
”And so it was – later on, we found each other directly” – a narrative analysis of five young men’s experience of participation by utilizing personal assistance.

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Abstract

According to Swedish disability policy, all people, regardless of their functional abilities, should have the same opportunities to participate in society and take part of human rights (LSS, 1994). This study is part of a larger research project with the overall aim to explore children and young peoples’ experience of living with personal assistance and participating in meetings with social workers responsible for giving them access to personal assistance. A previous GT study (Hultman, Forinder, Pergert, 2015) revealed that adolescents’ main concern was to achieve normality which is about doing rather than being normal. They tried to resolve this by utilizing personal assistance – assisted normality. This oral presentation is based on three individual interviews included in the previous study and two additional interviews. The participants are young men between 15- 19 years who to varying degrees use personal assistance in their everyday life due to different types of physical impairments. The aim was to explore the young men’s experiences of participation by utilizing personal assistance. Their stories are analyzed according to narrative analysis (Crossley, 2000). The young men tell us how their different experiences of participation are affected by both internal and external factors. Their narratives provide insight into how the interplay between themselves, their personal assistants and the surrounding environment contribute to their experiences of participation. The results show that experiences of participation are affected by their own and others conception about normality and disability, as well as accessibility to activities and contexts in which one wants to participate, as well as the co-operation and relation between the assistance user and the personal assistant.

Keywords: participation, personal assistance, everyday life, interviews, narrative analysis

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