

# CYCLE ON "CREATING SAFE SPACES TO PREVENT VIOLENCE "

## Workshops for mothers and fathers:

## 6th meeting: What we can do when we identify concerning emotional relationships



The activities listed below are designed so that they can be easily implemented following this guide.

We have calculated the time in order to be able to plan the session (90' in total). Either complete the entire contents or just one of the activities.

The text for addressing participants is in italics.

For all the meetings, chairs should be placed in a circle, with no tables, leaving a large space in the middle where participants can move freely.

# 6th meeting: What we can do when we identify concerning emotional relationships

## MAIN GOAL OF THE MEETING

To identify risks in the emotion relationships established by our children in order to discuss them and be able to avoid them.

## PHRASE OF THE DAY (this phrase will be hung on a mural and written in the languages of the participants)

Our job as parents must be carried out in a cultural environment in which well-being is associated with tangible goods or with popularity, and in which more instant remedies are sought to calm psychological pain, sadness or any other emotional difficulty.

## MATERIAL

A music player, a projector, slides, the story of Pepa and Pep, cards with male and female symbols.

## GREETINGS AND WELCOME (15')

On arrival, we will proceed as on the previous days: We will greet everyone, ask how their week has gone and whether anyone wants to share anything, or what they remember from the previous meeting. We can also read the phrase of the day and see whether anyone is missing.

*Today we will ask how we are going as a group. Are everyone's opinions respected? Has anyone felt bad at any point? What is helping us to feel like a group? What is making us feel good? Now that "we have passed the equator" and we only have this and two more meetings to go (plus another a few months later). Is there anything you would like to done differently for the remaining days? Do you have any ideas that you would like to share and that you haven't found the right time to say? Is there any topic that we might not be able to discuss and that interests you?*

## RELAXATION (5')

We will proceed as on the previous day. *Today, attention will also be given to identifying the parts of the body that feel most tense and trying to relax them whenever we breathe out. We will not do the exercise of closing the fist and releasing it, but instead we will concentrate on relaxing every part of the body.* We can repeat the exercise, asking that everyone to give out a vowel-like sound (whatever you want, and in the tone you prefer) when you breathe out, trying to take as long as possible to do so.

## MAIN ACTIVITY (45')

Introduction: Present the goal of the meeting. *Today we will explain a story that will enable us to identify certain characteristics of relationships that form the basis of gender-based violence. We will identify behaviour that is a sign of a dominant, abusive or submissive relationship with another person, along with those that conceal and normalise small acts of violence that are very easily overlooked. This is the story of Pepa and Pep (by Carmen Ruiz Repullo), which will show us what the beginning of gender-based violence between a boy and a girl who are starting a relationship could be like. It is a story based on very common situations, which can help us identify the characteristics of dominance and violence* (source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ4CmoFX8bk> and <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-e&q=el+cuento+de+Pepe+y+pepa#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:f87c99c6,vid:lpaabDdQN08,st:0>).

Part one: Explain the story of Pepa and Pep (it can be projected if preferred). As it is explained, show an interactive slide of the gender-based violence ladder: Separation from friends, control by mobile phone, abandoning interests and hobbies, control of passwords for apps and social networks, control of the way they dress and do their hair and make up, change in personality, control of activities (giving up personal free time), separation from family, submission in sexual intercourse. Progress with the presentation as each of the steps on this ladder are mentioned throughout the story. At the end of the story, explain why Pepa is trapped in the relationship with the help of the story about the frog that was able to leap out of the pan and frog that was trapped and with the help of the same slide. If it seems appropriate, show the next slide which graphically explains the difference between gender-based violence, psychological violence, physical violence, sexual violence and rape (the following slides are only used as support for the workshop hosts). (15 minutes)

Part two:

- Hand out small cards at random that contain the female and male symbols (there will be the same number of each). Everyone should take one. Arrange the chairs in two concentric circles. Ask everyone with the female symbol to sit in the central circle and those with the male symbol to sit in the outer circle.
- For 10', the participants in the central circle should discuss what Pepa's family could do to help her. Participants in the outer circle should listen carefully.
- For the next 10', the participants in the outer circle will sit in the centre and do the same but thinking about what Pep's family could do to help him.

*cont.*

Part three: Form a single circle. Ask whether, when listening to the others, they agreed with what they were saying, whether they disagreed or whether they would have added another idea. Focus on the specific case of Pepa and Pep. Encourage an informal debate on a safe environment can be provided from the family of one and the other to help prevent a dangerous relationship full of small acts of violence that go unnoticed from evolving, and how they could help them get out of it. Try to make sure the participants talk as much as possible and try to intervene as little as possible. Limit yourself to redirecting the conversation towards the goal. (10 minute discussion as one group)

## REFLECTION SPACE IN A CIRCLE (15')

We will proceed as on the previous days.

*This circle will rotate to the left and will find out whether the story we have been working on sounds familiar and makes us think of a situation experienced by our children.*

First allow enough time so that the group members can say whatever they want freely. If no one says anything, do not rush into saying anything. If, after a few minutes, the group remains in silence, some of the following questions could be posed:

- How did this story make you feel? Why?
- Our way of educating can make it easier for a child to fall into or prompt a submissive relationship?
- What kind of education would provide protective experiences and help them react to toxic relationships or not encourage them?
- Is a homosexual child more exposed to violence?
- How can we help identify a toxic relationship or hidden violence?
- Is it hard for us to talk to our children about the situations involved in the story of Pepa and Pep?
- Have we ourselves experienced situations like those in the story at any point in our life?
- If we have, did we find support? What type of support?
- If we have overcome a toxic or violent relationship, what helped us get out of it?
- Having experienced violence or a toxic relationship makes us alert and makes us afraid of the relationships our children could have? Can we give them space so that they have their own experiences without interfering with our fears?

Final reflection:

*Today's phrase tells us to look for "instant remedies to calm psychological pain, sadness or any another emotional difficulty". A dominant or submissive relationship is often prompted or suffered precisely because, in times of difficulty, our children might have an overwhelming desire to calm their inner pain. We must therefore find ways to educate them on protective relationships: Educating in making an effort, establishing clear limits to provide assurance - as we saw the previous day -, developing confidence, preventing children from falling into situations of loneliness, ensuring they feel supported and heard, bearing in mind what adolescence involves, as we saw in another meeting, and talking to them appropriately, as we also worked on another day. It is important that we reinforce their self-esteem so that they have resources not to fall into blackmail, threats or abusive relationships. Above all, if at any point they feel trapped in a relationship that hurts them or that is harmful, we cannot leave them alone and must always offer them a hand.*

## ENERGY BOOSTING ACTIVITY (5')

Ask for a volunteer. Ask them to mime one of the steps of the gender-based violence ladder. The other participants will have to guess which one. Whoever guesses it must mime another. Continue to do this until all the steps have been mimed or until the time available runs out.

## ENDING ROUND (5')

- Remember that there are only a couple of meetings left (plus another one after a few months). Invite them to think of an activity or an idea for the last day.
- Explain that the topic of the next day will be "how we can avoid and act against risky behaviour".
- *As usual, remember that it is important not to lose the flow of the workshop and that you must attend. Being able to attend is a privilege. If, in spite of everything, you are unable to attend, you must inform us (give a contact phone). Should any problems arise, think about whether you could count on someone to come in your place so that you don't miss it.*

**TOTAL TIME: 90 MINUTES**

# Workshop 6

Material for the main activity

the steps of gender-based  
violence

# The steps of gender-based violence

Control  
Domination  
Submission

Consenting to sexual intercourse

Separation from family

Giving up of personal free time

Change in personality

Control of the way they dress

Control of social media

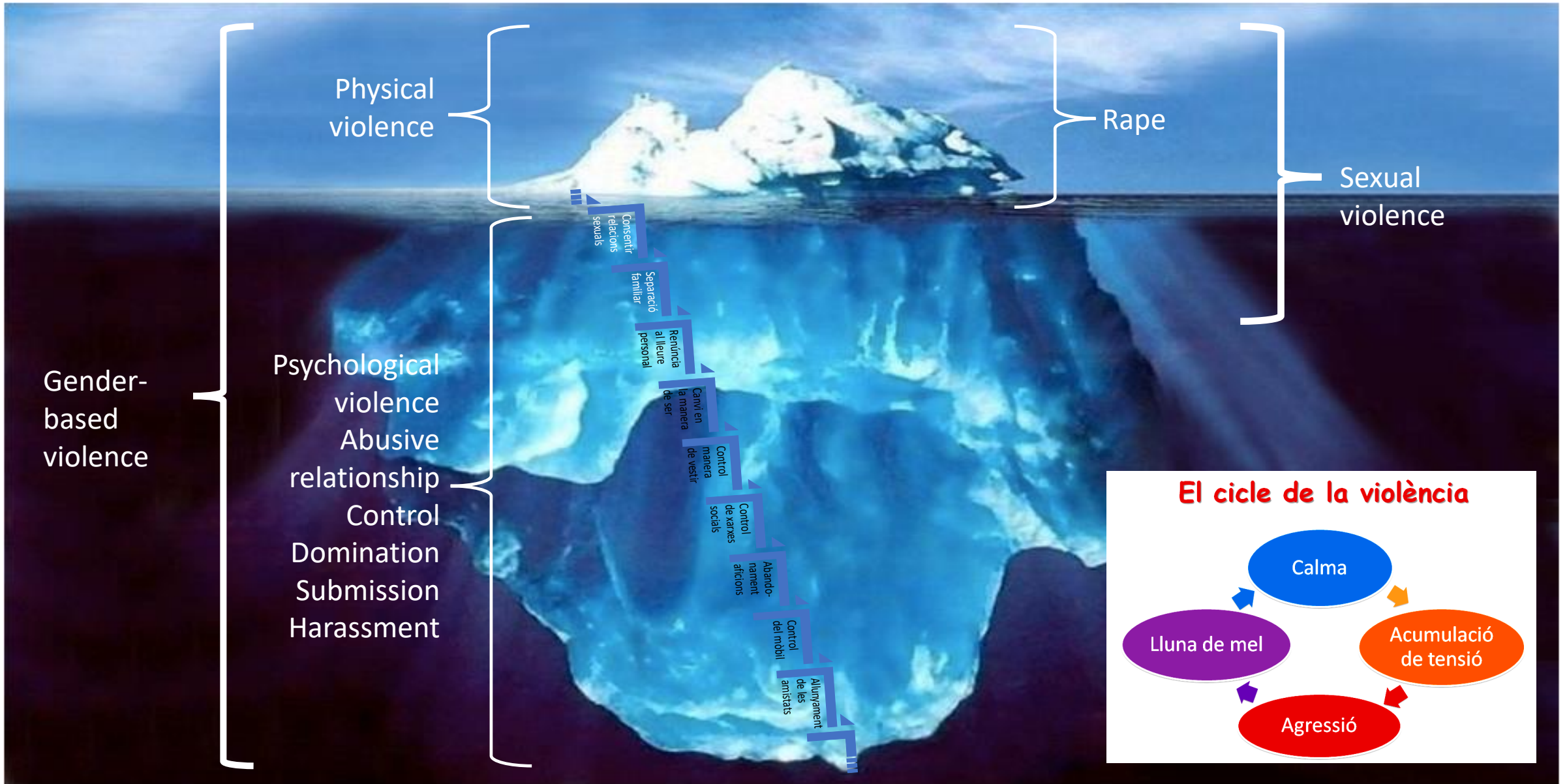
Abandoning hobbies

Control by mobile phone

Separation from friends



Source:  
Carmen Ruíz Repullo



# Tactics of dominant people to gain attention

- Instil mistrust of significant people: Friends, family, etc.
- Look down on others - with words, looks or gestures - their personality, how they speak, how they laugh, how they dress, etc.
- Emotional blackmail ("*That means that you don't love me and I really love you!*")
- Twist and manipulate situations
- Make the other doubt when they have made a decision independently without asking

**SOURCE:**

[https://ebapenobert.caib.es/pluginfile.php/4701/mod\\_resource/content/3/42\\_les\\_relacions\\_txiques.html](https://ebapenobert.caib.es/pluginfile.php/4701/mod_resource/content/3/42_les_relacions_txiques.html)



# How to avoid a submissive relationship and get out in time

- Surround yourself with people who respect you and make you feel at ease by their side
- Deciding who to love and who to have at your side is your choice
- Getting out in time, even if it causes suffering, is a victory in the long run
- Be aware as to whether your emotional needs are being met
- If you feel underrated and are looking for affection at any price, you are at risk and should ask for specialist help
- Remember that love does not hurt
- Remember that NOT everything's fair in love

**SOURCE:**

[https://ebapenobert.caib.es/pluginfile.php/4701/mod\\_resource/content/3/42\\_les\\_relacions\\_txiques.html](https://ebapenobert.caib.es/pluginfile.php/4701/mod_resource/content/3/42_les_relacions_txiques.html)

# How to identify a negative relationship

1. You do not feel that you can behave as you would do normally and feel forced to pretend when you are by that person's side so that they treat you as you deserve.
2. They do not accept your friends and try to make you understand that they are not good for you and that you deserve much more.
3. They do not like your pastimes. When you tell them what you like to do in your free time they tell you that you're wasting your time.
4. You start lying to your friends, who realise that this person is bad for you. You try to defend this person when you really know that you don't actually like being by their side.
5. They disappear when you're going through a bad time. You send them messages, call them, want to see them... but they disappear. Furthermore, if you explain your problems to them, they will tell you that they are easy to overcome and that you're exaggerating.
6. They get angry with you for no particular reason. You try to explain that you didn't want to be disagreeable and this person ends up making you think that you are to blame when in fact you did nothing wrong.
7. They look down on your feelings when you try to open your heart. They are unable to accept it whenever you cry or smile, they don't want you to show any emotion, and that affects you negatively.
8. You start to lose contact with the people you love. You first try to stay in touch with these people, but you begin to move away for fear of that person becoming angry.
9. You always forget the things that are important to you and this gradually hurts your feelings.
10. You are the only person in this relationship who is committed to many things and you stop doing things to help this person when they need it.
11. They sometimes criticise the new things you try to do and decide that they want you to be the same as always, that you don't have to change.
12. You almost always feel guilty, whatever you do. And not because you have done something wrong, but because you know that any small thing will make this person angry.
13. You feel controlled by this person who permanently wants to know what you are doing.
14. You start to ask yourself how life would be without that person by your side.
15. You keep things that bother you about this relationship to yourself to avoid problems.
16. You feel insecure whenever you are by their side.
17. You lose control of your own decisions when you are by this person's side and don't want to do anything.
18. You apprehensively criticise this person to one of your best friends to get it off your chest.
19. You do not understand how it is possible that you have let someone like that into your life.
20. You think about this person many times a day and you don't like doing that.

**SOURCE:** <https://www.adolescents.cat/noticia/46371/20-senys-ajudaran-evitar-relacions-toxiques-sempre-mes>

## Workshop 6

### **The story of Pepa and Pep** (based on the story by Carmen Ruíz Repullo)

This is the story of Pepa, a 16-year-old girl, and Pep, a 19-year-old boy. They started seeing each other a few weeks ago.

One Friday, Pep asks Pepa what she wants to do that afternoon. Pepa tells him that she has arranged to meet some friends, Paula, Andrea, Raquel, etc.

“Oh my God”, says Pep. “Not again! Everyone in the village thinks Paula is a slut! I don’t want you to go because everyone will think you’re like her! And Raquel goes on and on about how I don’t love you and who knows what else! She says I’m a real bastard and stuff like that... Can’t we just go out the two of us on our own?”

“Don’t be like that. Don’t worry, I’ll send them a WhatsApp and tell them we’ll see each other another day”.

This causes Pepa to start to climb down the deceptive ladder of violence to the step of separation from **friends**. Furthermore, people like Pep are now very subtle and, whenever they both meet her friends, he picks on them as much as possible so that, when they see Pepa, they tell her not to bring him again because “he’s a killjoy!” Pepa doesn’t know what to do about this. She says to herself “Should I tell Pep that my friends can’t stand him?” She ultimately decides to say nothing and gradually stops seeing her friends.

But then Pepa climbs down another step, that of control by **mobile phone**. It turns out that Pep is constantly sending her WhatsApp messages, not to find out how she is but to find out where she is and with whom. Pepa does not see it as a dangerous show of jealousy but as proof that he’s crazy about her, and it even makes her feel good.

“Pepa, who are you with?”

“Pep, I’ve already told you that I had a literature essay to write.”

“But you’ve been doing that for three hours. Who are you with?”

Pepa takes a selfie of her and her friends at the home of one of them and sends it to him. She justifies himself by saying that someone he had been seeing before her had been two-timing him when she said she was studying.

Pepa thinks that Pep does all this because he loves her, and she climbs down another step slightly further on the path towards emotional dependency.

Then it turns out that Pepa wants to join two activities that she’s really excited about: football and zumba. On Tuesday, the day she started football, she calls Pep and tells him,

“Hey babe. What are you doing?”

“It’s Tuesday, I already told you I’ve started going to football. I’m getting my backpack ready.”

“I’m really bored.”

“Well, if you want, come to my house and walk me to football practice.”

They arrive at the sports club and Pepa realises that Pep’s expression has changed.

“What’s wrong, Pep?”

“I wanted to talk to you about something. Are you happy with me?”

“Of course I am.”

"It's just that I'm crazy about you but you do whatever you want, you do your own thing. You don't love me as much as I love you..."

"What do you mean, Pep? Don't get paranoid about it. I love being with you..."

Then Pepa realises that she's missed 20 minutes of training while they've been talking and says: "Shit" It might not be worth going to training now. I don't want everyone to see me turning up this late."

So now Pep accompanies Pepa to her activities every Tuesday and every Thursday. And one day he turns up with a long face, as if he were sad and depressed.

"What's wrong, Pep?"

"Jeez.... I've had a big row with my parents. I'm fed up. Don't go to zumba today, stay with me, do not leave me on my own."

Because Pepa has been brought up to please people, she stays with him to please him.

Another Thursday, Pep picks Pepa up in his car.

"How come you're in the car, Pep, if the civic centre is only a few minutes away?"

"I was thinking about going to buy some trainers from the shopping centre before the sales end (the sales are still going on, but he decided to go precisely on a Thursday, the day she has zumba).

"..."

"Why don't you come with me? We could spend the afternoon together..."

Pep eventually convinces Pepa to accompany him.

Situations like these repeat themselves week after week and, in the end, Pepa stops going to the activities she had started to do. Pep therefore ensures Tuesdays and Thursdays are for him.

Pepa climbs down another step, that of abandoning **hobbies**.

Another day, they were in the park and Pep tells Pepa that his friend Juanma's "girlfriend" has told him that he has two-timed her on Instagram.

"Like I said, Pepa, social networks are full of problems. That's why I only have WhatsApp. I hate the fact that you've got Instagram and that some bastard could follow you."

"Well... if someone wants to follow me and I don't know them then I'll block them!"

"That's what you tell me ... but you might not block everyone ... You don't let me see anything. You could be hiding something from me..."

To show him that she's not cheating, Pepa shows him her mobile phone.

"Here. Don't worry. Look at whatever you want..."

Pep takes Pepa's mobile phone and starts to scroll through her WhatsApp groups.

"Pepa! How come you're in this group? It's full of blokes who want to get off you with... You should come out of it! And why have you got this photo on Instagram? You should take it down. And why have you made this comment on the photo of some bloke?"

"..."

"I don't believe you're not hiding anything. If you really trusted me you'd give me all the passwords for your apps."

And Pepa gives him the passwords for her social networks.

Pepa gradually stops using them and distances herself from her contacts and the wide network of friends that is so necessary during adolescence.

With this, Pepa has already climbed down to the step of control of **social media**.

Nowadays, the Peps of this world no longer say "I don't like you wearing mini skirts". Now things are more far-fetched. One day, Pep says to Pepa

"A friend of mine who goes to your school is always saying "Pep, your girlfriend is really hot! The outfits she wears and the way she moves are really sexy", and things like that. And I was wondering why you go to school? To study or what? To cause a stir? I don't know why you wear these kinds of clothes... And I don't know why you wear make up and do your hair like that... That's fine when you're with me... but at school..."

Pepa starts changing the way she dresses and does her hair and make up to avoid avoid rows with Pep. And now Pepa has climbed down one more step, that of changing the way **she dresses**.

One day, Pepa had gone out with Pep and they walked past a bar with a lot of her friends inside. They were really happy to see her.

"Pepa! We're in here!"

"Mate!"

Pepa went up to her.

"Pepa! It's been ages!"

"I'm so happy to see you! Brilliant!"

"Yes! It's great! I'm really happy to see you too!", they answered.

Pep looks on from afar with a bitter expression.

After hugging them and jumping with joy, Pepa tells them that she has to go because Pep is waiting for her.

When she goes back to Pep, she says to him,

"That wasn't cool! You could have come and said hello to them. I don't know why you had to stand here like a statue as if you didn't know them... They're my friends! And you haven't even met them yet... We were here together!"

"Your friends? You look really stupid when you act like that! The next time I see you acting stupid like that, kissing everyone and jumping up and down like silly kids, I'm leaving!"

And whenever Pepa sees her friends again, she is no longer so warm when she says hello, she increasingly controls her behaviour and, little by little, distances herself from them and stops saying hello. And Pepa has now climbed down another step, that of her **personality**.

Another day when they meet, Pepa happily tells Pep that the school is arranging an end of term trip to Majorca. Pep, who doesn't go to school, says,

"Do whatever you want..."

Short and to the point. With that he said it all.

When Pepa returns to school she says,

"Don't sign me up for the trip because I'm not going."

"Pepa, what do you mean?" reply her classmates.

"How come you've changed your mind?"

"Look, if it were anywhere else I would go, but I've already been to Majorca", she says in her defence.

"Teacher, that's just an excuse! Her "boyfriend" doesn't want her to go! Ha, ha!"

"What do you mean? What's your problem? Mind your own business!"

And Pepa has climbed down another step, that of her giving up **personal free time**.

At home they think she's changed a lot and her mum starts telling her.

"Pepa, you're not the same since you've been going out with that boy."

"...."

"I don't know whether he's a good influence on you. You almost never bring him home, you're becoming more and more serious and you look sadder..."

"Shut up, mum! Don't you remember what it's like to be my age?"

"When I was your age, I was really happy and didn't hang around with boys like that."

"Didn't you? Maybe you hung around with boys who didn't love you."

"Your father always loved and respected me."

"Oh, right! And Pep doesn't, does he? Well just for your information, he's crazy about me. I don't want to hear any more about it, don't ever say that to me again"

After scenes like this, when Pepa sees Pep she tells him that she can't stand her family, that they don't understand her and never leave her alone. Pep says that her family doesn't like him at all and they now never go to Pepa's house. Pepa has therefore climbed down to the next step, that of the **family**.

They have been together four months now, and Pep wants to have sex with Pepa.

"Pepa, I really want us to do it....and to do this and that...my friends are doing it..."

"Pep, I need a bit more time, I'm not sure yet..."

"You'd do it if you loved me. If you're not sure it's because you're not sure whether you love me."

And what do you think? Will Pepa agree to have sex?

Pepa tells him that of course she loves him and agrees to have sex before being ready and wanting to do it. And, at this point, she climbs a step lower, that of **sexual intercourse**.

Will Pepa continue to climb down steps? So far, she has climbed down all the steps of gender violence that did not involve physical violence, but she is about to climb down this last step, the most visible of all. It is only one step, but she has climbed down all the previous ones to get there, steps that are difficult to see and easily go unnoticed. All of these silent steps, without physical violence, are gender-based violence.

SOURCE:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJ4CmoFX8bk>

<https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-e&q=el+cuento+de+Pepe+y+pepa#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:f87c99c6,vid:lpaabDdQNO8,st:0>