

Home is not always a safe place: A bioecological approach for the violence in pandemic time

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Abstract

The study objective was to discuss the panorama of Covid-19 and impacts on violence committed at home through Bioecological Theory and to propose strategic actions to guarantee rights and protection. Apparently, due to the need to stay at home, risk situations can be maximized in homes, worsened by the absence or minimization of the performance of protective contexts such as schools, social assistance institutions, and health centers, among others. There is an increase in danger in families due to fear of contagion and death, added by the overload of household chores concern with subsistence and other factors that differ depending on socioeconomic conditions. The characteristics of the person, the proximal processes, the contexts, and the time are identified based on this framework. We concluded about the need for a social mobilization on strategic actions of combat and confrontation, which should be undertaken by everyone, and concrete measures are proposed for this end.

Keywords: domestic violence; ecological model; pandemic.

Resumo

Nem sempre a casa é um lugar seguro: um olhar bioecológico para a violência em tempos de pandemia. Objetivou-se discutir o panorama da Covid-19 e impactos sobre a violência cometida dentro de casa, à luz da Teoria Bioecológica, e propor ações estratégicas para garantia de direitos e proteção. Constata-se que, em virtude da necessidade de permanência no lar, situações de risco podem ser maximizadas nos lares, agravadas pela ausência ou minimização da atuação de ambientes protetivos como escolas, instituições de assistência social e centros de saúde. Observa-se o aumento do perigo nas famílias decorrentes do medo do contágio e da morte, acrescidos pela sobrecarga de afazeres domésticos, preocupação com a subsistência, e outros fatores que diferem a depender das condições socioeconômicas. As características da pessoa, os processos proximais e o tempo são identificados a partir desse referencial. Conclui-se que a mobilização social é necessária para que ações estratégicas de combate e enfrentamento sejam incorporadas por todos e propostas medidas concretas para esse fim.

Palavras-chave: violência doméstica; modelo ecológico; pandemia.

Resumen

La casa no siempre es un lugar seguro: una mirada bioecológica a la violencia en tiempos de pandemia. El objetivo fue discutir el panorama de Covid-19 y los impactos sobre la violencia cometida en el hogar, bajo la Teoría Bioecológica, y proponer acciones estratégicas para garantizar los derechos y la protección. Debido a la necesidad de quedarse en casa, las situaciones de riesgo pueden maximizarse en hogares, agravadas por la ausencia o minimización del desempeño de ambientes protectores como escuelas, instituciones de asistencia social, centros de salud, etc. El peligro aumenta en las familias debido al miedo al contagio y a la muerte, añadido a la sobrecarga de tareas domésticas, preocupación con la subsistencia y otros factores que difieren según las condiciones socioeconómicas. Las características de la persona, los procesos proximales, los contextos y el tiempo son identificados con base en ese marco. Concluimos sobre la movilización social necesaria para que las acciones estratégicas de combate y afrontamiento sean hechas por todos, y se proponen medidas concretas.

Palabras clave: violencia doméstica; modelo ecológico; pandemia.

At the end of 2019, an outbreak of infection caused by the coronavirus, called Covid-19, profoundly changed the lives of residents of a province in China. However, what was a local outbreak quickly turned into a global pandemic. Brazil declared a public health emergency on February 3, 2020 (Ordinance MS / GM No. 188, 2020), its first case was confirmed on February 26, and on March 20 it recognized community transmission throughout the Brazilian territory (*Ministério da Saúde* [MS], 2020). Given this scenario, some measures related to the prevention and containment of the virus started to be recommended to the Brazilian population, with social distancing being the main one. Social distancing has been a significant strategy in combating the spread of Covid-19, but it can bring social, economic, and psychological risks that also need to be discussed. The distance of important people and support services, economic insecurity, unemployment, added to the fear of contagion and death by the virus, end up intensifying the dangers that, many times, already existed at home (*Fundação Oswaldo Cruz* [Fiocruz], 2020a). Thus, the increase in contact time within the home can favor conflicts, episodes of violence, and be quite serious for families who have already experienced domestic and intrafamily violence.

Domestic violence is that which occurs inside the home and could be perpetrated by anyone who has access to this space, since in the definition of intrafamily violence the physical space in which it occurs is not the most important factor, since its definition is related to people who commit violence, considering affective, bloody and coexistence bonds (MS, 2002). Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi and Lozano (2002) still indicate that domestic and/or intrafamily violence involves all forms of emotional, physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect or commercial treatment or another form of exploitation with a chance of causing potential damage to health, development or dignity. In Brazil, domestic violence encompasses all violence that occurs at home; and that directs at children, adolescents, and women (Stelko-Pereira & Williams, 2010).

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, a series of studies has been published highlighting an important warning about the dangers that may be hidden inside home. Marques, Moraes, Hasselmann, Deslandes and Reichenteim (2020) show the increase in domestic violence during the period of social distancing in several countries and indicate in Brazil an increase of 17% in the number of calls to 180, a central that answers

notifications from violence against women. It is not possible to state that all reported cases also involved the children of women, however it is important to highlight that the testimony of conjugal violence is quite harmful to the healthy development of children and adolescents (Antoni & Koller, 2010; Justino & Nascimento, 2020). Vieira, Garcia and Maciel (2020) also show an increase in domestic violence due to forced coexistence and the economic and health instability brought by the coronavirus. This reality is not exclusive to Brazil. Peterman et al. (2020) pointed out that already in March, data were suggesting a higher occurrence of violence against children, adolescents, and women during the pandemic in several countries such as China, Australia, and the United States. The researchers point out several aspects that need to be considered as risk factors during periods of crisis for committing violence, highlighting a series of economic, social, demographic, political, and even individual factors.

Krug et al. (2002), highlight that WHO has suggested an ecological model for understanding the multiple factors that act in violence inspired by the discussions that Bronfenbrenner had already brought in his bioecological theory. The purpose of this article is to discuss how the Bioecological Theory of Human Development allows addressing the different relational dimensions that favor the occurrence of domestic violence in the social distancing and helps us to think about strategic actions to face it. For this, we present the theory discussing its main characteristics articulating with Covid-19 and its repercussions for Brazilian families, especially those who experience situations of sexual violence, and we present proposals for strategic actions to face violence in times of pandemic.

Bioecological theory of human development

Bronfenbrenner's theory reached its most mature phase in the 1990s, having Proximal Processes (PP) as its main axis, which is characterized by strong, long-lasting relationships, with increasing degrees of complexity, with the regularity of frequency and with certain stability of events. The PPs make up with three other elements what he called the Process-Person-Context-Time Model (PPCT) (Rosa & Tudge, 2013).

Time was classified by Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) in three dimensions: microtime refers to the frequency of daily events promoted by interpersonal

relationships. The mesotime addresses events that occurred in slightly more intervals of time, such as days or weeks. The macrotime is related to social events which almost always occurred at the level of culture or ideology, marking the historical time of a people, nation, or the whole world, as is the case of Covid-19 (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

If we draw a timeline, it is possible to identify that Covid-19 was first identified in China in December 2019. On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that it constituted a Public Health Emergency of International Importance, and on March 11, 2020, it was declared a pandemic (WHO, 2020). Because of the high contamination, a series of measures came into force in several countries. Simple measures such as hand hygiene were oriented, transforming the daily actions of families and the dynamics of the microsystem until then. The hygiene of the body itself, the environment, and the products brought to the domestic sphere took care of daily activities. However, in Brazil, the simplest actions are challenging, especially for populations in precarious housing and sanitation conditions. The presence of the virus brought new stress and difficulties showing that daily habits changes depend on the context where these changes are required and not only on people's goodwill.

The time extension of Covid-19 is unknown and, for the time being, it is very difficult to identify when there will be safety or less risk for contamination and return to daily activities. Although there is still no data to indicate the real impact of the pandemic on human development, Covid-19 is undoubtedly a historic event that impacts everyone's life in many different ways. The life of those who experience domestic violence is being crossed by the pandemic, especially considering the orientation of social distance and the closure of the main support services, reducing daily interpersonal relationships and increasing vulnerability. Nevertheless, domestic violence needs to be perceived both through its microgenetic history (microtime) and its ontogenetic history. Violence crosses generations and tells a story that is repeated in humanity for a long time, it is not something new or that emerged during the pandemic.

When dealing with the **person** Bronfenbrenner (2001) states that it is necessary to observe specific aspects of personal characteristics in his analysis. According to the author, they have a genotypic inscription that is manifested in phenotypic, that is, they are visible by the appearance and the way that a person interacts with his environment, with people, with objects,

and with the symbols present in this environment. (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1993). Contrary to being static, they can be hereditary, built-in interactions with contexts, or be configured in the results of proximal processes.

According to Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006), personal characteristics can promote or inhibit development and are divided into three categories: strengths, resources, and demands. Strength characteristics can be generative or disruptive. Generative ones are presented as development promoters and are related to the person's ability to interact with the environment, both the immediate and the most distant communicative and curiously when engaging in activities with people, objects, and symbols. The characteristics of inhibitory forces are attributes that make it difficult for people to interact in the environment, such as difficulty controlling their actions and emotions, shyness, and unwillingness to explore the environment. In a critical period like the pandemic, the person's characteristics will likely be able to illustrate how generative they can be, in the case of expression of active behaviors such as self-control, curiosity, commitment to activities, responsiveness, and tolerance to frustration when dealing with projects interrupted for reasons extrinsic to their will. Disruptive forces find a vast field of expression amid the need for social distance, in the form of skepticism, pessimism, apathy, and introspection.

Development can be limited by the lack of resource characteristics or promoted by the presence of resource characteristics such as skills and knowledge acquired throughout life. The resources of a biopsychological nature will be decisive in coping with the stressful situation that configures Covid-19, while new skills resulting from the need to carry out new challenges will also expand the repertoire of people. The experiences, skills, knowledge, and capabilities that were developed before the pandemic will be quite valuable resources to be reframed for new challenging situations. The grieving process, the way to deal with the limitation of interactions, the significant decrease in microsystems, and the radical changes in routines will summon knowledge previously built to anchor themselves.

Demand characteristics are capable of stimulating or inhibiting reactions from the social environment in promoting proximal processes. Thus, the development will depend on how the environment interacts with the person's characteristics, such as sex, gender, age, and ethnicity (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The forces, resources, and demands will also be transformed in the pandemic period, in the interactions with

the social group with which one is confined, and can have an effect on the initiatives and the course of the proximal processes that will be experienced by people in this period of intense sanitary, social, and economic crisis. It is really relevant that in the pandemic period, personal attributes are not evaluated in a deterministic way since they can be contextual, unveiled, or exacerbated in the circumstances that contribute to their expression.

Proximal processes are increasingly complex processes of reciprocal interaction between the person and other people, objects, and symbols. The more regular the time of occurrence of proximal processes, the more effective they become in promoting human development. Proximal processes have a more effective impact, promoting skills in human development in stable environments with more resources. Besides, it can reduce dysfunctional impacts on the development of people living in unstable environments and with limited resources (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). According to Rosa and Tudge (2013), Bronfenbrenner has always considered proximal processes as a priority resulting positively in development, however proximal processes can also be considered inverse when they would lead to greater dysfunctional results (Merçon-Vargas, Lima, Rosa, & Tudge, 2020). The inverse proximal processes comprise interactions that act with an inverted correlation with the developmental result, that is, the stronger, the better the dysfunctional results would be.

Social distancing has provided bigger coexistence, contributing to the increase of proximal processes among family members and between people with objects and symbols. It is common to observe reports of people recognizing transformative processes during this period, developing skills in fields not explored before, whether related to domestic tasks, decisive innovations in work or study aspects. However, the applicability of the inverse proximal processes concept (Merçon-Vargas et al., 2020) is observed when we approach the scenarios of violations committed at home. The period of distancing has provided, in homes whose aggressors had already acted before the pandemic, progressive processes of conflicts, physical, psychological and sexual violence, intensified by the greater permanence in the environment, and consequently greater exposure, and what is aggravating, away from protective equipment that acted as powerful mesosystems for detecting and preventing violence, such as schools, hospitals, among others. Isolation allows a closed system, such as a home

where violence occurs, to become even more secluded and produce bigger effects, as the frequency and intensity of risk factors are maximized. In the virtual environment, stimulated as a communication vehicle during social distancing, the inverse proximal processes have also shown harmful interactions, depending on the age group and the content that can be accessed as part of daily and progressive activities, especially among children and adolescents who until then had not had access and guidance to criticality and selectivity to recognize potentially damaging and harmful approaches.

For Bronfenbrenner (1993), the context is characterized by any event or condition of the environment that can affect or be affected by the developing person. The context is understood at four levels, the first being the most immediate environment, known as the microsystem. In it, interactions occur face-to-face through engagement in progressively more complex activities with people, objects, or symbols. The microsystem has particular physical and symbolic characteristics that can allow or inhibit human development, manifested in personal traits; and the performance of social roles (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

During the pandemic, the family microsystem, which in general is the first microsystem that we participate in, takes on an even more relevant role. All care becomes almost exclusively the responsibility of the family. Families start to assume functions that until then were shared with the school, relatives, caregivers, and neighbors. Increased coexistence, in a scenario of uncertainty and fear, which characterizes the pandemic can make the whole family group more prone to violent reactions, whether physical or psychological (Fiocruz, 2020a).

The set of microsystems, such as home, school, work, church, and community, form the second contextual level, the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). During Covid-19, the set of basic mesosistemas for help, support, and care of children and adolescents is closed. Without access to school and the support network in general, families do not have the services offered by the education, social assistance network, or other adult caregivers to share the care of their children. The risk factor is strongly expanded for families that experience a situation of socioeconomic vulnerability, as the school, in addition to providing care and education, can be a source of food and, in the absence of it, families need to build new strategies for the search for resources that will ensure survival and may end up leaving their children alone. In the absence of the caregiver,

the child is at the mercy of other adults who may come to explore their work and even their body and sexuality. Miserable situations, added to the lack of protective adults or family neglect, can also set precedents for sexual exploitation (Vega & Paludo, 2011; 2015). In these cases, the family ends up transferring the responsibility for sustenance and relations with the safety net to their children, who are already very fragile and become even more vulnerable due to social distancing.

The reduction in the number of people in health care, social assistance, and public security teams can hinder access to families that most need care at the time of the pandemic. The lack of contact with the professionals of the safety net and with the teachers can greatly reduce the chances of notification of violence since families generally do not reveal what happens inside their homes. Rates, Melo, Mascarenhas and Malta (2015) analyzed 17,900 notifications of violence against children aged 0 to 9 years registered by public health services in the country in 2011 and found that 73.6% of the cases happened at home and parents being the main aggressors, confirming the idea that the home is not always a safe place. Researchers identified negligence as the most reported type of violence, followed by physical, sexual, and psychological. They also observed that negligence and physical violence are more likely to occur in boys and sexual and psychological violence in girls, suggesting that the person's characteristics can be considered a risk factor for such violence. Another relevant aspect brought up in the study by Rates et al. (2015) is that the data analyzed were obtained from the Notifiable Diseases Information System (SINAN NET), a system fed by health services, reference centers for violence, outpatient clinics, among others. However, how can services feed a notification system if people are unable to reach them? In the context of a pandemic, it is likely that they will only be known in severe cases that require some type of emergency care at the hospital or health. Most cases can remain hidden inside the home.

During the period of social distancing, many parents are doing their work remotely, and still, others lost their jobs, and this directly affects the life of the whole family. The environments that influence the lives of people who do not directly participate in them are called by Bronfenbrenner (1993) an exosystem. Therefore, in the time of a pandemic, the family begins to experience more strongly the consequences of measures taken in the world of work of one or more of its members, being affected more strongly by their exosystems. Children started to live more closely with the effects of

their parents 'work, often experiencing stressful situations and dividing the parents' attention with the work environment at the same time. In this way, the parents 'work starts to weaken as an exosystem, as the distance between the child and the world of the parents' work becomes very small.

The last level macrosystem is formed by the set of values, beliefs, habits, and ways of life existing in a given culture (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996). Depending on the beliefs about the pandemic and the coping strategies adopted, families can adhere more or less to the guidelines of managers. Considering the pandemic as a serious public health condition that has not yet been experienced by many generations, the role of opinion-forming agents becomes even more relevant in facing the pandemic. In this scenario, the media, the public management of biosafety measures and, even, the guidance of religious leaders can contribute to the formation of beliefs about the adequate and safest form of prevention of Covid-19. In Brazil, for example, the divergence of guidelines in different spheres of government has contributed to the low adherence to health measures among individuals and companies and may further aggravate the impact of the crisis that the pandemic generates (Silva, Lordello, Mietto, & Schmidt, 2020).

Thus, Bioecological Theory presents itself as an important theoretical lens for analyzing the phenomena of domestic violence in times of pandemic, as it guides to an analysis of the synergistic effects of its four elements. It differs from other theories that, even with contextualist proposals, isolate variables, analyzing the effects of one and the other, and not of their interaction. Bioecological Theory shifts reflections that analyze the person or the context exclusively to an understanding that allows a view of development as a joint function of the person and their context in a given time (Tudge & Rosa, 2020).

Specificities of sexual violence interpreted through the lens of Bioecological Theory: Before, during and after Pandemic

In the second half of March, when the country was beginning to deal with the spread of Covid-19 cases, records of domestic violence rose by around 17% (*Ministério da Mulher, da Família e dos Direitos Humanos* [MMFDH], 2020a). In April, data released by the National Human Rights Ombudsman revealed a 19% drop in the number of suspected sexual violence against children and adolescents on Dial 100 compared to the

same month in 2019 (MMFDH, 2020b). In homes where violence was already common, it is possible to consider that with increased coexistence with the aggressor, the duration and frequency of violence could also be increased. Bradbury-Jones and Isham (2020) highlight that domestic violence is marked precisely by the occurrence of violations within the home where it can continue to happen and remain veiled. For the researchers, isolation is already a control, surveillance, and coercion tactic widely used by aggressors, so staying at home is not always safe and can have direct implications for children, adolescents, and women, especially with the imposition of social distancing for all people.

The most frequently practiced sexual violence within the family is abuse. Against children and adolescents, it is sexual submission to the pleasure of an adult, or an older person, or physically bigger and stronger, or who has power over them (Sanderson, 2005). Against women, sexual violence is generally practiced by intimate partners and also implies a power relationship. It is a type of violence that usually occurs concurrently with physical and psychological violence. Furthermore, the numbers of sexual violence are difficult to measure in this population because when they occur, in the context of marriage, they are covered up in many cultures by the belief that the wife has to sexually satisfy her spouse (Schraiber et al., 2007).

But it is here to understand sexual violence in the light of Bioecological Theory. As mentioned, the peculiarity of this theoretical lens is the synergistic performance of its elements to understand the phenomena. When analyzing the behavior of victims of sexual violence, we realize that the person's characteristics can change according to the types of proximal processes that are established between them, their aggressors, and other elements of the environment in which they live. The experience of sexual violence (inverse proximal processes) can cause a person to aggravate or present new dysfunctional personal characteristics and limit or prevent their development. In cases of intra-family sexual violence, whose risk during the pandemic is increased, there are chronic aspects of sexual abuse committed over prolonged periods, which leads to a recognition of the change in personal characteristics due to the violence. One of the effects of this type of violence is the destructuring of identities, when the victims point out characteristics that were modified with the exposure to violence, such as joy, spontaneity, proactivity replaced by sadness and introspection that were not part of their identity before the event (Costa, Grossi,

& Macarro, 2016; Lordello & Costa, 2017). These and other examples show that generative forces give way to disruptive forces and affect biopsychological resources and demands that can limit or prevent their potential development for an effective confrontation of the situation of violence.

Besides, specificities of the dynamics that involve violence, such as the belief in authoritarian values, marked by hostility and power imbalance (Antoni & Koller, 2010), gains strength in this pandemic moment, with greater acceptance of physical and psychological aggression. It is possible that the belief in impunity is even more evident, since inside home and away from the eyes of other adults; new opportunities for control and submission are created.

Another reason that contributes to the low reporting of sexual violence even before the pandemic is the victim's difficulty in revealing the situations she has been suffering. As it is a process that involves, most of the time, the accusation of people who do not arouse suspicion, revealing intrafamily sexual violence can promote reactions of disbelief towards the victim, not to mention the fear of the consequences that the revelation may cause to her family (Coutinho & Morais, 2018; Lima & Alberto, 2016; Nascimento, Rosa, & Alencar, 2016). As for the woman, among the difficulties in revealing this type of violence against herself, it may be in the belief that it provokes the partner's actions, hope that the partner can change, emotional dependence, financial needs, especially when the couple has children, fear suffering prejudice (Oliveira, 2007), fear of being re-victimized, fear of receiving more physical aggression and death threats (Acosta, Gomes, Fonseca, & Gomes, 2015).

Strategic actions to face violence in Covid-19 times

The World Health Organization (*Organização Mundial da Saúde*, 2014) recommends measures for the prevention of violence, which includes the prevention of sexual violence. At the national level, it recommends the collection of data that allow visualizing the extent of the problem to support a combat plan, incorporating violence prevention into health programs, strengthening leadership through institutions responsible for guaranteeing rights, creating prevention programs that address various types of violence simultaneously, assess the impact of programs for the prevention, enforcement, and review of legislation on violence and invest in professional training. At the regional and international level, it recommends strengthening the

global violence prevention agenda, supporting integrated prevention programs and determining criteria and targets, and monitoring violence prevention programs. Such measures impact the context at the mesosystemic level by covering the support network composed of health institutions and the human rights guarantee system and their professionals, and at the macro systemic level, it impacts by reviewing the existing legislation and strengthening a culture of combating violence.

Even knowing the limitations of the performance of projects and assistance programs for victims, in this moment of social distancing, we need to think about the implementation of remote and easy access to victims. These resources can bring the mesosystem closer to the family microsystem distanced by the pandemic. The online care that was already provided by psychologists, for example, has expanded as a practice in the current context. This tool can help maintain professional monitoring of children and adolescents who were already part of the victim assistance programs and be extended, when possible, to new cases. Besides, other professional categories may also adopt remote monitoring as a means of identifying and preventing violence. Specific ordinances and guidelines for the performance of professionals during the health crisis have been published. Because of the intensification of situations of rights violations, work under the social assistance policy that aims to provide social protection, access to the social assistance network, and the defense of rights through integrated, intersectoral, remote or face-to-face work when necessary is highlighted, supported by strategic representatives of civil society (Fiocruz, 2020b). The joint action provides for the integration of ecological systems. Studies show that effective action with people who are victims of sexual violence enables the updating of adaptive personal characteristics that help to overcome the trauma experienced. Habigzang et al. (2009) demonstrated how effective a therapeutic group was as a support network for girls. The study by Trigueiro et al. (2017) with women who suffered sexual violence in southern Brazil showed that the participants used their support networks (family, friends, psychologists, support groups, work, and school) to overcome traumas. The study by Pessoa, Coimbra, Noltemeyer and Bottrell (2017) showed that adolescents can realize the importance of school functioning as a protective factor.

The support network can also act in the prevention of sexual violence by helping children and adolescents to acquire personal characteristics of resources such as knowledge about the attitudes of suspicious people and risk situations that may result in sexual violence.

The study by Pulido et al. (2015) shows how a prevention program can help children acquire skills to prevent sexual violence. Other studies have presented the effectiveness of sexual violence prevention programs for children (Barron & Topping, 2013; Cecen & Kaf, 2013; Wood & Archbold, 2015), including for children with intellectual difficulties (Kim, 2016), and Conanda (2020) warns the need for actions for children under the age of six in accessible, simple and consistent language.

By considering the decrease in records of sexual violence that occurred in April, almost two months after the closure of schools and other services due to Covid-19, the protective role that these devices play in the life and protection of children is evident and teenagers. Campbell (2020) points out that in the United States, 67% of the records of violence are made by professionals who care for children and adolescents and 19% by education professionals. Therefore, in the absence of these groups, records tend to fall.

The study by Arpini, Hermann, Dal Forno and Soares (2010) carried out with professionals from a school and two health units, showed that the participants feel anguish and revolt when they become aware of the sexual violence suffered by children and adolescents, however these feelings conflict with the fear of disclosure, bringing harm to them in the personal scope. The conflict does not necessarily prevent notification, however the lack of institutional support, of dialogue between the institutions, and of knowledge on how to proceed to effect the registration weakens the support role that must be exercised by the professional and the institution. Thinking that social distancing hinders external action so important to stop violence, protection agencies have been campaigning to publicize phones, websites, and face-to-face services so that people are not intimidated to seek help.

With the suspension of face-to-face classes, the educational system, both public and private, has sought alternatives to make academic activities available for students to perform in the home environment. The need to maintain school activity, which is a right of children and adolescents, shows once again the important role that the school can play in combating violence by being once again in a privileged position of contact with families. Thus, knowing the students' reality regarding the possibility of accessing remote education and making public investment to help digital inclusion to those who do not have it is a measure that can guarantee access to education, protection of the physical and emotional integrity of children and teenagers. Developing remote

activities in which students can share information about emotional aspects and situations of violence experienced, although it is a strategy limited by the possible supervision of adults, can help to identify some cases.

At this time, when the prevention, care, care, and public safety teams are diminished, children and adolescents depend even more on the support of their family or other close people. In the family, the mother is the most sought after figure by children and adolescents to reveal the occurrence of sexual violence (Caminha, Habigzang, & Bellé, 2003), but they do not always find the necessary credibility and support (S. S. Santos & Dell'Aglio, 2009). For this reason, it is important to work with the aggressors' family to enhance their protective role by encouraging them to take actions in favor of the defense of the victimized child and adolescent (S. Santos, Rosa, & Merçon-Vargas, 2020). Marques et al. (2020) further suggest that advertising campaigns related to violence highlight the role of the affective and social support network in breaking the violence during the pandemic, highlighting how neighbors, friends, and relatives can help.

Considering the social distancing that restricts face-to-face contact, so valuable for the occurrence of proximal processes, family members must seek alternatives to maintain contact with children. Periodic phone calls to talk to children and teenagers or video calls, when possible, can help limit the actions of abusers when they know they have people they can talk to and count on. We know that to avoid being discovered, the aggressor can monitor such calls and even prevent the family member from having access to the child or adolescent. However, such behaviors can be a sign that something may be happening that threatens freedom and integrity.

Final considerations

Bioecological Theory allows a contextualized interpretation of the new processes and routines triggered by the pandemic. The first evident issue is the importance of microsystems where proximal processes are activated. Since the home is the most prevalent context in social distancing, it is in this environment that interactions need to be considered, since the mesosystem is weakened due to the need to stay at home. Living with the aggressor, the duration and frequency of violence, the lack of protective figures, and coercion to maintain silence can aggravate the consequences of violence in general and sexual violence in particular. The developing person and the proximal processes

considered molar (Bronfenbrenner, 1979/1996) are elements of attention at this moment, especially when domestic violence is present. At this point, the violent relationship is understood as an inverse proximal process since its greater intensity and frequency contribute to dysfunctional developmental results. On the other hand, positive and strong relationships between people (PP), when activated in microsystems, can sustain the social and affective support network of the person who lived the experience of sexual violence, favoring the development of skills to overcome a violation.

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