

CYC-Online

Online journal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)



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



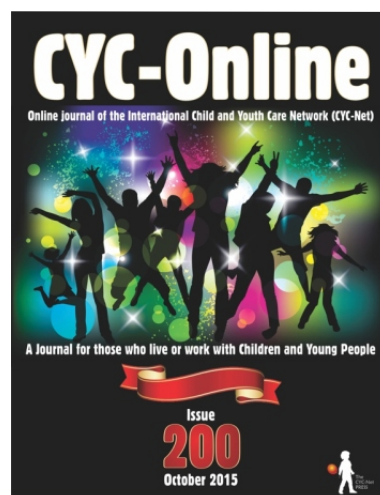
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CYC-Online

Welcome to the 200th Issue of CYC-Online, the online journal of the International Child & Youth Care Network.

This is a special issue in many ways, not just because it is the 200th issue but because of the content and how it all came together.

About six months ago, James Freeman reminded us the 200th was coming and wondered what we were going to do to mark this milestone. This issue is the answer.

What we did was reach out to people with a simple request.

Within a word limit we asked people to join us in acknowledgement and celebration by writing 'whatever your heart inspires'. We were humbled by the responses from people who were not only willing but 'wanted to be a part' of this issue.

What you will find in this issue, then, is a part of the heart of CYC practice.

Here you will find articles from regular columnists who continue to inspire us, articles from others who have, in the past, graced our pages, and some pieces, as is appropriate, from writers new to CYC-Net readers. Some of the pieces are personal, some theoretical, some professional and all inspiring.

If there is a theme which holds this issue together it is only this – commitment to the field and the goal of helping young people and their families.

Enjoy.



From Relationship to Relationships

Thom Garfat



Syl Desjardins

Brian Gannon and I met at the **first International Child and Youth Care Conference in Vancouver, Canada in 1985.** We, the organising committee, had invited a number of people involved with youth from various corners of the world to present. I remember how shocked I was when he came off the plane, a white guy! We had never met before this and perhaps my surprise showed just how ignorant I was about the world of child and youth care. Once getting over my surprise that he was white, we developed an immediate connection.

Shortly after this I was invited to South Africa by the NACCW to present at their 1987 conference in Johannesburg.

Many of my North American friends were shocked, outraged, and angry that I would go to South Africa. This was during the days of Apartheid, of course, so their reaction was perhaps understandable. They asked, with self-indulgent righteousness, how I could possibly support such a regime. I responded with the best of my knowledge that the NACCW was one of the few organisations during the Apartheid regime that had remained integrated so it



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was more like supporting colleagues in difficult circumstances. So I went to South Africa, experienced the passion of the Child Care Workers there, was welcomed in all the communities of South Africa as a Child Care Worker and secured a friendship with Brian that has lasted since then. I could tell you of the adventures – but those are for a different place.

In the following years, Brian and I would exchange letters, often with audio tapes included. In these audio tapes we would share our thoughts about what was then called, here, child care work. Weeks would pass between our exchanges as our letters and tapes were carried half way around the globe. And then came the internet.

Brian, who was much more IT savvy than I, proposed in 1997 that we create an internet discussion group of like-minded individuals. We started with a small group of 8 initial members. These child and youth care practitioners, teachers and writers were located in South Africa, North America, Europe, the Middle-East and Australasia. By 1998 this group had grown to around 200 and today this number stands at many thousands of members.

Brian then had the idea to create a web presence called the **International Child and Youth Care Network** and in 1999 we introduced the first issue of **CYC-Online** (go here to see an updated version of that first simple beginning –

<http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cyconline0299.html>). Since that initial website, CYC-Online has evolved through 200 issues. And always it has been Brian at

the helm, leading us all through a maze of changes, shifts, new possibilities and always with the same objective: to promote and facilitate reading, learning, information sharing, discussion, networking, support and accountable practice amongst all who work with children, youth and families in difficulty worldwide, *at no direct cost to the end-user*. Often times, as Brian and I worked together on this project, it was hard for me to accept this idea – that we would do all this work for front line workers at no charge to them – and always he reminded me that even \$10 for someone in rural developing countries was too expensive. He was right and consistent, never wavering in his belief.

In the early days we were supported by the Royal Netherlands Embassy in South Africa but after a few years they declined further support and so we began the mad, on-going, scramble to keep CYC-Net, and *CYC-Online* alive and viable. In those days we drew on our own resources and those of Pretext Publishing to keep it going in the belief that, with time, others would come in to support the vision. And if you look at the CYC-Net supporters page (<http://www.cyc-net.org/administration/supporters.html>) you will see how others, from around the world, have come forward to support this project. By the way, if you do not currently support CYC-Net but use it, as so many do, it is time you stepped up with whatever you can afford to keep CYC-Net alive and viable beyond this 200th issue of *CYC-Online* (see here: <http://www.cyc-net.org/donate.html>).



The Eds – Brian, James and Thom

Carol Stuart once said that **CYC-Net is the most valuable resource in the world for those who work with troubled children and their families** and we trust that is still true. Over time we have evolved an active Board of Governors under the leadership of Dr. Leon Fulcher, secured more supporters and continued, we hope, to be a valuable resource to the global CYC network, while at the same time being true to the initial vision of being freely available to the front line worker.

So, now, here we are, 200 issues later. What a wonderful outcome of Brian's vision and constant work.

In this issue you will find articles from the regular columnists who continue to inspire us, articles from others who have, in the past, graced our pages, and some pieces, as is appropriate, from writers new to CYC-Net readers. For this issue we invited a number of people to

contribute and our directions, in keeping with our values, were to write what your heart inspires. What you will find in this issue, then, is a part of the heart of CYC practice.

I have enjoyed being a part of putting this issue together, along with my long-time colleague and friend, Brian Gannon, our new editor James Freeman, the ever hard working Martin Stabrey and the one who really does do the hard work, Carina Lewis. As we move forward to the future – with, we hope, your professional and financial support – we dream of what CYC-Net might continue to contribute to our field. To the 'new generation' who will soon be taking over everything, including CYC-Net and *CYC-Online*, we will be here for you for a while yet, so just ask if you need support. If you believe, as we do, that CYC-Net is a part of your future, please go here <http://www.cyc-net.org/donate.html> and make a contribution to your future.

With time, persistence and the driving values and vision of Brian Gannon, CYC-Net is still here. The rest of us have mostly been, at best, apprentices to the Master ☺

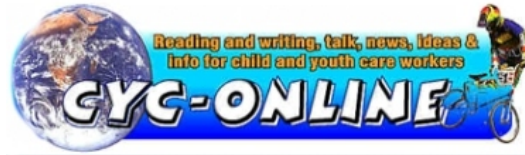
Enjoy this issue – it is one, I believe, of our finest.

THOM GARFAT, PhD is the co-owner of [Transformation International](#) and the co-founder of [CYC-Net](#). Information about Thom can be found [here](#).



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Not where you work but what you do

Brian Gannon

I was once talking to a child care worker who was part of a too-small staff team in a cash-strapped programme on “the wrong side of the tracks”. She found her work very difficult in terms of resources, facilities and support. When she compared the environment in which she worked with the better-off organisations around town, she became easily discouraged.

But I hadn’t even noticed the peeling paint and the sandy yard — and I don’t think the children who lived there had noticed either, because we were all overwhelmed by the warmth of the hospitality, the feeling of safety and inclusion, the respect and the optimism and the fairness ... as a child and youth care worker she was a natural, and the kids got everything that they could ever need from her programme.

Instead of offering to help to find funds to smarten up her place, I invited

her to come and talk to other child care workers about her work. It was soon obvious that while the others seemed to have everything she thought she needed (modern buildings, good plumbing, new motor vans) she had something which everyone else longed for — an accurate sense of good child development and a soundness of practice for the youngsters who needed something extra.

Everyone who participated in those talks came to realise that what’s most important in our field is not where you work but what you do.

It was a time of limited resources, and this experience of coming together to talk about our work fulfilled many of our needs for support and learning. This was, in fact, the beginning of what was to become over the next thirty-odd years the National Association of Child Care Workers in South Africa.

Formal and informal; perspiration and inspiration

We knew that we needed our formal training, the structure of supervision and the discipline of reading, but (particularly in this business of child and youth care which is about people who need to know themselves and feel good about themselves and manage their relationships with each other) our less formal interactions were the meta-practice of our work with the kids. Being exposed to the monitoring and the criticism and the approval of others was also the experience of the youngsters we were working with.

There were times when we needed to be taught and challenged; there were times when we needed to be encouraged and inspired. There were times when we must be held accountable, and times when we could be forgiven. We used the old joke that child care work was 50% perspiration and 50% inspiration.

CYC-Net — daily and on-line

Thom Garfat and I recognised the universality of the child and youth care experience, and the growing accessibility of the internet offered to all of us this opportunity of “coming together to talk about our work” — but across nations and across cultures and across levels of practice. On our CYC-Net e-mail network we are slowly getting used to the exciting reality of on-line workers, students, professors, writers, researchers being able to talk, ask questions, find resources, share opinions — together. I personally

find myself moved each morning as I “do CYC-Net”, by newbies in the field getting the chance to meet with the old-stagers, first-year students talking to famous academics and writers, people in Africa or Europe sharing information with colleagues in North America or Israel. We will all, no doubt, become more and more comfortable doing this.

And while Thom and I (both involved in the editing of journals in the field) strongly promote formal reading in the field, we felt that *CYC-Online* would provide the ideal opportunity for less-formal writing and ideas and news and exchange than we would expect in the scholarly journals.

So that's *CYC-Online* — **the beginning of what may become a useful “alternative press” for those around the world who work with troubled kids and youth at risk**, offering opinion, ideas, writing and news — and perhaps some of the inspiration to complement the perspiration — of this truly remarkable profession of ours which, throughout the world, is like no other profession.

Feel free to participate — read, copy, share what's here — and do let us have your own contributions. (Thousands of our colleagues do not have access to electronic media and rely on printed media. If anything in *CYC-Online* is of interest please feel free to use it in your local newsletters — acknowledge the authors and *CYC-Online*.)

So it remains true: **What's most important in our field is not where you work, but what you do.** Share it with us all.



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Central themes in child and youth care

Mark Krueger

Coming from your center, being there, teaming up, meeting them where they're at, interacting together, counseling on-the-go, creating circles of care, discovering and using self, and caring for one another.

During the past 40 years, significant advances have been made in understanding and developing professional child and youth care with troubled children. In this article, which first appeared in the Journal of Child and Youth Care, 5.1 (1991), the literature is reviewed and concepts, principles and themes for teaching and learning are presented.

Child and youth care is about caring and acting — about being there, thinking on your feet, interacting, and growing with children. It is rich, intense, difficult work that requires passion and commitment. When it goes well, troubled children can make tremendous strides. When it goes poorly, their obstacles may seem almost impossible to overcome.

As important as it has always been, however, child and youth care was not well understood or developed in North America until the middle of the century when a few pioneers began studying and writing about it. Since then there have been numerous contributions to the

knowledge base from practitioners, teachers, and administrators. In this paper their work, and the themes that appear to from it will be reviewed.

A brief chronology of the professional child and youth care literature

According to a study conducted by the National Organization of Child Care Worker Associations (Krueger et al., 1987), professional child and youth care in North America is practiced across a continuum of services including treatment centers, group homes, correctional institu-

tions, special schools, temporary shelter care.

Facilities, independent living programs, foster and natural homes, communities, and street corners. Its roots, however, are in residential treatment. In the 1950's child and youth care advocates began to write about residential treatment as a holistic method that with the proper skill and adequate knowledge of human development could be used to teach, treat, and nurture troubled children.

In *Children Who Hate and Controls from Within: Techniques for the Treatment of the Aggressive Child*, Redl and Wineman (1951, 1957) introduced psychodynamic management techniques and ego support programs for residential care. Redl, a leading pioneer in the professionalization movement, also developed a popular counselling technique called "The Life Space Interview" (1959). Meanwhile, other pioneers like Myer (1958), Burmeister (1961), Trieschman et al. (1969), Foster et al. (1972), and Beker et al. (1972) wrote books about creating the therapeutic milieu. These books, of which *The Other Twenty Three Hours* (Treischman et al., 1969) is best known, provided a foundation for the systematic care of children and youth throughout the course of a day.

Others found new ways of applying psychodynamic, human development, sociological, cultural, and social learning theories. For example, Nicholas Long (Long, 1966; Long, et al., 1976; Powell, 1990), a student of Redl's, developed a child care method (The Conflict Cycle) for dealing with stress and anger.

Maier (1975, 1979, 1987) identified the components of care and described the important role care and caregiving play in human development for children at home and away from home. Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979), the recognized leader of a major paradigm shift in the science of human development, introduced ecological caregiving and caring human connections. Vorath and Brendtro (1974) developed a group method of caregiving that is based on sociological concepts. Weaver (1990) urged greater sensitivity to cultural differences and described methods of cross-cultural care. Several authors advocated for social learning and competency approaches (Durkin, 1990; Ferguson and Anglin, 1985; Fox 1990).

In a comprehensive textbook, *Re-Educating Troubled Youth*, Brendtro and Ness, (1983) reviewed major child and youth care developments and practices from historical as well as modern perspectives. Proposals for improving the group care system, child and youth care environments, and curricula for teaching child and youth care work were also developed (Ainsworth and Fulcher, 1981; Beker and Feuerstein, in press; Krueger, 1986, 1990; Linton, 1969, 1971; Maier, 1987; McElroy, 1988; Reiger and DeVries, 1974; VanderVen, et al., 1982; Whittaker, 1980), as were additional books about techniques (Krueger, 1988; Savicki and Brown, 1981). Recently, Brendtro et al. (1990) presented their research on the Native American Circle of Courage and encouraged members of the field to study and advocate for similar values of belonging, mas-



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tery, independence, and generosity in working with troubled children. Authors have also turned to creative writing as a way to describe the rich and intensive nature of the work and to portray the roles of self discovery and personal growth in child and youth care (Condit, 1989; Fewster, 1990; Krueger 1987a, 1990). Finally, four recent anthologies, *Choices in Caring* (Krueger and Powell, 1990), *Perspectives in Professional Child and Youth Care* (Anglin et al. 1990), *Knowledge Utilization in Child and Youth Care Practice* (Bekerand Eisikovits, in press), and *Challenging the Limits of Care* (Small and Alwon, 1988) include chapters that cover the scope of the field.

A review of these anthologies, the references cited earlier, and articles in *Child and Youth Care Quarterly*, *The Journal of Child and Youth Care*, *The Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, and *The Child Care Administrator*, led to the conclusions discussed in the next sections.

Developmental care

Developmental care has become the central theme in child and youth care practice and in this context Maier's work (1979, 1987) is significant. A collection of his papers, titled *Developmental Group Care of Children: Concepts and Practice* (Maier, 1987), is the most comprehensive analysis of care and its applications. In one pivotal paper, *The Core of Care: Essential Ingredients for the Development of Children at Home and Away from Home* (Maier, 1987, pp. 109-120), he identifies the components in care as bodily comfort, differentiations, rhythmic

interactions, the element of predictability, dependability, and personalized behavioral training. He concludes that child and youth care or caregiving requires sensitivity to and interventions that address:

- (a) children's basic physical needs and privacy requirements;
- (b) their differences in temperament;
- (c) their underlying developmental rhythms;
- (d) their need for predictable responses and dependable adults; and
- (e) the importance of the personal element in behavioral training.

From his work and the work of many of the authors noted above, and others, at least eight basic principles appear to have emerged:

- 1. Care is a central element in building helping relationships;
- 2. When caregiving and care-receiving are mutual, a nurturing human connection is formed (Maier, 1987; Trieschman, 1982);
- 3. The components in the core of care as defined by Maier are essential for the development of children at home and away from home (Maier, 1987, pp. 109-120);
- 4. Child and youth care is a sophisticated practice that requires considerable skill and formal knowledge;
- 5. Effective child and youth care workers are caring people (Austin and Halpin, 1989);

6. Every child needs a connection with “at least one person who is crazy about him or her” (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 5);
7. Children are more apt to respond to psychodynamic, sociological, social learning, ecological, and human development approaches when they feel cared about;
8. Care work takes time, patience, and persistence.

Child and youth care work themes

In comparing personal experiences (practicing and teaching care over twenty years) with the literature, nine additional themes evolved. In the author’s opinion, these themes outline key knowledge areas for teaching and learning in child and youth care.

Coming from your Center

“I tell them to follow their bliss,” Joseph Campbell, the famous mythologist, responded during a television interview in which he was asked what advice he gave students about choosing their work. After devoting his life to studying myths and religions throughout history, he knew that people could only be happy if they made choices that came from their own spiritual center. Al Treischman, a renowned leader in this field, once talked about having a “twinkle in your eye” for working with children (Treischman, 1982) and workers often talk about a feeling they have in their guts for the work. The message here is clear: the primary motive for being a care-

giver has to be that something in your center or gut or heart or all of these is telling you this is what you want to do. Without this feeling, there is not much that can be learned that will be helpful.

Being there

Troubled children have been psychologically and or physically abandoned throughout their lives and their greatest fear is that they will be abandoned again. To trust and grow, they need dependable and predictable connections (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Maier, 1987; Krueger and Powell, 1990) — caregivers who they can count on, who are on hand to talk when they are ready, to support them when they are motivated to learn, to encourage them to try again when they fail (Krueger, 1988) and to also be there when they are neither ready, motivated, nor interested in a helping hand. Thus, coming into the field requires a commitment to being there with an understanding of the time it takes for troubled children to begin to trust adults.

Teaming up

Teamwork is the in thing (Garner, 1988). Decisions about how to treat, educate and care for youth require the insight and consensus of all those who are involved in the lives of the children, including child and youth care workers, administrators, consultants, parents, and the children themselves. Further, these decisions need the mutual support of everyone as they are being implemented.



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Meeting them where they're at

We need to relate to and work with children as developing beings ... It is important to remind ourselves that the developmental approach does not permit preoccupation with deviant, pathological, or defective behavior. ... When an individual's affect, behavior, and cognition are evaluated as distinct processes, care workers can rely on predictable patterns of development progression instead. (Maier, 1987, pp. 2-4).

Maier and the other developmentalists have shown that troubled children can only respond to self and skill-building interventions that are geared to their emotional, cognitive, social, and physical needs, and that are conducted in a process of care (Beker and Feuerstein, in press; Maier, 1987, pp. 109-120). The goal is to meet them where they are at, with child and youth care interventions (Durkin, 1990; Fox, 1990; Juul, 1989; Krueger, 1983; Maier, 1987; Munoz, Savicki and Brown, 1981) that focus on building strengths rather than concentrating on weaknesses.

Interacting together

"When we do things to youth and not with them, it's not going to work so well" (Trieschman, 1982). "Children are not objects, they are subject beings and caring is always an action carried out by one subject being in regard to another subject being" (Austin and Halpin, 1989, p. 2). This requires a nonjudgmental, unconditional caring attitude that is based on valuing and understanding all children as unique individuals who are capable of making

their own choices (Fewster, 1990). Care-givers can never consciously allow or give permission to children to do anything physically or emotionally harmful to themselves or others, but their greatest hope has to be that through their teaching, counselling, and nurturing interactions with children, the children will learn and be empowered to make the best choices for themselves (Krueger and Powell, 1990).

Counseling on the go

Crises are opportune times for adults to model and teach social and emotional competence ... For children under stress we must interpret adult intervention as an act of support and protection rather than hostility. ... We must acknowledge and accept the feelings of children without necessarily accepting the way in which they choose to express them (Excerpts from Nicholas Long's principles of the Conflict Cycle as summarized by Powell, 1990, p. 26).

Troubled children need counselling at bedtime, during kickball, in the arts room, and during fights and temper tantrums as much as during scheduled office visits; and no matter how tough or aggressive or passive they are at times, the prevailing underlying feelings they experience are anxiety, fear, sadness, and depression (Long et al., 1976; Redl, 1959; Trieschman, et al., 1969). With the use of psychodynamic (Long et al., 1976; Powell, 1990; Redl, 1959) guided group interaction (Brendtro and Ness, 1983), social learning (Fox, 1990), creative/ expressive (Juul, 1989; Pirozak, 1990) and self discovery (Fewster,

1990) techniques, they need help to learn alternative methods of expression and to cope with these feelings as they surface throughout the course of daily living.

Creating circles of care

In traditional Native society, it was the duty of all adults to serve as teachers for younger persons. Child rearing was not just the responsibility of biological parents but children were nurtured within a larger circle of significant others. From the earliest days of life, the child experienced a network of caring adults (Brendtro et al., 1990, p. 37).

In studying the Native American circle of courage, Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (1990) understood the ecology of care. Today in caregiving, as in most other helping professions, it is widely acknowledged that parents, siblings, relatives, helpers and members of the community are all part of a troubled child's circle of care, and long term change is dependent on making this circle functional again (Brendtro et al., 1990). Thus every effort has to be made to conduct care giving interventions in homes and communities, and in harmony with familial (Garfat, 1990) communal, cultural (Weaver, 1990), and interdisciplinary team systems (Fulcher, 1981; Garner, 1977, 1982, 1988; Krueger, 1987b; VanderVen, 1979) that are interconnected with a child's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Discovering and using self

"Charolette was inviting me to consider the idea that

self-examination and discovery is a process of observing self in action. At the broader level this is compatible with the preference for cerebral realms of theory and philosophy to follow experience, rather than vice versa" (Fewster, 1990, p. 147). "The idea is that when we are experiencing another person, particularly at the feeling or emotional level, we are actually experiencing ourselves" (Fewster, 1990, p. 42).

These selected quotes come from conversations between a worker and his supervisor in *Being in Child Care: A Journey into Self* (Fewster, 1990), which beautifully exemplifies and summarizes the belief that a full understanding of and relationship formation with children can only be achieved through self awareness and discovery (Fewster, 1990). In child and youth care, workers with the help of supervisors, teammates and teachers have to constantly strive to understand their own feelings and experiences in relationship to how they influence interactions with children and families.

Caring for one another

"It is inherent that caregivers be nurtured themselves and experience sustained caring support in order to transmit this quality of care to others" (Maier, 1987, p. 119). Child and youth care is difficult and demanding work. To overcome the stress and fatigue, managers, supervisors and practitioners in professional child and youth care organizations have to do everything possible to create a supportive, caring environment for themselves (Bieman, 1987; Krueger, 1986a,



1986b, 1987b; Mattingly, 1977) with the awareness that the patterns of care they create for one another are interconnected with the patterns of care they create for the children.

In professional child and youth care, coming from your center, being there, teaming up, meeting them where they're at, interacting together, counselling on the go, creating circles of care, discovering and using self, and caring for one another, are actions, thoughts and feelings that when woven together provide a foundation for effective daily interactions. Further, it is the holistic mix of teaching, counselling, and nurturing approaches as summarized above rather than any single approach that makes child and youth care unique from other helping roles.

Conclusion

The growing knowledge base and the need for care

The references in this article are representative of the work of many authors who drew upon both practice experiences and work from related fields such as psychology, special education, social work, human development, and the arts to collectively create a rich and exciting knowledge base for a new profession. A knowledge base, however, is a dynamic entity which is constantly changing and growing and open to interpretation. This contribution is the result of one effort to summarize and organize the literature at a given point and time. The goals have been to provide an outline for curriculum devel-

opment and to encourage further investigation. With the changes in contemporary child rearing patterns and the rising numbers of poor and dysfunctional families (Carman and Small, 1988; FICE, 1988; Mech, 1988), the need to learn and practice child and youth care is greater than ever before.

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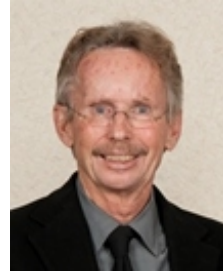
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Pardon me, do you have a cold or flu? Or are you just a “sneezaholic”?

Lorraine Fox

*Mistaking ‘symptoms’ as ‘problems’ and
missing the chance to be therapeutic*

As I approach my 44th year working with mistreated children and youth and those who serve them, I am continually discouraged by how often I encounter child care workers, foster parents, and others who confuse “symptoms” with “problems”. Symptoms are a gift from God/nature, allowing us to know when something is not right with our

system, so that we can attend to it and give our bodies the care it needs. How would I know I was coming down with a cold, or flu, if my body didn’t ache, sneeze, cough, and generally feel bad? How would I know that I had an infection if I didn’t run a temperature? Sneezing, coughing, aches, and temperatures are not problems, but signals – signs of distress that cue us of the need to engage in caretaking activities.

Why is it then, when we see signs of “distress” in our children and



youth, most often expressed in unacceptable and challenging behavior; that we are inclined to interpret the “symptom” as the problem, and then, rather than engaging in caretaking activities we move into a punishing mode of attempting to stifle the symptoms rather than using the symptoms to give us information that our children’s systems are suffering and need healing! We would not yell at an asthmatic child for “wheezing” and tell them that they will suffer an unwanted consequence if they don’t stop! We would, instead, investigate why the child’s lungs were having trouble breathing, and investigate a therapeutic (healing) intervention, such as an inhaler. If that same child is kicking the chair in front of them, touching other children as they walk by, jumping out of their seat when told to sit, looking around the room rather than focusing on their schoolwork, we turn the behavior into a “discipline” issue and begin threatening consequences, rather than investigating whether the child is suffering from a problem, such as ADHD. In other words, ADHD would be the problem, the unwanted behaviors are the symptoms of the problem.

A couple of weeks ago I asked a group of people I was working with why child abuse was a crime? I got many answers, but none got to the heart of the problem. They explained that children were defenseless, which is true but is a circumstance, not an explanation of the reason for criminality. They explained that adults had no right to hurt children, which again does not explain why we have decided they do not have the right. I

told the group that my answer for the criminalization of child abuse is that maltreatment forever changes a child, and deprives them of the ability to grow up and develop as God intended them to. These “changes” are to their hearts and minds. But, we cannot see their hearts and minds. What we can see is their behavior. And their behavior gives us a glimpse into their hearts and minds, and with the “caring” eyes that are part of our title, shouldn’t we take the time and trouble to try to discern the hurt that is causing the behavior that is so challenging for us? Michael Trout, the Director of the Infant-Parent Institute in Champaign, Illinois said:

The interactive and affective “language” of young children is a worthy language, deserving of our attention and respect.

In his professional work Trout focuses his attention on babies and very young children, but those who have worked with troubled teens know that the same could be said for older children, who have not found a way to put their pain into words or into healthy forms of expression, and who “talk” to us with behavior that is provocative, difficult, and sometimes ever dangerous. How wonderful for kids it would be if we could make a commitment to “listen to their behavior”! What are they trying to tell us? Where is their pain? What are they unable to recover from?

Charles Appelstein, author of *The Gus Chronicles* (required reading for all working in group care) states the case



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beautifully when he writes: “ Misbehavior is nothing more than a neon light flashing – I need help! I need help! Not enough people see the lights!” The challenge for all of us, however, is that *behavior is not diagnostic*. The “misbehavior” does not necessarily tell us what kind of help a child or young person needs. For example, requests for workshops on “oppositional behavior” are common. This particular form of behavior, which many adults experience as very challenging, does not have a single cause. Many different children and teens, with many different backgrounds, exhibit this kind of behavior, for quite different reasons. For example, neglected children are often oppositional because they are quite unaccustomed to being “parented”. Unattached children/teens are often oppositional because they disdain adults (for good reason) and don’t really care what we want them to do. Children who have histories of being “controlled” (sexual abuse victims, for example) are often leery now of going along with adults since in the past going along (with unwanted sex, with secret keeping) has gotten them only misery and torment, and they feel safest when being defiant. Children with neurological problems, such as learning disabilities, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder are often oppositional because they know in advance they will be unable to do what is being requested in a way that pleases the adult asking, which will result in negative interaction, so they “refuse” to do what they are told. So, defiant/oppositional behavior is a symptom of a problem – since most chil-

dren/youth are inclined to do what adults ask them to do – but we cannot be sure of the exact nature of the problem without some knowledge or investigation. Child and youth care workers, foster parents, special education teachers, spend a considerable amount of time in their “Colombo trench coats” trying to figure out what a particular form of behavior might be signaling. But we should know one thing for sure – difficult, challenging, unacceptable, or whatever label we choose to use – behavior is telling us that something is wrong, and what is wrong is not the behavior, but the problem motivating the behavior. Do we “care” enough to take the time to figure out how to help the kid with their problem, or do we choose the easy way out and just try to modify or eliminate the symptom!

If a person shows up at the hospital with a headache, a doctor can take the easy way out and prescribe two aspirins and a call in the morning, or s/he can care enough about the person to figure out what is causing the headache. And a headache does not tell us much about the cause. What we do know is that most people don’t have headaches and that *something is wrong*. Tracking down what’s wrong may take a little time, or may require quite a bit of time and trouble. Perhaps the person is suffering from stress overload; perhaps it’s allergies; perhaps they need glasses; or, perhaps, they have a brain tumor! How much harm might be done if no one cares enough to find out what’s wrong, but only tells the person to take aspirin, quit complaining, or

implies that negative consequences will follow if the headache does not stop.

Children who were exposed to drugs and alcohol while they were still in the womb may not be able to learn like other children, may not remember from twelve o'clock to noon, and may not be able to focus on tasks. Children who have not been responded to when they were completely vulnerable, as babies, may develop into very cynical, mistrusting children and teens. Children who have been neglected and who did not have their needs met may do things like steal food from stores or other children. Children who are being physically abused by adult "bullies" in their homes might become bullies in the schoolyard. Children with immature or inadequate parents might have learned to parent themselves and might strongly resist being parented by others. Children who were never played with might not know how to play, may not play "fair", or may not follow rules when interacting with others. Children who witnessed domestic violence in their home might feel that women are weak, and useless in providing protection and therefore do not have to be obeyed, or may believe that there are only two kinds of people in the world – those who give it, and those who get it. They might identify with the victim, and become passive themselves; or they might be frightened of the passivity and helplessness they witnessed, and figure out that aggression is the only way to avoid such a fate. Children who have been sexually abused may be traumatized and symptomatically "reenact", behaving

provocatively, may have learned to be good liars to protect the secret and thus avoid the threats they were given, may be suspicious, having learned that adults who seem "nice" may have agendas that cause more pain than they can handle. *These are our children!*

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we responded to their behavior as we would respond to a child who had had an arm amputated; or as we would to a child with cancer; or as we would to a child who couldn't run because they were in a wheelchair. Why do we respond, instead, as if the children who we *know* were wounded by abuse or neglect, were willfully demonstrating such unacceptable behavior, and could, in fact, cease and desist immediately if we could threaten them with a good enough negative consequence, or motivate them to behave like other children by offering good enough rewards. When we know that people hurt them, why do we insist that a "program", and not people, will heal them!

The research is in and we know the results of our uncaring ways! Programs with a one-size-fits-all approach expect every child to respond to uniform interventions, as if a child with a brain tumor will respond the same as a child with allergies. Punishing children for their symptoms will not make them better. They may learn to "mask" their symptoms to please us or to get their privileges. An unbelievable number of our youth go on to very unfortunate adult lives. Very disproportionate numbers of our youth end up homeless, jobless, or incarcerated.



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Too many of our youth become teen parents, unable to care for either themselves or the children they create. Too many of our children never complete their education because they confuse doing well in school with intelligence, and believe themselves “unable” to learn when we are the ones unable to teach them. Too many of our children describe themselves as “failures”, when in fact we are the ones who have failed them.

* * *

One hundred issues of a Journal is a wonderful thing! One hundred readers of the Journal is a wonderful thing. One hundred lovers of children and teens, telling one hundred others they know that our joy is to have the opportunity to heal those who come to us with hearts and minds wounded beyond our ability to comprehend, is a wonderful thing. Each of us who finds our way into the lives of these wounded children of God, give one hundred thanks each day for the privilege of looking beyond the symptoms to the “invisible wounds” caused by abuse and neglect, and finding ways to respond with kindness, and thoughtfulness, and accepting the challenges of being on the other end of symptomatic behavior as a blessing. We are the ones who try to heal the pain, because they show us they are hurting.



LORRAINE FOX holds a doctorate in clinical psychology and a doctoral certificate in organizational development, and is a Certified Child Care Worker. Lorraine has been a direct service worker, a supervisor, a clinical director, an Executive Director and Assistant Professor. She has trained and consulted across the United States and in Australia, Canada, Guam, England, Scotland and Czechoslovakia. She was awarded the Outstanding Service Award for Excellence in Teaching by the UC-Davis and was a consulting editor for the 'Journal of Child and Youth Care'.

Relationship

Henry Maier

Relationship formation actually entails one of the most basic interpersonal human strivings – *the salutary experience of interconnectedness* where each person lends energy and rootedness to the other. Child and youth care relationships implicitly entail mutual personal interactions. In child and youth

care the youngsters ideally find both stimulation for their life experience at hand as well as verification as worthwhile beings. In turn, the caregivers experience

confirmation of their competence as workers and valued adults. The need for relationship formation has been stressed in child and youth care fields for a long time (Parry, 1985, 1). The commitment of a professional journal publication to this exact topic might

be a unique venture. Using this terminology the *Journal*, legitimately, wants to highlight the care relationship between workers and care receivers as the primary vehicle for facilitating the service workers' change efforts. However, it seems our professional experience and knowledge is

now tilting toward an enlarged frame of reference. Perhaps in the near future our endeavors toward effective individualized care will no longer be wrapped in the almost slogan-like term:

relationship formation. Recently, our greater scrutiny of the relationship phenomenon makes us aware of the vast range of primary variables entailed. This is especially true when we examine the significance of interactional experience contained in such relationship.



Also with the present trends toward the scientific, the humanistic fervor associated with relationship formation now seems to approach a blending of science and humanism (Alwon & Small, 1987). Interpersonal interactions are now reviewed for their affect, behavioral, cognitive, and contextual dimensions rather than merely for their relationship matrices. This shift to the *components* of relationship reflects our intent to care more discriminately but not necessarily less ardently! (This tilt, however, has a built-in risk where greater attention to the parts might result in losing sight of the whole.) It is interesting to note that attention by the care fields to interactional processes is really part of what is occurring in general in the human science realm as is so graphically portrayed in the indexing material once found under “relationship,” presently cited under “interaction” (e.g., Bredakamp, 1985, 59).

The relationship dilemma

Formation of relationship has been for a long time viewed as the “beachhead of successful child [and youth] encounters” (Brendtro, 1969, 53-99). It was posed as though the formation of relationship is the prelude to potential effective work. Actually, this belief holds much wisdom. Close personal interactions, well focused personal investment and mutual give-and-take are paramount for jointly achieving a targeted change in the personal, group or contextual situation (Parry, 1985). At the same time the above formulation perpetuates two erroneous assumptions: (1) that

there is something like a relationship; and (2) that relationship formation precedes work on the task at hand. There is neither “a relationship” nor a state of a relationship. Relationship is actually a popular term for innumerable forms and degrees of mutually achieved processes of interactions, and these might utilize simultaneously, affective, behavioral, and cognitive components. Personal interactions begin, maintain, mar or strengthen the qualities of the relationship whenever persons are linked together in the same sphere of events. The once held notion of forming a relationship as a prelude to work is being replaced by an awareness that relationships are formed by the interactive process of investing energy and struggling together from the onset of the encounter. Most important is the fact that relationships change with the process of interactions rather than interactions changing with the progress in relationships.

Another dilemma exists with the concept of relationship. And that is that there has been a tendency to envisage it primarily as one-directional and located with the efforts of the worker and the ones in charge. The act of making connections and forming a bond was seen in the hands of the worker with regard to the residents; the group counselor, in connection with his or her group; and the administrator in terms of her or his staff. Actually, however, within our contemporary perspective (Kuhn, 1970; Marmor, 1984), meaningful human relationships emerge out of interactions: namely the interweaving of

complementary actions and the linking of dissonant actions within a mutually established relevant context. Again, the focus shifts from the generic aspect of relationship and is expanded to include two definitively accountable phenomena: *interactions* and *context*.

Relationship components

The importance of *personal investment* in interpersonal relations has been well substantiated by the past decades' research endeavors on attachment formation (Ainsworth, 1982; Ainsworth & Blehar, 1978; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Sroufe, 1978). Attachment and the inherent attachment behaviors are now seen as essential components of close relationship experience (Maier, 1987, 121-128). Furthermore, for the task of child and youth care workers, it has been recently recognized that the relationship variables of "being attached" and "dependent" are desirable; these behaviors at points have to be nurtured in order to assure healthy development for an individual. In fact, secure dependence and attachment leads to stable independence and a sense of rootedness in the very area where personal reassurance and dependable nurturance has just been sought (Ainsworth & Blehar, 1978; Maier, 1987, Sroufe, 1978). These references to research findings can be best summed up in Urie Bronfenbrenner's vehement pronouncement, "Every child needs at least one person who is really crazy about him or her" (quoted in Maier, 1987, 128).

Recent research and practice interest in the interactive factors of human relations offer concrete steps and directions for child and youth care toward competent and effective care work. Just to cite a few:

- the essence of mutuality in relationships (Lewis & Rosenblum, 1979)
- the importance of dealing with the care receiver's responses rather than the worker's own input (Maier, 1987, Ch. I & II; Tronick et al., 1980)
- the way each individual impacts his or her own development and relationship bonds (Lerner & Busch-Rossnagel, 1981)
- the impact of relevant intervening systems of interactive relationship progressions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Maas, 1984)
- the force of congruent rhythmicity as a potent power in fostering togetherness within a relationship progression (Davis, 1982; Maier, 1987, 46-48).

All of these furnish rich new developmental knowledge and appropriate practice suggestions for the central aspect of human interactions inherent in the child and youth care relationship. Our attention is drawn to the detailed constitutional parts rather than the global and easily elusive whole.

The significance of gender in the care relationship. Research findings within the past years have made us conscious of apparent differences between a female and a male mode of relationship. Carol



Gilligan's publication *In A Different Voice* (1982) startled many of us with her research findings that male thinking and values tend to be problem-solving oriented with autonomous, linear causality modality as central relationship image. She further poses that female thinking and value orientation in human relationships tend to be multi-dimensional, integrative and akin to a holistic modality (Gilligan, 1982; Ivey, 1986, 274). Gilligan's findings, though still inconclusive and challenged by others (Skolnick, 1985, 399), probably have profound implications for relationship formation in the human relations fields. Hitherto, we have thought of professional care relationships as a uni-track affair for male and female alike. Now, we are faced with new and perplexing possible variations in relationship patterns and objectives, depending on whether we deal with a female or male relationship interaction. A new variable and challenge arises for the practitioner, supervisor, policy maker, as well as the ones we serve.

In conclusion

Relationship issues have been viewed here for their *interactive* components and for their contextual circumstances. We hold that a relationship is neither won nor lost by one party. Instead, relationships are in a constant flux, reflecting the mutual as well as differential experience of the persons interacting.

Hopefully, the reader noted the omission of expectations and admonitions about what a practitioner should be or

should *not do*. "Relationship" is neither an end nor a means factor. Instead, relationship processes, or more precisely – purposeful interactions – necessitate focused investment of personal energy through the care workers' active involvement. They must risk personal encounters, interacting as persons rather than as role performers, technicians, or agents of a program (Maier, 1987). Essentially, whether at this point the reader conceives child and youth care work as primarily relationship-building or as mutual, intense caregiver care receiver interactions, the challenge remains the same. In which way can each child and youth care worker utilize the minutia of a situation to enhance personal experience and expand social experience. Such a challenge is central for all child and youth care work today.

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Originally from: Maier, H. (1987) Editorial, *Journal of Child Care*, Vol. 3 (3)



HENRY MAIER was our North American grandfather in the Child and Youth Care field. Go [here](#) to learn about him and his contribution to our field.



An important characteristic of a child and youth care approach to practice involves *Examining Context*. This means seeking a conscious awareness of how everything that occurs for a young person or her family does so in a personal, cultural and socio-economic context that is unique to a particular place or places, and to the history of family members who lived there. This got me thinking about how the same might be said for The International Child and Youth Care Network @

www.cyc-net.org and *CYC-Online* as we celebrate its bicentenary. Examining

the context in which *CYC-Online* began offering an electronic library to the world of child and youth care yielded a number of interesting points of reference.

Let's spend a few moments considering what was happening in and around our field at the end of the 20th century when www.cyc-net.org got started. What was happening in the world, particularly in Cape Town and Montreal – in 1999 – where Brian and Thom launched a vision with the assistance of Martin Stabrey? According to Wikipedia, the earliest internet webpage can be traced back to 1991 and after that, there was rapid growth

of the web between 1992 and 1995. The launch of CYC-Net followed a period of web commercialisation between 1995 and 1998. *CYC-Online* was fully operational – albeit operating on a financial shoe-string –

by 2001 when the dot.com bubble burst. I feel certain that the dot.com bubble bursting had limited impact on *CYC-Online* directly. It continued operating on a shoe-string – interestingly enough, just like a lot of child and youth care services around the world!

CYC-Online @

www.cyc-net.org started the same year that the Euro was introduced across

Europe, except for in the United Kingdom. The Euro is, interestingly enough, now prominently back in the news with Greece – the Cradle of Democracy nearing bankruptcy – as we celebrate this *CYC-Online* bicentenary! 1999 was the year that Nelson Mandela stepped down as President of South Africa, although the first issues of *CYC-Online* were published while he was still President. Mandela was replaced by Thabo Mbeki in the 1999 mid-year elections, with Jacob Zuma elected his Deputy. In some ways, it feels like *Back to the Future*!

Examining Context and the Bicentenary Issue of *CYC-Online*

Leon Fulcher



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That same year, Air Canada took over Canadian Airlines and the Inuit homeland of Nunavut was created from the eastern portion of Canada's Northwest Territories, becoming that country's third territory. In Europe, NATO forces bombed Serbian forces in what became known as the Kosovo War. And US President Bill Clinton was acquitted at the end of impeachment proceedings in the United States Senate following his encounters with Monica Lewinsky.

Whether directly or indirectly *CYC-Online* owes a debt of gratitude to Bill Gates. Along with other internet gurus, the internet had become far more accessible throughout the whole world by the end of the 20th century! Without those advances, *CYC-Net* and *CYC-Online* were little more than the dream of visionaries. In 1999, Bill Gates became the wealthiest person in the world due to the increased value of Microsoft. While there is no causal relationship between the launch of *CYC-Online* and Bill Gates' fortune – sadly – I thought it was a nice coincidence, nonetheless!

The first circumnavigation of the globe in a hot air balloon was achieved in 1999 with a non-stop, non-refuelled flight travelling 42,810 km after 19 days, 21 hours and 55 minutes! It's funny to think that before 1999, it took about the same amount of time for founding *CYC-Online* Editors Brian Gannon and Thom Garfat, to exchange letters and cassette tape recordings. The fledgling idea of an *International Child and Youth Care Network* first relied on the postal services of Apartheid South Africa and then the beginnings of the post-Apart-

heid era before the internet was fully operational. Information exchanges and international networking between Cape Town and Montreal via the Canadian postal service was how *CYC-Online* started.

1999 was also the year that Tori Murden became the first woman to cross the Atlantic Ocean alone by rowboat, after rowing for 81 days and 2,962 nautical miles. This, too, provides additional context to international information exchanges. Stop for a moment and consider how long it took to order a book in a local book store in Cape Town, at prohibitive prices in the local currency – or anywhere else in the so-called developing world. Expect delivery 3-4 months later by surface mail from North American or British publishers. Most child and youth care learning materials at that time were written and published by North American and British authors. Since all imported books are still prohibitively expensive in South Africa, *CYC-Online* offered the potential to reach child and youth care workers in the developing world to provide quality education and training materials at no additional cost to end users.

Lest we forget, 1999 is the year when Littleton, Colorado teenagers Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold opened fire on their teachers and classmates, killing 12 students and one teacher before shooting themselves in, what became known as, the Columbine High School Massacre. Alongside *CYC-Online* grew the *CYC-Net* discussion group where child and youth care workers from around the world can access a network of co-workers



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and professional colleagues – for advice, guidance and counsel. Working with children and young people who have experienced trauma, abuse and emotional pain presents many challenges for the emotional and physical wellbeing of workers engaged in daily life space care. As we celebrate this *CYC-Online* bicentenary, we also acknowledge the 4000-plus members of the discussion group – always ready to offer suggestions to questions posed by members located anywhere in the world.

For the past sixteen years, *CYC-Online* has provided anyone – wherever they live – with the world's most highly specialised child and youth care library located in cyberspace. With its Google search engine facility ready to assist, someone living anywhere in the world can access specialist learning material about specific work place challenges that may assist in their support as well as continuing learning and development. Nobody – regardless of job title across the field of child and youth care – is constrained from accessing specialist reading materials that may be of direct assistance to them in their specific work circumstances within this field. Two things restrict any child and youth care worker, foster parent kinship grandparent, social worker, teacher or manager from making ready use of specialist materials directly related to their work, through *CYC-Online*: (1) knowing about *CYC-Online*; and (2) getting into the habit of building 30-minutes of 'personal and professional development time' into every work week, starting with a read of *CYC-Online* each month. If you don't look after your own per-

sonal and professional development, in your own time, why should you expect anyone else to look after you?

Let's take that argument about looking out for your own personal and professional development needs a step further. How many of you reading this bicentenary issue of *CYC-Online* know about the best bargain going for low-cost, quality learning materials that address contemporary issues and specialist features across your child and youth care field? I'm talking about the new *CYC-Online* companion e-journal – *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice* – which publishes four issues per year sent directly to your personal email address – to be read on your laptop, iPad or tablet?

A Special Bicentenary Offer is available for an RCYCP annual subscription for only US\$15 – less than the price of a cup of coffee per issue! (See offer over the page). Show me a better high quality investment in your own personal and professional development in the field of child and youth care! But then, do you actually pay attention to, and look out for your own personal and professional development? Lots of recent graduates say they have 'learned about this stuff during college or university'. Yet it would seem that a lot of 'newbies' don't seem to have worked out what personal and professional development actually means, from week to week. Learning to 'look after and nurture' yourself is likely to be a determining factor in whether someone stays practicing in this field, with its – at times – high adrenaline work demands,



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The clever readers amongst you will quickly find the RCYCP advertisement somewhere near. Fill out the application form provided and use PayPal to start receiving the next four issues of the journal *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*. You may want to tell other people about this *CYC-Online* Bicentenary Special Offer! Subscriptions received before publication of *CYC-Online* Issue 201 will receive – at no extra cost – a complimentary copy of RCYCP Volume 28(2), the special issue on *Beginnings!* You won't regret making this truly worthwhile investment in your continuing personal and professional education and learning!

Meanwhile, let's get back to our examination of context in this bicentenary themed issue of *CYC-Online*. It was interesting to recall that 1999 was the year that *Shakespeare in Love* won the Oscar for Best Picture. In Europe, the 1999 UEFA Champions League Final (think world football!) took place at Barcelona's Camp Nou Stadium with the English side Manchester United defeating the German side Bayern Munich by a score of 2-1. In the US (where they call football soccer), the Denver Broncos won the Super Bowl (that other kind of football which the rest of the World calls Gridiron) That same year, Canadians tried not to watch the Dallas Stars beat the Buffalo Sabres in the Stanley Cup Finals (which is hockey not football). Wayne Gretsky's retirement in 1999 perhaps had something to do with Canadian teams not making it to the final.



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Since the end of the last century, there have also been many changes in the national and international policy arenas. Children's Rights have become a major campaign through country ratifications of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. According to their international website, UNICEF *has learned through experience that problems that go unmeasured often go unsolved. ... UNICEF gathers evidence on the situation of children and women around the world and uses this knowledge to inform national and global decision-making with the objective of improving children's well-being (accessed here:*

<http://www.unicef.org/statistics/>). With challenges facing the world's children such as those listed below, we mark this CYC-Online bicentenary in the full knowledge that there is much work yet to do. Roll on Issue 201 as we set sights on celebrating CYC-Online 250 (the Sestercentennial)! Hyperlinks have been retained in the information below, for anyone wishing to follow up on any of these research threads about challenges facing children and young people in our World – not just where you live! Thank you CYC-Online for helping us be part of a world network of people who worry about and care for children and young people.

- 17,000 children die every day, mostly from preventable or treatable causes.
- The births of nearly 230 million children under age 5 worldwide (about one in three) have never been officially recorded, depriving them of their right to a name and nationality.

- 2.5 billion people lack access to improved sanitation, including 1 billion who are forced to resort to open defecation for lack of other options.
- Out of an estimated 35 million people living with HIV, over 2 million are 10 to 19 years old, and 56 per cent of them are girls.
- Globally, about one third of women aged 20 to 24 were child brides.
- Every 10 minutes, somewhere in the world, an adolescent girl dies as a result of violence.
- Nearly half of all deaths in children under age 5 are attributable to undernutrition. This translates into the unnecessary loss of about 3 million young lives a year.

Kia Kaha! Stand Tall!

LEON FULCHER, MSW, PhD, has worked for more than forty years as a social worker in residential child and youth care work, and as foster carer in different parts of the world. As a practitioner, supervisor, manager, researcher, scholar and author, Leon has given special consideration to working across cultures and geographies, how this impacts on team working, supervision and caring for caregivers, as well as promoting learning with adult carers. His practice aims involve making moments meaningful in the lives of children and young people whilst nurturing and promoting developmental outcomes that matter for them and their families, wherever they live.





South African musings on the occasion of the 200th issue of CYC-Online

Merle Allsopp

CYC-Online started when South Africa was in its democratic honeymoon period. Anything seemed possible in life at that point. If we had come through apartheid as a unifying country, where a new, just social order was being born, then surely it was possible for *anything* that one dreamed of in life to happen?

South African child and youth care work was experiencing a season in the sun on that honeymoon. Beyond the fragmentation of separate administrations for children of difference races, our country was carefully creating a welfare service policy environment that could provide not just for 10% of the population, but for *all* children – and do so in a manner

that drew on local ways of doing things, and indigenous capacity. The child and youth care agenda was given a thorough hearing in the reworking of national welfare provision.

In the same month that *CYC-Online* was born, South African child and youth care celebrated the inauguration of the first South African degree in child and youth care work. In order to create the learning material we drew heavily on literature from afar. Our limited resources were liberally augmented by the writings of thoughtful, intelligent and articulate Canadian, American and European writers. We worked hard to make that first degree as ‘African’ as we could, but we could



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only create the learning material from writing from a world very different from our own.

We were extremely grateful for those writings. They provided the theory in child and youth care work that we needed – they articulated what we were doing and gave us the words to teach people to do child and youth care work at tertiary level for the first time. In many ways the development of the field in South Africa is testimony to what can be achieved not only through local cooperation and commitment to a cause, but through international commitment to the development of child and youth care services.

And so, a few thoughts on the auspicious occasion of the 200th issue of *CYC Online*...

Firstly, *CYC-Online*, born on the African continent, took an extraordinary, egalitarian step towards harnessing the power of global (English-speaking) child and youth care work thinking and knowledge for all, *for free*. It was audacious in its generosity. This initiative represents a commitment to the children and families served by child and youth care workers the world over. The impact of it cannot be underestimated in growing child and youth care work in weak currency countries where access to expensive professional journals is limited. And *CYC-Online* has always further allowed South Africa's NACCW to reprint in its local journal, articles for circulation for those without internet access.

CYC-Online has gone on over these 200 issues to create a rich and wondrous pantry of important learning and knowledge – written by people who, I think,

must recognize the value of their work for those who do not have access to mainstream child and youth care work literature. We are appreciative of the revolutionary element of *CYC-Online* that works against a 'publish while others perish' approach. To the founders, thank you for your vision of making child and youth care literature available across the English-speaking world. This was a political decision to be admired. To all involved in providing material for this extraordinary initiative over the years, you are applauded for an invaluable contribution to the development of our field in places like South Africa, where educated, informed child and youth care workers are desperately needed.

Secondly, 200 issues of *CYC-Online* later, I am mindful that over these 200 months the 'local content' of *CYC-Online* *has not* increased dramatically. Nor has the level of contribution from other less developed countries been too regular. This is not, I hasten to say, to be blamed on the editors. On the contrary, the invitations to African writers have been many and frequent. But, as Virginia Woolf so eloquently said, in order to write one must have 'a room of one's own' – material resources and the time to be able to spend writing. Many child and youth care workers still lack the resources of time and space (and access to the internet) to be able to fully participate in this commendable globalisation effort. And therein lies a challenge to child and youth care workers in resource-poor settings – to move beyond the *doing* in the profession to *writing about what we*

are doing – so that others may ‘do’ better with other children and families. The challenge is there for us to show up, and find rooms of our own.

A third thought ... *CYC-Online* has achieved something else of great value. It has created a network of child and youth care people who are cooperating across continents to make a contribution to the field outside of a formal organizational structure. I heard it said that the reason we humans are ascendant as a species is that we are able to cooperate in large scale – and to do so flexibly. The ‘global’ nature of *CYC-Online* certainly demonstrates flexible and large scale cooperation! And so CYC-Net has formed one of the most significant networks of child and youth care people on the planet.

A question then arises as to whether this network can be further exploited for the value of children and families. We see in the move of CYC-Net in partnering with FICE International in the hosting of the next FICE/CYC-Net congress, a trend towards more global cooperation in our field. We see the network being used to bring people together who would otherwise have been unlikely to connect – which holds the possibility of promoting collective effort in child and youth care work. This is a commendable step in using this network most profitably for those whom we serve.

And as we celebrate this 200th issue of *CYC-Online*, and the innovativeness of Brian Gannon and Thom Garfat in creating something brand new and different in *CYC-Online*, it seems to me that the

world has never before in my lifetime needed collective positive action quite as it does now. All of us child and youth care people who are watching refugees try to find a place to be are, I think, overwhelmed by the sense of wanting to do something to help in this situation – and in so many others where children and families are suffering across the globe.

Is it time perhaps for us as child and youth care workers to rediscover our activist roots? How do we as a field contribute locally, regionally, nationally and internationally towards changing the circumstances in which children suffer and then need our services so desperately? Individual effort is far less complicated than collective action. That we all know. And much of child and youth care theory is about individual level action – child and youth care practice. But our profession also calls on us to be advocates for children and families. Should we not as a ‘global’ child and youth care work profession, be responding to the call of our times to work towards a collective agenda for action aimed at systemic, global changes for children and families?

I see the cooperation between CYC-Net and FICE as a significant step in a direction towards maximizing the cooperative efforts of the child and youth care work sector for children and families on a larger scale. Is this not a step towards unifying the child and youth care work networks of caring people –and the possibility of enhancing our individual contributions through collective effort?



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The times surely call on us to be not only child and youth care workers, but child and youth care work activists. The step has been taken to link this important network with other child and youth care networks. Can we now be using this platform and this set of connections to hone our international agenda for action in the child and youth care profession; to promote child and youth care work activism – and to take the next steps in creating a just social order?

Viva CYC-Online! Viva!



MERLE ALLSOPP is a child and youth care worker with online and management experience in residential care. For the past two decades she has worked for South Africa's National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW), most of this time as executive director. She obtained a Masters degree in child and youth care work cum laude, and studied the growth of the South African child and youth care field. Merle has been elected to serve two terms on the Professional Board for Child and Youth Care, the statutory regulatory structure for child and youth care workers in South Africa. She edits South Africa's regular publication Child and Youth Care Work, and holds the position of Secretary-General of FICE South Africa.

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Hope in Moments of Pain

James Freeman

Relational Child and Youth Care exists at the crossroads of pain and hope in the lives of others. This article highlights some examples of pain young people experience and offers insight into the subtle ways child and youth care practitioners offer hope through their interactions with young people.

Keywords

relational child and youth care, pain, hope, professional identity

There is too much pain in our world. I am sure many of us have differing reasons or interpretations about why and

whether it serves a higher purpose. But it is there. We hear of it in the news. When we're in sync with others we can sense it. Sometimes even in a crowd. We feel and touch it in our daily interaction with young people and families. Think of the pain in these recent circumstances I have seen:

Sara is seventeen years old. She is the mother of Peter and they are living on the streets with no known family members to which she can turn.

Adrian is a young father. He was laid off his job four weeks ago and is trying to figure out how to pay rent and support his family.

Dennis is sixteen years old. He attempted to hang himself at home because he is bullied by a gang at school.

Cameron, a twelve year old boy, is on the run. He feels uncomfortable in his own body because he has never experienced a safe environment.

A group of four siblings was placed in the local emergency shelter after witnessing their mother's boyfriend murder her in their home.

I wish these were fictitious stories, sensationalized in some way. But they are real – with names and faces. It is these people we show up for each day.

Child and youth care exists because there are hurting people in our world. They experience pain internally and often express it in pain-based behavior (Anglin, 2014). Young people who confuse, trouble



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or scare us are often living with deep pain which the human brain and body were not designed to experience over extended periods of time. Relational Child and Youth Care enters into experience with others in real time as they live their lives (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012) to feel and share the burden of such pain with others.

Mark Krueger once said that “motion is a defense against the pain inside” (2015, p. 199). This motion can be outward: running or fighting against others. It can be internal distress and unease. It is here we have the opportunity to come alongside, find their rhythm and discover ways to engage them. It is in being with them in their pain that we can begin to nurture a sense of hope for the future.

If we're not careful, this experience with pain can wear on us. Too many of us give in and say things like “I'm just a CYC”, “I'm burned out”, or “I'm only a child-minder not really a professional”. We do this internally to ourselves as well as externally to others. But we are more than “just” and “not really”. There are too many people in pain, who have yet to discover their hope, for us to be unsure of our role and how to do our work well. Their lives are worth too much to allow ourselves to become burned out.

Think of the ways we can better articulate who we are and what we do:

- We restore personal dignity to those who have lost it.
- We assure people that a future is possible even though they can't see it.
- We are present in meaningful ways

when people are at their most vulnerable moments in life.

- We create experiences for others which they have missed or had taken from them.
- We look in the eyes and touch the individuals that most communities don't want to admit even exist.
- We speak up for the young person who no-one wants to take the time to hear.

It is time for us to be bold and strong in our beliefs about why we are here.

Think about the small moments you enter into each day and the opportunity you have to offer hope. The way in which you change a diaper and calm a crying baby, as you teach the mother how to respond. The kindness you show when helping someone clean up after they vomited during an overwhelming anxiety attack. The calm reassurance you offer when bandaging the arm of someone who has been cutting. The way in which you say “I'm here” to the young person who is struggling to close their eyes and go to sleep. The smile and hug you give when a child wakes up in the morning after returning from the hospital. Karen VanderVen called these micro-interactions (1991) and said they shape the quality of our work. Notice they are often more about our approach than our words. More about the way we speak than what we speak.

In the moments where you feel overcome with the pain of others, look for how you might use even the smallest of interactions to nurture hope.

You might even save a life in the process.

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A word about CYC-Net

Child and youth care is a unique field around the world. CYC-Net unites us and gives us a forum for expressing our work, supporting one another, and promoting good practice for young people and families around the globe. It is a happy day to celebrate this bicentennial issue and a pleasure to volunteer time and effort in supporting it through the next 100 issues!



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A Home for the Soul

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In his book *A Home for the Heart*, Bruno Bettelheim (1974) explores the humanization of institutional care, arguing in effect that regardless of the expert knowledge that goes into the everyday operation of an institution, the goal is to provide a home for a real human being, a child with a beating heart in need of social dynamics that provide for nurture, love, and belonging. In this article, written specifically for the 200th edition of *CYC-Online*, I want to explore the role of this journal, and CYC-Net more broadly, in providing a home for the soul, with emphasis on the soul of our endeavor — child and youth care (CYC). The soul and the heart are not the same thing; symbolically,

the heart denotes goodness, generosity, and an authentic and at times idealistic and often selfless engagement of others. The heart intentionally sidesteps objective categories like reason, evidence, and science in order to privilege our humanity. The soul, in contrast, is a much more nebulous symbol. It is one that speaks to our inner life, with torment and hope, strength and vulnerability, all engaged in an uncomfortable yet strangely satisfying dance.

CYC-Online, over the course of 200 issues, has presented us with precisely this kind of nebulous image of child and youth care. The articles published here range from celebrations of child and youth care practice to outright denials that

child and youth care even exists. They have ranged from the extremely personal to the extremes of clinical professionalism (not necessarily a compliment). Often, the articles written by specific authors who have contributed prolifically to this journal represent their journey from optimism and lighthearted commentary to frustration and ever-more intense demands to endorse a specific kind of child and youth care. Sometimes, they just reflect the aging process!

After writing many articles with good humour and gentle reminders of important aspects of our endeavor, Gerry Fewster, for example, changed his approach dramatically a couple of years ago and produced ten articles called *The Ten Commandments*; hardly gentle and free-spirited! The message (using Fewster-spirited language) is get it right or get the hell out! In the early days of the journal, the incredible Mark Krueger wrote about farting in the group home van and having lunch with kids; by about the 100th edition, he was sufficiently pissed off at the industrial imperialism of child and youth care publishing to write a deathly venomous letter to the publishers of *Child and Youth Care Forum*, once an important journal in our field. Thom Garfat used to write very concise but hard hitting pieces on specific practice aspects of our profession; he wrote on topics such as Self, supervision, relational practice and vulnerability, using case examples, child and youth care language and concepts and a teaching, or at least mentoring, voice. In the past few years, he has written countless

stories about the carpenter in his home, various encounters with friends, and other vignettes about life. The message clearly has changed from 'please be reflective and thoughtful in your work with children and youth' to 'if you can't see how my every day life stories apply to being in this world as a child and youth care practitioner, well then you better move on to the next article'!

Some writers have stayed almost worrisomely consistent in their message; the only difference in the writings of Jack Phelan over the years has been the word count, from brief to very brief. Nevertheless, in sometimes fewer than 400 words, Jack has consistently focused on the very essence of core practices, especially supervision and behavior management issues. Similarly, other writers such as Karen VanderVen, Lorraine Fox, Ernie Hilton, Mark Smith and, more recently, Laura Steckley, Wolfgang Vachon and others have consistently provided incredibly valuable insights into core CYC themes, topics and issues, often pushing analyses of very specific issues to very deep levels, such as Steckley's work on physical interventions, or Vachon's writings on improvisation.

Over the past two or three years, *CYC-Online* has featured contributions by authors who occupy a more contested space in child and youth care; Hans Skott-Myhre comes to mind, whose postmodernist approach to child and youth care practice presents challenges to the orthodoxy of the field. His writings provide us with ways of thinking about issues such as control, power and



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the overuse of structure in everyday practice using very deep theoretical formulations that are nevertheless steeped in Skott-Myhre's own experiences in working with street involved youth in the US.

Anyone who takes an afternoon re-viewing articles from *CYC-Online* will quickly realize that this journal provides not only celebratory endorsements of our field, but hard hitting analyses of highly ambiguous issues and themes. The torment of our field, driven by a clash of the intuitively meaningful openness to all kinds of approaches, thoughts and theoretical formulations on the one hand, and the self-protective responses to things that seem to draw too much on other disciplines, intellectual traditions or approaches to practice on the other hand, are clear to see. The nuanced difficulties of integrating the elder generations of CYC-engaged people with a new generation of CYC-inspired people are also on display. Story-telling, writing from the heart and omitting reference to evidence and research common in the writings of the elders is replaced with a young generation's need to write more academically, in a more learned manner, and to provide evidence of argumentation and empirical commentary wherever possible.

From my perspective, all of these tensions are part of what I call 'soul work'; they reflect the inherent challenge of putting into words and on paper the full complexity of being with young people, of *living* child and youth care, of a way of being in the world, as Garfat likes

to say. *CYC-Online* is, in my view, the most sophisticated and extensive collection of CYC commentary precisely because it is reflective of soul work; because it presents the torment of trying to unify what was never meant to be unified; of resisting 'truth' while actively producing it. I think of CYC-Net in general, and *CYC-Online* in particular, as a home for the soul in our work of child and youth care practice, because it is here where we can either receive or produce or perhaps receive *and* produce dialogue about child and youth care practice that rings authentic in ways that academic journals just can't replicate. It is here where we can find the emotions behind the thinking, the frustrations we harbor in relation to the injustices committed against young people who for whatever reason are not conforming to the mainstream – I like to call them edgy youth, only because the term edgy denotes both worrisome characteristics and also virtuous and intriguing ones. *CYC-Online* is also where we find the pride associated with being in the world as child and youth care practitioners, commentators, and thinkers.

So, a home for the soul. A home that has been provided to all of us in part by the collective contributions of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of CYC-involved folks from around the world. But the foundation of this home, and its ongoing maintenance, must be credited to Brian Gannon, and his small place on the outskirts of Cape Town in South Africa. Aside from his central role in creating this home for us, his years of dedication to ensuring CYC-On-

line appears every month cannot possibly be adequately acknowledged. Add to that his own contributions to the collection of articles that make up *CYC-Online*, and you have what one might refer to as the godfather figure for the global child and youth care community.

I have been returning to this home for the soul regularly for the past eight years. In fact, I am proud to say that the 200 issues of *CYC-Online* being celebrated in this milestone issue feature nearly 100 contributions from me; some admittedly more meaningful than others. My experience with *CYC-Online* is one that I consider priceless. It provides me with the therapeutic opportunity to put into writing the thoughts and feelings, both positive and negative, I have about child and youth care, about being in child and youth care, and about knowing the systems that provide services to edgy youth. Those feelings and thoughts overwhelm me at the most awkward moments. Sometimes it happens when I am driving, other times when I am participating in a meeting with service providers. One time it happened while I was having a tooth extracted by my dentist. Another time it happened as I was making a deep pass down the centre of the field while playing soccer in a men's league (the pass went astray; obviously not a happy thought that time). But I recover from those moments largely because I know I will be able to write about them shortly; whatever it is that came to mind about child and youth care, there is a column that needs to be written. And so I write whenever the urge hits me; I have

produced my columns in parking lots while waiting for medical appointments; late at night when I can't sleep, or sometimes early in the morning when a thunder storm wakes me up. Many of my columns were written in nature; I love to take my laptop to the river near my house and write there while sitting under a tree. At one point, I even constructed a gadget to enable me to write on my laptop while kayaking down the river. Natural settings inspire me; I feel free of the need to be compliant and conform to what I know might be expected by my academic colleagues, by practitioners I have known for a long time, or by friends who may wonder what happened to me.

In a way it all makes sense to me. I write differently in nature just like young people are different when they join a camping trip or a nature walk with committed CYCs. I follow few rules when I write out of raw emotion, just like young people abandon any pretense of interest in rules and routines when they become overwhelmed by the reality of being away from family, and the challenges ahead. When I write for *CYC-Online*, I become an edgy youth, but I remain conscious that my edginess always comes with an exit to the charming, safe and predictable middle class life in which I exercise a great deal of control over what happens next.

There are some other things about *CYC-Online* worth mentioning. I am always amazed when I receive a message from someone I know or someone I don't know about something they reacted to in one of my columns, sometimes positively,



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sometimes not so much. It makes me feel great knowing that I am in fact engaged in dialogue with others when I write. I love receiving any sort of feedback, and just knowing that someone out there engaged my thoughts and feelings. This is the CYC community that I love: temperamental, argumentative, but also nurturing, kind and interested. When a column of mine becomes subject to an intense discussion on the discussion forum, I rejoice, and although I rarely participate, I love the discussion that unfolds knowing that I may have provided something worthy of discussion.

I also love Leon Fulcher's 'postcard' series, a brilliant approach to engaging us mildly, gently and ever so casually on issues, themes, events and happenings from around the world. Who doesn't love receiving a post card?

Finally, I want to end by making reference to the enormous privilege of *CYC-Online* to have had, as an early contributor, the incredible Henry Maier. It is one of his practice hints that for me ranks as the top contribution ever made to *CYC-Online*; a practice hint, actually more of an article, a full three pages long, that provides a 'how-to' outline from a man with over 50 years experience in the world of child and youth care. Specifically, it is his piece on how to say hello to a young person that I consider to be the summit of child and youth care thought and spirit. My hope is that one day, I will get it right.



KIARAS GHARABAGHI is currently the Director of the School of Child & Youth Care at Ryerson University in Toronto, Canada. He spent nearly 25 years working directly with children, youth and families in various contexts, including residential care and treatment, child protection, children's mental health and youth homelessness. His research is very much focused on the professional and ethical issues and opportunities in the field of child and youth care, locally and globally, always with a strong emphasis on children and youth living life away from home, however defined. Kiaras continues to be very much involved with child and youth practitioner teams locally, and he frequently participates in major initiatives for organizational and system change activities. Some random perspectives held by Kiaras include a strong dislike for structure and routine in youth services, a deep suspicion of treatment, clinical practice and expertise of any kind, and a belief that there is much value in celebrating chaos..

Rhythm n' Blues, Ebbs and Flows

John Digney and Maxwell Smart

The problem as you get older is that you become more self-aware and at the same time, you have to surprise yourself. There's no way of arranging the surprise, so it is tricky.

Seamus Heaney, Irish Poet

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.

Robert Louis Stevenson, Scottish Writer

What's in a Title?

We will all be familiar with the original definitions of 'ebb and flow' as they relate to the two phases of the tide. 'Ebb' denotes the outgoing phase (when tidal waters drain) and 'flow' is the incursion of the sea as it returns to make the high tide. The tide has its highs and lows where the flowing and draining is seen as part of the natural order of things, just as normal and expected as night following day.

'Rhythm and Blues' is a term used to refer to a genre of music, yet if we were to ask 100 people to explain it we

would probably get 100 different responses. We might get something on its history – originating in the 1940s where jazz, soul music and gospel music fused into a new genre. Or we might be told about its metamorphosis occurring on an almost constant basis (incorporating other evolving sounds such as rock, electric blues, funk and boogie-woogie). We might even be told about the constellation of instruments used to create this amazing sound (usually piano, guitar, drums and sax). Like many other complex, organic constructs in our world (such as 'love' and 'humour')



rhythm and blues is not easily defined, but it is easily recognised. We know it when we see (or hear) it.

In considering our topic for this the 200th edition of *CYC-Online*, we were struck by the similarities that 'ebb and flow' and 'Rhythm and Blues' have with Child and Youth Care practices, particularly in residential care settings. The ever evolving ebb and flow of daily rhythms and routines, the ongoing metamorphic ebb and flow of settling a group to have cohesive and stable care only for new youngsters to bring us back to the flow of a new group of young people in our settings. These ideas can help us better understand the natural and organic ebbs and flows of the dynamic 'rhythm and blues' within our life space – both in terms of how and why.

Rhythms and Blues, the ebb and flow of rhythmicity

Human beings clearly enjoy rhythmic interactions – our brains are attuned to the natural rhythms that surround us. It is our experience most people seem to prefer predictability and routine combined with just enough novelty in life to throw off boredom. Life coach Tony Robbins, in his articulation of his own personal needs theory, stated the greatest human need is certainty and the second greatest is uncertainty. In social work and social care practice we often see how caring adults seek to strike a balance when forming relationships with newly referred youth that are oriented around calm but also

are imbued with enough novelty to avoid boredom. This balance is purposeful. It creates rhythms of predictability in order that youth can feel safe and secure, whilst at the same time providing stimulation, novelty and fun. Henry Maier (1987), articulated further by Garfat said, "The capacity to predict is a measure of knowing ... and thus is an essential ingredient of effective learning" (Fulcher, L. C. & Garfat, T. (2008, p.19).

Of course rhythms can be both positive and negative. Positive rhythms encourage interaction between youth and mentor, allowing learning and growth to take place together. In some ways it may be possible to refer to the more negative rhythms as 'blues'. This can be where the adult-youth interaction becomes more akin to battles for dominance and power rather than growth. It is in these regimes, 'enmeshed in the blues', which ill-informed authoritarian and controlling practices live and thrive. These are the poorly conceived systems without relationship (such as we are beginning to see a re-emergence of, even within the Celtic context). It seems that those in charge have forgotten much of what has been learned by those at the coal-face (usually the hard way). Can they not understand the simple equation devised by the authors (Digney & Smart, 2015), $r^u - r^e = 3R$ (rules without relationships equal rejection, revolution and riot), an idea initially articulated by Scott Larson (Larson & Brendtro, 2000. p. 61).

Rhythms of perpetual chaos are not conducive to positive care. The ebb and flow of such regimes become fo-

cused on control, compliance and a 'battening down the hatches' approach. This controlling mindset is not indicative of caring. It fosters a 'them and us' mentality and then becomes focused on trying to merely survive every eight or twelve hour period, in the eyes of both youth and staff. Overly authoritarian and regimented 'care' regimes based on adult controls rarely yield positive outcomes where compliance to expected norms is rare. In the 1950s Redl and Wineman reminded us that a change had been taking place over the previous 60 years, and here we are 60 years later reiterating the same message, looking back at the positive change which has occurred in our ever evolving profession, yet we still have so much of the 'blues' ever evident.

Positive rhythms, such as those that have been professed by pioneers and champions of restorative and relational practices, people like August Aichhorn, Bruno Bethelheim, Henry Maier, and Mark Kruger, seek to minimise the 'blues' and allow for the creation of a positive milieu, where growth and competence are put at the heart of every intervention. It is in the milieu "where attachments form, trust grows, relationships develop and the foundation for growth and change is laid" (Holden, 2009, p.47). Positive rhythmic interactions function best in environments that are emotionally calm and safe.

Good Flow, Bad Flow

Successful care systems demand greatness not obedience (Vorrath & Brendtro, 1985) and create cultures of courage and

support. Cultures of courage have a strength orientation, modeled in staff interactions with youth with the intentionality of all practices being focused on what is strong not what is wrong. It is within such cultures that the small and meaningful moments loaded with potential for positive shifts are noticed and acted on. Such as what makes a particular young person tick, when would be the right time to address an issue, and when to give a wide-enough berth. It pays attention to the "minutiae of everyday life" (Maier, 1987) and "the small, seemingly unimportant events out of which the days of our lives are constructed" (Garfat, Fulcher & Digney, 2012).

Inn the 200th edition of the *CYC-Online* journal we have an opportunity yet again to attest to the fact that positive care cultures understand the natural cyclical nature of the task. In doing so they achieve a range of benefits and quality assurances including:

- Displaying characteristics that focus on meeting the developmental growth needs of young people,
- Permitting adults to accept that their work is not about 'fixing broken kids',
- Promoting practices where staff can assist kids with developing their emotional competence
- Allowing time to provide opportunities to kids to work on their caring and independence skills
- Allowing the time to be responsive to the ongoing needs of each individual young person.



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These cultures are sensitive to the ebb and flow of each day for each young person. They strike a balance between the expectations of the care environment and the abilities of children to respond to these demands in a positive manner.

Proactive care cultures veer away from failure-oriented communications and reactions, choosing instead to seek ways to build competence through confidence. They accept that youth have a right to make mistakes and staff focus on guiding them to better ways of coping and growing so as they are not constantly making the same mistakes over and over again.

Through the understanding and utilisation of the rhythms of participation that

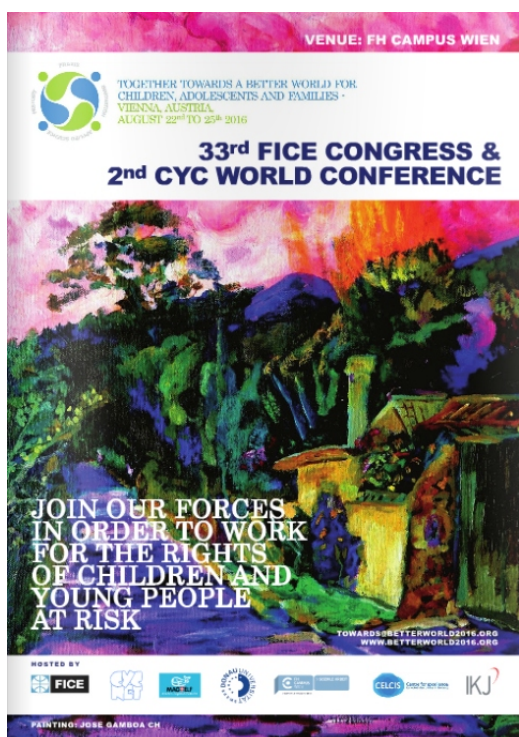
occur daily between youth and mentor in activities, those working in Child and Youth Care are in a unique position to influence the ebb and flow of life and to generate proactive rhythms that create opportunities for youth to grow and develop. These activities and moments can be used to build connection, belonging and skills in problem solving. Whether it is shooting hoops, playing table tennis, snooker, pool, catching a Frisbee or a summer's day water fight, a football game or sock hockey, we can purposefully use and create opportunities for young people to learn and grow.

As the ebb and flow of the shift occurs we can return to the restful and tranquil rhythms of the night routines (eventually), preparing and settling the youngsters for a night of rest and mental processing of the events of the day. Then (in the true nature of ebbs and flows) with the coming of the next new day we are again attentive to the rhythms which begin to reverberate around us, guiding and influencing these to ensure they are helpful to each young person as they awaken into this new day. This is the ebb and flow of life attuned to the positive rhythms, one which can respect and acknowledge the existence of the "blues" but not be controlled by it.

Maarie and Digs

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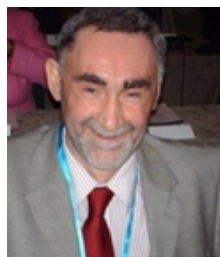
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Doomed to Repeat It: the Selective and Collective Ignorance of the Shadowy Historical Foundations of Child and Youth Care

Grant Charles

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.
– Santayana, 1905

I have chosen to focus this paper on the shadowy side of child and youth care history with the hope that it will help prevent future harm to children. By raising awareness of historic anti-child practices and drawing the readers' attention to the role of child and youth care in these practices, I hope to encourage contemporary practitioners to maintain a critical and careful awareness of the potential we have for harm even while we believe we are doing the right thing.

Child and youth care has much to celebrate throughout its history, and we rightly attend to the encouraging stories of our development and the valuable work of leaders and everyday workers in the field. However, it is my belief that we have not done enough to ensure we have a full and

critical understanding of our role in a number of harmful, widespread policies and practices in the past 150 years. In fact, our profession played a significant role in an era noted for the establishment of 'serving' organizations that were rooted in the oppression of marginalized populations. This paper will provide a brief review of this era and the origins of child and youth care within it.

I want to begin by saying that I am only going to be presenting a one-sided perspective on the origin of child and youth care. It is important that one recognize that with our profession, like that of most others, there were positive and negative foundations. For example, while medicine has helped to make great strides in the reduction of infant mortality it was also at

the forefront of the eugenics movement within which people were sterilized or in the extreme case put to death because they were deemed to be inferior (Wheatley, 2013). Likewise, our field has much to be proud of but there are also areas where we were simply wrong in our approaches.

Child and youth care in part grew out of the child saving era that began in the mid-1800s (Charles & Gabor, 2006). This was an important time for children. It was the beginning of a period where children were being recognized as being worthy of attention by society in a way generally not seen before, at least in Western countries. This period saw the beginning recognition that children had the right to support from society. The child rights movement, although only in a rudimentary sense, can be said to have begun in those times.

The work in the child saving era, as can be the case with all forms of helping if not based on reciprocity and equality, was rooted in a sense of moral supremacy (Charles & Gabor, 2006). While the motivation to help children was well meaning it was based upon a societal belief that there was a way of life and a way of being that was superior to any other. Superiority was based upon ethnicity, gender, ability, class and religion. Anyone who was outside this rather narrow definition of 'normal' was considered inferior. There was a moral obligation to 'help' those considered inferior. Much of the 'helping' involved removing children from their families. Young people who were considered unproductive were placed in institutions (Daly, 2014;

Wheatley, 2013). It was considered critical for the well being of communities that those deemed unproductive and inferior be placed in institutional care, until they were considered harmless, lest they contaminate the rest of society (Murphy, 1932).

In other cases, children and youth who were considered socially inferior but potentially productive were placed with families deemed to be morally superior where they could be trained, within limitations because of their perceived inherent moral weaknesses, to be contributing members of society (Bean & Meville, 1989; Kohli, 2003). If they were young enough, some children were removed from their families and placed with 'morally' upstanding citizens with the hope that they could 'pass' into a higher, more proper class (Balcom, 2011). The younger children, if adopted, might be at least partially accepted as members of their new families. This was rarely the case with the older children and youth who were at best treated as laborers and at worst as indentured slaves (Daly, 2014). There was a tremendous exploitation and abuse of the children and youth regardless of whether they were in institutional or family settings (Barter, 1997; Bombay, Matheson & Anisman, 2014; Charles & Degagne, 2013; Daly, 2014; Wheatley, 2013).

Many helping professions, including child and youth care, have their origins in these residential and community based moral movements. If one knows the history of the development of the helping professions then this cannot be



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disputed. While it took longer for child and youth care to emerge as a full profession than many of the others, our foundation still goes back to the beginnings of the child saving era. A portion of the staff roles in the organizations of the era evolved into what today is recognized as child and youth care (Charles & Garfat, 2013).

While I am going to give Canadian examples of the types of programs of that era it should be noted that there were similar movements in most Western countries. Although there would have been some differences based upon local circumstances there were a great deal of similarities. Indeed there were enough similarities that the marginalization and mistreatment of these young people could be considered one of the first examples of the impact of globalization on society. Values and beliefs during this period rapidly crossed international boundaries in Western countries and created a 'universal' anti-child attitude. These attitudes were then imposed upon colonized people in much of the rest of world.

The best-known example in Canada of the programs based upon the values of the child saving era are the Indian Residential Schools (Bombay, Matheson & Anisman, 2011; Charles & Degagne, 2012). Over 130,000 Aboriginal youth were removed from their families and placed in sub-standard boarding schools. The young people were stripped of their culture, spiritual beliefs, language and connection to their families and communities. Many of the young people were physically,

emotionally and sexually abused. The damage done to many of these children and consequently their descendants under the guise of saving them is still being felt in Canada today (Bombay, Matheson & Anisman, 2014; Charles & Degagne, 2012). In case there is a question whether child and youth care had anything to do with the residential schools, I have seen in my work with the Aboriginal Healing Society reference by survivors to child and youth workers in the schools.

There are several additional examples of similar kinds of harm perpetrated in the name of 'child saving' both in institutions and the everyday practices related to social management of poor children. The second largest, although not widely known, group of young people were the Home Children (Harrison, 2003; Kershaw & Sacks, 2008; Kohli, 2003). Between the mid-1800's until 1939, well over 100,000 children were 'rescued' from poverty and their families in the United Kingdom and shipped to Canada. There the children were often put into receiving and group homes prior to their eventual placement. The boys were placed on farms as laborers and the girls in homes as domestic servants. They provided the manual labor by which the Empire could be colonized (Bean & Melville, 1989). While some were well treated, many were essentially slaves. The tales of abuse and neglect amongst these young people parallel those of the people who were in the Indian Residential Schools (Daly, 2014). In both situations the children were considered inferior and therefore less than human. As such

they were highly vulnerable to abuse and neglect. As an aside, my father was one of these 'inferior' children, taken from his family under the Home Children policy, transported across the ocean and placed in an alien environment with people who exploited him. While he died a free man, he came to Canada as a slave. He never fully recovered from that experience in his early life.

Other children during the same era were placed in the 'Institutions for Idiots' (Wheatley, 2013). Thousands of children (the true number is unknown) were taken from their families and communities and put into massive institutions where they were subjected to neglect and often abuse because they were considered cognitively and/or physically inferior. As with the Home Children many of these children came from poverty. Children from immigrant families were particularly vulnerable to being deemed 'idiots' because of language or cultural differences. The range of children in these facilities was quite startling from those with developmental delays to those with epilepsy and health conditions. Some young people were placed in these institutions because they were considered 'incurable'.

Later in the era young women were placed in Homes for Incurable Girls rather than the 'Institutions for Idiots' although the reasons for placement were similar (Demerson, 2004; Myers, 2006). One could be placed in these homes because of 'promiscuity', 'loose morals' or simply because they did not fit the socially accepted mode of being a passive

female. Young women who got pregnant were often put into maternity homes where they were treated poorly and shamed as part of their path to 'moral redemption' (Balcom, 2011; Petrie, 1998). Some died, as with the previously mentioned young people, because of neglect and ill treatment (Balcom, 2011).

The children of these young women were placed for adoption in Canada as well as in the United States. Some were sold for adoption in the United States by 'baby mills' disguised as maternity homes (Balcom, 2011). In most cases the babies were removed from their mothers through force or coercion (Balcom, 2011; Petrie, 1998). All of this was considered acceptable because the young women were deemed to be morally inferior as evidenced by the unmarried pregnancy.

The Sixties Scoop is widely known in Canada. Thousands of Aboriginal children were removed from their families because of 'neglect' (more accurately poverty) and placed for adoption (Johnston, 1983). What is lesser known is that this occurred subsequent to a similar 'scoop' on white children in the decades before the Sixties Scoop (Balcom, 2011). While the scoop affected larger numbers of Aboriginal children both groups of young people were removed without freely given consent from their families. In both cases many of the children were adopted into American families without any form of government supervision (Balcom, 2011).

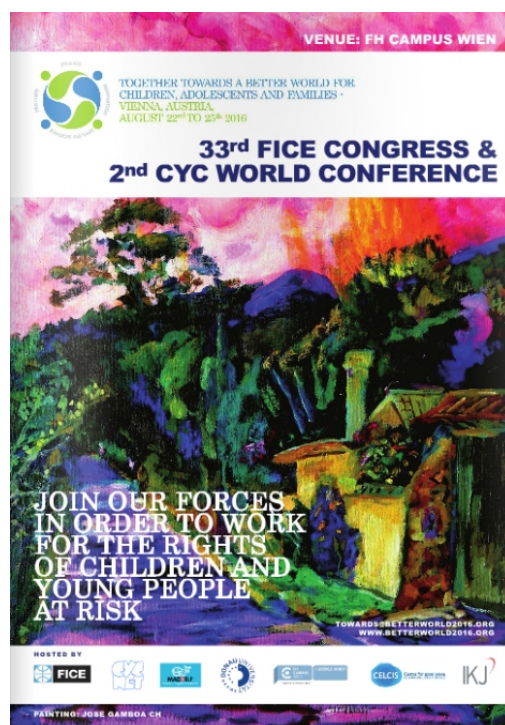
Thousands of other children during the era were placed in psychiatric institutions (Moran, 2000; Ulbrich, 1993), in-



dustrial schools and farms (Charles & Gabor, 2006), schools for the deaf and blind (Porter, Yuille, & Bent, 1995) and orphanages and reformatories (Charles & Gabor, 2006). Regardless of the type of placement the child saving era can be seen as an attack on marginalized young people and in many cases their families. If a child or youth was different for any reason from what was deemed to be normal they were at risk of being removed from their home and community and placed in a setting where more often than not they would be neglected and quite possibly abused.

While I have focused on Canada, as I have mentioned young people marginalized in other Western countries faced similar risks. Indigenous children in the United States were forced to attend Indian Boarding Schools or adopted out in large numbers (Hoxie, 1984) as were the 'Stolen Children' of Australia (Van Krieken, 1999), S'ami children of Norway (Kusmenko, 2004) and Yenish children of Switzerland (Baer, 2015; Meier, 2008) who were removed from their families so they could be 'saved.' The Magdalene Laundries of Ireland and their associated orphanages are but one more example of how marginalized children have been treated (Finnegan, 2001). While Indigenous children in Canada were at the highest risk of removal (and continue to be) there were likely close to 300,000 children in Canada during the approximately 150 years of the child saving era who were removed from their families because they were 'different'. Millions of us today in Canada are descendants of these young people.

As I have stated, many of the staff in the various settings mentioned would have later been identified as child and youth care workers if the programs were operating today. In some cases members of our profession worked in the later versions of the programs from the child saving era. Many of the people who worked in these settings were not bad people. The report on residential schools of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015) makes this clear. Many thought they were helping children by providing them with a better life. They were trapped in the values of their time. This is why it is so important to understand our origins. We need to learn about our past so that we



can work hard not to recreate systems of harm guised under the motivation of helping. By learning about our past we can understand how easy it is to be constricted by the conventional wisdom of the time on what constitutes helping behavior. While we have advanced beyond the worst of the past, we must always be on guard for the possibility that we are just perpetrating different forms of neglect and abuse on children and youth. Not acknowledging our past only ensures that we are more prone to repeat our mistakes. In order to truly move forward as a profession we need to overcome our selective and collective ignorance of the shadowy historical foundations of child and youth care.

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This 200th special issue of CYC-Online is a celebration of CYC-Net.

It is an important accomplishment to reach issue 200. It may therefore seem somewhat odd that I have taken this opportunity to write about the bleaker beginnings of our profession. Shouldn't a celebration be more about the positive aspects of the profession rather than about something most of us would rather not know? Normally the answer would be yes although in this case I have a good reason to not do so. You see I think this is a celebration of our field and the journal but for me it is also a chance to acknowledge the contributions of **Brian Gannon**.

I could mention his role founding this journal or his work helping set up child and youth care associations in South Africa or any number of other contributions to the field. However, what I really want to honour is his role in the Anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa. He took a stand against the mistreatment and marginalization of people by the state. I won't go into any of the details but it was a courageous act to go against the conventional 'wisdom' of the people in power in his country. He was, of course, not the only one but at a time when at least some other people in the field in his country supported the state through their action or inaction he took a moral stance. He looked past the 'wisdom' and made his own mind up about the morality of the situation. We may not like to know but there were others working with young people who took the opposite position from him. I believe we must never forget this point if we are not to repeat our mistakes of the past. We can be as much about being part of the problem as we can be about being part of the solution. As such, I have chosen to bring to people's attention some of the bleaker aspects of our past. It is my way of honouring Brian.

Grant Charles



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First the bad news, but let's try to keep this to a few brief bullet points:

For several decades, we have seen the demonization of troubled and troubling youth. Politicians of every stripe embraced the fear-driven fiction that we were raising a generation of *super predators*.

- Schools flying the flag of *zero tolerance* tossed out children with emotional and behavioral problems, placing our most vulnerable youngsters in the pipeline to the justice system.
- The term *juvenile injustice* would be a better label for a system that often imitates adult corrections in a prison culture marked by two rival gangs: residents and guards.
- Treatment is often less about doing therapy and more about medicating unwanted behavior as an “expanding” DSM adds more disorder labels for drugging our kids.
- Children of color are discarded at phenomenal rates and, were it not for bystander cell phone videos, the noisy

calls that “Black Lives Matter” would be silent black holes.

These are modern examples of what Ellen Key (1909) called *soul murder of the child*. Here we focus on two profound examples of good news: the resilience

revolution and designer genes.

The Resilience Revolution

Positive psychology and the science of positive youth development are toppling the traditional notion that kids are broken and need to be fixed (Peterson, 2009). Early researchers on adversity compiled long lists of risk and protective factors (Masten,

2014). More recently, resilience scientists are seeking to discover what leads to successful life outcomes, even in the face of trauma. Since thousands of variables are related to positive youth development, simpler principles are needed to make sense of this mass of information (Small & Memmo, 2004).

We have been immersed in the call for *evidence-based treatment*, an idea spawned in medicine which quickly spread to other fields. Now, everybody is scram-

And Now for the Good News

Larry K. Brendtro



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bling to promote their pet method as an evidence-based intervention. How do we identify *evidence-based essentials* to guide effective practice? The highest standard of evidence is *consilience* (Wilson, 1998). This requires integrating knowledge from natural science, social science, experience, and values.

Some argue that the “gold standard” for evidence is the random blind trial used in the drug industry. But even if an intervention has a *statistically* significant effect, the amount of change may be trivial. In the quest for the evidence-based seal of approval, one can lose sight of what will lead to lasting learning and transformation with a particular youth, something we have called *deep brain learning*. Leading child trauma researchers (van der Kolk, McFarlane, & Weisaeth, 2006) oppose anointing certain methods as evidence-based simply because they prevail in narrow comparative research trials.

Consilience draws knowledge from different sources to identify powerful, simple truths. A streamlined model of positive youth development is the Circle of Courage (Heck & Subramaniam, 2009; Jackson, 2014) which integrates positive psychology and neuroscience with child care philosophies from traditional indigenous “cultures of respect” (Bolin, 2006; Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 2002). Most terminology in major models of youth development are synonyms for these four *evidence-based essentials*: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. These universal brain-based needs apply to all children everywhere (Brendtro & Mitchell, 2015).

- **Belonging (attachment)** requires the opportunity to build trusting bonds with caring adults and positive peers so children feel safe, accepted, and loved. A half century of attachment research shows the centrality of this need (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).
- **Mastery (achievement)** entails opportunity to explore, solve problems, and develop talents. Robert White (1959) proposed competence motivation as the core reinforcer. Mastery is tied to belonging—our most important learning occurs in relationships.
- **Independence (autonomy)** requires *self-regulation* and the ability to cope with challenges to make responsible decisions. Research on *self-efficacy* shows the importance of believing that one is in charge of personal destiny (Bandura, 1982).
- **Generosity (altruism)** entails empathy, prosocial values, and helping behavior. This is a new focus of research, although caring for others is basic to human survival and all moral systems (Gibbs, 2014). We survive by being our brother’s and sister’s keeper.

By focusing like a laser on these essentials, we have maximum impact in changing young lives. Resilience-building strategies enable caregivers to form positive relationships necessary to foster achievement, self-regulation, and empathy. This is also the foundation of creating cultures

of respect in schools, treatment, justice, and youth work settings. One cannot have deep brain learning with superficial interventions.

Describing how the Circle of Courage relates to her study of resilience, Emmy Werner (2012) found that every child who overcame adversity had some person who believed in his or her potential. Relational child care is now hard science: in a synthesis of five decades of resilience research, Suniya Luthar concluded: "Resilience rests

fundamentally on relationships" (2006, p. 760). Further, resilience is not a rare personality trait of a trauma-proof child, but the normal outcome from supportive bonds in the ecology of family, school, peer group, and community (Masten, 2014). As Bessel van der Kolk states: "Every trauma survivor I've met is resilient in his or her own way, and every one of their stories inspires awe at how people cope" (2014, p. 278).



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Designer Genes

Exciting new research on *epigenetics* provides a deeper understanding of the impact of trauma, as well as the resilient nature of the human brain and body. *Epi* is Greek for on top of and epigenetics explains how experience alters gene expression. Humans have 46 chromosomes with their 20,000+ genes, half from each parent. Remarkably, these are all packed in the nucleus of virtually every one of our trillions of bodily cells. Only a portion of these genes is activated to design a particular cell; however, throughout life, genes can be turned on or off by signals from the environment.

A massive study by the ENCODE Project Consortium (2012) identified four million gene switches that enable cells to adapt to their particular environment. Gene expression can be changed by love or abuse, by positive thoughts or pessimistic fears. The Allen Institute of Brain Sciences (2012) found that 84 per cent of genes are expressed in the brain. This gives humans an astounding ability to redesign neural pathways to meet new challenges, the essence of neuroplasticity (Doidge, 2015).

Some life events build resilience; in fact, manageable stress can have a “steeling” effect preparing us to cope with future challenges. Other experiences, particularly those related to severe and protracted trauma, signal genes to set our stress systems on high alert. In the extreme, these can lead to maladaptive behavior. Thus, physical and sexual abuse, cold parenting,

and chaos in the home can produce epigenetic effects in both brain and body (McEwen, 2008). Perhaps the term *ecogenetics* more clearly illustrates how happenings in the social or physical environment influence our designer genes.

Research by Michael Meaney (2001) of McGill University found that nurturing caregiving creates resilient, emotionally stable offspring. In contrast, maternal neglect alters the expression of genes necessary to manage stress reactions. Perhaps the most startling finding is that some effects of parental experience may persist for up to three or four generations. This explains cross-generational effects of trauma. Entire social systems can impact humans through epigenetics (Szyf, McGowan, Turecki, & Meaney, 2010). As with personal trauma, effects of cultural or racial trauma can be long lasting and impact a whole group of people (Hardy, 2013).

Genetic differences in temperament can interact with experience to create epigenetic changes. For example, children with timid and reactive temperaments are much more likely to be hurt by bullying than those who are bold and low reactive (Sugden *et al.*, 2010). Yet high reactivity is not necessarily a flaw, since there is evidence that some children are more influenced by both positive and negative experiences, for better or for worse. Thus, reactive kids respond more negatively to rejection and maltreatment—but also more positively to warmth and acceptance. In contrast, less reactive youngsters are more insulated from environmental influence (Pleuss,

2015). Our most vulnerable children are particularly equipped to thrive with supportive adult and peer relationships.

Epigenetic changes are triggered by the environment and in theory can be changed by the environment. While not all effects of trauma and maltreatment are reversible, children have great capacity for neuroplasticity. Even if the damage of past harm persists, humans are able to develop new circuits to work around the traces of trauma. Emerging research in positive psychology, neuroscience, and epigenetics is pointing to evidence-based practices enabling all children to thrive. The good news is that we can respond with creativity and hope to change the developmental pathways, strengthen families, and foster well-being of communities.

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From a technical rational to a moral practical knowledge base for Child and Youth Care

Mark Smith

I am delighted to make a writing comeback for this, the 200th edition of *CYC-Online*. For several years over the course of the last decade I wrote a pretty much regular monthly column. The discipline of doing so was formative in my development as a writer. For a number of reasons though I found writing the column increasingly difficult. At a very practical level demands on my time at work escalated, as they do as you become a more established academic. One strand of this is to do with the demands in an increasingly competitive academic environment to carry out the kind of 'real' writing in peer reviewed journals that is needed to satisfy the research metrics exercises that dominate the academic world. At another level though, perhaps linked, I encountered a bit of a crisis of confidence in writing what I did. I began to wonder who, if anyone, would be interested in my musings on whatever it was that took my fancy in any given month. My subject mat-



ter began to feel a bit idiosyncratic, self-indulgent even; a large amount seemed to use football (or soccer for those newcomers to the game) as a lens or metaphor to understand experiences of Child and Youth Care (CYC) – not the kind of thing that a serious academic at a serious university should be writing.

Yet, over time, these very moments of self-doubt have also prompted me to reflect upon and to crystalize my thinking around the nature of CYC and its knowledge base and I am at the point of beginning to explore this in my writing. In doing so I am able to draw upon interests developed in recent years around more philosophical ideas of caring and from European traditions of social pedagogy. So, a number of years down the line I am back to where I started, using *CYC-Online* to rehearse some of my thoughts through writing.

I am now at a stage where I would say with some degree of confidence that CYC



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is about football (or music or cooking or make-up, or whatever it might be that floats the boat of particular kids and staff members). What I want to do now is to locate that argument within a conceptual framework that allows me to sound suitably academic in saying so. I'm not really saying anything new here – asserting the importance of everyday events is the basis of a CYC approach. I hope I might be able to offer some additional conceptual ballast to such an approach, partly drawing on European perspectives, which, broadly, might be thought to reflect more humanistic rather than scientific ways of understanding.

My initial thoughts were to focus on an epistemology of CYC, epistemology being about the nature of knowledge and how we come to know, or think we know, things. I then realised that there is a point before this and that is ontology, which is about being. In some ways being precedes (or arguably intertwines with) knowing. This was brought home to me at the recent NACCW conference in South Africa. I could write a whole column on the conference alone but one of the many things that struck me was one of the songs that delegates periodically broke into. “I *am* a child care worker” it stated. This is perhaps equally true of teachers and other ‘people professions’. It is not just something they do but something they are – it is deeply embodied, dispositional, part of who one is. So, having established ontology as a baseline I can now move on to epistemology.

My thoughts on the need to develop an epistemology of care were first prompted when reading Peter Moss and Pat Petrie’s book *From Children’s Services to Children’s Spaces* in the early 2000s. One of the many arguments they make, which has stuck with me is the need to reframe the way we think about care away from being a technical rational task towards an appreciation of its moral and practical nature. In making this case, Moss and Petrie are hearkening back to an Aristotlean tradition. Aristotle identified a number of what he called intellectual virtues, the main ones being *techne*, *episteme* and *phronesis*. Flyvbjerg defines these, respectively, as follows:

Episteme: Scientific knowledge. Universal, invariable, context-independent. Based on general analytic rationality.

Techne: Craft/art. Pragmatic, variable, context-dependent. Oriented towards production. Based on practical instrumental rationality governed by a conscious goal. The original concept appears today in terms such as ‘technique’, ‘technical’ and ‘technology’.

Phronesis: Ethics. Deliberation about values with reference to praxis. Pragmatic, variable, context dependent. Oriented towards action. Based on practical value-rationality. The original concept has no analogous contemporary term (2001: 57).

Phronesis might be described as the thoughtful reflection on experience. It is described elsewhere, variously, as prudence or practical wisdom. Aristotle associ-

ates phronesis specifically with moral knowledge, involving contemplation on eudaimonia or 'the good life'. It involves acting on our world in a value based way (praxis).

It would seem to me that the kind of knowledge that is useful and that we draw upon in CYC reflects an idea of phronesis: knowledge that is pragmatic, variable, context dependent, oriented towards action and rooted in deliberation on the values that underpin it. Yet we persist in looking to science to provide solutions to complex situations that are invariably not amenable to technical answers but are located within wider questions of ethics and practice itself. Partly, and this is where my interest in European models of social pedagogy comes in, this is a North American thing. Lagemann, an historian of American education, explains that: "One cannot understand the history of education in the United States, unless one realizes that Edward L. Thorndike won and John Dewey lost" (1989 p.185). Thorndike was a psychologist and his was a positivist method. Dewey, on the other hand understood that learning came about through participation in community life. Crucially, he argued that children learn through interacting with a social environment (see my article in *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* for more detail).

Increasingly, though, I am concerned that we are moving in the wrong direction towards an ever greater belief in or reliance on scientific or technical rational solutions to complex social problems. This was brought home to me on a recent

European project. Having identified a common concern across six partner countries about those children who operate at the borders of the mental health and residential child care systems, the project set out to discover examples of 'best practice' among the two professions working together so that these might be rolled out through a joint education programme – all very rational and logical. Only, it didn't prove to be so easy, for we struggled to find examples of such 'best practice'. Sure, some things could be identified that were better than others but across every country barriers were apparent in the status differentials that existed between the two professions, in the language used and in the very different ways they both understood their tasks. This got me thinking that the problem of collaboration or lack thereof wasn't just one of structures or even professional self-interest but reflected a wider epistemological divide between the two groupings. Mental health professionals drew upon a scientific knowledge base, residential workers a more practical one based around everyday caring tasks. This practical knowledge was harder to define or legitimise than scientific knowledge, which was deemed to be superior, because it, ostensibly at least, could be argued to be based on experiment and calculation. Residential workers looked to mental health workers to offer them answers as to what to do in response to behaviours they found hard to understand. Mental health workers could rarely give the kind of answers that were looked for. The result was mutual frustration.



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This desire among residential workers to find scientific answers to complex practice problems isn't helped by some of the pseudo-science that has become so popular in training courses in recent years. Much of this looks to neuroscience. Juxtaposed images of healthy and shrivelled brains seem to provide proof positive that poor early experience is manifest in observable physiological (or neurological) symptoms. Only, it is far more complicated than this, as any neuroscientist would attest. Even were it straightforward, knowing that poor early experience isn't to be recommended and may have negative consequences down the line doesn't really tell us much about what to do in the here in now. What to do about it comes back to good old fashioned, responsive care. Taking as a starting point that kids are inevitably damaged, traumatised even, by past experience may even get in the way of workers responding to kids in the kind of spontaneous and intuitive ways that are required for fear that they may interrupt a delicate neurological process. Life is too short, and much too complicated, for us try to second-guess what might be going on between the brain's various receptors and pathways – sometimes we just need to go with the gut.

Suggesting that practitioners go with their gut isn't a call for an uninformed, non-reflexive approach to practice. The gut instincts of good CYC workers are invariably honed through experience and reflection on that experience. This is a grounded expertise that comes from long hours on the floor; ten thousand

hours, according to Malcolm Gladwell in his book *The Outliers*. Regardless of the validity of Gladwell's arithmetic, there is no doubt that expertise in any field requires time spent in it. Moreover, the nature of such expertise is that those who hold it realise that it is only ever partial and contingent, forever questioning itself.

By contrast there are those who imagine that knowledge is something that can straightforwardly be applied to practice. They inhabit the policy communities that grow up around particular subject areas, the network of people in and linked to government who determine the policy agenda. Expertise is rarely a criterion for entry to this community, the role of which is not to debate or contest but to facilitate government policy. The policy community spans civil servants and increasingly NGOs. They invariably have good degrees in subjects such as social policy and are motivated to right wrongs, being especially fond of human rights and other universalising ways of understanding the world. They are generally untroubled by the doubt that plagues real experts.

We were treated to a lovely example of this gulf between abstract and grounded knowledge at the NACCW Conference. A delegate from a major NGO sought to have us understand Africa's problems in terms of First World concepts of patriarchy and human rights. Later the Government Minister got up to speak. A veteran of the ANC struggle she had a script that her civil servants had obviously prepared for her and she occasionally resorted to it. Most of her speech, though, was improvised and

subverted or (to put it more charitably) added texture to NGO understandings. Her take on UNCRC articles around children's participation, for instance, was that teenage boys should be made to take their turn at scrubbing the household pots because of the desirability of a sense of doing things together. It would have been a foolhardy teenage boy to dispute that fact with the Minister in full force.

Washing pots are but one of the practical aspects of care. How about the moral? The cornerstone of the Hippocratic Oath is that a doctor should 'first do no harm'. Yet there are areas of child care where professions do harm. In child protection for instance, Lonne *et al* have concluded that the system is 'close to bankrupt (and it may be doing more harm than good' (2009, 5). Child and youth care workers do harm when they fail to care, when they start to believe that the relational and dialogical heart of care can be subsumed beneath bureaucratic fiat. This imposes a social distance, which reduces kids to objects of our intervention rather than unique individuals who share in our common humanity.

So, what is needed? A good starting point would be to relinquish the search for the philosopher's stone that will open the door to how to 'do' care. It doesn't and never will exist. There is no universal care. Instead, knowledge of care comes through caring for concrete others in the places and contexts within which they live their lives. This can't necessarily be taught as so much of it is embodied in the person caring (or the caring person), but

it can be honed through continually reflecting on caring encounters.

Hopefully, I'll be able to rehearse some of these thoughts in future issues of *CYC-Online*.

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Notes on the Transfiguration of the Field

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It is time to move beyond post. The political and social intervention of post-modern, post-Marxist, post-structural and so on have done their work of opening up a space that follows the failed project of modernity and it is time to let them go. This is not to say, as many have contended, that the various iterations of postality foreclosed and finished modernity off. Modernity still holds an inordinate following in both theory and practice.

But, modernity is a ghost of its former self and operates largely in the form of ideological obfuscation and pure simulacra. In a term, the driving concepts of modernity such as rationality, reason, scientific objectivity, the search for foundational and universal truths, rights, democracy, revolutions through class struggle, the

dialectic, socialism, the individual, development, progress, politics of identity (progressive and reactionary) and all forms of political and social utopias have lost whatever capacity they once held to change the world.

This is not to say that they never had such force. Instead, the revolution of modernity has been utterly coopted into the realm of the symbolic. Each of these terms has become corrupted beyond redemption by global capitalism's capacity to transliterate these forms of human striving into pure abstraction. Put simply, modernity's promise of a transformation of the world has become the new opiate of the people.

The post modern with all of its flashy contestations and contentious encounters,

I would argue is also on its last

legs. Again, this is not because it no longer functions, but because it has done the work it had the capacity to do and is, like modernity, now turned almost fully to the interests of neo-liberal capitalism. Its capacity to open forms of liminal spaces that open the edges of modernity to indeterminacy are now taken up as new pseudo-utopic spheres of what Deleuze has termed infinite deferral. The gifts of deconstruction, as both theory and practice, are now undertaken as a powerful tool for creating an infinitely proliferating sphere of niche markets and marketable boutique identities. The much-lauded linguistic turn has been turned against itself by savvy advertising gurus and the masters of marketing. The Derridean claim that there is nothing outside the text has been deployed to create an infinitely mutable system of textual code all of which returns eternally to the money sign as the sole source and master signifier. The Butlerian realms of performativity have been reduced to an unending reiteration of bodies as media spectacle. The promise of the post-colonial has been reconfigured as a purely symbolic register, wherein the hybridity of Bhabha and Anzaldua is reproduced as an opportunity for all of us to create mutable identities that flee any real world accountability to the ongoing atrocities rooted in our patterns of consumption and addiction to privilege.

However, both the modern and postality leave us a residue. A surplus that is indigestible to capitalism and points towards unfinished projects that still have the force necessary to continue to

open lines and ruptures within the totalizing world of global capitalism. While I would argue that for anyone serious about engaging a 21st century CYC it is probably useful to abandon those aspects of modernity and postality now fully compromised, it may be useful to keep an eye open for the bits and fragments that refuse capitalist appropriation.

How might we spot these? We have to look the edges of our field where work is being done that doesn't seem to make sense and might even appear kind of crazy. Work that can't be assimilated into the rubrics of professionalization, funding streams, accreditation standards and evidence based practice. In short, work that sits outside the boundaries of how we have defined ourselves as a field thus far.

This kind of work would be interested in taking bits and pieces of the residue of modernity and postality and re-combining them into new ways of thinking about youth-adult relations. This might entail new combinations of a re-configured empiricism, transitory modes of rationality and reason that open onto new forms of imagination and irrationality, non-juridically based collectivist notions of equity, rhizomatic mappings of organizational structures, the return to the experimental unhinged from instrumentality and utility, a revivification of the poetic and evocative sans transcendence and any hint of romantic sentimentality and so on.

The method here is what Guattari refers to as transversal mapping or in feminist readings of quantum theory as entanglements. Such a method opens



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thought and practice as a horizontal mapping without the heights of transcendence, the arborescence of taxonomies, the march of teleology and development, or the depths and internalities of psychoanalysis or reductive versions of neuroscience. Instead, we might map our work on a flat surface of force as extension, connectivity, and flow. Here, as youth and adults we could explore the messy overlapping of rich and fecund ecologies of life and thought, living bodies in collision, entanglements of meaning and definition, the indeterminacy of possibility, and the field of infinite possibility that is that which isn't yet.

This is certainly one of the landscapes fomented in the wake of the failed project of modernity and the legacy of postality. For us who engage the field of youth-adult relations, it returns us to the promise of our roots in phenomenology and existentialism. That is to say to the fundamentals of relationship founded on two bodies in encounter. This is the world of the vaunted, but largely unexplored, world of Mark Krueger's lunch or his evocative poetic explorations that entangled CYC practice, memory, theory and reflection. It is a return to experience, but without the search for the essence of that experience. This would be a phenomenology without the baggage of individuation, self-actualization or hierarchies of needs.

To work experientially and relationally in this way is to immerse us in the flow of the living ecology of immanent creativity and the struggle for existence and impetus for the persistence of form and id-

iosyncratic capacity that we hold both as singularities and in common. In short, it is to engage CYC relationship seriously as the transforming of life. Not in any limited sense of transforming young peoples lives into the forms and constraints of a brutal system of domination, but transformation as a realm of open capacity only constrained by the limits of an actual material ecology.

To open our field of work and thought beyond the realm of modernity and postality, but premised in the rich compost of residue left behind, holds the possibility of transfiguring our work as we enter the 21st century. I use the term transfiguration with both necessity and intention. The term has both secular and spiritual overtones. In the secular sense, it means to change in form or appearance, to effect a metamorphosis. Most certainly, I am proposing that we as a field of young people and adults in new forms of relational engagement such as those outlined above, would certainly shift the appearance and form of our field of endeavor and the ways in which we work.

In this, we might well undergo a metamorphosis, a term I want to use transversally to indicate overlapping maps of humans and animals akin to Kafka's becoming cockroach. In the biological sense that Kafka deploys in his short story "Metamorphosis," the process involves the way in which an animal experiences a visible and sudden change in bodily structure through cell differentiation and growth. This deployment of the term has a resonance that is of interest here. For

example, there is the way in which Kafka turns the term to his own ends by entangling and overlapping the taxonomic models of animal and human by having a human (Gregor Samsa) metamorphose suddenly into a cockroach. There are, of course, many readings of this short story from the psychoanalytic to the becoming animal of Deleuze and Guattari. I want to propose a trans-species and ecological reading for the field of CYC.

As we enter the 21st century with all its attendant anxieties and crisis, perhaps none holds more devastating challenges to our ability to care for young people than climate change. If any of the projections about climate change are at all accurate, the planet we will leave behind (as we who are the elders of our field pass) will be a very harsh place indeed. We need to create our field of care in such a way as to entangle our models of care with those of other species. It is essential that we broaden our capacity for caring in such a way as to comprehend the fact that our human bodies and their well-being cannot be logically scissioned from the inter-species ecology in which they are imbedded. We must engage a metamorphosis of the bodies we encounter, so as to apprehend that our bodies are part of all the other bodies on the planet; that we are cockroach already.

In this sense, transfiguration is a recognition and acknowledgement of an existing set of relations made opaque or forgotten by us in our rush to certain modes of partial and incomplete ways of knowing. I would be remiss if I didn't note

the impressive work done in this area already by Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw and her colleagues at the University of Victoria and Fikile Nxamalo at the University of Texas at Austin.

The more spiritual reading of transfiguration is that of giving a new glorified and exalted appearance. It is often used to signify the intercession of the heavenly into the worldly, in ways that transform the latter into a more beautiful form. I would like to modify that definition, for our purposes here, by introducing the concept of immanent spirituality as defined by Kathleen Skott-Myhre in her work on feminist immanent spirituality. Drawing on sources as diverse as the Voodoo of Louisa Tiesch, conceptual frameworks of Mestiza in the work of Gloria Anzaldua, Alice Walker's Womanism, Capitalist sorcery and the counter trance of contemporary witchcraft in Stengers and Pignarre, the relation of witchcraft and women's labor in relation to capitalist development in Frederici, aboriginal spirituality in the work of writers and practitioners such as Goldtooth, Kovac and Wilson, and the neo-paganism of Starhawk, Skott-Myhre opens a field of spirituality deeply rooted in the material conditions of contemporary life and struggle.

Immanent spirituality according to Skott-Myhre focuses on the transfiguration of the world not through heavenly intervention, but through an amplification of the force of life brought about by immersion into the set of living relations that is life itself. It is a reassertion of the power of networks of life that brings illumi-



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nation and beauty into our perceptions of the world. I would argue that in our work as CYC practitioners and thinkers it is a similar transfiguration that brings beauty into the relations that youth and adults share in their encounters together.

The transfiguration of our field in both the secular and spiritual senses is both an intercession into the world of our contemporary practice and thought, but also a potential recuperation of the roots of our field being lost in our rush to professional adulthood. I would argue that there is a valuable residue of revolutionary force left by the neglected philosophical fields of phenomenology and existentialism. In our rush to abdicate our professional adolescence we may have forgotten the value and importance of the force of the child. The raw unfettered force of the child body in relation to all it encounters. The encounter with the child is, for many us, the reason we do this work and stay in this field. It is the connection to the force of the child in all of us that keeps us fresh, vibrant and alive. Perhaps, the transfiguration of our field as it enters the new century is as simple (and complex) as to leave the stale registers of maturity behind and find our way with the bright eyes of the child; that child that we all remain to the end. The child that erupts in and through us no matter how hard we work to suppress its force. Perhaps ...



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Speaking the Disagreeable Truth

Frances Ricks

In July 2015 I wrote my first and only letter to an editor.

The Whistle Blower's Tale: Part 2

I appreciated David Broadland's article, "The Whistle Blower's Tale: Part 2."

If the facts are accurate as reported I fail to understand:

- (1) why employees of the District of Saanich continue to be employed in light of their incompetence regarding the procurement and implementation of the software;*
- (2) how these employees are allowed to disregard and violate their own regulations/ethics; and*
- (3) why the IT employee is the only one showing moral courage by stating the*

obvious (rather than saying "I don't know") and is subsequently disciplined for telling the truth.

When will we as citizens insist on professional behavior, ethical behavior and moral comportment from those we put in office and those who are hired to do their bidding? I wonder what is keeping anyone from acting on the facts pertaining to Commissioner Denham, District Directors, the Fire Chief, Paul Murray, Forrest Kvemshagen, John Proc, ex-Mayor Leonard (who lost the election and has been appointed to a position in government), and others.

Surely some of these facts speak to professional incompetence, inappropriate applications of standards of practice and ethics, and/or faulty thinking regarding moral comportment and moral courage. The statement "no one is known to have done it" is hardly a viable argument for not acting. Under the circumstances, many stand in a chain of command while holding a smoking gun. Therefore "they haven't broken the law"? This is not about law! This is about doing what is expected in order to fulfill mandates as public servants.

What is alarming about this incident is that it does not stand alone with regards to other public servants, including federal senators, premiers, contractors, and others reported in the public media as being suspected, if not charged and convicted, of misplaced trust and wrong doing.



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I am embarrassed that as a citizen I have remained silent in the past. This was too close to home to let it go by. If others agree, call the Saanich switchboard and express your concerns, or write a letter to the editor to the Times Colonist or Focus. Call one of the directors/councilors. Express your concern and disappointment in our local governance. We deserve more. It is the very least we can do.

Frances Ricks

(Focus: Victoria's magazine for people, ideas and culture. Letters to the Editor, July, 2015, pp 6.)

About the same time in Victoria British Columbia ...

Questions were raised about the actions of researchers involved in medical research. A number of researchers were fired and one of those subsequently committed suicide. Objections were made about the investigation and eventually the BC Government apologized for the mismanagement of the situation. Some of those fired were rehired and two have not been adjudicated. Pressure was applied to have an external review and it was determined by a committee composed of major stakeholders that an investigation would be conducted by the Ombudsman. The Ombudsman was quoted as saying,

"... my staff have a collegial relationship with civil servants. Many came from the civil service and might be interested in

returning. Being part of a public roasting of senior public servants could be a career-limiting exercise."

The journalist noted "Given those circumstances, if the report goes too easy on the civil servants, it will be seen as a whitewash. If too harsh, it could derail their own careers."

This is currently under investigation (Times Colonist: June 24, 2015, July 16, 2015).

About the same time ...

The same newspaper reported a story about a child abused by the father. The father allegedly had custody of the child because the mother was considered mentally unstable. The mother had reported that the father was an abuser. For some reason this was disregarded by case workers. The Child and Family Advocate considered this case to be under her jurisdiction while the Ministry of Child and Family said the case would be reviewed by an outside consultant hired to "fix the system". The person hired was a key player in setting up Child and Family services in the first place. Serious and highly questionable cases are normally under the jurisdiction of the Child and Family Advocate.

This is currently under investigation (Times Colonist: July 21, 2015; August 7, 2015).

About the same time ...

A man was elected as mayor to one of the municipalities in greater Victoria. The previous mayor was ousted by the

voters. Some of the civil servants said they would not work for the newly elected mayor. The civil servants ordered and placed “spy software” on the new mayor’s computer and limited the new mayor’s access to information that had been available to the previous mayor. When participants were asked “Who did this?” they claimed they did not know. One person in the IT department had objected to the spyware. He was reprimanded and punished. He found a new job in another organization. Staff had been instructed “not to speak” to *Focus Magazine* writers.

This is currently under investigation (January 12, 2015; April 1, 2015).

About the same time ...

Employees at the University of Victoria alleged a fellow employee showed them nude pictures of his sexual partners, bragged about his promiscuity, suggested threesomes with co-workers, asked male and female workers to show their genitals or breasts, and asked workers for massages. Some employees claimed this activity had been going on for years and that the university officials knew about it. Other employees said they were tired of the cover ups but were afraid of being dismissed if they spoke out.

This is currently under investigation (*Times Colonist*: August 12, 2015).

Pervasive, Repetitive and Systemic Issues

These situations surfaced in early 2015 and continue to be reported in

Victoria’s *Time Colonist*, usually on the front page. They resemble numerous situations which never see the light of day. Most do not make it to the front page of any newspaper like these did. These situations occur in large and small organizations. They occur in different kinds of service agencies and work organizations. They involve people of all sorts. Some appear to be endemic and others systemic. Sometimes they get resolved, and more often than not, they do not get resolved. Why is that?

Rather than take corrective and appropriate actions, people in charge appear to be guided by self-serving motivations. While their conclusions might have been based on the facts or truth of the situations their actions suggest they are afraid of something. Sometimes officials think it comes down to whether there is evidence for breaking the law. When the law has been broken they can make a case for their actions. Rarely do officials say “This violates our sense of common sense, right and wrong or code of ethics.” When most people ask if something is ethical, they mean “Is this legal?”

You Have Nothing To Fear But Fear Itself

When I recount my own experiences of fear in professional circumstances (highly variable depending on my age, experience and context variables, such as gender of others and perceptions of danger) I feared loss or multiple losses. Feared losses might include loss of job,



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promotion, friends, opportunities, family, prestige, social life, emotional support, partner, social support, money, time and identity, to mention a few.

One or a package of any losses can feel life threatening! In life threatening conditions we tend to burrow down into a place of wombly warmth and cower there to avoid our delusional reality of what might happen. There we keep and remain silent! We have all been there and have heard, “You have nothing to fear but fear itself.” (Franklin D. Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address, 1933) Yes, but he was talking about war. This is personal. This is about me and people I know. This is very close to home.

Canada Is Our Home

The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms is the section of the Constitution of Canada that lists what the Charter calls “fundamental freedoms”. These freedoms theoretically apply to everyone in Canada regardless of whether they are a Canadian citizen, or an individual or corporation.

The freedoms (and the rights and responsibilities that are embedded in them) are enforceable by the courts. The fundamental freedoms include: *freedom of expression*, freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of belief, freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of association. Section 1 of the Charter permits Parliament or the provincial legislatures to enact laws that place certain kinds of limited restrictions on the freedoms should

they be used for hate speech or obscenities.

All of the freedoms require us to manifest them in who we are through our words and deeds. In my view, expression (speaking, writing, doing) is how we manifest our thoughts, beliefs, peaceful assemblies and associations with like and unlike kind. It is through our expression of thoughts and ideas that we engage in dialogue and discussion and co-create options and opportunities to do things the same or differently.

When we are silent about what we question and disapprove, we inadvertently end up sanctioning and encouraging the delusions of others. Our silence communicates that we ‘go along with’ what happened as if it does not matter, or does not matter that much. The silent majority speaks loud and clear through silence.

The small things that we ignore, that we let go by, that we don’t take the time to address, or that we leave for others to address, require our attention. By the time the effect of what we do not do reaches the front page of the newspaper, it represents a very big and systemic problem. Chances of a correction and getting things on track are slim. Imagine some expert coming in and “fixing” the demonic system you work in.

Overcoming Our Fears

As citizens of Canada we can bite the bullet and speak out. I am embarrassed to say the letter below is my first and only letter to an editor. I learned from people’s

responses to the letter that WE ARE NOT ALONE, SO SPEAK OUT. Write to the press, call hot lines, speak out at social gatherings, and go public on Facebook, Twitter and other social media apps to raise issues.

We can also pause and consider more than “Is this legal?” Is it right or wrong? Does it violate my code of ethics and personal code of conduct? If so, what is violated? We can consider the consequences of what happened and the impact on those involved and the larger community. We can consider what else needs to be done to rethink what is needed for the larger context. That larger context may be the whole of Canada! (Be sure to vote in all elections!)

Taking our scenarios: What needs to happen in a work environment that has told workers not to talk to the press and people are shut down? How might this instruction affect their work? What needs to be done for a mother, father and child where there has been abuse and case workers cannot or do not address it? What needs to be done for students or staff who have been harassed, abused, or kicked out of programs because no one knows how to handle the situation that involves a person with status and power over others? How do we handle differential treatment of people who are part of wrong doing, but not equally?

More importantly, let's clean up our own actions. Let's take care in our personal relationships at home, work, school and community by speaking truthfully and without malice. Let's avoid perpetrating untruths that bring harm to others

or to 'look good' and 'be in the know'. Play fair in job competitions and abide by human resources regulations and equity principles. Promote and participate in educational programs to foster a healthy environment and culture e.g. anti-harassment, anti-violence, anti-fraud and other programs that promote safety. Create a culture that takes care of those who have been harmed rather than avoiding and shaming them.

Above all, remember that we have the freedom to speak and express ourselves. We not only have the freedom to speak, we have the right to make right by speaking the disagreeable truth. Please join me.



FRANCES RICKS Ph.D. is retired from the University of Victoria (June, 2005) and lives with Jim, her husband of 50 plus years in Victoria, B.C. Dr. Ricks volunteers in programs that benefit seniors, does pro bono work for people who ask, raises roses, and makes a 'mean apple or blackberry pie' with hand-picked apples and blackberries.

The literature of Child and Youth Care has done little to promote awareness of the needs and perceptions of youth with disabilities. Our field has an important role to play in modelling ethical engagement and working towards the elimination of stigma.

What follows is a transcript of a talk that was delivered in 2015 during a graduate Youth Work Ethics course at Concordia University in Montreal. The speaker was a courageous young advocate for the rights of students with disabilities. Her talk was direct and based on lived experience, and had a riveting effect on students, many of whom were experienced Child and Youth Care workers.

Penny's Talk

Living in a multi-cultural society means that there are many differences among youth in any group, like race, sexual orientation, color, religion and physical ability. I am here today to talk to you about the differences you might see in the minority group of youth with limitations.

The basis of all ethics is to have respect for differences. Disrespectful language and behavior creates greater disrespect.

A person with a disability is an individual who has feelings, knowledge, strengths, emotions and desires. They likely have tal-

ents just like the rest of us and there are many examples of people with limitations who are great achievers in our society.

Don Cameron is one example. He was born in Montreal and was severely disabled from birth. His mother enrolled him in regular school. One day the Fire Department visited for a fire drill. When the fire chief saw Don in the classroom, he complained to the teacher,

"If you have a real fire in the class, what are you going to do with this boy in a wheelchair?" Don overheard the talk, turned and said, "You really want to know? I'll show you." He flew out of his chair and crawled faster than anybody else from his classroom to the exit. The fire chief was left speechless.

Don completed his university education and dedicated his time to lecturing in hospitals, schools and community organizations across Canada about the rights of people affected by disability. He

Considerations for Ethical Engagement with Youth with Disabilities

**Penny Constantinides and
Varda R. Mann-Feder**



fought for people with disabilities who were placed in long-term facilities to have a bath more than once a week and was a valuable member of the Cerebral Palsy Association. He passed away a few years ago, but throughout his life worked as a “tireless crusader for public awareness and communication on Cerebral Palsy” (Montreal Gazette, 2002). He is my hero!

Persons with disabilities do have abilities. What they often do not have is recognition and acceptance from society. A person with limitations often has support from loved ones; however, sometimes families are unable to handle the stress when a member faces challenges related to their disability and depends on the support of others. In some situations this has resulted in the dissolution of the family.

Leaving home is also particularly difficult for people with disabilities because, in addition to the usual stresses, they must often move to placements governed by bureaucratic and public systems that may lack empathy and understanding.

People with disabilities prefer to be spoken to as adults, not like kids who do not know what is going on.

I often tell others that “I am not a wheelchair, it’s not who I am”. My basic needs are exactly the same as those of any other person. I simply meet them in a different way, including the use of a wheelchair to get around.

Being a person with limitations does not mean an individual cannot speak or do things on their own, but sometimes they need assistance for basic activities. This personal care is best provided by people who understand and demonstrate the qualities of respect, reliability, trust, and confidentiality. This is an extremely delicate situation. One always has to be alert to avoid physical mistreatment, neglect, mishandling of belongings and other forms of abuse. Issues

of emotional attachment or fear of loss can also complicate this relationship. Balancing time, expectations, and performance is a serious matter for an individual who has responsibility for a person with disabilities. Communication is crucial as the caregiver must be well prepared and aware of specialized methods of communication, such as communication boards, sign language, and color coding. It is important that one not assume that a disabled person cannot express



themselves even if they do not communicate verbally.

There are a number of things to be mindful of when speaking to a person with a disability. Here are some examples:

“It’s good to see you out and about.”

This makes the person feel bad because they may not be able to get out as often as they would like to for many reasons, like weather conditions, medical reasons, or no available escort. The feeling of loneliness and isolation is very difficult to deal with. It’s better to say “I’m happy to see you”. The emphasis is then on the positive feeling about the person, rather than on their experience of being isolated.

“Who do you live with?” I think that one has to be very careful before posing such a question because we don’t know the relationships of the parties involved. We do not know the level of contentment or satisfaction nor the living conditions. Such a question increases the possibility of stirring up unpleasant issues and might cause emotional harm rather than good. It’s preferable that one uses a more general question such as “Are you happy where you are?” or “How is life treating you?” because this does not have the same negative effect on the person.

“Please, wait a minute.” Every time I hear this statement, if I put myself in front of a mirror, all I see is the word “wait” written on it. It is the most frustrating statement which young people with disabilities hear over and over.

Sometimes, I think that the expression “wait a minute” has become sort of a habit. It would be preferable that needs are discussed ahead of time, in a dialogue, validating the need for calling for help and discussing appropriate time frames for responding. What is needed is an agreement between the two parties about what would be a timely response.

“Can I help you?” When a stranger approaches a disabled person and offers help, instantly this makes the person feel helpless and diminished. An able bodied person should not invade the personal space of the disabled person by standing right in front saying “Can I help you?” I think that it is offensive to assume that the person with limited functional capacity automatically needs assistance.

Prejudging one’s capacity is not the best way to approach a person that we don’t know, because it makes them feel inferior. When we acknowledge the fact that the person with limitations has strengths and abilities, we can assume that the person has the potential to be superior to others as well. I am certain that when most people reach the point of needing help, they know the time, place and the way to ask for that help. Then the other person can decide how to respond.

It is preferable that people like me have the privilege of judging their needs for help. The importance of treating people with limitations as an authority on their own needs extends to greetings as well.

Rather than lean over to say hello

to a person in a wheelchair, ask how they wish to be greeted. Ask if they want to be hugged, and treat their personal space with the same respect granted to others. Even someone who has verbal limitations can respond to a respectful question, and always appreciates being asked how someone else should approach them.



Discussion

Disability is a “prevalent human condition” (Weber, 2004, p. 1). It is estimated that 10-20% of the world’s population are people with disabilities (Shakespeare, Lezzoni & Groce, 2009), including 180 million youth under 24 (Groce, 2004). This number is increasing due to population growth and advances in medicine (United Nations, 2006). Traditional definitions of disability stress impairment, and the medical model has contributed to a view of people with disabilities as deficient (Shakespeare et al., 2009). This has led to stigmatization and social exclusion (Weber, 2004). Young people with disabilities are under-represented in higher education, and are more likely to be the victims of violence than other youth (U.N., 2006). The

Disability Rights Movement (Galer, 2015) has emphasized that it is the social context that places limits on person with disabilities, and that disability can be exacerbated by our collective and individual responses. In 2008, the United Nations adopted an International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with the goal of changing such perceptions (Galer, 2015).

In a recent chat thread on CYC Online, it became clear that we have done little to identify how the Child and Youth Care field might promote a more positive social climate for youth with disabilities. The North American Code of Ethics for Child and Youth Care states that we should act as part of our global responsibility to:

... ensure that services are sensitive and non-discriminatory, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, national ancestry, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, abilities, mental or physical handicap, medical condition, political belief, political affiliation, and socioeconomic status.” (International Leadership Coalition, 1995)

While much has been written about cultural competence for Child and Youth Care Workers, persons with disabilities have unique needs that are not often mentioned. In fact, research in other professions, including medicine and psychology, suggests that many biases persist in relation to persons with disability because of the absence of adequate training (Shakespeare et al., 2009; Weber, 2004).

This has a role in “reinforcing



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marginalization and ... invisibility” (Weber, 2004, p.5).

Sercombe, in his book *Youth Work Ethics* (2009), states “In the face of prejudice and negative discrimination routinely experienced by members of minority groups, it is all the more necessary to think critically and reflexively about our practice” (p.154). Penny’s talk highlights the importance of questioning our assumptions. How we use language is particularly important. One common assumption is that disabled people are in constant need of help. This is a human rights issue: young people with disabilities are not inevitably dependent. An ethical approach demands that we treat these youth with the same respect as others. This is consistent with a relational approach, in which we engage with the whole person, acknowledging strength and resilience, while doing “with” rather than “for” or “to” (Garfat & Fulcher, 2011). We are also uniquely positioned to recognize the voices of youth with disabilities.

Lastly, ethical youth workers have a responsibility to model non-discriminatory language and disability sensitivity with all youth. “While the young people we work with may have suffered from discrimination and injustice themselves, it is not unusual to hear young people denigrate other groups....this can spill into physical violence and active exclusion” (Sercombe, p.157). Negative prejudices about disability are still all too common, and it is up to us to engage ethically with youth with disabilities while working towards changed perceptions in ourselves and others.

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The only disability in life is a bad attitude.

Scott Hamilton

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Something to say about commitment

Rika Swanzen

How often do we hear these days that this generation doesn't have the same respect or perseverance or struggles as those in the past? While I am not at all convinced that much of these statements are true, our need to reflect on the condition of where we find ourselves, compared to the place of where we were "before", seems to be deeply engrained in our need to pause and reflect.

I like to believe that how Child and Youth Care Workers (CYCWs) evaluate the state of society is based on how well their children and youth are doing. Over the time of the last 200 *CYC-Online* issues, they have gone through the ups and downs with economic, cultural and political influences on how well children are cared for. What an amazing collage

for reflection is offered through the commitment of the global network which contributes to and reads *CYC-Net*.

I cannot remember exactly what came first when I became part of a very special and diverse group of CYCWs. I think I may have had my first introduction to *CYC-Net* at the 9th Triennial International Child and Youth Care Conference in Fort Lauderdale in 2009 where I met Michael Gaffley and Carol Stuart and discovered her new-soon-to-be released text book. This introduction to Child and Youth Care (CYC) became one of the first prescribed textbooks for a degree at Monash University South Africa (MSA) to start in 2010. Needless to say, the prints arrived just in time!

Key to the start of some accelerated progress of our position in the field was the CYC-Net discussion forum. I could immediately connect myself and my colleagues and students in a young Child and Youth Development major, literally, to a world of expertise. CYC-Net showcased the commitment of practitioners, academics and students at all levels and across various contexts. CYC-Net is one place that shatters the perceptions that people just don't care enough anymore, or that challenges are too overwhelming to solve. You can follow a discussion thread and be offered a link to free resources. It became a huge luxury, to never wonder about how to get answers to any challenge faced in practice. Seeing how students made use of the resource was encouraging, because you know if they leave, they will have something that is consistent, reliable and dependable – some continuity during a major transition in their lives. It is also here where I got to know the names of the influential forces in the field: Leon Fulcher, Thom Garfat and Brian Gannon.

At the 2009 National Association for Child Care Workers (NACCW) conference, of course well-advertised by CYC-Net, I was steadily realising who the rest of the CYC giants were. I got to speak to Merle Allsopp and Sandra Oosthuizen among the dancing and singing of members, and I heard about Barrie Lodge, who would later become a regular guest lecturer at our university. I also remember Leon sharing his *Images of encounters* CDs (for free!), which introduced me to the Online Learning Zone – also

hosted – for free – by CYC-Net. I also started to hear about Martin Stabrey, as the quiet 'mechanic' making sure the wheels of this CYC-Net machine keeps on turning. At this conference, for a ridiculously low price, I obtained two volumes of *Readings for CYC for South African students* printed by PreText, which I later learned was hosted by the same team in Cape Town who enabled CYC-Net. It was also here where my Durban University of Technology academic colleagues Fathima Dewan and Jackie Winfield made a point to meet and since then we have had a supportive and valued relationship.

What I do know is that during the time when CYC in South Africa was fighting for professional recognition, CYC-Net offered the students at MSA a window into a world where CYC existed as a strong force – people all over the world who were impacting the lives of children on a daily basis. I'm not sure who all the quiet good hearts were behind the scenes that were enabling this network – the donors and those spending hours reading through emails and those making sure the links remains active. We were made aware of the new books available – many of them authored by Thom and Leon, who again focused on how the sources can be made accessible to CYCWs around the world. The other silent heroes that promote the CYC cause with me in my little part of the world are Pearl Vezi, Gugu Shange, Varosh Nadesan and Gert Jonker.

On CYC-Net there was a call for papers for the Relational Child and Youth Care Practice (RCYCP) journal for



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a special issue in 2011. This introduced me to an accredited journal in CYC and marked my first CYC specific publication. Soon after this I got the invitation by Thom and Leon to convene in Paisley as a Clan member. I cannot say I've ever before experienced such inclusivity, where your work is elevated to a level of significance, and you see your part in the bigger picture. What can be more motivating? Here I met other giants, funny enough South African colleagues I did not meet in our own country – Cecil Wood, Werner van der Westhuizen, Jacqui Michaels and more international influences like Mark Strother, Frank Delano, John Digney, Heather Ann, and Simon Walsh and his as warm-hearted parents, Lyn and Pete.

At this Clan-gathering the dream of the 1st World CYC conference to be hosted in St John's was born. Through this conference in 2013, I was introduced to the other international giants: James Freeman, Garth Goodwin, Michael Burns, Jack Phelan, Jim Anglin, and Laura Steckley. A fun memory was the bidding between me and Kathleen Mulvey, a promising young pioneer in the field, for a teddy bear – a mascot of sorts. Another was the boat ride with and Catlin Thorn and Max Smart. I was fortunate to listen to Mark Krueger who sadly passed away in 2014. I also had the pleasure of working closely with Heather Modlin, my co-guest editor on the special conference issue for RCYCP after this conference. Apparently, according to Leon and Thom, we both have the capacity to shop and still be on time for our flights.

It cannot be said that the giants connected to CYC-Net have not invested in a lasting legacy for CYCWs. More so, they have impressed me with the example they provide of commitment. In a world where slogans like "What's in it for me?" and "There is no such thing as a free lunch" rule, they break the mould and expect nothing in return for their sacrifice. They have ensured that when any of the giants email you and ask you for a favour – your immediate answer is yes. They have embodied inclusivity, being relational, making moments meaningful (and memorable ?), with a brilliance in connecting people despite geographical distances and philosophical differences. Because of CYC-Net the efforts of different people in different places helped create a unified sense of identity and we are therefore never alone.

With the warmest hospitality I have ever experienced, Simon and his family ensured that I got to the Ignite conference in Sydney in 2014. Because of the work of Allambi I was able to connect with Mark Freado, Larry Brendtro, Steve van Bockern, and Lesley du Toit and with the amazing highlight of meeting Nancy Getty and Martin Brokenleg.

NACCW celebrated their 40th anniversary and 20th conference mid-2015. By then I joined RCYCP as editor with Heather Snell (guess who invited me) and Merle Allsopp wrote a heart-wrenching reflection on the beginnings of CYC professionalisation in South Africa in the *Beginnings* issue of the new e-journal format. Here in my own

country I was able to visit with my now international friends and could have discussions with new colleagues in the likes of Kelly Shaw, Kiaras Gharabaghi, Herman Radler, Jennifer Davidson, Aurora de Monte, Christine Gaitens, and with my fellow South African CYCWs Dikeledi Phalane, Lesiba Molepo, Mirriam Siluma, Kathy Scott, Yvonne Spandiel, Donald Nghonyama and Vincent Hlabangana. And a fitting end with another colleague Adele Grosse who whisked some of us through the streets to accumulate some unforgettable memories of Cape Town.

PreText also looks after *RCYCP* now – strange how I end up back at CYC-Net headquarters. I also had the pleasure to meet the right-hand, sweet Carina who shows an amazing tenacity to get the journal issues through the last copy editing stage. It makes you wonder, is everyone this friendly and committed all the time?

It does feel like I came full circle – not as an end, since a circle doesn't have an end. For the first time since hearing about this giant, I recently met Brian Gannon personally, and at the place where all the CYC-Net products are born. What a privilege to have met one of the master brains behind CYC in South Africa. Thank you Leon and Thom for again including me, and to Martin for making it happen.

It is hard to believe so much could have been experienced in less than 6 years. Who can say they've personally met most of the influential role players in a profession? Each person I met was connected to a different part of CYC and they broadened my horizon for

understanding the scope of CYC practice. On behalf of the youth we are responsible for, we have not been idle. I can't help to think this was all set in motion with registering on CYC-Net. Those positive and inspiring quotes pop in my head when I think of the CYC-Net team and their supporters: "Be the change you want to see in the world" and "The journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step".

Thank you for taking that first step for the rest of us!



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18 to 23 The time(s) of your life

Leanne Digney

*'In youth we learn; in age we understand'.
– Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach*

Introduction

As much as it seems, ethically and morally, impossible to believe, in Ireland there is no statutory obligation on our state's child and youth care department to provide support services to young people after the age of 18. There are many who think reaching the age of majority infers that youth are ready to 'go it alone' but as we know the truth is often very different.

According to the Irish Department of Children and Youth Affairs website, one of the main aims of aftercare services is to enable young people to achieve a successful transition from care into independent adulthood – the inference here is that the state is required to 'pull out all the stops' to ensure this is achieved.

This paper argues that the legislation ought to be amended to increase the age whereby the state maintains responsibility for young people in care from 18 to 23, an age when our brains begin to approach maturity: by the mid-twenties, the logical brain normally has finished constructing pathways in the frontal areas to manage emotions and decision making (Brendtro, Mitchell & McCall, 2009).

Our Baseline

Where a child leaves the care of a 'health board' (at 18 years), the Board may, in accordance with subsection (2), assist him for so long as the Board is satisfied as to his need for assistance and ... has not attained the age of 21 years – (Child Care Act 1991).

Currently, aftercare service provision in Ireland is noncommittal, inconsistent and dependent on individual providers. Aftercare is viewed as discretionary, as our legislation is "enabling not obliging." One would imagine that protection for vulnerable people should be more compulsory than the existing passive legislation.

The Act quoted above empowers the care provider to provide assistance to the

young person only for so long as they are “satisfied as to his need for assistance”, thus implying that not every child leaving care will require aftercare. Young people in care are amongst the most, if not *the* most, vulnerable people in society and it seems that our law makers consider that their vulnerability ceases when they reach 18 years. As those working with troubled, marginalised and at risk youth know, 18 year olds who have spent time in care are even more vulnerable, and considerably more exposed to significant risk, than most of their contemporaries.

Parens Patriae Doctrine – State as Parent

Parens patriae puts forward the notion of ‘Parent of the Nation’, a doctrine within which the State holds responsibility to intervene to protect children and incapacitated individuals from negligence or abuse. By adopting this policy, the state and the courts have recognised a relationship of dependency between the state and its citizens, electing to be responsible for the vulnerable and marginalised in the same way in which a parent is responsible for their child.

The current Leaving and Aftercare Services National Policy and Procedure Document (HSE, 2012), states, “the HSE¹ is committed to promoting and achieving the best outcomes for young people in care, in keeping with the role of a ‘good parent’.”

However, to properly follow the *parens patriae* doctrine the state must fulfil a role akin to parents (where parental legal, ethical and moral obligations do not end as soon as a child turns 18 years of age).

The *Judicial Separation & Family Law Reform Act 1989* raised the age for a dependent child on parent from 16 to 18 or up to 21 if in full time education, with the *Family Law Act 1995 & Family Law (Divorce) Act 1996* shifting this age from 21 to 23. This legislative pattern illustrates that the state and courts have an understanding of how fundamental parental supports are to the development of a child and/or young adult. In comparing the state’s statutory obligations with that of a parent it becomes evident that the state is seeking to end its duties much earlier than other legal guardians and is therefore abdicating its responsibility to provide fundamental supports. This is despite the young people in question being – generally – more vulnerable than those who have not relied on the state for their primary and other essential human growth needs to this point in their lives.

Celtic Comparison

In 2014, significant changes were made to the laws governing residential and aftercare services in Scotland. *The Children and Young People Act 2014* was entered into law, in a bid to enhance the opportunities for children and youth in care to grow and

¹ HSE formerly had responsibility for children and families. This function is now the responsibility of Tusla.



develop. For example, Section 67 made provision for any young person in state care to have the right to remain in their current (or alternative) place in care up until the age of 21 and Section 66 makes provision for young people leaving care to have entitlements to aftercare support services up to the age of 26, as one might expect from a state professing its belief in the necessity of relational care. Why spend so much time building connections and fostering relationship with youngsters, developing trust and engagement, only to 'pull the plug' when the young person reaches the age of majority?

Irish legislation differs from the Scottish in that there is a complete failure to recognise that leaving care, for some young people, means losing the only 'home' they may have known and that this loss may result in a complete alteration or disintegration of the relationships they have had with their primary care-givers (Garland, n/d) in addition to a sense of loss and associated grieving (Digney & Smart, 2015).

Where Scottish legislation opens the possibility of retaining supports for young people leaving care, current Irish legislation is not as compulsory in providing supports to prepare youngsters fully for adulthood and a life independent of state supports. To fulfil their right the law must exist to support child and youth care staff and foster carers be available to support them to "realise their full potential" (Justice O'Higgins quoted in Conneely, 2003):

... to live and be fed, to be reared and educated, to have the opportunity of working and of realising his or her full potential as a human being ... the State has a duty, as guardian of the common good, to provide for a child born into a family where the parents fail in their duty to the child.

Social Costs and Impacts

It is difficult to begin to measure all the potential social and emotional impacts of leaving a care (support) system when one is not fully prepared; rate of suicide, relationship breakdown, future abusiveness are but some negative outcomes which may be considered. This paper considers two such issues – homelessness and criminality.

Homelessness

A "relationship between leaving care and youth homelessness is recognised in a significant body of research" (HSE, 2006): an observation which cannot be denied as one of the most significant and practical needs of an individual leaving care is accommodation. Nestor (2009) quotes the *Focus Ireland* (1998) report which highlights that many youths leaving care become homeless. Ten years on from this report, the issue is still being reported on, as shown by the *Homeless Strategy and Implementation Plan* in 2008, which recognised that young individuals leaving care remain at risk of becoming homeless.

Criminality

The lack of stable relationships and accommodation has been found to contribute significantly to the problem of youth crime (Maycock & Carr, 2008). An 18 year old care leaver, deemed as no longer requiring state assistance can find themselves with a serious educational deficit which may directly or indirectly result in difficulty finding work and low career prospects. This may leave them more vulnerable to the allure of crime in order to survive. In 2000 a study by Kelleher, Kelleher & Corbett (2000) reported that over 38% of care leavers had been imprisoned within six months of leaving care with an additional 18.8% being sentenced within two years.

These studies alone would seem to suggest that there is a need for dramatic reform of the services that are provided, allowing for enhanced protection and availability of services. This paper is not intimating that raising the age will eliminate these issues, especially if young people's time in care was characterised by authority, control and abusiveness. However, increasing services as they become young adults would certainly give young people a better chance of mitigating against some of the identified risks.

Recommended Reforms

1. In Ireland the statutory age of dependency has gradually risen, suggesting that there is a societal understanding that young people continue to need support once they

turn 18. This paper recommends that the state fully embrace their own acceptance of the *parens patriae* and raise the age permitting access to aftercare services and support to the age of 23, thus ensuring that aftercare legislation is congruent with the legislation existing on parental obligations.

2. In order to better protect and support young people leaving care, the state must amend legislation to ensure a less arbitrary application and create more obliging legislation. The power of changing one word should not be underestimated and to shift from a place of “*may*” to a place of “*must*” means that obligations are defined. The Ombudsman for Children (2010) made a similar observation, stating, “The Bill needs to be amended to impose a positive obligation on the State to provide aftercare for every child in care... at least until they are 21.”

If Ireland is going to facilitate “better outcomes” for our more vulnerable citizens and deliver on promises, such as that of Minister Fitzgerald on 20th June 2012, we, as a country need to accept the research evidence and have our lawmakers realise that relationships and relational care must not be curtailed or eliminated when kids are still kids.

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Harsh. Forgiving. Home.

Nils Ling

"I come from a land that is harsh and unforgiving ..."

It's just after 8 am. and the world comes in two colours – blinding white and astonishing blue.

I roll out of the parking lot of the Wheels Inn (\$39.95 per nite! Color TV!) and on to Highway 2, heading north from Assiniboia, Saskatchewan towards Moose Jaw and onward to the next stop of my two-week tour of performances in small towns on the Canadian Prairies. Five minutes of vigorous chiseling with an ice-scraper in the brittle air of a

mid-January morning has etched out a peephole in the windshield of my rental car that, if I hunker down and turn my head sideways, is just clear enough to give me a sense of whether or not I am between the ditches. The car heater struggles with the rest of the ice and turns the frost on my eyelashes into winter tears.

"Saskatchewan in winter," I grumble.
"Who comes to Saskatchewan in winter?"



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It had been a clear night, and morning had brought an unusually thick hoar frost to transform the world. Every branch on every tree and bush; every stalk of stubble in the grain fields; every surface of every object is sheathed in the purest white imaginable. The crystals coat cars and barns and hibernating farm equipment, climb telephone poles to their highest reaches, encrust the wires and transformers. White has settled gently on the Prairie landscape the way a hen settles on her eggs.

White. Blinding, brilliant, almost painful white, everywhere.

Except up.

I look to the sky. That clear, still dome of a Prairie winter sky. The kind of sky for which the word “blue” seems to have been invented, only to come up so woefully short.

You can’t find it on a colour wheel, that blue. I’ve tried. You work your way through various combinations and shadings of azure, cyan, and cerulean, and still its singular, elusive, incredible blue taunts you. It’s as if it has an extra dimension – a clean, crystalline quality that would take your



breath away if the -30 degree cold left you any breath.

White and blue. The very colours of cold.

I shiver, try in vain to find another setting on the car heater past “HIGH”, and fumble through my case of compact discs to find the perfect music for a drive on a brittle Prairie morning ...

* * *

You don’t see a lot of out-of-province plates in Saskatchewan in mid-January. Understandable; it’s a tough sales pitch: “Saskatchewan. Come for the flatness. Stay till you thaw.”

Look, this isn’t telling tales out of school. Even the hardiest denizens of the Canadian Prairies – people who love their corner of this land to death – will concede that if you’re in Saskatchewan in mid-January, it’s probably not by choice. Either you live there and can’t get away, or – like me – you’re there with a purpose.

“Lucky me,” I mutter to no-one, wishing the heater would kick in. Damn Prairie cold.

“Brown broke down in a blizzard last winter. Tried to walk and froze to death fifty feet from town ...”

It is a land harsh and unforgiving. In January, that all starts and ends with the cold.

The cold of a Saskatchewan winter doesn’t rip and tear. It’s more subtle, more insidious: it slips under the crack at the bottom of the door; slinks into rooms through light switch covers, microscopic gaps around window frames, and

tiny nail holes; and smuggles itself in, clinging to clothing and fur. It creeps in – literally and figuratively – on little cat feet and scorns the futile efforts of furnace and fire to hold it at bay.

The weather forecasts in the heart of Canada include the time it will take exposed flesh to freeze. We hear that so routinely it doesn't provoke the response it deserves – which is: "Why am I in a place where my exposed flesh can freeze in less time than it takes to unlock my car? Why am I voluntarily traveling in a part of the world actively trying to kill me?"

A physicist will tell you "cold" is simply the absence of heat. In other words, he'll say, "cold" is ... well, nothing. Ask him to step out of his lab and into a mid-January morning on the Canadian Prairies.

We got your "nothing" right here, Newton. Oh, it's something, is that cold. It's something else.

I flip the leaves in my folder full of compact discs. I travel with about a hundred CDs, more or less. They help the miles slip away. Touring by car in Canada is all about eating up the hundreds of miles between shows.

My traveling music is an eclectic mix: a CD of Japanese Taiko drumming might share a pocket with Bryan Adams or Matt Anderson or the Good Lovelies or Acadian fiddle tunes. Sometimes I won't glance down to pick out a disc – I'll just reach into the case and let serendipity take the reins. I enjoy surprises.

But just as often I'll look for music that feels perfect to frame a particular moment or mood.

And this crisp, bright Saskatchewan morning cried out for something by Prairie-born singer and songwriter Connie Kaldor. As the car noses northward on that lonely stretch of highway, I find the disc I'm looking for: "Wood River".

"Wood River" is a collection of songs about Saskatchewan – or more properly, about the experience of living in a land where *"... winter snows can kill you and the summers burn you dry."*

The songs are lovingly crafted snapshots of a hardy people living in a place that – to an outsider – can seem relentlessly inhospitable.

"The heart is bigger than doubt. But the heart sometimes needs a little help to figure that out ..."

I squint out over the white and blue canvas ahead and suffer my own doubts about the wisdom of being in this God-forsaken place I thought I abandoned for good some twenty-five years ago ...

* * *

You need to know I'm a Canadian kid, a Prairie boy, born and raised. As a young boy, I spent summer afternoons on my belly in a farmer's field out behind our house in Saskatoon, still as a clod of mud, hand clutching one end of a long string. At the other end was a noose, carefully arranged to perfectly encircle a gopher hole. A whisker would rise above ground first ... then a nose ... (*Don't move, don't even breathe...*) ... a curious pair of eyes ... (*Wait for it...*) ... the rest of the head and (*Now! Do it!*)



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wham!

Ten cents bounty for each tail. And bonus: the farmer didn't want the rest of it. So now you had a dead gopher on a string. You were a hero to every boy and a source of terror and grossness to every girl. Now that's a Saturday.

I lived for thirty-some years under those Prairie skies, first in Saskatchewan and later in Manitoba. One of my earliest memories involves scrabbling to get my skates off between periods of an outdoor hockey game and rubbing my feet to get the feeling back – then instantly regretting it as the feeling *did* come back and the dressing room filled with my moans and the sobs of two dozen kids with thawing, frostbitten toes.

I never made that mistake again. From that day forward I walked home from the rink with my hockey jersey stretched tight over my parka, head swaddled in toque and scarf, and my skates still laced tight. I marched on, pillowy warrior, hockey stick dragging behind, blades protesting each step on the paved road with a hideous *skritchchch skritchchch skritchchch*.

By the time I arrived home the tears would be frozen to my eyelashes.

"Winter tears," my Mom called them as she rubbed the white spots out of my cheeks. "No shame in winter tears."

* * *

As the kilometers tick away, I gaze into the distance, past the so-familiar, incredibly flat landscape, to a flock of birds on the horizon. They dip and veer together, twisting and turning in perfect formation. I watch idly as I drive, distracted only by the occasional flash of reflected sunlight from within the flock.

Another sparkle, and a thought nips at the edge of my reverie: its mid-January on the Prairies.

What few birds have not flown south are surely not gathered in flocks to compete for the paltry stray grains or crumbs of food this barren landscape can offer. What kind of bird flies in formation at this time of year?

A final glint, and the answer hits me: of course – I'm approaching Moose Jaw. Home of CFB Moose Jaw. Which is the home of the Snowbirds, the Canadian Armed Forces Aerobatic Team.

What better opportunity for them to practice than on a cloudless, still January morning?

I settle in for the free show as the CD clicks to the next track ...

I swear to God what happens next is true.

A long bass note rolls through the car as two of the Snowbirds break formation and launch into a steep climb. At the pinnacle of its climb, each releases its

contrail, the tail of smoke painting its path on the ice-blue canvas. At that precise moment, Connie Kaldor's full, rich, resonant voice fills the space around me:

"I come from a land that is harsh and unforgiving ..."

... and before my eyes, the two contrails carve out a perfect heart in the impossibly blue Prairie sky.

* * *

Almost a quarter century ago, I left my Manitoba home to live in Prince Edward Island, on the East Coast of Canada. I didn't know when or if I'd return – or if I even wanted to. To justify uprooting a family and moving thousands of miles away, I'd built a fabric of reasons why the Prairies weren't enough, and as the years passed, that fabric was overlaid and strengthened by a contented existence somewhere else.

I'd come to doubt my love of the Prairies, and its place in my world. To doubt it was and would forever be part of me, the land itself owning a piece of my soul which it nurtured and tended as surely as a farmer tends his fields.

"The heart is bigger than doubt. But the heart sometimes needs a little help to figure that out."

On that white and blue January morning, a gentle, forgiving land offered all the help I would need.

Robert Frost said, "Home is a place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in." And I guess that's true. But it feels so *grudging*. He may not have anticipated a homecoming like this.

I drove towards the heart in the sky, my mouth open in wonder. "I'm home ..." I thought. I felt tears sting my eyes and brushed them away, a little embarrassed.

"Winter tears," my Mom called them. "No shame in winter tears."



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I kept receiving messages asking for a contribution to the 200th issue of CYC-Net, and there were no restrictions on the content or topic. I tried to resist, as I don't really have time to do this, but as Thom quotes from Karen VanderVen, "if you want something done, go to a busy person." I know we are all busy, but I had to find some way of starting this piece quickly, as otherwise it won't happen by the deadline.

I did think about this as I was driving to work yesterday, and I thought "wouldn't it be fun to just reflect, briefly, on a whole bunch of issues I never write about", either because it is something I don't know enough about to write a full article, or because no opportunity to write about it has presented itself.

So here goes ...

I will start by stating one appreciation and one pet peeve about CYC-Net. It is fantastic that CYC-Net has brought so many CYC workers (and perhaps others curious about CYC) from around the globe into contact and communication. Full credit to Brian Gannon, Thom Garfat, Martin Stabrey and many others



Reflections on turning 200

James P. Anglin

for creating and operating this labour of love. You had the foresight, determination and courage to bring our field into the electronic age in a useful and dramatic way – well done!

My major peeve has to do with students who post pleas for someone else to do their assignments for them. Before you overreact, I am not saying there is a problem with using CYC-Net to canvass opinions or experiences on issues and burning questions in our field, or seeking advice on valuable resources that may be

difficult to find. What I react to are postings that indicate what the assignment is and requesting help, with no evidence that the poster has done any literature review or hard thinking themselves at all. That's all on that.

I recently returned (last year) to full-time CYC involvement after 10 years of broader university administration where I had the opportunity to learn more about every other educational discipline except CYC. Over this period, I was able to continue some of my own research work thanks to amazing colleagues at Cornell University (Martha Holden and Mi-

chael Nunno especially). However I admit to not keeping up with the literature in myriad relevant CYC and child-related journals. I didn't mean this to be a confessional, but perhaps it can be good for the soul. (Speaking of soul, let me come back to that in a moment.)

What I want to say about being away from the hurly burly of the field for a decade is that it allowed me, forced me, on my return to review the more recent literature (writing of all sorts), and to become exposed to many of the new voices in our rapidly expanding field. And I have loved what I have found. I even welcome the critiques of things I wrote 25 or 30 years ago which either I don't believe anymore or which may have been misinterpreted. It is wonderful to experience new voices and iconoclastic perspectives (including some older but still fresh voices) seeking to make sense of the complexities (thanks Cole Little, Janet Newbury, Scott Kouri), paradoxes (thanks Frank Ainsworth, Leon Fulcher) and dialectics (thanks Kiaras Gharabaghi) of child and youth care.

When I came back to teaching, I feared that many of my colleagues would groan and bemoan the return of another "old white guy" who would fight to defend dead ideas and long-ago debunked beliefs and assumptions. I hope that has not been their experience of me, because while I believe there are long-standing values and valuable "ancient texts" in our field, I have been re-energized and excited by the incredibly insightful and challenging perspectives and notions being explored and struggled with across many

parts of our discipline and practice. There is much promise for the future of professional CYC and for those we are committed to support despite massive hurdles of ideology, politics, economics – you name it.

I am aware that there are different "camps" in our field, as in every field, and especially as to such questions as "What is really CYC?", "Who is really a CYC worker?", and "What is all this esoteric theoretical gobbledygook about anyway?" I must admit to having been shaped and moulded by the views and ways of thinking of pragmatic, practice-grounded, and sometimes prosaic mentors in my formative CYC years. However I have always sought to remain open to seemingly off-the-wall or perplexing notions that challenge the conventional wisdoms. It is my assessment that our field has now matured to the point where we can and should celebrate a thousand flowers blooming, and to learn to appreciate the wide and wild variety of colours, scents and shapes they represent. *Vive la différence!*

But speaking of soul, I have come to appreciate how CYC as a field – full of paradoxes, problems and pain (as well as joy, humour and passion) – provides almost unparalleled opportunities for personal and communal growth. One of my heroes in the child and youth care field (Grant Charles and I can debate his status later) is Janusz Korczak. A few of you have heard me talk about him before; all of you should Google him now if you don't know who he is. Allow me to quote



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from a recent presentation I have made about Korczak, beginning with his declaration on making a career change from medicine to child care work/social pedagogy.

I was carried away by false ambition. I deserted medicine. I deserted the bedsides of sick children. I abandoned my medical profession to become a sculptor of the child's soul.

Thus, in 1912 he offered himself to the Dom Sierot orphanage in Warsaw where he served as its Head for 30 years. He lived off the dormitories, and was available to children who suffered from nightmares, illness or loneliness. His notion of caring for “the soul of the child” could today be interpreted as wanting to work with the “whole child”, and especially through the growth and development of the human spirit.

In 1939, the Nazis invaded Poland and in the months and years that followed, Jewish citizens in Warsaw and beyond were herded into a ghetto where Korczak, his child care worker colleagues and about 200 children had to find a way to survive in an abandoned building with inadequate food and amenities. In August, 1942, it was the time for the orphanage inhabitants to make their final march to Umschlagplatz to board the train cars to Treblinka where all were killed. Today, Janusz Korczak's name is inscribed on a stone memorial at Treblinka, and many memorials to

“Korczak and the children” exist in Poland, Israel and around the world.

At the end, Korczak, who had directed a Catholic as well as a Jewish orphanage before the war, had refused all offers of help for his own safety from his Gentile colleagues and friends. “You do not leave a sick child in the night, and you do not leave children at a time like this,” he said.

– From Anglin, J.P. 2015, To Care for the Soul of the Child: The Legacy of Janusz Korczak

Rather than focus on how Korczak died, we need to understand how he lived, and lives on today through his many legacies including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Another inspiration to me, and to many CYC workers in South Africa, is a poet (former hoodlum) named Don (“Terror”) Mattera. Don is a Patron of the National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers (NACCW) in South Africa, and opens most NACCW conferences with his wisdom and inspiring words, born in pain, struggle and having been “at risk” and “in care” himself. His life, as the life of Nelson Mandela, reinforces the fact that out of terrible pain and suffering a purer soul can emerge. One of the lessons we are now learning in our field is that each and every one of us (“client” or “helper”) is immersed in pain – often deep and profound psycho-emotional pain – with which we need to learn to live. As Zvi Levy, a great child and youth worker from Israel has said, children need to learn “to

not be victims of fate, but shapers of their own destiny.” Somehow, referring to our work as being “trauma-informed” does not quite capture it! As Don Mattera says so eloquently, “this is God’s work”, and the NACCW is “God’s organization”, as it is willing and able to share the painful life-spaces of the downtrodden, the marginalized, the defeated, and to find ways to rise with them and to take their rightful places in their community and society.

Perhaps the greatest lesson I have had to learn about child and youth care work is that, to do it well, one must engage in soul work. Living and working in a sea of pain requires soul-searching, and fortunately we have those who have gone before us to show us a way forward. Their way may not be our way, but at least we learn there *is* a way!

Allow me to end my “reflections on turning 200” with one more quotation from Janusz Korczak. I don’t know of any better definition of “soul” than this.

The child ... that little nothing, is the flesh-and-blood brother of the ocean wave, of the wind, and ashes; of the sun and the Milky Way. This speck of dust is the brother of every ear of corn, every blade of grass ... every fledgling from the nest... there is something in the child which feels and explores – suffers, desires, and delights ... loves and hates, believes and doubts, something that approaches, something that turns aside. In its thought this small speck of dust can embrace everything: stars

and oceans, the mountain and the abyss. And what is the actual substance of his soul if not the cosmos, but without spatial dimensions



PROFESSOR JAMES ANGLIN began his career as a child and youth care worker in a mental health centre in Vancouver after which he developed a 6-bed group home for adolescents in Victoria. He then pursued graduate studies and in 1979 joined the faculty of the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria where he is a full Professor and former Director. He has published in North American and international journals and child welfare texts on a variety of child and youth care issues. He is on the editorial boards of Child and Youth Services, International Journal of Child and Family Welfare, Journal of Child and Youth Care Work, International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies, and Reclaiming Youth at Risk. He has also visited child and youth care programs and offered keynotes, workshops and seminars in over 40 countries, focusing on extra-familial care with young people, creating theory from qualitative data, and the evolution of CYC as a global profession.



“I don’t nag, your mother nags ...”

Carol Stuart



This is a common expression in our household, used by aunties, uncles, fathers, grandmothers, etc.; basically anyone without the direct mothering relationship. I recently became a grandmother; overnight. In fact, there were almost 24 hours when I was a grandmother and I didn’t know it. Then suddenly, the text message arrived and there it was — I had a new relationship and a new title. I’d had nine months to be excited by the anticipation and then, suddenly, everything was different. People kept asking me if I had

decided what I wanted to be called. It had not occurred to me that I had a choice. I knew there were different titles; grandma, granny, grandma, nana, but this seemed to be a decision needing to be made jointly with the people involved in the relationship. So the question of title, or entitlement felt outside of my decision-making realm; this is a shared identity.

I want to thank Thom for nagging, just a little, gently, and for giving us permission to write about whatever we wanted to for the 200th edition of *CYC-Online*.

That nagging and the permission to write about anything, have let me reflect a little on how being a grandmother changes the way you look at the world. I said yes, I would participate and write something for the 200th edition, because being a child and youth care practitioner is at the core of who I am. Also, I had signed up for CYC-Net in the very early years, when it was just an email distribution list, and it has evolved — as has *CYC-Online* — to represent such a major force in the world of child and youth care. Then, Thom sent a gentle nag and I came so close to saying no. I was busy, I had another paper I was working on, and I didn't know what to write about. Then I realized it was a little gift, just like the grandchild, and while I should occasionally say no to the grandchild, I should never say no to a gift, especially if it means I can reflect on what it means to have this new relationship. So I made a little list of some things I've noticed — things that are not just about being a grandmother, they are also about relationship as the core of child and youth care practice.

We were advised very early — prior to meeting our grandchild—that this was not a public internet baby. There would be no pictures on Facebook or Instagram and we were asked to respect those wishes. I panicked. How would I get to know all the cute things that this baby did? In a country with five time zones, where it takes at least eight hours to get from Vancouver to St. John's, I had come to rely on Facebook for keeping in touch. After the panic subsided I started to reflect on the

meaning of this decision, made by the parents of this vulnerable young child.

When we work with young people today we teach them how to be internet 'safe'. I recognize that young people live in a world where personal information is very open. They have a virtual life-space in which they exist and it is indistinguishable sometimes from the physical life-space. Here were two young parents making the courageous decision *and* directing all their relatives and friends with access to a camera (that would be everyone) *not* to take photos of their child and/or to post them on the internet. Decisions about how you reveal yourself to the world should be made carefully and should have some sense of personal control, and parents are responsible for those decisions until the child can take them on. In the context of relationships, though, it takes constant communication and commitment, both from parents and everyone else with a relationship to the child, to actually enact the circle of safety. As the circle gets wider, and the child more knowledgeable, that effort has to be transferred and expanded. In the meantime, I've respectfully left that decision where it belongs and I've learned how to share with less public forums.

I've also started to wonder how we prepare young people for these types of decisions as *they* get that overnight jolt and instantly take on a new role and new responsibilities as parents. Often there has been too little preparation for the basics: housing, education, employment, financial management for young people. Mothers blog about their children; there is



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even a “top 25” blog on mommy blogs with a link to the daddy blogs. There are major decisions to be made about revealing yourself and your child—who has no say at this point—to the internet world. It’s a little like opening the front door and inviting the neighborhood in on purpose, without cleaning the house. One could argue that what is posted on the internet is filtered by the writer, and therefore it does represent a clean house. However, the blogs tend to be about struggles—the authors (parents in this case) want to be helpful to others—and in writing about those struggles may reveal things that cannot be erased and which may affect the young person later in life.

The other day I met a famous grandmother in the parking lot. Carol Matthews wrote a column on grand mothering for *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice* for years. I helped her put together the columns into a little book. Mostly she wrote stories about her granddaughter. When her granddaughter got to be about seven, Carol retired the column. She felt her granddaughter was of an age where it might bother her to see stories of herself in print. When I met Carol in the parking lot she introduced me to her granddaughter, and let me know that they were taking a philosophy course in Grandkids U. I had never met her, at least not in person. I bit my tongue, because I so wanted to say “I’ve read so much about you. It’s so great to meet you in person.” But I knew, having reflected some on the choices about the openness of the lives of children and grandchildren, that this might em-

barrass the tall, reserved, fourteen-year-old in front of me. So instead I said “Pleased to meet you” and inquired after the course and then chatted with her grandmother, as most other adults would do. Choices about revealing to the world details of the young people with whom we have relationships, must be made carefully so as to avoid over familiarity, and to ensure that they feel safe with this and that their privacy is respected. Safety and privacy have changed significantly in today’s world.

I’ve also been reflecting on building a relationship with my grandchild, at a distance. This is not unusual in my family; my own children were raised mostly on the other side of the country. We visited, shared photos, talked on the phone, sent the kids to visit on their own. Now that I’m a grandmother though, I’m impatient. I want more contact. In eleven months we’ve had four visits and now that the grandchild can recognize us, Skype and FaceTime are great new tools in the relationship repertoire. The developmental milestones for little ones mean that at around 8 months the baby can interact with the electronic device and see your face, your smile, hear your laugh. You can even play peek-a-boo. I haven’t tried it yet, but pat-a-cake might also be possible. I’m not the only grandparent doing this—I know several others—we think up new ways to interact and converse that are digitally mediated. Last time we ‘Skyped’, her mother left for a few minutes and we carried on.

I was recently in a remote First Nations community where the former residential school was torn down last spring. As part of the healing and reconciliation process the cultural centre had a display of photographs from the school. They were taken by a young woman who snuck in a camera. Most photos of those times were taken by the people running the schools or the 'Indian Agent' and were photos of large groups of children, usually looking very serious, in front of the school building. In this approach there were no pictures taken by the school personnel and sent back to family to share in the accomplishments of the young people. The purpose of the schools, of course, was to separate and distance the children from family and culture. I, of course, reflected on the exhibition at the cultural centre from the perspective of a grandparent. There were grandparents who completely missed years of the children's lives. They weren't invited to cultural events (like the school Christmas concert) or graduations. We know the impact which that had on the First Nations culture and society. Of course, that

was the stated intent of the government at the time, to remove the children from those relationships where they would normally learn the norms, protocols, languages and customs of their society. It was very nearly successful. In this area, several communities have been completely shut down. No families left, or at least not enough to make a community. As a grandparent, I am saddened by this loss of family and culture.

The young woman with the camera left a beautiful legacy for parents and grandparents; and for children. We have been poring over pictures of our own children, trying to find the one that "looks just like" the grandchild – a picture that might share some insight into how she will grow up, what gene pool is strongly represented. What is her inheritance? The pictures from the former residential school are of small groups of young people, usually smiling, sometimes engaged in an activity of which they are proud, or just playing and hanging out with friends. I wonder if they were shared with their families. I doubt it. These were pictures from the 1950s, pictures of young people for whom there are

The reason grandchildren and grandparents get along so well is that they have a common enemy.

Sam Levenson



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very few family pictures. Photographs were a marker of privilege at that time. Such a gift that young woman left: to record what they were doing, how they looked at that age, and who they hung out with. I spoke to a woman who had attended the destruction of the school building in the spring of 2015 and she showed me one of those pictures. She explained that one of the young boys in the picture was her father, and pointed out two possibilities. He himself wasn't sure which one he was, and really had no one to help, and no other pictures to compare with. Such a contrast to my own family which was photographically obsessed — we have boxes of photos. Not only could he not identify himself; his parents and grandparents couldn't really help. They did not see him from the time he left home at five until he was fourteen and left the school.

Grandparents are often the keepers of society's culture and the teachers of the family history. This is a new role for me, and with my own parents gone, one which I need to figure out on my own. What do I want to pass on and how do I do it? What are the implications of the digital world? As a child and youth care practitioner, being a grandmother brings forward further the importance of family work and of staying connected to parents and even grandparents in order to value what they bring to the young person and to suspend that young one in a web of norms, protocols, language and culture that is embedded in their genes and waiting to emerge, be influenced by the context in which they are growing up and

support who they are and who they are becoming.

In many ways, *CYC-Online* has become the grandparent for the child and youth care family. It is a repository of new thinking as well as the traditions and origins of the field. Thanks for the gift and for nagging. Congrats on reaching 200.



CAROL STUART has self-identified as a child and youth care practitioner since graduating from University. She maintains professional certification in Canada in Ontario and Alberta, as well as with the CYCCB, Inc. in North America. Carol has supported and influenced the development of professional competencies, certification, and educational accreditation as mechanisms for ensuring that young people and families receive the best quality of care possible. Her professional work, as well as including residential and community-based practice has included being a faculty member in college and university programs in Canada in Child and Youth Care. She is currently at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, B.C. where she is the Dean of the Faculty of Health and Human Services. Her identity is now being shaped by her new status as a grandmother.

"I can't tell them I love them!"

We often talk about moments in our lives ... moments in our careers ... that change our lives forever.

This was one of those for me. Seven words – spoken to me by a 12 year old boy about his foster parents of nearly four years.

He'd been particularly angry that day which caught us all a bit off guard. He'd been doing so well!

Isn't THAT a classic line: "He'd been doing so well" – but that is another story for another day.

I got the call fairly late one spring evening from a concerned foster parent:

"Andy, I just don't know what happened. We were having a grand night (*she actually said 'grand night' and she actually talked like that most of the time. It was like being in a Greta Garbo movie*)...all his favourite things. I had watched him play hockey; he's doing sooooo much better – he almost scored a goal! We laughed all the way home. I'd made chili. He LOVES chili after hockey. It was even his turn to pick the movie. I told him how proud I was of him and I asked him if he wanted marshmallows in his hot chocolate."

Long pause here. Long, long pause. I knew she was holding back tears...

"And then he just lost it!" He screamed, "Don't you @#%&ing know yet what I @#\$&ing like! I @#\$&ing hate you!" And he stormed out of the house".

"I've looked in all the usual spots; although it's been awhile. I am really worried so I thought I'd call ..."

I found him at the spot where he and I used to go, an old picnic table near his favourite chip truck. He'd go there back when being around the "goody two shoes whack job family Andy pawned him off on" got too much for him and he'd bolt. I mean he'd really bolt. Kentucky Derby winners were slower out of the gate. It

got to be a *thing* we did. I'd wait for him there and he'd come when he was ready.

"I blew it this time didn't I"?

I had learned not to answer ... YET ... he had taught me well.

"Well ... Didn't I?"

Not yet.

"Proud of me. Proud of me, my ass!"

Not yet.

"Why did she have to say that? What does she want from me?"

OK ...

Love is a Four Letter Word

Andy Leggett



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"You think she wants something from you?"

"Don't they all??? She thinks she's so ... DIFFERENT! The whole whack job family thinks they are @\$&ing different!"

"They want too much from me, Andy!"

"What do you think they want, dude?" (He called me "dude man" when I first met him. Well ... actually it was @\$&ing dude man – it became another "thing" we did) ...

"They want me to be like them...you know ... like a part of them!"

"Like ... you mean ... their family?"

"Yeah. Their family! Their stupid whack job loving family. They want me to love them. I can't tell them I love them!"

"Yeah ... that would be pretty scary to say."

"Don't you ever ... like ... say something helpful?"

I knew we were done ... for now.

"You ready to go back to the Whack Jobs. You know they are worrying."

"Yeah. Let's go. Sorry dude man."

I can't tell them I love them.

That is a problem that is all too common with "our kids" – and our system. For soooo many different reasons.

We write a lot about love in this column. Isn't love the foundation of family and isn't family the foundation of foster care?

Too often, *they* try to take the love out of foster care as *they* have tried to do with most professions that deal with youth.

Fortunately, foster parents help remind and teach the rest of us that love is integral in our work. It is not a strategy to be tried or a therapeutic intervention

to be assessed, monitored and considered based on measurable outcomes.

A foster parent had this on a needle point framed and hanging in each of her bedrooms:

LOVE

Bears all things
Believes all things
Hopes all things
Endures all things
LOVE never fails.

We would love to hear your "love never fails" stories.



ANDY LEGGETT is the Clinical Director and Owner of Broken Arrow Residential Treatment Services, a private treatment program in Ontario specialising in Treatment Foster Care.

Andy has been a long time member of the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care and is a strong supporter of the CYC field. You will often find Andy hanging out at conferences or virtually any gathering involving those who work with and champion the causes of children and youth.

RESIDENTIAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE IN A DEVELOPING WORLD

Tuhinul Islam & Leon Fulcher



Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World builds from a critique of Courtney, M. E. & Iwaniec, D. (Eds). (2009). *Residential Care of Children: Comparative Perspectives* (Oxford University Press) which evaluated de-institutionalisation policies in the residential care of children in 11 countries. It also builds on the comparative efforts of Whittaker, del Valle & Holmes (2015) *Therapeutic Residential Care for Children and Youth: Developing Evidence-Based International Practice*. We started from an intellectual claim that residential child and youth care "places" exist everywhere – whether called homes, orphanages, schools, centres or institutions. Unlike Courtney & Iwaniec or Whittaker et al, we include private boarding schools, madrasa and other religious learning centres in our definition of residential child and youth care. Residential establishments involve any building(s) (and sometimes tents) where children or young people are brought together to live in shared community life spaces for given periods of time, whether as refugees of war, poverty, disease, abuse, famine or natural disaster.

Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World represents a unique comparative research effort in its time and place with 69 contributors already submitted from 62 countries where care has received limited attention in the literature. FIFA world regions have been used to group contributions for publication purposes. Each contribution builds on an historic legacy of story-telling about child and youth care practices in different places, by different peoples. An overwhelming response has already yielded a diverse and unique range of stories about triumph and turbulence in the provision of residential care and education for children world-wide.

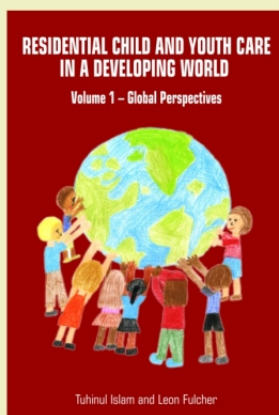
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Volume 2 – Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World: Asian and Middle East Perspectives (February 2016)

Volume 3 – Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World: African Perspectives (April 2016)

Volume 4 – Residential Child and Youth Care in a Developing World: European Perspectives June 2016)

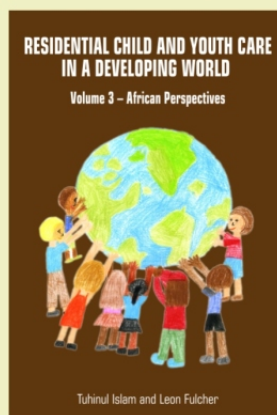
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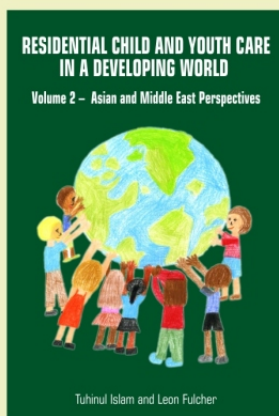
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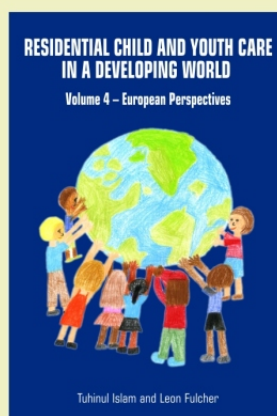
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Some Thoughts on Child and Youth Care Leadership

Werner van der Westhuizen

Many people believe that leadership comes from having a designated position or title. Maxwell, however, states that leadership “is a choice you make, not a place you sit” (2005, p.7). He argues that every level of an organisation depends on leadership from someone and that while someone may hold a position of management, real leadership comes from a position of earned influence.

While generalised knowledge on management and leadership is useful, child and youth care practice demands unique and unconventional leaders whose leadership is based on the principles of relational child and youth care work as a profession.

Garfat (2010), for example, refers to the leadership of Henry Maier as “being with others the way we should be with kids” and argues that “people do what they experience”. This requires a kind of leadership that is based on principles of child and youth care.

I have worked with a number of managers and leaders over the years and learned from each of them. From some of them I learned about effective leadership and what to do as a leader; from others I learned about ineffective leadership and what not to do. All of these experiences were useful as long as they resulted in learning for myself and others.

As I look back over the past 20 years of my career there are some experiences and learnings that I consider worth sharing. While most of these seem quite obvious, they are not always practiced.

Surround yourself with strong people and don't be intimidated

One of my directors used to say: “Surround yourself with strong people, then don't be intimidated by them”. He openly recognised that each member in his team knew more about their particular area of expertise than he did and he used this to strengthen the team. He called upon them to lead when it was needed, knowing when to step back and to let others take the lead. This approach creates a team of leaders and strengthens the entire organisation. It builds the capacity of leadership and encourages others to do the same with their own teams. I have also

experienced the opposite. When a leader does not surround him or herself with strong people, because he or she is intimidated by them, the team does not grow stronger and starts out having already reached its limit.

Ask for help when it is needed

Some people in leadership positions believe that they should be perfect and have all the answers. This is an impossible standard. When a leader does not, or cannot, seek or accept help, other team members become less and less tolerant of mistakes. Asking for and accepting help is an important skill that practitioners can model for the young people with whom they work. Most young people in care do not know how to ask for help and their experiences have taught them that asking for help displays weakness. They need to learn that strong people are strong *because* they know when to ask for help.

Encourage productive disagreement

Effective leaders encourage disagreement as long as it is productive. When productive disagreement is encouraged it

allows a team to consider all – or most – of the possibilities before making important decisions. Disagreement means that decisions are considered from every possible angle before a final conclusion is reached. This helps those participating to learn how to disagree constructively while also learning about aspects of the particular topic under discussion. I remember talking to a manager who appointed a new staff member to his team. This person appeared very ‘strong willed’ and I commented that he will probably give the manager a ‘hard time’. He replied: “Good, then by the time I have to make hard decisions the hard work will be done”. Modelling productive disagreement models for others that disagreement is not always a bad thing.

Clearly support team members

Effective leaders demonstrate clear support for team members. At times when I had challenging work to do my director said to me: “I want you to do this difficult task and I will support you and I will stand by you”. This is very, very important. People who are tasked with challenging

A leader is a dealer in hope.

Napoleon Bonaparte



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projects need to know that they are supported. This is not something that a leader should ever take for granted by assuming that his team members know that they are supported. Even though I already knew that I would be supported, hearing my manager say it added tremendous determination and drive to my work. People should never have to guess where their manager stands on an issue: clarity makes it easier for everyone.

Provide open recognition

Effective leaders provide open recognition for good work. Recognition may be tangible or intangible – what matters is the act of acknowledgement. One of my directors would sometimes give his team small gifts and he particularly liked handing out books on leadership. Even though such a gift might communicate that there is more learning to do, it also communicates trust and appreciation, which are the foundation of meaningful relationships. Those were the books I loved reading. Providing meaningful recognition models that giving and accepting appreciation is valuable for everyone.

Take responsibility

There are few things as unforgivable as blaming other people for one's own mistakes, even more so when the person doing the blaming is in a position of leadership. It is a sign of poor character and is a sure way to lose the loyalty of team members. Taking responsibility for one's actions models for everyone else

the importance of *being responsible*. Blaming others creates and then maintains a cycle of distrust. John Maxwell (2005) said that people don't leave organisations – they leave their leaders. In many ways it is like blaming children for their inability to change and then watching them run away.

Hang out together

One of my managers always made time to be with his team in contexts other than work. He created these opportunities not for just for the sake of socialising, but it showed he had an interest in learning about his team, who they were and what was important to them. He remembered their birthdays. He paid attention to little details about their personal lives. This process of 'hanging out' with people, getting to know them and developing more personal relationships is an investment in the working relationship (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). It communicates to team members that they matter as individuals, not just as a collective. It communicates that they are valued, and there are few things that inspire loyalty in the same way. An effective leader is loyal to his team members first, before expecting loyalty from them.

Keep on learning

Arrogance does not serve any leader. When a leader thinks that he or she does not need to learn any more that is a sign that it is time for them to step down. Effective leaders are always learning, seeking out new, more effective ways of doing things and of avoiding previous

mistakes. When a leader continues to make the same mistakes it becomes embarrassing, not only for him or her but for their team as well. When a leader shows a constant desire to learn, grow and develop it models for everyone that growth and change are constants and this helps to create a context of learning and development which affects everyone.

‘Do things’ with the team

A basic principle in child and youth care practice is to “do with, not for” children and young people. The reason for this is fairly simple: by doing something with someone, it becomes a matter of ‘we’. It fosters togetherness, connection and trust. You create a context in which relationships can be strengthened. You avoid the power struggle and conflict cycles. Yet it seems many leaders and managers believe that this basic principle of child and youth care work is only applicable when working with children or young people. I have often heard team



@CYCareworkers

members say something like “it is easy for management to give instructions, but I would like to see them work with this child”. Leaders should be seen helping out the team when necessary – it does not matter if they are ‘good’ at that particular area of work. What matters is that they are prepared to stand side by side with their team members and struggle with the same challenges.

Mistakes are important

Effective leaders are willing to make mistakes and are willing to allow others to make mistakes. There is an understanding that making mistakes is tied to learning and that some mistakes need to be made. Mistakes are not considered to be a problem unless they are repeated unnecessarily, which means that the learning has not taken place. Effective leaders see mistakes as feedback about what did not work and as opportunities to find new strategies that were previously not considered. If a mistake means that the entire team can learn from it, it prevents many others from making the same mistake and then it was a mistake worth making.

The principles of relational child and youth care practice are equally applicable to adults. Even more so. Expecting employees to engage with children and young people from a developmental, strength-based and relational perspective makes no sense unless they experience this in the organisation.

Anglin (2002) explains that the philosophy and orientation of organisational



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leadership tends to permeate through the rest of the organisation into the experiences and ways of thinking of the young people. Workers learn how to be with young people through their experience of how their leaders are with them. Within the context of child and youth care work, leadership is not a management concept, it is a child and youth care concept.

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WERNER VAN DER WESTHUIZEN started his professional career in 1996 as a social worker and probation officer working with children in trouble with the law and with their families. This was during the time that the child and youth care system in South Africa underwent major transformation and he was strongly influenced by the relational and restorative themes inherent in the child and youth care profession. After 6 years he took up a position as director of a child and youth care centre for an international child care organisation where he served for 13 years. In 2014 he entered private practice as a clinical social worker, but continues to be involved in the child and youth care field as consultant, trainer and therapist. He holds Master's degrees in psychology and clinical social work.



Building BRIDGES

Jeff Reid

A few years back, or maybe a decade or so, I was hired to be the program supervisor for an agency that was changing its residential approach from one short-term assessment centre using behavioural approaches to two programs for adolescents using a relational approach: one short-term and one long-term. I entered into the position with twenty years direct child and youth care experience, fifteen of those in supervisory and managerial roles. I enjoyed success in my previous positions in a variety of organizations across three different Canadian provinces. My successes had been while I was part of existing programs,

coming in to existing policies and procedures, or in developing new programs for organizations that had clearly written mission statements and mandates, with the accompanying support team in place. I was excited to be taking on the challenge where I would develop a new long-term program, building the staff team to offer the programming to the youth, and putting my own philosophy about residential care for youth into practice. While there was a mission statement and mandate in place for the larger organization, I was looking forward to creating a specific mandate based on my practice philosophy for what



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would eventually become BRIDGES Program.

I had been told (warned?) by the director of the agency I was leaving that the existing staff team was struggling to deal with the loss of the previous supervisor and a loss of identity as “their” program was being changed. There were team members with many years of experience in the assessment program. They had been part of its development, and felt an ownership of the program which was being threatened by the forced change. While my initial reception by them was cordial, it wasn’t long before I felt that several of them were seeing me as part of the threat that comes with change. While they were still struggling to hang on to the past, I was pushing them to let go and move forward. As I felt more resistance to my ideas and approaches, I became more rigid in my presentation. Over time my initial excitement faded, and underneath my external presentation of calm assurance, I was anxious, feeling vulnerable, and worried that I would fail.

I had always believed one of my skills to be team building. What if I could not bring the team to see the value of my belief about relationship-based practice? I had so many years of success, it had to be the team’s “fault”, not mine. After all, when you feel threatened yourself it is always easiest to blame others. Looking back, the team and I were feeling similar things – fear of what was coming.

As I struggled with the team, I started to become rejecting of the person who was in place to support me. Thom

Garfat had been hired as a consultant to the program and myself; he had been brought in to help make the change, and had been part of my selection as the program supervisor. From my understanding, he was in place to help transition the program from a behavioural to a relational approach. Part of his role was to guide the change, part to provide support to the new supervisor. I could understand from an organizational point of view why he had been brought in. Change was needed in the delivery of programming and a significant shift was required. But I had years of experience in relational practice and supervising teams, and in the midst of struggles with team, I saw Thom less as a resource and more as a judge, watching and evaluating me. That wasn’t fair to him, but in the moment I felt intimidated. Here was someone with more experience, known and respected in the field; how could this be “my” program with his presence creating a strong influence.

As I reflected on what was happening for me, I recognized I was in a power struggle with the team. On a different level, I was trying to create a power struggle with Thom as well. With the encouragement of Thom I started to look at what I could do differently to engage the team. I didn’t always agree with his advice, but by letting go of my need for control in that moment, I was able to hear it differently. I stepped back and with support from Thom, engaged in a communication meeting, allowing team members to voice concerns and complaints.

This was difficult for me, opening the door for the airing of complaints in a public way, with each team member having the chance to verbalize their own issue and for me to accept it as feedback, without rebuttal. This was, I believe, the turning point in the relationship between the majority of the team and myself. While I still had to struggle with challenges, after this meeting I felt that I had some team members on board and willing to give me a chance.

My approach to working with teams early on had developed three pillars, drawn from the components of a therapeutic relationship as articulated by Brendtro (1969) in *The Other 23 Hours*. I believed that to build a strong team there had to be honest communication, positive role-modelling, and affirmation and feedback in the moment between myself and team members and between team members. From that, I wanted the team to take the same approach to working with the youth. The importance of parallel practice was critical to building the program that I had envisioned.

I believe in the adage that “information is power” and I took every opportunity to share information with team members about my philosophy and approach, what I wanted to see happen for the program, what I wanted us to do with the youth we were working with, giving power to the team. There are always going to be pieces of information that are confidential, but whenever possible, I wanted each team member to have the information I had.

My role-modelling for team members was not limited to communication. I was in the program, working the floor when necessary. I covered shifts when no one else was available, I drove youth to appointments, supervised visits, anything that needed to be done. If a toilet was plugged, I would plunge it. If time and youth needs necessitated it, I would participate in planning and preparing meals. It was my goal to move the team members from being anxious about my presence to seeing me as part of the team, not as “the boss”. As team members had an experience of me working with them, asking questions to get to know them, my relationship with the team members started to change. Team members accepted the challenge and the change and began to see the program as their own. Eventually team members were able to see the youth as part of the team. They began to participate and share in experiences with each other, not just as “staff” being there to challenge and discipline the youth.

Affirmation and feedback were important in the moment as the team and the program developed. As team members gave me their feedback, I wanted them to see me incorporating it to make change. As I was able to do that, team members were better able to accept my feedback. Offering affirmation and support to them to try new things helped to develop an environment where team members were able to offer affirmation and feedback to each other. As team members brought forward programming ideas for the youth, I encouraged them to try it when-



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ever feasible. Whether it was individual work or group programming, I challenged them to find ways to make things happen, instead of finding reasons not to try something. Some fantastic activities developed over the years, from “Amazing Race” competitions through the summers, to youth writing their own daily logs, and leading their own case conferences.

A strong program, BRIDGES Program, developed and a strong team formed over time. While I knew my philosophy and approaches would work, it was good to see other child and youth care workers take on the challenges and adapt to the changes. My own struggles in that experience, and those of the team, were similar in many ways – as they struggled to try something new, so did I. As they offered resistance to their new supervisor, I offered resistance to Thom. As the team members pushed through their anxieties, so did I. Our journey to developing BRIDGES, a long-term residential treatment program, was a joint one, as the team grew, I grew, and the BRIDGES Program grew, benefiting the young people who were now included as part of the team

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Supervision and “The Millennials”: Collaborating to Bridge the Generation Gap

Frank Delano

“A new breed of worker is coming soon that is about to attack everything you hold sacred” screamed an advertisement for the CBS-TV news show *60 Minutes*. In that show Morley Safer said “Organizations will be facing a new generation that will want to stroll in to work around noon with their flip flops and iPods on Monday and still want to be CEO by Thursday” (2007). That was nearly eight years ago but the hysteria around the impact the Millennial Generation (for the purpose of this article those 18-30 years old) will have on our workforce and how they can be best supervised continues to flourish. The *60 Minutes* show was talking generically but Child and Youth Care is not immune from

the concern. I was recently asked to do a presentation on the topic for a 25th Anniversary of a CYC program in Canada. I am told very excited sign-ups from the CYC field zoomed in by the end of the first day of advertising. It is also interesting to note the Executive Director sent me an article on Millennials that spoke to the different societal culture from which Millennials are coming (Klass and Lindenberger, 2015) that was provocative and fascinating. Where did he get the article? His Millennial daughter gave it to him in hopes it would help him get through these tough times!

There is not yet much written on this topic in our field. Davidson (2009) did ex-



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amine the generational differences in regards to how CYC practitioners might view boundaries. But most of what I found spoke more to the generational differences that connect to the adult/youth dynamic and not the supervisory relationship. In that vein Whittaker points out there are generational differences in the idea of “worth”, highlighting one of the many values differences that can exist between generations (Whittaker, McCormick, O'Connor, and Tebben, 2004). Finding ways to bridge this kind of generation gap is a quickly emerging issue and one that supervisors and agencies should begin to examine more closely.

There has always been anxiety about new generations entering a workforce, so why are Millennials so different? Some of the general characteristics of this new generation that I have heard discussed in a number of different arenas are:

The main reason they stay in a job for the first three years is loyalty/respect for their supervisor. The main reason they leave is dissatisfaction with a supervisor (Klass and Lindenberger, 2015).

- They tend to value the concept of “paying your dues” or “playing the game” less than previous generations.
- They tend to value job security less than previous generations and value employment flexibility more.
- They generally have a different view of a “work/life” balance placing much more emphasis on protecting their personal life.

- They are the most diverse generation in history.
- “Every kid should get a trophy.” Many Millennials have grown up thinking “You can’t fail”...many times having been rewarded for participation and not necessarily achievement
- Some Millennials are coming out of a university culture of “trigger warnings”, hypersensitivity to offending, “micro-aggressions” being sanctioned, etc. (Lukianoff and Haidt, 2015).
- Millennials have had a lot of experience “multi-tasking”.
- Millennials tend to have a different view of “loyalty”. They tend to place less value on loyalty to an organization and more value towards involvement to make things better.

Oh, No! Here comes one of those Gosh-Darn Millennials!!

This above list paints a very daunting picture of what differences are coming along with this generation. They have also led to many stereotypes that create anxiety for those supervising Millennials.

Apropos of this, at a social gathering with some senior management people and supervisors at a Texas Child and Youth Care conference recently I raised the question of supervising Millennials. The first comment of an excellent and thoughtful discussion, complete with rolling eyes, was “Oh no, those gosh-darn Millennials!”

Some of main stereotypes are:

- They feel they are just so entitled!
- They always seem so distracted.
- They are so self-absorbed.
- They think *everyone* should get a trophy – just for existing!
- Their work ethic is just not the same.
- They don't have any attention span.
- They won't stay long. They have very little sense of "duty", or loyalty to the organization.
- They are always on those phones!

Of course there is always some truth to stereotypes and I must admit I have even seen some of these in younger Child and Youth Care workers recently. Many times in discussions with supervisors and agency senior people the conversation tends to elicit many of the above as big concerns. I confess I have sometimes found myself tempted to buy into the gloom and doom they were predicting for the future. But, then I asked myself some questions: Who are the people that seem to be the best participants in most of my trainings? Who asks some of the most thoughtfully provocative and creative questions? Who stimulates my creative juices the most in the trainings? Who are the ones most likely to approach me after a training to ask questions, or to tell me how much they appreciated feeling their opinions seemed to be valued. Why, it is those same gosh-darn Millennials! As a way to try to think through the disconnect with this and what has been the large frustration I have been hearing about Millennials from so many supervisors, I decided to ask some Millennials what

they wanted from supervision. Here are the eight replies I received:

"I want to be valued. I don't want to feel I am merely a means to a number. My input is unique and I want it valued as such." (Krystina)

"We enter the workforce as children whose brains have been overstimulated by technology, so my brain is constantly going. What I need is to be motivated by my work, feel empowered by my supervisor to trust that I am capable to get the job done well. I am full of ideas and want to be seen as a key part of the team and not second class in my career." (Saira)

- "Sometimes you just have to tell us what to do. Be sure the expectations are clear." (Lais)
- "I want a supervisor who will help me, not just hire me to their advantage. I want to be valued and have a mentor." (Larissa)
- "It is important to have mutual respect and clear communication about expectations. Also, if I do something that is not correct I want to know so I can make it better." (Jija)
- "I want to see my supervisor have a passion for the work we do. I want to have her as a role model." (Leticia)
- "Supervisors should not lower their standards/ expectations for Millennials. Supervisors should instead sharpen their supervision skills to meet Millennials where they are and then help them grow personally and professionally which in turn helps to better



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the organization as a whole.”
(Constanzia)

- “When I have a worker who is going ok and not causing me any problems that bothers me more than those giving me problems. OK is not good enough when working with kids and I go home and wonder what else I can do to connect with them better to motivate them. I don’t think we should settle for less than excellent.” (Melissa, Millennial Supervisor)

Strategies going forward

Of course, it is a very small sample, but the disconnect of my experiences with Millennials, along with the quotes above from the prevailing stereotypes and growing concern about how negatively this will impact the workforce, speaks to a need for much critical-thinking discussion going forward. As a way to add to that thinking and discussion I suggest the following strategies for supervisors and agencies to consider going forward:

Supervisors and agencies should re-think their hiring practices and philosophies. Thought should be given to less emphasis on recruiting for long term employment and more for shorter periods of time as well as ways to recruit to Millennials’ strengths and interests.

Millennials prefer to work in teams. Look for ways to involve Millennials on committees and stress the value of their contributions.

- Supervisors should enhance and focus on their “coaching skills” and repertoire as a supervisor — including on the spot coaching.
- Supervisors should make attempts to get to know Millennials “as a person”. What are their likes, dislikes, strengths, doubts, beliefs?
- Supervisors should discuss and be clear about what expected boundaries are in the supervisory relationship, for example social media, protocols, etc.
- Try to tell or show Millennials what to do less. Give them the desired outcome and let them figure it out. This would be in the spirit of delegating outcome, not process (keeping a balance with earned trust and “safety”).
- Supervisors should be particularly careful not to complain or “whine” about senior management, “the system”, etc. There should be consistent attempts to help Millennials understand the bigger picture and learn strategies to best negotiate frustrations with the larger world.
- Supervisors should be clear about how Millennials will be evaluated and how that is measured.
- Programs should make efforts to have more “social” type atmosphere and events.
- Explore and consider the idea of flexible schedules.
- Consider the idea of Millennial Affinity Groups.
- Consider discussion groups that encourage creative thinking across the generations.

- Give thought to the idea of “reverse mentoring” situations, where Millennials can teach others skills and share ideas.
- Define things like “self-care” together. A Millennial may have a very different understanding of this than you do.
- Be specific about what is clearly out of bounds and unacceptable then discuss why. Don’t assume it is known.
- Provide Millennials more training in the “soft skills” (communication skills, protocols, etc.) of the workplace, critical thinking, and other areas that will help assimilation into the agency culture.
- Provide supervisors’ trainings that focus on cross-generational issues and communication.
- Start preparing for “Generation Z”!

The values, culture and traditions of the Child and Youth Care field that I have come to cherish so much make me very optimistic that we will negotiate this process extremely well. The quality of leadership in the CYC field, as well as the quality of the younger CYC workers I am experiencing, should position us to be trend setters in creative ideas and strategies that will hopefully benefit the societal workforce as a whole moving forward.

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The Last 20 Years, Thanks To CYC-Net

Jack Phelan

I am happy to report that CYC agencies are interested in getting more sophisticated and effective in their CYC approach. Clinical practice is being significantly overhauled and CYC supervision is being enhanced and upgraded in several agencies that I am familiar with. This is not just another new program idea or theory about how to make things better, but a serious review of the overall strategy and implications of doing child and youth care practice more professionally. The agencies that are doing this are already fairly effective and forward thinking, with committed and intelligent staff. However, it has become clearer to both administrators and CYC practitioners in these agencies that there are real problems in the methods they have been assuming to be legitimate and the results that they have been satisfied with. In the spirit of the quality control processes introduced in the business world several years ago, an examination of the methodology built into the life space for youth and family work by the CYC staff shows multiple flaws and bad practices that have traditionally been

assumed to be valid approaches. Additionally, there is agreement that CYC supervisors and staff have been unwittingly rewarded for less than professional attitudes and practices, which have embedded bad practice models into the milieu. Only an honest and total rethinking of how and why we do what we do will create the desired change.

Child and Youth Care work is relational and developmental and it occurs in the life space. These are fundamental concepts in our field, yet the actual practice often does not reflect this. Mature practitioners who are capable professionals imbed these concepts into everything they do, but often must work around policies and procedures that inhibit their work. Newer CYC staff often are trained to ignore these fundamentals, and it may take years of experience before they discover how badly they were supervised and informed about practice. Agency administrators and government department heads may only know CYC practice as it was explained to them through policies and procedures, so they often have a poor perspective and

may see bad practice as sufficient. Not knowing what you don't know makes running a CYC based program clinically unsound and doomed to ineffectiveness.

The most obvious aspect of working to change youth and families who are behaving badly (poorly socialized, aggressive, neglectful, self-harming) is the behavior that is occurring. Unfortunately, it is the focus on behavior which is the root of most bad practice procedures. Whether the agency is a school, hospital, youth residence, community center or family support program, the task of the CYC staff is often to minimize, control or eliminate the troubling behavior. Behavior is also relatively easy to measure and observe, so results can be tabulated with minimal disagreement or confusion. Behavior modification strategies, pioneered in the 1930's by B.F. Skinner and his disciples, are relatively straightforward and easy to implement. Conveniently, the procedures are learned quickly and really do not require much theory or sophisticated knowledge. When a program organizes its efforts around behavior as a fundamental focus, then all the additional enhancements to the program are limited in influencing the overall clinical strategy. Programs that claim to be strength based or solution focused often are not really implemented well because of the behavioral foundation. Any attempts to be relational and developmental are doomed to fail because of the behavioral focus embedded in clinical strategies.

Another problematic aspect of doing CYC work is that most agencies

are funded by government bodies that are deliberately purposed to accomplish specific results that may not easily allow for a developmental and relational approach. Child and Family Social Service departments deal with abuse and neglect, usually under a legislative mandate, and the social work staff want CYC workers to change parents' and youths' behaviors so that the home can be considered safe for all. The methodology of being relational and developmental is not a priority. School principals want CYC staff to improve classroom attendance and behavior, often through direct supervision and control. Juvenile justice officials want CYC staff to create crime free youth, another behavior control focus. Psychiatric hospitals use medical models and see CYC staff as ward attendants who control behavior. Residential CYC programs often attempt to remove youths from a bad environment and use external control strategies to create socialized behavior. Family support workers often find that a successful strategy is to align with families to help them get the system out of their lives, rather than as the government inspector who will report their behavioral offenses.

Behavioral approaches are often useful at the beginning of CYC work as a method to create safety, since many youths and families are doing destructive things and need to stabilize. As soon as trust and safety are established there is little need for behavioral techniques, since relational work should be starting. As I will explain, relational approaches and a behavioral focus are often in direct conflict in



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life space work. Predictability and consistent results are key ingredients when you are attempting to make the life space safe for people. Basically, the choices available are fairly limited and the enforcement of rules and routines is done in an impersonal, unemotional way, so that the behavior is the focus, not the intention or motivation of the activity. This is useful to create a non-blaming and matter of fact reaction by the staff and limits the emotional 'I hate you' response of the person being affected. It is also a safe response for the staff member who just refers to the rule or routine, and takes no personal blame for the unpleasant result. All staff members try to act consistently with each other, which means that no one has any personal arrangements outside the rules and routines that would be dissimilar to any other staff. The focus at staff meetings is on behavior, specifically behavior that needs to be modified, which usually is bad behavior. This is a very useful way to deal with new youths or families who are still struggling with unsafe responses to the environment and helps them to stabilize and reduces fearful reactivity. This stage of treatment is really a pre-treatment stage and the CYC practice at this point is neither relational nor developmental. It sets the base for a CYC approach.

After a fairly short period, usually a month, youths and families will typically settle down and begin to respond positively to the predictable and safe environment that has been established. Youths will be doing the behaviors expected by the program, families

will be less prone to challenging the worker and there will be some developmental information available to the CYC practitioner through observation and interaction. At this point relational work can begin and this is the start of professional CYC practice.

Relational CYC practice has some fundamental aspects; each relationship is unique, so family support workers have multiple relationships on display for all to see while they interact with different family members. Community CYC practitioners treat each youth differently, school-based workers have unique approaches and responses to youths within the same classroom or on the parking lot. Teams of CYC staff in residential programs struggle here, since they have to shift from being consistent with each other to being quite separate and often contradictory in their responses to individual youths. This is really not confusing to the youth or family members, but it can be a challenge for staff who are less skilled. The goal in relational work is to be internally consistent in responding to individual people, not a nameless, faceless staff member who acts like everyone else. CYC-Net started espousing this relational model in the 1990s starting with a ground breaking piece by Susan Leaf, *From Control to Connection*. Readers of the *CYC-Online* journal will be very familiar with these concepts. Unfortunately, CYC programs that are not keeping up to date will still be using behavioral approaches that undermine any relational focus.

I am aware that most readers of this piece will be regular visitors to CYC-Net and will view this article as preaching to the choir. However, it is possible to direct less aware practitioners to this and other articles in the 200th edition which may challenge some thinking about our work. When programs unwittingly base their results on a behavioral focus, all attempts to create change through developmental and relational methods will be contradicted by the underlying theory – or lack thereof – which reinforces compliance, consistency and safety.



What CYC-Net means to me

www.cyc-net.org has kept me aware of our connections around the world, it has informed me regularly about improvements and new methods to do our work and to stay humble about the people who need us to be skillful and aware. I also use CYC-Net to identify the committed colleagues in my world (who read it religiously) and the ones who don't really know what they don't know.



JACK PHELAN — I started to do CYC work in 1967 in NYC, and I have known right from the start that this is the work which I should be doing. I was very fortunate to work in a group home program where most of the CYC staff had Master's degrees and saw the need for a sophisticated approach to CYC practice. Several of my original colleagues are still in the CYC field today. My first agency also supported me to attend graduate school.

I have worked as a CYC community worker, a group home and residential treatment practitioner, a CYC supervisor (where I was told that I didn't need a degree), and a program director. I also worked in juvenile justice for a few years.

I became a CYC faculty member at Grant MacEwan College in 1983, and I am still there. My goal is to help my students and others in the field to be more articulate about what we do to help youth and families. This isn't an easy task; the complexity of CYC work is masked by the simple tools and everyday events that we use to support change.



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Change is a comin' but what about evolution?

Ernie Hilton

What do we know about change? Any workshop will tell us that change is inevitable and regularly causes discomfort, at least initially. Usually, these workshops give techniques or strategies to work through discomfort to arrive at a process where one is engaged and enthusiastic.

Is evolving different than changing? Evolution generally occurs over a long period of time and the changes are often subtle and unremarkable in the day-to-day. I could argue changes are objectives to evolution but seeing there is no one else present I will just agree with me. Monitoring changes is essential to

influence our path of evolution if I believe I have such control. Creating mindfulness with specific objectives can influence our evolution of concern, similar to intervention planning. What can get in our way of this influence?

Reviewing the impact of *CYC-Online*, at this time of the 200th issue, I wonder did it change, influence, and is it evolving and what, if anything, does it tell us about us as a field and as individuals?

A Generation with a CYC-Net Foundation

Do you know everyone in our field, aged approximately 35 and under have never experienced the field without CYC-Net and *CYC-Online* magazine? That demographic does not know our profession without access to world-wide information and connection. For 18 years the field of CYC has had a substantive interactive-output that has undeniably evolved the field. Stop for a minute and ponder what concerns have been addressed by CYC-Net. Wonder for a minute where your own evolution of status and knowledge would be without access to *CYC-Online* and CYC-Net. Wonder, without the international audience, where would we be as individuals and as a field. Imagine having no forum to be generous with knowledge and stories, no forum to connect, belong and grow strong as a community. If we look at our current existence as individuals having identified seven areas in our lives to be influenced ask this: how has CYC-Net influ-

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enced/evolved my finances, social group, family, career/vocation, mental health, physical health, and spirituality?

What limits our rate of change and subsequent evolution?

How about fear, hesitation and excuses as the culprits. How far down the journey of life have you envisioned your own evolution? My grandfather asked me a question when I was a young boy, he asked, "Ernie, where do you see yourself when you're 90?" I being a young lad said, "I don't know papa" I remember him saying something like, "Well, don't worry about it then, without a plan you won't get there." I attribute that moment to the beginning of my pragmatic-self. So, I ask us all "Where do we see CYC-Net in, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25+ years?" Let's be clear, the supporters of CYC-Net who contribute knowledge and finances will change but will the needed resources evolve? Sustainability of any community requires generous and regular contribution to ensure the community can endure and evolve so all can benefit. In evolving, the elders of CYC-Net will change, (either a naturally occurring event or intentional succession planning), renewable funding and additional sources of funding will need to be generated and nurtured or evolution will uncompromisingly take care of the community. Nature has a compassionate method for organisms that do not nurture themselves; there is no compromise, extinction is the outcome.

Like many, I have been a supporter of CYC-Net since inception and now many employees at HomeBridge Youth Society contribute both financially and with shared experiences through *CYC-Online* and discussion threads, thus growing the greater community and enhancing our own. The benefits of this professional media utility were obvious to me from the beginning. Its power to connect, learn, grow and share now reaches all ends of the earth. Collectively, our professional community needs to share in the desired evolution and subsequent changes that need to occur to sustain *CYC-Online*. Our field has so many incredible objectives: teaching, learning, professionalizing, certification, connecting, challenging, supporting and healing to name a few. The issue that lies before us all is "How important is CYC-Net to our evolution as a field and as individuals and what fears, hesitations and excuses will get in our way?" While it is inevitable the CYC-Net will change in form, the question is "Will we nurture it so it doesn't become extinct and with it the ease to which we are evolving?" I am reminded of the old adage, "You don't know what you got till it's gone".

For most of this pondering I have discussed CYC-Net as an entity, a thing. I have intentionally steered clear of specific individuals who have built and maintained the structure at great sacrifices in many areas of their lives. Without Brian Gannon, Thom Garfat and Martin Stabrey I would not have had the privilege of so many wonderful experiences as a result of the creation of CYC-Net. The 200th



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issue of *CYC-Online* is merely a benchmark in the evolution of CYC-Net and the CYC field. We need the greater community to desire the 400th issue to ensure we evolve as a field and benefit as individuals. We need to change fear, hesitation and excuses into certainty, courage and determination and the greater purpose of nurturing health, safety and harmony with ourselves and others through relational-practice.

The math ...

4000 CYC-Net subscribers
@ \$2 a month

= \$8,000 x 12 months
= \$96,000

That would be one objective taken care of to ensure our evolution. Go [here](#) to help.



ERNIE HILTON has been working in this field since 1985. After graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Dalhousie, he began as a CYC worker in a residential setting in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia called Hawthorne House. It is one of the six facilities operated by what is now known as HomeBridge Youth Society. In 1987 he secured a full time job in a provincial youth corrections facility, a jail for adolescent offenders called the Nova Scotia Youth Facility. In 1989 he went back to HomeBridge as a CYC supervisor in a crisis and assessment center known as Brenton House. In 1996 he had the opportunity to work as the CYC supervisor for Nova Scotia's first safe house (Sullivan House) serving youth who were being exploited in the sex trade. This was troubling work but made a difference. In 2000, he moved to a more senior position, Director of Youth Care and Operations with HomeBridge and decided to enrol in a program at Nova Southeastern University in Florida from which he graduated with a Master's of Science in Child & Youth Care Administration. In 2015 he became the acting ED for HomeBridge. He has now been with HomeBridge for 26 years and, in his own words, "lovin' every minute of it."

Connection and Belonging – Let Us Continue to Create

Aurora De Monte

I had the privilege of attending the National Association of Child Care Workers conference in Cape Town, South Africa this summer. It was a large conference (over 1000 national and international participants) and as with most conferences this one had many large group sessions where we listened to eloquent speakers discuss relevant issues related to Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice. Conferences are significant as they provide us with new information to apply to practice, and they challenge our perceptions or understanding of topics. However, upon being asked “What were the most meaningful moments from the conference?” I responded with moments of familiarity shared with others. It is in these close encounters where true connection and belonging originate, when we collectively create space with another and where a sense of truly being in relationship with others alights.

I would like to draw attention to the importance of these connections and for making time for these social bonds and relationships in our lives and practice. Garfat and Fulcher (2011) address the importance of ‘being in relationship’ with others,

which “means engaging with the other person in a deep and profound manner” (p.10). Humans are social beings with social brains. This means that we must be able to relate to others and make sense of our social surroundings and that our brain development is impacted both by genetics as well as social environments (Howe 1995). In practice, we must be attuned to the state of being with those with whom we work, paying close attention to the creation of a safe bond. When we create moments to share parts of ourselves with others (young people, practitioners, etc.) in a genuine and loving manner, we are inherently opening an opportunity for attuned connection and interactions. When someone feels a sense of connection repeatedly, they begin to feel a sense of belonging with someone or something. For myself, these moments of connection with others at the conference highlighted my sense of belonging in the field of CYC practice. I have a deep passion for the practitioners and communities we serve. I was humbled and re-invigorated by the enthusiasm, commitment and care demonstrated and communicated within



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the conversations and moments shared with others.

Emily White, a former lawyer, recently wrote a book about creating connections and a sense of belonging in her own life. Within the pages she references a nursing professor who researched the health-promoting effects of belonging and who came up with this definition:

“Belonging = a sense of being welcomed, needed, or accepted by a group + a sense of fitting or matching with that group” (White, 2015, p.34).

From acceptance, a sense of belonging can be cultivated and our human need to be in relationships with others supported. Acceptance requires both parties to be present and connected: to be vulnerable and caring. Garfat (2008) defines the space between self and other as the interpersonal in-between; a space co-created by the “opportunity to be with others as they experience and re-create their lives and as we re-create our own” (p. 31). In being with others, we share stories relevant to the space and place we are co-creating. It is these stories and moments from the conference, sharing not only about practice but also about personal reflections and interpretations, which evoke gratitude for this field and community.

Cozolino (2006) writes about how the “co-construction of narratives impacts culture and shapes a secure sense of our place within our tribe” (p.332). With the young people with whom we work, it is significant to support and nurture

a space for them to share their stories (those that are both delightful and difficult). As practitioners it is important to be mindful of emotional experiences that are demonstrated by ourselves or by the young people as stories are shared, so that we can hold any fears or anxieties that might arise. Susan Pinker (2014) wrote about the importance of face-to-face interactions, and notes that health and longevity appear to be positively impacted by belonging to a community. Referencing research conducted by David Snowdon on nuns living in Wisconsin and Minnesota who lived longer than average American women: “[t]he community not only stimulates their minds, celebrates their accomplishments, and shares their aspirations, but also encourages their silences, intimately understands their defeats” (Pinker, 2014, p.62). By providing opportunities for young people with whom we work to connect to a greater community, whether that is a professional, cultural, recreational, artistic, creative or alternative community, nurturing bonds and narratives with others, we are supporting the health of their minds and bodies. When we come together as practitioners in professional development settings, we are provided this opportunity to co-create, share and celebrate our sense of connection and belonging to this unique profession of Child and Youth Care. Let us continue to share, connect and cultivate a sense of belonging together.

About CYC-Net

After I completed my undergrad I moved back to my hometown. I knew few people professionally and CYC-Net provided me with opportunities to develop in my practice and challenge myself as I established a group of practitioners from which I could shore up support and discuss practice.

Challenge is a positive word in my opinion, it suggests that there is more to be explored and I love the idea of being an adventurer, charting new ground for my growth and development. CYC-Net is one of the ships I use to support my exploration and travel into the depths of CYC practice.

I appreciate the hard work and dedication of those who make CYC-Net a reality and to those who contribute to this community regularly as you further my learning and development. Thank you all.

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AURRORA DE MONTE currently teaches in the CYC program at Fleming College, along with maintaining a practice with young people and families. She is enthusiastic about all things CYC related and appreciates this lovely, diverse and ever-expanding CYC family.



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CHILD AND YOUTH CARE LESSONS FROM THE ELDERS

Lesley du Toit

A group of elders gathered together for three days to focus on their ongoing healing from significant childhood trauma. These elders, all Canadian residential school survivors, and I were working together in “Walking with the Wounded”, an experiential workshop which guides participants in healing childhood trauma and understanding its impact across generations. It was on the second day as we began our circle work when “Paul” joined us. He was seventeen at the time and had lived all his life in British Columbia within his First Nation community. Among the group of elders was John, an Inuit man in his late seventies who had grown

up in the Arctic. As John begins his turn in the circle he makes it clear that all he has to offer is his story and the lessons he’s learned on his healing journey. He starts way back with his early experiences as a child – the long trips on the ice with his grandfather and father, their warnings, teachings, and practical lessons on survival. He reflects on his joy as a child before he was taken away. He remembers being told, “Son, there are bad things coming and you are going to have a tough time, you must be prepared.” Without any self-pity or blame, he tells of attending four residential schools between the age of 7 and 15 years, living away from his family and home – and then he quietly, and very briefly alludes to the trauma he endured in the schools.

When Paul’s turn comes, he says very little, simply looking down at the floor and introducing himself.

Sharing and Holding Pain Together

The circle goes on, until again it is John’s turn and he shares more of his experience – quietly, respectfully, with occasional humor, telling his story of unimaginable suffering, tears running down his face. Every so often he is silent and we all wait in the silence and the moments of pain.

I notice that the elders will sit quietly listening for long periods of time, even when tired. Whether they are listening to a silent struggle or words of extreme emotional pain, they are still. They convey safety and care without saying anything. They are aware, yet not anxious. They

seem to have very little need to control the other person or the situation. They don't interrupt and seldom react. They know instinctively when to move towards the person in pain and what that 'movement' should be. They often seem to me to be listening to the soul rather than the words.

It's probably 45 minutes before we move on to the next speaker and eventually we are back at Paul. This time, struggling to speak, he tells us he's had enough of life, he can't cope and he wants to end it all. He feels like there's "no other way". His depth of pain and intense distress are obvious as he talks and cries, although he gives no detail or reason for his desperation, and there is no expectation that he should. The elders simply all stand, move around him and say a prayer for him. Without words they express how honored they feel that he (as a young person) is there with them. After they return to their chairs we complete the circle.

They had signaled that he was heard, safe, understood and not alone. No one attempted to give him advice or make him feel better. No one asked him to explain. They had intervened 'in the moment' without any direct verbal communication to Paul.

Strengthening Connections Outside the Circle

We move on to other activities. Outside the circle Paul is a silent

observer in the workshop activities, choosing to sit with the elders and listen without engaging. I've been watching closely to see how he is doing and I notice that Paul gravitates toward John during lunch and then again in the afternoon break. I can see that John is aware of Paul and has conveyed this without speaking. They don't speak much but I know that something is happening. A connection is building and Paul seems less agitated and frightened.

I'm reminded that in our work with young people there are tiny little miracles of growth that we can seldom define or articulate in scientific outcomes. "Watching the grass grow" as it were – (Durrant, 1993).

By late afternoon we are back in the circle for one more round before we close and leave for the day. John had repeated some of his story from the morning, this time adding in a few humorous stories about his survival tactics in residential school and his experiences during the years of treatment for alcohol dependence. By the time he was done we are all laughing along with him. Paul had joined in with the laughter and when it came to his turn again he is ready with a few quips of his own.

I'm reminded of the powerful role of humor in child and youth care.



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Being Together on the Final Day

We returned to the circle the next morning. Paul had clearly decided to spend another day with the elders and they simply assumed that he would. Without fuss, or special attention, their acceptance of his presence and their obvious willingness to trust him with their pain was communicated. (This is significant because the children of survivors have reported many times that their parents and grandparents do not talk with them about their experiences in residential school.) John's story continues. Over the course of the day he spends a number of hours talking about what he did to cope and eventually heal. He tells us about his addictions and his struggles to overcome his anger, his confusion, his hatred of himself, and the hurt. Woven within John's stories of overcoming these challenges he offers short vignettes about the good things in his life, the fun and joys he has had along the way. Inevitably his sense of humor and ability not to take himself too seriously has us laughing while we learn.

Through it all I am conscious of his inner strength and the respect he has for others around him. He conveys a sense of hope and belief in himself and others.

In the last circle of the workshop, Paul shares a little more on why he was so desperate and then what's changed for him in our short time together. As he talks he makes eye contact with John and talks to him rather than the circle. John listens,

nods, smiles and occasionally his eyes convey sadness. Paul thanks John and explains to him that before he heard his story he had no sense that "things could be so bad, that bad things can happen to you, yet you can get better, you can get past it, you can live with it".

Learning Across Generations

I followed up with Paul a few times and he told me he was doing well. Months later when I saw John again, he told me he had phoned Paul every few days following the workshop and was still in contact with him. He told me he had always wanted to use his experience to encourage Aboriginal young people, particularly in the schools, and he felt more confident to try. He has gone on to do that and many more young people are sitting in circles, learning from and with John.

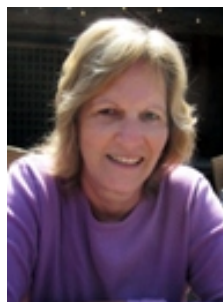
I'm reminded of the great child and youth care worker, Henry Maier, who in speaking about the power of belonging and connection, said that every young person should have the experience of being a 'twinkle in someone's eye'. I'm reminded too that young people, no matter how much they hurt, can make a positive difference in lives of adults. If we let them, they are as much our teachers as we are theirs. Lastly, I am reminded of the power in connection between the old and the young and I'm inspired to consider how elders might be a greater part of Child & Youth Care.

The Experience of the Circle

The circle work as a central part of the workshop each day and is established as a safe space based less on formal rules and more on principles that are integrated into the experience. The experience is not difficult to create, as Aboriginal people are inherently respectful and relational. After working with more than 100 elders and their families I would suggest that in no other experience is that more obvious than within a circle of elders. So then, what does this look like?

Firstly, what is said in the circle stays in the circle – respected, held in trust, not judged, not repeated, not discussed. An elder usually communicates this expectation quietly, firmly reminding everyone that the circle must remain strong. Secondly, there is no dialogue backwards and forwards across the circle, no questions, and no comment back to those who speak. We move from one to the other round the circle, each person choosing whether they speak or not. If not, we move on. Thirdly, each person decides what they say and how much time they need to take. We trust that who needs to be there is there, and who needs to speak in the circle will do so. Lastly, people are encouraged to “stay with the pain” – whether it is their own or the pain of others – and trust themselves and each other. We trust that people in the circle recognize emotional pain, most having lived with it for a life time, and are capable of holding’ the pain safely and strongly within the connectedness of the circle.

As I reflect on the role of *CYC-Online* in my professional journey, the words accessible, challenging, practical, and with a touch of fun, come to me – I would say that it’s like having a really great supervisor and mentor right there on the internet!



LESLEY DU TOIT, MSc. is a Child & Youth Care professional with more than 35 years of experience in working with children, youth and families, teaching professionals who work with children and youth, changing and building systems for children at risk, policy development, community development, and healing work in relation to childhood trauma.

Lesley led the transformation of the Child & Youth Care system in South Africa for the Mandela Government and later served as Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Children & Family Development in BC, Canada, where she presently resides. Lesley co-authored the Response Ability Pathways (RAP) course with Dr. Larry Brendtro and has authored and facilitates the workshops known as Walking with the Wounded in the Footsteps of Warriors. She is presently teaching and consulting internationally from and within Canada.



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NEW PERSPECTIVES ON ACTIVITIES

Karen VanderVen

In my various Soapbox columns, over the years, I have ranted about poor practices in child and youth care, extolled good ones, and shared other perspectives on the field. At the outset I remind readers that these are opinions, collectively based on study, experience and reflection. It is up to the reader to decide what truths, if any, he or she will take from any particular Soapbox.

For years I have promoted the importance of providing well-designed

and implemented activities for children and youth. More specifically these activity areas or large organizing categories which have been called 'domains' include art, crafts, music, movement, drama, sports, games, food preparation, writing and journalism, technology, nature, out-of-doors, adventure, service, chores, and others – anything external to a person that occupies his or her time, interest, and engagement. I tried to show that these are a fundamental part of child and

youth work. Activities are not frivolity or rewards for good behavior, but rather are essential for positive development and adult mental health and life success.

Like any area of practice, that of activity programming has undergone changes and surfaced new issues in recent years. Using some new sources, and a few trips of mine down Memory Lane, let's take a look at some of them, and think about what they might mean for the decisions we make in child and youth work.



The advent of technology

Yes, we've all seen the cartoons of groups of people immersed in their cell phones, no matter where they happen to be. Computers, cell phones, tablets and other items abound. Children begin using these in their earliest years – they are not just the province of school age children and youth. Involvement in technology has both advantages and disadvantages, it seems to me. Whatever they are, child and

youth workers need to deal with them. What are some of the advantages?

First of all, use of technology (computers and other devices) is a legitimate domain of activity. There is a knowledge base and skill base (quite extensive of course) involved in their use. Technology is so much a part of modern life and will increasingly be, so youngsters must be exposed to and learn how to use it.

And, of course, social media allow new methods of connecting with others – all the way from arranging get-togethers to simply learning what somebody else is doing or thinking.

I am not one who believes Facebook, for example, is distancing, especially because for some children and youth distance actually enhances their entry into closer relationships. I truly believe that Facebook serves to increase connectivity because it increases options and degrees of closeness – or distancing. I have previously

written that activities can serve a special function of enabling more distance, neutrality and less intrusiveness or emotional labor in relationships when needed. A youth who would be threatened by a face to face therapeutic encounter might well be productively engaged in an impromptu

basketball game with an adult. In fact the opportunity to work with youth in activity mediated encounters is one of the wonderful contributions of child and youth care work.



As well, older adults often joke as they acknowledge the truth that young people know more about technology than they do and rely on them to keep them informed about the latest advances and how to trouble-shoot. This is a wonderful thing, actually because it enables young people to feel more competent and needed in a real life area.

And technology has a great way of encouraging interest and skill development in other domains of activity. For just one of many examples, there have been many innovative kinds of new art forms developed utilizing and/or in combination with, technology.

However, as most know, there are disadvantages which adults need to pay special attention to and take into account when making decisions.

A provocative article “10 Reasons Why Handheld Devices Should Be Banned for Children Under the Age of 12” (Rowan, 2015) describes how too early use, among other things, restricts movement, and encourages attention deficit and sleep deprivation – three very crucial ingredients for positive development. Guidelines for allowing use of handheld devices are included in the article. These include consideration of ‘how much’ (balance) and ‘age’ (when) – always useful criteria for making activity decisions.

Cyberspace makes bullying, which has become more and more pervasive,

easier and more ominous. Young people make major indiscretions in postings (or others do) and somehow adults have not



been able to prevent some life-destroying events from taking place through postings on Facebook and the like. Texting and the continued availability of cell phones distracts youth from other healthy pursuits.

Access to computers, game technology and the like is often the default activity in settings for children and youth. It is a reward for ‘good’ behavior and may even be one of very few activities available. When part of a wide menu of available activities – again, art, crafts, music, games, physical sports, etc. — then participation in technology is of course valuable and essential to develop the skills needed to participate in today’s world. But when it is the *only* thing – that is completely different.

The Overscheduling Hypothesis – disproved

For years there has been the contention that children have been overscheduled by adults (a contention known as the “Overscheduling Hypothesis”) in structured and adult led activities and not had the opportunity for free play and discovery (e.g. Mahoney *et al.*, 2008). I myself didn’t buy it at the time (always of course looking for ways to question the fashionable ideology). Challenge to the ‘hypothesis’ was later supported by research that showed that there are numerous benefits from participation in scheduled and structured activities and that ‘overscheduling’ only affects an increasingly small segment – generally that in the highest economic echelons – of the youthful population. In fact

there has been research (e.g. Lareau, 2003) showing how for lower income children and youth participation in activities is crucial for skill development relevant to success in school and work.

My suggestion has always been to apply the ‘morning-afternoon swim’ principle.

I learned this at my summer camp decades ago. In the program there was no free-for-all. Each morning there was rigorous, authoritative instruction in skill development and supervised practice, including in swimming. The afternoon was more informal. There was free swim and freedom to participate as one wished in the other activities. So perhaps it’s a matter of balance – provision of both adult-designed and taught activities

and opportunities for freer choice and expression. The ‘unstructured’ time also allows for free play, sharing of each others’ experience, and that unique knowledge that comprises the ‘culture of childhood’. These are those child-specific and transmitted activities that we all remember: making ‘fortune tellers’ and table top footballers’ choosing up sides to name a very few.

Risk taking

Of course our prime responsibility is to keep children safe! But some years ago there began a litigious and possibly over-protective movement to reduce opportunities for children to do anything in which there would be a chance they would be injured. Diving boards were removed from swimming pools. Playground equipment became more and more ‘tame’.

When I was a child and teenager, we were permitted to, and did, take risks much more than youngsters seem to be able to do today (with some exceptions of course such as in extreme sports.) We roamed the woods. We walked considerable distances to school and nobody called us ‘free range children’ (Skenazy, 2010). We practiced tricky dives off diving boards. (Try to find a diving board today!). I notice that since the diving boards were taken down some years ago at the beautiful city pool where I swim, fully grown

adolescent boys do cannonballs or crude floppy dives off the edge, often getting dangerously and possibly deliberately close to other swimmers. And I lament the



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fact that with some exposure and instruction they'd be developing the coordination to do the jackknives, back dives, somersaults – one and a one and a half – that were so much a part of my growing up.

So here's a paradoxical result: the attempt to increase 'safety' (and maybe prevent liability) seems not only to have resulted in increased lack of safety, but also has deprived these youngsters of the opportunity to find and meet real challenges with skill-development oriented guidance and practice. We somehow need to figure out how

to help youngsters steer clear of real danger while still giving them the opportunity to take growth-producing risks. As I've often observed, for any movement there is often a counter-movement. So now there are efforts to design playgrounds and other activities that allow a bit more risk to be involved.

Restricted opportunity and too-early specialization

In recent years there has been a noticeable trend towards selectively

involving some youngsters in highly competitive activities, particularly sports. With perhaps some exceptions this practice needs to be further examined. For those who are groomed to participate, there is premature closure on their opportunity to experience and try a variety of activities before specializing. As well some adults are over-involved and withdraw real emotional support from their youngsters who feel they need to win at all costs and to earn and keep their parents' love or coaches' acceptance. Top athletes in certain sports – football usually – are over-revered. For those not being specifically trained, groomed and entered into demanding competitions, then what? There are often few sports options for them – a great developmental loss. Sports opportunities should be for all youngsters, so that they gain the numerous benefits of practicing to develop skills, engaging in reasonable competition and participating in a team. The fact, as has been discussed, is that there is more and more protection of *most* youngsters from taking reasonable risks and gaining the special developmental benefits that can accrue from participation in both individual and team sports.

On the other we can laud those efforts that provide opportunity to participate to more extended populations and to people with special needs. The Special Olympics comes to mind, along with special occurrences such as when a group of Minnesota boys included in their games a child with special needs who had been bullied (USA Today, 15 June 2015).

Schools and out of school time

In my opinion, various programs should generally follow their main purpose, but allow some aspects from others to be included. Of course schools need to focus on delivering academic education and it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the profound relationship between activities and teaching methods for doing this. Rather we will touch on schools as a whole.

Due to economic problems, political reasons and poorly designed educational practices, in recent years activities have been downsized or eliminated from schools: recess, art, physical education, and music. Interestingly, the recess elimination led to a surge in research on the role of recess in child development. The findings were that, among other benefits, experiencing recess increased rather than decreased school achievement.

For children who seem not to fit in well and/or to lack solid academic aptitude, activities are an ideal way to help them feel more successful in school both academically and socially. For example, lucky is the ADHD child who discovers and develops his or her art or musical talent in school or develops better concentration in the classroom as a result of having the opportunity to move around during recess and physical education.

Gardner's well-known "multiple intelligences" theory (1991) of course provides a strong rationale for activities in schools – programs and curricula that address all of them, as well as the basic

verbal and mathematical domains.

Even though activities have diminished in the regular school day, they are often now not given their truly appropriate place in after-school and other out-of-school programs – a double blow. In too many programs the emphasis is on completing homework, just extending the academic school day and edging out traditional after-school pursuits that actually promote attributes that enhance more formal academic achievement.

It's not that there isn't a place for homework in after-school. Rather it should be an option that children can choose. There's an age factor. Some older ones especially may actively want to use the time to work on a school project or get their homework done so they can go to an evening activity. Younger children should really be able to focus on play and activities.

In fact the importance of play in development cannot be overemphasized. Play experience, and opportunity for playful learning in school, is crucial. Youngsters cannot feel 'engaged' in school if they don't have a chance to move around and to experience some 'non-academic' activities during the school day. Lack of opportunity to play, the chance to move and develop social and problem solving skills, contributes to both older children and young children having increased vulnerability to anxiety and depression (Gray, 2010). And, while I'm at it, let me mention somebody who accords play a profound role in developing his curiosity and interest in science: Albert Einstein.



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The Economy

In recent months there has been a great deal of press given to the fact that more and more young people are not prepared with the attributes needed to get on a solid economic footing themselves and to bring needed skills to employers. These skills are more than those specifically re-

activities are not a meaningless frill. They nurture crucial skills for the future.

As well, developmental lines can be traced from activity domains that hopefully will be experienced in childhood to vocational preparation and real job opportunities. There are many examples and perhaps these will be discussed in future Soapboxes.



lated to a certain job. According to a recent research-based study by Child Trends (Lippman *et al.*, 2015), there are “key soft skills” that contribute to youth’s ability to succeed in the workplace. The identified skills are higher order thinking, social skills, communication, self-control and positive self-concept. All of these have been identified as the outcome of activity participation, starting with play in early childhood and blending into activity domains of childhood through old age. Thus

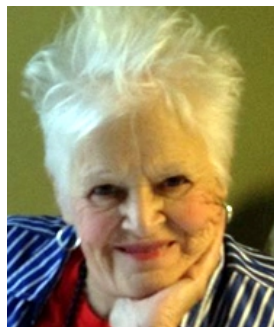
Toward the future

If one is skeptical about the significance of activities, try a movie! There is nothing like watching a film that drives home some of the ‘lessons’ about the significance of activities. Try *Billy Elliot* about the British boy who overcomes all odds to become a ballet dancer, *October Sky*, about a group of West Virginia teenagers who also overcome odds to design and fly rockets, *Fame* about New York adolescents in performing arts – and others.

This Soapbox identified some current issues in the role of activities in child and youth development. In a future Soapbox, I will discuss some relationships between activities and current issues in behavior. Additional Soapboxes – wherever and when they may appear – will discuss some actions and approaches that can be taken to ensure that all children and youth have the rich activity which will enhance their relationships and potential for adult well-being.

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Wu Wei!!

Laura Steckley

Thom, Brian and Martin have been busily harvesting a bumper crop of articles to celebrate this 200th issue of *CYC-Online*. In the editorial for the very first issue, Brian wrote about the exciting reality of people coming together, online, to talk about the work. He shared his vision for this journal to become a sort of alternative press where people could share ideas, opinions and news, all in a less-formal manner than scholarly journals.

This less-formal approach to writing about practice serves many functions. It requires writers to communicate using straightforward and accessible language. This (hopefully) serves to attract more practitioners to professional reading than scholarly journals tend to do. It also makes reading about practice less onerous and writing about practice less exclusive or rarefied. As a result, a wider array of members of our global CYC community become included as writers in *CYC-Online*.

There is an emphasis in Child and Youth Care literature on the everyday. We capitalise on everyday opportunities for growth and development as they unfold, like the petals of blooming flowers that can be easily overlooked if we

don't look for them. I think that this less formal, everyday approach to developmental care and to *CYC-Online* is compatible with an ancient Chinese concept called *wu-wei*. Literally translated, *wu-wei* means "non-doing" or "non-action". This shouldn't be misunderstood as laziness or indolence. Rather, it is a virtue or a way of being that incorporates spontaneity and harmony with nature and with what is.

In his in-depth exploration of *wu-wei*, Edward Slingerland (2014) refers to several different ways that *wu-wei* can be understood. He describes it as a sort of "relaxing into some pre-existing harmony with nature" (p.23), an "effortless, unself-conscious but eminently cultured spontaneity" (p.25) and "an intelligent spontaneity perfectly calibrated to the environment" (p.29). *Wu-wei* isn't some uptight, rarefied place but a natural, everyday way of being. Yet it can be elusive as well.

Wu-wei has characteristics in common with what athletes sometimes describe as being in the "zone" – a place of optimal performance. It also has parallels with "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), a term that refers to total immersion or ab-

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sorption in some activity and is also associated with optimal performance. I find all three concepts interesting and can see their applicability to CYC practice.

One of the differences between flow and wu-wei is that flow is associated with an activity (for example, basketball) whereas wu-wei is an overall way of being. Given that CYC work is about who and how we are as much as it is about what we do, there is potential benefit in coming to understand wu-wei, identifying times when we might have already experienced it, and reaching for it as the condition of our everyday.

I am in the early stages of my own “coming to understand,” but I can immediately recognise times, many of which occurred in practice, that felt effortless yet energetic, spontaneous and in harmony with some sort of collective, productive process. I can also easily identify my own opposite of wu-wei. Shall I call it ieu-uw? For me, ieu-uw is my tendency to make hard work of things, to get bogged down by the heavy, sticky mud of worry and trying. When I think about all this, I’m also reminded of so many young people who struggled with their every day and how hard they had to try, just to get by. Ieu-uw was a permanent state for some of them.

Of course, wu-wei is a bit of a paradox, hence the title of Slingerland’s book – *Trying Not to Try*. How does one try to do wu-wei when trying is part of the problem? I’ll let you know when I figure it out, but I have the sense, so far, that it is about cultivating the parts of myself that enable that intelligent, spontaneous re-

sponse “perfectly calibrated to the environment.” And *CYC-Online* offers a wealth of information, ideas, ways of understanding and opportunities for development (of writing!) that support such cultivation – in a less formal, everyday way that doesn’t make hard work of it.

So congratulations, Thom, Brian and Martin, on issue 200 of *CYC-Online*. I wonder how much wu-wei went into this great milestone. Until next time...

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I have become much more aware, over the last few years, of the radically variant ways in which child and youth care is conceptualized. I'm not referring to differences in practice across cultures and countries – these exist – but to differences in ideology, in fundamental beliefs about the role and purpose of child and youth care.

I have spent more than twenty years learning as much as I can about how to work effectively with “troubled” young people and their families. I have read extensively about child and youth care and residential care and my professional language includes the words and phrases: life

space, rhythm, presence, hanging in, activity programming, use of self, relational practice. Until quite recently, I assumed that this was the common language of child and youth care workers; that we were all kindred spirits who would recognize each other across a crowded room, our shared understanding and experiences reflected in a conspiratorial smile and knowing tilt of the head. I have come to realize, however, that the room is larger than I thought it was and it is divided into cliques.

Currently, the most tension

seems to exist between the belief that our role is to challenge the societal status quo and the belief that our role is to provide direct assistance to young people and families who are struggling. Clearly, we cannot effectively work with children and families without an understanding of the broader

context and, if we are ever going to create lasting change, we must be cognizant of – and attending to – the oppressive social and political structures that contributed to the problems in the first place.

That said, there is sometimes an undertone that direct-care practitioners are less sophisticated and critical in their

thinking, that focusing on the needs of an individual child or family is somehow “less than” focusing on the collective. While there is clearly value in recognizing the social conditions that lead to the plight of many of our young people and families, and advocating for systemic change, the discussion should not be either/or. Yet some of the conversations about social justice tend to privilege radical resistance over individualized intervention. Talking about whether we should be focused on the individual needs of young peo-

The Agenda of Child and Youth Care – Political or Individual?

Heather Modlin

ple or the political realm in which they live is like a contemporary rehashing of the nature-nurture debate.

The fact is, while we're struggling to change the world, many children and families need immediate assistance and our intervention had better be informed and competent.

Refusing to acknowledge the importance and usefulness of direct interventions puts us in a position where intervening becomes a last resort, something we do because we have no choice. Or worse – something other people do because they are not enlightened enough. This is a dangerous place to be. When something is not valued in the academic world, there is less research conducted and therefore less generation of new knowledge. This can perpetuate already-formed beliefs that our practice is not research-informed or evidence-based.

I have been involved – directly or indirectly – with hundreds of children, youth and families over the years. The young people I have worked with don't want to be political activists. What they want is to be safe, to feel better about themselves, to have friends, to be invited to birthday parties, to do well in school. Helping them to achieve this is not easy. By the time they get to us, many of our young people have been badly scarred by their previ-

ous experiences of abuse, neglect and other forms of trauma. To ensure that they get what they need, they require a knowledgeable and skilled response. If there is any bit of information out there – whether it's from a neuropsychiatrist or an Egyptian snake charmer – that can positively inform our daily practice with young people and families, I'm going to grab onto it with

both hands. We will change the world by strengthening the children and youth we are engaged with today – and this will happen by remaining open to all sources of information and learning, not just those with which we are most

comfortable.

Child and youth care is a challenging job that requires complex thinking. Whether or not practitioners are involved in conversations about political radicalism is in no way reflective of their practice acumen or their ability to think critically. In the same way that the families with whom we work are often excluded from having any kind of meaningful, powerful role in the societies in which they live, so too are practitioners often excluded from these political conversations – because the material is inaccessible.

Academics often make reference to writers, such as Foucault or Derrida, which the average practitioner is not familiar with. Not because they don't have



the capacity to engage with the material put forth by these philosophers, but because the curriculum of many college and university programs, and child and youth care training, is on understanding and meeting the daily needs of the young people and families. And while I agree that critical thinking is essential for effective child and youth care practice, I do not believe that critical thinking only occurs through exposure to French philosophers.

Before I started a PhD in child and youth care and became forcibly immersed in the world of deep thinking, I would sometimes come across an article heavily influenced by Foucault or another regularly referenced philosopher using words and phrases I was not familiar with. Because these articles did not speak to my experience as a practitioner, and I could not easily find anything in them that I could relate to, I rarely finished reading them. I'm sure I missed out on many opportunities to stretch my thinking.

I imagine the opposite is true, as well. If you spend most of your time pondering existential philosophy, an article about the therapeutic use of daily life events, or the impact of trauma on brain development, may seem too focused on the minutiae to capture your attention. We all gravitate towards that which is familiar, and look for validation of our own ideas. Critical thinking, however, requires that we stretch our brains in more ways than one.

Heads in the clouds are just as visually obstructed as heads in the sand.

We need to be talking about the social, economic, and political worlds our

young people live in. These conversations are important to creating systemic change, so that the generations of young people who come next may not have to endure some of the hardships of our young people. At the same time, we need to help them navigate the world they currently live in, so that they can decide whether or not they want to resist. It is not our job to turn our young people into revolutionaries – that needs to be their choice. It is wrong to use our children as pawns to further our own political agendas. And whether we want to acknowledge it or not, while they are in our care we have some measure of responsibility towards them and we need to use this wisely. The first step to this is to examine our own agenda.

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Heather is a founding board member and treasurer of the Child and Youth Care Educational Accreditation Board of Canada and a board member of the Child and Youth Care Certification Board and the International Child and Youth Care Network. Heather is a PhD candidate and sessional instructor in Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria.



PLAY IT AGAIN SAM ... Just for the Hell of it

Gerry Fewster

This will be my last submission to the CYC-Net and, unless something staggering comes along to divert me, it will also be the last piece I'll write about the ubiquitous profession that has preoccupied me for over half a century. I made this decision a few months ago when I declined an invitation to speak to a group of educators on the topic of "Contemporary Child and Youth Care Practice." I realized I have nothing to say that I haven't said so many times, in so many different ways.

The truth is I'm no longer 'contemporary' and my views on current trends and practices have become repetitive and increasingly negative. What began as a challenge to the 'fixing kids' mentality that currently drives the quest for professionalism has become a tedious tilting at unresponsive windmills. Within my own professional enclave I've often been accused of relishing the role of devil's advocate and, to be honest, there have been times when this oppositional stance has helped me to find my voice and consolidate my own beliefs. But now I'm as bored as those readers and listeners who seek to be inspired with new ideas

and positive thoughts. Sadly, I no longer have my buddy Krueger to turn to when the spirit sags.

Just for old time's sake, I'd like to sign off by briefly reviewing a few of the principles that have become entrenched in my personal manifesto for CYC practice. I'll try to be brief and keep it positive. To make things simple, I'll use the generic term "children" rather than struggle to include all the other terms we use to classify our fellow travellers on the winding developmental pathway.

1. All children need to be seen and heard for who they really are, at any given time. Our task is to understand *and respond* to their personal experience – past and present. This means knowing each child's unique history from his or her own perspective. This requires establishing clear personal boundaries between where we end and they begin.
2. All children have the internal resources to take charge of their own lives in their own way. Our task is



to help them discover and mobilize these resources.

3. All children possess an emerging sense of Self that incorporates their own unique cognitive, somatic and spiritual experience. Our task is to invite that fledgling Self to find expression, nurture its integration and assist the child in learning how to live fully and responsibly in a world full of expectations and demands. For this, the child needs one of the most precious gifts an adult can offer – a clear and accurate ‘mirror’.
4. All children have experienced some form of trauma from conception onwards. Our task is to understand these events as developmental ‘interruptions’ rather than injuries to be classified and treated.
5. All children need at least one person who’s crazy about them. Our task is to be such a person.
6. All children need to be loved. Our task is to find the loving place within ourselves, knowing that love is both a noun and a verb.
7. All children experience developmental interruptions in their primary relationships. Our task is to be ‘good-enough’ surrogate parents, ready and able to offer whatever they didn’t get in those early years.

8. All children struggle with the universal fears of abandonment and/or invasion. Our task is to know which is which and respond accordingly
9. All children need adults who have what it takes to hang in there when the going gets tough. Our task is to establish that trust, without conditions.
10. All children live and learn through relationships. Healthy relationships are intrinsically reciprocal. Our task is to understand that we can learn from the child as much as he or she can learn from us. For this to happen, we need to bring a curious, authentic, separate and contained sense of Self to the party.

Oh, how simple it all sounds – and it is. But it’s not ‘simplistic’ and it certainly isn’t a piece of cake. Translating these principles into practice calls for a level of skill and discipline that would have most allied professionals crying out for new theories, protocols, prescriptive manipulations and measurable outcomes. But I’m a dreamer and continue to believe that there are those in the CYC global community who will resist the lure of remuneration and professional status to provide what children really need. Some may even believe, as I do, that these same principles are essential if we are to have any hope of recreating our fragmented world.

I would be a traitor to my own cause if I failed to include the most important feature of my idiosyncratic manifesto

– the one objective that would put Child & Youth Care on a very unique professional trajectory. I believe that (we) should share everything (we) do and everything (we) learn with as many people as possible.

I realize this will not sit well with folks bent on creating a profession based upon exclusive knowledge and protected practices but, for me, this has always been a misdirected and lost cause. In the most generic and global sense, the experience of this profession should be available to anybody who is concerned with the well-being of children and young people, whoever they are, wherever they happen to be. The pay-off may not be a professional seal of approval – only the simple affirmation that the more we love and understand our children, the more we will come to love and understand our Selves. What a mind-bending graduate program this would make. Are you listening Marko?

I don't expect this brief overview will ever become required reading in the shadowed halls of academia but the good old CYC-Net reaches well beyond the Ivory Windmill and I'm happy to let the chips fall where they may. If you have any interest in my version of relational child and youth care practice you might be interested in the monograph I wrote for the First World Conference in Newfoundland. If so, just send me a stamped addressed envelope and I'll mail you a complimentary copy. My address is: #15, 1861 Maple Bay Road, Duncan, B.C. Canada, V9L 5K3.

If you have questions or comments, you could always email me at:

fewster@shaw.ca

Bon Voyage. (With best wishes from my aging collaborators, Charlotte and Cedrick.)



GERRY FEWSTER has been wandering aimlessly around the field of Child & Youth Care for over fifty years. Over that time, he has shared his thoughts and experiences through his writing, workshops, teaching, and sundry speeches. He has edited two CYC journals and held teaching positions at two Canadian Universities. For over twenty years he was the Director of one of Canada's largest privately operated 'treatment' facilities for troubled children and their families. In his last public appearance, he delivered the opening keynote address at the First World CYC Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland. He is now recuperating at his retreat on Vancouver Island.



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Hunting for Hope and Perspective

Heather Sago and Aurrora De Monte

Have you ever felt down and out and then suddenly you sense this wave of possibility, regardless of how small, rolling over you creating the energy you need to continue, at least for the hour, to put one foot in front of the other? For us, we call this a moment of hope and define it as a glimmer of opportunity for something to be different. We think that hope plays a vital role in the partnerships that we create with young people and their families. As practitioners, we need to train our eyes to notice the detail that makes up the beauty in the daily lives of those with whom we work, focusing on the

seeds of hope percolating in the smallest of moments. Practice should include finding ways of creating hope within individuals; together believing that change is possible.

Working with young people involved in the criminal justice system, we read many files that are filled with negative representations: histories of trauma, troubles or difficulties in various institutions (care, education, community, etc). These files are there to give a 'realistic' view of the young person and their history and are supposed to help practitioners work more effectively with the young person; they

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often simply reinforce the negative judgments and biases that predominate society's perceptions. The young people are seen as non-compliant, defiant, destined to repeat the cycle of violence, unchangeable and not worthy of aid. The strengths are few and far between in a young person's file and in some cases missing altogether. In our own families, we don't fill our photo albums only with reminders of the tough times or most difficult moments; we fill the pages mostly with numerous images of significant (or insignificant) positive moments or achievements. The pages speak of the cultivation of development, growth, pride and opportunity. The albums of the young people with whom we work are seldom filled with language that paints similar imagery.

Self-awareness, empathy and attuned response are required in order to be able to increase positive representations or perceptions of young people within practice. It requires us to understand our individual experiences and be aware of how they influence meaning making within our relational practice. Garfat (2004) states that it:

"is not enough for the worker to understand only his own process of meaning-making, for without understanding the meaning-making process of the young person, the worker may fail to understand the actions of that person as he or she reacts to the worker's actions in intervention. The young person and the worker

engage in a mutual process of meaning-making in the act of intervention, each responding to how they make sense of the actions of the other" (p.11).

In order for us to challenge the pre-conceived concepts or perceptions that may have already been created about a young person, it is imperative to be aware of the meaning-making experience and encourage alternative encounters, interpretations and responses. And we must not limit our attention only to noting large moments of change, as sustainable changes occur, for the most part, incrementally. We must start documenting these small, seemingly insignificant moments, for often it is those moments that challenge the young person's world view and open the door for a new narrative to be written.

To highlight our point of challenging beliefs and perceptions, we would like to share with you a story. It is a story illustrating how a small moment challenged dominant narratives, and perhaps created hope for an alternative self, in the life of a young woman.

Upon arrival, it was obvious that Mazy was disconnected from everyone and everything. For her, the detention/custodial center was just another living space. She had been removed from her home at a young age due to multiple types of parental maltreatment. Unfortunately, due to repeated outbursts of aggression



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she had also experienced the revolving door of care, going from foster home to foster home, then group home to group home and the revolving door now included the justice system. Somehow through all this she continued to throw out multiple bids for connection (Freeman & Garfat, 2014) seemingly longing for a sense of belonging. These bids, often very subtle in nature, quickly turned sour if they were not acknowledged in the way she appeared to expect. For example, just after her arrival she threw a board game at a staff and swore at another youth when she couldn't be the pawn she wanted in the board game.

On her first stay with us, she had extensive community service hours she had been ordered to complete as part of her justice sentence. Not wanting to have to waste her freedom on such tasks, she was in a hurry to find a way to finish these hours before her release. She weeded the facilities gardens, helped create psycho-educational boards for the living space, etc. but when offered to go offsite, while supervised, to participate in a charity yard sale, she was hesitant, 'You mean, I'd have to be around people? Talk to them and all that shit! I don't really like new people and they don't like me.' That said, she was attracted to the fact that she could accomplish so many hours at once and agreed to participate.

To prepare for the yard sale Mazy was assigned to organize groupings of items. This was easy enough as she could do it alone and didn't have to interact much with anyone other than the staff accompanying her. On the day of the yard sale, she was assigned a space, given a chair and told to answer any questions visitors might have about the items.

Towards the end of the day, an elderly woman came up to her with a request for help. The woman explained that she didn't have many possessions and was almost out of wearable clothing. She had \$20 and was hoping to get as much as possible for it but didn't know how to make that happen. Mazy jumped to her feet and went around the yard sale with the woman for the next hour and a half. At the end of their shopping spree the staff could not believe how many items Mazy was able to secure and negotiate for the woman. The woman piled her items in her portable cart, gave the youth a hug and went on her way. The staff and Mazy drove back to the custodial center. She remained utterly silent during the ride and upon arrival, burst into tears. She headed straight to her room and collapsed on her bed refusing any conversation.

The accompanying staff told the other workers that she did not understand what had occurred to create such a reaction. They explained how the

youth assisted the elderly woman and appeared to enjoy herself in the experience. Staff could not see any triggers for such strong emotions to have come pouring out. I happened to be in the house at the time and agreed to see if I could find out what was going on for her.

I entered Mazy's bedroom and asked if I could sit on the edge of her bed. She nodded her head yes and sat up, her long hair covering her face. I began to breathe in and out in an exaggerated but mindful fashion. Her breathing began to slow and her body seemed to calm. I explained that we (the staff) were confused about what was going on for her right now; we thought she had experienced a good day in the sun and had been helpful to the elderly woman. She crumpled back up the moment the word 'helpful' left my mouth. At that point I knew the trigger must have been the woman and asked her if she was a known acquaintance or reminded her of someone she knew. She shook her head no. Confused, I just sat there, hoping the silence would lead to answers. The youth started to mumble something over and over. Finally I caught what she was saying: "I didn't know I could be good." I repeated the words to see if I had heard correctly. She then looked straight at me and in a clear voice said "Everyone's always said that I'm bad but she said I was a good girl,

I didn't know I could be good." My heart broke at that moment but hers was filling with possibility and from then on we worked together to reinforce her new perception of herself. How did we do this? We provided opportunities for her to be helpful, promoted her apparent new awareness of generosity and noted in her file the small successes and strengths we saw during her days with us.



Research has supported the importance of positive relationships with peers and practitioners, relationships that support chosen identities (how they see themselves), and ones in which they have the opportunities to demonstrate these competencies (Adams & Marshall, 1996; McMurray, Connolly, Preston-Shoot, & Wigley, 2011; Stockholm, 2009). McMurray *et al.* (2011) in their research on identity formation and positive outcomes for looked-after children, note that, in general, practitioners' "descriptions of children's

identity tend to be general and of a negative nature” (p.212). As illustrated in the above story, the young woman had only ever heard that she was ‘bad’ and there were limited or few opportunities for her to develop and nurture a positive sense of self. Her perception of self as ‘bad’ had grown in the context of her previous relationships with others including, it seems, the staff who had previously filled her file with those negative representations.

Saleebey (2000), in discussing a strengths-based perspective, notes that the approach “obligates us to understand – to believe – that everybody (no exceptions here) has external and internal assets, competencies, and resources” (p.127). It is our job to ‘believe’ in the capacities of young people, adhere to our relational, strength-based and resiliency focused roots, hunting for the moments of worthiness, competence and positive affirmation. Let us remember to nurture our hope in humanity including the young people and families with whom we meet, challenging narratives that disempower them and instead, cultivate capacities and perspectives

that encourage dreams, visions and the hope of change.

Why CYC-Net? To Build Community and Foster Passion

The world can be isolating – especially when your way of being is different from the majority. CYC-Net allows its users constant, consistent exposure to others functioning from a framework of relational strength-based care and it does this not just online through its articles, discussion board and learning zone activities but also in person through shared experiences. It creates a strong presence and drives our credibility as a discipline.

CYC-Net fosters connection in a world where sometimes we seem small and insignificant. It supports our continued learning, growth and passion for our field. It supports risk taking by encouraging the young and those older to share views in an environment of non-judgment and respect, acknowledging that we are all at various stages or phases of our personal and professional development, and to stay in

“No two persons ever read
the same book.”

Edmund Wilson

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touch, promoting a relational approach with one another. One piece of advice: if you have an idea that you've been sitting with or a question you've been pondering for some time and want to take that next step, reach out, send an email to someone who may share your perspective or passion. CYC-Net participants span the globe and there is much diversity within. Challenge yourself.

Just as young people need new perspectives and hope for a better world so to do CYC workers. It is in relationship with others that CYC workers will foster their passions, becoming innovative and, most importantly of all, impact children, youth and families assisting them to reach their potential.

CYC-Net is the Global CYC practice family and we are grateful to have such a large and nurturing family.

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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

OCTOBER 2015

Hi Everyone! **Happy 200th to CYC-Online!** And I offer a toast to everyone who's been involved in helping CYC-Net and CYC-Online reach out to child and youth care peoples – all over the World! Warm celebratory greetings to you all!



Just like other holiday postcards, this one got delayed a bit. Still, it seems fortuitous that this Postcard appears in the 200th Edition of CYC-Online! Happy Bi-Centenary reading folks! In what fol-

lows, I want to acknowledge the 5 days when a small cluster of stalwart CYC-Net supporters shared time together at the Kruger National Park, at what I called the Skukuza Camp Gathering to hang-out and share time together after the NACCW 40th Anniversary Conference in Cape Town.



A big thanks to Jacqui and Rodney Michael for helping to organise this Gathering

A big thanks goes to Dr Thom, and to Jacqui Michael and her brother Rodney who helped to organise our 5 days at Skukuza. After bringing his Lebanese Christian Family from Beirut to South Africa during an earlier period of Middle East civil war and community upheaval, Jacqui and Rodney's father took his family on camping holidays in the Kruger Park every year. And that tradition continues amongst the Michael Family, as it does for other families across South Africa.

Participants in the Skukuza Camp Gathering voluntarily demonstrated their core child and youth care skills. Preparation and taking of food was a mostly shared activity, with everyone in



Everyone who joined in had to demonstrate child and youth care skills!

our Gathering heeding signs about keeping cupboards and refrigerator doors locked to deter local monkeys and baboons. Alas, the chalets behind ours failed to heed the warnings at the end of their party, awakening to mayhem with everything from the previous night's BBQ strewn about the camp!



There was a lot of sharing and partaking of food and beverage, befitting of a Gathering!

Hanging out together in various combinations for five days provided an abundance of opportunity moments that spring so naturally from a shared activity. It was very reminiscent of what happens in youth camps or scout camps where youths are socially engineered to live together for a week of shared activity. Our CYC-Net Skukuza Camp Gathering was about animal and bird watching. Yay!



Hedgie was there, too, meeting new friends Tammy, Scruffy and Jack

The gates to Skukuza Camp closed every evening at 5:30 pm – to keep the animals safe from the humans in 'the zoo'! ;-) Fine were paid for late entrance. Carefully regulated and well organised animal drives operated morning and evening, along with a few walking tours with armed guides. As our inter-generational Skukuza Camp participants re-gathered at the end of each day, there was always much to talk about and opportunities for sharing meaningful moments together.



Happy Campers Aurora, James and Julie after a long day of spotting wild animals

Sharing meaningful moments together is how child and youth care workers make connections and build relationships that matter over time. Facebook friends and social media now have growing impact across the world of child and youth care, a medium facilitated through the sharing of stories and evocative images that are stored in personal memory boxes of one sort or another.

The Skukuza Camp Gathering was active in its animal and bird spotting activities. It was almost impossible to resist. In the first hour after entering the Kruger National Park, we identified 4 of the Big Five – Elephant; Rhinoceros; Leopard; and Cape Buffalo – then spotted Lion the next morning.



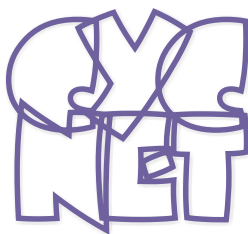
THAT Lioness and her Cubs from the Johannesburg Lion Park!

I can't resist ending with a comment about the behaviour of 'tourist animal spotters'. We were aghast as a Chelsea Tractor (4x4) pulled up beside a sleeping rhinoceros and started honking to wake it up for their video! Or the pack of wild dogs on the road, chased by Toyota and Mercedes SUVs. The craziest was the lady who came to the J'burg Lion Park and ignored the signs saying "Don't lean out your car window!" This Lioness was doomed through the stupidity of a tourist!

John



Everyone got involved with animal and bird spotting, with celebrations around the Big 5!



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CYC-Online is published monthly by [The CYC-Net Press](#). It is an e-journal and therefore not available in printed form. However, readers are welcome to print out pages or chapters as desired.

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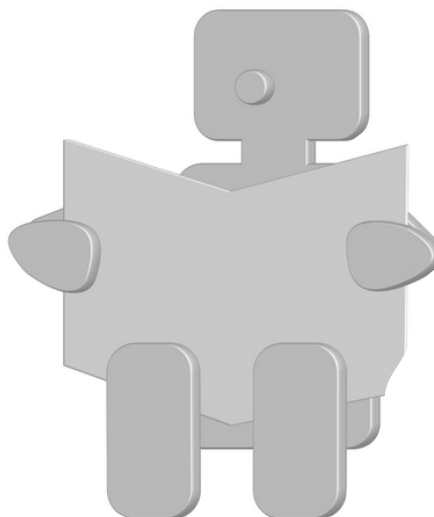
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**ONLINE JOURNAL OF
THE INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE NETWORK (CYC-NET)**

www.cyc-net.org

Published by



ISSN 1605-7406