

Contact building: emotional exchanges

Contact building: emotional exchanges between counselees and counsellors in the late socialist period in Poland

Agnieszka Kościńska



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In Poland after World War II, the related fields of sexology, sex education and sex counselling developed a distinctive model of communication between counselees and counsellors. This article focuses on Wiesław Sokół, one of the key Polish youth counsellors and sex educators active during the late socialist period (the 1970s and 1980s), looking at his path to becoming a sex educator and youth counsellor as well as his practice in both fields. It treats his story as a case study that illustrates the distinctive development of the related disciplines of sex counselling and education. It specifically focuses on the communication between Sokół and his counselees, school pupils, correspondents and readership. It shows how the distinctive methods underpinning emotion-driven communication between counsellor and counsellee developed, while presenting them as products of particular economic, political and religious conditions of late socialism, including state-funded education and healthcare as well as the relative sexual openness resulting from the struggle between the state and the Catholic Church.

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