CYC-Online

ISSUE 149: JULY 2011

Contents

Appealing for the Future

Well, you can't have missed it if you got this far in reading CYC-Net for this month. We have been asking for your help. But in case you did miss it, have a look here http://cyc-net.org/appeal.html

This is the first time we have ever made such an appeal – although we know CYC-Net can be very appealing ☺ – but the reality is, we are wanting to set CYC-Net on a secure financial footing for the future, as well as survive for the present. And we need your help to do that, as Leon says in his appeal to you, the consumer of CYC-Net and CYC-OnLine.

And if it seems to you that we are appearing to be a bit more urgent, or insistent these days about needing your financial support it is, well, because we are feeling it.

You see, I happened to look in the mirror the other day and noticed that I was not, contrary to my wishes, getting any younger. And, it seems, neither is the rest of the CYC-Net team. And while up until now we have been able to pretty much run CYC-Net as a voluntary effort, we know that may not be possible in the future. Thus our concern with securing a 'financial future'.

We do hope that CYC-Net will live longer into the future than we are likely to do. Think about this for example … if you are a younger-than-me (64) user of CYC-Net, would you not like it to continue to be available to you in your future growth as a person helping young people? If you find it useful now, would you not like to keep having access to it?

Well, now, then, is the time to think about that future – I know, I know, I might sound like a nagging grandpa — 'remember, think about the future!' — and maybe that is what I am right now. But I am concerned about the future. I think it would be a shame in the future to lose this resource, simply because we could not put it on a sound financial footing right now.

Now, I recognize that we have created this dilemma ourselves. By running CYC-Net as a free voluntary service for so long, people have, perhaps, come to think that CYC-Net does not need financial support – indeed, over the past few years as we have struggled to survive, and asked for support, many people have said they just 'assumed' it was supported by some large organization or corporation. But it is not. While there are some organizations and staff groups and individuals who are constant in their support, there are many who are not – see here.

So, enough said. If you think about the future and you think CYC-Net should be a part of that future, then please answer the appeal. And as someone said, 'what? 10 a month? That's it? I can do that!'

Thanks for whatever support you can offer.

Thom

Teaching Students to Overcome Frustration

Martin Henley

Abstract: *Teaching students to handle frustration in the classroom can break through academic roadblocks and reduce related behavior problems. The author offers concrete strategies for introducing the concept of frustration to students, reducing classroom stresses, and integrating frustration-tolerance techniques into the regular curriculum.*

The ability to persevere in the face of frustration is a trademark of success-an ability that is high on the list of self-control needs for youngsters. While teachers never purposefully try to frustrate their students, many everyday classroom affairs require the ability to manage frustration. Waiting for the teacher to answer a question, puzzling over a math problem, and stumbling through a reading passage are common, everyday experiences that can frustrate many students. To a large extent, how they handle these frustrations can make the difference between school success or failure.

Students with low frustration tolerance are easy to spot in any classroom. They give up easily and they avoid tasks that are difficult. The refrain "I can't do it" is their mantra. Special educators call this lack of persistence in the face of difficulties *learned helplessness.* Consider these scenarios:

Helen, age 12, is stumped by a word during a spelling quiz. Instead of thinking, she clowns around, pretending to smoke her pencil like a cigarette. She leaves the rest of her paper blank.

Mark, a fifth grader, has difficulties calculating perimeters. His frustration is painfully obvious. He erases his answers so hard that he tears a hole in the paper.

Yolanda, age 11, throws down her reading text in disgust after bungling several words while reading aloud.

Just as a golfer with a high handicap ends up having to play the most difficult shots-out of the rough and sand trapsstudents who are handicapped by low frustration tolerance have to deal with low grades, dead-end relationships, and chronic struggles with authority figures.

SELF-CONTROL CURRICULUM

Impulses Control
Manage Situational Lure
Demonstrate Patience
Verbalize Feelings
Resist Tempting Objects

Follow School Routines
Follow Rules
Organize School Materials
Accept Evaluative Comments
Make Classroom Transitions

Manage Group Situations
Maintain Composure
Appraise Peer Pressure
Participate in Group Activities
Describe Effect of Behavior on Others

Manage Stress
Adapt to New Situations
Cope with Competition
Tolerate Frustration
Select Tension-Reducing Activities

Solve Social Problems
Focus on Present
Learn from Past Experience
Anticipate Consequences
Resolve Conflicts

Those who are the least capable have the most challenges.

However, students who have learned to quit can also learn to persevere. The solution is to change the way they think about themselves and to teach them the skills they need to tolerate and manage their frustration. The Self-Control Curriculum provides practical guidelines for teaching frustration tolerance and the 19 other social skills that comprise self-control (see Table).

Learning frustration tolerance begins with the insight "I feel frustrated." To learn how to cope with the stress that accompanies frustration, students need to understand what is happening to them. To their disadvantage, many youngsters do not even have the word "frustration" in their vocabulary. Without a semantic hook on which to hang their intense and confused feelings, students are unable to figure out appropriate ways to manage their angst. (Try to describe feelings of shame, grief, or disappointment to a friend without using the words!)

Rather than thinking through their situation, such youngsters resort to the primitive fight-or-flight instinct that is genetically wired in all of us at birth. They act without thinking, and their actions are almost always counterproductive. Apathy ("I don't care"), anger ("I hate reading"), and despair ("I'll never learn this") are typical reactions of a young person who has learned that the best way to deal with a frustrating situation is avoidance.

Attaching a word to feelings is the first step in learning to deal with frustration. Within the Self-Control Curriculum, this is called *teaching the concept.* During the initial phase of the Self-Control Curriculum, vo-

cabulary and student awareness of a specific self-control skill (i.e., frustration tolerance) are highlighted. The method is educational and straightforward. Utilizing research-based techniques for teaching social skills such as brainstorming, role playing, and children's literature, the teacher introduces the term "frustration." Students' feedback is used to discuss the many faces of frustration, and students are encouraged to develop their own frustration-tolerance strategies.

Introducing the Concept

Lynn Potter, an assistant special education teacher at Swift River Elementary School in Belchertown, Massachusetts, introduced the concept of frustration tolerance to a group of third graders in the following manner:

> I wrote "frustration" on large, colored paper, and put it on a board with magnets. We tried to define it. Students brainstormed ideas about what frustration was. Some examples were "when someone bothers me," "it is a feeling," "when I get angry," "when I feel shaky," "when my mouse gets lost," "my sister frustrates me," and "a funny feeling I get when mom yells at me."
> Next, the students looked up the word "frustration" in the dictionary. We wrote the definition on the board. We then proceeded to discuss "things that frustrate us in school." Some of their frustrations included homework, math facts, "when the teacher makes me write 'Don't talk out loud,' 20 times," and not going outside for recess.
> With our school list on the board, I

asked the students to think for a few minutes about things in their lives that make them frustrated. They made lists and drew pictures. This went over well. We had lots of discussions about feelings-why we feel frustrated and how we can cope. We have our pictures on the wall, and conversations about frustrations have continued daily since.

As this lesson indicates, Lynn recognized that the first phase in teaching students how to tolerate frustration is to help them understand what frustration is (e.g., "that funny feeling I get when mom yells at me") and how frustration affects their daily lives.

Teaching Self-Control within the Curriculum

The next phase of the Self-Control Curriculum is merging self-control instruction with elements of the general curriculum. Teachers cannot be expected to set aside a part of each day for "social skill" training time. There are too many demands on teachers in terms of proper use of instructional time for them to take on new responsibilities. At the same time, students need to see how self-control skills such as frustration tolerance are relevant throughout the day, in and out of school. Merging self-control instruction with the general curriculum is not only the most efficient way to teach self-control, it is the best method for helping students to generalize their social-skill development to other situations.

Colin Harrington is the language arts teacher at Hillcrest Educational Center, a

residential school for adolescents with special needs in Lenox, Massachusetts. What follows is Colin's approach for merging creative writing with frustration tolerance.

"I have found that getting students to write who have low self-esteem and a history of failure with written language taps directly into their problems with tolerating frustration. When asked to write anything, their behaviors range from groans of disapproval to outright opposition. This generalized attitude can dog an entire lesson. But I know these kids want to write. They tell me all the time. They want to write letters, they want to write sports stories, and they want to write personal narratives. But the self-conscious fear of failure stops them cold!

I have found solutions to this intolerance for frustration in writing from cues provided by my students. First, they need to relax before they begin writing. Second, they need to know the whole class supports them in their efforts. Third, they need to have a sense of accomplishment with every attempt.

Relaxation
When students come to my class, I stop each one individually at the door. I greet them, and they greet me in return. This shifts the focus from the chaos of the hallway to one of respect and order. They all seem to want to know that I am taking charge of the class from the start. I direct each student coming through the door, one by one, where to sit and how. They should have feet on the floor, eyes forward, and they should not touch the

pencil already placed on their desk. Once everyone is in the classroom, I immediately request a moment of quiet. We all sit at least one full minute in silence. Next, we take a deep breath through the nose, hold for three seconds, letting go with a sigh. I play some quiet, soothing music. When students begin their writing in this relaxed state, frustrations are much less likely to arise or be so troublesome.

Support
When students become frustrated because they are having trouble imagining a story to write, I supply them with vivid stock photo books easily found at professional printers or publishing agencies. I pair up students to make a story about a picture or two of their liking in the book. Or, we look through the book as a class, and as I hold up various pictures, we go around the room and create details, big and small, that make up a story. I may begin writing the story on the board and allow the students to copy the first part. Allowing students to copy parts of stories also helps them to get through the initial frustration of writing. To keep the momentum rolling, I allow students to help each other research spelling and grammar rules. It often helps to have another group breathing session and a moment of quiet when the writing gets tough.

Accomplishment
I often give easy assignments for writing. I may ask the students to tell me a tall tale, some big lie, or to write me a story about wishes or dreams. I allow them to narrate these stories verbally, sometimes for the entire class. Students feel accom-

plished when their work entertains the class. They take pride in their imagination and storytelling abilities. Soon they cannot be held back from writing them down.

Another way I build in accomplishment is by beginning a writing assignment with art work. I make photocopies of natural objects, such as leaves and pine cones. With the pine cones, I ask the students to color in the parts and then make the cone into a fish-a wish fish. I ask them to write a wish paragraph on the back of the page and share it with the class or just with me. Then we paste another piece of paper on the back and cut it out. The fish can be displayed on a bulletin board. The writing is secret this way, but any public display of student writing, such as decorated haiku, is good for increasing a sense of accomplishment, while decreasing the frustration of failure."

Mr. Harrington uses a technique that Fritz Redl called "hurdle help." He recognizes the difficulties involved with writing, and builds in support to help his students, many of whom have a history of school failure, manage the inevitable frustrations encountered when they attempt to write. The merging of curriculum with self-control development presents students with here-and-now models of how frustration can be managed, while highlighting the benefits of making the effort. This kind of natural consequence is a powerful positive reinforcer for persistence in the face of difficulties.

Teaching frustration tolerance throughout the curriculum

Students with low frustration tolerance need insight into how frustration affects them, and they need help in developing coping strategies. Literally every area of the general curriculum provides mini-lessons about tolerating frustration. For example, consider these frustration tolerance-teaching activities:

Social Studies: Talking about the feelings of famous people adds vitality to social studies and provides positive models — a critical missing element in the lives of many young people-as well as teaching about the benefits of frustration tolerance. Have your students discuss whether Marie Curie ever had frustrating days. How about Martin Luther King, Jr., and Jackie Robinson? How did they cope with frustration? Or consider Stephen W. Hawking, the eminent expert on black holes in space. He is totally disabled by motor neuron disease, but he is the top theoretical physicist in the word. How did he do that? Examining the process of scientific inquiry, with its painstaking attention to detail, provides real-life examples of how frustration tolerance leads to success.

Mathematics and throughout the curriculum: Tape a "frustration barometer" on the desk of each student, using a piece of paper with a colorful design. Tell students to make a check on the frustration barometer each time they feel frustrated. Students do not have to explain why they put a check on their barometers. Keep a record of these incidents of frustration. After a period of a week or two, have students tally their total number of frustration incidents for the period of data collection. Have them make their personal

frustration tables or graphs, first by days and then by subjects. Discuss the results. Try to identify and record reasons for student variations in frustration. Bring in copies of *USA Today* to show students various ways of showing data with tables and graphs. Encourage students to be creative in their own table and graph design.

Conclusion

Students must see the benefits of self-control skills, such as frustration tolerance, before they will invest themselves in personal change. As my 12-year-old daughter recently remarked, "I'm like most people, Dad-I don't like change." Change is hard and it requires personal commitment. The more opportunities students have to observe how each self-control skill presents itself in life and in the classroom, the greater the likelihood they will invest themselves in changing their own behavior.

AMIR AL RAJAEI

A Brighter Future for Young People

The Kibble Centre in Paisley is one of Scotland's leading child and youth care organisations. Young people are referred to us from across Scotland, and we operate at the intersection of child welfare, mental health and youth justice. Our uniquely integrated array of preventative and rehabilitative services encompasses intensive residential and community services, a full educational curriculum, throughcare and aftercare, intensive fostering and a secure unit.

Tackling Youth Unemployment

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

In cyc/online no 146 Kiaras Gharabaghi highlighted the steady increase in youth unemployment in OECD countries, despite fluctuating unemployment in the general population. Kibble has been attempting to tackle this issue since 2005, through its KibbleWorks and KibblePLUS portfolio of social enterprises. We offer training and employment for disadvantaged young people (16 to 24) in construction, recycling, catering, mechanics, gardening, ICT, multimedia, events organising, administration, promotional goods production and general trades. We don't claim to have all the answers, but we are trying to make a difference! We believe that social enterprise is the most appropriate model to use, and we know we are delivering positive outcomes to the young people. However, financial viability and sustainability of the enterprises are still fragile and dependent on external funding sources. We are hoping to work with cyc-net to build a knowledge exchange network, one strand of which will share approaches to tackling youth unemployment, particularly those with a care or custody background. If you would like to learn more, please contact lesley.fuller@kibble.org

KibblePLUS JOBS CHANGE LIVES   **KibbleWorks** LEARNING AND EARNING   **www.kibble.org**

Partners in Child and Youth Care

Many of our staff are regular readers and contributors to cyc-net. For our type of work, it is the most comprehensive and contemporary web resource we have come across, and we are looking at ways of increasing awareness of the site and its contents.

Academic Roles and Relationships

Jack Phelan

Faculty members in Child and Youth Care college programs play out three different roles as they teach aspiring practitioners. Every faculty member should be a successful CYC practitioner as well as being academically credentialed, and eventually skilled in adult pedagogy. This combination of roles creates a three level viewpoint as we encounter our students. Typically we expect to have a relationship with each student based on a learning dynamic, then we must evaluate professional suitability and finally we need to engage students in academic rigor, both reading and writing at a suitable level.

So we see the person first, then the future staff member and finally the scholar. Our inclination is to pay attention to people issues, since we are primarily helpers, which sometimes gets us into muddy waters where we end up in a helping role, counselling rather than teaching.

LUISA FERNANDA

We also can find students who are academically quite suitable, even excellent, yet are poor future practitioners. Our own definition of professional suitability may also be skewed by personal experience or the passage of time.

So how do we actually evaluate students in a professional school? What are the criteria (the new buzzword is rubrics) that function well across courses and faculty differences? Perhaps this is a question that also can inform supervisors and program directors as they hire and train new CYC staff.

My own answer is to use a CYC approach that is congruent with the beliefs and attitudes that we hope to inculcate in our students as they work with youth and families. So a relational and developmental framework that looks for skills and abilities as well as the potential for growth and new beliefs is most useful. Students need to be more than academically skillful,

they must be curious and non-judgemental about differences. Potential is an elusive quality to assess, but there are some helpful indicators, such as a creative and persistent attitude when frustrated, and the ability to look at self when confronted with unpleasant interactions with others.

Academic ability can appear to be the ability to come up with the right answer, but actually what is needed is the ability to see many possible answers. The challenge for faculty is to create measurement strategies that reward creative lateral thinking and academic rigor simultaneously.

Faculty and program managers both want to graduate and hire people that can be effective with people who have suffered from and often inflicted abuse and/or neglect on children, sometimes in families that have this pattern for generations. Ordinary logic and socializing techniques do not help, and we need CYC staff who can create transformations where everyone else has failed. This level of practitioner skill does not exist in the new hire or the school-based student. So faculty and employers are seeing developmental potential, not actual ability as they bestow degrees or offer employment.

We expect students to work in small groups on some assignments, which is frustrating for many of them. Yet the ability to understand how to see strengths in others and to avoid blame when things go awry are major learning objectives. Case study assignments and seminar discussions support students to work through the confusing and challenging beliefs of the people they are helping. Believing in their own potential to grow often is supported by a learning relationship with a faculty

member who doesn't give up on them.

We also have to challenge students who are developing ineffective beliefs and approaches and evaluate all students fairly, but with an eye to the professional tasks ahead of them. Perhaps a useful idea would be to get program managers and faculty together to discuss developmental and relational strategies. There would be great learning all around.

ANATOLY TIPLYASHIN

No Need to Fix Anything – Just Add the Missing Parts: A Needs-Based Approach to Child & Youth Care

Gerry Fewster

Only a few years ago the word 'unsustainability' didn't even exist. Now it's used to describe almost everything we do on this planet. The reason is simple. In order to be sustainable the environment *needs* constant self-replenishment to support human life; the economy *needs* protected freedom to operate in the best interests of all; nations *need* security to respect other nations; religions *need* humility to maintain their spiritual connections; and, at the core, human beings *need* to express their caring and compassion in order to live in harmony on this planet. The message is clear. When we fail to attend to the essential needs in any living system it becomes increasingly unsustainable and our desperate efforts to 'fix' the accumulating problems only serve to dig the trenches deeper. Well, the same principle applies to the sustainability of human relationships in general and the development of our children in particular.

For the most part medical science has confirmed what we have always known about the physical and nutritional needs of kids, although fads and fashions might change. Meanwhile, obesity is rampant across nations that still have options. In the psychological realm, child development theorists have given us a broad list of specific needs in line with their specific areas of interest.

KATSEYEPHOTO

So we can appreciate what Piaget had to say about intellectual development, understand Mowrer's theories of communication and agree with Kohlberg's notions about morality, even though we

might never actually incorporate these ideas into our efforts to respond to the struggles of a particular child. But, in my experience, very few of the problems presented to professionals are associated with the needs identified by these anointed experts. In the vast majority of cases, the deprivations occur in relationships and appear as self-defeating patterns of behavior that can be traced back to what happened, or didn't happen, during the child's earliest formative years.

From this perspective, our primary relationships, from conception through the first three or four years of life become the blueprint that lays the foundation and sets the direction for the journey from the dependency of infancy to the autonomy of adulthood. If the essential needs are acknowledged and addressed, the core of this developmental trajectory is the emergence of the Self – an expanding expression of who we are through our relationships with others. If not, we are left with the professional 'fix-it' remedies we euphemistically refer to as "interventions." Back to square one.

But if we can identify the foundational needs that nourish the development of the Self, perhaps we can create a relational context that offers what was missing from the outset. Again, if we review the relevant theory and research we will find a multitude of possibilities clustered around the orientation of particular theorists. Blending these notions with a little intuition, a dash of insight and the groundbreaking research of Daniel Stern, three fundamental relational needs emerge from the mix. They are as follows:

1. The Need for Bond

If the experts agree about anything it's that the bond between infant and mother (or primary caregiver) establishes the foundations for the life-long developmental journey. Ideally, this provides the anchor point — a constant, loving and reliable presence that ensures survival and protects against the inherent fears of abandonment and annihilation. When this primary bond is weak or interrupted, children become anxious and insecure. Feeling powerless and fearful of the unknown, they desperately try to control the world, using whatever means are available to them along the way. If someone moves close, they will distance themselves. If others move away, they will do whatever it takes to get them back. Their only trust is in their own defenses. Is there a child and youth care worker anywhere who has not tried to fix this relational dance? At the extreme end of the continuum, infants who live with the terror of abandonment and annihilation have no option but to cut themselves off from both Self and Other. With no emotional contact on the inside and no concern for the feelings of others, all that counts is their own survival. These are the kids who will torture a kitten to affirm their power over life or kill a classmate with no sense of remorse. The label may be "psychopath" but no fix is available at this point.

2. The Need for Breathing Room

The primary bond that provides safety and security must also be the home-base from which the infant is free to explore the external world. Children who are encouraged to have their own thoughts

and feelings, while making their own choices and mistakes, are on the pathway to personal autonomy and self-responsibility. The fledgling Self learns from direct experience rather than external instruction and needs to mobilize its internal resources to take the helm. This doesn't weaken the primary bond. On the contrary, it transforms the union into a developing relationship that nurtures the growth of both child and adult.

But striking this delicate balance between bonding and breathing room can be a perplexing challenge. Devoted parents often over-protect, permissive approaches can create abandonment and parents who vacillate between the two are likely to send the emerging Self into a tailspin. Then there are those conscious and unconscious agendas parents have for their child – to be loving, obedient and happy before becoming a neurosurgeon. Not much breathing room here. Parents who are not aware of their expectations, options and choices will blindly pass on whatever they learned from their own experience of being parented. Not much 'conscious parenting' here. If this sounds a bit like child and youth care practice, ignore the connection.

JACEK CHABRASZWSKI

3. The Need for Attunement

The key to establishing an effective balance between bonding and breathing room is the parents' ability to understand and respond to the subjective experience of the child. All children have a basic need to be seen and heard, and to be with caring adults who see and hear without judgment or conditions. At the most primal level this naturally occurs between a mother and baby where mother has her own secure sense of Self and baby basks in her unconditional love. Later this becomes apparent in the caregivers' ability to understand and reflect, rather than direct, the child's internal world through accurate 'mirroring'. If the bond provides the glue, and breathing room creates the context, then attunement is the essential process that makes authentic relationships possible. There is no prescription that can bring this about, only the unconditional availability of one human being to another. Again, no reference to child and youth care is implied.

So what if this is so? If there really are three fundamental needs underlying all the other developmental considerations, can the deprivations and interruptions of infancy be addressed later in life? Most theorists have argued that development occurs through specific stages that must be accomplished sequentially, and that omissions at one stage cannot simply be patched up later. Well here we are not talking about the usual physical and psychological developmental pathways; we are concerned with the emergence of the Self, and in this domain, the theories are less linear and the options more encouraging. While definitions may vary, the empirical view of the Self as a complex internal system that organizes and directs

personal experience and learning has become widely accepted. The far-reaching research of Daniel Stern exemplifies this perspective and shows how this self-system is in place and highly active from birth onwards. For present purposes, the key point is that while the Self develops through identifiable phases, no phase ever closes down. In other words, all aspects of the Self remain open and responsive to new information that is effectively presented at subsequent points along the developmental continuum. This is wonderful news for those who believe that our potential for growth and change is never closed off through environmental circumstances. It's also a pretty nice idea for those of us in the 'people business' who like to think we can be helpful.

Implications for Child and Youth Care Practice

I firmly believe that Child and Youth Care is the one profession that can lead the way in creating a needs-based approach with sustainable relational outcomes. This might sound overly ambitious for a ubiquitous group of self-defined "baby-sitters" that continues to question its role and validity in the scheme of things. I also believe that our only hope for survival on this planet is to learn how to relate to each other as curious and compassionate human beings and that this must begin through our relationships with our kids. And if that isn't enough of a challenge, try renting a villa in Libya.

Unlike other related professionals, most CYC folks have the opportunity to bond through their direct involvement in the lives of young people, rather than

through hourly sessions and predetermined interventions. The day-to-day interaction in residential settings provides ideal opportunities for bonding and, strange as it may seem, the most controlled environments can be the most conducive in creating interpersonal boundaries or breathing room. The reason is that these are relational processes that become more relevant and necessary as interactive conditions become more intense. By the same token, attunement becomes a very viable personal alternative to the impersonal intrusions and routines of institutional life.

For me, child and youth care has always been about the development of Self through relationships and, for my money, no other profession can make this claim. Of course knowledge and skills are involved in establishing bonds, creating breathing room and enhancing attunement, but these are natural processes rather than remedial professional techniques. The key to effectiveness and sustainability is the degree to which the practitioner can draw from her or his sense of Self to meet a youngster at the contact boundary. In other words, child and youth care is still in a position to side-step all the professional politics and posturing to go to the heart of the matter.

Conclusion

On the one hand, this is just another stab at the old problem of how Child and Youth Care might define itself as an identifiable profession. On the other, it calls for a complete redefinition of the object of the exercise. Is it radical or irresponsible to suggest that we should step off the 'cu-

rative treadmill' and go straight to the heart of the matter rather than join the others in alleviating symptoms and resolving problems? Can we still claim professional status if we unabashedly accept the role of surrogate parents addressing the needs of infancy? And, if we prove our point, will anybody listen to what we have to say? Well …..

Reference

Stern, D. (1985). *The Interpersonal World of the Infant.* New York: Basic Books

If you have read this article please send an email to the author — fewster@seaside.net *(even if you have no comment)*.

NACCW
18th Biennial Conference 2011

Conference dates
5 – 7 July 2011

PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN CIRCLES OF CARE

The NEC of the NACCW is proud to announce details of the 18th NACCW Biennial Conference to be held in 2011 in the Eastern Cape

It is expected that the province will host an excellent event where representatives from across the country will deliberate on child and youth care matters – for the first time in the policy context of the Children's Act.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi

Conference Theme:
Promoting Cultural Diversity in Circles of Care

Conference Venue: The Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, North Campus Port Elizabeth.

Accommodation: Hostel accommodation at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University which is situated on the South and North Campus. This accommodation is shared accommodation with communal bathrooms. Rate per person per night R170.00 B/B - Bedding included. Soap and towels are not provided. A database of guest houses in the area have been prepared.

Youth Conference
The youth will be accommodated at the 2nd Avenue Campus of North Campus of the NMMU for the period 4 – 8 July 2011.
The theme for the youth conference is: Embracing Cultural Diversity.

For more information visit: www.naccw.org.za
Email: headoffice@naccw.org.za

CYC Week – 1996

John Stein

My first experience with a CYC Week was in October of 1996. In April of that year, I landed my dream job, Program Manager of the Developmental Neuropsychiatric Program (DNP) at a state hospital. It was a specialized program for the long term treatment of adolescents who had concurrent diagnoses of behavioural disorders and learning disabilities. It had a capacity of 22 patients on three units, one for boys, another for girls, and a third coed unit for patients preparing for discharge.

It had considerable resources for these 22 children–three psychiatrists, five psychologists, three teachers, two social workers, a music therapist, a recreational therapist, lots of nurses, and lots and lots of Child and Youth Care workers called "Behaviour Shaping Specialists," BSS's for short. (Where do we come up with these names?) Qualifications for BSS's were high for our region–a college degree or several years of prior experience in the field. Pay was likewise relatively high. Medication was de-emphasized. Behavioural treatment was the order of the day. All of that attracted me to the job–I considered my orientation to be primarily behavioural and I looked forward to working with a team of psychologists with more than ample staff and resources.

And so in October, we came to 'CYC week,' a week the hospital set aside for recognition of its direct care staff–the Psychiatric Aides on other units and our BSS's. The hospital made note of the week on the sign at the entrance to the hospital where they posted various announcements. After that it was up to the individual programs to recognize their direct care staff.

The RN Manager who hired and supervised the BSS's ordered color-coordinated T-shirts for each of her staff, a different color for each unit. The rest of us put on a special covered dish luncheon for the BSS's on Friday, with enough left over for the evening and overnight shifts. Tributes were paid. The RN Manager told them they were all special, the backbone of the program. "You all do such a great job. We couldn't get along without you," and so on. One of the psychologists gushed, "You are all terrific. We could not do our jobs without the data you people provide."

But it all fell flat. Extremely flat.

The problem was that the hospital treated their employees as disposable commodities. Commendations were actively discouraged because

commendations could make it more difficult to dismiss employees if they appealed their dismissal to civil service. Disciplinary memos for any infractions were the rule—disciplinary memos helped to justify dismissals. Consequently, employees were readily 'written up' for any infractions of the policy and procedures manual, which was over seven centimeters (three inches) thick. It seemed as if the hospital was more concerned with dismissing employees that with retaining them. The RN Manager on DNP had a reputation for being especially strict with her staff.

Morale among the BSS's was abysmal. In the twelve months preceding my arrival, the turnover rate for our BSS's was a staggering 95%. It's not that we lost 95% of our BSS's that year. There were many who had years of service. But we had so many more who left in their first few months.

In time, I concluded that we had three types of BSS's. There were those new employees who had no investment in the job at all and who left quickly, after discovering that the job was not for them. Then there were those who had been there for a few years. When they left, they could withdraw their contributions to the pension plan in which participation was mandatory. It could be several thousand dollars. They also got paid for accumulated leave, which was often substantial because they accrued leave in lieu of pay for any overtime they worked. They worked a lot of overtime because of staff shortages due to turnover, and rarely were approved to take either their compensatory leave or their vacation, again because of staff shortages due to turnover.

More thousands of dollars. They actually could count on a substantial cash 'bonus' for resigning, perhaps enough for a new car. Finally, we had the employees who had been with the hospital for many years. They could not afford to leave because they had so much invested in the retirement plan. So we had lots of disgruntled employees who left, and lots of disgruntled employees who could not leave.

So when the RN Manager gushed about how "terrific you all are," it did not ring true. Many of her BSS's had been on the receiving end of her disciplinary memos. More, there was at least one whom she was actively trying to terminate and everyone knew it.

And when the psychologist gushed about the data the BSS's provided... Their most important contribution, providing behavioural data for the psychologists so they could revise their behaviour plans? Really. I could just tell how important a part of the treatment team that made them feel.

In reality, BSS's were discouraged from forming relationships with the kids out of fear that they would undermine treatment. Psychologists did the treatment. They developed the treatment plans and revised them weekly on each child. And they met individually with each child on their case load (of four or five) weekly to discuss their progress—provided the child was not on restriction.

The treatment was behavioural, based on the strictest of token economies. Children earned points for each activity period, one for being on time, another for 'participation,' and a third for showing no

more than two prohibited behaviors during the period. There were some 42 prohibited behaviours that required token fines, sixteen of which also carried room restrictions of from one to three hours. No one was allowed to speak with children on room restriction, neither the BSS's nor their psychologist.

When children became distressed, perhaps cursing, staff were not to attempt to de-escalate children. They were only to say, "That's cursing, that's two tokens." In a 'neutral' tone–not punitively, and not with any empathy. Children were then expected to stop cursing, go to their jar of accumulated tokens, take out two and hand them to staff in payment of their fine.

What children often did was to escalate further, 'earning' more fines. Eventually they threw something or tore something up (both were classified as property damage and carried a room restriction of three hours in addition to a fine), or attacked staff (aggression, another three-hour room restriction). These aggressive behaviors almost always resulted in the 'necessity' for physical restraint. There were usually about 30 episodes of physical restraint in a given month.

BSS's were expected to record behaviour accurately and completely, and to award tokens, impose fines, enforce restrictions, and safely subdue children who needed to be placed in restraints. Consistently and with no extraneous dialogue. (Even the social workers were not allowed to spend too much time with their kids–they arranged home passes and wrote progress reports.)

So. BSS's were simply score-keepers and enforcers, often physically so. There were a few who seemed to take some satisfaction in filling this role. And there were many who did not. And the recognition for these during their week of celebration ... well, we all sure did eat good!

CYC week, for CYC's who are truly appreciated, it is just icing on the cake. For those who are not allowed to contribute to their potential and who are not recognized for what they do ... It's just an exercise to make everyone else feel good. And maybe to eat well.

The other benefit of CYC week, when CYC's can pull it off, is to highlight their potential and their contributions. That could not happen on DNP. I sincerely hope it can happen elsewhere.

Just my opinion based on my observations of one program. (I also worked in another program that did not celebrate a CYC week. But they did not have to. They routinely recognized the contributions of their CYC workers.)

Nevertheless, CYC workers are indeed the most essential component of any residential program. Even on DNP I occasionally noticed staff who had relationships with children and who used those relationships to help children get through the strict behavioural 'milieu.' No one can be sure, but I suspect those staff had at least as much to do with the improvement of those children who did improve as did the team of behavioural psychologists. And for the few children who did not improve ...

youth development

Developmental Pathways as Rites of Passage

Ron Garrison

Youth often use significant events in their lives as developmental pathways or "rites of passage" to serious antisocial behaviors. A youth's progression along these pathways can be arrested and even reversed through positive rites of passage that are guided and supported by prosocial adults.

When I met Juan in 1989, he was 16 and classified by the Miami police department as a serious habitual juvenile offender. Juan's history with family and institutions included being abandoned by his mother shortly after his fifth birthday, expelled from the Dade County schools at age 11, injured in a gang fight that left him physically disabled by the time he was 12, and rejected by most social service agencies due to his repeat offender status. I was working in Miami at the time with federal SHOCAP (Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program), and Juan was considered by his probation officer to be a perfect candidate for interagency monitoring under the program. My first task was to determine Juan's eligibility by interviewing him and the professionals who had worked with him over the years. With each interview, it became clearer that Juan had become increasingly disruptive and antisocial as he progressed from childhood through adolescence. Juan confirmed these reports by admitting that as he got older, he involved himself in more serious acts of aggression against family, friends, classmates, and adults.

Prompted by a daily journal, Juan described proudly many events that contributed to his aggression. According to Juan, these acts were almost always tied to significant events in his life. Some of these events involved separation like the day he was sent by his mother to live with a despised aunt. Juan reacted to these problems at home by finding a "family" in a neighborhood gang, confirming the opinion of at least one researcher that most gang problems are homegrown (Howell, 1998).

Juan also talked about periods of transition from one exclusionary program to another, usually involving schools, during which he would respond with overtly aggressive acts including attacks on classmates. And according Juan's journal,

covert criminal acts like robberies and shootings, committed when he was older, increased his status in his street gang and were followed by "good time" celebrations where he was often recognized for his accomplishments by the gang's leadership.

Rites of Passage

Juan's self-reflection offers insight into how youth can use significant events in their lives as pathways or "rites of passage to more serious antisocial behaviors. Authorities have frequently described such significant events, especially in children's lives, as rites of passage (van Gennep, 1960; Turner, 1969; Myerhoff, Camino, & Turner, 1987; Warfield-Coppock, 1992; Delaney, 1995; Harvey & Rauch, 1997). Rites of passage mark distinctions in an otherwise continuous life course, celebrating and facilitating change and the disruption of standard social categories, while at the same time preserving them. This ritual process achieves a shift in consciousness that parallels the youth's new social standing (Myerhoff, Camino, & Turner, 1987).

For most groups and societies, rites of passage for young people usually include benign forms of separation, preparation, transition, and acknowledgment (Delaney, 1995), and are based on life-affirming needs for acceptance, ceremony, and recognition. But in certain cultures, including our own, these rites can become pernicious. For example, the rites of cicatrization (the inducement of scars), genital mutilation, and teeth gouging practiced today in some primitive cultures are analogous to modern forms of extreme

body modification, needle sharing, and gang initiation rituals that involve committing violent or criminal acts.

Without prosocial adults to support and carefully guide these rites and rituals, youth may upset the delicate balance that exists between rights and responsibilities, causing what they may perceive as fights to degenerate into a license to act where crime, violence, and victimization follow (Garrison, 1988). The recent shooting death of a 16-year-old in Columbus, Ohio, for example, was described as an initiation act for a new member of a rival gang (Nirode, 1997). Another young man described his transition into puberty without adult guidance in this way:

> I was restless and school was boring; being good was like I'd been missing out.. What mattered was to experience life, so I tried everything there was. My first time of taking drugs, of drinking myself incapable, of having full sex with a girl—they all happened with a rush, within just a few weeks of me being fourteen (Parker, 1995, p. 32).

> *"I was restless and school was boring; being good was like I'd been missing out... What mattered was to experience life, so I tried everything there was."*

Developmental Pathways

Juan's recounting of his own life events and personal acts also indicates how the classic rite of passage elements of separation, preparation, transition, and

acknowledgment can go awry when not guided or supported by the community. For example, without a separation ritual fostered by significant adults, Juan's traumatic detachment from his mother contributed to problems at school and eventually led to his escalating gang involvement.

The experiences of Juan and other young people with chronic misbehaviors that become sequentially more harmful to themselves and others parallel the research of Roif Loeber. Loeber and his colleagues articulated a developmental model to describe how children progress from disruptive to criminal behaviors (Loeber & Schmaling, 1985). According to these researchers, some children follow specific developmental pathways that lead to increasingly disruptive and delinquent behavior. Especially in boys, these behaviors are displayed in a methodical, progressive manner with less serious problem behaviors preceding more serious ones.

Loeber found that these increasingly disruptive and antisocial behaviors in childhood and adolescence roughly follow a sequence of progressive activity from difficult temperament to criminal recidivism (Loeber, 1990):

- Difficult temperament
- Hyperactivity
- Overt conduct problems and/or aggressiveness
- Withdrawal
- Poor peer relationships
- Academic problems
- Covert or concealing of conduct problems
- Association with deviant peers

- Delinquency and arrest
- Recidivism.

> *"We learn from young people like Juan that resilience is not necessarily pretty social, or lawful Resilient qualities can go beyond accepted social norms and even toward criminality when a child's circumstances become desperate or unsupported by caring adults."*

Loeber's theory was field-tested beginning in 1986 with a longitudinal investigation in Pittsburgh, involving repeated contacts with the same male juveniles and their primary caretakers over a substantial portion of their developmental years (Huizinga, Loeber, & Thomberry, 1993). This research inquiry, later known as the Pittsburgh Youth Study, confirmed that for the males studied, less serious forms of delinquency developed into distinct behavioral pathways that often steered individuals toward more serious criminal activity.

The Pittsburgh Youth Study also found that boys who never progressed beyond the first stage of any pathway reported very low offense rates during the prime delinquency ages of 13 to 16. However, as soon as boys started to develop their disruptive and delinquent behavior characteristics along several diverse pathways, the rate of serious offenses increased (Kelly, Loeber, Keenan, & DeLamatre, 1997).

Pathways and Resilience

The developmental pathways model proposed by Loeber (1990) argues that disruptive behaviors are both age-depend-

ent and sequential. Children have an innate ability to consistently display disruptive and antisocial behaviors even though the behaviors are disclosed differently with increasing age. Yet although these behaviors may be antisocial, they nevertheless help to define the nature of resilience in children.

We learn from young people like Juan that resilience is not necessarily pretty, social, or lawful. Resilient qualities can go beyond accepted social norms and even toward criminality when a child's circumstances become desperate or unsupported by caring adults. If a child is left alone or exploited by nefarious others, resilient traits surface to help him or her to survive hostile environments. When human children are forced to care for themselves, like some primates, because they have been abandoned by caregivers, species-specific resilient behaviors begin to emerge. These behaviors can acquire special meaning for the children and adolescents who use them and, as a result, often become ritualized. When these ritualized, resilient behaviors become disruptive, adults and their institutions, rather than listening, observing, and supporting, too often choose instead to discipline, medicate, or punish.

Developmental Pathways as Rites of Passage

The seeming paradox that exists between resilience and harmful behaviors can be unraveled by understanding the need for structured, multiple-component prosocial rites and rituals directed by adults and supported by community. Developmental rites of passage can assist children and adolescents in choosing prosocial pathways if adults support age-appropriate rituals based upon contributing resilient qualities.

For example, Steven Venable (1997) studied rites of passage programs that incorporated mountain climbing and backpacking. He concluded that "the rites of passage structure represents a significant and positive possible resource for growth and transformation in the lives of adolescents" (p. 12). African-American male teenagers living in high-risk environments were found to greatly benefit from comprehensive Africentric rites of passage programs described by Harvey and Rauch (1997). And Cassandra Halleh Delaney (1995) states:

> Increased opportunity for young people to participate in appropriate rites of passage may be achieved by updating traditional ceremonies, continuing and expanding rites of passage programs and including bibliotherapy as part of the high school curriculum. It is hoped that these efforts will result in a decrease of self-destructive behavior and a greater sense of fulfillment for the young people coming of age in America. (p. 897)

The destructive developmental pathways that Loeber and his colleagues describe can be the avenues that Juan and his peers follow in order to survive a culture that fails to nurture or support them with ritualized activities that recognize the importance of childhood separation, preparation, transition, and acknowledgment.

But with adult-directed rites of passage programs that incorporate ritualized resilience and developmentally appropriate activity, children like Juan can discover their strengths and share their gifts.

Rites of Passage Programs

Prom Catholic confirmation and Jewish bar and bat mitzvahs to the Mormon mission, most religions have traditionally incorporated rites of passage rituals into their faiths. However, emphasizing the importance of prosocial rituals for young people. Nevertheless, one program that has succeeded is the Boys and Girls Club of Stockton, California's "Rites of Passage" effort to initiate boys in the requisites of manhood (Boys and Girls Club, Inc., 1998).

Using a council of elders, parents, mentors, schools, community based organizations, and the faith community, the club's "Rites of Passage" program offers middle school youth the opportunity to gain important skills for adulthood. In this program, participating youth complete an application and assessment followed by youth and parent training, once-a-month Saturday family days, and field trips to expand their cultural awareness. Adopted recently by public schools and supported by community leaders, this passages program is designed as a social recovery plan for parents and youth, using 9 rites to reduce risk and increase the following protective factors:

1. *Personal* — enhancing self-esteem, improving self-concept, and enhancing a young person's sense of self-worth.
2. *Spiritual* — exploring the concepts of unconditional love, friendship, courage, patience, joy, suffering, commitment, empathy, sympathy, and compassion.
3. *Economic* — teaching the purpose of money, how to make money, and how to manage it. Career exploration and entrepreneur training is an integral concept.
4. *Social* — developing skills of leadership such as public speaking, writing, supervising, motivating, decision making, concentration, and mediation skills.
5. *Mental* — enhancing the youth's appreciation of education and critical thinking.
6. *Physical* — focusing on developmental understanding of the physical self and how to care for it. Youth explore and develop an understanding of nutrition and the dangers of alcohol, tobacco, and substance abuse.
7. *Historical* — developing a sense of historical awareness, connection, vision, purpose, and appreciation of self and group.
8. *Cultural* — exposing youth to the ideas, values, principles, perceptions, art, music, literature, and social patterns of cultural groups.
9. *Emotional* — examining the development of and need to master the emotional self. Relationships, nonviolent conflict resolution, love, anger management, friendship, and family building are targeted.

Rites of Passage along Prosocial Pathways

In a recent address, U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley discussed issues of

violence and fear in urban, rural, and sub-urban schools (Willerton, 1995). Riley challenged the nation to create new "rites of passage" for youth threatened by a culture that too often glamorizes violence. By exploiting the potential of positive developmental pathways through programs like Stockton's "Rites of Passage,"- adults are rediscovering the importance of directing children's innate resilient abilities through prosocial rituals that guide a young person's sense of possibility and responsibility.

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Fair Start for you: a Free Online Education and Development Program

For residential placement and orphan care workers.
In almost any language

Niels P. Rygaard

Background: high risk infants, orphans and their care organizations

Foster families, orphanages and other settings are responsible for infants and children without efficient parenting. 7 million of the total 143.000.000 orphans globally are infants and toddlers at high risk for crippled social, emotional and cognitive lifespan development. Their NGOs or public caregivers have tight budgets, little local political support, and their jobs are often low status with little or no access to care education and supervision. Orphanages and foster families often work from principles of care organization that are harmful to child development, as seen in former Romanian orphanages.

I'm a Danish-American child psychologist specialized in developing organizations working with children suffering from early deprivation, loss and maltreatment. In 2005 I published "Severe Attachment Disorder in Childhood", which spurred visits to universities, orphanages and foster families in Latin America, Canada, the US and Europe. After this tour my conclusion

about empowering caregivers was this: What they need is not necessarily *only* more money or staff, they are mostly highly motivated but need access to education and ideas for developing their organizations in order to provide quality care.

My idea was creating a handy tool for development: let's unite child development scientists, child care givers and their leaders, and decision makers in a joint venture to design attachment based education and quality care social systems. Make it online and in people's local language, with their own video demonstrations of quality care. Let participants be active co-designers of their local practices by including dialogue based planning. All I had was not a dime and a firm belief in what people can do together.

So I designed 15 sessions for staffs (or foster families) and their daily leaders (or foster family managers) covering methods for learning basic child brain stimulation, attachment theory, social relations, individual and group identity development,

and breaking down barriers between placement and the local environment. You gather people at the workplace for 2-3 hours, open the online program using a projector, then first go through a session's theory part and end up planning together how you will cooperate in immediate improvements of practice.

In the project described below, orphanage and foster family leaders (from Romania, Italy, Turkey, Spain, Greece, Austria and Switzerland) were invited to a "training for trainers" education, went home and introduced it to their workplaces, and the design was

SONYA ETCHISON

then modified to be as workplace- and user-friendly as possible. They also produced most of the photos and videos in the program.

The European Fairstart Project (www.fairstart.net): real life tested standards for caregiver education

From 2008-10 I started a European Commission grant project in cooperation with the Danish State Social and Health Care College in Denmark. The purpose was to develop and test an education/development program empowering local caregivers in attachment based care for young children placed outside home. A scientist network was formed, and orphanage leaders/foster family managers in 7 countries tested the design in real life

and finally recommended EU educational standards to the commission.

Results and online education

Results were very positive with respect to both improved quality in care, staff/leader cooperation and child development. One project outcome was www.fairstart.net/training. This program is in 8 language versions, free of charge and only requires internet access. To reduce education costs, the program is used at the workplace supported by a handbook for the leader, two scorecards for before-and–after assessment, and 15 online sessions including video demonstrations of theory in daily practice.

Beyond Europe: versions for 3rd world caregivers

At present (May 2011), program success has spurred a second EU project, FairTrans, to disseminate the program in risk zones in 3rd World countries. Also, the program has just been chosen by the government, SOSChildren's villages and REACT as future standard education for the 8000 Indonesian orphanages. It is being translated also into French, Amhari (Ethiopian), and many Eastern Europe and Asian language translations are being produced by Translateurs Sans Frontiéres (translators without borders, www.tsf-twb.org).

Design development is produced in co-operation with Swiss www.seedlearn.org, a non-profit organization aiming at creating efficient e-learning for social organizations. In the future, more versions may be produced and published at www.globalorphanage.net

The global project purpose is to support quality orphan care standards and create a positive professional identity in caregivers and their organizations.

I'm completely stunned by the enthusiasm of scientists, users and developers in many countries, and I'd like to thank just a few of them here: Charles Zeanah of Tulane University, Robert McCall Pittsburgh University, R.A.D. Hoksbergen Utrecht University, Sheyla Blumen Lima

University for science networking. EU governments, project partners, child care leaders and staffs in the European project. Translators Without Borders, social worker Karine Bordeleau of Canada for the French translation, AIEJI and SOSVillages, REACT Indonesia, and many others who generously gave their time and knowledge to the project.

We all hope that CYC workers will make use of the program in their efforts to improve child care. If you need support or have a bad internet connection, you can also get the program on DVD in your preferred language by mailing me at npr@erhvervspsykologerne.dk.

With mental health and wellbeing in mind

Allyson McCollam

Abstract: *This paper is based on work undertaken on behalf of the Scottish Development Centre for mental Health and it explores key challenges in addressing the mental health needs of children and young people who are looked after away from home. It considers some models of working that show promise in building bridges between activities to promote good mental health for all such children, as well as highlighting activities that focus on assessment, care and treatment for those who require such intervention.*

Mental health of children and young people

A considerable body of recent research highlights the importance of childhood experiences in laying the foundations not only for individual mental health and wellbeing later in life, but also for the development of trusting social and community relations and for creativity and productivity (Foresight project, 2009; Layard & Dunn, 2009). Influences on children's mental health and wellbeing at the level of the individual child, the family and the wider community are summarised in the tables 1 and 2.

Children and young people who are looked after

The influences that affect the mental health and wellbeing of children who are looked after are similar to those that af-

Table 1

Risk factors for mental health and wellbeing

Child	Family	Community
Learning difficulties	Parental conflict	Socia-economic disadvantage
Communication difficulties	Family breakdown	Homelessness
Developmental delay	Inconsistent discipline	Disaster
Genetic influences	Rejecting relationships	Discrimination
Difficult temperament	Inability to adapt to child's changing needs	Other significant life events
Physical illness	Parental mental illness	
Academic "failure"	Physical, sexual or emotional abuse	
Low self-esteem	Death or loss of close relationship	

Table 2
Protective factors for mental health and wellbeing

Child	Family	Community
Secure early relationships	At least one good parent-child relationship	Wider social network
Positive attitude	Affection	Good housing
Problem-solving skills	Clear, consistent discipline	High standard of living
Communication skills	Support for education	Positive school ethos
"Easy" temperament	Supportive long-term relationship	Positive peer relationships
Capacity to reflect and learn from experience		Range of opportunities for pro-social activities
Healthy living, eg. diet, activity levels		Opportunity to be heard/ participate/ exercise control
		Safe environments

fect all children. However, the circumstances that lead to a child becoming looked after (loss, bereavement, trauma, lack of continuity in caring relationships, or the accumulation of stressors) combined with the experience of being looked after tend to have a considerable impact on the mental health and wellbeing of a child or young person. It is not surprising that young people who are looked after highlight the importance of control and choice when seeking and receiving support and of continuity in relationships with care-givers and with friends (Stanley, 2007). Children who are looked after are more likely to experience poor mental health and develop mental health problems, compared with the gen-

eral population of children (Meltzer et al., 2004). Mental health problems are just as prevalent among those who are looked after and living at home with their families as among those who are in foster care or residential care.

Poor mental health in children who are looked after tends to be manifested in complex ways which can differ greatly from child to child and which may not constitute a readily definable set of symptoms. For this group of children, the appropriate starting point may not centre on establishing a diagnosis using categorical models of disorder but may emerge from concerns elicited by the child's behaviour. Experienced practitioners suggest that it is more useful with this population to work with concepts of change, trauma, resilience, loss and attachment and to take an ecological view of the presenting behaviour that situates that behaviour within the child's current and past experiences. These are significant considerations in relation to the types of service models and interventions that are likely to be useful in addressing mental health in the context of the care system.

Where children require treatment and care, experience suggests that therapeutic work with the looked-after population is not adequately delivered through 'standard' arrangements for specialist child and adolescent mental health provision. This is a question partly of how services are organised and resources allocated, waiting times from referral to assessment, and services being provided in clinical settings that are perceived as stigmatising by children and young people (Barbour et al., 2006). It also stems more fundamentally

from the different conceptual frameworks on which care services and treatment services are constructed (McCollam & Woodhouse, 2007).

Policy context

The mental health of children and young people: A framework for promotion, prevention and care (FPPC) (Scottish Executive, 2004) makes bold statements about the importance of the mental health and wellbeing of all children and young people as a shared responsibility across sectors. The FPPC acknowledges that some groups of children and young people are at heightened risk of poor mental health and those who are or have been looked after are among these. Specific action is required to promote the mental health of this group, to prevent the development of problems and address the needs of those in distress through:

- The provision of training and consultation on emotional and mental health needs for residential care workers and foster carers;
- Accessible and confidential support for children and young people who are feeling troubled;
- Explicit arrangements within each NHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) team including referral protocols for looked-after children and arrangements for care planning and review;
- Liaison between specialist CAMHS and looked-after services, including multi-agency planning and commissioning to ensure the development and delivery of accessible and appropriate

mental health responses for children and young people in local authority care.

The Scottish Needs Assessment Programme (SNAP) working group surveyed the experiences of a wide range of professionals working with children, young people and families and identified some key concerns among the residential care workforce. These included the high perceived need for training on mental health, better access to advice and support to enable them to care appropriately for children and young people in distress and the need for specialist services to be more flexible to provide 'outreach' support to fit the context in which the child is being supported (Barbour et al., 2006).

The *Extraordinary Lives* review of care for children who are looked after drew attention to the health inequalities experienced by this group of children and young people and recognised that achieving and maintaining good health is a priority for them and their carers. To this end, the review recommends that details about a child's health are fully recorded and the information passed on quickly to new carers if the child moves placement. Care providers should be aware of the increased likelihood that some children and young people who are looked after away from home may develop mental health problems, and know how to gain access to appropriate help at an early stage. The review highlights the importance of coordinating local services to help looked-after children and young people get the best possible health care (Social Work Inspection Agency, 2006).

The national review of educational and

other outcomes (Scottish Executive, 2007) and the *Ministerial task force on health inequalities* in Scotland (Scottish Government, 2008) recommend that all NHS Boards should assess the physical, emotional and mental health needs of children who are looked after and act on that assessment with their local partners, to ensure that health services are more accessible to this group, especially when they are moving on from care to independence. Each local NHS Board is expected by 2015 to offer a mental health assessment to every child or young person who is looked after.

Service and practice development

Achieving improved outcomes
   It is not possible to define 'good quality' foster care or residential care in terms of specific aspects of an individual service in isolation from the wider care system, in view of the complex social and familial factors that shape the course of a child's life and the significance of wider cultural expectations and influences. From a mental health perspective 'everything counts': structures, relationships, the physical environment, interventions, access to specialist resources and access to family and community supports (Clough et al., 2006). The Scottish Development Centre for Mental Health (SDC) described models and approaches to support children's mental health (McCollam et al., 2008b). In this work, the following factors emerged as major issues that care systems need to address to be able to meet the full range of mental health needs of children who are looked after:

- Awareness and understanding among decision makers and care providers of the importance of mental health and wellbeing, likely influences on the mental health of children who are looked after, and steps that can be taken to improve outcomes;
- Capacity to support children and young people in care settings that:
  - encourage permanence and maximise stability and continuity through crises;
  - build on areas of strength and assets in the child's personal, familial and social environment;
  - create opportunities for positive experiences;
  - foster consistent and supportive relationships;
- Accessibility of mental health expertise when required, along with 'stickability' and continuity of services to anticipate and respond flexibly to what individual children need;
- Co-ordination of roles and responsibilities – a critical factor in view of the complexity of the issues young people face and the multiple sectors and agencies likely to be involved across the service system. This includes ensuring effective links with CAMHS;
- Active involvement of young people and families.

   The views of young people who have been looked after corroborate these points (Happer et al., 2006; Stanley, 2007).

Developing a mental health resource for children and young people who are looked after away from home

There are inherent tensions between the need to cope with and respond to the immediate mental health needs of the current looked-after population and the need to take a longer term strategic focus on achieving potentially more lasting solutions. The latter requires action to support families, facilitate early intervention, prevent family or placement breakdown, and enable children to receive care within their local area, as far as possible. Taking steps actively to address mental health needs can make a significant contribution towards achieving the longer term health, social and economic outcomes desired for this group.

Whilst the long-term vision may be to 'mainstream' responsibility for the mental health of looked-after children as a core component of the work of child and family services, for the foreseeable future the need remains for transitional investment in service models such as those developed in some parts of Scotland. A common feature of these services is that they operate at several levels and encompass direct work with some children and young people, as well as training and consultation with carers. These services share common goals to:

• Raise awareness of the mental health needs of children who are looked after;
• Build capacity within care settings to provide an environment that promotes mental health and wellbeing and to respond to needs as they arise. This includes enabling carers to understand

what may lie behind presenting behavioural problems that can be difficult to manage by, for example, looking at the child's history, early attachments, current relationships;
• Provide a bridge between CAMHS and care services to find appropriate ways for this group of children to engage effectively with assessment and treatment when needed;
• Enable clear communication and information sharing among care providers;
• Inform strategic planning and development. (McCollam et al., 2008b).

Some mental health projects working with children and young people who are looked after away from home have focused specifically on providing direct support to children and young people, for example the LEAP service in Ayrshire that offered counselling support (Milligan, 2004). Most, however, combine direct work with training and consultation functions, in differing proportions. There is no blueprint to determine the 'best' way to configure a mental health resource or the optimum scale or scope of such a resource. The primary aims of a service and the allocation of roles and responsibilities vary from one local context to another depending on local service patterns and how skills and resources are deployed.

Building capacity and capability to address mental health in care settings

Training programmes and case consultation offered by the mental health services help generate a shared understanding of mental health and how that can be operationalised in practice across

the care system. This approach builds confidence and competence in addressing needs within care settings from a perspective that recognises the importance of promotion and prevention and does not only respond to presenting problems and crises. In addition, it provides a means for care staff to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that contribute to a child's behaviour and of the impact of the care environment in promoting mental health and wellbeing.

The mental health services that work in this way are seeking to embed mental health into the way care services operate day-to-day so that this becomes sustainable:

- Training has been designed to maximise reach by building this into core staff training;
- Formal link roles have been designated to enhance liaison between residential units and the local CAMHS;
- Services have worked closely with care service managers and social workmanagers to maintain effective working relationships and address emerging issues.

Notwithstanding the difficulties involved in evaluating the impact of interventions that seek to achieve change within a complex care system, several independent evaluations by SIRCC, the SDC and others show promising results. Findings suggest that dedicated mental health services working with children and young people who are looked after away from home can achieve gains in strengthening the service system in a number of ways:

- Levels of awareness, understanding and confidence among residential care staff and foster carers can be improved;
- More attention is given to the mental health needs of the looked-after population;
- More of this group of children get access to assessment and support for mental health needs;
- These services can make a significant contribution to changing cultures in residential care by promoting positive practice in addressing young people's presenting and more long-standing problems.

Discussion

The findings which have emerged from a range of approaches developed in different parts of Scotland highlight several critical factors needed to ensure that the mental health needs of children and young people who are looked after away from home are effectively addressed in the short and longer term. One key point is participation of children and young people. Although there has been considerable investment in enabling young people involved with a care system to have a stronger voice, levels of involvement in specific mental health initiatives for those who are looked after remain relatively low and require development. Also, it has become clear that strong leadership across agencies is essential to achieve the quality, stability and continuity of care that should be the entitlement of children who become looked after as they journey towards adulthood. In the examples referred to earlier, considerable time and effort were invested in raising awareness
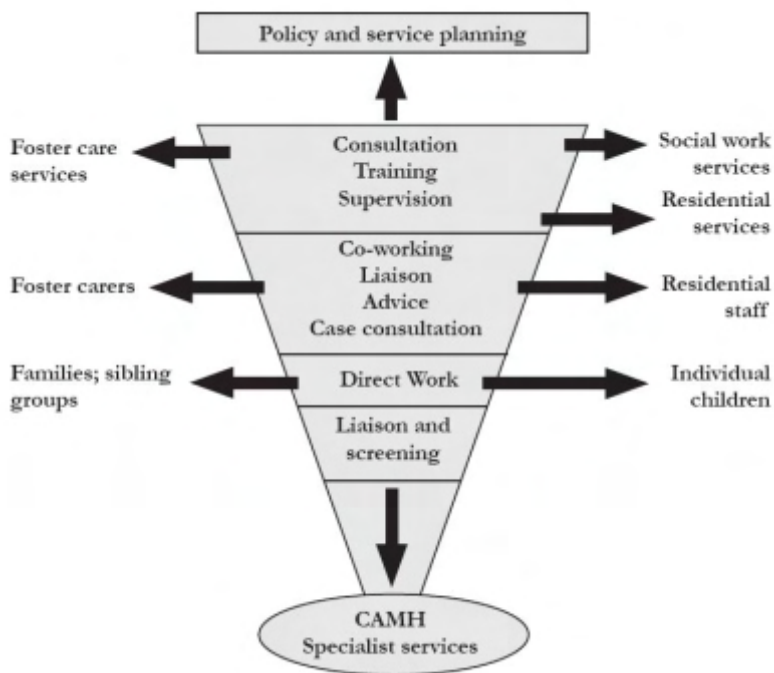
of mental health needs and in developing agreement on approaches, structures and relationships. This development work needs to understand and work with the differences in service cultures. The provision of consultation support to care givers in residential and foster care can be a valued resource which enriches caring relationships, environments and processes. However it requires a great deal of ground work and relationship-building to operate effectively. A shared focus on the child's wellbeing can help establish common ground. In relation to direct work with children who are looked after, there is a need to consider how specialist mental health services can become more accessible and acceptable. This may need resource-intensive interventions to support young people to use services. The following diagram shows a model of how a

dedicated resource of mental health expertise can serve a range of functions in supporting the service system to achieve better outcomes.

Finally, the importance of effective throughcare and aftercare services cannot be ignored. Commonly, services are not geared to sustain attention on the mental health needs of young people as they move on from care. Indeed much of the focus of care planning tends to be on practical requirements needed to support independent living with less attention to emotional and psychosocial needs. As throughcare and aftercare provision develops it will be important to redress this balance.

Conclusion

The key principles driving service and practice development in children's services are now focusing attention on potential assets and areas of strength within the system around the child and emphasising the importance of positive relationships in nurturing self-belief and wellbeing (Scottish Executive, 2006; Daniel, 2008). This creates renewed opportunities to address the mental health and wellbeing of all children who are looked after: to identify how best to promote mental health and wellbeing; to prevent the development of mental health problems; and to assure the provision of treatment, care and support for those who require such intervention.


Policy and service planning

Consultation
Training
Supervision

Foster care services

Social work services

Residential services

Co-working
Liaison
Advice
Case consultation

Foster carers

Residential staff

Direct Work

Families; sibling groups

Individual children

Liaison and screening

CAMH
Specialist services

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Cat and Youth Care, Part 3

Kiaras Gharabaghi
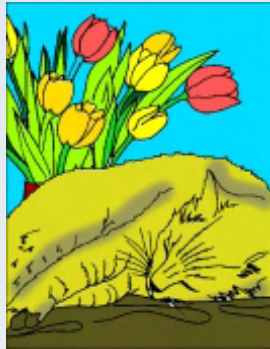
The intense feeling that Pacco was alive, even if this was completely irrational and seemingly impossible, quickly became the core ingredient of virtually all family interaction. "Good morning", my wife would say; "how good can it be good for Pacco in this freezing cold", I would answer. "How was school, my love"? I would inquire gently of my daughter. "We learned about amphibians today", she would answer with tears in her eyes. "Why is that sad, my love"? I naively asked. "Because amphibians get all crinkled up in the winter and are almost dead until summer, and I think Pacco must be all crinkled up and almost dead too, buh-huh-huh". "What did you do today" we would inquire of our teenage son; "I went to my friend's house where we played with his warm, safe, well-fed and happy cats" came the snarly response.

The problem during these difficult days was simply this: the entire evidence of Pacco being alive rested on some paw prints in the snow and an intuitive feeling on my part; the same intuition that thought it wise to get this cat from an on-line buy and sell web site in the first place. Under these circumstances, we were unsure about how much concrete action we should be taking to determine whether Pacco actually was around. In a small town it is not that easy to go up to neighbours and try and explain to them that we had lost our cat weeks ago and still thought he might be alive, winter and wild predators notwithstanding. We were anxious, therefore, to avoid being labeled as the 'crazy cat people'. All of these issues were confusing, indeed, disorienting us. We were immobilized by the complexity of the situation, and for a while, it seemed like negativity and sarcasm were the best, and certainly the easiest way of coping with this. Then one day we pulled into our drive way and there was Pacco on the front porch, looking terrible, skinny, dirty and disheveled, but clearly very much alive.

We screamed, we stuttered, we hugged and high fived all around. Without

any sense of political ambiguities we joyously exclaimed Hallelujah and Allah Akbar in the same breath. The momentary celebration far exceeded Canada's gold medal winning goal in the ice hockey final against the United States during the Vancouver Olympics. Individually and collectively we felt at least as good as I would imagine a German hausfrau feeling when finding a shirtless David Hasselhoff on her front porch.

Perhaps a tiny piece of conscience inside of me wondered whether our joy about this family reunification was a little over the top, given the real life miracles of family reunification across the Berlin Wall in years gone by or even across the Korean divide today. But euphoric moments don't lend themselves to maintaining perspective, and we allowed ourselves to be overcome with this emotional summitry. Of course, what goes up must surely come back down, and this is true of emotional euphoria as well. The second I opened my car door, Pacco was gone. And then we remembered: this cat doesn't really like us all that much, and in spite of some movement toward getting along just before the great escape a few weeks ago, Pacco had at best tolerated our presence in the house. Given this, getting Pacco back into the house was going to present a whole new set of challenges. This battle was far from over.

We met twice a day as the family war council: the membership included principally my seven-year-old daughter and my ten-year-old son as well as myself. We did report back to the remainder of the family, but since we encountered mostly skepticism, we watered those reports down in terms of challenges and instead provided unabashedly positive, although not entirely true, accounts of our battle progress. The ethics for this process were nightly modeled by the Fox Newscast covering other, apparently highly successful, war operations in distant places. At any rate, as a war council we preoccupied ourselves with this question: how could we get Pacco into the safety of our home given his clear desire to avoid us at all costs? How could we catch him for his own good, so that we could mould him into the cat he ought to be? Perhaps most importantly, how could we get to a point where we could re-live the feeling of having 'won' something?

We started with a gentle strategy. Every morning, we put out a fully loaded dish with cat food. And every morning Pacco would come on the porch and eat the cat food. But whenever we tried to open the door to the house ever so gently so as to not scare him, he would take off in flash. This cat was as alert as any starving, freezing and resolutely non-compliant cat could be. We did feel good about Pacco finally getting some food, but in no way did this get us any closer to getting him back into the house. We needed to up the ante. Thankfully, a close friend offered a solution; he brought us a huge live trap. This is a cage with a trap door that closes when the unsuspecting animal has entered the cage in order to get to some food strategically placed at the back. This seemed like a brilliant idea; as it turned out, it did have a minor flaw, which we discovered after having trapped three Raccoons, one skunk, a whole family of squirrels and the cat that belongs to the

neighbor from down the street. The latter was not amused, even though his damn cat got a nice meal out of the deal.

As time went by, our enthusiasm for getting Pacco into the house was replaced with a creative re-framing of being cat owners which essentially legitimized our withdrawal from the battle we now realized we could not possibly win; amazingly, Fox News reported something very similar about another withdrawal from battle somewhere else. As a family, we came to the conclusion that Pacco was an outdoor cat, and we would continue to record our sightings of him as well as feed him every morning, but we would cease our attempts to catch him. And so it came to be that our family life slowly returned to normal, with everyone going about their business and Pacco living outside where it was still cold, but at least he was now well fed each and every day.

As winter gave way to spring, a new problem emerged. Spring in Muskoka is typically a very wet affair, with all that snow melting and frequent rains. It was my daughter who pointed out that Pacco must be very uncomfortable in these wet conditions outside. Thankfully, my ten-year-old son and his friend quickly went to work in order to address this issue. The result was Pacco's House, built entirely by two ten-year-olds and featuring not only a waterproof roof but also insulation throughout. Sure enough, Pacco moved right into his new home and seemed enor-

mously comfortable there.

Another thing happens when spring comes to Muskoka. Other animals wake up from their winter sleeps, or begin to return to the town from their forest hide-outs. Raccoons, Skunks, Porcupines, Foxes, Fishers, Coyotes, Wolves and even Bears are relatively common sights in smaller towns in this area, and cats and smaller dogs make for great meals for these hungry predators. It wasn't before long that we realized that Pacco was no longer getting his food; other animals were eating whatever we were putting out for him, and Pacco was relegated to watching from a safe distance. The dangers of everyday life were not enough, however, to convince Pacco to come to us, to move back into the house. Trust, or its absence, is far more powerful as a motivator than fear and acute danger.

Thinking quickly and creatively, I reconvened the family war council, this time switching the channel from the Fox approach to the much more Canadian

commitment to offending no one. As a council, we appointed my ten-year-old son as the ambassador for the family to negotiate a new relationship with Pacco. Not unlike Canada's partnership with the US and Mexico in the North American Free Trade Agreement, we would ask nothing of Pacco and just keep serving up good meals and unqualified support for all of his needs. Slowly but surely Pacco would develop a perception of my son as a peaceful albeit not overly important neighbor, a relationship beginning that could, over time, be transferred to me. And this is exactly what we did. Over a period of ten days or so, my son would just sit with Pacco outside, giving him food and his full attention. And Pacco, who clearly did enjoy the warmth of my son's body, increasingly allowed him to pet him. After a few days, I started joining my son, first from a distance and then coming progressively closer, until I too was able to

pet Pacco. And in a decisive and absolute breach of trust and goodwill, it was on one of those days that I picked up Pacco and carried him into the house.

It has been two months now that Pacco has been living with us on a full-time basis, and it has been six months since he first joined our family in that parking lot about an hour south from our town. Every day brings new surprises; one never quite knows what living with Pacco will involve. We have had to put in place some protective measures for Spotty, our goldfish. Apparently Pacco has taken a real liking to Spotty and we simply cannot support this relationship out of fear that Pacco's intentions may not be all fun and games. We have had to accept that Pacco is a messy eater, resulting in us having to clean up his eating area several times a day. On the other hand, the kids have a respectful relationship with Pacco, sometimes petting him and sitting nicely with him, but absolutely never moving in for the kind of torture cats are often exposed to at the hands of kids. No one, not even my otherwise fearless daughter, dares mess with Pacco. Cute as he is, we are still not entirely sure whether or not Pacco would spare us if he ever felt the need to lash out at the world.

As far as I am concerned, I have learned a great deal from being with Pacco. Far from taking my relationship with him for granted, I have learned that my need for things to be a particular way
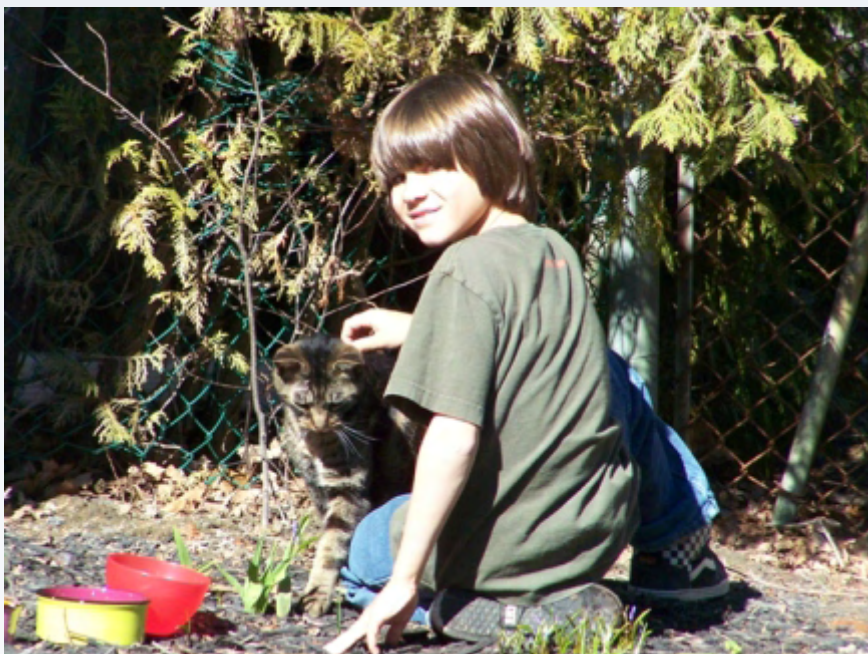
may not be compatible with his needs. Relationships take time, evolve in all kinds of different directions, require a great deal of patience, and ultimately bring out both the best and the worst in all of us. I have been reminded of one of the things that perhaps few of us acknowledge clearly enough: we spend a lot of time in relationships creating claims for entitlements. The other owes us gratitude, respect, trust, reciprocity, and many other things. Our good intentions ought to be recognized and therefore accepted by the other. How dare he or she resist our initiative, decline our offer, reject us?

A cat is not a person. As a child and youth care practitioner, I would never want to create the impression that children and youth are the same as cats or other pets. They are not. Being with children and youth is very serious business, potentially life altering, and potentially life ending for some young people who cannot face the long and hard battle to find comfort in relationship. My essay about cat and youth care seeks not to trivialize the trauma, depth and joy of human experiences and moments. But as individuals, we can discover many things about ourselves and about relationships in many different contexts. Paying attention to ourselves in relationship is therefore inherently useful, whether we are thinking about the carpenter fixing up our home, a GPS unit affectionately known as Betty, a young person resisting treatment or a cat named Pacco.

I did learn one other thing about myself I never knew before; turns out, I am allergic to cats. ❍
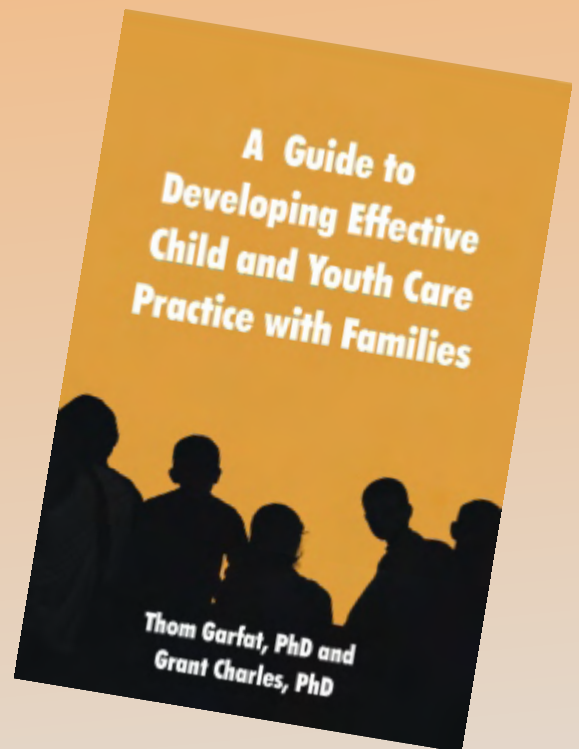
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Who will regulate the regulators?

Mark Smith

I am, generally, not a fan of fly-on-the-wall television documentaries, especially when they focus in on social welfare issues. There have been two significant examples of this genre in the UK in recent months, however, that can't be ignored. One, 'The Scheme' followed the lifestyles of a select few characters and families in a rundown housing scheme in the West of Scotland. 'Poverty porn' it was dubbed, and there is no doubt that it laid bare the lives and vices of its chosen characters for the simultaneous repulsion and titillation of the viewing public. However, having taken my usual 'I'm not watching that nonsense' stand, one evening, I did.

It took me unawares, just came on as 'The News' finished and drew me in. And, actually, for all its obvious sensationalism, it proved pretty unsettling viewing, exposing the real inequality gap between the characters in 'The Scheme' and people like us, people like me, who can too easily assume a vaguely liberal view of social matters without having to confront society's casualties in the raw, in our own living rooms.

The other documentary, I didn't see, and for that reason I'd usually be wary about commenting on it. But I'm going to nonetheless. It involved an undercover film crew posing as staff members in a home for adults with learning difficulties. Those who have seen the programme report awful behaviour on the part of care staff. It has, understandably caused something of a media and political storm. Not having seen the programme I won't dwell on its specifics, but for me this case brings into sharp relief, the entire political agenda in respect of care services, not just for adults with learning difficulties but across the board, including children's homes and schools.

Care in the UK is perhaps more regulated than in any other country in the world. Under a banner of modernization and improvement each of the countries in the UK introduced legislation to regulate care. We have care standards, we have inspections, we have a registered workforce; it is claimed that we have, or ought to have by now, a confident, competent workforce; this type of scandal isn't meant to happen.

Our infrastructure to regulate care, and the rhetoric that goes alongside it, needs to be deconstructed. It came about at a time when the political thrust was towards privatizing and marketwising care. Erstwhile aspirations for a professionally qualified workforce were dropped, and in their place was put a minimalist and reductionist system of vocational qualifications. We have lost sight of any notion of what care might be; it has been reduced to a time and motion exercise. Moral purpose and professional judgment are subsumed beneath ever-expanding checklists. In child care, too, a need to account for work done has led to an overload of unnecessary and intrusive recording, which ironically, gets in the way of staff doing the real work: hanging out with children.

It is hard to hold onto any calling to care that one might have once had in a climate, when the pressure is to complete a series of largely mundane and measurable tasks.

In many places the low value placed on care translates, too, to a monetary undervaluing. Many care staff are often on minimum or minimal wages. Care homes are, thus, staffed by those who struggle to gain employment anywhere else. As soon as they manage to find an alternative they do so, with the result that the care workforce is an often transient one. As a consequence, relationships are low trust and instrumental. When a carer has so many beds to make and toilets to clean and, moreover, has to record that he or she has done so, then a child or adult with learning or behavioural difficulties who goes into a strop becomes a real problem – they get in the way of task completion! And, with minimal training on such issues and in the absence of a stable and containing staff culture then such strops are taken as personal threats or challenges. A power struggle ensues, instructions become demands, demands become threats and these threats have to be seen through. Thus we get to the stage where the very kind of abusive behaviours exposed in the documentary can come about.

These undervalued, arguably oppressed, workforces are presided over by an army of regulators and inspectors. It has been a deliberate strategy to reduce costs; ditch the need for professional qualifications, present care as being attractive to the market and maintain a rhetoric of 'quality' and 'quality assurance' through an expanding regulatory apparatus. But this compliance regime hasn't worked. This latest scandal is but the latest example of care not being amenable to technical regulation. Talk of competent confident workforces begins to sound a bit empty.

My fear is that the political response to the realization that regulation hasn't worked will be to impose yet more regulation. It seems to be the political way: the rules aren't working, we need more and better rules. That would merely compound the problem.

Regulation hasn't worked because it is the wrong kind of regulation; it is what Bill Jordan (2010) calls contractual rather than moral regulation. Contractual regulation believes that "care" can be set down in a series of standards, registration requirements, service level agreements and external monitoring of these. This elaborate infrastructure does not lead to improvement but actually gets in the way of care that might be rooted in any deeper moral purpose. The sociologist, Zygmunt Bauman argues that when we surround care with ever more rules and regulations we dissipate the moral purpose that draws people to care in the first place. We redefine the task as a technical rather than a moral one. Defining care as primarily technical gets carers off the hook of moral regulation that demands that they relate to those they care for on the basis of a shared humanity. This calls for a very different kind of political and professional culture.

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Power Down for Dinner

Estella Abraham

CEO, *Fostering First International*

I am writing this in a Toronto airport cafe having watched an advert for gravy.

Gravy is a word and food familiar in many cultures. As a child living in England there was a battle of brands for gravy supremacy; Oxo versus Bisto. Both brands have been household names for generations. Recently, as part of a social responsibility campaign, Bisto have launched their '[Bisto Promise](#)' bid to reclaim family mealtimes from the disruption of texting, emails, phone calls, and those ever-vital 'pokes'.

They have also developed an app which enables mobile phone users and other gadget users to change their status to let people when they're sitting down to dinner. To get this on your smart phone, just visit your app store or market place, search for 'Bisto' and download. This could be a great opportunity to talk to and get some tuition from our children and young people and have all the family use it.

Eating together is another universal custom that transcends culture. Many of the children we look after have not experienced regular meals, let alone the benefits of family time around a table. And expecting them to just do it is a little unrealistic.

Modelling the desired behaviour should be the first task, laying a place and hoping they join you is second, and the third is to entice them with foods they like. Together, these steps are more likely to bring results, even if you wouldn't usually prepare such fare. Going so far as to introduce new foods should happen over time, once the child feels safe.

You may recall a blog I wrote some time ago entitled 'Children See and Children Do'. This principle has to be upheld at the dinner table if you want to achieve family mealtimes.

Adults mustn't adopt the 'do as I say not as I do' approach at dinner; you need to demonstrate the value of appreciating food, conversation and time spent together. A shared meal may be the only opportunity you have for conversation that doesn't feel like an interrogation.

Advertisements from my childhood for Bisto had the well-known expression, "Ahh! Bisto!" This memorable line combined with the tag 'Power Down for Dinner' created a modern day version of a household brand, using its consumer following to change social behaviour and put family time back into meal time.

Authentic Assessment for Restorative Outcomes

Allison Doerr

LISA F. YOUNG

The Developmental Audit® is a comprehensive means of assessment and treatment planning that identifies the coping strategies underlying a youth's maladaptive and self-defeating behavior (Brendtro & Shahbazian, 2004). This is a strengthbased assessment that engages youth in conflict in the process of generating solutions rather than focusing on deficits. This process incorporates research on "positive psychology" (Seligman, 2000) which emphasizes optimum human functioning and strengths rather than human dysfunction. It also uses ecological perspectives (Hobbs, 1982) that emphasize the importance of understanding one's ecology as part of the assessment and treatment process.

The Developmental Audit is based on understanding a student's "private logic" and goals as identified by Alfred Adler (1932). This involves using the child as the expert in retelling his or her life story. It also incorporates the work of Fritz Redl (1966) on constructing timelines of life events. Therapeutic clues are revealed through one's personal narrative and provide rich insight into the youth's "private logic" through the reconstruction of his or her important life events. The process of the Audit entails spending time with the student, the family, and other key people in the student's life to understand the child's life space (Long, Wood, & Fecser, 2001). Information gathered through the Audit is used in collaboration with traditional assessment techniques in order to build a comprehensive strength-based growth plan. The overall format of the Audit includes:

50

- Presenting Problem
- Significant Life Events
- Supports and Strengths
- Private Logic
- Coping Strategies
- Goals for Growth (Brendtro & Shahbazian, 2004)

The developers of the Audit have included the following key components: targeting strengths, forming respectful alliances, identifying key connections in the ecology, clarifying coping behaviors leading to risk or resilience, and enlisting the young person on the search for restorative solutions. It is grounded in the Circle of Courage needs for belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity (Brendtro, du Toit, Bath, & Van Bockern, 2006).

Practical Applications

Mountainbrook Comprehensive Academy, part of the Georgia Network of Educational and Therapeutic Services (GNETS), is a psychoeducational program designed to serve students (kindergarten to 12th grade) defined as severely emotionally and behaviorally disordered. The Clinical Services team at Mountainbrook Comprehensive Academy consists of licensed psychologists, school psychologists, counselors, and social work technicians who have been trained in models such as Response Ability Pathways (RAP) (Brendtro & du Toit, 2005), Life Space Crisis Intervention (Long, Wood & Fecser, 2001) and Circle of Courage resilience principles (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2002). This team of professionals naturally welcomed the opportunity to incorporate the Developmental Audit into

their comprehensive assessment practice. The students referred to Mountainbrook have undergone numerous psychological evaluations and behavioral interventions and have been in a variety of special education classrooms, juvenile justice programs, and treatment facilities. Mountainbrook is often seen as the last placement before a student is removed from his or her family to enter a residential program. Following is a framework of the assessment and treatment model at Mountainbrook Comprehensive Academy.

Targeting Strengths

The goal of the clinical team has been to merge the best traditional psychoeducational assessment practices with strength-based assessment practices to achieve restorative outcomes for challenging youth. Traditional psychoeducational evaluations are based on deficits in functioning for the purposes of meeting federal and state eligibility guidelines for special education. The strengths of students identified with emotional and behavioral disorders are often overlooked in traditional assessment and educational planning. Strength-based assessment is viewed as a critical and essential component of psychoeducational evaluation and treatment planning.

When a student is referred to Mountainbrook Academy by the local school system, considerable amounts of paperwork including psychological evaluations, IEPs and treatment plans often precede the student. These documents rarely include the student's strengths, interests, and perspective on life. The first and most essential component in the as-

sessment and restorative planning process at Mountainbrook is to conduct a Developmental Audit.

"What occurs (and how it occurs) during assessment and analysis sets the tone for collaboration in intervention. Interveners foster collaboration when they are facilitators, committed to problem-solving and not to assigning blame" (Cantrell, Cantrell, Valore, Jones, & Fecser, 1999, p. 8).

An intake day is arranged so that the parents and students can begin to build an alliance to support the child. This day is not seen as an appointment for an assessment but rather a time to begin to build a partnership with the family in planning solutions. On this day, the family is met by a counselor and a social history is conducted with the family. This social history not only includes developmental information but also enlists the parents and/or caregivers to target strengths of the student as well as goals for growth. These strengths are then used as building blocks for intervention planning. The student and family are given a tour of the facility and are introduced to teachers, fellow students, and support staff.

The student meets with the psychologist, and an interview begins. This is not a typical clinical interview focusing on deficits and diagnostic criteria but rather a discussion centered on the youth's story as viewed in his or her own terms. The intent is to begin to make a connection between the child's thoughts, emotions and coping strategies. Over the next six weeks, time is spent building rapport and supporting the student in the construction of his or her unique Developmental Audit and growth plan.

Forming Respectful Alliances

An effective alliance involves both personal traits of the helper and practice expertise. Mountainbrook staff are trained in techniques to empower youth, listen with genuine empathy, and gain insight. The program enlists the Response Ability Pathways (RAP) model as the primary source of connecting with the child (Brendtro & du Toit, 2005). Additionally, each student at the program is assigned a staff mentor whose primary focus is to take a genuine interest in this student. Mountainbrook strives to enlist the students as partners rather than as patients (Brendtro & Shahbazian, 2004). Young people at the center are invited and encouraged to participate in the planning of their goals through participation in treatment teams and individual educational planning meetings. This alliance and empathic connection helps further gain insight into the student's unique world (ecosystem) and thinking (private logic), both essential components of the Audit.

The power of this alliance was demonstrated to the Mountainbrook team when a new student's parent began crying in a meeting and disclosed to the team: "This is the only place that has truly taken the time to get to know Sarah for who she is — not just given her another set of diagnoses."

Identifying Key Connections in the Ecology

The strengths of the child and of the people in his or her ecology are an important focus for analysis and intervention. Areas of need or problems

offer targets for change. Strengths become critical elements of support for bringing about those changes. (Cantrell, Cantrell, Valore, Jones, & Feeser, 1999, p. 8)

The identification of key connections in the ecology is critical to conducting a Developmental Audit. To begin this ecological scan, the Mountainbrook team reviews the student's records. Particular attention is given to the child's social ecology. Ecological science states that problem behavior cannot be understood in isolation (Hobbs, 1982). Thus, the family and student, as well significant others (caseworkers, counselors, teachers, etc.) in the student's life, are invited to participate in forming a growth plan. By identifying connections or the need for connections in the areas of family, peers, school, and community, a richer understanding of this student's ecology is gained through the audit.

Clarifying Coping Behavior

Mountainbrook incorporates the use of functional behavior principles and the strategies of Life Space Crisis Intervention (Long, Wood, & Fecser, 2001) to construct timelines of significant events for the Audit. Through these timelines, one can often interpret the function of a behavior as well as identify patterns and pathways of coping behavior. This becomes an instrument of authentic assessment produced jointly by student and facilitator (Brendtro & Shahbazian, 2004). The student's coping behaviors are clarified through these timelines and conversations with the student and primary

caregivers during the construction of the Audit.

Additionally, a model of collaborative team problem-solving called CLEAR is employed (Koehler, 2006). Typically, four to six weeks after a student enrolls at Mountainbrook, a C*L*E*A*R meeting is conducted, bringing together the student, parents, school administration, teachers, and clinical staff as well as any other family members or community representatives. Through this meeting the student's strengths are identified as well as the Challenges (stressors) the student faces; the Logic used when thinking about self, others, and the world; the Emotions the student experiences; the Actions the students takes; and the Results of the actions. The discussion seeks to turn problems into opportunities.

The *Circle of Courage* is a common framework for identifying where the student's circle is broken, i.e., where needs are unmet (Brendtro & du Toit, 2005). For example, a new student revealed that she was a victim of abandonment and sexual abuse, something she previously was reluctant to share with professionals. These traumatic events led her down a pathway of maladaptive coping mechanisms including sexual acting out, suicide attempts, and drug abuse.

This overt acting out and self-abusive behavior was used not to assign a diagnosis but to understand and interpret this child's unmet needs. It also helped her recognize her patterns of maladaptive coping behavior and begin to develop resilient coping mechanisms. The student's growth plan included:

Belonging: participating in a therapeutic girls' lunch group;

Mastery: learning keyboarding skills to facilitate her goal of working in an office and allowing her to complete her community service in the school's front office by fostering her strength in communication skills;

Independence: participating in a substance abuse treatment program to foster self-control and responsibility of her addictive behaviors and develop positive coping strategies; and

Generosity: reading to and tutoring younger students by targeting her strength and interest in reading.

Enlisting the Young Person on the Search for Restorative Solutions

As maladaptive patterns are challenged, new insights and strategies to deal with challenges are formed. These are incorporated into the student's Developmental Audit and growth plan. The importance of enlisting the young person is validated by neuroscience (Baker, 2007). Youth who can communicate about conflict and trauma are able to develop new neural pathways for resilient coping. The person's story is pivotal in therapy (Baker, 2007). Telling a coherent story about one's life enables the brain to integrate memory, knowledge, and feeling (Siegel, 1999). Young people are able to make sense of what has always seemed irrational and to envision more promising outcomes (Baker, 2007).

Conclusion

Understanding the individual youth is the ultimate goal of assessment. Traditional assessment techniques measure youth against norm-referenced criteria, and although useful, these instruments provide scant information about the function or purpose of the behavior and the interventions that might produce growth and change (Buetler & Malik, 2002). Blending real world information directly from the ultimate expert (the individual youth) with traditional assessment information from multiple data sources provides a foundation for developing restorative goals and positive growth plans. The Developmental Audit fosters a respectful alliance and resilient coping strategies. The Audit is the missing link in merging assessment process with strength-based interventions.

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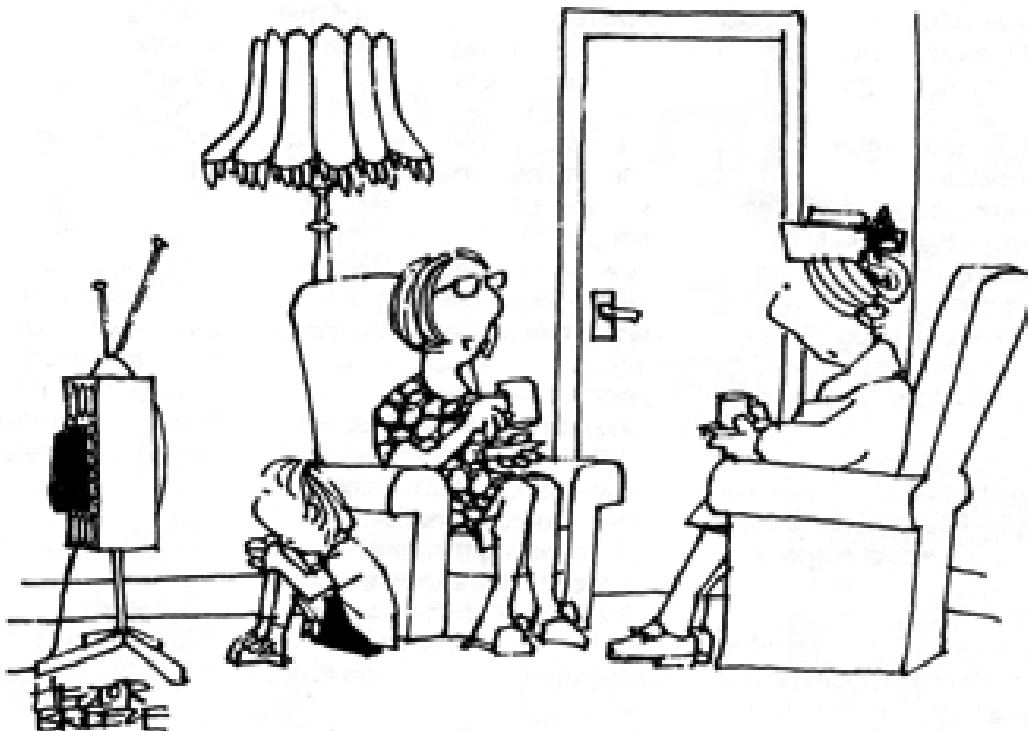
"The Educational Psychologiost says he has the viewing age of a twelve-year-old."

Clean your room

Art Buchwald

You don't really feel the generation gap until a son or daughter comes home from a term at college. Then it strikes you how out of it you really are. Art Buchwald reflects on an experience which child and youth care workers know only too well. This dialogue would probably feel at home anywhere in the world.

'Nancy, you've been home from school for three days now. Why don't you clean up you room?'

'We don't have to clean up our rooms at college, Mother.'

'That's very nice, Nancy, and I'm happy you're going to such a freewheeling institution. But while you're in the house, your father and I would like you to clean up your room.'

'What difference does it make? It's my room.'

'I know, dear, and it really doesn't mean that much to me. But your father has a great fear of the plague. He said this morning that if it's going to start anywhere in this country, it's going to start in your room.'

'Mother, you people aren't interested in anything that's relevant. Do you realise how the major corporations are polluting our environment?'

'Your father and I are worried about it. But right now we're more concerned about the pollution in your bedroom. You haven't made your bed since you came home.'

'I never make it up at the dorm.'

'Of course you don't, and I'm sure the time you save goes towards your education. But we still have these old-fashioned ideas about making beds in the morning, and we can't shake them. Since you're home for such a short time, why don't you do it to humour us?'

'For heaven's sake Mother, I'm grown up now. Why do you have to treat me like a child?'

'We're not treating you like a child. But it's very hard for us to realise you're an

adult when you throw all your clothes on the floor.'

'I haven't thrown all my clothes on the floor. Those are just the clothes I wore yesterday.'

'Forgive me. I exaggerated. Well, how about the dirty dishes and the soft-drink cans on your desk? Are you collecting them for a science project?'

'Mother, you don't understand us. You people were brought up to have clean rooms. But our generation doesn't care about things like that. It's what you have in your head that counts.'

'No one respects education more than your father and I do, particularly at the prices they're charging. But we can't see how living in squalor can improve your mind.'

'That's because of your priorities. You would rather have me make up my bed and pick up my clothes than become a free spirit who thinks for myself.'

'We're not trying to stifle your free spirit. It's just that our medical insurance has run out, and we have no protection in case anybody in the family catches typhoid.'

'All right, I'll clean up my room if it means that much to you. But I want you to know you've ruined my vacation. '

'It was a calculated risk I had to take. Oh, by the way, I know this is a terrible thing to ask of you, but would you mind helping me to wash the dinner dishes?'

'Wash dishes? Nobody washes dishes at school.'

'Your father and I were afraid of that.'

From *Humorous Stories*, Octopus Books Limited

"If you tell folks you're a college student, folks are so impressed. You can be a student in anything and not have to know anything. Just say toxicology or marine biokinesis, and the person you're talking to will change the subject to himself. If this doesn't work, mention the neural synapses of embryonic pigeons."

— *Chuck Palahniuk*

nscc

Child and Youth Care Concentration

Do you value and respect children and youth? Are you committed to seeing their strengths and believe they can develop their full potential? Do you think you would enjoy working with a team to design recreational, therapeutic, and social programs for youth who are troubled? Do you think you could be firm enough to facilitate those therapeutic programs and interventions? If so, you will truly enjoy learning all there is to know about being a child and youth care worker.

Child and youth care work takes place 24/7—you must be flexible in your work schedule. Children and youth range from 6 to 25 years old, so you'll no doubt be broadening your idea of what passes for entertainment: get used to playing with dolls, sliding down hills, listening to crazy music. The more you put into the learning process, the more you will gain—and the gains and rewards in this field are tremendous.

For more information: NSCC Child and Youth Care Program

The Assessment of Children

Werner van der Westhuizen

In the assessment of children we consider a myriad of influences and factors contributing to what we consider "the problem" in order to find some solution or strategy to solve the problem, alleviate the mental pain of the children and strengthen their innate potential for normal development. Very often however, assessment fails to be effective in its purpose because we omit a very important target for assessment: ourselves.

In assessment we usually consider developmental life stages, tasks and needs, family of origin history and dynamics, social learning, emotional and cognitive factors, behaviour patterns, to name but a few. We generally follow a very eclectic approach to assessment, sometimes with a stronger focus on psychodynamic factors, sometimes social factors, sometimes environmental factors, and oftentimes a combination of all of these. An ecological systems perspective supports such an approach, with an emphasis on under- standing the degree of fit between the individual and the environment. From an ecosystems perspective we look both at the forest and the trees, to use this metaphor. We consider contributing factors from psychological, physiological and social perspectives, but then we also "zoom out" and consider the gestalt of the situation, the child in environment, a holistic view.

In doing so we tend to consider ourselves as objective observers, experts who examine the child in interaction with his or her environment, and who then devise a solution for some kind of problem. We don't often consider ourselves as part of the target for assessment – part of the environment of the child's world, part of the interactional forces, that both influence and are influenced by the child as we actively participate in the child's world. We cannot be objective observers who assess, only participant observers at best. Although this is a term we have become used to, especially in research circles, it is a bit of a contradiction when you think about it. How can you really be an observer when you are a participant? Of course there are many ways in which research methodology addresses this dilemma, especially the qualitative paradigm, but it all comes down to the researcher (or participant observer) attempting to "step back" and through some process of

introspection to consider the mutual influence of interaction between the researcher and researched evironment or phenomenon.

Why is it then that we often avoid doing this when we assess children? Rarely (if ever) will you read an assessment about a child, and see references to the *assessor* in terms of introspection about the influence of the assessor on the child and vice-versa. And again considering the research metaphor, when we avoid this process of considering this mutual interaction and influence, we seriously jeapordise the reliability or trustworthiness of the assessment by leaving out a critical aspect and important target of assessment. In doing so, our assessment process can be seriously flawed, and therefore also our intervention plan or strategy following assessment.

But why do we leave out this critical aspect of assessment? This would be an interesting topic for further research, but allow me to speculate for the time being. Introspection can be a daunting process, requiring from us not only the ability, but the willingness to also view our own hurts and pain in the process, when considering how we interact with children and why we interact the way we do. Assessing our-

selves as part of the assessment target also makes us vulnerable by exposing our own weaknesses, and in doing so may ask of us to make certain changes, a process which can be both painful and challenging. So why would we shy away from this? Is this not an opportunity we should eagerly grab hold of? I can only imagine that practitioners would be hesitant to make themselves vulnerable if they work in an unsupportive evironment, or have inadequate supervision, or are so overwhelmed by their work that they are becoming emotionally unavailable to children (and then by definition to themselves as well). Or perhaps it may be that we simply do not understand just how much we influence the environment and the child that we are assessing. I am sure there can be many more explanations.

In the end, whatever the reason for avoiding this critical aspect, my challenge to all of us is to explore without fear or apprehension the value of including ourselves as targets for assessment, and I dare to say that we will not only be more effective and accurate in our assessment, but we will be richer emotionally by applying this form of self supervision and autocorrective feedback.

Nils Ling

Being Civilized

We like to think we're a civilized country. We have laws, we have rules, we have standards of behaviour that go back, in some cases, hundreds of years.

It's interesting to see our society through the lens of a different culture – a culture that has been around so long it makes ours look like a new dance craze sweeping the internet.

Recently, we welcomed a foreign student into our home. Gao Lai is from China, studying at the University. (Gao Lai is his mother's nickname for him. It is sort of pronounced "Gow-lay". We tried to wrap our tongues around his actual full name, and came admirably close, but he gave us this easy, pronounceable out.)

He's a young man, only 22, and he came to Canada alone. He came here determined not to impose his culture on ours, but rather to adapt to and learn from our way of life. He insists on eating our food (and being a boy barely out of his teens, he eats a lot of our food). He wants to listen to our music, read our books, watch our television. I think he's brave and smart and he will come away much richer for having learned so much about another kind of life.

RAMON GROSSO

But along the way, there is certainly a lot of adapting he has had to do.

He arrived on a Saturday at noon, exhausted from the long trip halfway around the world. And because he's a young man, my wife figured he'd be hungry. In his halting English and through a set of quick charades he confirmed this, so my wife whipped together a toasted tomato and cheese sandwich.

She set the sandwich down in front of Gao Lai. He smiled and thanked her. And looked at the sandwich. And smiled again, and thanked her again, and looked at the sandwich again.

Finally, he asked, "What is ...?"

"Oh, it's tomato and cheese," said my wife. "Do you not have those in China?"

"Yes, but ...". He seemed very uncomfortable. "How do you ... eat?"

He had never seen a sandwich.

Now, we know that some foods are going to be different. Of course they will be. But this really surprised us. We apologetically showed Gow-Lay how to pick up the sandwich and eat it. He was clearly uneasy about this.

"No ... fawk? Spoon?"

What we didn't know – and what he so

delicately explained to us later – is that in his culture, food is rarely touched with the hand while eating. It is usually considered monumentally impolite. And here he was, just off the plane, and we were casually expecting him to commit a serious breach of table manners. And smiling at him, and waiting to see if he enjoyed it.

Think about how you might feel in that situation. You get on a plane and land in another country. You're hungry. Your hosts cheerfully put a plate of food down for you, then ask you to, I don't know, eat with your feet. "Bon appetit!"

Yes, I think I might be a little disconcerted.

But give the boy credit, he rolled with it. And he has continued to. But we always have to remember that most of the dishes we have served him are new to him. So we find ourselves having to demonstrate how our food is eaten here. Corn on the cob. Fried Chicken. And it was particularly fun to show him how Western children eat spaghetti.

I'm impressed by his willingness – his eagerness – to inhale our food, because it is so different from what he knows. But we want to learn from him, too. So I took him to the local Asian market, got him to pick out some typical spices from his region of China, and cook us a small noodle dish.

Well. This is going to sound like I made it up, but I promise you I did not: he gave me a single noodle from the pot. I put it in my mouth and tasted the various flavours of this different culture, savouring the rich — Oh, dear God, what is happening in my mouth?

I could FEEL the taste buds being cau-

terized. My teeth began to melt.

Imagine gobbling down a plateful of jalapeno peppers, but stopping to roll each one around for a bit. That was the effect produced by a single noodle. I can see why they don't eat with their hands. You would need oven mitts.

So I admire him for deigning to eat our food, which must taste so bland to him that it would be like eating noodles without any sauce at all. And he is learning that our cultures are different and that he must be patient with us because we are savages who eat with our feet.

And we are learning that for a civilized people, we have a way to go.

From Nils Ling's book *Truths and Half Truths*. A collection of some of his most memorable and hilarious columns. Write to him at RR #9, 747 Brackley Point Road, Charlottetown, PE, C1E 1Z3, Canada.

leon fulcher's postcard from the southeast of england

Greetings from the Southeast of England where I started my visit in the ancient city of Bath located in the County of Somerset. Bath was named *Aquae Sulis* by the Romans back in AD 43! Located about 100 miles west of London, Bath was granted city status through Royal Charter by Queen Elizabeth I in 1590, 7 years before Canada's Newfoundland become the first colony of the British Empire! Bath was granted World Heritage status in 1987 and the ancient Roman baths have been carefully restored to provide amazing glimpses of life in ancient Britain offering rich learning opportunities for children and young people of all ages – even oldies like me.

Learning Opportunities during School Hols at the Roman Baths

As a dedicated 'people watcher', I am always on the look-out for the kinds of things children or young people are getting up to in the places I visit. It was interesting to watch children and young people at the Roman Baths listening to the audio guides, picking up on the free educational materials that were readily available, or just *hanging out*, whether with adults or doing things and filling time by themselves.

Reflections arising from this Image of a Solitary Youth

I'm particularly interested in moments when one finds young people *hanging out* on their own. In my experience, one doesn't find young people *hanging out* on their own all that often. So when I do find such instances, it gets me thinking: What may be going on in their lives? What does the body language communicate through this image of a solitary youth? Does the body language convey relaxation? Maybe one identifies tiredness or exhaustion? Might this be a young person in pain? We will never really know but how often do

you find young people sitting in this manner with their heads in their hands? How might one contemplate connecting with such a youth?

Magical Moments for Children of All Ages in the Centre of Bath

My visit to Southwest England was during the school holidays so there were plenty of children and families around. There were also a lot of caravans and camper vans on the roads! I watched with fascination as this street vender performed his magic for younger children and adults, capturing our attention and prompting amazement plus laughter in a variety of ways. Some street vendors and buskers cater for adults. Those who perform for children and parents – like cyc workers – have special talents.

As we moved further south through Devon and Cornwall, I was filled with amazement while visiting old Tintagel, the birthplace of King Arthur – he of King Arthur and the Knights of the Roundtable! No, it wasn't Camelot – that imaginary place that featured at the end of King Arthur's life. One look at the roof line of the

Ancient Tintagel Post Office built well after King Arthur lived there

Tintagel Post Office spoke of its long life, remembering of course that Arthur lived there centuries earlier!

Granddad, Daddy, Children & the Dog at Cornwall Harbour

The Cornwall beaches were of course teeming with families. All seemed intent on soaking up sunshine after the wet Springtime in many parts of the UK. Given the number of non-English speaking visitors, it seemed as though half of Europe was also spending their school

holidays in Cornwall. One particular family group caught my attention at Padstow Harbour. As I engaged in my pastime of people watching, this extended family plus dog were also hanging out, engaged in the very same pastime!

But for all of the Biker Clubs I saw during this trip, and even those that I've seen over my many years of travel, I confess to never having seen a group of old Bikers like this one that I found on my drive back north to Scotland. Here these old guys were – many probably my own age and older – all dressed in their leathers and Biker gear but all were riding Vespas, maybe two dozen of them! Who needs a Harley, eh? Enjoy!

"What have you got planned for the school holidays?"

Club Outing for Old Bikers with their Vespas

Gary Adams (1985) in his article "Verbal management of contagious behavior" (*Journal of Child and Youth Care Work,1*(2) stated that: "Lengthy discusions are not appropriate for belligerent groups." We thought this cartoon illustrated his point admirably:
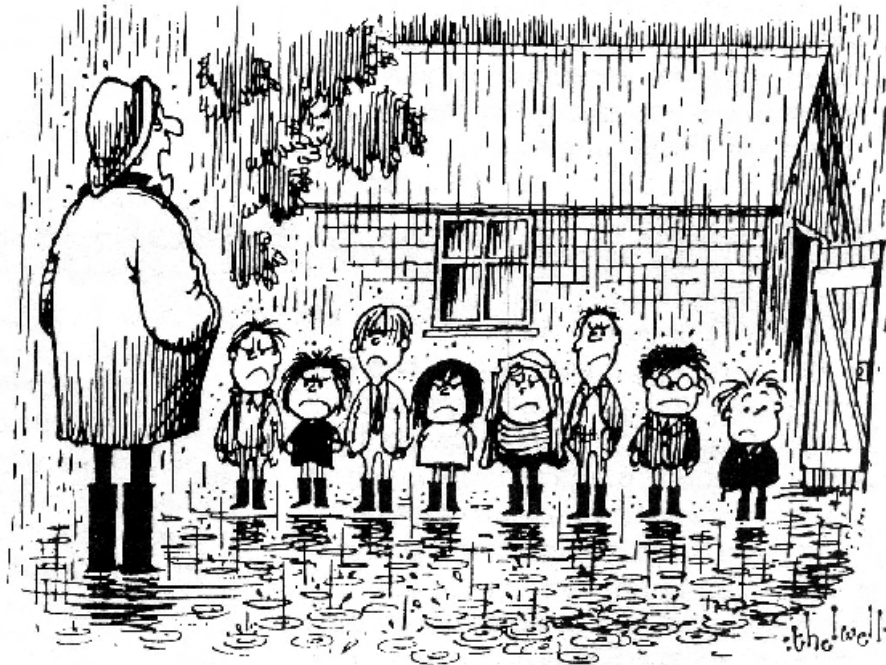
EndNotes

SERGIY NYKORENKO

Until a few months ago

We didn't know what it was to live without fear, uncertainty, embarrassment and hurt;

We didn't know what it was to feel safe, happy, and loved;

You helped us to shed our conflicts, anger and emptiness,

And filled us with hope, courage and peace,

So that we could live and achieve and move forward.

Until a few months ago, we didn't know that we would ever want to say

Thank You.

——

"Women and cats will do as they please, and men and dogs should relax and get used to the idea."

— Robert A. Heinlein

There is a theory which states that if ever anyone discovers exactly what the Universe is for and why it is here, it will instantly disappear and be replaced by something even more bizarre and inexplicable.

There is another theory which states that this has already happened.

— Douglas Adams
(*The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*)

——

"Never put off until tomorrow what you can possiby do the day after tomorrow."

— Mark Twain

——

"Son, I think I'm beginning to understand you better ... I've been paging through this book called *How to Know your Teenager.*"

— Charles Schulz before the days of 'Peanuts'

In-depth conversation between father and young son

"It is a model of how adults can and should but so rarely do talk to children, for it is above all a conversation between equals. Not that the man and the boy are or pretend to be equals in everything; both know very well that the man has much more knowledge and experience. But they are equals, first, because they work as colleagues, are equally involved in the conversation, equally eager and determined to find as much of the truth as they can. And they are equals because the man treats the boy with exactly the respect that he would want an adult colleague to treat him, takes his thoughts, confusions, and questions as seriously as he would want another adult to take his own. Again, we can only envy all children who have such adults to talk to."

— John Holt

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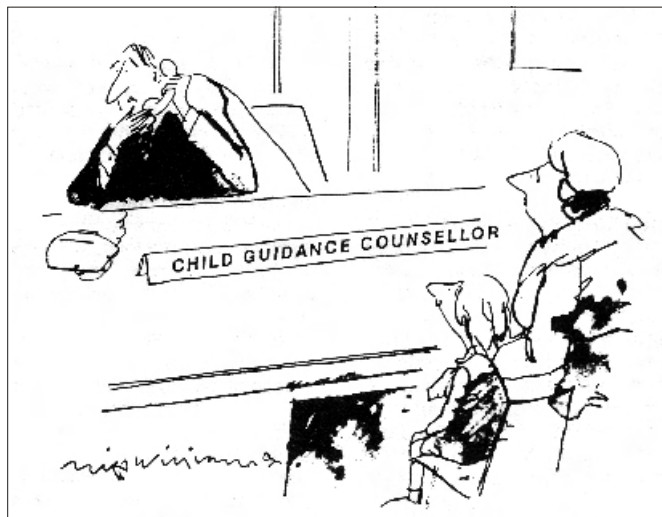
"**Look, Timothy, if I give you the two bars of chocolate *and* the fifty cents, will you tell Mummy that Daddy is on the telephone?**"

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You are worried about seeing him spend his early years in doing nothing. What! Is it nothing to be happy? Nothing to skip, play, and run around all day long? Never in his life will he be so busy again.

— Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*, 1762

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I am fond of children — except boys.
— Lewis Carroll