



The Effects of Violence Due to Neglect in Childhood

Silva PP*

Psychology Unit, Autonomous University of Zacatecas, Mexico

*Corresponding author: Patricia Prieto Silva, Autonomous University of Zacatecas. Av. Preparatoria #301. Col. Progreso, Zacatecas, Mexico, Email: patriciapax@uaz.edu.mx

Research Article

Volume 6 Issue 2

Received Date: July 18, 2022

Published Date: August 16, 2022

DOI: 10.23880/mhrij-16000179

Abstract

There are almost imperceptible levels of violence in the family fabric that leave deep marks on the psyche of the infant, such as abuse due to neglect, a continuous and silent behavior that comes to annul the subjectivity of the other, leaving him completely helpless, hopeless and without resources to find ways to allow the infant to express their affections, difficulties are observed while interacting with others and inserting themselves in the social environment. Neglect is not a physical absence of the person who exercises parental care, but rather it is an emotional absence, a type of violence in which protection, support, care and attention cannot be provided to the infant. Leaving him helpless and devoid of psychic resources. It is quite common nowadays that parents do not have time to attend to the basic needs of children, they have other priorities, so neglect is not a violence that can be recognized so easily, but is observed in clinical practice, in session, how children nowadays have a great impossibility to be recognized as individuals, as subjects with suffering, desires, dreams and desires. This is psychoanalytic research, of a qualitative nature, in which a clinical vignette will be analyzed with the aim of identifying the psychic elements that prevent the internal development of the infant exerted by violence due to neglect.

Keywords: Violence; Neglect; Childhood

Introduction

Currently it has been observed that children have increased considerably the use of electronic devices, either to take online classes or as a means of entertainment. For the magazine Business insider Mexico (2021) [1], 60% of children and adolescents spend their free time playing video games or being in front of a screen. According to the data from the Inegi (2021) [2], children take virtual classes from 3 to 5 hours a day since the confinement due to Covid-19 was established. Still in Mexico, several students take their classes in a hybrid way, that is, face-to-face and online. This fact indicates that children today spend more than 8 hours in front of a screen per day. On the other hand, it has been observed in the interviews with parents the difficulty they have in establishing boundaries towards their children, it is glimpsed how they leave the media content and information

that the child consumes at the mercy of virtuality that does not generate anything worthy to enrich the internal world of children. Parents believe that because they are home there is no danger to the child, it is comfortable because while they carry out other activities, they know that their children are in front of a screen. This is worrying because the majority of parents who go to therapeutic consultation report that they are not aware of the interactions and information that children obtain in virtuality. It is also observed that parents are forced to take their children for consultation by recommendation from the institutions or a close relative, that is, it is not due to any genuine concern where they realize that they cannot attend to the needs of their children on their own, there is no awareness of illness on behalf of the parents, the symptomatology of the child is attributed to situations external to them.

Abuse by neglect is due to a deficit and rejection on behalf of the parents to provide protection, care, physical, mental, social attention and cognitive stimulation; this usually continues from early childhood to adolescence [3]. Abuse due to neglect in virtuality is nothing more than another consecutive act of many others that have occurred since the beginning of the life of infants. When parents do not care about any of their children and are not aware of the processes and achievements throughout their development, they constrain their essence as people with desires, needs, wants and affections.

The Importance of Limitations in Childhood

The limitations are the foundation to consolidate and constitute the psychic structure of the individual. Casas M [4]. points out that the frustration expressed by the child in the face of a limitation exerted by the parents, is essential in the bond with the other, deprivation and castration intervene to constitute themselves as a desiring subject, therefore, frustration defines and gives continuity to the phases of development in childhood. Each situation in childhood and each phase generates losses in children that they have to process as duels, this allows them to form symbols and elements that generate thinking, discerning, and acting. The infant, through a state of optimal frustration, is introduced into his environment and acquires identifications of his parents and his context for the conformation of his individuality and subjectivity.

Dolto F [5], states that the child's psychic constitution is based on the image of the body, which in turn is elaborated from symbolic castrations, that is, the author describes moments or stages of the child's life from the moment of birth until the beginning of adolescence, where the child has to endure deprivation so that he organizes his psyche. Parents are the guides and those who stop certain behaviors and situations that at first instance proved constitutive for the development of the psyche, but that later can generate obstacles in its psychic organization, for example the care exercised by the mother for weaning, this can be violent and abrasive for the child, however the infant is required to process this loss so that a whole new series of elements are opened that will consolidate, take hold and develop in the child's internal world.

When the parents do not meet the needs of the child, nor do they see him as an individual being, different from each of the family members, nor do they have the ability to prohibit, stop or limit moments or situations linked to his psychic development, then failure will intervene to elaborate and symbolize each loss in the infant, establishing pathological forms that prevent free movement through the stages of its development. Dolto F [5] maintains that the mother is the

first agent that signifies the infant, subjectifying him as he set boundaries and upsets the child, the child can experience it as a violent act, and however, those are frustrations that provide significant elements for the infant's psyche which develops alongside their individuality.

Winnicott D [6], considers that the subject who has the ability to care about another and who assumes his responsibility to protect him, has a high degree of self-unification; signifying and bonding with those who are part of his life and his environment, implies well-being and health as an integrated and ambivalent subject. According to the author, when the baby perceives his mother as a total, unified, integrated being, he lends himself to a two-body relationship, that is, the baby begins to show himself as a subject with his own identity. For this condition to be achieved, it is necessary to provide a "facilitating environment", a space where the child is seen by his parents as a being that requires elements that provide him protection, care and support.

When the infant is not protected, supported, or cared for, fissures arise in the subjectivation of the individual; the affective absence of the parents generates undeniable failures for their psychic ordinance. For Arranz M, et al. [7], child vulnerability occurs when the basic needs of the infant have not been covered in a period of time long enough to generate significant consequences, situations of abuse due to neglect or lack of attention are usually not detected because they are violence acts that apparently do not involve criticism of parents or those who care for minors, these are usually normalized within the family and social sphere. Concern for others is inherent to the maturation of the psychic integrative processes; available and continuous caregivers that are aware of the inner progress of the child.

Methodology

This research has the purpose of identifying the elements that contribute to the lack of psychic development exerted by violence due to neglect, it will try to analyze a clinical case presented in a vignette to demonstrate the psychic helplessness caused by neglect and affective absence.

Design

This is a qualitative research, longitudinal descriptive type, of a psychoanalytic nature.

Procedure

The data collection technique was through in-depth clinical interviews, Taylor S, et al. [8] consider it fundamental techniques in qualitative research. As a first step, the first interviews were conducted with the parents to process the

information they provided about their child and analyze the link that has been established between them, as well as obtaining information on the child's life history. Subsequently, clinical interviews were carried out with the child in a period not exceeding two years to date. Diaz I [9] discusses the relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer as a primary element for understanding the patient's discourse.

Objective

The main purpose of this research is to analyze the elements that prevent psychic development exerted by violence, neglect and affective absence by parents, presented in a case in the form of a clinical vignette. The participant is a 9-year-old boy named Tony, who is in the 4th year of primary school. Permission was granted by the parents to present the information obtained during the interviews; the identification of the participants is protected according to the Code of Ethics of the Psychologist (2010). The content analysis technique was applied in clinical interviews, suitable according to Souza M [10], for qualitative research.

Results

Vignette

Tony is sent for psychological treatment on recommendation from his school teacher, he had previously undergone an assessment and was diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). Tony is a 9-year-old boy in fourth grade, he has a hard time focusing at school, he constantly gets up in class, doesn't do his homework, yells at his classmates and assaults them. His parents constantly receive complaints from the school for his behavior. His chronological development agrees with his mental development. His intellectual capacity is within normal parameters.

When he arrives at the clinic, the first thing he talks about is that he can't stand his classmates or his teachers because they make a lot of noise, he says that they shout a lot and that behavior bothers him to the point of hitting them, then he mentions that he has ADHD and that's why he is how he is. When he is at home, he likes to play video games, his parents work all day and come until 8:00 or 9:00 at night, in all that time Tony usually locks himself in his room and when he gets bored, he goes to her sister's bedroom and messes it up, he likes to break her toys because it's fun to him. Later, the sister complains to her mother and she gets angry with him, yelling and complaining about why he is so annoying and unbearable. He thinks they don't want him in his family or at school because he's a bad kid and he thinks he can't learn because he has ADHD. Ever since classes began online

due to the pandemic, teachers have been telling his parents that he is about to fail the year because he didn't turn in assignments or log in to classes.

When the parents are at home, they allow him to play on the Xbox for as long as he wants, they comment that since he suffers from ADHD, this condition does not allow them to approach him, because he does not pay attention to them, nor do they demand that he do his homework or to respect his peers for the disorder he suffers from makes it useless. The parents hardly interact with Tony because they say that it makes no sense to do so, they have taken him to the psychiatrist, he has medicated him for a long time, but the parents notice that he is very lethargic and does not respond to any stimulus when he takes his medication. His parents work most of the time and when they are at home, they start arguments with Tony because he annoys his little sister. Tony says that it bothers him a lot that his dad goes to his bedroom when he gets home from work and doesn't come out until the next day, his mom takes food to his bedroom, Tony thinks it's because she doesn't want to see him. Tony would like to play with his parents and get along better with his schoolmates, but he says that no one can stand him.

Analysis and Discussion of Results

It is observed that the death drive prevails in his actions, his way of being noticed by others is by aggressive means, he has not been given the possibility of showing him other ways of expression, and both his parents and himself justify themselves behind a label that empowers them to avoid responsibilities. On behalf of the parents there is no manner to establish boundaries and generate an optimal degree of frustration, their priorities are different, there is no way to libidinize the other, the death drive prevails, canceling his thoughts, his desires and their great need to know that they are heard and cared for by their parents. Coinciding with Cristoforo A [11], in the case of Tony, hyperactivity/annoyance is a way of expressing failures from the first links, there is somatic disorganization, that is, failures in corporal libidinization, his hyperactivity is a need for containment and somatic regulation; at the same time, it is a provocation towards the other.

The parents did not have the ability to worry about him, giving him a glance, talking to him and communicating from the beginning of his development would have made it possible for him to invest his reality and have a better capacity for representation, identification and interaction. Due to an effective absence, there is a permanent neglect, Tony denotes a fragile and helpless self. Infants are psychically constituted from the moment desire of the other is manifested, if there is no other that corresponds, the child will be left helpless,

Tony shows his emotional helplessness in the absence of his parents, he is libidinally deprived, eager for support and care. Coinciding with Wald A [12], subjective vulnerability and experiences of helplessness originate from experiences with others, the author is committed to a new subjective dimension that involves individual and group therapeutic approaches to both children and parents, including interdisciplinary work.

As Janin B [13] proposes, the therapist will look for the relationship difficulties that emerge in the child's history and will allow the expression of the infant, giving rise to the unfolding of new paths through creation, whether in play, drawing or stories; look for places for the child to enjoy and at the same time reconstruct himself through symbolic elaborations, to make room for his repressed desires, wishes, ideals and fantasies to emerge. Consequently, his ego will be reorganized to formulate different procedures to bond with his parents and his environment, he will be constituted again as an individual being.

According to Delgado J [14], the concept of abuse due to neglect becomes ambiguous and diffuse, however, this type of violence is an accepted social practice, especially in these times, abuse is diluted due to the need to use virtuality due to the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving gaps in the infant's psyche, limiting the latency period, a fundamental phase of internal readjustment that gives rise to involvement in the social, school and family spheres [15,16]. What Tony requires, precisely, is to link up and to be introduced in the social environment, with genuine relationships that resignify his internal world as well as the ability to express his affections through spoken word.

Conclusion

Virtuality in the pandemic has brought new learning modalities, but also pseudo interactions that stop and limit the psychic development of children. The information that is obtained immediately saturates the capacity of retention and elaboration; the transgressive content of the internet does not allow access to other forms of interaction and emotional expression. Tony has a great inability to bond with others, that is, with his schoolmates or with his sister. There is no room to interact, tolerate, empathize and be heard. The neglect and affective absence on behalf of the parents has exposed Tony to continuous affective helplessness, leaving him with constitutive failures from the beginning of his psychic development. It is essential that mental health specialists give the infant a space to think, give him a place so that he can rebuild and redefine himself, in such a way that he can discover the meaning of himself and his place in the world. It is hoped that this research will spread awareness of these forms of violence, which are not tangible and are

acceptable to society, however are considerably harmful to the children who suffer from it.

References

1. Business Insider Mexico (2021) Mexican children and adolescents spend 60% of their free time in activities with screens, a new study shows. Business Insider, pp: 1-5.
2. Inegi (2021) Survey to measure the covid-19 impact on education (ecovid-ed) 2020.
3. Clark R, Freeman J, Adamec C (2007) The encyclopedic of child abuse. In: 2nd (Edn). Facts or file library of health and living. New York. pp: 79-105.
4. Casas M (2018) The helplessness of heartbreak: about depression in childhood. Uruguayan Journal of Psychoanalysis 127: 11-24.
5. Dolto F (2000) The unconscious image of the body. Karnac Books, London, pp: 1-199.
6. Winnicott D (1990) Deprivation and delinquency. In: 2nd (Edn.), Paidós, Buenos Aires, pp: 1-28.
7. Arranz M, Torraba J (2017) Child abuse due to neglect or family neglect, conceptualization and intervention. Prospective Magazine 23: 73-79.
8. Taylor S, Bogdan R (1986) Introduction to qualitative research methods. The search for meanings. Paidós, Buenos Aires. pp: 45-122.
9. Diaz I (2002) Psychodynamic interview technique. Pax. Mexico, pp: 7-10.
10. Souza M (1997) The challenge of knowledge. Qualitative health research. Editorial place. Buenos Aires, pp: 7-78.
11. Cristoforo A (2015) Efficacy of psychoanalytic psychotherapy in a group setting for children with attention difficulties. (Master's Thesis) University of Salvador, Buenos Aires, pp: 1-150.
12. Wald A (2018) Notes on vulnerability and helplessness in childhood. Uruguayan Journal of Psychoanalysis 127: 90-101.
13. Janin B (2019) Interventions in the psychoanalytic clinic with children. Noveduc. Buenos Aires, pp: 12-57.
14. Delgado J (2016) Child abuse by neglect; concepts and overview of its evaluation. ID Research Magazine 7(1): 14-23.

15. Prieto P, Hernandez L, Villasana M (2019) Expressions of oral aggression in the latency period. Ocana J, Garcia G, Cruz, O. Dimensions and perspectives on violence in Latin America. Porrúa, Mexico, pp: 289-299.
16. Mexican Society of Psychology (2010) Ethical code of the psychologist. In 5th (Edn.), Trillas, Mexico, pp: 33-43.

