

## INTRODUCTION

*“Alfred Adler says that a man with insufficient social interest in others tends to have the biggest problems in their own life and generally most often hurts others. In these people we should look for the source of all failures of the human race.”<sup>1</sup>*

Scientific monograph **“Disability in a context of social work”** deals with many aspects of life of the disabled people. The monograph describes social care of people with disabilities in historical as well as in current context, addresses the issues of education, and integration, and analyzes the difficulties in family life. In the last part we introduce the method of HRV biofeedback as a supportive method helping the family members who are burdened with taking care for a disabled member. We also summarize and interpret results of the realized research.

Persons with disabilities want and are able to live together with majority society. Disabled people have the same goals in life as the rest of population and that is to create values in society. They desire to become active members of society and lead full and rewarding lives. Therefore the duty of our society is to provide adequate education and help the integration of disabled people into the society. Human worth is not determined by their disability, but it depends on the fact how are they able to cope with the disability, to adapt in society and to create values for the society. I believe that disabled people do not perceive their disability as the most important obstacle, but the attitude of the majority society towards their disability can be very challenging. Life of people with disability is influenced by the opinions of their surroundings and these views are subsequently reflected in their psyche, perception and self-acceptance.

Nowadays there are high demands put on people’s life. These requirements are not easy to fulfil even for intact population and that is why people with disability need higher quality care from the society in process of integration.

The attempt to share the problems and experiences with working with disabled people was the main motivation for writing this publication. Long-time experiences as a teacher of

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<sup>1</sup> CARNEGIE, D. *Ako si získat' priateľov a pôsobiť na ľudí*. Praha: Dale Carnegie Institute 1995, p. 75.

students with special educational needs and as a social worker encouraged me to address the issue of disability closer from these points of view. I meet people with various disabilities in my everyday work and I try to support them to solve their difficult problems. Many of them have acquired the disability during their lives and I realize that the line between good health condition and disability is very thin. Every man is vulnerable and we can find ourselves on the other side of the barrier at any time. Finally, whether we admit it or not, the disability can cause social exclusion in narrower or wider level and people with disabilities can find themselves pushed to the society margins. On this basis disabled people are often discriminated against. In this monograph I would like to highlight the holistic approach to solving problems of people with disabilities. We should see these difficulties in overall context of life obstacles they must constantly address. Therefore it is essential that a social worker would have as much information and knowledge about their life and problems they face every day as possible, to ensure that their situation is dealt on professional level, and they are seen as full citizens with dignity and their rights are respected. The fact that disabled people have always been a part of every society is well-known but even at the times of rapid development in medicine field, we are still unable to prevent or resolve many health problems and disabilities. It is therefore necessary that social workers would be able to work with disabled people and be decent companions during crucial periods of their life and help people with disability to fulfil their targets and dreams.

Attention is also drawn to the importance and role of the family in the process of coping with difficult life situation and that is in adaptation of the family to the fact that their child was born with disability. The importance of the parenthood, marriage or solid partnership in shaping the personality and child's development is also stressed, as well as the role of the society in education and training of the individual with disability is pointed at. When a child with a disability is born, the parents are the ones who desperately need help and supporting these families is the role of the society. Even in our modern times, the family has not lost its important role, but on the contrary the family is much more important.

In the presented scientific monograph I decided to highlight the issue of people with disabilities who wish to be full members of the society and want to be active in every area of life and definitely do not want to be only passive recipients of social benefits. The most difficult and challenging part in the field of social work when supporting people with disabilities is to introduce all methods and put the effective visions into practice. While

working on this issue I have used the current knowledge of social work, special pedagogy, sociology, ethics, law and psychology.

I believe that the publication will contribute to the wide scientific community and I hope that this insight into the issue of disability would encourage many people to reconsider the attitude towards people with disability. All of us should praise value and place of disabled people in our society.