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Gender and coping: the parents of children with high functioning autism

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Abstract

Gender is a concept that is frequently discussed in the literature on stress, coping and illness. Research has reported that women are more vulnerable than men are to stressful events and use different strategies to cope with them. Furthermore, it is often asserted that these gender-based differences in coping may partially explain the differential impact of stressful events on men and women. Unfortunately, much of this research has equated gender with sex and failed to contextualise the experience of illness and coping. This paper presents a qualitative analysis of the role of gender and coping among parents of children with high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome in an Australian sample. It attempts to analyse the different meanings of the disability for mothers and fathers and describes the various strategies that parents use to cope with their child's disability.



Keywords

Autism; Coping; Asperger's Syndrome; Gender; Family

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