CYC-Online

Why Are We So White?

Supervision:
The Growth from Manager to
Professional Developer

Children and Young People
Living in Alternative Care

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

Issue 220 / June 2017

The
CYC-Net
PRESS

Contents

The Cupcake

James Freeman

As we celebrated Thank a Youth Worker Day last month, you and all the readers of CYC-Online were on our minds. We're thankful for the care and support you provide children, youth, and families around the globe. We're thankful for your part in making CYC-Net possible. We're thankful for you. I hope that the thankfulness expressed around the world on Thank a Youth Worker Day lingers throughout the year. The work so many of you are doing every day is special and appreciated by those around you.

The residential care program where I work celebrated Thank a Youth Worker Day with a special gathering of those involved in the daily lives of the children. We posted signs of thanks, served a special brunch, and shared a time of reflection and thanks to one another. As we were preparing the room one of the young girls

living in the residence walked through and caught a glimpse of the cupcakes we were setting up on a side table.

Youth: "Those look good. Can I have one?"

Me: "I bet they are. Can you read what kind they are?" I pointed to the small card identifying what kind of cupcakes were on the plate.

Youth: "Thanks anyway." She began to walk away.

Me: "Wait. Don't you want to know?"

Youth: "Never mind."

Me: "Never mind? What do you mean?"

Youth: "I can't read. It's OK." She moved on without eye contact.

Me: "Well, would you like to come back and we'll read it together?"

Youth: She walked back over to the table.

Me: "This one says…" I pointed to each word as I read the card slowly.

As we read the card together her eyes got wider and her smile got bigger. We made a plan for her to enjoy the cupcake and soon she was back with the group participating in the day's activities.

This could have gone several other directions. "You need to get back with your group." "These cupcakes aren't for you, they are for the adults." Yet it didn't go that way and we had a brief shared moment together.

I don't know how it impacted her, if at all, yet this simple and momentary exchange left me thinking about how comfortable young people can get with the barriers and hurdles they face every day. This young girl had faced a simple hurdle (the demand of reading the card) and gave up something she wanted (the cupcake). We all do it. Something is too hard or challenging and in the moment we turn and go the other direction. We miss out on the good. We miss out on what we desire.

Relational Child and Youth Care is about being with young people in ways that help them learn about themselves. It's about interpreting our circumstances and 'doing with' in ways that promote growth and learning. However small or inconsequential the moment, you are in this child's life to make a difference and to make them feel they matter to someone.

It's this work - and those who engage in it - that we celebrate each year on Thank a Youth Worker Day.

This month's issue offers several opportunities for learning more about how we do what we do in Child and Youth Care. Both Gharabaghi and Skott-Myhre offer us a significant challenge in our thinking about race, color, and privilege. Totally on their own and without advance planning these topics were on the mind of these two regular contributors. I suggest you plan some time to read and thoughtfully respond to these in your own life and practice.

Steckley provides us a beautiful insight into being present with children in pain and the physical and mental interconnectedness of our experiences. Phelan guides us in thinking about supervision and professional growth, including a challenge for us to question ways in which we "hinder creative responses to life space situations" in other practitioners. Drawdy, a recent graduate, gives us a close up look at building connections with young people. Don't miss part one of a special interview with Leon Fulcher and his postcard from New Zealand on family celebrations and the local culture. I join with a colleague of mine on the topic of organizational trauma - something we've been thinking about as we live out the day to day experience of residential care.

Our archive selection features a thoughtful writing by Karen VanderVen from almost thirty years ago, yet as relevant today as it was then.

I encourage you to carve out some time to read and reflect on the topics of the journal this month. In that space - however brief it might be in your schedule - examine your own commitments and actions you will take based on your interaction with the writers and your own learning.

Perhaps they might influence how you respond the next time a young person asks for a taste of your cupcake.

James

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Why Are We So White?

Kiaras Gharabaghi

I am preparing myself to challenge my field, principally in Canada. I thought I would launch the first step in this challenge right here, a space I am comfortable in and that has for many years supported discussions, dialogue and debates that aren't always easy. I am doing so with some trepidation because I know the topic is sensitive; but I am also doing so because I am not convinced that we can simply continue to ignore an obvious problem in our field. Again, my focus is the field of child and youth care in Canada, but I would suggest that the theme I am about to address is not very different in the US, in the UK, in Ireland, or in continental Europe. I also acknowledge that the status of the theme I am addressing here may differ somewhat from province to province in Canada. To the extent that my friends and colleagues in South Africa might read this, please know that I am aware that child and youth care in South Africa has evolved in a very different context which is not immune to issues of diversity, but certainly not as antique and complacent in its approach to engage diversity differently. So, let me get right to it.

Specifically, I think I am increasingly questioning the legitimacy of a field, and flowing from it, a practice that remains profoundly white at all levels. By this I mean that our practices in many of the core sectors of practice, such as schools, residential care and treatment and hospitals, are based on a field that in North America developed within an almost exclusively white social context. The original writers of the field were and continue to be predominantly white people and to the extent that others try to join in with different perspectives reflecting different lived experiences, we find them interesting but then immediately question their child and youth care credentials. The professional infrastructure of the field is principally white, including almost all those who contribute to professional associations, who

teach at post-secondary institutions (thankfully there are some exceptions in this context), and who make policy decisions that affect the on-going development of the field. When we hold conferences, the speakers and presenters are principally white, and I can't remember more than one or two keynotes over the past ten or so conferences I attended provincially or nationally (and also internationally outside of South Africa) who were not white. The agencies and organizations in which we work are led predominantly by white people, who write our job descriptions and who set the parameters within which we practice.

With all that whiteness, I am amazed that we pretend to be outraged by the enormous inequities and social injustices experienced in particular by Black Youth in care (a particularly disturbing issue in Ontario) and by indigenous young people, their families and communities (a massive issue across all provinces in Canada and as we know at the national level too). Why would we expect this to be different? What work have we, and our field of child and youth care, actually done to resist these injustices?

Wherever I look, I cannot find that work. I look at CYC Online and note that there have been at best a handful of articles (and I am an active contributor and guilty as charged) that address anything remotely related to our whiteness. I look in the Relational Child and Youth Care Practice journal and I find the same. I follow the discussions on CYC-Net and note the absence of discussions about identity and race, much less of intersectionality. Conference schedules yield similar results, especially at the national level. I have waited in vain for my professional association, the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care, to take a position on the overrepresentation of Black Youth in child welfare generally, and in residential care, in custody and in school expulsion programs more specifically, even though mainstream media has reported on these issues regularly and with considerable concern. I have been waiting patiently (and doing nothing myself) for our field to engage the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, which released its historic report with recommendations that directly impact our field nearly three years ago – no comment on the part of the professional associations across Canada, no special

conference, no emergency meetings, no rash of publications seeking to engage these issues. In fact, not even outrage. Here is something that is outrageous: I remember my good friend Debbie preparing an abstract about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for the global child and youth care conference held in Vienna in 2016 (which has a significant Canadian contingent) and having her abstract rejected on the basis that it did not fit thematically with the conference. This in spite of the fact that there is good reason to question whether residential schools in Canada actually ever ended; there seem to be quite a few residential programs specifically for displaced indigenous youth from Northern communities in Canada, located in white communities in the South, staffed by white people including child and youth care practitioners, that do pretty much what residential schools did.

Having said all of this, I know that there is movement on these issues in some places. For example, I know that post-secondary CYC programs are increasingly developing courses on diversity, anti-racism and anti-oppression. I know that some service providers (especially Children's Aid Societies) are working with members of the African-Canadian communities to develop a strategy for change. I know that in Ontario, at least, the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth has raised issues of race and racism and actively supported Black Youth and Indigenous youth to raise their voices and to exercise resistance. And many members of the CYC community in Canada have greeted these initiatives with enthusiasm. But it is important to be clear here: None of these initiatives are really initiatives that challenge our field to be different and to open to the simple reality that one cannot legitimately carry on promoting child and youth care practice through lenses that are so deeply embedded in the white experience, that draw almost exclusively on white institutions, structures, processes and policies, and that aid and abet in the perpetuation of social injustice based on race.

So here is the challenge: Can we change this? Can we become less white?

I can offer some early thoughts on how we might proceed, imperfect as they are. Then again, my only goal right now is to open the dialogue. So here it goes:

1. Can we agree to reflect on our own history, on our field, and on our assumptions about what is part of our field and what is not, specifically from a perspective of the embeddedness of whiteness? And can we in that process forgo the inevitable objections that child and youth care practice is a universal practice, not impacted by race and racism? Because it would be painful to sit through these horrendously misguided, very 1950s, discussions.

2. Can we work to open our professional infrastructure to intentionally recruit members of racialized communities, and in particular indigenous communities, and in places like Ontario, the African-Canadian communities? And, slightly more radically, could we set a deadline for when we cease to accept the legitimacy of a professional association that is entirely white and produces whiteness in all of its activities? How about January 01, 2018? Is that enough time?

3. Can we encourage, invite and support racialized front line staff, undergraduate students, and young people involved with us in settings and services to disseminate their voices across our field and to feel welcome and invited to challenge us on our whiteness?

4. And here comes the real challenge: Until we figure this stuff out, can we set aside our ambitions for professionalization, accreditation, and regulation of our profession and focus instead on a new movement of inclusion, radical politics and engagement with communities that have structurally, procedurally, and in every other imaginable way been cast aside to the margins of our profession and of society as a whole?

I can only speak for myself. And for myself, I am quickly arriving at a point where I am not sure I can support the goals and ambitions of my friends and colleagues in my field. Do we really need another white group to become

acknowledged and recognized through regulation? Do we really need another white group pushing forward in a field that while rightly acknowledging its heritage with pride and gratefulness, shows no initiative to move forward with a commitment to social justice in *this world* (not yesterday's world)? Do we really need another white group that claims expertise beyond its own privileged context?

I don't think so. I have never felt greater urgency to move my field in Canada forward in directions that undoubtedly will challenge it to the core. Challenging the field to its core does not mean abandoning its ideas, core concepts or competencies. It does mean exposing these to the lived experiences and the wisdom of people and groups who are not white. There are places we can learn something from. South Africa, notwithstanding a very different historical context, has 14 official languages and is far more racially diverse than Canada. And while the country may continue to journey along its way to figure out this diversity, the field of child and youth care in South Africa has accomplished a level of inclusion and anti-racism that we in Canada have blissfully lived without. I don't have answers for how to move forward, nor should I; I do know that we shouldn't do that without the leadership of those who we have so effectively kept away. But at some point in the future, if ever I have the privilege again of being asked to do a keynote at a child and youth care conference in Canada (or the US, UK, Europe), I want to look out into the audience and notice *the white guy!*

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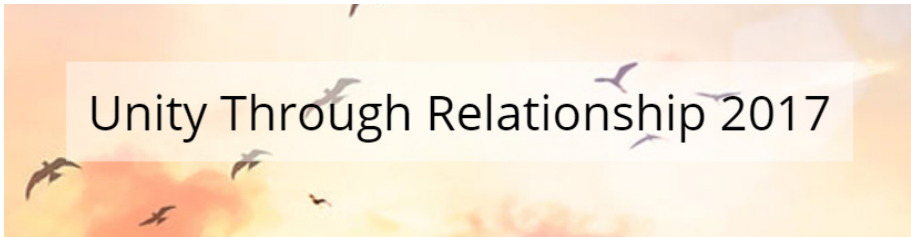
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Seeking a Pass: White Supremacy and CYC

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I have been giving some thought recently to the resurgence of racism and white supremacy, here where I live in the U.S., as well as in Europe. Of course, it is arguable whether racism and white supremacy is truly re-emerging, or whether it was simply repressed and is now being expressed due to a shift in political climate. For those of us in Child and Youth Care/Work in North America, the issue of white supremacy and its attendant subtle colonial practices has been an issue we have taken up as a field, often under the conceptual frameworks of multiculturalism. Without a doubt, we have taken the mandate to address issues of inequity related to gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, culture, and race seriously. I would cite work at the University of Victoria and Ryerson as notable in this regard. However, as with much of what we attempt in terms of training and education, it remains challenging to bring the issue home to each of us individually. I would argue, that for those of us who identify or are identified as white, we seem to have a hard time being accountable to the privilege we hold in concrete material terms. While the great majority of Child and Youth Care workers I have come into contact with as students, co-workers, or colleagues, are horrified and appalled by the inequities we encounter in our work, it can be hard for us to identify the ways in which we inadvertently collaborate with the social and cultural practices that perpetuate the very inequities we find repellant. In particular, we seem to struggle against being identified with white supremacy or naming our own racist practices. It seems to me that, for many of us, we want a pass or a get out of jail free card when

it comes to our own collusion with racism and white supremacy. We want to be the "good" white people who have somehow transcended the brutish and ignoble colonial practices of our ancestors.

While this is a noble aspiration, it skips over some rather crucial material actualities. In fact, I would argue that if you are white, you inherit a world in which your well-being is premised on racism and white supremacy. In a very concrete way, nothing we, as white people, achieve materially under the current economic system of capitalism would be possible without slavery and colonialism.

This is demonstrable both historically and in contemporary terms. We can start with the land we white folks live on, the houses and buildings we depend upon, the roadways and city streets, and the raw resources we engage when we turn on a light or drive our cars. Each of these is utterly dependent on a system that constructed its infrastructure through stealing land and killing hundreds of millions of people.

The justification for this genocidal appropriation of land and bodies is premised in a system of value that puts technological process and the production of monetary profit above living things. In fact, the very existence of the system of value found in capitalism is defined by the ability to turn a profit. Such profit, however, would not exist without what Marx termed primitive accumulation. Primitive accumulation, as the economic driving engine for capitalism, is defined as the ability to use unwaged labor (slaves) so that the cost of raw materials (cotton and sugar for example) could be produced at a massive profit. Without free labor (slaves and the unwaged domestic labor of women) the Europe of the Enlightenment and the age of Industry in the U.S. would have been impossible. In this very real sense, slavery is not simply a historical horror, it is the ground out of which all current economics arises. Which means that no matter how enlightened we as white people are about not being rude or unkind to those designated as outside whiteness, our day to day life style is premised on the fruits of a poisoned tree.

This came home to me a number of years ago when I was engaged in anti-racism training. I was leading a multi-racial group in which we were struggling to find common ground within an agency to be able to work in an intentionally just fashion. As we were trying to hash through the complexities of privilege, I noticed one woman across from me in the group becoming more and more agitated. She was an African American woman I had worked with for a number of years and with whom I thought I had a good working relationship. As I looked across the group at her, she looked back at me and said, "You will never really understand what needs to happen here, until you get it, that your very existence is painful to me."

I was stunned. I really had no way to make sense of this statement and it seemed counter-productive at best to question my colleague further at that time. As I paused, I remembered something another African-American friend of mine had told me earlier. When asked to explain her blackness to her white friends or help them understand their racism, she said simply that she was not responsible for their education. They needed to take the time to educate themselves. It was a double oppression for her to both manage the daily effects of white supremacy and racism on her life and be asked to assist those very racists to overcome their white privilege. After all, for hundreds of years, enslaved black women cared for and raised the children of their masters. My friend said that she was refusing to continue that role in any variation.

So, I decided that I needed to reflect on what had been said to me without calling on my African American colleague for help. She had already done what she could do in being generous enough to say what she said. Taking this on myself as a privileged white male involved several stages of understanding and process.

The first stage was coming to terms with my own sense of offense and hurt over my colleague's characterization of me as a source of pain to her. How could this be? I was one of the good white people. In fact, I was responsible for bringing anti-racism training to the agency. I was deeply involved in achieving greater equity in hiring staff of color. I was involved in activism on behalf of youth of color and so

on. How could I be responsible for her pain? I was trying to make things better. It seemed unfair that she should say this to me.

Gradually, however, it dawned on me that quite possibly the very fact that my pain was my first concern, might indicate a certain kind of narcissistic investment founded in my white privilege. I began to see how it was that my hurt initially took precedence over the much deeper trauma of my colleague who, after all, was the direct target of all forms of white supremacy and racism. Once I began to see the way in which I put my hurt first, I could begin to set that aside and reflect on the pain I was causing by "my very existence."

The realization that someone like me could cause pain by my existence was a hard idea to get my head around. But bit by bit it dawned on me that I could not escape or step aside from the white privilege that I inherited at birth.

For my colleague, the knowledge of my inherited white privilege was simply painful in and of itself. There was no rational reason, that because of my whiteness, I was less likely to be discriminated against in employment, schooling, interactions with authorities, housing and in the escape from a million small indignities personally, socially and culturally. In fact, not only was I less likely experience discrimination, I was far more likely to be able to take advantage of the economic and social system that continues to do its very best to destroy her people. That I was largely unconscious of the myriad ways in which this played out for me in my life, was also very probably offensive and painful.

Now one of the things I know as a white person, is that when this idea that white folks are privileged becomes personal, there is often a rather predictable reaction. This reaction tends to focus on the particular struggles and hardships the white person in question or their friends or family have had. There is a tendency to draw false equivalencies between hardships, which ignores the particularities of the varying effects of colonial practices. Without a doubt, those of us with white working class backgrounds have suffered under capitalism. But let's not forget that we were also the folks who got land grants, we were the only ones allowed into the unions for many years, we got financial support for farming and, in some cases,

were actually the beneficiaries of land illegally denied to black farmers, we were on the other side of the dividing line in the era of segregation and Jim Crow, and we had much earlier access to college educations and so on. Whatever our class status, we were white and that counted and still counts.

In a recent blog, Robin DiAngelo (2017) writes about why she uses the term white supremacy. She says,

> When I give talks on what it means to be white in a society deeply separate and unequal by race, I explain that white people who are born and raised in the U.S. grow up in a white supremacist culture. I include myself in this claim, as I enumerate all of the ways in which I was socialized to be complicit in racism. I am not talking about hate groups, of which I am obviously not a member. And no, I don't hate white people. I am addressing the majority of the audience to whom I am speaking, white progressives like me. If it surprises and unsettles my audience that I use this term to refer to us and not them, even after I have explained how I am using it, then they have not been listening. That recognition should trigger some sense of urgency that continuing education is needed. Yet invariably, a white person raises the objection: I really don't like that term! I associate it with the KKK and other white nationalist groups. Why can't you use a different term? As a classic example of white fragility, rather than stretching into a new framework, I am asked by a white participant to use language that is more comfortable and maintains their current worldview. (Para 1)

She goes on to note the following institutions in the U.S. that are over 90% white: congress, state governors, president and vice president, presidential cabinet, ownership of the media (TV, books, news, music), teachers, college professors, owners of pro-football teams, and military advisors. She remarks that this heavily weighted white power structure does not exist because the people in it are good or bad. It is she states, "a matter of power, control, and dominance by a racial

group with a particular self-image, worldview, and set of interests being in the position to disseminate that image and worldview and protect those interests across the entire society."

We in Child and Youth Care are not exempted from this power structure. In fact, we cannot help but be deeply embedded in it. Because of this, those of us who identify or are identified as white cannot be granted a pass on our privilege. This does not mean that we should indulge ourselves in shame, guilt or other narcissistic exercises in emotional breast beating (public or private). Such investments in the oblique trauma inflicted on us by our horrific colonial past is a dangerous indulgence that can easily lead to first world problems such as compassion fatigue, nihilism, apathy, irony, resentment or nostalgia.

Instead, we need to seek to be accountable to our privilege in real and material ways. We need to be aware of the fact that the young people we encounter in work may not see us as helpful and loving adults. In fact, they may well see our very existence in their lives as painful. To the degree we don't understand that, or seek to deny that actuality or seek a pass, we will not understand some of the rage and frustration that we will face in our encounters with young people and colleagues of color. We need to be less comfortable with terms such as multi-culturalism. We need to avoid programs of cultural tourism where we seek to understand other cultures. Programs that seek reconciliation without compensation are dubious as well. Instead we need to be more comfortable with terms such as white supremacy. As DiAngelo points out, white supremacy puts the emphasis where it belongs, on white people, and that is where the work needs to begin, because that is where the problem originates and is perpetuated.

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Pain

Laura Steckley

Jim Anglin (2002) coined the term 'pain-based behaviour' to support practitioners' awareness of the psycho-social pain that underlies what we more commonly refer to as 'challenging behaviour'. The words we use are important. They reflect our deeper values, beliefs and understandings. They also shape them. Indeed, the term 'challenging behaviour' hasn't always been so common and there was a time when it was more accepted to call behaviour, or even a child, 'bad'.

There is a general consensus about the importance of trying to understand what a child or young person is communicating through his or her behaviour, and so this term 'pain-based' behaviour is highly useful. It helps us to hold in mind the child – a child who is in pain – and not get fixated on the behaviour.

Having had a recent, prolonged bout of sciatica, I've been prompted to shift my focus from an acknowledgement that pain underlies much of the behaviour we see in our work to looking at the nature of pain itself and its impacts more broadly. One of the first things this experience has brought home is the ridiculousness of our tendency to think of the mind and body as separate. My experience has physical *and* mental dimensions that cannot be disentangled. I'm not even sure I can separate out the source; on one level, the pain is caused by inflammation of my sciatic nerve and so is physical, but that inflammation is likely caused by too much sitting, poor posture, a habit of crossing my legs and stress. These causes (or sources of the source of my pain) have clear psycho-social elements to them.

Societally, we tend to be more supportive towards (and less stigmatizing of) what we categorise as physical pain than we are of psycho-social pain. The impacts are more readily acknowledged and accommodations more readily made. Yet the more we understand about the relationship between the mind and the body, the

more we are coming to realise they aren't two different things at all. Some are turning to the term 'the embodied mind' to communicate a non-dualistic way of understanding not only mind and body, but self and other. On a fundamental level, what happens in our bodies profoundly affects what we think, how we feel and how we relate to others. At the same time, what we think, feel and experience – on a conscious and unconscious level – profoundly affects our bodies.

So pain, whether categorised as physical or mental (or psycho-social), affects both kinds of feelings – emotions and bodily sensations – and these, too, are interconnected. While each person's experience of pain will be unique, common effects include difficulties with sleep, appetite, decision-making, focus, memory, emotional regulation, mood, fatigue, and motivation. The more severe the pain, the greater the difficulties often are. Our bodies can feel heavy, achy or sore in ways that don't seem directly attributable to the source of the pain; we can lose a sense of hope or meaning in the things that usually keep us going. We might have referred pain, meaning pain experienced in a different area of the body than the source of that pain. We may have a variety of undesirable emotions triggered by, and sometimes not logically related to, the pain.

It's not uncommon to be unaware of pain. Pushing it from our conscious awareness is rarely a deliberate act. It is a way of protecting ourselves and adapting to our circumstances. Sometimes it's a way of surviving them. Depending on the family we grew up in, the people we're in contact with and the culture we live in, we may receive regular, implicit messages not to talk about, or even to deny, our pain. So when Anglin and others write about the psycho-emotional basis of pain, it doesn't necessarily mean the kind of anguish you may have experienced with your first broken heart or major loss. For many, that kind of pain is experienced as ever-present, crushing and transforming. The pain they are referring to may also mean a dullness, or fatigue, or rage, or many other things that, on the surface of awareness, may not feel like – or look like – pain at all.

Banoub-Baddour and Latyea (2003), in an article here on CYC-Net, discuss how developmental changes can affect how children experience pain. While they focus

on the importance of the meaning children make of their pain, I also wonder whether pain is sometimes experienced more vividly when we're young. We do know that, typically, children's sense of taste, especially bitter tastes, is more sensitive than adults', and from experience and observation, I suspect this may be true of other senses as well. Depending on what happens over the course of our development, this vividness may become more muted. I suspect this may happen very early for some children, and may result from learning to disconnect from bodily and emotional feelings.

A habit of wondering about the pain a child or young person might be feeling and what that experience might be like elevates practice from simply acknowledging that a particular behaviour is 'pain-based' to creating presence and insight that is more likely to yield a helping response. It is a form of holding that the child may not be aware of, but can benefit from nonetheless. Over time this might make it possible to gently enquire about the meaning a child is making about his or her pain, and to gradually make meaning together about it. Even just naming something as painful may be an important first step.
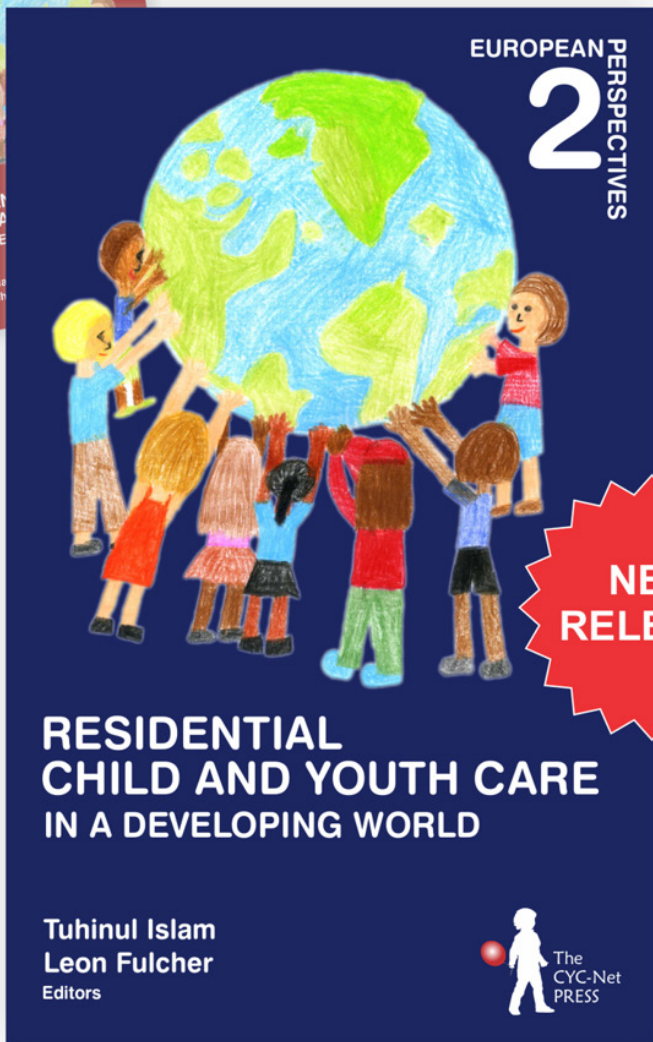
Until next time …

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

1

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IN A DEVELOPING

Tuhinul Islam
Leon Fulcher
Editors

EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

2

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CYC Supervision: The Growth from Manager to Professional Developer

Jack Phelan

When most skilled CYC practitioners become supervisors, they endure a period of uncertainty and competence anxiety as they struggle with managing adults and being the boss to previous colleagues. Just as new practitioners look for a "how-to" manual of techniques, they expect to find easy answers to supervisory dilemmas, which are written down, or at least easy to find. The realization that being in charge means constantly having to choose the less costly or destructive alternative, not the better of two good choices, is a regular occurrence, and staffs' suspicion that you do not have their best interests at heart (if you even have a heart) wears away at your optimism about making the world a better place by having some power.

This struggle to become a competent manager of staff behavior and attitude develops gradually for about one year, after which most supervisors start to believe in their own competence and are comfortable in the role of boss.

The next stage of professional development, beginning 12-18 months into the job, is a crucial one. Many supervisors can become quite complacent in being able to run a safe, predictable program, with clear behavioral expectations for both staff and youth or families. The issue is that they are not using advanced CYC skills, nor are they supporting the staff to do so.

Supervisors who are advancing in professional development now can begin to be relational and developmental in their interactions with staff members. Much like mature practitioners, they can stop managing behavior and start to support staff to be creative and self-motivated in CYC practice. This does not mean developing

friendships with staff, but rather to use relational approaches to improve the effectiveness of individual staff's CYC practice. The connection between supervisor and skilled staff member is not focused on control, but on building strengths and improving both relational and developmental awareness as the practitioner grows in professional skill.

This developmental growth in the supervisor demands a willingness to let go of comfortable and safe practices, which have been acquired with great effort, but which are not professionally as effective in creating excellent CYC practitioners. The supervisor becomes a mentor, teacher, and professional collaborator with those staff who are ready to be developed at this level. This is the stage of CYC practice which can legitimately be considered to be a profession. CYC practitioners who advance into relational and developmental practice are professionals and need to be supervised in a professional manner. When we hold back people who are ready to be more professionally competent by using behavioral management techniques which hinder creative responses to life space situations, we keep the level of practice for the whole program at a safe, but mediocre level, which stresses consistency and safety over self-control and growth.

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Children and Young People Living in Alternative Care

Interview with Dr. Leon Fulcher (Part 1 of 3)

Editor's note

This article is generously reprinted from the bi-annual journal Institutionalized Children: Explorations and Beyond (ICEB) published by Udayan Care (udayan is a Sanskrit word meaning 'eternal sunshine'). Udayan Care works to empower vulnerable children, women and youth, in 14 cities across 9 states of India. Learn more about the journal at http://udayancare.org/iceb-journal/home_iceb.html

Question 1: *You have over four decades of work experience and expertise on issues of child and youth care. Can you share with us what got you started working in this sector? What was the situation forty years back on issues of child protection and what has changed in this sector now? Would you wish to share an anecdote with us from your journey so far?*

Looking back, I guess I started working in this sector through my involvement in Scouting and voluntary youth work, first as a participant and then as a leader while undertaking concurrent university studies in Sociology and Social Work. I was fortunate to receive a National Institute of Mental Health (USA) scholarship to study and train as an MSW qualified Psychiatric Social Worker at the University of Washington in Seattle. During that time, and following graduation, the focus of my professional life was with emergency mental health and residential child and youth care practice with young women in secure care – many of whom suffered from depression. What has changed? The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (2010) for a start! The USA has signed that Convention but sadly, along with the

Cook Islands, Niue, the State of Palestine and the Holy See, the USA is not a party to it. I find the politics associated with children, young people and families suffering from pain, deeply distressing – especially when refugees of war zones are re-labelled economic migrants and walls are built to pen them in, or pen them out indefinitely. In my early work as a psychiatric social worker with maladjusted teenagers in Scotland and with young women in secure care, I learned about the personal and family stories behind depression, and of the importance of restorative practices. Such stories are highlighted in Sisters of Pain – An Ethnography of Young Women Living in Secure Care, written with Aliese Moran now grandmother, author and Native American activist but one of the young women back then who lived in that secure unit.

Question 2: *What child protection issues remain largely unaddressed in many parts of the world, even today?*

As a generalisation, I would argue that the experts who write and publish about child protection are doing so from a mostly Western perspective, or from what the post- Modernists might claim as to be their location or place from which they speak. Gun crime remains unaddressed in many parts of the world. In America, more toddlers kill their parents while playing with a loaded revolver in their mother's handbag than the total number of Americans killed by so-called terrorists – in a country that has signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but has so far failed to fully enact it.

Guns are a central feature around war zones, along with missiles, barrel bombs, shrapnel and now suicide bombers. Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome continue to challenge restorative efforts with children, young people and families the world over. The nature of trauma is heavily shaped by economic, social and cultural dynamics, and these require attention alongside any professional efforts to provide therapeutic remedy and support through crisis times into times of restorative equilibrium.

Question 3: *What worries you most when you think of the various vulnerabilities of children globally, especially children in out-of-home-care?*

I worry when children and young people have no real sense of belonging or present as someone without any personally rewarding relationships with another or others. Children and young people are vulnerable to exploitation – everywhere! And there are those who would exploit children for financial gain – everywhere! I worry that the people with money who are paying others to help them exploit children are becoming bolder and more aggressive in their activities! I worry that in many places in our World, local politicians and law enforcement agents help wealthy people exploit children on a scary scale. I can see why, for many child and youth care workers or policymakers, it just feels too hard! So the experts tell us what to do without ever having been there 'doing Child Protection work' on a Saturday night in any urban centre.

Question 4: *Given your extensive work with so many individuals and organisations, could you list out the most important issues in child protection in the times to come?*

In contemporary times, we already see survivors of war zones arriving at and crossing borders as refugee immigrants seeking new lives in places more peaceful than the places left behind. There and elsewhere, old socio-cultural practices confront new socio-cultural realities, with patriarchal family order maintained in the old country but severely challenged and undermined in the new. Establishing a sense of belonging whilst undergoing cultural adaptation, learning a new language and re-establishing a livelihood are themes that generate ripple effects in families through at least three generations. Throughout Africa and Asia, children and young people have been pressed into becoming child soldiers or sex slaves, now even suicide bombers with hopeful promises about how Paradise will be better than present circumstances offer. Religious training and residential education continue to present important challenges, especially in places where private education may be the only options available. Western experts commonly assume that public education such as they received is available, for the most part everywhere. Social
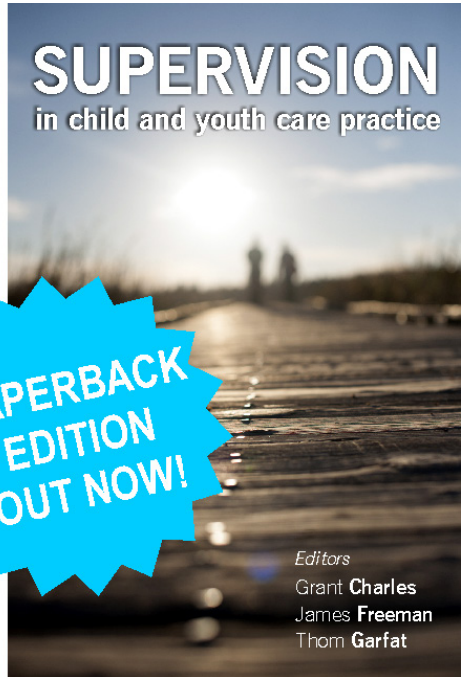
class and the Hindu socio-cultural caste system cannot be simply intellectualized away through a mental health and psychiatric diagnostic process. How does one make sense of the symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome presented by an 'untouchable child' as compared with the physically and emotionally abused child of an aspiring 'merchant-class' family, or 'mixed-religion' family? Professional child protection practices will need to take issues such as these into consideration from the very first contacts with children at risk and families at risk of endangering their child(ren).

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Question 5: *What has been the overall impact of your kind of writings and trainings you do and have you in any way been able to measure the impact of the work you do?*

Who knows? I know Aliese Moran has formally published an evaluation of my care and protection work carried out with her and her mother. Then there are the young people with whom I worked during the past forty years who are now Facebook Friends and our relationships continue in multiple ways. I guess that says something about impact. A Google Search would be the easiest way for somebody to 'check me out' quickly, or even https://www.academia.edu

Question 6: *You have said that 'Child and Youth Care will not ever be recognized as a profession just because child and youth care workers and educators assert that it should be'. Can you elaborate on this and suggest ways of positioning the work done by this cadre of professionals more seriously?*

Child and Youth Care Workers are the day to day keepers of stories fundamentally important to the lives of children and young people who spend time in out-of-home care. Those who are successful in this work are those to whom young people return as young adults to restore relationships, if only for brief moments, that remain important in young peoples' lives after leaving care. When young people leave care with their pain acknowledged, respected and with restorative efforts having assisted them to move on with comparative success, these are what make other professionals acknowledge Child and Youth Care workers for their personal authority to act in the best interests of each child in their care. When young people leave care angry, having experienced added pain in addition to that suffered before entering care, then every incident like that undermines the professional recognition of Child and Youth Care Work.

Child and Youth Care Work, as best evidenced in Canada and South Africa where professional certification is required to practice, is most comparable to professional recognition of Social Pedagogues in Scandinavia and Western Europe as distinctive professional occupation compared with Social Arbiters.

Follow part two of this interview next month in CYC-Online.

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Understanding The Relationship I Have With Children

Hannah Drawdy

Often when adults have conflict with children, it leaves both parties upset and frustrated. The adult wants to "help" the child and children most of the time just want to be heard. However, at times, the situation seems to escalate, which makes things worse. One of the ways that this can happen is if "staff members initially approached the students in an authoritarian manner" (Hewitt, 2007, p. 1). Hewitt argues that using an authoritarian manner, more times than not will end the conversation on a negative note. This dynamic has a power element to it and demolishes any form of relationship with the youth. Regrettably, this often does not deter adults who take this approach from persisting in it even when it doesn't seem to be working. As Hewitt (2007) points out, "Even though the students' behavior escalated when approached in this manner, the staff members continued along their course" (p. 2).

Why is it that when adults use a method of dealing with children, they often can't seem to look past their own beliefs; that when "faced with misbehavior from a student, we should take a hard, no-nonsense, 'nip-it-in-the-bud' stance" (Hewitt, 2007, p. 2)? This viewpoint may work for some children, however adults need to be willing to humble themselves and to change the way they approach misbehavior, if a particular approach does not work. Having an authoritarian perspective can hinder the relationship with the youth and can put up barriers between the adult and young person that didn't have to be. If the adult desires to carry out any form of relationship, they are going to need to understand that children and youth have

bad days just like everyone. Just as we might "always try to understand where the person is coming from, otherwise how can I develop the relationship" (Markey, 2006, p. 2). This is not saying that youths' misbehavior is excused, but it opens up dialogue to have a genuine conversation and to work through the problem.

One student I have worked with over time has often left me feeling exhausted at the end of my day. In the past, I have had children give me a hard time, however I generally can work through the challenges and we can start to have a working relationship. However, with this particular student it was more challenging for me to do so.

The events I am going to relate take place at an elementary school. On average, I had 30 students to watch over, and a handful of these students needed one on one attention. As many of my co-workers put it, these children oftentimes "misbehaved". A couple of days of being at this new job I got a new student. Now granted, I was still trying to get the hang of my other students. This little guy comes in full of energy yelling right at me: "HI MY NAME IS FINN, I AM NEW HERE", repeatedly. And the more times he said it, the louder he seemed to get. I quickly attended to him. I greeted him and showed him where to sit, explaining the rules I had set in place. These consisted of keeping backpacks on, leaving their water bottles in their bags and not talking loudly. These rules were in place because we were not going to be in the check in area long and they needed to hear their names when called. I soon realized this kid was going to have a hard time with these rules. Of course, I had other students who had a hard time as well, but Finn took it to a new level. I would say about every five to seven minutes Finn would be up to tell me something, which completely prolonged check in. At the rate it was going we were going to be sitting there for 20 plus minutes just trying to get these children

checked in. I soon went to the attitude of I need to "nip-it-in-the-bud" for the sole reason that the other kids were going crazy and I was losing tolerance. For the next couple of weeks this is what our relationship looked like. He tended to get in trouble with most of the staff members. Most of the time his energy was going into hurting other kids, pushing, hitting, kicking or having a hard time following direction. He expressed himself by putting his hands on his peers. I honestly felt like I had to keep my eyes on him all the time; on the other hand that was an impossible job since I had 29 other students that needed my attention. I also had a nonverbal student that would run away. Needless to say my hands were full.

Finn's school teachers tried to help but nothing seemed to faze him. Even when the school got in touch with his mother they never seemed to get a response. I wanted to be there for him and show him there is a different way of doing things. I wanted to help, but I realized that the impulse to help can sometimes inadvertently create a less than helpful power relation. If a relationship is to be possible then the power dynamic has to be mitigated to some degree.

There are three possible outcomes of interactions between adults and youth: the relationship can be unchanged, damaged, or improved" (Long, Fecser & Wood, 2001). Thus far Finn's and my relationship was leading to being unchanged or becoming damaged. From this point, I felt that Finn saw me just like everyone else in his life. I was just someone that told him right from wrong. This was not how I wanted our relationship to be and so I started taking the steps towards forming how we were going to be together differently.

I remember being outside and Finn did something to another student. I told my colleagues that I would talk to him. Something I have always aimed for when talking with any student is to make them feel I am on their level. I never wanted to make them feel that I was the bigger person therefore I would try to avoid being the adult or boss. This time was no different. I took Finn to the side and sat on a bench with him. I started out just trying to carry on a simple conversation. But the more we talked the more I realized that this little guy, staring straight with his big brown eyes, was completely programed. He knew what to say and how to say it. He had

this dialogued all in his head. I would try and change his dialogue, but nothing seemed to work. He had one thing on his mind and that was how he could get back to playing. I was completely shocked that this little five year old boy could play the system in such a way. My shock was not entirely in that he knew how to play the system because I had seen that before. It was the fact that he sounded like a machine that was preprogramed. I was so astonished that I let him go play and he ran off. In that moment I knew that no matter how many times he got in trouble, nothing was going to faze him. If anything, that was something he expected. Regrettably this is not entirely unique to my situation with this young man because "for many students, these rote punishments have little effect on changing behavior…they address only the symptoms, not the beliefs and feelings that underlie the behavior" (Hewlitt, 2007, p.1).

It was necessary to take a step back and look at all points of my relationship with Finn. I had to think about a lot of different aspects. For example, "our temperament, personalities, cultures and histories…and of course what were all the other issues associated with power, race, control, gender, role models, etc." (Krueger, 2007 p. 21). I had to address him in a different way. It occurred to me that perhaps he saw me in one of two lights: either as a mother figure or as a teacher figure. Both of those were not roles I felt allowed me to be seen as a person that just simply cares for him or in which our relationship was not based off of his actions. From this point on I wanted him to see me in a new light. I wanted us to experience a relationship.

A couple of weeks went by and I tried various strategies, but none of them seemed to work. On one particular day I was walking past Finn and I could see that he was completely upset. I stopped and paused for a moment. One of two things could have happened. I could have stopped and asked him what was wrong or I could have played into what he was doing. He was beating a stick into the ground. I walked up to him and simply said, "What are you doing? Building a fire?" In that moment, he looked up at me with those big brown eyes, with a slightly surprised expression. He quickly replied with a "yes." "Well if you're building a fire don't you

think singing a camp fire song would be good idea?" His head was quickly turning trying to figure what was going on. Nonetheless, he continued to go with it. We then spent time coming up with camp fire songs.

For the first time, I saw this little boy finally get rid of the preprograming. He was finally just playing like a five year old. However, this came to a complete halt because another student came up to me for help with a bloody mouth from a playground injury. I had to shift my attention to someone else. I could see his face completely change. Very quickly he was fighting for my attention. I bent down to look at him right in the eyes and said "I have to take care of this little boy, but when I get back we will finish our camp fire song. Does that sound like a deal?" He said "yes," and quickly added "Can I come with you?" I couldn't let him come with me since blood was going everywhere from the other student's injury. I instantly saw disappointment fill his eyes. I felt sorry for him, but I had to focus on the other kid at the time.

When I got back I saw Finn sitting on the bench. I walked up to him and simply asked him why he was sitting there. He said, "I got in trouble". I quickly responded with, "Oh what happened?" He told me this long story about how he was hitting the tree and being mean to other students. In the back of my mind I knew exactly why he was upset and I was completely upset that he got in trouble. There was no need for him to have gotten into trouble. After all, "sometimes kids do inappropriate things when they are upset" (Hewitt, 2007, p. 4). In this situation, he was clearly upset and giving him a punishment was completely the wrong move. I looked at him and asked him "How would you like to finish that camp fire song?" He looked right at me with sheer joy and he let out this loud "YES!" He quickly said, "First I need a big stick," so we went looking for a stick. I believe it was in this moment that our relationship shifted. I had been able to show him that he could trust me. No matter what he did, that was not going to change how our relationship formed.

From that moment on when I saw him get in trouble I would step in and try to understand where he was coming from. I wanted to show that "accepting a person

for who they are, and letting them know that you do, can be a big step forward in their development" (Hewitt, 2007, p. 2). I had to show him that it honestly didn't matter what he did, because I understood that his acting out was due to an emotion he was feeling. I honestly cared more about the emotion he was feeling than the behavior in and of itself.

I had to be careful when speaking with him. I could not let him fall into that place of just giving an automatic response, though I have to note that there was one time I could not overlook his behavior. Finn got upset and put his hands around another student's throat. I had no choice and had to call my boss to the room. He was taken to the front office where my boss was going to write him up. Finn had to realize that no matter how upset one person may get, it's never okay to choke another individual. On this day he actually got picked up by his mom, which was rare. This particular day his behavior clicked for everyone. His mother told us she had cancer. She had been spending a lot of time at the hospital and that if we ever needed to get in contact with her that we needed to call her cell phone. He ended up not getting written up and I think from that point on everyone saw him in a new way. Which is honestly sad because each of us should have already known that something was going on at home. As Skott-Myhre (2015) tells us, "What goes on in the home carries immense emotional anxiety and fear of social censure on the part of both parents and children" (p. 4). Finn's mother could not control what was going on in terms of her health and she certainly couldn't be held responsible for how her son was acting. This was a five year old boy who just saw his mom was sick. The only way he saw to handle it was by acting out. By acting out there was an understanding that this was an emotional response.

The relationship between Finn and me has taken time to figure out, but I finally understand the missing piece. However, I do believe that even if I did not have that piece of information, we would still have formed a strong bond. That was not entirely needed for us to continue on a working relationship. However, since I do have it maybe I can guide him a little differently.

When working with children, no matter the age, remember that you have to accept individuals for who they are, otherwise it puts a strain on the working relationship. "I have to accept the person I am working with and they have to reciprocate the acceptance to value my contribution" (Markey, 2006, p. 2). If I had continued our relationship with the attitude of just having a "no-nonsense, just nip-it-in-the-bud" approach I could say without a doubt that Finn and I would not share the bond we have today. This doesn't mean that we don't have rough moments, however, we have an understanding that we are going to work through it. "Many times, because students who are acting up expect adults to come from an authoritarian standpoint, relationships go pretty much unchanged" (Hewitt, 2007, p. 2). Every day I choose to humble myself to the world of this little boy. Without humbling myself I am just like every other person in his world. Therefore, I would propose that we need to take the time to understand who we are working with, to help grow the relationship, and to adjust for any power dynamic there may be.

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Sharing Wounds: Trauma in Organizations

Kelsie Tatum and James Freeman

By nature we are social beings. We seek sustenance and protection from our caregivers, connection and belongingness to celebrate our joyful experiences, and comfort and community during times of grief and loss.

> *From the moment we are born, our very survival depends on connecting to those around us through touch, smell, sights, and sounds. If we are able to connect with nurturant others whose brains are primed to accept us as an extension of themselves, then we can bond, attach, and survive.* (Cozolino, 2010, p. 180)

Those who work with children and families who have been affected by traumatic experiences, know that not all human connection is nurturing, survival-promoting, or growth-inspiring. We are exposed to the depths of suffering and range of pain that trauma leaves in its wake. We have read reams of records, listened to countless stories, conducted interviews and investigations, observed the physical and emotional injuries of abuses, and sat with those who are suffering. We have pursued this work to travel with others from the darkness of traumatic stress toward the hope of post-traumatic growth. It is this "exposure" that makes our work unique:

The exposure floods you from all directions…. This does not mean that your work is a negative thing, something to be avoided. Instead, it means that something very real and, therefore, very sacred is happening, and you are a part of it. (John, 2016, p. 16-17)

The sacredness of our work, and the nature of our own vulnerability, should cause us to pause and reflect on how we do what we do on an ongoing basis. Our experiences with people who are suffering in significant ways impact us whether we are aware of it or not. Working with traumatized children and families is both an intimately personal and an inherently relational endeavor. Our role is be present with others in ways that support them in transformation and growth:

Trauma stewardship…can be defined as a daily practice through which individuals, organizations, and societies tend to the hardship, pain, or trauma experienced by humans, other living beings, or our planet itself. Those who support trauma stewardship believe that both joy and pain are realities of life, and that suffering can be transformed into meaningful growth and healing when a quality of presence is cultivated and maintained even in the face of great suffering. (van Dernoot Lipsky, 2009, p. 11)

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37

As trauma stewards we risk the effects of both the immediate exposure to traumatic events and traumatized individuals as well as the accumulation of traumatic stories we have received over time. We also find hope in the possibility that this "sharing" of the traumatic can promote growth and healing for those who entrust us with their vulnerabilities. And most of all, we must acknowledge that as we strive to shape the lives of those whose experiences have led them to our organizations, we too are transformed by the stories that we hear, the suffering we witness, and the healing we mutually pursue. In this way, trauma and healing are constitutionally social experiences.

> *All trauma ends up in us by virtue of a social experience. Even hurt we cause ourselves is inherited from hurt others have caused us. Trauma is a relational artifact. What we see, hear, feel, learn, and are touched by through direct and indirect relationship feeds us or harms us… Since trauma is vicarious by nature, we can treat trauma vicariously. If relationship caused a wound, relationship can be used to cure the wound.* (John, 2016, p. 48)

It is this something sacred that happens when trauma is shared and this curative power of relationship that also implore us to be deliberate in the ways we prepare ourselves to receive the suffering of others and care for ourselves and each other upon exposure. Just as we pursue education, training, and experiences to ensure our readiness to be with others who are suffering, we must also pursue self-awareness, self-compassion, and self-care to make space for others' stories and experiences. This is difficult in a society that rewards "martyrs" and praises "over-commitment" to our work. However, there are many ways we can prepare to receive and support those experiencing trauma: as individuals, teams, and organizations.

Preparing individuals within the organization

When thinking about the organizational impact of trauma, we begin with individuals. It is individual people who come together to form teams and create larger organizations. Individual workers can be affected by the significant trauma and suffering experienced by children and families the organization serves. Some recognizable signs of trauma within the individual practitioner include: isolation, numbness and lack of emotions, feeling inferior or not good enough, extreme exhaustion, diminished personal joy or job satisfaction, irritability, increased jumpiness or startle effect, and feelings of hopelessness.

Practitioners can prepare and maintain their ability to work with those affected by trauma by building their own knowledge and skills. Reading books and articles to develop personal awareness and pursuing ongoing training are helpful steps. Readings that focus on the characteristics of relational care (Freeman & Garfat, 2014) can be helpful in centering and refocusing ourselves on our task and purpose. Assessments such as the Professional Quality of Life Scale (Stamm, 2010) are also helpful in developing self-awareness and action planning.

Developing an active self-awareness is also critical in our work. There are several reasons individuals can fail to notice things in and around us, including not wanting to see and being distracted by other things (Garfat, 2003). Noticing what is happening in ourselves, as we are connecting with and working alongside others, gives us information on how and what parts of our selves might need more attention.

> *Effective self-care requires the development of a keen sense of self-awareness so that we are attuned to our needs, as they occur in our daily experience. [It's] about looking after ourselves. However, if we do not know our selves (who we are both inside and out, our needs, priorities, etc.), and how we relate to others and the world, then taking care of ourselves may prove to be difficult.* (DeMonte, 2016, p. 32)

We bring our whole selves to every relational exchange with a child or family member. This includes the parts we are aware of as well as those we are not. Without attunement to our own experience and needs, we may be working blindly and may also risk causing harm to others.

It is also important that individual practitioners experience relational safety in their work. Relational safety is the experience of being and feeling safe and connected in the context of a specific relationship, while at the same time being free from threat and free to explore the development of new skills (Garfat, 2015; Freeman, 2016). With regard to the working role of a practitioner, this experience of relational safety can be cultivated in connection with an internal or external supervisor, a supportive mentor, or a trusted colleague. It is by personally

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experiencing relational safety with a trusted supervisor, mentor, or co-worker that a practitioner may learn to also create experiences of relational safety for children and families in which they, too, feel safe from threat and free to explore the development of new skills. Relational safety is important because "the defining experience of any child who has experienced complex trauma is that of feeling unsafe" (Bath, 2008, p. 18).

Preparing teams

Most helping organizations perform their work in and among various teams. They may be formed as a specific program team or comprised of a certain shift or schedule. They may be long-term in focus or short-term by design for a specific task. Teams can be affected by trauma just as individuals can be. Some of the recognizable signs of team trauma include: low morale, blame, conflict or lack of collaboration, poor communication, lack of desire to work in sync, and a lack of empathy when shifting load or responsibilities.

Teams can prepare and maintain their ability to work with those affected by trauma by facilitating open and honest group discussions on the impact of work. When feelings or concerns are held internally without talking about them they build and can impact the work of the team. Discussions can be in the form of small groups (such as debriefing at the end or crossover of a shift), in group supervision (with pairs or the whole team), or in larger contexts such as within departmental or organizational meetings.

It is also important to create opportunities for team members to connect and care for one another. Just as the wounds of trauma are inflicted relationally, the reparative tasks of healing trauma are also relational. So, small measures such as signing birthday cards for team members, taking moments to ask about weekend or vacation experiences, or sharing about friends and family can be meaningful. Facilitating experiences of caring for and being cared about by others can buffer against the effects of trauma exposure and can also create a space for healing trauma wounds.

Experiences of belonging are also important for the team. Organizing regular opportunities for community gathering and team-building can facilitate feelings of connection and cohesion that can also buffer against the effects of trauma exposure. Activities like sharing meals, participating in organizational and community activities, celebrating individual and team accomplishments or life events, sharing kudos and recognizing employees of the week or month, and holding regular potlucks can promote better connections and teamwork skills. They also provide a greater sense of belonging for those who may not have as much of a network of support outside of the workplace.

Preparing as an organization

Organizations exist to achieve greater impact than individuals can on their own. Just as trauma can impact an individual worker or a team, organizations can experience trauma. This trauma can be direct as well as through the experiences of the children and families which the organization supports. Some of the recognizable signs of organizational trauma include: loss of innovation and creativity, inability to take appropriate risks, being stuck in narrow ways of working, and lack of vision for the future.

Leaders of teams and organizations must model self-care and set an expectation of self-care from the beginning of a new employee's tenure at an agency. New workers must have role models and examples to follow. More mature workers can be role models, but also need the ongoing support of the organization. Policies should also be written and carried out in ways that promote and encourage well-being (e.g. sufficient pay, benefits, and holidays).

An organization also has a responsibility to shape a culture that promotes shared values and cultivates meaning from the work it does. This can include communication from leaders, regular meeting and connection points, and times of gathering together for both celebration (e.g. successes, graduations, reaching achievements) and mourning (e.g. acknowledging losses, people moving on, transitions). Rituals and routines within organizational life that promote awareness

and a relational culture are vital to being prepared to work with traumatic situations.

As an organization, the quality, frequency, and priority of supervision must also be emphasized. Supervision provided to teams and individuals must be frequent enough to be effective and should be well-timed to support practitioners both proactively and during times of high demand or stress. A relational approach to supervision which is grounded in the characteristics of relational care (Charles, Freeman & Garfat, in press) increases mutuality, availability and person-centered practices for both supervisors and those they supervise.

Organizations can also be impacted by direct trauma. In our own work we have experienced the murder of a child by another child, the sudden death of a partner of a co-worker who had worked in the organization for nearly two decades, and a key leader who left suddenly and without warning. Experiences like these are traumatic to an organization and it takes time and intentionality to heal. Just as generational trauma can occur, and families can be impacted by trauma across generations, organizational trauma can last for generations of workers in the form of stories that are told, approaches and policies that are developed, and beliefs and fears that are adopted or inherited.

Maintaining focus

In our own work we have experienced the impact of trauma in both individual and team/organizational ways. We have been, at times, unnecessarily hyper-vigilant of threats when interacting with children and others in the community. We have occasionally questioned the impact of our work or doubted our abilities to continue it. We have entered leadership roles within teams that have survived significant trauma or chaotic histories and supported them in making meaning of their experiences and transform into more effectively functioning teams. We have also worked with numerous families who have experienced suffering beyond what humans were designed to endure. Yet we have also been witness to the growth,

possibility, and transformation that has derived from the trauma that once threatened destruction.

In all of this we have learned that the ability to maintain personal focus and bring ourselves into everyday moments with others – especially moments of pain and suffering – has been an essential part of our work. Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, founder of The Trauma Stewardship Institute, challenges us and everyone who interacts with human suffering in any way with these words:

> *It is incredibly seductive with the volume and intensity of suffering on the planet today [to let ourselves] become numb. [Yet we must] continue to cultivate our capacity to be present. [W]ith everything that is out of our control every single day, one thing that remains in our control at any given time is your ability to bring your exquisite quality of presence to what you are doing and how you are being. That presence we know can interrupt the systematic oppression which is causing so much harm and transform the trauma that is arising.* (van Dernoot Lipsky, 2015)

We do what we do because so many parts of our communities and systems are broken. Children and families in today's world have unmeasurable pressures. In our work we see the outcomes of those under pressure. Troubled neighborhoods, suicides, torn families, young people with no hope. It is love, in the words of the late performer David Bowie, which motivate us to care for these "people on the edge of the night" and that same love leads us to "change our way of caring about ourselves". And in doing so we prepare and create space in ourselves to be present with and share the wounds of a hurting world.

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How is Child and Youth Care work unique, and different, from other fields? Reflections on Time, Space and Context

Karen VanderVen

The Nature of Child and Youth Care Work

Child and youth care work is different from other fields; it focuses on children and youth in their life space, improving quality of life in that space, and and ensuring that the space is developmentally and holistically growth producing. It is the way we arrange the space of these interactions that connotes how well we care, and inexorably influences the significance of the caring message being given. There is no other field that embraces the nature of the spaces that contain its clients, works to adapt these spaces to the clients' needs, and uses the spaces as a context to empower its other services.

Child and youth care workers must respond to the ongoing shifts in these contexts and in the spaces that comprise them, which include other children and youth, adults, families, schools, and communities. Child and youth care workers are the ones on hand at times of joy and crisis, of growth and setback, where and when they happen: on streets, in living rooms, school rooms, and bedrooms, in homes,

and on playing fields. Child and youth care workers communicate when and where children experience these real events of their lives—hence the term "life space interview."

Unlike practitioners in other fields which deliver services in prescribed spaces, such as offices, and prescribed times, usually by appointment, child and youth care workers interact with their clients on an ongoing basis, and so spend the most time with the children in their care. Paradoxically, spending a great amount of time with children does not dilute the impact that child and youth care workers have on their charges.

In child and youth care, every moment is highly significant and has the potential to cumulatively contribute to the growth of its young clients. Child care workers, like parents, spend a proportionately large amount of time with children, taking on similar significance as influencers of their charges. Here the old analogy between child care and parenting is appropriate, for research shows that it is the micro-interactions between child and caregiver (either parent or substitute) that set the tone for the quality, and hence the impact of the interaction.

The ultimate task of the practitioner is to weave these fundamental elements—time and space—together in a cohesive integration that is meaningful to children in the shifting contexts of their lives. Dana Lewis (1981) puts it well: "Time, space and movement for the practitioner." He describes how "Sequential analysis of child care situations enables.., to take all element into account, seeing them holistically... seeing parts as they relate to the whole" (p. 101). Thus the notion of field, or context, comes in. Child and youth care work is predicated on the premise that ecological or contextual influences on development, ranging all the way from family and neighborhood to the broadest values of society, are specifically utilized, and intervened in when necessary, to promote therapeutic and developmental growth.

Professionalization of Child and Youth Care Work

Despite the compelling significance of the unique work of child care, and its symbolic compatibility with the most powerful theory of modem science, the field

is not yet a profession. Here again the time-space-context concept provides a conceptual framework for examining the status of the field.

The length of time deemed necessary for preparation of practitioners is a factor that differentiates child and youth care—negatively, unfortunately—from other related human service disciplines. There is no profession that relies on brief, uncoordinated, non-standardized trainings to prepare its personnel. Until child and youth care work insists on a professional level of preparation for initial practice, it will continue to be a subsidiary of other fields that deal with children and families. There is simply no substitute for time spent in specifically acquiring the knowledge, skill and attitudinal base of the field.

Time, space and context have further implications for training and education of practitioners. From these notions the field gets its content or distinct knowledge base which deals with the nature of children, relationships, and the environment. Consider the following book titles: Children of Time and Space (Ekstein, 1966), Time and Mind (Fraser, 1990), Spaces for Children (Weinstein and David, 1987), and consider common language in the field, such as "inner spaces" and "sense of timing."

The fact that the effective child and youth care worker must be able to deal with contexts is compelling stated by Demers. He makes a powerful case, showing that competency based, linear educational models used by other disciplines are not adequate to enable child and youth care. Citing Beker and Maier, he calls for a systemic, "holistic perspective emphasizing pattern of thought and skills which would allow workers to connect their ongoing experiences" (Demers, 1988, p.22 1).

The variable of time relates also to the issue of professionalism when considering the amount of time the clients of child and youth care—youthful by definition—have lived. All other human service professions deliver their specialty to persons throughout the life span. Until child and youth care recognizes that it has a unique configuration of knowledge and skills to meet the developmental needs for caregiving and intervention of human beings of all ages, it will not be a profession.

One day - in time - it will be. Developmentally oriented care in the life space will be provided to people throughout the life span, with child and youth care work a major subspecialty.

Even though child and youth care work is the major human service discipline practicing in situ, it has been further restricted in development by its own limited view of the contexts in which it works. Many have thought that residential settings, day care centers, hospitals, or schools are the exclusive sites for practicing child and youth care. In fact, all of these, and more, are appropriate arenas or contexts for child and youth care work.

The field of child and youth care work is particularly exciting because of the fact that it is not totally organized. Its boundaries are fluid, allowing for further extension and growth. We can look at space as reflecting the fact that there are ever increasing opportunities today for child and youth care practitioners to expand into new roles in practice, and new locations or contexts to apply these roles.

A Time for Action, A Space to be Filled

Like the planets lining up in favorable synergism, the forces supportive of the advancement of child and youth care are in alignment now and we should take advantage of this positioning. It is time the growing number of those committed to the value of child and youth care gather together and work proactively to advance their field as a profession; there is a space in the array of human services that can and must be filled by informed child care workers, with their unique approach of practicing in the context of children's lives.

Perhaps the greatest implications of the metaphor of Einstein's Theory of Relativity deal with relationships among the bodies of the universe, for the nature, status, and future of child and youth care work are for the field thus to realize its cosmic power. With child and youth care work's profound connection to daily life, the field is indeed the sun, the moon, and the stars. Utilizing the energy of the

critical mass of those who believe in it, child and youth care has the great promise for making a positive impact on many lives in the future.

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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

Te Whare Hinekura, Lake Waikaremoana – New Zealand

Kia Ora and Warm Greetings Colleagues! As we in the Southern Hemisphere face late Autumn and the beginnings of Winter, those of you in the Northern Hemisphere are celebrating the beginnings of Spring! We hope you are enjoying the sunshine and flowers!

On Mothers' Day here, we were invited to attend a special ceremony of remembrance at *Te Hinekura Marae*, one of two Ancestral Houses in our village and one of few *Marae* in New Zealand to be named after a female ancestor. It was thus only fitting that two *Kuia* of that *Marae* – female elders Gladys and Moia – were the initiators of this initiative or *kaupapa*.

During the past century where we live, family members lived and died but their burial sites have become lost and forgotten as time went by. Two female elders in the community – Kuia Gladys and Kuia Moia – were determined that

Te Whare Hinekura o Kuha Pa – Lake Waikaremoana

Anglican Minita taking Mothers' Day Service of Remembrance at the Urupa cemetery

these forgotten people should be remembered, and that their lives be acknowledged for future generations. The notion of *whanaungataonga or* genealogy was central to the grandmothers' dream of remembering.

The local Maori Anglican Ministry joined in the planning for this Mothers' Day initiative and helped to frame the activity within an Anglican Christian way of understanding – the idea of joining together when believers are re-gathered with the Son of God in heaven. This Minita was fluently bi-lingual in English and Maori, and it was very special how she encouraged children to participate in this special unveiling ceremony of remembrance. Their grave sites may have become lost or forgotten, but these family members and friends are remembered for all time with a headstone that publicly marked this celebration of active remembering.

Children and Grandchildren Participate in the Formal Unveiling

The Minita Explains to a Mokopuna-Grandchild what is written on the Headstone

Children were curious about this formal event and the *Minita* behaved as a skilful child and youth care worker who involved them as active participants in the whole ceremony. She helped children make sense of happenings and what the words on the headstone said.

This is a memorial of love for the tribal people of (Ruapani) and people of the sub-tribe (Hinekura) who are buried here at (Wharekaponga) cemetery but cannot be identified because they have no headstone or their final resting place is unknown. Sleep eternally – the babies, the young, the elders, the few and the many – including Europeans and people from other tribes. In time and in heaven we will meet again.

While Mothers' Day is not traditionally associated with Easter Egg Hunts, it was very much an activity of choice for the *tamariki* and *mokopuna* of *Hinekura Marae* – the children and grandchildren of this Ancestral House. Adults moved around the outside of the House, distributing or hiding chocolate eggs. Some children were keen to start 'hunting' before all the eggs had been 'hidden' so early ground rules and boundary-setting were reinforced!

Remembrance Inscription Close-up – Translated thanks to Huhana Takuta-Moses

Kuia Gladys and Kuia Moia in Realisation of a Dream for the Unveiling Ceremony

Then the scramble was on with children running all around Te Whare Hinekura (not inside), collecting their 'loot' in the fronts of t-shirts or caps. On reflection, these kids experienced a very special 'Mothers' Day' which reinforced a message of

belonging and remembering in a very special, but fun way! Thank you *Kuia* Gladys and *Kuia* Moia for sharing your dream!

Does our child and youth care workplace nurture feelings of personal belonging that celebrates remembering?

Hinekura Children Gathering for the Start of the Mothers' Day Easter Egg Hunt

Frantic Scramble for Chocolate Eggs hidden all around Hinekura Marae

Information

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