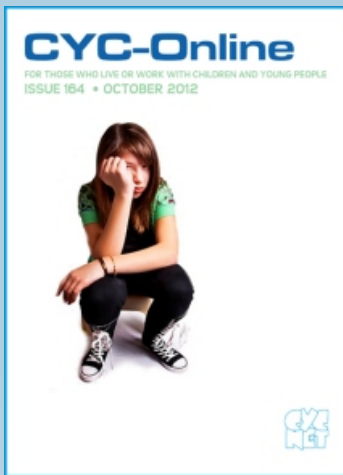


CYC-Online

FOR THOSE WHO LIVE OR WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE
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Influencing the Future

My history in our field has been primarily in the area of child and youth care as it is focused on working with troubled youth and their families who are ‘in the care of the system’. I have often been somewhat tunnel-focused about it to the extent that, in many ways, I have been ignorant of much of the work done with youth who were not so clearly identified by the system as being ‘in need’.

However, over the years – quite a few really – many of my colleagues, who work with young people in different circumstances, have contributed to my knowledge and education about the many, many ways in which we, as workers who care about youth and families, contribute to the betterment of the lives of young people and families who are not so formally ‘in care’. And the range of our contributions is quite staggering. When one considers the contributions made through everything from work with homeless, orphaned, hospitalized, displaced, and deprived young people and families through to those involved in programs serving youth in schools, community parks and organised youth groups to promote opportunities, we touch the lives of mil-

lions of young people and families worldwide.

It is really quite a staggering thought – to be a part of a movement – as fragmented and disconnected as we may be – that touches the lives of millions of children, young people and their families. And the potential to affect the future of our world is equally staggering.

Now, that last statement could sound a little grandiose, “to affect the future of our world”. But in essence, I think, that is what the caretakers of young people have always done – influenced the future. Through the sharing of ways of being in the world with young people, caretakers have shaped the future – for better or worse. And I also think that that is what you are doing – one child, or one group, or one family, at a time – you are contributing to how the world will be in the future – wherever you live and work.

Yet, as workers working with young people as they move towards their future (and ours) we seldom focus on ‘how we think the world should be’. Rather, caringly, we worry about how the future will be for this young person and family, in their world and future. More and more, however, people within our field are talk-

ing about just that – the need for us to think about the way in which we are with young people can, should and will affect the future of the global reality. I recently read this quote from Gerry Fewster’s upcoming keynote address at the CYC World Conference.

“... the time has come for us to step forward; to move beyond helping ‘problem’ kids to fit into the status quo...”

This seems to me to be a call for all of us who work with young people and families, to drop our focus on ‘problems’ and focus on ‘the beyond’ – beyond the problem, beyond the moment, beyond the present.

I think that in order to do so, we need to come together, globally, as a group of concerned working professionals and unite for the benefit of our children’s future. As it says in the CYC World Conference description:

“If we, who work with troubled, disadvantaged and hurting children and families, are to be a force for change in the World, we will only do so if we are connected and united. This is the opportunity to begin a global connection for healing, emanating from our field. Together we can impact the **World**. Come and join us in this effort to **Connect at the Crossroads** between ‘what is’ and ‘what might be’.”

Personally, I believe it is time. I hope you do too. So, if you believe in the future of young people and their families, come to the *World*, listen to what Fewster and other from around the globe have to say, and let’s begin.

Thom
www.cycworld2013.net



June 25-28, 2013
St. Johns, Newfoundland & Labrador – CANADA
Child & Youth Care World Conference

Connecting at
the Crossroads

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Freddie and the Green Rock

Cedrick of Toxteth

Preamble

While considering my next brilliant contribution to *CYC-Online*, I came across a letter posted on the CYC-Net Discussion Group by Rianna Awan, a student at Mount Royal University in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. She was asking CYC folks to share their most “intense” moments in the trenches and how they had dealt with, or diffused, the situation. This brought to mind a personal saga that was more intense than a ten-day trip through the birth canal. It took place a long time ago, but I’ll do my best to recall the events as they happened. Please note that all names have been changed to protect the guilty.

The Story

Bored with city life and in need of a few sheckles, I signed on with a group of CYC types intent on taking a dozen urban adolescent dissidents on a two-week wilderness experience. Apparently, some bright spark had suggested this would expand their horizons and teach them something about “personal initiative,” “self-reliance” and “collaboration.” When I enquired if anyone had read “The Lord of the Flies,” our appointed leader brusquely informed me that his name was Jim, not Gandalf, and they were planning a trip to the Shuswap Lakes, not a journey through Mordor. He also made it clear that, as a non-professional ‘extra’, my responsibilities would be appropriately

limited. I was appropriately relieved and decided against pointing out his limited knowledge of contemporary literature.

The day before departure, Jim took me aside to outline the nature of my limited responsibilities. Apart from assisting and taking direction from the pros, I was to pay special attention to Freddie, a nine-year old Tasmanian Devil who had been drafted into the brigade at the eleventh hour because there was insufficient staff coverage back at the Group Home. Being four years younger than the other boys, Freddie would not be involved in the more challenging aspects of the program and would require some serious individual supervision. OK, so I'd been hired as a babysitter. Great, I had no primal urge to climb rock faces or shoot rapids anyway. Freddie and I could spend quality time together, a couple of extras enjoying the gentle touch of Mother Nature.

Sitting together at the back of the van, it was clear from the outset that we were outsiders – a familiar role that has become my specialty. He turned out to be a delightful little deviant, grabbing my arm to draw attention to whatever took his fancy through the window. Ignored by our fellow travelers, the spirit of togetherness blossomed between us as we munched on the corned-beef sandwiches while our resolute leader gave the others a three-hour briefing on what to expect and what was expected. We were happy campers savoring our own expectations.

After a death-defying voyage on a gradually sinking barge, we came to our retreat at the tip of a remote promontory. Without any signs of the anticipated initia-

tive or collaboration, we unloaded the boxes of supplies, rigged up our tents and set about constructing a communal Biffy. This pleased me enormously. I don't mind taking a leak in the bushes but when it comes to the delights of the dump, I like to sit down in comfort and privacy. Having demonstrated his pitiful ineptitude with a shovel, Freddy was released from digging duties and dispatched to collect sticks for the inevitable campfire. I dutifully followed him into the woods to make sure he didn't fall into the hands of marauding savages. Oh the sacrifices one has to make when the chips are down.

That evening we sat around a crackling fire while a no-nonsense 'Jungle' Jim (JJ in Freddy-speak) outlined the plans for the following day – a three hour march to Black Mountain followed by drown-proofing practice in the lake. Freddy and I would stay behind to defend the camp from the aforementioned savages and organize the food supplies in the designated kitchen area, conveniently located next to the Biffy.

When the briefing was over, Big Bill (BB), Jim's more amiable assistant, offered some relief by suggesting it was time for a sing-a-long. As I'd brought along my ukelele, BB announced that I would be the coordinator of camp entertainment and would get the ball rolling with a few traditional airs. At last I had a legitimate and familiar place in the scheme of things and a chance to show my stuff.

Lively renditions of "Coombya" and "Marching to Pretoria" did little to raise the sullen spirits of our worn out tribe and my customized version of "Home on the Range" brought only moans from the oth-

erwise silent audience. With no vocal support from the *real* professionals, I decided to try one of my favorite ice-breakers, “If I Push You Through the Mattress, I’ll See You in the Spring” and the circle sprang to life. It’s amazing what a spot of raunchy humor will do for frozen adolescent minds. Acknowledging the well-deserved applause, I launched into the classic “If I Had the Balls of a Bullfrog,” inviting group participation in the suggestive body motions and lusty chorus.

The party was well underway, with delightfully discordant harmonies and raucous group bonding. But when I delivered the opening stanzas to “I Once Had a Girl in the Bike Shed,” the focus of attention suddenly shifted and the energy dissipated as dramatically as it had arisen. In my trivial world, losing an audience is a devastating experience but I was at a loss to account for my unexpected plunge into isolation. Glancing over my shoulder I caught sight of JJ glaring in my direction and drawing an imaginary dagger across his throat. In deference to his authority, I strummed my last C7th chord and waited for the next instruction. “Bedtime everybody. An early start in the morning,” he announced as he turned away and headed for the tents. There could be no doubt in anybody’s mind that my responsibilities as entertainment coordinator had been unilaterally suspended *sine die*. On the way back to our quarters, my friend Freddie put his arm around me and whispered, “Somebody should fix that prick”.

In the days that followed, life in the Gulag settled into a pleasant routine, at least for Freddy and me. The adventurers shuffled off early each morning for their

daily recreation while we stayed behind to clean up the mess, prepare the evening meal and rebuild the campfire. The menu was simple – canned stew, boiled tatties and mixed veggies followed by one of three dubious dessert options. When they dragged their battered bodies back in the evening they gobbled it all down like pigs at the trough, washed their dishes in the lake and trudged off to the campfire ritual – a debriefing on the events of the day, followed by roasted marshmallows and an mandatory skinny dip. With no entertainment duties, I volunteered Freddie and myself to clean up the kitchen; a gesture I’m sure they appreciated. I was still looking for signs of initiative, self-reliance and collaboration but could only conclude that these qualities must have been exhausted on the barren rocks of the Black Mountain.

As far as I was concerned, my primary responsibility was the welfare of my junior assistant, and to this I was completely dedicated. Before getting into the grizzly circumstances that arose on the fifth day, I want my diligence to be recognized by all who read my personal account. Freddie and I relished each other’s company and a close bond had been established between us. We played together, created our own adventures and let our spirits stir our imaginations. We were comrades, a tightly knit inseparable team. But, on that fateful day, without any warning, or reason, my little confederate simply vanished — like poof — nowhere to be seen.

I had left him opening cans of stew for an essential trip to the Biffy and returned to find the kitchen deserted. At first I thought he was playing a spontaneous ver-

sion of hide and seek so I pretended to be nonchalant about it all by opening the remaining cans and pouring the contents into the pot. Still playing it cool, I went down to the beach, sat on a log and began singing “I’ll See You in My Dreams” with a plaintive uke accompaniment. I thought the sneaky little bugger would get a kick out of that.

Such was my faith in our connection that I didn’t start to worry about his absence for an hour or so. Then, when my mind began to invent stories, I decided it was time to play the game by conducting an obvious search of the area. Even so, I was relatively at ease until I heard some crashing in the woods and caught sight of the back end of a bear (a grizzly no less) barreling up the trail used by the adventurers on their morning excursions to unknown destinations. With no thought for my own well-being, I tore after the galloping beast until I reached the edge of the woods and I found myself running across an open meadow. Pausing to catch my breath, I gazed across the tree-less expanse but there was no sign of either the hulking bear or the diminutive Freddie.

Hanging on the fading belief that this was harmless prank, I made my way back to the camp, hoping to find my quarry calmly going about his kitchen duties with that mischievous shit-eating grin on his face. Even if that had been so, which it wasn’t, my playmate would still have broken one of the most sacred unwritten rules of our special relationship – to stick together through thick and thin. I was angry and made up my mind to murder the little sod once I got my hands on him.

Then came the self-doubts and recri-

nations. If only I hadn’t left him in the kitchen – albeit for a worthy cause. Marauding savages aside, I was well aware that there were inherent dangers lurking in the woods for unsuspecting inner-city nine-year-olds. And then there was the bloody Ritalin. Why had we decided on the second day that, out here, in the middle of nowhere, hyper activities and attention deficits were no threat to anybody? Stupid, stupid, stupid — I had no right to pocket his pills without carefully considering the consequences. Unless he re-appeared before the tribe returned I would be facing a lifetime of condemnation and litigation.

I had to do something, but all the options seemed pointless. Finally I decided upon a strategy of walking around the campsite in ever-increasing circles searching for any clues I might have overlooked. After a futile hour or so, my feelings of hopelessness turned into a profound sense of sadness and remorse. What if he had been dragged off by the bear and torn to shreds? What if he had fallen over a cliff or drowned in the lake? How could I ever live with the knowledge that I was responsible for the death of a wide-eyed little guy with whom I felt so close and connected?

When I reached the edge of the meadow, my mind severed its connection with my body at the sight of the tribe meandering back along the trail. There was nothing left for me to do, other than to fess up and let the chips fall where they may. And they fell like a ton of pig shit.

Jj’s voice dominated the encounter. “You left him without supervision?” he screamed. “That was you’re only fucking

job. You useless asshole.” Then came the predictable kicker. “You did WHAT? You took him off his goddamned medication? Are you joking? You gotta be fucking joking”. The others glared at me in silence. I had no defence to offer.

Still in a volcanic rage, JJ sent tribe members and staff in all directions with instructions to “search every nook and cranny” leaving me to “wallow in my own shit” – an insightful turn of phrase for a thicko like JJ. I was exhausted from the inside out and wandered back to my tent, still hoping for a miracle.

I don’t know whether I actually fell asleep or simply drifted into a coma, but it was late in the afternoon when I crawled out of my sleeping bag. Only then did I notice a folded slip of paper wedged between my pillow and the air mattress. It was a note from Freddie. *I gotta plan to get JJ. Just tell him I went AWOL and leve the rest to me. If you gotta problem, come out to the green rock and wissle that song about the bullfrog real lowed. No problem – I’ll tell them I took off wile you were in the can. Fred*

Within a matter of minutes I was beside the moss covered rock we’d enjoyed peeing on during our first exclusive field trip together. Never one to follow instructions, I stood there and hollered, “Come out you little shit, I’ve been getting crucified because you.” The response was immediate; the sound of twigs cracking underfoot, the parting of undergrowth and there he was, all in one piece and all smiles. “Didn’t you get my note?” he asked politely as though he was late for a lunch appointment.

“Oh sure I got your note, after search-

ing for you all day and getting the works from the tribal chief,” I shrieked. “What made you think I’d go looking in my tent for a fucking piece of paper?”

“You always go to your tent after taking a dump.”

“Well I didn’t, and now we’re both up to our frigging necks.”

“Yeh, but I bet JJ’s shitting himself eh?”

“You devious little bastard. You dreamt all this up to put the blocks to JJ.”

“He deserves it. He’s a prick.”

By this time I was turning into a babbling idiot. My relief at finding him alive and kicking was at war with an immediate urge to kill him on the spot.

For better or worse, my struggle with this decision was made redundant by the sight of JJ and two adjuncts bearing down on us with serious intent. Turning my attention back to Freddie was also redundant since he was no longer there, vanished again without a trace.

“What the hell’s the game?” he screamed JJ from thirty feet. “What the fuck are you two playing at?” — yelled from ten feet. Then he was in my face. “You think you can make a fool out of me. Well you’re the fool ... you’re the fucking fool”

“I know that.” The truth, as they say, will out.

Now I’m no stranger to hostility, but a mad man will overpower a babbling idiot any day of the week. If there was going to be a homicide, I was now the more likely victim. Stepping back to avoid an immediate assassination, I did a little dance, hoping to catch him off guard while confirming his diagnosis. It didn’t work. He lunged at me and would have inflicting

lasting damage if one of the adjuncts hadn't yelled "STOP, look up there ... he's up there." JJ froze with his arm poised for the kill and all eyes followed the pointed finger of divine intervention to the top of the green rock. There, some forty feet above, stood the unmistakable figure of the boy wonder, feet apart and arms akimbo.

Diverted from his current project, JJ turned his attention to more immediate matters. "Get down from there right now. I said RIGHT NOW." The response was calm, clear and, to my mind, perfectly reasonable. "No chance. I'm safer up here." JJ's next line was anything but calm, clear and reasonable. "Get down here or else ..." he bellowed, clenching his fists and waving his arms in what could reasonably be described as a tantrum.

By this time, alerted by the racket, BB had arrived with his own weary search and rescue contingent. Like a troupe of well-trained supporting actors, the swollen group silently pulled back, leaving space for the two antagonists to play out their scene in the spotlights. As an extra, I dutifully took up my rightful place in the back row.

Following a sublimely timed pause in the action, and with everything hanging in the balance, JJ made his fatal move. With the blind determination a suicidal warrior, he charged forward and began scrambling up the mossy rocks. At this point I was completely convinced that poor old JJ had taken leave of whatever senses he might have been born with. Had it never occurred to him that fearless Freddie (later to be designated FF) had taken the much more convenient route along the gentle

slope on the other side?

Slipping on the moss and sending flurries of earth and stones tumbling in his wake, the demented JJ managed to make it to the first ledge, about twenty feet above ground. Only then did he seem to realize that the remainder of the ascent was simply impossible. Clinging to the rocks above his head, he looked down at his gaping tribe as if considering his options. Nobody offered advice. At the top, Freddie chose this pregnant moment of hesitation to take a leak, projecting a shimmering arc into the evening sky and onto the rocks below.

The spell of the escalating drama was broken as Freddy's urinary spectacular claimed the attention, if not the admiration, of the onlookers. Gasps, giggles and even applause came as a welcomed relief from the shackles of insanity that had enveloped us. From his precarious perch, JJ also looked skyward, and for this, he paid a heavy price. In a desperate attempt to avoid being pissed upon from a dizzy height, he made a quick move to the right only to lose his footing and return to the ground in a fraction of the time it took him reach the ledge.

It was a horrifying descent and whatever humor might have been lingering within the gathering was quickly replaced by a stunned silence. BB had been the first to rush forward when JJ hit the deck, followed immediately by other elders as they scrimmaged around their fallen leader. For the rest of us, the curtain closed.

Unnoticed, I resumed my scripted role as an extra and wandered back stage in search of the elusive FF. It had occurred

to me that, in his twisted little mind, his performance was dedicated to me but I was not about to express my gratitude or compliment him on his virtuosity. Crazy as it might seem, I just wanted to give him a hug. But, as any sane person might have anticipated, the little sod had flown the coup — again.

Postscript

So that's my story Rianna. I realize I haven't delved into the murky depths of the CYC experience but for me, a non-professional extra, this was an "in-tense" experience. I don't think my ways of dealing with, or "diffusing" the situation will impress your teachers but some learning might be gleaned from my incompetence. For readers who like to have sense of closure, I offer the following:

JJ was picked up by helicopter the following day and transported to hospital. There were no fractures, only bruised ribs and a badly sprained ankle. BB took over the expedition and there was a noticeable shift towards the self-reliance, initiative and collaboration identified as the initial program objectives. Freddie remained AWOL but left another note on my pillow to say that he was fine and would return voluntarily given the assurance that I wasn't going to be punished for his behavior.

With BB's support, I left a message at the green rock containing this assurance. The following day he strolled nonchalantly back into the camp and we all upheld the demand of the elders that we shouldn't do or say anything that might reinforce his pathological intransigence. After careful consideration, BB decided it would be in

everybody's best interest for Freddy and I to leave the camp and return to our roots in the city. I agreed. Lounging on the old barge on a beautifully summer's afternoon, my little buddy and I took great delight in tossing his remaining pills into the lake, followed by a rousing rendition of "If I Had the Balls of a Bullfrog."

Post-Postscript

In case you're interested, I still hear from Freddie occasionally. He lives with his wife and Freddie junior (FJ) in New York where he practices law and, of course, the ukulele.

The End.

Cedrick was a columnist with *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice* and President of the Cowichan Valley Malt Whiskey Society. He was recently seen in Toronto and, even more recently, in Damascus. He can still be contacted through his reluctant editor – fewster@seaside.net

Different but Beautiful

Kiaras Gharabaghi

I spent the first two weeks of September in Germany and Austria, first attending a Residential Care conference in Germany and then visiting a residential care service provider in Austria. On both occasions, I learned a lot about the possibilities, the challenges, and the opportunities to be different in both countries. Over the past few years, I have spent quite a bit of time in Germany especially, visiting residential care facilities, talking with practitioners and reviewing some scholarly work related to residential care provision there. One of the reasons for this is that I am very interested in social pedagogy, which is the core disciplinary context of residential care provision, and indeed of youth work more generally, in much of Central Europe. Unlike in North America, where youth work and child and youth care practice are struggling to gain recognition, social pedagogy as a discipline has a long and proud tradition in Central Europe, and generally is rated as a meaningful profession that usually is seen as more learned and even sophisticated than social work. In the context of residential care, social pedagogy is the overarching context of the everyday work, however, it is the “Erzieher” (literally translates as

‘upbringers’) who do much of the work on the floor. Erzieher have a relatively lower level of education, typically similar to college level child and youth care workers in Canada, whereas Social Pedagogues typically have graduate level university degrees. The interfacing of Social Pedagogues and Erzieher is therefore somewhat comparable to clinical social workers and child and youth workers in North America, albeit with a little less of the political tension that often accompanies the relationships between these two professions in North America.

The conference I attended was designed for the higher level managers of residential care facilities, and as such, featured several excellent presentations from the field of practice as well as a number of more academically-oriented contributions. I learned about several features of the German approach to residential care that are quite different from what I am used to in North America. Some of these things I think are ahead of North America, and some are quite far behind. Here is a list.

Family work

Germans seem to think that the families of children and youth in residential care are more often than not beyond re-

pair. While the arguments to this effect were significantly more complex than what I am about to capture, in effect it goes something like this: If families could raise their children, they wouldn't be in residential care, but since they can't, it is not even useful to consider a family-like placement (such as foster care), and instead it is best to rely on the 'upbringing'-expertise of the social pedagogues embedded within the residential group care system. Although reunification with family is an expressed goal of the residential care system, I heard over and over again that this rarely happens, and therefore there is relatively little emphasis on incorporating family-friendly features in the residential care programs. Home visits and occasional attempts at formal family therapy do happen, but this seems to be done with little excitement and less determination.

Youth participation / empowerment

This is currently a big focus in the German system, and although participation especially is mentioned repeatedly in the more general speeches and presentations, I heard virtually nothing about this in the presentations of the service providers. It seemed to me that there is a strong sense within the theoretical formulation of social pedagogy that focuses on the agency of the intervener, and largely ignores the agency of the young person. The experience of young people in residential care is carefully orchestrated through the expertise of the interveners, while young people are assumed to be largely passive recipients of this work.

'Bildung'

This is a German word that refers to the accumulation of knowledge, understanding and wisdom of a person, including knowledge of Self. The promotion of Bildung is the centrepiece of social pedagogy in the residential care context, and considerable efforts are made to provide young people with an ecological context and everyday opportunities to add to their Bildung. The term is adamantly distinguished from the more common North American term 'education', which is seen as too closely associated with the formal education system and schools in particular. There was a very strong rejection of education as a component of the residential care facility's role, largely because accepting this role was seen as a way of rendering social pedagogy as secondary to schooling in terms of social value. In this context I experienced a very similar defensiveness and self-isolationism that I often witness in the North American context, whereby residential care seeks to assert its value by pointing to the inadequacies of other systems. Schools, so the argument goes, may provide an education for young people, but young people can't do anything with that education unless they are also benefitting from Bildung. And since schools often are unable to engage the young people who live in residential care, it is the residential care facility that is to receive the credit for the 'educative growth' of the young person.

Überförderung

Another German word that essentially means 'making demands that exceed the present capacity of someone to meet that

demand'. This is a concept I really liked, and it was frequently referred to as a way of describing the failure of a program or a particular expectation to engage a young person. I liked this concept because when things don't work out, the connotation is that the intervener made a mistake in calculating the appropriate level of expectation, rather than the young person having a behavior problem and being disobedient. This concept also has a strong developmental component (although Germans are very critical of developmental approaches), inasmuch as the lack of capacity on the part of the young person is seen as situational and momentary rather than as entrenched and permanent. It is specifically the timing of an expectation that is referred to as excessive, rather than the expectation itself.

Group composition

Germans laugh out loud at the idea that residential care programs should serve groups of young people based on age, gender, diagnostic or behavioural criteria. The overarching belief is that group composition should reflect diversity in age (age ranges of 5 to 18 are common), male and female children and youth (other gender identities are not yet considered), and a wide range of situations (whereby more significant mental health situations are largely seen to fall outside of the residential care system and instead within the psychiatric care system). This is quite different than what is typical in North America, where group composition often reflects a much tighter age range (either 7 to 12 or 12 to 16), genders are often separated, and admission criteria specifically

reflect particular circumstances and scenarios. A reference to a hypothetical scenario of having a group home specializing in sexual offenders, for example, drew loud and exuberant laughter, suggesting to me that this might not be a good time to point out that such programs are quite abundant in Canada and the US.

Supervision

I have written about the German approach to supervision before on CYC-Net, but again I was impressed with the central role of supervision in the service structure of residential care. In many cases, supervision is provided at multiple levels, whereby team supervision is always provided through an external supervision specialist (there is a discreet training and certification program for this). Case supervision is also often external, or at least provided by someone not associated with the everyday functioning of the program, and then there is the more standard operational supervision that reflects much of what supervision is (but shouldn't be) in North America. Maintaining three levels of supervision requires a substantial investment, but Germans view this as an essential component of quality care.

These were just some of the concepts and ideas I heard about at the conference in Germany. I list them here with relatively little analysis, because I think that while many of these ideas are quite different than what drives the sector in North America, they are interesting and useful ways of reflecting on our (North American) core assumptions about residential care, regardless of whether we like these ideas or not.

Following the conference in Germany, I

travelled to Austria in order to visit a new friend of mine who happens to be the operator of a rapidly growing residential care organization. I was able to visit three residential care programs, and again I was struck by several things that seem quite different than what I might typically encounter in North America. Again I will list these below:

Beauty

I cannot even begin to describe the three programs I visited in terms of their physical set up, other than to say that one was more strikingly beautiful than the next. Each of the programs provided ample space, were located in absolutely stunning neighbourhoods (one adjacent to a lake), and presented the very best of what architecture and interior design have to offer. Aesthetics is arguably one of the most poorly developed concepts in the North American context of residential group care, where group homes are very often operated out of mediocre and sometimes quite ugly homes in moderate neighbourhoods. It is no wonder that one often encounters property damage and generally uninviting spaces in group care in North America. These homes I visited in Austria beg the question whether too much comfort is problematic; for me, the answer is categorically 'no', and the benefits of beauty are immediately noticed in the way in which young people interact in the environment. Although not every residential program in Austria is as beautiful as these three were, at least the importance of aesthetics in relation to the quality of care is generally recognized.

Informality

I was struck immediately by the fact that in all three residences I visited, there was ample evidence of mixed boundaries, inasmuch as staff members had their own children visiting the home, the managers often lived in or adjacent to the home, and staff members' pets were always welcome. In part, this is a response to poor employment terms for front line staff; by allowing them to mix their professional and personal lives, the job becomes a little more palatable. In North America, this approach has largely been abandoned in favour of a more professionalized standard for the workplace, however, the discussions about the merits or pitfalls of this more boundary-challenged approach have been sparse. In the end, it seemed to me that the informality associated with the personalization of the workplace had at least some benefits, and the young people I spoke to saw this as entirely reasonable. An added advantage was that for many of the young people, the presence of staff offspring resulted in friendships beyond the group of residents they were inadvertently paired with. Nevertheless, I recognize the inherent complexity of the issue.

Travel

Arguably the most pleasant surprise for me was the extent of travel these programs did as a matter of routine during summer and other vacation times. The groups of children and youth had traveled across Europe on several occasions, taking time out from the everyday at least once, and often twice a year. This kind of experience is invaluable for young people who otherwise may never have such an oppor-

tunity. Group home travel trips are not unheard of in North America either, but most of the time these are limited to the standard camping trips in organized camp grounds or camps. I do know of several agencies in Canada that have taken their kids on more substantial travel adventures, including a road trip across Canada from East to West. In my experience, both kids and staff experience these kinds of trips as major highlights of their being together.

In the end, my observations about residential care in Germany and Austria reveal that there are probably more similarities than differences between what happens there versus what happens in North America. From the perspective of kids, well-meaning adults try their best to provide for their needs, however correctly or wrongly these might be identified. As an overall framework, social pedagogy has much to offer and seems largely complementary to child and youth care practice, but definitely not identical. The conversations about residential care sound different across these jurisdictions, but the practice seems similar, adjusted only for cultural context. What really does strike me as noteworthy is that the complexity of conversation, ideas, thoughts and theories seems to make relatively little difference in the everyday moments of the residential care environment. What does make a difference is the commitment of staff members to bring themselves and all that they know (from studies and from their own experiences) to their relationships with kids.

I do think it is extraordinarily useful for practitioners, practice leaders and academics to expose themselves to different settings and contexts as a way of finding new frameworks to guide their reflections on their own context. I certainly have benefitted significantly from doing so over the years. On this particular trip, however, my greatest accomplishment had little to do with residential care. I was finally able to accomplish what I have wanted to accomplish for years: I had a Vienna Schnitzel in Vienna, and it was delicious.



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Writing for Contemporary CYC Practice

Hans Skott-Myhre & Thom Garfat

Introduction

Years ago one could have had a full library of Child and Youth Care (CYC) related literature. And such a library, if one was industrious, might have measured one shelf four feet long. A library of literature written 'by and for' Child and Youth Care Practitioners would have occupied much less space.

Today the situation is different. Indeed one could have multiple shelves of literature not only relevant to CYC Practice (e.g., literature from related fields of practice which importantly 'inform' our field) but even multiple shelves of literature written by and specifically for the field.

This notion of 'written by and for the field' is important to us as CYC Practitioners. Our field has now reached a place where people – academics, trainers, practitioners, etc.- who are grounded in the practice experience of the field, are writing *for* the field. This does not mean they are still identifying themselves as CYC practitioners but it does mean that these authors are grounded in their experience

and theoretical work 'in' CYC practice.

In spite of this burgeoning literature, the field of Child and Youth Care is still seemingly regarded as academic step-child to other disciplines such as psychology or social work. Even our own conferences often times have keynote speakers whose work and theories have little or no connection to Child and Youth Care practice or experience.

As we (Hans and Thom) were discussing this one day, we wondered how we could help others in our field become more aware of the relevant (dare we say, important) writings in our field. So we set out to find a way to help out with this issue.

Our Approach

Much of the foundational literature in our field is well known to practitioners and academics alike (Various sites, like *CYC-Net*, have identified this literature base, for example, <http://cyc-net.org/foundations/index.html>). Additionally various journals and sites con-

stantly identify new and relevant writings as they appear through advertisements, announcements and reviews.

However, no site or publication keeps us all up-to-date.

Recognising the importance of this issue of the availability of the writings of our field, we decided to conduct a casual survey/inquiry of people in our field of literature 'written by and for' the field in the past 10 years. Using CYC-Net and our own professional networks we asked people to identify writings by and for the field during the past 10 years. We focused on books, but recognize there has been an equally rich development of literature in journal publication specific to CYC.

We chose ten years in order to highlight the dynamic and contemporary developments in theory and practice specific to CYC. Our field is well grounded not only in our foundational literature but also in radically new and innovative theories and practices. CYC has a vibrant and creative literature that could well inform other disciplines both academically and in practice. We find the recent literature exciting and significant and believe it is important for us, as a field, to be sure that we are aware of these developments in our literature and then perhaps we can share that awareness with others outside our field.

So, over a period of a number of months in 2012, we asked people for their suggestions. The result of this survey/inquiry is reproduced below. We did not review the suggestions against any criteria other than the 10-year time frame and the very loose description of 'by and from the field'. So, we make no argument that this list covers the best, or most relevant, or definitive liter-

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CYC Texts 2002-2012 ...

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CYC Texts 2002-2012 ...

- Gharabaghi, K. (2012). *Being With Edgy Youth*. Hauppauge NY: Nova Science.
- Ginwright, S., Noguera, P., & Cammarota, J. (Eds.) (2006). *Beyond resistance! Youth activism and community change: New democratic possibilities for practice and policy for America's youth*. New York: Routledge.
- Holden, M. (2009). *Children and Residential Experiences: Creating conditions for change*. Arlington: Child Welfare League of America CWLA
- Jeffs, T, & Smith, M. (2010) *Informal education: Conversation, democracy and learning*. Bramcote, Nottingham: Educational Heretics Press.
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- Nunno, M. A., Day, D. M., & Bullard, L. B. (Eds.). (2008). *For our own safety: Examining the safety of high-risk interventions for children and young people*. Arlington, VA: Child Welfare League of America.
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Pacini-Ketchabaw, V., & Pence, A. (Eds.). (in press). *Canadian Early Childhood Education: Broadening and Deepening Discussions of Quality*. Ottawa, Ontario: Canadian Child Care Federation.

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Smith, Mark (2009). *Rethinking residential child care: Positive perspectives*. London. Policy Press.

Stuart, C. (2009). *Foundations of Child and Youth Care*. Dubuque, IA. Kendall Hunt

Ungar, M. (2004). *Nurturing Hidden Resilience in Troubled Youth*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ward, A., (2007) *Working in Group Care: Social Work and Social Care in Residential and Day Care Settings*. BASW / The Policy Press, University of Bristol

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ature of our field. Rather it is, simply, a list of writings identified by practitioners, academics, trainers, writers, etc., of our field, as being of relevance to the field. We think of it as a list of 'recommended texts in contemporary CYC literature'.

Conclusion

As we can see from the list above, the literature of CYC is rich and varied in both approach and style. The breadth and depth of the literature of the past ten years covers a significant range of theoretical and practical approaches rooted in the fundamental relationship between young people and adults. In these writings we find that CYC is an international field with writers from around the globe. The writings here range theoretically from development to deconstruction, from Maier to Marx, from family work to feminism, from program management to post-colonial encounters and so on. Clearly, the work we do inspires a great deal of serious thought, inquiry and examination.

Yet, there remain some serious challenges. Here are a few of them:

1. If we are ever going to be taken seriously as a field in our own right, CYC badly needs a higher profile in the academic community. Currently, much of our relevant articles written 'by and for' the field are published in journals and other vehicles (like CYC-On-Line) which do not hold serious academic credibility. Journals such as Child and Youth Studies, Relational Child and Youth Care, and the International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies have begun

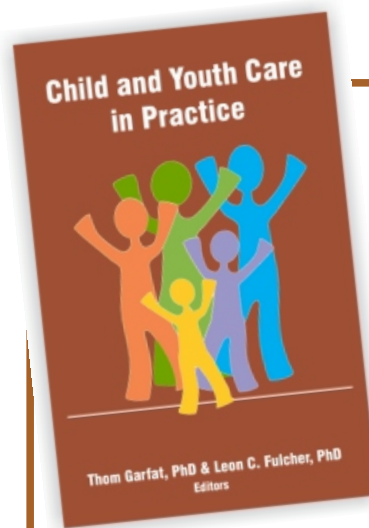
to address this issue but we continue to need more academically recognized journals in our field. Similarly, because our literature is often unconventional it is challenging for us to find presses that will accept our books. Again this is changing with presses such as Sense Publishers and Routledge's youth work imprint, but we need more academically respected presses that will support what we are writing. That said, those authors in our field who have managed to gain access to academic presses and journals should receive our support and accolades for their part in the advancement of our field.

2. If we intend to raise our profile as a legitimate field, then we need allies and our own academics within key universities internationally. To do this we need those academics to be able to advance and take key positions where they can promote the development of departments and programs devoted to Child and Youth Care. In this regard, writings published in sources without sufficient academically credibility do not qualify for credit for those writing from within academic institutions which use these standards as a criteria for advancement, etc.
3. It is equally important that our best thinking about our field be available to the broadest range of practitioners and scholars. Many CYC Practitioners and a significant number of scholars do not have access to the primary journals or other publishing vehicles in our field. As a result much relevant

writing remains inaccessible to large portions of the field.

4. Because of this, many CYC practitioners – front line workers, trainers, academics, etc., remain unaware of much of the valuable writings in our field. To remedy this we clearly need better distribution mechanisms. Innovative approaches such as the efforts made by CYC-online to highlight journals and texts as they emerge is a step in the right direction. We also need to lobby for higher profiles for our key theorists and practitioners at our conferences, gatherings and within our agencies, colleges and universities. It is a travesty to have anyone other than someone writing directly out of the CYC tradition give a keynote or plenary, with the kind of literature that we have collected on this list available to conference organizers and training coordinators.

We are a field with a strong intellectual history and vibrant legacy of solid practice. We should be both proud of our heritage and excited by the new work that is being done and the new thinking that is informing the edges of our practice. This is an exciting time for our field and we hope that by sharing this list and some of our thoughts we can make small gesture towards raising awareness of the good work that has been done over the past ten years. We are very excited to see what the next ten years brings. Let's work together to make sure the rest of the world knows how well we think and write about the good work we do.



Child and Youth Care in Practice

Thom Garfat & Leon Fulcher - editors

Child and Youth Care in Practice brings together some of the best of contemporary writings on Child and Youth Care practice. Starting with an updated version of the characteristics of a CYC approach and ranging from practice-based evidence that informs evidence-based Outcomes that Matter through to direct care, supervision and management, through education to creative arts, *Child and Youth Care in Practice* demonstrates the application of a Child and Youth Care approach across many areas of our work.

Drawing upon writings from different parts of the world, this is a practice ideas book for college courses, teams, trainers, carers, managers and individual practitioners. *Child and Youth Care in Practice* shows the expanse and connectedness of our field. It is a testament to the evolution of a Child and Youth Care approach.

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To order, visit www.pretext.co.za/shop or email info@pretext.co.za or thom@transformaction.com

Every Child Needs a Home

John Stein

“Every child deserves to grow up in a loving family.”

I have both heard and seen this sentiment expressed more than once. I believe it has done more to harm troubled children in our society than perhaps anything else. First, I do not know what children ‘deserve.’ I don’t know what people deserve. In my opinion, many people get much more than I think they deserve. A few get more wealth than I think they deserve. Many more get more trouble and hardship than I think they deserve.

Instead of trying to figure out what children deserve, I think we should be concerned about what children need. In my opinion, one of the things children need is a stable home in which to grow up.

I think of trees that need roots from which to grow, mature, and thrive. And I think of buildings that need a stable foundation under them in order to survive earthquakes and storms. Without roots, trees cannot grow and mature and thrive. Neither can children. Without a stable foundation, buildings cannot survive the

challenges of earthquakes, floods, and storms. Neither can children survive challenges without a stable foundation. A stable home provides children with both roots from which to grow and a stable foundation on which to build.

While a loving two-parent family is the ideal in our culture, there have been cultures in which that is not the norm. There are tribal cultures in which children are raised largely by the tribe. There have been cultures in which men took multiple wives and all shared the responsibilities of raising their children. But I know of no other time in which troubled children are shuttled from one family or placement to another, one community to another, changing schools every time, multiple times in their childhood, too often every couple of months. These children do not have a stable foundation. They cannot put down roots. And I know of no other time when so much was expected of children transitioning to adulthood and independence—find a job, find a place to live and set up housekeeping, get more education.

All of which makes me think of what I call multiple placement syndrome.

Multiple Placement Syndrome

I have seen too many kids over the years who seem to have I call multiple placement syndrome. It has many of the features of Oppositional Defiant Disorder and some of the features of Conduct Disorder. The behaviour of these children is most challenging, even for the best of residential programs.

Children enter foster care by many different paths. One path is when children are placed in foster care because their parents cannot manage their unruly and ungovernable behaviour. Another is when children are removed from homes in which they are being physically or sexually abused and placed in foster care. Yet another is when children are placed in foster care because their parent(s) simply cannot or do not provide a suitable home for them—death, incarceration, illness, poverty, or abandonment. Some of these children are more difficult than are others for foster families to manage. Multiple placement syndrome begins when the first foster placement fails. Many children placed in foster care have challenges that are difficult for foster families to manage. Unlike with their own children, the solution is simple. Just pick up the phone and ask for the child to be removed. With each move, children feel less and less secure, more and more powerless over their lives. Problems with relationships are exacerbated. For these children anger is not an emotion, it is a mood. They are chronically angry. They may look normal enough when they are engaged in some activity, but when they are sitting by themselves, as in a waiting room, they look angry. Their anger is a mood that under-

lies everything.

Children cannot commit to a new family until they know the family is committed to them. They have to test. They begin to engage in testing behaviour. The 'experts' opine that they are testing limits to see what they can get away with. I think they are testing relationships. They need to know whether the new family can handle them and their problems. They know there is a line they dare not cross. They need to know exactly where that line is. They cannot feel secure until they find it. The closer they get to that line, the more insecure they feel. And they can only know exactly where it is by crossing it. Once they cross it, they get thrown out once again.

These children become experts at figuring out what it is that their new placement cannot tolerate. Perhaps it's using strong language. Perhaps it's disrespect. Perhaps it's aggression. Perhaps it's damaging something the family cherishes. Perhaps it's intimidating or injuring another child in the home. When they finally find themselves in a residential setting, they again have to find that line,



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and they bring their expertise with them. They soon figure out exactly what the residential program cannot tolerate. And they get moved once again.

Even when a placement fails through little or no fault of the children, as when the foster family has to move or just changes its mind, possibly because they are expecting a child of their own, it may still be damaging to children and the beginning of the onset of multiple placement syndrome.

The multiple placements can continue for years, perhaps because of the belief in the ideal that every child deserves to grow up in a loving family, perhaps because of the belief that residential care is, well, those places are terrible and should be used only as a last resort, perhaps because of the economics of avoiding the expense of residential care. By the time these children end up in residential care, they are so damaged they pose serious challenges for even the best of programs. The only thing in their lives over which they have any control is getting moved from one placement to another. Getting moved is a great way to avoid relationships, and they are motivated to doing that because they have been ripped from so many relationships in the past—not only parents and foster parents but also teachers and peers—even communities and familiar places. And they have become experts at finding exactly what it takes to get moved before relationships become too uncomfortable.

Their behaviours can be most challenging. For many of these children, their behaviour meets the criteria for diagnoses of Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Conduct Disorder, and such diagnoses are

common. Less common is the diagnosis of Intermittent Explosive Disorder. For these children, although chronically angry, they have become experts at controlling their temper. Their anger only overwhelms them (and others) when they are under stress, or faced with something that serves as a trigger based on past experience, perhaps perceived as a threat.

The only cure—find them a stable home. The sooner we find it, the less severe the problems.

We need to stop trying to find them what they deserve and get them what they need.

Residential Treatment

Residential treatment programs can put an end to multiple placement syndrome, but only when they have a policy of not discharging children for challenging behaviours. When they have such a policy, and follow it, their personnel know they must dedicate themselves to working with such children, no matter what. When they do not follow such a policy, their personnel are likely to devote themselves to convincing the treatment team that difficult children are ‘untreatable in this environment’ rather than to managing and treating such children. Only when children become convinced that they are not going to be moved once again can they stop their pathological search for ‘the line’ that they dare not cross. It helps tremendously, of course, if the program does a good job of meeting their various needs.

Residential programs can provide a home for children to grow up in, providing care until they reach the age of independence. However, it is not always

necessary for them to do so in order to break the cycle of multiple placements. One program in which I worked was able to return children successfully to the community in 15 to 24 months. It did so by meeting children's needs and providing comprehensive treatment, so that children reached a point at which they felt it was time to move on. They were able to either return home or commit to another placement and engage in a transition to that placement, leaving on their own terms when they were ready to move on. The home, for many children, became that foundation on which they could build, providing the roots from which they could grow. Many returned over the years to visit staff and share their accomplishments. More, they shared their experiences with other children, giving them a vision and hope.

Conclusions

Children need a place to call home. Without it, they have no foundation on which to build, no roots from which to grow. They cannot plan for or commit to their future without the stability that a stable home provides. How can children commit to and invest in their education when they do not know where they will be going to school next year? Or perhaps even next month or next week?

The ideal may be a stable, loving family for some children. For others, the reality is that they need a stable place to call home. The sooner we find it for them, the better off they will be. They cannot begin to grow up without it.



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Keys

Laura Steckley

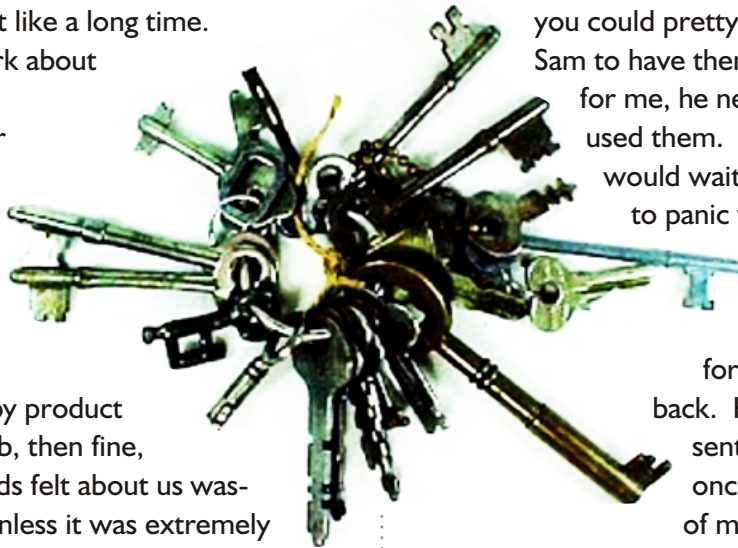
I read an essay recently that brought back memories of Sam, a kid I used to work with. He was admitted to the first treatment center I worked in, not long after I started there.

I felt intimidated by Sam. It wasn't that he was big and he didn't use physical presence in an intimidating way. He wasn't particularly charismatic (charismatic kids could be frightening in their capacity to turn the resident group against you). Sam intimidated me because he was inaccessible, inscrutable. He was self-contained and had a subtle way of showing his disdain. My clumsy attempts to connect were consistently shunned, and this went on for what felt like a long time.

I was in the dark about what to do. It was made clear to us that our job wasn't to make friends with the kids or be liked – if they happened to like us as a by product of doing our job, then fine, but how the kids felt about us wasn't a concern unless it was extremely bad or extremely good.

I did notice that Sam had a keen interest in our keys. This treatment center was really just a big, old house with a different lock on each door, so we all had to carry massive rings of keys around with us. No one (myself included) questioned why everything had to be locked. Many of the locks were old and would stick. Finding the right key often took several tries. They were cumbersome and inconvenient, especially on the occasions of our accidentally bringing them home. This inevitably happened at the start of my days off, requiring an extra trip back into to work to return them.

If you ever misplaced your keys, you could pretty much count on Sam to have them. Fortunately for me, he never kept or used them. Instead, he would wait for me to start to panic when my efforts to find them would come up empty before giving them back. He also presented them to me, once, in front of all of my colleagues on staff meeting day. Again, fortunately for



me, occasionally misplacing the keys was a common mistake across the team.

I decided to give Sam a set of his own. I dug up a bunch of old, widowed keys whose locks no longer existed and put them on a nice ring for him. I was a bit reticent that he might feel patronised by a bunch of dud keys, but he surprised me with his delight at receiving them. He carried them everywhere and became quite proficient at spinning them round his index finger, like a sharp shooter in an old western movie.

The keys quickly became the source of jokes and connection between us. If I had been a bit further along in my practice, I might have tried to explore with Sam the idea of keys as a metaphor. It would have been interesting to know what he thought about the keys to happiness or a good life. Did he feel he had, or would ever have, such keys?

Instead, I was hauled into Ralph's office. He was the program director. He was not happy with Sam having his own set of keys.

My initial reaction was to quickly clarify and reassure Ralph that these keys didn't actually unlock any doors – physical ones anyway. I was surprised and disoriented to find that he knew full well that these keys were duds. The problem wasn't that they might allow Sam free passage through the center without adult control. The problem was that Ralph considered keys to be the province of the staff world; it was inappropriate for a resident to have them. They were a 'distraction' from what Sam should be focusing on (which, explicitly, was 'following the program' and implicitly was knowing and keeping his place).

Keys – Sam's keys and staff keys – were symbolic and they carried multiple meanings: barriers, access, connection, possibility, status, and power. Power is inherent in all of these meanings, and at that time and place, it wasn't acceptable for a young person to have such power, even if just symbolically.

I was told to take them back from Sam.

I cringe, looking back, at my acceptance of this directive. I had the vague sense that what I had done wasn't wrong, or even counterproductive, but I had neither the confidence nor the clarity to offer a counter argument. My understanding of what constituted good practice was mostly based on how it was defined in the center. Ralph seemed a fair and knowledgeable guy, and he had a lot of experience. I had no access to alternative conceptualisations of the work, ones that stressed engagement, connection, presence, rituals of encounter, being in relationship, intentionality, rhythmicity, or meaning making.

I did resist slightly by asking Sam to take the keys home and offered some paltry explanation that I can't even remember. When presented with yet another opportunity to make things very difficult for me, he didn't. Instead, he either took them home or stashed them away. They made no further appearances in the center.

By accepting the keys, Sam had actually given me access to building a relationship with him. I wonder what sense he made of it when I then told him it wasn't appropriate for him to have them anymore.

The essay that got me thinking about Sam is a piece of creative nonfiction – a

story in which the details are true and accurate, but the style of writing is more like fiction. It's written by psychologist Lauren Slater and is an account of her return to the psychiatric hospital where she was once a patient, only this time to attend a case conference and meet a new client. It is a compelling read. In it, Slater explores the space between client and practitioner, challenging the rift created by professional jargon and the desire to protect ourselves from pain. She also writes very movingly about her own journey from patient to practitioner, and the difficulty of having to revisit this hospital. It is only at the end of the story that Slater meets her new client, a woman with a complex history and bleak prognosis. As the two approach the meeting room door, Slater does something brave and profound:

We stand in front of the locked interview room and I fumble for the correct key. I start to insert it in the lock, but then, halfway done, I stop. "You," I say to my new patient, Linda.

"You take the key. You turn the lock."

She arches one eyebrow, stares up at me. Her face seems to say, *Who are you anyway?* I want to cry. The hours here have been too long and hard. "You," I say again, and then I feel my eyes actually begin to tear. She steps forward, peers closely, her expression confused. Surely she's never seen one of her doctors cry. "It's okay," I say. "I know what I'm doing." And for some reason I cannot quite articulate at the moment, I make no effort to hide the wetness. I look straight at her. At the same time, for the first time today, my voice feels genuinely confident. "Take the keys, Linda," I say, "and open the door."

Lauren Slater's essay is called *Three Spheres* and it is in the book entitled *In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction*. Lee Gutkind is the editor and it was published in 2005.

"If you want your child to be the kind of person who's going to stand up for what she believes in, and not be pushed around by other people, you're going to have to expect that a little bit of that is going to be exercised at home!"

– Dr. Laurence Steinberg

The impact of providing a continuum of care in the throughcare and aftercare process

Caroline Chittleburgh

Introduction

This paper is based on the findings of a piece of practitioner research. The research examined the impact of providing an aftercare service to young people supported by one voluntary organisation as they make the transition from being 'looked after and accommodated' to living independently in the community. This voluntary organisation has supported children and young people since 1733. It set up an aftercare service in 2004 in response to concerns about the transition of young people into the community.

Research in the area of throughcare and aftercare has highlighted major problems (Dixon and Stein, 2002; 2005; Stein, 2006; Elsley et al., 2007). In response to such findings, regulations and guidance were published, outlining responsibilities for supporting young people leaving care (Scottish Executive, 2004). The Regulations and Guidance includes duties to assess and review a young person's aftercare needs and to establish clear plans called *pathways*. In addition to this, reports and

guidelines on best practice have been developed which offer support to practitioners (Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum, 2006; Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People [SCCYP], 2008).

The aftercare service on which this paper is based was set up in 2004. The principles behind the service were based on a series of factors identified by young people as being important to them when they were in transition. These factors were:

- Having a relationship with aftercare staff from the time young people are first admitted to the residential units;
- A flexible service which is available in the evenings and at weekends as well as during public holidays;
- Opportunities for group work with other young people in the same situation;
- The opportunity for young people to continue with the support on a voluntary basis;

- Young people able to decide how long they wish to receive support;
- Support plans are individualised, creative and client-led.

This study wanted to investigate if the aftercare service was a positive development and if the service could be adjusted to meet the needs of the young people in a better way.

The aftercare service

The role of the aftercare worker while young people are still in residence includes supporting young people to identify and secure appropriate 'move-on' accommodation. It also involves developing a relationship which will continue for as long as the young person requires this after moving into the community. This can be provided up to age 21, or 25 if they are parents. Young people are given support to establish themselves in their tenancies. Both aftercare workers and residential staff get involved in decorating flats before young people move to make the flats as pleasant as possible, as the flats offered are often in a relatively poor state. In addition to individual support, a number of groups are available to assist in aftercare, one such group is the *Feeling Good* group. The aim of the *Feeling Good* group, is to improve young people's self-esteem and confidence. Another example is the mother and toddler group which meets fortnightly and offers professional and peer support to seven young parents and their fourteen children. A variety of other general activity groups are also available.

Methodology

The study was carried out using documentary analysis, questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The documentary analysis was carried out to obtain some quantitative data as a starting point for the study. Information was sought on four key performance indicators (PI) for two years before the introduction of the aftercare service and the first two years of the service being in place. The performance indicators and the numbers before and after the service was introduced are outlined in table one.

As can be seen from the figures, the composition of the resident group was similar over these four years but the outcomes were different. In January 2007 all young people being supported in the community were given a questionnaire asking their opinions of the service. There was a 90 percent return rate. Ten young people were interviewed individually and the others were involved in a focus group. The interview questions were based on the answers to the questionnaires and the same questions were used as the basis for the focus group discussion. In terms of sampling, it was important to involve all of the young people who were supported in the community. Even although some had moved from the units before the aftercare service was in place, all of their views were valuable.

Findings

Questionnaires

In looking at the results of the questionnaires, it was noted that the young people had come from a variety of settings

Table One
Performance indicators before and after enhanced service provision

	Young people leaving	Gender	Average age on leaving	Number losing tenancies within 6-12 months of leaving (PI 1)	Number receiving a criminal conviction after leaving (PI 2)	Number losing contact with support agencies (PI 3)	Number yet to find a job within two years (PI 4)
2002 & 2003 (Pre)	24	65% Female 35% Male	16 years 9 months	24	10	17	20
2004 & 2005 (Post)	19	65% Female 35% Male	16 years 11 months	1	2	1	3

before coming to the organisation. The majority had come from foster care or young people's units and all had been identified as young people whose next accommodation would be living on their own in the community. The average length of stay within the organisation was one year.

The length of time before young people were introduced to one of the aftercare workers was dependent on when they lived in the residential unit. Some had lived in the residential unit before there was an aftercare service. Others had come to live in the unit when the aftercare team was very small. This group of young people became involved with an aftercare worker within a month of moving into the unit.

The frequency of contact with the aftercare worker altered as the time for transition became closer. This took the

form of individual contact and group sessions, either in activity groups or the *Feeling Good* group. The majority of young people were visited weekly by their aftercare workers when they first moved out of the residential unit and for the first six weeks they also continued to have weekly support from the residential unit from which they had just moved.

The majority of young people highlighted as important the help they were given to get their finances sorted out and the practicalities of getting furniture and decorating their flats.

All the young people said that having an aftercare worker was a good thing. They also reported that the most important things were having someone they knew and trusted to support them and who would sort out practical problems. The availability of aftercare workers at times that suited was also felt to be important as

was the opportunity to contact workers outside of normal office hours. After looking at the answers given in the questionnaires, it was important to hear directly from the young people about why the factors they had identified had been helpful to them. The author also wanted to know how prepared they felt by the time they moved from the residential unit. Finally, it was important to hear if any additional services would have been helpful and also if anything that was being offered was not helpful or could be improved. This was investigated by conducting semi-structured one-to-one interviews and also by running a focus group.

Interviews and Focus Groups

Five main themes emerged from the interviews and focus groups:

1. Role of the residential unit in the success of life after residential care;
2. Importance of ongoing relationship with aftercare worker;
3. Difficulty of moving from residential environment to independent accommodation;
4. Role of the aftercare worker;
5. Factors which would have contributed to an easier transition.

Role of the residential unit in the success of life after residential care

Young people highlighted the role the residential unit had played in helping them to make a successful transition to living in the community, talking about both the practical and emotional skills they had learned. They also spoke about the fact that they began to trust people again and

learned how to relate to people more effectively.

I learnt to trust again, that was a big deal. (Young mother, aged 19)

You helped me find a new way to sort out arguments. (Female, aged 20)

I realised I was using things to try and make me happy. (Young mother, aged 19)

A young person who did not have English as his first language his English improved and staff took time to help him with this. They also adjusted the environment to enable him to practice his religion. All of the interviewees felt the residential experience had been positive. One young person stated:

The residential unit made me feel safe, something I had not felt before. (Female, aged 21)

While young people also reported that they were left more able to care for themselves, the majority said they wished they had taken more advantage of the support on offer while in residence.

Importance of ongoing relationship with aftercare worker

With regards to the importance of the ongoing relationship with the aftercare worker, young people wanted to know that the person supporting them knew them well and would support them whatever happened. The small things were seen as being meaningful. These included

knowing how they took their coffee, support at meetings, workers visiting when they said they would, and practical help to get a suitable flat.

Difficulty of moving from residential environment to independent accommodation

Young people found the worst thing to cope with when they first moved was their feeling of loneliness. They also reported that gate-keeping became an issue because of this, as young people tended to let anyone into their flat which in turn caused problems with neighbours. They said seeing residential staff and their after-care worker regularly at this time was crucial. Many said if they had the option of going back to the residential unit at this stage they would have 'jumped at the chance'.

Role of the aftercare worker

Young people talked at length about the role of their aftercare worker and highlighted the importance of staff sticking with them, being flexible, being able to be trusted and being around for them for as long as necessary tackling whatever areas for which young people asked for help. This is illustrated in the following comments:

You covered lots of areas, helped me settle in lots of practical ways, painting, getting furniture and sorting out my money and bills but also talked to me about how I was feeling and at that time I was struggling. (Female, aged 21)

You didn't know I was checking you were really listening to what I said from one week to the next but I was. I wanted to know you really cared. (Female, aged 17)

You have stuck with me for years despite the crap I have at times thrown at you and the mental things I have done. No-one else has put up with me whatever. (Young mother, aged 20)

You have done things for me that I needed not just what you had to do. (Female, aged 19)

Young people also talked about the importance of the groups on offer. The *Feeling Good* group are run by an aftercare worker who was previously a hairdresser. The group works on issues of self-esteem and personal hygiene, as well as providing free haircuts, and helps young people to feel better about themselves. It provides a service they could not otherwise afford. The young mothers reported that the mother and toddler group provided them with a group where they can share ideas with peers and receive emotional support from one another.

Factors which would have contributed to an easier transition

Young people had a number of ideas about what would have provided better preparation for the move from the residential unit. These included having less money to reflect the reality of living in the community, the opportunity to practice gate-keeping, and practice at seeking out the available resources in the local com-

munity. All said the issue of managing money was difficult. Although they had had the opportunity to budget while living in the residential unit, they felt the level of money was unrealistic and therefore this did not prepare them to manage on a tight budget.

It was a nightmare managing on £44 a week when I was used to having £66.50 a week and did not have to pay for fuel. Also I knew I would not be left to starve in the residential unit if I blew my money on something other than food.
(Female, aged 17)

Almost all said they would have liked support for longer from the residential staff and the opportunity to return if things did not work out. A number suggested it would be good if there was another step before moving into the community alone in the form of a supported flat.

The move from being in care to living alone in my own flat was a real shock, something in between would have made it easier. (Female, aged 20)

Young people did not have any other suggestions about how aftercare workers could help them, saying more of the same was what they wanted.

Discussion and concluding comments

It was evident from the literature that the issues for young people moving on from residential care have become an area of concern over time, with the outcomes being unacceptable. Statistics show young

people leaving the care system being more likely to become homeless, to leave school with fewer qualifications and being over-represented in the prison and youth psychiatric population (Dixon and Stein, 2002; 2005). This is not good enough. There is now both professional and political will to ensure young people in this situation are better served so that their life chances are improved (SCCYP, 2008, Scottish Government, 2008).

In looking at the results of this small study, a number of key factors emerge. First, young people have a great deal of enthusiasm about being engaged in the process of evaluating what we are doing and to explore what could be done better. This enthusiasm was striking in this study, as was their openness about their circumstances and the struggles they had as they moved into their own accommodation.

The area they raised as the most important was having someone who was there for them throughout the process. This person had to be someone who was reliable, that they had assessed as trustworthy, and who treated them as an individual. To fulfil this role the support worker had to be flexible and be consistent, both in their actions and over time. The fact that this support began at the beginning of the residential placement was important as it meant roles were clear and the story only had to be told once. It is now the practice in my organisation to introduce the aftercare worker at the placement meeting to ensure a continuum of support from the beginning of the placement.

None of the factors which young peo-

ple highlighted in the research were a surprise but they emphasised what young people feel is important. This should serve to remind practitioners that our services should be developed to meet the needs which young people find important if they are to make a successful transition to living independently in the community. Engagement with young people can begin to reverse social expectations that young people who have been 'looked after and accommodated' have poor outcomes.

As can be seen from the figures at the beginning of this paper, good quality support can have a major impact on outcomes for young people leaving care. The impact of good support should be appreciated by all care providers. In recent years throughcare and aftercare has become a recognised field of social work, with staff in this field having become experts in the issues faced by young people in this situation. As with any field of social work we can always do better and there continue to be areas in which young people are looking for more and different support. It seems important that we listen to what they have to say as they are, after all, the true experts.

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Let the Children Play

Thomas Cottle

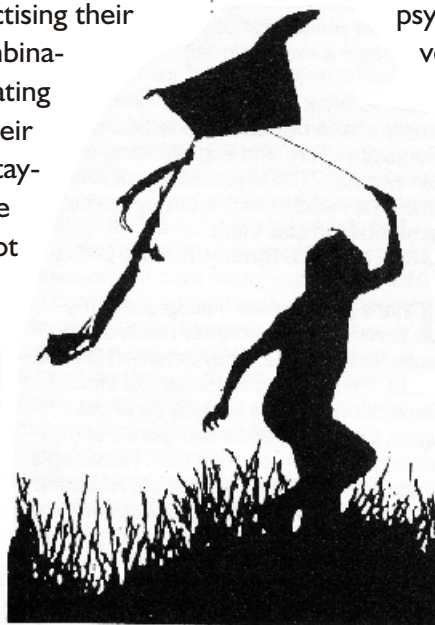
I sat for nearly three hours in the park near our home last Ty. It was a bright clear day and the children from the neighbourhood who had been forced inside for almost two weeks by the freezing weather ran about on the cold ground excited to again be in touch with the world outside. Across from the bench on which I sat, a high metal sheet has been erected at an angle which some of the children attempted to climb. The little ones longed to climb as the bigger ones did. Clearly unable to manage the ascent, the feelings of one child could be sensed as he looked up into the sun and quivered, then bolted away as though either this one activity was too perplexing or because another idea

had struck him. Back to the swings he ran, and in an instant he was sailing up and back by pulling hard on the metal chain just as the downward motion of the swing began. All the while he yelled, “Look how I can push myself! Look at me pushing myself!”

Autonomy and competence

I was struck while watching these children how a sense of autonomy and competence were precious commodities for them. To master a particular action, like swinging or pushing oneself on the merrygo-round, actions that had once required the assistance of an adult, brought sensuous and hard-earned gratification.

The word “doing” crossed my mind. How important it was for these children to be able to do things with their bodies or minds, or merely with another person. There was much more to observe among these handsome two-, three-, and four-year-old children. Some for example, spent an enormous amount of time talking. Even when no-one was around to listen, they jabbered on, practising their words and learning new combinations. They were communicating with themselves. Through their use of language, they were staying in touch with their private worlds, worlds they might not yet be able to speak about, but only speak to. And they were, in a fashion I continually noticed, using language and work to construct bridges between the world they saw about them and the world that had begun to form inside them.



The meaning of laughter

We hear children laugh too, and this is a more complicated phenomenon than we might think, for we love the sounds of children giggling among themselves yet stay away from interpretations of it. But laughter at this age means so many wonderful things in addition to its presence as a sign of pure delight. It means a sense of inner happiness. A child who cannot laugh frightens us, I think. Something else about the children’s laughter: To look at the world and have things strike you as funny

implies cognitive maturation and, ultimately, understanding. Incongruity, foolishness, shame, audacity, comedy and ritual are but a few of the concepts that the child must comprehend, if only intuitively, if something is to strike him as funny. Tickling, of course, will do it. So will certain tragic acts. But imagine what it required in the form of

psychological and cognitive development for a child to laugh at the sight or sound of something.

Play as a medium

Play is more than an activity. It is a forerunner of work and creativity. It is a medium through which people mature and cultures are made richer, if not healthy. Through play, children come to learn their connections with the past and with the present world of their comrades and elders. Play is their own product, self-initiated and moulded according to criteria children themselves establish and impose. Allow a child to play and one permits her to experience the necessity of both individual action and social control. One permits her, moreover, to experience the meaning of choice and from this the inevitable limitations set by any society, any culture, and indeed by any persons for him- or herself.

Imagination

Imagination and autonomy, I think, best captures what the children revealed in the park. Their capacity for imagination was practically limitless. They could become anything or anyone; they could be creators of worlds that have never existed, children living free of any temporal order or spatial constraints. This means that someday, they might conceive of and bring forth notions or products or inventions that no-one before them has even dreamed of. No culture survives without these products of imagination, eventually to be transformed by adult intelligence and adult need. Play is, indeed, the very basis of learning. It is a basis which in no way precludes teachers, but which instead, prepares for the entrance into the child's life of teachers and ultimately the wisdom of other human beings.

Extract from an article by Thomas J. Cottle for UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund)

Quality Care in a Family Setting A Practical Guide for Foster Carers



Leon Fulcher & Thom Garfat

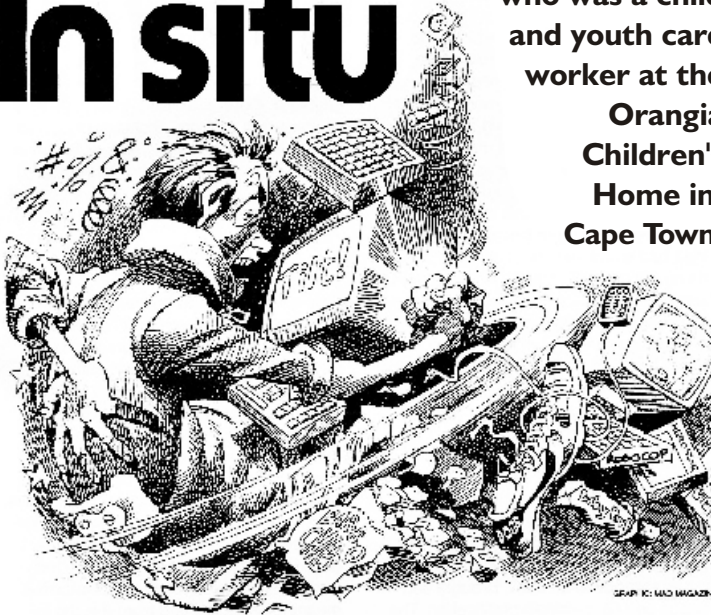
While training and practice standards are now used in many places to enhance, monitor and evaluate the quality of care given to children and young people in out-of-home care, Foster Carers are often expected to perform miracles without practical assistance. Building from a strengths-based approach, **Quality Care in a Family Setting: A Practical Guide for Foster Carers** seeks to redress that deficit, offering practical help for Foster Carers seeking to do extraordinary things with the kids for whom they care.

Written by Leon Fulcher and Thom Garfat, **Quality Care in a Family Setting**, offers theory, practice tips and everyday advice for helping young people in Foster Care develop the strengths and skills necessary to successfully navigate life's challenges.

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In situ



**Short Story by
Alan Roberts,
who was a child
and youth care
worker at the
Orangia
Children's
Home in
Cape Town.**

chest, dead. It's a violent image. It's disconcerting. An ignoble end.

"What's his name?" I ask, pointing. "Robocop", says David.

"I tell you what", I propose, shifting posture. "I'll give you another twenty cents. But this time, you have to earn it. You have to work for this game. How does that sound to you?"

David narrows his blue eyes. "What do I have to do?" he asks.

"Tell me about the game," I say, "What you have to do to win. What the aim of the game is.

Whatever you want to tell me about it."

"Oh that's easy".

David snatches the twenty from my fingers and inserts it in the indicated slot. The protagonist is moving. David has laid his hands on twin joysticks and is jerking them frenziedly backwards and forwards. Other kids suddenly materialise from elsewhere in the cafe and gather around us. A motley bunch. No girls. Robocop kicks out with his legs. He punches, chops and cuts with his arms. He gyrates in every direction. He's defending against attackers.

"Why is Robocop being attacked?" I address David.

Behind us, someone sniggers.

It's true. The hero's progress along the street is being threatened at every turn. Club-wielding thugs assault him.

A ton of bricks falls from a second

David's looking up at me again. I see him out the corner of my eye. I know what's going to happen next. He's going to ask if he can play another game. So I prefer to avoid his gaze. I peer at the screen in front of us - at the final image of the game he has just played. I'm hinting with my posture what isn't going to happen next. After all, we've been here a while. It's getting late. Gopel's Cafe closes soon.

"Aw, come on", David whines, "One more. I swear it. Just one more. Then we'll go. Honest to God."

David's looking at me but I'm paying attention to the frozen image glowing on the screen. It portrays a bronzed muscleman, of huge proportions, doubled over, a knifehandle protruding from his naked

floor. Further on, masked knifemen emerge from an alleyway.

Now a horde of ferocious Alsatian dogs approach.

“Enemies”, snorts David.

(He’s not working very hard for his money. I want him to tell the story, to describe the drama, not to abandon the world of words. But it looks as though a flickering image has a firmer hold. I’ll try again.)

“Enemies?” I say to David, in search of motive and hungry for plot. “Why are they attacking Robocop? What’s going on?” “They’re trying ... David begins. His hands are flurrying at the controls. His eyes fix on his hero who is now embattled with a new set of adversaries. He huffs. ”They’re trying to stop him from getting to the White House where the president of the United States of America is being held hostage and he’s trying to free the President and save America and he’s only got two lives ... “

I have an impression that David has forgotten about the twenty and is talking unwillingly to me. He’d rather be left to his hero’s vicissitudes. He’d prefer not to be questioned at such a crucial time. Look at him: Face up against the screen, hands a blur at the controls, totally absorbed.

So, as Robocop stoops to gather some food at a streetcorner - sustenance for his next task - I glance around the interior of Gopel’s Cafe. Shelves of candies - sweets - chocolates. Comics and trash literature cramming a revolving stand near the entrance. A poor selection of fruit and vegetables. The old counter. Mr. Gopel. And suddenly I’m in Gopel’s Cafe in 1973. The refrigerator is in the far corner. Op-

posite it, I’m pushing and cajoling a pinball machine, fingers frenetic at the flippers, trying to keep the silver ball alive, smoke from my Lucky smarting my eyes. I bring up another ball. Someone saunters up. Lesley. Wearing a cheesecutter. He offers me a sip of Coke. I drink, hand back the bottle, and pull back the plunger.

*Ever since I was a young boy
I played the silver ball
From Soho down to Brighton
I must’ve played them all
Now I ain’t seen nothing like it
In any amusement hall
That deaf dumb and blind kid
Sure plays a mean pinball.*

It comes back to me. *In situ*. I stare at the empty space opposite the refrigerator, biographing on, and experiencing a certain anguish. The irreversibility of lived time. The need to fill the empty space. To remember. *In situ*. Here.

1973. The Who. Tommy. Pinball. Lesley.

That’s *your last life*. I snap out of my reverie. Who said that? I look at the faces. Bright faces. They’re turned toward David. I’m standing amongst the Video Generation. David’s looking up at me again. I avoid his eyes and glance at the screen. A knife protrudes from Robocop’s chest. I know what’s happened. Robocop’s dead. I know what’s going to happen next. But I’m wrong! Mr. Gopel’s making an announcement. He’s the same man I knew in 1973. Mr. Gopel’s closing the shop now. Aw, come on, Mr. Gopel!

Biographical Outline of August Aichhorn

K.R Eissler

When August Aichhorn approached his seventieth birthday I wrote a *Biographical Outline*. At that time, not one of us thought that August Aichhorn's life span was ending and that he would soon be taken from us. In preparing this outline for the new edition of his *Wayward Youth*, it is a grief to me to have to change to the past that present tense which sounded so friendly and hopeful when he was seventy.

August Aichhorn was born in Vienna the 27th of July, 1878. At the age of twenty, the year his twin brother died, he became a teacher in one of the grade schools of the City of Vienna. The course of his career seemed to be set from the start. He was a member of a conservative, well-established family; he lived in a feudal city and chose a profession which, like all professions in those days, was guild-like in character. At that time, once a teacher one remained a teacher and waited for two or three decades until he could retire on a government pension. But it was not Aichhorn's style to follow a routine and to wait for retirement. When in 1907 military settlements for boys were introduced in Vienna, he led a successful fight against that institution. In the following year he

became the chairman of a new board which was officially assigned the duty of organizing boys' settlements. Thus he had prevented the penetration of the military spirit into the educational system. Aichhorn had devoted ten years to that task when he was given an unique opportunity. With a group of idealistic followers, he organized the institution for delinquent boys in Oberhollabrunn, Austria.

Out of the shambles of a refugee camp arose one of the most touching experiments in humanity. At a time when the Austrian monarchy fell apart and the fruits of a cultural tradition were ground to pieces between revolution and inflation, Aichhorn submerged himself in constructive work and created an entirely new method of curing an age-old scourge for whose cure many a device had been tried in vain. Crime and delinquency had taken their course without hindrance. Punishment, segregation, flogging, and execution were recommended by some; love, humaneness, understanding, mercy and charity by others. Neither approach satisfied Aichhorn. In Oberhollabrunn he had occasion to study a vast clinical material and to test his methods of treatment. Part of the exciting experience of these days

was laid down in his book, *Wayward Youth*, the full impact of which only future generations will know.

Aichhorn became interested in delinquents when he started his work as a teacher. He groped around for a science which could help him in the understanding of his observations. Following the fashion of the day he studied neuropathology. But its contribution to the explanation of delinquency was inadequate and could not quench his thirst for knowledge. Next he tried experimental psychology and steeped himself into Wundt and Meumann, but again he felt frustrated. However, as soon as he came into contact with psycho-analysis he knew that he had found a key to the maze of his puzzling observations.

In Aichhorn's hands, Freud's technique, devised for the treatment of neurotics, seemingly became a new instrument so much did it differ from the original. Although still authentically analytic in its method, it yet was adapted to the requirements of the delinquent's personality structure which is so different from that of the neurotic. It was fortunate that a psychologist and clinician of Aichhorn's stature came upon psychoanalysis and made it his tool. Following the remarkable experiment in Oberhollabrunn which was mentioned with praise in the English Parliament he organized and conducted for the City Administration child guidance clinics throughout Vienna. After his retirement from the municipal service he was made chairman of the child guidance clinic of the Viennese Psychoanalytic Society. He soon became one of the foremost teachers of the Viennese Society and when

Germany occupied Austria he remained at his post. He, his wife and their two sons miraculously survived, although one of the sons was sent to a concentration camp. Again surrounded by a holocaust he remained undaunted, and tried to preserve the little of Freud's work that could be rescued during those dreadful years. After the liberation he was elected president of the society.

It would be futile to attempt to compress the scope of Aichhorn's personality into a few sentences but a few words must be devoted to the teacher, the clinician and the man. He possessed certain features that made him an unique teacher. It was his attitude of being 'ignorant' about the subject-matter to which he had devoted his life work, his belief in always beginning anew, in being eternally a student and pupil, not a teacher, which made him a truly great one. He always acted as the 'servant' of his pupils and met their queries for guidance not in the customary teacher-student fashion but sensed in every problem raised the underlying individual conflict which reality had imposed upon the questioner.

His lectures were not the dissertations of an instructor, but rather the talks of a man speaking about life as though reporting on a country he had visited. Even when presenting his theories, they seemed accurate descriptions of reality.

His intuition was uncanny. As the archeologist can visualize the entire temple from a half-broken column, so could Aichhorn reconstruct the whole of a human personality from a few meagre details which seemed only trifling superficialities to the unintuitive. This amazing

gift he had acquired by hard work. He was a true psychologist, who could spend hours in the trolley car watching people and making guesses from what he saw. From the way a man held his newspaper, he guessed at the way he would leave his seat and walk to the exit. Until the passenger reached his destination Aichhorn would wait patiently to test his prediction, oblivious of the fact that by so doing he got farther and farther away from where he wanted to go.

He had a supreme faculty of identifying with the patient and of knowing his needs. It was a touching experience to hear him argue with a schizophrenic adolescent about the interpretation of some obscure passage in the Bible and to witness from week to week the patient's gradual recovery at a time when official psychiatry still maintained the dogma of the incurability of schizophrenia. Or who else would be able to spend six months of daily interviews with a patient who believed that Aichhorn would like to be instructed in the patient's vocation? But in this half-year, the foundation was laid for a transference which permitted him to achieve one of his brilliant therapeutic successes. His clinical stature was indicated in his statement that he who feels that he is being 'patient' with the delinquent whom he is treating will by that feeling alone be deprived of the fruits of his good intentions.

Aichhorn may be called an impassioned psychologist. Wherever he went or in whatever he did he found problems of human nature to stimulate his quest for knowledge. The world became a huge stage crowded with innumerable dramas so that there was no difference to him be-

tween his office, the movie or the trolley car. Everywhere he detected problems of the human mind and puzzling questions demanding an answer. He succeeded in totally disengaging the problem of crime and delinquency from any religious, ethical or moral implications, thus approaching it as a question of nature exclusively. The result was his conception of delinquency not only as a problem of deviate behaviour but more profoundly as a manifestation of deficient internal growth.

As a great artist has supreme command over his instrument, be it a flute or a harp, so could Aichhorn play his instrument, the human personality. In the shortest time he could turn a squanderer into a miser, a thief into a scrupulously honest fellow, a blackmailer into a defender of law and order. But such metamorphoses of a deviation into its opposite were meaningless to him and he never considered such stupendous changes of behaviour a success. He was an enraged enemy of bigotry and conformity and knew that the new miser the scrupulous fellow the protagonist of law and order, were merely acting under the impact of a new compulsion. To him such changes only signaled the opportunity of starting his real work, namely to lead the patient to internal freedom and the integration of values. His amazing command over the human personality resulted in a technique enviable and uniquely effective. It was a rare pleasure to witness one of his interviews. It usually proceeded with a casualness which made it seem uneventful and a apparently merely flowing easily, yet at every moment it was expertly related to the dynamism of the total situation as subsequent checking would

ascertain. He rarely made a frontal attack, and was skilful in avoiding the precipitation of resistances, but he could implant a message in the unconscious of his subject with unfailing certainty and by means of indirections and innuendo. It would be difficult to find his peer in the great art of asking the well-timed question which gives reassurance and the feeling of being understood. There were no routine questions in his repertoire interviewing, but a single question became a meaningful part of the comprehensive plan of his interview.

His questions were directed to provoke and create certain preconscious associations in his subject's mind as part of his strategy. By so doing he had forged an exquisite therapeutic tool out of a procedure which was usually merely a matter of routine and of gaining information.

A follow-up among the families who had sought his advice revealed that in a surprisingly high percentage of instances, a single interview had had a significant effect on the family equilibrium an effect which persisted years after the interview had taken place.

Yet in spite of his command of the art of asking questions, Aichhorn could also level a magnificent frontal attack. Then narcissistic defenses crumbled under his assault, the arrogantly smiling delinquent would leave the room in tears, a vengeful father become subdued and a nagging mother turned meek.

Yet to those who had the privilege of working with him, the most fascinating experience remains the personality of Aichhorn himself. He had achieved an enviable degree of mastery and harmony

without losing the capacity for immersing himself in constructive conflict. The man who often spent sixteen or seventeen hours a day with patients could say that he never had the feeling of working. To him work and play coincided. Despite his dedication to the treatment of delinquents he had never lost his capacity to enjoy the adventure of crime nor his understanding of how sweet to the criminal is the violating of a rule to which the community bows. His faculty for enjoyment was unlimited. A therapeutic success, a well-written mystery story, a ride in a car, a game of cards—for him everything could be an enticing adventure.

I ended the above Outline with what I thought to be a description of the rare happiness of which I was convinced he had obtained a fair share: "Thus he is truly young, but spared the hardship of youth, and truly happy because oblivious of his own genius."

Montaigne warns us not to evaluate a human life before it has taken its full course and I know now that this last sentence has lost its truth in view of the dreadfulness with which his last few months were replete. He passed away in his sleep on the 13th of October, 1949, but in the preceding months he fought a titanic and bitter struggle. He felt cheated when ill fate struck him because he had so much more to say than he had put in his writings. But as the magnificent fighter he had always been, death did not vanquish him easily.

This article is reprinted from the preface of the 1951 edition of *Wayward Youth* by August Aichhorn. London: Imago Publishing Co.

In Defiance of compliance

John Burton

A care children's home that is run simply to be "compliant" is unlikely to be a good place in which to live or work. Compliance is alien to the ethos, principles and good practice of the social care profession and residential social work.

Compliance, the principal tool of measurement used by the Care Quality Commission, has no place or validity in the life and work of a care home (or children's home). It is a negative and submissive concept. Nothing ever grew and developed, no initiative or advance was ever made by compliance. Compliance is static and change is dynamic. The notion of compliance could only be of use to check important but secondary technical services to a home, and such checks should be made by suitably qualified and experienced technicians. For example, the lift must be properly maintained, medication managed well and accounted for, and food stored and prepared safely, but such compliance is not the primary purpose of a care home.

Those of us who were trained and qualified as residential workers or residential social workers – trained to practise, manage and lead – received a thorough grounding in such areas as human/child

growth and development, loss and change, social psychology, group processes, community and institutionalisation, leadership, ethics, ageing and society, social work methods, social policy, counselling, dependency and power relationships, family and individual therapy, etc. etc. We were encouraged to enquire, to challenge, explore, and debate ideas. We thought, read, and argued. We were not taught "compliance". Courses differed and, of course some were better than others, but I very much doubt if any residential social work course ever mentioned "compliance".

No, I'm wrong. In the early 70s, when I did my qualifying training, the word compliance described a worrying aspect of, for example, children whose infancy and early years had compelled them to keep their heads down and to find a way of surviving the hostile and persecutory world around them. The notion that a children's home where such "compliant" children may live and be cared for, would itself need to be "compliant" would question the whole basis of residential care. Nevertheless, we have to acknowledge that to this day there are children's homes that put compliance with OFSTED's demands and the compliance of the residents well before

“good enough caring”. With the care of older people, we might take compliance in an eighty-year-old resident of a care home to indicate that they may be being abused, bullied or medicated, while they attempted to avoid further pain and humiliation by withdrawing into themselves and being “quiet”, compliant and unnoticed. “No trouble.”

“The creativity that we are studying belongs to the approach of the individual to external reality . . . Contrasted with this is a relationship with external reality which is one of compliance, the world and its details being recognised but only as something to be fitted in with or demanding adaptation... in a tantalising way many individuals have experienced just enough of creative living to recognise that for most of their time they are living uncreatively, as if caught up in the creativity of someone else, or of a machine.”

– D.W.Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*.

Residential care (for people of all ages) is caught up in what the machines of CQC and OFSTED has created – compliance. We will break free of the constraints of compliance only if we start acting like professionals and leaders of our care communities. We must stop acting like quiet, frightened, compliant children, anxious to please by fitting in with the rules and restrictions imposed on us. We must grow up, join forces in taking responsibility for our own profession, and lead the development of care homes as highly val-

ued local centres of care and support.

Over ten years, the national regulators have turned social care upside-down. Instead of the needs of users instigating the form and operation of care services, and those services, led by the registered managers, being designed and managed at a local level to meet those needs, the regulators have imposed their misinformed and blinkered design for care. This top-down approach has in turn spawned a new layer of quality-assurance, management and consultancy which is now seen as essential to prove to the regulators that providers are compliant. And in adult care this self-perpetuating arrangement flourishes alongside the cosy pretence of personalisation. Compliance-centred is the very opposite of “person-centred” care.

It seems extraordinary that while those at the head of this appallingly wasteful and dysfunctional system have had the advantages of sophisticated management training and mentoring, they seem incapable of understanding their part in it.

According to Paul Hoggett (University of the West of England), social work/social care professionals need the capacity ...

- to tolerate and contain uncertainty, ambiguity and complexity without resorting to simplistic splitting into good/bad, black/white, us/them, etc.
- for self-authorisation, that is, the capacity to find the courage to act in situations where there is no obvious right thing to do
- for reflexivity, that is, to take oneself as an object of inquiry and curiosity and hence to be able to suspend belief

about oneself; all this as a way of sustaining a critical approach to oneself, one's values and beliefs, one's strengths and weaknesses, the nature of one's power and authority, and so on

- to contain emotions such as anger, resentment, hope and cynicism without suppressing them and hence to be both passionate and thoughtful.

What do we think the late Tom Kitwood (author of *Dementia Reconsidered – the person comes first*) would have made of this compliance culture? Would it not fit perfectly with his description of a “malignant social psychology”? Is it not understood at any high level in Government, Department of Health, CQC or OFSTED that the malignant effect of compliance does not merely “filter” softly down to the way residents are treated, it is – albeit unwittingly – aimed directly at them and blights their lives.

When senior members of CQC are cornered, and when they cannot bully their way out of the corner, they resort to the excuse that they have no choice and are merely following the orders given them by government but are short of resources, and “give us time – we’re a young organisation”. Such excuses are a betrayal of professional ethics.

As social care professionals and leaders, registered managers must take their cue from their own professional standards. We must support each other, learn from each other, and always put our clients first.

This article was adapted for publication in the *goodenoughcaring* Journal from another which was first published under the same title on the Association of Care Managers' website www.caremanagers.org.uk and Brunswick's Healthcare Review at www.brunswicks.eu

No matter how one may think himself accomplished, when he sets out to learn a new language, science, or the bicycle, he has entered a new realm as truly as if he were a child newly born into the world.

— Frances Willard, *How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle*

Boys and Their Toys

I'll admit it: I'm a boy. A big boy, sure. But a boy, just the same.

My daughter came over the other day with my grandson in tow. It was a reasonably warm, sunny spring day, and the moment the little guy burst out of the car he wanted to play.

Fortunately, we have the technology for that. He ran to the garage where we park his motorcycle.

Now, understand, it isn't a real motorcycle. We have a family ban on motorcycles. My mother put the ban in place, and it remains to this day. None of her six children, nor any of her children's children has ever, to my knowledge, ridden on a motorcycle. Mom felt like she had quite enough to worry about, thanks.

I was equally rigid in enforcing the same ban on my girls, so it was with some degree of bemusement that my daughter came over one day with her 2 ½ year-old son to find that Grandpa had bought him a motorcycle.

Well, a motorcycle-ish type of toy. It is powered by two 6 volt batteries and if he

puts the pedal to the metal, he can roar around the yard at speeds approaching 2 miles a week. Which he is allowed to do, providing he wears a helmet and keeps to the grass.

The first time he clambered on board this thing, I felt a rush of envy.

Like all kids my age, I grew up rushing home from school to watch programs like "Razzle Dazzle" on TV. These shows had ads for all the latest toys, like the Slinky or the Etch-a-Sketch or Silly Putty.

And of course: the PlayMobile. It was a tiny car with a real engine, and in the ad the kids were chasing one another down the street in it. I wanted this car more than anything I ever wanted in my life.

I began dropping hints

for Christmas.

I might as well have dropped hints that I wanted a solid gold bicycle, for all my parents would or could do. Six kids on a military salary. Get used to disappointment.

I promised myself that when I had kids, I would get them a PlayMobile. But of



course, I had to go have girls. And my girls couldn't have been less interested in driving around in a toy car. Which was fine, because they weren't making them any more. I'm guessing personal injury lawsuits. Just a hunch.

So when my daughter presented me with a grandson, I saw my chance to load this kid up with all the toys I wanted as a kid but couldn't have. A friend of my wife's showed us a Fisher Price motorcycle his son had outgrown and he was willing to sell.

I had some initial misgivings — all I could hear was my Mom saying, "Why do you think all those poor Fisher Price people have no arms and legs?" But in the end, I couldn't resist.

So now the little guy tools around on this pretend motorcycle, and I swear the grin on his face is so wide it's a wonder the top of his head doesn't come off. And tooling around is what he was doing the other day when I left him in the care of his Mom and my wife and set off to cut the grass.

I have a fairly big lot, so I bought myself a ride-on mower a few years back. I was zipping around cutting the grass, headphones on, music blaring, when I caught

sight of my grandson on his motorcycle.

We locked eyes. I grinned evilly. He grinned back. I dropped my mower down to second gear, let out the clutch, and the chase was on.

In second gear, my mower precisely matches the speed of his motorcycle. So I set off in pursuit of the little guy, and he was as insanely delighted as a kid could be.

And so was I. What nobody else could hear was that my music player had switched tunes and the random selection was "Live and Let Die". Perfect chase music. We rolled over hill and dale — well, OK, around the yard — with him zigging and zagging to get away and me, always just a few meters behind.

It went on for quite a while, until finally he was looking back at me, grinning, and managed to run his motorcycle into a patch of raspberry bushes. Like most boys' games, it ended in tears. But it sure was fun while it lasted.

Finally, almost half a century later, I got my car chase. And yes, I loved it. I loved it because for those brief, wonderful moments, I was a boy again.

A big boy, sure. But a boy, just the same.

"When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, they will grow well, like the lettuce. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change. "

— Thich Nhat Hanh



Post Card from Leon Fulcher



Postcard from Australia

October, 2012

Gid'aye Comrades! Greetings from Australia where we were attending the Circle of Courage Ignite Conference sponsored by Allambi Youth Services in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales. After the conference we travelled to Perth, Western Australia and then Melbourne in order to reconnect with old friends before returning to New Zealand. Springtime rains were common!



The Crier at Perth, Western Australia's Cultural Heritage Centre

The Crier sculpture outside Perth's Cultural Heritage Centre offered a fitting reminder of how the old Town Crier called people together to discuss matters of great importance to all who gathered.

This Crier from the European tradition contrasted with how Aboriginal Australians called people together for talk.



Aboriginal Call to Delegates for the Allambi Ignite Conference

Members of the local Hunter Valley Darkinjung people welcomed delegates to the Ignite Conference with a call from the didgeridoo and traditional dances. This was followed by a smoke ceremony in which all 300 delegates linked hands in concentric circles to begin 'sharing talk' around the theme of **Sparking Hope, Care and Innovation.**



**Director Peter Walsh, Allambi Youth Services
Ignite Conference Host**

Peter Walsh and his team from Allambi Youth Services were gracious hosts to an extensive gathering of participants from the USA and Canada, Ireland, the UK, Africa and New Zealand, as well as from several Australian states. Martin Brokenleg, Lesley du Toit and Larry Brendtro were all there, along with others from Reclaiming Youth International, focusing attention on connecting with troubled and troublesome young people through new ways of engagement.



Australian Therapeutic Use of Daily Life Events Graduates

Prior to the conference, delegates could enrol for intensive training opportunities in a variety of courses offered by Reclaiming Youth International. 21 Carers graduated from our *Therapeutic Use of Daily Life Events* training. This training helps child and youth care workers to take a much more proactive role in the daily life spaces where they live and work with children, young people and families. Opportunity events are many if we only look for them!



June 25-28, 2013

St. Johns, Newfoundland & Labrador – CANADA

Child & Youth Care World Conference

*Connecting at
the Crossroads*

www.cycworld2013.net



Hunter Valley Resident at the Allambi Ignite Conference

In WA, this giant Boab 'Gija Jumulu' tree captured world-wide media coverage in 2008 as it journeyed over 3200 kilometres, from Warmun in Western Australia's Kimberley region in the north, to Kings Park in Perth in the southern part of the State. Never before had a mature tree of this size – estimated to be 750 years old – been transported across such a large distance on land.

First-time visitors to Australia were of course welcomed by mobs of local fauna. One child and youth care worker told of being chased by a mob (group) of male kangaroos after taking young people to feed young roos like this one.



The Giant Travelling Boab Tree from Northern Territories



A Reminder of One of Life's Special Truths

Some old truths remain wherever one goes! Enjoy a good cup of coffee today!



THE INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE NETWORK

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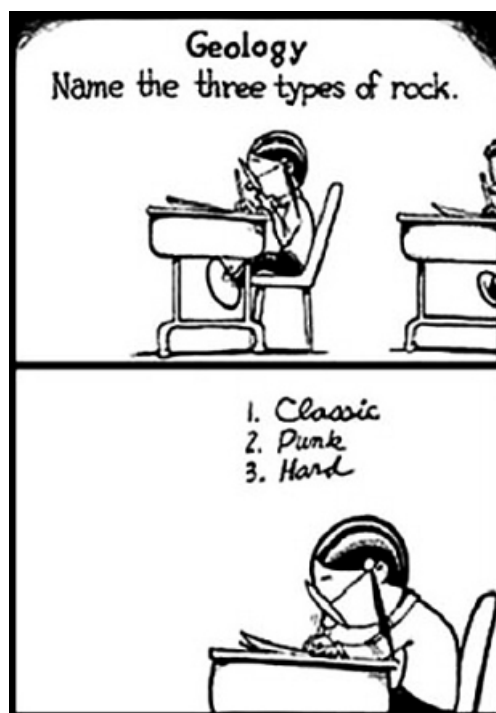
When light returns
to eyes which, for too long,
have been dark,
this is our reward,
this is our reassurance
that there is once more hope,
and our work, and his,
has been worthwhile.



You're tired?! HELLO, what about me? I haven't slept since I was born!

Something new is being added to the personality of the seventh grader. He seems wobbly inside and out. He is in the stage of a department store that is being remodeled. For a while it appears that everything is about to be ground into rubble but while the mess, dust and noise seem alarming, they are necessary because improvements are about to be made.

— **Fritz Redl**
National Institute of Mental Health



“I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.”

— **Mark Twain**

“Creative people who can't help but explore other mental territories are at greater risk, just as someone who climbs a mountain is more at risk than someone who just walks along a village lane.”

— **R. D. Laing**

To be educated, a person doesn't have to know much or be informed, but he or she does have to have been exposed vulnerably to the transformative events of an engaged human life.

— **St Thomas More** 1478-1535

One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.

— **Carl Jung**



Please remind your mom and dad that it's a parent-teacher conference, not a parent-teacher-attorney conference.

If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.

— **Derek Curtis Bok**

“All men are scoundrels, or at any rate almost all. The men who are not must have had unusual luck, both in their birth and in their upbringing”

— **Bertrand Russell**

Man is born neither devil nor saint. He merely reflects in his behaviour the nature of relationships he has had since the time of his birth, with the people who were important to him.

— **Karen Horney**

information

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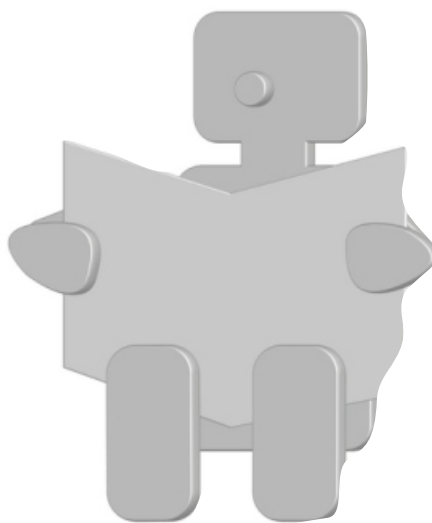
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