

Jesus, A. P. (2021). *An elephant in the room? (Re)building possibilities and challenges for promoting relationships between supervisors and PhD students at neoliberal university*. Abstract from International Social Work Education and Development Online Conference 2021.

PhD student pathway studies demonstrate how this teaching cycle has high dropout, dissatisfaction, and mental health problems (McAlpine & Norton, 2006; Stubb, Pyhältö & Lonka, 2011; Anttila et al., 2015; Levecque et al., 2017). These are problems with external and internal factors that play against each other and the relationship with supervisors is a widely recognized aspect to minimize and, in certain situations, prevent such situations (Dharmananda & Kahl, 2012; Filho & Martins, 2006; Hunter & Devine, 2016). However, this relationship can serve both as a source of support and as a critical element (Schmidt & Hansson, 2018). These relationships are contextualized in a neoliberal culture, including the imposition of the “publish or perish culture” in which teaching and pedagogy lose strength in the face of research understood as an end in itself (Moosa, 2018). Considering the commitment of social work to the promotion of human relations both in formation (Weidman & Stein, 2003) and in practice (IFSW, 2014) this paper proposes to analyze and understand students' experiences and perceptions regarding the doctoral supervision relationship, in today's context. More specifically, this work deepens the students' conceptions about the following aspects: i) the reasons that led to the choice of the supervisor and the expectations regarding this process, namely in terms of the support received and in the academic socialization; ii) satisfaction with the relationship, favoring the characteristics and competences indicated in this area, the components of the support received as well as their articulation with critical moments in the doctoral course; iii) the way they envisage the repercussions of neoliberal logic in academia including, but not limited to, their articulation with the frequency and quality of the supervisory process; iv) and finally the way they perceive the supervisor as a role model of professional socialization, in the investigative and pedagogical aspect., this research is a qualitative, descriptive and phenomenological study using semi-structured interviews with 15 students from the 2nd and 3rd year of PhD.