

Suicide in adolescence: A psychoanalytic approach

Suicídio na adolescência: uma abordagem psicanalítica

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ABSTRACT Open interview following a guided script, conducted on June 18 and 20, 2024, with Professor Christian Ingo Lenz Dunker from the Institute of Psychology at the University of São Paulo. The interview aimed to discuss suicide among adolescents in Brazil from a psychoanalytic perspective. The discussion focused primarily on issues related to: i) social pressure on adolescents; ii) expectations regarding performance and success; iii) the role of public policies; iv) life trajectories and possible 'clues' about suicide; v) suicide as a solution to problems; vi) proximity to death among adolescents involved in drug trafficking; vii) the pseudo-fragility of contemporary adolescents; and viii) the need to address the topic more thoroughly.

KEYWORDS Suicide. Adolescent. Psychoanalysis.

RESUMO Entrevista aberta, seguindo roteiro orientado, realizada nos dias 18 e 20 de junho de 2024, com o professor Christian Ingo Lenz Dunker, do Instituto de Psicologia da Universidade de São Paulo. O objetivo desta entrevista foi discutir o suicídio em adolescentes no Brasil a partir de uma abordagem psicanalítica. Foram abordadas, sobretudo, questões relativas: i) à pressão social sobre os adolescentes; ii) às expectativas em relação ao desempenho e ao sucesso; iii) ao papel das políticas públicas; iv) às trajetórias de vida possíveis 'pistas' sobre o suicídio; v) ao suicídio como uma solução para problemas; vi) à proximidade com a morte entre adolescentes que participam do tráfico de drogas; vii) à pseudofragilidade dos adolescentes contemporâneos; e viii) à necessidade de abordar mais e melhor o tema.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE Suicídio. Adolescente. Psicanálise.

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Introduction

Suicide is a major public health problem, globally highlighted by Sustainable Development Goal – SDG 3.4 and reinforced by Brazil, which has established, as one of the indicators for monitoring compliance with the 2030 Agenda, a one-third reduction in the suicide rate among people over 5 years of age¹.

Despite having a similar and/or relatively lower suicide rate than other countries at the same stage of development, Brazil has been dealing with a constant increase in the suicide rate among adolescents², which, considering the 10 to 19 age group, increased from 1.7/100,000 in 2000 to 4.5/100,000 in 2022, according to data from the Mortality Information System (SIM).

Guimarães, Moreira and Costa³, when reflecting on the effects of the reduction in the adolescent population in Brazil, point out that this demographic transition opens a window of opportunity for public policies aimed at this population. Focused on organizing the supply of actions, especially the promotion of health in schools, prevention and strengthening of mental health programs, and reinforced by confronting prejudices⁴ and denialism, such policies have effective potential to deal with the issue of suicide.

Aware of this window of opportunity and understanding that the increase in the suicide rate among adolescents points to a trend that, if not interrupted, may, in the coming decades, assume proportions that are difficult to reverse. This interview was conducted online on June 18 and 20, 2024, and aims to discuss suicide in adolescents from a psychoanalytic perspective (in other interviews, sociological, psychiatric, and public health approaches were also explored) with one of the leading Brazilian intellectuals of today, Christian Ingo Lenz Dunker, Full Professor of Psychoanalysis and Psychopathology at the Institute of Psychology of the University of São Paulo (IP/USP).

Marcelo Rasga Moreira – Christian, our goal with this interview is to contribute to outlining a psychoanalytic approach to the current situation in the country, where the suicide rate among adolescents has been increasing for some time, a scenario that is even more serious among indigenous people, where suicide is the leading cause of death in this age group.

Christian Dunker – Look, I’m not going to repeat the data, but it’s worrying! The curves are rising! I know they’re rising in places like Mato Grosso do Sul (with indigenous populations) and in the Serra Gaúcha region, in a type of community that depends heavily on the tobacco economy – which has great uncertainty, great seasonality, where someone can do very well one year and terribly the next! – and it’s a large area of German and Italian immigration, with high levels of ‘individualization’.

These two examples point to, on the one hand, a culture of extremely high performance, appreciation, and recognition based on what the adolescent is able to deliver in terms of efficiency, results, social functionality, and sometimes economic function as well; and, on the other hand, the issue of the Guarani people, which is closely linked to the experience of belonging and the loss of references – “Where did I come from?”, “How do I relate to my ancestors?”, “How do I live up to that promise that was passed down to me?”, “How do I situate myself within a certain sense of rootedness?”.

These are two extreme cases that reflect opposing logics, both present in adolescence!

The adolescent, since its invention with German Romanticism in the 18th century, as we recognize it today – as a phase of transition and formation – has to solve two distinct problems: i) how to inhabit ‘this’ body, how to belong to ‘this’ body, which is a problem of belonging; and ii) how to belong to this group, how to belong to – ultimately – this world that has just been presented to me?

I think what distinguishes early childhood from adolescence is this questioning about

what kind of ‘dwelling’ is reserved for this individual who, soon after, will make professional, romantic, and sexual choices...

This is, in itself, a source of anguish, because adolescence produces a kind of ‘artificial rooting’! You are no longer in the family... *“What place do you want for yourself? – I don’t know yet... I’m deciding!”*.

And this anguish can be increased by social, cultural, racial, and gender pressures! Several things can increase what we would call an ‘expected and basic anguish’.

On the other hand, you have the anguish derived from replacing a form of recognition based on irreplaceable love, on family love, on a non-positional but strict identity within the family... for someone who is ‘like the others’, who needs to compete with others and needs to decide on what terms, by what means, and by whom, ultimately, they want to be recognized!

These two problems intersect in adolescence: who will they date? What sexual orientation? What future do they want for themselves? One is more linked to the past – where I came from –, the other is more linked to the future.

And the entry into this preparatory grammar leads to *“Look, you are no longer loved for who you are, but for what you do! You did something wrong, you lost love, you lost recognition! You did something right, you gained recognition, you gained acceptance within the group!”*, which is a group that he will choose! One question leads to another, which leads to the first, and that produces a certain dialectic.

What seems to be happening in relation to contemporary adolescence?

These two grammars are becoming silted up, they are losing their obvious solutions available for generations and generations! And they become the object of new modes of creation! New because they are traversed by technology, new because they originated in an achievement, new because they are subject to a desired transmission that we consider somewhat problematic, because, to some extent, it is not very mandatory.

Generations like mine, or the one before, encountered – at least the middle class, but also those in other social positions – significant, mandatory orderings that, in a way, were clear: *“Be honest! Work! Study! If you ‘learn the ropes’... That’s what we, your family, expect of you!”*.

Basically, this means: be more or less like us! Follow more or less this way of life and reproduce it on your own terms!

Once that’s done – in other words: once the toll is paid – you then have autonomy... *“we expect you to find autonomy, freedom...”*. On the other hand, you encounter the idea that you need to create, above all, a path that is original, unique, and your own... yours!

These two demands were, back then, something like this: *“How will you reconcile work and pleasure? How will you reconcile a professional choice that guarantees you some kind of job, but is also what you enjoy?”*. These two demands form a more or less typical crossroads.

However, what has changed in the most contemporary forms of creation?

“I’m not going to interfere in your life! I think you should radically choose, both the place, the form, and the means of fulfillment! I expect and demand that you be happy!”.

This question of happiness is often accompanied by a kind of bargain – tacit or explicit – that posits: on one side, either you are dependent and obey me – then you are a child, a ‘minor’ –; on the other, you are independent, you are free, you manage your destiny, you make your life, you create your own horizon!

This crossroads has become sharper, less mediated... it has even become the stage for a kind of regression – from the point of view of social ideals – to the point that the ‘good life’, the ‘exemplary life’, is no longer that of the adult, no longer that of the elderly, but that of the adolescent!

The model of those who are thinking about the world, of those who should have more power, of those who should do things for us... is concentrated in this adolescent way of life!

This creates a kind of shock – the teenager receiving a message that says: *“You have*

everything to be happy! You are in the social place I envy! When I was your age, I repressed myself! Now you have to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh! Don't waste time, because otherwise you will become a resentful adult like me!"

This pressure for achievement at a time when, on the other hand, what happens are forms of digital belonging, nudes, reformulations of relationships without mourning and without processes of articulation and disarticulation... that is: a subjective experience strongly marked by the eternalization of an instant: *"I committed social suicide! I messed up! I sent the wrong message! I was canceled!"*

There's no going back! There's no negotiation! There's no second round! There are no excuses! There's no negotiation with the other person you offended!

This is very strong in the digital discursive logic and makes the problem of belonging a very serious problem! Because I'm going to make choices, and they are, on the one hand, extremely fluid, ephemeral, they vanish into thin air! And, on the other hand, they are irreversible!

Marcelo Rasga Moreira - So, do adolescents experience a violent social pressure?

Christian Dunker - Let's say that we hear - now thinking a little more about the Clinic - a very substantial difference from when I started practicing, 30 years ago: people were afraid of 8-year-old children and 11 or 12-year-old pre-teens! They would arrive at the session: *"So? - So... nothing! Your father said you're not doing well in school. - Fuck it!"*

It was the kid there, defended, grappling with the discovery that adults had become the enemy! And you had to go with tact and care, entering that world, using the language that was pertinent! This situation, which was somewhat atypical - the beginning of adolescence and 8 years old, which is the end of childhood! - has turned into a kind of generic attitude, in which there is a very large deficit, among our adolescents, of intimacy, of talking

about themselves, their vulnerabilities, their indecisions, their mistakes and their fears!

I think our culture is becoming more and more therapeutic because old spaces of friendship, of intimacy... have become rarer and rarer!

So, dating happens, people count *"how many I kissed at the party?"*, they count *"how many I slept with?"*... but when you ask: *"And what's the story?"*... it's a shortening that would make Lyotard envious! It's a dramatic narrative shortening! Of adolescents aged 14, 15, 16! It's as if it were an extension of that wall of subjective sharing for the longer journey, from adolescence to late adolescence!

And, on the other hand, you have another very pervasive experience, which exposes violence against oneself, which makes violence against oneself a tempting alternative, which is the loss of community.

That is, before: *"You are one among others! You are ordinary! You do what you can, but, like so many others!"*. Not today: those who exist - and Brazil has conditions that worsen this draconian rule - are the exceptional ones, those who have gifts, those who have a specialty here... the ordinary ones are the 'nobodies'!

And the mass of 'nobodies' has greatly increased with excessively narcissistic creation processes, a process of cultural transmission mediated by a somewhat disorganized digital universe, and by an economic process that made 'Generation X', 'Generation Z', the 'millennials'... expect a future of great increase, of great growth - of *"Look! Life will be easier for you! You will have a future of greater employability, less work and more pleasure!"*... - and that delivered successive crises of entry into the world of work, that delivered very declining real values of salary!

So, today, a teenager looks and says: *"I won't be able to do what my parents did! Buy a car, have a house... alone, it won't be possible!"*

This creates a kind of retreat from the future! Which is terrible when you think about someone who, having other vulnerabilities, a

depressive moment, has entered into suicidal ideation... is beset by these other more structural elements!

I have heard a lot from adolescents: *“I’m not going to work because the world will end first. I’m not going to retire, get social security... because it won’t be necessary!”*. You see there a ‘climate anxiety’ – everyone’s discussing this! – that is appropriate for shortening the future and extending an expanded present!

Marcelo Rasga Moreira – At other times in our society – and in others – adolescents didn’t have such a wide range of concerns. There were a few very specific things for them to do – go to school, rest, meet friends... Thinking about a democratic society, is much more expected of adolescents today than should be?

Christian Dunker – In a certain sense, we expect more!

We expect that unbearable thing called happiness! We expect that ideal state of enjoyment, we expect a super-determined desire, autonomy, independence...

On the other hand, we expect much less!

We expect much less civility, much less urbanity, much less intimacy, much less communality!

There is a downgrading with an inflation of idealization that falls upon adolescents and that they incorporate into their own trajectory of interspersed conflicts!

It is typical of adolescence to experience marginality in the anthropological sense of the term: *“I am apart! Nobody is like me! I am a Martian, a being of another species!”*.

What was the classic solution available? One day, he discovers that there are other Martians! He goes to the Martian club, discovers that there is a Venusian club, a Uranian club... and this is a reconstitution of society, of social bonding! In other words: a second nature that allows one to say, *“This is the one I chose!”*.

This is almost occult for contemporary adolescents because this group identification has

become instrumentalized! So, the idea that *“we are all marginal!”* has become an idea for adults as well! And for children with autism spectrum disorder, for neurodivergent children... when everyone becomes ‘marginal,’ there is no longer ‘marginality’ in the sense of reconstructing a group!

Marcelo Rasga Moreira – What can public policies do about the issue of suicide?

Christian Dunker – Many things!

Sex education! It’s part of the curriculum! I had it, others had it! It’s useful for a lot of random things and it needs to be on the agenda!

The discussion about abortion! How many women are driven to suicide by continued harassment? Because of abortions that are not possible? Because of pressures of control over their bodies?

Promoting the reduction of gender oppression, class oppression, racial oppression! It’s the ABCs to address some cross-cutting factors that greatly worsen the situation of adolescents!

We could think of countless other state policies! For example: young people, especially those from the periphery, have very few options like *“I’m going to build my Rap group here!”* or *“My poetry group here, my Slam group”*. Where is the state support for that? Football championships, band competitions... That would be a simple thing! A municipal cultural policy could be revitalized in this sense!

In terms of mental health, today, if you need psychotherapy, if you need to talk to someone, and you don’t have private resources, you won’t be able to get it!

The CAPS [Psychosocial Care Centers] won’t offer that to you! They are the main and a very good public policy in terms of mental health, but they are geared towards severe cases! A policy that chooses to attack the issue in more complex situations! Suffering of medium complexity has no place! And this is aggravated in certain contexts of religious matrices and so on.

Marcelo Rasga Moreira – Would a policy that operates along the lines of the CVV [Center for Life Appreciation] be an important public policy?

Christian Dunker – Yes, because adolescent suicide is divided into two big groups: one group includes cases involving drug use, vulnerable situations, repeated violence, and favorable clinical conditions such as depression and anxiety... This is an important group!

The other group is made up of what we expressively call ‘impulsive suicides’, which is the kind of suicide that, if the person talks to someone, they won’t do it! But it has to be right then and there! They can’t wait in line! If they have to wait... they’re lost! Someone needs to be available for that conversation where, deep down, I’ll listen to myself and, by listening to myself, I open cognitive pathways that take away some of the anguish and take me to the solution of anguish through the act!

So, for this group, a public policy offering basic listening services in healthcare, like the CVV does, would be excellent!

Marcelo Rasga Moreira – Could we assume that, throughout their lives, adolescents who commit suicide leave behind signs of suicidal ideation? Are they asking for help, and we fail to notice, and health services fail to notice? Are the problems accumulating, even in other forms, and at a certain point, do they ‘explode’?

Christian Dunker – Look, I really like a study – it must be about five years old now – that reviewed research on suicide in the United States over the last 50 years. And they came to an observation that I found very insightful and very consistent with the clinical reality of the process.

They say this: after it happens, it’s super easy to find the clues, it’s super easy to say, *“Look here: they had depression, they used alcohol, they self-harmed, they had domestic violence, they had periods of detachment from reference groups, from school, etc... Look! It’s a very easy profile for us to identify! So, let’s*

do the opposite! Let’s predict! That child who starts more or less like this and then develops a pattern like this... we could easily prevent suicide this way!”.

And what does the research show? That research has a very low degree of predictive accuracy! In other words, there is something suspicious about these conditions, these traits, even this idea that there are warnings! Yes! There are warnings! But we can say that there are, permanently, warnings about anything we are going to do!

Today’s research processes, using Big Data, the internet, and massive daily monitoring of everything a person does, allow for many inferences and inductions that suggest, *“Look here: this curve was already forming! This other behavioral arc was already in genesis!”.*

Why is this both good and bad for suicide prevention? Because it highlights the importance of a less focused prevention approach, less of a *“Look! Let’s focus on the cases that show signs!”.* Because it seems to me that the most difficult suicide to prevent is the one with the fewest requests for help! It’s the one that’s in the back of the classroom, silent, with low sociability, speaks little, rarely announces what they’re going to do, living in a state of loneliness and isolation!

You might say: *“But then, let’s combat mass isolation!”.* That won’t work!

In other words, this is a clue for us to perhaps change the quality of our perspective on the issue: the signs are there, but only if we have spaces for listening! More generic listening spaces, where you’re not just focused on suicide, but on what precedes it! Then, I think we can say: this is a good indicator because it’s a generic indicator! States and sufferings, especially non-subjectified states and sufferings, those that are involved with dissociations, with a kind of isolation from affection or detachment from others! And these are the ones that deserve an active search! Let’s go find this case and let’s make them talk!

Especially when we talk about adolescence, this topic is important! Any teenager who has

never seriously considered this issue isn't a true teenager! They're a child who is still learning to see the world and needs to make a subjective decision about re-engagement!

Ultimately, adolescent suicide is very much structured around looking at the world and thinking 'now I realize' that this world has a processual dimension and another dimension of entry, of completion of formation, of a gamble, of transformative engagement in which, between one space and another, the question of suicide will be raised!

In other words: it is not a pathological question!

The absence of this question, however, can be!

What makes this question pathological is when it is eroticized, when it turns into ideation, when it turns into planning, when it is accompanied by a depressive, psychotic constellation, a constellation of suffering, acute or chronic... And when, on the other side, you have favorable conditions for the act!

This same research that mapped research on suicide came to a banal but very interesting conclusion: what makes a difference? Of course: support systems, CVV, listening spaces, psychotherapies, referrals, etc... but it also pointed to the training of doormen in large public buildings, the placement of guards on the Golden Gate Bridge... and you might say it's a mechanical blockade... but it's a mechanical blockade that yields results!

Never, under any circumstances, have a gun in the house! And this really irritates people, because it's a consensus that recent public policies fail to understand or respect in the slightest! Having a gun in the house will increase suicide, no matter how much people say: "*I'll hide it! I won't show it! The person will never find out!*"... it's known that the availability of means increases suicide!

The problem is that, with the increase in poorly distributed, poorly managed, and poorly monitored medication, the availability for suicide by psychiatric medication has skyrocketed! And I think we already have these cases making the curve, which was previously

different between boys and girls, more stable. We know that women tend to be less likely to engage in violent acts related to suicide.

Marcelo Rasga Moreira - Can suicide, in a way, be understood as a solution? Does the adolescent see suicide as a solution to problems they cannot cope with?

Christian Dunker - Sometimes it's a solution, and sometimes it's an ethical act! One that we wouldn't normally take, but it's the act of someone who says, "*I don't want this anymore!*".

'This' can be a condition of acute suffering, which we will compare to euthanasia: "*A life like this... I'd rather not!*". Everyone will say: "*Wow... great! Let's support euthanasia, dys-thanasia!*". There are many states in which life is not worth living! We are the ones who cover up adolescence with idealizations that it will be good for everyone!

However, the second condition, which I would say is indeed an ethical act, is that of the person who says: "*There are good things and bad things! I am not suffering bitterly! I don't think this is the end of the world! But I would prefer... not to!*". As Melville's character says: "*I would prefer not to!*".

These suicides are much more difficult for us to understand! And sometimes they run the risk of being fetishized! Of being elevated to the status of "*Look! A hero does this! Someone who is very different does this!*".

In fact, this is a social risk! When we do press coverage, when we talk about suicide, we need to keep in mind that this affects the equation! It may not determine it, but it affects the equation!

Marcelo Rasga Moreira - Interviewing sociologist Michel Misse (UFRJ) - who conducted the first study on violence and adolescence back when we had a Guanabara State! - he presented a reflection that I now thought to bring to the issue of suicide: for him, today, the big difference is that the adolescent subjected to the violence of drug trafficking/militias knows that death is lurking around them. So, their choice

to be involved in drug trafficking is a choice in which death is part of the game! Would it be something similar in suicide? Does the fact that the adolescent has death lurking around them make them see it as an option?

Christian Dunker – There’s a psychoanalytic description for this process, which goes something like this: given the changes in symbolic place, in the imagination of the self, ideals, one’s own body... – everything that, for some psychiatrists, defined adolescence as a ‘normal syndrome’ that everyone must go through! – this metamorphosis places the subject in a kind of groping in relation to the real. Both the real in the sense of authenticity and the real in the sense of that which makes the radical difference! That which absolutely matters! Because it’s a position where the imaginary and the symbolic are rearticulated: “*Whoa! That’s a limit! A limit to what I can think, what I can say, what I can enjoy!*”.

David Breton, a French anthropologist who wrote about emotions, has a good description of how the adolescent subject feel things around, approaching even that which causes him anguish, in order to position himself as a subject, using dangerous games, transgressions, substance use... a series of practices that make us say: “*Look! It seems that the adolescent is trying to feel the proximity of the impossible! The proximity of Death*”.

And this, in essence, defines what, for the adolescent, would be the adult! The true adult as a hero! It is the one who is able to push their social persona, their position, their imagination to the limit!

Well, we’ll have all the past of warrior culture there! Dying in battle, young, as the greatest example of courage!

What is this prototype? It is, in essence, the prototype of the recognized adolescent!

And if we think of adolescence as a crisis of recognition – recognition of the other, recognition of oneself, recognition of the other for oneself – this will, in fact, be an organizing function, however dangerous it may be!

However much it is this extension of “*Why should I go forward or not?*” (in the matter of ‘non-pathological suicide’, let’s call it that), in its connection with this groping of the real.

It seems that, in the cases we see from afar, of adolescents in conflict with the law, of adolescents who enlist as soldiers for drug traffickers... it seems there’s this dimension of rapidly ascending to a position of recognition, of fear, of being able to quickly become an adult, by having a weapon behind them, having the power to provide for their family, protection! Many times this is very important! To provide for their family, revenge... other times, this is very important because it’s the brother who’s gone, the father who’s gone, the uncle who was lost for one side or the other... This dimension will position suicide as... it’s not exactly a ‘decision to’, but it’s an exposure to a risk zone where it will accompany you day and night.

Marcelo Rasga Moreira – It seems that, in certain sectors of society, and even in the health sector, many are working with the idea that adolescents are ‘fragile’ and, therefore, more likely to commit suicide. What are your thoughts on this?

Christian Dunker – I don’t agree!

However, this speaks about the social place of adolescence for adults! For us, the old-timers, who say, “*Mine? It was a heroic adolescence! I went through bullying, frustrations, beatings, and I’m here, alive! Look how awesome I am, and those guys are the weak ones! They haven’t even tasted the edge of a knife yet!*”.

It’s obviously an illusion! Not prospective, but retrospective!

Now: don’t confuse this effect with something else that I think happens, which is another narcissistic complexion, in which we alter the measurements, the volumetry... it’s not that the adolescent today is more or less narcissistic than the adolescent of yesterday! But since narcissism is formed by a system of recognition that is historically given and

operated, the narcissism of the 1960s is not the same narcissism that we see today! And it is in this difference that the adult sees the fragility!

Ultimately, the risks have changed, and so has what it means to 'have courage'! Today, exposing yourself on social media, saying "*I think...*" is a gesture of courage for a teenager that an adult can't even begin to measure!

That's because, for an adult, it might seem trivial: "*Will others think you're an idiot? It's okay to think you're an idiot!*".

No! It's not okay to think you're an idiot! Because today, jobs are obtained through referrals! The proportional value within the group you belong to has changed! And if you commit 'social suicide,' you'll pay a penalty that wasn't the penalty you paid back in the 1920s, creating your own group of outcasts!

It's as if risk and courage, the relationship with sexuality... You'll say: "*What person our age would joke about giving lesbian kisses at a party and then say 'I'm bi,' but now 'I'm queer'!*". You were a jerk! The jerk who hid certain inclinations as much as possible, which today are out in the open, gaining expression and courage!

There is also a historical, datable effect that affects narcissism, which are the 'modes of creation'. You have 'modes of creation' that are now excessively medicalizing and medicalized! Broke your knee? Get medicalized! Suffering from insomnia... get medicalized! Have anxiety, get medicalized!

This creates a fragility because it says: "*it doesn't matter much what you can do with what others have done to you! You need either the resources to regulate the external landscape, move out, buy another one... or some alchemy to change your internal landscape!*".

So, we can say that a type of fragility is introduced, but it's not because the essence of the adolescent is more fragile! It's because you are not teaching, you are not providing, you are not valuing situations that were once formative situations! And which, sometimes, were formative in a deformative sense: "*swallow your tears! Men don't cry!*".

Marcelo Rasga Moreira - "*Go back there and beat him!*".

Christian Dunker - This is the strong one! Even the 'strong-weak' axis is outdated! If you were to ask adolescents, "*What is the moral compass?*"... Perhaps this axis would have a much smaller or lesser value than it did for past generations!

Marcelo Rasga Moreira - Christian, is there anything you'd like to add? Is there anything we haven't touched on that you think is important to our topic?

Christian Dunker - I think there's a topic I wouldn't have much to say about, but it's an emerging one. For a long time, there was a code that went like this: "*when talking about suicide, don't sensationalize it; don't get inside the person's head; don't narrate explosions, events... don't take photos; don't replay the entire week that the suicide occurred...!*". There was a coded way of talking about suicide when it happened: the concern about suicide contagion!

This is no longer possible! It's no longer possible because it doesn't work! How can you compete with Instagram and Facebook? You won't be able to! You won't have the kind of control you used to have anymore!

On the other hand, we have institutional guidelines that don't address the problem! How do you talk about suicide without infantilizing it, without pathologizing it, without racializing it, without creating that image of "*Look, there's a suicidal person here!*". It's difficult! It's a challenge!

Authorship contributions

Dunker CIL (0000-0001-7335-4561)* contributed as interviewee, interview transcript reviewer, and article writer. Moreira MR (0000-0003-3356-7153)* contributed as interviewer, interview transcriber, and article writer.■

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