

Elderly Parent Caring for an Adult with Down syndrome: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The presence of mental and physical disabilities within the family members can be complicated to handle. A child with a mental disability has different demands from an adult with the same disability. However, an old-aged person raising an adult child with Down syndrome with occasional epileptic seizures is a whole different experience. Thus, the purpose of this case study is to examine the unique relationship, challenges, and demands of an elder parent caring for an adult child with a life-long mental illness. The family case gave many valuable insights into the challenges and struggles they had as a family under trial. The family was able to find strength through their faith, within themselves and among the circle of support they had, to adapt and handle the stresses that accompanied the daughter's disability. The story also illustrated the hardships experienced by the father as the only caregiver of her mentally disabled daughter. Despite the difficulties experienced by the father, it was shown through the result of his Parental Stress Test that he is experiencing a low level of stress. His coping mechanism, such as his faith and perception in life and the support he received from the people around him, made him positive and expectant of what the future may bring to him and his daughter. It is recommended that the parents arrange legal assistance and financial plan as early as possible. The government should have supporting services that cater to the needs of the family's preparation for the future, such as free legal consultation, family budgeting workshops, and health insurance.

Keywords: elderly parent, down syndrome, mental disability, parental stress