

KLAIPEDA REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY SOCIAL WORKERS' APPROACH INTO THEIR POSSIBILITIES PROVIDING HELP FOR TEENAGERS FROM INCOMPLETE FAMILIES

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Abstract

In this article the authors try to reveal the approach of social workers to their possibilities providing help for teenagers from incomplete families.

Children from incomplete families often make a group of increased risk, where may appear more drug addicts, alcoholics, law breakers and criminals. A social worker, working with the teenagers from incomplete families, could help them specialize in society, improve their self-respect, and strengthen their social status.

Keywords: social worker, incomplete family, working opportunity, teenager.

Introduction

The relationship of the father or mother with the child is different. So there will be no mistake in the statement that it is not random that in traditional and modern family the role of man is to solve wider social tasks, while the role of woman is to solve family and daily questions. In the family, people not just receive the main images and traditions of the family life, but what is the most important – a personality is formed in the family. Traditionally the father represents the role of mediator between the child and society. The social role of a child formats public activeness of the child, it makes him recreate and reform society that is why a child, comparing himself with the father, interiorizes not just social activeness, but social aspirations as well. The mother, according to E. Fromm, loves and accepts the child with no conditions, and a relation of the child and the father can be defined according to some duties of a child and a father. In this comparison with the father the child is learning to be a responsible member of society (Leonavičius, 1998).

There are more and more children from incomplete families who live only with the mother, sometimes – just with the father. Spread of this phenomenon can be explained by an increasing number of children, born not in marriage and also instability in the families, when after divorce, the child remains with one of the parents. An increasing number of incomplete families is very painfully felt by our society, and is very concerned about it. It is clear, that this is one of

the main problems of child socialization. As well considering the fact that there appear more such families and more and more children encountering poverty, so solving this problem should be the priority (Stankūnienė, et al., 2003).

The issues of incomplete families in Lithuania are discussed and researched by Leliūgienė (2003), Litviniienė (2002), Stankūnienė (2003) and others.

With an increasing number of incomplete families in Lithuania, there appear many educational problems. Children from incomplete families usually appear to be in a group of increased risk, where appears more drug addicts, alcoholics, law breakers or criminals (Žemaitis, 2005).

A social worker, working with teenagers from incomplete families, could help them to specialize in society, improve their self – respect, and strengthen their social status.

Purpose of the work – a reveal the social worker's approach to his possibilities providing help for teenagers from incomplete families.

Object of the research – a social worker's approach to his possibilities providing help for teenagers from incomplete families.

Methods of the research – the science literature analysis, questionnaires, analysis of statistical data, graphical models, details and summing up, and also logical abstraction.

Concept of an Incomplete Family

After regaining independence, the statistical data of 1990 confirm that 16% of Lithuanian families had only one parent. Though it is difficult to say exactly, that is to provide statistical data about incomplete families, as living together without marriage is quite popular now, where children are raised, and mothers receive allowance, for being a lonely mother (Leliūgienė, 2003).

As it is said in the Social security glossary (1999), an incomplete family is a family, where a child is raised only by the mother (or the father).

An Incomplete family, in our opinion, belongs to the category of families, where a lonely father or mother lives with one or a few children and carries res-

possibility for their education and care (Leliugienė, 2003).

Miškinis (1993) says that in economical, social, educational and psychological view, incomplete families are not the same as other traditional families. 4 types of incomplete family can be separated.

- Incomplete family after divorce;
- Incomplete family after the death of one of the parents;
- Incomplete family having no children;
- Incomplete family, after a woman used a man as a donor.

Žemaitis (2005) says that in Lithuania we can find more than one hundred thousand incomplete families. The incomplete family consists of one parent (usually a lonely mother). Incomplete families appear when one of the parents dies or spouses divorce and separate from the family. The other form of an incomplete family is the family of the lonely mother.

Other authors describe such types of incomplete families:

- A family of a lonely mother;
- A family of a lonely father;
- Incomplete family after the death of one of the spouses (Nave – Herz, 2002).

A number of lonely mothers has increased very much over the last decades. Social research shows, that lonely mothers even now belong to the risk group because of their poor wealth.

Lonely motherhood is not a planned state. Unplanned pregnancy forces a girl to make a decision, she decides to give birth to an unplanned child though she understands that this may complicate her relationship with the partner. This decision to raise a child alone cannot be easily made. More and more women decide to raise a child alone, that means that a lonely mother feels quite firmly in our society.

Growth of a child in a family of a lonely mother can also have a positive impact. A growing child sees self-renunciation of the mother, her belief in herself, in her strength, patience and he becomes more responsible, being able to take care of himself and others. Such a child is more ready for any conflicts in the future, or for divorce (Nave – Herz, 2002).

In incomplete families, a child cannot solve one problem with the father and another with the mother, as it is possible in full families. In many situations a child's will to communicate with his father is very clear. If for any reason this can not be done (father is immoral, or is gone somewhere), a child very often looks for communication with a male, for example, with the fathers of the peers. Absence of the father is most felt by boys, who lack their attention. From the father a child learns such features as masculinity, courage, determinacy, honesty, and respect for a woman.

In the families without a father, boys can become feminine. Especially it is important in one-sex incomplete families (mother, grandmother, aunt, and daughter) (Litvinienė, 2002).

The father can accept to take care of his children not on his free will, but as a necessity to help the children. Sometimes the father appears in such situation without his will, he is pushed in such situation. It is interesting that the father formerly paying not much attention to daily work does it more often and finds time for his children.

The family with the child is more financially stable, and lonely mothers are usually in a worse financial position.

In an incomplete family, where one of the parents is dead, social atmosphere is usually better than in other incomplete families.

Widows or widowers are more respected by other people than divorced or lonely mothers. Family relations usually break in such families, as it usually happens after divorce. The grandmother or grandfather, aunts, uncles, cousins continue communication with the spouse of their dead relative (Seliokienė, 2002).

Death of one of the parents is unexpected event and affects more than divorce. Earlier women lived shorter for many reasons or birth complications, it was usual that a child did not know his mother or father.

The difference between families where one of the parents is dead and where the parents are divorced is that children (if the parents are divorced) believe that their parents will reconcile and start living together again. After one of the parents dies, children need psychological help to get back to reality.

Incomplete Family as the Object of a Social Workers Work

The main social problems in incomplete families are connected with a lack of wealth, which depends on the ability of one member to earn the money. Woman's incomes are usually smaller than man's, and we do not even discuss extreme cases, when the family does not receive any income from any work and must live from welfare. There may appear complicated psychological problems, which are usual for personality and relationship between the family members of incomplete families, for example, injustice or lack of self-respect. This can appear in the child's mind after parents divorce. Quite often children consider themselves guilty for their parents divorce. The second thing is that divorce makes woman feel guilty before her children that is why she takes even greater care of them. Woman, trying to adjust to the normal standards of a normal life, tries to work endlessly, and working so much cannot give children so much time and atten-

tion. Or on the contrary – sorrow for the broken family is expressed for children. A lot of problems then appear dealing with the issues of sexual identification and orientation, as well as sex role identification. In incomplete families, especially if the family became incomplete at the early stage, or was incomplete at the beginning, the features of the children of both sex are formed in the chaos of stereotypes.

Problems in incomplete families with the father are quite specific. This is not a model of a traditional family, so rules of life are not adjusted to such families. As well for the father with the child (children) it is easier to create a family, than for woman living with small children. So a lot of problems may appear in the relationship of the children and the new wife and/or her children.

Not long ago there appeared a new category of incomplete families, that is extended incomplete families, which are formed after death of the parents or when the parents are in prison, or the parents have no right to take care of their children because of alcohol. Usually the grandparents take care of such children. The level of income in such families is low, the majority of them lives from social welfare, pension or grandparent's salary. A lot of problems may appear because of health of the elderly people, their flexibility is not so strong, and they can't adjust to everyday life.

Sometimes children cannot feel themselves in the right educational position that is why children living with their grandparents usually behave in a delinquent manner.

Socio-educational work, orientated to relationship stabilization in the family – this is the relationship between spouses, parents and children, family members and other people (Anheir, 2000). The content of work with “difficult” children or teenagers, diagnostics of the family and child relations with school, definition of the child's social net, need to analyze his medical, intellectual and psychological state. Having the data received during this analysis the program is developed, where it is stated the way of solving problems of school attend and making to included young clients in a positive educational surrounding.

It is difficult to correct all relationship in the family. Sometimes bad things in the family can be foreseen even before their appear. Some difficulties may be removed in an early stage because if no attention is paid the problem gets even worse. Despite difficult relationships in the family, a socio-educational worker has no right to consider this family as hopeless. Though we have to remember that solving problems is a result of free decision and free will of the family members themselves.

Social Worker's Work Possibilities Solving Teenagers' from Incomplete Families Problems

A social worker, providing help for teenagers from incomplete families, is a helper giving his strength and abilities to satisfy their need. A social worker develops communication skills, which are needed in order to receive productive communication from the teenager and his family.

Such a person was described by Johnson (2001) as:

Having a positive attitude to other people and their behavior;

Being honest, kind, trusty, friendly and sincere;

Working not for people, who need help, but with them;

Calling the person's feelings does not use any other methods;

Being mature, able to make decisions, risk while helping others;

Evaluating the situation, understanding changes and time, which is needed to make any changes in the life.

A social worker, helping teenagers from incomplete families, tries to make difficulties of their lives smaller, to strengthen their social status and to improve the level of living, helps to adjust in society, develop personal sociality.

A social worker first of all must consider teenagers' needs and try to work with the teenager's family. A social worker, working with such teenagers, tries to use a systematical model of social work (Beacker, Bepink 2000).

Systematical view allows analyzing social situations, basing them on a holistic perspective, and concentrating attention on relationships among people. The tasks of a social worker are to set the network of the client, to find meaningful co systems and to adjust them to any changes, help or support (Howe, 1993).

The systematic analyses allow to evaluate the situation in structural aspect, that is to evaluate client's problem (micro system) as a bigger part of a macro system, which can help (or not) to any further changes.

Systematical view provides a possibility for a social worker to see all aspects of social situation, the dynamics of all development and perspective, this allows strategically thinking. This approach widens the limits of client's understanding. From rate individual, but as personality, providing all efforts to achieve changes and aims (Vitkauskaitė, 2001).

A social worker, providing help to teenagers from incomplete families, has to consider the laws, which describe his rights, the teenager's rights, forms of help for the family, state the fields of his actions, possibilities.

A social worker usually works with children from incomplete families in the children's day care centers, children's wealth centers, children foster homes, and boarding houses.

One of the main aims is to satisfy the main needs of the teenager so a day center tries to provide teenagers with partial care teenagers get partial free food. In the day center teenagers usually have a possibility to have a shower, get clothes, things needed for school, they are helped with their homework, in summer time there are different types of activities (camps and so on). Additional education of teenagers is also organized. They can take part in different excursions. During such activities young people learn different things, gain new skills, get to know themselves better. Day centers try to help teenagers to solve their problems. There young people can receive emotional support, develop their skills, character and positive ethical moral ideas, in many different ways they try to help teenagers to integrate into their surrounding, cultural and social life.

Day centers are usually attended by teenagers from social risk families, where the main problems are alcoholism, unemployment, and poor health and hygiene conditions and so on. Usually children are raised by the lonely mother (father), there are many families with many children. A lot of attention is paid to teenagers families, they are provided with financial psychological and moral support, especially during the crisis period. In order to make this help more effective

different meetings or celebrations together with the parents are organized there.

Research of the View of Social Workers Attitude to the Possibilities of Work Solving Teenagers from Incomplete Families Problems

Trying to do research on work possibilities of a social worker providing help for teenagers from incomplete families, we asked for help from Klaipėda region social workers¹. The people were chosen with a purpose. All 11 social workers were surveyed.

After making empirical analyses of the data it became clear that all social workers participating in the research think that teenagers living in incomplete families encounter many difficulties.

Sutton in her book "Social work, the communication of community and psychology" (1999) says: "... children, living in the families, having just one parent, – and the number of such families increases – it is possible that emotionally children are as healthy as children from the families with both parents. Troubles appear not because there is just one of the parents; but because of the social harm. For example, the average income of the family with only one parent is two times smaller than of the family with both parents. The family with one parent usually lives in a worse flat and is more isolated.

During the research it was found what difficulties were met in the work of social workers, who work with teenagers from incomplete families.

Table

Distribution of respondents' answers on teenagers' from incomplete families' difficulties

Respondents' answers on teenagers' from incomplete families difficulties	Distribution of answers (percentage)
Lack of father or mother	30
Bad material conditions	25
Negative attitude of others	5
Distrust of himself	6
Behavioural problems	23
Suppression of contrasting feelings for parents	5
Feeling of fault due to parents divorce	6

Social workers name the main difficulty lack of father/mother that was stated by 30% of respondents: 5% thought, that teenagers, from incomplete families usually have problems with suppression of contrasting feelings for the parents. 25% of respondents said that the main problem is not emotional, but bad material conditions.

A negative attitude of others, distrust and the feeling fault due to the parents divorce were said not considered as the main difficulties met by teenagers from incomplete families. These answers were stated only by 5% and 6% of respondents.

Insults of friends are not connected with living in incomplete families; this problem appeared to teenagers

from full families as well. This answer was not marked by any of the respondents.

During the research, it was tried to find out which activities of a social worker are most important solving teenagers from incomplete families problems. The results are shown in Figure 1.

The majority of respondents (41%) thought that the main activity of the social worker working with teenagers from incomplete families is training. A smaller part of social workers thought (20%) considered preventive work as the main activity with teenagers. Not the least part considered that consulting (15%) and material (17%) support also important.

¹ There are 11 region parts in Klaipėda district.

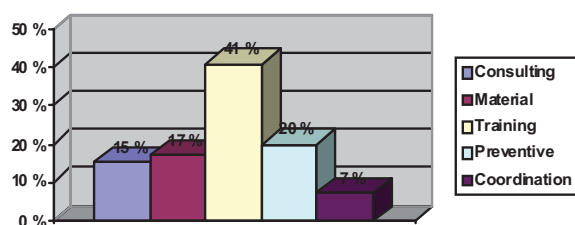


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents' opinion on the importance of social work activities

Not so important activity was chosen by 7% of respondents, that is coordination. Social workers think that informative activities provide not many good things and are not very important. None of the respondents chose this answer.

The respondents were asked what consulting activities of a social worker are most important while working with teenagers from incomplete families.

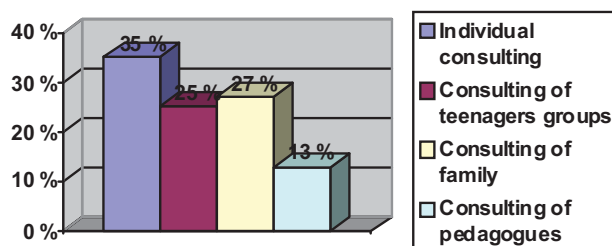


Figure 2. Distribution of the respondents' opinion on consulting activities

The respondents answers divided almost equally. The majority percentage of the respondents, social workers, said that the main consulting activities are individual consulting (35%). 25% of respondents considered that the main activities are consulting teenagers groups and consulting the family.

the most needed are interred help group organization seminars and social skills training seminars.

13% of respondents considered that the priority is organization of drug prevention programs. Only 10% percent of respondents thought that the most important training and preventive activities are seminars on knowing personality and self-feelings.

The smaller part of social workers (13%) think, it is needed to consult pedagogues, as through them a secondary consulting model is formed when pedagogues influence teenagers. This model is very effective because pedagogues communicate with teenagers more often, and if there is need they can help teenagers to solve their problems more effectively.

During the research the opinion of social workers on free time organization for teenagers from incomplete families was found out. Social workers who took part in this research said that the main free time activities are activities after the lessons. This was said by 33% of social workers. 27% of respondents considered that the main free time organization activities are during holidays. 17% of respondents thought that the priority is excursions and outings. Of minor importance is art – work clubs (13%) and sport competitions (10%).

During the research it was tried to find out what training, preventive activities are the most important working with such teenagers. 31% of respondents, social workers, stated, that in training activities the most important are seminars of self-trust, self respect. The smaller part of respondents (23% and 23%) said, that

The most important activity of a social worker is to work with teenagers families.

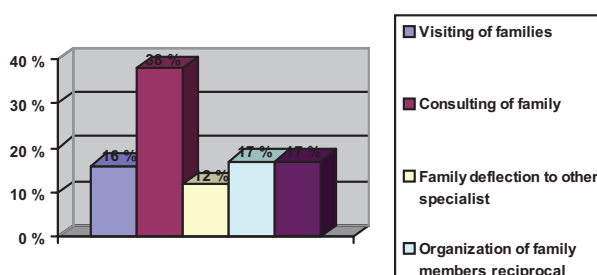


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents' opinions on work with teenagers' families

As it is seen from the data i the most important activity working with families is family consulting. This was chosen by the majority of respondents (38%). Visiting of families were chosen by 16% of respondents. Organization of family members' reciprocal groups and work with both parents was considered similarly important by social workers. These answers were

chosen by 17% of respondents. 10% of respondents thought that the most important activity is family deflection to other specialists (psychologists, doctors and so on).

Social workers were asked what most important activities cooperating with other institutions are.

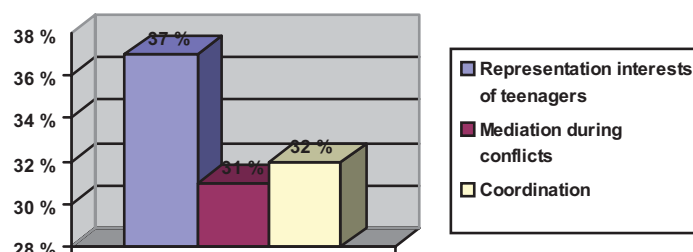


Figure 4. Distribution of respondents' opinion about cooperation with other institutions

The majority of respondents (37%) thought that the most important activities of a social worker cooperating with other institutions is representation of teenagers, interests 31% respondents stated that an important field of a social worker is coordination and mediation during conflicts.

Having analyzed the data of the research, it can be said that a social worker should organize the inter help groups for incomplete families. A social worker, providing help for teenagers should involve other professionals – pedagogues, psychologists, social pedagogues and so on. A social worker should make research and find out teenagers' views on help of a social workers.

Conclusions

Incomplete families belong to the category of families where the lonely father or mother lives with one or few underage children and is fully responsible for their education and care. Incomplete families appear when one of the spouses dies, or after divorce they go away from the family.

Teenagers from incomplete families, have psychosocial difficulties in communication, feel isolation, fear to be responsible, tend to criminal acts, use of drugs. Statistics also shows that children from divorced families create strong marriage with difficulties and more often divorce.

A social worker, helping teenagers from incomplete families, tries to make those difficulties in their life easier, strengthen their social status and make their life better, they help them to adapt to society and develop personal sociality. First of all he must consider the needs of the teenager and try to work with the family.

Analysis of the research data shows these tendencies in the respondents answers:

Teenagers from in incomplete families are more likely to suffer these difficulties: lack of the father/mother, behavioural problems, and poor financial conditions.

The most important activities of a social worker solving of the teenagers from in the incomplete families problems, are training: seminars how to trust, respect himself and preventive work with teenagers – organization of drug preventive programs.

Important work of a social worker is consulting a teenager and work with his family.

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Klaipėdos rajono seniūnijų socialinių darbuotojų požiūris į veiklos galimybes, teikiant pagalbą paaugliams iš nepilnų šeimų

Santrauka

Socialinis darbuotojas, dirbdamas su paaugliais iš nepilnų šeimų, galėtų padėti jiems adaptuotis visuomenėje, ugdyti paauglių savigarbą, stiprinti socialinį statusą. Reikšmingiausia socialinio darbuotojo veikla, sprendžiant paauglių iš nepilnų šeimų problemas, yra ugdymoji – pasitikėjimo savimi, savigarbos ugdymo seminarai ir prevencinis darbas su paaugliais – narkomanijos prevencijos programų organizavimas. Vaikai iš nepilnų šeimų dažnai sudaro padidėjusios rizikos grupę, kurioje atsiranda daugiau narkomanų, alkoholikų, teisės pažeidėjų, nusikaltėlių.

Šiame straipsnyje siekiama atskleisti socialinių darbuotojų požiūrį į veiklos galimybes teikiant pagalbą paaugliams iš nepilnų šeimų. Šeimoje asmenys ne tik įgyja pagrindinius šeimyninio gyvenimo įvaizdžius ir įpročius, bet – svarbiausia – čia formuojasi jų asmenybė. Tėvo ir motinos santykiai su vaiku yra skirtingi. Todėl galima teigti, kad galbūt neatsitiktinai tiek tradicinėje, tiek šiuolaikinėje visuomenėje vyrui vis dar priskiriamas vaidmuo spręsti platesnius socialinius uždavinius, moteriai – šeimos ir buities klausimus.

Nepilnų šeimų tematika Lietuvoje domisi, tyrinėja ir apie tai rašo Leliūgienė, Litvinienė, Stankūnienė ir kt. Gausėjant nepilnų šeimų Lietuvoje, ypač daug problemų kyla dėl vaikų auklėjimo. Vaikai iš nepilnų šeimų dažnai sudaro padidėjusios rizikos grupę, kuri skatina rasti daugiau narkomanų, alkoholikų, teisės pažeidėjų, nusikaltėlių (Žemaitis, 2005; Valickas, 2000). Socialinis darbuotojas, dirbdamas su paaugliais iš nepilnų šeimų, galėtų padėti jiems adaptuotis visuomenėje, ugdyti paauglių savigarbą, stiprinti socialinį statusą.

Atkūrus šalyje nepriklausomybę, remiantis 1990 m. duomenimis, Lietuvoje 16 proc. šeimų turėjo tik vieną tėvą. Tačiau labai sunku tiksliai nustatyti, t. y. pateikti statistinius duomenis apie nepilnas šeimas, nes šiuo metu dažnas neįregistruotos santuokos, kuriose auga vaikai, o motinos gauna vienišos motinos pašalpas.

Nepilna šeima priklauso tokiai šeimų kategorijai, kurioje vienišas tėvas ar mama gyvena su vienu ar keliais nepilnamečiais vaikais ir visiškai atsako už jų auklėjimą ir globą. Nepilnos šeimos atsiranda, kai vienas sutuoktinių miršta arba, santuokai iširus, pasitraukia iš šeimos.

Paauglių, augančių nepilnose šeimose, psichosocialinės problemos: emocinis nestabilumas, menkas savęs vertinimas, uždarumas, sunkumai bendraujant, izoliacija, baimė išsipareigoti, polinkis į nusikaltimus, narkotinių medžiagų vartojimas. Statistika rodo, kad išsiskyrusių šeimų vaikai sunkiau sukuria tvirtą santuoką ir patys dažniau skiriasi.

Socialinis darbuotojas, padėdamas paaugliams iš nepilnų šeimų, siekia palengvinti jų gyvenimo sunkumus, sustiprinti jų socialinį statusą ir pagerinti gyvenimo lygį, padeda adaptuotis visuomenėje, išvystyti asmenybės socialumą. Pirmiausia jis atsižvelgia į paauglių poreikius ir stengiasi dirbti su paauglio šeima.

Tyrimo duomenų analizė atskleidžia šiuos respondentų atsakymų dėsningumus:

- paaugliai, augantys nepilnose šeimose, dažniausia patiria šiuos sunkumus: tėvo / motinos trūkumą, turi elgesio problemų, prastos jų materialinės sąlygos;
- reikšmingiausia socialinio darbuotojo veikla, sprendžiant paauglių iš nepilnų šeimų problemas, yra ugdymoji – pasitikėjimo savimi, savigarbos ugdymo seminarai ir prevencinis darbas su paaugliais (narkomanijos prevencijos programų organizavimas);
- svarbią vietą socialinio darbuotojo darbe užima tiek individualus paauglio konsultavimas, tiek darbas su šeima.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: socialinis darbuotojas, nepilna šeima, darbo galimybės, paauglys.