

Child on the Rainbow: Real life stories of parents to children with disabilities. A play accompanied with music, songs, and humour

By Dalia Shlomy (Israel) (Initiator, Group Counsellor, and Producer)

My name is Dalia Shlomy and I want to tell you about the processes that led me to creating the play: *"A child on the Rainbow Real life stories of parents to children with disabilities. A play accompanied with music, songs, and humour"*.

I began my career as a paediatric nurse. I remember very well all the times when I had to say out loud that there is a problem with the size of the child's head. I remember the mother who burst into tears and the mother who said to me, "Nonsense, the child is okay."

I remember my emotional upheaval at the time, the hope that maybe everything is fine, the understanding that now it was necessary to act and the anger at the parents who did not act or disappeared.

Later I went to work in programs to locate children at risk, and many times I stood (with the rest of the team) against parents who found it difficult to adapt to the reality of their child and we - the professional team, arguing among us about how to deal with such parents. It was only during my master's degree at Haifa University that I was exposed to the concept of, *challenges to adapting to child diagnoses* and realized that accepting was a process, and I had to accept the process.

In addition to my professional work, I deal with production of events that combine personal stories and poetry. I do this together with my friend who is a musician and a mother of a child with special needs. In one of the conversations between us the question arose: Why not tell the story of parents of children with special needs?

A group of parents and myself as the counsellor, started to meet once a week (I am parent groups counsellor) to expose the difficulties and pains associated with raising a child with disabilities. We used a playback theatre technique that made it possible to touch sensitive points with the required sensitivity. My attachment to the parents gradually increased and their confidence in me grew. The ability to touch pain without fear made it possible to reveal more experiences and events, from the daily life of the parents. I believe that part of my ability to connect with parents even though I am not a parent of



CHILD ON THE RAINBOW

Real life stories of parents to children with disabilities
Accompanied with music, songs and humor

Idea, group counseling and production:
Dalia Shlomy

Director:
Hani Lavi Bellin

Participants:
Liora Bloch
Dror Yifa
Smadar Safrai
Anat Bruner
Mira Fahima

Music and singing:
Liora Bloch
Soof Sela

Photography:
Tsafi Kurz Harpaz

Subtitles:
capNsub

a child with special needs, is related to my personal experience of loss and pain. From my painful place, I could understand their painful place.

After a year and a half of meetings that were all documented, we decided to go forward and invite a director, who would help turn the raw material into texts adapted to the stage. At this point, I began to use my abilities as a producer. After another year and a half, the premier took place on the 6th of February 2014.

An important part of the play is the dialogue which takes place between the actors and the audience. The importance of this dialogue; the empowerment experienced, by both parents and professionals.

It has been five years since the Premier took place. The play has been performed more than 20 times and we will continue to appear, as long as we can. Today we are a cohesive group with our own humour and shared experiences. Formally, my role is production, in practice; I feel like the group's big mummy and feel great pride in the group's achievements.

The personal processes of the group members are evident mainly in openness and in the ability to reveal their personal stories. One of the members participated in a national television program dealing with parenting of children with special needs, another found that the stage suited him. Me? I'm happy taking part in all this.

Link to watch the play: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjjiBelYpt4&t=17s>

Credits

Dalia Shlomy – Initiator, Group Counselling and Producer

Dr Efrat Sher-Censor - Academic Counselling

Hani Lavi Balin – Director

Liora Bloch- Initiator, Musical producing, Plays the Guitar and Sings

Soof Sela - Piano and Singing

Dror Yifa, Mira Fahima, Smadar Safrai, Anat Bruner, Liora Bloch - Actors (parents)

Tsafi Kurz Harpaz – Photography

capNsub - Subtitles