

## PSYCHODRAMA CONFIRMS POLITICAL MISSION OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

O PSICODRAMA CONFIRMA MISSÃO POLÍTICA DA  
DIVERSIDADE, EQUIDADE E INCLUSÃO

EL PSICODRAMA CONFIRMA LA MISIÓN POLÍTICA DE  
DIVERSIDAD, EQUIDAD E INCLUSIÓN

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In 2020, humanity was challenged by the highly transmissible coronavirus respiratory syndrome 2 (SARS-CoV-2), responsible for the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Social distancing has also accentuated psychosocial difficulties.

Another recent challenge was the awareness and mobilization triggered by the serious consequences of structural racism that led to the murder of George Floyd in the United States. Issues related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) have been gaining increasing visibility and strengthened an important global movement to transform the course of history and society. Due to its responsibility for scientific dissemination, in a special way this movement should influence editor-in-chief and all actors involved in the editorial process.

Diversity refers to the presence of differences such as race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, language, (dis)ability, age and political positioning. It includes populations under-represented in the area. Equity involves promoting justice, valuing impartiality and guaranteeing rights, access, processes and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. The condition for change requires understanding the causes that lead to disparities in our society. Inclusion means getting diverse individuals to feel and be welcome indeed, being able to participate in decision-making processes and development opportunities within an organization or group (Extension Foundation 2021)

The Brazilian Association of Scientific Editors (ABEC Brasil) promoted the webinar “Equidade de sexo e gênero na pesquisa e na publicação”, with Shirin Heidari, advocate of sex and gender equity policies and practices in research (Heidari 2021). Differences between sex and gender, and the influence on power and opportunities was addressed as a source of oppression and inequities. She emphasized the need to balance sex and gender in research designs to avoid excessive and inadequate generalization of results. She presented the guidelines of *Sex and Gender Equity in Research* (SAGER) (Heidari et al. 2016). The importance of scientific journals legitimizing DEI in the content of articles, editorial boards, policies and procedures have been stressed (Heidari et al. 2019).

In all areas of research, but especially in health, DEI is mandatory. A study involving 551 editorial committees of health journals identified that 35% of the editors were women, and only 11% of them were part of the group of 33% from countries with low and medium income. Men from high-income countries were overrepresented among editor-in-chief (59%), compared to 42% men in the total sample. Only one woman held the position of editor-in-chief in low- and middle-income countries (Nafade et al. 2019).

The journal *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, a publication of the *American Psychological Association* presented a special number with initiatives focused on diversity and inclusion, with objectives that highlight the challenges for this initiative with continuous social changes. The goal of creating DEI in the editorial process was also considered in this special issue, focusing on: a) promoting equity in the review method and published content; b) inclusion approach in the evaluation process; c) invitations to authors, editors and reviewers from different communities, including additional

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care for recruitment; d) mentoring and support for new authors, editors and reviewers who were not traditionally included in the journal publishing process (Brancu and Hayes 2020).

This collective effort to build a more inclusive reality is the essence of psychodrama, an approach created by Jacob Levy Moreno. At the beginning of the 20th century, he developed strategies to know the functioning (sociodynamics), the measurement of relationships (sociometry) and therapy (sociatry), with the objective of applying sociatric methods for the inclusion of the marginalized and the development of groups (Marra and Fleury 2010).

Sociodrama, the main sociatric method, focuses on themes common to a group, mediating group interaction in search of concrete objectives, optimizing the functionality of a group (or between groups). It stimulates the diversity of expressions, giving voice to all participants, amplifying the awareness of singularities, and benefiting the acceptance of differences (Knobel 2020).

The aim of this text is to reflect on some actions or aspects in which psychodrama is shown as an instrument for strengthening practices that promote DEI in Brazilian society.

At the opening event of the 15th Brazilian Congress of Psychodrama, in 2006, the Brazilian Federation of Psychodrama celebrated 30 years of its existence. The director of sociodrama, Luis Falivene Alves, planned to transform the auditorium with approximately 500 participants into a large station with passengers coming and going for a trip of celebration of 30 years of something (Alves 2020). With the application of the entire methodological arsenal of psychodrama, the testimonies of the “travelers” were being presented through brief scenes. The large group elected four scenes, one of them praises the African roots and the identity of the protagonist. The latter, identified as containing the previous ones, begins with a child protagonist participating in a Christmas party in kindergarten. In dramatization, he goes on a path of transformation of myths into living and more human experiences, which allow a symmetrical relationship. At the end of the sociodrama, with the integration of the four characters into one, the participant of the congress, called by the large group a congressman “open to the new”, the leading character presents psychodrama as a path and as a perspective.

This sociodrama (Alves 2020) illustrates the various meanings of DEI in sociodramatic work. The participant of this congress is a psychodramatist inserted in a community with a history of 30 years and who will go his way for many other years ahead. Moreno believed that we are all co-responsible for creating a better society. The psychodramatic community has been mobilized to integrate Moreno utopia, to treat all humanity, with the current moment, when action methods for group work can actively reconstruct movements of social oppression in group interactions that value DEI.

In 2018, Anna Maria Knobel surveyed articles published in the Brazilian Journal of Psychodrama between 2012 and 2016 that illustrate the diversity of psychodrama applications. She selected 21 articles representing different group interventions and theoretical developments produced in the country (Knobel 2018).

Among those selected, we find Malaquias (2016), a leadership in the use of sociodrama to work on race relations in the country, marked by structural racism and psychological suffering. Since the pioneering activism of Guerreiro Ramos in the 1940s, with the implementation of Psychodrama in the Experimental Theater of Negro, passing through the Vira-Lata Complex (or Mestiço Complex), a denomination attributed to Nelson Rodrigues, reflections on the relational dynamics between colonizer/colonized, Brazilian psychodrama has been creating new approaches for the transformation and inclusion of diversity.

Another selected article presents psychodrama as a pre-surgery therapeutic instrument in groups of transgender men and women participating in the transsexualizing process, held at the Clinical Hospital of São Paulo Medical School (Torres et al. 2016).

Regarding the LGBTQIA+<sup>1</sup> population, Zakabi (2014) reports the experience of psychological care in a social clinic, with the objective of strengthening the individual to deal with moments of crisis. It combines the exercise of citizenship and the problematization of daily life to overcome stigma and discrimination. It considers that the suffering presented as individual is also collective. It discusses the positive results brought by the psychodramatic method, facilitating reflection and expanding verbal interactions.

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1. LGBTQIA+ is an acronym used for sexual and gender diversity and includes the population that does not identify as heterosexual or cisgender. (www.abemss.org). Recovered in <https://abemss.org/lgbtqi-2/>. Accessed at: 13 August 2021

In 2019, the second issue of the Brazilian Journal of Psychodrama was focused on strategies related to active methodologies in education. One of the selected articles described the mobilization of women embroiderers in the outskirts of São Paulo for an emancipatory experience (Novaes et al. 2019).

Sociometry studies the affective positions of individuals in groups and groups in society, characterized by relationships of attraction, rejection or indifference, leading to the exclusion of the marginalized. Nery and Gisler (2019) reported a research on the affective interaction among students in the process of racial inclusion at the University of Brasília. Sociodrama made it possible to highlight the social group of blacks and the new social roles of “black quota student” and “non-quota student”, generating the experience of radical identity (increased aggressive power relations or feelings of anger, injustice and indifference to the theme) and the concealment of identity (weakening of politicized, political participation of the socially excluded group). Explaining identity gave voice to the social group to fight for its rights and illustrated the emergence of a new role in society, reproducing the silencing of Afro Brazilians, the distortion of history and the exclusion of educational processes and professional ascension.

Many other articles present the possibilities of psychodramatic action in different contexts, such as group sessions with girl victims of sexual violence (Marra 2020; Moreira and Costa 2021) and adult perpetrators of intrafamily sexual violence (Costa et al. 2020), the rescue of health and the exercise of citizenship with the elderly (Rodrigues et al. 2019) and many others.

The incorporation of VLibras in the digital platform of the journal allows those deaf researchers and students to have access to articles as another form of translation and scientific dissemination, favoring the expansion of the practice and promoting DEI for the deaf community.

We believe that Brazilian psychodrama, beginning the second century after its creation (Fleury 2021), is effectively applying its methods of action to strengthen DEI in Brazilian society. The next step will be the vigorous strengthening of these principles in the composition of the journal editorial team.

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