

# Work and containment measures for **COVID-19**

Contributions from Work and Organizational  
Psychology in the pandemic context

# VOLUME 3

## **The state of Brazilian Psychology in the COVID-19 scenario**

*Edited by*

**Daiane Rose Cunha Bentivi**



**SBPOT**

Associação Brasileira  
de Psicologia Organizacional  
e do Trabalho

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1. Psychology in fighting the COVID-19 Revolution; 2. Impacts on the Labor World and the Telepresence Reflexive Practice in the Context of Pandemic; 3. Professional training and knowledge production in psychology in the face of the pandemic; 4. Psychological Interventions in Healthcare and Hospital Settings During the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic; 5. Psychology's Contributions to Integral Risk and Disaster Management, Sports, Traffic, and Person-Environment Relations in a Pandemic Scenario; 6. Adaptation of Psychodiagnostic Practice, Psychotherapeutic and Career Guidance in the midst of Pandemic. 7. Psychosocial and psychopolitical aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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## Introduction

Since March 2020, when the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been dealing with a variety of consequences. Social isolation, services interruption and compulsory remote work are measures that have caused heavy emotional impacts on population. In this context, psychologists had to meet new demands, having to rethink and adapt their performance, inviting Psychology to analyze and reflect on possible interventions in view of the pandemic's development.

To contribute with this reflection, the Brazilian Association of Organizational and Work Psychology (SBPOT – *Associação Brasileira de Psicologia Organizacional e do Trabalho*) developed a three-volume collection named "COVID-19's work and containment measures: contributions from the Organizational and Work Psychology in the pandemic context". Volume 1 provides home office (space designated in a person's residence for official business purposes) guidelines, specifically for mandatory works that have had to be done at home because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Volume 2 embraces other themes that affect workers, also encompassing work experiences beyond the organizational context, with particular attention to those in vulnerable conditions.

Volume 3 brings reflections about the impact of the pandemic on the work, considering different fields of Psychology. For this, 15 Brazilian Psychology Organizations were invited to contribute with their experiences on the development of themes. To develop the content, SPBOT also contacted expert researchers whose focus of investigation is this area. The objectives of the seven themes of this volume are presented below.

**1. Psychology in fighting the COVID-19 Revolution.** This chapter was written in partnership with de Federal Council of Psychology (CFP) and the Brazilian Psychology Society (SBP) and analyzes the Psychology role in face of the dynamics driven by COVID-19. It also discusses the adjustment of its own professional practices given the increasing virtualization and fragmentation generated by the "trans-human" era perspective. Considering Psychology professionals performance in contexts of intensifying virtualization and tools-systems mediation.

**2. Impacts on the Labor World and the Telepresence Reflexive Practice in the Context of Pandemic.** In partnership with de Federal Council of Psychology (CFP) and Psychologists National Association (FENAPSI), this chapter provides reflections on the world of work transformations and restructuring underway as basis to understand the crisis caused by the pandemic. It also analyzes how Psychologists could contribute with harm reduction procedures on collectivity psychosocial protection, without losing sight of changes and productivity impacts, suggesting reflective practices in organizations.

**3. Professional training and knowledge production in psychology in the face of the pandemic.** This chapter, written in partnership with Psychology Postgraduate and Research National Association (ANPEPP), analyzes professional education and knowledge production in Psychology, regarding

the educational problems and challenges raised by the pandemic. It considers the education and professional training in the Psychology from remote schooling perspective.

**4. Psychological Interventions in Healthcare and Hospital Settings During the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic.** In partnership with Brazilian Association of Health Psychology (ABPSA), this chapter considers the professions' regulation and standardization, defined by laws that determine labor relations and duties, especially in the health field. It analyzes the psychologist's role as a health promoting agent during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**5. Psychology's Contributions to Integral Risk and Disaster Management, Sports, Traffic, and Person-Environment Relations in a Pandemic Scenario.** In partnership with the Brazilian Association of Sports Psychology (ABRAPESP), the Brazilian Association of Traffic Psychology, and the Brazilian Association of Environmental Psychology and the Person-Environment Relations (ABRAPA), this chapter presents possible options for the role of the psychologists on Integral Risk and Disaster Management Psychology, Sports Psychology, Traffic Psychology, and Environmental Psychology, during the COVID-19 pandemic. It elucidates possible roles and relevant recommendations.

**6. Adaptation of Psychodiagnostic Practice, Psychotherapeutic and Career Guidance in the midst of Pandemic.** This chapter was written jointly with the Positive Psychology Brazilian Association (ABP+), the Psychotherapy Brazilian Association (ABRAP), the Psychological Assessment Brazilian Institute (IBAP), the Rorschach and Projective Methods Brazilian Association (ASBRo) and the Professional Guidance Brazilian Association (ABOP). It discusses the need for Psychology professionals to consider and review their technical-scientific strategies at times when reality requires it, such as the current pandemic scenario. It resumes necessary special care points in psychological assessment processes during the pandemic, in order to maintain the ethical commitment and quality service.

**7. Psychosocial and psychopolitical aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic.** In partnership with the Political Psychology Brazilian Association (ABPP), the Social Psychology Brazilian Association (ABRAPSO), and the Psychology Brazilian Society (SBP), this chapter analyzes how political conditions build certain subjectivation and social organization modes and, therefore, questions the role of Psychology in its social and political dimensions. It contributes to the complexity pandemic social and political repercussions analysis, as well as indicates coping possibilities.

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## Themes and authors

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José Carlos Zanelli (Instituto Zanelli), Antônio Virgílio Bittencourt Bastos (CFP) & André de Carvalho Barreto (FENAPSI)

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### **Psychosocial and psychopolitical aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic**

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## 1

## Psychology in fighting the COVID-19 Revolution

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Pandemics are epidemics that spread quickly around the world. Virologists anticipated the risk of some large-scale epidemic outbreak, with potentially devastating consequences (Taylor, 2019), a prediction confirmed in the pandemic contamination by COVID-19. This pandemic is considered the biggest public health problem in the last 100 years by the World Health Organization (WHO). In Brazil, in less than three months, the spread of this virus sparked a revolution in social life and in the economy whose impacts and reach mobilized the whole of society, offering a self-portrait from which the country's challenges in building future quality of life emerge.

In this portrait, the paradoxical equation of Brazilian society appears in the enjoyment of sophisticated technological resources linked to the fragility of its mastery of the good living, as dreamed by the Greeks for all humanity. Aligned with other countries, Brazil also moves its events at high speed, due to the almost miracle of digital technology, which virtualizes reality in globalized networks, setting them going in several flows that have instrumentalized the spread of COVID-19. This paradox reveals the long trajectory of weak structures and institutions although they were built in Brazil to enable the collective good living of its population.

These problems are not only due to the limitations of public policies and the poor performance of the structures and mechanisms that move Brazilian society but also result from the implicit contradiction to the digital technology itself. The latter moves events at high speed, risking the necessary adaptation to the sustainability of the biological being and the conditions of its existence in society to maintain the regularity of properties and functions, always threatened by emerging events. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed Brazil's

risks to account for its sustainability. In it, Brazilian society proved to be limited in facing two contradictory demands: the continuity of the economic movements that support it and the social isolation to block the spread of COVID-19, given the lack of therapies, vaccines, and hospital infrastructure.

Although digitalization is still a long way from many citizens, its effects reach, equally all, because they impact on the regularity of the resources that the biological being needs to instrumentalize its adaptive action. These contradictory demands stem from the fierce economic competitiveness and the insufficient management of risks to survival in the face of the invisible spread of COVID-19. The strength, speed, and invisibility of this virus were fertilized by the available equations of exchanges in the digital communication networks, which act in the subjectivation, in the socialization, in the collective imagination, and the other mechanisms involved in the present-day conditions of collective existence. The own resources of these networks enabled COVID-19 to revolutionize adaptive action, adding new risks to society's survival and sustainability.

### Psychology in the fight against COVID-19

COVID-19's action is revolutionary (from the Latin revolution, "act of revolving") for its potential to abruptly and radically change political power, socioeconomic articulation, and the mobilization of all resources for collective existence. Pandemics such as cholera and the Spanish flu have already promoted revolutions with devastating effects. Likewise, COVID-19, in addition to deaths, raises the fear of infection, the demand for isolation, and the rearticulation of the economy, impacting individually and collectively the conditions that account for the sustainability of collective existence. The spread of COVID-19 could have been more manageable, but its appearance and action were quick, not allowing preparations, therapies, and other preventive actions for public health systems.

All over the world, Psychology - a reliable, already legitimized and matured scientific and professional field, - immediately enlisted, in the ranks of combating COVID-19, in the empowerment of society to sustain the conditions of collective existence, now threatened by multiple disruptions and losses. Its practitioners and researchers mobilized, quickly, formally and spontaneously, making their theoretical-professional framework available for understanding and coping with these ruptures and losses, explaining the chains of causes and reasons that hurt the economy, coexistence, and lives, putting adaptive action at risk. Its practitioners joined forces in health care, in blocking the contamination networks and in overcoming the consequences of personal, emotional, and social illness.

Coping with revolutionary action is difficult and worsens when the adversary is invisible. The enemy's view favors security in the choice between ambiguous tactics and energizes the creativity that enhances the structures and instruments that build collective existence. In this battlefield with invisible enemy, Psychology has been an accessible and reliable resource, as in the myth of Ariadne's thread, to find the way out of the labyrinth created in this revolution sparked by COVID-19. The security that Psychology offers, with its collection of concepts and the experience of its practitioners, emerges from the richness of its theoretical narratives that explain the individual and social existence in all its mechanisms and instruments to deal with human conduct and the quality of life. The knowledge of these narratives instrumentalizes people and institutions as protagonists of good living, built through prevention and effective solutions to recover losses, sustain resources, and open new paths for growth and emancipation.

If someone believes in a human fate, it can be the uninterrupted movement of organisms. Intuitively and scientifically, organisms are known to function and interact, even during sleep. These movements reveal the corner stone of the biological being, which is the continuous mastery of its own sustainability through its proneness to adaptive action. In simple and naive terms, adaptation is understood as the set of changes promoted in both the environment and organisms to sustain, develop, and move their functional relationships. The sustainability of life and of human development depends on these changes, which are manifested in the effectiveness of adaptive action.

Through its movements, the human organism creates the conditions for its sustainability, being health one of the most relevant for its implications in the proneness to adaptive action, i.e., in the capacity of the organism's movements to respond to all the demands of its existence in society. To simplify something complex, health can be understood as the continuous adaptation of the organism to its environment. In general, in different cultures, health is treated as a predicate. It is often said that an individual has or has or has health, but in fact, health is the continuous movement of adaptation of the organism.

These movements and changes constitute organism adaptive action, revealing the human condition, as an always incomplete being, who acts in search of complementarity that steadily expands its multiple properties and functions to support its survival and instrumentalize its emancipation. This complementarity is found in the movements of organisms and in their exchanges with the environment to overcome their wear and energize their development.

The disruptions created by COVID-19 directly affected the body's capacity for these movements, either by limiting the effectiveness of its functions or by preventing the



necessary complementarity, evidenced in situations such as the search for water and medicines. The obstacles to movement and complementarity compromise the satisfaction of basic needs, such as food, shelter, and sophisticated needs such as social peace. The disruptions, daily, manifested in the action of COVID-19, hinder the coexistence, and several movements necessary to act adaptively. Isolation, lack of mechanical support to breathe, job loss, insecurity, and particularities that compromise health and adaptation, prevent community exchanges that have always been irreplaceable pillars of the sustainability of life and its development.

The emergence of COVID-19 mobilized all the forces of society, beginning with scientific and technical knowledge, in all segments that make up the wisdom and practice of health in its dependence on people's behaviors. Psychology's immediate response to this mobilization was evidenced in the wide promotion and publication of research, in the scrutiny of emerging solutions, in the survey and review of instruments for individual and collective support and the entire spectrum of professional services that attention to life requires. In this mobilization, Psychology revealed its participation in the professional complementarity that underlies the effectiveness of the professions in the construction of individual and collective existence.

This mobilization of Psychology appeared in its contributions to all the actions required by adaptive movements. Although the causal axis of the revolution sparked by COVID-19 is the infection process, its effects unfold in prevention, in the control of risks and the consequences of various sequential and interconnected disruptions, such as death, job loss, and depression. Much of the chain of events involved in the COVID-19 revolution is investigated and treated in the field of Psychology, in demands such as social discipline, community solidarity, understanding of suffering, support for the patient, institutional and structural capacity, and the commitment to overcome losses. All of these demands are aspects of human conduct involved in the disruptive force of COVID-19 and in the means for its control. The spread and incapacity that characterize this revolution, call for an understanding of the problems in their relations with globalized chains of causes and with the provisions for neutralizing their disruptive effects.

The virtualization of events and their structuring in fast and global networks moved through tangled and interdependent flows make the understanding of society, in its causes and reasons, an almost insurmountable challenge, as evidenced in the daily debates broadcast in the media about the tactics to block the spreading flows of COVID-19. Within networks of events that move quickly and interdependently, it is difficult to discriminate causes and identify points of intervention aiming at their mastery (Sutherland, 2013). Many aspects of today's society, such as its economy and culture, operate in self-regulated ecosystems

whose dynamics are hardly captured and understood, even by the State, the protagonist responsible for their management. This difficulty is explained by the porosity and flexibility of the boundaries between events and the interdependence between their multiples causes. Within self-regulated systems, the conditions of existence become fluid in which the only regularity is continuous changes, creating ambiguities for the biological being, which make it difficult to understand and identify ways to cope with the adaptation of their skills, their bonds, its goals and its balance standards (Esprit Editorial, 2019).

Today, the human being is challenged to adapt to the wide ecology of events that characterizes the globalized and digitalized society, in which adaptive action demands competences above its biological limits, as observed in the limitations of adjustments to the recent economic crises. This demand explains the difficulty in controlling migratory movements, nomadic life, timeless work, and political parasitism, impacting directly and indirectly, even on groups and people who enjoy economic, social, and cultural stability. Levy (2019) named these self-regulated systems of kingdoms without territory and a king, but they impact on societies with the strength war forces of powerful nations. COVID-19 has all the predicates for its recognition as a new kingdom without territory or a king. Similarly, control over the COVID-19 revolution requires the mobilization of the whole of society, with all its forces. Psychology is a witness to the repertoire of complaints about the evils of these kingdoms found in the suffering of nomadism and timeless professional life, two routines of the digitalized society that hinder the continuous adaptation of the organism to its environment and, therefore, compromise health.

The nomadism of globalized society complicates overcoming the disruptions generated by COVID-19. In the context of this society, individuals do not choose to be nomads but are led into this way of life, even without regularly moving from one place to another, as the Guarani and Bedouin did, as they did. In fluid environments, made up of intertwined networks of events, movements flow at high speed, forcing people and groups to adapt continuously and radically, as if they were moving places, carrying many uncertainties and insecurity about their tomorrow. Routine events such as the demand for a new software signals the inevitable updating of skills, procedures, and habits since today most services are mediated by those instruments. Quality standards and evaluation criteria are also changed, imposing rearticulation of cognitions, action options, and routines. These adaptations in skills and judgments complicate the management of identities with significant impacts on interpersonal relationships and living well with oneself. The individual is charged with the crystallinity of his/her identity and, at the same time, pressured to change his/her identity predicates to adjust to the fluidity of the groups in which he/she transits. Nomadic life requires continuous adaptive movements to respond to the demand for the validation of one's personal and social life.

It is difficult for individuals acculturated in nomadic life to adjust to the rigidity of coexistence required by blocking the spread of COVID-19, or teleworking online (Abdelnour & Médas, 2019). The habits of nomadic life in the search for merely functional adjustments in their routines and in the legitimation of these adaptations by the groups with whom the individual has interfaces make it difficult to understand the environment and create particularisms that complicate interpersonal relationships and the social peace. The risks created by COVID-19 increase the cognitive and emotional insecurity that characterizes nomadic life in today's society, favoring the search for solutions in the external guidance of gurus, technicians (coaches), and consultants (Hochschild, 2013).

In the personal dimension, COVID-19 potentiates psychological suffering, whether due to ease contagion, frequency, proximity of deaths, social isolation, and uncertainty about collapses in the health system. Anxiety, fear, and stress are present in positive patients, suspects, family members, and professionals working on the front lines (Shojaei & Masoumi, 2020). Such side effects were added to the biological risks of COVID-19, with a high probability of perpetuating itself after returning to activities. The revolution triggered by this virus created a different world, which is redesigning the conditions of collective existence.

In the social dimension, Brazilian dystopia gains new nuances as evidenced in femicide and violence against fragile groups. The vulnerability of already marginalized populations, such as migrants, prisoners, and homeless people is exacerbated (Marques, Moraes, Hasselmann, Deslandes & Reichenheim, 2020; Okabayashi, Tassara, Casaca, Falcão & Bellini, 2020). The COVID-19 revolution opened up the injustice in social inequality, further implicating Psychology in combating its effects due to its potential and experience in meaning reconstruction and in the quest for new answers for old problems whose terms were changed by digitalization and globalization.

Under these new terms, the traditional scenarios of adaptive action are modified by the modalities of remote interaction. Work, education, services, and coexistence are redesigned to adjust to the new patterns of relationship and the mediation of information, to which the professional practice in the field of Psychology is adapting. This practice has always been largely instrumentalized in face-to-face relationships and conversations. The new conditions promoted by COVID-19 challenge Psychology in its contribution to the reduction of suffering, the protection of the vulnerable, the resignification of ways of working, learning, and social relationships, requiring reinvention of its instrumentality. The mission of Psychology was, once again, reaffirmed by COVID-19, in its capacity to act in the context of digitalization and speed with the complexity of complaints in its services and the interdependent ruptures. Its challenges remain focused on the development and strengthening of individual and collective subjects, now more fragile within the world

already heading towards the era of “transhumanism”, due to the artificial intelligence that moves to intervene in the adaptive action that enables it to good living and emancipation (Touraine, 2018).

### Scientific knowledge and justice, allies in the post-COVID-19 era

Faced with this dynamic driven by COVID-19, Psychology, empowered by its maturity, is challenged to reinvent itself in the development of theories and the adjustment of its professional practices in the face of the growing virtualization and fragmentation brought about by the horizon as predicted by the “transhuman” era. How will the professional performance in the field of Psychology be in contexts in which the virtualized and systems-tools are going to intensify and demand the inclusion of the online mediation of the settings of the clinic, the hospital, the justice, the psychosocial care devices, the teaching and so many other scenarios (Sammons, VandenBos & Martin, 2020)? The trajectory of the institutions that represent Brazilian Psychology shows a significant set of skills and determination to adapt to the times after COVID-19.

This trajectory of Psychology reveals what De Charms (1968) called “ontological strength”, which is the recognition and trust in one’s own power for adaptive action. This strength arises from the regularity of making the subject protagonist. The more an individual performs, the more he/she discovers his/her potential to perform and develop his/her actions in the unfolding of new demands of adaptation. The recent history of Brazilian Psychology exposes this “ontological strength”, to reinvent itself in the post-COVID-19 era. In this era, both sciences and professional practices in the field of Psychology will be updated and strengthened in facing the current paradox of Brazilian society.

COVID-19 affects everyone, although its effects are more complicated in conditions of greater vulnerability (Santos, 2020). This complication paradoxically encourages investments in the “awareness of planetary communion”, the “common home” and justice. Psychology, together with other behavioral and social sciences (Bavel et al, 2020) is called, once again to expand knowledge about the existence in the society that depends on justice to overcome the vulnerabilities that enhance the reproduction of the disaster of COVID-19. This call comes not only from its development as a science but also from its ethical commitment to the pursuit of justice and a good living for all (Chenneville & Schwartz-Mette, 2020).

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## 2

## Impacts on the Labor World and the Telepresence Reflexive Practice in the Context of Pandemic

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The COVID-19 ensues side damages with consequences that can go beyond the morbidity and mortality, the need for immediate medical treatment, the hospital crowding, and the interpersonal distancing. Damages related to phenomena known as “mental disorders” are progressively increasing, and should supervene even more strongly, as a subsequence wave of pandemic (Borges, 2020; Tseng, 2020). This herald and neglect regarding health and well-being lead us to review how professional psychologists can contribute in organizations, through procedures to reduce damages aiming at the psychosocial protection of the collective, and its impacts on the economy and restructuring of work processes.

The insertion of psychologists in the world of labor organizations dates back to the origins of Psychology as an applied field. Over more than one century, concepts, principles, and models of action and instruments developed by psychologists have been systematically applied to a wide range of contexts of production of goods and of the services provision. Psychology was consolidated as a far-reaching and diversified field of action, with a wealthy set of ways for managing both organizational processes and their impacts on groups and individuals.

Our models of intervention - from classic areas, such as personnel recruitment, training, performance evaluation, among others, to interventions in the field of worker's health - were built and changed over its history. From more simple interventions focused on individuals, it advanced to more complex, more strategic interventions focused on the



collective of workers. Traditionally, the work on the field was on-site, with psychologists in direct contact with the phenomena that they should deal with, typically in organizations of different types and productive segments. On-site presence used to characterize even consultant and practitioners' services, when the professional held no labor link with the organization. Since long this work has suffered the impacts of the ongoing changes on the labor world, including the advance of new technologies and the expansion of remote work, or work mediated by communications technology.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced an unprecedented rupture. It demands adjustments, changes, restructuring of professional activities, even from psychologists, including organizational and work psychologists. The impacts of the current health crises surely go beyond changes on the work routines and processes. These should be added to a global economic crisis that will affect the national economies in different ways. Depending on the grounds of a country's economics, the crisis can entail more unemployment and impoverishment of working conditions. Even when it comes to organizational contexts, the impacts on health and the required health-related measures demand creative and innovative ways of sustaining the commitment to building healthier work environments, capable of reducing damages to all those engaged in the lives of organizations.

The current paper aims to make a reflection over the changes in the labor world, the ongoing restructuring as ground for a proposal that, in our view, is an important contribution that Psychology professionals can offer. This contribution takes place through reduced damages, and enhancing the psychosocial protection to the collective, without losing sight of the impacts ensuing from changes and productivity.

### Brief summary of the labor world

The Taylorism-Fordism paradigm that marks the industry world since early the 20th century, and the counter-balance of a trade union structure that granted some power to the working class, provided us with a sense of stability and continuity for more than half of the 20th century. Notably in the central countries, mainly the European ones, policies on social well-being have also contributed to a feeling of equilibrium and stability in the labor world. This is sharper after the II World War when, under the dominance of the United States, economy experienced times of prosperity, despite the geopolitical unrest. Big organizations, long-term service contracts, award policies were then associated to a notion of long-lasting career in the company, expansion of the consuming market, improved conditions of life, support when one loses the job, and so on. By the way, that was not a hegemonic reality for all countries, mainly when it comes to the countries peripheral to the global capitalist order.

That seemingly stable order suffered a sharp blow as of the 1970s, resulting from the petrol crisis that halted years of economic growth, as well as some income distributions in the Western societies. The crisis of socialist societies brought about geopolitical changes that undermined the bipolar world structured after the II World War. In parallel, technology changes continued to produce huge impacts on production processes, and on the setup of a globalized world, in which the notions of time and space were downplayed. We were then facing a Third Industrial Revolution, marked by the advance of cybernation and automation of production processes. This technology advance transformed Japan into a strong economic power, and its model of work organization became a model to be conveyed to the Western societies. This, in turn, triggered big changes on the models of structuring and managing labor organizations. These changes, in a context of the crisis of capital, ground the emergence of neo-liberal policies that, briefly speaking, aim to respond the demands of a globalized and more competitive world, sustaining or expanding profits while reducing workers' rights, and taking down the policies that used to structure the state of social well-being. Considering all these elements, we have the end of the 20th century marked by deep changes not only in the labor world, but also at the level of society in processes conceived and largely studied, such as globalization and production restructuring.

These macrosocial processes are the background that allows us to understand the specific changes in organizations, in the workers and ways of working. This is the main focus of this paper. Since these are processes that we experience and continue to experience, our knowledge is still fragmented and little inconclusive. Something that should be emphasized is that we do not have a homogeneous world, notably a labor world, within and between countries. Frequently, the discussion about changes and future of work disregards this heterogeneity, approaching a given productive or social segment, in which the ongoing changes are more visible. Highlighting this heterogeneity is important to recall that in our everyday life, we live together with virtual organizations, or highly technological organizations, side by side with medium, small and micro businesses whose work processes are much less affected by those changes. Even worse, we coexist with organizations that sustain slavery-like labor relationships. This diversity is also applicable when we consider labor relations. More "deregulated" societies coexist with societies that preserve higher levels of regulation of the workers' rights and duties. Despite this diversity, we find some general lines that redesign the labor world today, and foreshadow directions that are being apparently consolidated for the decades to come. Some terms may summarize the major lines of this change: flexibility, polyvalence, deterritorialization, outsourcing, and entrepreneurship.

As advocated by Spreitzer, Cameron and Garrett (2017), unsteadiness and lack of clear frontiers, either spatial or temporal, are a beacon that replaces full-time, stable jobs, carried out for years or decades in the same organization. Thus, the number of half-time workers;

informal and temporary jobs; indirect links with the organization through outsourcing; flexible working time; telework, is increasing. It is quite clear the divide between core and peripheral workers, as defined by Antunes (1995). Core workers are granted more security, higher compensations, opportunities to grow, and development. Peripheral workers, in turn, face instability, and are only supported by the labor law bills (always challenged and, as we saw, recently amended to remove historical rights of workers). Spreitzer et al. (2017) acknowledge this distinction when they recognized that, for more specialized and better educated workers, these new work arrangements can be positive experiences. However, the best term to define the current reality for the remainder workers is impoverishment, mainly when we consider the workers of digital platforms (the work “uberization” process).

In another dimension, the technology advances have made jobs more cognitive, complex and volatile, which demands working with a set of differentiated competences and skills. We are now on the edge of a Fourth Industrial Revolution accountable for the “smart plant” (Buhr, 2017) in which machines are no longer instruments for human actions, becoming active agents in the production process. This process is not limited to industrial corporations, and encroaches the social life, directly affecting the job event. Structural unemployment tends to increase, thus reducing the workers’ chances of bargaining. The uncertainty, and all of its consequences to people, is the keynote of current times (De Witte, 2005; Lee et al., 2018).

For Brazil, these changes are unique when we consider that we are experiencing one of the sharpest economic crises in our history, surely deeply worsened by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Economic stagnation and paltry growth levels in the years that an economic crisis happened determine a huge contingent of unemployed, underemployed, and informal workers. In this setting, labor laws are reviewed, the work of trade unions is weakened, deteriorating the imbalanced relations of power between capital and work.

## Labor organization and the COVID-19

Labor organization can be understood as the dynamic relationship between labor force, structure, leadership, and management of a given organization (Turner, 2020). The authors Zanelli and Silva (2008) argue that labor organizations are open and technical social systems aimed at fulfilling specific objectives. As established collectivity, they are in interactions and tensions with internal and external coalition (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Internal coalition refers to the organization’s workers that execute and make decisions in the organization, holding informal and/or formal power. External coalition can be understood as non-workers of the organization whose actions and decisions can affect the workers’ behaviors (Zanelli & Silva, 2008). Furthermore, the engagement between employees,

managers and policies can promote either alignment, or organizational incongruence and detachment of the relevant players in the work organizations.

The social systems play core roles in the work organization. The functions of adaptation, objectives' fulfillment, integration and latency of values and beliefs of people sometimes border the control powers (i.e., environmental pressure, rules enforcement, shared values and expectations) that can reduce the individual's variability in the context of work (Zanelli & Silva, 2008). In given situations, this tension produces psychical suffering, mainly in the struggle between the individual's history, plans, hopes and desires, and with a labor organization that ignores these (Dejours, 2016). The manager - representing those holding part of the power in this dynamic - starts playing significant role in the social building of the labor organization's reality.

In the history of global pandemics, the COVID-19 became one of the core crises of health, interpersonal relationships, and economy. The pandemic affected people from all nations, continents, ethnicities, genders and organizations (Shanafelt, Ripp & Trockel, 2020). No other experience with epidemics in the past has caused so many significant changes on labor organization as the COVID-19 did. For example, during the Ebola virus epidemic, from 2014 to 2016 in the West Africa, health resources were relocated as the response to the emergency, but business did not need to be locked down. During the Zika virus outbreak, women were most affected, and the imbalanced income between men and women made women lack resources to undergo checkups at hospitals (Weham, Smith & Morgan, 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the required responses such as lockdown and quarantine of entire cities, closure of organizations, physical isolation, and requests for shelter have sharply changed every day and organizational lives (Shanafelt, Ripp & Trockel, 2020). Each country responded these interferences in their own way to reduce effects on organizations and the economy. For example, the German government launched packages to foster loans, backed the loans, and supported outsourced workers. Resuming on-site work became optional. China, one of the first countries affected by the pandemic, launched campaigns to encourage people to resume work at places where the pandemic was under control. The Chinese government encouraged trust in workers and businesses through campaigns, built infrastructure to create more jobs, and improved labor relationships. The Brazilian government established unsuccessful measures, like the Provisional Measure (PM) N° 936/2020 that instituted the Emergency Plan to Maintain Jobs and Income. The program allowed wage reduction and working hours in up to 70%.

The context of pandemic, added with this PM, encouraged and mandated new dynamics in organizations and human relationships, such as: (a) clandestine opening of organizations;

(b) alternation of employees' working shifts and hours; (c) authorization by the State to open organizations and, in few days, mandatory closure; (d) physical distancing between workers and customers; (e) flexible working hours; (f) implementation of sanitary practices for workers and customers; (g) incentives to remote purchase and delivery services; (h) mandatory use of individual protection equipment by workers and customers; (i) reduced number of workers in each room; (j) remote work. Moreover, in few months there was a noticeable increase in the number of deaths and leaves of absence from workers due to the COVID-19, unemployed individuals, collective and individual bargains, labor suits, closure of organizations, and workers' income reduction. In sum, the external coalition affected the internal coalition in work organization with unprecedented severity at the macro, meso, and micro time of social systems.

Considering this dynamic, even the most experienced manager suffered an increase of overload resulting from the new events, with well-known stressor consequences (Zanelli, 2010) - a psychosocial context clearly susceptible to the rise of physical and mental pathologies that demand skilled interventions by professional psychologists at organizations, far beyond the remedy clinical support.

The interconnected activities that make up the Psychological support scope now, and circumstances pass by, are: review of the traditional human management processes, and expand its influence on the organizational decisions; effectively humanize the organization, and make work worthy and decent; focus on workers' experiences and participation, making them meaningful; set programs on prevention, promotion and protection of psychosocial health; increase competences, and enhance the digital culture; and many other activities (Zanelli & Kanan, 2019). A wide range of potential interventions can be worked in scheduled learning processes, coordinated from the **reflective practice** of managerial actions. This procedure is presented below.

### The shared telepresence-based reflective process

The texts published in the volumes of this collection "*O trabalho e as medidas de contenção da COVID-19: contribuições da Psicologia Organizacional e do Trabalho*" (COVID-19's work and containment measures: contributions from Organizational and Work Psychology) by the Brazilian Association of Organizational and Work Psychology offer alternatives for the analyses and psychosocial interventions to managers, supported by robust empirical evidence. They pave the way to identify the needs of the organization community based on renewed parameters, provided these are shared in practice. In order to do that, and considering the impacts of the pandemic and its consequences on the worsening of labor

crisis and the crisis in organizations, we will conclude this text by displaying a procedure designed to ground reflection, in an integrating process that facilitates learning prior, during and after the managerial actions.

Many philosophers, scholars, and competent managers have discussed over time the relevance of methodical consideration and reflective practice at managerial level (e.g., Schön, 2000). This peculiar moment of our history doubles the importance of consideration and unveils its usefulness, if Human Rights and the Agenda 2030 are to be respected (Nações Unidas Brasil, 2015). However, this consideration is not always shared, systematized by groups and, above all, not always is supported by scientific evidence. This is mostly due to the scanty dialog between researchers and managers, to the enclosure and pressure for results both from researchers and managers in their specific scopes of work. The problems discussed in managerial meetings are many times restricted to the search for “technical solutions”, i.e., solve the barriers to performance and productivity, as if these could be disconnected from health and well-being (Zanelli & Kanan, 2019).

The current crisis unveils the fragilities of organizational structures, policies, and strategies, and urges for solidarity and collaboration - values that are more than ever of extraordinary relevance. According to Dejours (2016) cooperation “is the imperative mediation in the construction and renewal of solidarity against suffering at work” (free translation, p. 330). The procedure that is briefly presented below is a cooperation resource aimed at developing managerial competences to build collaborative and reflective, healthy and productive work environments (Zanelli & Tostes, 2019).

The procedure should integrate the actions plan (human management, and others) currently adopted or to be adopted by the organization in all of its subsystems, to respond the challenges posed by the pandemic/crisis. It is enabled as group process of support to cope with stress, and sustain affiliative bonds. Passing by the scheduled sessions of reflective exchanges opens widely “to which extent coercive control destroys trust, mutual consideration, and cooperation” and deconstructs the “objectives of the organization itself” (Zanelli & Tostes, 2019, p. 13, free translation). Relying with social support and finding assistance in relationships of interpersonal affinities in scheduled meetings mediated by experts, themselves, prove to be a protective resource to health and well-being.

The proposed Reflective Practice starts by the assembling of Reflection Groups (RGs) ideally in the most powerful positions, to raise awareness about the power of the procedure to enable the organizational reinvigoration, clarify doubts and, though the exercising of reflection, remove unjustified fears about the potential effects of the Practice. The number of RGs is expected to increase and be inclusive, as much as possible, from the development of the first RGs.

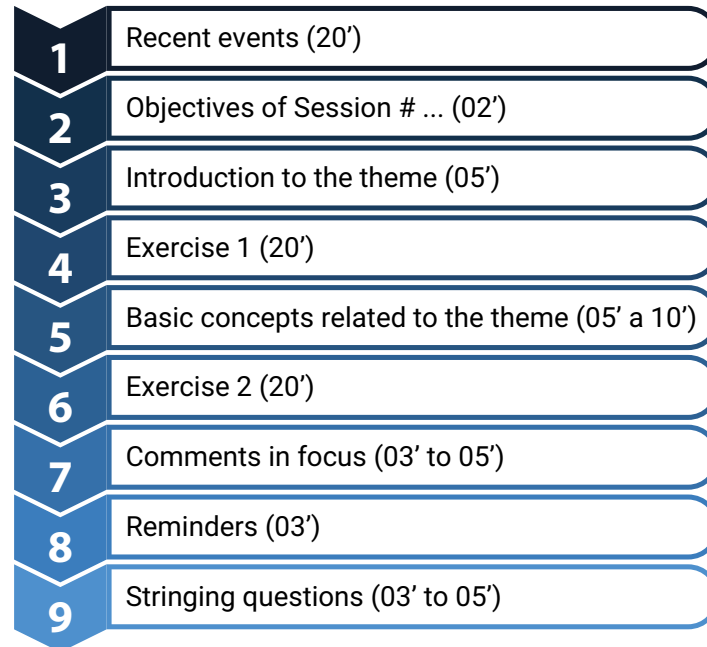
In order to expand the opportunities of individual manifestations when procedures are exclusively performed online, all RGs are restricted to four or five members (preferably selected by interpersonal affinity relationships), coordinated by a mediator professional, and one assistant. Execution is oriented by themes or subjects elected for their pertinence in relation to the participants' daily issues. These issues are worked on weekly basis, or bi-weekly 90-minute sessions. In the first sessions, the mediator professional and the assistant define the themes, jointly with professionals in charge of the training and development or occupational health program, or by programs with other denominations, or simply in the context of human resources, depending on the allocation of Reflective Practice in some of these. After the second or third session, topics selection is decided upon negotiations in the RG, strictly aligned with the participants' needs clearly stated along the Practice development.

Participants are encouraged to keep up written records of the experiences and lessons, either during sessions or in-between sessions, to report in the beginning of the next session. Sessions are planned to facilitate exchange of experiences and purposeful suggestions, in a sequence that starts by highlighting the major events to each participant in a period or interval of time between the last and the current session. Next, the conceptual summary in question is read in an attempt to achieve mutual understanding, and the resulting reflections. Exercises and active experiences are coordinated and directly linked to the participants' performance, and further clarification of the everyday practice.

Following is the sequence presented by Zanelli and Tostes (2019) to each session: 1. Recent events (20'); 2. Objectives of Session # ... (02'); 3. Introduction to the theme (05'); 4. Exercise 1 (20'); 5. Basic concepts related to the theme (05' a 10'); 6. Exercise 2 (20'); 7. Comments in focus (03' to 05'); 8. Reminders (03'); 9. Stringing questions (03' to 05'). Certainly, this basic structure can be adjusted to the context and demands estimated to each session.

**Figure 1.** Sequence presented by Zanelli and Tostes (2019) adaptable to the context and demands estimated to each session.

## Stages



Source: Prepared by the authors.

This procedure of Reflective Practice allows professionals (RGs coordinators and members) to become collaborators of the organizational and work reconstructs, oriented by the collective needs. Initially, we suggest drafting summaries of the Brazilian Association of Organizational and Work Psychology texts as presentations, as well as drafting own materials, or resource to other summaries such as, for example, those presented by Zanelli and Tostes (2019). It is an instrument to the psychologist professional and to, after being understood, be disseminated by managers through their actions in their units and, gradually, permeate the organization as a whole.

## Final consideration

Based on the Socratic assumption that knowledge can make us better human beings, we conclude that decent work and a worthy world will result from actions anchored in scientific evidence, and coherent ethical principles. The circumstances we are experiencing now demand new ways of responding to the needs or pressures imposed. With the Reflective Practice presented here we intend to encourage the planning and execution of interactive, adaptable and inclusive (regarding both participants and themes) procedures to (re) construct work environments that are collaborative, reflective and assertive - necessarily productive environments, but healthy and sustainable ones.



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## 3

## Professional training and knowledge production in psychology in the face of the pandemic

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The production and dissemination of knowledge in the different areas of science constitute permanent challenges to the civilizational process, innovation, and generation of scientific products. To produce knowledge is to build processes of reflection and argument, and therefore reflects tensions, consensus, dissent, particularities, and generalizations, guided by theories and methods that contribute to the very process of knowing reality (Cruz, 2016). To widely disseminate this knowledge is an ethical and scientific commitment: scientists and professionals who are part of a networked community must ensure the quality of the information produced and made available to society.

In psychology, it is no different. In critical and challenging moments such as the one that abruptly appeared due to the Sars-Covid-2019 pandemic, psychologists embrace the commitment and put themselves at the service of society in different ways to collaborate in order to cope with the problem, and its effects.

Understanding human reality in its different psychological manifestations and intervening whenever it is professionally possible, ethically desirable, and based on the best scientific resources and arguments, are basic commitments of a science and a profession that aims to collaborate effectively in solving problems and improving psychological knowledge about human reality. In this sense, when it is stated that psychology is a science and profession, the intention is to emphasize in a forceful way that producing scientific knowledge and disseminating it in society is a paradigm under which the training and professional development of psychologists and of all journals in psychology is guided.

In this chapter, we focus on professional training and the production of knowledge in psychology, considering the educational problems and challenges raised by the pandemic.

### Training of psychologists in the context of the pandemic

The processes of professional training and development in psychology are primarily carried out in undergraduate and postgraduate courses, and complemented by other training opportunities in technical and scientific events, inside and outside the spaces of the profession.

Such processes start from the premise that these are privileged spaces and situations for developing the skills of knowing (which is generally called the process of reflection and criticism) and the skills of professional intervention (when attending, in a qualified and specialized way, the different demands of the population) (Cruz, 2016b; Cruz, 2016c).

The main objective of training and professional development in psychology is to promote the development of scientific and professional skills among learners, which implies the improvement of critical and scientific reflection, based on prior and contemporary knowledge of the facts (Iñesta, 2006). It is a process that involves immersion in reality; the integration of values, feelings, personal verbal communication skills, and writing; the use of technical resources; and especially identification with the profession, its demands, and its challenges (Sadykova, et al., 2019).

The civil and professional responsibility of psychologists is accentuated as the interaction between the training process and the demands of meeting the needs of the population and social institutions increases. The expectation is that this process of interaction will produce the greatest possible benefits for those involved, as well as enable professional performance committed to ethical and scientific values spelled out in the principles on which the profession is based (Dueñas Becerra, 2003). Training people to act professionally, considering the educational basis, cultural diversity, and economic problems in a country is a complex task and an accentuated social responsibility. Thus, it is possible to affirm that the quality of training of generations of Brazilian psychologists is a fundamental aspect to the integration between science and profession (Cruz, 2016A).

The current context of the SARS-Covid-2019 pandemic, a public health crisis, has produced relevant effects on the dynamics of society in terms of social mobility, employability, and economic losses, as well as on the physical and mental health of populations, especially the most vulnerable (Brooks et al., 2020). The need for scientists and professionals from

different areas to contribute to the assistance, safety, and provision of resources necessary to slow the spread of the disease and to mitigate its results on people's health has been observed. This is especially relevant if we consider that policies and actions to prevent contamination and reduce damage can not reach the peripheral communities of cities, due to poor sanitary conditions.

In this context, there is a recent increase in scientific production in psychology that discusses the relationship between fear of exposure to contamination, the situation of isolation and confinement of the population, and the accentuation of mental health problems (Barros-Delben et al., 2020; Cruz et al., 2020). Additionally, studies have been expanded in populations infected with coronavirus and among professionals directly exposed to the risks of contamination. This is especially the case for those who work in hospitals and health centers due to reports of exhaustion, reduction of empathy, anxiety, irritability, and insomnia, as well as deterioration of cognitive functions, and social and professional performance (Brooks, 2020; Schmidt et al., 2020). There is also recent work about the pandemic's effects on the increase in social and domestic violence, cases of suicide, and the process of mourning and loss, in addition to the manifestation of symptoms of acute stress a few days after the implementation of quarantine (Crepaldi et al., 2020; Enumo, 2020).

### Education and professional training in psychology: reflections on remote schooling

The ongoing social, economic, technological, and behavioral transformations intensified by Sars-Covid-2019 have accentuated the need for knowledge production. This is in addition to the need for improvement of intervention in crisis and emergency situations, guidance, psychological care and treatment mediated by information and communication technologies, as well as the promotion of new professional training processes based on theory-practice integration.

In a way, these transformations, provoked and/or intensified by the pandemic, have had effects on public policies and health management, and more specifically on people's personal, family, and professional lives. They are already influencing the production of psychological knowledge about the pandemic's impacts in society on mental health, life, and work. Similarly, it is also possible to visibly perceive greater participation of psychologists in coping with psychological problems which have been exacerbated by the context of the pandemic. All these aspects certainly impose challenges to updating the teaching and professional practice of Brazilian psychologists.

The suspension of face-to-face pedagogical activities, starting in March 2020, aimed

to enable the social distance necessary to prevent contamination and extensive dissemination of the virus among people. The need to continue to ensure the provision of schooling led to the emergency replacement of face-to-face teaching in the classroom by a new educational reality called remote education. This is based on the distance mode legal device, already provided for in Brazilian legislation, as we will highlight below. This solution led to several problems and raised different questions, of which we will focus on two from the perspective of psychology: transposing a model of distance education into basic education, originally thought for adult education, demanding skills and creativity from teachers; and, the challenges inherent to carrying out practical disciplines and professional internships, as part of the training of psychologists, in the context of remote education.

The pandemic was challenging, requiring the rapid suspension of face-to-face educational activities and demanding the search for alternative solutions, which resulted in the use of remote education. According to the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2020), the suspension of classes due to the closure of educational institutions affected more than 1.5 billion students worldwide. The social, economic, and developmental costs of this measure are high, especially in relation to basic education, and when we refer to children and young people who are socially vulnerable. We know that schools are not only spaces for formal learning, but for socialization, the development of ethical awareness, and in an unequal country, the guarantee of food security for students, especially in a situation of increasing unemployment and economic crisis resulting from the pandemic such as in Brazil.

Faced with the worsening of socioeconomic disparities, it is possible to observe the reduction of opportunities for healthy development and learning of the child-youth population, the increase in the chances of school dropout, and the fragility in the protection networks for this public (INEE, 2016). The longer they are away from the school system, the more likely they are to drop out of formal education (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020), because they are required to contribute financially to family income.

Remote education—almost always mediated by information and communication technologies (ICT)—is the possible alternative when it comes to mitigating the effects of absence from school, maintaining children and young people's contact with the school system, and maintaining the bonds of trust between peers and teachers. At the same time, this alternative carries challenges, many of which are not being faced, and much less solved. Firstly, remote education has been thought of as a transposition of the same classroom conditions, with the exception of physical presence in the same space, without often considering the particularities of the students' study context, their material resources, and family support.

In this sense, one aspect to be emphasized is the difference between distance education and remote education. Distance education is provided for in the Brazilian educational legislation (Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education—LDB, 1996) as an educational action in response to emergency situations that may affect basic education. However, by definition (decree 9.057, of 2017), distance education provides a didactic-pedagogical mediation appropriate to the characteristics of the virtual world, the use of ICT, the presence of qualified professionals, and should comply with legal requirements and regulatory frameworks whilst doing so (Brazil, 2017). Due to the need for abrupt changes when adapting to the health emergency of COVID, there was neither time nor opportunity to extract the best benefit from the existing educational experiences, within the framework of distance education.

Secondly, although it can be done without ICT by using print and audio-visual resources of another nature, such as TV and radio, in the present context of the pandemic, remote education, with exceptions, was designed to have access to digital technologies by teachers and students as the norm—which is not true even for higher education students. Also, the proposals are based on a professional image of teachers, supposedly competent and autonomous in didactic planning and conducting classes, interesting and motivating, with access to such resources; something that research shows that does not always occur (Schuhmacher & Filho, 2017; Tenório & Tenório, 2016).

Promoting teaching and learning dynamics remotely is not something simple, and the complexity involved can produce stress and dissatisfaction in educational actors. Teachers and students do not always have support for planning and learning in such peculiar circumstances, produced in such a short time. Above all, carrying out inclusive remote education is a complex challenge, considering the development and learning needs of the child-youth public, and of each child and adolescent in particular. In this scenario, critical school psychology, for example, which has been working for decades to redefine school grievances and promote the quality of basic education, is challenged to contribute to reducing the negative impacts of the pandemic on the quality of education, so that no student is left behind.

According to research data (Cetic.br/NIC.br/The United Nations Fund for Children (UNICEF, 2020), there are 4.8 million children and adolescents aged 9 to 17 years living in households without internet access in Brazil. Therefore, if the process of remote schooling is prolonged, and continues to be exclusively mediated by digital technologies, about 17% of the child-youth segment may remain excluded from the social right to education. The National Council of Education (CNE/MEC), in issuing professional opinion no. 05/2020, recognized the difficulties of many children and young people, exposed for the time being to remote education, in accessing digital technologies. According to the professional opinion:



In order to ensure essential school care, it is exceptionally proposed that the adoption of non-in-person pedagogical activities be developed with students as long as sanitary restrictions persist for the complete presence of students in school environments. These activities may or may not be mediated by digital information and communication technologies, especially when the use of these technologies is not possible (CNE/MEC, 2020).

A worrying aspect is the high expertise required of parents and family members to support their children's learning processes in the domestic environment. Learning can be compromised when the student does not find a family environment conducive and motivating to carry out their studies and develop some autonomy. Research conducted with basic education students who study remotely indicates that when there is no minimally favorable environment, the probability of the student giving up their studies is higher (CREDO, 2015; Zhou, Wu & Zhou, 2020), as it starts a cycle of low grades, low self-confidence to learn, and absence of mentors to offer emotional support in emergency situations (INEE, 2016). All this affects the quality of the family-school relationship and leads to distance between school and the concrete reality of the students.

In addition, we emphasize as simplistic the idea that producing didactic materials by video or in print could guarantee the quality of pedagogical processes for children and young people. If these alternatives contribute to compensating for the lack of technological resources in the domestic environment in one way, in another it does not solve the question of qualified pedagogical mediation, since this refers to the social role of teachers that dispenses with the technology used.

The current circumstances require rapid educational responses. Some movements of educational institutions, perhaps hurried, that may have uncritically adapted from classroom activities to non-classroom situations, must be monitored. Such an attitude may be collaborating, or legitimizing decisions that may contribute to the aggravation of existing educational problems. As the historical-cultural approach in psychology helps to understand, the development of higher psychological processes—such as meaningful learning—depends on at least two complementary processes: the semiotic mediation of the psyche (construction of new meanings and senses), and the instrumental mediation of activity (when new instruments convert into cultural resources for development and learning). Educational experiences lacking these forms of mediation do not promote learning or even development, besides weakening the teacher-student bond.

Finally, it is possible to understand that historically, many of the criticisms directed at the (lack of) quality of education end up falling back on the role of teachers, as if they alone

could solve systemic and lasting problems that impact public education, raising its quality. Once again, we see a new source of pressure on them in remote education, being expected to plan coherent, consistent, and creative activities that enable learning in the absence of the figure of the teacher and peers.

We noticed, in relation to remote teaching, that in the absence of models for practice, many teachers have sought to build references for didactic-pedagogical action and mediation forms that take as a basis their own experiences and previous knowledge, imported from the classroom context (face-to-face/physical). There are so many uncertainties, that teachers continue rehearsing and experimenting. But even in this unknown scenario, attempts to deal with the new, in the light of traditional pedagogical principles, can contribute to the saturation of these principles and the emergence of new meanings related to the teaching function and its teaching practices, in a creative and innovative way with more lasting effects, which extend even to the post-pandemic future, provided that support is given by governmental actions and public policies.

What contribution can psychology make in this whole process? Educational contexts have always constituted an important space for the development of psychology as a science and as a profession. In the historical process, this contributed a lot so that education could identify its problems and face them, in the search for solutions to qualify and strengthen school education. How can reflections on school and educational psychology contribute to facing the challenges of the moment, and what lessons should we draw from what is new in the dynamics of teaching and learning for training in psychology which is socially committed to contemporary problems?

When dealing with sociogenetic phenomena, in constant historical transformation mediated by sociocultural processes, one of the greatest challenges faced by psychological science is the investigation of psychological processes at the moment they are transformed. In the abrupt social transformations caused by the pandemic, we visualize an interesting social experiment to encourage the elaboration of new interpretative models and psychological research of great value. Questions related to remote schooling are part of this scope of possibilities.

At the same time, it is important to be clear that in the face of new phenomena, in most cases, the existing formulas are not good enough and must be co-constructed. Psychologists can build alternatives with different educational actors, to deal with the feelings and frustrations that emerge as part of a process which is still unknown and confusing. They can learn from these actors about the educational possibilities and potentials of new technologies. They can contribute to families and students not only in the organization of new study

routines in a domestic environment, but also in relation to emotional and interpersonal issues related to physical distance, movement restrictions, and the lack of space and social exchanges provided by the school environment, which are so missed by all. They can support teachers in the construction of new symbolic references for themselves and their teaching performance, in a lasting and consistent way with the increasing challenges of the future.

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## 4

## Psychological Interventions in Healthcare and Hospital Settings During the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic

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This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the regulation and standardization of professions, which are defined by laws that govern labor relationships and duties related to a given profession. Professions are established in accordance with social needs, and professionals should acquire specialized knowledge and follow appropriate procedures. These should be consistent with the ethical and moral precepts that underpin the services provided to a community.

Psychologists are trained in accordance with the competencies stipulated for higher-level professionals and defined in the National Curricular Guidelines by the National Education Council (Brazil, 2004; Brazil, 2011). In this context, the focus of professional performance is psychological phenomena and processes, and the aim is to understand individuals in an holistic approach and interact with related fields of knowledge.

The role of psychologists has received increasing attention in recent years, largely because of psychology influence in various domains of the Public Health System (SUS). The principle of public healthcare is as follows: “care for the health of the citizen, including basic and specialized care, and actions and services of promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation” (Ministry of Health, 2020). This is in accordance with the principles of health psychology. Their inclusion in the SUS allowed psychologists to understand

community needs. This helped them provide evidence-based interventions and improve their effectiveness (Campos, 1999). However, despite the pool of available interventions, the emergence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has posed new challenges to healthcare professionals, including psychologists.

To understand the professional role of psychologists, it is necessary to examine the fields of clinical, health, and hospital psychology to establish and differentiate this praxis within the framework of the COVID-19 pandemic. These fields have been sequentially described in the following paragraphs.

Since its conception, clinical psychology has been practiced and has gained prominence in psychiatric hospitals, and psychologists have been providing mental health care in hospitals, specialized care centers, and primary care institutions. However, their skills were soon required in general hospitals, and they had to manage the challenges of diagnosis, the problems caused by diseases, and other related issues. Although this claim is not universally accepted, it will be used to outline the differences between clinical, health, and hospital psychology (Ribeiro, 2011).

Health psychology is defined as an area of professional, scientific, and educational psychology that aims to promote and maintain health. Thus, it aims to prevent and manage the health-disease process and identify the factors that are related to the development of diseases (Matarazzo, 1980). In addition, it facilitates the analysis and improvement of health service systems and elaboration of health policies (Calvetti, Muller, & Nunes, 2007). Clinical psychology has retained its space, specifically with regard to the treatment of mental health problems. It is provided in private and public institutions, and individual, family, and group care services are provided.

The premise of health psychology is derived from the methodology of disease prevention and health promotion. It is based on intervention techniques that are fundamental to psychology, and they are used to enhance the health and well-being of individuals and communities (Teixeira, 2004).

Health psychologists teach, research, and develop interventions that promote health. However, the most important interventions are those that reduce the risky behaviors that lead to the development of diseases (Odgen, 2007). In addition, in Brazil, health psychology has largely evolved in hospitals, where intervention models based on health psychology concepts have been created for hospital psychologists (Almeida & Malagris, 2011).

Hospital psychology has emerged as a specialty in Brazil. From a technical perspective, health and hospital psychology are poorly defined and often confused with each other

(Miyazaki, Domingos, Valerio, Santos, & Rosa, 2002). In accordance with Gorayeb's (2010) observation, hospital psychology has been included within the framework of health psychology in this chapter.

Health psychology is intertwined with hospital and clinical psychology. Therefore, they have been defined as follows in this chapter: 1) clinical psychology pertains to the care provided to individuals, families, and groups in clinical environments (specialties); 2) health psychology pertains to action plans and interventions implemented in accordance with public policies regarding health promotion and disease prevention outside hospitals (primary care); and 3) hospital psychology pertains to strategies and action plans developed and implemented within hospitals (including those of high and medium complexity). Emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic pose challenges to all healthcare professionals. With regard to psychologists, new types of interventions that can be provided in different therapeutic settings are required.

These changes have been emerging rather abruptly, and there is an immediate need for professionals to respond to the new demands of practice (e.g., online therapy; Schmidt, Crepaldi, Bolze, Neiva-Silva, & Demenech, 2020).

In addition, it should be recognized that the severity and ease of transmission of this disease (especially within this field of work) have resulted in fear, stress, and anxiety. Furthermore, it is very important to promote risk-reduction strategies. This applies to healthy individuals, patients, and healthcare professionals. In this regard, psychologists are professionals who possess the competence required to manage this emerging and urgent crisis, because it involves different psychological aspects that determine positive and negative behaviors.

The approach of health psychology and role of psychologists within the context of the pandemic pertain to the following: the identification of risk and protective factors related to the spread of COVID-19 within the community, the development of effective strategies to disseminate scientifically valid information, the training of facilitators to promote health and hygiene within the population, and the implementation of assistance models that assess mental health and (if necessary) refer to specialists (among others, in accordance with primary healthcare practices).

With regard to the role of the psychologist, attention is paid to the reception of patients, their families, and healthcare professionals. The number of deaths, admission to intensive care units, and family members' inability to be with patients negatively affect the psychological well-being of individuals.



Psychologists treat individuals with attention and respect. This allows them to share their inner experiences with others, which in turn provides relief and makes them feel understood. This process helps individuals cope with their situations and challenges, and this in turn enhances psychological well-being. This is a welcome intervention to patients who receive emergency care. The hospital is a propitious space, especially during a pandemic. Another necessary strategy is to train healthcare professionals to manage the information that is transmitted to family members. They should be informed that, when relatives are debriefed, they should consider other dimensions of the interlocutor in addition to examining the impact of how the information is conveyed. A third strategy is to include mental health promotion protocols in the routine practice of healthcare professionals. This role of psychologists is established within the relationship between professionals, patients, and their family members (Grincenkov, 2020; Serafim, Do Bú, & Lima-Nunes, 2020; Regional Council of Psychology - Pernambuco - Brazil, 2020).

Negative psychosocial events that occur during a pandemic adversely affect professionals, patients, and their family members. In this regard, the shelter and mediation played by the psychologist are important. These negative factors (real or imagined) adversely affect health and well-being and lead to psychological suffering, dissatisfaction, and limited productivity. On a daily basis, healthcare professionals, patients, and their family members experience loneliness in intensive care units and the fear of transmission and possible death.

To mobilize the technical resources needed to face and cope with the pandemic, professionals (AMB, 2020), universities (IP-USP, 2020; UFPA, 2020; UFF, 2020) and the Federal Council (CFP, 2020, SBPH, 2020) were immediately deployed. Clinical psychologists who espouse diverse approaches have learned to use new information and communication technologies to maintain old therapeutic contacts and respond to the increase in mental health problems within the general population and among healthcare professionals (Brazil, 2020; Fiocruz, 2020; CRP-PE, 2020).

Psychologists from all over the country have volunteered to work with healthcare professionals who are involved in the fight against COVID-19. During psychotherapy sessions, they provided responses such as "Will I be next?" The most common symptoms were related to anxiety, insomnia, and changes in appetite. In addition, they reported feeling pressured to be more productive (working more hours per day and more shifts per week) and experiencing physical and mental overload and even moral harassment. These are examples of work-related psychosocial risk factors and this indicated that exposure to the virus was a major fear among these individuals. Even though psychologists are willing to provide care, it has been reported that the demand is less than expected.

Reflections on this issue have generated some questions. For example, are professionals carrying a heavy workload, tired, and lacking the time needed to seek specialized care? Are they temporarily denying their vulnerability as human beings to continue fulfilling their professional responsibilities? What care does the healthcare professional take with his or her own mental health? Do healthcare professionals believe in being a “superhero”?

These reflections play a fundamental role in planning and developing interventions for healthcare professionals during and after the pandemic. Indeed, mental illnesses can become severe, and some may temporarily (or even permanently) be unable to work in hospitals. Professional psychologists who work in healthcare settings, clinics, and hospitals can develop and implement interventions that focus on the mental health of health workers to ensure that we do not end up with an army of decorated but sick soldiers.

Within the context of this pandemic, this would be a very appropriate intervention to address the psychological issues experienced by healthcare professionals and service users. Through mediation, we can broaden our understanding of the conflict processes that occur in clinical and hospital environments (Sangy & Oliveira, 2013). This strategy aims to contribute to the humanization of healthcare services. The regulation of emotions is a practice that aims to enhance mental health in a humanizing manner (Arruda & Arruda, 2010). During a pandemic, the risks that professionals face (especially those who are on the front lines in the fight against COVID-19) should be identified and mitigated or eliminated. In this context, risks are those aspects of work that render an individual vulnerable (high or low) to harm due to danger (ESENTER2, 2015). Within the occupational context, they include different aspects of the planning, organization, and management of work and the social context that can harm a worker both physically and psychologically (Tolfo, 2018). Therefore, during the pandemic, psychosocial risk factors in the workplace should be effectively managed to enhance the well-being and quality of life of healthcare professionals and psychological service users, irrespective of where they are provided.

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## 5

## Psychology's Contributions to Integral Risk and Disaster Management, Sports, Traffic, and Person-Environment Relations in a Pandemic Scenario

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In December 2019 we were surprised with the news of the spreading new Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19 disease, originated in China. The global impact of the COVID-19's made the World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes its transmission as a pandemic, declaring it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). Given the increasing number of cases, in January of 2020, Brazil published Measure No. 188<sup>5</sup> in the Federal Register, this being the starting point for official health strategies for the prevention of and coping with of COVID-19.

It is an atypical situation in the world that has brought to society a series of challenges to engage with a collective conscience, especially in joint actions aimed to minimize losses and ensure the population's health and well-being. Such actions can be consolidated in the perspective of social isolation, for those who are able to physically stay away from other individuals, as well as they can be specific actions, depending on the activity area. Regarding

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5 <http://www.in.gov.br/en/web/dou/-/portaria-n-188-de-3-de-fevereiro-de-2020-241408388>

Psychology, we often see people facing difficulties that they do not know how to deal with, which has aroused the most different feelings and reactions.

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, the present text presents possibilities of psychologists' actions, in the fields of psychological risk and disaster management, sports psychology, traffic psychology and environmental psychology, indicating possible actions and relevant recommendations.

### The work of the Psychology professional in Integral Risk and Disaster Management

Given the crisis, emergencies, and disasters caused by COVID-19, the involvement of psychology in this context has been constantly demanded, in order to give psychosocial support and propose interventions capable of emotionally stabilize the affected people due to the extreme suffering situation. The context of a pandemic and the intense emotional reaction to a threatening critical incident, generating a state of imbalance and psychic disorganization, can be understood as a crisis (Everly & Lating, 2012; Sa, Werlang, & Paranhos, 2008). Therefore, the crisis onset is related to the previously existing balance breakdown. Emergencies are linked to situations of sudden and unexpected origin that cause a threat or danger, requiring rapid interventions; and disasters are events that can be originated from natural or technological causes. Both bring material destruction and loss of life, in addition to causing psychological distress. They are complex and multidimensional phenomena that affect not only a country economy and infrastructure, but also compromise the social structure of affected populations (Valencio, 2017).

The damage caused by COVID-19 does not only affect the individual's physical health and the health system, but also the population mental health, generated by changes in the routine originated from social distance. Most evident emotional reactions are frustration, anguish, anxiety, boredom, changes in appetite, intra and interpersonal conflicts (Khan et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2020). In the psychological aspects, it is evident that "infodemia", excessive information and the fake news spread, create fear and panic, generating a great impact on population's mental health (Khan et al., 2020).

The Psychology in the integral risk and disaster management, nomenclature defined by the Technical Note issued by the Federal Council of Psychology (Conselho Federal de Psicologia - CFP, 2016) deals with the psychologist's attributions in critical scenarios reaching the National Civil Defense Policy. This note comprises five phases in disaster

risk reduction: i) prevention (mitigating and avoiding disaster); ii) mitigation (reducing or limiting impacts); iii) preparation (knowledge and ability to manage crisis); iv) response (set of actions to decrease damages); and v) recovery (restoration of living conditions)<sup>6</sup>.

Within the psychologists scope of work, there are several intervention strategies used to mitigate human suffering from pandemic such as virtual psychological shifts, support groups, psychological support for frontline professionals, among other actions, mediated by technology (Arriaga , 2011). One of the specific interventions for acute stress is psychological first aid (PFA), which aims to reduce the emotional damage caused by unexpected situations that generate an imbalance and trigger anguish and anxiety (Bruck, 2007; Everly & Lating, 2017). In view of the occurrence of crises such as the pandemic that cause suffering in multiple victims, interventions in those cases include vast methodologies and techniques that are focused on providing psychosocial support (Zwielewski, 2020).

According to the Pan American Health Organization (2015), PFAs are responses given to individuals who are in situations of suffering and who need support, seeking to reduce the emotional damage caused by traumatic events, minimizing stress and seeking to adopt coping<sup>7</sup> strategies. Thus, intervention in crisis situations aims to help victims to reorganize their psychic and social life, in order to minimize possible health, physical and emotional harms.

## The work of the Sports Psychology professional during COVID-19

In relation to sports, the postponement of the 2020 Olympic Games, scheduled to be placed in Tokyo (Japan), has generated major debates in the sector. Due to isolation policies, there's also a suspension not only of other competitions, but of all types of sports, exercise or free time activities, with exception of practices performed at home. Several sports organizations, such as the Brazilian Olympic Committee (COB) and the Brazilian Association of Sports Psychology (ABRAPESP), in connection with Psychology, have disclosed strategies towards mental health care. Regarding the ABRAPESP, as it is a specific association in sport psychology, we will detail the recommendations that have been released during the pandemic period related to COVID-19.

ABRAPESP has been a catalyst for actions that offer psychological support to audiences related to professional and amateur sport, and professionals in the field of sport psychology and related areas. In this context, the organization launched a campaign for actions on the

6 <http://www0.rio.rj.gov.br/defesacivil/defesa.htm>

7 Coping are cognitive and behavioral efforts to deal with situations of harm, threat or challenge, when a routine or automatic response is not available (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).



psychological impacts related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the sports environment, which consists of two moments: the first is separated in two groups, (1) sports psychologist and (2) athlete (professional athlete, amateur, free time practice) or sports professional from related areas (non-psychologist). This action aims to understand the needs of these audiences, promote psychological support services, and also have updated data on the impact of the pandemic in this sector.

Secondly, the campaign has specific recommendations to the above groups, constantly published on the social networks of that society, based on information and recommendations on COVID-19 provided by WHO and competent sports organizations. For the athletes, the importance of constant contact with the technical team was emphasized, seeking assistance especially from the coach, physical trainer, nutritionist, and psychologist to readapt physical training and psychological monitoring according to the goals of each one during the isolation period.

According to the traditional literature on Sports Psychology, the goals are usually set in short, medium and long terms (Conde, Filgueiras, Ângelo, Pereira & Carvalho, 2019; Weinberg & Gould, 2008), however it is suggested that, at this moment, priority should be given to those of short term. As it is a period full of uncertainties, this conduct allows the athlete to remain motivated in his/her training. There is still no concrete forecast of return for regular training and competitive events and, with the postponement of some competitions, such as the Olympics and Paralympics, it is important to revisit the goals established before the pandemic, so they can be properly (re)adapted.

In addition to prioritizing short-term goals, we emphasize the need to establish a daily routine, get enough sleep, maintain adequate food and pursue pleasurable activities. These actions can help to restore feelings of control and comfort, and also assist in health and well-being. We stress the importance of keeping updated, looking for reliable sources, checking the veracity of what has been passed on and avoid looking for information at various times a day. Dedicating a lot of time to this activity can bring mental health harm, which can generate anxiety and affect daily goals.

With a shorter experience of space (isolation) and time (short-term goals), we emphasize the need for a greater focus on the “here-and-now”, in the concreteness of what can be done at the time and place where we are. Thus, we suggest using meditation strategies - including through mobile applications -, *mindfulness* practices, and other body and movement activities that focus on this perspective, such as yoga.

To sport psychologists, we stress the need to continue offering support to athletes and teams, following the recommendations made by the Federal Council of Psychology (Conselho Federal de Psicologia - CFP), which recommends the removal of face-to-face activities, by making available the psychologists register for online care without the need for platform confirmation to start remote work (CFP Resolution N. 18/11). It is important that this professional helps athletes in managing their experiences and feelings in face of these events and, in case of using specific techniques of sport psychology, resorting primarily to those the professional is familiar with, preferably already used with the athlete before. We emphasize the need to work together and to constantly contact the other technical team members, aiming to align the psychological work with the goals established by other professionals during the isolation period.

It should be also noted that previously mentioned self-care strategies for athletes are equally important to other professionals, including sport psychologists, such as: establishing a daily routine, with attention to sleep, food, and doing pleasurable activities (physical and mental); keep updated (without dedicating much time of the day to this), gathering information from reliable sources and agencies; seek to return to the “here-and-now” and search appropriate professional psychological support.

To coaches and other technical team members, special attention is suggested to how each athlete has experienced the period of social isolation, in order to offer activities that are possible for each one. Instructions should be given clearly and, if possible, at individual level. Keep constant contact with the athlete is essential, including for possible referrals, such as psychological counseling or assessment, if the team or the athlete does not have a sport psychologist as a staff member.

For individuals who are engaged in sporting or physical activity, the need to remain physically active during the period of social isolation is emphasized, as a way of relieving stress and anxiety arising from the situation, maintaining good conditioning during a rest period and improving immunity. Therefore, it is suggested to search for qualified professionals, through available technological resources, to carry out exercises indicated to each one’s profile and the right way to execute the movements. A list of qualified professionals is available on the Federal Council of Physical Education ([CONFEEF](#)) website. Emphasis is placed on self-knowledge and attention to limits, avoiding exercises that individuals are not used to, and reducing injuries risks resulted from these practices.

To summarize, Sports Psychology may offer a wide range of care in terms of physical and mental health that is not limited to athletes and other professionals who deal directly with the sporting context. Sport is a form of encounter and an important way of relating to

each other and the world, and it only exists in a given situation, society and culture (Camilo & Rubio, 2019; Rubio, 2019). It is about understanding the sport in all physically active individuals, on contexts of diverse corporal, cultural, and movement practices.

It is also necessary to have a critical reading of the moment we are living, assuming that human movements are a result of the intertwining between processes of perception and action. Therefore, one acts in what is perceived from the relations with the world and the situation (Telles, 2018). Any change in the environment may be able to demand body challenges and new movement forms, whether we are conscious of these processes or not.

### Professional activities of Traffic Psychology dealing with COVID-19

In times of the global pandemic of COVID-19, which is giving new meanings not only to health issues, but, above all, to interpersonal relationships, it has become essential to concern about the direct impacts in our operational areas. With regard to the displacement system of people in cities, when we look at this new reality, we perceive the immediate effect on people and goods' displacement, whether local, between municipalities, states or countries. The author Reinier Rozestraten (1998) defines traffic as "the set of displacements of people and vehicles on public roads, within a conventional rule system, which aims to ensure the integrity of its participants" (p. 05). In face of the current scenario, a question arises: At this specific moment, how will these displacements assure the integrity of its participants?

Thus, it is necessary to take a look at urban and, above all, human mobility, as results of this moment and its consequences. While urban mobility creates conditions so that people can easily come and go using public or private transports and roads, human mobility is based on the concept of the human being at the center of each and every coming and going movement. It is a paradigm, therefore, that seeks solutions for healthy, intelligent, sustainable, inclusive and safe displacements, analyzing historical, social, political, geographic, structural, cultural situations, among others. In this way, these concepts together broaden the understanding about the individual's displacement, and also about everything that may impact their coming and going, including being isolated or in remote work (home office).

From now on we can point out the particularity of transit space, especially in this current context, on the (new) relations of identity and belonging it brings. According to Augè (1994), places are identity, relational, historical and also symbolic, where individuals are represented in relation to themselves and to the group. The author also points out ephemeral occupation places and transit, as being non-places, because they are places

where a relationship with another person is limited, where individuals are only passing through, being depersonalized spaces, in opposition to the concept of place. Expanding this concept, the same author affirms that mobility does not create spaces, but non-places, because it makes them places of transit, of mere passage where to move is simply to cross spaces and their borders (Augè, 1994).

The notion of transit space as a non-place, where the involved actors are anonymous, with the impossibility of affective and identifying landmarks, makes this non-place a space of solitude. Belonging to any group is not established without identity, and makes the individual temporarily free from group and social ties, norms and demands. In this condition of anonymity, without the group's coercive power, the individual feels free from possible punishments (Bauman, 2001).

Statistics place Brazil among the five countries in the world with the highest fatal number of traffic accidents. WHO data show that land transport accidents are responsible for 1.35 million deaths (12% of the total in the world) and 50 million injuries worldwide, in addition to addressing severe implications for families, communities and society in general (PAHO, 2018). Looking at traffic as dissociated from human behavior and emotions that act and interact in it is an error that makes our population sick every minute. The population keep getting sick due to the physical marks and sequels, emotional scars, pain, loss, the mourning for themselves and their own, in short, for each of us' humanity that is expressed in various ways. Psychology needs to claim its human suffering care knowledge and show our country the fundamental role it can play in favor of a future with inclusive, democratic, sustainable, healthy and happy human mobility.

Understanding the traffic psychology role in public policies field, especially in compulsory psychological assessments for obtaining or renewing the national driver's license (NDL) purpose, the Brazilian Association of Traffic Psychology (ABRAPSI) elaborated a document with recommendations and guidance to the category and to the states executive traffic entities<sup>8</sup>. The document was designed to guide psychologists who carry out psychological assessment for motor vehicles drivers and candidates on the practices that must be followed, regardless of state peculiarities, considering each carrying out psychological expertise place characteristics. The recommendations served of models for the State Traffic Departments (DETRANs) to use as reference of accredited psychologists and psychologists practice during the epidemiological scenario. This professional's guidelines and recommended practices and specificities were also discussed with the Federal Council of Psychology (CFP), regarding technological resources, online performance, and remote psychological assessment.

8 Published in <https://site.cfp.org.br/abrapsi-e-abramet-recomendam-suspensao-de-exames-nos-departamentos-estaduais-de-transito/>.

According to the publication organized by the United Nations (UN) entitled “COVID-19 and the Need for Action on Mental Health” (United Nations, 2020), COVID-19 pandemic is not only attacking physical health, but, above all, the population mental health and, therefore, psychology action field as a science. The publication defends the mental health services importance and expansion, within world public policies. In view of all these observed impacts and the need for the entire category action to reduce these harmful effects in medium and long terms, ABRAPSIT sought to develop actions in favor of the mental health of professional drivers. This is how the “[Routes of Health - your well-being passes through here](#)”<sup>9</sup> Project was created, as a joint action of ABRAPSIT with partner organizations, such as National Traffic Department (DENATRAN), the National Road Safety Observatory (ONSV) and with the support of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

The project focuses on welcoming professional drivers (truckers, motorcyclists, taxi drivers, application drivers and bus drivers) who are working at essential services and facing all this work difficulties in times of isolation. Its main focus is to observe signs or symptoms of: anxiety, depression, stress, burnout, distress, panic, use and abuse of psychoactive substances, and basic health conditions, in order to underscore the importance of mental health and to stimulate social connection and interpersonal relationships with appropriated security measures.

It is with projects like these that we understand that every field of psychology can make a significant contribution to the mental health of the population with which it works and thus reduce the future harmful effects of this calamitous situation we are experiencing, and to which traffic psychology professionals have a lot to contribute.

### Activities of psychological professionals from the perspective of person-environment relations: Living the present with an eye on the future<sup>10</sup>

Thinking about the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, some of which were described in the previous sections, the first reaction is one of profound sadness in the face of deaths, losses and uncertainties about the future. After all, how many changes did we have (and still have) to face in order to adapt our daily life on very short notice? In this pandemic, we are confronted with the task to develop strategies that go beyond avoiding contamination

9 The project received scientific support from traffic psychology researchers at the federal and private universities in Brazil, such as the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (UFRN) and the Catholic University Don Bosco.

10 This text resulted from a collaborative effort, at the invitation of ABRAPA, by Daniele Rosa (Federal University of Roraima), Fábio de Cristo (Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, campus Trairi), Hartmut Günther (University of Brasília), and Zenith Delabrida (Federal University of Sergipe).

in ourselves and others. It includes (re)thinking about how the presence of this new context affects humanity: our daily actions and the spaces we frequent. From this perspective, the Brazilian Association of Environmental Psychology and Person-Environment Relations (ABRAPA) has developed several activities regarding the pandemic, supporting society in general as well as psychologists and other professionals, such as architects and urban planners, geographers, biologists among others. For example, in addition to notes repudiating actions by the Ministry of the Environment, ABRAPA sponsored newsletters, member publications, podcasts and lives that address environmental psychology and pandemic dealing with the following contexts and topics: rural environments, transportation, indigenous people, public space, the elderly, and children (c.f. <https://abrapa-rpa.org>). All of this to contribute to our understanding and ways of dealing with the present moment.

But, what will life be *after* this pandemic – our relationship with ourselves and others, our interactions with natural or built spaces? It will be highlighted below (among several possible approaches to the theme) from the perspective of environmental psychology, with an eye on the reciprocal influence between person and environment. In this way, it is intended to subsidize the reflections and work of both environmental psychologists and other areas of psychology whose themes can be related, considering the city as an example.

Most people's lives occur in urban settings that (should) provide the four basic dimensions of rational urban planning of which the 1943 Athens Charter speaks (cf. Gold, 1998): housing, work, leisure and circulation / transportation. Each of these dimensions of our daily life has been, and continues to be, impacted in an unimaginable way. The first, housing, is the place that constitutes, in the classic term "my home is my castle" a sacrosanct space, of restoration, and now became restricted and invaded by the demands of work and leisure. More restricted, as the confinements did not allow the 'escape valves' in the form of going to work, shopping etc. The pandemic transformed the traditional activities of the home, rapidly incorporating, for example, work activities in the same "behavioral setting" (c.f., Wicker, 1979). This profoundly influenced the already prescribed sequence of interactions between people and objects in this scenario. Furthermore, privacy has been reduced significantly, causing emotional problems in part of the population. Once social distance ends, we hope to also note a number of positive changes in everyday life, such as the redefinition of life's priorities and the greater sharing of tasks and space.

The second dimension is work. Depending on its nature, it was transformed into *home office* (evident example of the overlapping of the spaces of everyday life). Consequently, the amount of work to be dealt with simultaneously (domestic and professional) increased, often, at the same time, with fewer people (e.g., when household help was dismissed) and with less social support (e.g., daycare, school, extended family). This overlapping of activities

in the same environment, added to the absence / reduction of the support structure, has been producing psychological consequences, such as the negative interference in family relationships (e.g., difficulty in separating time dedicated to work and playing with the child) and the appearance of symptoms and mental illness associated with anxiety, stress and aggression. But what is the potential for work to become something more human in the post-pandemic? For those who can work from home, the experience can present important gains, but will need adjustments. For this, from the environmental point of view, it is necessary to analyze and redo / adapt both the new set of activities and the environment, in order to maximize the new programming within the domestic scenario. This may imply, for example, defining essential and secondary activities, the need to change (constantly) the space and to acquire / reorder objects within the home.

The third dimension is leisure, which often takes place outside one's home or by receiving visitors at one's home, implying agglomerations and physical contacts that are currently inadequate from the health point of view. Furthermore, artistic and musical events are being enjoyed virtually. It is through virtual environments (social networks) that people try to replace, to some extent, the sharing of their lives, leaving the line between the public and the private blurred. However, it appears difficult for people to endure long periods of social distancing. Consider, for example, the disrespect as far as the renewed agglomerations go in parks and other urban areas in Brazil and around the world. Hence important questions considering the current moment: Does the virtual leisure space (or distance leisure) bring the expected dimension of exchanges and social interactions? To what extent do we miss the perceptual integration of smells, flavors and invitations present in the leisure environment? Some possible legacies of the confronting the pandemic are the care for public spaces, preferably green ones that allow free interactions, the promotion cultural and sports activities to reduce stress and reinforce immunity. Fewer mechanical and electronic toys that do not stimulate creativity and more options for children's interaction and encounters with each other and with nature. In that manner, we are creating new options and shared meanings.

Finally, the fourth dimension, is transportation. Whether or not using vehicles, it enables interaction between different urban and rural spaces, contributes to our own psychological constitution (e.g., children who drive by car represent the city in a different way from those who walk) and influences the ideas we have of streets, neighborhoods and cities (safe or unsafe), as well as of its inhabitants (stressed or calm). On the one hand, the decrease / absence of mobility can reduce the spread of COVID-19 between spaces; on the other hand, it can also have a negative impact on our mental health, due to social distancing / isolation, and, in some cases, the temporary closure of a region (lockdown). In the post-pandemic world, the way we move between housing, work and leisure may have

a potentially positive impact. As the first three dimensions of everyday urban life change, as shown above, mobility between them, will change, which, in turn, will impact these three dimensions. Instead of using a private car, at the individual level we may just continue to use such healthier alternatives, such as walking or cycling or simply continue use less individual transportation, thus, at the collective level, contribute with less pollution, less noise and less stress during the pandemic.

The pandemic allowed for the person-environment relationship to be placed at the center of the debate regarding the lives of ordinary people, since human relations and activities occur in a socio-environmental context. Thus, it is obvious that this moment presents a unique opportunity for understanding this relationship in its transversal relationship within psychology, with ABRAPA being one of the catalysts of this process. Finally, is there a potential for the COVID-19 pandemic to make our lives better? Afterall, the pandemic forces us to rethink the way we live, work, rest, circulate and, thus, offers us a chance to reflect on what was missing in our pre-pandemic life in order to arrive at a more humane post-pandemic life.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the intention of this text was to show the diversity of knowledge provided by different fields of Psychology, demonstrating the important contributions by fields of Psychological Risk and Disaster Management, Sports Psychology, Traffic Psychology and Environmental Psychology in dealing with the crisis. The fields converge in caring for people's mental health, making it possible to understand what challenges are imposed and how to deal with them.

Affirmative actions are necessary as special measures throughout the pandemic to cope in extreme situations, such as psychological distress increase, predicted by the World Health Organization. Therefore, psychosocial support during COVID – 19 circumstances is essential for mental health care, to mitigate the psychological consequences linked to the crisis and triggered by the contamination.

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## 6

## Adaptation of Psychodiagnostic Practice, Psychotherapeutic and Career Guidance in the midst of Pandemic

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The distinctive character of the COVID-19 pandemic poses unique challenges for psychologists in their most diverse fields of activity. In Brazil and in the world, several online professional services emerged as an urgent response to the crisis that was imposed. Such recent practices are based, in general, on the knowledge already developed by psychology in the context of emergencies and disasters or on the First Psychological Aid (PAP) approach, whose main focus is on psychosocial care, care with social support and psychological practices adapted to the emergency (Malloy-Diniz et al., 2020; Schimdt et al., 2020). In the field of Positive Psychology, national and international researchers have drawn attention to the importance of promoting care and psychological practices through positive emotions that act as factors of psychosocial protection, such as courage, compassion, forgiveness and engagement at work (Salanova et al., 2018; Vazquez et al., 2019). This chapter provides information on adaptations in psychological practice whose professional competence

needs to focus on meeting the needs arising from this emergency context in psychological and diagnostic assessment, clinical psychotherapies and professional guidance.

### Psychological and psychodiagnostic assessment process in the context of the pandemic

There is an undeniable need for psychology professionals to reflect and review their technical-scientific strategies at times when reality demands it, such as the current pandemic context that forces us to distance or social isolation as essential health care. This process cannot represent just an individual adjustment, based on flexibility of technical strategies, personal decisions. Human creativity is a wealth to be enhanced at these times, but with respect to accumulated scientific knowledge, a mandatory source for professionals, requiring us to respect the scientific, institutional and legal guidelines and evidence of the profession.

In this context, we are all over-stimulated by multiple and new demands, including an absurd amount of information conveyed by various sources, with guidelines that are sometimes contradictory and that can exert undue pressure and even confusion about the psychologist's actions in his work. In a modest, didactic and simple way, we seek to outline parameters for psychologists in the field of psychological assessment in the face of the pandemic by COVID-19, in the hope of offering strengthening guidelines for psychology as a science and profession. As a starting point and a highly recommended reading, we highlight the recent considerations of Marasca et al. (2020) when discussing the feasibility of online psychological assessment processes and pointing out directions for their improvement, presenting possibilities for distance teaching and supervision.

As necessary points for special care of psychologists in psychological assessment processes in the pandemic, it is necessary to consider several variables, necessarily involving: a) real process goals and needs at this point; b) technical-scientific quality of the selected psychological assessment instruments; c) client's socio-cultural and demographic characteristics; d) material resources available for the safe, valid and reliable process (from the technical-scientific and material point of view of the technologies involved); e) conditions of technical security and confidentiality of data and information; f) guarantee that the activity respondent is effectively the client designated in the evaluation process; g) informative losses involved in the process by the mandatory social distance measures and their impacts on data; h) quality of the link established between psychologist and client, especially in the case of compulsory assessment situations; i) need for participation of a customer support figure (tutor in psychological assessment) and its impact on information, especially in the case of children, adolescents and people with some sensory, logical or technical limitations

to guarantee the full performance of the proposed activities; j) preference for a multi-method approach, combined with clinical experience (Bornstein, 2017).

It is essential to remember that the psychological assessment process consists of the complex integration of the relationship between the psychologist and the client, the observation of their posture together with their speech, clinical listening, inferences made from psychological instruments considered fundamental and complementary sources, and of the client's relationship with the social, cultural and historical context, to then elaborate a final conclusion of the clinical diagnosis. The same technical indicator may have a different meaning depending on the context of the assessment, the client's history and the other variables that interfere in its production, requiring from the professional the science, the technical-scientific domain and the reflection on this complex network of variables. It is noteworthy that the psychological assessment and diagnosis process unfolds in the production of knowledge based on a demand presented to the psychologist, who must be informed to the applicants in a written or verbal feedback, being essential that they pay attention to the impact of the communication of relevant information for the life of the evaluated and for the resulting decision making, specifically considering the context of the pandemic. In its final report, it is necessary to mention, necessarily, the technical conditions in which the same occurred, emphasizing the information that it was carried out during the pandemic period, known to correspond to a context of great socio-emotional mobilization.

Specifically with regard to projective methods of psychological assessment or psychological instruments that require a specific relational environment and often involve visual stimuli, it is understood that more research should be developed to assess what these instruments would allow to assess in conditions of distance, even that some adaptations are necessary. It is known that changes in the mode of application of these resources for clinical diagnostics produce a new format of the psychological test in question, so that new scientific evidence of its validity, accuracy and normative references will be necessary before its use in professional practice.

Even, with regard to measurement instruments, it is worth mentioning that it is essential to be guided by [Technical Note 05/2019](#) of the Federal Council of Psychology (CFP), which deals with the use of psychological tests in services carried out through information and communication technologies. This note emphasizes the importance that the psychological test has a favorable opinion from the Psychological Test Evaluation System (Satepsi) for its use, with specific standardization and regulations for this purpose.

In summary, in a world full of uncertainties and insecurities about the "new normal", the psychologist must preserve his / her sensibility and promote the continuity of scientifically

based psychological practices, without incurring ethical faults, maintaining the quality of professional practice in this scenario. Only with collective efforts of scientific investigation and with respect to human dignity in clear suffering, can the processes of psychological assessment and care for people be improved to the extent necessary for the current environmental requirements of the 21st century.

## Performance in psychotherapy in times of pandemic

Psychotherapeutic activities in COVID-19 times face us with the necessary continuing training in psychotherapy. It is essential for psychotherapists that any adaptation of their techniques is scientifically justified and aligned with the standards of ethical exercise of the professional psychologist<sup>1</sup>. We emphasize that training in psychotherapy is not just knowing the theory and having a practical recommendation, as can be well observed in this emergency situation in public health due to the pandemic. In this unique and challenging context, difficulties are observed that require the psychologist to realize that it is necessary to seek knowledge in supervisions with more experienced colleagues and / or in scientific content arranged in *webinars* or *lives*, whose debates help to reflect on how to explore new and efficient paths in psychotherapeutic care.

The growing elaboration of protocols based on scientific evidence and for reception, social support and psychotherapeutic assistance adapted to the period of the pandemic has been an effective response to guide the psychological action and its development in the midst of the crisis we are experiencing. We suggest consulting the reception, social support and psychological assistance protocols provided by organizations linked to the area, such as [abpp+](#) and [Fiocruz](#). On the other hand, it is important to note that the protocols, being clear and precise documents, are standard operating procedures. And, when faced with people who sought psychological assistance, we need to be prepared to manage them in the online context so that anguish is not mobilized. Therefore, clinical adaptation requires the psychotherapist to plan his strategy in advance to exercise clinical reasoning about care situations. And clinical supervision is a fundamental resource, which is part of the training process.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, we face abruptly with online psychotherapy, a modality that was often not even considered as an option by the psychologist, but that in social distance presents itself as the viable one. Studies by the *Centro di Studi and di Applicazione della Psicologia Relazionale de Prato* (Manfrida et al., 2017) shed light on technological resources in online psychotherapy and psychotherapeutic communication regarding:

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1 justified and aligned with the standards of ethical exercise of the professional psychologist

- a. **Proper use of technological resources:** tools such as SMS, *WhatsApp*, telephone and e-mail can be combined to strengthen the therapeutic relationship in the service inside and outside the consultation room. If properly used, they can guarantee the consultant the security of not being abandoned and also provide the therapist with useful information and signs in psychotherapy.
- b. **Remote environmental contexts:** whose contents mobilized in these therapeutic processes generate meanings to be explored, which may not be accessible in face-to-face care. Here attention must be paid to the whole and not just the verbal.

Online sessions in the pandemic are no longer restricted to specific situations brought by COVID-19, but have now been applied as a viable action for the moment. The research by Manfrida et al. (2020)<sup>2</sup> conducted with 290 Italian psychotherapists in the first month and a half of online psychotherapeutic practice in the COVID-19 pandemic identified strong signs of fatigue and a tendency to be distracted, with an effort of concentration greater than a face-to-face session. The authors reiterate that there are many ways in which the web can assist psychotherapy and not just through online synchronous sessions, since these represent only a fraction of the interactions between therapists and patients. We use cell phone, *WhatsApp* and email. And many consultants use location apps, audio messages or bring videos to show in session. Thus, recent studies encourage us to be concerned with learning how to postulate more effective psychotherapeutic interventions using the technological resources that are already part of psychotherapeutic communication to build psychotherapeutic practice and not just online sessions, with more availability. The COVID-19 pandemic can be seen as a stimulus for us to take flight.

## Performance in times of insecurity at work and career due to the pandemic

Several authors are unanimous in highlighting, as characteristics of the contemporary world, the unpredictability and the need that, in order to deal with it, individuals develop autonomy, the ability to reflect on themselves and to adapt actively to the challenges presented by the labor market, in constantly changing (Baruch et al., 2015; Oliveira & Gomes, 2014; Savickas & Porfeli, 2012). Considering this context, the career has been understood as a trajectory that can be thought as a script in which individuals progressively design and build their own

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2 More information at Albertini V.; Manfrida, G.; Eisenberg, E. In mezzo al guado. Il passaggio al setting online durante l'emergenza Covid-19. <https://www.slideshare.net/mobile/CSAPRPrato/il-passaggio-allonline-una-svolta-importante-per-la-psicoterapia-ecco-i-primi-risultati-della-nostra-indagine-sul-cambio-di-setting-terapeutico-a-un-mese-e-mezzo-dal-lockdown>. Free translation into Portuguese: <http://abrap.org/artigos.php?NuNot=274>



lives in different roles that they occupy, in the domains they belong to, which they include. However, those related to their professional career are not restricted (Duarte et al., 2010).

The COVID-19 pandemic heightens the challenge of career management today. For this reason, understanding them as complex trajectories and marked by significant events in different areas of life, stresses the relevance of reflecting on the impacts of this crisis that today plagues the world. One of its consequences for society and the economy was the record increase of unemployed in a short period of time. Projections suggest that many businesses will be permanently affected, with longer periods of unemployment causing significant losses for workers (Rudolph et al., 2020). The withdrawal from work activities can compromise resources critical to your professional career, related to human capital (experience and training), social capital (support and social networks) and psychological capital (hope, self-efficacy, resilience). Such resources are essential to achieve objective success (hierarchical level, salary and promotions) and subjective (satisfaction and balance between roles) in the career (Audibert et al., 2020). This set of factors confronts people with the need to stop living their individual trajectories on “autopilot”, without being aware of their choices and the impacts for themselves and their community.

In the pandemic, professionals are experiencing what may be called a ‘career shock’ for having lost their jobs, suddenly having to work in a teleworking or home office regime, or even continuing to carry out their work activities within some normality. The term shock refers to events that occur unexpectedly, singularly and impactfully and that are capable of triggering reflections on possible career transitions, which can significantly change individual trajectories (Akkermans et al., 2018). Considering the context, there is room for professionals in professional and career guidance to assist individuals in developing resources and acquiring assertive habits, such as:

- a. **Developing Adaptability:** metacompetence and the ability to present adaptive and flexible responses to expected development tasks, transitions and professional traumas, such as a Pandemic event. It involves taking care of thinking about the future (concern), understanding that the future belongs to those who think about it (control), identifying and exploring possibilities (curiosity) and developing the confidence that it will be possible to achieve such reflections although there may be difficulties.
- b. **Reflect on yourself:** awareness of the life trajectory, from the past to the present, how the individual articulates the different roles and domains of life today and in important future expectations. This exercise allows us to understand what resources the individual has developed throughout his career and which he has today to make projects that contemplate different aspects of his life in relation to the future, consistent with his life script.

- c. **Plan for uncertainty:** career sustainability depends not only on entering (and, as far as possible, staying in) a work environment compatible with the resources that individuals have at present, but also on preparing for the changes that can be anticipated and for those who cannot. An analogy that helps to clarify this point is that the career is much more like a marathon (long distances require continued effort and pace) than a speed test (short distances that require intense effort, but for a short time).
- d. **Qualify to act remotely and digitally:** the pandemic has opened up a multitude of opportunities for digital and remote action in areas such as health and entrepreneurship. Remote advice and guidance, as well as *webinars*, conferences and online learning, are just some of the many possibilities for action that will continue to expand. Qualifying digitally allows you to take control over your own career, a need to be competitive and viable in the current and post-pandemic job market.
- e. **Carry out voluntary activities:** in addition to allowing curiosity to be exercised, voluntary activities in the field or in other areas of interest contribute to increasing career resources, especially for those professionals whose workload has been reduced and those who have been dismissed. It can also expand the meaning attributed by professionals to the work they do.
- f. **Collaborate and contribute:** the ability to cooperate with others allows us to establish useful positive interactions to facilitate reflections and develop solutions to the problems of the future, in addition to creating social support networks. It refers to simple, everyday actions taken by everyone, such as wearing masks to protect life, sharing reliable information and identifying opportunities to contribute to collectives.

In times of uncertainty, it is not possible to prepare for a career and work using strategies that are based on the stability of the world and individuals. The challenge that the pandemic poses to us is to find comfort in the discomfort of constant change, to enable the development of autonomy, the ability to reflect on oneself and to actively adapt to the challenges presented by the job market.

## Final considerations

Different aspects and relevant suggestions were presented for necessary adaptations to the processes of psychological assessment, psychotherapies and career guidance in the pandemic. In this context, we conclude by highlighting the psychosocial protection factors that are determinant for people's health throughout life. The work of psychologists, in any

field of action, must consider the protection of the health aspects preserved in people who act as *buffers* of risks or losses or *boosters* of motivation and well-being. The author Vazquez (2018) points out four essential elements for this analysis and intervention: (1) the reduction or mitigation of the impact of potential risks, (2) the effect of possible negative contagion or positive spiral in the chain of reactions to the possible risk, (3) the positive development strategy based on positive emotions and mental states for building well-being routes, and (4) opening up to opportunities that enable challenges rather than continuing dilemmas or vulnerabilities. Adapting our professional performance strategies to maximize psychosocial protection and preservation of the factors that drive people to well-being, even in complex pandemic times, is an important guideline for professional training and practice at this time.

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## 7

## Psychosocial and psychopolitical aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic

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### Context

Just like other pandemics and outbreaks of emerging diseases, the COVID-19 is giving rise to a wide range of changes in social relationships. The media publicizes efforts carried out by healthcare professionals to support the population, and the work by academics pursuing for medicines and vaccines to cope with the disease. In addition to pharmaceutical and medical interventions, fighting the COVID-19 demands changes on social arrangements, such as social isolation. These changes deeply affect the everyday habits, social interactions and economic exchanges (Schoch-Spana, 2020). Therefore, the pandemic engenders a set of thorough social phenomena (Bavel et al., 2020), such as increased social inequalities (Dorn et al., 2020), domestic violence (Marques et al., 2020), prejudice/stigmatization (Peuker & Modesto, 2020), among others.

Also worthy of notice in the wake of the pandemic's psychosocial dimension is that it has been on the spotlight in a country that is politically divided. A study developed in Brazil found that political standing has influenced how Brazilians view the social isolation measures (Modesto et al., 2020). This can be explained by the speeches of the federal government about the pandemic and social isolation. These speeches have even been subject of an

article in The Lancet (The Lancet, 2020) medical journal about the impacts of the actions adopted by the current administration to cope with the pandemic.

In this context, it is also worthy reviewing how the political conditions shape modes of subjectivization, and social organization. Therefore, considering the pandemic fallouts on the society, this text aims to discuss the role of psychology in its social and political dimensions. This debate intends to contribute with the analysis of the complex social and political effects of the pandemic, and to point out some possible ways to cope with it.

### Social Psychology in face of the challenges posed by the pandemic in the Brazilian context

Currently in Brazil, both the social psychology and the society as a whole face the inextricable challenges of addressing on the one side the risks imposed by a pandemic process (COVID-19) that threaten the physical and psychosocial integrity of all, and on the other hand, respond to the adversities ensuing from the exceptional experience of living under the so-called *brasileense* fascism, fostered by the rightist extremist social movements since 2013, and consolidated by the inauguration of the president of the republic in 2019. It is worth mentioning that fascism is understood as a movement that favors radical exploitation of workers, and accumulation of wealth by the capitalists “[...] of conservative social content, disguised by a “modernizing” mask and in the shadow of the ideology of radical pragmatism, resorting to irrationalist myths, combined with rationalist-formal manipulative-like procedures.

Fascism is [...] “chauvinist, antiliberal, antidemocratic, anti-socialist, antiworker” (free translation, Konder, 1977/2009, p. 56). The *brasileense* fascist movement fits this definition, despite some distinctive aspects such as: alignment with economic liberalism in addition to the weakening of the State; and selective chauvinism targeted at the Latin-American, Chinese and African peoples, associated to pleasurable subservience in relation to the big capitalist powers.

The blend of these two threats, mutually orchestrated in Brazil, is expressed through the submission of the country to the unnecessary loss of thousands, maybe million lives due to a thorny political action by the federal government. Such action can come to produce the highest impact on impoverished population segments, such as black people, native Brazilians, LGBTQI+ individuals, women, and other groups historically oppressed by the capitalism, and clearly harassed by the current federal government. Furthermore, the *brasileense* fascist movement has taken advantage of the pandemic crisis to move forward

in the elimination of social and civil rights, to relax and abolish laws that advocate for the working class, and to expand the State's waiver of social and scientific responsibilities by sharply reducing investments in areas such as health, education and social assistance.

Considering the foregoing context, it is imperative for the social psychology to strike the sociopolitical and economic complexity of this stage, and the risks for life preservation posed by the pandemic. Yet, the area must find new ways to express its commitment with the segments that are vilified and ravaged by fascism. Special attention should be attached to the actions aimed to curb the epidemic advancement, and the unreasonable and/or fallacious emergency public policies enforced by the federal government. It is imperative for the social psychology to mobilize a theoretical and methodological framework capable of materializing its engagement with the joint activity by workers and dispossessed people, in professional and academic practices targeted at collective struggles against fascism, as a movement intrinsically bound to capitalism, and the discriminatory traits inherent to it (sexism, racism, intolerance, chauvinism) that are contrary to otherness.

The core repertoire of investigation and efforts to produce academic-scientific knowledge in social psychology, as well as of the work world of psychologists in the area, is the social being, understood in its substance, historicity and dialectic moves in face of the Brazilian capitalism. To be substantiated, this social psychology should strive for methodological tools and practices simultaneously devoted to produce and mediate: 1) individuals and groups in the process of identification, understanding and critical awareness-raising regarding their material and concrete, historical, political, social, cultural and symbolic conditionalities; and, 2) the organization of impoverished collectives and collectives of workers to allow them to lead the changes in their own reality.

Briefly speaking, in the context of Brazil ruled by an autocrat, and affected by the pandemic, social psychology is compelled to focus on the fight for the survival of people, and against fascism. Furthermore, it should steadfastly elucidate labor theories and strategies capable of assisting people to appropriate the historicity, the materiality, the dialectic moves, and the totality of the society, and the path of each human being and each group, in order to expand the power of individual acting, and of the collective activities devoted to suppress the oppressions and exploitations stemming from capitalism. In the wake of this concern, the political psychology supplements the review of the political-social scene imposed by the pandemic.



## Social demands and the work of Political Psychology in the context of the pandemic

The political psychology is an interdisciplinary field of human and social sciences established in Brazil since the 1980s, upon the institution of the Work Group “Psychology of Social Movements” in the then-new National Association of Research and Graduate Course in Psychology (*Associação Nacional de Pesquisa e Pós-Graduação em Psicologia*, ANPEPP). The group gathered academics who also participated in the Brazilian Association of Social Psychology (*Associação Brasileira de Psicologia Social*, ABRAPSO), established in 1980 to strengthen the social psychology’s critical perspective in Brazil. The Brazilian political psychology was consolidated with the establishment of the Brazilian Association of Political Psychology (*Associação Brasileira de Psicologia Política*, ABPP) in 2000, and of the Political Psychology Journal (*Revista Psicologia Política*, RPP), in 2001 (Camino, 2001).

Therefore, it is crucial to consider that the Brazilian political psychology got organized in a context characterized by: a) political mobilizations fighting for the end of the civil-military Brazilian dictatorship, and for the democratization of Brazil; and, b) academic-scientific cooperation that contested the social relevance of the scientific production in the country, advocated for the need to develop research and interventions focused on problems related to the Brazilian and Latin-American historical context, and that could contribute to expand the democratic rights (Sandoval, 2002).

By virtue of the interdisciplinary nature of the political psychology, and of the historical and contextual aspects concerning its establishment and development in several countries, we find different definitions about the area (Costa, 2018; Costa & Machado, 2018; Costa & Machado, 2019; Costa & Machado, 2020). Nonetheless, in general we can consider the political phenomenon as the subject of study of political psychology. This phenomenon is characterized by the concern towards coordinating subjective aspects (beliefs, ideologies, emotions) and structural aspects (relationships of power, configurations of the State, organization of the society) pertinent to the phenomenon being surveyed.

In this sense the COVID-19 pandemic is a subject of investigation and intervention by the political psychology. This is so because, as aforementioned, it caused significant changes to social relationships, made inequalities in society even more visible, and has evidenced the need for critically reflecting over the State performance in coping with the pandemic, formulating public policies, and advocating for democracy. All these aspects are directly related to the production of subjectivity, since the construction and replication of society are grounded on principles and beliefs that legitimate specific ways of being and living. For Brazil, the pandemic phenomenon is bound to the context of political polarization we have been experiencing in the

country since the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016. This polarization was even worsened by the 2018 presidential elections, and the strengthening of conservative and anti-democratic discourses, as above mentioned. In this context of pandemic, we clearly see the rise of antagonist discourses about the ways we organize life in society and, therefore, the shaping of conflicting political identities in the public arena.

Hence, actions identified with the field of political psychology in the context of the pandemic can be linked to a wide range of social demands, and political disputes about the fundamentals that organize social relationships at different levels of the society. Furthermore, this action can take place in a wide range of environments, such as the university, social movements, and public policies. Despite the plurality, these actions are generally characterized by understanding the structuring of discourses about life organization (the social demand linked around these discourses, and the principles and beliefs that ground them) to understand its effects on the fight against the disease, and the promotion of democracy. On the one hand, this understanding is crucial to build strategies to confront discourses that go against scientific recommendations on the prevention and treatment of the disease, and that favor inequalities. On the other hand, it is crucial to the designing, dissemination and implementation of strategies that converge upon discourses capable of preventing the highest number of deaths possible, and of keeping and expanding democratic rights towards the plurality of social groups existing in the society.

A way of acting in line with the field of political psychology in the current context is that of formulating, implementing, and reviewing governmental actions to cope with the pandemic. For example, if we consider the emergency financial aid implemented by the Brazilian federal government for individuals socially and economically curtailed by the pandemic or who, even before the pandemic, already lived in conditions of denial of social rights, some important psychopolitical questions to be raised would be as follows:

- a. How beneficiary subjects are discursively constituted in this action? As potentially fraudulent individuals? As individuals made vulnerable by the denial of rights that should be ensured by the State (right to health, housing, food)? Understanding this discourse construction is crucial to reflect over the position the government assigns to these people in the social organization and, therefore, in the field of the debate about citizenship, social justice, democracy.
- b. How the government accesses potential beneficiaries? Through digital applications, even aware of the huge digital exclusion in Brazil? Through the *Sistema Único de Assistência Social* (Unified Social Assistance System) aimed at organizing the social assistance services in Brazil? Understanding this aspect allows us to consider the

number of individuals targeted by the government, and the strategy's effectiveness to meet the social demand that led to its construction.

- c. How the governmental action was designed, and is being implemented? Based on a management model controlled by the federal government members? Based on the governmental dialog with a multitude of social actors that work with social groups that could potentially benefit from the action? Pondering over the social actors participating in the action design contributes to understand how the government devises the relationship between State and civil society and, therefore, the principles that rule the governmental intelligibility over the public sphere.
- d. What other actions different social actors have been developing to meet the same social demands targeted by the governmental emergency financial aid? How these actions converge or diverge in terms of baseline fundamentals to their design and implementation? Understanding these actions allows us to understand the other discourses existing in the society regarding the same social demands, and the structure of these discourses in the field of discussion about how social order is established.

These issues allow us to establish a psychopolitical reading of the political phenomenon. That means understanding the phenomenon as a social and historical construction that demands the integrated review of: a) the social demands existing in the specific context; b) the beliefs and principles that ground these demands, and the actions aimed to meet them; c) how these beliefs and principles build subjectivities and the ways of managing life in society; d) the strategies to replicate or dispute the hegemonic practices produced in the social order.

## Final remarks

Considering all data, information and news we can conclude that the crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic goes far beyond a health crisis. The pandemic affects all levels of the social life; involves many people; implies institutions; problematizes values; and has repercussions in the cultural, religious, political and economic planes, besides naturally affecting the work world (Schoch-Spana, 2020). Therefore, it demands coordinated and diverse actions to meet the countless emerging demands.

However, while many countries fight to flatten the curve of infected individuals, and reduce the possibility of significant volume of deaths and extended economic shrinking, the current administration of Brazil builds a speech of denying science and legitimating a ultra-liberal

policy aimed to sustain the reduction of State social expenditures, despite the context that demands enhancing State policies devoted to universalize basic income, and free and high-quality healthcare, education and social assistance. It is about the overestimation of capital to the detriment of science, and of the principles of equality and social fairness.

Rejecting the epidemiological guidelines concerning the COVID-19 is another example of the antagonism of the Brazilian president regarding scientific knowledge, except that this time he clashes with a global concern towards saving lives (Barbosa-Pinto, 2020). It is crucial to strengthen the fight against authoritarian, negationist, and neo-liberal policies of the federal government to fight social inequalities, save lives, and revoke bills that destroy the social achievements ensured by the State, and the rights of workers and the different minorities, and to prevent the implementation of new projects of this nature. Gathering scientific societies that advocate for the production of critical knowledge and democracy as strategic mainstays to build the social order, is part of the process of shaping this fight in these days of COVID-19 pandemic, and whenever necessary.

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