

# CYC-Online

e-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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# Honoring Andy

**James Freeman**

**F**ar too many good Child and Youth Care practitioners are pressured (for a range of reasons) to view the craft of caring as a stepping stone to other work. Some who fall in love with their calling and into the field of Child and Youth Care know that they will be in it as long as they live. It's a part of what makes our work and life so different than many other professions.

Child and Youth Care, by its nature, pushes the limits of boundaries in our personal and professional lives. For me, learning to let go of finding a perfect balance was helpful. Instead finding meaning in the various seasons of work or personal life taking the forefront and handling shifting priorities as they arise. One of the aspects of our work that is so appealing to me is that the task of caring is so simple to grasp, yet takes a lifetime to master.

So, when someone reaches the finish line of their career in our field it's something worth celebrating.

Recent past CYC-Net board member Dr. Andrew Schneider-Munoz announced his retirement from a lifelong career and service dedicated to children and families around the globe. Known as Andy by anyone I've ever witnessed interact with him, his career spanned decades, a variety of practice settings, and meaningful interactions with young people in places ranging from the ball field to the university classroom. He started in Child



and Youth Care in 1980 in Denver, Colorado (USA) with a first group of kids and youth workers.

Andy's career accomplishments and impact are far too big to list here – and this is no attempt to do so. Most of his written bios explain that he is a Harvard-trained child psychologist and anthropologist. To me Andy is an advocate, a connector of people, and a storyteller. Among many roles he has served as President of the Association of Child and Youth Care Practice, is a fellow of the Association of Children's Residential Centers, a professor at multiple leading universities, a trainer with the Academy for Competent Youth Work, and much more.



**Andrew Schneider-Munoz (past president) with Jody Rhodes (president) of the Association for Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP) in San Diego, California (USA) in September 2019.**



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I've had the chance to work with and train CYC practitioners with Andy many times and it is always a pleasure. Among so many memories with Andy I've shared a meal at Stubb's BBQ just down from the state capitol building in Austin, Texas (USA) and the best Indian dinner I've ever had in Scotland (along with Frank Eckles). We've browsed used bookstores in Milwaukee and shared sushi with Karen VanderVen in Pittsburg. We've led and participated in meetings together – sometimes even in conflict or high stakes situations. I've seen him expertly host a national Wraparound conference in Florida, facilitate a collaborative academic forum, and we have co-facilitated ethics training to bring higher awareness of inequities and trauma on the US/Mexico border. I've experienced joyful moments with him hanging out with kids in our care program in California and seen him connect with my own family and kids with shared interests. All of my experiences with Andy weave together a theme of caring and being together in the moments of everyday life.

Andy's ability to connect with people, his attention to hearing their story, and his gift of making connections between previously unconnected people is inspiring. Here's a few comments shared by colleagues over the past weeks since his announcement:

*Andy, whom we agree, with warmth, caring and tact and intelligence among other wonderful interpersonal skills, has done so much to encourage and elevate us all as persons, practitioners, the field of child and youth care work, and innumerable children, youth, families, organizations and settings. (Karen VanderVen)*



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*Your contributions in keeping us connected to our rich heritage and historical Child and Youth Care roots and emphasis on international Child and Youth Care work is deeply appreciated. Of course, your recent globally focused publications exemplify this focus. Your ability to 'story-tell' has helped to bring our knowledge base, heritage and international focus alive for many of us. (Dale Curry)*

*Few people retire with as many successes as you have had. You have been a major player in establishing both ACYCP and CYCCB, you have forwarded practices in psychology, after school, education, higher education, wraparound, residential care, disabilities, recreation. It's a very long list. You have published significant articles, forwarded research, trained and educated - and occupied some of the top positions in the CYC field. You have inspired many of us with your endurance and constant focus on what HAS been accomplished, how FAR WE HAVE COME, and WHAT ELSE we can do. So many people have benefited and learned from you. Congratulations on a career well spent. (Frank Eckles)*

Andy would often end board meetings of ACYCP with a mic-drop moment. AFTER we would hash out numerous details and eat too many pastries, drink too much coffee, and have too many smoke breaks (for some of us...while being scolded by Mark for killing ourselves), and would make his departure, but JUST before leaving the room, say something along the lines of, "I secured \$5,000 for ACYCP", or "I have secured



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scholarships for 20 youth workers to attend the conference”, or “I am working out details for X amount of \$\$\$ for the journal”, etc. And usually I'd look to Quinn or Kreeb, or Frank or Varda or Mark or Hector, etc. and laugh, “damn, he did it again!”. (*John Korsmo*)

We're all glad Andy is still here with the field – and wonder (as he likely does) what his contributions to the field will be in his retirement. I am sure the story is still unfolding. In his most recent work Andy reminds us of the mutuality, respect, and collaboration that makes good CYC practice:

*Adults need the innovative creativity and will of today's youth as much as youth need adult partnerships to actualize many of their ideas. The needs and benefits are reciprocal. It all comes down to how we treat each other.*  
(2018, p. 20).

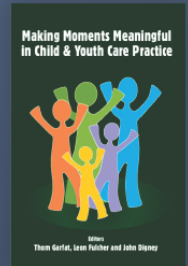
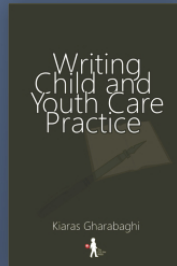
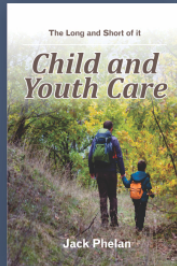
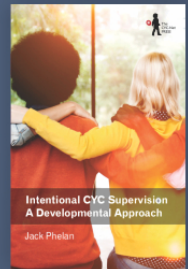
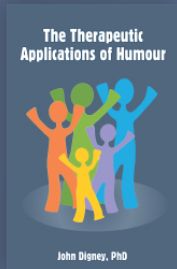
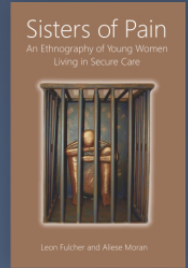
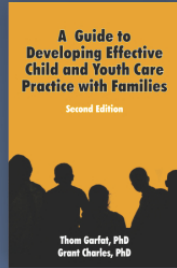
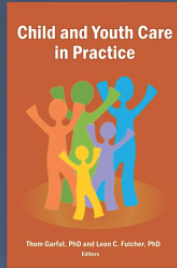
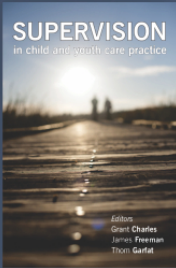
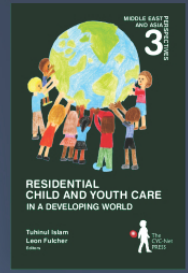
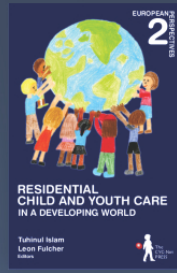
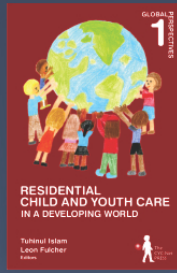
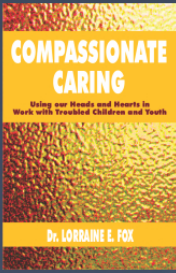
Thank you, Andy, for a career well-done in the service of others.

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# What of Diagnosis and Drugs?

Hans Skott-Myhre

Like many of my generation of CYC workers, I entered this field through the back door. Having completed a bachelor's degree in comparative literature, I had embarked on a career as a street poet. However, there being little actual compensation for reading my poetry on the street, in bars, and coffee shops, I began working in factories, canneries, fishing boats, and gas stations in order to keep body and soul together. It was an exciting time for poetry in Seattle. There were some wonderful poets who gathered in places like the Dogtown Poetry Theater to read and drink and talk. After a few years though, blue collar work lost its appeal for me and having put some money aside (in the early to mid-1970's blue collar jobs paid well and rents were cheap), I decided to look around for somewhere I could volunteer and do some good in the world. I explored a number of options for socially relevant organizations where I could volunteer, and found out that there was a "mental health center" that had just opened up the street from where I lived.

The idea of mental health center probably doesn't seem so novel these days, but at that time such centers were a radical intervention. Community mental health was unheard of, psychoanalysis was really the only form of therapy taken seriously, and "mad" people were housed in massive asylums.



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But, things were changing. Franco Basaglia had deinstitutionalized the asylums in Italy and as they closed, the idea of community centered care took off. There were radical experiments in anti-psychiatry, such as R.D. Laing's Kingsley Hall in London, Felix Guattari's La Borde in France and Soteria House in California. These projects combined the political and social critiques of the late 60's into an analysis of madness which proposed that people who went mad were expressing the monumental social fractures and contradictions of the society in which they lived. In places like Kingsley Hall, those people who experienced severely anomalous thoughts, perceptions, or feelings were worked with as equals in the treatment process. Guattari insisted that there should be no hierarchy between the psychiatrists, nurses, aides and patients. Centers of anti-psychiatry focused on political and social actions as a means for resolving madness. Indeed, one of the slogans that can still be seen on the walls of one of the asylums Basaglia closed down in Italy says, "Freedom is Therapeutic."

# Unity Through Relationship 2019

*"The Rhythms of Care"*

Dublin, Ireland, 11-12 November 2019



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When the movement of anti-psychiatry and deinstitutionalization came to the U.S. it still held some of the political impetus of its origins, but it was also seen by politicians, such as Ronald Reagan, as a way to cut the costs of the massive asylums that housed, fed, and clothed thousands of psychiatric inmates. As a result, as the asylums were closed, the community mental health system into which they were referred was severely underfunded. This lack of monetary support was justified by two competing and contradictory innovations. On the one hand Basaglia, Laing, and Guattari, among others, had democratized care by bringing the community into the institutions they ran. In their programs, there were volunteers of all types who worked with the staff and patients, both in the institution and as mentors supporting patients as they moved into the community. This tradition of community volunteers working alongside (and in any many ways equal to) the staff and psychiatrists, was carried forward into the community mental health movement as it emerged in the U.S. On the other hand, psychotropic medications such as thiorazine and lithium were being used with increasing frequency and with what appeared to be remarkable results. With the use of these new drugs there were significant decreases in symptoms in patients with severe and long-standing psychoses, depression and mania. Psychiatry seemed to really come into its own as these drugs began gained in popularity. Indeed, some might argue that deinstitutionalization in the U.S. was driven by the idea that we no longer needed intensive treatment, all we needed was the proper administration of psychotropic medications.

This was the state of things when I applied to volunteer at the new mental health center up the street. There were certainly radical edges across the agency, with the majority of the staff being comprised of volunteers, many of whom came from socially radical religious groups such as the Catholic Workers and Mennonites, but also recently paroled draft



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evaders, and students from overtly left wing universities such as Antioch. The nurses and psychiatrists were open to anti-psychiatric principles in which service recipients had significant input into their medication regimes and overall care.

The agency sought training for the volunteers and medical staff from some of the most radical clinicians in the U.S. at the time. These included the emerging work of family therapists like Virginia Satir, Carl Whittaker, and Salvador Minuchin. Ericksonian hypnotherapy, strategic family therapy, and brief therapy was taught to us by people like John Weakland and Dick Fisch from the Mental Research Institute. We were exposed to the provocative therapy of Frank Farrelly with its irreverent and somewhat shocking use of humor and sarcasm. While many, if not all, of these approaches are now mainstream approaches to working with young people and their families, at the time they were highly controversial.

The day treatment program where I volunteered served what was termed “first break” young people. That is to say, young people who had been admitted to the hospital only once or twice. Our program was the alternative to the companion program that served those folks with more “chronic” long term involvement in the system.

Over the five years that I was there, the team I was on developed a strong interest in democratizing our program. We worked with the psychiatrist and the young people we served to reduce or eliminate dependence on psychotropic medications. The idea was rooted in anti-psychiatric ideas about madness being a social not a medical malady. For about three years, we were allowed a free reign to see if building a community built on democratic relational principles might have a beneficial effect on the both the people we served and ourselves as workers. For me, it was a rich and exciting time in which I was able to build



deep and somewhat profound connections with both my colleagues and the young people we engaged in our work.

Towards the end of my time in the program, however, federal funding began to mandate fewer volunteers and more paid staff. This was to my advantage at one level, as I was able to get a paid position and was funded to complete my master's degree. On the downside, there was a significant shift in treatment philosophy towards what was emerging as the "medical model." Diagnosis, when I arrived had been a perfunctory and largely bureaucratic exercise we engaged to get the young people some financial assistance. The DSM was relatively new and still developing. By the time I left, the DSM was in its third iteration and was beginning to drive treatment approaches, which were becoming far more invested in the medical management of symptomatology through psychotropic medications. The insurance companies had begun to make inroads in funding and psychiatry was asserting its authority as the true experts in treating "mental illness."

I am reminded of my entry into the field as a "mental health worker" and the somewhat dramatic shift of the agency from relational principles of care to medical intervention as I have been reading recent [studies](#) that have questioned both the scientific validity of the DSM as well as [significant questions about the long term efficacy of psychotropic drugs](#) and their rather nasty side effects. It has been over forty years since my introduction to the "medical model," and it would seem as if the miracles promised may be a bit more dubious than was thought at the time.

At a personal level, I am not entirely shocked about the fact that the DSM has no research supporting the framework for diagnosis that has become so prevalent across all sectors of care for those suffering from anomalous neurological patterns of thoughts and feeling. I am also not surprised that the medications that have spread across society impacting



increasing numbers of young people and adults may be less than entirely effective over time and may have severe and unpleasant side effects. Both of these problematic aspects of the emergent medical model were fairly obvious forty years ago. The continuing need to revise the DSM absent any serious scientific study has been known for quite a long time. It was always a largely anecdotal clustering of symptoms that were named by consensus rather than scientific inquiry. Similarly, in what can only be thought of as a significant lapse in ethical scientific protocol, [medications were justified](#) on the basis of their initial efficacy without any real longitudinal studies of their possible side effects or any real understanding of how they really work as they impact on our neurology.

We saw the nasty effects of psychotropic drugs on our clients forty years ago. The Parkinson's like facial contortions, grinding of teeth and zombie like shuffle were the mark of a person on Thorazine. The response of the medical community was to try to find other medications that would reduce the side effects, rather than seriously investigating whether these effects were inherently damaging to the person taking them. [Lithium and the following tricyclics and other anti-depressants](#) also had a similar pattern of quick adoption without adequate concern about long term neurological or physical impacts.



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The recent validations of my concerns about the extremely problematic aspects of medical diagnosis and treatment for those designated as having some degree of neurological or emotional deviance, have caused me no small degree of concern about how we as CYC workers are involved. While many of the young people we encounter (not to mention ourselves and our colleagues) are being subjected to the regimes of psychiatric diagnoses and medical intervention, I am not sure we, as a field, have begun to wrestle with the implications of the recent information questioning the foundational validity of diagnosis or the negative long term impacts of [psychotropic](#) medication. What is our ethical accountability to the young people we serve as they are inducted into what might well be a lifelong relationship with psychiatry and psychiatrists? Do we have a duty to warn? Is our role as a field that holds care as a central defining characteristic to assure ourselves that we are doing no harm when we use a diagnostic term to describe the young person in front of us?

It seems to me that this is huge pachyderm in the room of our practice. Many of the schools and programs in which we work, routinely use diagnosis and medication. While we are not the psychiatrists nor other medical personnel who assign diagnosis or prescribe medication, we are often on multidisciplinary teams where these processes occur and are mutually validated among the professionals at the table. What is our obligation to the young people in our care?

Even in our work, it is not uncommon to find CYC workers using diagnostic categories and supporting the use of medication management. The literature in the field is largely, if not entirely, silent on the issue. It is almost as though we claim innocence by omission. We work relationally and through the life worlds of lived experience. We are not medical professionals. But, in what ways are we complicit? Is it all reasonable to simply ignore the evidence that is becoming increasingly obvious as to the



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problematic nature of psychiatric interventions with children and young people? I don't have clear answers to these questions, but I worry about them. I hope that we as a field can begin to have a discourse about what role, if any, psychiatry, diagnosis, and medical intervention should have in CYC. Without at least exploring our entanglements with what may be dubious ethical practice, we remain passively complicit in possible harm to the young people we serve. For me, that is unacceptable. I can only hope that it is also unacceptable for some of you as well.

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# How do We Measure Relationships?

Doug Magnuson and Priscilla Healey

A difference between professional and semi-professional work is the ability to think systematically about our relationships, and one way to help us think about this is to use data that comes from outside our own experience. In our personal lives we have biases, and those biases are troublesome and they cause us no end of difficulties. In our professional lives, those biases need acknowledging and correcting. If we are serious about "relational work," we want to have enough tools to help us account for all the ways in which relationships operate: trust, communication, understanding, connection, power, alienation, conflict, liking, attunement, dependability, emotional reliance, relatedness, membership, support, autonomy, intimacy, emulation, meaningful participation, emotional security, attachment, involvement, caring, affective experience, ideal and real selves, social support seeking, emotional reliance, internalization, and engagement.

There are interesting measures of all of these. We do not measure "the relationship." We measure one piece of it that matters to our work.

When do we use measurement? When we have power over children and youth, when we want to make sure that their perspective is included, when they need assistance thinking about dimensions of life experience, any time we are concerned that what they say to us may not be what they actually think, and when we have reason to think our perception and their



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perceptions may differ. Our own children surprise us; other people's children will surprise us more. There are some easily accessible tools available to measure child and youth experiences against our own bias. Here are some other examples that are available on the internet; the citations for each are listed below.

The session rating scale and outcome rating scale (Campbell & Helmsly, 2015) are widely used to assess perceptions of well-being. The session rating scale assesses four dimensions: relationship, goals and topics, approach and method, and overall. The session rating scale asks questions like whether the recipient felt "heard, understood and respected." The outcome rating scale has four simple dimensions of well being. Both scales are composed of four items, and each scale takes one minute to complete. Two minutes a week to complete these is doable.

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The "Inclusion of Other in Self" (Gachter, Starmer, & Tufano, 2015) scale measures how close someone feels to another person, and it is interesting because it uses a series of Venn diagrams, with progressively overlapping circles, and the respondent chooses one of the options. Simple and quick.

In early childhood the confidence, collaboration, and affiliation of parents and caregivers toward each other, measured by the Parent-Caregiver Relationship scale (Elicker, Noppe, & Noppe, 1996), is an interesting measure of the similarities and discrepancies in perceptions of each other. You end up with separate scores for each person that can be compared for consistency and discrepancy.

In group care, the Trusting Relationship Questionnaire (Muistillo, Dorsey, & Farmer, 2005) asks both the child and the caregiver to think about a series of actions by the other person such as whether the child (or adult) identifies things they like about you, talks to you about problems, wants to spend time with you, shares personal information, talks positively about you to others, seeks you out for advice, and so forth. There are 18 items, and for the caregiver, this is also a reminder of things that they can do for the child.

There are "therapeutic alliance" scales everywhere on the web, and they can be adapted for our use. Search by "therapeutic alliance" scale.

Barch (2015) gathered an assortment of instruments for measuring student-teacher relationships that can also be easily adapted for other settings.

None of these instruments are complicated or takes much time to complete. They create space for youth to express their experiences and give youth an opportunity to give us feedback in the normal course of work. They help make objective sometimes difficult conversations (assuming the staff person is ready for this!). We ought to welcome this kind of formative, case-level data for our work.



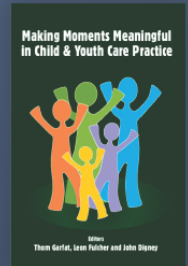
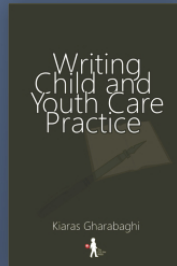
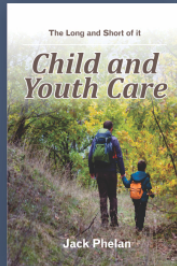
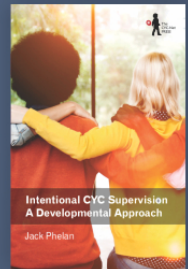
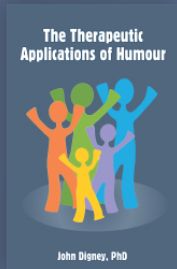
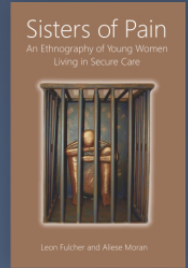
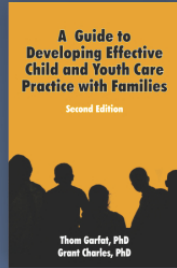
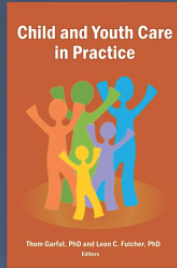
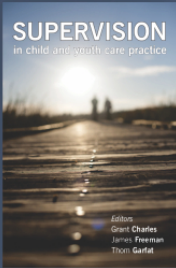
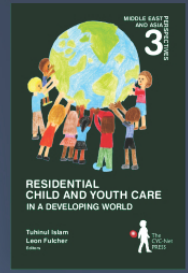
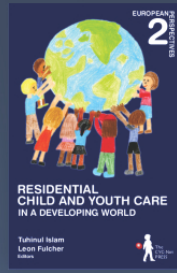
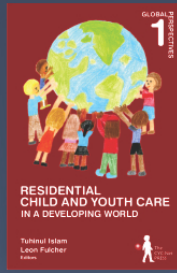
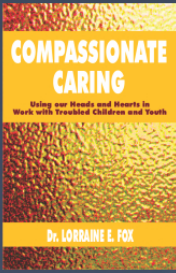
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# The Seven Actions of Effective Listening

Kiaras Gharabaghi

Listening seems like an obvious thing to do when practicing child and youth care. Young people have lots of things to say, so we should probably take a moment and just listen. But it turns out that even something as simple as listening is not really that simple at all. Lately I have been trying to be more conscious about the processes and actions involved in listening to someone, be that a young person, a group of young people, their families, their communities, or even colleagues at work, my own kids, and others. And here are the seven actions I am able to identify as necessary for effective listening.

## Action 1: De-centering myself

I have noticed that when I listen to others, I am also *listening to myself listening to others*. Sound weird? Well, perhaps it is a little weird, but the reality is that I am always at the centre of what I do unless I specifically work to remove myself from that centre. Listening is not merely about being silent so that someone else can talk. It is about actively removing yourself from the space through which someone else's voice travels, so that you can hear that voice without the barrier of your presence. Your own voice is always closer to you than someone else's. Therefore, so long as you listen to yourself listening to someone else, you will inevitably hear your own voice more so than the other's. This is problematic, because you are



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likely to categorize the content of the other's voice into your categories and judgments of tone, language, attitude and demeanour. And as soon as you start doing that, you will listen differently to people based on how they say what they say (and perhaps based on who they are) rather than based on what they say.

## **Action 2: Avoid anticipating what you are listening to**

One problem for especially seasoned CYCs is that we have heard many things before from many different people. A young person complaining about the rules of the program, or asking for food, or explaining why they did not follow through on some sort of expectation, is hardly news to us. We think we have heard it all before, and therefore, as a young person begins to talk and exposes their line of argumentation, we are often tempted to anticipate what we will hear next. One we start anticipating what will come next, based on previous experiences of young people speaking to their concerns, we have stopped listening and started channelling – we are channelling their voice into file folders of experience, in which the young person presently in front of us no longer has agency over their voice since our files have already determined where their voice is taking us. It takes a great deal of work to listen to someone while remaining open to the possibility that what is being said is not the same as something that has already been said by someone else previously.



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### Action 3: Remember your questions

If you listen to someone speak and you find you have no questions about what they said, you haven't really listened to them very effectively. A simple test for this proposition is this: Have you ever said something, anything, that retrospectively you would have said slightly differently? Perhaps using different words, phrases, or intonation? Perhaps you might have adjusted your body differently while speaking? Or perhaps you might have chosen different timing for whatever it is you said? If so, and I suspect everyone would answer these questions with a resounding YES, we know that there is never perfect clarity in what we say to others. We try our best to be clear, but the language and context of using that language is never exactly a match for what we meant to convey. Therefore, when listening to someone else, we ought to have questions, knowing that someone else probably didn't say everything they meant to say when they were speaking. If we have no questions, we have clearly filled in the clarity we thought appropriate for what they were saying ourselves.

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## **Action 4: Consider the immediate context**

We neither speak nor listen in a vacuum; there is always context in which this interaction unfolds. Listening to a young person in a group home is different than listening to that same young person in the community, when they are amongst their friends, or when they are in a classroom. No matter who is speaking, the context of the environment in which they are speaking, including the power relations within that environment, matter. How we are positioned in that environment relative to how the speaker is positioned may very well impact how we listen as well as how the other is speaking. Effective listening requires an active engagement with both the location and the circumstances in which the interaction unfolds.

## **Action 5: Consider the systemic context**

From action 4 we get to action 5, which demands a higher-level engagement of the positionality of who we are listening to and *who we are and might be seen to be* through the perspective of the person speaking. What is said and what is left unsaid are determined not only by the immediate context, but also by the much broader, and generally much more entrenched and permanent contexts, of systems, including systems of racism, marginalization, power, structure and agency. We are all conditioned to some extent to be responsive to our deeply embedded understanding of how things work, how systems contain and privilege us, and how we interpret the rules of engagement based on such broader themes, issues and dynamics. Effective listening, therefore, requires intentional engagement of multiple levels of being and social context, from the immediate to the systemic and from the micro to the macro levels. Listening through a lens of privilege impacts speaking through a lens of marginalization and oppression.



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## **Action 6: Identifying who are we listening to**

Attributing everything the other says to the other as an individual is often misleading. Young people will frequently speak to their aggregated understanding of what a group may want to raise. Parents may try to represent the voice of their child, with or without permission of the child. Communities sometimes nominate a speaker to represent their issues and priorities. It is important to actively seek out clarity on whose voice we are hearing. Actions 4 and 5 are helpful in this regard, but often not enough. Listening for the voices behind the voice we hear is a critical skill, albeit one that requires direct and immediate double-checking with the speaker. “I have heard a similar point from your peer group; am I hearing from you what I heard from your peers?” Or “should I listen to you as an individual or are you trying to convey the thoughts of your community”? In order to ensure clarity on who we are listening to, it is often good to simply ask: “Should I listen to others to hear their perspective on the issues you are telling me about?”

## **Action 7: Actively announcing that you are about to listen**

It is not always obvious to the other that you are in fact listening to them. In fact, a very common source of conflict is the perception of the other that in spite of their desire for you to listen, you did not do so. It is therefore useful, and sometimes absolutely necessary, to actively announce your intention to listen. This may mean actually saying to the other “I know you would like to say something, so I will listen to you right now”. Additionally, it can be helpful to change whatever it is you are doing in that moment and to reposition yourself as you say that you will listen. For example, as you walk through the classroom and a young person approaches you, it is useful to say, “hang on, let me sit down on this chair so that I can focus on you right now and listen to what you are saying”. In this



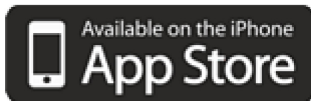
way, at least the other knows that you are intending on listening because you have interrupted your actions to engage in the action of listening.

These seven actions are critical elements of the act of listening effectively. Perhaps there are more elements to consider, but the point here is simply that listening is in fact a very complex process that requires a high degree of intentionality, a strong engagement with context at multiple levels, and a critical understanding of how even the simple act of listening is a reflection of much broader systemic issues and processes. I think it is valuable to think about how we listen to others carefully. Virtually all the demands to shift our practices from imposed expert-driven frameworks that reflect dominant identities and their power relations to practices that are critically engaged with the many different levels of process, structure and activity require a capacity to not just listen, but to listen effectively. Like everything else in child and youth care practice, moments of listening look pretty straight forward, but child and youth care practice is always more than a simple and momentary aesthetic.

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# The Importance of Including Children's Rights in Child and Youth Care Education

Tara Collins and Hangama Ahmadzai

**H**ow do children's rights relate to Child and Youth Care (CYC) education? We were inspired to collaborate on this topic in this short article due to our involvement in teaching the Children's Rights course at Ryerson University. Our goal is to explore how the child rights framework relates to CYC work and practice, the importance of children's rights education in CYC education, the difference that it can make, and share recommendations if not yet included in your CYC education efforts.

## Child Rights and CYC Work

Children's rights provide a helpful and proactive framework to guide understanding and practice with young people, and the international obligation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) inspires and informs both young people and adults to be advocates for child rights. In relational practice, we are working with human beings who need to be respected through our work and efforts. Yet time and time again, children and young people find authorities are working about them and not with them. Children's rights help us understand the role, contribution, and capacities of children and young



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people in our lives. As Child and Youth Care (CYC) practitioners, we have to create and maintain spaces where children and young people's contributions are not only encouraged but given "due weight" (in the language of CRC article 12) in decision-making, and in turn, they feel valued. Therefore, it is important to support aspiring and current Child and Youth Care practitioners to understand and appreciate the child rights framework as it can inform their attitudes and efforts in working directly with young people.

The CRC is unique in that it affirms the role and significance of children and young people in society. It provides opportunities for advocates, including young people, and CYC practitioners (CYCs) to advance accountability of their governments after ratification or accession, which means that they are bound to implement it. When children and young people and CYCs become aware about child rights and how they either are or can be affirmed through child serving legislation, policies, and programs, young people and CYCs may be inspired to be active agents of change. Children's rights education is essential to CYCs due to the very nature of our advocacy work with children and young people. This in turn also helps us challenge gaps in service when working with other human service professionals. It is our duty to translate the commitments of the CRC into practice within our field to support the children and young people that we work with in our practice. This is a worldwide movement and obligation and not just something that affects us locally.

## **The Importance of Children's Rights in CYC Education**

CYCs have responsibilities to know about and realize children's rights, as well as to children and young people, and supporting their understanding and acting upon their rights. It is imperative that young people and adults alike understand that children's rights do not take away rights from others.



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Rights both empower and inform children and young people to be mindful and respectful of other's human rights. Everyone is involved in upholding, implementing, and respecting rights. This is a process and without this education, a gap is created and lack of necessary progress in society results.

Children's rights education affects that way that we work as CYCs with each individual child or youth as well as groups of children and youth in various systems. For instance, a children's rights framework can help CYCs in the education system provide input in curriculum mapping, inform the whole school culture, and respond to incidences such as bullying and violence in schools. Rights-based responses can reflect and advance more respect, more understanding of each individual child, as well as children as a collective. In times of conflict, less blame and punishment help better resolve issues for all the children involved.

In another example, within the justice system, the CYC knowing about children's rights would offer context, background, and space for the children and young people's voices to be heard in their cases. A CYC can help the young person, the lawyers, and judges involved understand the reasoning of the crime, tackle issues of racism, poverty, and other concerns of discrimination that may be disregarded or ignored in decision-making. This more comprehensive approach can only be realized if we listen to, support and advocate with the young person in identifying all the pertinent factors that led to the incident.

Moreover, when working in residential care, a CYC knowing about children's rights would be able to create spaces to discuss and negotiate various issues as they arise. Bedtimes and bedtime routines should be adapted to meet the diverse needs of the young people in relation to sleep and being cared for in a human level. What if the child or young person wanted a hug before going to bed, can that be discussed, or is it dealt with



awkwardly or not at all? Children's rights recognize the dignity and humanity of each young person and their distinct requirements, which CYCs can advance whatever the context.

## **The Difference Child Rights Can Make**

As we collectively embark on teaching children's rights for a semester to third- and fourth-year students, the vast majority of them have regularly never heard of children's rights before. Without the rights discussion, empowerment is missing and CYCs may feel there is not enough support within the system for change. Child rights assist us in relation to the myriad of young people with whom we have contact who are differently positioned in life and society and work as well as in various contexts. As examples, rights can support the steps associated with the challenges in supporting the child in protection cases who disagrees with placement outside of the home, perceived or actual conflicts that occur between the family and child, how to unpack and redress discrimination that hinders the right to education of Indigenous children, how to resolve the best interests debate between duty to care and supporting the development of child's autonomy, and the tension between child's participation in decision-making that conflicts with CYC worker. For CYCs and young people, child rights education helps in the understanding of how the self is situated which in turn promotes movement towards an internalization of and a higher commitment towards rights principles. This also brings to light the young person's diverse needs, and the relevance of respecting the CRC principle of non-discrimination (article 2). Accordingly, CYCs working with this child can better adhere to the "best interest of the child" (in the language of CRC article 3) by meeting the child's needs. We recognize that much CYC education is carried out without incorporating a children's rights framework. At the same time, we recognize the significant



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responsibility of having only one semester to introduce children's rights and make an impact upon each of our students. We hope that our students get inspired about the potential and possibilities from children's rights, and that they learn that our one semester together is only the beginning, and that children's rights are a lifelong journey.

We believe that both CYC instructors, students, and practitioners can find avenues to incorporate children's rights in their teaching, research, and studies.

### **Recommendations for CYC Instructors**

If no children's rights course exists in your educational program, we encourage you to weave children's rights into existing CYC courses but at the same time, advocate for inclusion within the program due its importance in advancing respectful attitudes about each young person with whom we come into contact, advocacy with young people, addressing child abuse and neglect, and much more. If we want to inspire new thinking and new energy to support young people and our work with them, then we must find entry points for incorporating child rights and linkages to children's rights in our CYC courses and programs.

No matter what is being taught within your CYC program, there are always opportunities to incorporate a children's rights framework one class or lecture at a time. There are a variety of academic and practitioner writings with a children's right perspective in relational CYC work. Bringing in guest speakers – both adult and young people – who utilize a children's rights framework can have great impact and influence upon your students and yourself. You could also design an assignment focused on children's rights. Encourage students to pursue research from a child rights perspective or apply CYC concepts in practice through a rights-based approach. Moreover, curriculum reform can add a new specific child rights



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course, incorporate children's rights across other courses, and engage not only CYC professionals but also young people. Perhaps new CYC programs can be proposed at the graduate level that can be grounded in children's rights. Furthermore, child rights-based engagements such as group projects or collaborations, developing or attending conferences, developing or attending 'lunch and learn' events, developing child rights groups within the educational institution, and organizing and proposing presentations based on children's rights can provide doors to further inspire and advancement.

### **Recommendations for Students and Early Career Practitioners**

Students can be proactive and pursue assignments from a child rights perspective in order to broaden their knowledge base. They can ask questions about how children's rights inform anti-oppressive practice, advocacy, trauma, child abuse and neglect, and so on. Both student and instructor can embark on a child rights related research. The student can bring a child rights framework in practice through their practicums and internships so that it is incorporated into practice. As citizens, students may get involved in civil societal events to heighten awareness, engage and support advocacy moving forward.

### **Recommendations for Practitioners**

Every day and each interaction is an opportunity to put a rights-based framework into practice. Read the CRC and share it with team members. Access or create a child and youth-friendly materials about rights and share them in your program or workspaces.

Check out these examples of informative videos and modules:



Three useful segments about children's rights, rights to non-discrimination and to survival and development at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COjVj9czgrY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGECP1eGe1M>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KN-R\\_X7J-yl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KN-R_X7J-yl)

There is a song by children and staff at a Rights Respecting School in the UK:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V1BFLitBkco>

Useful learning modules about children's rights are available here:

<https://carleton.ca/landonpearsoncentre/childrens-rights-modules/>

There are also informative and fun resources available online including:

<https://www.cypcs.org.uk/rights/uncrc>

<https://www.sahrc.org.za/index.php/focus-areas/children-s-rights-and-basic-education>

<http://home.crin.org/rights-gallery>

If you need to access resources off the Internet, contact your national UNICEF office or human rights institution to see what is available.

Talk about rights with colleagues and youth in ways that are proactive and action-oriented. Developing an operational framework in your institution should include children's rights as part of anti-oppressive practice, trauma informed, and youth focused lenses. Make it part of your daily responsibility, as we said above, to create and maintain spaces where young people's contributions are encouraged and given due weight. Every young person is worth it. The effort is part of the value our profession brings to young people and to our communities.



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## Conclusion

In conclusion, we look forward to engaging further with you on this ongoing dialogue. While this a brief article is by no means comprehensive, we hope it will stimulate discussion, debate, and interest on the importance, value, and practicality of children's rights in Child and Youth Care.

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# CYC Boundaries that Create Influencing

Jack Phelan

CYC Practitioners are dancing a fine line while building connections that become more intimate over time. Young people who have suffered abuse and neglect in their past are hyper-vigilant and fearful of closeness, especially with adults. The expressions of poor attachment dynamics are a predictable daily behavior with many of the young people in our care. Unskilled CYC staff are quickly put off by the aggressive responses to their intrusive efforts to connect with young people. They are offended by the rude or even verbally abusive comments of young people when they try to get too friendly or close to hyper-vigilant youth. They blame the young people for being ungrateful, instead of understanding that they need to be less threatening in their attempts to build connection. The other possibility that confuses untrained staff is when the youth seems very amenable to closeness, but eventually realize that the result is being manipulated into unsafe interactions and embarrassment at being used.

Mature CYC practitioners develop the ability to walk a fine line of not being too threatening, but also realistic about the ego-centric logic of poorly attached people. Relational practice aims to build connections and safe closeness for both parties, with the goal of having the CYC practitioner become a person who becomes invited to influence the young person. This is not an easy task with people who have little trust in adults, and the



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process includes respect for differences and a sharing of power. Relational practice relies on developmental awareness, so skilled practitioners are well versed in developmental theory and approaches. This is not the traditional use of developmental knowledge to measure how far from normal a person is functioning, which looks for problems and deficiencies, but rather a developmental awareness that creates accurate empathy by meeting the young person or parent where they function, both in social logic and personal beliefs. Skilled CYC practitioners use developmental information to adjust their own life logic to connect with people by seeing the world from the young person's perspective, becoming both more respectful and credible.

Lev Vygotsky is a cognitive theorist whose ideas are very useful in CYC practice. He describes learning occurring through three basic concepts, involving a More Knowledgeable Other, who determines a person's Zone of Proximal Development, and builds new knowledge by Scaffolding small, carefully constructed lessons that are slightly more complex than the learner would understand on his own. The capacity needed here is not to merely be more knowledgeable, but to use relational practice skills to persuade the young person to allow you to influence him. This building of trust and respect will result in a mutual willingness to share the "inter-personal in-between" space necessary for this learning to occur.

The main lesson being imparted is that it is a good idea to connect with other people and that safe closeness can occur. The result is an increase in "other – awareness" which will reduce the ego-centric logic that has hampered developmental progress. Relational practice has the goal of building experiences of being cared about for people who logically believe, based on the past, that no one cares for them. When it begins to feel good being connected to the CYC practitioner, the influencing process can begin.



The mutual influencing that can occur with highly skilled CYC practitioners and youth and families is the professional goal of our craft and can be achieved after about five years of well supervised practice.

So, there is a continual shifting of boundary dynamics beginning with the thick, impersonal interactions which create safety for both new staff and new young people, then gradually creating closer connections through a process of caring interactions and reducing the control that helpers typically wield in interactions. A major shift in boundary thinking typically occurs after about 18 months of experience, when the CYC practitioner wearies of the limited impact of behavioral approaches and begins to investigate more useful ways to create change. CYC supervisors can intentionally support this shift, being the More Knowledgeable Other who can guide the worker towards creating more impactful influence through boundary shifts and a relational, developmental methodology. The basic shift is an awareness of the need to share influence and control, which is demonstrated most powerfully in closer boundaries.

The relationship becomes a respectful sharing of perceptions, beliefs, and opinions to expand the social logic and developmental progress of young people and parents. Boundary issues will become a regular agenda for supervisory sessions and self-awareness for mature practitioners.

**JACK PHELAN** is a regular contributor to CYC-Online. He is the author of *Intentional CYC Supervision: A Developmental Approach* and *Child and Youth Care: The Long and Short of It*, both available through the CYC-Net Press. Jack teaches *Child and Youth Care* at Grant MacEwan College in Alberta, Canada. Learn more at <https://cyc-net.org/People/people-phelan.html>



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# The Supervision Dance: Two Left Feet

Heidi Holloway

Child and Youth Care sometimes struggles with forms of supervision conceptualized in fundamentally different systems and contexts. It would benefit practitioners and the children and families they work alongside to be aware and reflective on their approach to supervision in ways that align with the values of the Child and Youth Care field.

Through the use of a linguistics lens and a reflection on the theory of conceptual metaphors we will examine supervision. Lakoff and Johnson (1980), suggest through the cognitive theory of metaphor and metonymy that the manner in which human perception works is based on our conceptual systems, more specifically, that our concept structures influence not only how we perceive the world around us but also how we interact with it. In particular, they suggest that there is a fundamentally metaphorical nature to our conceptual systems. Suggesting that the structures of these metaphors are not merely in the rhetoric of the words we use, but that these metaphorical structures are also embedded into our very conceptualizations of the world around us. Within this theory, is the notion that metaphors act as cognitive devices which help with reasoning and understanding. They propose that conceptual metaphors allow us to make sense of difficult events, relationships, objects and abstract concepts by linking it with something in which we already understand well. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggest that as we move through life, these



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conceptual metaphors are not merely forms of language but they tend to create foundations, guide our way, and influence the way in which we interact with the world around us.

It can be argued that the conceptualization of supervision is more heavily weighted on the historical “conventional metaphor” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) of a battlefield or perhaps even dictatorship. This explains the lingering culture, which at best results in hesitancy and at worst hostility towards supervision. This coincides with the still present notion that supervision is something that happens strictly from the top down, rather than a parallel process. This comes from management structures which have roots in traditional economic and industrial institutes, which continue to shape current societal assumptions of supervision. Such structures, which have carried along with them incongruent impact on current developmental and relational models of supervision, are primarily focused on ensuring quality control, the management of people, productivity within a closed system of rules, exploitation of labor, and profit over person mindset. Despite time moving forward we still see these notions within supervision and within people’s conceptual structures of supervision. This demonstrates how ingrained historical societal metaphors can take hold. It must be recognized that we have come a long way since that time in considering, advocating and creating a new way forward in supervision. However, this short glimpse back at history helps us to understand some of the deep roots that cause bumps in the road as it pertains to the facilitation of effective developmental and relational supervision models. Both supervisor and supervisee (in addition to the system at large), need to fight off remnants of old conventional conceptualizations of supervision.

So then, how does this change? How do we switch from what Lakoff and Johnson call a “conventional metaphor” to a “new meaning



metaphor”? They suggest that it is no easy matter to change the metaphors we live by. The easy part is to be aware of the possibilities inherent with a new metaphor, but the very difficult part is to live by it (1980, p. 145). It is evident that change has occurred and that the change process is ongoing as it pertains to altering the operations of old conventional structures to new ones in supervision. For years there have been contributors in the care professions challenging conventional constructs of supervision by bringing forth new intellectual and conceptual structures for supervision, and therefore as a conscious or unconscious result, are proposing new conceptual metaphors. This can be named as the first step in creating change; the introduction of a new conceptual structure or metaphor. It is necessary to reflect on the possibilities of the new conceptual metaphors before we can create an environment which reinforces the conceptual metaphor(s). As conceptual systems and related metaphors change, the actions and interactions within this new environment then serve to fulfill the new conceptual metaphor(s) and disempower old ones.

### **Supervision as a Dance**

In the spirit of this process of examining, reflecting and eventually solidifying new conceptual structures, it may be useful to explore the supervision process through the metaphorical lens of a dance, all the while remembering that conceptual metaphors serve to provide a “coherent structure”, naturally “highlighting some things while hiding others” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p. 141). In other words, our conceptual metaphors aren’t perfect and do not serve to be absolute in their accuracy of depicting all aspects of a concept, object or relationship. Rather, they serve as a base. They are a foundation on which a “network of entailments awakens and



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connect our memories of past experiences and can serve as a possible guide for future ones” (p. 140).

To illustrate how conceptual metaphors can influence how we engage with the supervision process, it will be useful to examine two contrasting metaphors of supervision. Imagine how different our beliefs and actions would be depending on if we were operating from a conceptual metaphor of “supervision is a dance” or “supervision is a battlefield”. In the later, participants can be viewed as enemies making strategic strikes, engaging in actions of aggression and defense, with the subsequent conquests, victories, losses and the welding of power. Alternatively, if our conceptual metaphor was that supervision is a dance, participants would not be adversaries but rather partners. Instead of performing against, the purpose would be to perform in a collaborative manner, within a partnership, with the synchronicity of complementary actions. Rather than welding power, power is shared as partners uplift one another. This simple differentiation in metaphor and conceptual language, completely changes the game that is being played. When viewing supervision in these ways, it becomes clear the dance metaphor is healthier and aligns more with the values of relational care.

However, just because we know something, does not mean that is how the story always plays out. There can be many factors that can influence which conceptual metaphor we are operating within. These influencers have been described as environmental factors, cultural coherences and interactional properties by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Other influential factors also exist, such as social norms, cultural diversities, relationships, organizational culture and personal histories/values. These can all play a part in deciding which supervisory metaphor we are possibly operating within. Naturally, there is significant need to be aware of and reflective of these influencers when engaging in the supervisory process.



## Supervision as a Partnership

To further elaborate on this metaphor of supervision being a dance, let us consider the phrase, “two left feet”. The contextual importance of this phrase is its representation of literally having two left feet. There are two sets of feet within the supervision dance, one belonging to the supervisor and one to the supervisee. The supervision dance is one based on the relationship with one another, partnership, and mutual effort. It is the coordination, cooperation and collaboration between those two separate beings that creates the dance.

There is a responsibility within the supervision dance for individuals to know their partner. For instance, evaluating what child and youth care professional developmental level the supervisee is operating within is a fundamental process to engage in for the supervisor (Phelan, 2017). Other considerations relate to the supervisee's strengths, challenges they face, particular talents, and even including their personal attributes and traits. The supervisor can then identify and choreograph the supervisory dance (approach) to be considerate of the supervisee's unique collective of cultural diversities, learning styles, abilities, developmental level and personal attributes. Engaging in “the dance” in this way, indicates our understanding of the need to ‘meet the supervisee where they are at’ (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012) and shows that one “cares about the supervisee as an individual” (Delano & Shah, 2006). Doing this holds the potential to reach into the principles of “mattering” within the supervisory relationship (Charles & Garfat, 2016).

In the spirit of parallel process there is a need for the supervisee to get to know the supervisor (in a manner that promotes professional boundaries). Facilitating this, allows the supervisee to get to know the supervisor within their professional capacity. A supervisory relationship cannot effectively be established unless both sides of the partnership are



willing to be open to 'putting self into the relationship arena'. Additionally, part of this process is for the supervisee to get to know the agency's supervision process and for them to explicitly know not only their role but the role of the supervisor and the supervisory guidelines. As these organizational policies and guidelines are in essence an extension of the supervisor.

The practice of getting to know your partner paves the way to examine the natural extension of this concept, which is to know when and how to appropriately curate a change in routine or tailor the dance lessons. There is a responsibility to appropriately match the supervisee's developmental level to the appropriate routine. As suggested by many (Garfat, 2001; Phelan 2017; Modlin 2017), there are specific considerations and strategic approaches to be utilized at each developmental level of the practitioner in order to facilitate growth and optimize growth. Knowing when to support your partner, when to introduce into the dance a new routine or challenge by adding a new step is essential to the growth of the supervisee. "The supervision relationship revolves around the cornerstone of support and challenge" (Hilton, 2005), so it is important for the supervisor to recognize when to slow down the pace of the dance in order to be supportive and when to up the tempo by curating into the dance a new challenge for the supervisee. It is only after we have an adequate understanding of our partner, their needs, and the program needs that we can appropriately choreograph the supervision dance, set the tempo and be "tuned" in and attuned with one another.

Mark Krueger's (2000) words describing the child and youth care work dance are equally applicable to the supervision dance when he stated "a competent worker (or supervisor) is able to act and interact with sensitivity to the multiple contexts within which actions and interactions take place. The worker (supervisor) learns how to move, act, or not act, with the



awareness that each youth (worker) and situation is unique”. The dance between supervisor and supervisee is one of being attuned to our partner which involves finding finesse within our responses of actions and counteractions. It requires constant re-evaluation of our position and which step to take next whether that be within a curated routine of a scheduled supervision or one based in improvisation (Krueger, 2000) experienced within daily life events (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012).

## **Balancing Power**

On the flip side, in the true sense of partnership and in the name of balance and the parallel process found in supervision, it is important to recognize that the supervisor does not always have to take the lead role. Despite the “assigned authority” given to and “structure of power” weighted to the supervisor side of the relationship (Delano & Shah, 2006), this does not mean that the lead cannot be shared. Exchanging the lead in this way helps to balance the power dynamic within the supervisory relationship (Delano & Shah, 2006) (e.g., when the moments are appropriate, the supervisor can exchange the role of lead with the supervisee). This approach can assist in the development of self-directed learning skills, be a crucial step in progressing the growth of a child and youth care professional in their developmental stages (Garfat, 2001, Phelan, 2017), and can foster empowerment and autonomy (Gharabaghi, 2008) and promote critical thinking (Delano & Shah, 2006).

As we understand the crucial gains that can be achieved by exchanging the lead within the supervision dance, it is now important to discuss strategies on how to exchange the lead. An important first step can be to examine the practice of “professionally packaging your power in the supervisory relationship” (Delano & Shah, 2006). Delano and Shah point out several strategies for professionally identifying, reflecting on and balancing



the power dynamic within the supervisory relationship. Practical strategies they suggest regarding the power dynamic and related notion of exchanging the role of lead include (i) purposefully making space in the supervision agenda for the supervisee's input, (ii) allowing opportunity for supervisees to take the lead by giving them a foundation where tasks match the skills, and (iii) delegating outcomes not process. Delano and Shah also highlight the importance of strategies to (i) avoid micro-managing, (ii) allow space for creativity, (iii) in an ethically responsible manner allow for opportunity to learn from one's mistakes and (iv) find appropriate avenues to explore lead roles in a developmentally sensitive manner.

Further, Delano and Shah strongly advise that, "there is a need to see that all parties have power in a relationship". Therefore, there are also many practical strategies that the supervisee can utilize in their efforts to balance the power dynamic and to exchange the role of lead. These include asking, advocating, insisting on regular supervision and evaluations, constructive confrontation and professional growth through training. For "it is important for both parties to be self-aware of the power involved and work individually and together to balance the power in a way that maximizes the chance for growth and a climate that enhances quality care for children and families" (Delano & Shah, 2006, p. 37). Additionally, it is important to recognize that exchanging the lead role within the supervision dance is not a simple one-time exchange. Rather, a continued consideration through time and space which repeatedly and appropriately facilitates seamless changing of roles and with that an innate knowing of when to be the leading partner and when to be the partner to follow.

Within the supervision relationship and partnership of the dance, it is essential to have understanding of 'Self' and 'Self with other Selves' (Fewster, 2013). We must continually strive to discover, examine, be aware



of and understand Self. In part, to know Self separate from social feedback and to be able to separate our needs of Self from the needs of other Selves within a relational approach (Phelan 2016), which includes being aware of our own “developmental dynamics” (Phelan, 2017). And in the other portion of the equation, to also understand how Self can influence Other Selves. We must “contact, without invading another Self” and we must be aware of what Self is bringing to the interaction and exclude personal agendas, that can prohibit us from truly seeing and hearing the experience of other Selves (Fewster, 2013). This includes how our own “steps” or “movements” (e.g., actions and experience), “interpretation of the music” (e.g., thoughts and beliefs) and “choreographed” Self-agendas can influence our partner and the dance as a whole is critical.

## **Opportunities for Growth**

In examining the supervision dance, one’s mind could fall into the traditional sense of the phrase, “pardon my two left feet” when thinking about dance. This does have metaphorical merit as it relates to the supervisory process. To illustrate this, let’s ask ourselves the following questions, ever feel like you just can’t get out of your own way? Has workplace stresses ever negatively impacted your decision making? Has personal stresses ever influenced your professional actions? For most of us it’s safe to answer yes to these questions.

At this time it is important to press pause and consider a side note. We are all humans who make mistakes. Fortunately the supervisory process allows for errors, giving room to make mistakes (or through a more strength-based perspective, “opportunities for learning, development and growth”). Of course, we are to try our hardest to avoid harm to others and preventable errors. We have a duty for self improvement and an obligation to engage in best practices. A supervisory system, when it is healthy at its



core, should be able to not only withstand moments of trial, but when given the appropriate attention and counteraction, help discover new growth born from those moments.

Now coming back on point, there is no question that having two left feet is a phenomenon that occurs within the supervision dance. For instance, consider when “we are often unsure about what we should be doing in supervision. And like all things, when we are unsure, we are hesitant. When we are hesitant, let’s be honest, we look for ways to avoid doing that which makes us uncomfortable” (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012, p. 90) and we can make mistakes despite our best intentions. No matter how many years of experience we have, or what developmental stage we are at, we are all still learning. And sometimes that learning means realizing, and even going as far as to be comfortable with the fact that we don’t have all the answers. We are not always certain or confident, and we don’t always hit the center of the target. We need to learn to pardon ourselves for sometimes having two left feet while still striving to do better with the next step.

An orange-to-white gradient banner containing the event title and date.

**Unity Through Relationship**  
**2019**  
*“The Rhythms of Care”*  
Dublin, Ireland, 11-12 November 2019



## **Search for Balance**

There is a search for balance within the supervision dance which can be examined in two main forms. On a simplistic one-dimensional level, balance can mean being in the middle of a spectrum or two opposing sides in a certain situation or decision. However, on a multi-dimensional level, balance can also be found in the sum of all those moments and decisions taking into consideration individual differences and situational dynamics. This is where balance does not mean symmetry nor does it mean equal. For instance, as discussed by Delano and Shah (2014), in the actions of providing hands on support there is a required dance to take place between 'doing with' to appropriately support and 'doing too much', which can cross professional boundaries and disempowers. Likewise, Delano and Shah discuss how in constructive confrontation there is a dance that takes place between the phenomena of avoiding confrontation because of its negative associations with conflict or aggression and being overly authoritarian to make up for a lack of constructive confrontation. Neither extremes in these scenarios proves beneficial in the improvement of professional practice. But rather a dance somewhere within a balanced approach has the potential to yield professional growth. If you also insert considerations of an individualized approach taking to mind cultural diversities, varying abilities, developmental level, relationship and situational dynamics, a balanced approach will not look to be exactly in the middle nor will it appear symmetrical (nor be the same every time). This is the 'dance of balance' within the supervision process that both the supervisor and supervisee should be able to engage in.

## **Rhythmicity in Supervision**

In the creation and engagement of the supervision dance there must be significant considerations given to the idea of rhythmicity. In fact,





having awareness of and mindful practice which incorporates many of the ideas and strategies mentioned previously are some of the key ingredients for forming the presence of rhythmicity and synchronicity within the supervision dance. Not only is rhythmicity an important element within the supervision dance, but rhythmicity itself requires the finesse of a dance. Rhythmicity pertains to the supervisory partnership, “is the give-and-take with clear cycles of approach and withdrawals, continuously maintaining each other’s rhythm, that creates meaningful relationship” (Maier, 2007).

Another aspect of rhythmicity to be mindful of and incorporate into practice is being attuned (e.g., in rhythm with), not only to the beat of the supervisory relationship, but also to the beat of the group being worked with, the rituals of our practice, and the synchronicity between colleagues and the organizational routines. The idea of rhythmicity in practice is equally relevant to the supervisory process. It is like a “dance that is improvised according to the rhythms of daily interactions [and a] development readiness and capacity to participate” (Krueger, 2010). In the mindful search for rhythmicity we ought to remember that “we might have to learn to listen, to look and explore in a new way to find the ‘pulse’ (or beat) of groups with which we are working” (Maier, 2007).

In dance the movement must move through a person with congruency. All of one’s body must be complementary unto itself. For instance, in the supervision process (dance) our words must match our actions, also our actions and practice must compliment theoretical approaches. For “when there is incongruence between the program approach to Child and Youth Care and what the worker experiences in the relationship with the supervisor, then confusion walks through the door. And practice suffers” (Garfat, 2005).



## **Constructs and Connectedness**

Another entailment in the conceptual metaphor of the supervision dance is “the stage”. The area in which the supervisory dance takes place is a platform constructed by ethics, policies, procedures, confidentiality and is also bordered by professional boundaries. Consider that “supervision becomes quite complicated in that while it should embody many of the positive qualities of all relationships, it should remain “professional” in its’ context and actions” (Delano & Shah, 2014). In this metaphorical dance interpretation such components as policies, ethics and professional boundaries are not viewed as a box to which we need to work within. Rather a stage, being even more than a foundation, being a platform to which standards are held at a high degree of excellence. These ethical and professional guidelines are not meant to limit our expressions of practice, but rather to uplift our expressions of practice.

The audience in this supervision dance consists of all the people who engage in our services. As within any performance, the audience can not only tell if the performance is well done or lacking, but they can be affected by the quality of the performance. When there is connectedness between the dancers, when movement is congruent and expressive, they will be impacted by the beauty of the work. Likewise, they have the insight to notice when the performance is lacking, when there is disconnect between the dancers, when the routine does not match the music or when the dancers are stiff and unrefined in their movement. By insinuating an indirect nature to the involvement and impact of the supervisory process does not imply that the impact of supervision is not of significance to those who engage in our services. Nor does it imply that the audience is passive, quite the opposite in fact. But what this metaphor does recognize is however deeply intertwined the destinies of supervision and individuals who engage in care services may be, they remain separate entities. This



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does not lessen the utmost importance of always keeping the role of the audience and the impact on the audience in mind when engaging in the supervision dance.

## **Handling Obstacles in Supervision**

Metaphorically speaking, dancers may come across “obstacles when engaged in a dance”, a chair on the dance floor, a sudden injury, a cell phone ringing in the crowd or an unexpected change in routine. Such obstacles or interruptions can cause the supervisor and supervisee to have to share their dance partner. This may metaphorically mean that another dancer cuts in, or the need for pressing pause on the music in order to promptly attend to the needs of a young person. In reality such obstacle could include but by far are not limited to, supervisor and supervisee operating from a foundation of “mixed metaphors” (when individuals have contrasting conceptual metaphors about the same topic (Lakoff and Johnson), teaching and learning styles not matching up, ethical concerns, resistance to change or mistrust in the relationship. Of course, then one also needs to consider the realm of possibilities of program challenges, conflicting demands/obligations or operational disturbances which can occur at any given moment of any day (Gharabaghi, 2012).

In order to free the space for the supervision dance to continue, the obstacle(s) needs to be promptly identified and then be resolved. In times when obstacles arise it is important for us to remember the fundamental characteristics of the child and youth care approach as they pertain to the situation and the supervisory relationship/process (Charles, Freeman, & Garfat 2016; Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). Paying attention to the theoretical underpinnings allows us to spur on our practice, collaborate with the supervisee or potentially seek support from our colleagues.



The reframing of the supervision process with the conceptual metaphor of a dance, examining the related entailments and exploring new meaning is wonderful. What an entirely different experience can be had when operating from a foundation of supervision being a dance compared to a foundation of supervision is a battlefield. But, what happens when we are stuck in transition from old “conventional conceptual metaphors” to “new meaning metaphors”? What happens when we encounter “mixed metaphors” known as the phenomenon which occurs when there are conflicting and competing metaphors of an object, concept or interaction? (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980)

Within the supervision process this could be experienced by one partner believing in a conflicting conceptual metaphor of supervision which differs from the other partner or a conceptual metaphor of supervision which differs from that of the organizational culture. If these barriers to effective supervision arise, consider some of the following strategies:

- Encourage and allow opportunity for reflection into self, examining the realities, experiences and conventional conceptual structures that have influenced their/our perspectives and expectations of supervision,
- As with all things, there are always strengths. Examine the inherent strengths which can be found in the mixed metaphor(s), and appropriately address the need which is either being met inappropriately or not being met at all within the conflicting metaphor. As there are many other possible conceptual metaphors for supervision, consider such others as supervision being a machine, factory, extended family, theatre (Hilton, 2007; Bolman & Deal, 2003).



- Furthermore, under careful consideration examine the possibilities of therapeutic uses of humor (Digney, 2007) to address the conflicting metaphors.
- Utilize appropriate constructive confrontation skills (Delano & Shah, 2006) to challenge conflicting metaphors.
- Create an environment which reinforces a healthy conceptual structure of supervision.
- Interact with the opportunities of daily life events within this environment to engage in teachable moments, meaningful conversation and support (Garfat & Fulcher 2012).

To conclude, it is well understood that supervision is a process and, as discussed here, can be viewed as a dance. It is a dance with its considerations and challenges, triumphs and falls, moments of magic and moments of missteps. By framing the supervision process within the conceptual metaphor of a dance, it is hoped that (i) the positive entailments of this metaphor are highlighted in mind and practice, (ii) that old conflictive metaphor structures are disempowered, and (iii) that environments which reinforce new healthier conceptual systems for supervision are empowered.

In addition, this metaphor reminds us not to get caught up in the minor parts or missteps of the dance, but to remember to view the supervision dance in its entirety. What we must never forget is that even as we are in the midst of the supervision process, the dance, both in every moment and in its entirety, we are offering a performance. Supervision is a process and this process is also a performance. So, as it may be that our toes get stepped on, the routine is difficult or our technique is not quite on point, nonetheless, we have a responsibility to take the next step, continue the



dance, and perform to the best of our ability. For the audience is watching and the show must go on. Break a leg.

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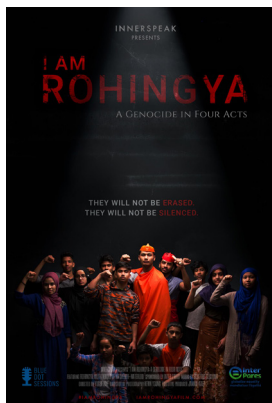
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# I Am Rohingya: A Genocide in Four Acts

Nancy Marshall

As more than 700,000 Rohingya continue to flee their homes in Myanmar (UNHCR, 2018), everyday people ask – who are the Rohingya and why are they fleeing? The film, *I Am Rohingya: A Genocide in Four Acts* documents a behind the scenes look at a play



performed by fourteen Rohingya high school students<sup>1</sup> who had had no previous experience in dramatic arts. Despite their lack of experience, these young refugees produced an intensely real, heartfelt, and provocative re-creation of their families' dangerous journeys from Myanmar to Kitchener, Ontario (Canada). The film opens with the backstage scene, moments before the show begins in Spring of 2016 at the University of Waterloo. Viewers first get a peak of the nervous young actors giggling and getting ready backstage: "Are you nervous?", one asks as the group supports each other in their stage fright much like any other group of students would before a high school play. This play, however, is a far cry from any popular re-production of Wizard of Oz or Mummy. It is a story of horrors, trauma, and courage not yet told. It is a reality buried amidst the busy-ness of our daily lives where we become desensitized to the blur of global violence in the daily morning news.

The backstage scene cuts to black. The young narrator, Janatara Begum, appears wearing a beautiful bright orange hijab. With intense earnest and confidence, she asserts: "The most persecuted people on earth. This is what you will find, go ahead and Google it... Our Heritage, our culture, our people, drowned out by an endless search of horror. And *this* is what we have become". The film unfolds to reveal the stage production process, peppered with media clips and interviews that have only recently begun to document the ongoing crisis for the world to see. This film presents us with the unthinkable: how can a "textbook example of ethnic cleansing"<sup>2</sup> be a story that no one knows? The actors implore us to become both aware and active so that we can help stop this atrocity while it is still

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<sup>1</sup> Parvin Aktar, Yasmin Akter, Jannatara Bergum, Anamul Haque, Faisal Mohammed, Jaber Mohammed, Rasel Mohammed, Sohel Mohammed, Nasima Parvin, Mohammed Rafiqu, Ruma Ruma, Abdu Salam, Ahmed Ullah

<sup>2</sup> Human Rights Chief Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein as quoted in the film



happening. These young actors' purpose is to *sensitize* us to their story of violence, genocide and persecution. They want to sensitize us to the truth. To wake us up *now*.

## **An Education in Four Acts**

Much like myself, the director Yusuf Zine admits he knew very little of the crisis before he began this project. Originally, he recalls: "They wanted me to do anger management groups and such with them [the young refugees] – I was not sure if that is what they needed, I wanted to meet them ...I realized they didn't need traditional therapy or counselling. They needed a platform, a stage". As readers here are aware, Child and Youth Care (CYC) workers are expected to 'intervene' using anger management and counselling techniques with young people. Recently, I have reflected on my own cycle of social skills and anger management groups with young people throughout my career. I wonder how many of these lessons were actually of any help? How are these young people doing now? How often did I give young people a chance to create their own narratives- narratives that held the dual therapeutic purpose of self-healing and educating others? While watching the film, I thought that this project offers an opportunity for transformative learning. These fourteen young people are offering up their stories as genuine gifts for their audiences. This is a gift that I personally do not take lightly- nor, it seems, did the many audience members who had the privilege of seeing this production on stage. Some accolades in the film included:

*"Phenomenal – those kids were incredible, the way they pushed boundaries and took risks. They just were amazing".*



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*"It was hard to watch sometimes, very hard to watch. But you know you had to watch because these kids experienced it so ... it was on us to watch and be uncomfortable".*

*"I was sad and embarrassed at how little I knew".*

My intent with this review is not to glorify the innovation of the directors and producers of this film, as noteworthy as their efforts are. My intent is to celebrate the courage of the young actors themselves. I am curious as to how the youth are doing, how their lives have benefitted, how the plight of the Rohingya people are impacted as a result of this project? Can this film act as a tool to stop this unnecessary violence before the story becomes "another Rwanda", a genocide talked about 'after-the-fact', as the film so accurately points out? Will these young people's narratives propel us to action? What can we actually *do* with this new knowledge?

I aim to present the remainder of this review as *An Education in Four Acts*. This wording, readers may have noticed, is taken from the title of the film, *A Genocide in Four Acts*. I present the review in this way because it is imperative for everyone reading this to actually watch the film in order to understand the full context. Thus, I will describe the contents of the film sparingly. Not surprisingly, this film continues to actively make the rounds in film festivals globally. (A free preview as well as rent or purchase options are available at [www.iamrohingyafilm.com](http://www.iamrohingyafilm.com).) The film, and this review, are timely as I reflect on my own introduction to the plight of the Rohingya people by Dr. Tuhinul Islam at both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Child and Youth Care World conferences in Ventura, California (2018) and Durban, South Africa (this past July). It encourages me that scholars such as Dr. Islam care enough to do the important work of expanding our scope of practice within refugee camps and residential care facilities in Bangladesh where the Rohingya people have fled. It also



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encourages me that prolific writers in our field (notably, in this case, Dr. Leon Fulcher and Dr. Kiaras Gharabaghi), take up interest in presenting the impact of Muslim genocide on young people and their families (see Islam & Fulcher, 2018). It further encourages me to hear discussions at these recent conferences charged with passion and eagerness from fellow colleagues. The common question Dr. Islam explained he hears often is, “What can I do to help?”. His answer (paraphrased from memory) is to educate oneself and become involved in critical awareness and advocacy to those in power. Of course, there are never any easy answers. The collective efforts of youth workers to answer such questions is paramount. This review offers merely the tip of an iceberg.

It is also important to note my recent friendship with a Rohingya woman, a colleague and doctoral research candidate. Throughout this review I include her important knowledge and experience, which she graciously took time to share with me. To protect my friend’s identity, I will refer to her as Amna throughout this review. I do not take Amna’s education lightly either. In honour of her work and continued struggle for peace and acceptance of her people, I want to take this opportunity to thank her and let her know that there are a dedicated group of youth workers anxious to be allies alongside the Rohingya people. I personally take comfort in this and hope that readers will too. That said, let us please not simply watch this film and reflect. Let us do better. Let us share ways to empower real action and change. I look forward to comments and suggestions after everyone watches this important film!

## **Act 1: The Golden Country**

Any Google search will reveal that the modern Myanmar is described as ‘The Golden Land’- an exotic tourist destination with stunning golden pagodas, serene gardens, and peaceful Buddhist monks praying or



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studying amongst these pristine backdrops. As a former traveller in South East Asia, I can attest to the romantic appeal of such visions, which lure tourists and backpackers alike to these areas. However, only those travellers who dare to venture beyond the five-star resorts and popular bus tours will witness the socio-economic disparities, crime, and violence that underlies the beauty of these destinations. Likely, the present-day Myanmar has the most violent and unspeakable reality in South East Asia today- a very real and devastating genocide of nearly 1 million innocent people.

As I have mentioned, I had the honour of speaking with my colleague, Amna, who willingly shared her knowledge after I watched the film. We decided to interview each other and document our responses to the film. We were both immensely interested in each others' thoughts- I was as interested in her lived-experiences as a young migrant from Myanmar as she was in my reactions as a Canadian-born citizen largely ignorant to the realities of such atrocities. Of the many questions we asked each other in the three hours we interviewed each other, it was one particular question that unsettled me the most. She asked, "What did you think when you saw the Buddhist monks in their orange robes brutally beating young students in the media clip presented?"<sup>3</sup> Indeed, I remembered that it was this point in the film where I had to stop, rewind and watch again. To my limited knowledge and experience, Buddhist monks were remarkably peaceful. In fact, like millions of others across the globe, my fascination with this peaceful religion compelled me to attend a lecture by the Dalai Lama himself in the late 1990s. In his iconic orange robe, I was immensely impressed and persuaded by his calm, cheerful message of peace and internal happiness to conquer global violence. Needless to say, the film's uncovering of violent military monks wearing the very same

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<sup>3</sup> The YouTube clip can be seen here:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZE2nbhR3hU&has\\_verified=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZE2nbhR3hU&has_verified=1)



iconic robes, who repeatedly beat and murdered young Rohingya students, was quite a shock.

## Act 2: A Clean Nation

*"Swans are known as one of the most beautiful birds on earth – an elegant creature but ...what people do not know, is that they are dangerous ..."* – Youth Narrator in the film

It is incomprehensible to think that anyone can justify genocide, particularly monks known for world peace and inner beauty. As one journalist points out in the film – "We have the perception of Buddhism being peaceful and tolerant ...the 'Islamic extremism' narrative gets turned on its head". In the film, the young narrator compared Buddhist monks to elegant swans who hide their dangerous personas. In stark contrast, a self-proclaimed "Burmese Bin Laden" (Hodal, 2013), the Buddhist Militant leader Ashin Wirathu, declared on YouTube that the Rohingya people were savage "African Carps" who "breed rapidly" are "violent", and "eat their own kind" as they eat others (PoliticallyRude, 2017). It is clear that the Islamophobic comments in response to this video reinforce Wirathu's popularity and influence globally. Hodal (2013) explained that in 2003, Wirathu was imprisoned for 25 years due to anti-Muslim racism but was given amnesty in 2010. He has since been issued further arrest for comments against the government (Lees, 2019). He has thousands of social media followers who quite religiously believe his false claims that the Rohingya minority (only 5% of the total population) comprise "...a crude and savage majority" in every Myanmar town (para. 4). According to Wirathu, the Rohingya people rape, murder and aim to overthrow innocent Buddhist citizens via direct commands from their Islamic extremist leaders abroad. These insidious 'leaders' (of which he has no evidence exist) have



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apparently financed the illegal immigration of Rohingya Muslims to achieve a militant takeover in Myanmar. Although these claims lack any evidence and are easily refuted, anti-Muslim followers are not dissuaded in the least. Activists argue that while accurate and critical media coverage is punished by the government, hate speech has been permitted to spread freely and rapidly across social media, which contributes greatly to the violent crisis in Rakhine state and elsewhere in Myanmar (Human Rights Watch, 2019).

In the film we learn that, "... the first Muslims arrived in Burma during the 9th century" and there are over 135 ethnic groups in Myanmar. Historically, Buddhist and Muslim people have lived peacefully side by side – it is only in recent decades that Buddhist militant extremists have persecuted the Rohingya people and pushed them to the margins of the country. Citing the renowned historical scholar Azeem Ibrahim (2018), my friend Amna informed me that, in fact, the Rohingya people were there first, in 3000 BC before they converted to Islam in 1080 BC. She continued that the persecution and massacre of the Rohingya people began in in World War II when the Arakan massacres from 1942 to 1943 triggered the hatred between the Buddhist and Muslim people, which slowly became worse over the decades. A complicated history has unfolded since this time and the film touches on important events in the political timeline, particularly how "In 1982, the Burmese military government introduced a law stripping the Rohingya of their citizenship and identity. Since then, the U.N. has branded them as "the most persecuted minority in the world." Amna continued that luckily, her parents had jobs in the government at that time so had inside information about the law. They discovered the government's plan to forcefully lock in and segregate the Rohingya people in towns such as their own town of Buhtiduang. They quickly moved into the capital city of Yangon and Amna grew up in Buddhist communities. As a devout top student in Buddhist-run schools, Amna expressed a profound



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feeling of betrayal now that her people were referred to by Buddhists as “Meiksa Deihti’- Demons who have wrong beliefs”. In perfect Pali, the sacred language of all Theravada Buddhism texts, Amna recited the five precepts of Buddhism: (1) Avoid taking life, (2) avoid taking things not given, (3) avoid sensual misconduct, (4) refrain from false speech, and (5) avoid substance that cause intoxication (Buddha Dharma Education Association, 2019). Through her tears, Amna recounted the unthinkable actions of Buddhists known for such strong denouncing of violence, harm and crime. How could such peaceful people justify such horrible things?

Next, we began to discuss the Buddhist concept of Karma. This is when things began to make a little more ‘sense’ to me from a Buddhist extremist and militant perspective. I have known for some time now that major religions are subject to both violent or peaceful interpretations, depending on which moral compass a follower decides to affirm. However, I never thought to think critically about Buddhism until now. Notice the wording of the five precepts: ‘avoid’, suggesting that sometimes such things can be justified. Indeed, in 2018, a top Buddhist monk Sitagu Sayadaw announced publicly that killing can be justified, particularly in war and defense against non-Buddhists who could not be considered ‘humans’ due to their bad deeds (GIDSS, 2018). In the video, Sayadaw recited an ancient dialogue between a worried king (involved in the killing of over 500, 000 soldiers) and his disciples:

*Don't worry about this, your highness. Not even a single one of them was Buddhist. They didn't live by the five moral precepts... They didn't have the instinct to know that they have to avoid committing bad sins ... Lacking the instinct to know what is a bad thing or good thing is the nature of animals. Humans can only be called humans if they have*



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*the instinct to know the difference between good sins and bad sins.*

Thus, Sayadaw concluded that the story affirms only the king was really human in this scenario and could rest easy. In other words, the killings could be justified.

The concept of Karma further determines the conditions into which a person lives in the present depending on their misdoings of the past. The Dalai Lama speaks of this often. For example, he writes “The circumstances under which one human being kills another determines the severity of the consequences ...a brutal murderer ...is likely to be born to great suffering in a realm of existence we call hell” (The Dalai Lama, p. 67). In our interview, Amna and I discussed how, although completely unfounded by any evidence, this can be interpreted to mean that the Rohingya people are living in their current ‘hell’ due to violent misdeeds or murderous ways in their past lives. Further, this can be interpreted to mean that any murders of the Rohingya people happening now will be punished later, in the next life, allowing for an absence of accountability in the present. Indeed, CYC workers Islam and Fulcher (2018) also observed that within their research and field experience in Southeast Asia, “Adults may commonly assume that ...if good happens ...it is because they are good. If evil occurs and they become possessed by evil, -it is assumed- that this is because they have done something bad in a previous existence” (p. 17). This belief in fate certainly seems to underlie the complacent acceptance of non-accountability by leaders in Myanmar. The recently elected leader and Nobel Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, has stated publicly that she feels the Rohingya people are by no means innocent and she is criticized by the United Nations and human rights organizations globally for stating, “... ethnic cleansing is too strong an expression to use for what's happening” in Myanmar (Griffiths, 2017). She continued that the Rohingya people are



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involved in the violence as well, that it is complicated, so no one side can be 'blamed'.

To his credit, the Dalai Lama does state that, "though our current situation has been determined by past behaviour, we do remain responsible for our present actions. We have the ability and the responsibility to choose to direct our actions on a virtuous path" (The Dalai Lama, p. 69). And, in opposition of Aung San Suu Kyi, he declared, "They [the militants] should remember, Buddha, in such circumstances, Buddha (would have) definitely helped those poor Muslims." (Quinn, 2018). But, as Quinn points out, The Dalai Lama has remained noticeably silent on the issue and in no way calls for the Buddhist extremists to stop or be held accountable for their crimes. Thus, Karma seems to allow for justification. First, the concept allows for the murderous misdoings of the militant Buddhists to be punished later, in the afterlife. Second, one's current life of hell cannot be helped if this is your fate from past doings. This leaves a limbo state which, when combined with the complexities of political unrest, tends to condone the persecution of over 700,000 innocent people.

### **Act 3: The Long Journey**

*"Silence was the worst of all. You didn't know what was coming for you ..."* – Youth Narrator in the film

From the film, we learn that in 2012 violence increased between the Rakhine Buddhists and the Muslims prompting President Thein Sein to declare that the only solution is to send Rohingya to other countries or camps. Evidence of the genocide began to creep into the media, yet journalists were forced into silence- ordered to not report it anymore. This, as one journalist explained, helped contribute to the common



desensitization and the "why do I care?' factor" we experience in the Global North as facts are continually hidden and difficult to expose: "how does it impact the common citizen in New York for example? It doesn't". The young actors poignantly recreated scene after frightening scene depicting the horrors of 2016 when Aung San Suu Kyi banned the name 'Rohingya' and the exiles began to Bangladesh, where the Rohingya people experienced hunger, malnutrition, starvation, hate and discrimination. The people of Bangladesh become increasingly resentful of the Rohingya taking their space- robberies and abuse of women become commonplace as one young actor cries, "They are some kind of trash just because they are girls".

Again, this story begs the question – how could such intense hatred develop? There must be more to the story we are not aware of? Of course, this is the problem when investigative journalism is silenced by governments. There is much more to be said on the politics of the situation and it takes keen interest and research to uncover it. In 2012 for example, a democracy was elected and Aung San Suu Kyi became co-leader of a blended state of the former military dictatorship and the democratic National League of Democracy, thus, blended opinions in this region are new (Arnold & Turner, 2018). Arnold and Turner pointed out the irony of Buddhists using anti-Muslim rhetoric, hate speech and violence to justify that Rohingya are threatening their "peaceful and tolerant religion". They further gave some insight into how these opinions were created with origins dating back to the aforementioned Arakan massacres of World War II. The influence of British rule until 1948 reinforced that religion had distinct ties to policies and education, which created a divide to reinforce the idea that Buddhism is 'peaceful' and 'tolerant' while Hindu and Muslim were 'superstitious' and 'backward'. As readers can see, the story is long, complex, and by no means easy to explain.



## Act 4: A New Beginning

*“We have to make them live that story because every single audience that’s watching the story is not just watching it. We are making them live that story” – Ahmed, actor in the film*

The question remains now, what do we do and how can we let this go on? As Canada donates billions to the crisis and accepts more refugees here, what can we, the general public, really do to help cease this genocide before it gets any worse? Of course, there are no simple answers to this question. After our interview, I asked these questions to Amna. She responded, “All we can do is listen to them; watch this film and listen to us. Help us to tell this story and tell it everywhere. Help us to tell the facts”. This, I felt, was too simple an answer. It reminds me again of the passionate and eager CYC workers at our recent conferences imploring Dr. Islam to tell them how they can help. Just listen, repeat facts and ask for change? Can this really be enough? Indeed, the power of this film’s narrative is strong and needs to be viewed far and wide. And, this is the purpose. Of course, we will all implore our governments to step up action. Of course we will donate and continue to advocate. Now, let us also help them to change the narrative. Perhaps we can help curb those Google searches that ‘drown out’ their ‘heritage, culture, and people so that “this”- a *genocide*- is no longer ‘what they have to become’. Let us also start the conversation about what else can be done!

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# 12 Fun Activity Ideas

**Nicole Malczan**

*This brief excerpt is from 'The Complete Guide to Fun Activities for Kids You'll Ever Need' at [www.familylifeshare.com/fun-activities-for-kids](http://www.familylifeshare.com/fun-activities-for-kids). The full article includes dozens of activity ideas including cooking, crafts, holiday traditions, and more.*

**Y**ou've probably had an afternoon where you and your kids all looked at each other and asked what everyone wanted to do. The kids shrugged and said they don't know. The kids seem really bored and unengaged, and you find yourself trying to find a fun activity for everyone.

Everyone has their own idea of what fun activities for kids are supposed to entail. Some people lean towards outdoor activities and adventures while other prefer rainy day comfort activities. It's just a matter of finding out what kinds of things your kids enjoy.

Try out one of these activities (or more from the comprehensive guide at [www.familylifeshare.com/fun-activities-for-kids](http://www.familylifeshare.com/fun-activities-for-kids) and you'll never have one of those moments of not knowing what to do again.

## 1. Spend an Afternoon Identifying Clouds

If your kids could use some more time spent outside enjoying the fresh air, ask them to look at some clouds with you. They can identify different clouds with a free printable cloud viewer. You can also sit and ask your kids what kind of shapes they see in the clouds.



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## **2. Run Your Own Nature Scavenger Hunt**

A nature scavenger hunt will entertain your kids for hours. You will also aide your kids in discovering and exploring the world around them. You might even leave little surprise goodies around as a bonus treasure. Who wouldn't love that?

## **3. Set Up a Game of Indoor Bowling**

Indoor bowling on a rainy day can snap your kids out of their boredom ASAP. You'll have an entire afternoon of excitement with this budget-friendly activity. You can use empty bottles and a ball you have at home.

## **4. Host a Balloon Tennis Match**

Just because you're stuck in the house doesn't mean you can't enjoy a good tennis match. You just need to do so in a way that you don't run the risk of breaking anything. Using balloons and plastic fly swatters should protect household heirlooms and get the kids off their phones.

## **5. Have a Water Balloon Fight**

A water balloon fight is a classic group activity for your kids to enjoy. If you're looking for a special twist on this classic favorite, you can always try water balloon volleyball. You'll need a net and some towels in addition to water balloons for this game. Your kids will certainly have a great time.

## **6. Play a Game of Capture the Flag**

Capture the Flag is a staple summer camp activity, but you don't have to be at camp to enjoy it. Play with classic rules or set up your own household rules. Your kids can have an afternoon of competitive fun with their favorite pals.



## **7. Run Through a Backyard Obstacle Course**

Making an obstacle course to run through in your backyard can get hearts racing in the best way. Your kids will love racing through the course against their friends. If you want, you can even have small prizes for different things. Think fastest time, biggest jump, or best somersault.

## **8. Craft a Set of Custom Placemats**

Making placemats with your kids can make mealtime much more engaging. Help them craft a placemat from paper or cardboard in whatever pattern or design they want. Then let them use stickers and markers to craft their own special place for mealtime.

## **9. Have Your Kids Help with the Cooking**

Give your kids the chance to help you out in the kitchen. Hand out age-appropriate tasks like stirring a bowl of batter or putting spaghetti in a pot. This will allow your kids to get involved in the meal-making process. They're sure to enjoy mealtime more knowing they helped with it.

## **10. Make Your Own Movie**

Your kids may be a lot more skilled with using smartphones and tablets than you are. It's easy to install free editing software to put together short films. Depending on the app, your kids can make a movie using pictures, cartoons, or footage they film themselves.

## **11. Take Your Kids for a Hike**

Not every town or city has great hiking options. Check out your local woods if your town has deemed them to be safe. The woods are a



wonderful place for a family hike. Your kids can explore. The dog can run loose. You can step back and enjoy the moment as it unfolds.

## 12. Stargaze in the Backyard

Spend a night with your kids in the backyard gazing up into the stars together. Stargazing is a unique experience for families. It allows you to teach your kids as well. You can point out different constellations or notable stars in the sky.

## Related Questions

Why is it important for kids to get active? Kids need to be active every day. This promotes healthy development and growth. Children who establish healthy lifestyles early will carry them for the rest of their lives. The benefits of being active younger in life can be felt throughout the course of their lives as well.

How long should kids be active every day? Kids should be active in one form or another for 60 minutes each day. Most of that time should be focused on doing moderately intense physical activities. At least three days a week, children should include some form of high intensity physical activity in their daily schedules.

**NICOLE MALCZAN** enjoys reading, baking, and music and is a writer for Family Life Share ([www.familylifeshare.com](http://www.familylifeshare.com)) which aims to share knowledge and unique experiences about family life, marriage, love, relationships and parenting.



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# Assault and the Employer

Barrie Lodge

There was a volume of comment made on social media following my previous column on assault in the workplace. The comments implied that some organisational, systemic, policy and procedural conditions frequently exacerbate rather than reduce, aggressive, if not violent behaviours in children and youth in care, as well as in child and youth care workers.

The question, then, is, "What is the role and responsibilities of the employer of social service professionals, particularly of child and youth care workers, in providing and ensuring an environment that reduces assaultive behaviours?"

## The tangibles, the measurables

In designing a building for teacher training, someone wrote on the blackboard in the staffroom in bold chalk letters, "First establish your philosophy, then design your building to meet it – not the other way around! That was an "Aha!" moment for me. It's true the building can shape or even dictate philosophy. Philosophy dictates practice. In child and youth care work that was my experience. Close dormitory living, lack of privacy, lock and key facilities that enforce strict routines were a built-in formula for aggressive assaultive behaviour. When moved to more normalised buildings, aggression reduced considerably, but not entirely



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In South Africa, the State is the largest employer of child and youth care workers. So called government tendered architected buildings, some claimed to be state of the art, some legacy buildings, provide living conditions for children and young people. Comments of child and youth care workers and from my own observations, imply that the employer has some way yet to go in making living conditions visibly, philosophically and practically as least restrictive, most empowering, as normalised and as child friendly as possible. It means that norms and standards for the optimum practice of therapeutic work by child and youth care workers have to be put in place and applied by the employer (as they must for all social service professionals). For social workers these have been researched and set out by the South Africa Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) Norms and standards for the optimum practice of child and youth care workers will follow. None the less, the Department of Social Development has a number of published books of norms and standards for services to the children. There has to be congruence between working conditions norms and standards for worker environments and conditions and t minimum standards of service to the children. You can't as an employer have one without the other. Some of these are just plain obvious.

### **More tangibles and measurables**

Child to worker ratios. Recently the quoted ratio by the Department of Social Development Human Resources department was 1:5. But then follows some simple arithmetic: 1000 children, 200 child and youth care workers. So, it was said there is a current OVER SUPPLY! It doesn't work like that. Two shifts of 12 hours a day and the ratio becomes 2:5. With time off sick leave and vacation leave it's 3:5 then some ranks of child and youth care workers are not directly working on-line with children. It's an UNDER SUPPLY, thus the staff shortage, unfilled vacant posts and ratios



sometimes closer to 1:12+. Conditions like that increase levels of frustration by the worker, feelings of not coping, not performing as they should. This is conveyed to the young persons who react to the circumstances. Assaultive behaviour is then more likely. It is the employer's responsibility to provide staff to child ratios that allow for meaningful interaction, levels of individualisation, teamwork and the reduction in the potential for acting out behaviours.

## **Yet more tangibles**

Governance structures have to be in place, not just as in business management, but as in a therapeutic environment. It has to be governance that embraces the principles and nature of a "healing space". There are 17 of these principles listed in the policy document for the transformation of the child and youth care system in South Africa from way back in 1997. Two of these are worth mention. Democratisation, and its partner, participation. It means that hierarchical systems don't work in therapeutic environments. The Manager, the employer are defined by ROLE and NOT RANK. Everyone – children, young people and social service professionals all – have an equal voice in the decision making connected to the life of the therapeutic community. Top down systems increase the potential for frustration and assaultive behaviour. Many facilities are reluctant or slow to have community involvement in their governance such as Management Committees or Advisory Committees. They just say that policy comes from "above". The law REQUIRES Children's Forums, which then speaks of the requirement of in house-based child and youth care forums. In a therapeutic community EVERYONE has an equal voice. when we can all own the system it reduces aggressive outbursts that lead to assault.



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Staff well-being and development. Masud Hoghughy always said "what's good for the goose, is good for the gander". Children have Individual Development Programmes,. Staff need Individual Development Programmes, too. Not just a "you need to work on this thing!", but real tangible growth courses and programmes. Which brings us to supervision and in-house staff training.

The employer has the responsibility to treat and respect all social service professionals as equals. This story that one profession has been around for longer than the other just doesn't hold water. As an employer just go back to your scriptures and you will surely remember references to the care of "widows and orphans" we are talking over 2000 years ago. The profession of child and youth care must, by the employer be recognised as a full profession as any other helping profession. The trivialisation of child and youth care by any employer sets up a formula for aggression and then a spillover effect to the children and young people in care resulting in the kind of assaultive behaviours.

# Unity Through Relationship 2019

## *"The Rhythms of Care"*

Dublin, Ireland, 11-12 November 2019



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What I have set out in this article are some of the observable tangible measurables which are but part of the responsibilities and role of the employer and which, I believe, move toward the reduction of risk in a facility.

I am in favour of employers having to register with the SACSSP and so become eligible for sanctions in terms of employer's codes of conduct, organisational ethics and norms and standards for their employed social service professionals. I believe that this will go some way towards reducing the risk of assaultive behavior by young people on child and youth care workers and vice versa.

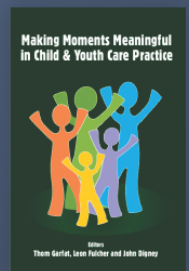
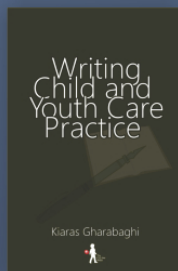
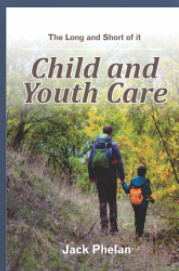
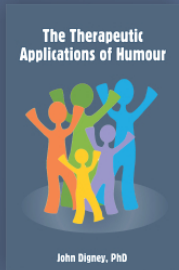
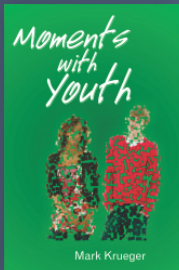
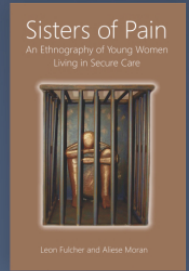
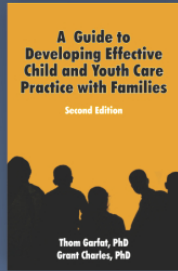
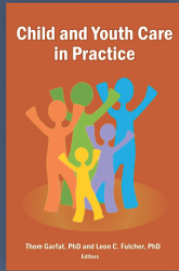
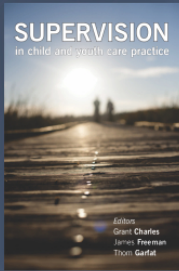
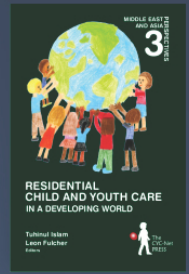
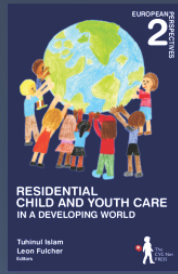
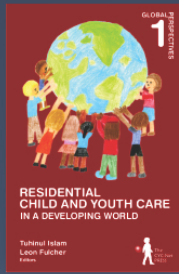
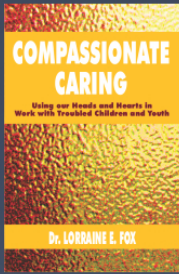
Next month we will take a look at the intangibles, the immeasurable, the 'not in a tick-box' list of employers' role and responsibilities in reducing risk in the therapeutic milieu.

**BARRIE LODGE** is a Child and Youth Care worker near Johannesburg in South Africa. He has served as a teacher, clinical manager, and director of two children's homes. This column was originally published 29 July 2018 on Barrie's blog at <http://childandouthcaretalk.blogspot.com/2018/06/assault-and-employerchild-and-youth.html>



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# Postcard from Leon Fulcher

## *The Rugby World Cup, Japan*

**K**ia Ora Koutou,  
MaComrades! I  
hope this finds  
you well! Those of you  
in the Northern  
Hemisphere will be  
feeling the growing  
chills of Autumn while  
here in the Southern  
Hemisphere, we're  
moving into Spring! In  
just a few weeks,  
Daylight Saving Time  
will change our clocks  
again!

I don't know  
whether you know  
about the Rugby  
World Cup or whether  
you are a follower of  
rugby union football –  
played now in the 7s  
variety as an Olympic



Sport! The 2019 World Cup – of the 15-player variety – is being hosted for the first time ever, in Asia – the most impressive yet.

If you live in Great Britain, Ireland, France, or Italy you can follow all the Rugby World Cup matches on free-to-air television. In the USA, Canada, Australia and South Africa, this may not be the case. In New Zealand, it has certainly not been the case! Where we live, broadcasting the streaming World Cup matches has become a central issue of competitive tendering for the 42-match

contract. It was all supposed to be a view into the future of live broadcast streaming.

NOT. In the cities and suburbs where cable broadband is readily available, the video streaming was mostly successful. However, in the rural



***New Zealand All Blacks Perform the Haka Challenge to South Africa's Springboks***



***New Zealand All Blacks secure first round win in a bruising test against South Africa***

sector – said to be the Heartland of New Zealand Rugby – video streaming was blitzed with buffering messages and pixilated video streams.

The Spark contractor repaired the USA to New Zealand video stream but switched real time broadcasting of Day 2-3 Rugby World Cup matches through to public television. The private media sector gave more promises while rural people have responded with lowered expectations.

All the techie issues could not detract far, however, from some glorious displays of rugby union football. A hat-trick of tries scored by the young Japan wing player highlighted an early star in the 2019 Rugby World Cup. Born in South Africa, his life story tells of a Japanese mother and Zimbabwe father



***Young players gave the New Zealand vs South Africa Test great drama***



***Fiji gave Australia an early fright before the Wallabies' second half Test win***

– with a love of sport. His professional rugby career in Japan is highly valued.

Think of life stories that accompany each 2019 Rugby World Cup player. Selection recognises a young person who has perfected rugby instincts and skills to the place of personal and family achievement. Tears often accompany national anthems for new international representatives.

Another contender for the 2019 Rugby World's Webb Ellis Cup is England, the cultural birthplace of

Rugby Union, played as an amateur sport by the middle and upper classes. From the mid-1990s and the advent of professionalism in World Rugby, the sport of rugby has offered some young people new career paths with opportunities for world travel and cross-cultural experiences. Pacifica



***England were tested by Tonga before winning out with their own Pacifica players!***



***World's Number 1 Ireland thumped Scotland***

players in the England squad made important contributions to their success.

Elsewhere, the World's Number 1 Rugby team squared off against a developing Scotland squad. This was not one of Scotland's memorable test matches. I declare an interest in the well-being of Scottish Rugby since my dear father-in-law played rugby and as fly-half for Scotland, he drop kicked the winning goal, in a Triple Crown Match against Ireland at Lansdowne Road in Dublin before World War II. I feel for the Scotland team and supporters for their thumping by Ireland.



Some argue that the emergence of rugby union football in Argentina and Uruguay has been a significant development in World Rugby. This Rugby World Cup test of old-world France and new-world Argentina was both a physical and emotional encounter. Only two points separated the French winners over their Southern Hemisphere challengers. The Cup has only just begun!



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