

Motherhood Constrained: The Minotaur Legend Reimagined Through the Perspective of Marginalized Mothers

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Abstract : Background. Child removal is a profound and life-altering measure that significantly impacts both children and their mothers. Unfortunately, mothers with intellectual disabilities are disproportionately affected by the removal of their children. This action is often taken due to concerns about the mother's perceived inability to care for the child, instances of abuse and neglect, or struggles with addiction. In many cases, the failure to meet society's standards of a "good mother" is seen as a deviation from conventional norms of femininity and motherhood. From an institutional perspective, separating a child from their mother is sometimes viewed as a step toward restoring justice or doing what is considered "right." In another light, this act of child removal can be seen as the removal of a mother from her child, an attempt to shield society from the complexities and fears associated with motherhood for women with disabilities. This separation can be likened to the Greek legend of the Minotaur, a fearsome beast confined within an impenetrable labyrinth. By reimagining this legend, we can see the social fears surrounding 'mothering with intellectual disability' as deeply sealed within an unreachable place. The Aim of this Presentation. Our goal with this presentation is to draw from our research and the metaphors found in the Greek legend to delve into the profound challenges faced by mothers with intellectual disabilities in raising their children. These challenges often become entangled within an insurmountable labyrinth, including navigating complex institutional bureaucracies, enduring persistent doubts cast upon their maternal competencies, battling unfavorable societal narratives, and struggling to retain custody of their children. Coupled with limited social support networks, these challenges frequently lead to situations resulting in maternal failure and, ultimately, child removal. On a broader scale, this separation of a child from their mother symbolizes society's collective avoidance of confronting the issue of 'mothering with disability,' which can only be effectively addressed through united efforts. Conclusion. Just as in the labyrinth of the Minotaur legend, the struggles faced by mothers with disabilities in their pursuit of retaining their children reveal the need for a metaphorical 'string of Ariadne.' This string symbolizes the support offered by social service providers, communities, and the loved ones these women often dream of but rarely encounter in their lives.

Keywords : motherhood, disability, child removal, support.

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