

Sex education methods and techniques for individuals with disabilities in Italy. A phenomenological survey and an application plan

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A survey on various public and private organizations dealing with treatment and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities throughout Italy was carried out; moreover, methods and techniques within the framework of sexuality was also investigated, since it relates to a wide range of disabilities. Our study showed that sex education is frequently hidden or even kept latent, when relating to persons with disabilities who live in public and private facilities or in their families. Sex education is not explicitly included in the main goals of educational programs. In the present study, sex education for persons with disabilities is approached from an innovative point of view. Indeed, disability problems are dealt with using case histories and practical applications of techniques along with educational theory.

We collected personal accounts derived from interviews to mentally and physically disabled persons, parents of disabled children, and professional caregivers who work in this field. Survey data are interpreted from a phenomenological and qualitative point of view rather than from a statistical point of view. Consequently, results of our analysis provided us with the proper means to develop a Course of Sexual Education for Persons with Disabilities, Professional Educators and Parents.

Together with the Course of Sexual Education, a psychometric test to measure inner sex identity (developed by Marta Olivetti Belardinelli in her research) will be administered to all participants, in order to understand how the course has affected psycho-affective maturity. Furthermore, assuming that sex identity is a cognitive organizer, sex education could represent an helpful instrument to improve individual's mental skills, through the acquisition of affective intelligence.

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