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Storytellers: Discourse Practice and Gender Violence

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Meneghel S, Iñiguez L. Contadores de histórias: práticas discursivas e violência de gênero. [Contadores de historias: prácticas discursivas y violencia de género] (Storytellers: Discourse Practice and Gender Violence). Cadernos de Saúde Pública (Rio de Janeiro, Brasil) 2006 diciembre; 22(12):2693-2702.

Objectives: This article analyzes the results of a workshop conducted by story collectors in the Ecumenical Center for Counseling and Training of San Leopoldo (CECA-SL), an NGO located in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil.

Methodology: This study was divided into three stages: 1) identification of groups that are working on the issue of gender violence, 2) planning and conducting workshops, 3) analysis of the narratives. The rationale was the discursive practice and critical social psychology.

Results: The project called "Stories of Resistance of Women" originated in the Graduate Program of Public Health at the University of Valle de Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS) conducted in 2003. In the article, the authors identify two discursive repertoires: one based on the category of gender and the other in everyday life and recollections of the participants' life histories. Also considered were a number of controversies immersed in the contradictions and inconsistencies that permeate the discourse of those who participated in the workshops. Such is the case with the assertion that states that while the violence may affect all classes of women, it is typical of low-income sectors, as if they were dangerous by nature.

The authors note that the strategy of storytelling can be used to identify and tackle gender inequalities, and has been shown to be a powerful analytical tool for evaluating this prospect in the actions of collective health.

Conclusions: For the authors, narratives help to deal with mechanisms of social exploitation/domination issues related to gender, race and social class. They believe that this tool has been little explored in working with women in situations of violence, and the use of which could draw out important lessons in the health field.