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Barriers in the relationship of parting parents in the parental collaboration context

SUMMARY

This research project is focused on cases of extremely conflicted parents who separated, but were unable to cooperate as parents of a minor child, which led to communication disorders, and finally also to the functioning of the whole family.

The conflict of the surveyed parents was so impossible to solve on their own that they were directed by the court to contact the child in the presence of mediation center employees, whose task was to influence the relationship between the parents in such a way that cooperation was established between them and they could function without court supervision. Often, however, these activities did not bring the expected results, and cooperation did not appear.

The priority reason for undertaking this research was the situation of minor children whose parents were not only unable to cooperate, but often actively acted to the detriment of each other, involving their children in conflicts, whose mental health was seriously endangered for this reason. It was assumed that by identifying barriers in the relationship of separating parents, the interactions designed by specialists will be more adequate to the problems and more effective, and thus protect children from the destructive effects of their parents' conflicts.

The first chapter is devoted to theoretical issues related to the possible functioning of parents after separation and the barriers that prevent parental cooperation. These issues include communication and barriers that may occur within it, conflicts, their types and ways of solving, the legal situation of separating parents and the consequences regarding the behavior of separating parents.

The second chapter is focused on the theories that are the source of the proposed ways of eliminating barriers between separating parents that prevent parental cooperation. It was decided that the scientific and practical achievements of polyvagal theory, cognitive theory and behavioral theory may be adequate in the context of interactions aimed at helping families in the crisis of separation or divorce. Elements of the above-mentioned theories were used to create a program of workshops eliminating barriers between separating parents, which is attached to this work.

In the fourth chapter, which is the research part of the project, the barriers between parents who are parting and preventing parental cooperation are identified and classified. For this purpose, 15 pairs of parents who had separated and were in deep conflict were observed. The observation was carried out from the position of an employee of the mediation center who supervised the meetings of the supporting parents with the children. In the case of each of the examined families, a psychological and pedagogical opinion prepared by the Consulting Team of Court Specialists was also analyzed.

The data obtained allowed not only to identify barriers, but also to design an adequate tool for working with parting parents, which is the program of workshops presented in the appendix to the work. The entire research project is a response to the needs of practitioners working with the above-mentioned parents.