

The present project is a part of trend of qualitative research, located on the border of special education and cultural studies (gender studies). This applies not fully explored area associated with the performance of parental roles by persons with intellectual disabilities. The aim of the study is **to make theoretical, empirical and multifaceted analysis of the supported motherhood of women with intellectual disabilities**

The project aims to gain knowledge about:

- experiencing motherhood of women with intellectual disabilities
- the role of social support in formation of mother identity
- specifics of the experience of women with intellectual disabilities in the following areas: mother identity-building strategies in a situation of dependence, models of support women with disabilities in the construction of parental identity, modifying the system of social roles in the family
- the challenge that motherhood of women with intellectual disabilities sets for standard parenting
- possibility of reconstructing the discourse of femininity in the perspective of experiencing motherhood of women with intellectual disabilities.

It was planned to investigate at least forty people: twenty mothers with intellectual disabilities and twenty women who directly support them: mothers and sisters. The final number of participants in the study was made conditional upon the achievement of theoretical saturation conceptual categories.

The basis for acquiring knowledge will be qualitative analyzes of data from two sources:

[1] The focus studies conducted in:

- five groups of mothers with intellectual disabilities, in which assumptions of inclusive research methods will be used, involving the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities as co-researchers (O'Brien, 2014); it is planned to include three researchers with intellectual disabilities;
- four groups of women supporting mothers with intellectual disabilities in fulfilling their maternal roles.

[2] forty individual narrative interviews partly directed and standardized to small extent, which will focus on the research problem, carried out with all participants in the study. This analysis will draw strategies proposed by Barney Glaser, Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin (Glaser, Strauss, 2009), with particular emphasis on grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2009).

In the area of special education research interest there is a lack of analysis and theoretical references that relate to the socio-cultural functioning of women with intellectual disabilities, and their personal narratives that construct the discourse of femininity. Research field of special education begins to speak up about gender category, as one that is closely connected with the social dimension of human life. On the other hand, gender studies deal with the perception of gender sparingly, in the face of disability issues. Meanwhile, the social categories of constructing and deconstructing gender and sexuality concern the whole of modern society, and so also people with disabilities. Thus, one of the innovative objectives of the project is to use cross-sectional analysis (Crenshaw, 1996), which crosses gender and disability issues. The results of the planned study will complement the existing feminist research on issues concerning women with intellectual disabilities, especially the right to be a parent (Ortoleva, 2011). In contrast, a category of gender research on disability will analyze disability as a condition which cancels and "erases" sex, all the attention focusing around the lack of efficiency (Garland-Thomson, 2005).

Paradigmatic changes taking place in special pedagogy and social transformations have led to the existence of a strong belief that adults with intellectual disabilities have the right to self-determination in terms of social roles. It does not apply to the issue of procreation; in this area people with intellectual disabilities continue to face inequality and limiting them parental roles, leads to "reduction" of adulthood. Acceptance of this group adulthood is hampered by the existing stereotypes, according to which they are seen as "eternal children" (Kijak, 2010; Ko cielska, 2000). Motherhood of women with disabilities, regardless of its nature, is a challenge for the socio-cultural systems of sexual reproduction of the standards in the field of parenting also because the existing discourse today applies only to women who do not have disabilities (Długoł cka, 2011; Stenhouse, Letherby, 2011). Therefore, the study **aims to reconstruct the discourse of motherhood in perspective of experienced disability**, as well as knowledge of the social dimension of the functioning of the mother category in the perception of women with intellectual disabilities.

The international research indicates that in relation to women with disabilities it comes to number of abuse and neglect in the area of reproductive rights mainly due to strong stereotypes and prejudices. According to them, women with intellectual disabilities are presented as people who are unable to take care of family and child care, to assume the responsibility for lives of others. They are seen as children: dependent and asexual, which excludes them from fulfilling the traditional roles of women (Nosek, Howland, Rintala, Young, and Chanpong, 2001). The reports of The European Disability Forum (2011) shows that such concerns and fears results in directing many family activities to taking control over the lives and decisions of women with disabilities in this area. This in turn results in their excessive dependence, lack of independence and privacy and, ultimately, limiting self-determination and decision-making about their own lives.

The narrow concepts of social support have led to the belief that people who are not able to independently perform all the duties associated with raising children, are unable to care for their children and functioning in the role of parents (Keith Morris, 1996). Meanwhile, as a result of intellectual disability and the lack of responsiveness of formal support system, mothers with intellectual disabilities are embedded in the dependence relationships (Asch, Rousso, Jefferies, 2001). On the basis of the literature it assumed that supported motherhood is a social practice in which not only the

parents are involved. Also, individuals related to the child and other people who do the caring work are engaged. They lend their collective, over-individual strength and support to women, creating a chain of care (Mayes, Llewellyn, McConnell, 2006; Wołowicz-Ruszkowska, in press).

This phenomenon is particularly interesting in Polish culture where the dominant model is the "managerial matriarchy" (Titkow, 2007), according to which a woman has to deal with numerous responsibilities alone, without any support. The literature does not present phenomenon of support that allows mothers with disabilities being effective, responsible and competent in implementing the parental role. **The study therefore will complement the existing knowledge about the horizontal and vertical informal support systems, on a detailed analysis of the role of adult sisters and mothers in supporting the obligations of maternity women with disabilities. It will also reveal the importance of the presence of mothers and sisters, in shaping the identity of the mothers of women with intellectual disabilities.**

The adoption of social paradigm of disability affects the choice of methods and techniques. One of the important methodological assumptions of the project is to conduct in-depth interviews with people with intellectual disabilities. An innovative idea will be to prepare and engagement of people with intellectual disabilities as researchers, in line with the inclusive research studies. This approach stands out from other methodological approaches through the active participation of persons concerned by the survey. Therefore, an additional aim of the proposed research methodology will be **to analyze the strategy of integrating, as co-researchers, people with intellectual disabilities, as well as to describe strategies to maximize their participation and control at each stage of the examination.** The rationale for this methodological approach determines the assumption of the need to provide grid of terms (codes in vivo), which is grounded in the experience of individuals (Charmaz, 2009). The feasibility of such plans with regard to people with intellectual disabilities, has been confirmed by an international research team under the direction of Patricia O'Brien (2014). In the proposed research procedure, people with intellectual disabilities play a key role as participants in this process and will participate both in data collection and in the process of analysis. The analysis, in turn, will consist in determining the in vivo code statements of the participants and as a consequence - identifying topics for in-depth interviews. The involvement of people with intellectual disabilities in the research process allows to ask vital questions. Moreover, it provides the adequacy of the data collection methods and more comprehensive analysis of these data (O'Brien, McConkey, Garcia-Iriarte, 2014).