

BEREAVEMENT AND SUICIDE ATTEMPT IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Sylvia da Silveira Nunes¹; Bruno Yan Souza Moraes¹; Breno Rafael da Costa¹

ABSTRACT

With the increase in the suicide rate of young people and adolescents, schools are forced to face the themes of death, mourning and suicide. From the analysis of the series “The 13 reasons why” that deals with these themes and through analytical psychology, we present reflections that can open the debate about these issues at school. The series analysis followed the steps of qualitative research analysis, with some adaptations: we watched the series repeatedly, took notes, discussed with specialists, and finally organized the reflections into categories. We can conclude that the person bereaved by suicide is someone in pain who can also envision suicide as a way out of his/her pain. However, support and the possibility of reframing the grieving process will be operators of meanings that can help the bereaved not to focus on death as the only solution to suffering. In this way, the school institution can act as a facilitator of this process.

Keywords: suicide; grief; school

Luto y tentativa de suicidio en ambiente escolar

RESUMEN

Con el aumento de la tasa de suicidio de jóvenes y adolescentes, las escuelas se ven obligadas a encarar las temáticas muerte, luto y suicidio. A partir del análisis de la serie “Los 13 porqués” que trata esas temáticas y por intermedio de la psicología analítica, presentamos reflexiones que pueden abrir el debate sobre esas cuestiones en la escuela. El análisis de la serie siguió los pasos del análisis de investigación cualitativo, con algunas adaptaciones: asistimos la serie repetidas veces, hicimos anotaciones, discutimos con especialistas, para, finalmente, organizar las reflexiones en categorías. Podemos concluir que, el/la doliente por suicidio es alguien en sufrimiento que también puede vislumbrar el suicidio como la salida para su dolor. Sin embargo, el apoyo y la posibilidad de resignificaciones en el proceso de duelo serán operadores de sentidos que pueden ayudar la/el doliente a no enfocar la muerte como única solución para el sufrimiento. La institución escolar puede actuar como facilitadora de ese proceso.

Palabras clave: suicidio; luto; escuela

Luto e tentativa de suicídio em ambiente escolar

RESUMO

Com o aumento da taxa de suicídio de jovens e adolescentes, as escolas se veem obrigadas a encarar as temáticas morte, luto e suicídio. A partir da análise da série “Os 13 porquês” que trata dessas temáticas e por meio da psicologia analítica, apresentamos reflexões que podem abrir o debate sobre essas questões na escola. A análise da série seguiu os passos da análise de pesquisa qualitativa, com algumas adaptações: assistimos à série repetidas vezes, fizemos anotações, discutimos com especialistas, para finalmente, organizarmos as reflexões em categorias. Podemos concluir que, o/a enlutado/a por suicídio é alguém em sofrimento que também pode vislumbrar o suicídio como a saída para sua dor. No entanto, o apoio e a possibilidade de ressignificações no processo de luto serão operadores de sentidos que podem ajudar a/o enlutado/a a não focar na morte como única solução para o sofrimento. A instituição escolar pode atuar como facilitadora desse processo.

Palavras-chave: suicídio; luto; escola

¹ Universidade Federal de Alfenas – Alfenas – MG – Brazil; sylviasnunes@yahoo.com.br; brunno_yan@hotmail.com; b.rafacosta@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

According to a 2019 publication by the United Nations¹, Approximately 800,000 people take their own lives each year, which means one suicide every 40 seconds. Suicide has been the second cause of death among young people aged 15 to 19 years: in Brazil, Cicogna, Hillesheim and Hallal (2019) observed a rise of 47% in suicide rates among adolescents ages 10 to 19 years, in comparison with the period from 2000 to 2015.

Although the numbers do not depict the profound drama in the lives of those that ended their own lives and the impact on the lives of those around them, it is evident that we need to study the topic in order to better understand it and also to create routes for suicide prevention. Here, we approach suicide prevention in its deepest as well as most specific sense.

In a broad sense, preventing death by suicide regards every reaction that improves the conditions of human life (Botega, 2015; Cassorla, 2017). On the other hand, specifically, we can also consider as prevention more punctual interventions such as: campaigns that promote information and dialogue on the theme; responsible advertisement of support channels in the media; reduction of access to the means to commit suicide; investment in mental health; support to people who are experiencing loss or suicide survivors, as well as other possibilities that might be created based on the reality of each case.

School can also be a space for the creation of preventive strategies in order to approach the theme of suicide in a careful and collaborative way with the school community. It is not necessary to wait for a suicide to happen so that school approaches such delicate set of themes. Speaking of suicide, and understanding that suicidal ideation has been quite present among adolescents and young people, is an important step towards prevention. However, death is still taboo at schools and it is unusual to find bibliographical references on how to approach the theme of death and bereavement in the school environment (Alves & Kovács, 2016; Kovács, 2012).

In this sense, we intend to approach suicide attempts, as well as the processing of bereavement by suicide, with the help of scenes and dialogues (many of them in the school environment) from a Netflix series: "13 Reasons Why" (Yorkey, 2017).

The analysis of the series was realized in a way that was similar to qualitative research analysis, with interviews and open questionnaires. Alves and Silva (1992), in a classic text, recommend the following steps for the realization of qualitative investigations: (1) diligent readings that lead researchers to really internalize data; (2) notes on relations, interpretations, and critical points;

(3) dialogue with other researchers so that the current instruction of the data analysis, although the subjectivity of those who analyze and interpret it is indispensable, will not present an excess of subjectivism. The necessary adaptation for analysis of the series involved the authors' engagement in the following stages: (1) researchers watched the whole series individually three times; (2) researchers took notes as we watched the series; (3) researchers realized systematic meetings to discuss and produce reflections on the series, with the participation of invited guests, who were specialists and some of the themes approached in the series, such as bullying, youth and mental health; (4) researchers organized the ideas and scenes by means of analysis categories, which will be presented in this article, by means of reflections on the perspective of Jungian psychology for suicide and death.

Conceptions of death and suicide: the Jungian point of view

Our conceptions of death and suicide are based on the reflections produced by Carl G. Jung (1946/1991) and James Hillman (1964/2016), in which death is seen as the structuring opposite of life itself. Without it, the search for meaning is impossible. In all circumstances of life, certainty regarding the end is necessary to experience the start and restart. On the other hand, if we live in a society that fears death and wishes to deceive it just like Sísifo², there are consequences of repetition for psychological structure, such as the punishment he receives from the gods, because the certainty of death, and its sense of transformation of life itself, engineers our very potential for transformation. Thus:

A beginning and an end are inevitable aspects of all processes. However, if we look up close, we will verify that it is extremely difficult to point out where a process starts and where it ends, because the events and the processes, the beginnings and the ends constitute an indivisible continuum in the end (Jung, 1946/1991, p. 812).

In this sense, Hillman (1964/2016) states that... "It is in life that suicide appears", because somehow, suicide is a transformation drive. The desire to die, from the Jungian perspective, is connected to deep symbolic meanings. That is, what do people in a suicide attempt wish kill in themselves, in their lives, around them, and their thoughts or feelings? It is undeniable that there is a desire to end a false life that does not correspond to their souls so that another wife can come out. That seems quite clear in the following quote:

Suicide is, then, a desire for rapid transformation. This is not premature death as they say in medicine.

² Character in Greek mythology who deceives death twice and then gets punished with the endless task of climbing a mountain carrying a large rock, which always rolls down back. Philosopher Albert Camus (1942/2010) analyzes this myth and suicide.

¹ Available on: <Suicide: one person dies every 40 seconds (who.int)> Access on: April 27th 2021

Rather, it is a late reaction of a life in the darkness that did not change on the way. Such individuals want to die immediately because they have lost their in death crisis (Hillman, 1964/2016, p. 85, *destaque do autor*).

Thus, if people with suicidal ideations could experience the transformation that they are symbolically searching for with the death of the body, this desire for self-annihilation might change.

Can school be an agent in these transformations? Could listening with attention what the young and adolescent public has to say and debate issues be an effective way to promote these changes? Based on these questions, we will reflect on the Netflix series named “13 Reasons Why”, contextualizing the situations experienced at school in order to think about the following points referring to suicide: suicidal ideation, attempts, and bereavement.

“13 Reasons Why”

“13 reasons why” is based on the homonymous novel (Asher, 2009) that tells the story of a young lady named Hannah Becker, a high school student in the United States who commits suicide and leaves 13 cassette tapes, each one addressed to a specific person at school (12 classmates and a counselor). The cassette tapes provide a narration of the reasons for her decision to end her own life, while focusing on one or two situations experienced with the person to whom the recording is addressed.

The series has four seasons, released annually since 2017. Our objective in this article is to analyze the first two seasons, in which the issue of suicide is a central theme.

The first season is quite faithful to the novel with one important difference: In the novel, the main character Clay Jensen, who receives the 11th tape, listens to all tapes at once, no interruptions, no interventions, and no dialogue with other receivers of the tapes.

In the series, there is a complex network of intrigue and aggressiveness with a constant suspenseful vibe, with secrets and threats. Clay, in addition to her silent grieving, has frequent hallucinations involving Hannah and accusations that she was responsible for the death. This season shows the impact of the death of Hannah to all those involved in the tapes and in the stories they tell. Most importantly, there was fear that the tapes would get discovered along with their denunciations of bullying, humiliation, chauvinism, invasion of privacy, disrespect, illegal activities, and two acts of sexual violence (there is a third rape in the second season, that happens after the recording of the tapes).

In addition, Clay searches for each one of the people accused in the tapes in order to know the truth about what Hannah said and, occasionally, takes revenge on the accused people. Unlike the novel, in which there

is no access to the other characters, the series makes it possible to see that the strategy of the tapes works as a means to make Hannah be heard by the people who disrespected her. However, wouldn't it be a form of romanticizing suicide, because recording the tapes involved a fantasy regarding how the death and the content of the tapes would affect the lives of the people who hurt, humiliated, and the violated Hannah, or even the ones who failed to take action in face of the bullying she was experiencing? Could such romanticizing could work as a trigger for suicide – we use the trigger metaphor to talk about factors and situations that are conducive to suicidal ideation or the act of suicide.

The second season is completely disconnected from the novel. This season starts with a cliffhanger from previous episodes and there is another suicide attempt. Alex Standall, who receives the third tape, tries to commit suicide and survives with a motor disability as a consequence of such attempt.

On the one hand, if we understand that suicide or the attempt to commit suicide is a message, a gesture of communication (Marquetti, 2014), listening to what other people have to say can bring many elements to the comprehension of this suicide act and it can also provide better instruments for suicide prevention programs. Although in a problematic and controversial way, the series allows us to dive into a universe of motivations for the suicide act.

However, it is a good idea to emphasize that specifically concerning the theme of suicide, neither the novel nor the TV series followed the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2000), in the following points: It is not advisable to publish suicide notes, or provide information on the used method, or depict suicide as a glorious act, or blame people. One guideline that was observed by the series was to provide information concerning where to get help. Nevertheless, due to the success of the series especially in the first season, we thought it would be a good idea to analyze its content so that we could use it to illustrate issues involving grief and suicide, as well as attempts to end one's life.

The lines we are going to quote were transcribed from the Portuguese dubbing. They are in italics you know to highlight the difference from other quotes. Of course, there is the limitation concerning the lack of the whole context in which the line was produced, that is, its impact is an aesthetic experience and not only irrational and it cannot be reduced to selected lines. However, we understand that the lines can illustrate the reflections that we select so that we can discuss the themes of suicide attempt and grief by means of the series. Besides, the characters and the contexts are presented so that the reflection on the series gets comprehensible for people who did not watch it or do not remember the details.

The school context in “13 Reasons Why” and the suicidal crisis

Right after Hannah’s death, the school’s administration realizes, in collaboration with the student organization, a campaign against suicide with posters about containing messages on the importance of asking for help. The message that the school presents by means of these actions is that the responsibility for Hannah’s death was exclusively hers. However, the first season is built up in a way that shows Hannah was the victim of a series of acts of violence, abandonment, betrayals, deceit, humiliation, bullying etc. – part of these situations happened in the school environment or was connected to it.

The tape that Hannah recorded on the day she killed herself is directed to Porter, the school councilor. In the tape, she says that, when she looked for him, she was giving life a last chance. Porter is an example of how unprepared adults and school are to help people who are suffering. He totally fails to provide support. When she says, between the lines, that she was the victim of rape, he says that she should either forget about it or forget about it – which makes her retreat once again and go away.

In the 12th episode of the second season, he says he had no training to handle this type of situation, but when he was fired, he gives the principal a list of students that need attention, due to possible emotional fragility.

We observed that, along two seasons, Porter’s character changes. The character’s construction seems to aim at making adults reposition themselves regarding the suffering of young people, and go beyond appearances, which seems clear in the last episode of the second season, when Porter says: *“Not all students that come for support are able to say where it hurts. [...] They believe they will never heal. So they don’t tell anything, they bottle it all up and try to pretend they are we expect them to be.”*

This statement contains several important points in the relation between teachers and students: the complexity of the communication between them and the game of expectations and appearances the influence the perspectives and behaviors of everyone.

Communication, as you have already said, is one of the points that complicate the situation involving ideation and the suicidal act. The communication class is given by Miss Bradley was a space where it became evident. The teacher’s proposal did not mitigate Hannah’s difficulty to communicate her pain. Hannah leaves an anonymous note during an activity in these classes, which demonstrates that she had suicidal ideations. The teacher read them out loud and provided examples of places where students could ask for help but Hannah did not go to any of these places. In the courtroom, the teacher said that she did not try to talk to the parents in order to not compromise the student’s self-confidence.

Here, such dilemma demonstrates how delicate

the situation is. On the one hand, it is necessary not to compromise the students’ self-confidence. However, not having a conversation with family or other connected people will jeopardize collective strategies in order to change the situations that lead to suicidal ideation.

In the series, it becomes clear that the difficulty to approach the suicide theme affects everyone in the school community. After Hannah’s death, one of the characters asks whether it would be possible not to talk about the topic anymore. In another moment in the second season, when Alex is back to school, after a time of recovery from the suicide attempt, a classmate warns him that the administration no longer allowed them to talk about suicide at school. Such prohibition seemed to reflect the fear of the “suicidal contamination” and unfortunately it is still quite common at schools. It becomes clear in another comment by the principal about Hannah: *“She was no hero and we have nothing to learn from her.”*

Fear that a suicide might stimulate other attempts or successful suicides is understandable because, according to the research by Durkheim (1897/2011), it becomes a reality. However, talking about the topic does not stimulate suicide. What actually happens is the opposite. When we talk about the anguish that people with suicidal ideation experience by themselves, new meanings become possible, other alternatives become feasible so that death does not become necessarily seen as the only solution.

Clay and one way to handle bereavement because of suicide: hallucinate

The lives of people who are in grief because of suicide can become chaotic because of the difficulties caused by bereavement due to suicide. In real life, the motivations on the decision to end one’s life remain a secret of the people who took their own lives. Even though they leave a note or a farewell letter it is not possible to access the complex universe of motivations that led them to make that decision.

However, this question seems to keep hurting people in grief until they are able to process their bereavement and until the memories of the ones they lost can find their own place among such feelings and pains.

In this sense, Fukumitsu (2018) asks the following question: who kills who when suicide happens? That is, for the ones who stay, there is an urgent need to reconstruct the meanings of life, because the suicide of a person with whom one is connected means a series of questions and situations involving complex feelings, such as guilt, shame, rejection, fear that suicide will happen again in the family or to other dear people etc.

In this sense, suicide specialists have used the term “survivor”, not only for people who tried to kill themselves and survived, but also for the ones who suffered any sort of impact by the suicide in question,

that is, for the ones who are in grief (Botega, 2015; Botega, Silveira, & Mauro, 2010; Fukumitsu & Kovács, 2016).

One difference between the grief of suicide and other types of grief is in the support that people who are suffering grief by other types of death receive, and that the one suffering grief of suicide do not. Not knowing what to do or what to say, acquaintances normally disappear or never touch the subject (Caselatto, 2018; Fukumitsu & Kovács, 2015).

In this sense, Understanding the pain of the person in grief and validating their process of suffering and re-signification of life after loss, as well as the possibility for farewell rituals or expression of pain, can together mitigate the bad effects of repression to expression of the suffering of loss.

Concerning the series, most of the characters are in grief. Three of them (Clay, Justin and Alex) announce their wish to die at some moments, which shows that considering the ones in grief also as survivors is an important step to prevent them from doing the same thing, which is what happens to Alex and that will be commented in the next item. One thing that might considerably increase the chances of that happening is exactly the impossibility of the person in grief to express their suffering.

Bereavement is not a disease, so there is no treatment and there is no right time for that to happen (Guedes, 2018). The person in grief needs to be supported in their pain and suffering, but they also must learn how to ask for help – this process can be facilitated by means of therapy or group support.

Anyway, grief by suicide demands re-signification of traumatic experiences and a reconciliation with life because death seems to underlie the lives of people in grief. It is a slow, difficult, and gradual process but it is possible. The scars of grief might become permanent and lead to different places (Fukumitsu & Kovács, 2016).

School can be the background of suicide or it can be the foremost scenario in which experiences with prejudice, bullying, humiliation, harassment etc stimulate suicidal ideas. And diverse situations, where there are attempts or accomplished suicides, the school environment can be a space for support so that students, teachers, and other professionals at school can look for new meanings regarding suicide.

The aforementioned authors analyzed that reports by children of people who kill themselves and come to the conclusion that: "Suicide causes so much impact that it is not clear what exactly is being lost. Exactness gets compromised and, just like the relation with the person who committed suicide changes, the person in grief also changes" (Fukumitsu & Kovács, 2016, p. 9).

The issue of time and the marks left in the ones who are in grief can be demonstrated in the following report by a woman who lost her father by suicide when she was

17 years old, in the research by Fukumitsu and Kovács (2016): "it's been 15 years and I've been in therapy for exactly 15 years. I am always talking about my father, about suicide, about my relationship with him, about guilt" (p. 9).

It is somewhat expected that the greatest expression of pain happens right after death, during the funeral or during the seven following days, but clear expression of the pains after this period are not socially allowed. However, life in grief is very particular. There is no right time for the necessary elaborations that can in fact change the pain of bereavement. Caselatto (2018) alerts us that: "grief that is not treated becomes a risk for complications in the process and leads to the development of disorders of physical and psychological nature, which are the result of repression and penalization of pain. (p. 213)"

In the series, Clay, in a discussion with his friend Tony, says: "You have changed" and Clay answers: "Hasn't everybody else changed?". Clay is the character that invites every other people involved to experience their grief for the death of Hannah in the most truthful way, especially by the expression of their anger, and beyond anger, Clay experiences grief internally by means of hallucination. Visual and audio hallucinations are common in people in grief (Worden, 2013).

In the first season Hannah's visions are related to the context in which they appear: sometimes when she is in the school hallways, in the classroom, in the gym, or playing a game. However, there is a change in the second season, because Hannah's hallucination starts talking with Clay. Although the hallucination is a means that leads the character to elaborate the grief they are experiencing, doesn't the construction of this script in this sense romanticized suicide? The fact that Clay's hallucination has a dialogue with him and justify her suicide can be a way to feed the fantasy of those who are in suicidal ideations of control and produce an impact in the lives of people around them.

Sometimes, Clay says Hannah's hallucination: "*I will never forgive you*". However, at the end of the second season, when the family has a symbolic funeral for Hannah at a church some months after her death, Clay's shows the discourse that people in grief that go through effective therapeutic processes of elaboration of grief sometimes can produce:

Life gets divided between before and after Hannah [...] What I fear the most is to forget you. The second thing I fear the most is not to be able to let you go. [...] I asked her every day why she did that thing. But I do not have the answer. She took the answer with her when she left. When she left me. When she left us: angry, empty, confused. I know that this pain will never leave. But there will be a day when I will not feel it all the time. Anger is not going to be so intense, other feelings will disappear. And in the end there will be only love. [...] I love you and let you go.

After this monologue, the hallucination leaves the church and does not appear anymore. Another interesting scene that demonstrates the development of emotional bond among characters is in the last episode of the second season during a school prom in which most of the main characters are present and many of them are having fun. There is a collective embrace around Clay, when his song with Hannah plays.

During the first season, there is the construction of a connection among the characters who are accused in the tapes, which becomes clearer in the scene and reaches most of the main characters. That seems interesting because it demonstrates the bond that was missing among them and that was lacking for Hannah: the possibility to have a dialogue with someone, and elaborate a way to handle suffering, that is, to have their pain acknowledged, taken care of, and respected.

A suicide survivor: Alex

There are other types of suicide. Some authors always use the term in the plural, such as Bastos (2009). There are people that make it clear what their intention is and others that provide no signal that they are considering killing themselves. In cases of frustrated attempts more fatal once, for those who live with victims of suicide, pain, guilt and perplexity are always present. In the first case, because they failed to do anything to avoid the suicidal act (which is not always possible) and in the second case, because they failed to notice that someone was not all right.

In the series, Hannah gives small hints that are not very clear. Alex tries once and survives and announces at several moments that he used to think of dying. That happens in the first season as well as in retrospective scenes in the second season. A suicide attempt is a complex situation that is also taboo because it involves effective self-inflicted death.

If we understand that suicide is a message, a communication gesture, listening to what people wanted to communicate can bring out many elements for the comprehension of the suicidal behavior, as well as provide better instruments for suicide prevention programs.

Alex is the character that shows the most guilt and one of the few people who are willing to talk about the situations exposed in Hannah's tapes. As we have mentioned before, guilt is a feeling that is often present in grief, especially in grief due to suicide and that certainly jeopardizes the elaboration process because it keeps the ones in grief stuck to the fantasy of what they could have done to produce a different result that was not the death of a beloved one. It is not easy to overcome the guilt, but only by overcoming it somehow, is it possible to produce other elaborations on everything that involved the life and the possible motivations of the person who committed suicide or tried to do it.

Concerning Alex, in addition to the guilt demonstrated before and after his attempt, he carries physical and emotional Reminders of his suicide attempt. He does not remember what happened to him one month before his attempt. Neither does he remember the content of the tapes. He reads the letter he left before he tried to commit suicide in which he wrote: "*I could have done something*" and he cannot understand why he wrote it before trying to kill himself. That remains a mystery throughout most of the second season. Until he remembers that he was able to hear the screams of Hannah the day she was raped.

Alex says sometimes: "*I cannot fail in that too*", referring to the frustrated suicide attempt, but also to his feelings of failure that is something quite common in people who attempt to commit suicide.

All this anguish will be hard to get symbolized if the person who tried to commit suicide does not get support and care. Marquetti and Leite (2018) propose that confronting the attempt to commit suicide and look in it together with the person who tried to do it for possible new meanings is conducive to a repositioning of individuals regarding their own pain, because listening can facilitate the comprehension of the suicidal act, because the truth in the individuals who try to do it must be recognized. Some authors affirm that it is necessary to get close to death to understand life.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The suicidal act is a complex event that involves each set of factors, causes, and consequences. It consists of a communication gesture, although it represents a difficulty in communication. An interpretation of suicide made by Jungian psychology involves questioning what a person in a suicidal crisis wants to kill inside themselves or in their lives. That is, suicidal ideation hides the potential to transform death into life, because life constantly demands changes. In the absence of such changes, pain that becomes existential anguish becomes so intense that it becomes a suicidal crisis. However, approaching this pain so that it can be re signified it is a way to prevent suicidal ideation.

Concerning people who are in grief because of suicide, it is important to remember that they are people who are at risk of seeing suicide as a way out of their suffering. In this case, it is evident that that support and the possibility of re signification of their grief process are operators of new meanings that do not appreciate death as the only way.

The set of strategies that are carefully thought of by people who are in grief because of suicide or institutions in which this type of death took place is called postvention (Fukumitsu & Kovács, 2016; repsu, 2018). The execution of this work must be done by someone who is from outside the institution, that is, someone who is not in grief and that is qualified to do it.

Regarding schools, and assessment involving the necessities of the school community³ must be done, based on situations that involved the suicide, the profile of the person who committed suicide, the impact of this death in the school community, the vulnerability of the students and the school staff, beliefs etc. The activities resulting from this assessment might involve: lectures, round tables, groups, individual assistance, and so on. The initial idea here is to speak openly about death and what happened, and the feelings of the ones who stayed. It is also important to think collectively on how to take care of the ones who stayed especially the ones whose lives are the most affected by this grief.

Then, it is possible that reflections on the common stages in the process of grief (and the peculiarities of grief because of suicide) help people who are in grief to understand their own feelings and have their pain transformed. For some time, it depends on the pace of each person in grief, it is interesting that new proposals have a day like with projects in the school community, such as projects involving arts, culture, music, environmental education etc. These new ideas can help bring back balance, even though temporary, to the investment of energy (from the psychological point of view) between life and death, help me in the re-signifying of emotions, and beliefs in the process of grief.

Thus, it is important that all these activities are of spontaneous participation so that they can in fact help elaborate grief. On the other hand, school does not have to go through an actual suicide attempt by a student to approach the topic, so it is possible to bring the theme to the school environment, along a delicate process, so that the topic is not approached in a superficial or punctual way. In this sense, we make 3 suggestions to start the debate on suicide at school.

1) the first thing to do is to be brave enough to bring the theme to the school community. In general, suicide is not an easy topic to be approached by adults either. There might be people in grief or suicidal ideation also among the school staff. That means that adults also need attention so that the topic is brought to students in a conscious way. A constant formative process for the school staff might facilitate a non-judgmental approach to the expression of suffering. It also guarantees that such expressions do not remain without support or guidance. Better preparation in adults might help students to develop trust so that they can talk about their problems, including suicidal ideation.

2) after getting familiar with the theme, it is possible to pay more attention to situations and students that need attention, such as changes in behavior, poor performance and isolation by some students. Besides that, the themes that are usually associated to suicidal

crises, such as the end of relationships, bullying, cyber bullying, examinations etc must be debated and confronted, and school must make channels for communication in which young people feel comfortable to handle their emotions, ideas, plans etc. Round tables can be a beginning when it comes to producing strategies. Bullying and cyber bullying are things that must be approached and confronted, so that the school environment can overcome common forms of violence. A decrease in school violence is a factor for the prevention of suicide.

3) schools can also use theater, movies, and television productions the approach the theme of suicide to start the discussion on the theme, as well as activities in which the students are able to say what they would like to hear when they are facing difficulties. That might help in the relationship between young people and adults at school. In order to do so, the relations with family members are also important sources of dialogue about the needs of the young people and their ideas. Many times, the students themselves have creative ideas for bringing complex themes to the school environment. Lectures on mental health and research works developed by the students themselves can also mobilize the school environment so that there is more openness to talk about delicate profound themes such as this one.

All these strategies and many others can be part of new research works so that we can learn new ways to handle suicide ideation and suicide crises, by means of a constant prevention work in the school environment.

Finally, we come to the conclusion that for students in suicidal crises as well as for people in grief because of suicide, the school environment can help construct a space for support, and listening in the search for new significations. It is a difficult task but it is a way for a lot of students to express their desires, fears, and expectations regarding death, so that death is not necessarily the only solution to an unhappy life.

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³ It is important to emphasize that, by school community, we mean the teachers, administrators, cleaning professionals and kitchen staff etc.

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