

Editorial

Editorial Board of the *Social Work Journal* (RTS)

The Editorial Board of RTS wishes to express its solidarity with all the victims and relatives affected by the floods that devastated the Horta Sud region of Valencia on 29 October. On that day and in the days that followed, harrowing news reports in the media brought us the personal stories of those who had lost everything, including hope for the future. Acts of solidarity became widespread across the country, with mutual aid and civic collaboration stepping in as much as possible to meet the needs of those affected. This stood in stark contrast to the inefficiency—and in some cases, indifference—exhibited by the public authorities in charge, especially the Autonomous Government of Valencia.

At times of disaster or emergency, such as the situation that continues to impact the Valencia region, the consequences extend way beyond material losses. The emotional effect on victims necessitates psychosocial intervention by specialised professionals who can provide support both during and after the emergency. Such interventions must be sustained over time, as recovery processes are lengthy, with professionals assisting those affected in addressing issues such as the loss of loved ones, the shock of the experience, health, housing, employment and economic stability, among many other difficulties.

Social workers, accustomed to managing crises and adept at coordinating necessary resources in every circumstance, play a vital role in interdisciplinary intervention teams, including in emergencies. For years, social work associations have established emergency and disaster committees in order to provide immediate psychosocial support to affected individuals within their own environments.

Since 29 October, social workers in Catalonia have mobilised through the TSCAT (Catalan Association of Social Workers), rising to the challenge of supporting those affected by the DANA phenomenon (Isolated Depression at High Levels). They travelled to the affected areas to organise aid via the mechanisms designed jointly through collaboration between the associations and the General Council of Social Work. Crucially, the cooperation of local residents in the affected communities has played a significant role in these efforts.

This approach—grounded in the reality of the situation and focussed on people (Person-Centred Approach, PCA) and their context—is at the core of social work. It is a method rooted in a host of principles that steer social intervention by focussing on individuals' capabilities, competencies, experiences, values and self-awareness to achieve the required empowerment and enable them to make decisions that bring about change or transformation in their lives. Key principles of the PCA

include recognising the uniqueness of each person, understanding their life stories as a vital aspect, supporting their decision-making capacity and appreciating the role their environment plays in problem resolution, harm reduction, recovery of balance in life and empowerment (McCormack, 2004³; Martínez, 2013⁴).

The response to the devastating effects of the DANA has once again highlighted the essential role that social work plays in solving conflicts and addressing crises in emergency and disaster contexts. Social work approaches these situations holistically, taking the individual into consideration from every dimension. In both assessment and intervention, it looks closely at the severity of the situation and how it is perceived by the person, it identifies difficulties and challenges, it analyses the impact on families and the wider community, it takes into consideration the stress factors associated with the emergency, it recognises the resources and support systems available to the individual and within their environment more generally, and ultimately social work undertakes actions where the individual remains central.

We wish to conclude this editorial by expressing profound gratitude to the social workers who form part of the emergency response teams and who, in recent days, have been on the ground in Valencia, providing swift support and endeavouring to meet the needs of affected individuals, particularly the most vulnerable. These professionals have acted with the rigour and commitment characteristic of social work, standing alongside individuals, safeguarding their dignity and helping them regain the elements of their lives that provide well-being.

3 McCormack, Brendan. (2004). Person-centeredness in gerontological nursing: an overview of the literature. *International Journal of Older People Nursing*, 13, 31-38.

4 Martínez Rodríguez, Teresa. (2013). La atención centrada en la persona. Enfoque y modelos para el buen trato a las personas mayores. *Sociedad y Utopía. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 41, 209-223.