

Promoting ACT in a group intervention for parents of children with developmental disabilities

Emina Osmanovic Basic, Psychologist M.A., Cognitive-Behavioral Therapist, ACT Therapist
 Contact email: osmanovice@yahoo.com

Psychological counseling ABC, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina



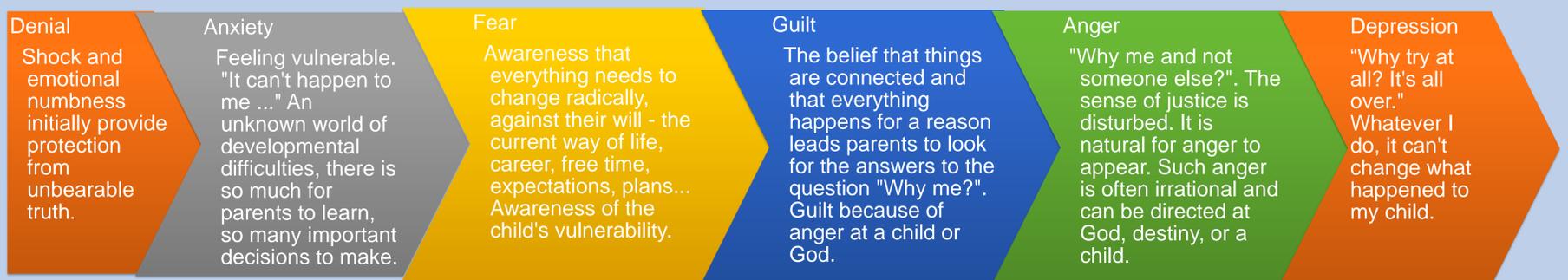
Traumatic experience

Knowing that a child has difficulty is an intense and traumatic experience for parents. It affects the dreams and projections into the future for the child that have been built up so far.

Parents' recovery from a traumatic experience depends on their ability to separate from their lost dreams and build new, achievable dreams. It is a demanding process for parents, requiring them to take care of the child's current needs and commit to the serious task of raising the child, while at the same time having to abandon their lost dreams and build new ones for the child and themselves.

Grieving process

During this process, parents gradually change their perceptions of the child, from those representing the perfect, healthy child, originally expected, to those representing the child with disabilities, developing new expectations for the child and new expectations for themselves as parents. The order in which the stages of grief occur may vary from person to person, as may the duration of stages and the overall grieving process. Instructions and advice on how a person should go through difficult periods can only harm a person who is going through grief. The message sent by such instructions is that they are not doing something properly or that they are not able to go through it.



Reality and permanence of loss

With each new developmental stage, in which the child cannot achieve developmental goals, parents can go through a new process of grief. Stages in the grieving process appear out of order. They can appear and disappear in different phases of family life, especially in the phases of change - when a child needs to go to school, when a child enters adolescence, after finishing school... Each of these periods carries certain losses.

Adaptation or resolution

Adaptation or resolution implies adaptation to new circumstances, creating new ideas about the child's real possibilities. Adaptation is a continuous process that does not end and is accompanied by a process of grief. For adaptation to take place, it is necessary for parents to cognitively and emotionally process the knowledge of the child's difficulties or health problems.

Characteristics of parents who adapted

Characteristics of parents who are not adapted

