

The Support for Siblings of People with Disabilities

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The Focus and Purpose of My Research

The Focus :

The Siblings of Mentally Disabled People

- ‘siblings’ : brothers and sisters of mentally disabled people
- ‘disabled siblings’ : disabled people (not ‘siblings’)
- ‘mentally disabled people’ : intellectual disabled people in Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Purpose :

- (1) I clarify a part of the problems that siblings have.**
- (2) I clarify the meaning of self-help groups for siblings.**

Evaluating this report

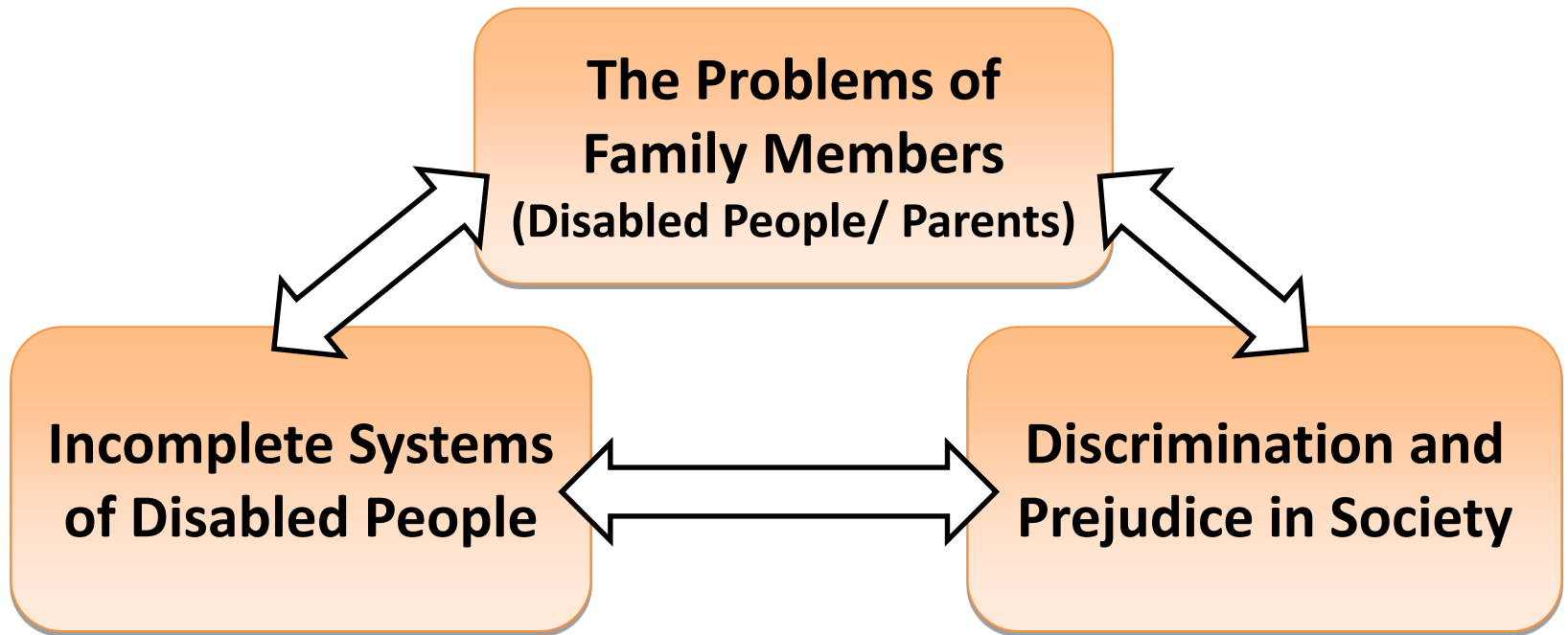
- The last purpose of my research:
I consider the problems of siblings of mentally disabled people and the support they get from many angles and clarify the support which siblings truly need.
- My research is based on the results showed by literatures, observations with participation and interviews.
- This report is a part of the results of my research. My research is still on-going.

The Reason I Focus on the Siblings of Mentally Disabled People

- (1) The siblings continue to have a relationship with mentally disabled people from their childhood to advanced age because of the characteristic of their disabilities.**
- (2) Mentally disabled people have hard time communicating by speech. When they have other disabilities, their siblings have more problems.**

The Problems of Siblings Have

The Siblings' Problems Come from Interaction among Three Problems.



(1)The Psychological Problems in Family

- Some siblings feel lonely, angry, and bitter for family members.
- Some parents demand the siblings of mentally disabled people to be perfect.
- **In the background, it is hard for parents to pay attention to siblings because parents spend too much time and care for mentally disabled people.**

(2)The Social Problems as Caretakers

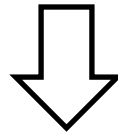
- Some siblings spend too much time and care for mentally disabled people though they are not mature enough to do so.
- Some siblings play more parts when their parents grow older or pass away.
- **In the background, the parents or society demand the siblings of mentally disabled people to be caretakers in place of the parents.**

The Meaning of Self-Help Groups for Siblings

(1) Mutual Understanding of Experiences and Feelings

Before siblings join in

- Siblings had the difference in the content of conversation between themselves and people with non-disabled siblings.



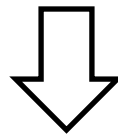
After siblings join in

- Siblings have encountered with people experiencing the same difficulty in self-help groups.
- Therefore, it has been easy for them to talk about disabled sibling and feel comfortable in self-help groups.

(2) Getting Information for the Support for Disabled People

Before siblings join in

- Siblings did not know the systems of disabled people.



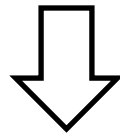
After siblings join in

- Most of the members in self-help groups have experienced the difficulty of disabled people.
- The members have advised siblings how to receive the support for disabled people.

(3) Considering again about Siblings' Life

Before siblings join in

- Some siblings felt that they were leading a meaningless life after their disabled sibling passed away.
- They tried to become 'the parents' of their disabled siblings.



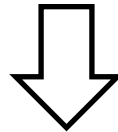
After siblings join in

- Some of the siblings consider their life again as 'the sibling of disabled people' in self-help groups.

(4) Empowerment

Before siblings join in

- Some sibling felt he was leading a meaningless life after their disabled sibling passed away.
- Other sibling could not talk with their family members about her disabled.



After siblings join in

- Some sibling found the meaning of talking about his experience.
- Other sibling worked on her family members. And they gradually came to talk about my disabled sibling.

Conclusion

- **The number of earlier research about siblings is small. One of the reasons is that the problems of mentally disabled people and their parents are outstanding, but the problems of siblings are not outstanding.**
- **The support systems of disabled people based on the problems of the mentally disabled or their parents. In the present situation, the self-help group for siblings is important.**
- **In the self-help group for siblings, not only do siblings receive the good effect, but also mentally disabled people or their parents.**