

Participation of sexual offenders in psychosocial intervention: Journey from fear to courage

Participação de ofensores sexuais em intervenção psicossocial: Trajetória do medo à coragem

Participación de delincuentes sexuales en intervención psicosocial: Trayectoria del miedo al valor

Participation des agresseurs sexuels à l'intervention psychosociale: Trajectoire de la peur au courage

 10.5020/23590777.rs.v24i3.e14225

Ranieli Carvalho Gomes de Sousa  

Mestranda no Programa de Pós-graduação em Psicologia Clínica e Cultura da Universidade de Brasília. Graduada em Psicologia pela Universidade de Brasília (UnB). Pós-graduada em Pensamento sistêmico e psicodrama para as práticas de saúde e educação com casais, famílias e grupos pelo Instituto Aprender Vivo.

Liana Fortunato Costa  

Graduação em Psicologia pela Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (1972), Mestrado em Psicologia pela Universidade de Brasília (1989) e Doutorado em Psicologia Clínica pela Universidade de São Paulo (1998).

Abstract

The present study aims to explore the experiences of adult men who are perpetrators of sexual violence as participants in a group psychosocial intervention. This group aims to reflect on violence committed against children and adolescents, and it is offered by public health institutions, and its members are referred by criminal courts. This is a qualitative ethnographic study. The aim was to understand how social stigmas are faced, as well as engagement in therapeutic activities. The instrument used was the observation and recording of eight group sessions. The participants were six men with an average age of 44 years. The analysis focused on observations of speech and behaviors related to the following issues: How was your experience in the group? What was it like to be part of a group like this? For the discussion, the results were organized into areas of meaning: feelings, learning, changes, and overcoming, and exemplified by participants' statements. The testimonies analyzed focused on the importance of building a therapeutic environment, without judgment or criticism, safe and reciprocal, that allows for a discussion of topics that are not debated in the daily lives of these men, in addition to the emphasis on the positivity of group conversation. The limitation of the research lies in the approach to the topic, which brings a conversation full of anxiety, doubt, and fear of admitting guilt. Another limitation is access to these individuals. In addition, there is the particularity that the authors are female and are researching in a context characterized by impasses typical of extremely sexist environments.

Keywords: therapeutic processes, sexual assault, sexual offender.

Resumo

O presente estudo tem como objetivo explorar as vivências e experiências de homens adultos autores de violência sexual enquanto participantes de uma intervenção psicossocial grupal. Esta intervenção visa à reflexão sobre a violência cometida contra crianças e adolescentes, é oferecida por instituições públicas de saúde, e seus integrantes são encaminhados pelas varas criminais. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa de cunho etnográfico. Buscou-se conhecer como ocorre o enfrentamento de estigmas sociais, bem como o engajamento à atividade terapêutica. O instrumento utilizado foi a observação e o registro de oito sessões grupais. Os participantes foram compostos por seis homens com idade média de 44 anos. A análise centrou-se nas observações de falas e comportamentos relativos às seguintes questões: Como foi sua experiência no grupo? Como foi participar de um grupo como este? Para a discussão, os resultados foram organizados em zonas de sentido: sentimentos; aprendizados; mudanças; e superação, sendo exemplificados com falas dos participantes. Os testemunhos

analisados focaram na importância da construção de um ambiente terapêutico, sem julgamentos nem críticas, seguro e de reciprocidade, que possibilite uma discussão de temas que não são debatidos no cotidiano desses homens, além da ênfase na positividade da conversa grupal. O limite da pesquisa encontra-se na abordagem ao tema, que traz uma conversação plena de ansiedade, dúvida e medo de admissão de culpabilidade. Outro limite é o acesso a esses indivíduos. Além disso, há a particularidade de as autoras serem representantes do gênero feminino e estarem pesquisando em um contexto caracterizado por impasses característicos de ambientes extremamente machistas.

Palavras-chave: processos terapêuticos, agressões sexuais, ofensor sexual.

Resumen

El presente estudio tiene como objetivo explorar las experiencias de hombres adultos autores de violencia sexual como participantes de una intervención psicosocial de grupo. Esta intervención objetiva la reflexión sobre la violencia cometida contra niños y adolescentes, es ofrecida por instituciones públicas de salud, y sus participantes son encaminados por los tribunales criminales. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa de carácter etnográfico. Se buscó conocer cómo ocurre el enfrentamiento de estigmas sociales, como también el compromiso con la actividad terapéutica. El instrumento utilizado fue la observación y el registro de ocho secciones de grupo. Los participantes fueron compuestos por seis hombres con media de edad de 44 años. El análisis se concentró en las observaciones de hablas y comportamientos relativos a las siguientes cuestiones: ¿Cómo fue su experiencia en el grupo? ¿Cómo fue participar de un grupo como este? Para la discusión, los resultados fueron organizados en zonas de sentido: sentimientos; aprendizajes; cambios; y superación, siendo ejemplificados con hablas de los participantes. Los testimonios analizados enfocaron en la importancia de la construcción de un ambiente terapéutico, sin juzgamientos ni críticas, seguro y de reciprocidad, que favorezca una discusión de temas que no son debatidos en el cotidiano de estos hombres, además del énfasis en la positividad de la charla de grupo. El límite de la investigación se encuentra en el enfoque al tema, que trae una conversación plena de ansiedad, duda y miedo de admisión de culpabilidad. Otro límite es el acceso a estos individuos. Además de esto, hay la particularidad de que las autoras sean representantes del género femenino y estén investigando en un contexto caracterizado por impases característicos de ambientes extremamente machistas.

Palabras clave: procesos terapéuticos, agresiones sexuales, delincuente sexual.

Résumé

La présente étude vise à explorer les vécus et les expériences des hommes adultes auteurs de violences sexuelles en tant que participants à une intervention psychosociale de groupe. Cette intervention vise à réfléchir sur la violence commise contre les enfants et les adolescents. Elle est offerte par des institutions de santé publique, et ses participants sont envoyés par les juridictions pénales. Il s'agit d'une recherche qualitative de nature ethnographique. On a cherché à comprendre comment se déroule la lutte contre les stigmates sociaux, ainsi que l'engagement dans l'activité thérapeutique. L'outil utilisé a été l'observation et l'enregistrement de huit séances de groupe. Les participants étaient composés de six hommes âgés en moyenne de 44 ans. L'analyse s'est concentrée sur les observations des discours et des comportements relatifs aux questions suivantes : Comment s'est passée votre expérience dans le groupe ? Comment était-ce de participer à un groupe comme celui-ci ? Pour la discussion, les résultats ont été organisés en zones de signification : sentiments ; apprentissages ; changements ; et dépassement, illustrés par des déclarations des participants. Les témoignages analysés se sont concentrés sur l'importance de construire un environnement thérapeutique, sans jugement ni critique, sécurisant et réciproque, permettant de discuter de sujets rarement débattus dans le quotidien de ces hommes, en plus de l'accent mis sur la positivité de la conversation de groupe. La limite de la recherche réside dans l'approche du thème, qui amène une conversation pleine d'anxiété, de doute et de peur d'admettre sa culpabilité. Une autre limite est l'accès à ces individus. En outre, il y a la particularité que les auteures, en tant que représentantes du genre féminin, effectuent leurs recherches dans un contexte marqué par des impasses caractéristiques des environnements extrêmement machistes.

Mots-clés: processus thérapeutiques, agressions sexuelles, agresseur sexuel.

Child sexual violence is a complex phenomenon that occurs in different social and economic strata and can be defined as any sexual practice involving children or adolescents, in which they do not fully understand the situation and are therefore unable to give their consent (World Health Organization [WHO], 2017). This issue has had an increasing repercussion in the Brazilian context, both socially and academically. However, the focus still prevails on victimization, while the aggressor, in this text's case, the adult male perpetrator of sexual violence, continues to be little studied (Meneses et al., 2016; Said, 2019; Wolff et al., 2016). International (Bowden et al., 2017; Grady et al., 2016; Marshall, 2018) and national (Meneses et

al., 2016; Setubal et al., 2020) authors agree on the need to offer interventions to the perpetrator of sexual violence, both male and female, so that there is effectiveness in the protective circuit for victims (Tavares et al., 2021).

The Epidemiological Bulletin (Ministry of Health, 2018) showed that 184,524 cases of sexual violence were reported, of which 58,037 (31.5%) were against children and 83,068 (45.0%) against adolescents. Another figure is the number of people imprisoned for rape of a vulnerable person between 2015 and 2016, 6,072, according to the report from Levantamento Nacional de Informações Penitenciárias (Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2017), a crime typified as practicing any sexual action with a minor under the age of 14 (*Decree-Law No. 2,848*, 1940). It is important to note that in the National Plan to Combat Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents (National Committee to Combat Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents [CONANDA], 2013) the provision of care for perpetrators of sexual violence, i.e. the state has a responsibility to offer interventions to this public, and not just to the victims. However, there needs to be a paradigm shift between punishing *versus* giving attention/treating, so that health care can be offered, promoting discussions about adopting a public policy aimed at getting to know and transforming the participants in this offensive circuit. This perspective already has examples in full operation in Brazil (Barros et al., 2022; Fonseca et al., 2019; Meneses et al., 2016; Tavares et al., 2021), including in the field of public health (Passarela et al., 2017).

Offering and evaluating programs to assist adults who commit violence is essential for drawing up public policies to protect the vulnerable, and even more justifiable given the large volume of court cases. It is not always possible to identify the differences between the results of these programs, but this should not discourage the maintenance of these initiatives. Participation in an action of this nature (reflection on behavior that harms others) facilitates the emergence of motivation to seek changes and the acquisition of interactional skills, as well as the regulation of emotions. Thus, these gains have an impact on legal accountability and other areas of the perpetrator's life (Murphy & Richards, 2021).

There is strong evidence of the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions for perpetrators of violence, whether individual or group. Studies evaluating these programs show that individuals/groups who participate in some form of these actions have a lower rate of recidivism of the violent act, compared to those who have not attended any treatment (Marshall, 2018; Murphy & Richards, 2021; Przybylski, 2015; Souza & Maciel, 2018). This finding concerns widely known programs, as well as different approaches, and indicates a reduced likelihood of other sexual and non-sexual violence (Lobanov-Rostovsky, 2015; Stinson et al., 2017; Vasconcelos & Cavalcante, 2019).

When analyzing the intervention process, the quality of relationships, the presence of empathy, the absence of criticism/judgment/prejudice, whether between team members or group members, is more important than the choice of a particular theoretical-methodological model. The style of conducting the intervention should be non-confrontational, encouraging mutual help, or the gaining of affective and secure relationships, taking the focus off inappropriate conduct and focusing on the possibility of transformations and strengthening decisions (Marshall, 2018; Meneses et al., 2016).

The literature on sexual violence is particularly interested in evaluating the effectiveness of therapeutic care, focusing on the characteristics of professionals, the therapeutic alliance and the group process (Marshall, 2018; Przybylski, 2015; Stinson et al., 2017). Even though there is a lot of discrepancy in the evaluations of care models, there is consensus and evidence that a reduction in the recurrence of violent acts occurs with individuals who have had this experience (Murphy & Richards, 2021; Przybylski, 2015). One issue that is gaining importance is the perception of intervention participants about this experience, which can lead to a better understanding of how to design other interventions. It is a matter of understanding which aspects are present in the engagement, the relational and understanding facilitators, the points that link the commission of violence with life itself, coping with the feeling of shame or recognizing the victim's suffering (Bowden et al., 2017). In an intervention with this audience, it is observed that in addition to the program content, the characteristics of the facilitators, the climate in which the intervention is conducted, the therapeutic alliance, as well as the participants' perception of the program, are factors that impact the effectiveness of the treatment (Said, 2019).

Research aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of treatment with adult perpetrators of sexual violence tends to focus on recidivism and fails to address the individual's experience of being part of the intervention's interactional/therapeutic processes (Marshall, 2018; Przybylski, 2015). However, Bowden et al. (2017) point out that individual experience is a determining factor in whether the individual completes what is proposed, since their perception of the treatment and the therapists probably influences their level of engagement in the intervention. It is considered that this is an issue that demands attention and should be incorporated into the evaluation of the program, with the aim of achieving effective treatment.

In recent decades, there has been an increase in reflective therapeutic actions aimed at men who commit violence against women, bringing a theoretical, methodological and ethical provocation to the discussion of the subject and individuals (Beiras et al., 2020b). In terms of the theoretical approach to the subject, systemic thinking is used to better understand the complexity of the phenomenon of sexual violence, seeking to understand the cycle of violence and the interrelationship of the factors associated with the commission of sexual violence. Vasconcellos (2013) also contributes, proposing that the paradigms of instability, complexity and the value of appreciating the context are vectors for interpreting and recognizing the phenomenon.

This research is based on a qualitative design carried out by Bowden et al. (2017) with adult perpetrators of sexual violence. Their aim was to investigate motivation, engagement and coping with social stigmas related to sexual violence. This study seeks to expand on these contributions, focusing specifically on adults who have committed sexual violence against children and adolescents and who are being held accountable by the judicial system. The main objective of this study is to analyze the perceptions of participants (adult perpetrators of sexual violence) in a group psychosocial intervention about the experience of being part of a therapeutic action aimed at reflecting on the violence committed.

Method

Research context

This is qualitative, ethnographic research, using full participant observation, which involves distancing, respect and, at the same time, does not impose restrictions on contact with the recorded material. This method benefits the conditions in which individuals refuse to sign the “consent agreement” to the research (Flick, 2009, p. 204; Nogueira et al., 2020). Data collection took place in the first half of 2022, in a program that cares for perpetrators of intrafamily sexual violence against children and adolescents. This program is located within the health area and the individuals assisted are referred to under the obligation of criminal courts (criminal execution court, alternative measures court, open execution court), after serving a sentence in a closed regime, or, still, in compliance with an open or semi-open regime. Sentencing takes place under article 217 - having carnal conjunction or practicing a libidinous act with a minor under the age of 14 - of the Penal Code (Decree-Law No. 2,848, 1940). The services are provided by a multidisciplinary team made up of professionals from psychology (one man and one woman), social services (two women) and psychiatry (one man). The cycle of care consists of: 1) assessment (individual, family and psychiatric interviews); 2) psychosocial care (group/individual); 3) follow-up (if necessary) after the stage of care. All those referred by the courts follow this path, even though the courts only have information on attendance and whether or not the program stages have been completed. The criteria for referring individuals refer solely to the Public Prosecutor’s Office and the courts.

Context of access to individuals

The information presented here was accessed during the group sessions, which last three and a half hours, take place every two weeks and are offered 2/3 times a year. The themes of the sessions are predefined: promoting group integration, confronting discrimination, personal victimization, masculinities, sexuality, risk/protection factors, sexual desire and future plans. The group sessions are organized into four stages: warm-up, development, sharing and a final ritual. In order to facilitate interaction between the participants and the team, as well as reduce the climate of tension when addressing the issue of sexual violence, a playful approach is adopted with the use of dramatic games, drawings, collages, modeling clay, songs and other resources (Meneses et al., 2016; Nogueira, 2020; Wolff et al., 2016).

Participants

In general terms, the Ministry of Health’s Epidemiological Bulletin (2018) points out that the perpetrators of sexual violence against children and/or adolescents are mostly men and have family ties to the victim, such as father, stepfather, grandfather, among others. A study carried out in Brazil (Penso et al., 2016) showed that perpetrators of sexual violence reproduce the characteristics of the Brazilian prison population, and are men with low levels of education, working in underemployed jobs and belonging to social classes with lower purchasing power.

The group intervention involved the participation of six men, with varying attendance at the different sessions (Table 1). All the participants were heterosexual, aged between 38 and 53 (average age 44.8), one participant was single, and the others were married or in a stable union. In terms of schooling, one participant was not literate, two had incomplete primary education, one had incomplete secondary education, and one had completed secondary education. Two participants worked in the informal market, one worked in the formal market, one was retired, and one was a self-employed salesman. Most of the participants declared themselves to be brown and black and only one declared himself to be white. Regarding the sexual violence committed, all of them had committed intrafamilial sexual violence, with the victims being girls between the ages of 1 and 16.

Table 1*Information about the group sessions.*

Group sessions	No. participants	Theme	Day
1st session	6	Group integration	22/03/2022
2nd session	4	Confronting discrimination	05/04/2022
3rd session	4	Surviving violence	19/04/2022
4th session	4	Masculinities	03/05/2022
5th session	3	Sexuality	17/05/2022
6th session	3	Risk and protection	07/06/2022
7th session	4	Sexual desire	21/06/2022
8th session	4	Project for the future	05/07/2022

Instruments

The instrument used for the analysis was the observation and recording of the eight group sessions, the themes of which are described in Table 1. It is important to note that the period of observation and recording was when the institution was adapting to the return of face-to-face group sessions, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Group psychosocial intervention has a delicate characteristic, as it elicits many reservations and ambiguous positions from the participating individuals when approached directly. As a result, it has been decided to keep permanent observers of group actions so that it would be possible to build up a body of knowledge that would provide access and interest, as well as publicity. An example of this initiative is the use of ethnography as a way of advancing knowledge of this reality (Andrada, 2018; Nogueira et al., 2020). Observation is a method that allows access to the field and the individual, especially in situations where the aspects are present (reserve, secrecy, interface with justice), and which involves backtracking on the authorization of recordings.

The first stage of all the sessions, the warm-up, was an individual self-massage that involved touching the face, head, arms, legs and hands with the tips of the fingers. The first session was aimed at welcoming and integrating the group and the second stage focused on development, with participants being asked to draw a picture of something they liked and explain it to the group. After this, the group contract was drawn up, specifying timetables, limits on absences, confidentiality and the obligation to wear a mask due to Covid-19. Next, images of boats in different situations were put up on the walls - the participants had to choose an image that represented the feeling of being in the group activity - and finally, there was sharing, a time to report on what they had learned from the session.

The second session, tackling discrimination, had the game of bad guy, victim and detective as the main activity. The bandit eliminated the victims with a wink, while the detective had to identify the bandit. The participants discussed the names society gives to thugs and explored the stigmas attached to men accused of sexual violence. At the end, they were invited to reflect on how they would like to be perceived by society, choosing a name by which they would like to be called. For the third session, personal victimization, an activity was proposed using modeling clay. Participants had to make an object used to commit violence and then take that same object and turn it into something good. Finally, different ways of relieving anger were discussed.

In the fourth session, masculinities, the participants were instructed to close their eyes while the team placed stones on the floor of the room. They were then to look at these stones as the teachings they had received throughout their lives about what it means to be a man. Phrases such as “a man doesn’t cry”, “a man has to provide for the household”, “a man has to be a catch”, were quoted. These phrases were written on paper, pinned up on the walls and then rewritten after reflection. In the fifth session, sexuality, the story about the creation of the sexes was told, and a deck of cards with phrases and questions about sexuality was used. After this, they had to tell a story involving the sexuality of a boy. All the stories presented were about homosexuality. At the end, the participants received a drawing of a box and reflected on which aspects of sexuality to keep and which to discard in their lives.

In the sixth session, risk/protection factors, the theme was reflection on the story of Ulysses and the siren song. The participants had to draw a picture of the part of the story that had most caught their attention. They used chalk and a candle to make the wax, symbolizing protection. They were then given a sheet of paper and asked to write down a “wax” and a “tie”, which would be protective factors in their lives. In the seventh meeting, sexual desire, the reflection was based on two cases involving sexual violence against children. The participants had to come up with protective strategies for these cases.

In the last session, a project for the future, the team tried to encourage the participants to think about personal projects for their lives. Each person was given a piece of paper and asked to divide it into pieces and draw (on each piece) the

actions they wanted to take in the future. They were also asked to allocate one of the spaces to a protection strategy they had learned about in the group. There was also a wheel of wishes, in which they declared their wishes to each other. The ritual was based on handing out a “certificate” of completion of participation in the sessions.

Information collection procedure

An observer carried out the recording in a thorough, dense and complete manner, seeking to follow the descriptive aspects, such as the behavior and speech of the participants within the group intervention, and the subjective aspects, such as their own impressions, highlighting their subjectivity (Gobo & Marciniak, 2016; Jerolmack & Khan, 2018). The researcher had access to the field to get to know how the entire group care process worked, familiarize herself with the team members and the context, develop ethnographic skills, train in observation and recording, from the beginning of the year in question, and was present at all the group sessions. A notebook and pen were used to record the information, and the participants’ medical records were accessed to obtain their sociodemographic data. This data was recorded, taking care to protect names or information that could compromise the identity of the participants. To make the recording operational, the observer sat at the back of the room, outside the group circle, remaining silent. During the first few minutes of the first session, she was introduced and briefed on the role of observation and recording, as well as asking permission for this activity. They were also informed that the records would not be made available for the judicial context, by means of a document/report, and that the information would only be of interest for the purpose of the research. All the participants in the group agreed to the recording activity, without any request to check its content. At the end of the last session, two questions were asked with the aim of understanding the individuals’ experiences of taking part in the group. The questions were: What was your experience like in the group? What was it like to take part in a group like this? The reference for these questions is in the proposal already mentioned by Bowden et al. (2017).

Information analysis

Initially, a fluid and extensive reading of all the material contained in the records was carried out, followed by assigning meanings to the speeches that denoted a personal or interactional expression of qualification of participation in the group activity. After this stage, we tried to highlight common meanings, identifying patterns of similarity or continuity. This is a content analysis proposal (Rey, 2005) with an emphasis on the production of meanings (indicators) and the construction of common meanings (zones/cores of meaning of the individual), which make up the interpretative sets. The indicator has no value as an isolated and static element, but as part of a process that works in close and constant interrelation with other indicators (Rey, 2005). This interconnection between indicators leads to the definition of the area of meaning (broader category) of the object studied. After a first interpretative construction, another evaluator, with experience and knowledge of the subject of adult perpetrators of sexual violence, carried out a second interpretative construction, identifying the nuances of these zones of meaning, grasping the significance of the information present in each one. The two evaluators discussed the categories and their contents from three perspectives: the subjective impressions of the observation, the statements referring to the emotions and affections present in the participants’ reactions, and the answers presented at the end of the last session. At the end, the discussion was organized into four areas of meaning: the emotions and feelings aroused during the intervention; the recognition of learning; the appreciation of changes; and the perception of overcoming. Rey’s (2005) methodological proposal is in line with the evaluative perspective of the presence of the subjectivity of the researcher/observer, in the research field situation, as well as in the interpretative work of the information.

Ethical care

This study is part of the project Evaluation and Intervention with the Perpetrator of Sexual Offenses Against Children and Adolescents, which received a favorable opinion from the Research Ethics Committee of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Brasilia in March 2015. This is a larger project, which has welcomed additions referring to thematic sections that expand on results already published (Meneses et al., 2016; Nogueira, 2020). Due to the sensitive involvement in the possible identification of the context, institution or location of the research, a position of avoiding further information that could offer approximate indications about these individuals has been adopted.

Discussion

This section begins with a more general appraisal, following Rey’s (2005) advice on recovering impressions of the interpretation process which are present in a recursive way throughout the analysis. Thus, the analysis of the observations, referring to the eight sessions, pointed to the subjective experiences of the participants after the complaint, the emotions

and learnings during the group and the reorganization after its conclusion. After the accusation and the start of the criminal proceedings, the participants reported feeling humiliated, angry, sad and alone. When they joined the group, they reported fear. However, during the sessions, they felt supported and had positive experiences. According to them, the sessions contributed to important learning, including better communication skills and interpersonal relationship management, reflected in changes in behavior, such as patience, tolerance and empathy. Participation in the group brought a sense of new beginnings, a belief in the possibility of change and the ability to overcome challenges. To conclude the discussion, the results were organized into areas of meaning: about feelings; about learning; about changes in behaviour; and about overcoming. Speeches from the participants, recorded during the sessions, are presented to illustrate and give greater consistency to the discussion.

Feelings/emotions present in the intervention

The first core of meaning concerns the emotional characteristics of the individuals, more precisely how they felt after the accusation/prosecution was made. This condition prevailed and was maintained from the beginning of the group intervention, as well as throughout all the sessions. Following the complaint, the individuals expressed feelings of humiliation, anger, sadness, loneliness and injustice, as they reported having been accused of a crime they had not committed, as expressed by P1: “being accused of something you didn’t do, that you know the person was making up, the anger grows a lot... the feeling of injustice is strong”. He also mentions having felt humiliated from the moment he arrived at the police station and found himself alone; P2: “at the time of the trial, seeing a one-and-a-half-year-old person say that you did something stupid to them, it’s complicated”; P3: “I felt sad, like I was a monster”; and P5: “the police humiliated me, I was called a jack, a rapist”.

The denial of responsibility in sexual violence has been intensively studied by authors who point to cognitive distortion as an auxiliary tool in reducing anxiety resulting from the commission of violent action (Marshall, 2018; Wolff et al., 2016). Cognitive distortion is a justification developed by the perpetrator of sexual violence and its main function is to neutralize negative emotions that arise from internal conflict and social stigmatization (Nogueira, 2020). Authors indicate reports of perpetrators of sexual violence who repeatedly designate themselves as “innocent”, even after trial and sentencing (Meneses et al., 2016; Nogueira et al., 2020). There is a major change in the outlook on life, the future and family and personal relationships, which are determined from the moment the perpetrator of sexual violence is identified as such. Anger is linked to a possible understanding of the style of attachment (more sexual than affective) that predominated up until the moment of the complaint. The start of the group activity marks the need to change this style (Grady et al., 2016) and the continuation of angry feelings is justified by the fact that it has become an imperative topic for reflection.

It should be noted that in addition to the negative feelings, the humiliation suffered and the deprivation of liberty, in some cases there were other punitive measures, as is evident from P2’s statement: “I am a good, hard-working citizen, and I found myself imprisoned, unable to enter my home, because the courts come and take you away from your home, give you a protective order”. Pointing out these negative aspects in the reports is necessary as it shapes the group’s subjectivity at the start of the intervention. The underlying suffering is thus revealed, especially to themselves, highlighting the need to renegotiate reality to change the focus of stigmatization, in search of a more socially favourable identity (Geiger & Fischer, 2017).

The denial of sexual offense is present in other studies, associated with the negative way in which the crime of sexual violence is seen by society, leading to rejection, isolation or even very violent actions (Nogueira, 2020). As a result, one of the main sufferings, after the judicial accusation, is the judgment of society associated with the stigma of being a perpetrator of sexual violence, which causes social, family and access to the job market losses. Perpetrators of this type of violence often experience isolation and loneliness due to the reactions of people in their social circle, including family members (Geiger & Fischer, 2017; Nogueira et al., 2020). In addition, they may suffer retaliation even from other individuals involved in a similar situation (Fonseca et al., 2019). Denial of violence can also be considered a survival strategy.

These individuals are referred to group intervention under obligation (Meneses et al., 2016). P1: “It doesn’t mean it’s bad, but I’m here because of the court order”. However, all the content of the sessions is confidential, and the courts only have access to the attendance/absences at the sessions. When they join the group, the most obvious feeling is fear, corroborating the study by Nogueira et al. (2020), since they find it difficult to differentiate between the legal context and the context of the intervention and, consequently, to trust that care is not subordinated to the legal context (Meneses et al., 2016). These individuals are afraid to say anything that could harm them in the legal process. Fear was present in the words of P2: “I’m scared”, when asked about the feeling of coming to the group, and in the words of P5: “I feel like I’m in the eye of the hurricane, because of my situation”.

Over the course of the sessions, the previously negative feeling gave way to a positive feeling of gratitude. P1: “when I arrived at the service, I had wonderful support, I felt strong... the work of the team is excellent, it got me out of the bottom”;

P2: “I was scared, but I saw that it was good”; P4: “the experience in the group is being great, whether it was justice or not, if I had known about the service, I would have sought it out myself, because I leave the service feeling very good, with a renewed mind, I like it”. During the sessions, one notable aspect was that all the participants became emotional and cried, which is unusual in this type of context, as shown in the study by Habka (2017). In that study, participants in an intervention were reticent to express their feelings, possibly due to the pressure imposed by hegemonic masculinity, which values silence in relation to suffering and discourages crying, considering it a sign of fragility for men. From an early age, individuals learn that crying is an attitude associated with the female gender (Beiras et al., 2020a). This means that showing feelings and vulnerabilities is seen negatively for masculinities, since sensitivity is attributed to the supposed feminine nature, while masculine nature is associated with other characteristics such as dominance and physical strength (Habka, 2017).

In this context, when analyzing the bibliographic reviews on care for male perpetrators of violence, it is clear that the programs are concerned with providing an interventional script that can help in the acquisition of social and affective skills (Barros et al., 2022; Poletto et al., 2018). This approach is of great importance, as it seeks to deconstruct stereotypes of masculinity that restrict emotional expression and can lead to violent behavior.

Recognition of learning

Another perception was that the group was a learning environment, providing reflections on how to prevent possible new accusations. P3: “the lessons learned will help protect us from future accusations”. P1, P2, P3 and P5 report that one way of preventing another accusation, learned in the group, is “not being alone with children”. Another measure presented by P1 is to “stop playing certain games with her, like throwing cushions at each other, asking about her boyfriends and only being with her when my wife is present”. Awareness of one’s own actions was also highlighted, as in the statements by P5: “you have to be aware of what you’re doing... think more and have more patience, have more patience to act more intelligently”. These statements indicate the acquisition of skills that will be important for the operationalization of self-protective behaviors (Marshall, 2018). This becomes relevant since self-regulation plays a strategic role in individual protection, making it an effective element in preventing acts of sexual violence (Setubal et al, 2020).

Some of the most important lessons were about taking responsibility for the act committed: P2 and P5, respectively: “if he did something wrong, he has to pay for what he did”; “if the guy did it, he has to pay, he has to change, you can’t change the past, but you can learn from the past, it helps the person not to repeat the mistake, you have to put it in your mind”. At another point, P1: “since the first consultation, I’ve learned a lot, because it’s helped to open my mind... I’ve seen various ways of relieving anger”; P2: “you have to be more patient, because when you act without thinking, you can harm yourself”; P3: “I’ve learned that I’m never alone”; P4: “I’ve learned a lot about how to act”; and P5: “the scene made me think that you have to be more patient and tolerant” (the scene refers to a dramatization that took place at the seventh meeting).

A prevention/education or psychosocial intervention program should invest in these reports to raise awareness among young people or young adults about the reproduction of traditional gender attitudes. Knowing these social conditioning factors and avoiding acting impulsively are steps in the seduction/dating scripts adopted by macho men, which facilitate the expression of physical or sexual violence against women or children (Geiger & Fischer, 2017).

Indicators of adherence to treatment can be seen in the achievement of immediate gains, as in the descriptions: opening the mind, relieving anger, having more patience and tolerance. These aspects deal with encouraging and training self-regulation over time (Stinson et al., 2017). Learning to act, not feeling alone, are also statements that show that therapeutic groups - which value intergroup relationships, sociability, sharing experiences - are able to promote greater integration, a sense of life and the development of social skills. These gains occur through living with peers who realize limits and possibilities right there in group interaction. In experiential group action, speeches have a common circulation, along with suggestions and “advice” aimed at resolving conflicts and shared experiences (Hollander & Craig, 2013; Poletto et al., 2018).

Valuing existing changes

The improvement in communication between the participants and their families was one of the most significant changes: “I started to have more dialog with my wife, it’s improved a lot, because before we didn’t talk” (P1). The changes are described as: listening more, controlling impulsiveness, thinking before acting, having more patience and being calmer. In the words of P1: “I learned how to talk and deal with people, I became a more humane person, calmer, more emotional, I started to know how to listen and understand. It’s made me a different person”; P2: “I’ve become calmer and have more dialogue with my wife and children”; and P4: “I’ve become more patient, tolerant, know how to wait, think of others”. It should be noted that the discussion of the topic involves the participants, ensuring that everyone has a voice. The group provides a context of learning and mutual respect which, together with reflections on the violence committed, allows for

the construction of new ways of dealing with conflict situations. P1: “I’ve learned to be more patient, because I used to fight for nothing at work”, and P3: “so that the anger doesn’t get in, I keep quiet and leave the scene, because when I stop talking, the discussion stops”. In addition, the group stimulated reflections on the importance of taking care of personal health, leading to notable changes, as exemplified by P3: “You always have to take care of your health. I take care at home so that I don’t hurt myself, and I started taking my medication”.

When considering the lessons learned, it is possible to see that the participants had insights into potential changes in their lives and relationships. The group microsystem plays a significant role in the process of transforming their developmental trajectories, influencing other microsystems in which they are inserted, such as marital and filial relationships, and the work environment (Oliveira & Scorsolini-Comin, 2021). The group is a fundamental space for providing active listening and emotional support, allowing participants to reassess their life stories. As well as acting as an alternative in the fight against violence, this environment promotes men’s health, especially those who, due to the persistence of macho culture, face difficulties in expressing their feelings, doubts and desires (Beiras et al., 2020a).

Habka’s study (2017) emphasizes that intervention programs - aimed at men who have committed violence against women - have proven to be effective in changing their behavior, resulting in a lower rate of recidivism compared to those who do not undergo this type of intervention. These observations are also significant when working with men who have committed violence against children and adolescents and should be an integral part of a comprehensive policy to combat violence. Punishment alone is not enough to bring about lasting cultural and preventative change. It is necessary to use more comprehensive strategies that address the underlying causes of violence, enabling the transformation of the behavior of the people involved (Nogueira, 2020). In short, interventions with male perpetrators of violence, both in the context of violence against women and sexual violence against children and adolescents, are fundamental to promoting positive changes in behavior.

Perception of overcoming

Individuals accused of sexual violence are often exposed to degrading treatment in Brazilian prisons and do not receive any assistance to reintegrate into society. However, in recent years, there has been an effort to change this reality, so that there has been an increase in the number of studies (Grady et al., 2016; Nogueira et al., 2020), whether in the psychosocial (Bernardes & Mayorga, 2017) or legal spheres (Orth et al., 2021). Reflecting on when and how help and reflective actions are offered to perpetrators of sexual violence is of paramount importance in child and adolescent protection policy (Souza & Maciel, 2018; Tavares et al., 2021). However, the presence of these initiatives is scarce, and the overcoming aspect shows a maxim of the sooner the better. Participating in therapeutic or psychosocial care favors the adoption of a more positive outlook on the future, P3: “now I’m looking for new horizons to pursue life” and P4: “the group has meant a fresh start, there’s new knowledge, the stories won’t leave my head and they’re stories that I can take into my life... it’s helping me to overcome, it’s giving me strength”. Another aspect that participates in the overcoming movement is facing fear and loneliness: recognizing and feeling that you are not alone. P5: “overcoming fear and moving forward, that I’m not alone, I’m always with people who help to overcome fear”. After the group’s final reflections, P3 said: “life goes on, you have to overcome obstacles and there are various ways of overcoming them”. Working on accountability does not imply disregarding the need to encourage overcoming and preparing for future life (Souza & Maciel, 2018; Vasconcelos & Cavalcante, 2019).

As pointed out in the study by Meneses et al. (2016), when going through the experience of imprisonment, these men seek and expect family support, so that the family plays an important role in the process of resocialization and reintegration of these individuals. Family support is evidenced by the words of P1 and P3, respectively: “I feel very relieved when I receive affection from my family. I was well understood by my wife, mother, children and mother-in-law. After I told them, I felt relieved, I felt lighter”; “I told the wife, the son (he started crying), the mother, the brothers, everyone supported me. I felt more relieved when I saw that I had their support”. The family context tends to be the most supportive for these men after they leave prison. Family support, however, is not enough for these men to overcome the pain of social stigma, and they also need support from their network of friends and institutions, guaranteeing a real chance of a fresh start and successful reintegration into society (Nogueira et al., 2020). Examples in the speeches: “the help of the group’s companions is important to overcome life’s obstacles” (P2); “you have to have help from the population and you can’t be trapped in fear” (P4). Therefore, the effective resocialization of individuals accused of sexual violence requires a collective effort.

Interventions should prioritize the adoption of protective attitudes and behaviors, focusing on participants’ potential and the acquisition of new coping strategies (Said, 2019). This enables a perspective that goes beyond pathologizing and labeling, allowing everyone to be perceived for their potential and resilience, opening up space for these men to rewrite their stories, revisit their conduct and chart new paths. It is believed that the perpetrator of violence against children and adolescents should be held responsible for their actions, but that their individual history of victimization by violence should also be considered. An open group space is needed for shared reflection, allowing perpetrators of violence to reframe their

beliefs and stories, taking responsibility for their actions and envisioning other ways of building relationships (Ferreira, 2019).

Final considerations

Initially, and for several decades, the emphasis of therapeutic approaches for perpetrators of sexual abuse (adults and adolescents of both genders) was on assessing and controlling the recurrence of abusive behavior (Marshall, 2018; Przybylski, 2015). Currently, greater value is being placed on the participation and experiences that take place in the interactions between the members of these groups. How do they participate? What changes can be implemented? What positive aspects are transmitted in interactions between participants and team members? (Beiras et al., 2020b; Hollander & Craig, 2013). Thus, this text seeks to analyze the participants' perceptions of the experience of integrating a group psychosocial intervention based on the perspective of rescuing subjectivity, recognizing suffering, and expecting to achieve behavioral and interactional changes in adult perpetrators of sexual violence.

The testimonies analyzed, by perpetrators of sexual violence in this text, focused on the importance of building an environment without judgment or criticism, commonly prevalent in this situation (Bowden et al., 2017; Hollander & Craig, 2013; Marshall, 2018), in a safe and reciprocal environment, enabling a discussion of topics that are not normally discussed in the daily lives of these men, in addition to the emphasis on the positivity of group conversation. The studies (Grady et al., 2016; Vasconcelos & Cavalcante, 2019), which identify evaluations of group interventions with male perpetrators of violence, observed similar results in terms of the positive perspective. Wolf et al. (2016) consider that adopting a non-confrontational stance in the consultations helps to establish an empathetic, understanding and accepting environment, as guided by Marshall (2018). In the case of Wolff et al. (2016) and Hollander and Craig (2013), the use of playful resources to address difficult topics is highlighted, reducing tension and facilitating reflection and expression of feelings. The reflective context of the group also led participants to recognize behaviors and characteristics in themselves and others that they hadn't noticed before. In addition, engagement in group activities was favored by the identification of feelings of fear and anxiety, which precedes entry into the group (Bowden et al., 2017).

In this way, the findings of this text corroborate the results of other studies (Stinson et al., 2017) in which the participants, after the group intervention, demonstrated learning related to greater maturity to avoid risky situations, different ways of avoiding conflicts, as well as the need for accountability after committing a sexual offense. The limits of the text lie in the discussion of the topic, accountability for sexual offenses committed against children and adolescents, which allows for a conversation full of anxiety, doubt and fear of admitting guilt, as well as the participation only of perpetrators of violence who are bound by the law. In addition, there are many limits on access to these individuals, especially on their part, who are suspicious, reticent and afraid to identify themselves. This condition makes it difficult to express spontaneity and thus reduces the sample size of qualitative studies. Finally, we should also point out that the authors of this text are representatives of the female gender researching in a context that presents all the impasses that extremely macho environments offer. It is therefore fair to recognize the suffering and audacity that accompanied the stages of the research and the researchers' journey.

Referências

- Andrada, C. F. (2018). O método no centro: Relatos de campo de uma pesquisa psicossocial de perspectiva etnográfica. *Psicologia USP*, 29(2), 236-245. <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=305157319009>
- Barros, A. S., Ferraz, I. M., & Silva, K. C. (2022). Práticas da psicologia com ofensores sexuais privados de liberdade: O que revelam os artigos brasileiros? *Teoría y Crítica de la Psicología*, 18, 85–103. <http://www.teocripsi.com/ojs/index.php/TCP/article/view/345/360>
- Beiras, A., Benvenuti, M. P., Toneli, M. J. F., & Cavaler, C. M. (2020a). Narrativas que naturalizam violências: Reflexões a partir de entrevistas com homens sobre violência de gênero. *Revista Internacional Interdisciplinar INTERthesis*, 17(1), 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.5007/1807-1384.2020.e72407>
- Beiras, A., Bronz, A., & Schneider, P. F. (2020b). Grupos reflexivos de gênero para homens no ambiente virtual: Adaptações, desafios metodológicos, potencialidades. *Nova Perspectiva Sistêmica*, 29(68), 61-75. <http://doi.org/10.38034/nps.v29i68.606>
- Bernardes, J. P., & Mayorga, C. (2017). Um estudo sobre intervenções junto a homens autores de violência doméstica contra mulheres. *Revista de Psicologia*, 26(1), 1-15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5354/0719-0581.2017.46691>

- Bowden, L., Glorney, E., & Daniels, M. (2017). Individual's experiences of sexual offending therapy in a forensic psychiatric setting. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 23*(3), 278-290. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2017.1343398>
- Comitê Nacional de Enfrentamento à Violência Sexual contra Crianças e Adolescentes [CONANDA]. (2013). *Plano nacional de enfrentamento da violência sexual contra crianças e adolescentes*. Secretaria de Direitos Humanos. <http://www.codigodeconduta.turismo.gov.br/images/documentos/PNEVSCA.pdf>
- Decreto-Lei nº 2.848, de 7 de dezembro de 1940. Código Penal. Presidência da República. <https://legislacao.presidencia.gov.br/atos/?tipo=DEL&numero=2848&ano=1940&ato=1bb0za61ENNRkTf8b>
- Flick, U. (2009). *Introdução à pesquisa qualitativa* (3a ed.). Artmed.
- Ferreira, N. de M. (2019). Intervenção sistêmica no contexto da terapia com um homem autor de violência contra mulher: Estudo de caso. *Nova Perspectiva Sistêmica, 28*(63), 109-125. <https://doi.org/10.38034/nps.v28i63.474>
- Fonseca, M. C. F., Setubal, C. B., & Costa, L. F. (2019). Adulto autor de violência sexual: Estudo exploratório de avaliação de risco de reincidência. *Gerai: Revista Interinstitucional de Psicologia, 12*(2), 389-409. <http://dx.doi.org/10.36298/gerais2019120213>
- Geiger, B., & Fischer, M. (2017). Incarcerated sex offenders in rehabilitation account for their offending. *Journal of Investigative Psychology and Offending Profile, 14*(1), 43-59. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jip.1460>
- Gobo, G., & Marciniak, L. (2016). What is ethnography? In D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 100-151). SAGE.
- Rey, L. F. G. (2005). *Pesquisa qualitativa e subjetividade: Os processos de construção da informação*. Pioneira Thomson Learning.
- Grady, M. D., Swett, L., & Shields, J. J. (2016). The impact of a sex offender treatment programme on the attachment styles of incarcerated male sexual offenders. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 22*(1), 123-136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13552600.2014.894148>
- Habka, I. de C. (2017). *A experiência do homem acusado de violência doméstica que participou de um grupo reflexivo para homens à luz da Gestalt-terapia* [Monografia, Centro Universitário de Brasília]. Repositório Institucional CEUB. <https://repositorio.uniceub.br/jspui/handle/235/11471>
- Hollander, E. M., & Craig, M. (2013). Working with sexual offender via psychodrama. *Sexual Offender Treatment, 8*(2), 1-15.
- Jerolmack, C., & Khan, S. (Eds.). (2018). *Approaches to ethnography: Analysis and representation in participant observation*. Oxford University Press.
- Lobanov-Rostovsky, C. (2015). *Adult sex offender management*. Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative. <https://www.womenagainstregistry.org/Resources/pdf/SOMAPI-AdultSexOffenderManagement.pdf>
- Marshall, W. L. (2018). A brief history of psychological theory, research, and treatment with adult male sex offenders. *Current Psychiatry Reports, 20*(8), 1-8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11920-018-0920-0>
- Meneses, F. F. F., Ströher, L. M. C., Setubal, C. B., Wolff, L. S., & Costa, L. F. (2016). Intervenção psicossocial com o adulto autor de violência sexual intrafamiliar contra crianças e adolescentes. *Contextos Clínicos, 9*(1), 98-108. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4013/ctc.2016.91.08>
- Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública. (2017). *Levantamento nacional de informações penitenciárias*. Secretaria Nacional de Políticas Penais. <https://dados.mj.gov.br/dataset/infopen-levantamento-nacional-de-informacoes-penitenciarias>

- Ministério da Saúde. (2018). Boletim Epidemiológico: Análise epidemiológica da violência sexual contra crianças e adolescentes no Brasil nos anos de 2011 a 2017. Secretaria de Vigilância em Saúde. <http://portalarquivos2.saude.gov.br/images/pdf/2018/junho/25/2018-024.pdf>
- Murphy, C. M., & Richards, T. N. (2021). The efficacy of psychosocial interventions for partner violent individuals. In R. Goffner, J. W. White, L. K. Hamberger, A. Rosenbaum, V. Vaughan-Eden, & V. I. Vieth (Eds.), *Handbook of interpersonal violence and abuse across lifespan* (pp. 3417-3444). Springer.
- Nogueira, R. N. (2020). *Distorções cognitivas de ofensores sexuais em interação grupal e familiar* [Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade de Brasília]. Repositório Institucional da UNB. <https://repositorio.unb.br/handle/10482/39412>
- Nogueira, R. N., Costa, L. F., Passarela, C. F. T., & Setubal, C. B. (2020). Apreensão do sofrimento do adulto ofensor sexual em intervenção psicossocial: Uma etnografia. *Revista Subjetividades*, 20(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.5020/23590777.rs.v20i1.e9713>
- Oliveira, J., & Scorsolini-Comin, F. (2021). Percepções sobre intervenções grupais com homens autores de violência contra as mulheres. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, 33, 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1807-0310/2021v33221163>
- Orth, G. M. N., Cordeiro, M. P., & Muniz, L. A. C. (2021). Violência sexual intrafamiliar e justiça restaurativa: Relato de experiência de um caso atendido pelo CEJUSC Ponta Grossa-PR. *Revista Humanidades & Inovação*, 8(47), 208-215. <https://revista.unitins.br/index.php/humanidadesinovacao/article/view/5622>
- Passarela, C. F. T., Setubal, C. B., Meneses, F. F. F., Wolff, L. S., Costa, L. F., Stroher, L. M. C., & Vieira, T. B. (2017). Intervenção psicossocial com adulto ofensor sexual: A experiência do Alecrim (PAV/SES/GDF). In K. A. Figueiredo (Org.), *Direitos sexuais são direitos humanos: Coletânea de textos* (pp. 71-74). Comitê Nacional de Enfrentamento à Violência Sexual contra Crianças e Adolescentes.
- Penso, M. A., Conceição, M. I. G., Costa, L. F., Meneses, F. F. F., Ströher, L. M. C., Setubal, C. B., & Wolff, L. S. (2016). Perfil de ofensor sexual intrafamiliar adulto atendido em uma instituição de saúde. In L. F. Habigzang, L. C. A. Williams, & P. I. C. Gomide (Eds.), *A outra face da violência: O agressor em múltiplos contextos* (pp. 63-76). Juruá.
- Poletto, M. P., Renner, A. M., Rebeschini, C., & Arteche, A. X. (2018). Intervenções psicológicas para homens perpetradores de violência contra a mulher: Uma revisão sistemática. *Contextos Clínicos*, 11(2), 268-283. [tps://doi.org/10.4013/ctc.2018.112.11](https://doi.org/10.4013/ctc.2018.112.11)
- Przybylski, R. (2015). *Recidivism of adult sexual offenders*. Sex Offender Management Assessment and Planning Initiative. <https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/recidivism-adult-sexual-offenders>
- Said, A. P. (2019). Intervenção psicossocial com ofensoras/es sexuais intrafamiliares: Reflexões e componentes de avaliação de processo. *Revista Psicologia Política*, 19(46), 584-601. <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7422813>
- Setubal, C. B., Wolf, L. S., & Costa, L. F. (2020). Pensamentos de risco de um adulto autor de violência sexual. *Revista Psicologia e Saúde*, 12(2), 105-122. <https://dx.doi.org/10.20435/pssa.v0i0.897>
- Souza, F. B., & Maciel, W. L. S. (2018). O tratamento que as Políticas Públicas e o Plano Nacional de Enfrentamento à Violência Sexual contra Crianças e Adolescentes têm realizado junto ao agressor sexual, com a finalidade de evitar reincidências. *Revista do CEJUR/TJSC: Prestação Jurisdicional*, 6(1), 33-48. <https://doi.org/10.37497/revistacejur.v6i1.306>
- Stinson, J. D., Becker, J. V., & McVay, L. A. (2017). Treatment progress and behavior following 2 years of inpatient sex offender treatment: A pilot investigation of safe offender strategies. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 29(1), 3-27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063215570756>
- Tavares, A. S., Costa, L. F., & Moreira, D. L. (2021). Ofensa sexual cometida por adolescentes jovens/adultos. *Aletheia*, 54(2), 82-94. <http://www.periodicos.ulbra.br/index.php/aletheia/article/view/6859>

- Vasconcelos, C. S. S., & Cavalcante, L. I. C. (2019). Caracterização, reincidência e percepção de homens autores de violência contra a mulher sobre grupos reflexivos. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, 31, 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1807-0310/2019v31179960>
- Vasconcellos, M. J. E. (2013). *Pensamento sistêmico: O novo paradigma da ciência* (10a ed.). Papyrus Editora.
- Wolff, L. S., Oliveira, E. S., Marra, M. M., & Costa, L. F. (2016). O recurso psicodramático na intervenção com o adulto autor de ofensa sexual. *Revista Brasileira de Psicodrama*, 24(2), 58-68. <https://revbraspsicodrama.org.br/rbp/article/view/269>
- World Health Organization. (2017). *Responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused: WHO clinical guidelines*. WHO. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259270/9789241550147-%20eng.pdf?sequence=1>

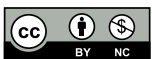
How to cite:

Sousa, R. C. G., & Costa, L. F. (2024). Participation of sexual offenders in psychosocial intervention: Journey from fear to courage. *Revista Subjetividades*, 24(3), e14225. <https://doi.org/10.5020/23590777.rs.v24i3.e14225>

Mailing address

Ranieli Carvalho Gomes de Sousa
E-mail: ranieligomes16@gmail.com

Liana Fortunato Costa
E-mail: lianaf@terra.com.br



Received: 02/23/2023
Revised: 08/27/2023
Accepted: 03/14/2024
Published: 11/29/2024