

Development of Personal and Social Identity in Immigrant Deaf Adolescents

Authors : Marialuisa Gennari, Giancarlo Tamanza, Ilaria Montanari

Abstract : Identity development in adolescence is characterized by many risks and challenges, and becomes even more complex by the situation of migration and deafness. In particular, the condition of the second generation of migrant adolescents involves the comparison between the family context in which everybody speaks a language and deals with a specific culture (usually parents' and relatives' original culture), the social context (school, peer groups, sports groups), where a foreign language is spoken and a new culture is faced, and finally in the context of the "deaf" world. It is a dialectic involving unsolved differences that have to be treated in a discontinuous process, which will give complex outcomes and chances depending on the process of elaboration of the themes of growth and development, culture and deafness. This paper aims to underline the problems and opportunities for each issue which immigrant deaf adolescents must deal with. In particular, it will highlight the importance of a multifactorial approach for the analysis of personal resources (both intra-psychic and relational); the level of integration of the family of origin in the migration context; the elaboration of the migration event, and finally, the tractability of the condition of deafness. Some psycho-educational support objectives will be also highlighted for the identity development of deaf immigrant adolescents, with particular emphasis on the construction of the adolescents' useful abilities to decode complex emotions, to develop self-esteem and to get critical thoughts about the inevitable attempts to build their identity. Remarkably, and of importance, the construction of flexible settings which support adolescents in a supple, "decentralized" way in order to avoid the regressive defenses that do not allow for the development of an authentic self.

Keywords : immigrant deaf adolescents, identity development, personal and social challenges, psycho-educational support

Conference Title : ICEDHI 2016 : International Conference on Education of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : June 20-21, 2016