

# SUFFERING OF EDUCATORS: A REPORT ON THE EXPERIENCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

*SOFRIMENTOS DE EDUCADORAS: RELATO DE EXPERIÊNCIA DA PSICOLOGIA*

*SALUD DEL TRABAJADOR EN UN ÁREA DESCENTRALIZADA DE SALUD DE CEARÁ*

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## ABSTRACT

The educational context can generate considerable pressure and overload, resulting in psychological distress for educators, manifested by professional exhaustion and demotivation. Therefore, this article aims to share a psychological listening experience carried out with education professionals, seeking to understand their experiences and emotional and institutional demands. This is a qualitative study, configured as an experience report, in which psychological listening was conducted with five educators working in early childhood education. The results showed the devaluation of the educators' work, the overload with demands that extrapolate their pedagogical functions, and the silencing of their anxieties. Despite contextual limitations, the listening demonstrated to be a powerful space for welcoming and reflection. It is concluded that qualified psychological listening is a fundamental tool for the emotional care of these professionals and for psychological training.

**Keywords:** *Occupational Health; Physical Exercises; Health Education.*

## RESUMO

O contexto educacional pode gerar considerável pressão e sobrecarga, resultando em sofrimento psíquico para educadores, manifestado por esgotamento profissional e desmotivação. Diante disso, este artigo objetiva compartilhar uma experiência de escuta psicológica realizada com profissionais da educação, visando compreender suas vivências e demandas emocionais e institucionais. Trata-se de um estudo qualitativo, configurado como relato de experiência, no qual foi realizada escuta psicológica com cinco educadoras que atuavam na educação infantil. Os resultados evidenciaram a desvalorização do trabalho das educadoras, a sobrecarga com demandas que extrapolam suas funções pedagógicas e o silenciamento de suas angústias. Apesar das limitações contextuais, a escuta demonstrou ser um potente espaço de acolhimento e reflexão. Conclui-se que a escuta psicológica qualificada é um instrumento fundamental para o cuidado emocional desses profissionais e para a formação em psicologia.

**Descriptores:** *Saúde do Trabalhador; Exercício Físico; Educação em Saúde.*

## RESUMEN

El contexto educativo puede generar considerable presión y sobrecarga, lo que resulta en sufrimiento psicológico para las educadoras, manifestado por agotamiento profesional y desmotivación. Ante esto, el presente artículo tiene como objetivo compartir una experiencia de escucha psicológica realizada con profesionales de la educación, buscando comprender sus vivencias y demandas emocionales e institucionales. Se trata de un estudio cualitativo, configurado como relato de experiencia, en el cual se llevó a cabo una escucha psicológica con cinco educadoras que trabajaban en educación infantil. Los resultados evidenciaron la desvalorización del trabajo de las educadoras, la sobrecarga con demandas que exceden sus funciones pedagógicas y el silenciamiento de sus angustias. A pesar de las limitaciones contextuales, la escucha demostró ser un potente espacio de acogida y reflexión. Se concluye que la escucha psicológica calificada es un instrumento fundamental para el cuidado emocional de estas profesionales y para la formación en psicología.

**Descriptores:** *Psicología; Docente; Distrés Psicológico.*

## INTRODUCTION

The school environment, although fundamental for human development, often presents a scenario of intense emotional challenges for students, families, and educators.

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Especially for teachers, the routine is marked by overcrowded classrooms, scarcity of didactic and structural resources, and the perception of low salaries and long working hours. In addition, curricula are increasingly demanding, the management of students' behavioral issues is becoming more complex, and there is a notable lack of social and institutional recognition of their work<sup>1-3</sup>.

These factors contribute significantly to the development of professional burnout, depersonalization, stress, and mental distress, which can include depression, anxiety, burnout, and a generalized feeling of helplessness or inadequacy. Such conditions can lead to the illness of educators and, in many cases, to withdrawal or abandonment from the classroom. In view of this scenario, it is imperative to offer emotional support to education professionals<sup>1-3</sup>.

Thus, in the search to understand and reframe experiences and challenges, these professionals can resort to psychological listening as a fundamental resource for emotional support. This practice then exerts a therapeutic function, as it offers a welcoming space, capable of attenuating the subjective impacts resulting from the daily complexities experienced<sup>1,4</sup>.

Thus, this article aims to share the experience of psychological listening carried out by students at a university discipline in the psychology course. The focus of the project was to listen to education professionals, central figures in childcare, in order to understand their experiences and the emotional and institutional demands that permeate them.

## METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach, unfolding as an experience report. Qualitative research, instead of quantifying, deepens the understanding of social phenomena, unveiling their meanings. Within this spectrum, the experience report is a descriptive study that documents experiences, interventions, or professional/academic practices, highlighting the perceptions and knowledge acquired by the authors<sup>5,6</sup>.

In view of this, the core of the study seeks to deepen the understanding of the experience of psychological listening carried out by psychology students with education professionals, in the school context. Through a critical reflection on real practices and contexts, we seek to understand this dynamic, which had as its setting an early childhood education center, an institution that plays a fundamental role in the formation of students and in supporting families.

The preparation for insertion in the field included weekly supervisions with the teacher of the discipline, theoretical classes on psychological listening, in addition to staging in the classroom on listening in different contexts, during the first semester of 2025. These teaching methodologies sought to strengthen the students' safety in the face of the services and offer a space for the expression of anxieties and expectations in relation to the field.

Previously, the students visited the institution, in order to present the purpose of the work, clarify the ethical procedures involved and make observations in the school space. Finally, the institution made itself available to offer the service to education

professionals and indicate those who showed interest in working on emotional demands associated with teaching practice.

From then on, psychological listening was established as a methodology, understood as an attentive posture, capable of welcoming anguish through established dialogue. In this sense, the narrative becomes a potentiating resource for subjective reorganization<sup>4</sup>. The listening was carried out with different subjects from the school institution, but for this research we highlight the monitoring process of five educators who worked between early childhood education 3 and preschool.

The post-consultation moment was dedicated to the writing of "versions of meaning", a phenomenological-existential instrument that enables a reflective and vivid record<sup>7</sup>. In it, the authors expressed their perceptions and feelings during the listening process, describing what happened in a presentification way and detailing aspects of what they experienced. In addition, it is important to highlight that all ethical precautions were strictly followed, ensuring institutional authorization, confidentiality, and anonymity of the participants.

## RESULTS

The analysis of the discourses revealed essential aspects of the teaching experience. In this context, the teachers verbalized a perception of professional disqualification, inferring that they are often perceived by family members as "babysitters". Such dynamics reinforce an overload imposed by demands that transcend their pedagogical functions.

Consequently, a silencing of their own emotional afflictions and the internalization of the need to absorb the difficulties of the school environment and the students' families were observed. Thus, they feel that they assume the role of conflict mediators and providers of solutions to issues that go beyond their training and teaching performance.

The teachers add that their practice encompasses both requests for material resources, such as the provision of playful materials or materials for personal use for students, and the management of highly complex occurrences, such as psycho-emotional crises or aggressive interactions between students. In addition, the educators expressed apprehension about the increase in diagnoses and psychopedagogical reports in children, a phenomenon that exerts a direct influence on the pedagogical dynamics and the emotional climate in the school context.

The teachers also reported a perception of limitation in their capacity for effective pedagogical intervention, prevented from fully meeting the needs of the students, as a result of institutional regulations and gaps in communication with legal guardians. Such factors compromise the structuring of a consistent educational routine and adversely impact child development.

The emotional constructs resulting from these experiences fostered the aspiration for recognition of their professional authority. Such recognition is not configured as a search for hierarchical superiority, but rather for the delimitation of a scope of professional action less susceptible to constant interference arising from the exclusive requirements of legal guardians or pedagogical management.

These discourses reinforce the relevance of psychological intervention in this context and highlight the urgency of support for education professionals. However, it is imperative to contextualize that the conduction of the listening process took place under restrictive operating conditions. The physical environment intended for the consultations had significant structural limitations, such as the presence of glass partitions and the impossibility of locking the door, resulting in frequent and unwanted interruptions.

In addition, operational challenges were observed on the part of the educational institution in the logistics of organization and in the selection criteria of the participants, which culminated in a late and, on occasion, improvised schedule. It was also noted the infeasibility of attending to all the expected teachers in a few weeks, concomitantly with the perception that the participants felt, in a way, compelled to attend.

Despite the contextual limitations and the complexity inherent to the demands expressed, the listening intervention demonstrated its effectiveness in providing an environment of acceptance and reflection. Such an approach allowed the creation of a space of trust, in which the educators could, even if momentarily, verbalize their anxieties, validate their experiences and initiate a process of recognition of their own subjectivity, in the face of intense daily work pressures and the complexities intrinsic to the exercise of care.

## DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data emerging from the psychological listening conducted with the educators elucidates a complex web of invisible sufferings deeply rooted in the social, cultural and institutional structure. The daily challenges experienced by these professionals go beyond conventional pedagogical prerogatives, culminating in a notable devaluation of their work practice, as well as manifestations of psychic suffering, which often remain silenced and unrecognized.

This lack of recognition reflects the persistent socioeconomic undervaluation in historically feminized professions. The naturalization of this work of care and social reproduction leads to its disqualification and overload, a phenomenon widely discussed in the feminist literature. The analysis by Federici<sup>8</sup>, for example, highlights the invisibility and non-recognition of women's labor, directly impacting dignity and working conditions in the educational sector.

On a more specific level, this precariousness is accentuated by the demand for a role of emotional restraint for students and families, combined with the maintenance of institutional secrecy about complex demands. This conjuncture generates a tension between pedagogical autonomy and the rigid organizational norms of work. According to the psychodynamics of work by Dejours<sup>9</sup>, the restriction of freedom of professional action leads to a significant increase in the psychic load, corroborating the premise that mental health and working conditions persist in a marginalized position in educational policies<sup>1,3</sup>.

This situation favors the silencing of the educators' subjectivity, the inhibition of the expression of their own suffering and the lack of safe spaces for emotional management<sup>1,3</sup>. Consequently, not only mental health is compromised, but also the

intrinsic quality of professional practice and the ability to foster a healthy and transformative school environmental.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, the provision of qualified and empathetic listening emerged as an essential component for the psychosocial support of educators. The facilitation of a space of non-judgment made it possible to validate their subjective experiences and verbalize anguish that was often silenced, culminating in psychological relief and the legitimization of their suffering.

This modality of intervention, which is intrinsically relational in nature, is aligned with the premise that authentic presence and the establishment of a secure bond are determinant for the individual's psychosocial well-being, grounding the centrality of therapeutic presence in facilitating emotional expression and promoting psychic change<sup>4</sup>.

For the psychology trainees, this experience was configured as a training process of great relevance, transposing the theoretical framework to clinical praxis in a complex context. Direct contact with the educators' narratives not only deepened the understanding of the psychosocial challenges inherent to the educational environment, but also validated the power of listening as a primary intervention tool.

This practical immersion is recognized as essential for the training of psychologists, as it provides formal knowledge and practical application, fostering the development of essential clinical skills, in addition to consolidating professional identity. As Falender and Shafranske<sup>10</sup> emphasize, clinical supervision and guided practical experience are pillars for the acquisition of core competencies in psychotherapy, enabling future professionals to act safely in real scenarios.

## CONCLUSION

The experience showed that the invisible sufferings experienced by educators are deeply rooted in complex social, cultural, and institutional structures. Despite the contextual limitations, the field experience revealed active listening as a powerful clinical intervention.

This instrumentality allowed the validation of their subjectivities and, in some cases, the resignification of their narratives, boosting the recognition of educators as protagonists of their own experiences. In a context in which silence prevailed, this space provided the verbalization of anguish that was often repressed and a consequent psychosocial relief.

These findings underline the urgency of reformulating educational policies and school management practices, aiming at creating work environments that offer structured emotional support, professional recognition, and decent working conditions, going beyond mere containment.

For psychology students, this experience was configured as a formative process of great relevance, with direct implications for academic and professional training. Preparation for listening, which included staging in the classroom and writing versions of meaning, was essential for the development of authentic and ethically based clinical skills. It is therefore recommended that such approaches be formalized and encouraged in university curricula.

This experience report, by unveiling the complexity of teachers' suffering and the power of psychological listening, in this context, offers a significant contribution to the literature on mental health at work and to training in psychology. It not only validates the relevance of clinical listening as a psychosocial intervention tool for educators, but also serves as a basis for future longitudinal studies and for the development of more comprehensive and accessible emotional support programs.

We conclude, therefore, that psychological listening in the educational context reveals itself as an intervention of significant impact. Thus, by giving visibility to the invisible suffering of these educators, we not only legitimize their speech, but also reinforce psychology's commitment to the promotion of emotional health and the renewal of the relationships that make up the scope of care.

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