

Sorority: thread that interweaves stories of collective resistance before old age and female body**Irmandade: fio que entrelaça histórias de resistência coletiva perante a velhice e o corpo feminino****Sororidad: hilo que entreteje historias de resistencia colectiva ante la vejez y el cuerpo femenino****Received: 29/09/2017****Approved: 23/03/2018****Published: 07/05/2018****Lucía Perez Sanchez¹**
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This is the account of a clinical work experience with women from the psych gerontologic perspective and collective and collaborative-dialogic practices narratives, which are distinguished using language as a constructor and transformer element of the reality. Thus, the objective of this study is to provide critical reflection on aging processes that women go through. It used a qualitative method of people participation, using the semi-structured interview, in five meetings. Five categories were shown, namely: Greeting my body, *Letter to my body*: remembrance conversation, Today I decide, The celebration, and Rewriting my body. The women realized that support among them and bonds that strengthen is a resource with which their vulnerability of genre is limited, and when they hear each other and make visible their stories, the idea of sorority is strengthened and gives the participants an emancipatory sense of dominant and hegemonic stories.

Descriptors: Human body; Women; Aging.

Este é o relato de uma experiência de trabalho clínico com mulheres, desde uma perspectiva psicogerontológica e práticas narrativas coletivas e dialógica colaborativas, que se distinguem pelo uso da linguagem como um elemento construtor e transformador da realidade. O objetivo deste estudo é proporcionar a reflexão crítica sobre os processos de envelhecimento que as mulheres atravessam. O método utilizado foi o qualitativo com participação das pessoas, utilizando a entrevista semiestruturada, através de cinco encontros. Cinco categorias foram evidenciadas, que são: Cumprimentando o meu corpo; *Carta ao meu corpo*: conversa de recordação; Hoje eu decido; A celebração; e Reescrever meu corpo. As mulheres perceberam que o apoio entre elas e os vínculos que os fortalecem são recursos com os quais a sua vulnerabilidade de gênero é limitada, assim como escutar umas às outras e tornar visíveis as suas histórias reforçou a ideia de sororidade, o que proporciona aos participantes um sentido emancipatório das histórias dominantes e hegemônicas.

Descritores: Corpo Humano; Mulheres; Envelhecimento.

Este es el relato de una experiencia de trabajo clínico con mujeres desde la perspectiva psico gerontológica y las practicas narrativas colectivas y colaborativas - dialógicas, las cuales se distinguen por el uso del lenguaje como elemento constructor y transformador de la realidad. Así, el objetivo de de este estudio es proporcionar la reflexión crítica sobre los procesos de envejecimiento que atraviesan las mujeres. El método utilizado fue el cualitativo de participación de las personas, con el uso de la entrevista semiestruturada, a través de cinco encuentros. Cinco categorías fueron evidenciadas, a saber: Saludando a mi cuerpo, *Carta a mi cuerpo*: conversación de remembranza, Hoy decido, La celebración, y Reescribir mi cuerpo. Las mujeres se dieron cuenta que el apoyo entre ellas y los vínculos que fortalecen es un recurso con el cual se limita su vulnerabilidad de género, así como al escucharse y hacer visible sus historias fortaleció la idea de sororidad que brinda a los participantes un sentimiento emancipador de las historias dominantes y hegemônicas.

Descriptor: Cuerpo humano; Mujeres; Envejecimiento.

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INTRODUCTION

The word sorority, coined a concept which refers to the possibility of re-significance and coexistence among women, and is born in the heart of the feminist movements¹; it analyzes and reflects on the question: why, if there is a recognition of equal values, rights, dignity and freedom between men and women, women's must be emphasized? Is the feeling of pursuit women's common good is something that should be evaluated and reflect about?

And, if the answer is a categorical yes, why working with women raises, from a feminist ethical perspective of gender studies, the need for a compensation and understanding to meet the emotional origin of bonds with other women in a relationship of peers?

In each of the stages by which the woman passes: as a child, as a teenager, as a mother or as an old woman, since it leads to the think what each of the women that I have met in every history of life meant, it is necessary to ratify or re mean their own experiences, and put its protagonists as re authors of their own identity².

What rises the value of the possibility to build a culture of sorority, to contribute to the deconstruction of prejudices and reproductive stereotypes in restrictive ways, excluding those women who then and now desire dignified and legitimate conditions of existence; sorority then, personalizes a transcendental and vital choice that symbolizes and identifies new possibilities among accomplice women, despite their diverse worlds and different journeys.

Taking as premise and material of work, the potential of the resources that women have developed by nature, and that in the older age become powerful sources that limit their vulnerability, these strengths are the friendship, neighborhood and community networks as spaces of support and solidarity, or rather of sorority with which they can give or signify their sense of life, in a time-as it is the process of aging-where it is necessary to reorganize and diversify the scale of values and ideals³.

This work aims to contribute a narration alternative that impact on the construction of a culture of sorority of the participants and optimize their resources as women, to live more fully the stage of life in which they are. Thus, the objective of this study is to provide critical reflection on the aging processes that women under go.

METHOD

The following work presents the design and results of a psychogerontologic workshop, from a collaborative and reflective perspective.

This have their origin in the therapeutic models that come from a socio-constructionist origin^{4,5}, such as the Narrative Model^{6,7} and the Collaborative and Dialogic Model, where the benevolence of collaborative, participatory, open and plural work is emphasized, in which interaction processes and language are favored as generators of changes⁸⁻¹⁰.

To favor an alternative narration of resistance stories from the experience of sorority, with the participation of women in their aging process, helping to identify senses, experiences and activities to empower the experience in the relationship between women, it worked from the method of qualitative approach of a participative action research¹¹.

This research was carried out through group, in-depth, semi-structured interviews, also known as talking and discussion groups¹², to explore the ways in which five women between 45-60 years old- relate among them and establish bonds of brotherhood (sorority) during their aging processes, in the city of Tepic - Nayarit, Mexico.

The sampling method was non-probabilistic, since it is a qualitative case study¹³, using volunteer subjects of continuous inclusion of convenience, with the snowball technique. Organization and analysis of the information was carried out through the content analysis of each participant speech, with the use of the program ATLAS to develop the analytic categorization¹⁴.

For the design of the conversation, we chose the structure of a workshop, and establish the topics that would be addressed according to the stages of the methodology of the collective narrative and the collaborative dialogical practices, as well as the number of sessions.

This work was constituted by five meetings in the second semester of 2017 and, through some questions, showed the perceptions of women about their aging process. The generating questions or activities of the narrations affected:

First meeting

1. The influence of the problem (aging experience) in the life and relationships of women in relation to their body.

- How they experience their body and aging process in their lives?
- What areas of their life have been modified by this process and how?
- How the way in which they see their body has influence in the relationship with their family and other women: friends, co-workers?
- What is your idea on the ageing process influence in your activities?

2. the influence of women in the life of the problem (aging experience).

- What do you value more of this stage of life experience?
- What do you think the expectations of the society towards your age women are?
- What do you say about this vision because of the aging process?
- How have you faced these expectations and confronted them with what you really prefer in your life?
- What would you say about your commitment to live your aging process?
- What things have you learned from this stage of life that you would not have acquired in any other way?
- How could you honor in your life these new knowledges that the process you are going through has given you?

Second meeting

- Has there been a time when you were about to give in to the expectations that others have of women your age and you didn't? How did you do it?

- How did you learn that ability to defend your right to choose how you want to live your aging process?

- Your ability to defend your way to live your process aging, with what values it relates to?
- Who did you learn to defend it from?
- What does that person mean in your life?
- How has that person's influence your life?
- How do you think you contributed or can contribute to that person who has influenced you so much?
- If you could see through the eyes of this person, what would you see?
- How would it affect you to see yourself through this new vision?
- What characteristics of your person make you feel satisfied at this stage of your life?
- How can, what you now know about yourself influence the next steps in your life?
- Who would notice your change?
- How would you know what you realized?
- How would that person behave with you when they see your change?

Third meeting

- Of what was expressed here, what attracted you or caught your attention most?
- Description of the images that emerged in your mind as you listened to the participants.
- What did sound in your brain with the expressions heard?
- Where were you transport to with what you heard?

Fourth meeting

- What new learning brings to your life the knowledge that today you rescue about your aging process?
- What tools will you have from today?
- How will they be used to relate in a new way to your body?

Fifth meeting

- Written suggestion of participants to their bodies

The necessary ethical procedures were carried out and the letter of informed consent was given for reading and signing, in which their detailed participation and the use of the information as well as the protection of their identity was explained.

RESULTS

First category- “Greeting my Body”

It explored discussions of deconstruction or outsourcing and re-authoring the narratives full of the problem:

“... I felt alone without doing anything... I ran out of the world when I had my kids... the rest was leftover... I see my gray hair and say “it’s ok” of course you feel cute with the dying hair... From a year now I am happy and I say something was in me that I had to live that process... for me it is a challenge,... so long being in a process forgetting me and my feelings and everything that happened to me... around, I do not know what happened, there was something that I did not accept, perhaps my changes...” (Participant 1).

The women interviewed portray in their discourse feelings that fluctuate between the rigid social conventions before the aging woman, and the new ways in which they are assumed at this stage of life:

“... they think that in the age we are, and I am an adult growing lady almost, they think that many things are limited... I visit my mother who does not live in this city and my mom is 83 or 85 years I do not remember if she goes to classes, she plays cards and I go and visit her and she is pretty because she is leaving and I say: Mom, I came here to visit you and she says: Yes, but I’m leaving...” (Participant 2).

“... when I see the changes in my body I say: I’ve grown!... I lost a few things, but I won others... I was that eagle, I went to pluck, I lasted many years, but when I returned I’ve risen and this is the one I am today, I did live that process of aging which is only growth from now.... I enjoy and every day I thank God... it is a gift to grow every day...” (Participant 3).

“... respecting our ideals and our values... I see who I do not want to become and if I see someone full and happy I try to imitate or apply what that woman is doing to be happy and arrived at where she is and what I can do in my own...”(Participant 4).

Second category –“Letter to my body: conversation of Remembrance”

Remembrance conversations gave women the opportunity to make contact again with experiences in their lives that otherwise, they would not give attention:

“... every day is one day less, but at the same time I find it beautiful because I have my mother close to me and admire the dignity in her aging process, her height because it is not easy to see how she is wrinkled... I have relationships with other adult women, and I see what all of them are doing and what, I want and who is not making them happy and that is what I would not like, I learn in both directions from women surrounding me...” Participant 1.

“...pues a mí lo que se me hizo más interesante es que son personalidades diferentes cada una de ellas y viven una etapa distinta pero que coinciden en la importancia de

deshacerse de estereotipos, deshacerse de tabúes que les ponen muchas veces las personas cercanas como sus familiares, de cómo comportarte a cierta edad, de que tienes que hacer esto o no tienes permitido hacer esto, hasta personas vecinas o personas que ves en la calle. Se me hace muy interesante que coinciden en lo mismo, que deben deshacerse de los bloqueos mentales e ir rompiendo esa percepción de la gente e ir haciendo lo que ustedes quieren, ser ustedes mismas, cada una de ustedes tiene la esencia de ser ustedes mismas...” (Therapist 2).

Third category –“Today I decide”

The description of therapists revealed in their speech how much they learnt listening to the stories of the women, making a dialogic moment in which they can include a diversity of voices that enrich the therapeutic process, this polyphony allowed participants to be heard through other people and by them reinforcing the new history that was collectively built...

“...what impacted me are their stories, as they are all different, with different life stories and how each of these events in their lives, good, bad, negative, critical how led to build the women who are at this moment. Sometimes we complain of what happens to us or we’d like to have something that we don’t have, but I guess there is a reason for everything being as it is and to be who we are now, that’s why, their stories have impacted me...” (Therapist 1).

“...for me what is more interesting is the different personalities they have, each one of them live a different stage but they agree on the importance of getting rid of stereotypes, of taboos that people near them most of the time build, their family members, about how to behave at a certain age, that you have to do this or that or not, even neighbors or people who you see on the street. It is to me very interesting that they think the same, that they should get rid of mental blocks and break this perception and go on and do what they want, be themselves, each of them has the essence of being themselves...”(Therapist 2).

Fourth category “The celebration”

Women have in response a re-meaning and validation of their own positive perceptions also regarding their body and their aging process, listening to other women strengthens their identity, their ability to cope with situations and can be seen herself as a coparticipant of a wider phenomenon:

“... I take the learning to forgive and forgive me and fight, even if I am old, learn to fight for what I feel, for what I like, with my partner and my son...” (Participant 2).

“... so I take the commitment with myself to continue increasing, eating, taking care accepting my changes, the wrinkles, the stretch marks and make them part of me and that, I am the responsible to modify, it not to let me

down, to follow it accompanying [she refers to her body] because that helps me spiritually, also that part of social acceptance of who I am and what I have also decided my body is...".(Participant 4).

Fifth category – "Rewritingmy Body"

It is the recognition of the achievement and certificates delivery. Reaffirming the achievements through therapeutic rituals in which documents are given that affirm the foregoing. These therapeutic documents have the peculiar characteristic of enriching the preferred stories.

Figure 1. Letter written by the women participants of the workshop: "Rewriting my body". Tepic, Nayarit, 2017.

Letter to my body

Dear body:
 I appreciate and accept you as a driver of my emotions.
 And because of you I enjoy and feel the adversities of life.
 I appreciate all my stages and hormonal processes.
 The virtue of giving life and love; I pledge to nurture you physically and spiritually.
 Regardless of your diseases... I LOVE YOU

DISCUSSION

Narrative¹⁵, as well as the collaborative dialogic practices¹⁶ allow each participant or community members deal with their problem, providing each one the possibility of expressing in their own words, describing their own lives, their identities and their relationships, counting with an audience that supports what is said¹⁷⁻¹⁹.

This specific way of working from narrative, and the collaborative dialogic practices, alternately help the network of scientific knowledge, because they allow to focus the spotlight on the hegemonic forms of a society that promotes discrimination and the culture of the "very old", perpetuating everyday dynamics that occur within different contexts where women interact, to break this rigidity of expectations through the exception or the so-called alternate history.

Narrative and dialogical collaborative practices help women not to feel since they know there is solidarity, and also to implement ways to express it, helps to the necessary recognition of these issues, discussing them, and think on them, make them visible to themselves not only as feminine natural and intrinsic qualities, but as a highly ethical political act of empowerment

In these ceremonies the position of the external witnesses should be decentered but influential, where the concerns and life experiences of the participants are at the center of the ceremony, so they must be honored and recognized. That's why they are considered rites of recognition and celebration of identity. The following is the letter (Figure 1) written by the participating women, as well as the certificate given to them at the end of the workshop.

and re deep significance of women in the aging process.

The main outcome of this workshop discussion was that women could develop a critical reflective questioning about what hegemonic gender culture constantly reiterated from representations of femininity that revolve around the beauty and perfection as standard criticism of women, thus it also coincides with findings showing the phenomenon called body and old age from different disciplines, and in which the ageism as a characteristic feature of contemporary society is reminiscent, which rewards the beauty and young bodies^{22,23}.

In the narratives, we observe a change in the intersubjective meaning of being old adult women²⁴, reflected in their feelings and experiences in their "being old" body, as well as their expectations and conditions of longevity²⁵, their function of being a woman that ages are framed by what have been building with the passage of the years in their family, professional and social context. Perhaps comparing their experiences with the other participants, favors the germination of this way of see and reflect about themselves²⁶, and somehow to develop more fully a sort of socio-emotional skills, which allow to

experience this stage of life with greater resources²⁷⁻²⁹.

Thus, findings stand out how such interventions favor the empowerment of the participants^{30,31}, deciding from their own re-signification³², their favorite narrative³³, in such a way that a unique therapeutic space³⁴ is generated and emphasizes the ethical aspect in narrative and dialogical collaborative therapeutic practices, which is most remarkable appearance because of notoriety of what they want to share^{35,36}.

CONCLUSION

The interest of sharing and making known this work-beyond the results presented here-was to expose the way in which we understand and carry out the narrative and the collaborative dialogical practices in diverse contexts, thus facilitating to open spaces of reflection especially in Latin America.

For this reason, this work can provide a meaningful study, in which we can see how the support of other women-sorority-is very important, and a resource with which it limits the vulnerability of gender. There can be disagreements in how everyone lives and confronts life, but the fact of being women makes them a unite that can think collectively.

In addition, these practices are considered necessary to generate stories of justice, resistance, stories of rescue of knowledges and alternate forms of living from **BEING WOMEN**.

In terms of research and contributions to psychotherapy, this work highlights the participation of family therapists in the therapeutic dialog and how these narrative and dialogic collaborative practices are experienced and developed, and which can be empirically observed through qualitative methods using conversation analysis.

However, one of the limitations of this work was the time taken in each session, so it is recommended to replicate this type of work, the space is open to at least two hours per session. This also opens the alternative to develop this same kind of discussions, but with men and thus perform a comparison in terms of living aging in their bodies and also know the ways in which they generate this

type of partnerships , as in the case of women, the Sorority.

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Lucía Pérez Sánchez was the technician responsible for the project SIP 16-149 before the Secretary of Research and Graduate of the UAN, which means that it was her who conceived the idea, design research and workshop project, as well as writing the article. **Marcela Rábago de Ávila** contributed with the implementation and coordination of the workshop, as well as data analysis and interpretation from the content of the conversation and dialogues of the participating women. **Georgina Castillo Castañeda** collaborated on data collection, analysis and interpretation, as well as the critical review of the article writing.

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