The Change of Mothers With Autistic Children: From Analyzing the Process of Support Group

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this study was to analyze the processes by which support groups assist mothers with autistic children, in order to understand how mothers adapt themselves and reestablish relationships within the environment of the support group. In this qualitative study, eight mothers were recruited to form a support group. The group met for 10 sessions, each lasting 90 minutes. All the sessions were recorded in full on both audio and video tape. The data were analysed by the content analysis method. The results were used to analyze the process of change within mothers who took care of their autistic children, including transitions involving the termination of a fond dream, emerging from confusion, finding hope and seeking help, facing the family - reversing the course of events and taking responsibility; facing society - respecting life. The results show the changes in mothers caused by the group experience and the effects on them of interaction between themselves and their spouse, relatives and the autistic child since the time of the child’s birth. The results should help health workers to gain a deeper understanding of mothers with autistic children.

Key Words: autism, mother, support group, process of group.

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