The lived experiences of parents with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder

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The purpose of the study was to explore on the lived experiences of parents with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder in order to come up with a proposed intervention program that would involve families who are in the process of adjusting and adapting to the challenging demands of having children with developmental delay. These experiences were assessed and analyzed using standardized questionnaire along with an in-depth interview. The findings suggested that reframing and seeking spiritual support make the parents resilient in coping with the demands of a member with special needs. However, suspicion and actual diagnosis of ASD led the parents toward the feeling of: (1) Loss and grief, (2) relief and acceptance and (3) self-blaming. Whereas positive impact on the family includes greater parental involvement, negative impact embraces high level of stress in meeting the demands of the special child and jealousy of siblings toward the child with ASD. These remind psychiatric professionals to pay more attention to the mental health of families with autistic member. This is as well a call for the institutions offering psychology and special education courses to get involved in providing intervention programs such as respite care services, linkage to online connections with advocacy organizations and a training on developmental, individual-difference, relationship-based approach.

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