

Workshop on Violence and Social Work at BMSZKI

Topic: Images created in the Women's Voices project and homeless women's experiences with violence

The professional workshop series is attended mainly by BMSZKI social workers who meet homeless women in various settings — women's or co-ed shelters, day centres, family temporary homes, or through outreach services. The monthly workshops feature internal and external invited speakers who present their own practices, followed by a 1.5-hour discussion on how these approaches could be adapted within the organisation's work.

Below is a report from Betti, one of the facilitators of Women's Voices group in Hungary, on the workshop held on 25 November:

“Since I find it difficult to speak in front of large groups, it was comforting for me that Tuesday morning's workshop took place in a small, intimate setting. Four guests joined us, and they actively participated in the discussion following the presentations. They were genuinely interested in trying the method in their own practice. One of them even asked when the training would start and already had colleagues in mind whom she would nominate to join.

The small group also meant that we could take a more relaxed approach to the timing of the presentation. Participants asked questions already during the slides, and we discussed them on the spot. This allowed them to gain a more accurate picture of how the groups were run. We didn't have to keep strict time limits, so we had more space for the stories.

After the presentations, we didn't end up discussing the case that Bogi had brought. Instead, we talked about alternative tools in social work: fairy-tale therapy, therapeutic gardening sessions, having coffee or meals together, walking, dancing, and singing. We spoke about the relationship between clients/residents and social workers, and how to ease the boundaries while maintaining mutual respect. We also reflected on what alternative tools we have for offering support. And we touched on the fact that someone should work with the perpetrator as well — yet we have very limited tools and capacity for that.

After reading the image-based narratives, it was clear that the messages had a deep impact on them. Several participants said how intelligent the narratives were and how much wisdom they contained. They also highlighted how simple the method is — any professional could apply it. It works just as well in child protection or in services for people who use substances. And it is effective precisely because we let the resident speak, and we gain first-hand information.

The intimate atmosphere and the colleagues' enthusiasm filled me with hope and energy. I truly hope that Bogi and I will be able to play an active role in delivering the future trainings.”