

Original Article

# Expressions of gender violence experienced by occupational therapists: narratives and coping actions in everyday life

*Expressões da violência de gênero vivenciadas por terapeutas ocupacionais: narrativas e ações de enfrentamento no cotidiano*

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## **Abstract**

The patriarchal social structure produces and sustains individual and collective violence every day. We are based on the idea of “bodies/experiences”, as a vital drive for existence, comprising occupational body-therapy, a predominantly female profession, to portray gender violence. The objective was to understand the perceptions of occupational therapists working in the health field about gender violence in their daily lives, through cartography as a methodological device. We analyzed 67 responses from occupational therapists among 1018 respondents to a remote questionnaire produced by the Adelaides collective in a research on experiences of gender violence in Brazil experienced by women in the field of public health. With narrative and multiple-choice questions, the questionnaire was divided into three sections: socioeconomic data; professional and academic performance; experiences involving machismo and violence, and in coping actions. Numerical data were analyzed using simple statistics and qualitative data based on the analytical technique of narrative translation. The results indicate that 91% of the participants suffered violence for being a woman in the daily spaces of the home, study, work and/or public environments. The coping ways used were organized into four actions: training and research, politicizing, breaking away and caring. We conclude that everyday life presents itself as a potential space-time of expressions, visible and invisible, of human action, which can be manifested by violent actions, as well as by confrontational actions, assuming aspects of reproduction or transformation of established relationships such as those embedded in in the culture of violence to which women are subjected.

**Keywords:** Occupational Therapy, Activities of Daily Living, Gender Based-Violence.

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### **Resumo**

A estrutura social patriarcal produz e sustenta violências cotidianas individuais e coletivas. Baseamo-nos na ideia de “corpos/experiências”, como pulsão vital para o existir, compreendendo o corpo-terapia ocupacional, profissão predominantemente feminina, para retratar as violências de gênero. O objetivo foi compreender as percepções de terapeutas ocupacionais, atuantes do campo da saúde, sobre violências de gênero em seus cotidianos, por meio da cartografia como dispositivo metodológico. Foram analisadas 67 respostas de terapeutas ocupacionais dentre 1018 respondentes de questionário remoto produzido pelo coletivo Adelaides em pesquisa sobre experiências de violência de gênero no Brasil vivenciadas por mulheres do campo da saúde coletiva. Com questões narrativas e de múltipla escolha, o questionário foi distribuído em três seções: dados socioeconômicos; atuação profissional e acadêmica; experiências envolvendo machismo e violência, e em ações de enfrentamento. Os dados numéricos foram analisados com estatística simples e os qualitativos baseados na técnica analítica da tradução das narrativas. Os resultados indicam que 91% das participantes sofreram violências por ser mulher nos espaços cotidianos do domicílio, de estudo, trabalho e/ou ambientes públicos. As formas de enfrentamento utilizadas foram organizadas em quatro ações: formar e pesquisar, politizar, romper e cuidar. Concluímos que o cotidiano se apresenta como um espaço-tempo potencial das expressões, visíveis e invisíveis, da ação humana, que podem se manifestar por ações violentas, assim como por ações de enfrentamento, assumindo aspectos de reprodução ou transformação das relações estabelecidas como as embebidas na cultura da violência a que as mulheres estão submetidas.

**Palavras-chave:** Terapia Ocupacional, Atividades Cotidianas, Violências de Gênero.

## **Introduction**

Gender identities and inequalities result from social structures and constructions linked to different dimensions, one of which is related to the dichotomous issue of gender, which translates into “feminine” and “masculine” (Sarmiento et al., 2018). This binarism manifests itself in different modes of everyday life, including non-human ones<sup>1</sup>, with manifestations, actions and speeches idealized for both gender expressions, which assume patterns of behavior and a reference model based on which other objects, ideas or concepts already predetermined are updated and produce the different forms of social reproduction, discrimination, prejudices and violence, since it understands the power of the masculine gender over the feminine in the western and patriarchal society (Sarmiento et al., 2018).

Gender violence is violations or violent actions that take place in the relationships between bodies and in the daily lives of people, including many women (Biroli, 2018; Lima, 2020).

Gender violence is produced in relational and, therefore, interpersonal contexts and spaces which have non-uniform societal and historical scenarios. The centrality of violent actions affects women, whether they are physical, sexual, psychological, property or moral violence, both in the private family

environment and in work and public spaces. [...] the expressive concentration of this type of violence has historically occurred on female bodies and [...] violent relationships exist because asymmetrical power relations permeate people's everyday life (Bandeira, 2014, p. 451).

In Brazil, Law No. 11.340, of August 7, 2006, known as Maria da Penha<sup>1</sup>, corroborates these definitions, since it defines the forms of domestic and family violence against women in article 7<sup>th</sup>, among them: physical, psychological, sexual, patrimonial and moral violence (Brasil, 2006; Piosiadlo et al., 2014).

The patriarchal system in western social organizations is related to gender violence, as it establishes, based on the domination and control of men over women, the promotion of male violence against women's bodies (Saffioti & Almeida, 1995; Balbinotti, 2018). This produces modes of subjectivities that reduce the possibilities of women's choices and sustain the violence experienced in different ways in their daily lives - whether in the symbolic and/or material field (Campos, 2016; Silva, 2018) - violations that are often naturalized, incorporated and reproduced by women themselves.

Daily life is taken in this research, according to Galheigo (2020), as a producer of spaces-time in which the subject, immediately and not always consciously, accesses opportunities and resources, faces adversities and limits, makes decisions, adopts mechanisms of resistance and invents new ways of being, living and doing.

In this way, expressions of gender violence in the daily lives of female bodies are identified in numerous ways, with emphasis on the processes of undervaluing work that is recognized as female work. In this sense, considering the context of care, there is an increase in the proportion of female heads of household who perform domestic work without remuneration and labor rights, the triple working hours that women perform, among others (Balbinotti, 2018).

We call attention to the violated/violent body. In the corporeal perspective, the first characteristic of every living body is the pulse: movements of expansion and contraction in processes of opening and closing in the encounter with other bodies (Favre, 2021). This pulsatile body, when suffering excessive aggression, produces a response (startle reflex). This response of the living, in articulation with other variables of everyday and singular life, can produce stiffening, collapses, confrontations, among other variations as a result that involve a body in its daily life (Favre, 2021). These processes contribute to the production of certain ways of being in relation to different forms of connection with the world (Keleman, 2002; Favre, 2021). Thus, violently or not, the presence of the other in me is made with the body and this body is always social, relational, collective (Romero, 2018).

In the occupational therapy body, gender violence is also expressed (Sarmiento et al., 2018). As it is a professional body associated with a predominantly female profession,

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<sup>1</sup> To speak of non-humans is to understand that we are part of multiple compositions, visible and non-visible, more obvious and less obvious, with things, humans, other living beings (Rolnik, 1993). That is, we are part of, we act and are affected in our own body composition by objects, animals, institutions, devices (Latour, 2014).

These compositions enable or challenge movements and ways of being in the world and of building our daily lives. Based on the terms of § 8º of article 226 of the Federal Constitution, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women (Brasil, 2006).

this group faces several challenges due to the patriarchal model that shapes professional and personal relationships (Figueiredo et al., 2018). Added to other forms of oppression, such as class, race, ethnicity, ableist, religious, among others, they are structuring and intensify the experiences of violence against these bodies (Assis, 2019).

The concept of the body as a pillar of experience is understood here. The construction of an anatomy takes place based on the types of bonds and degrees of oiling of the relationships that produce the most varied bodies through experiences in the world. (Lieberman, 2010a, p. 450).

One can thus understand the world as a plural place, stage of events in the body itself, which are engendered in the space/time context, based on mutual relationships – affectation, produced in the encounters (Lieberman & Lima, 2015). That is, bodies are continually modified throughout life, while producing realities (Lieberman & Lima, 2015).

For Spinoza (2008), a body can never be alone, since it is always in relationship with other bodies (human or non-human). In this sense, a body does not represent, but is a multiplicity, in which bodies are defined as individual and finite beings, which can act in infinite processes.

We are composed of infinitely small particles, grouped in infinite sets, which in a given relationship characterize us. Extensive compositions are made and unmade all the time, marked by their movements and rests, slowness and speeds. Infinite possibilities of compositions are carried out by configuring, at the same time, the finitude of modes (extensive bodies) and the infinity of possible arrangements (Frigato & Carvalho, 2011, p. 153).

The “occupational therapy body”, historically and culturally composed of many women’s bodies and female bodies, it deals in its professional practice with the attention to people, groups, territories and collectives constantly crossed in their daily lives by processes of inequality, exclusion, poverty, suffering, discrimination and lack of violation of rights (Galheigo, 2020)

The occupational therapy body also experiences the precariousness of services, working conditions and low wages, contexts increasingly accentuated by the growing neoliberal political and economic wave in Brazil and in the world (Galheigo, 2020). In the field of health, these weaknesses are jointly related to the scrapping of the Unified Health System and its devaluation. Added to this, there is the patriarchy that historically and culturally weakened labor relations in categories mostly composed of women (Figueiredo et al., 2018).

In view of this scenario, a master's research was carried out with the general objective of understanding what are the perceptions of women occupational therapists working in the field of Public Health about gender violence and how this violence is expressed in their daily lives. We had as specific objectives: (1) to identify how these types of violence were expressed in the daily lives of women occupational therapists in the health field (whether they are professionals, researchers and/or activists); (2) map the coping strategies for these same situations.

This article presents some of the results of this study as a gateway device for the academic problematization and the political empowerment of women involved in facing

the culture of gender violence based on the dialogue with the concepts of everyday life and body in occupational therapy.

## **Theoretical-Methodological Course**

This is a quantitative-qualitative study that has as its methodological framework the intervention research with corporeal frameworks (Lieberman, 2010a; Favre, 2021).

In a pandemic context, in which the construction of a face-to-face field has become unfeasible, we used the cartography of narratives that emerged from an on-line questionnaire (QOL) as a data production and analysis instrument. In this sense, the narratives were both field and data produced by the research, in a continuous process of co-engineering between these dimensions.

The use of narratives as a methodological device is already a reality in qualitative health research (Pacheco & Onocko-Campos, 2018), as well as in cartography (Silva, 2020). In this research, we incorporate this practice in a double sense: the production of narratives to sensitively access the shared experience and to affirm a policy of narrativity, as suggested by Dias et al. (2016). It is based on the assumption that the ways of narrating an experience carry aesthetic, ethical and political implications, since they include, on the one hand, the different ways of saying about an utterance and, on the other hand, the perspectives of the narrator about the world and about themselves.

Mapping the narratives was an immersion in unique situations of experiences of violence told by each participant, but which give way to aspects common to the experience of being a woman, an occupational therapist and a health professional.

Cartography was chosen because it is a research-intervention method that affirms the inseparability between knowledge and the transformation of both the reality studied and the researcher (Passos & Barros, 2009).

The production of data and the aforementioned QOL were part of a broader research called “Women in Collective Health: a portrait of those who build the field”, carried out by the collective “Adelaides: Feminismos e Saúde”, which built and launched this semi-structured questionnaire, having as its object the characterization of women who make up the field of collective health and their perception of gender relations in this field. This questionnaire was widely disseminated on social networks and in public spaces of the XII Brazilian Congress of Collective Health of ABRASCO, obtaining a total of 1018 female respondents who declared themselves to be active in Collective Health and voluntarily accepted to participate in the research by signing a Free Consent Form (Freire et al., 2018).

QOL was available on the platform *Google® Forms* for a period of eight months, in order to guarantee free access and easy handling of all respondents to the questionnaire: working women, managers, researchers and activists from all regions of the country (Lima, 2020), and it was composed of five sections: *socioeconomic data; professional and academic performance; social engagement and political activism; experiences involving machismo and violence; and maternity*. Each one of these sections included multiple-choice questions and a field for comments in the form of narratives.

The questionnaire made the survey and analysis of a quantitative-qualitative nature possible, and this article was based on an analysis of qualitative data, that is, the analysis

of narrative responses and specifically of occupational therapists participants, which corresponded to the total of 67 respondents among the 1018 survey participants.

As our clipping for this article focused on relationships of violence, the sections of the form analyzed were those that were related to the characterization of the participants and directly related to the theme of violence in its interface with professional activity: general socioeconomic data<sup>2</sup>, professional performance and academic performance, experiences involving machismo and violence.

This initial choice of narratives occurred through a preliminary selection of data and, especially, based on the sensitive reading of them and the call that these dimensions produced in the thus promoting the desire to delve into these three sections mentioned. The convening criteria referred to the articulation in the narratives with the theme of everyday life, in addition to the researcher's affective-cognitive mobilization, as suggested by the cartography method, with the concept of researcher involvement (Ferigato & Carvalho, 2011).

The narratives of the 67 women were analyzed and incorporated into the text of the master's dissertation. However, for this article, only a few of them were chosen for their expressive strength in each of the categories. It should be noted that some participants did not produce narratives in some fields of the questionnaire; in the text of the dissertation, it was also possible to reflect on the possible silencing within those themes.

The analysis of quantitative data was performed in a descriptive way and the analysis of the narratives was carried out in two stages: 1) reading and selection of the narratives (as previously described); 2) translation of the narrated, in the sense of mapping a common plane to these reports in a transversal and collective way.

The analytical technique of translating narratives (Passos & Kastrup, 2013) involved a triple movement of translation: (1) the translation of a set of signs, symbols, practices, words considered to be from the universe of health in general or collective health into its approach, to concepts relevant tools for occupational therapy; (2) the translation of locally situated processes into more widely perceived possible commons; and, finally, (3) the translation of a set of discourses, experiences of violence and experiences of coping with violation into scientific knowledge.

The practice of translation always throws us into the paradoxical field of being at the same time revealing a reality and projecting our own reality by looking and speaking about a universe that is not necessarily ours (Passos & Barros, 2009).

As Jullien (2009) indicates, to translate, in its literal sense, is to carry out the transition from one language to another, at the same time that we are always in one language or another. Intervention research also shows that this translation movement has as substance cultural, economic and social crossings, which are expressed not only as determinants of a language, but also as constituents of it.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Brief characterization of the participants**

Among the 67 occupational therapists participating in the research, 73% of the women declared themselves as white and 27% as black. As for gender identity, 100%

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<sup>2</sup> General data corresponded to the following items: a) state of residence, b) gender identity, c) color/race.

self-declared as cisgender. Regarding the region of residence of the participants, we found that 67% were in the Southeast region, followed by 21% in the South region, 7% in the Northeast region, 5% in the North region and none in the Center-West region of Brazil.

Regarding access to education, 31 women indicated that they mostly studied in public schools in basic education and 36 in private schools. Due to the research clipping, all 67 women graduated or are undergoing higher education in occupational therapy. In addition, 56 occupational therapists reported studying or having completed at least one postgraduate course, while 11 had not yet. Among the graduate training area, the following categories were observed: Graduate in Collective Health/Public Health; Mental health; Physical Rehabilitation/neurology; Social Psychology; Family Health/Primary Health Care; Epidemiology; Practice and planning in health management; Geriatrics and Occupational Therapy.

Regarding the question “Have you ever suffered violence because you are a woman?”, 91% answered yes, 7% never and 2% did not answer. As for the question “Did you denounce?”, it is noteworthy that 13 of them made the denouncements to competent bodies, but did not feel welcomed; 18 participants did not report out of fear or embarrassment and 30 shared the experience with someone they trusted, with this option being the most present in these situations.

### **On the experiences of violence lived by occupational therapists in different dimensions of daily life<sup>3</sup>**

Occupational therapists have human activity and daily life as central elements of study and practices, since people's ways of existence are produced by/in the activities that are carried out daily (Cardinalli & Silva, 2019). At the same time, it is in the encounter between bodies that daily life becomes present (Lieberman, 2010a) is crossed and constructed by historical, cultural, geographic, political and socioeconomic contexts (Melo et al., 2018; Lima, 2020; Galheigo, 2020).

In this way, daily life is understood as an intersubjective process, as it is not given, but is produced in the course of life of the subjects and woven by their relationships (Castro et al., 2001). It is in daily life that the multiple modes of existence, the subjective diversity and the differences are found, that is, the infinite ways of people of being in the world, based on a coexistence of multiple forces that give shape to these bodies, while these bodies act in the world (Kastrup & Fernandes, 2018).

For Galheigo (2020), Brazilian occupational therapy in its critical perspective reflects and acts towards emancipatory practices in its professional activity, considering the subject in all its complexity, diversity and heterogeneity as a subject that is produced daily. In this research, we identified some of the daily spaces and time in which violence is present, as summarized in Table 1.

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<sup>3</sup> Fictitious names were used to identify the participants' narratives.

**Table 1.** *Violences Identified in Different Spheres of the Participants' Everyday Life.*

DAILY VIOLENCES	NUMBER OF NARRATIVES	EXAMPLE
<b>Violence experienced in the domestic environment: space to live and resist</b>	9	<i>"Since I was a teenager, my brother abused me physically, verbally and psychologically for being a woman, denigrating my image. My mother believes that a woman has no respect from people and is nobody without a man. I grew up with that in my head and today I have a hard time getting out of a relationship that doesn't do me any good just because he's my daughter's father" (Rubi, 30 years old).</i>
		<i>"When I was 12 years old, I had private lessons at the teacher's house and her husband always found a way to reach me and touch me. I never got to tell my parents. At another time in my life, as an adult, I had a relationship with another woman and my friends distanced themselves and often made jokes, I mean, some still do, even though it's been many years since that happened" (Ágata, 36 years old).</i>
		<i>"Because it was impossible to continue living in the same environment as my father, we ran away from home and went to live in another city. His entire family mobilized to take him to the police station in order to file a complaint against my mother. She was unable to break up with her marriage or with her history of submission" (Granada, 27 years old).</i>
<b>Violence experienced in study and work spaces</b>	15	<i>"I was sent away because I was going to get married and that would mean a change in my behavior towards work. I also had a boss who discriminated because I was young and female, infantilizing me, not validating the techniques and knowledge I proposed" (Âmbar, 34 years old).</i>
		<i>"In adult life (19 years old), working as a cashier in a store, the manager often made sexual comments, and one day he grabbed me by force, tried to kiss me. I managed to separate and "run away", but I resigned shortly after" (Amazonita, 33 years old).</i>
		<i>"The violence I suffered was subtle, in leadership meetings, for example, in situations where I was talking and was interrupted, something that did not happen when men were talking" (Cristal, 39 years old).</i>
<b>Violence experienced in spaces of social and community participation</b>	14	<i>"Throughout life, we suffer a lot of violence in public transport, on the street, at work, in all the spaces we frequent, we need to resist. But one that recently impressed me a lot was when at the church I attend, the priest demanded that my music group wear sleeve blouses and "proper" clothes, such as neutral-colored pants, so that we wouldn't be judged.. It was clear that it was pure prejudice and that those demands were for the women of the group. So does it mean that the "judgment of people" is our fault for the clothes we wear? Violence can often appear in small everyday actions and relationships, which sometimes does not make us realize that we suffer violence, more because we do not share experiences. Often, too, violence is reproduced by other women due to the strong machismo in our culture" (Cremita, 27 years old).</i>
		<i>"Being a woman is often synonymous with being abused. So many ways, so hurtful. At work for going braless, by colleagues for having sex the first night, by family for refusing to wash male underwear. To be a woman is to face suffering from several sides" (Ágata Rosa, 30 years old).</i>

Gender violence is expressed in different everyday spheres of life of the participants of this research. Such violence was experienced in institutional spaces, such as at work, in training and domestic spaces, as well as in other interpersonal relationships, of social and community participation.



In private spaces, domestic violence is mainly practiced by men with blood kinship or with a personal affinity with these women (Biroli, 2018). Rubi's narrative exemplifies the relationship of violence lived in silence, both by her mother and the participant herself, in her youth, having her own brother as aggressor.

Zanello (2018) declares that violence against women, in addition to being naturalized by the patriarchal system, is intensified due to the expression of the capitalist system in people's culture, as they increasingly constitute individualizing ways of life that are distanced from a collective policy. In other words, the popular saying "in a husband and wife fight, do not get involved" exemplifies the scarce existence and sociocultural understanding that no violence should be tolerated/neglected.

In addition, 91% of the participants have already suffered some type of violence and 18 participants did not report it out of fear or embarrassment, which shows that these women are little welcomed and respected with their citizenship rights due to a sexist and patriarchal culture that has not yet legitimized bodies that are constantly violated as such. There is disbelief in institutional reporting bodies, as these can be places of violence as well. This refers to the culture of blaming the woman for the act experienced, almost placing it as a choice. Complaint spaces are essential to inhibit and break the culture of violence against women, but there is still an urgent need for better preparation of these institutions in the scope of listening and actions that do not blame victims for the violence exercised on them (Zanello, 2018).

In addition, there is a diversity of experiences and bodies that are established based on the social places that these occupational therapists occupy and that are conditions for the access (or not) of opportunities for the full exercise of their citizenship, as subjects of rights (Ribeiro, 2016; Lima, 2020). It is based on the emergence of breaking with the vision of a single history, which silences the diversity and differences of many groups seen as minority and different from those who occupy a privileged position in the hierarchy of social, political and cultural power (Ribeiro, 2016).

Connecting narratives, exchanging experiences (Benjamin, 1987), other geoterritorial movements are established and updated in the form of strategies to face these same violence, translated into concrete actions that cross the daily life of those who narrate.

After recognizing the violence, the daily strategies to face these same situations of violence were identified and distributed in four categories: training and research, politicizing, breaking away, and caring<sup>4</sup>.

### **The Action of Training and Research**

This dimension concerns women who carried out the activity of researching and training ways of coping with violence, as well as putting research on violence against women and gender as a priority agenda, and was present in 3 narratives. In this sense, this research proved to be another possibility of connection and questioning of situations experienced, which could be unnoticed or not recognized by the participants.

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<sup>4</sup> Verbs in the infinitive as a category of analysis and action were chosen as a way of reiterating the actions carried out by the participants identified as a strategy for coping with violence. They are verbs/actions that affirm the singularities of the responses that combine the individual and the collective (Lieberman, 2010a).

**Narrative (1):** “[...] *it is very difficult to even identify that such behavior is violence. The moment I came across some questions here, in this questionnaire, I started to reflect on some situations I experienced today [...]*” (Ágata, occupational therapist, 36 years old).

**Narrative (2):** “*I believe that the theme of gender cuts across all our daily experiences, it is extremely important that there is more research on violence from the perspective of public bodies in defense of women*” (Jadeita, occupational therapist, 36 years old).

**Narrative (3):** “[...] *and today with the practice and reading that I have, based on collective health, I started to visualize that what I had suffered was a type of violence*” (Ágata, occupational therapist, 36 years old).

Occupational therapy, as a field of knowledge and practices, is related to the devices of listening and welcoming, as well as social articulation, aiming at bridges of dialogue, support, social participation and access to rights (Galheigo, 2020). That said, it was possible to perceive that one of the strategies for coping reported was the action of training that referred to the training itinerary in the undergraduate occupational therapy, in the graduate and in other spaces of exchange. Training is seen as an instrument of awareness and reflection both to perceive violence, to manage care and emancipatory and life-producing practices, as well as the transformation of oneself in these relationships.

The narrative (3) places the training space as a possibility of caring and listening to oneself and creating a new body: a stronger female body to face violence.

However, it should be noted that studies still point to the need to study gender during the training of occupational therapists (Eklund & Erlandsson, 2011; Falk et al., 2015; Morrison & Araya, 2018). Falk et al. (2015), in their research, says that the training of students in the health area, including occupational therapy, presents a significant difference in the training process in relation to a female student and a male student, including in practices that involve multidisciplinary teams. That is, male students are still more encouraged to participate in classes (give their opinions, the relationship between right and wrong), and this is more evident in some professional specificities, such as medical, for example. Corroborating with Tarde (1976) and Almeida (2004), body experiences are directly related to how this body will be built in everyday life.

It is necessary to understand training spaces as a possibility to experience “[...] other ways of existing that are more unique and resistant to attacks and social models that restrict and/or impoverish what the body can [do], its potencies [...]” (Lieberman, 2010b, p. 41). In other words, articulating a critical training that makes new displacements emerge is to contribute to the transformation of occupational therapists bodies emancipated from patriarchal and sexist forces in their relationships with their peers.

The **action of research** proves to be potent to collaborate with theoretical and methodological reflections on gender and violence against women, both in relation to themselves and in relation to the different objects of study. The participants of this study indicated such action in two spheres: self-research and the researches as an act of emancipation.

Regarding the self-research, the occupational therapist Ágata (narrative 2) points out that, when faced with the research questionnaire, she identified some violence experienced that was not previously named as violence. For the new constructions of a body, it is important that it can also perceive itself and identify what acts on it and how it acts on the world (Almeida, 2004). The research then pointed out as an agent of new perceptions and discovery of how each daily encounter may have potentiated or diminished the power of existence of this body, and thus recognize and create body and life assemblages based on the narrative of the past, but also on the production of new events that were updated at the time of participation in this research, which fulfills its purpose as an intervention research, since, when asked about an experience of violence, the participant returns the question to herself and allows herself to remember, resignify and think about her experiences.

Regarding emancipatory research, narrative 28 sees the importance of investigations that collaborate with the understanding of intersectionality in everyday spheres of life and research in occupational therapy, the relationship of the theme with women and human rights and women's defense. In a brief survey that preceded this investigation of the last ten years of important contributions that guide the gender discussion, both in the epistemological training and clinical dimensions, there is still a significant number of articles that are not guided by this discussion; and, in the case of health, they are mostly restricted to reductionist conceptions of "Women's Health"<sup>5</sup>, detached from the lines of forces that also produce or not health.

Thus, we still need to expand the studies to continue to bring out other ways of thinking and doing theory; in this sense, appropriating the contributions of feminist theories and practices as an activist character intrinsic to the ethics of critical approaches, whether in militancy, research or clinical practice.

### **The action of politicizing**

Belonging to or accompanying organizations, groups and social movements, such as feminist movements, as a feasibility of tensions and protection in relation to gender inequalities and violence. This action appeared explicitly in one narrative.

**Narrative (5):** *After graduation, I went back to live with my parents and at that time I had already learned about feminism and understood that the reasons for the violence committed by my father were not a consequence of alcohol and mental disorder* (Hematita, occupational therapist, 27 years old).

The **action of politicizing** is mainly related to the meeting of the participants with social movements, specifically feminist movements. This network movement contributed, among other things, to the understanding of violence that is so naturalized in people's daily lives. In this way, this action provides, based on attention and collective experiences, the creation of modes of visibility and resistance to propositions for the

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<sup>5</sup> Different concepts about women's health can be found in the scientific literature, from more reductionist conceptions that only address aspects of the biology of the female body and its possible diseases or its maternal-reproductive function and others that are more extended, also addressing dimensions of human rights and citizenship such as sexual rights and gender issues (Coelho, 2003).

transformation of a non-patriarchal society. Relying on this collectivity and the actions produced by it, strengthening and emancipation has a unique effect on women's lives, as pointed out in the narrative (5).

For Lima (2020), the struggles to guarantee respect for life and its diversity demand the construction of a plural perspective, capable of breaking with a universal vision of women and the world. And it is these discussions that guide us to what is now defined as feminisms (in the plural), rather than feminism (single category), since they are movements and agendas that allocate different groups and universes of women (Morrison & Araya, 2018), in the search for the fight against all forms of exploitation defined based on the gender category and, in the case of some specific feminist groups, in the fight against other oppressions that intersect gender, race, class, sexuality, religion, ageism, aesthetic standards, among other social markers.

### **The action of breaking away**

It refers to the distance sometimes necessary to avoid suffering new violence, as a way of enabling self-existence.

**Narrative (6):** *I managed to leave the house and go live in my own home. I do not talk to or bond with him. My mother left home with me and my siblings, but after a few months, she felt guilty and believed that she had abandoned him. She returned to take care of him and live with him* (Hematita, occupational therapist, 27 years old).

This action of breaking away, present in two narratives, brings in certain situations the need to break relationships, whether family or belonging to other spheres of life in response to aggression and violence. Nascimento (2018) points out that there are many ruptures in the activities, affective relationships and social participation of women who suffer daily violence. Being able to share these experiences, give visibility to them, have the guarantee of care and the effective right to protection, strengthens women in their powers of exchange, of the integrality of body and life. The action of breaking with the situations of violence seen in the narratives shows the possibility of building new networks and experiences, converging to new ways of life.

### **The action of caring (caring for oneself and for others)**

Caring for oneself and for others was also expressed as a powerful action for the elaboration and confrontation of violence, a way of looking differently at what was experienced and welcoming suffering, as well as constituting a safer space for the necessary confrontations. – dimension explained in two narratives.

**Narrative (7):** *I only confronted this reality at the time of graduation, when I had access to therapy with a psychologist* (Hematita, occupational therapist, 27 years old).

The exercise of the profession and the encounter with women in care, work as a kind of prism to make the violence experienced by them visible, when listening and identifying with the violence narrated by users under the care of occupational therapists.

In addition, care practices also stand as a power for the deconstruction of sexist concepts and experiences or encouragement to denounce violence.

**Narrative (8):** I worked in a public institution in the prevention and assistance of victims of violence (Red Jasper, occupational therapist, 56 years old).

In this direction, the action of caring while exercising the profession is also related to the action of training. For Liedberg et al. (2010), gender issues should be seen as an influencing factor in care. In their study, it was identified that, despite the fact that the research participants, occupational therapists, stated that this topic is relevant in their clinical compositions, there was still an intertwining and fear on the part of professionals to provide spaces for reflection in their professional practices.

Falk et al (2015) revealed the same weakness in her investigation that aimed to describe how occupational therapists perceive gender and its importance to occupational therapy and their own daily work. Through a case study, it investigated how occupational therapy students chose and described therapeutic activities for men and women. The hypothesis was that occupational therapists unconsciously introduce sexist expectations into the differentiation of men and women in social roles during treatment. The results showed that students chose traditional feminine occupations, such as cooking and hairdressing for women, and traditional masculine activities for men, concluding that the practice can be constantly crossed by the ideas of the traditional roles and activities that a “man” and a “woman” would have a desire to accomplish. The author also emphasizes that it should be the occupational therapist's responsibility to know the subjects' possible desires to oppose traditional roles. Thus, occupational therapists should seek to be aware of their own values and judgments about gender.

By noting that the expression of violence, as well as its confrontation, cross different dimensions of the participants' daily lives (from the living space to public spaces for work and social participation), the structural dimension of machismo and its necessary macro political view are confirmed, as suggested by feminist studies (Lima, 2020; Gonzalez, 2020), while reaffirming that it is especially in the micro political and everyday sphere that women have greater autonomy to act and break with the cycles of the Updates of Daily Violence (ADLs, in another sense) through concrete, material and immaterial actions.

To the extent that everyday life is lived in various contexts, it is possible to speak of everyday lives that are lived in different space-time. There are multiple daily routines in complex societies and, in this sense, the subject is not only constituted in culture, but is constantly in an infinite process of constitution and deconstruction of the self, in processes of becoming, or transforming (Deleuze & Guatarri, 1996).

It can be said that it is in these spaces-times of everyday life crossed by the sexist, misogynist culture that the forms of oppression and violence constituted by the marks of the neoliberal capitalist context, racist, patriarchal, capacitist, LGBTphobic, aporphobic, among others are updated.

In these contexts, there is, also, what is our object of study - violence against women in their daily lives -, since the relationship of the feminine and masculine binomial in this society still marks the feminine in a place crossed by submission, discrimination, exploitation and subjugation (Sarmiento et al., 2018; Saffioti, 1994).

In its transforming power, reflection and narration about their own daily lives can be an allied field and device to make violence explicit, as well as to tension and build more potentiating becomings, both for victims and for aggressors, as we can see by the coping actions translated in the research narratives (Guattari, 1985; Testa & Spampinato, 2010).

For Matsukura & Salles (2016), practices and interventions in occupational therapy seek to reach with people, ways so that they are not limited to their impossibilities, rescuing/recreating life stories, based on significant activities to trace possible paths of continuity between them, the past, the present and the future, opening space for the new, for rediscovery or recreation.

With this, occupational therapists can meet creation actions and visibility so that, in opposition to the exercise of power, we are able to promote relational processes of resistance, individual and collective empowerment through critical consciousness; of the reconstruction of self-esteem, self-confidence and the gradual resumption of our role as protagonists of our own life and history, both in subjective and objective terms, acting in the spheres in which life happens: work, motherhood, the domestic space, of formation, of culture, among others (Carloto & Mariano, 2012; Tavares, 2010; Lima, 2020).

This finding was already clear when the occupational therapeutic action turned to our relationship with the subjects of our intervention, mostly people in vulnerable situations. However, one of the interventional aspects of the research is precisely in the sense of explaining to occupational therapists their own vulnerabilities and, at the same time, by inviting them to narrate experiences of violence lived in their daily lives, being able to revisit this same daily life, transforming it, recognizing oneself in it, moving away from it, as it was possible to observe based on the reading of the narratives.

Above all, occupational therapists can also act in the production of processes of collective empowerment that contribute to the strengthening of oppressed groups and communities, through the transformation of power relations, which is based on political practices and discourses that contest the current state of affairs (Berth, 2019; Lima, 2020).

With this, we seek to emphasize that the search for protagonism, autonomy, defense of rights and the confrontation of processes of violation of rights has always been at the heart of the actions of occupational therapy as a profession, in deep alliance with segregated bodies and/or stigmatized collectives (Lima, 2003).

For Tarde (1976), when held hostage to the hegemonically constructed processes, we are beings of imitation, in which we can mechanically and unconsciously reproduce in ourselves and in the people around us ways of doing and acting that can shrink the diversity of life and modes of existence that respect the other.

One body has the power to instigate this same movement in the other, which can reproduce violence. But we can also step out of the mechanical mode to operate creation potentials, the more aware we are of our bodies in the world; in this same mime, to produce new singular and collective movements, new bodies in everyday relationships that expand our existence as beings that do not subjugate the other, but live in action the idea that no body is bigger or smaller than the other; therefore, it also needs to exist (Tarde, 1976).

In other words, when analyzing the violence experienced by women through their daily lives and through their actions in the world, it rescues the notion that the body does and is done with what it does (Favre, 2021) and, often, the violated body produces ways of moving in this way through its attitudes – an attitude defined as readiness for

action. However, these forms and attitudes are not given, they are not watertight. Attitudes can be cultivated, sustained, shared, to oppose the normatizing and culturally dominant forms of construction of the female body.

## Final Considerations

This research sought to portray the perceptions and experiences on gender violence of women occupational therapists working in the field of Health, based on the analysis of descriptive narratives on the cartographic method. Furthermore, through theoretical-practical articulations with the scientific productions of occupational therapists on the subject, we made it possible to promote reflections on the existence of points of convergence between them and the collection in the narratives.

The reading and discussion of the data suggests that central elements for the area of occupational therapy – body, daily life and actions – can substantially contribute to the production of practices and knowledge of coping with the culture of gender violence.

In this specific research, the actions of training/research, caring, breaking away and politicizing are expressed in the participants' narratives as strategies for coping with situations of violence experienced, as attitudes incorporated into their daily lives, whether in the spaces of living, studying, work or in spaces of social participation.

It is concluded that, for occupational therapy, daily life through a listening tuned to the expressiveness of bodies in their multiple relationships with the world, presents itself as a potential means of visible or invisible expressions of human activity, including the violence of gender. However, in addition to the expression of violence, everyday life also operates as a device that effectively denounces and is extremely anchored in the details of human activities, ways of reproducing or transforming already established relationships, such as the culture of violence to which women are submitted.

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All authors participated in the elaboration, analysis and revision of the text of this article, are responsible for its content and approved its final version, with Aline Zacchi Farias being the main researcher and Sabrina Ferigato being the supervisor of the process. All authors approved the final version of the text.

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