

ABSTRACT

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Subjective wellbeing in people with intellectual disabilities

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The aim of the study was to reflect on and search for the factors and forces, which influence subjective wellbeing in people with intellectual disabilities. The study was conducted in social therapeutic workshops “Eben-Ezer” (Český Těšín, the Czech Republic). Through utilizing a narrative approach, I aimed to hear and record the ups and downs in the lived experiences of the people with intellectual disabilities. The main idea was to grasp the various views on the issue of subjective wellbeing through the listening to the stories of people and at the same time cherish the subjectivity of each story-teller.

The study follows qualitative research methodology, narrative approach for data collection, and thematic analysis for analysing the data. For the study six individuals were invited to take part in the research process. Previous contact was built with them during “Peer-Mentoring Project”, which was conducted few months earlier.

The findings showed that the individuals who have experienced of being able to take care about themselves are more self-confident and resilient to life challenges. The persons with less social skills tend more to live either with the family or in the institution. Further, it was acknowledged that health aspects prevented their full participation in society. For others, it was one of the reasons why they are more dependent on their relatives or guardians. Also, research participants emphasized secure and supportive environment, as well as proper medication system as the factors for improved mental health, and consequently better subjective wellbeing. Finally, the interviews highlighted the factors and forces making positive impact on subjective wellbeing of people with intellectual disabilities strictly related to the culture (e.g. watch hockey matches) and family traditions. Social workers and the workers of social services should be aware about subjective wellbeing of people with intellectual disabilities and address it as a need of a person.

Keywords: subjective wellbeing, intellectual disability, qualitative study, narrative method