

THE ABSTRACT

The thesis deals with sibling relationships of twins and triplets when one or more siblings suffer from some health disability or handicap. It outlines the way of life in sibling constellations of twins and triplets.

It deals with the topic of a disabled person who has brothers or sisters. It defines family as a pillar of person's life and it focuses on the sibling relationships. The thesis explains the connection between multiple births and the occurrence of disability, and it considers certain aspects of family life, with the main focus on siblings, when one of the siblings suffers from some health limitation. It also describes twins and triplets and their specific features. For example, it shows the development of the identity of each of the siblings, the role of their birth order, the types of relationships that occur in a family with twins and triplets, and the way the siblings may experience the separation from one another. It draws on publications and other sources that deal with sibling constellations and the resulting relationships among the siblings, on the publications on twins and triplets, on children and adults with disability or handicap. Last not least, it draws on personal experience of the author and on the research interviews.

Apart from that, the thesis clarifies how twins and triplets, including the person with disability or handicap, perceive their relationships, the impact they ascribe to the health limitation, and their ideas about the future regarding their twin or triplet. It tries to find out in what things the siblings help one another and what they think their sibling relationship has deprived them of, or has given them.

The writing of the thesis was accompanied with the qualitative research with semistructured interviews as a method of data collection. The basic research approaches were: biographic research, field research and partly also the case studies. The research has brought mainly the following results: Twins and triplets usually get along very well and are very close to one another. That is why they see their relationship as special. The health disability or handicap impacts everyday life of the siblings, but does not necessarily affect their relationships. Difficulties in understanding one another occur among the siblings when one of them suffers from atypical autism. Usually, the relationship with a disabled or handicapped sibling teaches the twins or triplets to appreciate the often disregarded values of life, to view the world from another

perspective, and it transforms the siblings themselves. The twins and triplets reckon on being in contact with their brothers or sisters during their future lives, too. According to the type and severity of the disability or handicap, they plan, or do not plan, to take care of them. Helping one another is very natural for twins and triplets.

The aim of the thesis is to outline the way of life in the sibling constellations of twins and triplets, and to clarify how twins and triplets, including the one with disability or handicap, perceive their mutual relationships.

THE KEY WORDS

- Twins
- Triplets
- Sibling relationships
- Sibling with disability
- Sibling with handicap
- Family
- Epilepsy
- Atypical autism
- Post-traumatic dementia
- Perthes disease

BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTATION

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