

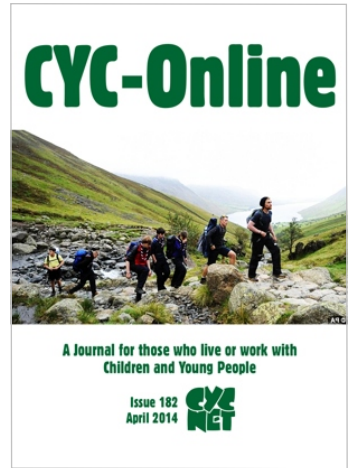
CYC-Online



**A Journal for those who live or work with
Children and Young People**

**Issue 182
April 2014**





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Help when Help is Needed

Where is the support when you need it?

Kids and families (well, maybe mostly parents) think about that a lot, I bet – where is the support when you need it? I don't know how many times I have heard parents say that to me – especially after things have been going well and then, suddenly, they need help or support.

“It always sounded like there was lots of support ‘out there’ for us as a family,” one mother said. “Until I really needed it and then it seemed to have disappeared.”

Funny how that is. When things are going well, everyone seems to be willing to voice their support. When you need them, well, really, they seem to not be there.

Oh, I know the demands – workers have excessive case loads, demands are everywhere, when we get home we just want to be ‘at home’ and when people want more from us, it is hard, sometimes, to step up. And sometimes it is just a systems problem – communications are not clear, priorities change constantly and there is, honestly, just too much to do. Or there is little support and we need time to recoup by ourselves.

I get it. So did the mother I was talking to above – and like she said “I understand. But when you need support,

you need it.”

What do we say to people in need who feel our absence? We can talk all we want about ‘other demands and priorities’ but, really, they don't want to hear that – what they want to hear is, given all that, how can you help us?

We are grateful, I hope, when that question comes. Because in some ways it forgives us all and positions us to move forward into the solution territory. And that is an area where we excel.

Supporting others; helping them find solutions; moving forward into a life of less pain: that is the territory of CYC (or Youth Work, or Social Pedagogy or Foster Care): helping others to live their lives without as much pain, easing the struggle, helping people get along.

Generosity is one of the outstanding characteristics of those who work in our field – heck, just committing your professional life to helping others is an act of generosity. Yet many in our field go much, much further, volunteering in community organisations, coaching teams, helping out neighbours, and just, well, just giving generously to others.

The first of April is coming here in the Northern climes – spring is but a week old – the New Year not far behind. Maybe I can do better this year. Maybe I can, if I am really committed, help others, especially those I care about, get along a



little bit better. Or maybe not. Maybe I will just continue to be the same old 'too busy Thom' and ignore others who need my support – after all, there is only so much of me, or mine, to go around.

Recently – well, last month actually – I send out hundreds of emails to individuals asking them to support CYC-Net through monthly financial contributions or \$10 or so. And then we sent out the

same appeal through the CYC-Net Discussion group.

Of the 4000 or so people who received our appeal, approximately 25 or so decided to support CYC-Net financially. Whew, eh!

On the other hand, maybe I *can* to a little more to be helpful.

Thom



Helping

“Helping Others” proves to be a very strong conduit for building moral reasoning in adolescents and empowering them to do positive things in their communities. “Helping Others” is about learning new positive behaviors, some of which can be taught through the use of modeling. Encouraging youth to observe and imitate helping behavior can teach them to try out these new behaviors for themselves. Guiding youth to help others strengthens their feeling of self-worth and can help young people bond with others.

Many federal or state funding bureaucracies do not view peer group helping as a reimbursable service to children. Peer group professionals must educate funding bureaucrats about the relevancy and strong developmental strategies within the art of “helping others.” “Helping Others” is a powerful tool to utilize when working with at-risk youth. Teaching and encouraging adolescents to help their peers meets many critical developmental needs. The process of peer helping offers a great wealth of strategies that can help reconnect troubled youth to their families, schools, and communities. Peer group helping can build social skills, strengths, and assets in at-risk youth.

RICHARD QUIGLEY

Quigley, R. (2004). Positive peer groups: “Helping Others” meets primary developmental needs. *Reclaiming Children and Youth*, 13(3), 134-137

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A 'Good Enough' Child & Youth Care Practitioner?

Kiaras Gharabaghi



In Canada, there are two trends of note: First, there is a strong sense that the young people coming to the attention of social service agencies are 'more complex' than ever before (see my column from last month). Second, there is the longstanding and on-going trend of anti-regulation of child and youth care practice. I am no rocket scientist (although I did build a few rockets in my youth), but these two trends seem dia-

lectic in nature. One might think that an increasing awareness of the depth of complexity related to the challenges faced by young people (which is much nicer language than 'complex kids') would lead to a greater emphasis on the professional qualities of the practitioners involved with those young people. But alas, this is not so. For much of the human service sector, child and youth care practice is much more akin to a

hobby than a profession. So this leads me to the question as to whether it might make sense to identify what constitutes a “good enough” child and youth care practitioner; one that will do for the job at hand, even if the quality of work is nothing to write home about. We don’t need excellence, just someone to get the job done. In the interest of providing some hiring criteria for the good enough child and youth care practitioner, I therefore offer, for the first time ever, a list of twenty characteristics that would allow us to aim for the minimum, shoot for the bronze, seek the mediocre. I think this will be useful for agencies everywhere:

1. Someone with a general awareness that some young people might face different challenges than others, but with the ability to largely disregard this awareness most of the time;
2. An ability to spell “child and youth care” with no more than three or four errors;
3. Minimal criminal record;
4. Enjoys spending time in offices, especially when working in group homes;
5. Excellent capacity to jump to conclusions and stick to them;
6. Deeply embedded mistrust of neighbours or seemingly innocent members of the community;
7. Uses sarcasm as a way to brighten everyone’s day;
8. When asked to focus on Self is quick to insist that you do it yourself;

9. Able to be discreet when using drugs for self care purposes;
10. Ideally not employable anywhere else as a way of ensuring staff retention;
11. Rejects narcissism because it is too impersonal;
12. Understands relational practice to mean practice that is relative to the behavior of kids;
13. Rejects engagement and polygamy as two sides of the same coin;
14. Rejects ecological perspectives in urban settings;
15. Insists on being given a stethoscope in hospital settings;
16. Advocates for children’s rights and able to refer their lefts to other service providers;
17. Understands that physical interventions are a part of a healthy workout routine;
18. Understands that food is a right, and good food a privilege;
19. Is grateful for minimum wage;
20. In addition to child and youth care practice, also enjoys yoga, long hikes and shopping.

On a completely unrelated note:
Happy April Fool’s Day!



To Become Strange to Ourselves

Hans Skott-Myhre

I have been worrying lately about the language we use to describe our work and the language we use to describe the language we use. Part of this has been prompted by the work of Milton Erickson who was a master of deploying language in ways that were immensely effective in assisting people in resolving complicated and difficult dilemmas.

What I was reminded of in re-encountering Erickson's work was the rigour with which he structured his conversations with people. In one account of his early work, it was reported that he would write out multiple scripts of conversations he was going to have with someone seeking his assistance. He would study the way they used language idiosyncratically and incorporate their particularities of speech and regional/ethnic dialect into his conversation. He would explore how the rhythm and flow of a particular manner of speaking with different emphasis on some words and not others, when repeated in a nuanced way over the course

of a conversation, could open certain ways of thinking about a situation not previously available to the person with whom he was talking. He studied the tonality and speed of a person's way of expressing themselves and then experimented with both matching and varying it in ways that opened new ways of communicating novel and innovative possibilities. He would note habitual and repetitive descriptions and explore ways in which they might be shifted into new descriptions by the way in which one spoke; not just in terms of obvious content and interpretation, but in the very way that one might use the pacing, tonality and grammatical structure of his approach.

I have often suggested to my CYC students that the only tool we have in our encounters with young people is our self. What impresses me about Erickson are the lengths he went to in order to hone that very tool. Often times, I worry that we focus too much of our efforts on an abstract version of who we think we

are premised in societal ideas of morality, such as being a good or bad person or functioning under certain directives given to us by social institutions, such as our families, our disciplines, our church, our nationality etc. We somehow think that if we subject ourselves sufficiently to the disciplinary demands of these forms of identity, then we will have some degree of authenticity that will assist us in our work with young people.

Leaving aside the fact that I would propose that such subjectification and affiliation directly interferes with the work, I would suggest that such authenticity operates at the wrong level. Because it operates at the general level of societal, cultural and familial norms, it can't possibly account for what idiosyncratically occurs in the encounter between a CYC worker and a young person. In fact, such formation of our sense of self through disciplinary or social belief systems can obscure what is most interesting and innovative about relational work; the unexpected and impossible thoughts and feelings that can arise. I would go further and suggest that in order to authentically engage in a truly relational work, we need to be willing to become strangers to ourselves. That is to say, to be willing to study our own habits and beliefs in a deeply reflective way that opens them to constant revision and adaptation in response to our encounters with others. This is not to say we should abandon the unique and idiosyncratic set of capacities that comprises us as a singular and unrepeatable becoming self. Instead, it is to

suggest that we have no idea what our capacities are (or their limits) until we are brave enough to open ourselves to experimentation with the rather limited descriptions we have inherited from the social norms in which we are imbedded.

Deleuze and Guattari, in their book *Kafka*, ask "How many people live in a language that is not their own?" I would suggest it is all of us. For the field of CYC, we can ask this question both individually but also collectively. As a field we are rather impoverished in terms of a language that is ours alone. We borrow heavily from other more dominant languages such as psychology, but we are more hesitant or even dismissive of efforts to explore radically alternative descriptions of who we are and what we do. We have an ongoing discourse that refuses the unfamiliar and calls for the constant reassertion of familiar language forms with which we are comfortable. Tragically, we mistake these common forms of dominant language forms for our own when they are actually rob us of the opportunity to find our own voice.

Deleuze and Guattari go on to propose that, under conditions in which we mistake the dominant vernacular for our own, we are blinded to ways in which our creativity and force are blunted and impoverished. When one studies the work of someone like Milton Erickson, we can see the effect of working tirelessly to undermine the conventions of conventional conversation in order to create new forms of consciousness and



innovative flights of unanticipated behavioral richness. The restricted poverty and shallowness of common speech becomes apparent.

Deleuze and Guattari tells us that this problem of being subject to modes of description that are stripped of experimental complexity, nuance, subtlety, confusion, consternation and challenge is an effect of being subjected from the outside rather than experimentally producing ourselves together in our interactions in the work that we do. They propose that the problem is, how do we free our idiosyncratic and unique capacities from induction into the familiar. For CYC, how do we resist the temptation to become identifiable both normatively and disciplinary? How do we engage, what I consider to be the promise of our collective work and history, work that is quirky, innovative and infinitely experimental. In a term, how do we challenge our own confirmatory descriptions and open a sober critique that avoids the celebratory intoxication of knowing who we are and what we do? How do we stray from the paths of anxious narcissistic self-promotion, as professional identity, into the thickets of impossible revolt and resistance to the conventional and disciplinary?

Deleuze and Guattari suggest that we should “become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one’s own language?” Perhaps this would mean (as Rosi Braidotti suggests about becoming a nomadic subject) that we create ourselves as a field formed in motion. In

this, CYC might well abandon the edifices and structures of institutions and professions and become a field that gathers its identity provisionally from what is at hand in any given moment between a young person and an adult. In this we don’t abandon identity as a field, but engage it like an art project composed of living elements with infinite creative capacity. Milton Erickson was a psychiatrist and without a doubt, a gifted hypnotherapist. For us, however, perhaps even more he was an artist of the human spirit as a rich ecology of living force. When I worry about language, it is because I am afraid that the rich and wonderful history of the deviants and miscreants (both youth and adult) that have formed our work over the years are giving way to bureaucrats and what Basaglia called technicians of desire. I can only hope, that under the surface of professional development and identity, there stirs a perverse spirit that will continue to hone artists of relational capacity. I keep looking for the graffiti of such work on the edifices of our institutions and disciplines. Every so often I catch it out of the corner of my eye before it can be cleaned away. And that makes me smile.

Kafka answers: steal the baby from its crib, walk the tightrope. (p. 19)

Brian Gannon takes us through the process of four essential stages for child and youth care workers to ...

Create Positive Moments

Most organisations and staff teams prepare treatment plans for young people in care. These may be long-term permanency plans, extending over a year or more; and they may be shorter-term interim plans, looking a month or two into the future, during which we work towards particular treatment goals.

But the real action in our work with young people takes place moment by moment. The very next interaction, the very next moment, between you and a youngster can be the moment when something truly significant happens. What are the essential things we need in order to make such a positive moment happen?

1. Being there

Relationship: *Have I already established some working relationship with the child or youth which gives me permission to be part of the action in their life?*

The whole point of child and youth care is the relationship through which we

express interest in — and influence — each others' lives. We must have some reason for "being there" in kids' lives. They will be uncomfortable with unexplained adults lurking around. We achieve nothing without initiating this relationship.

Sharing space and time: *Does the daily timetable have me moving in the same spaces and times as the child so that I am there at significant times?*

A good daily programme creatively "mixes and matches" staff with children. I am no good at all if I am not actually present with the youngsters I work with. Usually (though not always!), the more formal and controlled the activity (study, meal times) the more predictable the situation; the more unstructured and spontaneous the activity, the greater the risks and the opportunity, the greater the need for alert and experienced staff.

2. Observing

Selecting behaviours: *Do I have some*



observational frame which helps me sift out behaviours which are significant from those I should let go?

Our general experience of children and youth helps us to recognise what is normal and what is potentially problematic behaviour. Our *specific briefing* (from staff meetings, individual programmes, etc.) tells us what is significant for certain youngsters. We often prefer to “go with the flow” and intervene as little as necessary, and therefore, as often as not, we choose to “not see” certain behaviours.



Signalling: Do I have some way (a sign, eye-contact) to let a child know that I have ‘red-flagged’ a behaviour or incident for observation?

It is reassuring for the children to know why they are in the programme (whether their placement itself or a new game they are learning) and what skills and problems we are working at together. In our contracting we will often say “more sharing” or “express that in words”. When we have established the learning tasks or critical behaviours, we can use simple eye-contact or a cough to let the youngster know “This is what we were talking about.”

3. Intervening

Are we skilled in (and can we choose between) the various levels of intervention which may be necessary?

Here are four levels to consider:

Monitoring: Am I good at maintaining a level of added alertness on my part, “keeping an eye” on a situation?

This is not an unimportant level: it includes a deliberate act of *carefulness* and a time of being present with young people, when we consider ourselves to be “on duty”. This is the stage when child and youth care workers look out for risks and opportunities. As we become more experienced, we get to recognise ‘the music’ of kids’ interactions — both major and minor keys!

Accompanying: Can I choose the time to move nearer to a youngster or activity, to reassure or to communicate my adult presence/interest?

Think of this as “moving away from the wall” and entering the “hot spot” of the action. The coach of a soccer or netball team often moves closely alongside a particular player or group with the message: “I am right here. I am interested in how you manage this, I recognise that this is a significant moment, we may talk about this later ...”

We choose to move into this accompanying mode carefully, because the closer adult presence often triggers changes in the behaviour of the youngster or the group: perhaps an attempt to

demonstrate skills and improvement, perhaps a studied indifference and independence (“I don’t need you around right now”) or perhaps resentment and frustration at the adult challenge to their inappropriate behaviour or dominance.

We stay “with” the group or the child until we are sure that things can continue positively by themselves. This does not necessarily mean that all risk must have ended and that there is peace and quiet; on the contrary, it is good that robust, challenging and demanding interaction can continue, but that the kids concerned are *managing the situation* with the potential of learning and growing through it.

Enriching: Am I skilled at adding some new element from the sidelines, an observation, some information or encouragement, suggesting some choices?

This is the core of child and youth care work — *adding value* to the experience of the young people in the programme, without interrupting their activity. As always, we try to go with the flow: we usually don’t want to *stop* behaviour, but rather to enable, facilitate and optimise it.

Enriching is the best level for intervention because it is rooted in the things the youngsters are already doing naturally. Here we have the opportunity to reinforce positive behaviours, add information and skills, encourage and reward effort and achievement, and to work with the whole group at the same time

as being able to single out individual performances and issues.

A plus and a minus: Enriching is of great value because it can happen anywhere; we don’t need a special room or a special activity to practise enrichment — meal breaks, classrooms, talk sessions, sports training, activity groups, just hanging out — all are occasions when we have the opportunity to be with kids while they do their own thing. BUT this does not mean that we have to keep tossing “good advice” into every situation. Child care work should be a good *dialogue*, with us doing rather more listening than talking. Enrichment should add spice and stimulation; it should not be boring. We ensure that our contributions are well-chosen and we keep them to the minimum.

This is process of enrichment can be profitably workshopped in your teams and discussion groups, because each programme has its own special settings and possibilities. We at CYC-Online would especially like to hear of your experiences and suggestions in this area.

The Twitter logo, consisting of the word "twitter" in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font, followed by a blue silhouette of a bird in flight.

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@CYCareworkers

Engagement: Last of all, what are my skills when actually intervening in a process to change its direction, to avoid unhelpful developments, to teach alternatives or to instil new skills and possibilities?

There are two levels at which we intervene. At one level we include youngsters in more formal learning or treatment routines — such as activity or therapeutic groups or social skills classes. These formal interventions take children out of their life space for a period, build new awareness, attitudes and abilities, and then return them to daily life. All child care workers need some skills in such “extra lessons” for troubled youth.

At the other level we learn to work within the children’s life space. This is the whole area of behaviour management, crisis intervention, and what Fritz Redl called “life space interviews” and “therapy on the hoof”.

It takes courage to interrupt negative behaviours and difficult situations, and it takes skill and experience to be able to engage youngsters in running repairs and return them as soon as possible to the action.

The circumstances of such engagement are often tough, because through our monitoring and enrichment phases we will already have tried to prevent and avoid escalating situations. However, the better our earlier levels of intervention, the less often will we have to interrupt crisis processes.



4. Outcome

Follow-through and debriefing: Do I ensure that the incident, the learning or activity resulted in a successful, positive and useable experience?

By reflecting on an experience afterwards, a youngster can often make more sense of it. We can highlight the changes made and the gains achieved, and we can translate the experience to a verbal and conceptual level which allows us to talk about it subsequently. Troubled youngsters are often satisfied just to “get through” a difficult experience and simply feel relieved when the pressure is off. That’s not always enough because they will often then live in some suspense or anxiety anticipating the next crisis. So it is crucial that we show them the steps they have made, how we are changed and improved by our experiences, and that the next challenges and tasks will be different. Perhaps even more important is helping youngsters to generalise what they have learned to their own lives. So part of follow-through is providing op-

opportunities for the kids to put into practice their new learning, to see that it works.

Programme adjustments: Do I take away from the incident any information or tasks to contribute to the youngster's individual programme?

If we can help the child or youth to see growth and change in him/herself, then our programme must respond accordingly by also seeing them differently. The individual programme is now different. From today we should be working at a slightly higher level, with different challenges, different tasks, different expectations and goals.

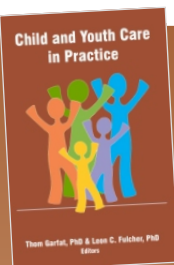
Positive moments

Throughout these four stages — being there, observing and assessing, intervention and outcome — we have the opportunity as child and youth care workers to offer youngsters *something different* from what they have been used to.

We offer them compassion instead of indifference, understanding instead of blame, warmth instead of anger; inclusion instead of turning away, encounter instead of attack, commitment instead of rejection, teaching instead of punishment.

Each of these can be a dramatic and never-to-be-forgotten moment in a child's life — a positive moment. This can happen when we consciously think of these four stages whenever we are on duty, never missing an opportunity.

(Also, never be slow or ashamed to admit openly that a youngster has taught *you* something today, during a session, whenever. For kids to come across a fellow human being who is also learning lessons about life is a truly salutary experience for a youngster in your group — and for you!)



CHILD AND YOUTH CARE IN PRACTICE (2012), edited by Thom Garfat & Leon Fulcher, offers some of the best of contemporary writings on Child & Youth Care practice. Starting with an up dated version of the characteristics of a CYC approach this book demonstrates the application of a Child & Youth Care approach across many areas of our work. This is a practice ideas book, ideal for college courses, teams, trainers, carers, managers and individual practitioners.

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Reflections on What I Want for My Kids in Their Early Years

James Freeman

After a few months of offering somewhat more technical content (if you missed them, be sure to check out the past few issues of CYC Online), this column is a bit more reflective. I'm away from home as I write and my everyday experiences of family rhythm, occasional chaos, and time wrestling on floor have been put on pause. I have a brief and fleeting moment to reflect on where I am, along with my wife, in the journey of raising three kids.

My oldest is already eight and is pressing the borders of early adolescence. My middle son is five and beginning to experience the impact of the school system on his life. And my youngest is three, making some huge strides in his language and ability to communicate with words. I'm thinking that some of the same things I desire for them as a father might translate into what those of us in relational child and youth care want to see for the young people and families we support.

Meaningful Connections

I want my kids to experience meaningful connections with positive adults and peers. Just the other day my daughter met a new girl in the neighborhood. It was interesting to watch the ease and rhythm of their relational encounter. In just moments a simple picnic blanket and outdoor space became a craft factory as they discussed school days and hobbies together. A connection was established between two different ethnic and family cultures. I know that the connections they experience with others shape how they view and experience their growing world.

Positive Experiences

I want them to have experiences that promote their healthy development. I don't mean that their childhood should be rushed or that everything center on them becoming productive adults. I want them to experience life in the present in a way that helps them become who they are created to be. I know life will not un-

fold for them in a way that they are unscathed by loss or hurt at some points in their journey. I want them to have experiences that prepare them to face those things when they happen.

Discovering Strengths

I want them to have opportunities to discover and experiment with their strengths. There's no need for them to become experts or even skilled at their strengths yet, just time to play with and explore what they have been given to bring into the world. The capacity to be generous, as some say, and to contribute to the lives of others is essential to their development.

Lifelong Memories

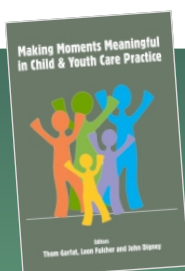
I want them to create lasting memories. Isn't that, in a way, the point of childhood? They are already building a range of them: roaming free in the outdoors, playing on the beach on a family

vacation, a visit with grandparents, making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich together, eating "cowboy food" at a special restaurant. They are simple, everyday things. And I wonder which ones will become lasting memories for them.

Final Thoughts

I don't want my ideas or intentions for them to eclipse who they are as individuals. I know that my worst moments come when I lose sight of where I am in my own journey - and they are a big part of that right now. My way of being with them is, perhaps, the best support or contribution I can make to their lives

How do you think about your role and desires for the young people in your life? Perhaps you might carve out a quiet moment this week to reflect on your own intentions. And through that process perhaps become a bit more reflective and intentional in your relationships with others.



MAKING MOMENTS MEANINGFUL IN CHILD AND YOUTH CARE PRACTICE (2013) is the latest book edited by Thom Garfat, Leon Fulcher & John Digney. In this volume, CYC practitioners, educators and trainers demonstrate the applicability of a **Daily Life Events (dle)** approach across various settings and practice areas. It demonstrates the breadth and depth of the Child & Youth Care field and how it has evolved. This is an excellent student or professional development volume.

Softcover: \$25 Can; e-book \$15

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Connections & Collections

John Digney and Maxwell Smart

*He who says there is no such thing as an honest man,
you may be sure is himself a knave.*

George Berkeley – Bishop of Cloyne and Irish Philosopher

*The work an unknown 'good man' has done is like a vein of water flowing
hidden underground, secretly making the ground green.*

Thomas Carlyle – Scottish philosopher & satirical writer

When we talk of connections, we talk of a process where things are joined up. When we talk of collections, we tend to speak of a 'bringing together' of similar objects, like stamps, dolls or other such objects. This 'connecting and collecting' after all was the initial philosophy behind the formulation of CYC-Net and equally our starting thoughts for our 'Celtic Connection' – a forum to (i) connect with interesting folks, to collect



pertinent issues and knowledge and keep all that is meaningful to us.

With the Social Care Conference in Ireland taking place in April this year (where the authors are co-presenting a workshop), it seems appropriate to speak a little on the topics; for what is a conference if it is not a 'collection of connected' people? We will turn up over the three days, with similar hopes, aspirations and motivations. We will meet like minded people

and discuss the best ways to be of service to our particular client group.

When we first got to talking about collections, we chatted about how as youngsters we went through various stages of collecting items: coins, stamps, comic books. We reminisced about how we placed great value on these items and how we would engage with our friends comparing and swapping for even more desirable items. We would buy or create scrap books, albums, and storage and display boxes. Of course these were pre-internet days and therefore things were much more difficult to come by – if we wanted to keep abreast of what was ‘going on’ in the world of philately (or whatever) we needed to subscribe to monthly magazines or join clubs (another forum where collections of people made connections with each other).

The Good People Collector

One of the authors recently disclosed details of his most current and most prized ‘collections’. It is a collection that has been almost 50 years in the making, it is a collection that has had no financial cost, it is a collection that has no tangible items and it is a collection of infinite value. This collection is ‘a collection of good people’.

Most people have others who are important to them and who they hold dear. These can be people who are members of their family, friends or work mates – in effect everyone has a ‘collection of people’ and we can but hope that it too

is a collection of good people but sometimes, for our youngsters, this is not the case.

The aforementioned author he has gotten into the ‘claiming’ habit and has been informing his selected people, ‘you are now in my collection’. This might seem odd to some readers, we however prefer to think of it more of a “Celtic” idiosyncrasy. Collecting ‘good people’ around us gives us support and prevents social isolation. It gives us hope and aspiration. It also gives recognition to the work and lives of others. So if we are doing it – why not name it?

What must occur first is ‘connection’ and then a metaphorical absorption into the ‘collection’. ‘Good people’ collecting, in our opinion, aids emotional survival in a complex world and goes beyond that to the enrichment of our lives. But what happens to people when they struggle to even connect? Are they able to be collectors of good people?

Larson (in Larson & Brendtro, 2000) advises that many teenagers in our societies are alone, vulnerable and isolated. He notes ‘while many youth manage to navigate through adolescence relatively unscathed, others are deeply wounded by their experiences ... some internalize their pain while others act out in more destructive ways’, (p.7). These youngsters are often most in need of positive adult involvement, but are also highly distrustful of adults in their bid to survive a difficult world. But they too need to be collectors of good people, if they are to have a better chance of surviving and of thriving.



Young people in great difficulty often protect themselves from further hurt by avoiding or disconnecting from relationships. However they also often ‘people collect’ in a negative way. They connect with and collect deviant peers and band together for protection and to meet other needs. This type of ‘people collection’ is often referred to as a gang.

Rapport and Trust

Connecting to and building relationships with vulnerable youth in our care is supposed to be our ‘bread and butter’. But exactly how do we go about helping youngsters to firstly accept us into their lives and at the same time facilitate them to make choices about *better people collecting*.

As we are all acutely aware, unfortunately there is no formulaic method of doing so. It is not an exact science, but there are clear principles we can follow that help. In many ways these are similar to the constructs we tend to when making our ‘good people’ collection. We need to feel some type of connection and for this to occur there should be some form of rapport, where rapport is one of the foundational blocks onto which we build connection; to create what Treischmann (1969) termed, ‘a relationship beachhead’. This beachhead then becomes a platform onto which it is possible to build trust. As noted by Burns (1987), ‘Rapport is the name given to the magic that emerges when two people interact to form positive or pri-

marily positive impressions or attitudes toward one another’. Rapport building is a good start to the process of ‘good people collecting’

Trust is another of the building blocks needed for connection. To ‘trust’ does not mean to have an unquestioning belief in someone to the extent that we place them in charge of our lives - trust is more about being congruent. The things that we say must match the things that we do. If we tell someone we will ‘be there’ for them – we must ‘be there’ for them. Simple things can instill a feeling of trust and often times we can miss the moments and opportunities because we are too busy or too invested in looking for the ‘big stuff’. We are born with the ability (and need) to connect – so, from birth we have the natural ability to ‘connect with’ and by extension, to ‘collect’ people – this is about surviving & thriving.

So in many ways, this short article is about reminding us of the importance of what is normal human behaviour and made possible by naturally occurring processes. To quote a good person (actually, the first ‘good person’ the author ‘claimed’ for his collection), ‘Come to think of it, living in a way that goes with the grain of nature rather than against it must surely be one of the most important life skills for all of us’ (White, 2010).

A Conclusion and Words of Hope

Reader, be not concerned if you have not yet been ‘claimed’ as part of the

above collection – even though this collection is almost a half century in the making, the first official member was only ‘claimed’ two years ago (incidentally this was at the 2012 Irish Social Care conference).

So as we head into spring, a period of renewal and hope, let us think more about the ‘new’ connections we will make, with colleagues, acquaintances and young people. And through the establishment of rapport and trust, let us give effort to assisting young people make more appropriate connections and engage in the process of ‘collecting good people’.

Maxie and Digs

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“Enjoy your youth.
You'll never be younger than
you are at this very moment.”

— Chad Sugg



Does measuring 'care outcomes' help to improve services?

*This month, I'd like to introduce a student from the MSc in Advanced Residential Child Care. His name is **Phil Coady** and he is doing an interesting study exploring care leavers' views on the 'outcomes' of their time in care. Here in Scotland, the new-managerialist language of outcomes has taken hold, with increasing expectations on residential child care services to demonstrate positive outcomes in the work they are doing. I would imagine that this is recognisable to many of you in other locations as well, and I strongly urge you to read on. Phil has spent considerable time and energy critically interrogating outcomes measures, and what follows is a well-argued critique of the way they are currently being thought about and implemented. If your practice is affected by notions and practices around outcomes and their measures, his piece can support your clarity when challenging their fallacious application. We hope that in future, he will be able to contribute to the growing alternative discourse on outcomes in residential child care, one that is grounded in an in-depth exploration of the experiences of those directly involved in the giving and receiving of care in this setting.*

– Laura Steckley

In the advertisements, websites and conference stalls of organisations providing care services, it has become increasingly common to find publicity information giving assurances of evidence-based interventions and care programmes, and promises of improved outcomes for young people. They are frequently pre-

sent along with outcome information demonstrating improved or superior outcomes, and case studies providing illustrative examples. At first glance, the process appears quite scientific and seems to imply that there are proven ways to work with young people that guarantee such improvements.

The views presented in the media, and by senior politicians from all major parties with responsibility for 'looked after' children (who are subject to compulsory supervision by a social worker, but may live at home, with relatives, or in foster or residential care) are very different. From this perspective, outcomes of the 'care system' or 'looked after' system clearly demonstrate the failure of the system, leading to a host of negative outcomes for young people unfortunate enough to be exposed to its influence.

This raises two important questions. First, if it is possible for such polarised views of care outcomes to exist, how helpful is the concept of care outcomes as it is currently used? Second, since the definition of the word outcome is 'the result or consequence of an action or event', implying a causal relationship, to what extent can a causal relationship be assumed between the care services provided for young people and the events that subsequently unfold in their lives?

Measuring 'care outcomes'

There are clearly potential benefits in exploring the impact on young people's lives of our care relationships and care services. We hope that what we offer with good intentions will be helpful and lead to positive outcomes, but it is also possible for well-intentioned actions to have no impact or to be harmful. However, it is also worthwhile to bear in mind that focussing on outcomes or tar-

gets can have an impact on our view of care, transforming it from something having intrinsic value to a commodity that is instrumental in achieving other valued goals. This is very different from the way we view parenting, and can have significant negative effects. Caulkin (2013) points out in relation to public services in general that focusing on targets and outcomes can change the relationship between the provider and user of a service. This can result in the target or desired outcome displacing the service user and taking centre stage, whilst the service user is cast in the role of assisting (or preventing) the achievement of the outcome.

There are also issues about how to measure care outcomes that raise significant questions about much of the current negative media and political commentary. These issues become obvious when relatively straightforward questions are asked, namely questions regarding what and whose outcomes should be measured and interpreted, and when and how this should be done.

What outcomes should be measured?

For organisations providing care services, there is a bewildering array of possible outcome information that could be measured. In spite of this, there is a relatively small number of outcome measures that have become commonly used, including attendance and academic attainment at school, offending, mental

health problems and homelessness. Although these measures relate to important events and circumstances, they each have a different connection to the work of care services, and it appears more likely that their use has developed more as a result of availability of data than because they are considered to be the most appropriate measures of success of the care task.

It is also common for outcomes to be measured without any regard to inputs or outputs. This means, firstly, that no realistic measure of whether or not progress has been made is possible. Secondly, it contributes to the common problem of confusing inputs and outcomes. Offending, low levels of school attendance and educational attainment and mental health problems are commonly presented as outcomes. However, they are clearly also significant inputs and frequently the causes of alternative care arrangements being made. A process of measuring outcomes in isolation cannot bring us closer to understanding how these issues are affected by the provision of a care service.

Whose outcomes should be measured?

In any statistical measurement exercise, the samples chosen are crucial to the result, to what can be understood from the result and to the way it is interpreted. There are significant problems with the samples that are commonly used in outcome measurements. As Forrester (2008) points out, in the UK, many

measures use care leavers as a sample. However, care leavers are a small and unrepresentative subset of the population of 'looked after' children. Care leavers are a combination of late arrivals and long-term users of the care system. These are also the two groups found by Sinclair et al (2007) to have the most entrenched difficulties and least favourable outcomes. The majority of the 'looked after' population either remain at home whilst subject to social work supervision or return home during their childhood.

As this picture suggests, this group is neither homogenous nor stable. It includes children living at home, with relatives, in residential schools and in foster, residential and secure care, and it is common for children to move between these subgroups. They may come into the care system at any age from 0-18 and remain for a few days or their entire childhood. They, and their families, may be affected by disability or mental health problems, they may have experienced abuse or neglect, or a combination of these and other factors. There is surely a limit to what we can hope to learn by combining all of these circumstances into one sample.

Perhaps even greater difficulty exists in relation to comparison groups. It is rare for an appropriate comparison group to be used. Instead outcomes for this combined group are commonly compared with the 'general population'. Use of this comparison group was initially justified on the basis that it was important to understand the size of the

gap between these two groups (Parker et al, 1991). If this was true in the early stages of routinely measuring outcomes, we have surely reached a point where we need to move beyond crude comparisons of this kind towards a more sophisticated understanding of the complexities that lie beneath these outcome measures.

The impact of high mobility within this group provides an illustration of the difficulty involved in achieving statistical improvements in educational and other outcomes. In England, the Department for Education provides annual statistics relating to 'looked after' children, using a sample of children who have been 'looked after' for at least 12 months. In 2013, this was a group of 68100 children. However, 42% were appearing in this group for the first time, and 43% of the 2012 cohort no longer appeared. Although some of these departures are care leavers, the majority are children who either return home or are no longer subject to compulsory social work supervision. These are events that are more likely to take place when circumstances are improving, whereas becoming a 'looked after' child is an event that is more likely to happen when circumstances are deteriorating or concerns are increasing. The impact of this high level of asymmetrical mobility on demonstrating improved outcomes for this substantial group of 'looked after' children is that those whose circumstances improve are more likely to cease to be part of the sample (and become part of

the comparison group) whilst those in the comparison group whose circumstances worsen become more likely to leave the comparison group and join the 'looked after' children sample. In the annual 'snapshot' provided by the Department for Education, little appears to have changed between 2012 and 2013. However, a great deal has changed. Thousands of children's circumstances have improved sufficiently for them to be removed from the care system, and their place has been taken by thousands of other children whose circumstances have deteriorated. The improvements in the lives of the children will not be recorded as improved outcomes for 'looked after' children, because, in the second snapshot, the children are no longer 'looked after'.

When should outcomes be measured?

The timing of outcome measurement is also significant. It is rare for measurement to happen in advance, or for appropriate comparison groups to be used. This means that it is difficult to say with any confidence that what is being measured is, in fact, an outcome. Measurement during the placement is most likely to be useful to those providing the service, as there is a higher likelihood that what is being measured will be relevant to the particular child, and will relate to the actions of workers involved. It remains important to remember, however, that many other influential variables continue to exist, and that even the best

progress will rarely be a linear journey towards improvement.

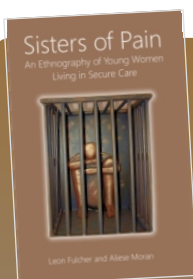
One of the most common forms of measurement continues to be comparison of events in adult life between people with experience of being 'looked after' and others. It is not always clear what is being measured in this situation, and to whom these 'outcomes' should belong. If somebody becomes homeless, commits an offence or suffers mental ill-health ten years after spending time in a care placement, is it realistic to consider this to be an 'outcome' of the placement?

It is notable that there is a tendency for positive outcomes to be measured only at the time of intervention, but because negative outcomes, such as homelessness, offending and mental health problems involve provision of additional services, they remain measurable over long periods. Duncalf's (2009) survey of adult care leavers demonstrates

that there are also positive developments in the lives of care leavers, such as significant additional educational attainment. However, these are not generally considered to be outcomes.

How should outcomes be measured and interpreted?

The most obvious difficulty about how outcomes should be measured and interpreted is that anything that happens after a period of care may be counted as an outcome. Claims about causality are sometimes made, often implied and regularly taken for granted based on simple correlation. Confusion of correlation and causation is an old enough and common enough logical fallacy to have its own Latin name; 'post hoc ergo propter hoc' or the 'post hoc fallacy'. The fallacy is based on the illusion that if one event follows another, the second event was caused by the first, whereas, of course, it is just as likely that a third event caused



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both, or that much more complex causal relationships exist.

It is worth questioning why such an obviously flawed analysis has continued to be the dominant view influencing our understanding of care outcomes for a period of decades, and why this appears to affect the care system in ways that other services are not affected. Last week, for example, a report was published revealing that a third of inpatients in Scottish hospitals die within a year of their stay in hospital. Media coverage of this report did not suggest that this 33% mortality rate was a result of poor treatment within the 'hospital system'. Instead, it focussed on the need to develop greater understanding of the needs of hospital inpatients based on this new information.

Forrester (2008) suggests 3 possible reasons for excessively negative interpretations of care outcomes:

1. Naivety about research methods and ignorance about the complexities of the care system.
2. Financial considerations resulting in pressure to keep children at home or keep periods of care short.
3. Stigma, which focuses on children in the care system, but also affects those working with them.

It is likely that all of these factors contribute to the problem. It has been notable within residential child care for example, that following more than a decade of stability, the number of young

people in residential child care placements has decreased every year since the financial crisis in 2008. Stigma also seems to have had a similar impact on criminal justice services in the 1970s, although recovery from the 'nothing works' criticisms of this time has been slightly better than for the care system. This suggests two other possible contributing factors to the continuing difficulties of the care system:

4. Whilst many other services focus on outcomes in one area, such as offending, education, mental health or housing, as a holistic service, care is seen as being relevant to a wide range of outcomes, and consequently is open to criticism in relation to a wide range of issues.
5. Relatively little is spent on research in social care as a percentage of overall spending. This is likely to mean that generation of research that leads to a clearer understanding of the complexities of working with families using care services is likely to be a slow process.

Expectations and aspirations

It is clear that, for a number of children, contact with the care system leads to improvements in their lives, although, for many of these children, these improvements are difficult to maintain on leaving care or returning home.

However, even if this is accepted, another significant difficulty remains.

Constant comparison between children who have been 'looked after' and those in the general population, and a disapproving commentary about the 'disproportionate' number of people with a history of care who have comparatively negative outcomes, implies that being 'looked after' should not only offer a positive experience in the present, but should entirely compensate for past difficulties and fully inoculate against future problems.

It is difficult to think of another service of which such high expectations exist. Yet, pointing out that the realisation of such expectations for all 'looked after' children is not realistic is likely to be interpreted as demonstrating a lack of high aspirations. In response, it might be argued that such aspirations are not only unrealistic, when expressed for the entire rotating population of 'looked after' children, but also do not appear to be genuinely held by the main political parties in the UK, if actions rather than words are to be believed.

It is difficult to regard aspirations for what would be a dramatic and unprecedented change as genuine when they are not accompanied by any theory of change explaining the processes that would bring about such a transformation. In relation to development of the care sector workforce, the fact that degree level qualifications were developed decades ago for workers in universal services, but workers in the care sector continue to be offered low level vocational qualifications (Petrie et al, 2006)

also suggests that, thus far, the rhetoric of high aspiration is not matched by the reality. With regard to the economic conditions in which 'looked after' children live, bearing in mind that they generally live in low income families, it seems unlikely that current social policy positions that are increasing income inequality and child poverty are foundations upon which significant improvements in the lives of 'looked after' children can easily be built. In short, without a commitment to significant improvement in inputs, it is futile to express high aspirations for improvements in outcomes.

How might focussing on outcomes help to improve services?

There is certainly a great deal of scope for improving the services that we offer to families in the care system, and that might help to improve the quality of life and future prospects of their children. However, it seems unlikely that more generalised comparisons between 'looked after' children and the general population, or even more collection of information about 'looked after' children as a combined group, has much more to teach us about improving outcomes.

At the individual level, some promising local developments are emerging. Pilots of two frameworks, 'Outcomes that matter' (Fulcher and Garfat, 2012) and the 'Education Through Care Scotland Outcomes Framework' have recently taken place. Both of these

frameworks seek to reclaim outcomes and make them specific and relevant to each child. Developments like these may help to give a voice to the young people and adults involved in the central relationships in the care system.

Learning about successful approaches is also needed. This learning is likely to be context specific, and is, therefore, likely to be facilitated by approaches such as programme evaluation, action research and reflective learning involving workers and young people, including those who have moved on. I am currently involved in interviewing members of a small resident group who lived together in the same care setting nearly 15 years ago, along with workers involved in their care, about their views regarding the impact of the care placement, and other influential factors, on future life events. They have a lot to say about their experience which does not fit well with the 'failing care system' narrative. I hope to share their views with you in the future.



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Discipline in action: some requirements and characteristics

Lorraine Fox

Discipline takes more time, and requires more work than punishment

Discipline requires that we do a lot of thinking before and during the intervention, and asks that we design, not merely administer, an intervention that will teach the young person something about the situation, or about him/herself, and that it will enable the individual to handle it better next time. We must consider who are behaving in the unacceptable way, what we know about their history and make-up that helps us understand why they are meeting their needs in an inappropriate way, and how we can provide an intervention and consequence which will facilitate effective learning. Discipline, as a practice concept, is often avoided in favour of more punitive interventions simply because of the demands on staff time and energy. It's easier to have charts on the wall spelling out consequences for all manner of misbehaviour, to take things away, to send someone to his/her

room to “think”, than to take the time to evaluate each incident of unacceptable behaviour, to use our knowledge of the child and of individual and group dynamics to understand the reason for the behaviour and to devise a consequence geared for the needs of the individual youngster.

Discipline requires a focus on the individual

Similar behaviour does not spring, necessarily, from similar or predictable motivation. Each child must be considered in terms of his/her background, present coping skills, treatment needs, and abilities for learning. Six children may run away together, but each will run for his/her own, individual reasons. Punishment may, but discipline will not allow all six to be given the same consequence, because the necessary learning will be different for each. Who left because they have trouble controlling their impulses?

Who left because they couldn't say "no" to others in the group? Who left because in the past it has been safer to leave than to stay? Each has something to learn; each has a different capacity to learn; each deserves the respect to be seen and treated as a unique person with unique needs. Each deserves discipline.

Discipline cannot be forced

Punishment can be forced, but we cannot force anybody to learn. It thus becomes our task to provide the opportunity, to structure a learning situation, to give it our best shot. It becomes our task to give the learning the time.

Discipline enhances a child's self-image

Punishment damages a sense of self-worth. I don't believe that it is true that children enjoy misbehaving and falling out of favour with the important adults in their lives. I believe, instead, that "acting up" is all that some children know. It feels comfortable, it makes them feel like themselves, it reinforces their negative self-images. I have never seen any evidence that it makes them feel good. Learning new ways to behave and handle emotions and difficult situations, learning more about themselves, learning that someone cares enough to struggle with them to help them change; this, I believe, feels good. Discipline allows the development of personal competence, and the sustaining of positive relationships with important adults, building a

sense of worth and value. Isn't this our commitment?

Discipline is hampered by previous life experiences

Kids who come into placement are, for the most part, undisciplined. They have been punished a lot; they have been ignored. Neither punishment nor uninvolvement teaches responsible behaviour. A lifetime of being ignored or punished does not make it easy to receive discipline. Children tempt us to do what would be easier for us anyway, to ignore them, or punish them. It is a challenge for us not to respond in the way they seem to be asking and which makes them feel comfortable. Abused kids elicit abuse; they act as if they would rather be made to suffer, to be called names, to be yelled at or hit. They would rather be sent to their rooms (ignored) than to be disciplined. Most don't feel they are worth discipline! They don't understand our willingness to invest the time and effort. This willingness and investment, I believe, is at the heart of treatment! This is hard to keep "up front" in our minds when they get up in our face and beg us to punish them; when they wreck our nights and ruin our days.

Discipline is hard just because we're human

Sometimes we have bad days. Sometimes we envy them the treatment they are getting at our hands because we'd



like to have some for ourselves. Sometimes we're just plain tired and irritated. These times call on all of our reserves, and all of our personal and professional commitment. We are here to treat them better than they were treated before we met them; to treat them better than we were/are treated; and to treat them better than we'd sometimes like to treat them.

Discipline, like love, requires patience and kindness

Punishment can be swift and impulsive. Who hasn't, in a flash of anger and frustration, been tempted to take away someone's bathroom privileges, to ground them for two years, to send them to their rooms until they "grow up"? The commitment to provide discipline in these moments is much like the commitment to love the unlovable. It takes patience to explain and relate a consequence, to be sure that the behaviour enables us to provide a clear explanation for intervention, and to construct a consequence that changes, rather than confirms, a negative view of the world.

Discipline can be proactive as well as reactive

In fact, it is possible on many occasions to recognise that corrective discipline is necessary because of a failure to provide preventive teaching interventions. Selfishly, it is far more use-

ful, less exhausting, and more pleasant to spend time with youngsters preventing misbehaviour than anxiously awaiting its occurrence and having to react to it when everyone involved is in an emotional state that decreases the chances of effective teaching and learning taking place. Too often we seem to wait for something awful to happen and then spend countless hours in meetings, consultations and ruminations deciding what to do in response. The beauty of the discipline framework is that it reminds us that, unlike punishment, which is only reactive, discipline/teaching can be done at anytime. We can talk in advance about how to keep windows from being broken when Frank loses his temper; how we can handle feelings and challenges other than by running away, how to direct aggression into acceptable activities, etc. We can provide discipline in advance of disruptive behaviour. We can use that well-developed ability to pick up on the warning signs, the "vibes" which signal the potential for something getting out of hand. We can teach as prevention and save all of us the bad feeling which results from "acting out" behaviour. This focus on prevention may, in many cases, cause us to re-evaluate our reward systems for direct care staff. It is unfortunate that so many strokes are given to child care workers who are good at "handling" difficult situations. To reinforce a focus on discipline, we should commend the child care worker who provides such good discipline that there is very little to handle. We also need to

reward creative and constructive consequences, even if they appear “soft” in a context where punishment seems called for. In considering the difficult task of maintaining discipline in classroom settings, Silberman (1970) reminds of the difficulty arising when teachers become obsessed with silence and lack of movement in environments where this becomes the chief means by which their competence is judged, since this atmosphere hampers real learning. He reminds us that a group cannot achieve enough maturity to keep itself under control if its members never have an opportunity to exercise control. Rewards need to be given to workers who do not “control” the group, but who struggle with the group and its members to learn self-control, with the understanding that while learning anything, the practice cannot be compared to the desired proficiency. Learning to type means a lot of misspelled words at first. And learning new behaviours requires tolerance for the approximations which will eventually lead to the desired performance.

Conclusion

Discipline is one of our primary tasks as caretakers of children. It is also one of our greatest challenges. It can be, when done as a way of life with those in our care, one of our greatest rewards. Discipline gives kids what they come to us to get; it is easier on us than any amount of punishing; it works and it feels terrific. Watching young people change their

feelings about themselves — recognising their own value and worth — is a thrill that never leaves a worker who has toiled with and on behalf of this young one. Recognising that disciplinary interactions, teaching kids that they deserve our time, our thought, our planning, our creativity; teaching them that love and respect can be found in this world as evidenced by the love and respect we can share with them; teaching them that they can learn to meet their needs in a way that enhances their own feelings about themselves as well as the feelings toward them of others around them; sharing the joy and confidence that comes from learning — these rewards will energise us and give us the motivational push to keep on for another hour, another day, another year.

Direct care workers tow a difficult line, searching for a blend of structure and freedom which allows children and young people the right to learn from their own mistakes, but which still lends them the protection of our experience as a buffer against unnecessary disasters. There will be times when the consequences we mete out will seem unreasonable to the child. At times like this, we need to examine ourselves to make sure they are indeed reasonable, and necessary, even if not understood. Anyone who has witnessed a two-year-old running out into traffic, convinced that all cars will stop while s(he) retrieves her/his ball, has experienced a moment when preventive discipline was the order of the day, whether the process was able to be mutual or not. There are other dangerous situations which call upon our best skills



in attempting to provide preventive discipline; most of us are not willing to allow teenagers to learn from the mistake of cutting their wrists, or taking a dangerous drug. It requires careful thought and lots of discussion between adults, to determine which situations we should step into and which we should allow to play out so that learning can occur from natural consequences. We need also to recognise that there are times when kids are not available for discipline: when they're on drugs or alcohol; when they are blinded by rage; when they are out of touch with reality. Most often, these times will pass and the opportunity for discipline (as contrasted with control) will present itself and we will then buy up these moments after the storm, to try to teach another way of handling stress or peer pressure, remembering that the goal of discipline is self-control, self-discipline. It is when we see a child or teenager learn a better way to handle his/her feelings and impulses that we are paid for our work, not when we pick up our cheques.

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Q & A

A verbatim transcript from
a recent discussion on
CYC-Net's email group

From: Carrie McDermott

I just finished watching the movie, *What Makes a Family*. It was a great movie about a gay couple, and their daughter – showing us that family doesn't have to include a bloodline. It got me thinking about the families we work with, in the CYC field. What does your program do to include all types of families (step families, gay parents etc.) For example during Father's Day what do you do with a child, that doesn't have a dad, and may have two moms? Do you include materials in your program to represent different families. (e.g. What type of families are represented in the book that you have?) Working with families, we cannot allow our own bias and opinion to affect the way we work with them. If you have a strong belief on divorce and gay couples, how do allow this not to affect the families that you may come in to contact with.

Replies

Hi Carrie :)

I love this topic. I think it is so important for people in CYC or ECE to think critically about this. If we chose to run a program that promotes unbiased attitudes then we have to be especially understanding and supportive of all situations. If a centre/program is going to celebrate some holidays/celebrations then we must celebrate them ALL! Now of course we can relate this to the youth/children we have at the time, but we must recognize all traditions and families. I always wondered about the Mothers/Fathers day activities that centres choose to do, because in most centres I've worked at there's always been one, if not a few children who have only one parent, have same-sex parents, live with grandparents etc etc etc. So I've always chosen to use those days to celebrate parents, celebrate the caregivers in our lives. I think this is a fair way to make sure that our own opinions and ideas do not interfere with the way in which we run our program.

That said it can be difficult including materials that support different sorts of families. However it is possible!! There are so many books, toys and puppets that represent an array of families that centres/programs should be using. Even things as simple as watching your words is important in supporting the myriad of families. (ex. When children are playing in the home centre, do you refer to them

as 'mommy, daddy and baby' let them tell you who they are. Don't assume that a family is 'mommy, daddy and baby') It is also great and always important, to have pictures of the children's families around the centre (especially in younger years) this will not only be supportive to the child, but the other children will get to see the diversity of families and support understanding.

Family is who we make it (once we're old enough to choose!) Children and youth have so many people in their lives, and it may not always be those who are related by blood who they see as 'family'!

I told you I love this topic!

Katie
CYC student (ECE), BC, Canada

.....

What makes a family is when two or more people share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another specially for their children, and reside usually in the house. I worked in a child care setting and we have clients who have two moms or two dads, or has mom and dad, or just grandparents or even aunts and uncles are the only people they know as family. But do we treat them differently, No, I had an incident one time that one of the child in the class asked me Why does _____ have two moms, or two dads? What I did is pull the books Families are different, we have to be open-minded and be gentle in

talking about these issues, specially with the children. When it comes to father's day we still make cards or presents for the special man that they can give, it can be their Grandfather or uncle; same also for mother's day if they have two dads. In a multicultural wall, family wall where my children can look at if they miss their family.

Wendy

.....

Hi Carrie,

I have not seen the movie but do think I'll check it out. In our school system we work with a wide variety of families, some we know a lot about and others we know very little about. I always take an interest in learning about my students family so I can better understand my student.

I have set up Father's Day cards and gift activities and we have substituted grandpa, uncle, new dad, or mom in place of dad. As for Mother's day cards and gifts....this is usually a little easier. Some kids often want to make several cards and that's ok too! Our program doesn't have many books that represent different families, most books are old.

When we are child and youth care workers in the field we need to be aware and accept all of the students and families we work with, regardless of the differences. I remind myself to have an open mind and put myself in the students shoes for a moment.... I believe this is



when my personal growth really occurs. This past fall I was working with a young male teen that was very open about being gay. I listened and learned a lot from him.

Each family is unique and faces their own challenges. We do our best to support and guide them.

Judy Tutschek
BC, Canada

.....

Hi Carrie,

I am a single mom and on father's day she just makes her little gifts at daycare and puts my name on it.

I think that part of our multicultural training, we learn about all types of families and that everyone is different.

I hope that because my own family life hasn't been "normal", for example a mom and dad and siblings, I will naturally be accepting of all types of families.

Morgan – CYC student
BC Canada

.....

Hello, my family is composed of myself, my partNer and daughter. The 3 three of us all live together and we all have our basic needs met. To me, this is a family. Of course, I also have family in other parts of the country, which by definition would be my extended family. I used to think my "partNers in crime" were my

family. Family is like religion, so many types of families, just like so many religions. Who's to say what is a family? I almost forgot, the government reassures me with a list of definitions of what constitutes a family when it comes tax time.

Just some random thoughts:)

Dean

.....

Family can vary from person to person and it mainly depends on who one genuinely cares about, treasures your time with, loves, can trust, feels most comfortable with and who you're most likely to go out of your way to help.

Q & A

Email your question to:
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Follow the link below for an
archive of previous topics:
<http://www.cyc-net.org/threads>

Outward Bound Wilderness Programs

EDUCATION FOR LIFE



Outward Bound was founded in 1941 in the tumultuous waters of the North Sea during World War II, to provide young sailors with the experiences and skills necessary to survive at sea. Named after the nautical term for a ship's departure from the certainties of the harbor, Outward Bound was a joint effort between British shipping magnate Sir Lawrence Holt and progressive German educator Kurt Hahn.

Hahn had developed his progressive ideas, first as founder of the Salem School in Germany, and later at Gordonstoun, a boarding school in Scotland, that soon became one of Britain's most distinguished and innovative schools. Hahn believed education must encompass both the intellect and character of a person.

In creating the first Outward Bound School, he expanded the concept of experiential learning to include real and powerful experience to gain self-esteem, the discovery of innate abilities, and a sense of responsibility toward others.

Outward Bound has since become the premier experiential education program in the world.

With schools in spectacular wilderness settings as well as in bustling urban communities, we serve a diverse student population while delivering courses with consistently high standards of learning, safety and results.

Over the past fifty years, we have continued to grow and expand our course offerings while remaining true to the original idea that when you place students in physically and mentally challenging situations, in a supportive



environment, they discover self confidence, physical and mental strength and a compassion for others they never realized they had.

Outward Bound has courses for all ages. There are courses for motivated middle school and high school students seeking a physically and mentally demanding skill-building experience in the wilderness. There are courses specifically designed for young adults transitioning from high school to college or taking a gap year to spend time in a foreign country.

Adults and groups with special interests can find Outward Bound courses that address their needs. There are courses for military veterans returning from conflict zones and teenagers struggling with personal challenges at home or at school.

Outward Bound is the only organization in the field of experiential education with 50 years of a proven learning model, a national network of regional schools and a highly trained and passionate staff of instructors dedicated to helping students grow from the new experiences which they encounter.



Design Principles

We use these principles to design and deliver programs:

Learning through Experience

- Facilitating engaging, relevant, sequential experiences that promote skill mastery and incorporate reflection and transference.
- Learning from success as well as failure.

Challenge and Adventure

- Using unfamiliar settings to impel students into mentally, emotionally and physically demanding experiences.
- Utilizing and managing appropriate risk.

Supportive Environment

- Designing an experience that supports physical and emotional safety.
- Developing a caring and positive group culture.

Outcomes

These are the outcomes common to all of our programs and what we measure:

Character Development

- Demonstrating increased self-confidence and self-actualization.
- Demonstrating compassion toward others and living a healthy and balanced life.

Leadership

- Demonstrating the ability to set goals, and inspire and guide others to achieve them.
- Demonstrating the ability to collaborate, communicate, solve problems and resolve conflicts effectively.

Service

- Demonstrating social and environmental responsibility.
- Actively engaging in service to others.

This short piece from
<http://www.outwardbound.org/>



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CASA PACIFICA

CENTERS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Providing Hope & Help

from this journal six years ago ...

Adolescents in our poor urban areas can be an isolated group, deprived of supportive relationships with adults in their families, schools, communities, and work places. This deprivation can result in poor socialization to adult roles, as well as a paucity of contacts and networks needed for educational and career success. Recently, planned mentoring programs, which purposefully link youth with someone older and more experienced, have become a popular means of providing adolescents with compensatory adult contacts.

These planned mentoring programs for adolescents are, by definition, structured, and their goals can be complex, ambitious, and even grandiose — preventing students from becoming pregnant, dropping out of school, or going to jail; helping them make a successful transition from high school to college; or giving them some undefined but dramatically better chance at life. The mentoring programs vary widely in the duration, frequency and intensity of the planned relationship, and some use a single mentor for as many as fifteen or

twenty mentees. The recruited mentors rarely share the mentees' environment or have firsthand knowledge of their daily life at home or at school. Rather, they range from older, more academically successful students at the next educational stage, to mothers and grandmothers, to successful

businesspersons.

Obviously, the quality of mentoring relationships differs enormously, as do the tasks that mentors and mentees agree to accomplish. Nevertheless, it is important to set some boundaries to the phenomenon and to distinguish mentoring relationships from other

relationships that are simply a kind of help. The following definition should clarify some essential elements in mentoring relationships for youth:

A supportive relationship between a youth or young adult and someone more senior in age and experience, who offers support, guidance, and concrete assistance as the younger partner goes through a difficult period, enters a new area of experience, takes on an important task, or corrects an earlier problem.

The mentoring of disadvantaged youth

During mentoring, mentees identify with their mentors; as a result, they become more able to do for themselves what their mentors have done for them.

The roles of mentors

Mentors for adolescents must help compensate for inadequate or dysfunctional socialization or give psychological support for new attitudes and behaviors, at the same time as they create opportunities to move successfully in new arenas of education, work, and social life. In fact, mentoring can be said to include both psychosocial and instrumental aspects.

In their psychosocial roles, mentors act as role models and counselors, offering confirmation, clarification, and emotional support. Because poor and minority youth often move through contradictory worlds, an important psychosocial role for mentors is to help the mentee understand and resolve these contradictions. In their instrumental roles, mentors act as teachers, advisers, coaches, advocates, and dispensers and sharers of concrete resources. An adult who merely acts as a vague substitute for other missing adults, or who briefly helps with a school assignment or work connection, is not providing the sustained and directive support that is crucial to mentoring.

Salience and social distance

Although some of the most publicized forms of mentoring have been between

extremely prominent adults and ghetto youth, it is clear that successful mentoring generally occurs when the older individual is not removed from the mentee by a great social distance. This is because, with distance, the mentors' values, knowledge, skills and networks may easily seem irrelevant or even nonsensical to the mentees, and their goals for the mentee naive. When this happens, the adolescents will at best only superficially cooperate, and are likely to become cynical and withdraw. However, even apparent social distance can be breached when the mentors provide those concrete resources that the mentees most need. A mentor who drives the mentee to look at a prospective college, joins in studying the catalog, and helps with the application form is both offering important psychological support and showing that, through a series of small steps, distant goals may be within reach.

Matching mentors and mentees of the same social class, race and gender is not the only — or even the best — way to close social distance, and ensure a meaningful connection. Often, in fact, mentoring failures attributed to class, race or gender differences might more accurately be described as a failure to give teenagers the specific support or resources they need. When mentors offer their mentees sensitive support, timely contacts, and other appropriate resources, mentees generally find their mentors quite compatible.



Trust

A critical aspect of any developing mentor-mentee relationship is trust. As a first step, a mentor can build trust by helping the adolescent achieve a very modest goal. The mentor also needs to be personally predictable, and the mentoring program itself should be of some duration.

Disadvantaged mentees come to programs with high hopes, great suspicion — or, more likely, both. Their conflicts are only exacerbated by erratic adults, loosely organized programs, or abandoned initiatives. All these serve to destroy relationships and to harden mistrust.

Particularly in large, complex programs, it is important for building trust in the mentees that the roles of the mentor are openly articulated. Mentors can be free to use any style they want in working with the youth — and probably should — but within a clear arrangement about what the mentoring should achieve for the youth, both psychosocially and instrumentally.

Natural and planned mentoring

So far, there are insufficient studies of either the natural or planned mentoring of adolescents either to derive lessons about the differences between them, or to be clear about how best to structure planned mentoring. Drawing from natural and planned mentoring in organizations, we can assume that the bonds between natural mentors and mentees are stronger, because the two individuals have found each other, rather than having been assigned, and because their relationship proceeds fluidly over a long period, rather than being constrained by both program content and structure.

Some mentoring programs for youth appear so short and narrow in their goals that classical mentoring is unlikely to take place. It may be, in fact, too difficult to develop the strong ties of mentoring in some youth programs. However, some youth may be able to take advantage of the looser bonds of good planned programs, if they provide



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an extended network of social resources in which the adolescents can have access to ideas, influences, information, people, and other resources they might not receive through the stronger ties to one individual.

Realistic expectations for mentoring programs

Planned mentoring is a modest intervention: its power to substitute for missing adults in the lives of youth is limited. Nor can it compensate for years of poor schooling. Still, it can improve the social chances of adolescents by leading them to resources they might not have found on their own, and by providing them with support for new behaviors, attitudes, and ambitions. When planned mentoring is intensive and extended, it can offer the important help with solving the contradictions of moving into the mainstream society.

Unfortunately, while planned mentoring can increase the availability of adults to a greater number of adoles-

cents, it is unlikely to serve all who need it. Even should mentors be found for every young person, the youth must still make their ways to the mentoring programs, want to be helped, and find the support and resources of the mentors suited to their needs.

Nor can planned mentoring programs pluck adolescents out of poor homes, inadequate schools, or disruptive communities. Mentoring will always be effective only insofar as it accommodates, transforms, vitiates, or expands, the influences of family, school, community, or job. Thus the power of other influences in the lives of youth must be recognized in any attempt to reasonably measure the potential accomplishments of mentoring.

*This feature is an Eric Digest and is in the public domain. It is based on a study, **Youth Mentoring: Programs and Practices**, by Erwin Flaxman, Carol Ascher, and Charles Harrington.*

“This world demands the qualities of youth; not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the life of ease.”

— ? Robert F. Kennedy





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Action Transforms

Postcard from Leon Fulcher

**Papatuanuku Kokiri Marae
AUCKLAND**



Kia ora CYC-Net Friends! Last month we helped with the hosting of 41 travellers from Indiana, USA for the 2014 International Youth Worker Exchange visit to New Zealand and Australia – Journey Stop at the start of their *hiko*i at Papatuanuku Kokiri Marae in South Auckland.



Journey Bus Ride to Papatuanuku Kokiri Marae, Auckland

A coach collected the Journey Group and delivered them and their day bags to their first ever experience of living on an urban Maori living environment. Papatuanuku Marae operates as a pan-tribal gathering place for young people – *Rangatahi* – from South Auckland

promoting healthy, alcohol and drug-free living.



The Journey dialogue begins in the Whare at this Urban Marae

Papatuanuku – is the ancestral Earth Mother. Traditional horticultural practices are used in the growing of kumara, Maori potatoes and a range of market gardening activities to support young people and families needing support.

Following the formal *powhiri* in the meeting house, Journey participants learned that they were now *whanau* or family. Lunch, tea breaks, dinner and



Shared Dining at the Papatuanuku Marae Bistro

breakfast was supplied by the Papatuanuku Marae Bistro team who support young people through the completion of recognised catering qualifications.



Memorable Evening Session with Rangatahi

Our evening session included some amazing music performed by the young people of Papatuanuku Marae. The

American visitors commented on how the Marae seemed more tolerant of children, including young children. In their experience, people back home would have been very distracted by young children moving about and some would likely object about it.



Papatuanuku Marae is about Urban Mokopuna and Rangatahi

Marae sleeping arrangements in a traditional ancestral house or *whare tipuna* might have everyone sleeping in the same large room – symbolically the ancestral womb. As an urban marae, Papatuanuku Marae used a sleeping room for women and another for the men, but some slept outside on the porch.

The next day, I asked *whanau* how they rated the overnight snoring on a scale of 1-10. Qualitative results from the women's sleeping room ranged from 7 to 9.8! The men's room fared slightly better, with results ranging from 5-7.



The Start to a Journey Day with Tai Chi and Zumba

What child and youth care experiences have others had with communal living?



Even Papatuanuku Marae Gardners were amused!

After a 'challenging' first night of communal sleeping, Journey members were invited by the local *tohunga* to participate in a Tai Chi workout, finishing with 10 minutes of Zumba! All were filled with energy for the final session with Indigenous Film Maker Kararaina Rangihau for

an *Out-of-Focus* Workshop using iPhones to create short films based on family birth order. Papatuanuku Marae helped individual travellers become a *Hikoi Whanau* or Journey Family! What about joining the 2016 Youth Work Fellowship Journey to **Vienna 2016**!?



Kia Ora Te Whanau o Papatuanuku Marae nga Hikoi

... end notes



Being young

“When you’re young, you think everything you do is disposable. You move from now to now, crumpling time up in your hands, tossing it away. You’re your own speeding car. You think you can get rid of things, and people too — leave them behind. You don’t yet know about the habit they have, of coming back.

Time in dreams is frozen.
You can never get away
from where you’ve been.”

— Margaret Atwood,
The Blind Assassin

“At the age of six I wanted to be a cook. At seven I wanted to be Napoleon. And my ambition has been growing steadily ever since.”

— Salvador Dali

Stories

Stories you read when you're the right age never quite leave you. You may forget who wrote them or what the story was called. Sometimes you'll forget precisely what happened, but if a story touches you it will stay with you, haunting the places in your mind that you rarely ever visit.”

— Neil Gaiman,
M is for Magic

Said the little boy, “Sometimes I drop my spoon.”
Said the old man, “I do that too.”
The little boy whispered, “I wet my pants.”
“I do that too,” laughed the little old man.

Said the little boy, “I often cry.”
The old man nodded, “So do I!”
“But worst of all,” said the boy, “it seems Grown-ups don't pay attention to me.”
And he felt the warmth of a wrinkled old hand.
“I know what you mean,” said the little old man.”

— Shel Silverstein



A Plan

“What should young people do with their lives today? Many things, obviously. But the most daring thing is to create stable communities in which the terrible disease of loneliness can be cured.”

— Kurt Vonnegut

The person inside

“Anybody can look at a pretty girl and see a pretty girl. An artist can look at a pretty girl and see the old woman she will become. A better artist can look at an old woman and see the pretty girl that she used to be.

But a great artist—a master—and that is what Auguste Rodin was — can look at an old woman, portray her exactly as she is ... and force the viewer to see the pretty girl she used to be ... and more than that, he can make anyone with the sensitivity of an armadillo, or even you, see that this lovely young girl is still alive, not old and ugly at all, but simply prisoned inside her ruined body. He can make you feel the quiet, endless tragedy that there was never a girl born who ever grew older than eighteen in her heart ... no matter what the merciless hours have done to her. Look at her, Ben. Growing old doesn't matter to you and me; we were never meant to be admired — but it does to them.”

— Robert A. Heinlein



“There's nothing more contagious than the laughter of young children; it doesn't even have to matter what they're laughing about.”

— Criss Jami

“He stood at the window of the empty cafe and watched the activities in the square and he said that it was good that God kept the truths of life from the young as they were starting out or else they'd have no heart to start at all.”

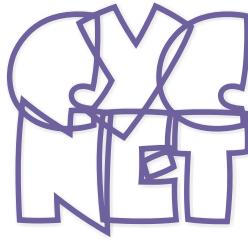
— Cormac McCarthy
All the Pretty Horses

“It's my duty as a human being to be pissed off”

— Eric Bogosian, *sUrbia ub*



Amazing how easy it is
to make a tiger happy!



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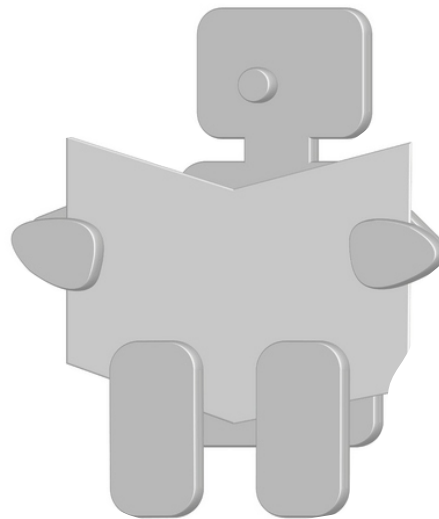
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