

Mental Support for the Parents of Children with Developmental Disorders

— The efficacy of the ACT Workshop —

SUGANO Akiko

Graduate School of Science for Human Services, Ritsumeikan University

Key words: Developmental disorders, parents, Acceptance & Commitment Therapy

The present study used the Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT) Workshop as mental support for the parents of children with developmental disorders. The purpose of this research was to show by means of evidence the efficacy of the ACT Workshop (hereinafter, “WS”).

The WS was planned for two days, and each day consisted of five hours. The second day was conducted a week after the first day, and was held for a group of 14 parents of children with developmental disorders.

Participants answered questions of several scales four times (three weeks before the WS, one week before the WS, one week after the WS, and one month after the WS). Those results were analyzed as the effect of the WS.

In Analysis 1, these results were examined per group. Their psychological problems, for example, depression, were solved. However, whether the ACT processes, for example, “mindfulness,” contributed to this result was unknown.

In Analysis 2, the point levels of the analyzed participants before the WS were over the cut-off point (i.e., the point level of the depression scale was over 12 and that of the mental health scale was over 7). The results of these participants were examined from the view of clinical significance. The improvement rate was 50%. To examine this rate, setting a control group was needed.

From these analyses, the WS acted as mental support for the parents of children with developmental disorders. In the future, the desire is to continue the experimental studies in keeping with the research methods, for instance, “research design and evaluation method,” regarding whether the ACT processes, contributed to this result.

Moreover, the role of the ACT study as mental support for families with disorders or diseases should be discussed from the standpoint of human services.