

**ADOLESCER PROJECT: PROMOTING HEALTH EDUCATION WITH
ADOLESCENTS OF A MUNICIPAL SCHOOL****PROJETO ADOLESCER: PROMOVENDO EDUCAÇÃO EM SAÚDE COM
ADOLESCENTES DE UMA ESCOLA MUNICIPAL****PROYECTO ADOLESCER: PROMOVRIENDO EDUCACIÓN EN SALUD CON
ADOLESCENTES DE UNA ESCUELA MUNICIPAL**

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to describe the meetings with adolescents promoted by the scholarship students of the Tutorial Education Program of the Undergraduate Nursing Course at the Federal University of Santa Maria. **Method:** it is an experience report based on the practical experience of the development of the Extension Project entitled "*Adolescer*". The project is guided by the participatory methodology, which enables the horizontal and dynamic participation of all involved in the construction of knowledge and sharing of experiences. **Results:** five meetings were held and discussed on the themes: sexuality, drugs, social networks and violence against women. The meetings provided moments of reflection permeated by rounds of conversation and dynamic activities. **Conclusion:** the project surpassed the walls of the university and contributed to health the promotion and prevention of the target public in places of social vulnerability.

Descriptors: Adolescent; Nursing; Community health nursing; Health education.

RESUMO

Objetivo: descrever os encontros com adolescentes promovidos por bolsistas do Programa de Educação Tutorial do Curso de Graduação em Enfermagem da Universidade Federal de Santa Maria. **Método:** trata-se de um relato de experiência embasado na vivência prática do desenvolvimento do Projeto de Extensão intitulado "Adolescer". O projeto é pautado pela metodologia participativa, que possibilita a participação horizontal e dinâmica de todos os envolvidos na construção do conhecimento e compartilhamento de experiências. **Resultados:** foram realizados cinco encontros, balizados acerca dos seguintes temas: sexualidade, drogas,

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redes sociais e violência contra a mulher. Os encontros proporcionaram momentos de reflexão permeados por rodas de conversas e atividades dinâmicas. **Conclusão:** o projeto transcendeu os muros da universidade e contribuiu para a promoção e a prevenção à saúde junto ao público-alvo em locais de vulnerabilidade social.

Descritores: Adolescente; Enfermagem; Enfermagem em saúde comunitária; Educação em saúde.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: describir los encuentros con adolescentes promovidos por los becarios del Programa de Educación Tutorial del Curso de Graduación en Enfermería de la Universidad Federal de Santa María. **Método:** se trata de un relato de experiencia basado en la vivencia práctica del desarrollo del Proyecto de Extensión titulado "Adolescer". El proyecto está guiado por la metodología participativa, que permita la participación horizontal y activa de todos los involucrados en la construcción de intercambio de conocimientos y experiencia.

Resultados: fueron realizados cinco sesiones y discutidos sobre los temas: sexualidad, drogas, redes sociales y la violencia contra la mujer. Las reuniones proporcionaron momentos de reflexión permeada por conversaciones y actividades dinámicas de las ruedas.

Conclusiones: el proyecto ha trascendido los muros de la universidad y ha contribuido a la promoción y la prevención para la salud en el público objetivo en lugares socialmente vulnerables.

Descriptor: Adolescente; Enfermería; Enfermería en salud comunitaria; Educación en salud.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a period marked by various biological, social and psychological changes in which young people experience new behaviors and develop their capacities, presenting specific health needs. One of the possibilities for addressing issues of interest to this public is the health education, which is conceptualized as a prevention and health promotion tool that prioritizes the autonomy and development of individuals' critical thinking.¹

Health education actions, therefore, stimulate the target audience to seek help in response to their demands and favor the rapprochement

with these adolescents, since the particularities of each group, as well as the social environment in which they are inserted, must be taken into account.²

In this context, the nurse is referred as an individual capable of working with the adolescent public through health education, since authors have stated that the professional responsible for carrying out these activities must be trained and have technical and scientific knowledge, as well as dynamicity.³

Thinking about it, scholarship students of the Tutorial Education Program (PET in Portuguese) of the Undergraduate Nursing Course of the Federal University of Santa Maria

(UFSM) and academic volunteers, under the responsibility of the tutor of this group, developed the project called *Adolescer*. The project in question is a teaching and extension activity targeted at adolescents of public elementary schools in the municipality of Santa Maria, with the aim of promoting reflections on self-knowledge and self-care of adolescents through the debate of values, discovery of feelings and understanding of doubts common to this phase of life.

Considering the importance of health education actions targeted at the vulnerability existing during adolescence, the present experience report aimed to describe the meetings with adolescents promoted by scholarship students of the Tutorial Education Program of the Undergraduate Nursing Course of the Federal University of Santa Maria.

METHOD

This is an experience report based on practical experience from the development of the Extension Project titled "*Adolescer*". The activities developed were carried out in March and April of 2016 in a public school of the municipal network of Santa Maria (RS). Participants were adolescents from the sixth year of elementary school, aged between eleven and fifteen. For the

execution of the project together with the school, there was the previous contact with the coordinator of the institution, aiming at delineating and organizing the schedule for the beginning and execution of the activities.

In this way, the meetings were conducted in the inverse shift to what the classes of the participating group happened. The activities were anchored in the dialogical education of Paulo Freire, based on the tripod teacher-student-object of knowledge, which constituted an important instrument to discuss and to integrate the knowledge and the practices among the participants.⁴ In this context, the school environment plays a significant role, being a propitious and facilitator place for the development of educational activities in health, since it is where the majority of the adolescents are concentrated,

The organizers clarified, through an initial conversation, that all meetings would take place in the form of dialogue, opposing the conventional classroom, seeking greater interaction and dynamicity in the development of the meetings. It is emphasized that this approach provided the active participation of all in the proposed activities, collaborating for the collective construction of knowledge.

The project in question was based on the participatory methodology, which

aimed to enable all individuals to work in the construction of knowledge through the exchange of knowledge and experiences.⁵ In the last meeting, an evaluation of the project was carried out with the adolescents, in which each participant could highlight positive points and points to be improved, as well as suggest other topics to be discussed in the next editions of the project.

DESCRIPTION AND DISCUSSION OF MEETINGS

The following will describe how the meetings happened. For better understanding, these are divided according to each theme defined through a vote that occurred on the first day of activities.

Sexuality

The transformations of puberty are characteristics that arise in social relations and biological and physiological transformations derive from meanings attributed by adults and society.⁶ It is also emphasized that, with the early onset of sexual life, this generation is more susceptible to early pregnancy and STIs, precisely because it is the period of the first intimate contacts and the adolescents find themselves in unfavorable conditions, without the necessary guidance for prevention.⁷

Only girls were present at this meeting. They were ashamed, which required more involvement of the organizers. We sought to build a relationship of trust to captivate the adolescents, showing greater accessibility, aiming to raise doubts, fears and longings, enriching and building a collective discussion.

Participants reported that they do not talk about sexuality with their parents because they felt embarrassed, afraid to be judged and could be misinterpreted as if they were interested in starting their sex life. Parents may actually find it difficult to communicate with their children on the subject of sexuality, so nurses play an important role in sex education and counseling to families and at schools.

At the same meeting, the organizers sought to explain to the participants about the best known contraceptive methods, highlighting the importance of using them correctly for the prevention of STIs and unwanted pregnancy. Early pregnancy and menstruation were also topics for discussions. In this item, there was a greater openness and tranquility of exposition of ideas, since the adolescents exemplified some situations in the school regarding classmates or friends who were pregnant, exposing that many had not menstruated yet. In this perspective, the menstrual cycle, the adequate use of the

internal and external sanitary pads, and the necessary care to have good intimate hygiene were explained.

Regarding contraceptive barrier methods, the majority of participants reported knowing the male condom; others said they knew the female condom, but did not know how to use it. Therefore, the use of female condoms was exposed and exemplified with the aid of a prosthesis of the female sexual organ.

Drugs and adolescence

On this day, the meeting was marked by the participation of boys and girls, however, the participation of girls in the discussions was more representative than the participation of boys.

The issues on this topic fostered a description of examples of close family members and people who used drugs and how this use interfered negatively in the intrafamily and social context. One of the adolescents explained to the group that an uncle, a drug user, had sold the belongings of his house to buy drugs and had already been hospitalized against his will twice, not following the treatment and falling back again. Another report addressed the easiness for drug acquisition among adolescents and, consequently, a significant increase in its use.

The organizers, when observing the comprehensiveness of the reports,

intervened to bring the discussion back to the spotlight and raised a question for reflection. The question limited: *“what are the reasons that lead an individual to use drugs?”*, referred by them as the *“entry into the world of drugs”*. The answers were divergent. Some reports associated the use with solitude, the presence of family conflicts, bad influences, curiosity and abandonment. Others have reported believing that users *“use it because they want to”*. The prevention of drug use seeks specific groups (children, adolescents, communities, schools), encouraging them to seek their comprehensive development through their personal experiences.

There has been evidence on the impact caused by the abuse of substances by children and adolescents (initial phases of human development); therefore, it is essential to work with preventive actions aimed at this population.⁸ This highlights the relevance of discussing and raising reflection on this issue in school settings, since it is a public health problem, requiring guidance and awareness.

Influence of social networks in adolescence

The discussion started after the questions: *“who makes use of websites and applications like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Skype and Instagram?”*. *“How do you make use of these tools?”*. Most

reported they made use mainly of Facebook and WhatsApp. The organizers were also able to note that a restricted number of adolescents did not have an account in any social network.

As for the way of use, adolescents reported on the speed and ease of communication, allowing the exchange of messages and photos, and the possibility of meeting different people. When asked regarding the use of cell phones, all participants answered to have one for their personal use. As for the daily time of access to the internet, they could not specify an exact period of time, but reported that they used it "*plenty of time*" during the day.

One report that came to attention was an episode in the school in which intimate photos of an older girl from another class were passed through a WhatsApp application group. This information converges with the lack of knowledge about behavior codes in social networks, where children and young people even publish serious facts or rumors about other people, provoking cyberbullying.⁹

Although internet has some negative points due mainly to the inadequate use thereof, it should be noted that the use of this tool also brings access to information, culture, knowledge, creation and new communication possibilities. However, caution is necessary in view of

overexposure in social media and contacts maintained via the internet.

Violence against women

In the beginning of the discussion, we asked participants about the advantages and disadvantages of being a man and a woman. In this sense, the girls were provoked to reflect and to report the advantages of being a boy, and the boys had to reflect and emphasize the advantages of being a girl.

Girls pointed out among the advantages of "being a boy": reduced accomplishment of household chores; higher salary in relation to women; men do not need to wear sanitary pads, make up, high heels and do not suffer as much harassment as women. As for the disadvantages of "being a boy", the issue of violence was more prominent. On the other hand, the boys reported that the advantages of "being a girl" is that they are more protected by their parents. As for the disadvantages, they highlighted the vulnerability to rape.

During the conversation, adolescents reported everyday situations that have occurred at home and at school about violence and situations of machismo. Among the examples, it was highlighted in one of the speeches of a teenager: "*what you are doing is a girl thing.*". There was, therefore, a clear differentiation of the

social sexes, which nourishes and is nourished mainly by the sexual division of labor structured in the separation of work of men and women and in the valorization of the activities considered as "masculine".¹⁰

It should be highlighted that, during the meetings, the participants were able to use cardboards and other materials available for the production of posters, according to the proposed activity. Also, all the guidelines and the comments addressed permeated the construction of a more fair and equal conscience between men and women before the society.

CONCLUSION

In order to promote healthy youth and risk prevention, the *Adolescer* Project surpassed the walls of the university, bringing the scientific knowledge to an interface with the reality of the participating adolescents. The reward was the knowledge built in this transition that combined the scientific knowledge with the experience, being extremely valuable both for the maturation of the critical being, so that they can become empowered adults in the decision-making, as well as for the academics who fomented the theoretical wisdom with the empirical knowledge, thus enriching the mastery on the subject.

It is worth noting that the themes discussed were relevant and the use of the participatory methodology, with emphasis on the dialogue, was adequate to the age group of the participants, allowing the reflection, the exchange of experiences and the construction of the joint learning. Finally, a limitation for the development of the activities was the choice by the inverse shift to the classes of the students, which hindered the participation of the target audience.

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