



From being a teenage mother to adult life according to a woman with intellectual disability

ABSTRACT: Aleksandra Mach, *From being a teenage mother to adult life according to a woman with intellectual disability*. Interdisciplinary Contexts of Special Pedagogy, No. 17, Poznań 2017. Pp. 99-28. Adam Mickiewicz University Press. ISSN 2300-391X

For women with intellectual disabilities, maternity is exposed to many factors that hinder this process. Related research shows that one of the main reasons for that is insufficient or inept support for this group of women within a wide range of realms, including educational, financial, cognitive and emotional support. Teenage mothers with disabilities face particularly difficult situations. This paper presents an analysis of statements by an adult woman with mild intellectual disability about her experience of teenage pregnancy and then motherhood as an adult woman. The humanistic approach of inviting the respondent to speak openly allowed the author to determine other meaningful matters in the woman's life (among others, her romantic relationships, her relationship with the mother, her vision of her own future and her financial situation). The research methodology used was qualitative. Two open interviews were conducted 8 months apart. The interviews were recorded with an electronic device. The material obtained was then transcribed. Triangulation of the sources was used (two family assistants were interviewed).

KEY WORDS: intellectually disabled woman, teenage pregnancy, maternity, inter-generational transmission, life difficulties

Introduction

Maternity is a concept that evades clear definition. From the humanistic perspective, maternity may appear to be steeped in subjects seen as valuable, or even essential, in life, and not just the woman's life. Maternity is essentially based on two entities: the mother and the child, the theme of motherly love being integral part of the contemporary concept of maternity. According to Małgorzata Karwowska, maternity is recognized as a social role that a woman plays with respect to her child, a role that stands apart from others due to the biological and emotional bond that comes with it. A woman may also undertake this role with a child other than her own by becoming a surrogate or adoptive mother.¹

The researchers investigating maternity in women with intellectual disabilities point to many problems in their pursuing this realm of life. Katarzyna Ćwirynkało and Agnieszka Żyta list three basic groups of factors that hinder the path to maternity, and maternity itself, in women with intellectual disabilities, namely: inadequate sexual education received by those women, adverse biopsychological pre-conditions and their communities. The said researchers argue that the biopsychosocial factors might be associated with intellectual disabilities. The community factors contribute to the quality of parenting more than parent's IQ does². Based on her own research, Dorota Lizoń-Szłapowska claims that maternity in women

¹ M. Karwowska, Being a mother to a child with intellectual disability (*Macierzyństwo wobec dziecka niepełnosprawnego intelektualnie*), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz 2007, pp. 38-40.

² K. Ćwirynkało, A. Żyta, *The woman with intellectual disability as a mother – support issues (Kobieta z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną jako matka – problematyka wsparcia)*, "Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej" 2015, No. 18, pp. 113-129; cf. U. Bartnikowska, K. Ćwirynkało, A. Chyła, *Disability and maternity – possibilities and barriers. A phenomenological study of mothers with intellectual disabilities (Niepełnosprawność a macierzyństwo – możliwości i bariery. Studium fenomenograficzne samotnych matek z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną)*, "Studia nad Rodziną" 2013, XVII, No. 2(33), pp. 29-52.

with intellectual disability is full of contradictions and exclusions. Maternity is done by intuition, and the way those women pursue their roles of mothers is largely situational. This observation has been particularly noticeable in women with moderate intellectual disabilities. The quality of maternity depended on past life experience, mother's current life situation and their individual abilities and dispositions.³ The key problem in mothers with intellectual disabilities, especially those with more severe degrees, is their immediate families' disinterest in those women's maternity. They are often left alone with their life choices⁴. Women with intellectual disabilities approach maternity based on their own life experience⁵. Some researchers point to declarations or concrete actions by parents who assist their adult children with intellectual disabilities in many tasks essential from the perspective of this stage of life. These largely regard adequate housing conditions, assistance with finding a job and fulfilling necessary formalities, as well as taking care of their grandchildren. The examples they discuss, however, are related mostly to properly functioning families and people with light intellectual disabilities⁶. Although difficulties fulfilling maternity-

³ D. Lizoń-Szlapowska, *Motherhood in women with intellectual disabilities in the light of personal research (Macierzyństwo kobiet z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w świetle badań własnych)*, [in:] *Człowiek z niepełnosprawnością w przestrzeni społecznej*. Volume 11 series: "Problemy edukacji, rehabilitacji i socjalizacji osób niepełnosprawnych", ed. Z. Gajdzica, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls", Kraków 2009, pp. 53-57.

⁴ D. Lizoń-Szlapowska, *Maternity in women with intellectual disabilities in the light of personal research (Macierzyństwo kobiet z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w świetle badań własnych)*, [in:] *Człowiek z niepełnosprawnością w przestrzeni społecznej*. Volume 11 series: "Problemy edukacji, rehabilitacji i socjalizacji osób niepełnosprawnych", ed. Z. Gajdzica, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls", Kraków 2009, pp. 53-57.

⁵ A. Żyta, *Marriages and parenthood in people with intellectual disabilities – challenges of modern times (Małżeństwa i rodzicielstwo osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną – wyzwania współczesności)*, "Edukacja Dorosłych" 2013, No. 2, pp. 59-71.

⁶ M. Grütz, *People with intellectual disabilities as partners, spouses and parents – previous research reports (Osoby z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną jako partnerzy, małżonkowie i rodzice – dotychczasowe doniesienia badawcze)*, [in:] *Dorośli z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w labiryntach codzienności. Analiza badań – krytyka podejść –*

related roles in this group of women are readily predictable, the problem is continues to be marginalized and relegated to the margins of social life.⁷

Teenage maternity is also related to a number of social, legal, economic and even medical problems. Researchers investigating teenage parenthood in people with intellectual disabilities point to multi-factor causes of this situation, including the search for emotional support, care and love, and loneliness, which result in relationships with random people, abnormal relationships with parents, living life from day to day, inability to predict consequences, and low sexual awareness.⁸ It is also worth mentioning that teenage pregnancy might impact one's capacity of building their future⁹.

Methodological assumptions of author's own research

This research aims to provide insights into how a woman with intellectual disability views her own teenage maternity and how she copes with maternity as an adult. This research project is dedicated to an adult woman's former experience of teenage motherhood as

propozycje rozwiązań, ed. B. Cytowska, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2011, pp. 175-203.

⁷ D. Lizoń-Szłapowska, *Maternity in women with intellectual disabilities in the light of personal research (Macierzyństwo kobiet z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w świetle badań własnych)*, [in:] *Człowiek z niepełnosprawnością w przestrzeni społecznej*. Volume 11 series: "Problemy edukacji, rehabilitacji i socjalizacji osób niepełnosprawnych," ed. Z. Gajdzica, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls," Kraków 2009, pp. 53-57.

⁸ D. Sidorczuk, *Early maternity in women from special educational centres, and factors contributing to the phenomenon (Problem wczesnego macierzyństwa wychowanek ze specjalnych ośrodków szkolno-wychowawczych a czynniki powodujące powstawanie tego zjawiska)*, "Niepełnosprawność i Rehabilitacja" 2002, No. 3, p. 58; D. Lizoń-Szłapowska, *Usamodzielnianie wychowanek specjalnych ośrodków szkolno-wychowawczych*, "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze" 2004, No. 8, pp. 31-32.

⁹ Teenage Pregnancy – March of Dimes, cf. source: <http://www.marchofdimes.org/materials/teenage-pregnancy.pdf> [accessed: 15.09.2016].

well as her ensuing adult motherhood. The main question behind this research is the following: how does the woman with light intellectual disability view her once teenage maternity and ensuing adult motherhood? The author has also sought to answer detailed questions: What were the difficulties that the respondent had to face in her role as a teenage mother and then an adult mother? How did she cope with her duties as a teenage mother? How does she deal with her duties as an adult mother? Was she/has she been supported during her teenage and adult pregnancy? If so, how? What is her relationship with the daughter she gave birth to while being a teenager and with the children she gave birth to as an adult? The approach whereby the respondent was asked to speak openly helped the author to identify other relevant issues in respondent's life such as her romantic relationships, her relationship with her mother, her vision of her future, and her material status. Research methodology primarily used a qualitative strategy. Two free-form interviews were conducted, including one retrospective. Each interview took approximately one hour. They were held separately, at eight-month intervals, at respondent's place of choice. The interviews were digitally recorded. The content of the recordings was then transcribed. The author also provided for triangulation of sources by interviewing two family assistants. The respondent was picked deliberately. She was required to meet the criteria of sex (woman), having been diagnosed with intellectual disability and having experienced teenage maternity. At the time of the interviews, our interviewee named Alicja (all names have been changed) was 38 years old. She is a mother of four children: Magdalena (21 years old), Marcin (13 years old), Jeremi (10 years old) and Kamil (7 years old). She gave birth to Magdalena as she was nearly 17 years old. She got married for the first time with the father of the two youngest children. They have since divorced. Alicja completed elementary education and grew up in a complete family. She lives in an old house of basic standard (bathroom, kitchen, bedrooms). She does not work professionally. Her revenues largely come from her social pension and children benefits.

Analysis of the results

The analysis of the statements provided by my respondent helped me identify the main themes that materialized as early as the first interview. They were given relevant names that stress a given stage of my respondent's life, her roles, and point to people important in her life. Based on the themes identified, the author has carried out an analysis of statements that highlight a section of Alicja's life between her teenage maternity and the present day, with an emphasis on the problems she faced and the ways in which she coped with them. The research materials generated within this project are presented in the following chronological order: 1. Alicja, a teenage student; 2. Alicja, a teenage mother; 3. Alicja, a teenage daughter of a teenage mother; 4. Alicja, a mother to Magdalena and three sons; 5. Alicja and her partners; 6. Alicja and her future. During the second interview, Alicja said nothing that would require adding another theme. Not only has the second interview allowed the author to better understand many of the issues, but it has also revealed new situations, important not only to the respondent, but also to those around her. Thus, the originally defined analytical order has been kept.

Alicja, a teenage student

School appears almost in the very beginning of the interview. Alicja got pregnant as a teenager. She attended a special school at the time. She claims she had some child conception knowledge. When taking up her sexual life, she had little fear that she could get pregnant. She did not think about possible consequences of her actions. The respondent reduces sexual life and the related thought of a possible pregnancy to her ability of handling men, as she puts it. Her knowledge of sex life was rather superficial. My respondent said that she had had no negative emotions as she found out about her pregnancy. "I normally accepted it, not that 'Oh my God, what

am I going to do?’ and so on; no, or ‘what should I do to’, no, no.” It might be that the time between her teenage pregnancy and now has made her view herself as a kind of a heroine, a courageous and resourceful woman. Her description of the way her family members responded shows the merely apparent calm of the young girl she was at the time. Alicja continued to attend school while being pregnant. She did not feel alienated. She says: “I was not the first and not the last one. It was not a shock, as they say.” At that time, other girls were pregnant, too. Her saying that her friends were in much worse situations than herself reveals some concerns, or difficulties, that teenage Alicja had to face. She mentions that one of the students had her child taken away. She doesn’t understand why she didn’t get a set of infant necessities from the school, as opposed to her friend. She recalls incidental sex education activities at school (e.g. watching a film) and then sums up: “(...) but you know, school does not pay attention, right? Not at all.” Her school did not offer any infant care classes, either. The woman did not feel the need to talk to a psychologist, a counsellor, or a trusted teacher. She does not recall any initiative of this kind on the part of the teaching community. She attended all of the classes yet she was released from physical education classes. She handled pregnancy well. However, nobody prepared her until she gave birth. She gave birth naturally, just as she did with the second child 8 years later (another two babies were delivered with a Caesarean section). She does talk much about the childbirth itself. She does not remember her midwife well. Following the childbirth, she discontinued her education. She was in the first grade of the vocational school. She did not return to school. Her teacher encouraged her to continue studying but she did not want to. The school, specifically a school counsellor, advised young Alicja to put the child in an institution. She says that she had been a sociable person before she got pregnant. She admits to have had skipped classes sometimes and hung out with boys, but she has changed her lifestyle since she found out she was pregnant.

Alicja, a teenage mother

As she recalls her teenage pregnancy, she pictures herself as a mother girl who was self-reliant and able to cope well with new responsibilities. She appears to have been a stubborn and consistent girl, able to plan every day, something that, in her opinion, allowed her to combine her being a student and a mother. However, Alicja's statements that follow put that harmony into question. She did not complete the first grade of the vocational school. She confidently asserts that it was her own decision. An argument for that choice was her daughter's health problems, and, arguably, her difficult relationship with her own mother. The latter did not help young Alicja play the roles of both a mother and a student. Asked about her emotions and feelings at the time the first child appeared, and her ways of coping with the new situation, she gives an impression of certain indifference about that event. To her, that event comes down to arranging for the necessities for the infant, which took several months. Alicja could not name anyone who helped her prepare for the childbirth or develop childcare skills. She points to her mother, but she also says her mother was highly critical of her, and despotic, and this led to conflicts between them.

Alicja, a teenage daughter of a teenage mother

The respondent claims that her mother offered her virtually no help as Alicja became a teenage mother, not the way she was supposed to. She says that her mother „did not fulfil her role as a grandmother". In Alicja's view, "she did not fulfil her promises," which irritated her. Alicja's statements might suggest that the appearance of the child gave rise to conflicts between them. She recalls: "She minded [my child, A.M.], as I left, but she didn't quite feel like it, so to speak." Importantly, the duty of care was taken

over by the mother of young Alicja. In Alicja's view, legal aspects prevailed. Alicja's statements about her relationship with her mother show Alicja's mother as a dominant figure, firm in her stance, possessive, and sometimes even aggressive. Importantly, Alicja claims that her mother in fact "did not fare well." In their strictness and inability to solve life problems, the two women seem very similar. In some situations, they voiced similar views. Certainly, the decision to take care of the child by the family itself rather than to put it in an institution, as advised by the school, was very significant. Alicja resents her mother and harbours a grudge against her for her dominance and imposing style in assisting Alicja with becoming a parent. Her mother did not accept Alicja's being a mother. Alicja tried to fight for her own position, which caused frequent conflicts. The way Alicja's mother helped her might have denied Alicja's new parental identity. The statements of the respondent show that Alicja wanted to fulfil the role of a mother. She did not want to give it up. However, she felt being pushed aside, even in situations she could have tried to tackle. Her mother did not explain various decisions regarding the child to Alicja. These circumstances have likely caused an increasing sense of disorientation and helplessness. The disturbed relationship between the mother and the daughter have continued to be so to this day. Alicja feels that her mother incessantly criticizes her and does not take her seriously, nor does she understand adult woman's needs. She explains: "You know, she's come here lately and tried to impose things on me, said I shouldn't do this or that. It's not that I want to have a relationship with another man; it's just that I need someone to visit me and spend some time with me, too. She thinks that a man coming here means 'we're having sex'. It does not (...). It is not about that. I say 'Mind your own business. I'm almost 40 and you're telling me what to do. You must be out of your mind!' (...) I think we will never agree on that point." Rejected in her becoming a mother and devoid of emotional support, Alicja has been losing trust in her mother.

Alicja, a mother to Magdalena and three sons

Magdalena was an unplanned child. The mother claims that Magdalena has never asked about her biological father. Similarly, Alicja's son Marcin has never asked about his (Alicja's another partner). The woman is experiencing parenting difficulties. Undoubtedly, the conflict with her ex-husband is one of the factors that loosen the relationships between family members. Alicja is concerned about her ex-husband's conduct that can impact the relationship between the siblings from the other relationships. The youngest sons see their father on weekends. Alicja dedicates a vast section of our conversation to Magdalena, mostly her current situation. It is easy to see the pattern of biographical themes of a mother and daughter, and even of a grandmother, being replicated. Alicja believes that her daughter is immature. During our first conversation, the respondent expressed her concern over her daughter's pregnancy, even though her daughter is 21 years old (during an interview with the family's assistants and another meeting with Alicja, it turned out that Magdalena was not pregnant). Alicja pictures her daughter as a careless woman that does not cope well with basic home chores. The tone critical of her daughter masks her actual anxiety about her daughter's future: "(...) Sometimes, I fear that they might take it away. I really do. – A child? [A.M.] – Yes, because she is really unprepared." Alicja excludes the possibility of supporting her daughter: She justifies it with a statement: "My mother says she doesn't want her". It seems that she is still under her mother's influence and cannot cope with some of Magda's difficult behaviours. Magda is a graduate of a special school previously attended by her mother. She is currently working abroad. This puts Alicja's pessimistic claim that her daughter is not resourceful in question. The relationship with her is conditional, even when it comes to providing help. Alicja presents a world that is a threat to her daughter: "you either work here and chip in or we have to say goodbye to each other. Go and rent a room or rent it with someone. You will see what it means to pay bills (...) She was scared because she knew she

wouldn't handle it. When I was moving out myself, I kept wondering if could fare well, too." The last part of the statement shows that the mother understands her daughter's emotional state because she had experienced similar situations herself. However, Alicja does not justify Magda's conduct, which she considers reckless, or irresponsible, as she says: "You know, she lives from day to day; if there is tomorrow, then there is tomorrow; if there is not, then there is not." Magdalena's inability to predict consequences and her carefree life, pointed to by Alicja, characterize Alicja, too. This manifests itself in many parts of her life (her finding out about her pregnancy - "milk has spilled out;" expected parents' reactions to the news about her being pregnant - "she [mother, A.M] wouldn't do anything to me, anyway;" her being pregnant while at school - "I was not the first one and not the last one;" preparation for the first childbirth and related emotions - "well, what is going to be is going to be, right?" To compare the way Magda and Alicja were becoming adults, Alicja failed to complete her vocational school and secure professional qualifications and find a job. Unlike Magda, who has completed school and became qualified as a cook, and has gained some work experience working abroad, first in the Netherlands and then in Germany. However, despite their life narratives being different, both of them seem to be disoriented on the verge of adulthood. The elements of helplessness correspond with being 'here and now', living from day to day. Alicja's statements imply that Magda has failed to keep a job for a long time. The mother's statements point to several reasons for that: a mistakenly chosen career, helplessness, irresponsibility, and avoiding difficult situations. Magda has also been unable to keep any romantic relationship for a long time. Alicja argues that Magda is the one to blame for the breakup, although she also mentions that Magda's partner abused alcohol (Alicja was in a relationship with an alcoholic, too). She is happy to see that her daughter is not pregnant. She claims that "a child is not a toy" and calls a situation in which a hypothetical father would turn out to be like her daughter 'a disaster'. The mother's concerns are likely related not only to the alleged irresponsibility in her

daughter's adult life. Alicja's relationships with men have also ended in failure. Perhaps the awareness of what being a single mother and related difficulties are like adds to her concerns about the future of possible grandchildren, and Magda. The cross-generational inability to express one's feelings is evident in many statements made by Alicja, including in the context of her relationship with Magda. Magda's fate is arguably not indifferent to her mother. The distance between them results from Alicja's being incapable of building healthy relationship with her child. At times, she tries to understand her daughter. She points to her own experience. She says that she worries about her future. Having raised the first child alone, the limited support from specialists, as well as the patterns of the original family are likely the reasons for problems with another child, which are now aggravating. Alicja explains that Marcin has talked to a judge due to his improper conduct and truancy. After school, he has to attend a sociotherapy centre. He is also provided with support by a court-appointed guardian. Sometimes, a social worker meets the boy, too. Alicja tries to light-heartedly excuse Marcin's conduct by saying that he has not always played truant – sometimes he has just stayed home. However, she hopes that the specialists will successfully influence Marcin and help him change his conduct. When it comes to the two youngest sons, the only thing Alicja says about them is that they have learning issues.

Alicja and her partners

Alicja said little about the father of the first child. It seemed that she did not quite feel like talking about that relationship. The man was 7 years older than her. She describes that relationship in vague terms. As for the circumstances of the first meeting and then her pregnancy, she says curtly: "You know, I didn't give much thought to that. Well, here is a child." She says that they had known each other for quite a while. He was not an accidental man. Asked about how he impressed her, she says: "Well, as usual, as any, as they say,

boy would." He might have not been mentally mature enough to fulfil the role of a father and life partner. The woman recalls: "You know. Well, he learned of my being pregnant, and not that he was dissatisfied; no, he was not against it; well, the milk has spilled out, as they say. On the other hand, though, he showed no resolve to have a family, have a child and so on. You had to hold his hand through this, like a small child. But I don't regret that I was then left alone with the child, that this ended up this way." Alicja has no contact with Magda's father, as is the case with the father of her second child. They do not get to see their fathers, either. She pictures her second life partner, Marcin's father, just as she does the first one. He was a submissive man, but just as uninvolved. Alicja seems to be a woman who is dominant in her relationships. She tells me about her third life partner during a conversation about her attempt to live an independent life. "When the third child had been born, I kind of prompted that partner to do some things with respect to me and my children. If he doesn't, it is over. I tried to make him just make some decision. I prompted him to work, asked him not to do things I don't accept, that is drinking alcohol, 'no hanging out with your buddies'; 'then we will talk', I say. And in the beginning, you know, he was fine with it, but then, well... (...)." Alicja married and then divorced that man. Being a single mother comes with responsibilities she cannot cope with. The difficult relationship with her mother made her fumble around in the dark looking for support in someone else. She has relationships with men who cannot provide herself and her children a stable life, not just in terms of financial support, but also in a sense of security. She is very strict in the way she deals with men. She asks them to meet requirements that are impossible to fulfil 'here and now.' The reasons are certainly addictions, a lifestyle that manifests learned helplessness, and probably a replication of patterns existing in their communities. This kind of authoritarianism with respect to one's life partners is also present in Alicja's mother. My respondent has sought various solutions to improve her marriage, but all of them ended in fiasco. The conflict between Alicja and her former husband has not been

resolved. My respondent is currently meeting a man who is 10 years older and has adult children. Alicja again puts a clear boundary in this relationship: "I am one of those who mean 'yes' when they say 'yes' and 'no' when they say 'no'. I have to make a decision, not him". Is this a manifestation of a strong Alicja who learned to put boundaries and say 'no' from professionals and express her needs and expectations? Or is it building a relationship based on her ideas? It is also possible that she replicates patterns regarding family relationships that she observed and experienced in her own childhood and then adult life. Alicja's mother also comes across as a dominant woman, and her husband is a secondary figure. Alicja stresses the need to make a decision about her relationship only by herself. She does not take her partner's stance into account.

Alicja and her future

Alicja says that she is not ready for a serious relationship with another man. She doubts that she may yet have a satisfying relationship. She argues that the main reason is that she has four children. Her female dreams boil down to having a flat of her own. Asked about children, she says that she would like to provide them with a sense of security, that is to provide them with their own place. Alicja's dreams are entangled in her complex life matters. During our second conversation, she said: "Well, I am just thinking about the apartment; the day after tomorrow, I'm going to see a lawyer because my ex-husband reported a change of my address and is going to deprive me of this apartment, so that I wouldn't be its co-owner".

Summary

Alicja's recollections point to a few important issues significant from the pedagogical perspective. The first theme regards the very phenomenon of teenage maternity in girls with intellectual disabili-

ties. The scale of this phenomenon is yet to be identified. Just as the phenomenon of fatherhood in male teenagers with intellectual disabilities. Another problem identified that is stressed in literature is the low level of sexual education in persons with intellectual disabilities¹⁰. Since teenage pregnancy is a phenomenon that also occurs among students of special schools, educational programmes using infant simulators might be an interesting solution to address to those with more profound intellectual disabilities¹¹. The question remains: do today's school and other institutions help teenage mothers go through pregnancy, prepare for childbirth, develop child care skills more than at the time my respondent grew up? This applies especially to the group of young women who cannot rely on their families. Teenage motherhood may entail more than a risk of delayed educational process. Contemporary schools, with the support of Psychological and Pedagogical Counselling Centres, make it possible for teenage mothers to continue and complete their education. However, one cannot exclude a situation where girls on the verge of adulthood make decisions to discontinue their education due to the lack of support from their families, thus making such a choice out of necessity. The failure to complete her education has had a large impact on my respondent's life later on. Alicja has been unemployed and has not secured professional qualifications to this day. In fact, until recently, she has lived in a dysfunctional commu-

¹⁰ W. Dykciak, *Preparing young people with intellectual disabilities for sexual lives as part of prospective marriage and family life (Przygotowanie młodzieży upośledzonej umysłowo do życia seksualnego jako element przyszłej samorealizacji małżeńskiej i rodzinnej)*, [in:] *Drogi samorealizacji młodzieży dorastającej*, ed. L. Niebrzydowski, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 1997, pp. 165-172; A. Mach, *Young people with intellectual disabilities in the light of marriage and family life (Młodzież z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną wobec życia w małżeństwie i rodzinie)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2015, pp. 71-84.

¹¹ A. Gonera, *Infant simulators and learning parenting (Symulatory niemowlęcia a uczenie się rodzicielstwa)*, "Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej" 2015, No. 20, pp. 190-200; cf. R. Kijak, *Sexuality in man with intellectual disabilities and family matters (Seksualność człowieka z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną a rodzina)*, Wydawnictwo Lekarskie PZWL, Warsaw 2014, pp. 107-120.

nity and her attempts to change it would have been much easier if she had a job. The financial aspect aside, employment usually affects one's self-esteem and provides opportunities to meet other people. Employment usually provides opportunities of detaching oneself from their adverse community and thus finding a life alternative, another lifestyle. Educational deficiencies that often affect teenage mothers make them less competitive in the job market¹². Mieczysław Radochoński et al. argue that "premature parenthood is correlated with many other risk factors that might affect the future of a child such as low economic and professional status and single parenthood. As a result, such a child's physical, intellectual and emotional growth might be compromised compared with their peers, and this facilitates transmission of behavioural disorders from one generation to another."¹³ While examining respondent's statements, it is easy to see that the respondent replicates her mother's life patterns and methods of interacting with her loved ones, including those who she does not accept. These similarities are also noticeable in Alicja's daughter. It turns out that, in parenting, women are the carriers of tradition, whereas men are the carriers of change. Accordingly, the women of the three generations demonstrate similar expectations, values and judgments, as well as expectations regarding the time of parenting (young-adult mother; mother-grandmother; young adult-grandmother)¹⁴. The presented sections of respondent's life reveal difficulties in establishing personal, partner, marriage and parenting relationships.

¹² Cf. Jones K. H., Woolcock-Henry C. O., Domenico D. M., Wake up call: pregnant and parenting teens with disabilities, "The International Journal of Special Education" 2005, Volume 20, No. 1, p. 97.

¹³ M. Radochoński, L. Perenc, A. Radochońska, *Family and antisocial behaviour (Rodzina a zachowanie antyspołeczne)*, [in:] *Psychologia rodziny*, ed. I. Janicka, H. Liberska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA, Warszawa 2015, p. 523.

¹⁴ M. Farnicka, H. Liberska, *Intergenerational transfer - processes occurring between generations (Transmisja międzypokoleniowa- procesy zachodzące na styku pokoleń)*, [in:] *Psychologia rodziny*, ed. I. Janicka, H. Liberska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA, Warsaw 2015, p. 201.

The support for teenage mothers, including with disabilities, should take their families into consideration. What best explains it are the words of my respondent about her own experience, which has determined her life to come: "Regret? I don't regret. But if I had had my head screwed on like I do now, then that wouldn't happen. Maybe it would happen later; well, maybe. But it just happened so, let it be so, then. I dunno, maybe I just copied that, you know, from my mother. Because my mother was about 17, too [laughs], I dunno, it seems hereditary, doesn't it? I dunno".

References

- Bartnikowska U., Ćwirynka K., Chyla A. (2013), *Disability and maternity – possibilities and barriers. A phenomenological study of mothers with intellectual disabilities (Niepełnosprawność a macierzyństwo – możliwości i bariery. Studium fenomenograficzne samotnych matek z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną)*, "Studia nad Rodziną", XVII, No. 2 (33), pp. 29-52.
- Ćwirynka K., Żyta A. (2015), *The woman with intellectual disability as a mother – support issues (Kobieta z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną jako matka – problematyka wsparcia)*, "Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej" 2015, No. 18, pp. 113-129.
- Dykcik W. (1997), *Preparing young people with intellectual disabilities for sexual lives as part of prospective marriage and family life (Przygotowanie młodzieży upośledzonej umysłowo do życia seksualnego jako element przyszłej samorealizacji małżeńskiej i rodzinnej)*, [in:] *Drogi samorealizacji młodzieży dorastającej*, ed. L. Niebrzydowski, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź, 1997, pp. 165-172;
- Farnicka M., Liberska H. (2015), *Intergenerational transfer – processes occurring between generations (Transmisja międzypokoleniowa- procesy zachodzące na styku pokoleń)*, [in:] *Psychologia rodziny*, ed. I. Janicka, H. Liberska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA, Warsaw, p. 201.
- Goner A. (2015), *Infant simulators and learning parenting (Symulatory niemowlęcia a uczenie się rodzicielstwa)*, "Niepełnosprawność. Dyskursy pedagogiki specjalnej" 2015, No. 20, pp. 190-200.
- Grütz M. (2011), *People with intellectual disabilities as partners, spouses and parents – previous research reports (Osoby z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną jako partnerzy, małżonkowie i rodzice – dotychczasowe doniesienia badawcze)*, [in:] *Dorośli z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w labiryntach codzienności. Analiza badań – krytyka podejść*

- *propozycje rozwiązań*, ed. B. Cytowska, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń, pp. 175-203.
- Jones K. H., Woolcock-Henry C.O., Domenico D. M. (2005), Wake up call: pregnant and parenting teens with disabilities, "The International Journal of Special Education", Volume 20, No. 1, p. 97.
- Karwowska M. (2007), Being a mother to a child with intellectual disability (*Macierzyństwo wobec dziecka niepełnosprawnego intelektualnie*), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz.
- Kijak R. (2014), *Sexuality in man with intellectual disabilities and family matters (Seksualność człowieka z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną a rodzina)*, Wydawnictwo Lekarskie PZWL, Warsaw, pp. 107-120.
- Lizoń-Szlapowska D. (2004), *Usamodzielnianie wychowanek specjalnych ośrodków szkolno-wychowawczych*, "Problemy Opiekuńczo-Wychowawcze", No. 8, pp. 31-32.
- Lizoń-Szlapowska D. (2009), *Motherhood in women with intellectual disabilities in the light of personal research (Macierzyństwo kobiet z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w świetle badań własnych)*, [in:] *Człowiek z niepełnosprawnością w przestrzeni społecznej*. Volume 11 series: "Problemy edukacji, rehabilitacji i socjalizacji osób niepełnosprawnych", ed. Z. Gajdzica, Oficyna Wydawnicza "Impuls", Kraków, pp. 53-57.
- Mach A. (2015), *Young people with intellectual disabilities in the light of marriage and family life (Młodzież z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną wobec życia w małżeństwie i rodzinie)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów, pp. 71-84.
- Radochoński M, L. Perenc, A. Radochońska, (2015), *Family and antisocial behaviour (Rodzina a zachowanie antyspoleczne)*, [in:] *Psychologia rodziny*, ed. I. Janicka, H. Liberska, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN SA, Warszawa, p. 523.
- Sidorczuk D. (2002), *Early maternity in women from special educational centres, and factors contributing to the phenomenon (Problem wczesnego macierzyństwa wychowanek ze specjalnych ośrodków szkolno-wychowawczych a czynniki powodujące powstawanie tego zjawiska)*, "Niepełnosprawność i Rehabilitacja", No. 3, p. 58.
- Teenage Pregnancy - March of Dimes, cf. source: <http://www.marchofdimes.org/materials/teenage-pregnancy.pdf> [accessed: 15.09.2016].
- Żyta A. (2013), *Marriages and parenthood in people with intellectual disabilities - challenges of modern times (Małżeństwa i rodzicielstwo osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną - wyzwania współczesności)*, "Edukacja Dorosłych", No. 2, pp. 59-71.