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VIOLENCE PREVENTION: THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF AFFECTIVE- SEXUAL EDUCATION

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Abstract: Educational institutions act as essential agents of socialization, where the first interactions and values that will guide individuals throughout their lives are formed. Comprehensive affective-sexual education provides students with a deep and respectful understanding of sexuality, promotes healthy and equitable interpersonal relationships, thus becoming a tool to prevent violence. This perspective dismantles gender stereotypes that perpetuate asymmetrical conditions in the exercise of power. It fosters gender equality by challenging social norms that justify subordination and control over women by promoting an environment where women can also thrive and participate fully in society. By educating all individuals about human rights and the importance of relationships based on mutual respect, it lays the foundation for a more just and violence-free society.

Keywords: violence, prevention, affective-sexual education, empathy.

In recent decades, domestic violence has been a central theme in national and international research. Since 2005, the WHO conducted studies that revealed disturbing data on domestic violence, especially that exercised toward women by their partners, highlighting serious physical and emotional repercussions, such as sexually transmitted diseases and suicide attempts. These findings established domestic violence as a critical public health problem.

Violence generates other behaviors, both depressive and addictive; the latter, in turn, feed the permanence of violence in daily life. Thus, different studies report the relationship between violence, depression, poor school performance, drug and alcohol consumption or the use of over-the-counter medication. Violence in and around schools, including bullying, mistreatment and sexual harassment, also undermine learning and have negative consequences for physical and mental health.

Educational institutions play a crucial role as spaces where attitudes and habits based on humanism and democracy are fostered, in addition to transmitting the knowledge necessary for the formation of the personality and the normative actions of individuals. However, these institutions, together with the State, can be sites for the creation and imposition of principles of domination, establishing a structural violence inherent to the systems of social organization. This violence is perpetuated due to the lack of attention to the basic needs of the subjects (Rodriguez and Crippa 2023).

This form of violence manifests itself in multiple spheres of life, including employment, health and education, and contributes to maintaining inequality between people, generating conflicts and violating fundamental human rights. Structural violence underpins other forms of violence that are practiced in the most intimate sphere. According to Bourdieu, in this context the relationship of male domination is perpetuated, which calls for a critical and reflective stance.

Students are subjected to violence of various kinds, from structural to direct violence such as gender-based violence, and as a result, sometimes do not attend class, participate less or have difficulty concentrating, or drop out of school altogether. Parents often cite concerns about sexual harassment in or around school as a reason for not sending girls to school. Gender-based violence in the school environment also increases the risk of unwanted pregnancies and other sexual and reproductive health problems, and affects girls' physical, psychological, and social well-being, all of which can have detrimental effects on school outcomes (UNESCO, 2016).

Likewise, the family, the peer group and the media have educational functions; however, it is often there where violent behaviors and misconceptions are also learned that condition the persistence of various problems

that cause personal and social suffering: gender violence, sexual abuse of minors, poor co-existence, low self-esteem, lack of responsibility, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, among others.

This text considers that violence, in addition to some disorders that occur in parallel, or derived from it, are emerging elements of a certain culture, in this case patriarchal, which includes educational styles that are reproduced in the family, at school and in the street.

EDUCATION: A HUMAN RIGHT

According to UNESCO's 2030 Agenda, published in 2015, one of the Sustainable Development Goals is Access to quality education, that is, ensuring inclusive and equitable education, as well as promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Achieving this goal involves meeting some targets, including that all girls and boys complete basic education free and equitably, and that gender disparities in education are eliminated to ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training. In addition to the fact that quality education fosters skills to prevent violence, the promotion of peace, conflict resolution, mutual understanding and sustainability, therefore, with regard to young people, education must be related to their needs and interests in which they incorporate meaningful learning and enable their adequate inclusion in the labor markets and the achievement of their life projects (ECLAC, 2015).

In this regard, the contents of education and teaching methodologies must respond to a humanistic concept of the person understood as a bio-psycho-spiritual unit, as well as to the environment shaped by social problems including violence in all its forms.

Nevertheless, it is known that throughout human history, greater emphasis has been placed on difference rather than similarity, on hierarchization, domination and authoritaria-

nism rather than on equality and democracy. The patriarchal culture extends from ten to twelve thousand years ago, with the beginning of pastoralism, to the present. Maturana (2003), comments that the emotions of that time are centered on distrust as the core axis of a dynamic configuration of emotions that move between control, appropriation and domination, subjugation, greed, arrogance, fear, enmity, war, devaluation of emotions and women, valuation of procreation, desacralization of sex, i.e. discrimination and violence.

Historically, sexuality has been a subject loaded with prejudices, negative attitudes, beliefs and values. As a consequence, nowadays the information that young people receive from the family, school and peer group contains misconceptions that condition the persistence of various problems that cause personal and social suffering: gender violence, sexual abuse of minors, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies, poor co-existence, low self-esteem, lack of responsibility, among others.

According to WHO (WHO, 2006), sexuality is a dimension of human beings and is present throughout their lives, and is shaped by biological, psychological, social, political, economic, cultural, legal, ethical, historical, religious and spiritual factors. It also says that it is lived and expressed by thoughts, desires, attitudes, fantasies, beliefs. On the other hand, Velasco (2009) tells us that sexuality is a socio-cultural and personal construction that integrates in a dynamic whole biological elements -which refer to chromosomal, anatomical, physiological and cerebral differences between males and females- emotions, feelings and social aspects -such as gender identities and roles, sexual orientation, eroticism, pleasure and intimacy-.

It is for this reason that excluding women from their sexuality is a violent act because it excludes them from themselves, since sexuali-

ty is knowing and feeling. Women have gone through the impossibility to study, to work, to vote; and over the years there have been certain changes allowing them to enter little by little in different spheres of society. In the attempts that have been carried out, there is the integral education, however, a patriarchal model still prevails, in which girls only adapt. Ideally, teaching strategies, curricular plans, the academic community in general, within the classroom and in the hallway should integrate the concepts of affective and sexual within their daily work. It is necessary to know the origin of discrimination and violence in order to create a correct intervention in education, (Ferreiro, 2017). The rejection of women in humanity is historical, for example, the Spanish educational system until 1970, was sustained by religion, and based on this, curricula were built for girls and another for boys, teaching of religion and criminalization of the exercise of sexuality in women, (Díaz, 1995 and Roca, 1996). For all of the above, affective-sexual education turns out to be a key factor to eradicate violence and achieve the fulfillment of the Human Rights declared in 1948, which seventy years later have still not been fully achieved, the right to life, security, dignity, among others (Calvo, Sierra and Caparrós, 2018).

THE CHALLENGE OF SEX EDUCATION

In Mexico, the panorama of sex education has gone through several episodes in which some challenges have had to be faced. In 1930, the idea of including sex education in schools was raised for the first time, as a result of the Pan-American Children's Congress held in Lima, Peru, which recommended to Latin American governments the implementation of a sex education program. Thus, since that year, it was accepted to implement sex education in Mexico as a special course in the National Preparatory School. However, this

generated controversy in some sectors of the population, and groups such as the Unión Nacional de Padres de Familia (UNPF), the Federación de Padres de Familia and the clergy were strongly opposed to it, so they carried out crowded marches through the streets of Mexico City, which ended in 1934 with the definitive cancellation of the project.

It was not until 1970 that the National Population Council (CONAPO) was founded with two main objectives: to reduce, in ten years, the annual growth rate to 2.5%; and to model the sexual behavior of Mexicans in terms of sex education and the use of contraceptives. The constant increase in population and, therefore, demographic concerns, became one of the central axes guiding educational reforms. Thus, in the 1974-1975 school year, the sex education model was included in textbooks. It was at the elementary level where education on population and sexuality was inserted, making it mandatory.

The sexuality education model embodied in programs and textbooks was structured around two axes: the reproduction of stereotyped roles and the intention to promote modifications in sexual behavior with a view to achieving birth control, such as the use of contraceptives. The unit of work that dealt most directly with sexuality was growth and development, included in the natural sciences and present in all six grades of instruction. Thus, in its beginnings, sex education focused on a single aspect, the reproductive-biological, and perpetuated violence and inequality by maintaining stereotyped roles.

From then until now, several generations of books have passed, each one with their respective modifications in content, in order to respond to the social demands of each moment. For example, the latest reform to Article 3° Constitutional, published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on May 15, 2019, states that:

The study plans and programs will have a gender perspective and a comprehensive orientation, which will include knowledge of the sciences and humanities: mathematics, reading and writing, literacy, history, geography, civics, philosophy, technology, innovation, the indigenous languages of our country, foreign languages, physical education, sports, the arts - especially music - the promotion of healthy lifestyles, sexual and reproductive education, and environmental care, among others.

Sex education is generally considered to be an activity that occurs consciously and voluntarily, through words and written texts. However, it is not the primary means by which children acquire their value system or their knowledge of sexuality; the daily behavior of adults, the relationships between adults, the influence of the media, the division of labor according to sex, etc., are factors that, throughout the process of growing up, permeate the child's mind and, consequently, shape his or her first attitudes towards affection and sexuality (Font, 1999).

TRANSFORMING EDUCATION: A PATH TO INTEGRATION

In this sense, the aim is for affective-sexual education to have a comprehensive orientation that includes affections and provides young people not only with knowledge for the prevention of diseases or pregnancies, but also addresses issues such as responsibility, respect, attitudes and values to cover the physical, biological, emotional and social aspects that lead to a more egalitarian and violence-free life.

Therefore, the question is not whether sex education should be given or not, but to determine how to approach it, to include affectivity, which objectives and contents should be included according to the age of the students and which are the teaching strategies, due to the fact that, around this complex topic, a series of beliefs have been built that are part of

popular knowledge and that are presented as a challenge to establish measures in this regard (Ramirez, 2013). A belief is a subjective probability judgment that a person has regarding some particular aspect, which allows him/her to understand his/her environment and attribute a value to it (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975).

When talking about affective-sexual education, beliefs also become very important because they are a form of integrated and internalized knowledge based on customs. The beliefs and behavior that make up social practices are influenced by culture, and gradually build a certain type of collective knowledge or common sense that is used by its members to resolve the different situations in which they are immersed.

This highlights the need to adjust the specific contents of affective-sexual education to the age and evolutionary development of children and adolescents, as well as to develop the necessary social skills (such as decision making, assertiveness and negotiation) in a sequential manner to facilitate integration, assimilation, reducing inequality and violence.

The aforementioned allows us to understand that there is a need for affective-sexual education to contribute to increase self-knowledge and help people to improve their decision making (Font, 1999). In this sense, authors such as Salas (1994) and Urrozola (1995) specify that affective-sexual education should be based on the aforementioned model of integral education, which conceives the person humanly, understood as a bio-psycho-spiritual unit.

Eisler (1987) mentions that a cultural transformation is needed, which evolves in the sense of developing supportive societies instead of domineering ones. Maturana (2003) proposes a matriarchal culture, which is distinguished from patriarchy by distrust and control, by an age of honesty and collaboration without violence. This age opens a space for the biology of

love, the emotion of collaboration and mutual respect. This culture has its foundations in democracy as a way of life, “which is centered on harmony, cooperation, participation in coexistence, emotion, intuition and love; it is welcoming of freedom, respect, collaboration and mutual help” (Gutiérrez and Prado, 2000, p. 59). In which the two genders are seen from a more human perspective, the woman is as maternal as the man, there is no biological opposition, only cultural.

In this work of renewal, the family and the school must learn to communicate from another place, the role of men and women is in a continuous process of learning, they must continue doing and learning. Boff and Murano (2004), mention that the human being is born whole, but is not finished, is still in genesis, unfinished; with absences, needs to finish being born, abounding that the unfinished being is not a defect, but a way of being.

In this context, the actors of education: the student and the teacher have the possibility to continue transforming themselves, looking for more options to act, to continue forming themselves, to share, and to converse, from reinvention. Ultimately, to take advantage of these absences that exist in man or woman because of their quality of unfinished beings, to fill them with spiritual exercise, with something supreme, with that which gives joy and peace. This will necessarily lead to a better understanding between both genders.

Practicing new dynamics in the educational field, such as accepting that the spirit and emotion exist within the classroom and that they are not left out, as has been thought. It is to move away from the reductionist vision where the student only learns to pass a subject, to another scenario where each student is a person, with emotion, with sexuality, and with spirit, and who seeks to be happy, regardless of what he or she learns. Then each content or skill learned should have a meaning for

life. Some authors from decades ago to date consider educating for life, that is, a school learning intertwined with all the learning that is woven in daily life, Villadangos, Martín, García, Martínez, Rivas and Carmona (2002); and this includes the development of values such as: tolerance, equality, respect, full coexistence, and also freedom, which are required for cultural renewal. When abandoning patriarchy, it is necessary to stop imposing one's will; freedom does not consist in what is done, but in how it is done.

Freedom is to move with ease and joy, like a leaf in the wind, a boat in the current, smoke floating idly towards the sky: it implies letting oneself go, not imposing one's will if it does not move in favor of the forces of the environment in which it is immersed (Racionero, 2001, p. 164).

This is how sexuality, and in it freedom, are strategic elements in this transformation, together with the affective and loving side, that is, the emotional expression pillar of what we are: human beings. The subject of love, understood as the acceptance of the legitimate other, for Maturana (2002), has been excluded in the educational environment by tradition, as if only reason existed. It is important to generate this virtue in learning environments, to let it speak. To be formed in respect, acceptance and integrity of what we are, avoiding inequality and violence.

The necessary principles and values point to the vision of a unity without gender distinction, to be able to see unity. Boff and Murano (2004), comment that it is necessary to discard seeing man and woman as incomplete beings that together become complete, since one is within the other, feminine within the masculine and vice versa. The man has within himself the dimension of the woman and the woman has within herself the dimension of the man, so there is no need for competition, violence or supremacy.

Let us start from the idea that we are whole human beings, woman or man, we are not going to complement each other thanks to the other, since we are already whole, but unfinished. As Morin (2003) mentions, we never finish forming, we make and remake ourselves along the way, in the doing. Differences should not be denied, denying them reduces the other, and it is not equity, it is not love, it is not acceptance of the other. The relationship of sex and gender limits and defines, makes that, within the classroom, certain behaviors are expected from the other, the clichés. The labels instead of helping get in the way, the differences make them bigger, the abyss grows and equity is further diminished. And by this we mean the stereotyped roles that are a source of inequality and violence.

Rubin (1975), a critic of the binary vision of man-woman in the western world, and of the violence exercised against women, including in love relationships, invites reflection on misunderstood love, in all its manifestations. Herrera (2011), offers the possibility of a different love, a free and egalitarian love, which is not derived from a dominant and therefore violent model. Then, by opening the doors to love, understood as acceptance of the legitimate other, as well as glimpsing the human being as a unit, violence will decrease at home and outside.

Although scholars, such as Bejarano and García (2016), who analyze the Spanish legislation on coeducation from 90 to recent dates; as well as Urrozola (2000) who mention that the same, is still a project, not a reality. The work is still under construction and must be unstoppable. The principles and values to be learned and reproduced are the adult's task, and the child's task is to grow up with them. They should be a transversal axis of the curriculum, as well as sexual and affective education. Moreno (2013), mentions that it should not only be that boys and girls study in a mixed school, but a school for all in gender equality, not with

a theoretical androcentric model, with patriarchal structures that subjugate and violate.

AFFECTIVE-SEXUAL EDUCATION: AN INTEGRATING AND NECESSARY PROPOSAL

Although the term has existed since 1892, it is only in the 1990s that, due to various enactments, legislative in Spain and academic in the rest of the world, the discrimination of the sexes in the educational system is recognized and equal opportunities between both genders are established as a necessity (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1993; quoted in *Guía de buenas prácticas para favorecer la igualdad entre hombres y mujeres en educación*, 2006). Thus began the production of many research works that pointed strongly towards this topic, rethinking from the analysis and the claim for a transformation that would frame principles and values different from those that had been used in the educational sphere.

An integrating proposal is affective-sexual education, which can be defined as a gradual process that begins in the early years and continues throughout life. It starts from a biopsychosocial conception of sexuality, without overemphasizing or excluding any of these three variables, which allows working from multiple perspectives, critically analyzing the concept of sexuality that has been internalized and proposing alternatives in line with people's happiness and quality of life (Carrera, Lameiras & Rodríguez, 2007).

The term "affective-sexual" refers to the human need to establish bonds with other people that are essential for survival and emotional stability, and to our nature as sexed beings, which is expressed in sexual identity, the awareness of being and belonging to a sex, the sexual role, the expression of the personal way of living the fact of being sexed, and sexual desire and the expression of the need for sexual satisfaction (Gómez, 2000). Integrating the

affective aspect in sexuality education means turning it into a discipline that combines both the development of skills and socio-personal values (self-knowledge, self-esteem, social competence, responsibility) and that, in its different traditions, tries to establish a frame of reference, with objectives, contents, strategies and guidelines, for the development of personal and social aspects in educational contexts.

It includes three fundamental dimensions (De la Caba, 2001):

- 1) Personal dimension: developing self-knowledge, self-esteem and autonomy to self-regulate behavior.
- 2) Social dimension: developing the ability to relate satisfactorily and effectively with others.
- 3) Moral dimension: to develop the ability to make decisions in an assertive and responsible manner, based on ethical values.

In addition, there are several reasons for including affective-sexual education in schools. We could mention at least eight of them:

1. It allows us to recognize the lack of knowledge about sexuality, the fear and embarrassment that comes with dealing with it.
2. It goes hand in hand with the social, economic and cultural changes that have emerged in recent years, such as the feminist movement, the LGBT community movement, among others, which have brought to light the need to rethink sexist attitudes in order to achieve an authentic education, free of inequalities.
3. Invites us to reflect on the ways in which we relate to each other and to take responsibility for our own behavior.

4. Seeks to develop a sexual ethic that favors respect for oneself and others in the satisfaction of desire, which is due to the need to prevent sexual abuse and the concern that it is often carried out by people close to the family or school environment.

5. Promotes the development of secure attachment styles, in order to face the repercussions of the lack of affective expression, both from parents to children, as well as from teachers to students, being victims of humiliation, abandonment and abuse, or on the contrary, of excessive overprotection or lack of rules.

6. Assumes the challenge of working on the acceptance of different types of families in the face of the increasing incidence of separations, divorces or adoptions.

7. It recognizes that Sex Education does not encourage promiscuous sexual relations, nor does it make young people lose their morality. The path lies in assuming it with freedom and responsibility.

Finally, the development of sexuality education experiences are still far from the acceptable minimum, since they focus on the urgency of prevention, overemphasize biological contents and neglect the genuinely constructed character of the human sexual dimension. Therefore, the need for a true sexuality education that overcomes coitocentrism and androcentrism is reiterated; and that presents sexuality in a global or integral way; without attributing to it the ultimate goal of reproduction, without limiting it to specific parts of the body, without a procedure or specific guidelines (Calvo, 2018).

CONCLUSION

By way of conclusion, we emphasize the need to talk about sexuality and affection in spite of fears due to ideas of intellectual discredit in educational institutions (De Greñu, Díaz, Martínez, Torrego, 2013). On the other hand, Hidalgo (2013), proposes to move from patriarchal violence to the biology of love of Maturana (2003), where the new tissue of emotionalism moves us to conduct ourselves as compassionate and loving human beings with the other, therefore, there is a task to relearn.

Educational institutions act as essential agents of socialization, where the first interactions and values that will guide individuals throughout their lives are formed.

Comprehensive affective-sexual education provides students with a deep and respectful understanding of sexuality, promotes healthy and equitable interpersonal relationships, thus becoming a tool to prevent violence.

This perspective dismantles gender stereotypes that perpetuate asymmetrical conditions in the exercise of power. It fosters gender equality by challenging social norms that justify subordination and control over women by promoting an environment where women can also thrive and participate fully in society. By educating all individuals about human rights and the importance of relationships based on mutual respect, it lays the foundation for a more just and violence-free society.

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