

Abstract

The diploma thesis „Experiencing the loss of a child“ deals with the psychological aspects of adaptation to the loss of a child. Its main objective is to analyse the supporting factors that help the adaptation and to find out how such loss influences individuals and their subsequent life.

The theoretical part of the thesis focuses on the issue of the loss of a close person and details the specifics of the loss of a child. Based on available literature the author explores the process of grieving and its manifestations and determines the variables that influence the adaptation to child loss. She also evaluates the impact of the child loss on the individual and the potential for intervention in the process.

The empirical part determines the factors that help to cope with such loss, describes, how the loss influences the life of the individual and focuses on the needs of the bereaved parents.

The data gathering consisted of ten individual in-depth interviews with women which experienced the loss of a child. These interviews were then qualitatively analysed using the IPA (Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis) method.

Based on the results of the qualitative analysis we identified four main support aspects of adaptation to child loss – social support, individual activity, professional help and faith. Furthermore we found that the loss of a child brought some positive effects into the lives of the individuals as well, such as concentration on helping others and change of values.

Keywords:

loss of a child, grief, trauma, coping with loss, complicated grief