

SINGLE MOTHERS: PROBLEMS IN LIFE

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Abstract : *Single mothers are called "incomplete" or "maternal", and "the very common term "incomplete family" is understood as the family of a parent who, due to various reasons, is the sole parent raising and is responsible for a child living in his or her care children. At present, the spectrum of single-parent families is replenished, in addition to those mentioned above, by families of spouses who actually live separately, due to the practice of adoption of a child by a single woman, as well as the establishment of guardianship or trusteeship in the event of orphanhood." It is important that as a unit of observation it is proposed to consider not only parents with children living separately from other relatives , but also single-parent households, which are understood as "a socio-economic unit that unites people through relationships that arise when organizing their shared life: running a common household, living together."*

Keywords : *single mothers, women and men, children and parents, single mothers*

As a result of demographic changes in marital and reproductive behavior of the population, single parenthood is becoming more common, reflecting the global trend of increasing numbers of women and men forced to raise children alone. Families of single mothers are called "incomplete" or "maternal", and "the very common term "incomplete family" is understood as the family of a parent who, due to various reasons, single-handedly raises and bears responsibility for a dependent child. Currently, the spectrum of incomplete families is replenished, in addition to those mentioned above, by families of spouses who actually live separately, due to the practice of adoption of a child by a single woman, as well as the establishment of guardianship or trusteeship in the event of orphanhood."

It is important that as a unit of observation it is proposed to consider not only parents with children living separately from other relatives, but also single-parent households, which are understood as "a socio-economic unit that unites people through relationships that arise when organizing their shared life: running a common household, living together." At the same time, single mothers, living in the same house with their husbands after a divorce, their parents or the husband's parents, accumulate economic and other resources, responsibility for the care and upbringing of children, freeing up time for study or work, while parents with children without family support and social assistance find themselves in a more difficult situation [1,2,3,4].

A single parent assumes great responsibility for raising children and cannot count on the personal support that usually exists in traditional nuclear or extended families. Therefore, organizing the upbringing of a child for such parents becomes a serious problem, since the parent is deprived of marital support and the necessary help in making decisions. A single parent also faces the need to adapt to numerous changes in his or her life and new models of interaction with others. In this case, it is absolutely necessary for him or her to master the skills of coping with stress factors, to be flexible, and to form a reliable system of values. According to I. F. Dementieva, the specific lifestyle of a single-parent family has a negative impact on the physical condition of the child. At the same time, the author singles out families after divorce, in which the mother's adaptation creates the need for her to perform, first of all, the function of providing for the family financially, to the detriment of the traditional maternal responsibilities of raising and strengthening the health of children. Experts associate the poor health indicators of children from single-parent families with social, living and housing instability, failure to observe hygienic standards of life, self-medication, and low medical activity of mothers [5,6,7,8].

Our study confirmed the findings. According to the participants, the main reason for the deterioration of children's health is the decline in the quality of medical care for the population, the cost and inaccessibility of services in the

children's health care system. Children, just like adults, find it difficult to receive timely and quality medical care. Even just getting an appointment with a doctor becomes a problem: queues, numbers, an appointment several days in advance, indifference of medical personnel. Therefore, respondents simply do not go to the doctor and try to treat their children themselves, using folk remedies: "We need to pay attention to our health care. Specifically, to medical assistance for children. At the moment, I think there is none, I work in adult health care and there is none in adult health care either, I mean free. And children have the same problem[9,10,11]. I haven't been there with my children for a long time. My child has a sore throat, but they won't take a blood test or smears! It all depends on funding. This is all the money that for some reason the government does not have for its children."

Thus, in our opinion, the declarative nature of appeals to social services cannot be regarded as a benefit for children and families in difficult life situations. In the conditions of the breakdown of family ties and social support networks, mothers consider the social protection department as the only place where they can informally discuss their problems, talk about difficulties and just "cry on a shoulder"[12,13,14]. At the same time, the social protection department is currently only a center for providing various types of social assistance and services to socially vulnerable groups of the population. Therefore, quite often the expectations of clients do not coincide with reality, and the respondents' responses are dominated by negative statements about the social protection department. Since, on the one hand, assistance in processing benefits and the benefits themselves are not considered by many as an effective measure of support for families, and on the other hand, when solving their life problems, mothers would like to get a specific result in the form of an improvement in the situation[15,16,17]. According to mothers, the registration of benefits, privileges, compensations is clearly an insufficient form of work with families in difficult life situations. In our opinion, in the current system of social protection of families with a deficit of social and material resources guaranteed by law and provided by

the state, a significant activating role could be played by programs for the employment of single women, self-organization of families and the unification of single-parent families to solve common life problems, training in necessary social skills and ways to get out of difficult situations, legal and psychological counseling[18,19,20,21].

Analyzing the issue of accessibility of additional education institutions with paid classes for children, it is important to note that in general they are practically inaccessible to single parent families. The classes that single parents can afford for their children are not always satisfactory in their content and quality. The main reasons for the current situation include the financial insolvency of single mothers, the inability to provide their child with the necessary equipment, sportswear, and shoes. Therefore, Angelina believes, parents are unable to give their child what he would like to do, and are forced to be content with what they can afford: "Everything is available, if we do not drink or eat. We must give everything for the sake of the child, so that he is well, so that he is occupied with something[22,23,24]. Now there are such prices that it is faster to buy a rope, soap and hang yourself." In general, assessing the availability of social services, the study participants agreed with the opinion of one of the mothers: "In principle, everything that we know is available, everything is available, but there is a "but" everywhere, in one organization the working hours are not satisfactory, in another - the attitude, in a third you need to collect a bunch of documents to get something, and it is not all so quick and easy! We have everything available, but to get it you need to put in I don't know what kind of effort, nerves, money."

When discussing the issue of parents' needs and wishes regarding new social services, the following proposals were made. One of the most important problems that unites many mothers is assistance in finding employment that takes into account family needs and the interests of the child. For example, Anna could not find a job for a long time with a schedule that would allow her to combine work and raising a child: "From personal experience, I can say that I spent a whole year looking for a job so that I could drop off and pick up my child and also take

him to clubs, i.e., you have to choose: either the child is completely abandoned, or there are no means to exist. There is a problem with sick leave, I could not find a job because I have a small child, sick leave is not paid..., no one likes it when children are sick." [25,26,27,28].

Attention to the need to inform single mothers not only about social services available in the area, but also about federal and regional laws, citizens' rights: "It would be nice to inform single mothers and other socially vulnerable groups about what they have rights to." Natasha suggested publishing information booklets and brochures: "Publish brochures with information for mothers, for example, with information about organizations that are located in our area, these are schools and clubs, so that it is in one directory." Anna, a sociable and cheerful person, admitted that she would like to get married, but to do this she needs to find free time and a place where single mothers could meet: "I think that we need to create a children's club, for example, like in Moscow, where there are many children's clubs, and so that there would be free entry for single mothers ... you take your child, and there is a pool, and a ball, and all sorts of slides, in general, I have seen such clubs in Moscow, you give your child there, and they look after him." Ekaterina suggested creating clubs for single parents as a possible form of work for the social service: "We also need to organize both a club for single mothers and a club for single fathers, because there are also many single fathers." [29,30,31]. According to Natasha, who has a higher education in the humanities and a good knowledge of English, she is ready to teach at a center for single parents: "On the basis of this center, we can organize a club for children with free clubs, so that the child can try himself in different clubs, and not just participate in one, for which there is enough money, I, as a teacher, can offer my help." [32,33,34].

In conclusion, it is important to note that the organization of social work with single parents should be developed in the direction of economic support for the family and assistance in the socialization of children, the integration of the family into society. In a broad sense, the situation with the growth in the number

of single parents requires the development of a comprehensive state-public system of rehabilitation and prevention of socially conditioned diseases, alcoholism, mortality, as well as large-scale prevention of divorces and illegitimate births. It is absolutely clear that there is an urgent need to implement programs for the formation of parental competence, a culture of responsible motherhood and fatherhood at all levels of education and upbringing of children and youth. It is necessary to allocate special subsidies from the federal budget to support preschool and additional education institutions for the education of children of single parents, it is important to further increase family and child benefits. Targeted federal and regional programs for assistance to single parents and children should be adopted[35,36,37,38].

In a narrow sense, many of the problems and needs of mothers can be met now with a more active involvement of social services and the potential of the resources of the city and local community and government. Thus, it is possible to develop and implement in the activities of social institutions and municipal councils programs for family upbringing of children, support for single mothers and fathers, help them in finding employment taking into account family needs, open free clubs for children or partially finance them from municipal councils or charitable foundations. It is important to open clubs for single parents, activating the resources of the parents themselves, including them in activities to provide support and mutual assistance to each other, for example, when creating home kindergartens or night groups[39,40]. It is absolutely necessary to look for potential leaders among representatives of the local community, as well as create conditions for the manifestation of leadership qualities in the parents themselves, since it is active and proactive people who are more likely to be able, by joining forces, to help themselves and others cope with common problems. It is also important to change the operating mode of social services, opening evening receptions, create a common and accessible database of needy target groups,

In the work of social sphere specialists it is necessary to use more widely technologies of education and informing the population, social advertising,

forming public opinion on support of single-parent families. Parents need employment, self-organization and unification of families to solve common life problems, training in necessary social skills and ways of getting out of difficult situations, in legal and psychological counseling[41]. The identified problems and needs give grounds to talk about the need to pay special attention to innovative technologies for activating the resources of clients, methods of activating the local community, methods and forms of unification of families with similar problems[42].

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