

SOCIAL INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES THROUGH CAREER/PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING

INCLUSÃO SOCIAL DE PESSOAS COM DEFICIÊNCIA INTELECTUAL ATRAVÉS DE ORIENTAÇÃO DE CARREIRA/PROFISSIONAL

Lukáš Stárek

ORCID 0000-0002-6068-215X

Ph.D. AMBIS vysoká škola, a.s.

AMBIS University

Katedra pedagogiky/ Department of Pedagogy

Lindnerova 575/1, 180 00 Praha 8

Libeň, Czech Republic

lukas.starek@ambis.cz

Abstract. In the context of the inclusive mindset of modern society, as a social value, this paper opens the question of social inclusion of people with mental disabilities in one of the many sociological areas, specifically in the field of professional application of the target group of people with mental disabilities in the labor market. Getting a job is not just a matter of earning; it's also about the sense of self-esteem and value one brings to the world. The aim of this paper is to describe the specifics of career counseling arising from the fact that a student with a given disability is influenced by the impacts of intellectual disability in certain aspects of preparation for a profession or independent life. Vocational counseling can show people with intellectual disabilities that they are capable of achieving things they didn't even know were possible for them. This has a huge positive impact on their self-esteem and overall quality of life. Quality professional counseling contributes to breaking stereotypes and prejudices, which often limit people with mental disabilities in society.

Keywords: Counseling, Development, Mental disability, Profession, Sociological aspects.

Resumo. No contexto da mentalidade inclusiva da sociedade moderna, como um valor social, este artigo abre a questão da inclusão social de pessoas com deficiências mentais em uma das muitas áreas sociológicas, especificamente no campo da aplicação profissional do grupo-alvo de pessoas com deficiências mentais no mercado de trabalho. Conseguir um emprego não é apenas uma questão de ganhar; é também sobre o senso de autoestima e valor que alguém traz ao mundo. O aconselhamento vocacional pode mostrar às pessoas com deficiências intelectuais que elas são capazes de alcançar coisas que nem sabiam que eram possíveis para elas. Isso tem um enorme impacto positivo em sua autoestima e qualidade de vida geral. O aconselhamento profissional de qualidade contribui para quebrar estereótipos e preconceitos, que muitas vezes limitam as pessoas com deficiências mentais na sociedade.

Palavras-chave: Aconselhamento, Desenvolvimento, Deficiência mental, Profissão, Aspectos sociológicos.

1. INTRODUCTION

General characteristics of mental handicap. According to Vágnerová, Hadj-Moussová (2003), a mental handicap is, together with psychological derangement and illnesses, one of the least accepted limitations of a person.

There is significant growth in statistics on number of people with mental handicap. Data from the Czech Statistical Office shows that in the Czech Republic in 2007, there were 1,015,548 people with mental handicaps, 9,87 % of the Czech population. In 2018, there were 1,152,000 people with a mental handicap, 13% of the Czech population (Czech Statistical Office, online, 2024).

There are a lot of authors who defined mental handicaps and what does it mean. Therefore, we chose a definition that characterizes our understanding and attitude towards mental handicaps. "Mental handicap can be described as complex syndromic limitation of psychology (intellectual) abilities and other layers of human persona. The most important is limited development and intellectual abilities, but emotions, communication abilities, and social skills

are impacted as well due to this limitation, overall education, self-development, and social involvement (Slowík, 2022).

There probably is no other discipline (except psychiatry) that would have a similar issue with terminology from an ethical perspective as psychopathic. ... psychopaedia is forced to look for new terminology due to the growing sensitiveness of society, and current terminology is becoming unacceptable (Valenta, Müller, 2021).

With regards to the mentioned terminological nonuniformity, which is also caused by the areas of appearance in life of a person with mental handicap such as medical/health, education, social, justice ... and further reflection of attitude/help or support of focused group we should mention humanity. The humane approach defines the difference between attitudes and phenomes; it also refers to terminology that arises from diverse practices and situations related to people with mental handicaps. Furthermore, it considers the psychopadeia questions.

In the Introduction, Cimrmannová et al. (2020) hit nails on their head when they describe their approach towards people with mental handicaps primarily as an approach towards human beings. "Terminology of a person with a mental handicap is also crucial for us from an ethical perspective. The handicap influences a person's life, but it is one of many layers of a human. This is capture in the preposition "with" (Cimrmannová et al., 2020, p. 14) [*author's note: in Czech language it is "člověk s mentálním postižením", the 's' presents the with*].

Simple presentation is visible in literature. Bajo and Vašek (1994) describe that between 1952-1989 in Czech-Slovak literature appeared, more than 20 diverse names and descriptions of the state of a person with mental handicap such as mentally mistaken, mentally deviant, mentally abnormal, mentally delayed, retarded, mentally defected, intellectually mistaken, children with mistaken cognitive development, mentally backward. Unfortunately, the most used term is mentally retarded, which initially aimed to unite the terminology across diverse disciplines such as medical, pedagogical, and social. According to Valenta and Müller (2021), even the mental retardation is diverse within its definitions. Nevertheless, all descriptions have one thing in common: the overall lower point in cognitive abilities (caused by childhood development) with a lower capacity to adapt to the surrounding environment. The given deficiency can be related (and often is associated) to education, speech, and social abilities Mental retardation is anchored in the International Classification for Illnesses (MKN-10), which has been accepted in the Czech Republic since 1993.

The year 2022 brings a lot of crucial terminological changes in the Czech Republic from 1.1.2022, the 11th revision of the International Statistical Classification of Illnesses and Related Health Issues (MKN, ICD) published by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which was accepted by WHO in 2018 (Institute of Health Information and Statistics of the Czech Republic, online, 2024).

MKN 11 presents a name defect of intellectual development, which includes IQ and adaptability issues. Therefore, MKN corresponds with another so-called classification called the Diagnostic Statistical Manual and its 5th revision (DSM 5) used for a diagnosis is not enough intellectual deficiency but a deficiency in adaptability as well (Bazalová, 2023; Marková, Prázdna, Jičínská, 2019).

MKN 11 brings a name for deficiency of intellectual development while the establishment of a diagnosis is not crucial only IQ but the adaptability of a person as well. MKN 11 corresponds with another classification called the Diagnostic Statistical Manual, and its fifth revision is when a diagnosis is not enough to define lower IQ but also lower abilities to adapt within an environment. MKN 11 define deficiencies of intellectual handicap as follows: Deficiencies of intellectual development represents groups of etiological diverse states originating from the period of development which are characteristic for significantly lower intellectual functions and lower adaptability (Marková, Prázdna, Jičínská, 2019).

The approach of society towards people with mental handicaps is developing as society develops. The general experiences of the community influence the prevailing assumptions that the club holds towards people with mental handicaps. Insufficient edification or societal lack of information supports the judgment of people with mental handicaps based on emotions rather than healthy intellectual reasoning. Everyone should be included and participate in the life of a society. The rights and responsibilities of everyone, including people with mental handicap, allows reflection and responsibility for their actions. Hájková and Strnadová (2010) reflect the change of attitudes of society towards a person with a mental handicap, mainly in education and social contacts. Therefore, we can assume that the more often people are in contact with people with mental handicaps, the more likely they are to change their attitude towards them.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Specifics of education in the context of career counseling for people with mental disabilities

A career can be considered a lifelong path, during which the conditions on the labor market and in society change based on various factors. A career begins with an individual's entry into the labor market, however, the individual decides on the career direction and field of focus already during compulsory schooling, where students are first faced with the choice of whether to enter the labor market after graduation, or to continue their studies and prepare for future career.

Pupils with mild mental disabilities are educated according to the Framework Education Program for Basic Education (Framework Education Program for Basic Education, online, 2024), which includes the minimum recommended level of expected outcomes. The majority of these pupils fall into the third level of support measures. After compulsory schooling, vocational schools are prepared for them, such as vocational schools, category E courses at secondary vocational schools or two-year practical schools. Mental disability significantly affects all areas of a student's life, including education. The depth of the intellectual disability determines the extent of these impacts – the deeper the disability, the greater the impact on education. Pupils with mild mental disabilities show a slower pace of work, which leads to a slower understanding of the subject matter and problems with independent work. They need more time to process tasks and clear instructions from the teacher. Cognitive deficits cause problems not only in thinking and working pace, but also in communication skills such as limited vocabulary and problems with pronunciation. Delayed speech development pushes the period when pupils learn the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic to an older age. They also have difficulty solving problems, their thinking is concrete rather than abstract, and they are unable to compare the curriculum between different subjects.

The access to education is basic human right and it cannot be taken from anyone nor the pupils with any disabilities. It is important to acknowledge the accessibility and inclusivity, differentiation, and individualisation of education. Plus, the activation of pupils is crucial throughout educational process. Although, we can support Daňek and Klugerova's (2023) thought who recognise inclusive education as tool of social exclusion.

For these students, multiple repetitions and practice on illustrative examples using three-dimensional aids and practical activities are essential. When the conditions or environment change, they have difficulty remembering the previously learned subject matter. These students tire more quickly, cannot concentrate for long and need more frequent change of activities and relaxation activities. They are motivated by praise and frequent evaluation of their work, and they require positive feedback from educators. Their memory is rather mechanical, which is

why frequent repetition and clarity of the presented material is important in teaching (Hanák et al., 2022).

Quite a lot of research has dealt with processes and procedures that can positively influence the transition of students with intellectual disabilities into vocational education. Goupil, Tassé, Garcin, and Doré (2002) examined the views of parents and teachers on transition planning, Beyer and Kaehne (2010) focused on the views of professionals, while Carter, Brock, and Trainor (2014) examined the views of parents and teachers on transition to vocational training.

The framework educational program for basic education is perceived as a means of acquiring activity-oriented expected outputs, which are gradually connected and create prerequisites for the effective and comprehensive use of acquired abilities and skills at the level of key competences. In the basic education stage, the following are considered key (Framework educational program for basic education, 2023):

Learning competencies: at the end of basic education, the pupil

- chooses and uses appropriate ways, methods and strategies for effective learning, plans, organizes and manages own learning, shows willingness to devote himself to further study and lifelong learning;
- searches for and sorts information and uses it effectively in the learning process, creative activities and practical life based on its understanding, connection and systematization;
- operates with commonly used terms, signs and symbols, puts things into context, connects knowledge from various educational areas into broader wholes and, based on this, creates a more complex view of mathematical, natural, social and cultural phenomena;
- independently observes and experiments, compares the obtained results, critically assesses them and draws conclusions for use in the future;
- recognizes the meaning and goal of learning, has a positive attitude towards learning, assesses his own progress and identifies obstacles or problems preventing learning, plans how he could improve his learning, critically evaluates the results of his learning and discusses them competences for learning; problem solving competence; communicative competence; social and personnel competences; civil competence; work competence; digital competence.

Problem solving competence: at the end of basic education, the pupil

- perceives a variety of problematic situations in and outside the school, recognizes and understands the problem, thinks about discrepancies and their causes, thinks through and plans a way to solve problems, and uses his own judgment and experience to do so;
- searches for information suitable for solving a problem, finds their common, similar and different features, uses acquired knowledge and skills to discover different solutions, does not let himself be discouraged by any failure and persistently searches for the final solution to the problem;
- independently solves problems; chooses appropriate solutions; uses logical, mathematical and empirical procedures in solving problems;

- practically verifies the correctness of solving problems and applies best practices in solving similar or new problem situations, monitors own progress in overcoming problems;
- thinks critically, makes judicious decisions, is able to defend them, realizes responsibility for his decisions and evaluates the results of his actions.

Communicative Competence: at the end of basic education, the student

- formulates and expresses his thoughts and opinions in a logical sequence, expresses himself concisely, coherently and cultured in written and oral speech;
- listens to other people's speeches, understands them, responds appropriately to them, participates effectively in the discussion, defends his opinion and argues appropriately;
- understands various types of texts and recordings, visual materials, commonly used gestures, sounds and other information and communication means, thinks about them, reacts to them and creatively uses them for their development and for active involvement in social events;
- uses information and communication means and technologies for quality and effective communication with the surrounding world;
- uses acquired communication skills to create relationships needed for full coexistence and quality cooperation with other people.

Social and personal competences: at the end of basic education, the pupil

- cooperates effectively in a group, participates together with pedagogues in creating team work rules, on the basis of learning or accepting a new role in the work activity, positively affects the quality of joint work;
- participates in the creation of a pleasant atmosphere in the team, on the basis of consideration and respect when dealing with other people, contributes to the strengthening of good interpersonal relations, provides or asks for help when necessary;
- contributes to small-group and whole-class debates, understands the need to cooperate effectively with others in solving a given task, appreciates other people's experiences, respects different points of view and learns from what other people think, say and do;
- creates a positive image of himself, which supports his self-confidence and independent development; he controls and directs his actions and behavior in order to achieve a sense of self-satisfaction and self-esteem.

Civil competence: at the end of basic education, the pupil:

- respects other people's beliefs, values their inner values, is able to empathize with other people's situations, rejects oppression and rough treatment, is aware of the duty to oppose physical and psychological violence;
- understands the basic principles on which laws and social norms are based, is aware of his rights and obligations at school and outside of school;
- makes decisions responsibly according to the given situation, provides effective help to the best of his ability and behaves responsibly in crisis situations and in situations threatening human life and health;

- respects, protects and appreciates our traditions and cultural and historical heritage, shows a positive attitude towards works of art, a sense of culture and creativity, actively participates in cultural events and sports activities;
- understands the basic ecological connections and environmental problems, respects the requirements for a quality environment, makes decisions in the interest of promoting and protecting health and the sustainable development of society.

Job competence: at the end of basic education, the student

- uses materials, tools and equipment safely and effectively, observes defined rules, fulfills duties and obligations, adapts to changed or new working conditions;
- approaches the results of work activities not only from the point of view of quality, functionality, economy and social importance, but also from the point of view of protecting one's own health and the health of others, protecting the environment and protecting cultural and social values;
- uses the knowledge and experience gained in individual educational areas for the sake of personal development and preparation for the future, makes informed decisions about further education and professional orientation;
- he orients himself in the basic activities needed to implement a business plan and its implementation, understands the essence, goal and risk of business, develops his entrepreneurial thinking.

Digital competence: at the end of basic education, the student

- controls commonly used digital devices, applications and services; uses them when learning and when participating in the life of the school and in society; independently decides which technologies to use for which activity or solved problem;
- acquires, searches for, critically assesses, manages and shares data, information and digital content, choosing procedures, methods and means that correspond to the specific situation and purpose;
- creates and edits digital content, combines different formats, expresses himself with the help of digital means;
- uses digital technologies to facilitate his work, automate routine activities, streamline or simplify his work procedures and improve the results of his work;
- understands the importance of digital technologies for human society, gets to know new technologies, critically evaluates their benefits and reflects on the risks of their use;
- prevents situations threatening the security of equipment and data, situations with a negative impact on his physical and mental health and the health of others; acts ethically when collaborating, communicating and sharing information in the digital environment.

The specifics of the development of key competences for pupils with mental disabilities, due to the needs of pupils with mental disabilities, emphasis is placed on communicative, social and personal and work competences during the development and acquisition of key competences. For pupils with mild mental disabilities, digital competence also has its place.

Therefore, it is advisable to focus to a greater extent on the acquisition of knowledge and skills (competencies) that lead to these competencies in the educational process. During

education, it is necessary to respect the mental level of pupils and offer them such forms and procedures for acquiring key competences that will be in accordance with their possibilities and needs.

The importance competencies and its importance during teacher training, mainly within special education needs teachers, is discussed in Stárek, Klugerová, Víšek, (2023). They highlight the importance of practice while studies as it is vital to useful to combine theoretical information with practice to extend specialized competencies for future teachers.

We can use the analogy of people with mental disabilities in the context of the target group of seniors. Here is the professionally appropriate idea of the authors Smékalová and Špatenková (2014) ... we consider the competence model of the lecturer in the education of seniors for the tool of professionalization of the education of educators of seniors. Competent the model makes it possible to transform the identified specifics into the form of requirements on the lecturer's work in the form of competencies.

We believe there is a need for these to further specify competences with regard to the target group of seniors and to think about the creation of an evaluation model that takes into account different levels their achievement. In this way, it is possible to ensure professionalization and professional development of educators of seniors, which is significantly absent in the sense of such a targeted approach targeted programs and it is at least desirable to raise this issue in the professional community and start the necessary reflection.

2.2. Career counseling

Career counseling is also called career or professional counseling. From the definition of the words career and counseling, it can be concluded that career counseling deals with an individual's career path. That's very simply put. Ľubová (2016) states that career counseling represents services and activities aimed at helping an individual at any age and at a specific stage of life in choosing education, vocational training and occupation and in managing his career.

Career counseling is characterized by the fact that it is a long-term (longitudinal) issue, a process in which several actors are involved, different levels, different activities intertwine, and it is influenced by a number of factors. By different levels, we primarily mean the school environment, the environment of the school counseling facility, but also the environment in which the student grows up and the environment in which he spends his free time.

Career counseling includes help with (Průcha, Veteška, 2014):

- choosing an educational and professional path;
- choice of first job;
- preparation for changing jobs or further education (lifelong education);
- return to the work process;
- change of original qualification and original occupation.

During career counseling at elementary school, we will mainly deal with counseling in choosing an educational and professional path from the listed areas of competence of a career counselor. At the same time, the career counselor should not be the one who chooses a suitable field for the student, but the one who accompanies him through the entire process of career counseling and directs him to make his own decision.

Giving students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to express themselves in discussions about their future when transitioning from basic education to vocational training or directly to employment is difficult. Opinions are influenced by the way education is organized and the way people with intellectual disabilities are talked about and thought about in society.

Listening to the vision of students with intellectual disabilities and thus giving them the opportunity to express themselves during the transition from school to work is not easy. Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) argue that people often assume that they are listening to students' views without being aware of the responsibilities and obligations that this entails.

It is necessary to respect that pupils have the right to express their opinions on matters affecting their future. This right was established by the United Nations in 1989 in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, (Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2016 in Dušková, 2021).

Recognizing that students have the right to have their voice heard is not enough, however. It also means taking responsibility for creating opportunities for students to develop their opinions and expressions. This is a crucial point for the education of students with intellectual disabilities. Students need to learn to express their thoughts and need guidance to form and express their own opinions.

According to Maybin (2013), students form their opinions in dialogue with their environment. Their opinions and experiences are influenced by their personal circumstances, the opinions of their friends, the opinions of parents and teachers, but also the way their education is organized and the current socio-economic and political situation.

The school provides career counseling for its students and their legal representatives, combining educational, informational and counseling support for the appropriate choice of educational path and later professional application. Among the involved actors who help a given individual with an intellectual disability, we can primarily include parents or legal representatives, school staff - principal, class teacher, educational advisor, school psychologist, school special pedagogue. We can also mention prevention methodology.

According to the document "Career consultant career consultant" (online, 2024), the duties/competencies of a career consultant can be defined:

- counseling activities (coordination between the main areas of career counseling, basic group "investigations" to choose a profession, individual investigations to choose a profession and individual counseling in this area, counseling to legal representatives with regard to the expectations and assumptions of pupils, cooperation with school counseling facilities and centers educational care, provision of group visits of school pupils in the Information and Counseling Center of the Labor Office of the Czech Republic);
- methodical activity (methodical assistance to school teaching staff in matters of pupils' career decision-making);
- information activities (passing on professional information from the field of career counseling to school teaching staff).

According to Decree No. 72/2005 Coll., on the provision of counseling services in schools and school counseling facilities, as amended, both the pedagogical-psychological counseling center and the special pedagogical center provide career counseling to pupils with special educational needs.

Since the main process of career counseling of a pupil/client with an intellectual disability takes place at a primary school, the key actor (coordinator) of this process is the educational (career) counselor of this school. Communication between the school and the special pedagogic center is thus an important prerequisite for obtaining objective and up-to-date information from this process.

An expert worker of a special pedagogic center dealing with career counseling should then primarily deal with specific matters falling within his competences. It always proceeds in the context of the client's current personal, family, mental and health situation. In addition to information from the school environment, it is also based on its own knowledge, which stems

from knowledge of the client and his family background (most clients are in the care of a special pedagogic center not only for the entire period of their basic education, but much earlier, already in the period before school attendance; there are regular rediagnosis and consultation with legal representatives and schools).

There is therefore a prerequisite for an objective assessment of all important and essential parameters for choosing a suitable direction of further study. In contrast to actors from the school, an expert worker of a special pedagogic center can rely on the results of special pedagogic and psychological examinations for career counseling, which are focused, for example, on the level of the pupil's intellect, motor skills, manual skills, partial abilities and skills, etc. in specific cases (and also according to time possibilities and equipment with relevant test materials) it also performs diagnostics typical for career counseling (Pipeková, Vítková, Bartoňová, Bazalová, Džambiková, 2014).

For a given client/student, the following factors are assessed, for example:

- the level of his study prerequisites;
- limits given by disability in relation to the chosen field of study;
- his personality traits and interests;
- the level of his work potential;
- limits given by the disability with regard to its possible employment;
- his preference in further education / next choice of profession.

It also detects:

- availability of a suitable school;
- what suitable fields of study the school offers.

From the point of view of future employment, the following are determined:

- job opportunities suitable for the client;
- job opportunities available for the client.

Last but not least, it is also important to consider:

- the client's medical capacity;
- preferences of the client's parents.

For this investigation, the expert worker of the special pedagogic center should be equipped with a range of available diagnostic tools. In practice, each workplace also has its own system of methods for finding relevant information for career counseling. As in the case of the school, the preferred form of communication with legal representatives is individual consultation (Hanák et al., 2022).

The career counselor must first of all be based on a good knowledge of the pupil's personality and its specifics, including the support measures provided. When obtaining relevant information, they must cooperate with all the actors of career counseling, but above all with the class teacher, work activities teacher, educational counselor, other teachers, and professional staff of the special pedagogic center (psychologist, special pedagogue) who have a pupil with an intellectual disability in their care. Also key are the observations of parents, teaching assistants, or staff of the hobby activities that the pupil attends. The career counselor is also based on his own direct work with the student and on his own diagnostic activity. Everyone with whom a pupil with an intellectual disability comes into contact at school should know the specificity of his manifestations, and this information should also be transmitted

during the transition to the school, in order to ensure the unity of approach and the continuity of his education.

The emphasis is mainly on individual counseling and an individual approach. When communicating, it is necessary (as in education) to respect the rules of communication with a person with an intellectual disability. Above all, it is about short, clear and concise formulation of sentences (thoughts, information), avoiding the use of foreign words, checking whether the student understands the message. It is important to set clear rules and follow them consistently.

Due to the specificity of the cognitive abilities of students with mental disabilities, it is necessary to have a higher level of tolerance, explain patiently, return to the unclear and always start from specific situations directly connected with reality. We must provide a greater degree of assistance in situations that require practical judgment.

The student must see some meaning in the activity he is supposed to perform, which is why it is important to move within the scope of the student's interests and convey information to him in a clear form. On the other hand, it is also important to involve a pupil with an intellectual disability in group forms (due to the development of social motivation), to the greatest extent possible, taking into account his individual, specific abilities and skills. It is appropriate to develop social and communication skills, as well as topics from the world of work.

All adequate methods and forms of work are used. We involve a student with an intellectual disability in all career counseling activities that he is able to handle or handle with help, for the provision of support measures.

The student should always know in advance: when, where, with whom and how he will address the topics of career choice, in higher years he should be prepared for the course of excursions, discussions and other events in and outside the school. When applying the methods and activities of career counseling, the career counselor must modify them according to the student's individual abilities and implement some (especially those that require independence, logical thinking, abstraction, etc.) only with the help of (the teaching assistant, but also other actors of career counseling), or not implement them at all. And a simple rule applies here: the more severe the degree of mental disability, the more serious its effects on education and thus career counseling for these pupils becomes more problematic. Therefore, it is necessary to look for new, specific approaches.

Last but not least, the offer of suitable fields for these pupils is also limiting. In addition to finding the next optimal educational path, the career counselor must in many cases also solve problems related to inadequate aspirations, not only of students, but also of their parents. Another complication is the state of health of pupils, which narrows the already limited possibilities of choosing an adequate profession.

From the point of view of motivation, it is important to build on the individual abilities of a pupil with an intellectual disability, to find out his prerequisites for the field - for example, rely on good results in work activities (his manual skills, etc.). It is important that a pupil with an intellectual disability completes such tasks within the framework of career counseling that he is able to handle at his level and that he is praised for their successful completion (so that he experiences a sense of success). This also strengthens his often low self-confidence. So there is a need for a clear concrete motivation. Working with motivation is important both for the personal development of a disabled individual (achieving maximum potential) and for his orientation to a certain field (profession). In general, it can be concluded that it is important to find suitable motivation, not only for the student, but also for his parents.

During career counseling with users with mental disabilities, it is advisable to follow the principles, according to Plesník and Šobánková (2014):

- create a calm atmosphere;
- speak directly to the user, do not turn to his possible companion;

- use simple speech, short words, sentences, avoid digressions and conjunctions;
- avoid abstract concepts, or clarify them using concrete examples or comparison;
- use common language, do not use foreign words;
- use adult language;
- prefer a direct style ("You have the right to..." is better than "Service users have the right to...");
- use non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures);
- use practical examples (photos, images, video, field trips, etc.);
- talk about only one idea, only after assurance of understanding move on to the next one and point out that it is that's another thought;
- structure the speech in advance, write the main points;
- make sure that the user has understood, or ask for an interpretation;
- use a positive form of speech, do not use many negatives;
- use verbs in the active form (the formulation "We completed the task." is more appropriate than the passive form "The task was completed.");
- avoid jargon, abbreviations, etc.;
- if the user uses alternative or augmentative communication, it is necessary to learn at least the basic rules of this communication;
- be patient.

Professional counseling for people with intellectual disabilities is crucial for several reasons:

1. Improving quality of life – helping these individuals find meaningful work that can improve their self-esteem, social interactions and overall quality of life.
2. Social integration - employment promotes integration into society and reduces social isolation. Work provides opportunities to establish new relationships and expand social networks.
3. Economic independence - vocational counseling can lead to finding a job that provides financial independence and reduces dependence on social benefits.
4. Development of competences - helps to develop work and social competences that are transferable to different areas of life.
5. Changing social prejudices - successful employment of people with mental disabilities can help change negative prejudices and stereotypes in society.

3. CONCLUSION

Research shows that in the transition from school to work, it is very important that students participate in decision-making and take responsibility for the entire process. Participation in decision-making has a positive effect on the empowerment of pupils, not only with intellectual disabilities, and contributes to opportunities for optimal transition.

It is important to establish that participation in decision-making and taking responsibility for the process in which decisions are made is something that the pupil will need to learn. This means that schools must be aware of what it means to listen to the pupil's vision, but they must also ask themselves how they can lead pupils to a situation where they really participate in deciding their future, which extends not only to professional application, but in the overall optical sociological view also to the quality of life of an individual with a mental disability.

Students may view their disabilities differently than their parents and teachers. The communication skills of pupils, parents and teachers, as well as the pupils themselves, can differ. When students are asked about their views on the school-to-work transition, this often

occurs in consultation between the school, parents and student. A situation where the pupil is at a disadvantage in a group with adults who will generally be more verbally literate.

Pupils often find themselves in a situation where they are expected to express their opinion in a group with their parents, teacher and practice supervisor from school and/or workplace. In such a society, a student must be very strong in sticking to his own opinion and not being influenced by adults who are often much better at communicating. Students with intellectual disabilities are capable of much more than is sometimes assumed, but they need a situation in which they can prove it. They have the right to think carefully about how it can be organized.

A thorough understanding of the individual is essential when creating a career counseling plan for people with intellectual disabilities. A key factor is to provide a safe and confidential environment that facilitates discussion of career guidance expectations. It is essential to obtain as much information as possible about the nature and extent of the disability and to consult with experts who work with the person in question.

At the same time, it is important to get to know a person as a whole - find out his interests, values, goals, skills and areas he prefers to avoid. We also find out his expectations and willingness to work on the weaker sides. Thanks to the profile created in this way, we get enough information that we can compare with potential career or job opportunities (Hristovska, 2009).

Career counseling for pupils with mild mental disabilities requires a sensitive and individual approach that takes into account their specific needs and limitations. It is important within the education system to ensure that these pupils have access to appropriate support measures to enable them to reach their maximum potential.

This includes not only quality education and practical experience, but also thorough advice when choosing a future job. In conclusion, we think that successful career counseling for pupils with mild mental disabilities can significantly help their self-confidence and readiness for the labor market, which has a positive impact not only on their personal lives, but also on society as a whole.

Career counseling at school is a continuous process that should not start only in the upper grades of primary school, but should be a process within the entire schooling. A number of experts are involved in career counseling at the school, which we have already mentioned in the text of the post itself – for example, an educational counselor, a teacher, a school psychologist, a school special pedagogue. We must not forget that even outside the school, career counseling is also supported by school counseling facilities and the non-profit sector, where transit programs are offered in particular

Investing in quality career guidance for people with intellectual disabilities is not just a matter of ethics or social responsibility; it's a smart move to create a fairer, more inclusive and prosperous society. Every person deserves a chance to show what's in them and contribute their abilities to the development of society. If you have the opportunity to support professional counseling for people with intellectual disabilities, do not hesitate to do so. Every step we take towards equal opportunities for all is a step in the right direction.

While significant strides have been made in understanding the needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities in career counseling, there are still many areas that require further exploration. One such area is the role of family and community support in the career development of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Research could investigate how different levels of family involvement and community resources impact the career outcomes and overall quality of life for these individuals.

Additionally, future studies could explore the effectiveness of various career counseling models and interventions tailored specifically for people with intellectual disabilities. For instance, comparing traditional face-to-face counseling with technology-assisted methods could provide insights into the most effective strategies for different individuals.

Another promising area for research is the long-term impact of early career counseling interventions. Longitudinal studies could track individuals from their school years into adulthood to assess how early career guidance influences their employment status, job satisfaction, and independence later in life.

Finally, it would be beneficial to examine the training and preparedness of career counselors working with this population. Understanding the gaps in current training programs and developing specialized training modules could enhance the effectiveness of career counseling services for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

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