

CYC-Online

Online journal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)

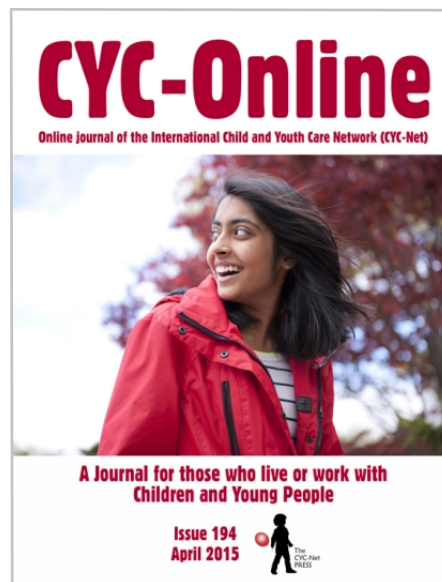


**A Journal for those who live or work with
Children and Young People**

**Issue 194
April 2015**



Contents



Editorial: Waiting with Hope	/ 3
CYC Education and the ‘Clinical’ Debate	/ 4
<i>Kiaras Gharabaghi</i>	
The Role of Intellectuals in CYC: Part IV	/ 8
<i>Hans Skott-Myhre</i>	
The Improvising Voice of Child and Youth Care	/ 14
<i>Wolfgang Yachon</i>	
Respect, Love, and System Change	/ 26
<i>James Freeman</i>	
At the Kitchen Table	/ 32
<i>Andy Leggett and Gena Morrow</i>	
I Can See Clearer Now: Hoping for Hope	/ 36
<i>John Digney and Maxwell Smart</i>	
An update on Threshold Concepts	/ 42
<i>Laura Steckley</i>	
Peer Assistance for Out-of- the-Mainstream Youth	/ 47
<i>Rey Carr</i>	
Rinse, Spin, and Die.	/ 54
<i>Nils Ling</i>	
Postcard from Leon Fulcher	/ 56
Endnotes	/ 60
Information.	/ 62



Waiting with Hope

Is that grass I see peeking out from under the snow? Is that the sidewalk? The roof? Water on the road instead of ice? Am I seeing signs of spring?

Whew! Yes! Finally!

It has been a long cold winter here in this corner of the world – every day the weather announcer seems to say ‘that’s about 8 or 10 degrees below our normal for this time of the year’. Ouch!

Waiting, that’s the name of the game at this time of the year – waiting for the snow to melt away, waiting for above 0 temperatures, waiting for the waters to thaw, waiting to be able to open the windows ... waiting for ‘better’.

It all starts out fine – fall comes and then winter with its wonderful white brightness, crisp days and even brilliant sunshine – then the waters freeze, people walk on the lakes, ski in the woods or down the mountain and all seems, well, lovely. But then the whole experience becomes a little too, well, long. Especially

when the winter starts to turn sour and messy as we thaw into spring.

Sometimes waiting for what you hope for can seem like a long process; a lifetime even. It can be painful.

Young people in care wait a lot.

They wait for someone to help them. They wait to go home. They wait for it to be over. They wait ... and wait.

I wonder what all that waiting does to a young person, especially when they have little ‘hope’ to assure them it will soon be over.

At least I, waiting for spring, know there is a cycle which will move it all along in a timely manner.

But what assurance do the young people have? And so how can we be helpful?

I guess we begin by realizing they are so often waiting, with so little hope, and we start from there.

Thom

CYC Education and the 'Clinical' Debate

Kiaras Gharabaghi

School of Child & Youth Care, Ryerson University

k.gharabaghi@ryerson.ca

Recently, a student in the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University posted a survey on the CYC-Net discussion forum seeking responses related to CYC practitioner experiences with vicarious trauma. Her survey caused somewhat of a stir in our community, largely because a well known CYC personality posted a critique of the survey itself, arguing that it reflects all that is wrong with CYC Education these days. In substance, there is much to be said for his argument. The survey, and the implied assumptions behind the survey, are reflective of a way of thinking about being with children and youth that mix child and youth care values with medical model thought in uneasy and at times contradictory ways. On the other hand, the survey was completed by a very large number of people from across our community, which may suggest that the topic itself is of interest to practitioners from many geographies.

All of this raises interesting questions

about CYC Education, and the priorities we set for the learning outcomes of our post-secondary education programs. Does the increasing presence, or perhaps the resurgence, of clinical thinking in CYC education programs present a problem for our field, or more importantly, for the way in which we are preparing our students to enter the field? Does this violate fundamental CYC values and practice approaches? Are we inadvertently promoting a 'clinicalized' model of child and youth care practice?

I suspect that the answers to these kinds of questions are at best speculative, and almost certainly will vary depending on the student. Nevertheless, we can at least contemplate the core priorities of a CYC Education at the post-secondary level, and then think about how the various approaches that are evident in our field in practice might be connected to these priorities.

In my view, the first priority, and per-

haps the one that more than any other will shape the contribution of graduates to our field, is to guide the development of the person. Objective (or objectified) knowledge itself at this stage of a CYC career is secondary to the concept of 'becoming'. Reflections on Self, on Being, on Becoming Present, and on Relational Practice are, I think, the cornerstone of the development of CYC students.

The process of becoming requires undoubtedly a critical approach to the 'truth', to scientific process, and to the categorization and quick solutions imposed on young people and their families. But it also requires a very high

level of interest in oneself, in how one is situated in the world, in the spaces that emerge between ourselves and others, and in how we engage those spaces, which are physical and metaphysical, and often relational, at the same time. Most students in my experience at least, are ill-equipped to embark on this journey of becoming; they are task-oriented, performance-seeking, and outcome-focused in their approach. This is reinforced by institutional structures (such as grading rubrics, course structures, program logic, etc.) as well as by societal, and often parental, expectations.

Breaking the longstanding training of students in the acts of conformity, compli-

ance and performance-seeking behavior is no easy task. At the very least, it requires us to create spaces of experimentation, relatively few rules, positive reinforcement, and encouragement for risk-taking, adventure-seeking, and exploration in all of its forms. These kinds of characteristics cannot emerge for students if we narrow the scope of what they can explore, or if we

hang on to our own power and influence in labeling what is right and what is wrong. Indeed, I would argue that learning (rather than being taught) is fundamentally connected to a process of self-determination.

A commitment to engage one's own process of becoming, and to engage a 'reflective way of being' is not easy to achieve. Sometimes, we can create the appearance of having achieved that by mixing the request for such a commitment with performance-based indicators, such as grades. This is oxymoronic at best, but more likely unethical. We are not good judges of the reflections of students. But we can be good supporters of that process. Students are influenced in their process of becoming by many factors, and reasonably, I think, by their ideas about careers, practical considerations, and the engagement of themes and topics that have the appearance of higher value (such as clinical processes and language).



Post-secondary education is asked to do a lot for students. Undoubtedly, the first goal is to help students become the best possible practitioners, ones who are informed by the fundamental values and principles of child and youth care practice. But our programs are asked to do more than that; they are asked to render students employable in systems that themselves are pressured to provide evidence of their effectiveness that corresponds very much to the clinicalized, medical model of practice. Questions in job interviews explicitly demand clinical responses: “What models of trauma-informed care are you familiar with?” “How do you promote healthy and secure attachment?” “How do you ensure fidelity with evidence-based practices”?



Moreover, our programs are asked to prepare students for graduate studies, where research skills and an understanding of multiple methodologies are an expectation.

In addition, once our students enter the workplace, some of the processes and supports they may have been taught to expect, such as supervision, won't be there, or will be there only in very inadequate ways. In other words, for the first few years of their careers, they will have to invent themselves, and determine who and how they are going to be amongst young people and their families. In that process, they will be informed first and foremost by

the culture and policies of whatever organization they are working in; most of the time, this will mean something other than child and youth care-informed practices.

So, what does this mean for our CYC education programs? In my view, the ideal response to the prevailing pressures would be to exit the system altogether; to reject the idea of courses, grades, prerequisites, literature reviews, and so on, and instead to focus on a holistic, intensive and very much relational model of becoming, not in the absence of evidence and research, but mediated through this process of becoming.

This, however, is not likely to happen any time soon. Institutional requirements are, if anything, tightening, and bureaucratic features of post-secondary education are strong as ever.

Therefore, I favour the alternative,

which is to expose students to what the dynamics of the field, including the pressures to work with evidence, clinical paradigms, and research methods, actually are. I think this is possible while still maintaining some degree of conscious and intentional becoming. What will be required, however, is an emphasis on engaging what might conflict with child and youth care principles on the surface, and to ensure that students are adventurous, curious and determined to find their own way and to question any and all 'truths'. This they will be best positioned to do if we support them in their research, in their explorations and in their forays into the

clinical abyss, so that we can have honest and meaningful conversations about what they can expect moving forward, and where the opportunities lie to re-shape systems and processes to reflect a greater focus on relational practice and a mitigation of the power dynamics embedded in clinicalized and medical models of practice.

I believe very strongly that there are things we don't want for our graduating students: We don't want them to feel excluded in conversations about evidence or in conversations that are clinically inspired because they don't know anything about it; we don't want them to experience child and youth care in isolation, because neither their psychology, social work or other-educated peers have any interest in what they are saying; we don't want them to look silly when making assertions about the value of child and youth care practice that they cannot back up with research. And we don't want them to NOT take initiatives that they believe to be meaningful for young people because when they did so in school, they got shot down and criticized.

One of my all time favourite child and youth care personalities coined the phrase "Don't let your kids be normal"; I would extend this slogan to CYC students as well. Inherent in this idea is that we value and support student development even when it deviates to whatever 'normalcy' we might impose. We should challenge, question and critique our students throughout their education journey, but always with unwavering kindness.

Always wanted to get your writing published but didn't know where to start, or who to go to?

We're here to help.



info@cycnetpress.cyc-net.org

VISIT OUR BOOK STORE AT
<http://cycnetpress.cyc-net.org>
ALL PROFITS GO DIRECTLY TO



The Role of Intellectuals in CYC: Part IV

Hans Skott-Myhre

Brock University

hskottmy@brocku.ca

In last month's column, on the role of intellectuals in CYC, I concluded by suggesting that there needed to be a public face to the theory and analysis being done by the organic intellectuals working in the field of child and youth studies/youth work. While I would argue that we have some excellent examples of precisely this phenomenon, in any issue of this on-line journal, our profile and impact in the world of broader media consumption about young people and their relationship with adults is small in comparison to other disciplines and practice orientations. Indeed, to engage any form of media, be it internet, television, radio, magazine or newspaper is to find commentators on young people whose orientation is directly in opposition to anything vaguely conceived of what we would term care or relationship.

The psychologists, psychiatrists and pundits in popular media, who comment on the lives of young people, couldn't be

farther afield from the thinking and writing of the organic intellectuals in CYC/YW. Given that we live in a media saturated age, this has significant implications for both how young people are seen and how they see themselves. It also has profound impacts on how line workers, as well as agency administrators and boards, see themselves in terms of the public's expectations of what they do.

The constant barrage of propaganda, masked as science, about young people has a greater influence than we think in the propagation of practice fads and short-term theoretical explanations for the behaviour of young people. Workers new to the field and unfamiliar with the intellectual traditions of CYC/YW arrive filled with media driven information and common sense about the work they are engaging. As these workers engage training or further education in our field, we find that we often have to overcome and wrestle with ideas, beliefs and practices derived

from the media. Regrettably, most of us as educators and field supervisors have little or no training in media literacy and critique.

To say that we have been outpaced and overshadowed by the public intellectuals of traditional psychology, psychiatry and social work is an understatement. I would argue that part of the reason we find ourselves continually borrowing from these disciplines is because their influence is all-pervasive. Their presence in the general field of discourse, that shapes our daily encounters with information through the media, overshadows the rich field of theory and knowledge being developed by our own organic intellectuals. The reason that we so often have to abandon what we have borrowed after a few years of use, or modify it to fit our needs in ways that make it almost unrecognizable, is that the information and practices we are adopting from these other disciplines are not derived organically from the work we do.

The work that we do is at the level of human relationship. It is done through encountering others with integrity and openness. This is hard, if not impossible, to make sense of at the level of generality required by the methods of science. While our work with young people may involve biology, neurology and genetics, it cannot be reduced or even directly correlated to any of these things. It can't be understood through statistical analysis of the general trends to be found in statistically significant samples of groups of young people, any more than it can be comprehended through generalized information about the

average size of the frontal lobe or certain levels of chemicals in the brain. Our work is done with idiosyncratic, unique young people and colleagues, not general populations of people.

To the degree that our understandings elide this crucial aspect of what we do, we no longer do CYC/YW but something else. Our colleagues from non-CYC disciplines, who derive their understandings of young people from objective scientific study, have a legitimate project. It is, however, different from the foundational elements upon which our field is founded. Their work is not founded in the organic messy entanglements of human relations as they are encountered on the work we do. Their public intellectuals are not representative of what CYC/YW produces itself. Perhaps, their work is useful in figuring out how to create shifts in people's biology, or discipline people in ways that are pleasing to the dominant cultural preferences of our time, but they have little to tell us about how to have a caring relationship with a particular young person, on a particular day, in a particular place, without worrying about whether anything else happens but having that moment together. That can't be quantified, generalized or experimentally reproduced. That encounter only happens once and then it is gone. What remains is unquantifiable, but I would argue, extremely powerful. Indeed, it is perhaps the most powerful thing that exists, in terms of how we shape the world in which we live.

In this respect, it is only the organic intellectual who comes from the world of



CYC/YW practice, who can bring a phenomenological understanding to thinking about what the encounter means and how we might adequately prepare ourselves, creatively and productively, to enter that moment. Let me be clear however, that the CYC/YW organic intellectual, just like the experts and authorities in other fields, cannot inform us about our work. They can only start conversations with those of us who do the work. They are not experts but provocateurs. Their job is not to elucidate the facts and truths about young people and ourselves, but to provoke and trouble us to think and talk to each other about what we do. Their function is not to provide us with information about what to do or how to do it, but to spark the kinds of new subjectivities and modes of consciousness that open onto organically derived practices unique to each encounter.

This function of the organic intellectual in our field creates a problem when it comes to the role of the public intellectual as it is generally practiced in relation to young people. Because we tend to align ourselves with other workers in the social sciences we often look for the examples of public intellectuals in that sphere. The media, however, is pretty selective about what kind of social-science-talking-heads make it into the mainstream. They are, as we have delineated above, typically experts or authorities who give us a range of truths about family's and young people's biology, development, neurology and so on. It seems unlikely that there would much room for a CYC/YW organic intellectual

regardless of university credentials to get much entre in the typical media environment. How then, might we get some leverage to tell our story about encountering young people? Where might we find our public intellectuals?

Perhaps, it is not as social scientists that we want to portray ourselves. Maybe there is another pathway to articulating our traditions, values and contributions. I recently heard an interview with the very public intellectual, Cornell West. Dr. West is a premier academic with ivy-league credentials and prestigious appointments at both Princeton and Harvard. His intellectual career had been in philosophy, but he has taken many public stands as an activist and outspoken critic of contemporary society. His profile in the media is quite high, but the roots of his public intellectualism are in his lived experience of struggle and oppression as an African-American living in the U.S. He is certainly, by the definition we have given thus far, an organic intellectual. I was struck by comments that he made in a television interview on the David Letterman Show. He said the following in relation to race, class and economic disparity:

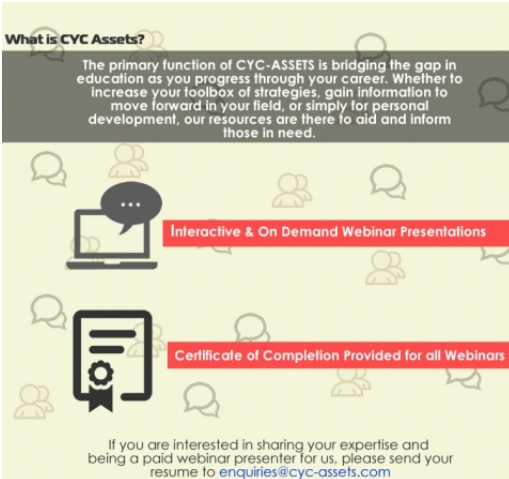
The point is – are you keeping track of those in the basement . . . If you look at the souls of our precious young folk – and you see it in Ferguson – you look at the souls of young black folk who are the leaders – they come from weaker families, feeble communities, a corporate media that is obsessed with titillating, stimulating. [The dominant society tells us that] to become human is to gain access

to power, to be well adjusted to injustice and well adapted to indifference – and you end up with a spiritual black out even though you've got big money because you have not developed the capacity for what John Coltrane called the Love Supreme, Do you know how to love? . . . We need love warriors. We are losing that among the young people in this generation and that's part of the challenge of teaching our young folks, that it is a question of not just understanding how to love, but that justice is what love looks like in public.

For me, these comments by Dr. West are far closer to the spirit of CYC than the traditional keynote psychologist, neurologist, behaviour analyst, advocate for professionalization or trauma specialist often found at our national and international conferences. Of course, some would say that such a perspective, that includes justice and love as public platform positions for CYC, is too radical. I would argue that they are at the heart of our work as relational care. In this regard we might note the legacy of Mark Krueger who often included art, music, poetry and philosophy as center points in his explications of what we do. Perhaps we should explore these domains as the explanatory frameworks that would allow us to find expression in the public sphere?

Krueger's focus on the everyday mundane practices that define CYC/YW as different from other disciplines and practices is again something we have failed, thus far, to deploy effectively in a way that

truly captures the imagination of the broader public and regrettably, I fear, the current generation of workers with their fondness for theories of attachment, trauma, dysfunction, boundaries and the like. Any perusal of the questions being asked on the CYC discussion list by students and practitioners will bring forth just such a catalogue. Perhaps we need to open ourselves to evocative organic intellectuals with an already existent international following who speak to the importance of the day to day such as Rosi Braidotti, Dr. Braidotti is an esteemed intellectual with impeccable credentials who comes organically to her work out her own struggle as a lesbian and woman in the male dominated discipline of philosophy. She recently gave a talk on Pussy Riot and punk and although her remarks are not directly about



What is CYC Assets?

The primary function of CYC-ASSETS is bridging the gap in education as you progress through your career. Whether to increase your toolbox of strategies, gain information to move forward in your field, or simply for personal development, our resources are there to aid and inform those in need.

Interactive & On Demand Webinar Presentations

Certificate of Completion Provided for all Webinars

If you are interested in sharing your expertise and being a paid webinar presenter for us, please send your resume to enquiries@cyc-assets.com



CYC-ASSETS

Child & Youth Care Resources for Professional & Personal Development

For More Information or to Register Today Visit:

www.cyc-assets.com



young people, I think we can hear resonances of what is core to our work.

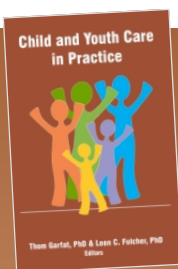
Feminist politics, for me, expresses the desire for transformation by taking as its starting point, the embodied, affective and relational structures of our subjectivity and our social relations. Embodied and embedded, affective and relational starting from the closest, the most intimate, (which is also the most political) opening up to broader issues: violence, freedom, poverty, dignity, radical democracy. This is what is at stake . . . the politics of everyday life is not to be taken for granted . . . [It is] something to be worked on . . . a sort of intimacy with the world.

This articulation of the day-to-day embodied, relational and sensate relationships we have with each other as a certain kind of intimacy with the world has deep resonance with the foundations of our

relational practice. The fact that this is

presented in a public forum to many people and reported in the media give us some idea of the ways that the work of our organic intellectuals could engage the realm of the public intellectual.

This is a crucial transition for us as a field of practice. We need to find our public voice in a way that speaks to what is unique in what we do and how we think but also as it connects to a broader discourse of material, emotional and sensate caring for young people and ourselves. This could be the role of the intellectual in CYC/YW. We don't need to import non-organic intellectuals from the outside. What we may need to do is to provide platforms for our own organic intellectuals, so they can assist us in explaining ourselves and what we do to the broader community as public intellectuals. To do this we would have to take ourselves seriously and that may be the biggest challenge of all.



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.

Softcover: \$25 Can

Orders: <http://cycnetpress.cyc-net.org> or www.transformation.com
Queries: info@transformation.com



From 2015

Relational
Child & Youth
Care
Practice

will become

Relational
Child & Youth
Care
Practice

That's right, we're not changing very much at all!

From 2015 RCYCP will be published through **The CYC-Net Press**, and will be moving from our traditional paper journal to a brand new **e-journal** format – delivered directly to your tablet, e-reader or desktop computer.

Visit <http://www.rcycp.com> today



The Improvising Voice of Child and Youth Care

Wolfgang Vachon

*In this, the fifth of six articles on improvisation in child and youth care, the author writes about **voice** in CYC practice.*

Introduction

This article is about voice in child and youth care (CYC). I will be writing about voice both materially and metaphorically, exploring and weaving the two ideas as they relate to CYC practice. We can think of voice in CYC as noun and verb, a thing that we use and an action we take. It is our responsibility as CYCs to listen, to speak effectively, and to ensure those we work with are given the means to express their voice (literally and metaphorically). This, of course, includes those who are deaf, don't speak, and otherwise communicate their voice other than through their vocal cords. In listening and fostering, we are also obliged to act upon what we hear. These ideas are fundamental to a strength-based, rights-focused, anti-oppressive, and relational CYC practice. Creating opportunities for others to express themselves, listening to what is expressed, and re-

sponding accordingly are likewise key components of improvisation.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articles 12 and 13 explicitly addresses the right for young person to have a voice. Article 12 states, in part, that States party to the convention will assure "...the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" (United Nations, 1990). And article 13(1), states "The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice." Expressing voice, through speaking, writing, drawing, performing or

otherwise, is a right for all children (for this convention a child is anyone under the age of 18), a right that should be honoured by all states who have signed the convention. As CYCs we are uniquely positioned to create opportunities for children, and youth, to express their voice. This can be difficult and scary. Difficult because we may not know how to do it and scary because it involves being conscious of our own power, and perhaps having that power challenged. When those we work with speak, sometimes what they say is not comfortable to hear.

Voice

In the introduction to *With Children and Youth*, Gharabaghi, Skott-Myhre, and Krueger (2014) recognize three dominant themes in current research and writing on child and youth care. They identify CYC practice as “relational and developmental”, as a way of “being in the world with youth”, and as “critical and postmodern” by which they mean “theories and practices (which) emphasize the political, anti-oppressive, liberatory (sic), and revolutionary capacities of the work of both young people and adults working towards common ends” (p. ix). All three of these involve voice as a central tenet. Speaking and sharing between “unique developing beings within and across social, political, organizational, and familial systems” (p.ix) is relational and developmental practice. Each party “brings self” when we work with children and youth. To bring self we must be willing to voice who we are, and

to be *with* we must listen to the other. Voice as advocacy, as a right, as something to proclaim, as something to foster and which challenges, is the essence of critical CYC practice. Voice in child and youth care is sharing a story at dinner, cheering at graduation, reading to a child, challenging punitive policies, singing around the campfire, crying with colleagues, confronting oppressive language, laughing at jokes, and advocating for those we work with. Voice includes quiet one-on-one moments between practitioner and young person, as well as being part of a global movement demanding the right of all children to be heard. Being conscious of our voice means being aware of our vocal qualities, and being aware of our power.

CYC practitioners have tremendous power in our interactions with children and youth. At the same time, there is a larger system limiting our power. In our role as an authority figure (working in a school, detention facility, group home, homeless shelter, etc.) we have the ability to make decisions, which can result in profound consequences. I used to work in a shelter for street-involved and homeless people. I had the authority to allow someone to come into the shelter, or not, the authority to remove someone from the shelter, and to prohibit people from returning for a set period of time. I could determine which section of the shelter people slept in, so, for instance, I could tell someone who identified as a woman that I did not think she “passed” and so had to sleep in the men’s dorm. It was an adult shelter, which was popular with young



people because there were fewer rules than at youth shelters. I could refuse admittance to someone under 21, for no reason other than their age, telling them they had to go to a youth shelter. We had rooms for couples, I could determine if someone had the privilege to sleep with their partner, or not. Most people who are working as a CYC can come up with a list of ways they have power over someone's life. At the same time CYCs must adhere to a larger structure. I recently facilitated a workshop on access to justice for system involved young people. A group of CYCs shared a policy in their workplace that exemplifies how structures can remove voice, and power, from both practitioners and young people. At their agency, if a resident kicked, punched, or threw something that put a hole in the wall, the requirement of the agency was to call the police and charge the young person with vandalism. The government that provided funding would release no money to pay for the repairs of the wall, if the young person was not charged.

In CYC practice we talk, and write, about "giving voice", "having a voice", "finding one's voice", "our voice", "diverse voices", "youth voice", "unique voice", etc. Many of us have also partaken in conversations, or heard our colleagues speak negatively about the voice of young people. Saying that young people are "being mouthy", "talking back", "talking shit", "talking trash", etc. This highlights a tension in much of our work; having young people with a voice is something most of us can support in theory, it can also be dif-

ficult in practice. We may not like what is being said. We may not agree with it. We might not want to hear it. This doesn't mean it's not relevant.

As the story above regarding "vandalism" illustrated, when thinking about voice in CYC practice, it is necessary to recognize there are diverse dialects being spoken. While we all ostensibly speak the same language of "what is needed/best/helpful" in this situation, frequently, we place the accent in different places. What is understood as "best available option" can be very different depending on one's standpoint. The young person who wants to stay at the adult shelter (because there is a greater sense of autonomy) is doing what they perceive as best for themselves. The municipal official that is identifying a lack of shelter beds available for adults and a surplus for youth is doing what they perceive as best for the system; ensure the maximum number of beds available for everyone. As an individual shelter worker, I must decide in that moment what "best" I will follow. Knowing that there will be consequences whichever choice I make.

Leon Fulcher has written, "at least 6 voices need to be heard and listened to in care work":

- (1) the voice of children and young people;
- (2) the voice of family members;
- (3) the voice of child welfare professionals;
- (4) the voice of media, policy makers and public opinion;
- (5) the voice of regulators and fiscal

managers; and
(6) the voice of research and scholarship
(Fulcher, 2006, para 2-3).

This list represents the diverse stakeholders in our work. Ignoring any of them puts those we work with, and ourselves, at risk. While the CYC practitioner, as a group, is included in “child welfare professionals”, I also want to explicitly name “you”, as the CYC working in a particular moment with a particular person. You must not lose your individual voice — your ability to speak. You may be the best amplifier for the young person’s voice; your authority may be what allows the young person to be heard. I have been working on a project with a youth legal aid clinic for the past two years. Every day they advocate for young people who come to them. The agency amplifies the ignored or denied voices of young people; people who are kicked out of their house and refused parental support (in Ontario, a parent must financially support a child until the age of 18, if they have the economic means), people who have been assaulted by the police, people who are being refused education, and endless other injustices. Without the lawyers speaking, the young people would not be heard. The lawyers have both the power and language to force people to listen. CYCs also have an obligation to know the law, develop the language to speak authoritatively, understand how their power can be an asset, and to work towards amplifying quiet or ignored voices.

Speaking and Silence

Talking is perhaps the skill new CYC practitioners rely upon the most when working with children, youth, and families. It seems to make sense, speaking being the most obvious way to communicate. While it may be the most obvious, it is not always the best. In theatre one will hear “show it, don’t say it”. This means don’t tell the audience what you are doing, thinking, or feeling, show them through your actions. Show it, don’t say it, echoes Henry Maier’s “doing is preferential to talking” (Maier, 2003). As Maier writes, “By actually starting to straighten out the child’s bed the counselor is likely be more effective in bringing the child to participate than if she insisted, ‘This bed must be remade!’ In re-making the bed together the two can join in mutual interaction that is positive and relationship building” (Maier, 2003, para. 3). Through participating we can communicate our desire to be in relationship with the young person. This communication can be more effective than talking. In an earlier article I wrote that some theatre practitioners use a 60/30/10 rule. The audience understands 60% of the character based upon how they move, 30% based upon vocal qualities, and only 10% based upon words spoken. It is likely that this idea comes from the work of Albert Mehrabian (1981) who proposed that when listening to a person we understand what they communicate based upon 7% words, 38% tone of voice, and 55% non-verbally. While we must first determine whether we need to say anything,



when we decide we do, we must pay attention to the 40-45% of our communication that is speaking.

Conversation is improvisation. Effective dialogue requires continuous attending, accepting and advancing. We are present with the person we're in dialogue with, we listen and reflect upon what they say and how it impacts us, we then respond, thereby furthering the conversation. As CYCs, the more prepared we are (physically, emotionally, and mentally) for the conversation the more effectively we will participate. Speaking is a physiological process. It begins with ideas forming in the mind, this creates an impulse from the motor cortex to speak, the impulse stimulates breath and the expelled breath connects with the vocal folds, creating vibrations that are amplified by resonators and sound is articulated through the lips and tongue to create words (Linklater, 2006). The words are then passed to the other person in the form of sound. For the listener, their brain receives the sounds, understands these sounds as words and then makes meaning from the concepts embedded within the words (Carter, 2009). After the meanings are processed, if appropriate, the listener then speaks. This is a complex process. The physical aspect of speaking is something that many actors spend years refining, how to increase the resonance, how to fill a room with their voice, how to develop a range in tone and volume. It is something that few CYC spend much time on. Although arguably, the words we say have far greater impact than most of those spoken on a stage.

Within this physical aspect of speaking are many places for one's voice as a CYC practitioner to be blocked. Before we have the impulse to speak, a thought to be communicated is required. In theatre this is called an "intention". Intention is also a well-understood concept in CYC practice; we do things for a reason and with a purpose. This thought, or intention, is based upon a multitude of factors. When discussing communication Stuart (2013) writes that "practitioners must have the skill to analyze their audience, identify what is required, and match the needs of the recipient(s) with the most appropriate means of communication in written, spoken, and visual messages" (pp119-120). All this happens before anything is said. We must analyze the person (or people) we are in conversation with, understand what their needs are, and then decide how we are going to communicate. It may well be, as suggested above by Maier, that doing something other than speaking is more effective.

Knowing whether or not to speak is something that is surprisingly difficult for many of us. Teaching an interviewing and counselling class, I spend a significant amount of time encouraging students to be silent, to not speak, to listen, to permit the other person time to think and process. I was recently sitting in a group for people with substance abuse issues. One woman was speaking, and as she was talking the rest of us were listening, not asking questions, just silently listening and supporting. After several minutes of talking this woman said "I've answered my own

question, I've figured it out by talking it out". For me this was such a powerful example of listening. The group created an opportunity for her to speak about the struggle she was having, surrounded by people who were supporting her and believing in her capacity to know her self. None of us needed to speak; we needed to provide an opportunity for her to speak. We needed to listen and witness.

Silence can be a frightening prospect for many practitioners. There may be a perception that if they are not speaking they are not doing. I understand silence as actively doing. In *A Youth Work Inquiry*, several practitioners write and analyze their own, and each others', practice. In a reflection written and interpreted by Molly Weingrod she considers the impact of silence in one of her interactions.

"On reflection, my silence had done two things for Angel. It allowed him to be angry. But I gave him space to be angry in, so that building vertically on itself, the anger could spread out everywhere and eventually be buried by stronger powers of time and space. Also, my silence allowed him to experience and feel something harmful and to share it with someone. By not saying anything, I was letting him know that it was OK with me that he was angry and that I wasn't going to try to change him." (Krueger, Evans, Korsmo, Stanley and Wilder, 2005, p.384)

Silence supports the other person; in the silence they are doing much (as are

we). They are thinking, feeling, and being. When speaking trumps silence it is frequently not for the benefit of the recipient but rather for the speaker. As Weingrod writes, about the above interaction, "There was something inside me fighting for silence. At that point, I realized nothing I said or asked would resolve anything for him. In this case, words would only soothe my discomfort with the situation." (Krueger et al. 2005, p. 384). When we break silence for *our* needs then we have not identified "what is required and match(ed) the needs of the recipient" (Stuart, 2013, p.119)

According to the renowned voice teacher Kristen Linklater, the first step in speaking involves an idea forming in our mind. From this idea, the motor cortex creates an impulse to speak. What happens in the mind of the practitioner motivates what s/he will do. If, as I sit in silence, I think "oh no, I don't know what to say", I am at risk of impulsively saying something, *anything*, in an attempt to mask my unease. This impulse to talk is motivated by an emotional reaction from the speaker, not, as Stuart recommends, an analysis and identification of what the other person needs. It is without intentionality. A great many ideas float through our heads as we sit and listen, not all focused on the other person. Over time, I've discovered it is much more effective for me, in moments when I am unsure of what to say, to remain in silence. Or, if I determine it is important *for the other person* that I say something, I respond with, "I'm trying to think of what will be most



helpful to you right now” or something similar. I’ve found, the more confident I become in speaking, the less I need to speak.

Speaking and Self

Much has been written about self in CYC practice (Ricks, 1989, Gharabaghi 2011, Stuart 2013). As Burns (2012) states “The Self is the interpreter of reality, and you, like the rest of us, interpret reality differently. This understanding or knowing is based on complex variables, which include, but is not limited to, our personal experiences, our physical and intellectual limitations and potentialities, and our state of mind in the moment” (p.9). Our self is what determines how we hear things, how we analyze things and how we “identify what is required, and match the needs of the recipient”. All of these aspects of self influence that impulse from the motor cortex, and inform what we say and how we say it. Our voice is the channel into, and from, many of these complex variables. “As we open our mouths to let sound and words pour forth, we frequently reveal the deepest parts of ourselves” (Rodenburg, 1992, p. x). Voice is connected to gender, race, economics, privilege and other aspects of social location that we inhabit, and enter, as practitioners. Speaking is related to the essence of who many of us are. This can be a scary prospect. What will I divulge when I speak? Will I show my fear, my doubt, my insecurities, my education, my class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, country of origin, or something else I am not even aware of? This is relevant and im-

portant for CYCs to consider as they work on becoming competent practitioners. Speaking is an act of revealing. Accents, mispronunciation, and vocal acoustics can all feel like an exposure. They may reveal our own doubt, limitations and lack of confidence; they may reveal our self.

The voice coach Cicely Berry (1976) writes that the development of voice goes through stages during the training process. The first stage involves being able to relax, have command of the breath, and to develop tongue and lips muscularity. This develops freedom and power in the voice. The second stage is applying this freedom and power. It is during this second stage that the many tensions and limitations become apparent. “Tensions and limitations always come from a lack of trust in yourself: either you are over anxious to communicate or to present an image, or you want to convince an audience of something about yourself” (Berry, 1976, p. 12). We disclose, and hide, a great deal in how we speak. Every semester, in the interviewing and counselling course I teach mentioned above, students write about their lack of confidence and how this shows up in their speaking. They use “filler words” such as “um”, “ah”, “so”, etc. They speak quietly, they put their hands over their mouths as they talk, or do any number of other things, which, rather than mask their lack of confidence, serves to amplify it.

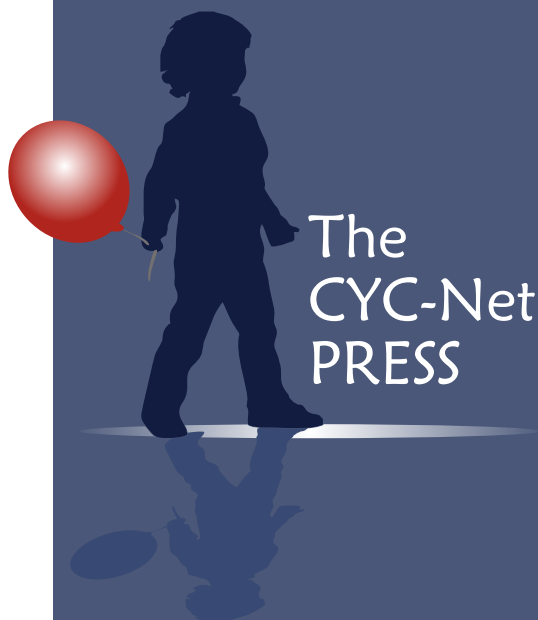
Speaking, of course, is equally revealing for those we work with. To speak is to take a risk. Parents and other caregivers

can lose their housing, families, and freedom based upon what they say. Youth may go to jail. Children can be removed from their homes. Students expelled, bullied, mocked, or failed.

There are also many flash judgments made as soon as we hear someone's voice. Over the past several decades a large body of literature from diverse disciplines has argued that people have "implicit bias" (Boyson, 2010; Holroyd, 2012; Staats, 2014). "Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control" (Staats, 2014, p. 16). Speaking can lead to implicit bias. It can, of course, also lead to explicit bias. There are many examples of bias related to voice, for example age, accents, lisps, dysfluency (stuttering), etc.

Two examples of identify, related to voice, are "gay voice" and slang. Gay voice is a term given to ways of speaking that people perceive as being associated with gay males. Both gay voice and slang can lead to exclusion, one (potentially) marks the speaker for exclusion (gay voice), and the other (potentially) marks the listener (slang). People make assumptions about an individual's sexual orientation based upon their voice (Smyth, Jacobs & Rogers, 2003). "They sound gay" is not an uncommon thought people have had upon hearing particular speech acoustics. For children and adolescents, assumptions made by

Child & Youth Care publishing
simplified



Visit our Book Store at

<http://cycnetpress.cyc-net.org>



others about sexual orientation based upon voice can be particularly difficult. Significant numbers, up to 80% according to Kosciw (2004) of young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans* (LGBT*) face verbal, sexual or physical harassment or other forms of bullying in schools (Craig, Tucker & Wagner 2008). Having what is perceived as a gay voice can lead to stigma, silencing, and violence. Service providers, of course, also hear gay voice, with all the cultural and personal (explicit and implicit) biases that come along with the awareness. While speaking can be a source of stigma and shame, it can also lead to community. For some people who identify as LGBT*Q, they may use voice, and other cues (what is often referred to as “gaydar”), to identify potential allies, friends, or partners (Valentova & Havlíček 2013). For CYC practitioners who also have a gay voice, this may “out them” (to youth, families and colleagues), regardless of their actual sexual orientation or identification. Gay voice suggests something about the speaker, irrespective of their actions or identity. As practitioners we need to be conscious of our biases (favorable or unfavorable) when we hear a particular type of voice. For many, gay voice is not something they consciously choose (indeed there is a whole industry to change peoples voices to sound “less gay”), for others it may be a way of explicitly signifying identity.

Slang is always about signifying identity. Speaking slang demarcates those who are part of, and apart from. Slang also considers, critiques and challenges the structures

that are created to enforce norms. “Slang words are coined by teens typically to gain control of the social world which they inhabit and, thus, to evaluate the world around them, *on their own terms*.” (Italics in original, Danesi, 2010, p, 509.) This desire for control can be particularly important for those involved in the social service system, whose lives may be even more out of their own control than other adolescents. It is important to recognize that speaking slang serves multiple purposes. For CYCs, slang can be difficult to navigate. Language seems to change on a monthly basis, and it changes to remind adults that we are not part of, that we are outside. Young people that I work with, have asked me countless times to “speak like I speak” or “speak like you’re trying to be cool/hip/down”. Which, when I do (or try to) frequently brings great joy and laughter to the listeners. I think this offer “to speak like you’re trying...” serves several functions. It is a reminder to me that I am not part of; at the same time, it is also an invitation to remain connected. The invitation, and my attempt, allows for exclusion and inclusion simultaneously. There is permission to laugh *at* me — to laugh at “the system” (represented through me) which seeks to control the young person. In asking me to speak slang there is also the question “can you navigate *our* world?” And, as I show my ineptitude to navigate, to speak their language, there is recognition that navigating foreign worlds (as they must do when they enter the system) is difficult. If one does not speak the language, it is hard to understand and communicate. The invita-

tion to speak slang, asks for acceptance and forgiveness of young peoples' challenges when I (as the CYC) ask them to navigate "our" world (the system they have entered).

CYC practice too, of course, is full of language that can seem inaccessible, incomprehensible and designed to exclude. Exclusionary language in professional contexts, lacking much of poetry and creativity of slang, is called jargon (Danesi, 2010). The words we speak must be clear and accessible.

Speaking as a CYC

What is "good" speaking in CYC practice? Gharabaghi gives us some direction though reflecting upon what he sees in fourth year students as a teacher in a Bachelor CYC program. "Many students demonstrate limited skills in terms of becoming present. By this I mean that they lack confidence in their posture and their communication strategies, they struggle to speak persuasively, and they are challenged to adapt their language, their tone, their voice and their force to diverse contexts" (Gharabaghi, 2013, p. 15).

Good speaking in child and youth care involves confidence, persuasiveness, a command of tone, effective use of language, and adaptability to diverse contexts. Effective speaking starts with intentionality, a conscious thought and a reason to speak. To speak effectively we must have control of our breath, clear thoughts that we want to communicate, and then connect those thoughts to our breath. I do a breathing

activity in an intervention class for first semester CYC students. I have everyone stand up breath very rapidly for 20 seconds (I have them hold onto a chair or table while they do this due to possible dizziness). After they complete this, I have them sit down and take three slow deep breaths, at their own pace. I then ask about the difference in how they feel with each way of breathing. During the first one most identify feeling anxious, confused, scared, dizzy, and related states. In the second one they feel calm, grounded, centered, focused, etc. I then ask which one they think is preferable when talking to a young person.

Breathing rapidly and shallow makes it difficult to speak. Sometimes when talking to someone, I become excited (or worried, confused, angry, etc.). These emotions can cause me to speed up, mix, stutter, and/or jumble my words, resulting in ineffective speaking. In these moments I've learned to stop what I'm saying, take a breath; gather my thoughts, and then slowly say what it is I want to communicate. It is amazing to me how quickly, taking a single deep breath can completely change my speaking and thinking.

Becoming aware of our speaking brings a consciousness to how we interact with others. When do we speed up our speaking? When do we breathe deeply? When are we in a natural pitch? How clearly are we articulating? This consciousness is an opportunity. I remember when I started to work a lot with trans* identified people. I learned to ask people what their preferred gender pronoun was, rather than just as-



suming that a particular person used “she” or “he”. I then had to consciously stop and think about the preferred pronoun before I spoke with or about that individual. This forced me to stop and think about the person, to be aware of whom the person is, to be present. I’ve come to really appreciate this awareness. To think about whom I’m speaking with. Before I speak, in any context, I need to think.

There are things we can do to take care of our voice, so that it is available to us when we need it. The following suggestions on vocal health all come from Boone (1997).

- Don’t yell
- Minimize throat-clearing and coughing
- Use a pitch that is natural for you
- Focus your voice on the top of your tongue, in the middle of your mouth (rather than your throat or nose)
- Pause to renew your breath
- Don’t do all the talking (reduce the demands on your voice)
- Watch the noise levels and avoid talking in loud settings
- Avoid smoking and excessive use of alcohol
- Keep hydrated and humidify.

As I type this list I am struck by how many of these are sound CYC practices. Pause, don’t yell, don’t do all the talking, watch the noise levels, speak in a way that is natural to you (Boone writes about pitch but it applies to many areas such as jargon and accents), and focus your voice (what you are saying and how you say it).

Conclusion

Voice is listening, speaking, and acting. If we think of the speaking process in reverse we can understand it as a map. The words we hear spoken have gone through a long process. Following them back into the mind of the speaker allows us access to the thoughts that formed the words. Words are spoken for a reason. All words, and actions, have an intention behind them. While not always easy to understand, something is being communicated with everything being said. Through our listening to the words, to what is (and is not) said, we can learn a great deal about the speaker; what they want and what they need. This is our responsibility as CYCs, to understand the speaker and to respond accordingly. It’s a right for young people to have the means to express their voice and it is our duty as CYCs to listen to that voice. We must also strive to communicate clearly. Speaking is one of the most used tools in CYC practice. We spend a great deal of time speaking. We also need also spend a great deal of time ensuring that when we do speak, we understand our voice.

References

- Berry, C. (1976). *Voice and the Actor*. London: Harrap.
- Boone, D. R. (1997). *Is Your Voice Telling On You? How to Find and Use Your Natural Voice*. San Diego, USA: Singular Publishing Group, Inc.

- Boyson, G. A. (2010). Integrating implicit bias into counselor education. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 49(4), 210-227.
- Carter, R. (2009). *The Human Brain Book: An Illustrated Guide to its Structure, Function, and Disorders*. New York: DK Publishing.
- Craig, S. L., Tucker, E. W., and Wagner, E. F. (2008) Empowering lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth: lessons learned from a safe schools summit, *Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services*, 20(3), 237-252.
- Danesi, M. (2010). The forms and functions of slang. *Semiotica*, 182(1), 507–517. doi 10.1515/semi.2010.069
- Gharabaghi, K. (2008). Mr. Self comes home. *CYC-Online* (111).
- Gharabaghi, K. (2013). Re-thinking child and youth care education. *CYC-Online* (172), 13-18.
- Gharabaghi, K., Skott-Myhre, H., and Krueger, M. (2014). *With Children and Youth: Emerging Theories and Practices in Child and Youth Care*. Waterloo, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.
- Holroyd, J. (2012). Responsibility for implicit bias. *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 47(3), 274-306.
- Maier, H. (2003). Why doing is preferential to talking. *CYC-Online* (54). Retrieved from <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0703-maier.html>
- Mehrabian, A. (1981). *Silent messages: Implicit communication of emotions and attitudes*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth
- Krueger, M., Evans, A., Korsmo, J., Stanley, J., and Wilder, Q. (2005) A Youth Work Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(3), 369-389 doi: 10.1177/1077800405275058
- Linklater, K. (2006). *Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language*. Hollywood, CA.: Drama Publishers
- Ricks, F (1989) Self-Awareness Model for Training and Application in Child and Youth Care. *Journal of Child and Youth Care*, 4(1), 33-41.
- Rodenburg, P. (1992). *The Right to Speak: Working with the Voice*. New York: Routledge
- Smyth, R., Jacobs, G., and Rogers, H. (2003). Male voices and perceived sexual orientation: An experimental and theoretical approach. *Language in Society*, 32, 329–350. doi: 10.1017/S0047404503323024
- Staats, C. (2014). State of the Science: Implicit Bias Review 2014. Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Ohio State University. Retrieved from <http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/2014-implicit-bias.pdf>
- United Nations (1990). Convention on the Rights of The Child. Retrieved from: <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>
- Valentova J. V., Havlíček J. (2013) Perceived sexual orientation based on vocal and facial stimuli is linked to self-rated sexual orientation in czech men. *PLoS ONE* 8(12). doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0082417
- Yi, H-G., Smiljanic, R., and Chandrasekaran, B. (2014). The neural processing of foreign accented speech and its relationship to listener bias. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 8, 1-12. doi: 10.3389/fnhum.2014.00768



Respect, Love, and System Change

James Freeman

Abstract

Child and youth care practitioners are uniquely positioned to influence change across systems and organizations. Awareness of basic organizational development strategies can help child and youth care practitioners who work within complex situations and systems. This article explores the value of the young person and selected organization development concepts to equip child and youth care practitioners in supporting and leading system change efforts.

Keywords

Child and youth care, human dignity, organizational change, system intervention

Organizations and the systems they are a part of have the power to do good and the potential to coerce or exploit those with whom we work. This exists even in systems with the best intending objectives and leaders. Child and youth care practitioners with both formal and informal leadership influence have the opportunity to bring together values of relational care and management strategies to guide improvements in care and supports for young people and their families.

The inherent value of the young person

When thinking about change at the organization and system level, we first ground ourselves in the idea of the inherent value of each person. Young people and their family members are not clients, projects, or assignments. We are not institutions serving the institutionalized. Young people and their families are human beings with whom we are privileged to share a connection. Sometimes for a moment; sometimes more. The primary motivating factor for being in the work of child and youth care is the worth and value of the young people and what they bring into our world.

Being with them in a way that respects and helps people recognize their value is a key task in child and youth care. Among our varied responsibilities and expectations “the child and youth care practitioner’s primary project is to encourage young people to explore their own experience, to recognize their potentials, and to know that they have the internal resources to be fully alive, to be who they really are” (Fewster, 2001, p. 163). At times the demands of the day may distract us from this simple mission yet the effort to maintain focus is well worth it.

It is this human dignity and worth The Band Perry mourns in its lament over a young person whose life is lost too soon:

*If I die young, bury me in satin
Lay me down on a bed of roses
Sink me in the river at dawn*

*Send me away with the words of a love song
The sharp knife of a short life.*
(Perry, 2010)

There are a variety of words we use to express the value of an individual. Respect comes from the Latin root meaning to hold someone in special regard. We get the word spectacle from the same root which reminds us of something worth a second look or closer examination. We also have the idea of dignity which comes from the Latin meaning of worth. Every person has an inherent worth as a human being. Another concept important to our relational approach is love. Love comes from Germanic or Middle English roots and encompasses the idea of approving, cherishing and delighting in someone.

Regardless of the words we use “a basic yet often ignored premise of working with people is that every person hungers to be treated with value.” (Alderson & McDonnell, 1994, xv). Child and youth care practitioners are uniquely positioned to be leaders in setting an example of treating others with value.

Adapting systems to better serve young people

With this foundation of respect, dignity, and love we can begin to look at intervening with the systems in which we connect with young people.

The process of change is primarily internal and highly relational. We must be careful to work with young people rather

than impose agendas or interventions on them. At the same time most of us find ourselves working alongside young people within various systems, perhaps in systems of mental health, juvenile justice, school boards or child welfare. Young people are significantly affected by these systems.

We can and should intervene in these systems to change, adapt or improve their capacity to meet responsively the needs of others. It’s clear that “to significantly influence the quality of human services delivered to children requires a comprehensive ecological approach that can influence each of the environmental systems that impinge on children and affect their lives” (VanderVen, 2006, p. 254). The system exists for the people, not the people for the system, so we intervene to change and improve the system. Systems



on-site
**professional
development**

Meet at Casa Pacifica trainer at an upcoming conference or event

- Savannah, Georgia | April 14-17
American Association of Children's Residential Centers
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin | April 29 & 30
Wisconsin Association of Child and Youth Care Professionals
- Central Eastern Ontario | May 6-7
Caring Connections Gathering


CASA PACIFICA
CENTERS FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Providing Hope + Help

www.casapacifica.org/training

Casa Pacifica is a proud supporter of CYC-Net and encourages everyone to support this vital resource to our field.



thinking, organizational frames, and implementation science are three ways of examining and intervening in meaningful organizational and system-level change.

Systems thinking

Systems thinking involves a focus on the system as a whole and the interactions of the various parts that make up the system. Systems thinking integrates the disciplines of personal mastery, mental models (perhaps better expressed as 'the ways in which we interpret our world'), building shared vision, and team learning (Senge, 2006). Rather than focusing on functions as isolated or strictly linear, systems thinking considers how change in one part affects the system as a whole.

We see the lack of systems thinking, for example, when a legislative act is passed without input from young people or when a sex trafficker or pimp is arrested and no support is provided to the young people who were being exploited and abused. When we hear of someone 'falling through the cracks' it may be a failure of someone thinking systemically in their practice. In our work across practice settings and other professions, we are often best situated to promote and raise awareness of the impact of decisions and interventions on the system as a whole.

Organizational frames

The idea of building shared vision involves "unearthing shared pictures of the future that foster genuine commitment

and enrolment rather than compliance." (Senge, 2006, p. 9). Effective leaders aim to be present in the moment and yet create a vision of hope and future potential. Frames are ways of thinking about how we interpret or intervene within a system or organization. Four specific frameworks include: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic (Bolman & Deal, 2008). They serve as both a window (allowing us to see) and a guide (helping us share our message and actions).

Each of the four frames helps us begin see things in new ways. The structure frame focuses on how the people within a system are organized and the supports they have to accomplish their work (e.g. work schedules, staffing plans, administration). The human frame focuses on themes such as the meeting of individual needs, use of strengths, and group dynamics. The political frame addresses the use of power, conflict, and alliances. The symbolic frame focuses on the growth and shaping of organizational culture primarily in the rituals, customs, and story of the organization.

A child and youth care association, for example, can be examined through the structural frame (e.g. membership), human frame (e.g. who is represented, unique skills we bring), political frame (e.g. united voice, legislative influence), and symbolic frame (e.g. history and representation of the field, our ways of being together).

They are like four different lenses we can put on or take off to look at problems and opportunities through multiple perspectives. Using the four together helps us in maintaining flexibility and avoiding rigid

or reactive management and planning decisions.

Implementation science

Understanding and awareness of opportunity to improve organizations and systems is not enough — we must also know how to implement ideas within the organization. Too often we hear of a program that was well designed and valued, but failed in execution. Or of a needed group or service that closed because it couldn't adapt to changing political or funding environments. What is needed is the ability of the organization to adapt or change. Readiness to change and the process of organizational change are important factors. Understanding the drivers that contribute to the process help us assess and determine next steps along the way.

There are three primary drivers in the implementation process: competencies, organization, and leadership (Fixsen, Blase, Naoom & Duda, 2015). Competency is related to the knowledge and skills needed to carry out work (e.g. training and development of workers). Organization (or structure) is related to design and administrative functions that create the surroundings or conditions for the work to be carried out. Leadership is related to the direction, decisions, and supports that guide and direct the competency and structural elements.

Consider, for example, a school and residential program that has used physical restraint for over a decade. Its use was in-

grained in the daily functions of the program and when a young person attempted to act outwardly with aggression or violence the workers were trained to manage the risk through physical intervention. This response, however, did not help the young person or respect their dignity and worth. So what was needed was a system intervention.

Now think of the implementation drivers. Leadership creates a compelling new vision for workers — new ways of being, interpreting, and doing (Freeman & Garfat, 2014). New competencies are trained including prevention strategies and how to communicate in moments of stress in a respectful and effective manner. New structures are put in place such as revising documentation systems and changing of responsibilities from reactive to more proactive practices. Awareness of the three primary drivers helps support a sustainable change in such a circumstance. And the more the that drivers work together — and even compensate for areas of weakness in one another — the more likely the change is to be sustainable (Fixsen, Blase, Naoom & Duda, 2015).

Relevance to your sphere of influence

Whether you may be introducing a new creative arts program in a school, expanding access to a drop in center or shelter, or renewing a degree program within a university, these frameworks and strategies can help.

Human interaction is the context for meaningful and lasting support or change.



Organizations and systems are used well when they facilitate such relational exchange. Grounded in a relational approach of working together these frameworks prepare us to lead change and reform where it is most needed.

It is no longer adequate for [organizations] to deal solely with the economic issues of the pocket book. Priority must also be given to the non-economic issues of the heart. The blending of the two needs will truly produce a world-class cadre of people ready to take on the challenge of [today's world]. How does [an influencer] address the non-economic issues of the heart? By developing a style of working with people that builds relationships ... by getting close enough to people to bestow value upon — to truly affirm, appreciate, and recognize them. This style of living and leading results in reconciliation ... growth, dignity, and mutual benefit to both parties. It only makes sense that in the stress and pressure of the world today, greater progress can be made [in an] atmosphere of reconciliation where all parties work together for the mutual benefit of all.

— (Alderson & McDonnell, 1994, xv)

The process is neither simple nor easy. Obviously larger and more established systems are more difficult to shift and change. Balancing the respect, dignity, and love of each young person while relentlessly challenging and renewing systems to better work with them is a responsibility of all of us in child and youth care.

References

- Alderson, W. & McDonnell, N. (1994). *Theory management*. Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN. Retrieved from <http://www.valueoftheperson.com/monthlyminder.html>
- Bowlman, L. & Deal, T. (2008). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice and leadership*. Hoboken, NJ: Jossey-Bass.
- Fewster, G. (2001). The road less traveled: A philosophical stroll through child and youth care. *Journal of Child and Youth Care*, 15(4), 155-176.
- Freeman, J. & Garfat, T. (2014). Being, interpreting, doing: A framework for organizing the characteristics of a relational child and youth care approach. *Child & Youth Care Online*, 179, 23-27.
- Fixsen, D., Blase, K., Naoom, S. & Duda, M. (2015). *Implementation drivers: Assessing best practices*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina.
- Perry, K. (2010). If I die young. On *The Band Perry* [album]. Nashville, TN: Republic Nashville.
- Senge, P. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Vandervan, K. (2006). Patterns of career development in child and youth care. In L. Fulcher & F. Ainsworth (Eds.), *Group care practice with children and young people revisited* (231-257). New York, NY: Hayworth Press.

JAMES FREEMAN will be connecting with CYC's at the Caring Connections Gathering in Ontario, Canada in May and facilitating a session on organizational shifts.

Visit <https://cycnowceo.wordpress.com> for details.



What have I been missing?

Twelve years of *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice* have passed since the change from the *Journal of Child and Youth Care* in Volume 16.
 12 VOLUMES, 48 ISSUES! Enquire at rcycp@cvcnetpress.cvc-net.org for back issues or subscriptions. Full details at www.rcycp.com

Relational
Child & Youth
Care
 Practice



At the Kitchen Table

Andy Leggett and Gena Morrow

My name is Andy Leggett and I have had the distinct honour of working with Foster Parents since the early nineties (no, Virginia, not the 1890's ... although some days and some of the best work with children and youth that I have had the pleasure of being involved with has been done by them. There is one fact I have learned about foster parents in my almost 25 years of hanging out with them that rings true with every one that I have ever met ... They are all, to one degree or another, certifiably mad 😊

Who else would welcome these broken, traumatised, aggressive, button-pushing, heart-rending, profanity spewing, pulsating bundles of anger and pain into their homes... and I 'm just talking about the workers!

Foster parents have become my friends,

neighbours, colleagues, teachers, mentors, heroes — they are what I would most like to be like when I grow up.

Foster parents have the best banana bread, best home-made soup, best “ouwey” remedies, and best equipped purses — well ... they are not usually purses — I have seen cargo planes with smaller storage place!

And their families never fail to amaze me with their ability, together, to welcome the seemingly “unwelcomeable”, to accept the seemingly unacceptable, and to help heal the seemingly unhealable.

And they all have amazing stories to tell!

This new column, overseen by myself and foster parent extraordinaire Gena Morrow, will bring these stories to life. It will be a forum for foster parents to tell

their tales of triumph, battles, patience, humour, pride, heartbreak, and most importantly, love.

So stay tuned. I have been sitting at their kitchen tables, or around their coffee tables, or on their back decks, or in their vans for years listening spellbound ...

If you haven't had the pleasure yet, here is your chance!

Gena ... over to you.

Hi. My name is Gena. I'm a Foster Parent.

I was born in Ottawa, lived as a preschooler in Montreal, moved to Harvard, Massachusetts to get away from the FLQ crisis, went to Guelph after high school, then moved to Manitoba two years later, then lived in 6 different areas of Lanark County in Ontario before we bought the farm and I became "planted".

My husband Tony was born, raised and always lived in a 20km area around Almonte, Ontario. I have 3 bio kids, 2 step kids, raised 2 kin kids (so far...) and somewhere around 60 foster kids. The shortest stay was 1 hour, the longest 10 years and counting. We had 7 teen kids at our high school at one time.

Our house is huge, with 11 bedrooms as of today's count.

We have an "open house" every Sunday afternoon where anyone is welcome ... friends, family, both ours and the foster kids, strangers, and especially former foster kids. We always have homemade cinnamon rolls. We raise as much of our

own food as we can each year and harvest wild food as well. We have milked dairy cows and goats and made our own butter and cheese. Over the years we have raised horses, cattle, emus, geese, ducks, chickens, quail, peacocks, rabbits, dogs, cats, pheasants, goats, sheep, and a donkey.

We are easily bored and always looking for stuff to do (no great surprise there!) We travel as much as possible with the kids, often with another foster family.

My mom recently confessed that she believed I had taken on too much and it wouldn't be manageable, but now 20+ years later she figures I can do this!

Next month we will start sharing our experiences in Fostering, and we would love to hear your stories – stories of the experience of fostering wherever you live, in whatever corner of your country. You can send them to us here

gena_morrow@yahoo.ca. But for this month let me offer you these reflections:

Beginnings

I have been fostering for more than 20 years and recently sat in on a P.R.I.D.E. course for prospective foster and adoptive parents (P.R.I.D.E. is an orientation and training programme for potential Foster Parents). It got me thinking about beginnings. The mindset of the participants was so hopeful and so sure ... and so naive! Perhaps my mindset was careful, grounded and ever so slightly jaded. I remember starting to foster so many years ago. I had befriended many street kids during my university years, and had shared my



apartment with them. I fed them and provided shelter, and we learned from each other as peers. There were boundaries but no bosses. Several years and three children later, my first foster child, a teen girl, came to live with me.

My world had changed significantly since my street kid years, and I had to learn a new role. My responsibilities were rather different from that of a student or peer, but there was virtually no orientation or training for fostering twenty-odd years ago. I was parenting preschoolers, but had never parented teens. She was twelve years younger than I was, and her history was far removed from my idyllic one. In a way, we evolved a peer relationship, because of our ages, and sometimes we would sit up late into the night, talking. But she rarely went to school, and sometimes ran away, and I needed to manage that as well. Ok, actually, I had to learn to quit believing her tales of days spent at school, and speak to her teachers. She had not attended in three months. Though, apparently, when she walked in the door after having disappeared for several days, and I just said “hi”, it was just the right response to convince her that I was accepting and kind, someone she could trust.

Over the years I have learned how to navigate the child welfare system, to get

what was needed for my kids. I have learned how to “climb the ladder” to advocate strongly, to speak out effectively, and how to be an effective member of a team. I have learned how to sublimate my own grief, outrage and pain to become a “parent therapist”. And I learned how to hear story after story from my kids, of hurt, betrayal and injustice, and to walk



with them through their confusion and raging emotions into their own versions of peace. Once I thought that love, plenty of healthy food and a good home would make everything better, and we would all be happy about it. I

learned that love and a good home would be a necessary start, (we disagree about what constitutes good food) but that the journey would be much longer, more demanding, and complex than that. I learned that some things could not be healed during the time I was given with my kids.

Then I learned how strong I was, and how I could change to enable success for my kids. I saw that rebuilding lives was a long process, but it was possible, and the most deeply rewarding. I found that kids own their healing, but that I could clear a path for them, and help them to develop the skills needed to succeed. It was so much more difficult than I had expected it to be. But foster parents are central to the process, and the basic skills required are

openness to learn and the ability to “roll with it”. And the participants at that P.R.I.D.E. class were on their way. I worried for them, knowing the difficult lessons ahead for them, but remembered being just the same. Fortunately they were being given some good information in their nine weeks of training. I hope to see them in the years ahead and to help them to manage their own journeys.

GENA MORROW lives in Mississippi Mills just west of Ottawa. She has been a full time foster parent for over twenty years and focusses mainly on treatment or therapeutic foster care. She is the regional representative for her area on the Foster Parent Society of Ontario, and represents Ontario on the Canadian Foster Family Association. Locally, she trains prospective foster/adoptive parents, and is on the board of the Foster Family Association of Lanark Leeds and Grenville, as well as the collaboration committee for the agency. Apart from fostering focussed work, she is on the board

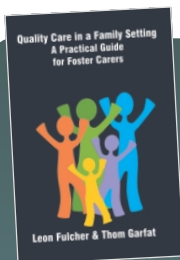
of the Mills Community Support, the advisory committee of Adopt4life, and is an active member of her church. She holds a degree in psychology, and, with her husband, Tony, farms vegetables and maple syrup for the local market.

ANDY LEGGETT is a graduate of the then Child Care Worker Program at St. Lawrence College in Kingston, Ontario.

For the past 25 years, Andy has specialized in Treatment Foster Care. He is currently the Owner and Clinical Director of Broken Arrow Residential Treatment Services, a private Treatment Foster Care Program in Ontario.

Andy is a long-time supporter of the Child and Youth Care field and all those involved in working with and changing the lives of our children and youth.

Andy is married with a family of three “children” who inspire and humble him daily.



QUALITY CARE IN A FAMILY SETTING (2008) by Leon Fulcher & Thom Garfat, offers theory, practice tips and everyday advice for helping young people in Foster Care develop the strengths and skills necessary to navigate life’s challenges. Training and practice standards are now frequently used to enhance, monitor and evaluate the quality of care for children and young people in out-of-home care, yet Foster Carers are often expected to perform miracles without practical assistance. This book helps to bridge that gap.

e-book: \$15 Can

Orders: <http://cycnetpress.cyc-net.org> or www.transformation.com

Queries: info@transformation.com



I Can See Clearer Now: Hoping for Hope

John Digney and Maxwell Smart

*This vision of the past strikes my throat like a lightening bolt.
Am I to wander the ceaseless oceans, the incessant waves; without hope for land, peace?*

Anthony Doyle, Irish abuse survivor and poet.

He, who has health, has hope; and he who has hope, has everything.

Thomas Carlyle, Scottish Philosopher

Cleaning our Transition Specs

Concluding our trilogy of articles on invisible transitions, we are minded of the lyrics of the Jimmy Cliff song, *I can see clearly now (the rain has gone)*. Just as we get a better view of an object or image when we wipe our glasses after a shower of rain, occasionally we need to wipe off our 'practice glasses' after being engulfed in a professional discipline that is complex, diverse and constantly evolving.

As we begin to better understand and recognise that for the young people in our care transitions can become so frequent that, like the trees in the forest, they be-



come hard to see individually. We must also accept that in the past we have failed to notice their existence as we have been looking through dull and dirty lenses. Because of this and also because the effects of transitions on the individual are often internal, they become all but invisible. Thankfully, as we wipe our 'practice glasses' these transitions are less invisible to us, and we understand better how they are so difficult for youth. Emerging from this 'darkness', we can

start to unpick the transitional experiences of young people in a search for ways to militate against the worst excesses of transitioning.

Bringing Invisible Transitions into Focus

As always, when we bring an issue into the consciousness of child and youth care, we set about the task of understanding how a particular phenomenon works and how it impacts the individual or group. Probably only then we can be of assistance. Problematic transitioning is located in the internal world of those who are experiencing it and unfortunately this world is not (obviously) open to our view — it tends to emerge through behaviours, behaviours which can manifest as resistance or wilfulness — like a kid ‘failing to get with our programme’. However deeper analysis usually supports the view that these behaviours are often ‘safety responses’ to overwhelming stress and feelings of acute vulnerability. So when we reflect for a moment on how at times some seasoned practitioners can be blissfully unaware of how multiple transitions affect youngsters and how unsophisticated adult responses can be, we then need to reconsider how we have dealt with serial transitioning for our young people in the past. Lacking understanding, and, worse still, sometimes compassion, we have often engaged in practices that dismiss transitioning as a problem at all.

“This kid doesn’t fit our programme, we need to move them to somewhere else’, reinforces the belief, and the behaviours, of youth and adult of not caring and not understanding, making the behaviours of both more engrained. And with this mantra another transitional crisis is born.

Yet as we look at the scant research on transitions and transitional processes, we begin to notice that those dealing with constant change and transition, appear to encounter similar ‘effects’ as those experiencing and dealing with grief and loss, (Kubler-Ross, 1973, Marris, 1974). On reflection, why should this surprise us? It seems logical that the emotional rollercoasters being ridden by our ‘ever in transition’ kids, will have metaphorical elements such as the ‘dive loops’, ‘loop the loops’, ‘batwings’, ‘bowties’ and ‘pretzel loops’ (types of rollercoaster twist / turns), all of which can create various sensations ‘on the inside’ — emotions relating to denial, anger and anxiety all create inner feelings that can make someone feel as though their insides are churning and never going to settle.

Grief and Loss

Much of the research and writing on the topic of ‘grief and loss’, agree that there are various stages people tend to go through in the grief cycle, e.g. Kromberg, 2013 (below).

5 Stages of grief and loss

Denial
Anger
Bargaining
Depression
Acceptance



In addition to these universally accepted stages are some others, proposed by various writers, particularly in instances of loss of relationship. These too can be seen to be applicable to the effects felt by those going through change and transition. They include:

- shock/disbelief, guilt and hope ('Masquerade', n/d)
- desperate for answers, relapse and re-directed hope (Lachmann, 2014)

If we are to bring 'invisible transitions' into our field of vision and in a focused manner (or even into practice visibility) and be able to offer practical support, we need to think differently about transitioning, recognising that it is not only located in 'events that happen' but is more related to the notion of 'transitioning as process', one which is navigated over a course of time. Within the stages of grief frame, we are beginning to realise that many processes need to be 'navigated' before any 'acceptance' of a new situation can occur.

When one reflects on a time of loss or grief in their own life and allows themselves to relive that time, the plethora emotions can be palpable. Then to try to imagine what it would be to feel like that ALL of the time, and to be at different and conflicting stages of dealing with various losses and traumas, at the same time, is mind-boggling.

When multiple transitions are happening simultaneously it can become very apparent why some young people may

seem to 'shut down' and look as if they are not co-operating with our programme expectations. When someone has reached 'transitional crisis' they are simply not able to cope (on their own). In the absence of preventing the change and transition, what is needed is support and time to recover, time to adjust to the new and changed and also for the onslaught of forced changes to be subdued. So time and timing are significant and important aspects in all transitions, apparent or invisible, and these will impact on how effectively people deal with altered states.

As we noted previously, there are planned and expected changes that occur in our lives, for example, when a person is to retire, a time for adjustment from work to retired state is required to deal with the change – knowing this is impending allows us an opportunity to adjust our outlook and our 'life rhythms'. The same is true with change from school to work, moving home and even getting married. Our society expects adjustment time for these major events in life and by and large, when people get recovery time, they cope with these altered states (particularly if a person is given appropriate support). Thankfully we do not have to deal with many changes at the one time and thankfully we are often able to see these coming and plan (or at least begin going through the various stages of dealing with them).

We Can and Must do better

Henry Maier (1979) advised that residential workers needed to be transitional

workers, to assist and support vulnerable young people to cope with perpetual changes in their lives. Yet, when we consider the situations of 'in care youth', exposed to multiple changes and therefore transitioning, we are apparently unwilling to afford the same privilege, of time to recover, that we allow ourselves. Giving our young people time to recover from one transitional event before encountering and navigating the next may be more effective than the sink or swim approach we have seen over many years.

Looking at the various stages of dealing with loss or change can help us to consider what might be useful in terms of an intervention or provision of support. Of course not all young people go through the same process; some go through almost cyclically, expecting the same feelings to recur each time, though never reaching acceptance; some will experience each exposure to change differently to the last (as they adjust their coping strategies to make each change or transition less painful); some will try to 'blank out' all the pain and negative feelings; and others will fully internalise this pain and develop a sense of inevitability and a certain self-loathing.

If we are to be of use, in the first instance we need, in our recognition of the lasting impact of change and transition, to seek to minimise the number of (unplanned and unnecessary) life changes that our youth are exposed to. This requires that we recognise transitioning as messy, complex and potentially destructive. This starting point means that caring interventions, and advocacy on behalf of young

people (who may not be transitionally aware), when our systems demands another change to a young person's situation. Giving some time may allow for acceptance and better adaptation to what has already changed, for this young person and preparation for what may need to change in the future.

In the literature pertaining to our field, there is a lot written on the use of daily life events and how we need to be aware of what is going on for other, and for us to be reflective. If we are to be of use to young people experiencing the invisible transition, we could do worse than consider the relevance of taking on board the commonly described 'characteristics of effective child and youth care practice'. Consider how these are implemented and lived by us as individuals and by our care-systems, consider how we can be more proactive in introducing and embedding these into our system of caring for youth.

If we begin by considering the 24 'characteristics' in the table on the next page and considering how our systems permit these 'across the board', we can get a good indication of our collective ability to reduce 'changes' and therefore 'transition'. It is important to note that some are more relevant than others to consider in times of potential or occurring transitions.

Ameliorating and Mitigating

We are often reminded of the adage that we are to 'resist the urge to fix kids', yet it can be difficult to overcome this



Love: It has been said that love is the most healing of all our resources.

Being in relationship: This is about having a value on our ability to interact in an open, honest and responsive way.

Hanging Out: The apparently simple and everyday things we do with other.

Hanging In: We don't 'cut and run' when times get difficult.

Participating with people as they live their lives: Caring involves being with people, sharing in their everyday (the good and the not so good).

Working in the now: This is about having a focus on the 'here and now' and what is happening between us and other.

Counseling on the go: Using our skills of observation, engagement, reflection and communication in the 'life-space' to provide 'counsel' in real time.

Flexibility and Individuality: A flexible approach to each person and for all interactions to be individual to each person and their particular context.

Meaning Making: Just as we all have our own way of making sense of things, we need to be aware of how 'other' is interpreting us.

Examining Context: We need to fully understand that everything happen within a context.

Needs-Based Focus: Having such a focus assumes that everything we do is to meet personal or social needs.

Responsive Developmental: This requires us to give deep consideration to the appropriate capacity of the individual.

Strengths-based & Resiliency Focus: This focus on the 'positive and healthy' enables others to also experience themselves as competent and worthy.

Reflection: 'What can I do better'? This is a continuous process and ensures we never rest on our laurels.

Family-oriented: The skilled practitioner involves 'family' (where appropriate).

It's all about us: There is an 'important interplay between the client and the helpers'.

Connection and Engagement: We must want to and be able to 'connect' with others and know how to 'engage' in a real and meaningful way.

Rituals of encounter: Conscious thought which must be given to the ways in which we engage with another.

Meeting them where they are at: Refers to accepting people for whom and how they are.

Doing 'with' (not 'for' or 'to'): We must engage, helping other grow and develop through doing things with them.

Being emotionally present: Is about a concerted effort to be fully 'available' - when I'm with you, I'm with you'

Intentionality of action: Everything we do is done for a particular purpose and this requires us to be truly reflective.

Purposeful use of activities: We creating 'experiences that promote the possibility of new beliefs for the people we support'.

Rhythmicity: Connecting with others at their pace and rhythm helps nurture our relationship with that person / family.

urge, as we often consider this to be the essence of our role. It was once said to one of the authors that we are in the business of 'amelioration and mitigation'. Perhaps this is the case, perhaps not (perhaps these are not the best usage of the

terms) but it does seem that we have some role in assisting young people improve their lives, to provide better opportunities and to support them as they make their way in the world.

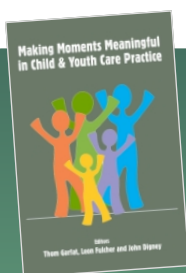
The list of stages associated with 'loss and grief', the same list that can apply to those in perpetual transition (shock or disbelief, seeking answers, denial, guilt, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance, and hope) are mostly not the sort of places we like to see our youth. Who likes to live in a place with endless feelings of guilt anger or depression?). But in there are some better places, especially at the end of the process – acceptance and hope. This 'end place' must be held dear, for if we are not able to prevent the changes and the transitions, we must be able to help our kids to get to a place of positive acceptance and this can only really be done by providing them with support and words of encouragement, by helping them become 'transition-proof', that is to say, to be resilient.

We can best achieve this by being there, being in relationship and doing all we can to keep alive their hope. In doing so, maybe with better sight we will be able to see clearer, now that the rain has gone.

Maxie & Digs

References

- Kromberg, J. (2013) The 5 Stages of Grieving the End of a Relationship: A breakup is a kind of dying. Retrieved on 22nd March 2015 from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/in-side-out/201309/the-5-stages-grieving-the-end-relationship>
- Kubler-Ross, E. (1973). *On death and dying*, London: Routledge.
- Lachmann, S. (2014). The seven stages of grieving a break up. Retrieved on 22nd March 2015 from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/me-we/201406/the-7-stages-grieving-breakup>
- Marris, P. (1974) *Loss and Change*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Maier, H.W. (1979) "The core of care: essential ingredients for the development of children at home and away from home", *Child Care Quarterly*, vol 8, no 4, pp 161-73
- Masquerade (n/d). Thee 7 stages of Grieg after the end of a relationship. Retrieved on 22nd March 2015 from <http://www.psychforums.com/relationship/topic84035.html>
- Smith, M (2009) *Rethinking Residential Child Care: Positive Perspectives*



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

Orders: <http://cycnetpress.cyc-net.org> or www.transformation.com
 Queries: info@transformation.com



Much of my headspace has been taken up lately with threshold concepts. Threshold concepts are like core concepts in a given discipline, but they have some added characteristics that make them particularly interesting and important. To my knowledge, no one has done any research on potential threshold concepts in our field (until now). I

wrote about them in the June 2013 issue of this journal, so if you want to know more, that may be a good place to start. There is also a wealth of information online that is easily accessible.

Several months after I wrote that piece, a Graham McPheat and I managed to get a grant from the Higher Education Academy (match funded by our own University) to

carry out a small, exploratory study on potential threshold concepts in residential child care / child and youth care.

I write 'threshold concepts in residential child care / child and youth care' because here in Scotland, residential child care is under a social work umbrella and there are no child and youth care departments or even courses, with the exception of one, brand new MSc in CYC Studies. All of my teaching on residential child care draws significantly from the CYC tradition (as well as from a social work residential

child care tradition here in the UK, and a little from the social pedagogic tradition). So for our study, we wanted to find out what our focus group participants thought might be potential threshold concepts for our field – 'our' being defined as CYC/RCC. We recognised that this isn't the tightest definition, but by the same

token, the point of the study is to explore and open up a dialogue. If we had had a bigger grant, we would have included social pedagogy as well.

We recruited what we termed 'expert/educators', and these were people who teach on dedicated CYC or RCC (or in the end, therapeutic child care) courses and who also have made a contribution

to CYC/RCC theoretical and practice literature. We then recruited 'student/practitioners', defined as people who had completed or were in the final stages of completing a dedicated CYC, RCC or therapeutic child care course and who were in residential child care practice. Our expert/educators and student/practitioners were from North America and the United Kingdom, and at the start we hoped to run two, online focus groups of 8 participants each for each type of participant – so 16 expert/educators and 16

An update on Threshold Concepts

Laura Steckley

Laura.L.Steckley@strath.ac.uk

student/practitioners. Due to significant challenges of scheduling, we ended up running three focus groups of expert/educators and had a total of 15 participants, and five focus groups of student/practitioners with a total of 14 participants. We then followed up with seven of the student/practitioner participants and did in-depth interviews about their experiences of coming to understand a particular threshold concept.

We have learned a lot already, and we've still got more work to do. It has been absolutely fascinating so far, but also a bit daunting. When I teach about methods of

qualitative analysis in research, I use the analogy of a mosaic and it is useful here to help me tell you about my experience. A mosaic is a

picture made up of pieces of different coloured glass. Sometimes these pieces are differently shaped and they may have different textures. When you listen to participants and transcribe their words, these words become like big sheets of multi-coloured, multi-textured glass. The work of analysing the information that you get from the focus groups involves taking those sheets and sheets of transcription and creating something of meaning from them. It's like you're breaking them down



into various shapes and organising them by colour and texture; in qualitative analysis, it's organising content from the transcripts into different themes. Deciding whether a certain bit is purple or violet (or a bit of both) may be part of your decision making process, as well as deciding which pieces to include in your final mosaic and which to leave out. At the end of the day, the final picture is your own creation – a compilation based on how you saw fit to combine the colours and textures to make a picture that, in the case of qualitative research, tells a story. Unlike a mosaic, in qualitative research, you are also ethically

obliged to represent the original sheets (and what people said to make up those sheets) with integrity. Not doing so would be like having sheets of glass that

had only a little bit of red in a few places on a few sheets, and offering up a picture with all of those red bits cherry picked and presented as an overall red picture. It would be unethical. There should be a strong relationship between the gross volume of bits of colour, shape and texture, and the final picture. That said, exactly how you assemble them – how much artistry is included, how compellingly it is done, and the more subtle nuances and links to stories outside of the picture –

will be unique.

At various points in the process of doing qualitative analysis, I always have the sensation of too many potential colours and textures, and too many possible ways of combining them, with no idea of the best way to put it all together. I get a bit overwhelmed. This is all pretty normal. It's sometimes called 'immersion' – you immerse yourself into all that your study participants have said and tolerate the blinding blizzard of data until you begin to achieve clarity. In the case of this study, there was such a range of colours and textures, and they were so vivid and interrelated in so many ways. Lots of the bits keep bouncing around in my head like variously coloured bits of glass. Even though Graham and I quickly had a sense of the dominance of particular themes, many of them overlapped and had multiple possibilities for coming together. There are many ways to tell this story. We also had to be on guard against our own pre-existing views on the subject distorting how we heard what our study participants were saying.

To be honest, we're not through with the process. We're in the final stages of a handbook that explains some of what was said in the focus groups and what we think

this may mean in terms of threshold concept theory. We also then will work on a learning object for the Learning Zone, based on the focus groups and the individual interviews, and then there will be a webinar and some articles. But I thought I might offer a spoiler here, and also a reflection on one of the things I've learned from doing this study.

The spoiler is this: More than any other potential threshold concept, expert/educators spoke about what we've called *use of self*. Some used this exact term, and others talked about self-reflection, reflexivity, self-awareness, self-knowledge and authenticity. For the student/participants, the most spoken-about potential threshold concept was *relational practice*. Again, some used this exact term while others spoke of many of the transformative and troublesome aspects of understanding and doing relationships in their practice. Interestingly, expert/educators spoke a great deal about relational practice as well and student/practitioners spoke a lot about use of self. Indeed, they sometimes talked about both at the same time (with my colleague and I having to decide, 'is this purple or violet or both?'). This can't be a great surprise, as it's impossible to be in relationship without having the self pres-



ent, and *use of self* is only possible in the context of the relationship. Our focus group participants had a lot to say about these and other potential threshold concepts, and in the coming weeks our handbook will be freely available online document for you to read more.

As I reflect on the experience of doing this study, I also have learned about relational practice in research. While it was challenging to arrange the focus groups with 'expert/educator' participants due to their busy schedules, we managed to do so with only minor delays due to the already-existing professional relationships we have with colleagues in the field. This relational effect translated to eliciting the in-principle agreement of 'student/practitioner' participants; our colleagues who participated in the first set of focus groups helped to connect us with student/practitioners they knew who then agreed to participate in the next set of focus groups. But, that first level of relationship didn't have the power to carry through to actual participation. 'Student/practitioners' were also busy, and it was only the ones who we knew from our own course (with only one exception) that followed up and actually participated in the focus groups. The rest were amenable to the idea, but when it came to actually fitting it into their busy schedules (and indicating their availability), we suspect that because they didn't know us, it easily slid from their radars. We continued to recruit more student/practitioners, only to have them also agree to participate but not actually commit to any of the many dates and times on offer.

Face-to-face recruitment processes were not possible to even establish rapport with these potential participants due to distance. We were running out of time (the original time-line of the study was meant to be 12 months) and none of our efforts at friendly reminders were having an impact. We finally came to realise that we needed to further draw on the established relationships with national and international colleagues in order to achieve the focus groups. So we asked a few to organise the date and time for a focus group to take place with student/practitioners that they knew, and we then turned up (virtually) to carry it out. And that's how we managed to get them done.

I also noticed, at the time and also in hindsight when doing the analysis, that in every expert/educator focus group at least one (but sometimes several) participants were supportive and affirming of us as researchers. They often did this subtly and remained in research-participant-role, but they did so without losing the relational quality of their interactions.

So thank you to those who participated in the focus groups, thank you to those who facilitated the organisation of some of them, and thank you to those who were so supportive and affirming of our efforts. This experience has strengthened my resolve to facilitate the efforts of other students, practitioners and researchers and so that they, too, can tap into this wonderful, relational network of caring professionals.

Until next time ...





University of
Strathclyde
Humanities &
Social Sciences

MSc CHILD and YOUTH

CARE STUDIES by DISTANCE LEARNING

Developed within the School of Social Work and Social Policy and the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland (CELCIS), this programme has a fresh, engaging curriculum that covers globalised childhoods, international policy contexts, the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), bringing up children and research methods.

The programme is aimed at students with an interest in developing positive strategies for affirming and developing the professional identity of child and youth care practice.

Launched in 2014, we are now recruiting for our September 2015 intake.

Fees for the programme are:

Scotland/RUK/EU Students: £3425

International Students: £6850

To find out more or to apply to join the course:

www.strath.ac.uk/courses/postgraduatetaught/childandyoungcarestudies/

Or contact

Graham McPheat

graham.mcpheat@strath.ac.uk



Centre for excellence
for looked after children in Scotland

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

Peer Assistance for Out-of-the- Mainstream Youth

Rey Carr

Peer assistance in its various forms (peer education, peer counselling, peer tutoring, peer mentoring and peer mediation) has become available to schools and colleges around the world. Thousands of schools in the United States have peer programs and virtually every secondary school and at least 50% of Canadian elementary schools as well as a majority of Canadian colleges and universities now include some type of peer helping program or service (Carr & Kingsland, 1986; Carr, 1993).

Educational institutions are not the only source of peer-based services for youth. Many traditional community organizations such as the YM-YWCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Boys and Girls Clubs now use peers to deliver services. In addition a number of innovative youth services are almost exclusively peer-based. Former sex trade workers in Victoria, British Columbia, for example, have formed PEERS, the Prostitutes Empowerment Education and Resource Society to provide outreach, education and advocacy in order to assist individuals who desire to leave the sex industry and create a safe,

respectful and healthy environment for those with a history of sex trade work.

Hospitals and community health units have also created peer-based services to deal with other specific youth problems. In Hollywood, California, for example, five youth-serving health agencies combined their resources to establish an HIV/AIDS peer education service to provide outreach and support to hundreds of young people wandering the streets in one of the most high profile areas of the world.

While school-based and street-based peer programs share some common ideals and principles, the practices associated with school programs cannot be generalized to street-based peer programs. Therefore the purposes of this article are (1) describe the peer program principles and training requirements necessary to establish peer-based services for non-school based youth peer programs, (2) compare traditional peer programs with those designed for street youth, and (3) identify the key elements for training adults to successfully be involved in non-traditional peer programs.

The Need for a New Peer Program Paradigm

Effective peer and mentor programs are typically designed to involve youth in helping other youth. Peer helpers and peer mentors not only learn specific coping strategies and contribute to strengthening social network support, but also teach others how to use coping strategies and provide support to different youth networks.



Although these programs are quite successful and some have been described as best practices, the methods commonly used to recruit, select, train and supervise youth in non-school peer programs require enough variation to be distinct and require different resources to be successful.

While schools can be considered as including a diverse student population, materials produced for educational organizations typically do not reflect the variety of learning characteristics of students. The initial version of *The Peer Counselling Starter Kit* (Carr & Saunders, 1981), for example, Canada's most popular peer training and program development manual, does not take into account the widely diverse populations encountered in non-school based peer programs. This is understandable as it was written prior to significant numbers of youth appearing on the streets of our cities.

And despite its experiential training focus, the manual does not provide the flexible content sessions required for street-based peer programs.

Even the title of this popular manual is out-of-date. While "peer counselling" was meant to be a generic term for a number of different ways that youth would interact with other youth, other titles have become more widely used and known. deRosenroll (1999) argued that a new term, "peer assistance," should be used as an umbrella phrase that would include terms such as peer counselling, peer helping, peer mentoring, peer tutoring, peer mediation, peer support and peer education. Many adult- to-adult peer programs balked at

using the term counselling and didn't want their mandate to be confused with therapy or professional counselling.

In addition to the dilemma of what to call the peer intervention, others have proposed various terms to describe the particular population of youth known to frequent street life. The most popular professional term appears to be "youth at-risk," but deRosenroll, Saunders and Carr (1996) argued in their pioneering work on mentoring youth that virtually all youth can be considered "at-risk." The term "out-of-the-mainstream," although less popular, may be more precise than the more popular term "at-risk" youth, because it includes youth at-risk, and does not portray youth as victims or in need of fixing.

Caputo, Weiler and Green (1997) in their report to Health Canada, described out-of-the-mainstream youth as including a number of youth categories that were neither mutually exclusive nor clearly defined. They used terms such as "youth at-risk, runaways, throwaways, homeless youth, wannabes, curbsiders, entrenched street youth, dropouts, and delinquent youth" (p. 4). They acknowledged that such youth may be in several categories at one time, can rapidly change from one category to another, and even within the same category can be dramatically different from one another.

Youth who are described as "out-of-the-mainstream" may not come into contact with the support networks available to school-based peer and mentor programs. While some of the principles of school-based peer programs can be ap-

plied in non-school settings, the needs of youth who are out-of-the-mainstream require a more custom-designed set of peer and mentor program activities and practices. Such practices, sometimes called “street-based” peer programs, require different recruiting, training and service activities to ensure their effectiveness in providing social support and coping skills for out-of-the-mainstream youth.

An increasing number of community-based, non-school, youth-serving agencies have become interested in peer-based services, and have made groundbreaking strides to establish peer programs. Several of these programs were listed by Caputo, Wieler and Green (1997) in their compendium of peer programs.

The Challenge of Peers on the Street

What out-of-the-mainstream youth have in common, however, is the challenge they present to traditional services, including school-based peer and mentor programs. According to Caputo, Weiler and Green (1997), “Perhaps the most critical factor influencing the service needs of these young persons is the extent and nature of their contact with the street” (p.5).

Time spent on the street generally means less time spent in school or involvement in school-related activities. Consequently the likelihood of out-of-the-mainstream youth coming into contact with school-based peer helping services remains unlikely.

But does association with the street require a different model of peer helping?

Caputo, Weiler and Green and their funding sources (Human Resources Development Canada) categorized school-based peer programs as “traditional” and not likely to be appropriate to the needs of young people living on the street or the needs of youth who want to get off the street. They concluded after reviewing a number of traditional programs and discussing peer helping practices with various experts, that school-based programs at best may be able to prevent young people from going to the street.

However, their conclusions are based on fairly common practices associated with the delivery of peer programs in schools. And in many cases these practices, while pragmatic, are in contradiction to the peer program standards recommended by both the Peer Resources Network (in Canada) and the National Peer Helpers Association (in the United States, and now known as the National Association of Peer Program Professionals). Most schools do not completely follow the national standards. One standard guideline, for example is that schools should actively recruit students from all the social groupings within the school. However, many schools are likely to bypass youth at-risk. These young people often do not attend to the normal information distribution system in a school, nor are they likely to be in activities where they will have positive contact with teachers and counsellors. Street-based peer programs need to recruit from the diverse ethnic, cultural, and social groups within their catchment areas.



Unique Elements of Street-Based Peer Programming

Recruiting youth for peer programs often relies on the quality of the relationship that exists between youth in school and their peer program leader. Too few out-of-the-mainstream youth have such quality relationships with school authorities.

Therefore, recruiting outside of schools requires peer program leaders to demonstrate trust-building and relationship enhancing qualities in order to attract experienced street youth.

Too often peer assistants in school-based programs are trained in a way that does not prepare them to engage in outreach work or to specifically make connections with youth-serving agencies outside of the school. Only recently have a handful of school-based peer programs begun to recognize that peer helping can be a form of service learning (Carr 2014). And even though provincial or state education requirements in some jurisdictions are mandating that students perform community service, many peer program leaders still do not see any connection between peer work and service outside of the school.

Street-based peer programs must be clear and specific about their objectives and the youth population they wish to serve. In addition, despite the training standards espoused by the leading authorities in peer assistance, many training programs fail to actively involve students in interactive and participatory training. Too often

school-based peer program training is teacher-centered or lecture-based.

Many schools have launched peer training courses that contribute towards graduation. While this is a valuable way to recognize and support students who volunteer for peer work, it often minimizes the role that youth can play in the development and delivery of the training curriculum. Out-of-the-mainstream youth, who may have had negative experiences with classroom-based learning, are likely to find themselves alienated from such an approach. Street-based peer programs require a peer helper centered curriculum that, while content or goal focused, allows and encourages participant variations.

Having suggested a “peer helper centered curriculum” does not mean that the approach is unstructured, or without goals or objectives. Nor does it mean that a peer trainer abandons any sense of direction or focus on specific content. What it does mean is that out-of-the-mainstream peer helpers have an opportunity to participate in agenda and rule setting; that they have an opportunity to set boundaries that make sense to them and are within the service goals; and that they will experience reasonable and clear expectations with increasing opportunities for greater responsibility. Too often school-based peer programs falter because they have not provided youth with opportunities for program ownership in areas relevant to their expectations.

Differences Between School- Based and Street-Based Peer Work

Like most community agencies, many of these street youth programs have minimal and year- to-year funding and rely on volunteers. Several of the agencies listed in Caputo, Weiler and Green's work have since gone out of business, despite the fact that the number of young people on the street has gone up rather than down in the interim (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2006; National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2014). This brings us to another difference between traditional, school-based peer programs and peer programs that are street-based: consistent and reliable funding.

While educational institutions may face a number of changes and budgetary redirections, peer programs, which are virtually cost-free, are much less likely to be eliminated. Funding is relatively stable as compared to the month to month existence of many street-based services. Unstable funding means minimal funds for professional development, higher turnover in personnel, greater reliance on novice or inexperienced workers, and high demands placed on too few personnel. In contrast, many champions of peer assistance in Canadian, American, British, Australian, Japanese and New Zealand schools can testify to 15 or more years of active, continuous involvement with peer assistants.

While establishing trust, and learning how to facilitate trust are essential components in peer assistant training, most of

the youth who volunteer as school-based peer assistants are relatively skilled in getting along with adults or authority figures. Some outstanding peer programs have leaders who are exceptionally good at creating a trusting bond even with youth who have a history of bad experiences with adults. In general, however, school-based peer programs do not engage in activities or training that can adequately combat the history of mistrust, hostility, or suspicion out- of-the-mainstream youth may have towards other youth, adults or authority figures. And while an individual peer program leader and other peer helpers may be able to respond to out-of-the-mainstream youth in a non- judgmental and accepting fashion, many other school personnel (including other youth) do not demonstrate the same characteristics, and consequently these youth do not experience an environment supportive of their efforts to renew themselves. Street-based peer programs must focus a significant part of their training on assisting peer helpers to earn the trust of their peers.

Another difference between school and street peer programs concerns the personal histories of the peer assistants themselves. School-based training programs are often subject-matter driven, focusing on teaching peer helpers various facts and information they can share with others. Many school-based trainers have a certain amount of material they must cover and an agenda they want to complete. This can be satisfactory and useful to many peer helpers in training. Youth at risk, however, often have a wider range of



experiences, many of which will have to be addressed prior to or during the subject matter discussion. This means that the trainer must be able to personalize the content, insure that the training process is relevant to the experience of the peer assistant, and adjust the content to match their needs.

Despite the existence of national trainer certification standards, too few school-based trainers have the skill and experience to assist peer helpers to deal with their own issues within the context of peer helper training.

Training must be experienced as an on-going process with continuous support for putting newly learned skills into practice. Street-based peer programs must have leaders who can assist peer helpers to benefit from their life experiences and use what they learn to help others. And they also must be able to determine when such life experiences will interfere with effective peer work.

Appropriate Curriculum for Street-Based Peer Work

Although a considerable number of peer program guides are available and the number of exceptional peer training manuals has increased considerably in the last few years, most of these materials are suitable for school-based programs. In addition to the development of more appropriate materials for out-of-the-mainstream youth who become involved as peer helpers, it is also necessary to alter the standard train-the-trainer work-

shop content and process for those adults who have experience in working with out-of-the-mainstream youth population, so that they can act as mentors and be qualified to provide effective peer training to the youth they serve.

A key part of the training model (deRosenroll & Carr, 2002) we use to train peer assistance program leaders for out-of-the-mainstream youth service is based on the fact that street youth are already helping each other in a variety of ways. Our model builds on their existing skills and enhances those skills. We train peer and mentor program leaders to start with youth experiences, provide the youth additional experiences, and encourage the youth to reflect on what those experiences mean, what goes wrong when they try to achieve their goals, and what ideas they have for strengthening their skills. Put another way, peer trainers must acknowledge the value of “street” wisdom and demonstrate to youth the ways in which such wisdom can help them achieve their peer assistance goals. This approach can be quite challenging to the trainer who is used to a canned curriculum or relies on a series of pre-determined skill-building exercises.

Our training model also emphasizes increasing youth responsibilities for the management and delivery of peer services. Too many so called peer programs are run by adults to meet adult needs; this often leads to program failure and lack of motivation by the youth involved. Our model also stresses that when the adult trainer is training the youth, the adult be able to demonstrate and practice all the skills that

he/ she is asking the youth to learn. Our out-of- the-mainstream train-the-trainer model requires that an adult be available as a support person for all the youth who volunteer as peer assistants. This ensures that when the youth have difficulties (get in over their heads) they can rely on a trusted adult to provide assistance and to help resolve any challenge. This also means that an adult must gain the trust of all those who volunteer as peer assistants.

Peer programs for out-of-the-main-stream youth present a number of challenges which cannot be adequately met by using traditional, school-based peer models as a template. While the foundation rationale for establishing peer- based services remains the same, namely that youth will more often turn to other youth than qualified adults for assistance, the characteristics and experiences of out-of-the- main-stream youth require attention to alternative delivery principles. At the same time, the establishment of peer services for out-of-the-main-stream youth must be considered as complimentary to and not a

substitute for the variety of comprehensive and supportive professional services required.

References

- Caputo, T., Weiler, R., & Green, L. (1997). *Peer helper initiatives for out-of-the-mainstream youth: A report and compendium*. Ottawa: Health Canada.
- Carr, R. (2014). *Peer helping: A model for service learning*. Victoria, BC: Peer Systems Consulting Group.
- Carr, R.(1993). Peer helping in Canada. *Peer Facilitator Quarterly*, 11, 1, 15-18.
- Carr, R. and Kingsland, L. (1986). Peer programs in post-secondary institutions in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, 20, 2, 114-121.
- Carr, R. and Saunders. G. (1981). *The peer counselling starter kit*. Victoria, BC: Peer Systems Consulting Group, Inc.
- Childrens Hospital Los Angeles. (1996). *Facing the challenge: Building peer programs for street youth*. (DVD). Los Angeles, CA: Author.
- deRosenroll, D. (Winter 1999). Peer assistance: A moniker for all peer programs. *Compass: A Magazine for Peer Assistance, Mentorship and Coaching*, 15.1, 28-29.
- deRosenroll, D., Saunders, G., and Carr, R. (1996). *The mentor program development resource kit*. Victoria, BC: Peer Systems Consulting Group, Inc.
- deRosenroll, D. and Carr, R. (2014). *Peer assistance starter kit: A comprehensive guide for people helping people (3rd edition)*. Victoria, BC: Peer Systems Consulting Group, Inc.
- deRosenroll, D. & Carr, R. (2014). *Out-of-the-mainstream youth peer program training materials and resources*. Victoria, BC: Peer Systems Consulting Group, Inc.
- National Alliance to End Homelessness (2014). *The state of homelessness in America 2014*. Washington, DC
- Public Health Agency of Canada (2006). *Street youth in Canada: Findings from enhanced surveillance of Canadian street youth, 1999-2003*.

From: *Peer Bulletin*, No.246 (March 2015), pp14-22





Rinse, Spin, and Die

Nils Ling

We got a new washing machine last week.

We didn't really want a new washing machine. Our hand was forced by the old washing machine, which, in co-operation with a number of our other household appliances, including my computer, had been monitoring the status of our checking account. When our balance began to bounce

back from Christmas, our old washing machine pounced.

Well, it didn't pounce, exactly. It keeled over. Croaked. Went all too gentle into that good night. One evening it was up and running, merrily spinning and rinsing and pureeing and all those other things washing machines do — the next morning I went down to put on a load and found it had joined the choir invisible in appliance heaven.

I tried to administer appliance CPR in the form of a repairman named "Leonard". At least, I assume that was his name. He had "Leonard" stitched onto his shirt. Although maybe he just stole the shirt.

Anyway, "Leonard" took off the back of the machine — apparently, the backs on these things are removable — and looked inside. When he poked his head up, he had a very long face.

"It's the transmission", "Leonard" said. Apparently, washing machines have transmissions. Now I was the one with a very long face.

Truth be told, I was no further ahead in terms of knowing the nature of the problem. But I've never heard the words "It's the transmission" and had it be good news, as in "Don't worry, no big deal, it's the transmission, you don't really need it anyway."

So while I didn't know what was wrong, exactly, I was able to divine that it was bad — and this was confirmed when "Leonard" took out a piece of white chalk and began drawing an outline of the machine on the floor.

So now I've got a new washing machine.

A washing machine is a very unrewarding purchase. That is, if you had one before. I guess if previously you were dragging your laundry to the river and beating it on rocks, a washing machine would be very exciting. But in our case, one day we had a machine in our laundry room that washed clothes — and the next day we had a whole different machine that did precisely the same job. And we were five hundred bucks poorer.

It's not like getting a new car or something, where you drive up to your friend's house and take him out for a spin. Nobody wants to give your washing machine a try. When people come over, you don't go, "Hey, c'mon downstairs. I got me a new Inglis Liberator with a sudsucker." It's just a washing machine.

It's like getting a new roof, which, apparently, I have to do this spring, according to a guy who had the name "Alby" stitched onto his shirt. It's going to cost

me several thousand dollars, and I'll just bet not one of my friends will stop on his way up the driveway and go — "Hey ... is that a Bradford roof?" No, it's just a roof — it'll sit there doing the same thing the other roof did, except the other roof didn't chew a big hole in my chequing account.

It's depressing. Just once I wish I could be walking down the hall at work and have someone stop me and say "Hey, Nils ... boy, is that shirt ever clean. Do you have one of them Maytag Soak-o-matics with a perma-press setting?"

And I'd go "Yep. Got a great deal on it. Custom paint job, cherry red with the racing package. Look, if you're not busy tonight, come on over and take it for a spin."

Ah, my luck they'd come over and wrap it around the dryer. And I'd have to call "Leonard". He'd take a look, and shake his head.

"Transmission", he'd say. "Pass the chalk."



Follow **CYC-Net** at
@CYCCareworkers





Postcard from Leon Fulcher

APRIL 2015

Hi everyone! It's been a month here when youthful protest has had a national impact on the media, the politicians and the public. Early in the month New Zealanders awoke to national news about a young man who had scaled 25-metres up a 500-year-old native Kauri tree and slept there overnight. He was protesting plans to chop down this endangered list New Zealand tree so that the site could be used to build two new West Auckland luxury homes. Local planning permission had been granted and the foresters arrived to chop down the tree, only to be dispatched by youthful protestors.

Taveres said he was prepared to stay there for "as long as it takes". Around 100 people gathered to support the protest, with thousands more joining the protest online. Former Prime Minister Helen Clark weighed into the row, showing support for the protesters and claiming it was "extraordinary in this day and age that a permit would be given to fell a 500-year-old



Michael Tavares positioned up a West Auckland Kauri tree protesting its demise

tree"! Yesterday, police officers served Mr Tavares with a verbal trespass notice authorised by the owners, who declined to talk to media.



Kauri Trees are an iconic yet endangered feature of New Zealand forests

At the site, residents and supporters were joined by members from *Reweti Marae* and *mana whenua* (guardians of the land). Long-time environmental activist and member Chris Pairama said it was an

emotional time for those whose family — like his own — had been living in the region for generations. *“I find this situation horribly distasteful ... there has been no community and iwi consultation.”* The local Member of Parliament offered to climb the tree and join Mr Taveres’ public protest.



After two nights and agreement reached to save the tree, protestor climbed down

So far, it looks as though the tree will not be chopped down, even though planning consent had been given. The landowners promised not to cut down the tree and the Council is exploring what other options might be available. Youthful protest can and does get media attention!

Another youthful voice spoke out within days about the campaign he has led to require foreign drivers to be tested before given authorisation to drive on New Zealand roads. 10 year-old Sean Roberts from a rural town in the South Island took his petition, signed by nearly 37,000 people across the world, calling for visitors to sit a test before getting behind the wheel



10 year-old Sean Roberts from rural South Island led a campaign for safer roads

of a rental car or campervan – considered especially important for drivers trained and used to driving on the left-hand side of the road!



Sean Roberts’ father was killed in a 2012 car crash with inexperienced driver

When Sean was told that his Dad had died in a 2012 car crash caused by an overseas tourist with little driving experience, he wondered why New Zealand

roads weren't safe enough to keep Dad alive. Sean overcame nerves and ferry sea-sickness travelling to Wellington to share his idea with the Parliamentary Transport and Industrial Relations Select Committee for keeping people safer on the roads.



Sean Roberts with his brother Cody remembering their father killed in a car crash

Sean was supported by his brother Cody, 9, and their mother, Mel Pipson who was proud that Sean's determination to do something had triggered a response at a Government level. She said her family was happy with the progress so far addressing the issue of foreign drivers, including a code of best practice initiated by some vehicle hire companies. Well done, Sean! Young people can have their voices heard!

As child and youth care workers, what do we do when young people in our care become outraged by social events around them? Professed neutrality *disnae* work!



Youthful protest was happening somewhere in the World every week in March

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean".



THE INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE NETWORK

CYC-Online Direct Advertising Rates

Size	Standard	x3 insertions	x6 insertions	x12 insertions
Full page	\$250.00	\$200.00	\$150.00	\$100.00
1/2 page	\$187.50	\$150.00	\$112.50	\$ 85.00
1/4 page	\$125.00	\$100.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 50.00
1/8 page	\$100.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 50.00	\$ 30.00

Price is per monthly issue, per insertion. Full amount payable at first insertion. Deadline - 7 days before monthend.

MATERIAL SPECIFICATIONS

Please send all relevant artwork to admin@cyc-net.org

Files: Only TIFF, PDF, EPS or high resolution JPG will be accepted. All images should be CMYK.

Image resolution 300 dpi at 100%

Fonts: If using PDF, either embed fonts or please supply ALL fonts with the documents, or convert fonts to paths.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Size	Layout	Width	Height
Full page	Portrait (5mm bleed)	200mm	260mm
1/2 page	Portrait	95mm	260mm
	Landscape	200mm	125mm
1/4 page	Portrait	95mm	125mm
	Landscape	200mm	60mm
1/8 page	Portrait	40mm	125mm
	Landscape	95mm	60mm





EndNotes

“Without education, we are in a horrible and deadly danger of taking educated people seriously.”

— G.K. Chesterton

“In real life, I assure you, there is no such thing as algebra.”

— Fran Lebowitz

“We spend the first year of a child's life teaching it to walk and talk and the rest of its life to shut up and sit down. There's something wrong there.”

— Neil deGrasse Tyson

“I know the answer! The answer lies within the heart of all mankind! The answer is twelve? I think I'm in the wrong building.”

— Charles M. Schulz

“Eragon looked back at him, confused. “I don't understand.”

“Of course you don't,” said Brom impatiently. “That's why I'm teaching you and not the other way around.”

— Christopher Paolini, *Eragon*

“And although I broke a lot of laws as a teenager, I straightened out immediately upon turning eighteen, when I realized the state had a legal right to execute me.”

— George Carlin, *Brain Droppings*

“She had been a teenager once, and she knew that, despite the apparent contradictions, a person's teenage years lasted well into their fifties.”

— Derek Landy, *Mortal Coil*

“Why is it that when you don't want to think about something, you can't stop thinking about it?”

— Stella Lennon, *Invisible I*

“These problems are real, and you can't turn off real life. So I won't try. Instead, I'll give you a set of tools to help you deal with real life.”

— Sean Covey, *The 7 Habits Of Highly Effective Teens*

“Directing teenage actors is like juggling jars of nitro-glycerine: exhilarating and dangerous.”

— Stephen King, 11/22/63

“From the time they hit middle school, they start moving away from home. They are not doing anything wrong; it's just the way they are made. They are becoming independent, and they begin redefining themselves through the eyes of other people who are not in their immediate family. The older they get, the more important it is to have other voices in their lives saying the same things but in a different way.”

— Reggie Joiner, *The Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collide...*

“One of the greatest challenge facing young people today, is the large scale availability of half truth's and manipulated facts”

— Oche Otorokpa, *The Unseen Terrorist*

“I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better.”

— Maya Angelou

“The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page.”

— Augustine of Hippo

“[Kids] don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are.”

— Jim Henson, *It's Not Easy Being Green: And Other Things to Consider*

“It was only high school after all, definitely one of the most bizarre periods in a person's life. How anyone can come through that time well adjusted on any level is an absolute miracle.”

— E.A. Bucchianeri, *Brushstrokes of a Gadfly*

“Why is it that when you don't want to think about something, you can't stop thinking about it?”

— Stella Lennon, *Invisible I*



information

CYC-Online is published monthly by [The CYC-Net Press](#). It is an e-journal and therefore not available in printed form. However, readers are welcome to print out pages or chapters as desired.

Editors

Thom Garfat (Canada)/
thom@cyc-net.org

Brian Gannon (South Africa)
brian@cyc-net.org

Correspondence

The Editors welcome your input, comment, requests, etc.

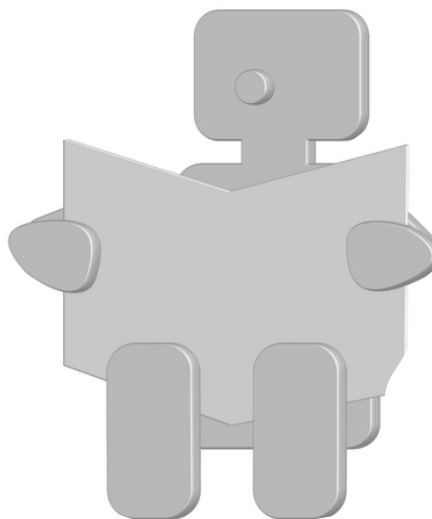
Write to cyconline@cyc-net.org

Advertising

Only advertising related to the profession, programs, courses, books, conferences etc. will be accepted.

Rates and specifications are listed over the page, or email

advertising@cyc-net.org





**ONLINE JOURNAL OF
THE INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE NETWORK (CYC-NET)**

www.cyc-net.org

Published by



ISSN 1605-7406