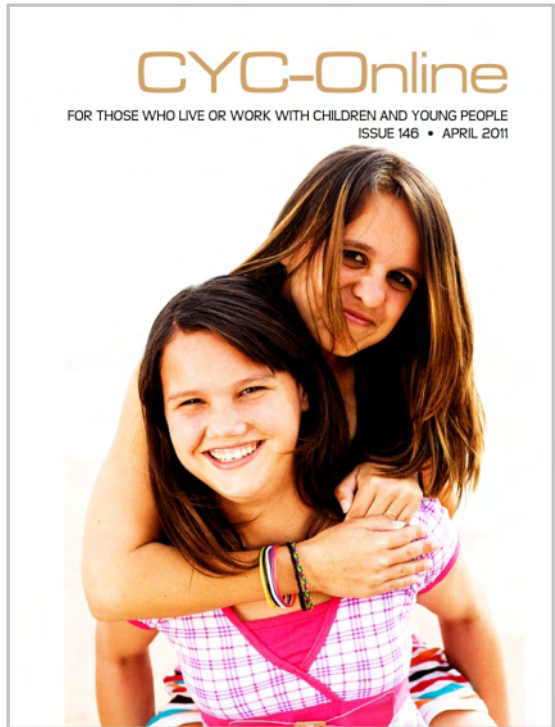


CYC-Online

FOR THOSE WHO LIVE OR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
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Waiting for the Change

It's almost Spring. Spring. Spring. Spring. We can see it coming – actually, we can *feel* it coming. Still lots of snow around, and the evenings are still below freezing – heck, they even say we will have ice rain tomorrow. But those of us who live here, who have 'been through this before', we recognize the signs of impending Spring. We feel the hint of it in the air as the smells change, the bird sounds are fuller, conversations change from tired whining to warm hopefulness, and there is somehow, almost magically, a hint of warmer air behind the cold. When you have 'been here before', had the experience, you get to know the signs.

I was working with Gerry one day. We had this kid who was always ... well, you know ... one of those young people who seem to defy all attempts to ease the pain, shift the course of her life, help her to find a new way. I was feeling frustrated, discouraged, defeated even.

"It's okay," he said. "Things are going well."

"How can you say that", I demanded. "I see nothing to say it is going okay, let alone well!"

"I can see it, I can feel it," Gerry said. "Look how the conversations are changing. See how her approach is a little less cold."

Accepting his perception, seeing what he saw/felt, I waited, wanting to be reassured by my teammate's perception.

I noticed he was right. She was, somehow, in some indescribable manner, different. And he was right about the conversations. They too were somehow different.

As we move into Spring – the Spring I can feel, see – we have some setbacks. It snowed last night. Hey, we are in the midst of *the thaw*, why is it snowing? And cold. Damn. Minus 7 last night and that does not even count the wind howling off the river. And the weatherman says there is another storm on the horizon. Nope, don't want that. I want Spring! Enough of the cold, and the 'transition time' and the waiting! Spring! Get over here, damn it!

Well, the conversations have changed alright. Now instead of just being a jerk, I am a f'ing stupid @\$%@ jerk. Well, that's a change alright.

"Gerry! Get over here right now! Please...?"

"So much for your 'I can see it, I can feel it' argument," I said. "What I feel right now – what I see – is more abuse – not better, Ger, worse!"

“Of course,” he said somewhat lightly.
“We expected that, didn’t we?”

“Well, I don’t know about the ‘we’ part,” I say. I thought we were on the right track, moving forward with her.”

“We are.”

“Ya. Ya.”

Storm Warning this evening. We though Spring was coming – and it is – it always comes – but it is struggling to arrive. Storm Warning – SNOW Storm Warning – 15cm of now – doesn’t feel like Spring to me – but I have faith – it always happens like this – a promise, a threat, a set-back, and then ‘the day’. The day when it is, for sure, here.

She destroyed the house last night. Okay, maybe that’s an exaggeration. But she sure knocked the whatever out of it. Holes, stains, pain everywhere.

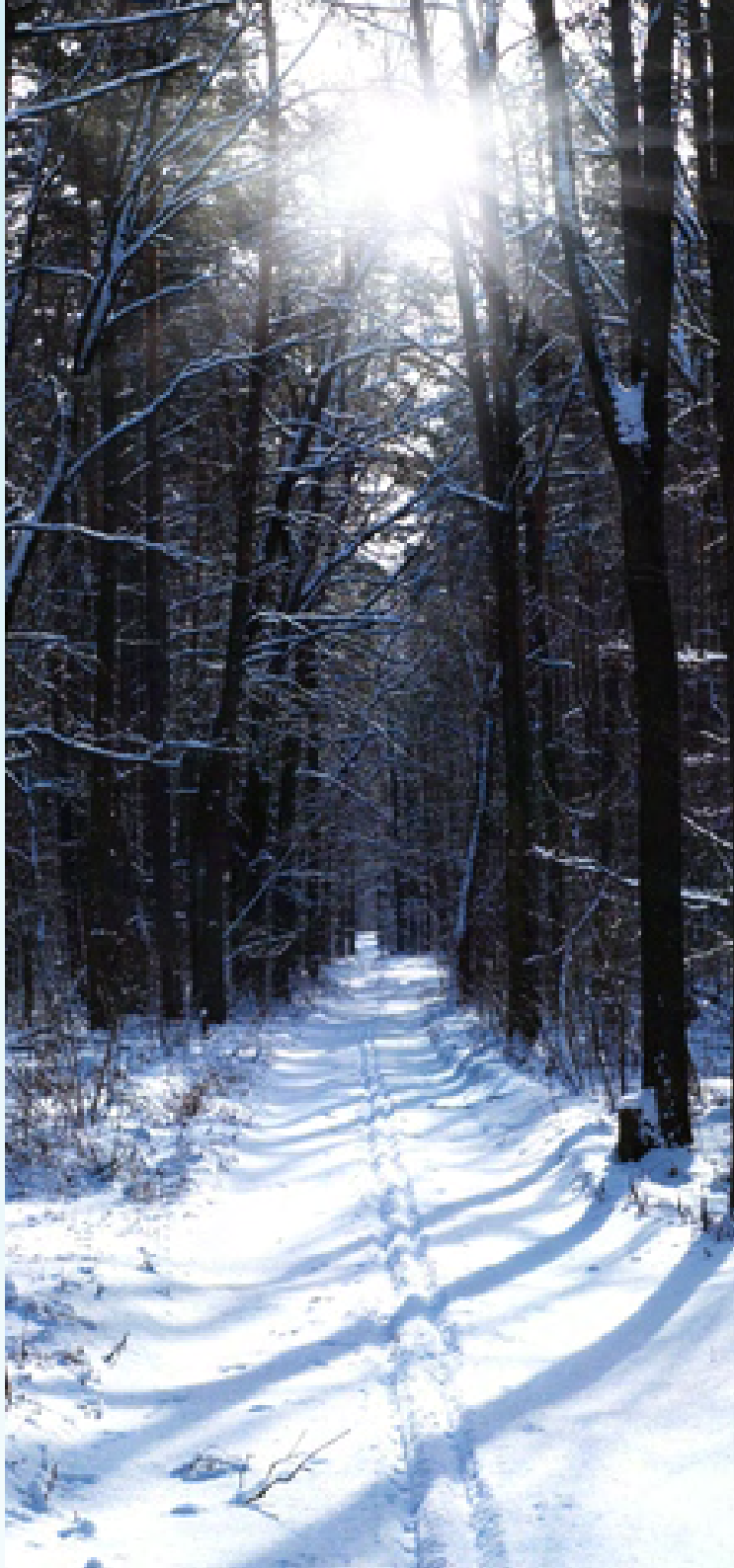
“So much for the ‘we are getting there’, eh? Gerry”.

“We are. We are. If you can just make it to the end, she will too.”

And she did. And I did too.

Thom

Rosemere, Quebec



Caring Is Harder To Do Than Just Doing Your Job Well

Jack Phelan

We spend a lot of time and energy trying to convey the message that we *care* to the youth we work with. Because most, if not all, of the people who are Child and Youth Care (CYC) practitioners support are low in Attachment ability, they view all caring attempts as behaviours that are not logical. The youth see caring behaviour as self-motivated, since there is no logical reason to do anything for another person unless it also provides a payoff for the carer. In the dog-eat-dog world view of a person with low Attachment ability, everyone is self-centered and has no need to care about anyone else unless they get some personal benefit. When people have been nice to them in the past, it was a set-up to take advantage of them in some way and this life lesson is very powerful.

So CYC practitioners often hear youth say that “The only reason you are here is because you are getting paid to do it.”

We laugh at this and reply that we do not get paid enough, or that we could make better money driving a bus, etc., but we are missing the point. What is being said is that the youth has made sense of our caring by realizing that we are getting a personal benefit, we do not really care about him. When we do our job well it does not necessarily communicate caring, but rather merely that we are a capable “staff” (part of the nameless, faceless adult world). When we insist on hearing a “Thank you” from a youth, intending to teach good manners, it is often understood by the youth as our pay-off, so it is not because you really care, you just want to be paid for your deeds.

Youth who are ego-centric (with very good reason) are the predominate population in CYC settings. These youth do not share the social logic of more developmentally normal youth and certainly do not see the world the same way that the adult CYC practitioner does. They actu-

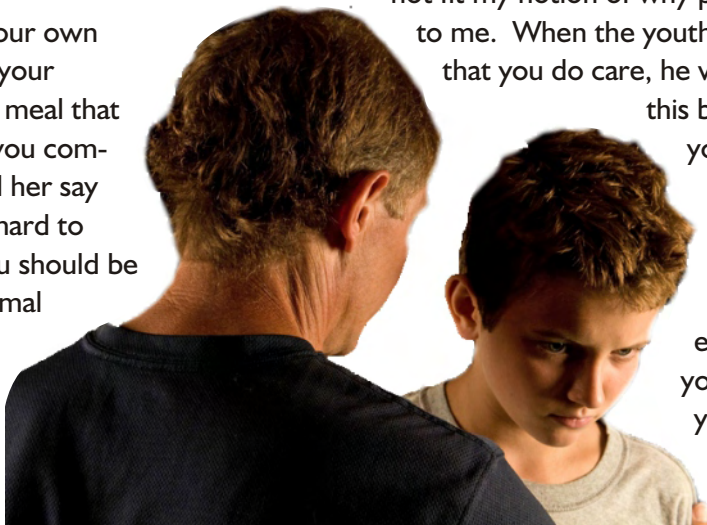
ally are quite invested in proving that we do not care for them, that we are only doing these caring behaviours for our own personal gratification, or because we are required to act this way by the job description.

Think about your own childhood; when your mother cooked a meal that you did not like, you complained and heard her say that she worked hard to prepare it and you should be thankful. The normal child typically thinks to himself, that's your job to cook meals, you are my mother.

Yet, if the same child gets his favourite snack or dessert one day, he feels loved in a special way, because his mom cares about him.

Child and Youth Care practitioners have to demonstrate caring by going beyond the usual job requirements and doing special things for each youth, particularly the ones who we are the focus of our relationship building efforts. Also, we have to do things without waiting for or expecting a "Thank you" because this negates the caring message.

When we join youth and families in the way that they actually think, not assuming that we already share the same "meaning-making" framework, it becomes powerful and useful for the youth/family. Our common sense function gets turned off and we begin to create meaningful communication.



So to communicate that we care, CYC practitioners must go beyond the job specs and usual daily interactions to create a message that will confound the youth – you are behaving in a puzzling way, it does not fit my notion of why people are nice to me. When the youth starts to believe that you do care, he will need to test

this behaviour. Some youth call after 10 pm to ask for a ride, knowing that the double coverage has ended. Other youth will ask for your attention when you are already too busy, much like children

in normal families all suddenly need to speak to their parents when they are speaking on the phone.

To do caring things and not get paid, means that we have to vanish quickly, not stand around waiting for a thank you or even a smile. This process will change slowly, but will only work with by starting with a careful, methodical approach that confounds the existing belief system (the world is an unfriendly place and no one cares for me).

So, being a caring CYC practitioner is not as easy as it sounds. As Bettelheim said, love is not enough.

Crazy Fights, Relationships and Child & Youth Work Mentors

Theresa Fraser

I can't remember her last name. In fact I may never have known it. However, Carol was the first Child Care Worker I ever met and she worked on a family unit at Toronto's Sick Children's Hospital in the mid 70's.

My family lived on this unit for at least a month. It could be more but it was almost forty years ago and a month to a little person felt like a really long time. My father left the unit daily to drive



to work in the suburbs and my younger sister and I attended the school on "the floor". My mother attended parent education classes during the day and I assume that our three-year-old brother stayed with her.

I remember that there was horrible orange juice for snack in a tin can and really great fruit cup that came from a big tin can. The morning staff taught us how to make hospital corners and

the night staff would stay up talking to my mother who chain smoked. The Toronto lights outside my bedroom window were beautiful and the carpet was always clean. It really was *always* clean and yet we never ever saw anyone vacuum it.

My family participated in family counselling, individual counselling, art therapy, and lots of therapeutic recreation. We were told at the time that our family was chosen for this program as it was a program for families of kids that were “hyper”. My young sister was the identified patient, the “hyper” one, but I too needed unrecognized intervention.

However, not knowing any specific concerns, Carol seemed to recognize that I was a kid also craving adult attention, maybe because I wasn't the “hyper” one. Carol taught me how to play Crazy Eights. I had never had played cards with an adult prior to learning this game. However, more than learning Crazy Eights I learned that an adult wanted to spend time with me for therapeutic reasons and thought that I was smart. I felt smart when with her and I not only learned Crazy Eights but also learned the importance of relationship.

I observed Carol professionally interact with other staff members, directly confront parents when they needed to be redirected, and intervene when a child was starting to escalate. She was re-

spected by the other Child Care Workers and was undoubtedly the best Crazy Eight player on the unit. I became the second best in my own mind and I graduated from the unit feeling a little smarter and a little closer to my father who as a young man of 28 was a good provider but was the parent that I needed to feel closer to.

As a high school student I read the book, *Dibs in search of self* and realized that I wanted to be a Play Therapist. However, there were no such College or University preparatory programs in the 80's for this occupation. Yet, when I read the program description for Child Care Workers, I realized that this profession also recognized the power of play and then I remembered Carol.

So in honor of her, I currently tell my Child and Youth Worker students that if they have no other tools in their pocket but a deck of cards – then they have the beginning tools to initiate a therapeutic activity and subsequent therapeutic relationship. So Carol thank you. You inspired me to become a Child Care Worker (a.k.a. – C.Y.W), foster parent, Therapist, Play Therapist and lastly C.Y.W Professor and it all began with a magical eight because as C.Y.W.'s we never know who our work will impact or how their work will then impact others.

www.theresafraser.com

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Ernie Hilton, MSc CYCA

Director of Youth Care & Operations, HomeBridge Youth Society

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‘This is what you do to little girls?’: Rational Detachment in Youth Care

Debbie Carver

After a particularly difficult day at the facility where I work, I began to ponder whether someone in the Youth Care field ever gets used to dealing with the pain of others. I am left wondering, is it possible for Youth Care Practitioners to rationally detach from the transference of the emotional pain experienced by the youth?

Placing youth in a secure facility for their safety and well-being is an intervention sometimes required in the facility I supervise for young women aged twelve to eighteen.

One day, a fifteen-year-old youth had just returned from an extended absence from the facility without permission, a pattern that had been occurring for quite some time. As the youth readied herself for a job interview, the Youth Care workers and I had to stall the youth from leaving so that the police and social worker could arrive to transport her to the secure facility. Minutes later, two police officers, the social worker and a transport person arrived at the facility. When the youth was told she would be going to the secure facility she attempted to bolt out the front door.

After being given direction from the officers to not resist, the youth became

extremely combative, kicking and hitting them. She was placed in shackles, handcuffed and then held face down on the floor of the hallway. I attempted to calm her down, telling her to not resist as she was only making the situation worse on herself. She managed at one point in the restraint to spit towards one of the officers. The officer then requested a ‘spit sock’ that he put over the youth’s head. This was something that I had never seen before, and I found it very distressing. My mind and my heart were both experiencing pain. Watching this youth being treated as an object and not a person, let alone a hurting fifteen-year-old child, was difficult.

While she was lying on the floor she turned her head towards me and asked, ‘Are you proud? This is what you do to little girls?’ Although I know that this was not about me, I have to admit that it felt like a knife through the heart. I reacted in an emotional way, having to turn my head away so as to avoid crying in front of my co-workers and other professionals.

Child and Youth Care practitioners are continually exposed to what James Anglin calls the ‘pain-based behavior’ of the youth we work with. He goes on to describe the term ‘pain-based behavior’ as ‘an abbreviated way of saying behavior, ei-

ther of an acting out or withdrawn nature, that is triggered by the re-experiencing of psycho emotional pain' (2002, p.111). The question to be asked then, is how do we respond to the pain? How do we deal with the emotions of the youth and still maintain our professionalism?

Inexperienced Youth Care workers are often exposed to situations that they have never had to deal with before. When I began my career in the Child and Youth Care field, I was twenty-one years old and straight out of university, with little to no experience. I had little idea of the complexities surrounding the field of Child and Youth Care.

After a single 'shadow shift', I was scheduled to work my next shift alone. At the time, there was a pattern of self-mutilation with the youth; several residents were engaging in cutting behaviors. I was left alone from 11:00 pm. to 7:00 am.

During a routine night check, I walked into a youth's bedroom, shone the flashlight on her in her bed, and saw red blood seeping through the white bedspread. I felt panicky and fearful as to whether or not I could deal with this. I had never been exposed to these behaviors or to the underlying causes of such behavior. After tending to this youth and providing medical attention, another youth approached me to say that someone else had also done some cutting. This awoke yet another, who was running around hysterical from the events she was seeing. I managed to get through the night but required a lot of supervision and debriefing the next morning.

I remember getting home and climbing into my bed, unable to sleep. I thought to

myself that although I did manage to handle the situation, did I really want a career filled with such crisis, and having to deal with the pain of others? I returned for the next shift and the next, and over twenty years later I find myself grateful for the choice I made that night.

As my practice as an intervener developed, I was exposed to many difficult situations with the youth. Some of the experiences that the youth and I had together involved understanding the nature of their abuse and neglect and dealing with their grief and loss or abandonment. Due to the depth of their trauma, some unfortunately required physical restraint to keep them safe from themselves and others, as they acted out their pain-based behavior.

One thing has remained consistent in my approach. Although I learned to intervene effectively and remain calm and professional in my interventions, the empathy and depth of feelings and emotions I felt when dealing with their pain has never changed. I still get that nauseous feeling in the pit of my stomach when I hear about a child's painful past, when someone describes just wanting to be loved, or when I see a youth hand-cuffed and shackled by the police.

Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training provides participants with techniques to safely manage disruptive and assaultive behavior. Part of the course speaks about the importance for Youth Care workers to remain 'rationally detached' from the youth. Rational detachment is defined as the ability to stay calm and in control of one's emotions, to maintain one's professionalism even in a crisis moment. It

means not taking things personally, even button-pushing comments that attack your appearance, race, gender, or competence (Crisis Prevention Institute Inc. 2005, p.9).

Through facilitating this training over the last ten years, I have found that inexperienced workers have the most difficulty with this. They tend to take everything personally, and assume that the youth's seeming contempt means that they are bad Youth Care Workers.

Experienced workers learn to use a variety of coping strategies. They learn to become aware of what might be a trigger for them emotionally and to reflect on what youth could say or do that the workers might react to. They learn to control their behavior by being preventative: getting proper rest, eating well, accessing a support system outside of work, and learning how to calm themselves in the moment. It helps for workers to be reflective, to take mental note of their reactions and ensure they debrief a situation with someone afterwards. Workers might reflect on why the youth are in the program in the first place, recognizing that the behavior is a symptom of the pain, and it is not about them.

In order to remain focused on helping to solve the problem rather than reacting, Rudolph Dreikus, an American psychiatrist and educator says, 'Amid a crisis, repeat in your head *language is behavior*. It is my job to figure out what the youth is trying to tell me' (as cited in Parish, 2008, p. 36).

Being part of a Youth Care team means that there may be times that we have to help our co-workers to rationally detach from a situation. Sometimes in the midst

of an intervention something might trigger something for us and we may get caught up in a power struggle or become consumed with our own feelings about the situation. I remember a few years back working with a colleague who had recently lost a child. We had been dealing with a youth who was pregnant yet continued to engage in behaviors that could affect her unborn child. She persisted in doing drugs and said that she had no intent to quit despite the team educating her on the possible side-effects. I noticed that the worker needed to disengage from the conversation as her own biases were surfacing. As an experienced worker she also quickly realized she needed to disengage.

Chris Walker, an internationally known change agent, supports the concept of rational detachment and ambivalence. He says, 'If you remain ambivalent to their emotions, you're absolutely remaining available for communication, whereas if you react, well now you know that their emotions were actually yours... Not reacting to someone's emotion can seem harsh because you aren't buying into it. However, when one person is drowning, you don't usually jump in and create two people in trouble; you get ropes and life preservers and things to help. So, reacting means they pulled you in. If there is no reaction, their stress is not your stress'. (Walker, 2008).

Should we, as practitioners be able to do our jobs with no sense of feeling one way or another about the youth? As a Youth Care Supervisor I need Youth Care workers that are skilled in rational detachment and can handle situations effectively

and professionally. However, Anglin (2002, p. 111) assures us that a practitioner's reactions to client's 'pain-based behavior' are unavoidable. Our work is relational in addition to our role of achieving precise contextual interventions through a clinical process. To achieve balance, the sacrifice may have to be an awareness that a complete and effective intervention will likely cause us, on occasion, to become over involved in the emotional experience of youth. The result may be that we react to the youth from an emotionally charged position, which can cause them to relive or experience further trauma. The result for the practitioner is that it may send us home stressing over the experience. Yet, distant and rigid responses alone will not provide the healing environment youth need.

The dilemma remains: how do we as practitioners balance a distant, calculated and rigid precision in practice while maintaining a relational, therapeutic context that creates connection, belonging and trust? I believe that achieving this balance is possible through engaging in an interactive supervision process and active self-awareness.

Actively participating in the supervision process with a competent colleague should provide a needed self-awareness of our pain-based reactions to pain-based behavior of youth. If violence was a part of our growing up, we need to realize that an evocative trigger from our past may influence our professional interventions. Our internal, possibly subconscious, meaning-making connections and subsequent reactions of triggers, like name-calling, sarcasm, gender-oppression, bully-

ing, etc., need to be self-explored through some process of reflection and connectedness and knowledge of how it might influence our professional practice.

Without an exploration of the depth and scope of our own emotional triggers, we, as professional practitioners, run the risk of creating reminiscent trauma for the group of people who we are supposed to be helping. Subconsciously reacting to our own childhood trauma encountered through an experiential trigger in the present daily life events of youth in our care, we may self-project a desire to protect ourselves emotionally under the guise of a clinical intervention.

Providing care with youth while staying detached from our own past trauma is a complex effort to do perfectly in every situation. However, those outside the minutiae of the treatment context will expect us to separate the two every time.

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Parallel Generations

Liz Laidlaw

Cruising through my middle years, I never really gave my ability to meet new people and make friends much thought. But watching my daughter make new friends and acquaintances at the age of almost seven has brought back memories of what it's like at that age and what lies ahead for her socially. Watching these children be coy, exclude, include and interact with each other is somewhat agonizing for me, the parent, especially since I've always been a little socially inept. I'm a blusher, am easily embarrassed, and what I say is usually taken completely out of context. My mother shares some of these traits, so I wonder if it's hereditary. Yes, pity my children if this is the example I'm setting and the genes I'm passing onto them.

The importance of how we function as social beings throughout our lives was recently made crystal clear to me. My grandfather, having just moved from Ottawa to Nanaimo at the age of 94, told me how difficult it had been to "break into" the bridge group at his previous senior's residence. He hoped that the new place

would be easier. I was horrified to suddenly realize that this process of connecting with people and attempting to feel like we belong never ends. I'm not really sure what I thought, maybe that I was somehow exempt from being socially engaged. I'm pretty much a heads down kind of person these days, with two young children, part time work, school, family etc. to keep me pretty busy (not to mention laundry and mowing the lawn). Obviously I should have been concentrating on teaching my kids good opening lines, how to make eye contact and appropriate school yard banter instead of going to the beach and playing with Lego.

When we start socializing our children as babies, it's all very innocent and seemingly simple. In retrospect, I realize the baby group I took my daughter to was less about socializing her and more about socializing me. We all lay our babies down on a big quilt in the middle of the room and just stared at them in curious admiration (mixed with a little bit of fear for us first time mothers). Initially I found talking in the group difficult, but then, as with most social situations, I eventually connected with one or two other mothers



and this eased the way and made me feel connected to and a part of the group.

Once our children become toddlers and preschoolers the challenges change. Sharing doesn't come naturally to two and three year olds so we expose our kids to as many situations as possible with other children. Even then we can see how different they are. My three year old son would just as soon bash a playmate over the head as share a toy, which apparently is developmentally normal (the reluctance to share, perhaps not the head bashing).

One of the positive results of socializing at the toddler age is that we get, by default, to know the parents and the environment our children are playing in. Most of us accompany our three year old on his play date to his friend's house where we get to follow them around and check out all the nooks and crannies. I'm not sure how this will go over when my kids are older, say in grade seven or eight. Is it okay to knock on the door and say "Excuse me, do you mind if I have a look around before my kids come into play? Could you open that locked door over there? Just want to make sure there isn't a Methamphetamine lab back there". The reality is, as my kids get older, I'm less likely to be friends with the parents of their friends (especially if I attempt to search their homes).

Right now, I am in fairly regular contact with the parents of some of my daughter's friends. At times, more communication can occur between the other parent and me than between my husband and me. There are phone calls, e-mails, coordinating registration of after school activities and summer camps, planning sleepovers,

arranging car pools etc. Two things occur to me. One, being the parent of a six year old is way more administrative than I ever thought it would be (and, am I over-scheduling my child? But that's a whole other topic). And two, I have to brush up on my social skills and work at these relationships. Not all of them come easily.

We naturally click with some people in our lives and not with others, and that's okay. To quote Jim Morrison, "People are strange" (and that includes me). This becomes very evident when we entertain one of our children's friends for dinner, watch other parents demonstrate their parenting styles, meet new co-workers, take the bus downtown or sit in the doctor's office. It would be ridiculous to expect that we will form long lasting friendships with everyone we meet. We don't have to become everyone's best friend or even agree with their point of view, although it certainly broadens our horizons to at least acknowledge them. While watching ballet class or t-ball practise, the adults can get as selective about whom they include in conversation as kids do. And sometimes what they're discussing is of absolutely no interest to others (that's why some of us have our noses buried in a book on the sidelines).

My friend Andrea and I have known each other since grade one. In grade four, another classmate and I stuffed all of Andrea's desk belongings down the heating vent (incredibly cruel). Twenty plus years later, Andrea and I are close friends, even though we live in different provinces. I realize this is unusual, both in that she forgave me (thanks for that A), and that

two kids who grew up on the same block and then moved all over Canada remain good friends. The kids my children are socializing with now are unlikely to be in their peer group in 15 or 20 years. Knowing that doesn't necessarily make it any easier when they won't let you join in their game of hopscotch, but it is the most probable reality.

It is a special gift when we do connect with someone and I want my kids to realize that. Friendships need to be nurtured and not taken for granted. We can learn a lot from each other, even those that we don't initially connect with or seemingly have nothing in common with. People move in and out of our lives and you never know when they'll make a re-appearance. As our environment changes, so do our relationships. This is as true for me the parent as it is for my daughter and son. None of us can live without the contact, approval and interaction of our peers. I just want to keep some of the pressure off my kids when it comes to these relationships. Maybe just being aware that these relationships change, grow, end and begin again is enough to

keep it all in perspective. We like to look for things we have in common with people, to connect in some way, which make us feel less alone, perhaps more relevant. All I can do is hope my children are lucky enough to make some good connections with people in their life time and that they treat others with and are themselves treated with respect.

So, maybe I'm not as far removed from what my daughter is going through socially and what she'll face in the future. When do we stop trying to fit in and get along with people? Never, I guess. Whether we are six and trying to fit in at school or we're a middle aged parent trying to get along with family, friends, co-workers and the parents of our children's friends, there are many parallels and challenges. Which reminds me. I'll have to ask my grandfather to teach my kids and me how to play bridge. You never know when it might come in handy.

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Changing practice in physical restraint

Anton Smith and Tanya Ulmer

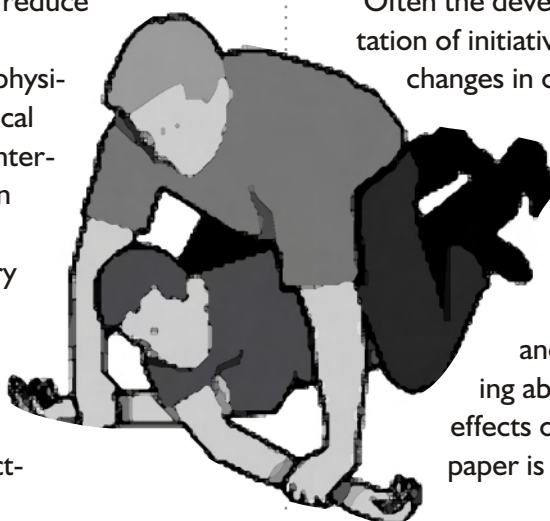
Introduction

Oak Hill Boys Ranch was established in 1961 in Alberta, Canada. It serves as a highly comprehensive residential treatment center for 11- 16 year old male youth. Young persons who are referred to Oak Hill Boys Ranch require residential treatment services for problems associated with trauma related to neglect and/or physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

Oak Hill Boys Ranch decided to embark on an initiative to reduce the use of restrictive procedures, primarily physical interventions. Physical restraint and physical intervention are terms often used interchangeably; however they have very different meanings. Physical restraint refers to a specific act of physically holding another person, restrict-

ing and limiting their movement to prevent harm to themselves or others. Physical intervention includes all direct contact with the young person with the intention of creating safety. For example, physical intervention includes physical restraint as well as less intrusive interventions such as guiding a young person from one place to another (escorts) or escaping from the grasp of a young person (personal safety).

Often the development and implementation of initiatives which lead to changes in organisational policy and practice are a result of serious crisis. The changes at Oak Hills were put into place due to the serious injury of a young person and also due to a questioning about the therapeutic effects of restraint practice. This paper is drawn from a larger re-



port and comprehensive literature review concerning the use of restraint. It outlines some of the data collected at Oak Hills concerning the use of restraint and presents a model for changing practice.

Therapeutic effects of restraint practice

The majority of academics, managers and practitioners who are involved in child protective services would agree that implementing an organisational goal to reduce the number of physical interventions requires little justification. Furthermore, the use of physical restraint has been questioned on some of the following therapeutic grounds:

- it has potentially harmful consequences to both staff and clients;
- it may reinforce aggressive behavior as a coping mechanism;
- it may humiliate clients;
- it may be counter-therapeutic for individuals with an abuse history (Miller et al., 2006).

We know that restraint can be very traumatic not only for young people and staff who are involved but also for youth who may witness the act. According to research (Hobbs et al., 1999; Fox, 2004), trauma-specific re-enactment may occur when young persons are placed in restraints. That is, they often relive traumatic events from their past during a restraint. Perceptions of intimidation, forced compliance or physical dominance by the young person involved mirror the lesson they learnt while being abused when younger. We often witness young people who become increasingly fearful,

angry and aggressive when restrictive techniques are applied, stemming from a history of trauma. Given this, our goal was to provide young people with an alternative model of healthy negotiation, therapeutic assistance and self-control.

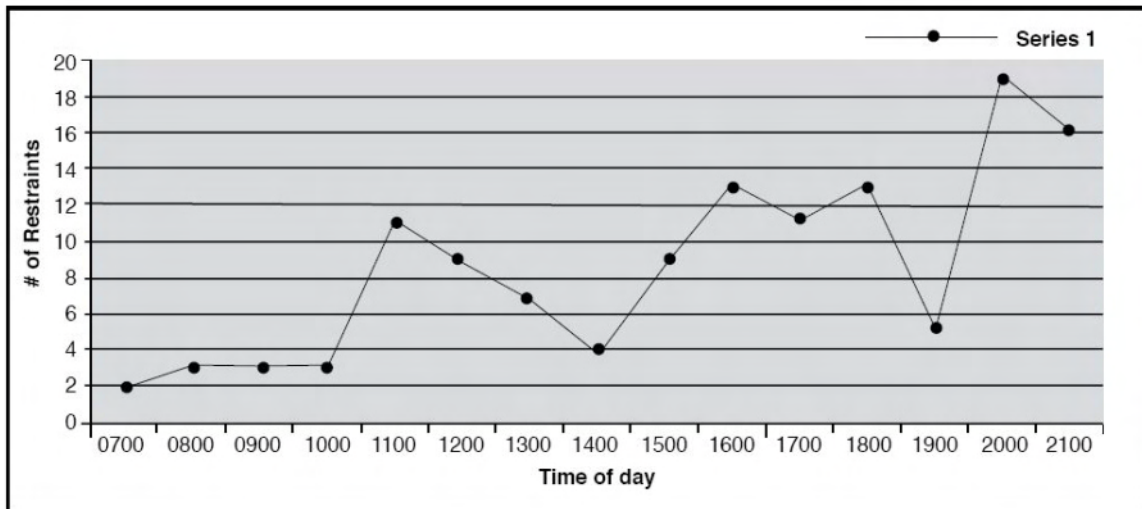
In contrast to abused children, Hodas (2004) concludes that young people who suffer neglect seem to have difficulties decoding and understanding emotions across the spectrum. Often, these young people expect conflict/confrontation from every social encounter which often leads them to take an aggressive stance, or, alternatively, to withdraw. These findings reinforce the theory that abused or neglected young people are more attuned to anger, or what looks to them like anger, in others, bringing about feelings of trauma from the restraint process. Hodas (2004) writes that –

we need to appreciate the fact that, even when implemented properly and safely, restraint(s) are intrinsically traumatic and humiliating to most children. Restraint, in particular, has the capacity to re-traumatise children, embitter them, (and/or) undermine therapeutic relationships (Hodas, 2004, p. 12).

In order to investigate further the way in which restraints were occurring at Oak Hills, it was decided to monitor their frequency over an eight-month period.

Frequency of restraints

In reviewing the frequency of restraints, with the time of day, for the period of April to November, 2006 there



were some interesting data points. The three peak times of day when restraints occurred most frequently were between 11:00 a.m. and 11:59 a.m.; 4:00 pm and 5:59 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. and 9:59 p.m. The first peak occurred after the residents had been in school since 9:00 a.m., after their last class in the morning. Given that the majority of the residents have cognitive deficits or a diagnosis of ADHD, having been engaged in class room activities for more than two hours, it would make sense that there would be an escalation in challenging behavior.

The second and third peaks, where restraints occur more frequently, account for 61 per cent of the restraints in the eight-month period. During the second peak of the day, the residents have an hour of free time which leads into the supper hour and clean up. During the third peak of the day, the residents have returned from evening activity and are typically having showers and getting ready for bed.

Although there are likely a multitude of

factors that contribute to escalation of challenging behaviour which lead to restraints during these times, there are two common features. First, there appears to be limited structured activity. The residents were engaged in free play or were being organised in ways where they were not all engaged in an activity. For example, only two residents were able to use the showers at one time and often other residents are left waiting to complete their routines. Secondly, the residents were engaged in activities in their residences. Three of the residences have between eight and twelve young people. Grouping these young people with their various challenges into a single environment, and who then have competing interests are sure to contribute to escalating challenging behaviour.

The times when restraints occurred least often were during structured organised activities. These included:

- The first four hours of the morning when the residents were just waking

and getting ready for school. They were in school for two hours before restraints showed significant occurrence;

- The hour between 2:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. when the residents were involved in options like computers or in physical education;
- The hour between 7:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. when the residents were typically involved in evening programming that usually involves high-energy recreational activities.

Future directions for practice at Oak Hill

In response to the data analysis, Oak Hill Boys Ranch adopted a six-stage process for administration and application of restraint reduction drawn from the work of Haimowitz et al. (2006).

1. Leadership in organizational change.

Haimowitz et al. (2006) suggest that to be successful, efforts to reduce restraints must start at the level of the Executive Director and other executive staff. Leaders should take an active and routinely visible role in announcing and implementing a plan to reduce the use of restraints. A key component of this strategy must be the assurance of the oversight of every restraint by the executive staff, including frequent communications in an effort to change traditional staff practices. Furthermore, an agency must create an environment that is very supportive and appreciative of its staff. Staff must believe they are supported by managers in their jobs and understand they have a voice in the process (Johnson 2004).

2. The use of data to inform practice.

Data should be collected and used in a non-punitive manner to facilitate awareness among staff members as to how the facility uses such interventions. The idea is to promote successes and look at areas where improvements are being made so that staff members can identify what is working and build on those successes. Haimowitz et al. (2006) suggest that facility data collection should include the following: rates of restraint (episode and duration) per six-month period, broken down by unit and (client) characteristics; trends in restraint use, and comparisons in rates and trends between our facility and other 'benchmark' facilities. Carlson (2004) suggests tracking where, when and with whom restrictive techniques were more likely to occur. Once trends are determined, modifications to programme structure during these times may occur. Fulmore (2004) adds the use of data to ascertain seasonal and temporal cycles in behaviour management and subsequent allocation of increased resources during the most needed times.

3. Staff development.

Staff training is imperative. As Haimowitz et al. (2006) state:

Efforts to reduce restraints are most successful in facilities where policy, procedures and practices are based on the principles of recovery and the characteristics of trauma-informed systems of care. This training should integrate trauma-informed care, the development of therapeutic relationships, value clarification,

cultural competence, the use of language, individualised care planning skills and the importance of the inclusion of service users in their care planning for restraint reduction efforts (Haimowitz et al. 2006, p.26).

It is also suggested that training on critical incident report writing is implemented. Training on incident reporting should include definitions review, reporting guidelines and documentation procedures to promote a consistent, reliable measurement of incidents, as reported by commentators such as O'Brien (2004). All of the literature reviewed indicated that it is necessary to provide a training curriculum that supports the reduction of restraints. It is imperative to the success of any initiative that training is comprehensive, not only focusing on proper restraint techniques but also on therapeutic crisis intervention (Colton, 2004). We recognise that during emergency situations, restraint may become a necessary intervention to prevent harm. However, implementing safe interventions in a therapeutic manner must ensure that restraint is truly a last resort, used only in response to imminent danger to the child or others, when less restrictive therapeutic interventions have failed. In doing this we need to provide staff with the support and training to assist them in carrying out their work in a manner that informs them of what to do, not simply what not to do (Hart & Howell, 2004).

4. Use of Preventative Tools.

Haimowitz et al. (2006) outline the following tools as being necessary to prevent and reduce restraints:

1. Client assessments to identify the risk for violence (including previous restraint history);
2. Client assessments to identify medical or psychological risk factors;
3. The development, with clients, of de-escalation or crisis intervention plans which support the client in learning self-control and calming techniques by identifying emotional triggers and environmental stressors that can lead to conflict or lack of emotional control. Colton (2004) supports approaches where staff members identify with clients and include behavioural strategies, the antecedents and early warning signs of behavioural escalation, and the use of creative de-escalation strategies such as changing staff, using humour and providing choices. Fulmore (2004) found the most frequently used alternative behaviour management techniques were timeouts, redirection, self-calming and verbal de-escalation. Individual behavioural programmes have been recommended throughout the literature with goals designed to focus on replacing the most dangerous and concerning behaviours rather than attempting to replace all interfering behaviours;
4. Creative changes to the physical environment to make it more calming and comfortable. Miller et al. (2006) suggest examining the therapeutic milieu to identify the triggers of aggression in the environment and the introduction of specific guidelines to reduce those triggers;

5. Ongoing implementation of daily, meaningful and engaging treatment activities.

Colton (2004), adds that programmes which have been successful in reducing the use of restraints are typically based on empowering clients — this is often referred to as strengths-based treatment to take responsibility for their behaviours (in the context of the client's physical, cognitive, affective and social development and disabilities), rather than imposing external control through programming requirements and staff interactions. For example, this includes normalising routines and maintaining safe, predictable environments.

5. Supporting advocacy in the residential treatment setting

Involving clients' family members, child advocates, children's service's workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers and other members of the young person's community in ongoing treatment issues can have a powerful impact as a prevention strategy to reduce the use of restraint. The presence of these stakeholders sends the message that the young person is supported in their efforts to utilise alternatives to violence and can serve as an ongoing reminder of treatment goals. Colton (2004) highlights factors that can enhance communication and involvement of stakeholders. This includes informing the stakeholders of the organisation's policy and when these interventions are used, including an explanation of why the intervention was necessary.

Staff interact with the client to ensure they are not isolated during the interven-

tion and staff are responsive of the client's need to interact and reintegrate back into milieu after the intervention (Colton, 2004, p7).

6. Debriefing tools

Staff require support immediately following episodes of crisis and challenging behaviour. Haimowitz et al.(2006) suggest that debriefing activities be standardised throughout a facility, and integrated into policy and procedure. They identify two distinct debriefing activities. The first activity should immediately follow the event and should be led by supervisor or other senior staff person who was not involved in the event. The purpose of this is to confirm safety of all involved parties, review documentation, interview staff and others who were present and assist in returning the unit to the pre-crisis milieu (Haimowitz et al. 2006). Colton (2004), notes that

debriefing with the client helps the client reconnect with staff, peers and the milieu. It also provides an opportunity to reflect on the behaviours that led to the intervention and to identify coping strategies and behaviours that can be used in the future ...(taking) into consideration the individual's maturation and ability to make use of the process... also a need to process the event with staff particularly around their feelings, reactions and safety, as well as examining the situation to determine what worked or didn't work (Colton, 2004, p.7).

The second debriefing activity is more formal and should occur a few days later, attended by a predetermined review committee which may consist of the facility executive, psychologist, supervisor and other residential staff member. The purpose of this meeting is to look at root causes, review and analyse events, and identify what can be changed to avoid an event in the future. It also helps to ensure that, as much as possible, trauma is mitigated for all involved parties (Haimowitz et al., 2006). The inclusion of the client's perspective is critical. The facility may appoint a staff advocate to present the young person's perspective.

Crisis management system and staff training

Organisations have a responsibility not only to provide the best therapeutic care and therapeutic services to young people and their families, but also to ensure that practitioners have the best skills and systems in place to optimise safety and therapeutic care. Organisational policy, procedure, and practice need to optimise both client and staffing resources to ensure there is the best crisis management system in place in order to work effectively through crises that have the potential to result in physical interventions. It is important that residential treatment programmes take a comprehensive approach to crisis management through ensuring staff are well qualified, well trained in the best models available and operate a consistent crisis management system.

Conclusion

This paper was drawn from a larger report which has committed Oak Hill Boys Ranch to a comprehensive initiative that will review and revise policy, procedure and practice to minimise the utilization and application of restraint within our residential centre. In this paper, we have presented definitions of physical restraint and physical intervention, our rationale for restraint reduction, a brief analysis of physical restraint practices, and a process for the implementation of new policy, procedure and practices to support better crisis management. It is hoped that by sharing our experiences, some of the valuable lessons we learned in our review may be of assistance in the wider child and youth care field.

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Summer Programs



John Stein

Summer is approaching, at least in the northern hemisphere. That means children will have lots of free time, and CYC's will have lots of time to fill with their children. That can be a challenge. It can also be a great opportunity.

Most of the children with whom I've worked over the years have been impoverished. Sure, they came from backgrounds where their families and the people they knew didn't have much money. But the real problem was the poverty of their experiences. Whether they came from rural areas, small towns, or big cities, many never ventured far from their homes or neighborhoods. In some cities, it is dangerous for kids to wander into a different neighborhood. They've never been to museums, or historical sites, to a college or university, to a professional or collegiate sporting event, or a zoo. Rural children may have never been to the big city nor big city children to the country. Many have never seen an airplane up close or been in a large office building. For many, their role models are laborers and housekeepers, or worse, unemployed or drug dealers.

It only becomes worse once they enter

State custody. Many of these children rarely leave their institutions, unless it is to move to another.

This impoverishment affects almost every aspect of their lives. It limits their education. There's no place in their brains for the things they are supposed to be learning in school—nothing with which they can associate so many of the things we take for granted. It takes a truly gifted teacher to create an appreciation for the courage and vision of an explorer for children who have never seen the ocean or the wilderness, snow or a mountain. Or an appreciation of other cultures for children who have experienced none but their own. Their impoverishment limits their vision, their goals, their hopes, their dreams. When they look to famous athletes or entertainers, they may lose all hope when they begin to suspect that such lofty attainments are beyond their reach.

Summer can be the time to begin to change all that, whether working with children in a community or children in a residential program.

Using Relationships

We all know that the relationships be-

tween staff and children are so important. But how about other relationships? What other relationships do the staff have? From family, high school, college, other jobs, friends, leisure activities, church, social organizations, interests and hobbies, perhaps music, theater, dance, camping, and so many other things. More, staff who are great at developing relationships can develop relationships with new resources—contacts at businesses, military bases, government agencies... These relationships can provide invaluable resources for expanding the experiences of children who are experientially impoverished.

A Great Program

The most successful program I've seen was in a group home for 12 boys. They began planning for the ten weeks of summer about two months before school was out. Each staff chose a foreign country in which they had some interest, perhaps because of their own culture, perhaps because they had spent some time there, perhaps because they wanted to visit, perhaps because they had a relationship with someone from that country. The country provided a theme for one week of the summer for which the staff took responsibility for planning some of the activities. Activities included such things as entertaining movies that provided some insight into the country and its people, music from the country, a presentation (either by the staff or a guest speaker the staff invited) about the country's people or some aspect of the country, its history and importance, perhaps visits to local places for presentations, (e.g., an Italian cultural organization or church, a Vietnamese

church, a museum), learning a few words and phrases from the language, learning a song or two, and most especially, the staff prepared and served a special meal based on the cuisine of the country.

Unless a special activity was scheduled, and there were many, mornings were usually devoted to physical fitness—running and other fitness activities at a local track, some coaching on skills in various sports, swimming, and athletic and other recreational competitions. Competitions were selected and designed according to the strengths and talents of individual boys, so that by the end of the summer, each boy had won at least one event prior to the end of summer awards banquet for the boys, their families, and guests, where boys planned and provided entertainment and received their awards.

Special activities included lots of tours—local businesses, TV and radio stations, the newspaper, a dairy, police headquarters, a court, city council meeting, the state capitol and legislature (politicians can be most attentive—these boys know people who vote and are future voters), college and university campuses, the Japanese and occasional other consulates, a nearby Air Force base in the next state, the local national guard facility, the airport...there were many more. Staff would prepare the boys for each visit, giving them some idea of what to expect and coaching them on what would be expected of them, including dress. They also made sure that people at the site were prepared for the visit.

Perhaps the most surprising thing for me was what these visits did for the boys' self-esteem. Because they were coached

to present themselves well, they were always well received and treated politely and with respect by adults—a bit of a new experience for many of them. Because they were interested, they asked surprisingly relevant and intelligent questions. The most interesting questions and answers often had to do with what it was like to grow up in another culture, dating, and relationships between the sexes. The boys received compliments on many occasions—these boys were not used to receiving genuine compliments from adults who were not patronizing them. On several occasions, people sent letters to the group home complimenting the boys on their deportment and demeanor and inviting them to return—these boys were absolutely not used to getting anything positive written about them. Rather, they were very used to getting reports written about their problems. When those letters were read to them and then posted on the bulletin board, well, it just made everyone's day.

The program also had several camping trips. Staff would take half the boys to an out-of-state National Park one weekend while the other boys went on passes. The following weekend, they switched. The final week of the summer, the agency rented a cabin in a state park in a neighboring state. Administrative staff and supervisors did all the cooking, cleanup, and chores, so that it was proper vacation for the boys and the staff. There were no chores, bedtimes, wake ups, rules, consequences, or anything else, except for one or two that had to do with safety, especially around the water. There was only free time, activities, and finalizing prepara-

tions for the awards banquet upon return to the group home, after which the boys got an extended pass before school resumed.

Some Comments

The first year for this summer program, one of the staff arranged the visit at the Japanese Consulate through a personal contact. (This was the stimulus that got everyone interested in using foreign countries as a weekly theme.) The boys learned the Japanese National Anthem in preparation for their visit, in Japanese. When they sang it, it was a hit. The trip to the consulate was one of the highlights of the summer. The staff who arranged the trip left before the next summer, so the supervisor called to schedule the visit for the next summer. The representative explained that the consulate was there to serve Japanese citizens in America, not Americans. But for the group home, they would gladly make an exception. That year, the visit was held at the home of the Consul General of Japan, a rather large and beautifully appointed home in a prestige residential neighborhood.. (The actual consulate was just a small suite of offices in a downtown office building.)

Occasional tours were also held during the school year. One such tour at Christmas time was of a large insurance company that owned and completely occupied a large high rise office building. Upon arrival, the company choir was singing seasonal songs in the lobby. Then the boys were whisked on express elevators to the top floor where the executive office suites were located. The view was fabulous. Few of the boys, if any, had ever

been above the second floor anywhere. This made the visit special and really got their attention, but there was more to come. Next the boys were taken to the multimedia center, an fully equipped auditorium with a stage and projection booth where they trained employees and did presentations to customers. They had a projectionist, a sound person, and all kinds of equipment. Next the boys went to the fully equipped fitness center where two physical fitness trainers were employed for their personnel. Then to the security station, and finally to the cafeteria for a nice lunch. In this one visit, boys got to see a variety of people with all levels of education—high school, trade school, college and beyond—secretaries, receptionists, clerks, bookkeepers, accountants, security people, physical ed. staff, a projectionist, janitors, food service people, sales personnel, public relations professionals, advertising people, and executives, all working together. Quite a difference from the group home. Quite a difference from their homes and neighborhoods. Quite a difference from their schools. It expanded their horizons, their vision.

The supervisor who created this program later used a similar approach in a community-based mentoring program for girls. In addition to various visits such as those above, volunteers had groups of girls to their homes for dinner, and a national funding source sponsored groups of the girls to fly (!) to other similar mentoring programs in the country (the US) for visits to exchange experiences, visions, and ideas.

Such activities empower impoverished children, expanding their horizons. They facilitate their education, enhancing their vision, their motivation, their dreams, and their self-esteem and self-confidence. They provide much food for conversations and discussions both with staff and among the children. Shared experiences and discussions are a great way to develop and enhance relationships. There is no downside.

All of these activities require vision and initiative on the part of staff and supervisors, along with a commitment from management and administration, including support to provide the staff with the time and opportunity to make the arrangements. A few require financial resources, but most require little more than the time and effort to make the contacts and arrangements and coordinate the schedule.



Dream a Little, Dream a Lot

Carol Stuart

I know many people who have been working for close to half a century in the field of child and youth care. I started a little over 30 years ago. When my career in child and youth care reaches half a century, perhaps I'll recognize that it is, or was, a career. I've always thought of careers as "planned," you start with vocational aptitude testing in high school to see what you are best suited for and then you take training to "become" a member of that vocation. I didn't really "plan" to be in child and youth care, it just happened. I think it is a marker of the professionalization of the field that young people now plan for a career in child and youth care. They have options for training and education; college or university? major or minor? They have varied settings that they can work in: Residential? School classroom? Hospital? Street Outreach? There are "career ladders" that include supervisory, management, and teaching positions. I wonder about how these options and the capacity to be more planned will affect our future work as a profession.

While I have never really "planned" my career, I do dream a little to test out which path I might take next. I also like to imagine where the field will be and encourage others to dream a little or a lot about their contributions to the field. I recently asked a group of first year students, just entering the field, to imagine what

they might be doing in 30 years and what difference they would make to the life of a child. These are students who planned for a university education in child and youth care, and worked hard to get accepted into university. They spent the term, their first term in a program that would direct the rest of their career, listening to the options available in child and youth care practice, reviewing the visions of others, and listening to the (sometimes harsh) reality of what working in professional child and youth care is about. I was really curious: What were their dreams? What would they be doing when they reached the age that I am now? How did they "identify" with child and youth care?

There are themes that run throughout the dreams of these students. While they still have several more years of learning left before they can officially begin to accomplish those dreams many have already begun this journey, some with their own children and some with children in their communities. All of them hoped and planned to connect with at least one youth and to make a difference in the life of that youth. I sometimes imagine for a moment that I went a different direction in my life; perhaps more technical like applied mathematics or more physical like sports and recreation. What do dreams look like in those fields? Winning a gold medal or coaching a young person to that

win? Developing a new technique for Tiger Woods to improve his golf swing? Defining a new approach to reducing financial risk in difficult economic times? Using statistical applications to track and prevent the spread of the latest influenza? I'm not sure that these imagined accomplishments would have the same sense of satisfaction as "making a difference" in the life of at least one youth. As vague as that dream seems initially, students were able to bring it to life and express the depth of passion that is present in the people that work in this field (and they haven't even started yet!).

My greatest passion right now is to be a youth probation officer. I hope to make a contribution to young people's lives that gives them hope and reassures them that while they might have made the wrong decisions it is not too late to make a 360 degree turn around. (*Kirdeen Matthews, 30*)

I am absolutely convinced that in thirty years I will be a child and youth care worker because this career enters into my heart. I love it and I want to devote my next thirty years of my life contributing to this field. I see myself as a youth worker or councillor devoted to helping children of immigrant families pass through the transition from their old country to a new one. (*Radostina Ivanova, 19*)

I want to be the person that a child one day looks back on when they are all grown up and thinks "she was the one who made a difference." My aim is to show kids that no matter what, they are special and can do great things when they put their mind to it. I believe that the heart of the child and youth worker is caring. (*Jenn Gettel, 19*)

I hope to challenge those around me to take the time to discover what they are passionate about and not be afraid of failure. (*Danielle Grumley, 21*)

There was a sense of caring, dedication and service to youth that ran throughout the visions that students developed. The idea that we need to give back something to the youth community and to help youth understand the importance of giving back was evident in their dreams. This concept of service and helping young people at risk or in trouble to develop a commitment to service to others is one that has formed a basis for many youth work programs. Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern (2002) describe the importance of generosity to children's growth and development. Students were dreaming about helping youth to change their hurting behaviours and teaching youth the importance of giving back to others. Many students were themselves giving back and encouraging fellow students to join them in the service work that they were doing.

So I guess I'm here in my community as the youth mentor to make sure that children are not left out because of family circumstance. Using everything I've learned I want to bring youth together, bridge any gaps, and give them the opportunities that were inaccessible to me when I was younger. (*Yousuf Ismail, 18*)

To be able to create an environment where they know they are loved and cared for, and challenge them to use what they learn to impact others. (*Danielle Grumley, 21*)

Although I will have helped a lot of youth in the same predicament, this particular youth came back a year later and

started volunteering his time at my practice. I then gave him a scholarship to attend university and he is now a CYC worker himself. (*April Iuliano, 18*)

Students have a growing awareness of the role of political advocacy and how it can contribute to programs and services for youth. As child and youth care practitioners we spend time and energy on equalizing power and engaging youth to work alongside them. It takes a different set of knowledge and skills to identify the politicians and the funding sources where money and power can contribute to changes that will impact a greater number of youth. They dreamed about being able to do this.

As our country experiences financial woes, I would like to involve myself in more political matters concerning child and youth care. To speak up for our profession and ensure that money is evenly distributed and that all communities (especially those in northern Ontario, First Nations reserves etc.) see the benefits from those funds. (*Robyn Kennedy, 21*)

Listening to the news and becoming more aware of my surroundings these past few years has made me realize that this world is not an easy place and a lot of the time it is not a fair place. I want to be the person who creates a fair chance for kids who don't get one from the beginning. (*Jenn Gettel, 19*)

The dreams of these first year students reflect the globalization of our world. They understand the poverty and difficult social conditions present in their own communities. They have a sense of the needs of youth from other countries as well as the needs of youth and families in

isolated communities in our own country. They want to change the conditions that First Nations children and families experience and better meet the needs of immigrants and refugees. Increasingly I meet students with personal experience; they come from countries at war, from communities and countries where the rights of children are violated daily, they have a curiosity about difference, and a commitment to working with and understanding many different cultures and histories as a basis for ensuring all children's rights are protected.

My current work at the First Nations daycare is to design and illustrate language books with an Ojibwa language teacher. I hope this is the beginning of a curriculum that supports the renewal of native language and culture in the classroom. I believe that my hope, care giving and ability to teach through the years will contribute to a child embracing their language, culture and history. (*Rachel Smith, 26*)

One of my greatest priorities is to fight for the children in Ghana, a country in West Africa where I hail from. Growing up as a child in my country of birth was a treacherous experience. It's my dream to form an organization to fight for children's rights and to make children a priority in all aspects of their policy making. I'd like to convince the government of Ghana to create a separate Ministry for Child and Youth Affairs like Canada so that children have mandated services including child rights, protection and youth justice services. (*Nana Asiedu, 26*)

Since I'm a first generation Canadian from a war-torn country in Africa there were large barriers my parents had to

overcome and sacrifices I had to make. I'm sure now that this is my path for life. I want to engage youth in how to deal with those barriers and hurdles. (*Yousuf Ismail, 18*)

I will have traveled to several parts of the world, working in different cultures and with different purposes. Regardless of what I am doing or where I am at; I hope to still be passionate about the work I am in. (*Danielle Grumley*)

As with most child and youth care curriculum students learn that SELF is core to the practice of child and youth care. Their dreams reflect this core value of the field. They have seriously undertaken a journey of self discovery and understanding, with the knowledge that as they come to know themselves they will help children, youth, families, and communities create a safer more respectful world. The little dreams and big dreams all come down to one thing — passion for connecting with a youth and making a difference in his or her life. They see themselves in 30 years — not much different from myself — still passionate about the work they do and passionate about children and youth. I see them as more prepared to start that journey and carry that passion beyond just one youth — to many, some of whom they may never meet.

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One aspect that helped to contribute to my determination and commitment to seeing the fulfillment of my dream was my understanding of the importance of self. Because I learnt from the very onset of my career to value myself, take care of myself and to be intuitive to my needs, feelings and desires as well as those of others, I knew that I could not give up on something that was so important to me. Also, from my training I learnt the importance of self care which allowed me to survive some of the more challenging moments of my career. The hard work, stress and all the troubles I have had to face over the years have been completely worth it and I would very gladly go through them all again in order to have the same outcome. The only thing that matters to me is that I helped young people. If I was able to give one young person hope and help them to turn a negative circumstance or experience in their life into something better, then that is the most important thing. As I begin to look towards retirement, I realize that my life has been and continues to be a journey of discovery. My greatest success has not come from a position or title but rather simply from self discovery and awareness and being able to help others do the same. My life has developed from a very average life to one that is anything but average. My life has made an impact. (*Katie Crosier, 22*)



Partners in Child and Youth Care

Kibble is pleased to have been a supporter of cyc-net since its very early days. Back then we had only one internet ready PC in the admin corridor, and the cyc-net newsletter was downloaded (very slowly!) printed and displayed on the general notice board. How times have changed!

A Brighter Future for Young People



"I never wanted a career until I started here..."

KibblePLUS participant

Today the Kibble Centre in Paisley is one of Scotland's leading child and youth care organisations. Young people are referred to us from across Scotland, and we operate at the intersection of child welfare, mental health and youth justice. Our uniquely integrated array of preventative and rehabilitative services encompasses intensive residential and community services, a full educational curriculum, throughcare and aftercare, intensive fostering and a secure unit. KibbleWorks and KibblePLUS comprise a portfolio of social enterprises, offering a range of solutions to meet the training and employment needs of disadvantaged young people (16 to 24).

KibblePLUS
JOBS CHANGE LIVES

KibbleWorks
LEARNING AND EARNING

www.kibble.org

Many of our staff are regular readers and contributors to cyc-net. For our type of work, it is the most comprehensive and contemporary web resource we have come across, and we are looking at ways of increasing awareness of the site and its contents through our intranet and monthly staff newsletter. We hope that this new format will encourage more people to access the excellent cyc-net resources.

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Kibble
EDUCATION AND CARE CENTRE



A Family Plan forged out of Commitment and Love

Lynn M. Welden

Family Group Decision Making (also known as Family Group Conferencing) is a process that brings together extended family networks—aunts, uncles, grandparents, neighbors, and friends—to make important decisions that might otherwise be made by professionals.

Prior to a Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) conference, a facilitator engages extended family members and friends, asking them to attend the conference. At the conference, professionals share information with the family group about the case. Then family and friends meet by themselves, without professionals present, to make decisions regarding the case. Subsequently, professionals and family ensure that the plan meets safety and legal concerns. Post conference, professionals monitor and review the plan's progress.

Alyssa (not her real name), 18, made some unfortunate choices over the last

few years, some with legal consequences. But her situation improved recently, thanks to a Family Group Decision Making conference facilitated by the Community Service Foundation in Pennsylvania, a demonstration program of the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP).

On probation and unable to function in school, Alyssa was in and out of alternative programs, youth detention facilities and group homes. By involving Alyssa's family and friends and tapping into their collective feelings of responsibility and concern, FGDM encouraged her to commit to positive changes in her life.

Bucks County Juvenile Probation Supervisor Dean Hiestand brought Alyssa to the attention of CSF's Conferencing Program, thinking that she and her family were ideal candidates for an FGDM conference. Laura Rush, conferencing program coordinator, and Jolene Head, conferencing staff member, agreed. Alyssa was very enthusiastic about the idea of a "family meeting," as were her mother and father. With juvenile court concurring, the FGDM process began.

Twenty people attended Alyssa's FGDM conference, invited by Alyssa and her parents. Head, the FGDM's main facilitator, observed, "This family wanted to do this. They owned it and wanted it to happen. The more committed people at the FGDM, the greater the resources and number of ideas generated."

When the family group met, Rush, Head, and Hiestand were present. "The professionals had been invited to this part of the meeting. They wanted us to be a part of their starting prayer," noted Head.

Everyone stood and held hands for the prayer, led by Alyssa's mother, who then read letters from friends offering her daughter work. Hiestand provided information and answered questions. Alyssa jumped in to share her own feelings, take responsibility for her past behavior, apologize to her parents and ask forgiveness from others she had hurt. At this point, Rush, Head and Hiestand left the room so the family could get to the heart of the matter: where Alyssa would live and get an education.

Two and a half hours later, the professionals were asked to rejoin the group. The family had come up with a plan for

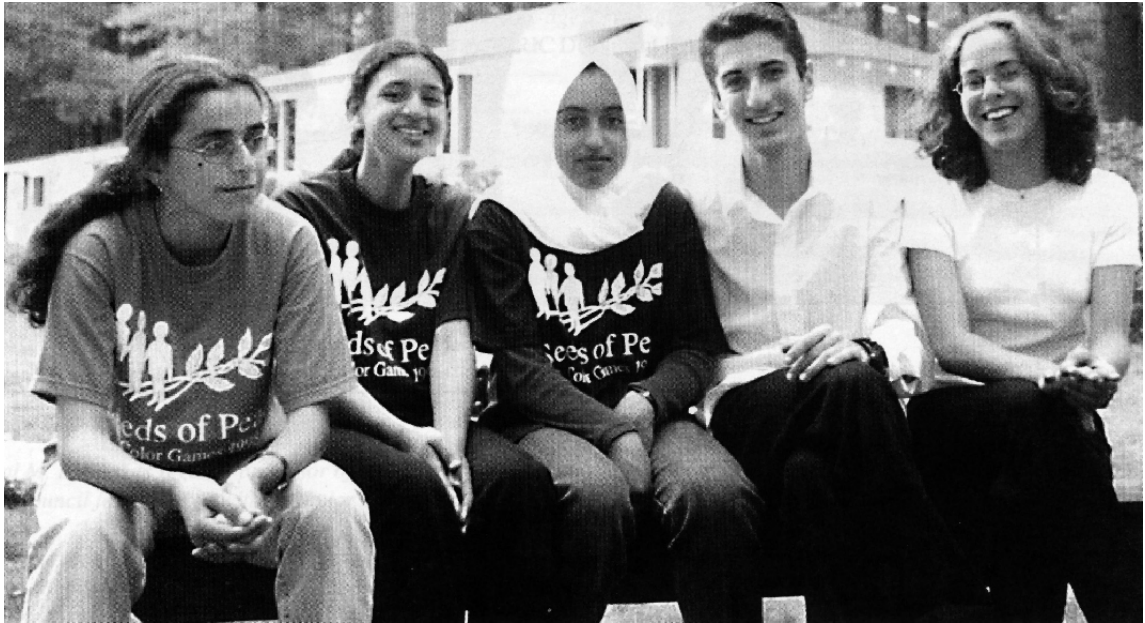
Alyssa, outlining solutions for her living situation, education and work requirements, and legal obligations, and stressing reconciliation with family, church, and community. The group planned to meet each month to review Alyssa's progress and to circulate a report to keep everyone informed. This FGDM was an acknowledged success, with everyone proud of having had a voice in the process.

The FGDM participants are determined that Alyssa will follow the plans they devised, because they were directly involved in developing them. "We all know she cannot deal with every point right away," said Alyssa's aunt. "But we are happy and hopeful that this conference has encouraged her to take these steps."

Alyssa now realizes that everybody who was at the FGDM that night loves her. They had met to help her examine her missteps and to contribute constructive ideas for her future.

Hiestand presented the family's plan for Alyssa to the juvenile court judge, who accepted it. Alyssa is now attending a local high school and is taking cosmetology courses. "No one has a crystal ball," said Hiestand. "But if the family sticks to the plan, I think Alyssa will be fine."

From: *Reclaiming Children and Youth*.
Vol.17 No.2, pp52-53



Israeli and Arab campers join each other at Friday religious services

peace building

Planting Seeds of Peace with Arab and Israeli Youth

Adam Shapiro

Seeds of Peace brings Arab and Israeli teenagers together at a summer camp in the United States to embark on the process of making peace between their peoples.

The idea is simple, but the effect is profound. Bring together Israeli and Arab teenagers, aged thirteen to sixteen — old enough to understand the Arab-Israeli conflict, but young enough to be open to new ideas about the situation — at a summer camp in Maine where they will live, work, eat, and play side by side for three-and-a-half weeks while learning about conflict resolution. Cer-

tainly it sounds idealistic, and many so-called experts and veterans of the region might even consider it ludicrous. However, since 1993, before the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles were even signed, this formula has worked and has graduated over 1,000 Arab and Israeli peacemakers, who return home seeking to develop the relationships and friendships they have established at camp.

Why This Program Has Worked

Seeds of Peace is based on the premise that real peace is made between peoples, not between governments. While politicians and leaders may sign peace treaties and engage in negotiations, the responsibility of establishing real, enduring peace will ultimately fall upon the shoulders of ordinary citizens. Even when treaties are signed, the propaganda and rhetoric from the era of conflict often lingers and continues to be reinforced in the popular culture and educational materials of those countries. For real peace to be established, a culture and environment conducive to peace must be established and nurtured. As long as the “enemy” is dehumanized and considered as the “other,” such an environment cannot be developed.

Seeds of Peace thus begins where peace treaties end—it takes a proactive role in putting a human face on the “enemy” by bringing together teenagers from nations at war and allows them the physical, psychological, and emotional space to meet each other away from the violence of the region. At a summer camp in Otisfield, Maine, along the shores of Pleasant Lake, these Israeli, Palestinian, Jordanian, Egyptian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Qatari, and American teenagers first meet each other on common, neutral ground and begin the process of humanization. That is, they begin to see the “other” as human beings, and not as terrorists or as soldiers—stereotypes that they are raised with and that are constantly reinforced in the media and in schools.

At Seeds of Peace camp, the Arab and Israeli teenagers are encouraged to think and act as individuals and are told that

they represent only themselves in the conflict resolution sessions and in life. This emphasis on individuality initially allows the participants to feel comfortable discussing and sharing their feelings about the conflict. Instead of representing a national or religious entity, the campers speak only for themselves and are free to explore their own feelings and those of their new campmates. Thus the first step toward recognizing the “other” as an individual is understanding oneself as an individual human being.

A Safe, Neutral, Supportive Environment

However, Seeds of Peace seeks to establish more than relations between individuals; rather it seeks to build a community based on the principles of trust, cooperation, tolerance, respect, and understanding. The first condition for creating such a community where peace can be taught is relocation from the region of hostility and from the daily exposure to external threat. The camp becomes a safe haven for these teenagers during the three-and-a-half-week transforming experience. The campers from different nations are bunkmates, peers in the conflict resolution sessions, and teammates on the playing fields. At all times at the camp, the importance of the community and the sharing of experience is emphasized and demonstrated.

Therefore, it is vitally important that when both sides arrive at camp, they are put in a setting conducive to accepting one another as equals. Establishing a safe, neutral, and supportive environment is central to the Seeds of Peace mission. The rules

of the camp, which are designed to ensure respect for everyone, are clarified the first day. To assure that everyone is on the same playing field, English is required as the language of the camp, even when a group of Israelis or Arabs is together with no member of another delegation present. By requiring the use of this neutral language, Seeds of Peace establishes a means of communication that does not favor a particular group. The use of Hebrew or Arabic can undermine the trust between delegations when those who do not speak that language believe (even incorrectly) that secrets are being kept.

Simple Human Relationships

Throughout the camp, the Arab and Israeli campers are required to work together in every activity, from cleaning their bunks to sharing meals, playing together on the sports fields, and creating art projects. After years of being taught that the “enemy” is animalistic, dirty, evil, and different, it takes basic activities like these to show the campers that the reality is quite different from the stereotypes and propaganda. When confronted with the reality that the “enemy” actually shares the same hopes, dreams, hobbies, and musical tastes, the Arab and Israeli campers begin to see each other as peers and friends rather than terrorists and soldiers. From these initial first steps of recognition and familiarization, the Arabs and Israelis often become fast friends.

The establishment of friendships is a means of giving the campers something worth preserving and fighting for. These friendships are tangible; they have value and are considered special by the Arab

and Israeli campers. When they return home and are challenged by others to explain what they accomplished at Seeds of Peace, the graduates point to the letters and e-mail messages they receive from their friends across the borders as evidence of the peace they made at camp.

An Extensive Support Network

An extensive support network at the camp helps nurture these budding friendships. The ratio of counselors to campers is approximately one to three, allowing enormous attention to be lavished on each camper. The counselor staff is composed primarily of college-aged students who are interested in the region and in conflict resolution. This staff, along with the professional facilitator team and the administration, provide love, support, and experience for the campers and work with them to help form cooperative relationships. Seeds of Peace also invites approximately one fifth of the campers to return each summer. These young people become “program leaders,” the peer support for the new campers. Their role in modeling how to deal with one another is critical. As the younger campers watch them treat each other with respect, and more important, as close friends, they aspire to behave similarly. Most important, the program leaders are an internal support network. They are one or two years older than the campers and share many of the same experiences of the campers.’ Additionally, they have had the experience of returning to the region following camp and can help prepare the campers for what they will face when they themselves return home.

Engendering Individual and Group Self-Confidence

Engendering a sense of individual self-confidence is critical to the process of reconciliation and humanization of the “other.” The participants are told how important they are from the first day. The selection process for the program, which is handled by the various ministries of education in the region, is highly competitive, and those that are sent to the camp are some of the brightest students in their countries. When the campers arrive at the camp and get off the buses, they are greeted by a long welcoming line of all the counselors, facilitators, and administrative staff. They are escorted to their bunks where they meet their bunk counselor and their bunkmates and are taken around the camp.

In the bunks the first night, the campers are encouraged to talk about themselves and where they come from. By first establishing themselves and sharing these stories, the Arab and Israeli campers begin to feel more secure in listening to and accepting the others. Through this self-empowerment, the campers are able to empower the others in the coexistence sessions where the discussion of feelings, emotions, fears, and hopes is a test of self-confidence and a further substantiation of the humanization process.

On the first morning of the program, Seeds of Peace also makes a specific point of validating each delegation. The entire camp assembles outside its front gates, where the flags of each delegation are raised while the youth from that delegation step forward and lead the rest of the

camp in the singing of its national anthem. This ceremony reaffirms each delegation’s national pride and serves as a reminder to the campers that they do represent their countries while at camp. For many, this public validation is one of the most important moments in camp.

After each delegation has completed its turn, the entire camp turns to face the flagpole closest to the front gate, reserved for the Seeds of Peace flag. While it is raised, the Seeds of Peace anthem, written by a former graduate, is sung by the entire camp. This final stage of the opening ceremony brings the campers together behind the flag of Seeds of Peace and creates an instant community, with the appropriate symbols (including green T-shirts worn at all times by everyone at camp) to reflect its uniqueness. During this important opening ceremony, legitimacy for the camp and for its mission of coexistence is won, while national pride is reaffirmed.

Planting the Seeds Back Home

By the end of the three and a half weeks at camp, many of the Arab and Israeli campers have learned lessons that would take most of us years to understand. The experiences they share as teammates, bunkmates, and confidants in the coexistence sessions are transforming, and when they return to their homes, the graduates often feel as if they have matured beyond their friends who did not attend. After the camp is over, Seeds of Peace alumni not only seek to maintain their new friendships from camp, but also try to share their experiences and relationships with their families and friends at

home. During this difficult process, the alumni are often faced with doubt, skepticism, and even scorn.

However, Seeds of Peace has established an extensive support network and provides substantial follow-up programming to facilitate the development of the alumni. For example, its regional office in Jerusalem coordinates workshops, reunions, school presentations, and the publication of *The Olive Branch*, a newspaper written, edited, and published entirely by camp alumni (see page 67). Seeds of Peace has also established a Web site (www.seedsofpeace.org) that includes a private chat room open only to the alumni, where they maintain a “virtual” electronic community (see page 68). All of these activities allow the alumni to continue building the friendships they started at camp and working together to prove that peace can be established between Arab and Israeli people.

One Friend at a Time

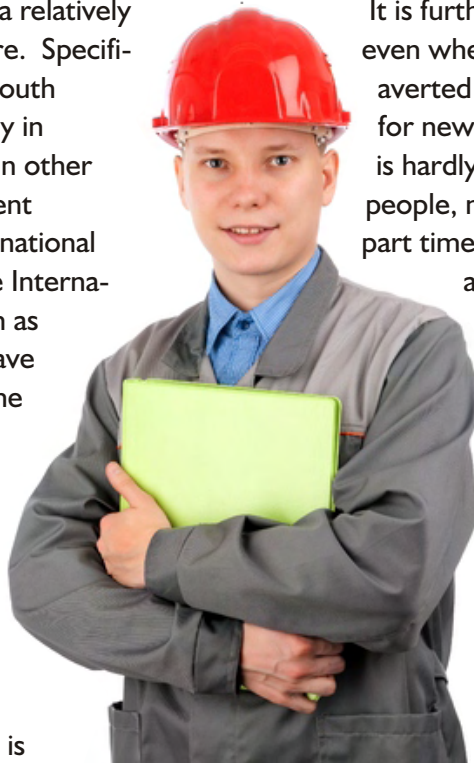
Each year Seeds of Peace graduates over 300 future peacemakers, who return home having met the “enemy” and learned firsthand that they can understand the “other.” What separates their peoples fades away quickly when simple, face-to-face human relationships are established. With the Middle East peace process precariously moving forward, the import of these budding friendships is increased. Each day at camp, and back in the region, on the playing fields, in the bunks, and at each other’s homes, real peace among people is accomplished, despite the hesitation of the leaders and negotiators. Seeds of Peace is helping to establish real peace among Arab and Israeli teenagers one friend at a time.

From: *Reaching Today's Youth*. Vol.3 No.2 (1999), pp63-66

A New Economy, a New Kind of Youth Work?

Kiaras Gharabaghi

Although it is not often mentioned in the Child Youth Care literature in academic and more casual sources, I think we have to begin thinking about an issue that is hardly new, but that has intensified in recent years with a relatively bleak outlook for the future. Specifically, I am thinking about youth unemployment, particularly in OECD countries but also in other parts of the world. In recent months, a number of international studies (by the OECD, the International Labour Organization as well as the World Bank) have pointed to some worrisome trends in relation to youth unemployment in OECD countries. Unlike unemployment more generally, which has fluctuated significantly for many years, youth unemployment has steadily increased. And so while it is true that unemployment generally was actually at record lows throughout North America and Europe only a couple of years ago, therefore implying that the current high levels of un-



employment may well reverse themselves eventually as they typically have in the past, youth unemployment has been high and growing even during times of massive, global and regional economic boom.

It is furthermore worrisome that even where unemployment is averted by youth, the job market for new entries into the economy is hardly inspiring; for many young people, minimum wage jobs, often part time, typically with no benefits, are the only prospects.

Three factors seem to make a difference in terms of successful entry and on-going mobility within the job market for young people: first, the level of education completed; second, the entrepreneurial spirit and knowledge of the youth, and third, the personal networks and connections of youth in the

high-achieving areas of the labour market.

Equipped with this knowledge, we ought to pause for a moment and think

about the way in which we have approached services for young people facing challenges in their lives and requiring the support of formal youth-serving sectors, such as children's mental health, child welfare or juvenile justice services and so on. We already know that we have not been particularly successful in helping these young people achieve the highest levels of education that would allow them to compete with other less disadvantaged youth. On the positive side, educational success has moved up in the list of priorities of governments in the US, Canada and Britain in particular (perhaps elsewhere too), but outcomes have not yet reflected this increased priority. It is perhaps also important to point out that a straight comparison of educational outcomes for youth in care (or looked-after) or youth affected by mental health challenges on the one hand, and the general youth population in any particular jurisdiction is not entirely fair either; clearly academic achievement is impacted by developmental challenges and mental health issues that the education sector has been ill-equipped to address and mitigate.

But education aside, what of the other two factors that impact on a young person's chances in this new, minimum wage, disposable labour force, economy. We do know that higher education, although clearly an advantage, is still not a sure ticket to economic success. Aside from the changing landscape of competencies

for particular career tracks, factors such as personal mobility, health, and the ability to invest up-front in one's career (cash to buy clothing, work items such as computers, tools, health & safety equipment required by law, etc.) also will impact on a young person's success, and we already know that the young people we tend to engage with are at a disadvantage in all of these factors¹. What I really worry about, however, is the degree to which youth-serving agencies and sectors are incorporating those other two major factors for economic success in their everyday services: entrepreneurial spirit and the building of networks within the economic elite (at least amongst local or regional employers).

I am aware that there are some services that do in fact focus on precisely these kinds of issues, but they are relatively small and serve only very small numbers of youth. In reality, the vast majority of youth-serving sectors continue to operate under the assumption of an old economy. By this I mean that the values and skills being promoted, enforced or rewarded are things like compliance, conformity, risk-aversion, safety-focus, citizenship. In many cases, youth are being streamed toward industries and employment sectors that have all but disappeared in the new economies of the OECD countries, including manufacturing and vocational endeavors of many different kinds. The message "you are good with

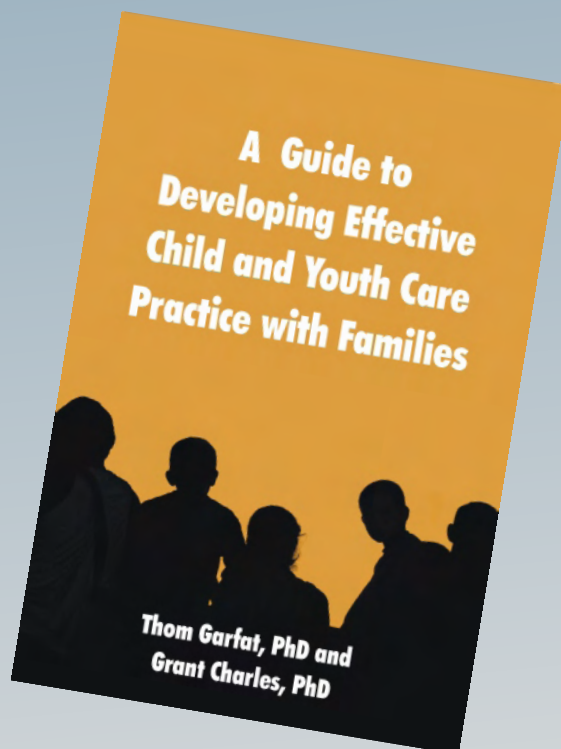
¹ It goes without saying that other, more sinister factors also continue to impact, including gender-based discrimination, homophobic culture, racism, and discrimination on the basis of mental health, physical or other disability, etc.

your hands” remains a common one.

And yet, here we are at a time in history when many things are changing rapidly and quite profoundly; quite clearly the deal we have had from the beginning of the industrial revolution to the end of the 20th century is off (perhaps that deal ended in the late 1960s, or specifically in 1968 as many French theorists have argued compellingly).

I think it is fair to take a moment and consider the characteristics of factors that lead to economic success in this new world: being persuasive, manipulative, connected, aggressive when necessary, assertive all the time, loyal to capital more so than to individuals, companies or even nations. Having capacity to assess risk and boldly step into the fray, knowing where to find information immediately, understanding the multiple languages of communication, some based entirely on technology platforms. Engaging, disengaging and re-engaging with people, in projects, to movements. Skills in public speaking, presentation technologies, and creativity reflecting the vast array of social, fashion, business and relationship trends.

None of these things are really compatible with the values and expectations of much of the youth-serving industries. This is not to say that everything needs to change, be abandoned or re-developed, or that all that we are doing is for naught. But it is to suggest that the time to critically reflect on whether youth work, youth services and the culture of youth engagement that has entrenched itself in much of the OECD area and especially in the US, Canada and Britain, is still as relevant as it could be.



A Guide to Developing Effective Child and Youth Care Practice with Families

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The Consultant as Container

Laura Steckley writes: *Over the last several columns, I've been writing about containment as an organising frame for thinking about practice – both the direct practice of caring for children and young people, and the indirect practice of supporting those doing direct practice. This month I asked my friend and colleague, **Judy Furnival**, to do a guest piece for my column. Judy is the Consultancy Manager here at the Scottish Institute for Residential Child care, and she has a wealth of experience related to the containing processes provided by external consultancy. Not only did she have the good fortune to experience good consultancy when she was in direct practice, she now provides it to organisations in Scotland and further afield. I've always enjoyed our conversations about this subject and I thought Judy could enhance this series of columns by sharing some of her experiences.*

The Consultant as Container

The first task of the residential worker is to survive the emotional, psychic and at times physical onslaught from young people in their care. This apparently simple expectation can at times seem impossible, as the level of pain and distress young people experience can often be translated into behaviour that is appallingly destructive to themselves and those who strive to enter into caring or therapeutic relationships with them. Moreover these young people have themselves survived by tuning in to and managing the anxieties of adults and seeking out splits among them to make them wider. Most workers will recognise the experience of “having their buttons pushed” by a young person and wondering how did the young person know exactly what to say to get under their skin. When we add to this already volatile mix the reality that many workers are attracted to the job because of their own difficult life experiences, it is easy to see that at times life in a residential child

care setting can resemble a boiling cauldron of emotion. A natural response when faced with this is to withdraw into a safe but sterile approach that avoids pain and connectedness by focusing on controlling behaviour through reward and punishment. Some degree of compliance can usually be achieved through this route and when children's pain spills out in violence or despair then they can be ejected or controlled through more restrictive conditions or medication. In some agencies workers may be left coping with a situation perpetually on the edge of chaos without even the support of such a behaviour management structure. In such cases the internal distress of young people and adults is reflected in the continuous instability of children's placements, dangerous behaviour, low morale and high staff sickness and turnover. There are many residential settings that are able to provide a much more sensitive and containing response to the young people who live there but this can only be achieved if the

adults are provided with their own containing experiences such as a clear philosophy of care, good management, regular supervision and training. Even with all these in place, however, there are times when managers, staff and young people can find themselves swept into an enactment of the tortured internal worlds that exist in residential care.

So what else can help? During my own time as a practitioner and manager I was lucky enough to have outstanding support from two external consultants who visited the therapeutic

community in which I worked on a frequent and regular basis.

One was a consultant psychotherapist who was able to provide a theoretical structure to provide meaning for young people's behaviour. Perhaps more importantly, however, he helped us to untangle the emotions evoked in us by the young people which sprang out of our own unresolved difficulties from those which were projected into us by the child. Many young workers who come into residential child care are still struggling with unresolved authority issues — I was no exception! I was the key worker for one very distressed, enraged and dangerous young woman whose life experiences had made her murderous towards adults. She was also, however, very intelligent and capable



of immense warmth and loyalty to those she cared about. I found myself identifying with this young woman in her perpetual struggles with adult authority as they mirrored my own struggles with more senior authority figures among the staff group. I also really liked this young girl and respected her courage and passion. It is

difficult for supervisors to deal with this kind of issue as they are caught up in the process. The consultant, however, was instrumental in enabling me to recognise that the over identification was defending me

from the pain and distress that this child was experiencing- she was not just a high spirited teenager with a bit of attitude! This allowed me to accept and contain her rage, hatred and anger, even when it was focused on me, whilst maintaining the very genuine warmth, love and respect I had for her. She is now a successful manager in a family centre with a young child of her own. Until she was placed with us at the age of twelve she had experienced multiple placements including a period in secure care and had been comprehensively rejected by all the adults who had cared for her. Clearly she was a very competent and resilient young woman but her capacity for hatred and destructiveness came close to destroying her placement with us too and without the containment I

experienced through consultancy her future would have been much less secure.

The second consultant was an organisational psychologist who provided role consultancy for individual staff and also worked with the dynamics of the staff group as a whole. Her position on the edge of the staff group enabled her to recognise patterns in the dynamics of the group that were dysfunctional and she reflected these back to us in a supportive but clear way. The experience of providing care for other people's children draws into sharp focus some of the patterns of relationship that exist in all organisations. We all draw our understanding of relationships from our earliest family experiences. Being part of a group of people who work together closely and are dependent on each other and management for the successful completion of work can mirror early life experience and particularly relationships with siblings and parents. This is emphasised by working with young people who bring their own distorted family experiences into the psychic mix! Moreover young people desperate for positive parental models often try to push adults caring for them into sexual relationships. We all know that many people meet their partners at work and the experience of working in a very intimate way makes the development of such relationships even more likely in residential care settings. All of this combines to create a potent and confusing mix of transference, counter transference, fantasy and reality. The consultant was able to support staff to explore these dynamics safely both as individuals and also in the staff meeting. Even the most well trained and well managed

staff group would hesitate to explore such areas without an external facilitator, yet it is precisely these unspoken dynamics that can cause damaging and destructive rivalries and acting out in staff groups that can have catastrophic effects on young people.

During the past few years I have had the privilege of acting as a consultant to a number of staff groups and this have given me a fuller picture of the complexity of the task. Most particularly I have become aware of the level of personal distress that is often carried by residential workers even before they begin to engage with young people. It is for example difficult enough to contend with one's own experience of childhood trauma without then being expected to provide emotional containment for young people whose own trauma is still raw and immediate. Alternatively imagine the impact of dealing with a violently aggressive teenager if you are still coping with domestic abuse at home. Discussing these issues with supervisors may be possible but to be honest about the depth of pain and emotion may be too difficult because of the fear of judgement. In most staff groups that I work with at least a quarter of all staff have this type of personal history. In many cases this can enrich their capacity for empathy but this is not without personal cost and having an individual safe space where they can explore these issues as they impact upon their work can be crucial for their emotional survival and continued professional effectiveness. Even for those for whom their personal experiences are not so traumatic the opportunity to reflect on how their professional practice relates to their internal world can enable them to

successfully contain the children they work with without becoming punitive or overwhelmed. The simple fact of working with children of the same age as one's own children can be acutely painful for some practitioners. They are confronted with the evidence of trauma and despair on a daily basis and cannot help comparison with their own children. This may lead to overwhelming sadness and pity for children and a confused guiltiness about the positive lives their own children enjoy. Alternatively there may be a defended reaction only to the behaviour and an unrealistic expectation that children in children's homes show the same level of competence and pro social behaviour that their own children display. Neither of these responses is helpful as it removes the focus from the real child and consultancy can provide the opportunity to disentangle these responses from the work of responding to the individual needs and strengths of children.

Providing individual containment as a consultant is not easy. I often feel I am literally carrying away vast loads of pain and distress as I leave the residential unit. More importantly, however, this kind of engagement cannot happen in the absence of a longstanding and trusting relationship. Most residential workers (including me!) view this kind of resource with suspicion and wariness. Fear of being covertly exposed to therapy or alternatively assuming that all information is shared with managers can make practitioners reluctant to make use of this type of individual space. What continues to impress me is that, almost invariably, once they do begin to seek out this support staff are capable of making

such extraordinary use of it to face their own responses and difficulties and develop their capacity to relate effectively with young people and stay connected to their pain.

Alongside this individual support I work with groups of staff in residential units particularly in staff meetings. Being a regular participant in this environment but removed from the direct work with young people allows me to recognise some patterns as they are emerging. A number of common themes occur in residential settings as a way of managing the intolerable anxiety evoked by the job. Sometimes there are divisions within the group between staff who are seen as too "soft" and those who are considered too "rigid". At times of crisis staff may focus on one member of the community (staff or resident) as the "problem" that needs to be ejected to restore equilibrium. Often a dysfunctional interaction between managers and staff can emerge in which managers complain about staff members' incapacity to act autonomously while simultaneously staff are bemoaning the managers' refusal to delegate. All these patterns are common and can be recognised by most practitioners and managers in the abstract but when immersed in a particular dynamic it is difficult to recognise it for what it is without some external support. If they are not addressed and managed, however, it is the children who are ultimately damaged as staff are unable to provide them with the consistent and attuned care they require and in some cases young people may be directly affected if, for example, their placement is terminated. Inevitably in residential care

these situations recur and can never be permanently resolved because the work is so inherently stressful that such self-protective but dysfunctional dynamics continue to emerge in even the most reflective and well managed staff groups.

I am not suggesting that consultancy is the only or even most important source of emotional containment for staff, indeed I would suggest it is probably most effective in an organisation that already has good structures of support for staff. What I am sure of from my own experience as practitioner and consultant, as well as through others who have received good consul-

tancy in their own organisations, is that it can provide invaluable containment and enhance practice. In fact I would argue that it is unethical to provide residential care without ensuring that such consultancy is built in to the staff support system. The skills required for undertaking consultancy already exist widely in the professional community involved with distressed children — can we afford not to use these skills to help adults survive in residential care and to enable children to flourish in their lives?



Drop In

Mark Krueger

This column is another in a series of columns in which I have written about writing and morality in child and youth care. I was moved to write it in a recent discussion about meaning making, reflective research, and a phenomenological approach to our work.

Last week I went with my youth work class to visit a drop in center for youth. The drop in center is a collaborative effort. Several community organizations have pitched in to make it work. It is a place where hard to reach youth from the community can “drop in” for activities, group counseling, tutoring, video games, and/or to just hang out and get warm. They can also do their laundry and take a shower if they wish. Many of them spend most of the time on the streets, or moving from one house to another. And the center is a place where they can feel safe and meet some of their needs.

Word is put out on the streets about it through several sources, including a street van that drives around at night trying to connect with youth and steer them toward resources. A block from a bus stop it is easy for youth who do not live

nearby to access. Bus tickets are handed out for future visits. What make the center work are the staff members and the youth. With a strong mentoring program developed by a former student in my classes, youth soon learn how to help one another. It is part of the culture of the organization. When you attend the drop in center you receive care and help, and learn how to give care and help to others.

No drugs or guns are allowed. Youth put their possessions in a paper bag before they enter, and collect them when they leave. The workers don't question what's in the bags. They suspect there are some weapons and drugs. This creates a moral dilemma. Like many of the staff members I was and am conflicted by this

policy. The staff members' reason for this policy is that if they take these items away the youth might not return. I am not sure what I would do. The idea



that youth walk around on the streets with illegal weapons and drugs really bothers me, even though I am aware they feel guns are needed for safety where they live and drugs are prevalent. Too many youth are being shot in our city, often over drugs. Adding more guns and drugs to the situation doesn't seem like a good plan. No matter what their lives were like, I wouldn't want them to think I gave them permission to have these items. I would try to understand and say no at the same time. During my career I have known three youth who were shot and killed in accidents with guns. Each time it was such a waste of a young life.

Youth peer mentors taught our class. These are young people who are paid to mentor other youth. Most of them have previous experience at the drop in center or the overnight shelter the organization runs at another location. For this class, about ten youth mentors, young men and women, were on hand to teach about fifteen of us. First, they gave us a tour. A few youth were hanging out in the lounge area. Some were working on computers in the computer area. We saw the showers, and kitchen. Two youth were having a snack. A support group was underway. Several staff members and a student in field placement were engaged with the youth. Everyone was friendly.

The meeting was held in a dining area. We sat around several tables; the peer mentors and a staff member to one side and the students and me to the other side. The staff member was intentionally silent. He had just come from a support group session and wanted the mentors to run the class. A leader in developing the peer

mentor program, he was not about to undermine the process. He was a student in my classes several years earlier. I jokingly made a bet with him beforehand that he could not stay silent. He won. The peer mentors ran the entire event. When they directed a question to him, he simply turned it back to them.

They had rehearsed the session beforehand. I was invited to the rehearsal but couldn't make it. The peer mentors gave me some heat about this. We introduced ourselves by saying two true things about ourselves and making one thing up. The group had to guess what was true. This was a fun exercise. Some of the youth made up bizarre stories about themselves. Some of these stories turned out to be true.

Then the youth told us a little about the program and what they liked, mainly the food and staff members. After this we were asked to join in several role plays. The youth had chosen several conflict situations that occur at the center. First they showed us the wrong way to handle a situation. Mentors, playing the roles of youth, challenged, argued and resisted a mentor playing the role of a youth worker. When the worker "screwed up" there was much laughter.

Then they asked the students to step in and show how they would handle it. In one situation a youth entered the program under the influence of drugs. In another situation a young lady was disrespecting a worker. In each situation the students tried to be professional. They used preventive and conflict resolution strategies we had discussed and practiced in class. You could tell they were uneasy; they

wanted to impress their peers and me. As they fumbled for the right thing to say or do, I got a kick out of it, and so did the youth, who “played them” for all it was worth. One young lady was particularly good at this. With a gift for street talk and an awareness of how touch the workers might be about boundaries, she kept the student off guard. A couple students and one peer mentor in particular, who showed us how to do it, were effective. They were not trying to be anything other than themselves.

In one situation a youth was preoccupied with a hand held electronic device. There are so many today. For the most part I don’t know what they are called or what they do other than process information and create instant access to friends, games, and any number of desirable and undesirable links. Let’s just say it was a cell phone.

The preoccupied youth was supposed to be in a group activity. Two students tried to convince him to put the cell phone away and join the activity. He effectively got them into power struggles he knew he would win because they would try to reason with him, or do the right thing according to what they had learned in class. At one point one of the peer mentors, who I know, said, “Mark, you’re the professor, why don’t you show them.”

I laughed nervously. I was on the spot. “Sure,” I said and got up.” They jeered me, jokingly. Several thoughts race through my head as I approached the makeshift stage. The crowd waited with anticipation to see what I would do. It was as if all I had learned and experienced in these situations raced through my head.

Then suddenly as I approached my head cleared and I simply said “give me that” and in one swift move took the device out of his hand and put it in my pocket. “We need you in our activity. You can have this back when we are done.” Surprised and caught off guard, the youth smiled and came along. The others applauded.

There was nothing professional about what I did other than I reacted naturally. It could have turned out differently, but it was the right thing to do at the time, and it showed that I really wanted him in the activity and wasn’t about to get involved in a game of reasoning.

I think the students were surprised by what I did. I was. Afterwards I felt very good about it. “Too often I think our professionalism gets in the way of doing what our instincts tell us to do,” I said as we debriefed in class the following week.

“Maybe they should have the same thing about the paper bags I thought. “Give me those drugs and guns. They do you no good in here or out there. You are safer without them. We want you with us now, here in the moment, and later. ”

We went on to discuss the pros and cons of this comment. We tried to look at it through the eyes of the youth and our own stories. We also decided to donate some funds from the class budget for bus tickets.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Mark', written in a cursive style.

Nils Ling

Where The Sun Don't (Usually) Shine



“Okay, I think we’re all set up. Let’s try a few without the clothes.”

So began my first nude photo shoot.

Regular readers will remember that a few weeks ago I was asked to take part in a fundraising project for my local Writer’s Guild. They asked if I would agree to have my photo taken by a renowned photographer for a calendar they were going to publish to raise money for some very worthwhile activities.

I agreed immediately, which is when the other shoe dropped. I was told that for this calendar, I would, in fact, actually be dropping my other shoe. And shirt. And pants. And whatever else I was wearing.

The working title of the project was “Writers in the Raw”. Which is what they were hoping I would be in.

Now, I don’t know very many people who love their bodies. The human body may have been perfect when it was created, but then God turned it over to us. And frankly, some of us do our best to run ours into the ground.

I’m no different from anyone else. I know my body has flaws. Some of them are right out there in the open. Others I

hide with smart clothing choices. Like, say, a catcher’s mitt. I dangle that mitt behind me and nobody can tell I have a butt the size of a Volkswagen.

What I’m saying is, I did not approach this whole idea of posing in my birthday suit without at least some trepidation. But I had agreed, however hastily, and a man’s word is his bond.

The shoot was at a beach retreat way out in the country. I pulled up and I met the photographer, a nice fellow named John.

We began looking around for likely settings for the shot. As we did, I noticed that John was wearing a pullover shirt made of mosquito netting. “How are the bugs?” I asked.

“You don’t wanna know,” he said.

See, you don’t get a sense of that in, say, the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue photographs. The women lolling about on the beach in those pictures don’t seem at all concerned with insects.

I promise you they have never visited the beach I was on.

From the time we walked down to the sand, the bugs were all over me. Mosquitoes formed a cloud around my head.

Deer flies darted in for a quick nip. And hovering around was a lone, angry horse fly.

Horse flies are the big guns, the B52s of the insect world. They are ungainly and fat and relatively slow, so they rely on stealth. Horse flies come at you from behind. They land hard, but they hope you won't notice and they can do their damage and get away before you're able to twist around and swat them.

And they do inflict damage. When a horse fly bites you, you lose weight.

So I was aware of the bug issue when we finally found a stretch of beach. We shot a couple of samples fully dressed, and finally the photographer seemed satisfied.

"Okay, I think we're all set up. Let's try a few without the clothes."

I took a deep breath and peeled.

Now, this calendar isn't going to be obscene or anything. They encouraged me to bring a prop, something to strategically cover everything that legally ought to be covered. I brought a ukelele, because something about a ukelele just makes me giggle. It is a ridiculous, tiny instrument. (Feel free to insert your own joke at my expense here.)

And yes, the ukulele is a small instrument, but ladies (and/or gentlemen), let me just say that if your man can't be adequately covered by a ukulele, do not let him near you without paramedics and a reconstructive surgeon on your speed dial. I'm just saying.

With the ukelele in place I was decent, but just (pardon the pun) barely. There was a lot of me left exposed to nature.

But I posed, and John began to shoot. And shoot. And shoot. And as things

dragged on, I became acutely aware of that horse fly hovering about. It circled lazily, a low, ever-present drone as it bided its time.

"Just a couple more," said John. "Tilt your head back a bit. And oh, dear, lower the ukelele some more." Click. Click. Click.

And suddenly I realized I wasn't hearing the droning noise any more.

The shoot ended the moment the horse fly sunk his choppers into my tender little tushie. I yelped, swatted at him, and missed. He got away with enough of me to share with his buddies for a week. In horse fly circles, they will tell stories about me for generations. I was his Great White Whale.

Well, we sacrifice for our art. Van Gogh gave an ear. I gave a chunk of my butt. As painful as it was, I still felt pretty good about doing the shoot. I asked John how the other writers handled the bugs.

"Oh, uh ... most of them kept their clothes on," he said.

Great. Just ... great.

This feature: From Nils Ling's book *Truths and Half Truths*. A collection of some of his most memorable and hilarious columns.

Write to him at RR #9,
747 Brackley Point
Road, Charlottetown,
PE, C1E 1Z3, Canada.



The Rusty Nail

Estella Abraham

CEO, *Fostering First International*

Some people think blogging is a new activity, but it's actually as old as the hills! The formats may have changed, but communicating everyday observations is not the domain of the cyber generation.

In ancient times, stories were told through hieroglyphics drawn on walls or on papyrus. In my lifetime cinematography, print, radio and podcasts have all been used. What blogging has made fashionable once again is expressing thought and opinion. How do we help the children and young people we care for express themselves?

Recently I was watching the premiere of a film recorded by some of our carer leavers; they had left care over a 12 year period and all aged out of our care, having stayed with us for between 2 and 7 years. They were talking about their experiences, the highs and the lows, the fun and the pain.

The focus of the film was to reflect on what belonging means and they did so with such eloquence. Each had a slightly different perspective on their journey through care. Not one said they didn't want to belong; some said they didn't need a second mum and dad, but they did want someone to care for and defend them.

As adults not many of us can move on to a new emotional relationship immediately after we have left or finished one. So

why do we expect children and young people to do this?

Being removed from birth parents or moved from one foster carer to another is not something a cup of tea and a piece of toast can heal. For some they never get over it and for others they may, but in their time, not yours.

I can remember when I was 9 years old, my mother went abroad to meet up with my father. She was away for 6 weeks so my adult sister looked after me in her home. She took me to the doctors because all I would do was sleep and she was worried about me. I can recall some of my feelings and thoughts: 'Was I adopted?' 'Was my mother really going to come back?' 'Why hadn't she told me?'

One day whilst she was away, I walked into a piece of wood with a nail sticking out and needed treatment for the hole in my leg. But at the time of the incident I was numb to any feeling and didn't know it had happened until I changed my clothes and saw the blood.

I was emotionally and physically numb. I was the youngest of 5 children, securely attached and with both birth parents at home. My mum was my primary carer because my dad was in the merchant navy and away for long periods. She had always been there; and then she wasn't. I suddenly had to live with my sister and her family and do things the way they did. I can't really imagine what the children we care for have experienced, or what they feel or think.

Let's not second guess and afterwards try to make amends; let's try to let them just be, and create a safe space for them to belong in.

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From Colorado

As a grandparent who lives almost 5000 miles from my nearest grandchildren, I was delighted to spend a few days meeting my new Granddaughter Caitlin recently and renewing contact with my 2 year-old Grandson Jacob. This coincided with doing some work around Key Developmental Assets as they apply with young children under the age of 5. As the new KDA Recording and Information System is introduced across 3000 foster placements, *Help-Info* buttons will offer Foster Carers tips, examples and ideas about how these 20 External and Internal Assets can be nurtured with young children using a daily life approach to child and youth care.



Carer Family Support begins very early

Carer Family Support is an External Asset that is frequently taken for granted. Where there were once large extended families within reasonable geographic proximity, this key developmental asset was readily available and supported within cultural traditions. However, through migration and family disruption, many families (like ours) no longer have such close family support networks. All too often child and youth care workers fill in the gaps. Important illustrations of this can be found in South Africa where child and youth care workers from local communities step in as *Isibindi* workers to support children orphaned by HIV-AIDS, supporting them as family groups in their own homes.



Safety and Learning Opportunities

Safety is another External Assets included in our list of Key Developmental Assets. Safety is at the core of risk assessments and child protection activities, making this an essential starting place for child and youth care. Learning Opportunities represent an Internal Asset in our list of KDAs. Learning around matters of safety is a daily feature of care with under 5s.



Engaging in Learning Activities

Another Internal Asset that requires nurturing with very young children involves Engaging in Learning Activities. Carer time spent early with young children frequently establishes the foundation for how children will approach formal education. The Parents as First Teachers folk are especially keen to get this message across. Moderating access to television and computers helps young children engage more actively in purposeful activities, nurtured through relationships that matter. It's not so surprising when they find learning is fun!

Planning and Decision-Making is an Internal Asset which some Foster Carers have said doesn't apply with babies and toddlers. Whoa! Anyone who thinks like this is missing what's going on in the moment by moment encounters of caring. Would this 2 year-old like the blue fork or this red fork? Would he like to read this book or that one? Would this 2 year-old like this cookie or that piece of fruit? 'Either-or' options teach young children to practice making decisions. This nurtures another Internal Asset – Personal Power – that is immediately apparent. When



Planning & Decision-Making and Personal Power

Carers make all the decisions for young children they often experience more tantrums in the process.

Positive Carer-Child Communication is the last KDA I watched between my grandkids and their parent. I'm reminded of how Henry Maier used to say "a whole developmental stage of communication occurs before any words are spoken"! Eye contact, attending, early rhythmic interactions – they are all there – just as you said, Henry! I also remember us talking about how care workers who spend time around young children frequently experience more ear, nose and throat infections. That was so true for me and it's taken me 3 weeks to recover from the RSV virus! Still, find time to enjoy being with young children! I wouldn't miss it for a minute. Be well!



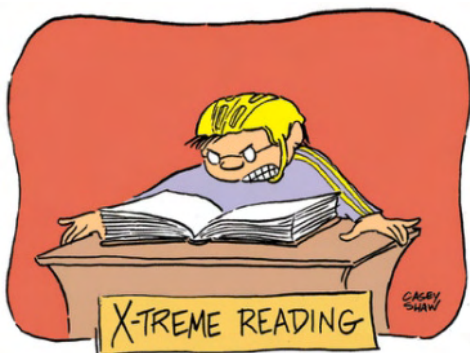
Positive Carer-Child Communication

EndNotes



Make your own Moments

No ball needed, no field, no equipment, no uniform, no rule book ... with nothing more than the will to be moving and joyful we can make it up as we go along — and together have huge fun.



A family is a unit composed not only of children but of men, women, an occasional animal, and the common cold.

— Ogden Nash

Question: *What makes a good family?*



Stephen Fry: What makes a good family? Well, I suppose obviously love.

Love lubricated often I think by humor. I think a family that can laugh at each other and tease themselves and who are able to be jolly with each other I think is the key. Humor is you know like a dog's tongue or dog's nose rather, which should be cold and faintly wet and a vet will tell you that's a sign of a healthy dog. I think our equivalent of a cold wet nose is humor. Families where there is not much laughter I think are signs of some sort of dysfunction-ality or sickness. Maybe if there is too much laughter it's dysfunctional too. Who knows? Families are so different. I've never met anyone who says they come from... they thought they lived in a normal family. As children everyone thinks their family is weird and they're upset by the weirdness of their own family. It is a peculiar thing we're asked to do, but I think GK Chesterton put it that it is an onerous responsibility that having been dropped by the stork down a random chimney and unwrapped we are invited to get on with a set of strangers who peer down at us. You know because although yes, we share the DNA. You know they are physically of our flesh and we are their flesh. Nonetheless they... We didn't choose them. They are a set of strangers. There is this man here and we should call him Daddy and there is this woman here. We should call her Mummy. This girl here I should call my sister and this boy here I should call my brother and we are somehow bonded for life.

<http://bigthink.com/ideas/17865>



If somebody thinks they're a hedgehog, presumably you just give 'em a mirror and a few pictures of hedgehogs and tell them to sort it out for themselves.

— Douglas Adams

We all grow up with the weight of history on us. Our ancestors dwell in the attics of our brains as they do in the spiraling chains of knowledge hidden in every cell of our bodies.

— Shirley Abbott



“When you wake up in the morning, Pooh,” said Piglet at last, “what’s the first thing you say to yourself?”

“What’s for breakfast?” said Pooh. “What do you say, Piglet?”

“I say, I wonder what’s going to happen exciting today?” said Piglet.

Pooh nodded thoughtfully. “It’s the same thing,” he said.

— A. A. Milne

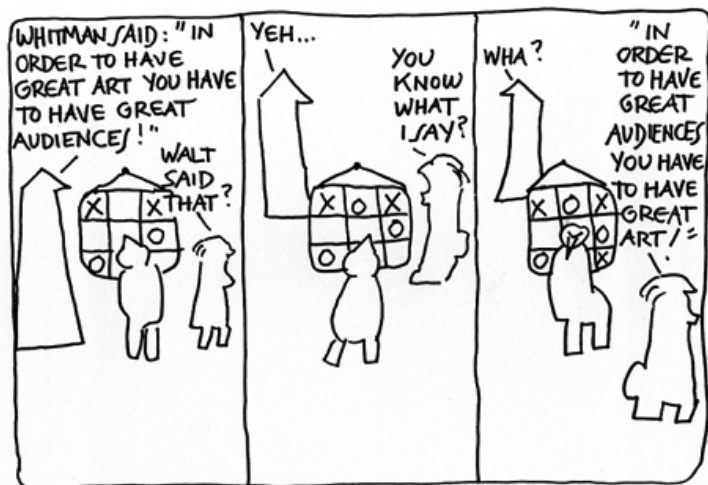
Always kiss your children goodnight — even if they’re already asleep.

— H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

The prime purpose of being four is to enjoy being four — and of secondary importance it is to prepare for being five.

— Jim Trelease

The Read-Aloud Handbook, 1985



information

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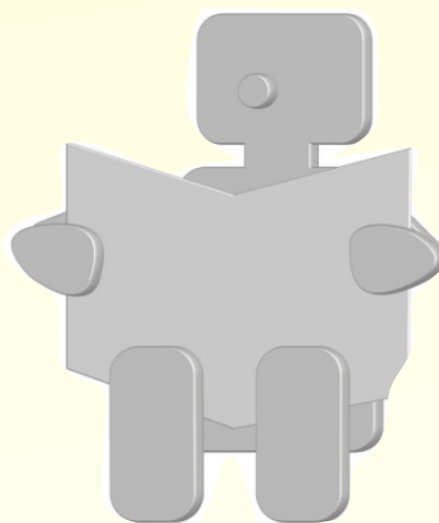
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