

## **Perception of the End of a Same Sex Relationship and Preparation towards It: A Qualitative Research about Anticipation, Coping and Conflict Management against the Backdrop of Partial Legal Recognition**

**Authors :** Merav Meiron-Goren, Orna Braun-Lewensohn, Tal Litvak-Hirsh

**Abstract :** In recent years, there has been an increasing tendency towards separation and divorce in relationships. Nevertheless, many couples in a first marriage do not anticipate this as a probable possibility and do not make any preparation for it. Same sex couples establishing a family encounter a much more complicated situation than do heterosexual couples. Although there is a trend towards legal recognition of same sex marriage, many countries, including Israel, do not recognize it. The absence of legal recognition or the existence of partial recognition creates complexity for these couples. They have to fight for their right to establish a family, like the recognition of the biological child of a woman, as a child of her woman spouse too, or the option of surrogacy for a male couple who want children, and more. The lack of legal recognition is burden on the lives of these couples. In the absence of clear norms regarding the conduct of the family unit, the couples must define for themselves the family structure, and deal with everyday dilemmas that lack institutional solutions. This may increase the friction between the two couple members, and it is one of the factors that make it difficult for them to maintain the relationship. This complexity exists, perhaps even more so, in separation. The end of relationship is often accompanied by a deep crisis, causing pain and stress. In most cases, there are also other conflicts that must be settled. These are more complicated when rights are in doubt or do not exist at all. Complex issues for separating same sex couples may include matters of property, recognition of parenthood, and care and support for the children. The significance of the study is based on the fact that same sex relationships are becoming more and more widespread, and are an integral part of the society. Even so, there is still an absence of research focusing on such relationships and their ending. The objective of the study is to research the perceptions of same sex couples regarding the possibility of separation, preparing for it, conflict management and resolving disputes through the separation process. It is also important to understand the point of view of couples that have gone through separation, how they coped with the emotional and practical difficulties involved in the separation process. The doctoral research will use a qualitative research method in a phenomenological approach, based on semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interviewees will be divided into three groups- at the beginning of a relationship, during the separation crisis and after separation, with a time perspective, with about 10 couples from each group. The main theoretical model serving as the basis of the study will be the Lazarus and Folkman theory of coping with stress. This model deals with the coping process, including cognitive appraisal of an experience as stressful, appraisal of the coping resources, and using strategies of coping. The strategies are divided into two main groups, emotion-focused forms of coping and problem-focused forms of coping.

**Keywords :** conflict management, coping, legal recognition, same-sex relationship, separation

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