CYC-Online

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

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4th CYC World Conference, Durban – July 2019

Heather Modlin

Editors note

This month we've invited CYC-Net Board Member Heather Modlin to reflect on her journey and participation in the fourth Child and Youth Care World Conference in Durban, South Africa. You can also view FICE co-president Emmanuel Grupper's presentation at the conference at:

https://www.ficeinter.net/single-post/2019/07/08/FICE-co-president-Emmanuel-Gruppers-speech-at-the-22nd-NACCW-conference-02---04-JULY-2019-Durban-International-Convention-Centre





August 2019 ISSN 1605-7406 recently attended the 4th CYC World and 22nd National Biennial Child and Youth Care Conference in Durban, South Africa. As co-chair of the 1st CYC World Conference held in Canada, I was excited to see the connections continue in South Africa. You may not be aware of this but CYC-Net, co-host of the CYC World Conference, exists because of the longstanding connections within the field of child and youth care between Canada and South Africa. It was specifically the relationship between two individuals, Dr. Thom Garfat from Canada and Brian Gannon in South Africa, that led to the creation of CYC-Net over 20 years ago. Thom and Brian's vision, at that time, was to provide a vehicle through which child and youth care workers around the world could connect with each other, network, engage in discussion and share information and resources. Their vision has been realized.





On Facebook a request went out for people to share their experiences of the Durban conference. The first response was: "It's difficult to express such an intense experience in words."

Yep.



Over the last several years, I have had opportunities to travel to many interesting places in Europe and across North America. From all of them I have treasured memories. South Africa, however, is something else. Beyond the obvious beauty (stunning in its range and diversity), South Africa is a land of contradictions. Great wealth sits next to abject poverty. Careful formality ("all protocol observed") rubs against spontaneous and exuberant expressions of song and dance. The child and youth care field is legally recognized as a profession and yet many child and youth care workers are paid only a stipend for their work.

During the opening session of the conference the federal Minister of Social Development spoke. While she acknowledged the important role











that child and youth care workers play in supporting children and families in

South Africa, she was also quite disparaging in some of her comments. Her blunt, outspoken style of addressing the audience was met with disbelief by many of the foreigners in attendance. Most of us are used to politicians who publicly exhibit "political correctness" (with some notable exceptions).





It was pointed out by one of the conference keynotes, Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi, that just having the Minister in attendance at the conference was testament to the profile that child and youth care has in South Africa. He was right. Child and youth care has a presence in South Africa that is unseen anywhere else in the world. The leadership of the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) – Merle Allsopp, Zeni Thumbadoo and Donald Nghonyama – are well equipped to manage the current challenges. The NACCW is a well organized, politically astute, influential body in South Africa. They have achieved more, as a professional association, than most child and youth care associations worldwide. Having watched them in action I can confidently say that the future of child and youth care in South Africa is in good hands.

During the conference I attended many informative workshops and plenary sessions. The calibre of speakers was high. What I remember the most, however, is not the content but the feeling. While immersed in the animated displays of pride exhibited by the more than 1400 child and



youth care workers in attendance, I couldn't help but think about how therapeutic it must be for the young people with whom they work to be surrounded by such positive and passionate energy. The South African child and youth care culture is vibrant, inspirational and rich in spirit and all of this was on display throughout the conference.

HEATHER MODLIN is a member of the Board of Governors of CYC-Net and serves as the Provincial Director of Key Assets Newfoundland and Labrador, an organization providing residential and family-based care to children and youth. Heather holds a MSc in Child and Youth Care Administration from Nova Southeastern University and a PhD in Child and Youth Care from the University of Victoria. She may be reached at heather.modlin@keyassetsnl.ca

For more on the 4th CYC World Conference, see Leon Fulcher's Postcard - page 62.

Unity Through Relationship 2019

"The Rhythms of Care"

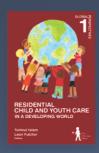
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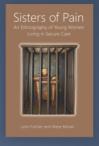


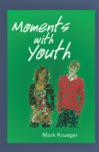


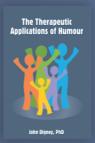












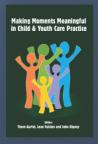












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Re-Launching Child and Youth Care Practice

Kiaras Gharabaghi

he field of child and youth care has, over the past fifty years or so, made huge strides; it has expanded from its residential group care roots to cover a wide range of service sectors and professional activities. We have today a not insubstantial body of literature that provides for a strong conceptual foundation for understanding child and youth care practice as distinct from other human service activities and professions. Post-secondary education in child and youth care has grown to provide college diplomas, undergraduate and graduate degrees across several countries. Professional associations exist in many countries, and membership in these associations has grown (albeit it at not very impressive rates). A reliable schedule of conferences for practitioners and academics exist, some of which focus on local and regional issues and themes while others are provincial, national, or global in scope. All of these accomplishments are the result of the hard work and incredible commitment of small groups of child and youth care people who have taken leadership roles in making things happen. And all of this is good.

It is fair to say, however, that the field of child and youth care also presents some problems, some challenges, some disappointments and some frustrations. For one thing, many employers of child and youth care practitioners are not entirely pleased with what those practitioners are able to offer, not only in the context of substantive knowledge and skill, but also



in the context of professional conduct, work ethic, and capacity to contribute to organizational growth and development. Child and youth care practitioner themselves complain that their career opportunities are inadequate, compensation is low, upward mobility difficult to operationalize, and respect amongst other professional groups is at best variable, but more often than not underwhelming.

Importantly, it is not all CYCs who feel that way; some are thriving, successful, upwardly mobile and enjoying increasing compensation for their efforts. And employers are not worried about all of their employees either. Most employers can point to some employees who meet and exceed their expectations, and whom they are grooming for leadership roles in their organizations. This then raises the question what it might take to be amongst the thriving CYCs, as opposed to amongst those concerned about their career prospects and whether or not the field can yield the rewarding work it seemed to promise.





I think the field can indeed yield that work, and I don't think that rewarding work comes at the expense of other rewards, including compensation, living standards, access to leadership roles and more. Quite to the contrary, I think we may have made a mistake when we advertised our field as one not appropriate for those wanting to get rich. Or as one that fills the heart with richness but leaves the rent unpaid. Or even as one that is all about the young people we work with. But to get to a different, and in my view better version of our field, we may have to re-launch it. That process, broadly speaking, requires several core shifts in how we think about child and youth care, both as a field and as a career. I will list some of these shifts below, understanding that these are likely not the only ones that matter:

1. Let us not limit the description of our field to a few concepts and processes that come across as trivial and self-evident to the rest of the word, even though we may understand them to be guite profound and complex. By way of example, I think every time we say something like "child and youth care is all about relationships" we lose our non-CYC audience to whom this hardly sounds earthshattering. I think it was Fewster who many years ago wrote something along the lines of 'Talking about relationships is hardly congruent with our wild ambition to change the world'. Among other concepts that do us no good talking about, even if they are in fact important, are 'self care', 'wounded healers', 'child or youthcentered', 'voice', and many others. This may sound like an all out attack on the very essence of our field. But it is not. I don't question the substantive content of any of these concepts and I think many CYC scholars and practitioners have written and spoken wonderfully about each of these. The point is that these concepts



don't sell; 'no one wants to pay for your self care'; 'if you're wounded, get help'; 'it is not useful, and perhaps harmful, to place the child or youth at the centre of bad practice – it is only useful to center them in good practice'; and 'what's with the constant reference to voice, which seems like a vehicle to get your voice heard rather than that of the young people'. Perhaps what we need is a description of our field that more directly engages the social dilemmas of the 21st century, and that places some urgency on our presence as essential in order to avoid catastrophe. For example, could we describe our field as 'a high-skilled intervention in community dis-regulation using catalytic social economies for rebuilding connection and growth'? This is in fact what we do when we work with young people in relational practice to re-built relationships across families and communities, thereby building strength in people to re-engage civil society through work, play and social cohesion. But it doesn't sound as much like a minimum wage job, does it?

2. Let us move beyond the now well-established parameters of interpersonal connections in child and youth care practice and accept, and benefit from, the simple fact that the inter-personal exists within the social. In the 21st century, we are living witnesses to the transformation of the social space of humanity, as evidenced by everything from communication processes in the digital age to multiple identities in the age of post-binaries, and complex histories and presences set off by unprecedented migration flows across all socio-economic strata, porous borders and ecological globalism, and a resurgence of Indigenous rights and connections to the land. It is not viable to propose relevance and economic value for an activity that seeks to limit itself to the interpersonal



space. For one thing, our postmodern surveillance systems combined with our incessant need to be heard, valued and nurtured, render the interpersonal impossible. A moment shared between two people but later described in a report, disseminated in an intranet of some agency, hacked by someone seeking to disrupt, and ultimately coopted by a political faction of the extreme right in an effort to perpetuate white power, is not really interpersonal. What we do, we do in a social space, transparent to communities, prepared for critical responses, and undoubtedly subject to feedback for its inadequacies from the perspectives of multiple communities representing a multitude of lived experiences.

Child & Youth Care practitioners cannot escape the need for innovation. It is not adequate to rely on old and tired structures, most of which are highly contested anyways, within which we provide some magical solutions to the many forms of oppression, marginalization, pathology, and disconnections suffered by the young people, and usually their families and their communities too. 50 years ago, it made sense to build our field within the structures of residential care, foster care, schools and hospitals. Our field was the innovation that was needed then. Professionals who were able to work through connecting with young people, focused on every day events and contexts, and ultimately strengthening young people's capacities to face conflict and opportunity in family and in community, did not exist back then. Today, that no longer makes any sense. Child and youth care practice in and of itself is not an innovation anymore. It is instead a taken-for-granted service provided to young people who exhaust the 'real' professional groups that are better paid and more highly valued precisely



because they don't engage the young people themselves through relationship; they are too busy with more important stuff to worry about, such as the grade 2 curriculum, the latest diagnosis and treatment plan, or drafting the necessary documents to wrestle custody away from the young person's family. We need to reinvent ourselves as innovators, and I think we can do that only if we confront the structures, systems and processes that actually ensure our continued marginalization in the professional hierarchies of the human services. Innovation in child and youth care can only be found in community, and more specifically in our approaches to strengthening community through the building of social networks that are responsive not simply to psycho-social functioning needs of individual young people, but indeed to the economic, social, political and cultural power of the communities where we work.

These are just three shifts I think we might consider to re-launch our field. These shifts, dramatic as they may appear at first glance, do not require us to abandon anything we already have. All that amazing work done between the 1970s and the current time is still as relevant now as it was then. But it does require us to think beyond that work and to build ourselves as practitioners differently. Post-secondary institutions must play their role. We have to do better than relational pedagogy, which seems to mean nothing in particular or everything imaginable. What we really need is a commitment to our students to build their innovation skills, their confidence in their role to shape the 21st century in resistance to the current forces shaping it, and to reengage with young people as partners in global change, in the defense of democracy, and in the rebuilding of communities outside of institutional structures from a time long gone. Child and youth



care practitioners must become economically relevant, politically fearsome, and the cultural vanguard of the coming age.

If we can engage this project, we will produce more child and youth care practitioners who will be able to build career pathways that don't compromise the quality of what they do with the quality of their lives. If we engage this project, we will forever bury the idea that child and youth care is a low-end, subsistence economy endeavour. And if we engage this project, we will transfer our ambitions for ourselves to our work with young people and to those young people, which means that we may well stop preparing those young people for minimum wage jobs and chronic poverty as we typically do now.

Ambitious? Yes, it is. Urgent? Yes, I think it is that too. A step toward aligning social justice and child and youth care practice? Well, I think that is the only future worth fighting for.

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ASPECTS OF RELATIONAL PRACTICE

Relational Child & Youth Care practice has been defined as "... a form of helping that ... attends to the co-constructed in-between of self and other" (Garfat, 2012, p.32).

We are aware that many practitioners are exploring and engaging in relational practice in critical and contextual ways and we would like to showcase how Relational Child & Youth Care (CYC) practice is being refined and expanded upon within, and throughout, our diverse communities and contexts of practice. While the literature on Relational CYC Practice has grown over the past few years, we want to return to this central idea and open it up further based on thinking and experiences over the past few years.

The journal *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice* (RCYCP) is preparing a special issue on 'Aspects of Relational CYC Practice'. We are interested in submission that explore/engage in aspects of relational practice in the following areas, however, we are not limited to these:

- Working alongside various populations/communities; how aspects of relational practice may vary due
 to the contexts, histories and systems that impact a person's experience and relational practice;
- Moving from theory to practice examining and reconceiving aspects of relational practice (ex. relational safety, relational engagement, relational versus relationship-based practice, relational interventions, etc.);
- Aspects of Relational CYC Practice in the various areas of our field practice, teaching, training, supervision, family work, school-based CYC, etc.
- Practice definitions / descriptions of relational Child & Youth Care practice as it continues to evolve.

Submissions for this issue may include various formats such as full-length papers, research, or short narratives and we prefer them to be less than 5000 words. Information for authors can be found on our website www.rcycp.com

Deadline for Submissions: October 5, 2019

If you are interested in contributing to this issue, please contact: rcycp@press.cyc-net.org

Thinking Boundaries and Personal Focus

Jack Phelan

s I discussed last month, new practitioners should have very thick, impersonal, boundaries for the initial 6 months or so of their professional careers. This is often a difficult task for newer workers because they are eager to create connections with the young people and families assigned to them. Most new workers entered the field because they believe that they are good at connecting with others and see this as a method to help people in distress. Newly graduated practitioners from CYC programs are trained to think relationally and have theoretical preparation to be relational with others, but need to develop the practical skills of creating a safe, other-focused presence before any relational work can occur. This ability to create a safe, other-focused presence is the topic for this month.

When new practitioners are suddenly immersed in the complex dynamics of life space work, safety becomes a powerful need. There is a sensation of being out of control and vulnerable which causes the new practitioner to focus on self because the need for safety and protection becomes paramount. When confronted with challenging or confusing situations, the first thought is "what am I going to do to survive this safely" rather than to focus on what anyone else might need in the moment. This "me focus" lasts for about 6 months as a primary issue and gradually diminishes over the following 6 months. Logs and self-reports are usually



descriptions of how events affected him/her, rather than what was being experienced by other people. Young people and family members appear to be deliberately challenging the authority and credibility of the new worker during this initial period, sometimes described as testing behavior, when actually these people are reacting to the anxiety being projected by the practitioner's lack of safety.

During the gradual reducing of the practitioner's "me focus", there is an increase in the awareness of what is happening for the other people, which enables the developing practitioner to meet the needs of the other person, not just take care of him/herself. This shift also reduces the challenging behavior experienced by the worker and reinforces their ability to be other focused. By the end of the initial year of practice, most new professionals can think more easily about what help they can provide for the other person without focusing on what they need.

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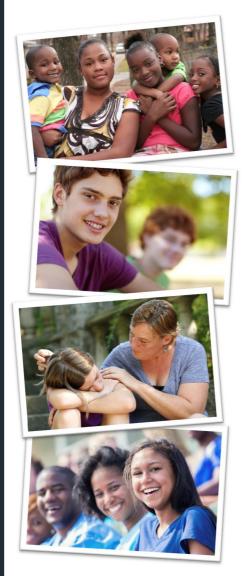


Boundary dynamics can now begin to shift, and relational practice can begin to emerge. While the practitioner is primarily attentive to self, which is reducing through experience, there is little useful relational energy. Young people are skillful at recognizing when a CYC practitioner is primarily interested in taking care of his/her own needs, as well as when this is not the case. Attempts to be relational and connected early in this journey of growing personal safety will be correctly judged by the young people as self-serving and they will manipulate these attempts to connect to their own personal advantage. This is why boundary dynamics need to remain impersonal for this early stage of development.

CYC supervisors can accurately assess the me-focus of each new practitioner and guide them to create the boundary setting behaviors which will be appropriate, based on these developmental dynamics, until they are more skillful at creating a safe, other focused presence.

JACK PHELAN is a regular contributor to CYC-Online. He is the author of Intentional CYC Supervision: A Developmental Approach and Child and Youth Care: The Long and Short of It, both available through the CYC-Net Press. Jack teaches Child and Youth Care at Grant MacEwan College in Alberta, Canada. Learn more at https://cyc-net.org/People/people-phelan.html







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Intersectional Collegiality

Hans Skott-Myhre

n my last column, I wrote about my own white fragility and the ways in which it impacted and impacts on my work in Child and Youth Care (CYC). This month I want to continue that conversation by beginning to think about the ways in which race, gender, class, and sexuality impact on our interactions with our colleagues. There is an adage from the women's movements of the late 20th century that, "the personal is political." The saying has been attributed to a number of key feminist writers including Carol Hanish who wrote an essay with that title. Shulamith Firestone and Robin Morgan also used it, but none of them will take the credit being its author. Kerry Burch (2012) explains this denial of authorship as rooted in the acknowledgement of "millions of women in public and private conversation as the phrase's collective ownership." (p. 139) The phrase is also found in the writings of the black feminist movement in work by the Combahee River Collective, Audre Lorde's essay, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" as well as in the work of Latina scholar Gloria Anzaldua. In short it has been a guiding principle for the women's movement over time and across contexts. I wonder if it has a similar set of possibilities for those of us working in CYC.

The concept of the political as personal came as a challenge to the conventional social structures of the late 20th century, such as the nuclear family and traditional patriarchal family values. It was a call to a phenomenological understanding of politics as the practices and limitations of lived daily experience under regimes of systemic oppression.



The life and struggles of each person were no longer to be separated and isolated from the broader political struggle. Instead, political change was to be rooted in what Foucault calls the micropolitics of everyday life.

I was reminded of this the other day, when I attended a performance of the musical Hair. For me, the play was a troubling but exhilarating trip down memory lane of my days as a Freak/Yippie activist in the late 60's and early 70's. I had seen the play when I was still very much living that life. The performance, which traverses many of the major cultural events, proposals, and struggles of the hippie movement resonated with me then as a celebration and affirmation of what I was doing. Seeing it now as an older man, I couldn't help but be struck by the hints of impending collapse and disillusionment that are threaded throughout the performance. Simultaneously, I could see how the failed revolutions of the late twentieth century were being picked up, revived and re-written by young people as we enter the 21st century. Certainly, the fact that the play was being revived, staged, and performed by young people today was at the very least evocative. This seemed particularly powerful in the finale, when the actors came into the audience and called on us to dance with them and hugged us, and each other, with joyous abandon. It was a moment of cautious hopefulness for me.

At one level, I recount this because, for me, the political has never been extricable from the personal. Any abstract sense of the political as outside my lived experience seemed a betrayal of all that mattered. To see politics as outside of our day to day relations or as something to be avoided, I have always considered a particularly fraught strategy for living life in an equitable and just manner.

There are no relationships that are not saturated with power relations. From what I have seen, one cannot step aside from the dynamics of race, class, gender, and sexuality. Whether or not we see these cultural and



social markers as important and relevant in how we manage our day to day interactions with each other, you can be sure many of the people that we are dealing with do. If we are serious about centering our work in relationship, then it would seem to me, that what is important to those who inhabit our immediate lived experience should matter to us. It should be obvious that to care for others is to care about what they see as important. To deny the fact that all of us are impacted by the world of the political, is an odd kind of ethical myopia. Put more strongly, it has the capacity to blind us to the very people in front of us on a day to day basis.

This is certainly true for those of us who would deny the political by deploying an array of blinders, or in the psychoanalytic vernacular, mechanisms of displacement and denial. Such blinders can be found in statements such as, kids are not political--they just want a normal life; I don't see color, I only see people; individuals should be seen only on their merit; my relationships are with people, not categories; I want to be seen for myself and my accomplishments; my feelings about someone are based on what they do, not who they are; I truly believe we are all equal; I am not responsible for things that I didn't do; life is not fair, and so on. These kinds of statements allow for someone to get a pass from any kind of accountability to inherited privilege and power. They can also, however, be a way to step away from the pain, trauma, and acknowledgement of power relations and the effects they have on ourselves and those around us.

In another very important way, they are relational blockers that tell anyone who is experiencing the pain and suffering caused by the shrapnel of injustice, that you are not interested in any discussion that might involve yourself. In this sense, what you may be well be saying, perhaps without meaning to say it, is that you are not willing to be the person that could engage in a real time conversation that could actually make a difference right here and right now. Because as long as injustice remains an



abstraction, from which you keep your distance, nothing meaningful can really happen. The real key to resolving injustice is always extremely close and personal.

There is a song in the play *Hair* called "Easy to be Hard" that really struck me precisely in relation to our work and the personal nature of the political. The lyrics read in part:

How can people be so heartless
How can people be so cruel
Easy to be hard
Easy to be cold
How can people have no feelings
How can they ignore their friends
Easy to be proud
Easy to say no
Especially people who care about strangers
Who care about evil and social injustice
Do you only care about the bleeding crowd
Do you only care about being proud
How about I need a friend, I need a friend





The song in context, is about how cruel we can be to one another in terms of insensitivity and rejection. It is a romantic lament about how someone who claims to be sensitive and caring at the broad political level can flippantly dismiss the affections of a long term friend who has feelings for them. But as I listened to it and have thought about it since, it may also have a broader and more pertinent message for those of us working "relationally" in CYC.

It has become almost cliché to say that we in CYC care about strangers. After all, many if not all of the young people and families we encounter in our work are initially strangers. In some cases, given the duration of time we see them on the street or in an emergency shelter, they can remain strangers to us. Of course their stranger status can be reinforced by professional boundaries and systems of diagnosis that produce them as distinctly different from us –literally strange or estranged.

However, there is another level of strangers. These are the abstract groups of poor, disenfranchised, immigrant, sexual, and gendered minorities, people of color and so on who we may not encounter directly, but for whom we maintain a more generalized sense of care or perhaps even outrage at the ways in which they are mistreated at the level of the social writ large. Our caring for these people is done at a distance, without much danger to ourselves. We can write about the injustices they encounter or study them statistically and report on the desperation of their situation. We can contact our legislators and try to change laws. We can write petitions and express our caring for them to our friends and family. We can post memes on social media that demonstrate our solidarity. These are all fine things to do, but they are done at a distance. The songs asks us if our motivation for caring about strangers, evil and social injustice is partly motivated by our need to proud of ourselves as moral and ethical people? Again, perhaps that is not such a terrible motivation.



But do we only care about the bleeding crowd? What about those much closer to us? Are we there when our colleagues need a friend, an ally, or an advocate? This is where the political and the personal collide. How do we respond to our colleagues who are experiencing harm related to their status as other? Of course, we all imagine ourselves to be good people who would never intentionally harm a colleague or treat them unfairly. On the other hand, we are all too aware of the political minefield that makes up collegial relations on a daily basis in a non-profit agency, a university department, or any other institutional milieu dedicated to the field of CYC. In my experience, we can indeed be heartless, cruel, hard, and cold to one another. We can be judgmental, dismissive, sarcastic, and cynical about the people we engage daily in our work. Most of this runs under the surface and we tend to ignore it or minimize its impact. It's just the way things are.

The assumption that our work together as human beings should encompass the worst of us, as well as the best, is quite challenging in and of itself. Now let's add the power dynamics of intersectional dimensions such as race, gender, class, sexuality and so on. At one level, we could simply assume that first and foremost we are all human and so the cruelty of the workplace impacts us all equally. It is simply personal. Some people just don't get along. They are not compatible.





August 2019 ISSN 1605-7406 I would argue that this is a significant diversion from any kind of serious accountability to justice and equity in our work. As I said before, it is not possible to have a relationship without the power dynamics of our society, culture, and history. The minor and not so minor social cruelties we impose on one another in the workplace are not exempt from this. It doesn't matter how much of a social justice warrior or advocate one is in the broad sense, if we don't understand and acknowledge power relations in our day to day collegial interactions, we are missing the heart of the project.

To begin to work with this, we need to understand that every single social interaction we have with our colleagues is saturated with privilege and unequal power relations. A white man from a middle class background interacting with white gay man from a similar middle class background are not speaking to one another on a level playing field. Their communication is riddled with a minefield of possible harm and misunderstanding. I have had experiences where I have, in all innocence, teased a gay colleague because it is way I show affection. My teasing was entirely unrelated to his sexuality, but I could tell he was uncomfortable. In that circumstance, I could ignore his discomfort (after all my teasing was "harmless" fun) or I could assume that our relationship always entailed power relations that could impact our relationship in negative ways. I chose to check in and ask if he was uncomfortable with my teasing. He told me in no uncertain terms that teasing was not ok with him, that to be teased by an older male was evocative of the bullying he had experienced as youngster and was very uncomfortable. I apologized and explained that for me it was a mark of affection, but that I would do my best to avoid teasing in the future. I have to say that I was not perfect about never teasing, but I did catch myself more often than not, and we talked about it when I slipped up. I chose to hold myself accountable to the personal politics and power relations imbedded in our relationship. It is important to note that it is not necessary



to get it right all the time. But it is crucial that our colleagues know we are serious and will not dismiss their pain and discomfort as simply a personal problem.

It is, of course, more normative to explain workplace friction as the result of personality differences, but we have to be particularly careful when the two parties involved have divergent sets of privileged relations. It is not the same thing when a woman of color talks over a white colleague as when that white colleague speaks over the woman of color. In the one instance it may require a certain amount of force for the woman of color to be heard at all, leading to a need for a forceful approach to the conversation. I cannot count the number of interactions between colleagues I have witnessed, in which the voices of women, sexual minorities and people of color have simply been ignored or dismissed. When they are heard at all, it is often because they have insisted repeatedly on making their point.

Similarly, while our colleagues who are at the receiving end of social injustice may have a need for trigger warnings and a respectful acknowledgement of historical trauma, that does not mean that white cisgendered males suffering from the "vicarious trauma" of being exposed to the brutal actions of their gender and class have the right to insist on the same. Perhaps, my brothers and I need to take on some of that pain and allow it to transform us, so that we don't keep doing it.

Finally, micro-agressions and subtle deployments of power are endemic in most collegial situations I have worked in. I have certainly been guilty of them and have caused my colleagues more pain than is reasonable. The astonishing thing to me has always been their generosity of spirit once I have made an effort towards accountability and redress. For that I am grateful beyond measure.



To work relationally in workplaces such as CYC requires an openness to personal transformation. In the case of intersectional collegiality, such transformation is rooted in a political accountability to the suffering we engender, based in our largely unconscious assertions of privilege and historically derived power relations. Such work is not easy and it can be painful and troubling. None of us wants to think of ourselves as heartless or cruel. Very few of us act brutally at a conscious level. It is at the level of thoughtlessness that we get into trouble. When we attempt to exempt ourselves from the world of power relations, that I have termed the political, we stand to inadvertently be the person who abandons a friend or a colleague in the moment of need. At the very least, it may be a need for institutional honesty, justice, and accountability. At the most, it might well be a need for a genuine encounter that has the capacity to change the world.

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Take the Magic Out of Your Day

Doug Magnuson

here is no better way to take the fun out of doing CYC work than to be primarily responsible for correcting the behavior of a child. The expectation that this is what we do seems reasonable and a plausible explanation--and yet--if we accept this we will always be fighting from behind, struggling to explain what we do. This is unfortunate, because it is a reduction of the complexity of the work to absurdity.

Here is another example, using quantitative data: A new study, published in the American Psychologist (Anemiya, Mortenson, & Wang, 2019), found that school infractions--disciplinary responses from the school-increase problem behavior and had harsher effects on those who are more attached to school. Teachers also punished African-American students more harshly than White students.

The researchers collected all disciplinary data over a school year, and they also had data about attachment to the school. They used logistic regression, a method which statistically predicts group membership. The idea is simple: We distinguish between at least two different groups and then try to predict which group someone will be in.

They were interested in whether minor or major infractions in the early months of the school year predicted infractions later in the year. And it did in an interesting way. Those students who received minor infractions were more likely to receive later "defiant" infractions, while those who received



serious infractions earlier in the year did not increase their defiance. Further, those students who were more attached to school were more likely to become defiant than those who were not. Finally, African-American students received more infractions.

This is an interesting study demonstrating the counter-productive--and counter-intuitive--expectations of teachers. Where school is complex, teachers' reactions were simplistic. Where the experience of school includes questions about who belongs, identity, competence, experimentation, and independence, teachers are expected to reinforce control. Where the discipline and satisfactions of learning need teachers to demonstrate coherence and sophistication, schools' too often choose to emphasize docility.

We too are expected to "teach" children to "behave." We have to start rejecting the premise, that is, that children have to learn to behave before they can learn anything else. Of course they should learn to behave, and they will learn to behave at the same time they are learning other things. If the other things are interesting enough, they will eventually stop doing those things that get in the way (all other things being equal). This basic insight of John Dewey, Jane Addams, Maria Montessori, Hedley Dimock, Gisela Konopka, and Fritz Redl is still too often ignored.

Teachers--and CYC practitioners--get anxious when our charges misbehave. We begin to substitute worry about losing control for reciprocity, when it is often reciprocity that youth want, as Dewey said. If we do not, they match us move for move down the rabbit hole of a power struggle. That is one message from this study.

Heather Modlin (2018) found that practitioners who felt responsible for the behavior of children and youth struggled, in part, because their wellbeing was at the mercy of children. Practitioners whose practice ideals had



to do with almost anything other than controlling behavior were more satisfied with their work

We can do this: We can create work settings that are dynamic, creative, interesting--and fun--at least most of the time, if we reject the false premise that our work is to be judged by the daily behavior of children and youth. We know how to do things, interesting things, with children and youth, and this remains our most important asset.

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Prioritizing Free Play is Essential for Childhood Development

Neve Spicer

ediatricians, parents, teachers, and other child care professionals agree that children often don't get enough time to play on their own, and that offering opportunities for free play is vital to proper mental and physical development (Ginsburg, 2007). But if everyone knows it's important, why don't kids seem to get enough free play time?

Overscheduling can be a part of the problem. Kids go from school (with increasingly brief recess periods) to after school activities to homework, with not enough time to just do whatever they want in between. Weekends are for sports, clubs, and family activities, and even vacation days can be filled with camps and trips. It can take a conscious effort to step back, assess which activities a kid really needs, and clear his or her schedule to create free time.

Free play also means no helicopter adults stepping in to tell kids what to do. It can feel like it's your job to keep the kids entertained – especially if the alternatives are boredom or screen time. Many adults fear the possibility of unsupervised children getting themselves hurt or causing trouble. But free play doesn't have to be the same thing as a lack of structure (CYC-Net, n.d.), and it doesn't imply neglect – it's quite the opposite.





You can subtly guide kids' play without stepping on their creativity by providing toys and tools and setting some ground rules. The important part is letting them take the lead and resisting the temptation to micromanage. If you feel like you're about to tell them they're not playing right, or suggest improvements, stop yourself. If they want your help, they'll ask for it. If you're invited into the game, then listen and follow, instead of trying to shape things.

As most childcare professionals know, one of the benefits of child-directed play is that it can provide a different sort of channel for adult-child interactions. For children who close up or rebel in the face of adult authority, letting them take the lead can assuage their fears and anger and create a more lasting bond of trust. Children can also explore concepts and express thoughts through play that they might never be able to do on their own. And giving free play time can also help blow off energy and take a break from having to focus, which will ensure that kids will be more cooperative when it's time for more structured activities.



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Unity Through Relationship 2019

"The Rhythms of Care"

Dublin, Ireland, 11-12 November 2019





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ASPECTS OF RELATIONAL PRACTICE

Relational Child & Youth Care practice has been defined as "... a form of helping that ... attends to the co-constructed in-between of self and other" (Garfat, 2012, p.32).

We are aware that many practitioners are exploring and engaging in relational practice in critical and contextual ways and we would like to showcase how Relational Child & Youth Care (CYC) practice is being refined and expanded upon within, and throughout, our diverse communities and contexts of practice. While the literature on Relational CYC Practice has grown over the past few years, we want to return to this central idea and open it up further based on thinking and experiences over the past few years.

The journal Relational Child and Youth Care Practice (RCYCP) is preparing a special issue on 'Aspects of Relational CYC Practice'. We are interested in submission that explore/engage in aspects of relational practice in the following areas, however, we are not limited to these:

- Working alongside various populations/communities; how aspects of relational practice may vary due
 to the contexts, histories and systems that impact a person's experience and relational practice;
- Moving from theory to practice examining and reconceiving aspects of relational practice (ex. relational safety, relational engagement, relational versus relationship-based practice, relational interventions, etc.);
- Aspects of Relational CYC Practice in the various areas of our field practice, teaching, training, supervision, family work, school-based CYC, etc.
- Practice definitions / descriptions of relational Child & Youth Care practice as it continues to evolve.

Submissions for this issue may include various formats such as full-length papers, research, or short narratives and we prefer them to be less than 5000 words. Information for authors can be found on our website www.rcycp.com

Deadline for Submissions: October 5, 2019

If you are interested in contributing to this issue, please contact: rcycp@press.cyc-net.org

Using the 'AS*IF' Framework to Engage in a Relational Encounter and Create Cultural Safety

Kahlyn McIntyre

ike all professionals, Child and Youth Care workers need to develop a way of thinking about the process of their work with young people and families (Ricks & Garfat, 1989). It is not enough to understand content; One must also have a way of organizing his or her interventions with children in a clear manner (Garfat & Newcomen, 1992, p. 277). 'AS*IF' is an intervention model which includes the following stages: (1) assessment, (2) selection, (3) pause/prepare, (4) intervention, and (5) follow up. These stages are interconnected and help the practitioner develop and prepare for effective interventions with children and youth (Gartfat & Newcomen, 1992). During the beginning of a recent internship I completed, I met a new resident and attempted to establish a safe, healthy, therapeutic relationship with her. Before working through the intervention model, I'd like to provide some context to the situation. This young person identifies as white and I identify as black. This young person was said to have a history of difficulty in her relationships with staff of diverse cultures, especially those of African Canadian decent. It is also believed that in her history, before entering care, that she was exposed to certain views about Black people that were negative by her previous caregiver. Despite her



history and trauma experience, she and I were able to get to know each other and connect. She was open to exploring a safe, therapeutic relationship with me and after spending some time together, we had an exchange that I believe the 'AS*IF' intervention model helped me navigate.

Stage 1: Assessment

This stage includes attending to the situation, assessing immediacy, and analysing context. This exchange took place at night time as I was settling the young person for bed. During her evening routine she gets a bed time snack, we talk, read books, draw animal faces, I sing to her, and I tuck her in. While I was reading a book, she stopped me and started to ask me questions about myself. I recognized immediately that she was making a bid for connection. She was trying to meet her need for safety and security and I couldn't blame her for that. Since I was a new face in her environment, she wanted to make sure I was safe and able to be trusted as an adulting caring for her at that time. She wanted to know things like why I had brown skin, if I had parents and siblings, if they were brown as well, if I liked animals, which animals I didn't like, and if I have ever been stung by a bumble bee. She shared her own answers to those questions about herself without my asking. I stayed present in the moment and validated her curiosity by telling her she had good questions. I felt like these questions posed no risk of physical harm or danger to the young person, myself or others, but I did have to consider the emotional outcomes my responses could trigger for this young person. As a developing youth care practitioner, I had to quickly analyze the dynamics of what was happening before intervening. I know that all behaviour has a purpose and I understood that because these questions weren't overly intrusive or inappropriate, it was a form of safety seeking behaviour that she was doing



in a positive way. The behaviour I was seeing was connected to her history and the things she may have been taught.

Stage 2: Selection

This second stage includes the study of available options, screening the options, and selection of the intervention. There are a few options I felt might work in this exchange such as active listening, empathy and reflection of feelings, asking questions, and self-disclosure (Egan & Schroeder, 2009). I felt each of these approaches individually, and over time, would allow me to help adequately meet the young persons need for safety/security and make for an ineffective intervention. Active listening helps the young person feel heard but alone doesn't provide the answers she needs. Showing empathy and reflecting feelings will allow her to feel understood but alone doesn't provide the answers she needs. Answering her questions with questions or asking her too many questions could give her some answers but may also cause her to feel overwhelmed and pressured to tell me about herself. This might take the focus off of her and her needs, and that is not my goal. Self disclosing gives her answers, however, there are healthy and unhealthy ways to do it and appropriate times when it should be done. I was mindful of this when making my selection and I believe using a mix of all of the options is what would allow me to intervene/interact most affectively and keep the young person first.

Stage 3: Pause and Preparation of Self

Because I was having a conversation and going through this intervention model in the middle of the exchange, I didn't have a lengthy period to pause and prepare, however, I did take a minute to do so. This brief pause allowed for any reasons for reconsideration to surface (e.g., changes in tone of voice, emotional state, energy level, behaviour, etc.).



Nothing came up that told me change to my mind. I didn't have a concern about my ability to follow through with the intervention. I took a deep breathe and positioned myself appropriately before continuing.

Stage 4: Intervention

This stage includes a focus on interest, integrity, and intention. At this point, I'm ready to proceed. I actively listened to all her questions and stories. When she told me about being stung by a bumble bee at her grandmother's it led her to telling me that her grandmother had passed away. I was already aware of this loss and knew she struggled for a while with the grieving process, but was showing significant improvement in the recent years. I felt attuned with her and showed empathy. She then told me "Thank you, it's okay because she is looking down on me, and she's looking down on us right now as we read...she was looking down and saw me do my major room clean today". I replied with "Yes, that's true, and I think she'd be very proud, you've cleaned your room very well." In addition, I also answered her question about why my skin was brown, I simply told her: "When I was born, I had brown skin because my parents are brown". She seemed surprised to hear that as she mentioned that she thought maybe I had a sun tan. I answered her questions about animals and being stung by bumbles bees. I also in return asked her about animals she liked. I was intentional with my approach to this exchange and wanted to make sure I was still meeting her need for safety. I believe I did what was in her best interest in this situation. After this conversation I asked her if she would like me to continue reading or if she still wanted to talk. I did this to make sure she was feeling okay to move on and to avoid making her feel rejected, ignored, or cut off.



Stage 5: Follow up

Stage 5 includes follow through as well as a focus on feelings and feedback. I followed through with the intervention and feel I reached the desired outcome ethically, which was to meet her need for safety and security. I did this by allowing her to get to know me in a healthy way that didn't compromise her physical or emotional well being or our therapeutic relationship. I shared this exchange with one of my mentors and she mentioned that it was good that I took this opportunity, given that there has been difficulties in the past. I was glad to have this simple opportunity to foster a safe experience for this young person.

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The Circle of Courage and the Supervisory Relationship with Practicum Students

Monica Lam

he Circle of Courage is a framework for understanding basic needs which is grounded in the universal needs of individuals (Brendtro, Brokenleg, &Van Bockern, 2014). Derived from the Indigenous culture's medicine wheel (Brendtro et al., 2014), the four quadrants represent the needs for belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity (Grover, 2007). These four needs are essential to an individual's wellbeing (Brendtro et al., 2014), and are interconnected, as one part of the circle can impact all other parts (Grover, 2007). With an intact circle, individuals thrive and have the courage needed to make good decisions for themselves and care for others (Grover, 2007). However, when these four needs are not met, the circle may be interpreted as 'broken' and individuals may become isolated, discouraged, or alone (Grover, 2017). This in turn, impacts wellbeing and how the individual makes decisions and treats others (Grover, 2007). The focus of this article is to discuss how supervisors can apply the framework while working with practicum students.

Practicum supervisors play a critical role in determining the success of students under their mentorship (Ross & Ncube, 2018). It is the role of the supervisor to ensure that a student's needs are met in their practicum setting.



Each of the needs in the Circle of Courage are important, and supervisors can take steps to meet individual needs under these four themes.

While the focus of this article relates to how supervisors can use this framework with practicum students, these ideas can also be extended for supervisors to use with any practitioners or for practitioners to use in their practice with clients and their colleagues.

Belonging

When we feel that we belong, we feel important, worthy, accepted, valued, and a part of a community (Brokenleg, 2015; Grover, 2007). It is important that students feel they belong in their practicum setting. If for any reason the need for belonging is not met, students may feel rejected, and isolate themselves from others and from the learning opportunities offered by their organization. Students may also internalize this rejection and reject themselves or externalize this rejection and reject others (Brown, n.d.).

During the beginning of my own practicum experience, the other students and I noticed how only a hand full of adults working in the program acknowledged our presence. I felt rejected by others and felt that they did not value my input because I was "only a student." I felt insecure in what I knew I could contribute to the team through my past work experiences and knowledge.

I started isolating myself, internalizing that I was not good enough as a practitioner, and started feeling resentment towards the staff.

Nevertheless, although I feared rejection, I never stopped trying to build relationships. Ultimately, they now acknowledge my presence by demonstrating the smallest gestures that mean a lot to me. For example, they would look for me and ask if I wanted coffee, and they would ask me to join them for lunch. Additionally, my supervisors would ask me to cofacilitate sessions with them, and asked for my insights and input after



sessions with clients. What appeared to be simple gestures on their part, made me feel like I belonged to the team.

There are several things a supervisor can do to meet a student's need for belonging. Supervisors can promote a trusting relationship with students and help them connect with other members of the organization. Connecting the students to others, especially when a student first starts their practicum, helps reduce social exclusion (Heppell, 2016). Supervisors can also create an environment where students feel included. For example, the supervisor can collaborate with students on goals, and joint agenda setting for supervision. Supervisors can create opportunities for students to contribute to tasks, ask them for their input and acknowledge their good work, hence students feel that their opinions matter, and that they are valued and appreciated in the organization.

Furthermore, supervisors can display actions to show students that they are interested in them. For example, acknowledging their presence by greeting them, asking about their weekend, and how school is going. They can ask students to sit with them during lunch, or join them in a program activity with clients (Grover, 2007). Supervisors can also take the time to build a relationship with students, learning about their interests and passions. Likewise, supervisors can share their interests and passions with students. Finally, supervisors can ask students how they could support them in feeling that they belong in the organization. These actions will go a long way toward making a student feel welcome and that they belong.

Mastery

Mastery fosters feelings of self-worth, belonging, and wellbeing (Brown, n.d.). Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (1990) mention that individuals "strive for mastery of their environments" (p. 39). They tie mastery to the need to feel competent, and once individuals meet this need, they are



motivated to further achieve. When students feel competent in their work, they want to learn more skills and take on more challenges. However, if the opportunities for mastery are withheld, students may feel inferior and helpless (Brendtro et al., 1990).

The role of a supervisor is to guide students, and provide feedback so students can learn and grow in their profession (Ross & Ncube, 2018). According to Brendtro, et al. (2014), "individuals learn in relationship with others" (p. 12), hence the way students relate to their supervisor will determine how well they will learn from them. There are several strategies a supervisor can implement to support a student's need for Mastery.

First, it is important that supervisors create an environment where they can support students in discovering what they can do (Brokenleg, 2015), focusing on the student's desire to learn and feel successful (Heppell, 2016). My supervisors did this by inviting me to professional development events to help me to expand on my learning. They took the time to learn about my interests and passions, and they came to me with enthusiasm about how much these events would benefit my learning. Not only did I feel the theme of belonging through these gestures, but these events helped me master my skills in family therapy.

Second, supervisors can provide students with constructive feedback on their work. Charles and Alexander (2016) mention that the best feedback is "concrete, direct, based upon specific observations, timely and respectful" (p. 84). Through this type of feedback, my supervisors demonstrated how I could improve on my work and approach things differently, which made me more reflective of my practice and more cognizant on what I could do to improve my skills in the field.

Third, supervisors can provide students with opportunities for mastery. My supervisors went out of their way to organize my involvement in many opportunities like trainings, and shadowing groups and family sessions. They



also encouraged me to participate in these activities, and when they sensed my anxieties, they drew out my strengths and stated their confidence in me. Encouragement and support from a supervisor helps improve a student's self-confidence (Ross & Ncube, 2018). Also, being exposed to so many practice settings helped me master different skills in the field.

Fourth, supervisors can show and teach students different skills and let students do them hands-on. In Ross and Ncube's (2018) research on the experiences of practicum students, they discovered that students shadowed others in practicum settings but were not shown or explained how to do particular skills. My supervisors discussed how to chart, but also sat beside me and showed me how to access the computer system to do so, and the particular language to use in charting. They let me sit at the computer and do these charts, while guiding me throughout the process. This opportunity to be hands-on as opposed to observant, helped me master my skills in charting.

Fifth, supervisors can also be available to support students in their learning through formal or informal supervision. My supervisors always took advantage of teaching moments by checking-in with me after every learning opportunity. They provided a safe and supportive space for me to voice my learning and/or concerns. These actions helped me develop new skills and learn more about how I want to practice in the field.

Independence

Independence is when one takes responsibility for their decisions made (Brendtro et al, 2014). Independence is associated with, "trust, freedom and being trustworthy, having trust in others and others having trust in you" (Lakeview Elementary, 2015, n.p.). It is a product of having opportunities to exercise independence at the practicum setting, where one starts doing



more without their supervisor's guidance. Independence is also demonstrated when students make more decisions for themselves.

Independence is tied to an individual's perception of their competence (Brendtro et al., 2014). So if the student's need for belonging and mastery are met, they are more likely to make responsible decisions in the practice setting, thus meeting their need for independence (Grover, 2017). Additionally, by having a positive relationships with their supervisor, students are better supported to develop confidence.

Initially, I felt isolated during my practicum experience, this made me feel anxious with the work I was doing because of my lack of confidence. I became dependent on the direction of my supervisors. As time passed and I was able to develop a trusting relationship with my supervisors, I developed confidence in myself, and I began to feel more competent. As a result, I was less dependent on my supervisors. As I developed a sense of belonging and competence in my practicum setting, I felt comfortable to be honest with my supervisors when I made a mistake and I took responsibility for it. As a result, after discussions with my supervisors, not only did I learn to practice more effectively, but they trusted that I would come to them when I struggled with any aspect of the practice. My supervisors trusted me, and thus offered me more opportunities for independence in the organization. Having the trust of supervisors help students develop confidence in their practice, hence it is important to build trusting supervisory relationships (Vassos, Harms, & Rose, 2018).

What can a supervisor do to support a student's need for independence? First, supervisors can give meaningful feedback to students, give them opportunities to make choices without coercion, and encourage students to problem solve, make decisions and show personal responsibility (Brokenleg, 2015). Second, supervisors can provide opportunities for independence and demonstrate they trust the student.



For example, the supervisor can provide opportunities for students to run a program on their own, trusting that they are competent and capable to do so. By providing opportunities for students to be independent and trustworthy, the supervisor gives them space to make choices and decisions for themselves, which in turn helps them build confidence and a sense of who they are. Finally, supervisors can adjust their level of support and direction in accordance to the student's shifting needs at different stages of their skill development (Vassos, Harms, & Rose, 2018). Also, encourage students to work outside their comfort zone by gradually withdrawing assistance to the student, where the student is able to execute tasks on their own (Diack, Gibson, Munro & Strath, 2014), without their supervisor doing it for them, taking over, or micromanaging them.

Generosity

Generosity involves altruism and empathy (Brendtro et al., 2014). The action of helping others demonstrates respect and deepens our self-worth and identity (Brown, n.d.). Generosity is linked to belonging (Brendtro et al., 2014) because those who receive generosity have the experience of being "nurtured and their feelings of belonging are enhanced" (Brown, n.d., p. 5). With generosity, people feel like what they do matters, which proves that they are worthy by making positive contributions to another's life, thus it gives people hope and confidence (Frankowski & Duncan, 2013). Brendtro et al. (2005) mention that helping others increases self-esteem, helps individuals cope with life's challenges, and that being generous breaks us free from the preoccupation we have with ourselves. Additionally, those who perform acts of generosity may be more accepted by others, and this helps deepen purpose in people's lives (Heppell, 2016).

To meet the need for Generosity, students need to feel that their lives have meaning. Besides being generous on their own, opportunities to help



others can be offered by their supervisors. For example, a supervisor may share their task and ask the student to help a youth in need, and/or involve a student in a community project.

Supervisors can practice and model generous behaviours in the work environment, such as helping others, giving back to the community, sharing resources, ideas and their knowledge with the student, giving complements, and showing respect to everyone at the organization. Additionally, supervisors can be patient with students, listen, and share a joke or a smile (Brokenleg, 1999).

Supervisors can also be generous with their time or motivate students to enhance their skills and practice. I really appreciated how my supervisors checked-in with me. I know that they are extremely busy but even a quick check-in showed me that they cared about my learning and wellbeing. To reciprocate this generous gesture, I acknowledged their commitment to my learning and growth as a person, and thanked them for their time and efforts, which made them feel good about their supervisory role.

Conclusion: An Intact Circle

The elements within the Circle of Courage are interconnected. As mentioned, I used to feel a lack of belonging in my practicum setting. On one occasion, I brought in a birthday card for all staff to sign for a colleague's birthday. Unexpectedly, this gesture made me feel a sense of *Belonging* as other staff members acknowledged my *Generosity* in thinking to make my colleague's birthday special. I noticed that with this sense of belonging and having a moment to engage and develop a relationship with each staff while they were signing the card, I felt more accepted, which increased my self-esteem in the organization. Having this experience of belonging allowed me to feel good about myself and helped me not be too fearful to try new things and take risks. It made me feel



confident and competent to learn more and helped me *Master* new skills. As a result, my supervisors trusted me and increased my responsibilities. They provided me with opportunities to make decisions on my own, while they gradually withdrew assistance. This fulfilled my need for *Independence*.

Using the Circle of Courage as a framework with students allow students to meet the essential needs of their wellbeing. Being supported by their supervisors enables students to grow and thrive in their profession and as a human being. Some reflective questions to ask when using the Circle of Courage framework might include: What can I do to help students feel like they belong in this organization? What can I do to ensure that students feel competent in their work? How can I help students act independently in the work that they do? How can I show generosity to students, and what opportunities can I provide students so that they can show their generosity?

With the awareness of the Circle of Courage framework in the supervisory relationship, supervisors can enhance the wellbeing of students by supporting them in meeting their needs of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity in the practicum setting.

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Social Media and Ethics

Barrie Lodge

here appears to be a gap in our child and youth care Codes of Conduct, Code of Ethics, Guide for the policies of the course of Ethical Conduct for Social Service Professions. None of these refer to social media ethics specifically. There is obviously a flow over from what is contained in the regulations attached to the South African Council for Social Services Act. It's just that it would be appropriate in this digital age for social media to get specific mention. All the regulations on ethical conduct for Social Service Professionals regulate the Acts or Omissions Deemed to be Unprofessional or Improper include a section which has to do with behaviour which, with due regard to the prestige, status and dignity of the profession, is detrimental to his/her position as a social service professional. This then applies to child and youth care workers.

It is unethical for us to publicly criticise other Social Service Professions or professionals. Yet social media appears to be regarded as immune. It's used in the bigger context as freedom of speech.

I remember being given an example of unethical speech freedom. Apart from hate speech. In a crowded cinema it is illegal to yell "Fire, Fire!" when there is no fire. Unnecessary panic and anxiety and fear is aroused. A mass exodus through narrow exits put people of risk of harm. So, it is in our profession. Yet, so often we see the cry of "Fire" when there is a smoldering in a corner of the profession which can be contained. The risk is a mass exodus. There is clearly a difference between advocating for the profession



as a whole on social media and using it to drag contextually specific issues into the digital arena.

We all actually know, what we say and do and how we are perceived in the wider community has ethical implications for our profession. Once a professional, always a professional. In social media this appears to be frequently disregarded. What if our clients, children and young people search our timeline on Facebook. And it IS done! I'm told that employers check out timelines as background checking of the references of work applicants. If they do it, then our young people in care can do just that and will. What will they find there?

If some of the posts I sometimes read and see is any measure, - then whooo!

I am NOT GENERALISING. In some posts only. Private life is exposed. Stuff we would never share with our clients. Sexual behaviours, relationships, allegations, family issues. Much of what, as professionals we keep to ourselves and to our close friends perhaps our family, but, there it is for all to see and read. Believe me, I'm not writing this as a prude, but as a professional. At a personal level there is much which is beautiful, witty, insightful, but my concern is how will our posts be interpreted by the children and young people in our care if it appears on our timeline? Provocative poses, explicit wording, expansive cleavage, bulging crotches?

There is another social media trend. It's the open often vilifying criticism of the workplace. In terms of our ethical behaviour toward the employer, there is reference to our not criticising the workplace in the public media (interpreted as newspapers and television). Social Service professional ethics as well as workplace codes of conduct simply disallow this. There was a post which said there is a workplace manager who made it policy that if he or she makes a friend request on Facebook, staff members are required to accept. Not at all sure of the ethics of such a policy! It does



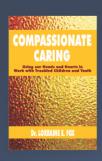
though, speak volumes of employer anxiety that internal workplace or personal criticism will be exposed on social media. Social media seems to be interpreted as "chatting to friends", which it may be. But social media can be a public medium depending on how it is used or managed. So, some texts are a diatribe of organisational criticism. I was once told that anything in the digital arena is in the public domain. It can be used. It can go viral. It can be a yell of "Fire, fire!" in the crowded cinema. There ARE other forums, other platforms, for this.

The use of a question on social media allures other professionals to come out and uncover within organization or facility criticisms. The questioner is protected, when others, I think, in good faith, may put themselves at risk.

None of this means that we, as child and youth care workers are closed off, that our freedom of speech is stifled. The use of administrated groups, closed groups, and privacy settings can allow us protection as professionals. I was given lots of advice when I went onto use social media. Much of which I have ignored, I'm afraid to say. Like, use LinkedIn for professional contact. Have a family group for family matters. But I like Facebook. It is interactional, stimulating, and is a platform for us to keep informed, to debate and to make plans. Just, ethically, be guarded. Be safeguarded. It's the public nature of social media that place us at most risk of possible professional ethical complaint.

BARRIE LODGE is a Child and Youth Care worker near Johannesburg in South Africa. He has served as a teacher, clinical manager, and director of two children's homes. Visit Barrie's blog, from which this column was originally published, at http://childandyouthcaretalk.blogspot.com























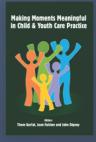












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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

4th CYC-Net World Conference in Durban, South Africa

ia Ora Koutou, MaComrades! I hope this finds you well. I write from the 44th Biennial Conference of South Africa's National Association of Child Care Workers who with FICE Africa and UNICEF hosted the 4th CYC-Net World Conference in Durban. 1400 delegates at the Durban International Conference Centre: 28 countries - especially from Central and Southern Africa, but also the Middle East. Asia and the Americas.



Yes! And what a Gathering of Voices and Energies!

Were you at the 4th World CYC-Net Conference in Durban? Voices and Energies!



Reception Evening and Dinner at the Durban Aquarium



Siimon and friends from Allambi Care in Australia helped ensure Oceania presence!

The preconference welcoming reception was hosted in the Durban



KwaZulu Youths welcoming in conjunction with traditional Indian dance

Aquarium which turned out to be an excellent venue for welcoming people into Durban City Centre. From the very beginning, it was clear that Durban was shaping into being an awesome conference gathering!

The Conference opened with groups of youths in care from all nine regions of South Africa walking into the conference venue as Olympic parades of switched on young people with banners and song. I know of no other conferences in the world where the voices of young people are participating and heard throughout the pre- and conference, post-conference initiatives. Mostly there is talk about youthful voices being heard.

Regional and traditional dance performances were offered by youths from different Durban communities, reinforcing KwaZulu music and dance, as well as music and dance from other tribes.

A distinctive feature of these conferences, as I have learned over the years and reinforced now after having been made a 'Life Member' of the NACCW, that music, rhythm and dance weaves through every hour of



every NACCW conference day. The voices and energies encountered at these conferences is remarkable. It really is a must in one's child and youth care career.

It was terrific having support from eight members of the CYC-Net Board of Governors on hand to support this event. Board members from 6 different parts of the world all contributed towards helping to make this a well-supported event. CYC-Net Chief Operating Officer Martin Stabrey was especially influential in



Music and dance continued at intermittently whenever there was a pause



Eight members of the CYC-Net Board of Governors at the Durban Conference

supporting Merle Allsopp, Zeni Thumbadoo and Donald Nghonyama to help make the conference a success.

Ample time was set aside in the conference programme for a very good array of Workshop Presentations and Research Paper reporting. It was notable how few delegates from this conference skipped any sessions. As a



newly recognised child and youth care workforce in South Africa, many were attending conference for the first time and were supported by friends.

Important work on transitioning from care is being carried out in South Africa with social workers facing a growing recognition that planning for a positive transitioning from care needs to start almost from the beginning of a place of safety placement.

Usually we leave it too late!



Eight members of the CYC-Net Workshop times were many and offered a rich variety of options of Governors



Johannesburg University Social Work Professor Adrian Van Breda on transitioning from care

A special feature of

this conference was meeting up with old friends like Zeni Thumbadoo, Patron Don Mattera; former Chairpersons Francisco Cornelius and Mtobeli Barrington; Coenraad de Beer from SOS Children's Villages and Werner van der Westhuizen formerly with SOS Port Elizabeth.



My special friend and comrade reminded us that a new generation is monitoring change in South Africa! South African youths are demanding responsive change and are growing impatient!

Where were you at the beginning of July? Sorry if we missed you in Durban!





Renewing acquaintances with Social African Leaders in the field



My KwaZulu Comrade Friend and his generation are closely monitoring change!



Information

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In general:

- Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words
- The style of a paper is up to the author
- We prefer APA formatting for referencing
- We are willing to work with first-time authors to help them get published
- We accept previously published papers as long as copyright permission is assured
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