

Empowerment Program on Promoting Perceived Self-Efficacy in Caregivers of Autistic Children

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This study was a Quasi-experimental pretest-posttest non-equivalent comparison group design, aimed to evaluate the effects of the empowerment program for caregivers of autistic children. The participants were 74 caregivers who took care of 2-5 years old autistic children at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Institute, Rajanakarin. After being enrolled into the study, the participants were matched by caregivers' and children's gender and assigned to the experimental group (37 participants) or the control group (37 participants).

The experimental group completed the 5-day empowerment program which was administered by the researcher whereas the control group received only the routine treatment program. The empowerment program was composed of 4 steps: discovering reality, critical reflection, taking charge and holding on through group process. The data was gathered at the pre-test and at the 4th, 8th and 12th week after the intervention program.

The findings revealed that the experimental group had statistically significantly higher scores on perceived self-efficacy in care of autistic children than the control group ($p < .001$) and there was a statistically significant difference between the 4th and 12th weeks ($p < .05$).

The evidence from this study indicated that this program had effect on promoting perceived self-efficacy in autistic child care. The application of this program is suggested for all caregivers of 2-5 years old autistic children. **Keywords:** Autistic children / Empowerment / Caregivers / Self-efficacy