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

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Living in the Tension: Remembering JC Chambers

8 December 1959 – 8 July 2018

James Freeman

One year ago this month JC Chambers passed away. You may know JC from his book co-authored with Mark Freado, *The Art of Kid Whispering: Reaching the Inside Kid* (2015) or the book that described his counseling practice, *The Stronghold Difference: Hope Without Hype, Guidance Without Judgement* (2016). He was certainly a friend of the Child and Youth Care field and left us a unique gift through his work.

I knew JC as a fellow trainer through the Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute. Every three years the institute gathers instructors together for updates, collaboration, and sharing of ideas. JC and I sat in on each other's session during the most recent gathering. We sat on the floor together in the hotel conference room after one of the sessions and traded feedback on our sessions. He was wise, humble, insightful, and practical with his words and actions.

JC was originally from Southern, California but grew up with his grandmother in Denver, Colorado. He completed a bachelor's degree in Sterling, Kansas (where he was a college basketball player) and both a



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masters and doctorate degree in South Dakota. As a black man JC experienced racism and prejudice in the midwest United States. A defining moment in his life was a near-death experience in a car accident where the car flipped over on the road.

In 1994 he co-founded Stronghold Counselling Services (visit www.strongholdcounseling.com). He had a clarity of focus in his work which he described as 'grace-based work'. He had a strong personal faith and embedded that in his practice in a way that was freeing and grace-filled rather than oppressive in nature. He had a unique clarity of focus on his calling to live and create relationships centered on grace, empowerment, and non-judgmental support. In his own words he described:

...graceful living is the organizing theme of my practice...we need to learn how to honestly and mercifully confront the problems of life in a manner that minimizes avoidance and defensiveness, and maximizes responsible relating and problem solving. (2016, p. 93)

For JC the work of caring was centered on healing, "the kind of deep healing that happens...on the spiritual level, addressing all the elements that make up the whole person" (2016, p. 96). In his words the process is inherently relational: "Healing never takes place alone" (2016, p. 96).

He also recognized a tension that is never truly resolved in this lifetime, one that reminds us we are made for something bigger and potential that many don't see. "Tension comes because we all want to keep what we have and get what we want...no matter how much healing we experience in this life, that tension will always be tugging at us." (2016, p. 74).



JC was 58 years old and passed away doing something he loved – coaching youth basketball. He and his wife, Lorri, had three daughters: Alyssa, Carley, and Haley.

Time doesn't heal our losses, but it does give us space to hold and grow through them. On this anniversary of his passing, I hope you can take a moment to be thankful for his voice and example of grace and encouragement in our daily work alongside kids and families.

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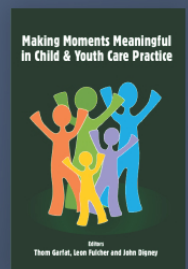
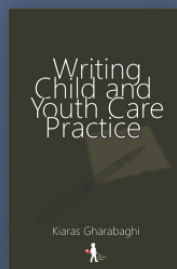
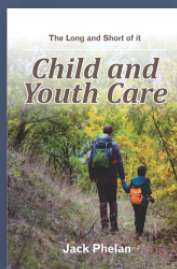
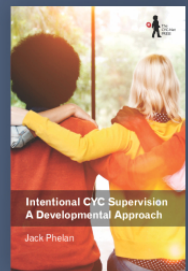
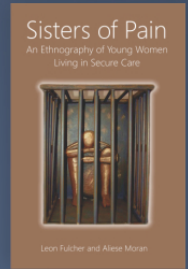
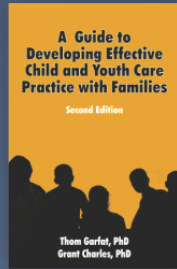
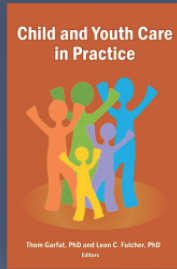
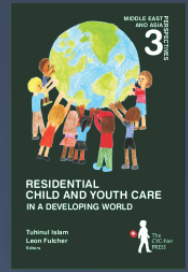
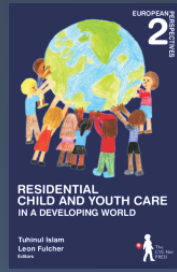
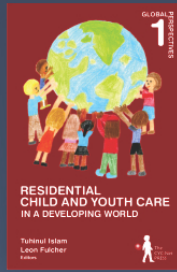
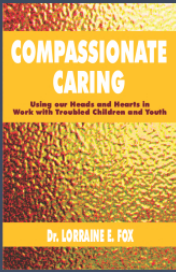


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White Fragility and Me

Hans Skott-Myhre

I recently had the good fortune to attend the CYC in Action conference at the University of Victoria. It was a powerful and humbling experience. I would have to say that it was the first CYC conference I have attended where the field's ostensible commitment to social justice, anti-racism, indigenous wisdom, queering the field, and feminist epistemologies were front and center. The conference coordinators Martin Brokenleg and Shanne McCaffrey were indigenous and wove Native ceremony and tradition throughout the conference from beginning to end in ways that moved well beyond token acknowledgement.

In addition, however, the conference drew a certain segment of the CYC community who brought their work on decolonization, queering the field, politicizing our work, eco-cultural restoration, the Circle of Courage, Afro-centric youthwork, critical consciousness, body and land sovereignty, the Sacred Hoop of Life, radical youth work, decentering whiteness, racialized youth and hip hop culture. There was an absence of workshops on diagnosis, behavior modification, broken brain theories, and some of the other common mainstream psy-CYC discourses I encounter in our on-line discussion boards and in our journals.

It was interesting and a bit troubling to see, in a rather visible way, the split in our field between radically dispirit epistemologies. There were muted conversations over coffee about how a conference like this was still considered too radical by some of our colleagues who declined to attend. Of course, there were multiple and varied reasons including money, other



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obligations and commitments etc. for non-attendance, but the fact that there was a sense of underlying controversy is still notable. All of that said, it should be noted that for Canadian CYC in an age of Truth and Reconciliation, this was the first CYC conference I am aware of co-hosted entirely by First Nations colleagues. That is an important historical event for the field of CYC and should be cause for celebration, not controversy.

As a white settler, my attendance at the conference was complicated. As I watched the ceremonies and acknowledgements, I was profoundly conflicted as to the legitimacy of my presence. By what dispensation was I anything but an interloper into older and deeper histories of struggle. As someone who has written and advocated for social justice and anti-oppressive practices for many years now, I suppose I could take the position that I am somehow exempt from the force relations involved in the continuing occupation of the very lands on I which I stood. As someone who has fought long and hard for the liberation of women and non-heteronormative peoples, I suppose I could see myself as separate from those other cis-men whose behavior remains filled with brutality in both words and deeds. As someone who has been involved in anti-racist activism for decades, I might presume to be seen as one of the “good” white people. Sitting in the opening and closing indigenous ceremonies, listening to the afro-Canadian plenary, attending and participating in workshops and panels focused on liberation, de-colonization, de-settling, queering the field, I suppose I should have felt right at home. And to some degree I did. My non-white, non-heteronormative colleagues were remarkably warm and welcoming. They acknowledged my work, joined me on panels, came to my workshops and were gracious and kind.

However, in the midst of all of that, I had a nagging sense that my position was indeed problematic and that I had a profound accountability to meet my colleagues in struggle with serious accountability to my



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positioning. I was reminded of an incident many years ago when I was the clinical director of a large multi-service youth agency positioned at the edge of an African American community. The agency had a long and complicated history with young people of color and their families. For many years the staff was pretty much all white and upper middle class, while other agencies in the area were far more integrated. Over the years that I worked there, I collaborated with the management team to recruit a multicultural staff into all of our programs, and we were quite successful. I also reached out to the other agencies in the area and brought them in to train our staff in issues of race and racism. Over time, I was able to build a strong relationship with several of the African American leaders of the youth serving agencies in the city.

One day, one of my closest African American allies invited me to a meeting of all of the African American leaders working with young people in our area. I was honored. I felt in some way it was an acknowledgement of how I really was one of the “good” white people. I went to the meeting to discover I was the only white person there. I was also the oldest and very probably most senior in terms of work in the field. I really looked forward to seeing what I could contribute to these young black men. What good counsel could I offer them? What wisdom could I impart that would give them strategies and new ideas about waging the struggle for liberation?

As the meeting progressed, and tactics for community organizing were being strategized, I drew on my training as a community organizer in the civil rights movement in the late sixties and early seventies and prepared to “whitesplain” the process and tactics of black liberation to these young black leaders. As I started to speak, my friend and colleague kicked me under the table, leaned over and said, “you need to be quiet and just listen.”

I cannot tell you how offended and surprised I was when he did that. I had literally never had anyone other than my parents tell me to shut up. I



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was a poster boy for the prerogative of the white male to hold the room. In my schooling, my ability to articulate (dare I say pontificate) was rewarded without exception. In my workplace, my opinions dominated the conversation wherever I worked. I was not impolite, nor did I ignore what others had to say, but I always assumed that what I had to say was important and that others would want to hear it. (Of course, the irony of saying this in a column where I once again have the privileged right to speak is not lost on me. Particularly here on cyc-online where currently the majority of our columnists are white men).

Long story short, I was deeply offended that my counsel was not welcomed and that my role was to listen without comment. I say offended, but what I really mean is outraged. I was so angry! I simply couldn't believe that these younger black men could tell me to be quiet and to listen. It was my first recognizable experience with my own white fragility. There would be others, but that first one took me over three months to process and wake up one day with a deeper understanding of what had happened and why it was necessary.

There is one other story I want to share that continues to shape my responses to being present in communities and on lands that are not mine, but where I hold colonial force as an older white cis-male. I was participating in an anti-racism training where we had been broken into small multiracial groups to talk about our experiences with racism. The event was at my agency and the people in my group had the complicated task of trying to talk openly about their experience of racism in the agency, in front of me the clinical director. Now, given all the work I had done to integrate the agency (including organizing this workshop led by nationally known Afro-centric trainers), I considered myself in the category of the "good" white people and really kind of expected some sympathy, connection and acknowledgement from my colleagues of color. Having



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processed my earlier experience, I held back on talking and tried hard to listen and process the experiences of my staff as they described their continuing racist encounters within the workplace. Granted, instead of the overtly structural racism the agency once manifested, we now had far more examples of interpersonal micro-aggressions. However, as my colleagues of color talked, it became clear we still had a very long way to go. As things progressed, I was feeling pretty good about sponsoring the training, being respectful, and doing my part to undo racism in the workplace where I was administratively in charge.

And then from across the circle a young recently hired young black woman made direct eye contact with me. She held my gaze for what seemed like quite a long time as the conversation came to halt. With a great deal of pain, frustration and anger in her voice she said, "You will never understand this until you realize that your very existence causes me pain!"

I had no response except a nod of acknowledgement and the conversation went on to other things. But I was caught in that moment. I kept running what she had said around and around in my head. My very existence causes her pain? What could that possibly mean? I was one of the good guys. My very existence was dedicated to undoing oppression of all types. I was a critical theorist, an activist, a social justice warrior, a good ally. The cognitive dissonance was overwhelming.

There was no animus in what that young woman said to me. It was simply the statement of an irrevocable if profoundly difficult and painful fact. That there could be people like myself born into white privilege, while others are born outside that world was an obvious and profound injustice. Our experiences of the world on a daily basis were substantively different in ways that had little or nothing to do with who I was as an individual. It didn't matter whether I was a good guy or not, when I went into a department store, no one went on alert and followed me until I left. It was



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extremely unlikely that I would be pulled over for driving while white. When I spoke I expected to be listened to. My anger was seen as passion and no matter how angry I got it was highly unlikely the police would shoot me. The presence of my physical body with its markers of whiteness signaled to every non-white person that I had access to privilege as a birthright. My privilege was not the result of my character, my behaviors, my ethics, my morality, or my good deeds. It simply came with an accident of birth.

Herein lies the essential core of everything it means to be white and why it cannot be escaped or passed by. Every encounter, we white folks have with our colleagues of color is fraught with the tension this young woman articulated as “your very existence causes me pain.” Now, of course our colleagues of color can mask it, or decide to be generous in overriding it and opening themselves to us, or simply hoping it can be overcome. That said, if we white people, colonists, settlers, patriarchs, and purveyors of privilege deny the simple fact of the inherent trauma of the existence of whiteness, we open old wounds and inflict new ones. Every time we, as white people, ask that we be given a pass, that our feelings should be given primacy, that our explanations of innocence be honored, that our voices should be heard, that the playing field is level, that history is past, that we can “whitesplain” cultural difference, or that the demands of our colleagues of color are “too radical,” we intensify the already existing pain of the encounter.

I should be clear that each of these examples is premised in my own behavior over time. I have no exemption. I was raised to honor my own whiteness over all else and the struggle to overcome the racism inscribed in my bones is a daily struggle. But if I am serious about my commitments to equity and liberation then I cannot afford the luxury of indulging my white fragility.



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While my brothers and sisters of color are being shot, incarcerated, having their children stolen and put in “concentration camps” on the U.S. Mexican border, sustaining ongoing occupation of their land, the disappearance and murder of their women, experiencing climate change related starvation and forced migration (the list goes on), it is insulting for me to talk about my compassion fatigue, my vicarious trauma, my lack of voice, my need for selfcare before I can help others, and all the other ways in which I have the luxury of stepping away from the struggle.

And so, as I stood at the opening ceremonies of the CYC in action conference and watched the sacred ceremonies of welcome and healing, I wondered what my obligation was to my colleagues. What can I bring and how can I position myself in ways that, at a minimum, don't cause more harm, and in the best of circumstances contribute to the struggle. The effects of the activities of my people will visit the youngsters dancing in front of me today. Climate change alone will shape their lives and the land they value as sacred in ways I cannot imagine. What is my accountability to these young people? What is the accountability of this still overwhelmingly white field we call CYC? To ask these questions and to struggle for the answers in collaboration with my colleagues of color is in no way a radical endeavor. It is simply a necessity for the survival of all of us.

HANS SKOTT-MYHRE is a regular writer for CYC-Online. He is a Professor of Social Work and Human Services at Kennesaw State University in Georgia (USA). He may be reached at hskottmy@kennesaw.edu



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Let's Talk About Money

Kiaras Gharabaghi

It is worth remembering sometimes that child and youth services globally are an industry that is worth many billions of dollars. To be fair, it is difficult to put a precise figure on this industry for a variety of reasons. For one thing, the boundaries of what constitute child and youth services are unclear, and overlap with education, health care, corrections, recreation and other sectors. Globally, the work of NGOs often includes activities that are not specifically targeted at children and youth, but that clearly impact them in significant ways, such as development work in the context of women, environmental work, and of course policy and advocacy work. Nevertheless, we can, with some imagination, at least estimate what money is spent on activities and contexts that very directly have an impact on the work performed by child and youth care practitioners. For example, we know that in Ontario, Canada's largest province, the annual budget for child welfare services is about \$1.5 billion. We can estimate that Canada-wide, this means that child welfare is worth about \$5 billion. Whatever the cost in Canada, it is about 10 times as much in the US, so we can say that child welfare in Canada and the US (North America without Mexico) is worth about \$55 billion. In most social expenditure categories, Europe ends up roughly on par with Canada and the US combined, and other global North countries such as Australia, Japan, and New Zealand add a little more, so that we can estimate the total global North expenditure on child welfare at about \$120 billion. The global South adds another chunk of money to this, so that it is not unreasonable, even if very inexact, to say that



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child welfare, globally, is roughly a \$150 billion industry! And it probably is somewhat conservative to suggest that if we add all of the other sectors to this total that directly involve the kinds of activities, jobs, contexts impacting child and youth care practice, which might include child and youth mental health services, youth justice, child and youth services in schools, and community services and activities as part of especially global South activities, we are probably talking about a \$300 billion industry.

\$300 billion is a lot of money. It is far more money than the entire GDP of most countries in the world. When this much money is involved in the provision of particular kinds of services and activities, inequities inevitably appear. Someone is making millions, and others are making minimum wage or poverty level income through their participation in this kind of work. This is not to be critical or cynical; it is simply a fact of life that under conditions of capitalism, including managerialism, entrepreneurship and public/private partnerships, money gets distributed unequally. Furthermore, some money is spent on things the necessity of which is decided upon by those with access to spending such money – this includes the travel costs, the conferences, the networking, the sometimes nebulous training initiatives, the consulting activities, the pet projects, and other ways of spending money. Some of the money spent in these ways is spent well; training, consulting, travel, research, conferences are in fact necessary components of ensuring good work and good practice. Some of the money is spent not so well; child and youth service are not immune to deals between friends, corruption and bad financial decision-making.

The point I want to make is simply this: We know that child and youth care practice is a great field, with wonderful and committed people doing amazing work in many different places under many different circumstances. And we also know that in order for a practitioner to be able to do great work, a lot of other people have to create an enabling



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environment. This means people have to create agencies and services, ensure their funding from somewhere, develop plans to evaluate these services, produce evidence of their effectiveness, and meet with other people in other places to negotiate new opportunities. All of this costs money. But there is something profoundly unfair about the vast majority of practitioners directly involved every day with young people, their families and their communities, working under terms of employment and under working conditions that are inadequate, sometimes unsafe, and often exploitative, while others benefit from the accumulated wisdom of these practitioner-warriors and sell that wisdom (and sometimes skills) at a high cost to the highest bidder. The bottom line is that for some, involvement in child and youth services has provided a life filled with opportunity, travel, and capacity to grow income and economic well being further, while for others, the daily dedication to real people in real places living real lives has resulted in subsistence.

A \$300 billion industry could, and should, do better than that. It cannot operate as a system in which the highest earners operate as entrepreneurs and benefit from the dynamics of capitalist expansion and growth, while the masses of low earners are asked to pretend we live in a community-focused, sharing economy in which love and care represent both the product and the reward for excellent practice. What I find particularly dark in its moral and ethical context is the sometimes explicit but often implicit demand of minimum-wage or subsistence workers (or, in many contexts such as Indigenous communities in Canada, unpaid labourers – usually, almost always, women) to think of the children and to do a little more even if it falls outside of the paid work context. Stay a little longer on shift, volunteer a little more, give more! The emotional burden of child and youth work is placed firmly within the lived experiences of the workers directly engaged with children and youth, while the glamour of system design,



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international negotiations for funding and partnership, multi-site research activities, and consulting services are sufficiently removed from the children and youth to avoid carrying the burden of their every day struggles.

These dynamics are not inevitable. They are constructed to serve a few people well while maintaining the masses to function as enablers of the few. We got this part wrong; we allowed our work to mirror what global industry has always been. A change agent to maintain the status quo. After years of enormous movement, development, discovery, research, and expansion, child and youth services continue to rely on the labour of women, racialized people, and people facing barriers to economic opportunity in order to grow the possibilities for further expansion. Someone will benefit, someone won't. At \$300 billion, more people should benefit, and they should benefit now.

KIARAS GHARABAGHI is the director of the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University. He may be reached at kgharabaghi@ryerson.ca



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International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP)

Tara Collins, Reshma Shiwcharran, Haley Marion McLean, Reah (Hyun Ju) Shin and Cleyton Lima

Sawubona, Molweni, Ola, 你好 Nǐ hǎo, 안녕 An-Nyung, and Hello!

We are called the International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP), and we are coming to Durban for the youth conference and the NACCW and CYC-Net international conference in July! We are excited to share with young people and practitioners at these two events about our research partnership.

Our partnership came together following a [conference at Ryerson University](#) in 2015 that explored the tensions with implementing the child's rights to participation and protection. While there is rhetoric about how rights are interdependent, in practice the child's right to protection is often the focus without considering children's knowledge and views. In addition to providing a range of resources including background papers, an executive summary, and videos on the conference website, we developed a [special issue of an academic journal](#) on this topic as well as [briefing note #1](#) and [#2](#) for various practitioners (available here). But we realized that there was a need for more research on these under-appreciated child rights involving academics, practitioners and young people themselves.



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As a result, we began our project in 2017 with funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Our partnership is a team of young people, university students, professors and practitioners from 7 universities, 10 international and national NGOs, provincial human rights institutions, and research institutes in five countries: Brazil, China, Canada, South Africa and the UK. (See some of the different languages of our members identified in the greeting above!) We have come together because we are interested in exploring the connections between a child's right to participate and protection, and learning how to monitor children's participation in child protection programs and policies. What makes us unique is that we use a participatory approach to connect with young people and adults, researchers and practitioners, funders and other stakeholders.

Involvement of young people is very important to our project. The ten international Child and Youth Advisory Committee (CYAC) members (recruiting from a population between the ages of 10 to 24) in Canada, Brazil, South Africa and China work together with researchers to advance dialogue between adults and young people in research affecting their lives. They are young people with varied life experiences who share much invaluable knowledge and time. We have two members from China; two from South Africa; two from Brazil; two from Ontario and two from New Brunswick, Canada. Members meet virtually every two months to discuss (in English) child rights matters of concern to them, as well as to consider and determine options to inform the research process. We also engaged local CYACs to support the research on the ground during data collection in the four aforementioned countries. The international CYAC members took leadership by coordinating and facilitating the local CYAC meetings with the support from the research team.



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Our project is divided into three phases. Phase I of the project involved international level research about current conceptualizations of children's rights to participate and to protection in the academic literature as well as with varied international stakeholders around the world.

Phase II concerned country cases where we researched different issues concerning these child rights in five jurisdictions. In Brazil, we explored young people's participation on the city council on the rights of children and adolescents in Volta Redonda. Data was collected from two separate studies in the two provinces of Canada. In Ontario, the question of how to involve young people in Child and Youth Care college curriculum was explored. We studied New Brunswick's Youth Voice Committee that was created as part of the provincial harm reduction strategy. In China, we researched with Right to Play China its program to strengthen the child protection system. In South Africa, we worked with the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) to examine the Isibindi Youth Forums in the Eastern Cape. While the contexts and study topics in each jurisdiction varied, they all concerned different dimensions of children's rights to participation and protection.

Our current Phase III focuses on analyzing the connections between children's participation and protection within each jurisdiction as well as considering the outcomes in all jurisdictions. We are busy working on our data analysis and look forward to sharing our results in various ways.

In addition to involving our CYACs at local and international levels, our research methods involved focus groups with young people, interviews with adults, and participatory meetings involving both young people and adults.

There has been some interesting developments due to our partnership. For instance, UNICEF South Africa and the National Association of Child Care Workers have committed to use the lessons learnt in this study to



start involving young in monitoring participation in the Isibindi programmes across South Africa. In another example in Brazil, there is now much greater visibility not only within their community but also beyond the municipality of both the Volta Redonda Youth Forum and the Child Rights Council that discusses policies and approves the children's budget. This means that their work as young people has been strengthened in contributing directly to public policy processes that affect them. We have all learned so much in working together within and across our geographies.

In addition to our CYAC members (some of whom co-authored this article), our research team consists of:

- Ryerson University (Toronto, Canada) – Dr. Tara Collins;
- University of Cape Town (South Africa) – Ms. Lucy Jamieson, Children's Institute;
- Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro and International Center for Research and Policy on Childhood (CIESPI) (Brazil) – Dr. Irene Rizzini;
- University of Edinburgh (Scotland) – Dr. Kay Tisdall, Dr. Javita Narang;
- International Institute for Child Rights and Development (Victoria, Canada) – Ms. Laura Wright & Dr. Philip Cook;
- McGill University (Montreal, Canada) – Dr. Mónica Ruiz-Casares;
- Lakehead University (Thunder Bay, Canada) – Dr. Sonja Grover.

In addition to these individuals, our partnership includes numerous practitioner and academic organizations:



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- *Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de Centre-Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal*;
- Equitas: International Centre for Human Rights Education;
- New Brunswick Office of Child & Youth Advocate (Canada);
- Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children & Youth, Ontario (which has sadly and regretfully been closed by the Ontario government, see: <https://ocaarchives.wordpress.com/moving-forward/>);
- Save the Children Canada;
- Plan International Canada;
- Right To Play International/Right to Play China; and
- National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW), South Africa.

This partnership is keen to better understand the children's rights that have such significance in our work with young people. How can we protect young people if we don't engage with them to comprehend what the risks and issues are in their lives? How can we respect the views and knowledge of young people in practice? What are the challenges and lessons to be learned? How can we understand the reality of how we respect (or not) child and youth participation in our work? These are some of the relevant questions of our work.

In order to answer these questions, our team has utilized youth engagement techniques, such as meeting youth where they are at - whether that means meeting outside of traditional working hours, shifting the language we use away from academic heavy terms, co-creating solutions by allowing youth to lead and supporting when asked, and developing clear expectations and terms of engagement that allow youth to collaborate with us as equal partners. For CYAC members, this process has been significant as it has challenged individual youth misconceptions



on youth-adult partnerships. Valuing youth as equal contributors is revolutionary; it helps give youth the context and the tools to self-advocate for their own rights and for themselves as individuals and as a collective to be taken seriously when advocating for the world they live in. For children's rights, the significance of this project is the empowerment it provides young people through education on their own child rights - giving them the tools to self-advocate and educate others; and helping shift away from historic pattern of devaluing youth voice towards inclusion, creating more opportunities for young people to collaborate with adults as equals.

The ICCRP work contributes to understanding of how children's rights are being understood around the world, how the children's voice is being used, recognized, understood and implemented in the decision-making process of the practices for children. It also helps a lot showing different ways of child's participation in other countries, that could help to develop better methodologies that recognize the important role of children in the process of decision making in our own countries

Many of the ICCRP and local CYAC members are actively working in social service fields. Being in an international partnership while having amazing funding partners such as UNICEF SA, to participate in international conferences allows our team to enhance our relational approaches with the children and young people we work with on a daily basis. Having first-hand research and data on how children's rights are upheld and protected around the world, helps us to work in our local communities with a diverse population.

For instance, CYAC member Reshma feels that as a child and youth care practitioner in the making, the ICCRP findings and teachings help her be a better student.



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“I work with a vast population of families that are immigrants, with many having their children be first generation Canadians. Having a better understanding of worldwide culture and practices help me to partner with families to get them adjusted to Canada while maintaining their cultures, in a safe and protected way for their children. Having the chance to be a participant and presenter at the NACCW conference, will teach me a tremendous amount of history, culture, family wellness, and how the communities uphold children’s rights. Being a future CYC, this is vital, as one of the main principles of our work is being relational, building the trust and rapport with families, empathizing with their history and intergenerational trauma, while being in Canada. Being a part of this partnership means that we can utilize globalization for the better in helping immigrant families better, helping them create better practices in how we as a community can shift the way we uphold and protect children’s rights globally.”

Warm and enthusiastic thanks to UNICEF South Africa and the NACCW, some of our CYAC members from Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in New Brunswick and Ontario, Canada will meet their South African counterparts for the first time at the upcoming youth conference. Then we will present details about the ICCRP, the research process and some preliminary results to the international CYC conference. We are so excited and hope to see you there! (But if you won’t be there, don’t hesitate to visit our brief [website](#) (where more details will be added soon) or contact us at iccrp@outlook.com or tara.collins@ryerson.ca and we can share more information.)



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TARA COLLINS is an associate professor in the school of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University, honorary professor at the Children's Institute at the University of Cape Town, and is a regular contributor to CYC-Online. She teaches and writes regularly on the topics of children's rights. She may be reached at tara.collins@ryerson.ca

RESHMA SHIWCHARRAN is a member of the International Canadian Child Rights Partnership Child and Youth Advisory Council. She is a current student in the Child and Youth Care program at Humber. She is active in the child welfare community working with 6 agencies across the GTA, as a youth mentor, life skills facilitator and bold advocate for bettering conditions for Ontario's most vulnerable population. Children and young people.

HALEY MARION MCLEAN is a member of the International Canadian Child Rights Partnership Child and Youth Advisory Council, and also acts as a national youth advisor to Kid's Help Phone and ACCESS Open Minds. Haley Marion has been a passionate child rights and youth engagement advocate since 2014, and has worked in healthcare policy research and reform for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research since 2017.

REAH (HYUN JU) SHIN is the ICCRP's Child and Youth Participation Coordinator since the summer of 2017. She graduated from the Child and Youth Care (CYC) undergraduate program at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. She will begin her Master's program in CYC at Ryerson this September. Reah's focus in her work includes advocacy, disability studies, feminism and the AOAR framework.

CLEYTON LIMA is an undergraduate student in International Relations at Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), a researcher at Núcleo de Pesquisa em Refúgio (NPR IRI/PUC-Rio) and a CYAC member of International and Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP). His works focus on child rights, humanitarian interventions and refugee studies.



Thinking about Boundaries

Jack Phelan

Professional CYC practice in the life space of young people and families is fraught with dangerous situations. The danger can be physical and combative, emotionally charged, power-laden, and personally fearful. Awareness of boundary dynamics and establishment of clear personal space can be a critical element in our attempts to interact with others in the life space. New practitioners are especially needing a practical road map for developing boundaries for every one of their interactions. Boundaries must be established between the practitioner and the young people and families, between him/herself and colleagues, and between him/herself and the CYC supervisor.

The main issue in developing boundaries is safety, and this awareness of safety needs must be re-evaluated regularly, since progressive life space experience builds the capacity to manage safety anxiety and increase competence beliefs. Safety involves both personal fears and anxiety, focused on being physically hurt or physically hurting others, as well as being emotionally bruised by the challenging and defensive behavior exhibited in the life space. This personal fear traps the newer practitioner in a “me focus” which seriously limits his/her ability to be aware of the needs of the other person. Here is a simple example; when a young person refuses to follow a basic request of the practitioner (come to the lunch table), the practitioner’s first thought is “oh no, now what am I going to do?” rather than “I wonder what is bothering her”. Until the practitioner



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feels physically and emotionally safe in the life space environment, there is a limited capacity to help others.

Safety also involves anxiety about professional capability, or competence fears. Most newer practitioners know how far they need to improve before they are as capable as many of the more experienced staff, and there is fear of being exposed as incompetent which affects their personal safety. This creates a protective “me focus” which also limits any attempts to help others.

Unfortunately, newer practitioners are hoping to get simple, unchanging solutions to complex dynamics like personal boundaries, since this could reduce the anxiety experienced, but this is not realistic. In fact, relational practice requires us to continually re-establish increasingly closer connections with people, which means re-defining boundary rules regularly for specific relationships.

Many newly graduated students hope to engage in relational practice without accounting for these boundary dynamics and safety issues and they become quite discouraged with all the seemingly useless theories in their textbooks. It is not possible to avoid or rush through the time and experience necessary to manage safety issues effectively, most practitioners need at least six months to a year to become personally and professionally safe enough to lose their “me focus”.

Actually, there is a simple formula about boundaries that practitioners can follow until personal and professional anxiety is managed effectively. Basically, newer practitioners should have very thick boundaries with people, not trying to do more than be a nameless, faceless staff member who is running a very prescribed program in concert with all the other staff on the team. He/she should try to treat everyone fairly and equally, and not seem to get too personally affected by challenging attitudes and behavior.



Relational attempts should be discouraged by supervisors and behavioral goals are most useful at this point in professional development.
I will continue this discussion next month.

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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What's love got to do with it? How to stabilise children in public care with cost-effective quality

Colin Maginn

In March 2019, at a 'Best Practice Forum' in the House of Lords, I presented on 'the emotional warmth model of professional childcare' using evidence from two research papers by Seán Cameron (2017) and Seán Cameron and Ravi Das (2019). Both papers show significant positive results. Lord Listowel (an advocate for children in public care) seemed uneasy with a 'scientific' approach to children. This short article outlines recent insights which science has given into the human need to love and be loved, argues that a systematic evidence-based approach enables clarity about what works, why it works, and goes on to show how quality care is more cost-effective.

People working in children's homes in England have a tough consideration, the official Guide to Children's Homes Regulations (Department of Education, 2015) says that "Children in residential child care should be loved" (p. 6). Viewed through the lens of the scientist, we now know that children need love as much as they need food, shelter and protection. The famous scientist Albert Einstein has been attributed as saying: "If you can't explain it to a six-year-old, you don't understand it



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yourself". Any six-year-old could explain the simple human fact that every child needs to be loved no matter where they live.

However, any adult would struggle to explain and justify to a six-year-old the emotional violence to a child caused by an adult in the parental role who is 'maintaining a professional distance' when they should be offering warmth, kindness, sensitivity, responsiveness, safety and security.

Science and parental love: The good news

Science can explain the delightfully rewarding and emotionally fulfilling reciprocation which the sensitive, kind, responsive, parent or adult in the place of a parent, receives when a child 'gets' that you care about them. Our behaviour towards a child directly impacts the child's behaviour towards us. When we modify our behaviour, the 'hypothesis testing' child learns and responds. We too learn and respond. With kindness, openness, mutual respect, trust and empathy our brain and the child's brain produce the hormone oxytocin making each more responsive to the other and more aware of subtle social cues leading to increased prosocial approach behaviour. Feldman (2015) explains the modulatory role of oxytocin in the development of children's social competencies.

Warm, responsive, protective parenting from adults who are clearly enjoying their child's company and are attentive to his or her needs, is reassuring and enables the child to relax and do what children do naturally: playing and exploring their world. Alison Gopnik (2016) shows us that play improves learning and retention and how amazingly innovative even young children can be when they are safe, relaxed and able to play and explore.

Attachment is no longer just theory. It is now attachment science. An example here is the work of neuroscientist Naomi Eisenburger (2003), who has shown how rejection and separation trigger the pain systems to



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maintain attachments by alerting to the potentially harmful consequences of separation.

Children are resourceful and will have used, developed, and perfected strategies to survive in hostile situations. These strategies are hard earned and well tested. So, an emotionally traumatised child will want to hold on to their tactics even when these are self-limiting and unhelpful. The job of a kind and informed adult is to provide safety, to spot stress, and enable the child to stay calm. To build attachments which are fun, protective, and reassuring. To help the child develop new strategies which are more adaptive to their new safe and caring environment, not to take the old strategies away as they may need them again in a future unfriendly situation. Patricia Crittenden (2015) using her Dynamic Maturational Model of Attachment, shows how considering attachment strategies rather than styles is more helpful and practical as the adult knows that change is possible and can see the child's behaviour as adaptive, in the context of their abusive background.

Science and the bad news

For survival, our brains are finely tuned to immediately detect danger and threats, so that rejecting words or even a frown on an adult's face could trigger a fear response in the child, (see McCrory, et. al., 2017). When the adult in the parenting role purposefully keeps a child at a professional distance or engages in other stress-inducing, cruel and unkind behaviour, the child's past experience of neglect are rapidly recalled by enhanced memory retrieval as a bodywide cascade of defence responses are triggered by the sympathetic nervous system, a process explained in detail by Van der Kolk (2007) in his book 'The Body Keeps the Score'.



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This process is complex. Adrenaline, norepinephrine, and cortisol are released into the bloodstream. Adrenaline and norepinephrine prepare the body to defend attack or flee with an energy boost from an increase in glucose. Perceptions become focused with increased vigilance, pupils dilate, vision narrows. The more primitive areas of the brain, the limbic system, take control from the more developed frontal lobe. Thoughts become less logical and more instinctive leading to impulsive and irrational behaviour. An informed adult will know that this is not the time to have a 'wee chat'. Instead, it is an opportunity to help the child relax and regain control. The time for talking is much later when the child is calm, regulated, amenable and using their frontal lobe, which is the part of the brain that controls, cognitive skills, judgment, language, emotional expression, problem-solving, and many other complex human behaviours.

Science and the living functional brain

For some time now we have been aware of pre-birth brain injury following exposure to drugs or alcohol during the rapid development of the brain in the womb. Catterick and Curran (2014) in their book on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) show that this is an underdiagnosed disorder. Making FASD part of a child's assessment could help with understanding, explaining and opening up to alternative strategies when dealing with children's behaviour which seems resistant to change.

The development in recent years of functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) has enabled detailed images of the brain and to discover that in addition to toxic substances (such as alcohol), toxic childhood experiences also have an adverse impact on the developing brain. Teicher (2016) reports "there have been more than 180 original reports showing an association between childhood maltreatment and alterations in brain structure, function, connectivity or network architecture" (p. 652-653).



Teicher, et. al. (2006) have mapped the impact on various specific areas of the brain following different adverse childhood experiences during different stages of the child's development from early childhood to late teens.

Science and 'parenting' traumatised children

When a child is 'placed in care' the adults in the parental role have a 'duty of care' to use the best knowledge available to ensure that the child receives warm, loving, care which is responsive to each child's individual needs. The 'emotional warmth model of professional childcare', (Cameron & Daz, 2019) helps to achieve this by systematically empowering foster and adoptive parents and adults working in children's homes, by combining their knowledge and experience of the child, with the knowledge, experience and access to research which a psychologist brings to regular consultations.

This systematic approach lists each young person's strengths then, in order to evaluate what's working, we record a 'baseline' in each of the areas listed below. These are broken down to identify specific priority parenting needs which at a later date, can be used to view change compared to the baseline. These needs are: (1) Primary care and protection, (2) Attachments and close relationships, (3) Positive self-perception, (4) Emotional competence, 5) Self-management or self-efficacy skills, (6) Resilience, (7) A sense of belonging, and (8) Personal and social responsibility. Also documented is an emotional assessment of where the child is on their trauma journey using Cairns (2003) four stages: stabilisation, integration, adaptation, and emotional growth.

Working together with the psychologist in small groups, adults in the parenting role are able to review progress and agree on a personalised, responsive and tailored plan for each young person. The resulting everyday



practical tasks for the adults become part of the child's personal care plan and include strategies for dealing with the child's self-defeating behaviours, responding supportively to emotional trauma, and ensuring that the child discovers and uses their often hidden signature strengths.

Two peer-reviewed research papers, by Cameron (2017) and Cameron and Das (2019) analysed data from the application of the model and found positive results. In the first with children in foster and adoptive care, the probability of getting these positive results by chance is less than one in a hundred. The second study was with children in children's homes in different parts of England achieved even better results, the probability of getting these positive results by chance is less than one a thousand.

Stable, quality placements cost less

Having a shared language, a clear structure and an ongoing record of progress allows priorities to be agreed, goals set and enables everyone working with and responsible for a child's care to evaluate the effectiveness of the support for each child, by referring to the baseline. Accountability and effective evaluation are necessary, not only to ensure positive outcomes for the child but also to ensure that scarce public resources are being used appropriately.

Remarkably, quality care costs less (even in the short term) than the current system. Loughton, in an all-party parliamentary group for children enquiry, details the postcode lottery of services and states that "money is influencing decisions about whether to offer support to our most vulnerable children" (2018, p. 3). Hannon (2010) demonstrates that quality care is more cost effective. Her study 'In Loco Parentis' compared a stable care journey (child A) with an unstable one (child B). Hannon found the average additional cost of the unstable placement to be £32,770.37 per child, per year. Multiplying that £32k to get the national cost of unstable



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placements that year, (about 33% of children in care in 2010, had unstable placements) thus the annual extra cost to the English taxpayer was about £650 million. Even if we ignore inflation unstable placements since the report was published in 2010 have cost over £6.5 billion. Hannon's report establishes the financial wisdom of achieving stability by showing the strong link to attachments, a matter which is well established in psychological research and confirmed in Seán Cameron's (2011) position that the adults in the parenting role are highly effective agents for therapeutic change.

Science and a brighter future

While there are no quick answers to supporting children emotionally traumatised by years of neglect and abuse, the Cameron and Daz research papers are recent examples of the research and psychology knowledge base which offers informed systematic support. It is paradoxical that it would cost less to provide the stability and support that children in public care need than the current, random provision across much of England. In spite of this haphazard support, a kind and informed adult can be a life-changing champion for the child in their care. It will take committed and knowledgeable leadership in central and local government to achieve both the dramatic improvements and cost savings possible. A start would be moving from a myopic one-year budgetary cycle approach to one which rewards high quality, loving childcare and considers the whole childhood as the relevant funding cycle.

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COLIN MAGINN, B.Sc (Hon) Psychology, MIOd, MBPsS, is the director of the Pillars of Parenting and has spent his career working with children in public care in the U.K. Learn more at www.pillarsofparenting.co.uk. Colin may be reached at colinmaginn@pillarsofparenting.co.uk

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The Roller Coaster Profession

Barrie Lodge

There is again concern on social media that child and youth care workers are leaving the profession. This time, having studied social work whilst employed, or are currently doing so, or are moving to education, or are simply leaving. Reduced numbers can't be filled with the through flow of graduates or child and youth care workers with a Diplomas. This leaves vacant posts, or else, a compulsion for child and youth care workers at the auxiliary level to perform some of the more advanced tasks in the scopes of practice.

There was a book shown on Facebook last week called 'Social Work: The Rise and Fall of a Profession'. Its context is the UK, but I thought the title captured something of the trends in the child and youth care profession in South Africa. The cover of the book shows a roller coaster ...the upward hikes and the scary drops. In previous blogs, this analogy proved useful...the rises and the falls for us as child and youth care workers in South Africa has spanned decades.

The first Professional Board for Child and Youth Care was inaugurated in 1998 after years of being statutorily in the Council for Social Service Professions Act. The first five years were spent drafting regulations for the registration of child and youth care workers at the Auxiliary and the Professional levels. The scopes of practice became a hurdle. The question was always, how does child and youth care practice differ from other



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helping professions and does it have enough original content to make it a separate profession? Was child and youth care yet a profession or an emerging profession, or an occupation that needed to first be an extension of the arm of other "established" social service professions. It was an ongoing debate.

Academics saw child and youth care as belonging in their various academic departments...Social Work, Psychology, Mental Health Care. All this resulted in there being no elected Professional Board for Child and Youth Care for a full five-year term. No warm bodies...No Board. The Department of Social Development came to the rescue and funded an "Interim Committee/Board" which functioned to continue the work in the interregnum.

The 18th draft of the proposed regulations was signed into law in October 2013 (see Lodge, 2015).

It was in that period that Social Work was declared a scarce skill (and a critical skill). Like the UK, it was experiencing a "down". Poor salaries resulted in numbers of social workers drifting away...leaving the profession for industry or the UK. Study bursaries were made available to offset the dwindling numbers. It worked. Some say that it worked too well as there was a time when we had unemployed auxiliary and graduate Social Workers. I am saying this because bursaries for university study were not available for child and youth care workers at that time and the University of South Africa shut down its child and youth care degree.

A very successful model for community-based care called *Isibindi* was designed and rolled out nationally by the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) in South Africa. This provided employment of large numbers of child and youth care workers and learners at the auxiliary level. In 2013, the then Minister of Social Development undertook to adopt *Isibindi* as a national model. The Department financed the training of



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10,000 child and youth care learners. The learners were paid a stipend and required to register with the South African Council for Social Service Professionals. The agreement was that for 5 years the NACCW would be the training service provider and employ the mentors to ensure the continuity and standards of the model. In the five-year period social media hosted expressions of disappointment by child and youth care workers in comments that they struggled to find appointments into the more senior posts.

The contract ended in March of 2018.

Social media exploded. Some Provincial Departments announced a "dry season".... no funds ... no pay. Delayed payments of stipends, suspended training. Some projects closed. Qualified child and youth care workers at the auxiliary level were still paid learner stipends. Monies in the community-based projects bore no comparison with child and youth care workers in residential facilities.

Here began the drift, reminiscent of the social work crisis of 2012/2013.

In 2017, National strike action was taken. It lasted 6 weeks. The trade union had a 13-point list of demands. They included better and equal salaries for all social service practitioners, the removal of the ceiling placed on the salaries of child and youth care workers at levels 4,5 and 6 on the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD). It was agreed that these demands would be met on the 31st October 2017. The date came and went and were not implemented. Apparently changes to the OSD have to be made at a very high level in the National structure and can or do take a very long time to fix.

This week on social media, it seems that child and youth care workers may be running out of patience. It was said ... they can't wait.

This brings us to this week's social media posts.



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The move of child and youth care workers out of the profession is a matter of concern. In one province it was said yesterday only 38 child and youth care workers were transferred to Social work. More are doing social work studies at the auxiliary level.

“Our profession is dying a slow and painful death”. Social media comment speaks of confused and mixed emotions. Even now, one child and youth care workers in one of the provinces said that in their project they had not been paid since October of last year. (Sometimes this can be a problem within the holding agency).

There is evidence of a lift. Training and compulsory training is emerging. An Isibindi styled model is underway. There is talk of more universities interested in offering a professional degree in child and youth care work. Some provinces, it was said, will or have made increases in salaries (if little).

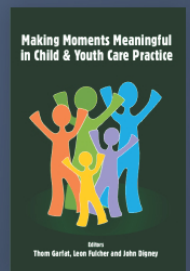
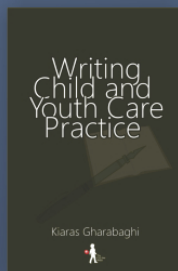
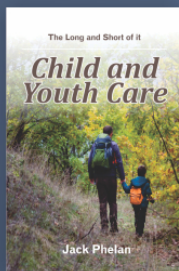
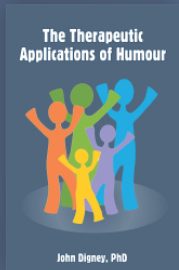
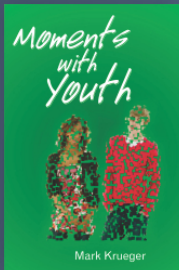
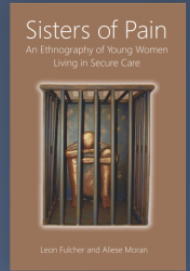
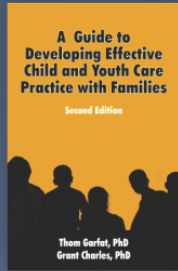
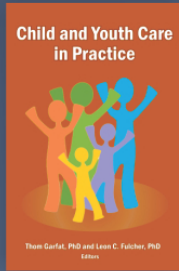
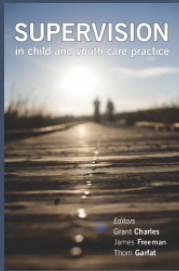
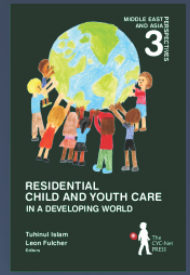
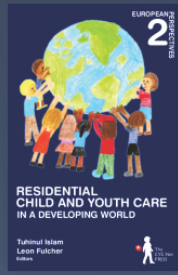
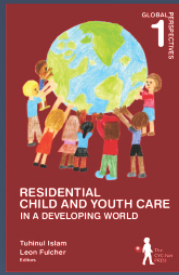
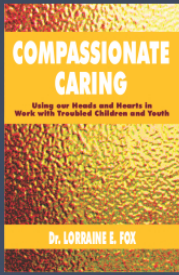
AND the resilience and loyalty of child and youth care workers to serve the best interests of the nation's children persists as a beacon of inspirational light. Child and youth care workers are encouraging each other not to become despondent, but to hang in. Feels as if they are anticipating another haul upward on the roller coaster.

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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://childandouthcaretalk.blogspot.com>





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To Be Awake or Not To Be Awake, That Is The Choice: Bringing Presence Into Child and Youth Care Practice

Debra Palmer

I'm not exactly sure when I re-experienced being fully awake. Other than my original experience of being born, being awake had become merely a mechanical phenomenon, the act of "doing" from an external perspective. Although I had flickerings of being awake, or experiencing my vitality from my core, it wasn't until I experienced a near fatal accident that I began to understand what being awake was really all about.

I had a life choice to make; would I use medication for chronic pain, or search for another way to manage it? I chose the latter. It was then I discovered the power of breath. Through my personal experience, and years of research, I discovered that not only could breath-work assist in relieving the pain, but also help to renegotiate the trauma through my body. I was beginning to experience myself from the inside. I was amazed at my innate potential to be alive and awake at the same time.



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Around this time (during the early eighties) I had a contract with the “Ministry of Social Services” to work with very complex, exceptional children and youth in their family homes. While I had many profound learning experiences during those years, my relationship with one exceptional young woman was life altering. She introduced me to listening. She was (is) a blind quadriplegic, with epilepsy and cerebral palsy.

One day, as we busied ourselves with the nightly routines of bathing, medications, physiotherapy exercises and our evening crossword puzzle (I read out the clues and, hand-over-hand, assisted her to write the words on the paper), she suddenly stopped what we were doing and asked, “Can you hear that dog barking?” I listened, or rather thought I was listening, but heard nothing. “No I can’t hear a dog,” I replied. “Listen harder,” she insisted, but I still could not hear the dog over the general noise of the house. She became very quiet and closed her eyes. “Listen to your heart beating first and then you will hear the dog,” she whispered. I closed my eyes and went inside. I shut off my thoughts for a moment and allowed my awareness to move to my heart beat and there it was, in the distance, the sound of a dog barking. I was excited, “I hear it I exclaimed. She smiled and turned toward me. “I know,” she said quietly.

In that moment of internal awakening and re-connection, I recognized my own ability to stay inside, tune out all irrelevant stimuli and focus on the sound. I realized that what I hear is not simply my vestibular system tuning in to external stimuli “it is a personal choice. No sooner had this dawned on me when my friend took the insight one step further. “Now that you can hear it, do you think he’s happy or sad?” she asked. Once again I went inside and found the place where I could hear the faint howl in the distance. “Definitely sad,” I replied, ... “definitely sad.”

“You’re right,” she laughed. The sense of connection was immediate and overwhelming. She was not only listening to the dog, she was also listening



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to me listening to the dog. We had established a new bedtime routine; we called it “What Do You Hear” and we played it every night for three and a half years.

Our relationship had changed. From that time on, things were different between us. There was a “knowing”, there was attunement, and there was that magical space in which two people find connection. I didn’t know what this was all about then; I was new in the field, and relatively new at being awake. But I knew something had happened. I knew that I had experienced a universal language. I know now that this language contains key components “the universal experience of breath, presence, boundary and contact. I know now that only when I am awake, fully present, and contained in my boundary, can I make energetic and personal contact with an other; and only when that other is awake and in a boundary is there potential for us to meet.

As I meandered through my career as an early childhood educator, special needs educator, infant and toddler educator, infant development consultant, special needs aide, and child, youth, and family counselor, I instinctively knew there was more. There was more to connecting than paraphrasing, more to listening than hearing, more to “being there” than leaning forward with good eye contact, and there was much more to helping than implementing the “intervention strategies” of the trade.

Simultaneously, I pursued further learning, in the fields of Early Childhood Education, Special Education, Child and Youth Care, Clinical Counseling, and Educational Psychology. But I always had a sense that something was missing. Throughout my undergraduate program in Child and Youth Care and my Masters” program in Counseling Psychology there were smatterings of energetic work, talk of boundaries, discussions about presence, references to internal locus of control, and countless exhortations about making contact. But where was the practice?



Now as a Registered Clinical Counsellor and Family therapist in private practice, I fully realize how much was missing from my formal university education, and how much was missing from the quality of my interactions with some of my early clients. Through my personal work, enhanced by my training in Integrative Body Psychotherapy (IBP), it became abundantly clear that what was missing from my work, and my life, was ME.

I was initially drawn to the body-mind-spirit perspective toward the end of my undergraduate degree in child and youth care. What I particularly like about IBP is its intricate blend of eastern and western philosophies and its systematic integration of many of the approaches that attracted me during my early training, including Object Relations, Gestalt Therapy, Self Psychology, Reichian Therapy, Bioenergetics, Yoga and Transpersonal Psychotherapy. As Jack Rosenberg (1985), the creator of IBP, acknowledges, “not one element of it (IBP) is new “(it is a method that) “deals with the whole person, integrating the body, mind, emotions, and spirit! A method that brings about profound and lasting changes”.

In my own experience, this model serves to initiate, strengthen and sustain the re-awakening that has been so important to my own growth, both personally and professionally. This involves accessing the full sense of aliveness within the body, primarily through breath work, combined with verbal and cognitive methods that serve to overcome developmental interruptions and promote the full development and expression of the Self. It is not possible for me to offer a detailed description of this model within the confines of this paper, but I strongly encourage the reader to peruse Rosenberg's book *Body, Self and Soul: Sustaining Integration* to develop a richer understanding of the following discussion.

As a certified IBP therapist and instructor, it is evident to me that the principles and methods of this approach could be effectively incorporated into child and youth care practice. Now that I am “awake”, or at least, more



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aware of when I am not awake, I cannot imagine practicing from any other perspective than the gentle authenticity of this model. There is no intent on my part to disrespect or disregard other theoretical orientations, rather to view the IBP model as a template, a home base from which to begin the gentle work of re-connection to core aliveness and authentic self-expression.

In this model, the essential tool is the practitioner. There is a reason why certification includes one hundred hours of individual work with a therapist/counselor certified in this method. The practitioner MUST be awake, firmly rooted in self-awareness, compassion, and profoundly sensitive to the personal issues that may affect his or her state of presence. Does this mean that only certified practitioners should be eligible to work with children, youth and families? Absolutely not! I do believe, however, that the essence of this approach can and should be integrated to child and youth care practice both from a curriculum standpoint and a personal one.

In terms of curriculum, it is my view that child and youth care programs should not just be concerned about this business called relationship; rather they should be the business of relationship. When I reflect back to my prescribed learning about the “tools of the trade”, building rapport, conveying genuineness, demonstrating positive regard, engaging in empathic listening, and responding with immediacy, there is something fundamentally missing. How do I know that I am in the relationship in the first place?

This question brings up the topic of energetic boundary “a topic discussed at some length by Gerry Fewster (2005) in the previous issue of Relational Child & Youth Care Practice. Only when I know on the inside where I end and the other begins, can I bring myself fully forward and make contact. For me, understanding and practicing personal boundary is



my life's work and has become the anchor from which I engage in any personal or professional relationship. As far as I know there is no other therapeutic orientation other than IBP that works with the concept of energetic boundary as the foundation for contact.

In the IBP model, every interaction between the client and therapist begins with the establishment of boundaries. These can be created as a tangible boundary using a piece of string or wool, or energetic, imagining the physical space between and around the relationship. In either case, time is taken to encourage experimentation. Both the client and practitioner take turns moving away from, and closer to each other, mutually establishing a felt sense in the body that indicates what feels right. The awareness is somatic, a kinesthetic sense of containment, safety, and energetic limitation. It is important that all practitioners receive accurate training and demonstration of boundary work so that they understand from their own subjective experience what an energetic boundary feels like.

Using boundary is not limited to therapy or counseling sessions. All interactions with children and youth can start with establishment of boundaries. From my experience, if I take the time to access my own inner experience and acknowledge my boundary within the relationship, I become awake to my own energy. I am more able to engage, and more willing to bring my full self forward. I am present for my client and for myself at the same time. I believe that this level of relational contact between client and counselor is essential if there is any desire for sustained growth or change. I believe that we as humans are starved of contact; we need to re-connect with our potential to achieve presence and connection to core aliveness through training and practice. It seems logical to me that learning how to work with boundaries in child and youth care practice



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should have as much weight and support as learning how to paraphrase, or “case manage”.

I do not need to imagine what it is like in a room full of professionals, each with their respective file folder of case notes and expected outcomes, each with their own agenda about how the meeting should be run, each with the best interests of the child in mind, and each with their Agency’s mandate firmly encoded into memory “I’ve been there many times. Can you imagine, however, the same integrated case management meeting with personal boundaries in place? What would it be like for the facilitator to be genuinely present in the moment with the group? What would it be like for the youth or family in question to be given time to set a personal boundary so that he or she could engage from a place of connection, safety and somatic awareness? I like to think this is possible.

Integrating the key concepts of IBP into a child and youth care curriculum would be a complex task. I believe however, that it is a task that ought to be contemplated. Training in breath work, becoming present, establishing boundaries, working with early development (primary scenario), recognizing holding patterns in the body and defensive patterns of behavior (character-style) can only serve to enhance the methods and material currently being taught.

I know that the current curricula in several schools of child and youth care continue to evolve. I have personally mentored many students and continue to be passionately committed to supporting students as they transition into the field. One thing that seems to remain constant however, is a consistent complaint from students of not feeling ready “a vague uneasiness of self, an unconscious yearning for the “right” way to be in relationship and a fear of risking bringing themselves fully forward. I believe that, with adequate training in the areas discussed above, these fears can be effectively alleviated.



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Over the years I have had the privilege of being invited to speak to graduating students about some of my experiences in the field and to discuss some of the mythologies I have encountered in the professional world. I would like to conclude by sharing some of the myths I have struggled with and the suggestions that I have offered:

- Wake yourself up. Don't wait to be "taught" how to become awake. Self-initiate your own awakening. Participate in IBP training or engage in personal therapy. Keep yourself open on the inside and connected to the outside in order to grow.
- Avoid the mythology of "objectivity". This idea that counselors must remain objective at all costs continues to permeate many schools of thought. It is the subjective experience of self and other at the contact boundary, that is at the heart of relatedness.
- Learn to breathe fully from your core and experience the difference between sympathetic and parasympathetic breath.
- Expand your repertoire from "How are you feeling" to "what do you notice in your body and where." This allows for connection between thoughts and somatic experience.
- Watch for the "Paralytic Effect". This affectionate term is one I use when describing excellent students who enter the field and suddenly become anesthetized to their own experience as well as the experience of the client. They completely lose self in the presence of other. Re-acquaintance with their energetic boundary, in the presence of a caring witness usually alleviates this.
- Be aware of the mythology surrounding "passion". The idea that the counselor shouldn't become too "passionately involved in



the lives of others” is interesting to me. Is there anything more passionate than relationship? Why are we so afraid of passion in this culture? As long as there are boundaries and you know that the passion that you are experience is yours, then enjoy your energetic experience of passion and pass it on. After all, CYC stands for Child and Youth Care not “Cautious Young Clone”.

- Maintain your courage to be curious. Explore where you came from without blame. Become aware of your own patterns as they play out in your current relationships, both personal and professional. This is the only way that I know to fully bring into awareness the messages that may have been missing during the early developmental years, and the ways in which we unconsciously seek them out.
- As often as possible stay connected to infants and animals; their pure energy revitalizes my being and reminds me of my core aliveness, of who I was and who I have the potential to re-connect with, in this moment in time.

In conclusion, I have lit a few fires in this field, and have also experienced “burn out”. I am eternally grateful for the exceptional teachers and mentors that I have invited into my life, but as I continue to evolve, I continue to co-construct my awareness. I continue, without too much resistance, to remain open. I continue to question what is best practice even when it has meant getting “transferred” from my position.

There have not been many things in my life that I can comfortably say are the “truth”, but I know this much to be true: my experience of life in general has changed; I know the difference between being awake and sleeping; I listen more; I am more willing to wait for responses instead of interpreting; I am more comfortable hanging out in the unknown instead



of searching for security; I am more able to “go inside” instead of desperately searching on the outside for verification; and I can now identify and interpret my somatic experience and trust my dynamic boundary.

Most importantly, though, I have experienced relatedness “my exquisite, felt sense of aliveness in the energetic presence of another. I thank IBP for introducing myself to ME, and I am passionately committed to sharing my experiences with other willing colleagues in the field.

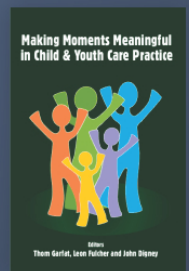
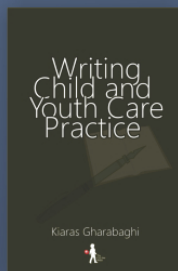
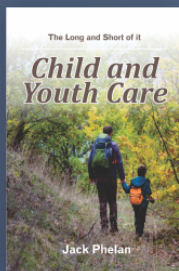
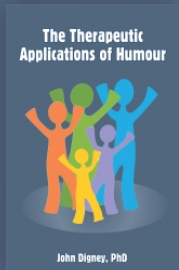
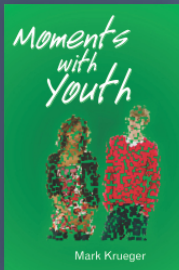
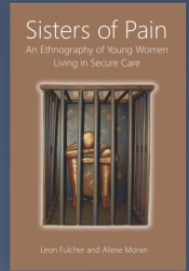
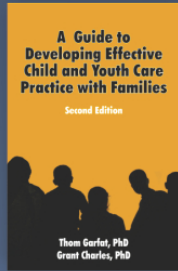
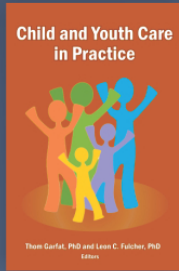
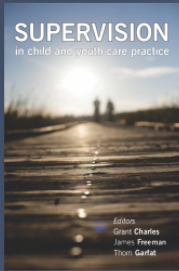
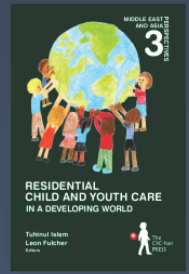
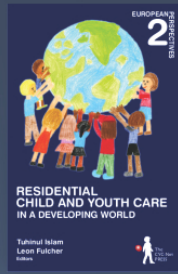
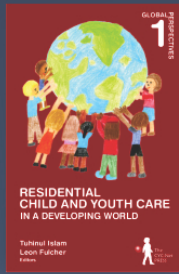
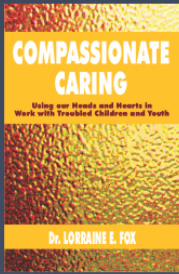
Now that I am “here”, I can recognize “there” and I am no longer willing to stagnate on the lonely continuum between breath and death. Are YOU?

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DEBRA PALMER first published this article in 2005 in *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice* and it was included in issue 125 (2009) of *CYC-Online*. View the original post here: <https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cyconline-july2009-palmer.html>





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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

Postcard from New Zealand's Bay of Plenty region

Kia Ora Koutou, colleagues. Last week we drove home from Auckland and although weather was threatening behind us all the way, for the most part we managed to drive through Te Urewera, the Ngai Tahu legal entity that gives a living presence to Papatuanuku, the Earth Mother, formerly the National Park.

The journey involves taking New Zealand State Highway 38, the last State Highway in the country with 159



State Highway 38 New Zealand's last State Highway with 159 km of unsealed road



Map of New Zealand Bay of Plenty Region and Kaiangaroa State Forest with Murupara



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kilometres of unsealed road. We encountered a total of 20 vehicles on our drive through.

From Rotorua, SH38 takes one through what used to be the largest man-made forest in the Southern Hemisphere, growing on ash soil from the Lake Taupo volcanic blast that was powerful enough to send ash as far as the west coast of South America. Early settlers of New Zealand brought the *Pinus Radiata* tree and they planted millions. In the mid-1980s, the state forest was privatised by the corporate Timberlands who argued that the business was only involved in the growing and cutting of trees, not maintaining villages.

Two decades later, the village of Kaiangaroa is largely a ghost town. Murupara suffers from unemployment and limited employment opportunities compared with the past. Tree planting, logging and shipping to the seaports continues but not much milling to produce value-added timber for the construction industry.



Murupara Village supported the largest state forest enterprise in the Southern Hemisphere



Privatization of the State Forest virtually destroyed Kaiangaroa and Murupara villages



Murupara – last town before the Te Urewera National Park, now a Ngai Tahu persona

Privatization of state-owned enterprises has been a feature of public policy debates for the past three decades. Curiously, privatisation has done little to support families living in Murupara and the surrounding area. And sadly, the arrival of cheap 'P' or methamphetamine has left a generation of youths out of control.

In the early hours of Monday 3 June, a stolen front-end loader was used to smash through the front of the Pine Drive building that housed both the Westpac and New Zealand Credit Union banks' ATM machines. The loader was used to put the Westpac ATM on a trailer while the NZCU Central ATM was hit with the loader and damaged, possibly beyond repair – the second in two months! Local detective constable Rob Hutchins said the ATM and trailer were found abandoned shortly before 4 am in the Kaiangaroa Forest.

The cash-strapped community of Murupara met with the last remaining bank in the town this week with the hope it will re-open following the brazen theft of the village ATM.



The Murupara Westpac Bank ATM is the last within an 80-kilometre perimeter

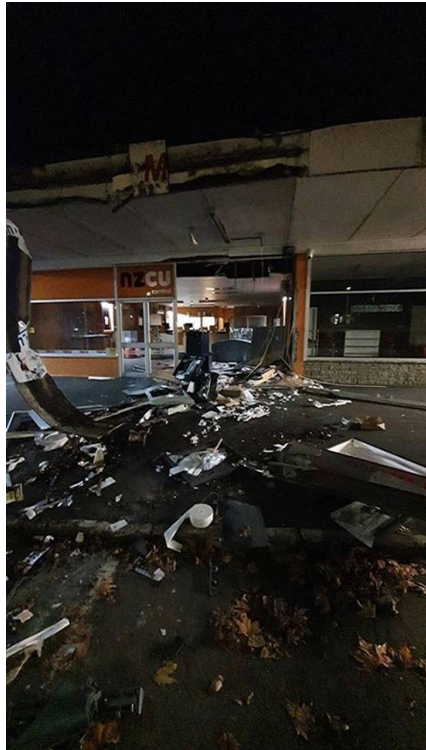


A front-loader was stolen and used to ram the Credit Union building and take the ATM

Murupara residents will now be required to travel out of town just to withdraw money from their banks.

Pause for a moment and consider what experiences you may have had living in or around potentially high crime areas? These are the places where there is likely to be more unemployment, greater poverty, more kids, youth boredom, alcohol, drugs, early sex and the prospect that very few youths will ever get a legal driver's license. Think of what it means when the earliest point of contact with the criminal justice system is associated with not having a driver's license! Youths learn a distinctive set of survival skills for use in a sub-culture environment about which all too few child and youth care workers know very little.

Residents of the cash-short town of Murupara have decided to ask police if they can put an automatic teller machine – ATM – in the town's police station after a meeting in the town a week after the ATM burglary. The gathering was called to discuss a lack of cash after the village ATM machines were damaged and removed because of major damage. When



Damage left behind after the ATM was dragged out of the building

talking with local people during a stop at the Murupara Bake House, it was immediately clear that Murupara are not at all happy that some of their own people – youths in particular – have acted to make life more difficult for a community already suffering from challenges.

There is little question but that the ‘baddies’ will be quickly identified in a community that has lost access to money! This could lead to an interesting opportunity for restorative justice with the youths involved. But first, specific attention must be given to youth access to methamphetamine in the village. Sadly, this is not the only Bay of Plenty village to suffer the impact of methamphetamine. It seems to be everywhere!



Front-loader left behind after the 2nd Murupara ATM theft carried out in two months!



Community notice about access to cash for all living in the remote Murupara community

What can child and youth care workers do to assist youths with methamphetamine addictions?



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Founding Editors

Thom Garfat

thom@cyc-net.org

Brian Gannon (1939-2017)

Editor

James Freeman

james@cyc-net.org

Associate Editor

Mark Smith

m.z.v.smith@dundee.ac.uk

Assistant Editor

Janice Daley

janicedaley@waypointsnl.ca

Correspondence

The Editors welcome your input, comment, requests, etc. Write to cyconline@cyc-net.org

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