

Borselli Speech

We would like to say a few words freely, to give perspective to the work we all did and because we think there is still so much to do in terms of research to do more adequately our work on mental retardation.

Centering our information not only on I.C.F. but also on the quality of relations among caregivers and care receivers we started a journey towards a study on mental retardation in an effort to understand how a trauma at birth, so difficult and delicate to accept, appears to the family.

This event influences the whole life of parents. In fact the ideas and expectations about the future, the fantasies of continuity of themselves are compared with the collapse of the project of the couple and the fear of the future. In this moment the representations of a disable person and the defenses of both parents which take place, particularly in the mother, have the utmost importance for rehabilitation. Infact in most case they represent a further state of alienation for the disable person.

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Following this perspective the disable person, integrated into a system of care and rehabilitation, might be deprived of his personal expression, when caregivers and parents neglect those parts of knowledge unknown to their consciousness but essential to do a good job and guarantee effective training.

It is important for example to be able to question our way of thinking and to recognize and take in consideration experiences located in non-verbal language; a dimension in which not words but the body is used to the communicate with others and with ourselves. An exploration like this could bring us closer to the communicative styles daily used by the disable persons.

Think for while of the encouragement or reinforcement given.

We do not know whether behind praise received the care-receivers feel or perceive a message of doubt and alienation?

Again parents, and especially mothers, continue to promote, and fight a social and health battle with no distinction between their own existence and the existence of the disabled. In this case they often they risk to fight against the care-receiver in the name of a mutual suffering part of which has its roots in the trauma and pain they had and have to bear.

This drama was often played even before birth and its very difficult to understand where the child's illness begins and where the neurosis of parents ends.

This scene also feeds on relations with grandparents. So the relations among care-givers, relatives, parents and care-receivers are on the stage and play their everyday performance.