

Violence and Mental Health: Sensitive Approach in Professional Training

Violência e Saúde Mental: Abordagem Sensível na Formação Profissional
Violencia y Salud Mental: Un Enfoque Sensible en la Formación Profesional

RESUMO

A violência e seus impactos na saúde mental são desafios significativos na atuação dos profissionais da saúde, exigindo uma formação acadêmica que os prepare para lidar com essas questões de forma sensível e eficaz. No entanto, estudos indicam que a abordagem dessa temática ainda é limitada nos currículos da área da saúde, comprometendo a qualidade da assistência prestada às vítimas e a saúde mental dos próprios profissionais. Este ensaio teórico discute a importância da inclusão da violência e saúde mental na formação profissional, analisando estratégias pedagógicas e desafios institucionais. A literatura destaca metodologias ativas, integração entre ensino e serviço e suporte psicológico como medidas essenciais para capacitar os profissionais a atuarem de maneira humanizada e qualificada. Conclui-se que a reformulação dos currículos acadêmicos e o fortalecimento de políticas institucionais são fundamentais para garantir que os profissionais estejam preparados para enfrentar essa realidade.

DESCRIPTORES: Violência; Saúde mental; Formação profissional; Humanização; Educação em saúde.

ABSTRACT

Violence and its impact on mental health are significant challenges in the work of healthcare professionals, requiring academic training that prepares them to address these issues sensitively and effectively. However, studies indicate that this topic is still inadequately covered in healthcare curricula, compromising the quality of care provided to victims and the mental health of the professionals themselves. This theoretical essay discusses the importance of incorporating violence and mental health into professional training, analyzing pedagogical strategies and institutional challenges. The literature highlights active methodologies, integration between teaching and practice, and psychological support as essential measures to train professionals to act in a humane and qualified manner. It is concluded that reforming academic curricula and strengthening institutional policies are fundamental to ensuring that professionals are prepared to face this reality.

DESCRIPTORS: Violence; Mental health; Professional training; Humanization; Health education.

RESUMEN

La violencia y sus impactos en la salud mental plantean importantes desafíos para los profesionales de la salud, lo que requiere una formación académica que los prepare para abordar estos temas con sensibilidad y eficacia. Sin embargo, los estudios indican que el abordaje de este tema sigue siendo limitado en los currículos de salud, lo que compromete la calidad de la atención a las víctimas y la salud mental de los propios profesionales. Este ensayo teórico aborda la importancia de incluir la violencia y la salud mental en la formación profesional, analizando las estrategias pedagógicas y los desafíos institucionales. La literatura destaca las metodologías activas, la integración entre la docencia y el servicio, y el apoyo psicológico como medidas esenciales para empoderar a los profesionales y que actúen de forma humana y cualificada. Se concluye que la reformulación de los currículos académicos y el fortalecimiento de las políticas institucionales son esenciales para garantizar que los profesionales estén preparados para afrontar esta realidad.

DESCRIPTORES: Violencia; Salud mental; Formación profesional; Humanización; Educación para la salud.

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INTRODUCTION

Violence, in its many forms, has been recognized as one of the main social determinants of health, significantly impacting people's physical and mental well-being. The professional health context, in particular, requires its professionals to be prepared to deal with the various manifestations of violence, both in relation to patients and in the workplace itself. Thus, professional training in the health field must incorporate a sensitive and

qualified approach to dealing with the intersection between violence and mental health in order to ensure humane and effective care¹.

The literature points out that exposure to violence can have profound impacts on individuals' mental health, resulting in stress, anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders. In the context of professional training, the lack of training on this topic can lead to inappropriate approaches and, consequently, to the revictimization of patients and the emotional exhaustion of professionals². Therefore, it is essential that academic curricula and training programs include pedagogical strategies that promote understanding of violence and its effects on mental health, training future professionals to act ethically and empathetically³.

Despite growing concern about the relationship between violence and mental health, studies show that many health courses still lack specific subjects that address this intersection. This compromises the ability of professionals to identify cases of violence, provide adequate care, and refer patients to specialized services⁴. In addition, the experience of violence in the workplace, including bullying and burnout, reinforces the need for institutional strategies to protect the mental health of health professionals⁵.

In this context, this research proposes a theoretical reflection on the importance of a sensitive approach to violence and mental health in professional training, analyzing the challenges, strategies, and impacts of this issue on the daily lives of healthcare professionals.

Violence has been increasingly recognized as one of the main challenges to public health, affecting the physical, emotional, and mental integrity of victims and the entire community involved. In Brazil, rates of interpersonal, domestic, gender, institutional, and structural violence are alarming, significantly affecting the mental health of the popula-

tion. Health professionals play a crucial role in welcoming and assisting victims of violence, but often do not receive adequate training during their academic training to deal with this complexity¹.

The relationship between violence and mental health manifests itself in various ways, encompassing disorders such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress, as well as long-term physical and emotional consequences. Victims of violence, especially those in vulnerable situations, need specialized and humane care that considers not only clinical interventions but also welcoming and qualified listening⁽²⁾. However, the lack of training of professionals can lead to inappropriate approaches, revictimization of patients, and even denial of violence as a determinant of health³.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes violence as a public health problem and highlights the need for qualified professional training to address the issue. However, studies show that most undergraduate health courses do not include specific subjects on violence and mental health. Consequently, professionals enter the job market without the necessary training to identify cases of violence, take sensitive approaches, and refer patients to specialized services⁴.

In addition to the gap in professional training, the work environment of health professionals can itself be a place of violence, whether in the form of bullying, aggression by patients and family members, or emotional overload resulting from exposure to cases of extreme vulnerability⁵. The impact of these experiences can lead to the development of burnout syndrome, emotional exhaustion, and difficulties in professional performance, compromising the quality of care provided⁶.

In this sense, incorporating a sensitive and interdisciplinary approach into professional training is essential to ensure that future professionals can

act in an ethical, humane, and effective manner in the face of multiple manifestations of violence. Teaching strategies that use active methodologies, such as realistic simulations, case studies, and supervised practical contexts, have proven effective in preparing professionals to face this reality⁷.

Thus, this research proposes a theoretical reflection on the need to include content related to violence and mental health in professional health training, considering the challenges, potentialities, and impacts of this approach for the qualification of professionals and the improvement of care for victims of violence. So, how can professional training in the health field incorporate sensitive approaches to dealing with violence and its impacts on the mental health of both patients and professionals themselves? The objective is to analyze the importance of including pedagogical strategies that address the intersection between violence and mental health in professional health training, discussing challenges, possibilities, and impacts for a more humanized and effective approach.

DEVELOPMENT

This study is a theoretical essay, a methodological approach based on the analysis and critical reflection of existing scientific literature on the subject. The theoretical essay allows the construction of arguments supported by evidence available in the literature, promoting a broader understanding of the role of professional training in addressing violence and mental health in the context of health⁸.

The methodology used included a review of scientific articles published between 2020 and 2025, obtained from academic databases such as SciELO, Google Scholar, and CAPES Journals. The inclusion criteria were: studies addressing the intersection between violence and mental health in professional

training, research on teaching methodologies applied to this topic, and articles presenting challenges and solutions for its implementation.

Thus, the study was structured into two main categories, which discuss different perspectives on the approach to violence and mental health in professional training: 1- The importance of professional training in addressing violence and its impacts on mental health; 2- Challenges and strategies for incorporating sensitive and effective methodologies in teaching the subject. This division allows us to understand both the impacts of violence on mental health and the need for professional training to deal with these cases, as well as the structural and methodological challenges faced in including this topic in academic training.

The importance of professional training in addressing violence and its impacts on mental health

Violence, in its different manifestations, is a public health problem that directly affects the mental health of victims and society as a whole. Health professionals play an essential role in identifying, receiving, and referring cases of violence, and it is essential that they are prepared to deal with the emotional, physical, and social aspects of these situations⁽⁸⁾. However, studies indicate that academic training is still insufficient to enable professionals to act sensitively and effectively in these situations⁽¹⁾.

According to this study many health professionals report difficulties in identifying signs of violence and managing patients in vulnerable situations, which can lead to inadequate care or even revictimization of victims. Lack of knowledge about the psychological aspects of violence also compromises the ability of professionals to establish a bond of trust with patients and ensure that they receive adequate support.

Academic training should therefore incorporate subjects that address

the intersection between violence and mental health, allowing students to develop technical, communication, and emotional skills to work in this area. Teaching strategies for welcoming, listening, and referring patients to support networks is essential for future professionals to be able to act with empathy and responsibility.

In addition to the need for training focused on caring for victims, it is necessary to consider that health professionals themselves are often exposed to situations of violence in the workplace. Moral harassment, physical and psychological aggression by patients, and emotional overload are factors that contribute to an increase in cases of burnout and other conditions of psychological distress among health professionals⁽⁴⁾. The lack of institutional support to deal with these issues aggravates the impact of violence on workers' mental health, making it essential to implement preventive measures and psychological support during and after academic training.

Thus, investing in professional training on violence and mental health is a crucial strategy for improving the quality of care provided and promoting the well-being of healthcare professionals themselves.

Challenges and strategies for incorporating sensitive and effective methodologies into teaching the subject

Despite the relevance of the topic, its inclusion in academic curricula faces several challenges, including institutional resistance, a shortage of specialized teaching materials, and difficulties in training teachers. Many universities still do not consider the approach to violence as an essential component in the training of health professionals, treating it only superficially within broader disciplines^(2,9).

One of the main obstacles to the implementation of this topic is the lack of adequate methodologies for teaching vi-

olence and mental health in professional practice. Unlike predominantly theoretical subjects, this approach requires interactive and participatory strategies that stimulate the development of empathy and relational skills. According to Lima and Andrade⁽⁶⁾, the application of active teaching methodologies, such as realistic simulations, role-playing, and case studies, has proven to be an effective alternative for preparing students for complex situations involving violence and psychological distress.

Another strategy that can contribute to improving professional training is the integration of teaching and service, allowing students to come into contact with the reality of health services and accompany supervised care in cases of violence⁽¹⁰⁾. The presence of experienced professionals as preceptors in these scenarios enables the exchange of experiences and the development of more humanized and sensitive approaches⁽⁷⁾.

In addition, it is essential that courses offer spaces for care and emotional support for students and health professionals themselves, ensuring that they can deal healthily with the emotional impact of contact with situations of violence. Psychological support programs, listening groups, and training focused on emotional regulation and prevention of professional burnout are essential to strengthen the resilience of these professionals and prevent early mental illness in their careers^(4,10).

To overcome these challenges, experts recommend the following strategies:

- Inclusion of mandatory courses on violence and mental health in health course curricula, ensuring that all professionals are exposed to this topic from the outset of their training.
- Continuous training of teachers and preceptors to teach the subject, enabling educators to be prepared to address sensitive issues

appropriately.

- Expanding the use of active teaching methodologies, such as simulations and case studies, to ensure that students develop practical and emotional skills to deal with violence.
- Integration between teaching and service, allowing students to have real supervised experiences during their training.
- Creation of institutional policies for psychological support for students and health professionals, preventing mental disorders and promoting healthier academic and work environments.

The adoption of these strategies can contribute significantly to the qualification of health professionals, making them better prepared to deal with violence and its impacts on the mental health of both patients and themselves.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Violence and its impacts on mental

health represent significant challenges for society and health professionals, requiring a sensitive and qualified approach from academic training onwards. This theoretical essay highlighted the need to improve health course curricula so that they include specific content on the intersection between violence and mental health. The lack of adequate training compromises not only the care of victims, but also the well-being of the professionals themselves, who often deal with situations of violence in their work environments.

The literature reviewed highlights that active methodologies, such as simulations, case studies, and role-playing, are effective tools for building practical and emotional skills in handling situations of violence. In addition, the integration of teaching and service enables students to gain real experience under supervision, making them better prepared to care for patients in vulnerable situations. However, challenges such as institutional resistance, lack of teacher training, and scarcity of institutional

psychological support policies still hinder the implementation of these strategies.

Therefore, to ensure a more comprehensive professional education that is aligned with social demands, it is essential that higher education institutions prioritize the inclusion of this topic in their curricula and invest in the continuous training of teachers and preceptors. In addition, the creation of emotional support spaces for students and health professionals should be considered an essential strategy for promoting well-being and preventing emotional exhaustion and burnout.

It can therefore be concluded that addressing violence and mental health in professional training is an urgent need that must be tackled through coordination between academia, health services, and public policy. Only with qualified and emotionally prepared professionals will it be possible to offer humane and effective care to victims of violence, promoting more inclusive and decisive health care.

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