



The purple door: a space for university transformation to address gender violence

La puerta violeta: un espacio de transformación universitaria para el afrontamiento de la violencia de género

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Dear readers:

Gender violence is a serious social, rights and health problem that affects millions of people in the world, especially women and girls. It constitutes any act or threat of it, based on the unequal exercise of power between men and women and that causes or can cause harm in any sphere of the individual's life. It can take various forms of expression: physical, verbal, psychological, sexual, economic, social, symbolic. ⁽¹⁾

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Some of these are more obvious, while others go unnoticed, although all are equally punishable. The different forms of violence coexist, so in many cases it is difficult to distinguish only one of them. ⁽¹⁾ It has been shown that the most imperceptible forms of violence condition the appearance of more notable expressions such as physical aggression.

The United Nations (UN) adopted the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993, which defines it as any act of violence based on the female gender and which causes or may cause physical, psychological or social harm. ⁽²⁾

In 1994, in the Inter-American Convention to Prevent, Punish and Eradicate Violence against Women, the organization itself classifies it as an offense to human dignity, a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms. In 2015, in the UN Annual Report on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean, it is declared that violence against women continues to be an unresolved problem that causes harm and suffering. For this reason, the 2030 Agenda, on the millennium goals for sustainable development, reflects among its goals, achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. ⁽³⁾

Cuba does not escape this global reality, which is why programs and strategies are being developed, while there is a political will to shorten the gaps of discrimination, betting on a social project based on principles of equality and equity, which is expressed in the Constitution of the Republic. ⁽⁴⁾

In this context, the Cuban Medical University has the responsibility of being one of the institutions that creates awareness and humanism, through the interrelation of its different processes: teaching, research and university extension, while these are enriched and applied to the search for solutions to the problems of society and nations in terms of health. The health sector in Cuba declares as its mission: to train revolutionary professionals, with a high scientific level, deep ethical values, a high spirit of improvement; committed to satisfying the demands and needs of the sector. ⁽⁵⁾

Fulfilling this task is only possible on the basis of a humanistic conception and an integral formation of this student body, which from the beginning of its training is linked through education at work to the communities and their realities. ⁽⁶⁾ However, the authors have been able to verify the existence of discriminatory beliefs and patterns in these groups, so the appropriation of knowledge, skills and competencies to confront this scourge as social actors is not always present, making training in this regard necessary.

For this reason, the Matanzas University of Medical Sciences has been developing systematic work on this subject, which has achieved favorable results. As part of this work, workshops have been held with adolescents and young people in schools, communities, courses at both undergraduate and graduate levels, and dates related to the subject have been commemorated through the work of multidisciplinary departments, specifically the Department of Sexual and Women's Education. This has contributed to raising awareness and visibility in this regard. ⁽⁷⁾

However, the authors of this article consider that, given the learning needs of students, their role in social transformation, as well as the urgency of continuing to act on this phenomenon, it was important to consider creating a space for comprehensive attention to gender violence and for a culture of peace. To comply with this, the proposal is designed and presented to the university authorities.

The aforementioned space is called "The violet door", because this color represents gender violence, and the door is symbolically a place of reunion, rebirth and personal growth.

The general objective of this space is to prevent gender violence in any of its manifestations, both within the university community and outside it. Among the actions that will be carried out, the following can be mentioned:

1. Create a multidisciplinary team that functions as a psychological office for the care of survivors of gender violence in the Matanzas territory.
2. Develop evaluation instruments, care protocols and strategies for the follow-up of people assisted in the psychological office by the multidisciplinary team.
3. Identify subjects or groups within the university community that may be subject to violence or are vulnerable to it.
4. Develop actions to promote health and prevent violence within the university student body of Medical Sciences, with priority on the needs identified from previous diagnoses.
5. Design courses, workshops and exchanges within the student body that contribute to their comprehensive training while preparing them to address the issue in the Matanzas communities.



6. Design educational materials that can contribute to the teaching-learning process for this topic.
7. Form student scientific work groups that, through research, contribute to making this problem visible.
8. Improve the training of professionals in undergraduate and graduate medical sciences.
9. Advise and train institutions or organizations in the health sector in the territory that are related to the care of survivors of gender violence.
10. Increase awareness of the issue through work with the media, social networks and other public spaces.

In view of the above, it can be stated that the fulfillment of the proposed actions requires the coordinated functioning of the different processes that are developed within the University of Medical Sciences as a higher education institution. In addition to this, assistance actions will be carried out for people, families, human groups, communities, whose well-being is being damaged by any form of expression of gender violence.

In order to achieve the proposed goals, the University of Medical Sciences has important strengths, among which we can mention: the existence of university spaces conducive to this end; a faculty trained and committed to a culture of peace; professionals linked to work on the subject, who have extensive experience in confronting this scourge; the commitment of the institution's management to this cause and to the fulfillment of the Medical University's mission of training humanistic professionals, capable of responding to the different problems that affect health and well-being; the social responsibility of the institution to be a transforming entity, promoter of change, from a conception of justice, equity and on the basis of ethical principles, which put the human being at the center of its actions. ^(7,8)

The authors consider that the creation of this space will contribute substantially to confronting gender violence, to the reduction of its manifestations, to the training of health personnel, to the quality of care that victims who go to the different services in search of help will receive, where those who receive it do not always have the necessary tools for this, which gives rise to re-victimizations. Likewise, it is an important positioning of the health sector in the Matanzas territory and a way of contributing to the



fulfillment of the millennium goals, supported by the principles of the Cuban social system.

The authors believe that a world without gender violence is possible, that education has a determining influence in achieving this. Confronting this scourge requires intersectoral actions, where the health sector has a great responsibility, so the space that opens today at the University of Medical Sciences of Matanzas is, without a doubt, a door to change, hope and peace

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YVF: Conceptualization, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, visualization, writing - original draft, writing - review and editing.

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