

Abstract

Background: Substance addicted women face many problems such as stigmatization, discrimination or lesser social support. When addicted woman become a mother, this social-perception usually escalates. It is common that addicted women lose their status as a mother and are deprived of custody of their child, which furthermore leads to estrangement and decrease in mother–child relationship intensity. Mothers effort to regain her status tends to be more complicated in spite of her history, conflicts originating from marriage annulment, concern from childs guardians or lack of trust from the child itself. In situations like this, there are organizations that provide unbiased insight and are able to arrange assisted and monitored parent–child contact.

Aims: Intent of this diploma thesis is to explore and describe the process of contact restoration of mothers, that successfully finished their addiction treatment, with their child using services of assisted contacts. Research questions aim to describe mainly the process of mother–child relationship restoration with mentioned services as a provider of environment for their meetings. Secondly the aim focuses on exploring and describing barriers that might interfere in the process.

Methods: Research was accomplished using qualitative methods with attempt of in depth interpretation and explanation of a certain phenomenon. Data gathering was executed by semi–structured interviews and documentation analysis. Research sample is consisted of 10 respondents from 2 separated groups. First group of 5 respondents were mothers that successfully finished their addiction treatment and that were in the process of renewing relationship with their child. Second group of 5 were social workers and employees in services that provide assisted contact. Second group was selected because of their direct insight and experience in working with mothers, former substance users.

Results: Interview results provided data that indicate following findings – assisted contact of mothers, former substance users, and their children is taking place mostly due to request of children guardians since there tends to be mistrust in mothers abstinence and her addiction treatment. Also the results indicate lack of trust in mothers parental competence and stigmatization. Assisted contact is not covered in Czech legal system and there was no methodology issued by the public authorities of Czechia. Absence of general knowledge about mentioned services leads to misunderstanding the main purpose and negative perception by people involved. Data also provides information on barriers that complicates parent–child relationship restoration such as disagreement between childs guardians and mother of the child, child manipulation by the guardian, mother stigmatization in spite of her addiction history.

Recommendation: Based on study results and related literature research, following recommendations were suggested: establishing methodology and interconnecting policies for services providing assisted contact that leads to unifications of services and know–how sharing, implementing assisted contact services into Czech legal system, integration of Cochem model into practice, education of social workers in addictology, family law and Authority for Social and Legal Protection of Children.

Keywords: Parent–child contact, mother, former substance user, child, assisted contact