**Marriage as Factor Promoting Rehabilitation**

**among Religiously Observant Jews with Intellectual Disabilities**

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the contribution that marriage makes to people with intellectual disabilities (ID) in terms of their integration into the communities in which they live, and their rehabilitation process. Following the “nothing about us without us” approach, this study presents the impact of getting married among religiously observant Jewish couples with ID on their own identity and on society's perceptions of them. In religiously observant Jewish society, marriage is viewed as a crucial step in the transition from the status of a child to the status of an adult with equal rights within the community. Therefore, it is essential to address this aspect of community integration. Despite the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which guarantees the right to marriage, few couples with ID marry and begin a family.

The present study contributes to the discussion of the right to marriage, and enriches the understanding of marriage as it is perceived by those who are experiencing it. Based on qualitative in-depth interviews with 26 individuals, this study examines the attitudes and perceptions regarding marriage among people with ID, and the impact that getting married has on them.

The findings indicate that for people with ID, marriage is important personally and in terms of community integration. Based on the cumulative data collected, a picture is presented that follows a chronology: expectations prior to the wedding, changes occurring after the marriage takes place, and consequences for the future. The study findings indicate that religiously observant Jews with ID perceive marriage as exercising their right to assert responsibility over their life. From this, it can be understood that marriage also has an effect on their processes of rehabilitation.