

Self-knowledge of adult people on the autism spectrum

**SUMMARY**

A subject of the undertaken research is self-knowledge of adult people on the autism spectrum. A goal of presented investigation was cognition and description of self-knowledge of individuals with autism in physical, personal, intellectual and social areas, considering self-description, self-assessment and ideal of own self. Furthermore, influence of autism diagnosis on self-knowledge of the subjects was defined. Through analysis and interpretation of empirical material, functions and sources of self-knowledge were described. For a practical objective, suggesting recommendations for professionals, with regard to inclusion of self-learning, gathering self-knowledge and self-acceptance in a therapy process, was selected.

Theoretical context of deliberation was K. Hurrelmans (1994) socialization theory. According to that conception, the self-knowledge is a result of sociological and cultural influences as well as inbred biological traits. Theoretical foundation, that made basis for research, analysis and interpretation of empirical material, was self-knowledge theory of Józef Koziński (1986). A qualitative approach was used in the research process. An interpretative paradigm was found to be crucial in finding answers for scientific questions bothering the researcher, due to specificity of people on the autism spectrum and considering a person as a participant of social interactions, that lead to a creation of personal conceptions. The phenomenographical perspective is a foundation for analysis and interpretation of results in this discourse. The research was executed using the dialog method.

This thesis consists of three main parts. The first one establishes theoretical framework for discussed topic. The definition of self-knowledge was searched for as well as adequate conceptual apparatus. Furthermore, explanation of an essence of the autism spectrum was included and modern developments of understanding of individual entering adulthood and adult person were defined. Theoretical part of the discourse is completed by a survey of academic achievements on the subject of the self-knowledge of adult people on the autism spectrum. Second part of the thesis includes methodological basis of research. In the third part of the discourse results of the research are presented. The research indicates, that self-knowledge is an important part of self-conception of persons with autism and constitutes a multi-faceted and dynamic construct. Individuals with autism spectrum possess different self-knowledge in physical, personal, intellectual and social field. The self-knowledge is for subjects an important factor in personal growth and influences their sense of

identity and psycho-social activity. For individuals with autism spectrum the self-knowledge performs an informative, diagnostic, compensatory, identity and destabilizing function. The source of self-knowledge in subjects is personal activity, external opinions, comparison of oneself and other people and diagnosis of autism spectrum. The thesis is complemented by synthesis of research results along with recommendations for practitioners that connect to the process of supporting people with autism spectrum regarding building self-knowledge.