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The Effect of Faithless Intervention Content on Self-Determination, Self-Efficacy and Empowerment of Religious-Spiritual Resources among Adolescent with Down Syndrome in the Haredi Sector.

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Abstract

Previous studies have suggested that religion and spirituality are an important resource for developing resilience to coping with life problems, crises, and difficult events in the general population (Caldwell & Senter, 2013; Tarakeshwar & Pargament, 2001; Yoon & Lee, 2006). The main purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of a faith intervention program among girls with Down's syndrome. This program was based on life preparation programs based on the basic idea that the quality of life of each individual is a product of the degree of compatibility between the needs of the individual and his environmental conditions - the system of beliefs, opinions, expectations and the individual's worldview. The significant psychological milestones of these programs relate to the empowerment of the components of self-determination and self-efficacy, in particular to increasing coping strategies of program participants in order to empower their resources to cope with crises in their lives. The faith program at the focus of the current work was based on Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers), and deals with ethical matters according to the Torah, as a basis for developing self-determination and self-efficacy and strengthening the connection to religion and spirituality. This is a source and tool in teaching social education in ultra-Orthodox schools, in the regular and advanced classes. The intervention will be based on the cycle of internalized learning (CIL) model, which is, as stated, a unique didactic method adapted to the research population (Ivzori, 2010; Shavit, 2007).

The study involved 43 girls diagnosed with Down syndrome, 26 of whom were in the experimental group and the rest 17 in the control group. In addition, the subjects were divided into adolescents (16-18) and older. The program itself began with a pre-test phase in which self-efficacy, self-determination, and the intensity of religious and spiritual resources among students were measured. Afterwards, the subjects were

divided into groups, at the end of which these variables were again measured to examine the effectiveness of the program.

Examination of differences between the control group and the experimental group in the various indices revealed that after the intervention, the experimental group increased autonomy, self-efficacy, ability to set goals and perform tasks, and the intensity of religious and spiritual resources. In contrast, no change was observed in psychological empowerment and coping ability.

Examination of differences between the groups in the autonomy components revealed that the quality of the relationship with the school was higher in the control group than in the experimental group. Similar differences were not found in the components: the ability to self-care, the degree of independence in the relationship with the environment, the degree of leisure time, the quality of relations with the community, and the ability to express oneself.

Findings of the present study suggest that confidence-building interventions for girls with Down's syndrome increase their sense of self-determination and empowerment by providing tools for coping with the religious-spiritual world. In addition, the intervention program empowers the spiritual and religious resources of the participants and offers an expansion of the emotional, cognitive and social context in the face of difficulties and crises in their lives. These findings are very encouraging because they mark the emotional content as therapeutic and as promoting positive changes in a population with intellectual disabilities.