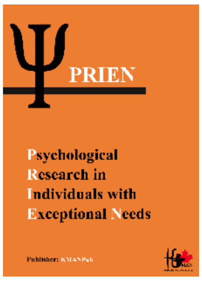
KMAN PUBLISHING INSTITUTE
Journal Website
Article history:
Received 13 September 2024
Revised 01 December 2024
Accepted 06 December 2024
Published online 01 January 2025

Psychological Research in Individuals with Exceptional Needs

Volume 3, Issue 1, pp 10-18



E-ISSN: 3060-6713

Examining the Psychological and Emotional Adjustment of Parents of Children with Intellectual Disabilities

Yaliu. Yang [1*]

[1] Marriage and Family Therapy Department, Iona College, New Rochelle, NY, United States

*** Corresponding author email address**: yaliuyang@iona.edu

Article Info

Article type:
Original Research

How to cite this article:
Yang, Y. (2025). Examining the Psychological and Emotional Adjustment of Parents of Children with Intellectual Disabilities. *Psychological Research in Individuals with Exceptional Needs, 3*(1), 10-18.
https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.prien.3.1.2

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the psychological and emotional adjustment of parents raising children with intellectual disabilities. This qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews with 26 parents recruited through online platforms. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring diversity in caregiving experiences. Data collection continued until theoretical saturation was reached, and all interviews were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo software to identify key themes related to parental psychological adjustment, coping mechanisms, and social interactions. The results revealed that parents experienced significant emotional distress upon receiving their child's diagnosis, including grief, denial, and prolonged sadness. Chronic stress was a recurring theme, with concerns over financial burdens, caregiving demands, and uncertainty about their child's future contributing to heightened anxiety. Coping strategies varied, with some parents relying on social support networks, religious beliefs, and cognitive reframing, while others struggled with emotional exhaustion and isolation. Family relationships were deeply affected, with some parents reporting marital strain and sibling adjustments, whereas others experienced strengthened familial bonds. Social stigma and external judgment further complicated parental adjustment, with many parents becoming active advocates for disability rights and inclusion. Despite the challenges, many parents reported significant personal growth, emotional resilience, and increased psychological strength over time. The psychological and emotional adjustment of parents raising children with intellectual disabilities is a complex process influenced by stress, coping mechanisms, family dynamics, and social factors. While many parents experience significant distress, those with strong support systems and adaptive strategies demonstrate greater resilience. This study highlights the need for targeted support programs, advocacy efforts, and policy interventions to enhance parental well-being and social inclusion.

Keywords: *Intellectual disability, parental adjustment, coping strategies, psychological well-being, social support, emotional resilience, disability advocacy.*

1. Introduction

Raising a child with an intellectual disability presents profound psychological and emotional challenges for parents, affecting their mental health, coping mechanisms, family dynamics, and social experiences. Parents of children with intellectual disabilities often experience heightened stress, emotional distress, and an increased burden of caregiving responsibilities, which influence their overall well-being and resilience (Gogoi & Jha, 2025; Каракулова et al., 2024). The psychological adjustment of these parents is shaped by a variety of factors, including their ability to accept the diagnosis, access to support systems, and the coping strategies they employ to manage daily challenges (Vaghela & Bodla, 2024; Wardani et al., 2024). While some parents struggle with prolonged emotional distress, others develop adaptive coping mechanisms that foster resilience and personal growth (Shaaban, 2024).

One of the most profound emotional responses parents experience upon receiving their child's diagnosis is grief and loss. Many parents describe the initial reaction as one of shock, denial, and deep sorrow as they struggle to reconcile their expectations with the reality of their child's condition (Pandia, 2024). The grieving process involves mourning not only for the child they had imagined but also for the envisioned future they had anticipated for their child (Naz & Noor, 2024). Some parents report experiencing prolonged sadness, frustration, and helplessness, particularly in the absence of adequate social support and professional guidance (Nanda, 2024). However, over time, many parents undergo a psychological shift, moving from despair to acceptance, finding ways to reframe their perspective and embrace their child's unique needs and abilities (Munir et al., 2024).

Parental stress is a central theme in the psychological adjustment process. The caregiving burden associated with raising a child with an intellectual disability often leads to chronic stress, which can manifest in both emotional and physical health complications (Lestari et al., 2024). Studies indicate that parents of children with intellectual disabilities experience higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to parents of typically developing children (Buthelezi & Mawila, 2024). The constant need for supervision, managing behavioral challenges, and navigating complex healthcare and educational systems contribute to heightened parental stress (Al-Oraini, 2024). Furthermore, financial strain due to the increased cost of specialized care and reduced work opportunities for caregiving parents exacerbates the psychological burden (Paz et al., 2023). The intersection of financial, emotional, and social stressors underscores the importance of providing parents with structured support systems and coping resources (Manuel et al., 2023).

The ability to cope with the challenges of raising a child with an intellectual disability varies among parents, with some adopting adaptive strategies while others struggle with maladaptive coping mechanisms (Mandal et al., 2023). Social support plays a critical role in determining a parent's psychological resilience. Studies highlight the protective effects of strong familial and community support networks in mitigating the negative psychological impact of caregiving (Lefakane & Maseko, 2023). Parents who have access to support groups, professional counseling, and peer networks report lower levels of stress and greater emotional well-being (H. & SuphalaKotian, 2023). Additionally, the presence of a supportive spouse or extended family members can significantly alleviate the emotional toll of caregiving responsibilities (Salinas & Tiamzon, 2022). In contrast, parents who lack such support systems are more vulnerable to experiencing emotional exhaustion, social isolation, and burnout (Rajan, 2022).

Religious beliefs and spirituality are another significant factor in the psychological adjustment of parents. Many parents find solace in their faith, using prayer, religious rituals, and spiritual beliefs to cope with the emotional difficulties of caregiving (Ivić-Hofman, 2022). Religious communities also provide a source of social support, offering emotional and practical assistance to parents of children with disabilities (H. & Kotian, 2022). Some parents interpret their child's condition as part of a divine plan, which helps them find meaning and strength in their caregiving journey (Ashraf et al., 2022). However, reliance on religious coping varies across cultural contexts, with some parents reporting that faith alone is not sufficient in addressing the psychological challenges they face (Staunton et al., 2020).

The impact of raising a child with an intellectual disability extends beyond individual emotional experiences, affecting family dynamics and relationships. Marital relationships, in particular, undergo significant changes, with some couples experiencing increased strain and conflict due to the added stress of caregiving (Nižić et al., 2020). Disagreements over parenting styles, financial strain, and emotional exhaustion can lead to marital discord and, in some cases, separation or divorce (Haider et al., 2020). However, other couples report that the shared challenges strengthen their relationship, fostering greater emotional

E-ISSN: 3060-6713

intimacy and mutual support (Gogoi & Jha, 2025). Sibling relationships are also affected, with siblings of children with intellectual disabilities often taking on caregiving roles, experiencing feelings of jealousy or neglect, or developing heightened empathy and resilience (Каракулова et al., 2024).

Social stigma and external perceptions further complicate the psychological adjustment of parents. Many parents report experiencing social judgment, isolation, and negative stereotyping due to their child's condition (Wardani et al., 2024). Some parents struggle with societal misconceptions about intellectual disabilities, which can lead to discrimination and exclusion in educational, healthcare, and community settings (Vaghela & Bodla, 2024). This societal pressure can exacerbate parental stress, leading some parents to withdraw from social interactions and community participation (Shaaban, 2024). Advocacy efforts and increased public awareness campaigns are essential in addressing these challenges, empowering parents to challenge stigma and promote inclusive policies (Pandia, 2024).

Despite the challenges, many parents experience significant psychological growth and resilience over time. Some parents develop strong advocacy skills, becoming active participants in disability rights movements, educational policy reform, and community support initiatives (Naz & Noor, 2024). Others find deep fulfillment in their caregiving roles, forming strong emotional bonds with their children and experiencing personal transformation (Nanda, 2024). Parents who successfully navigate the psychological challenges of caregiving often cite increased patience, emotional strength, and a greater appreciation for small developmental milestones as key sources of resilience (Munir et al., 2024).

In conclusion, the psychological and emotional adjustment of parents raising children with intellectual disabilities is a complex and multifaceted process influenced by grief, stress, coping mechanisms, family dynamics, and societal factors. While many parents face significant emotional and psychological challenges, those with strong support systems, adaptive coping strategies, and personal resilience are better equipped to navigate the demands of caregiving. This study explores the emotional and psychological experiences of parents raising children with intellectual disabilities, shedding light on their coping strategies, the impact on family relationships, and their psychological adjustment over time.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the psychological and emotional adjustment of parents of children with intellectual disabilities. The research follows an interpretative phenomenological approach to gain an in-depth understanding of parents' lived experiences, emotional coping mechanisms, and psychological adaptation processes. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring diversity in terms of age, gender, socioeconomic background, and severity of their child's intellectual disability. The study reached theoretical saturation with 26 participants, meaning that no new themes or insights emerged beyond this point. All participants were recruited through online platforms, including parenting forums, disability support groups, and social media communities dedicated to families of children with special needs. Inclusion criteria required that participants be primary caregivers of a child diagnosed with an intellectual disability and have at least one year of caregiving experience.

2.2. Measure

2.2.1. Semi-Structured Interview

Data collection was conducted using semi-structured interviews, allowing for a flexible yet systematic exploration of the participants' emotional and psychological responses to their caregiving roles. Interviews were conducted via video conferencing to accommodate participants' availability and ensure accessibility. Each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes and was guided by an open-ended interview protocol, covering themes such as emotional distress, coping strategies, support systems, and perceptions of parental adaptation. To ensure the credibility and depth of responses, follow-up questions were posed where necessary, and participants were encouraged to elaborate on their experiences. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim for further analysis.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis with NVivo software to systematically code and categorize emerging themes. The analysis followed a six-step approach: familiarization with the data, initial coding, searching for patterns, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and finalizing the results. Transcripts were iteratively coded to identify recurring patterns in participants' narratives, focusing on psychological adaptation mechanisms, emotional resilience, and sources of parental stress and support. To enhance the reliability of the findings, the research process included peer debriefing and member checking, where selected participants reviewed key themes to confirm the accuracy of interpretations.

3. Findings and Results

The demographic analysis of the participants in this study revealed a diverse group of parents, each with unique experiences in raising a child with an intellectual disability. Among the 26 participants, 18 were mothers (69.2%) and 8 were fathers (30.8%), reflecting the predominant role of mothers in caregiving. Participants ranged in age from 28 to 54 years, with a mean age of 39.6 years (SD = 6.8). In terms of educational background, 10 participants (38.5%) had a university degree, 9 (34.6%) had completed high school, and 7 (26.9%) had pursued postgraduate education. The majority of participants (57.7%) were employed, either full-time (38.5%) or part-time (19.2%), while 11 participants (42.3%) were unemployed or full-time caregivers. The duration of caregiving varied, with 9 participants (34.6%) reporting caregiving responsibilities for 1 to 5 years, 12 participants (46.2%) for 6 to 10 years, and 5 participants (19.2%) for more than 10 years. Marital status was also a key factor, as 20 participants (76.9%) were married, while 4 (15.4%) were single parents, and 2 (7.7%) were divorced. Regarding the severity of their child's intellectual disability, 8 participants (30.8%) reported mild disability, 11 (42.3%) reported moderate disability, and 7 (26.9%) reported severe disability. The diversity in demographic characteristics provided a comprehensive perspective on the psychological and emotional challenges parents face in adapting to their caregiving roles.

Table 1

The Results of Qualitative Analysis

Category	Subcategory	Concepts (Open Codes)
Emotional Responses to Diagnosis	Initial Emotional Reactions	Shock, denial, fear, confusion, guilt, emotional numbness
	Long-Term Emotional Adjustment	Acceptance, resilience, emotional exhaustion, hope, adaptation
	Coping with Uncertainty	Anxiety, unpredictability, distress, mental overload
	Grieving Process	Loss of expectations, sadness, frustration, emotional burden
Coping Strategies	Seeking Social Support	Family support, peer support, professional guidance, online communities
	Religious and Spiritual Coping	Faith, prayer, religious beliefs, spiritual acceptance
	Cognitive Reframing	Finding meaning, positive reinterpretation, growth mindset
	Behavioral Coping Mechanisms	Exercise, hobbies, work-life balance, structured routines
	Professional Counseling and Therapy	Psychological therapy, support groups, psychoeducation
Impact on Family and Relationships	Marital Relationship Changes	Increased conflict, emotional distancing, stronger bonding, shared burden
	Parenting Roles and Responsibilities	Role overload, parental guilt, role division, increased patience
	Sibling Adjustments	Jealousy, increased responsibility, emotional struggles, empathy development
	Extended Family Dynamics	Grandparent involvement, family misunderstandings, rejection, increased closeness
	Social Stigma and External Perceptions	Social judgment, isolation, stereotyping, advocacy challenges
Psychological Growth and Resilience	Personal Growth	Increased empathy, emotional strength, personal transformation
	Developing Advocacy Skills	Public speaking, raising awareness, policy engagement, disability rights activism
	Strengthened Parent-Child Bond	Deep emotional connection, mutual trust, meaningful interactions
	Future Aspirations and Hopes	Long-term caregiving plans, financial concerns, career adjustments, social inclusion goals

Participants in this study shared diverse psychological and emotional experiences related to raising a child with intellectual disabilities. Thematic analysis revealed four major themes: emotional responses to diagnosis, coping strategies, impact on family and relationships, and psychological growth and resilience. Each theme consisted of several subthemes, reflecting the complex ways parents adapt to their caregiving roles.

Emotional Responses to Diagnosis

Participants described a range of initial emotional reactions upon receiving their child's diagnosis, including shock, denial, fear, confusion, guilt, and emotional numbness. Many parents recalled feeling overwhelmed and uncertain about the future. One mother stated, *"I just couldn't believe it at first. I kept thinking they had made a mistake, that my child was just a little behind."* Others experienced guilt, questioning whether they had done something wrong during pregnancy or early childhood.

As time passed, parents underwent long-term emotional adjustment, marked by acceptance, resilience, emotional exhaustion, hope, and adaptation. Some parents described reaching a turning point where they shifted from despair to determination. A father shared, *"It took me a while, but I finally understood that I needed to stop mourning and start finding ways to help my child thrive."* However, others struggled with prolonged emotional fatigue, particularly in the absence of strong support systems.

Many parents expressed ongoing difficulty in coping with uncertainty, particularly regarding their child's future independence and quality of life. Anxiety, unpredictability, distress, and mental overload were common experiences. A participant explained, *"I worry every day about what will happen when I'm no longer here. Who will take care of my child?"*

The grieving process was another key aspect of parental adjustment. Many parents described feelings of loss, not only for their child's expected developmental path but also for their own envisioned future as parents. Sadness, frustration, and an overwhelming emotional burden were prevalent. One participant stated, *"You have to grieve the child you imagined before you can fully love and support the child you have."*

Coping Strategies

To manage the psychological burden, many parents relied on seeking social support through family, peer groups, professionals, and online communities. Some described their extended families as a crucial source of emotional and practical help, while others found greater comfort in connecting with parents facing similar challenges. A participant reflected, *"Talking to other parents who understand what I'm going through has been a lifesaver."*

For some, religious and spiritual coping played a significant role in emotional regulation. Faith, prayer, and spiritual acceptance provided comfort and meaning in difficult times. A mother shared, *"I believe my child is a gift from God, and that belief keeps me strong on hard days."*

Cognitive reframing was another commonly employed coping mechanism, allowing parents to find meaning, reinterpret their experiences positively, and develop a growth mindset. Some parents emphasized the personal growth they experienced, with one noting, *"Raising my child has changed me for the better. I've become more patient, more compassionate."*

In addition, parents adopted behavioral coping mechanisms such as exercise, hobbies, work-life balance, and structured routines to maintain their mental well-being. One parent shared, *"I make sure to carve out time for myself, even if it's just 30 minutes of reading a book while my child naps."*

Many participants found relief through professional counseling and therapy, engaging in psychological therapy, support groups, or psychoeducation programs. A mother explained, *"Therapy helped me process my emotions and understand that it's okay to struggle sometimes."*

Impact on Family and Relationships

Parenting a child with an intellectual disability significantly influenced marital relationships, with some couples experiencing increased conflict, emotional distancing, or, conversely, a strengthened bond through shared challenges. One father stated, *"At first, it drove a wedge between us. We blamed each other. But over time, we learned to lean on one another."*

Changes in parenting roles and responsibilities were another key concern. Parents spoke about role overload, parental guilt, and the necessity of adjusting traditional caregiving dynamics. A participant explained, *"I feel like I have to be everything at once—mother, teacher, therapist, and advocate."*

The presence of a child with an intellectual disability also affected sibling adjustments, with many parents reporting that their other children experienced jealousy, increased responsibility, emotional struggles, and, in some cases, greater empathy development. A participant noted, *"My oldest struggles with resentment, but she also has an incredible bond with her younger brother."*

Extended family dynamics varied, with some parents describing support from grandparents and relatives, while others faced misunderstandings or rejection. Some families experienced increased closeness, while others struggled with judgment and a lack of understanding. A participant shared, *"My parents didn't believe anything was wrong at first. It took years for them to accept it and support us."*

Finally, social stigma and external perceptions presented ongoing challenges. Parents frequently faced judgment, isolation, stereotyping, and advocacy challenges. One mother noted, *"People stare. They assume my child is 'bad' instead of understanding her condition."*

Psychological Growth and Resilience

Despite the challenges, many parents reported significant personal growth, describing increased empathy, emotional strength, and a deep sense of purpose. A participant explained, *"I never knew I was this strong until I had to be."*

Some parents became advocates for their children, engaging in public speaking, raising awareness, participating in policy discussions, and fighting for disability rights. One mother shared, *"I never imagined myself as an activist, but now I spend my time pushing for better resources and education."*

Many parents also reported a strengthened parent-child bond, describing deep emotional connections, mutual trust, and meaningful interactions with their children. A father expressed, *"My child has taught me more about love than anyone else ever could."*

Looking forward, parents discussed their future aspirations and hopes, focusing on long-term caregiving plans, financial concerns, career adjustments, and social inclusion goals. One participant shared, *"All I want is to know that my child will be safe and happy when I'm gone."*

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the psychological and emotional adjustment of parents raising children with intellectual disabilities. The results indicate that these parents experience a complex emotional journey, including an initial period of grief, long-term stress, evolving coping strategies, and significant changes in family and social relationships. Many parents struggle with emotional distress due to the unexpected nature of their child's diagnosis, while others gradually develop resilience and psychological growth. These findings align with previous research that emphasizes the heightened emotional burden and unique stressors faced by parents of children with intellectual disabilities (Gogoi & Jha, 2025; Каракулова et al., 2024).

One of the most significant findings in this study was the emotional distress parents faced upon receiving their child's diagnosis. Many participants reported feelings of shock, denial, sadness, and guilt. These emotions are consistent with the well-documented grieving process among parents of children with disabilities, where they experience loss—not of the child but of the imagined future they had envisioned for them (Wardani et al., 2024). Studies have shown that parental grief is common when expectations are disrupted, particularly in societies where disability is stigmatized and poorly understood (Vaghela & Bodla, 2024). Parents in this study reported prolonged sadness, frustration, and a sense of helplessness, which aligns with prior research on the long-term psychological distress among parents of children with special needs (Shaaban, 2024). However, some participants described a shift from grief to resilience, indicating that, over time, many parents develop coping mechanisms that help them accept and navigate their child's condition (Pandia, 2024).

The study also found that chronic stress was a dominant theme among parents, particularly due to the continuous nature of caregiving. Participants reported feelings of exhaustion, mental overload, and anxiety about their child's future. This is consistent with research demonstrating that parents of children with intellectual disabilities experience higher levels of stress than parents of typically developing children (Naz & Noor, 2024). Studies suggest that stress arises from multiple sources, including concerns about their child's well-being, financial strain, and lack of adequate support services (Nanda, 2024). Parental stress has been found to significantly impact their mental health, increasing the risk of depression and anxiety (Munir et al., 2024). The financial strain associated with caregiving further exacerbates psychological distress, as parents struggle with medical expenses, therapy costs, and reduced employment opportunities due to the time required for caregiving (Lestari et al., 2024).

In response to stress, parents in this study employed various coping strategies. Seeking social support was a crucial method for managing emotional distress, with many parents turning to family members, friends, online communities, and disability support groups for guidance and reassurance. These findings align with prior research indicating that social support serves as a protective factor against stress and burnout in parents of children with disabilities (Buthelezi & Mawila, 2024). The presence of a strong support network has been linked to lower levels of anxiety and depression, as well as increased emotional resilience (Al-Oraini, 2024). In contrast, parents who lacked a support system were more likely to report emotional exhaustion and feelings of isolation, reinforcing existing literature on the negative effects of social isolation on mental well-being (Paz et al., 2023).

Religious coping emerged as another significant strategy, with many participants relying on faith and spirituality to find meaning in their caregiving role. This is consistent with studies that highlight the role of religious beliefs in reducing psychological distress among parents of children with disabilities (Manuel et al., 2023). Some parents interpreted their child's condition as a divine test, which helped them maintain a sense of purpose and strength (Mandal et al., 2023). Religious communities also provided social and emotional support, reinforcing findings that spirituality can serve as both an emotional and practical coping mechanism (Lefakane & Maseko, 2023). However, some parents reported that religious coping alone was insufficient in managing the psychological demands of caregiving, a finding echoed in previous research suggesting that while faith provides comfort, practical interventions such as counseling and support groups are necessary for long-term well-being (H. & SuphalaKotian, 2023).

Family relationships were deeply affected by the presence of a child with an intellectual disability. The findings indicated that some marriages became strained due to financial stress, differing caregiving responsibilities, and emotional exhaustion, leading to increased marital conflict. These results support research showing that parents of children with disabilities experience higher rates of marital discord compared to other parents (Salinas & Tiamzon, 2022). However, some participants reported that their relationship with their spouse strengthened over time as they learned to navigate their challenges together. This aligns with studies suggesting that shared caregiving responsibilities can foster emotional intimacy and mutual support (Rajan, 2022).

Sibling relationships were also affected, with some siblings experiencing jealousy or neglect due to the disproportionate attention given to the child with a disability. However, some parents noted that their other children developed increased empathy, patience, and responsibility. These findings are supported by research demonstrating that while siblings of children with intellectual disabilities may struggle with feelings of resentment, they also show higher levels of emotional intelligence and social sensitivity (Ivić-Hofman, 2022). The extent to which siblings experience positive or negative effects often depends on parental involvement and the family's ability to balance attention among all children (H. & Kotian, 2022).

Social stigma was another major theme, with many parents reporting discrimination, judgment, and exclusion from social activities. The fear of being judged or misunderstood prevented some parents from engaging in social interactions, leading to increased isolation. This aligns with research on the impact of stigma, which highlights how parents of children with disabilities often feel marginalized and excluded from mainstream social settings (Ashraf et al., 2022). Many participants in this study reported that they had to become advocates for their children, challenging societal misconceptions and fighting for better inclusion in schools and public spaces. Previous studies have emphasized the role of advocacy in helping parents feel empowered and in reducing the stigma surrounding intellectual disabilities (Staunton et al., 2020).

Despite the challenges, many parents in this study experienced significant personal growth. Some parents became active advocates in the disability rights movement, participating in awareness campaigns and educational initiatives. This aligns with research showing that many parents of children with disabilities develop leadership skills and a strong sense of purpose through advocacy work (Nižić et al., 2020). Others reported a deepened emotional bond with their child, emphasizing that the caregiving journey, while challenging, had brought profound joy and fulfillment. These findings support previous studies indicating that many parents experience increased resilience and emotional strength as a result of their caregiving responsibilities (Haider et al., 2020).

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample was limited to parents who were willing to participate in online interviews, potentially excluding those without internet access or those who were less comfortable sharing their experiences in a virtual setting. This may have introduced a selection bias, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to recall bias or social desirability bias, as parents may have presented their experiences in a way that aligns with socially acceptable narratives. Finally, while this study explored a diverse range of experiences, cultural differences in parenting, disability perceptions, and support systems were not fully analyzed, which may have influenced the findings.

Future research should explore the experiences of parents from different cultural backgrounds to understand how sociocultural factors influence parental adjustment. Longitudinal studies are also needed to track parental coping mechanisms over time and to identify long-term psychological outcomes. Additionally, future studies should examine the effectiveness of various support interventions, such as counseling programs, peer support networks, and workplace policies, in reducing parental stress and improving well-being.

Practical interventions should focus on strengthening support systems for parents of children with intellectual disabilities. Mental health services, including counseling and stress management programs, should be made more accessible to parents. Schools and community organizations should provide structured support groups where parents can share experiences and receive emotional and practical guidance. Advocacy efforts should aim to reduce social stigma and promote inclusive policies that support families of children with disabilities. Finally, workplace policies should accommodate the unique needs of parents by offering flexible work arrangements and financial support programs to ease the caregiving burden.

Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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