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Contents

Special Issue: Supervision in Relational Child and Youth Care Practice

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The field of Child and Youth Care (CYC) is founded on core beliefs such as relational practice, support, working with others in the life space, meeting needs, and being developmentally responsive. Yet we have generally failed to provide adequate support through supervision for those who work directly with young people and their families (Gharabaghi, Tromce, & Newman, 2016) even though we know quality supervision leads to quality outcomes in our work with children and families (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012).

When we have provided such support for quality practice and the development of staff, we have typically done so through emulating models from other forms of practice (e.g. Social Work, Psychology, Medical, etc.). When we do this we encourage (even if inadvertently) direct care practitioners to practice according to a non-CYC model. After all, people do what they experience. This is also true of the relationship between direct care practice and the supervision experienced by the practitioner. Ultimately, we have failed to identify the value of a form of supervision which is congruent with CYC Practice (see Garfat, 2005).

Child and Youth Care needs its own models of supervision – ones based on the values and beliefs of our field – relationally centered, in the moment focused, responding to the CYC Characteristics (Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman, 2016) and which help CYCs experience the 'way of being' which we want CYCs to emulate in their relationships with youth and families.

Fortunately, such has begun to appear. Don't get us wrong – people have been writing about supervision in our field for years (see, as examples, Delano & Shah, 2015; Maier, 2005; Michael, 2005). We just have been not paying as much attention as we might in the coming days. In the past year, for example, there are, two new books on supervision in the field (Charles, Freeman & Garfat, 2016 and Phelan, 2017). These are significant contributions to our field not only because of their content but, also, because they are books – yes, real books – focused on an approach to supervision founded in the values, beliefs and characteristics of a CYC approach. In this sense, they contribute to the development of a CYC approach to supervision which is unique to the needs of our field.

So, in keeping with this new awakening within our field we offer you this special issue of *CYC-Online*. In this issue, you will find established and new writers offering their thoughts on supervision in relational child & youth care practice. Their contributions are a welcome addition to the CYC knowledge and literature.

In many ways, perhaps this new focus is a result of a new generation of CYC practitioners and leaders. A generation concerned with advocating for the support of direct care givers and who believe 'mattering' matters even in supervision (Charles & Garfat, 2016). It is, then, not coincidental, that several of the papers in this issue come from the first cohort of Masters students in the Ryerson University Child and Youth Care Program and they are joined by other already recognisable faces in our field. We lead off with Lorraine Fox, perhaps one of the most respected elders in our field.

So, we hope you enjoy reading it as much as we have in putting it together.

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Unusual Challenges in Supervising Child and Youth Care Professionals

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One of the renowned leaders of the Child and Youth Care Profession once said: Child Care Work isn't brain surgery: it's harder (Fewster).

Examining the outcomes of careless, punitive, ignorant interactions with clients needing treatment for emotional, mental, and spiritual wounds intimidates anyone willing to contemplate the gravity of our work. This article outlines some specific features of supervision in CYC work that present daunting and unusual challenges for those willing to take it on.

What a peculiar job we have! I think all of us in CYC work have faced challenges in trying to describe our jobs to other people. "They just don't get it" is a constant refrain. It is hard to have conversations sometimes about our profession. No, we don't babysit. No, we don't get paid to play. But wait, yes we do. But you have to understand that "playing" with our clients is not child's play. On the other hand, sometimes we do have fun. Yes, sometimes we also get hurt. Yes, we make schedules and plans, but we don't count on being able to follow them.

Describing our work to people outside of the field is difficult, and so is describing our work to those working **in** the field. One of the greatest challenges for Supervisors in CYC work, I think, is being able to clarify the word "care". There are other jobs that involve caring – working with the medically sick; working in a nursing home; being an in-home care provider. None of those positions

however, remotely compare to "caring" for children and teens who have been harmed – physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually – by neglect and abuse.

Before we can supervise folks, we have to "teach" them how to do the job. After that, we watch them as they work and provide feedback and coaching with the aim of improving job performance. But how do we even teach "caring" to well-meaning people who are regularly told where to shove things; who are spit on; who are kicked; who are ignored; who are written love letters and seduced by people decades younger than they are. I always loved supervision because it was always interesting: whether giving it or receiving it. Every client is different. Every story is different. We've never heard it all or seen it all. There are two immediate goals of supervision in Child and Youth Care Work: 1. to ensure that the clients are taken care of well enough to begin to heal from their mental, emotional, and spiritual wounds, and 2. to keep people from leaving the job because it becomes too overwhelming.

Following is an outline of what I believe supervisors in our work should be prepared to address.

Assume the role of "interpreter"

All words in our profession are subject to interpretation. It's not like fixing a toilet (which, after a short time in the field, we can all do), or wiring a house. If you tell me a place is doing "residential treatment" or "day treatment" I have no idea what is actually being done. "Treatment" is a word both carelessly and carefully used, and demands an explanation before we can hold workers accountable for providing it.

There are three primary responsibilities for supervisors in any field:

1. Performance Planning
2. Day-to-Day Monitoring and Coaching
3. Performance Evaluation

How well each of these functions is carried out determines how well a worker has been "supervised".

It is unethical to "evaluate" someone's job performance if we have not been entirely clear about what the job is. Performance planning is when the supervisor carefully communicates what the job is, whether it's making burgers or providing treatment. The word "care" unhappily, does not provide clarity. Each supervisor must laboriously define what "care" means in the setting providing "treatment", just as each supervisor must laboriously define what constitutes "treatment" in any given setting. Since these two words are used across the board in our work to mean very different things, direct service workers have the right to know exactly what we mean when we use those words in a particular setting. How is the word "care" the same or different than in other caring jobs? The "monitoring" – observing and explaining and coaching – is then applied to what the worker has been taught. This part of the job is the bulk of the supervisors responsibility, but can only be done properly when the first part of the job has been done: the interpreting and defining of terms as they should be carried out in interactions with clients.

Explain what "professional care" is

What does it mean to "care" in a professional sense? How is it different than caring for one's own children? How is it different than caring for pets, friends, relatives, and romantic partners? How is it the same? This category of supervision will incorporate the notion of "professional boundaries" and other concepts that are often challenging to describe for direct service workers.

Supervisors in CYC work serve as models of "care". We demonstrate what we mean by both care and professionalism in the way we interact with staff on a regular basis. Staff learn both by listening to our explanation, by watching how we interact with staff and clients, by experiencing how the supervisor cares for them, and how the supervisor maintains appropriate boundaries in their relationships with workers.

Understand the features of supervisory relationships that are similar to staff-child/youth relationships

All of the issues that workers will experience with child and teen clients, they will also experience with their supervisor, such is the nature of supervision in treatment settings. How a worker was parented will very much influence how they experience being supervised as a Caregiver. Because of the interface of how staff were parented and how clients were parented, many complicated clinical issues will surface in the course of developing therapeutic relationships. Supervisors must be prepared to intervene with issues such as: transference, power/control issues, dependency issues, need for nurturing and healing for both workers and clients, ambivalence, basic needs being front and center for both staff and clients, and unresolved issues from the past as staff attempt to "care" for the children and teens.

These issues make supervision in CYC work both extremely challenging, but also extremely interesting and invigorating.

Convey the interface of the personal and professional: Paying people for who they are vs. paying them for what they do

Child and Youth Care work is not comprised of a series of "tasks" or "activities" designed to provide healing for wounded and hurting children and teens. Although there are many tasks and activities involved in the job, those tasks and activities done by the wrong people would not only NOT promote and provide healing but would cause more harm. In our work, it is **not what, but how, and by whom.** It is who the worker is, and how they form relationships while engaging in the various tasks and activities that provides the healing. And healing is the job. Nothing else. The word "therapeutic" literally means "healing". The great news is that one doesn't have to be a "Therapist" to do it. Foster Parents can do it. Grandparents can do it. Some Therapists cannot do it. Healing is the direct result of the "matching" of the intervention to what is needed by the

one needing to be healed. We work with kindness; not scalpels. We earn trust, not rewards. We use power, not control.

Looking at who and how something is done is often in sharp contrast to other jobs staff may have had before coming to work in treatment oriented settings, and is often confusing to them when what they do is not effective. It is up to the supervisor to understand how unsettling it is for people to be evaluated so closely based on their personal characteristics, and to be able to explain why it is necessary to be examined so closely for treatment to occur.

Understand how "Accountability" in CYC work is closely tied to personal characteristics more than to personal accomplishments

As with any other job, we hold employees accountable for what they do and how they do it. But because the stakes are so high for clients if we allow them to be exposed adults who hurt them again, rather than protect them, we also hold employees accountable for deeply personal matters. We examine and ask them to share their:

1. **Values.** What is important to them? What do they believe? How do they define morality? What are their ideals? How well do their personal values line up with the values of the treatment organization?

2. **Character.** Because we pay people to be role models for young people who have been exposed to life circumstances where disrespect, disregard, dishonesty, and personal disaster were part of everyday life, we hire people for their personal integrity so that young people can see other ways to live. We are interested in people who will do the right thing even if no one is looking. Because in our work, someone is always looking.

3. **Attitudes.** We are interested in perspective. How does a worker choose to "see" things? Are they glass half-full or glass half-empty people? Even better, are they thankful that they have a glass! Do they understand that attitudes are "habits of thought" and that other people do not determine

their attitudes, but they do. This means that regardless of how the clients are behaving, we will be holding them responsible for their attitudes toward the clients. They will not be given permission to "blame" clients for negative attitudes. Behavior is prompted by, and reveals attitudes. So while legally we can only hold employees accountable for their behavior, we can trace backward from the behavior to the attitude, because it is one's attitude that is most likely to promote or prevent healing.

4. **Limits on rights to privacy.** Jobs that do not have other people's welfare tied to performance can be much more lenient about distinctions between "personal" and "professional" boundaries. However, in our work, how one conducts their lives away from work may become important to whether they are able to work compatibly on a treatment team, or whether they embody the goals we set for clients. Sometimes what someone does away from work becomes our business because it renders them incongruous with the values of treatment. We cannot allow an addict or an alcoholic to help our substance abusing clients with their struggles with addiction. We cannot have a worker coming to work with evidence of personal violence teaching clients how to be safe.

5. **Ethical behavior.** Coming to work is not like going to church. We don't just come in and sing some hymns and recite some creeds and hope to be judged as righteous. **The supervisor is responsible to insure ethical behavior.** CYC's cannot be supervised in an office! The supervisor must know how the worker interacts with the clients and their team members. Values are things we proclaim: Yes I believe in teamwork; yes I understand that punishment does not heal; I agree to use personal power more than control etc. etc. Supervisors must know not only what workers **say** they believe, but they must know if they put their beliefs into action. **Values are the talk; ethics is the walk.** Supervisors have the right to demand that staff be congruent: i.e. genuine, authentic. What they say is what they do. Kids should see what we expect, not only hear what we expect. Staff members should get along with each other as we expect kids to get along.

> Respect should be demonstrated, not demanded. Kindness should be operationalized every day, as evident as the curtains and sofa cushions.

We ask and require a lot from our people. A good supervisor constantly reminds those under his or her care why we ask so much. A good supervisor makes it clear that the measure of how much we value our clients is how much we ask of our staff.

Be prepared to respond to personal issues triggered by clients

We cannot require that applicants for CYC work have healthy backgrounds. In fact, it has been found that people with unfortunate personal histories are more likely to apply for work in our field and other "helping professions". The term "wounded healers", familiar in helping circles, attests to the need to be vigilant for client histories and behaviors to stir up past issues for workers. Supervisors must sometimes function almost like therapists in determining if an employee is "fit" for the job, based on whether their own history interferes with successfully handling similar histories in clients. Almost all supervisors in CYC work have encountered situations where staff were "triggered" by exposure to client/family histories similar to their own and were unable to maintain professional boundaries. This is not something that regularly occurs in coffee shops or donut shops. While we drink coffee and eat donuts, the tasks that are supervised involve meddling in client heads and hearts, and so we must be alert for complicated responses such as secondary trauma.

In other jobs where triggering is expected, such as my job as a psychologist, it is required that personal therapy is part of the educational requirement to graduate. We do not ask for this, and it is not infrequent that the need for personal therapy is discovered by a supervisor reviewing interactions with clients. Therefore, understanding standard "risks" of treatment for the helper, such as prompting a myriad of protective defense mechanisms in direct service workers, implies that direct service supervisors in our work must accept and be prepared to work with these risks. The supervisor can also insure there is cooperation between

CYC Supervisors and Clinical staff so that supervisors have colleagues they can turn to for suggestions and support in helping direct service workers handle these issues competently.

Sorting through dilemmas of Personal autonomy vs. Team consistency

We know that CYC work is as much an art as a science. Of course, both the arts and the sciences involve heavy doses of creativity. So does work with troubled and troubling youth. The dilemma for most settings however, is that working as a team is an absolute necessity – both for the good of the clients and for covering all the hours that need to be covered. In addition, the amount of damage caused by abuse and neglect requires multiple kinds of interventions. It's also true because the court often mandates involvement and cooperation between many different individuals from many different disciplines.

There's a reason we don't see two painters painting on the same canvas and we rarely see two pianists on the same keyboard. Creative people like to work alone. I must say there were some distinct advantages to the "old days" when they threw us a batch of kids and a set of keys and gave us few if any days off. We got to do things our way! As we moved into more regulated times where time off and staff ratios came into being, the stresses of working with other people sharing the same batch of kids became evident. Here is where shared team values are a must! Being involved in treatment is more like being part of a band than a soloist.

I frequently hear the word "consistency" used incorrectly, implying that it means the same as "identical". In fact, we don't have to be identical to be consistent. Consistent means "not in contradiction with". This allows differences in style, but not differences in substance. While we can allow staff to use their individual styles and gifts, it is the supervisors responsibility to insure that the substance – the program values – is never contradicted. Frankly, this annoys some people who would rather swim or play golf than play hockey or baseball. CYC work is a team sport! The supervisor is the team manager.

A background in team sports will be helpful

As discussed above, in CYC work "treatment", whether for children, teens, or families, almost always requires a team effort. There are frequently a number of concentric teams involved in any one "case", rendering treatment in group settings considerably more complicated than that provided by one-on-one clinicians. The supervisor of any group of individuals required to work together for the good of the client – meaning achieving treatment goals – is in fact, whether clearly stated in the job description or not, the team leader. This means that in addition to the skills listed so far, CYC supervisors must understand how teams work, how to build teams, and how to intervene when teams are not working functionally. As the manager of any team will gladly attest, team leadership – apart from other necessary skills -requires distinct abilities, many of them separate and apart from those skills required for competent individual supervision. Among these skills are:

- The necessity of clarifying the "mission" of the organization in terms clearly understood and agreed on by all team players. Mission includes both the **what**- services, activities, programs, etc., and the **how –** a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the philosophy of care in the agency. This task alone becomes very complex in CYC work because unlike other service agencies, where client characteristics tend to be uniform, Child Care agencies tend to batch together an overwhelming array of client characteristics, including: special education and learning needs, behavioral problems, mental health disturbances that include a variety of neurological conditions, trauma related mental and emotional injuries, spectrum disorders from exposure to drugs and alcohol, in addition to other problems your staff are being asked to provide treatment for. Most direct service people find this population so overwhelming they demand that the supervisor make it easier for them so that they can feel competent. Unhappily, a competent supervisor cannot do that. A competent supervisor must have a grasp of **each** type of need

and problem encountered in their client population. Few CYC agencies have the luxury of "specializing".

- The ability to clarify the specific "roles" of each person on the team, taking into account that each individual has an idea of what other people should be doing that may not be the same as what each individual believes they should be doing. I have found conflict in this area inevitable. The supervisor himself or herself must be able to distinguish between each team members' **"position",** the actual job title one holds, and what the **"role"** of persons with that position includes**:** those activities and behaviors that one is expected to demonstrate while holding this position. Since the rules for our team are considerably more vague than those in team sports, treatment teams must grapple with:

  Role Expectations: What others think an individual is responsible for doing and how they think it should be done.
  Role Conception: What an individual thinks her or his own job involves and how s/he has been taught to do it.
  Role Acceptance: Once clarified, what an individual is actually willing to do and the extent of his or her acceptance of others' expectations of the role.
  Role Behavior: What the individual actually does.

  Working on these issues with staff is done on both an individual basis **and** with the team as a whole. Group leadership skills, then, are a requirement for competent supervision in CYC work.
- Ensuring that relationships between all team members remains "positive" regardless of personal feelings for other team members.
- Assessing each team members' commitment both to the treatment tasks with clients **and** the willingness and ability to work with other team members.

- Ability to provide constructive "feedback" to keep the self-awareness levels for each team member high so that they remain aware of their personal impact on both clients and colleagues.
- Ability to assess strengths and weaknesses of the team so that between members of the team the needs of all clients can be met.
- Ability to assess and create "cohesion" (trust, acceptance, and support) between team members.
- Ability to inspire full involvement and participation in all treatment related activities focusing both on clients and the team.
- The supervisor must have a high level of self-awareness himself or herself so that they are aware of how their personal style impacts the performance of subordinates.
- Conflict management skills for the inevitable differences that arise between members of the team as well as between clients and staff members.
- Finally, one cannot be a competent supervisor without a variety of leadership skills, which incorporates abilities in each of these areas.

As with direct service workers, we ask a lot of supervisors. We need to, because people's lives are at stake.

Judgment to determine when it is okay to allow for "mistakes" on the job when the stakes are so high

There are "learning curves" in all new jobs. Frankly, there are few jobs where mistakes on the job have as much dramatic negative impact as in settings with children who have already been harmed in many ways. Careless actions by people who are usually well-meaning have the potential to add to the pain and damage already endured by vulnerable young people. Supervisors must be able to evaluate whether errors in judgment by a particular staff member implies an "inability" to

grasp the significance of everything they do, as opposed to errors made by staff members who show the potential to grasp the impact on young people of everything they say and do. Frankly, sometimes I think the clients can be our guide. In my experience, possibly because of the "hypervigilance" many of our clients have developed, they have an uncanny ability to know why someone might say or do the "wrong" thing. Is it because they simply don't care enough to take the time and thought into doing the right thing; or, are they demonstrating harmful responses because they are struggling to learn what "therapeutic relationship" means with emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, mentally ill young people who are still massively effected by everything that happens to them.

As I write I'm having a flashback to a wonderful moment I had "on the floor", as we say. I was the Executive Director, was passing through the living space when a brand new staff member confronted the client who was without debate, the most challenging of the group. She had a history of violence against staff. She was loud, and crude, and loved to prove how inadequate we all were. I was barely out of sight and heard the interaction between the two and shuddered as the new staff did almost everything wrong. She stood too close, she responded naively, she made weak demands that the teenager laughed at. I became very nervous, and was going back and forth in my mind about whether I needed to step in before something really bad happened. All of a sudden the client turned her back and walked away, flipping off the new staff person. I walked up to my typically hostile client to thank her for not hurting someone so new. "Yeah", said the client. "I thought about it. You know Fox, she's really bad. I mean really bad. She doesn't know what she's doing. But, she was trying really hard so I decided to cut her a break".

This client saw what supervisors need to see. Supervisors in CYC work need to be able to see into the hearts of their workers, and know whether the "mistakes" are coming from lack of caring and commitment, lack of understanding of the needs of the clients, or simply from lack of experience of a momentary lapse in judgment. The supervisory interventions for each of these determinations are quite different. Whether or not they are able and willing to learn has everything to do with

whether we will do our jobs: give wounded children the experiences they need to heal.

So what's so special about being a supervisor in a treatment setting with abused and neglected children and youth? Everything.

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Being in Child Care Supervision: A Renewed Journey into Self

Nancy Marshall

Introduction

Since the late 20th century, Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice has undergone a process of "informing itself" with writers producing theoretical literature unique to CYC perspectives (Garfat, 1998, p. 12). Garfat explains that before this time, CYC practice relied on knowledge from other professional disciplines. Today, the field of CYC can lay claim to a number of theoretical underpinnings that define its practice - adherence to Self in relationships (Fewster, 1990; Garfat, 1998, 1999) and a comprehensive list of 25 unique CYC characteristics (Garfat & Fulcher, 2013). Thus, it is only fitting that the field look once again at informing itself to develop the kind of supervision that fits the unique needs of CYC practitioners. Fortunately for us, this is exactly what is happening. A quick scan of CYC literature on the topic of supervision will yield a plethora of valuable resources. Recent supervision practice guides even emphasize an ethical, parallel practice that mirrors the valuable relational work we do with young people (Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman, 2016). However, this was not always the case. As such, CYC supervisors are still provided with little training and have little to no experience with the role (Charles, Freeman & Garfat, 2016; Delano, 2010; Gharabaghi, 2008a).

As this is a new area of development that is only just beginning to fully mature, gaps in the literature are not surprising. This paper aims to fill at least one of those gaps. This year, I had the fortunate opportunity to engage in a pilot course in CYC

supervision during my Master's program at Ryerson University. What impacted me the most about this experience was the emphasis placed on the significance of a renewed journey into Self as a CYC supervisor. Garfat (1999) states, "from the very beginning, child and youth care work has been concerned with the notion of self in relationships" (p. iii). Considering this, and the focus on parallel practice, a refresher on Self in CYC supervision makes sense. Yet there is still little written on the topic. Conceivably, the most prolific writer on the topic of Self in CYC is Gerry Fewster (Charles & Garfat, 2013). Thus, the title of this piece pays tribute to his seminal work, *Being in Child Care: A Journey into Self* (1990). It seems not much has changed since Jerome Beker muses in the foreword of this book, "in the face of the continual demands of young people in care for various kinds of our attention, only rarely do we have time to sit back to think about what we do and why" (p. xi). It can be argued, as Fewster clearly exemplifies within the supervisory relationship between the supervisor Charlotte and the practitioner Paul, that effective supervision challenges practitioners to truly reflect on the influence of Self in practice. All too often, practitioners go blindly about their work without considering the impact of how Self influences the effectiveness of their interventions (Charles & Garfat, 2013; Gharabaghi, 2008a). This also holds true for supervisors who do not reflect on the impact of Self in supervisory interactions with practitioners.

This paper will discuss the reasons a continued commitment to Self-exploration is essential for effective, professional and ethical CYC supervision. In fact, this paper argues that a commitment to recognizing, understanding and reflecting on Self is *the most important* skill a supervisor can practice. Thus, while practitioners await the anticipated but elusive training in CYC supervision, my hope is that this article will at least prepare new or soon-to-be supervisors with some foundational knowledge of Self discovery needed to succeed in their new role.

Self in Supervision

A solid grounding in Self, particularly the impact of Self in momentary interactions with others, is a well-established foundation in CYC practice (Charles & Garfat, 2013; Fewster, 1990; Krueger, 2000). This deep self-reflection must extend beyond any superficial notions of self-care, self-awareness, or self-control, which is often the premise of training in many human service disciplines (Charles & Garfat, 2013). Without this commitment to truly knowing Self, practitioners risk projecting their own values and beliefs onto young people (Fewster, 1990; Mann-Feder, 2009). This then disrupts genuine therapeutic connection. The same can be said in supervision. If ethical CYC supervision is to mirror the work we do with young people (Charles, Freeman & Garfat, 2016), it is a problem when supervisors are assigned to their new roles without expectations to renew their own journey into Self. It is the supervisor's duty to help practitioners realize how their personal experiences influence young people (Krueger, 2000). Similarly, supervisors must hold themselves accountable for how their experiences influence supervisees. For example, Gharabaghi (2008a) explains that supervisors' professional journeys into their new hierarchal roles within an agency will alter relationships with their colleagues, particularly when they have been promoted over others. It becomes essential, with this new power dynamic, that supervisors pay close attention to their thoughts, feelings, expectations, and most importantly, their place of privilege in the new relationship.

Once practitioners become supervisors, they are not the same person as they were when they started out in the field. As Gharabaghi (2008b) points out, Self is an ever-changing multi-dimensional process that takes on new meanings with each new encounter with others. Every professional and personal experience will influence every behaviour. Thus, if they do not pay close attention, supervisors may not notice how their notions of Self impact their relationships with supervisees. While supervisors bring preconceived notions of what their new role might entail – leadership, authority, accountability for practitioner performance (Mann-Feder, 2009), they also bring aspects of their former practitioner Self with the same

vulnerabilities and successes that shaped their journey into that role (both professionally and personally). The supervisor then has to make decisions as to which aspects of Self are important to reveal in each supervisory moment. Without this critical focus on personal agency in self-revelation, supervisors run the risk of becoming "objects in our work shaped by our connections to children, institutions, rules and norms, and ethics" (Gharabaghi, 2008b, p. 167).

For added clarity, I will explain further. The new supervisor must establish themselves as credible and trustworthy amongst a staff team who will certainly take their time in developing their own opinions, and perhaps test the supervisor as a young person tests a new practitioner (Ward, 2010). At the entry level position, a new supervisor will feel challenged and unsafe as they navigate unfamiliar territory and duties (Phelan, 2015). On the same note, supervisees will feel uncertain as to what is expected of their supervisors. Both supervisor and supervisee simultaneously negotiate their sense of 'relational safety', and make decisions as to whether they should wait out the gradual development of their new relationship or 'nudge' it along by taking personal risks in self disclosure (Garfat, 2016). This is an important process - a process that requires the supervisor to pay special attention to Self and Other in momentary connections (Charles & Garfat, 2013). Supervisors must make a particular effort to ensure they are approachable and respected while paying attention to professional boundaries (Gharabaghi, 2008b).

The new demands of the supervisory role will keep supervisors busy - busy enough to put off the duties of one-to-one supervision (Garfat, 2005). If supervisors are not careful, they will go about the day believing they have more important things to do, such as preparing the next grant proposal or meeting the next deadline. They may feel they never have time to sit down with supervisees and truly hear what they need (Charles & Garfat, 2016; Garfat, 2005). This will cause repercussions that directly influence the wellbeing of young people in our care. Supervisees need to feel like they are heard, cared for, and matter (Charles & Garfat, 2016). They need a supervisor who provides the space to unload and who acts as a 'sounding board' to express emotions when tensions run high in the often

precarious work of CYC practice (Graves, 2005). In addition, supervisees may be recovering practitioners who have had traumatic experiences in their past supervisory relationships (Freeman, 2016). Supervisors need to self-reflect often to ensure they make time for practitioners, stay in the moment, and let practitioners know that they truly matter (Charles & Garfat, 2016).

Beyond Power, Control and Administration

Without a solid grounding in Self, Mann-Feder (2009) argues that CYC supervision is at risk of following the models of other professions, which focus on administrative task keeping, monitoring task performance and exercising authority. Mann-Feder explains that this managerial approach to leadership is antithetical to CYC practice as it negates the emotional connections required to foster self growth. This aversion to hierarchy may be the reason CYC practitioners are underrepresented in managerial and supervisory positions (Gharabaghi, 2008a). Paradoxically, Phelan (2015) explains that new CYC supervisors must rely on control techniques in order to establish respect from their colleagues. While doing so, they need to establish trust and be patient as the new rules of their relationships in the workplace unfold (Ward, 2010). The success of this balancing act is critical if supervision is to become a source of support rather than stress (Mann-Feder, 2009). Mann-Feder argues that, much like with young people, supervisors must learn not to depend on behavioural tactics and interventions, but instead use themselves to model acceptance, openness and trust. This developmental journey is a natural endeavor that leads to a level of comfort whereby both supervisors and supervisees feel they can use supervision as a means to explore creative and autonomous practice (Phelan, 2015).

Delano (2010) agrees that CYC practitioners are often unprepared for their new role and become in danger of making or breaking supervisees with their use of power. A commitment to acknowledging the feelings and reasons underlying potential power abuses will help the supervisor avoid playing unhealthy games (Delano & Shah, 2011). Garfat (2002) notes that, "all behaviour serves a purpose"

(par. 1). For example, if supervisors are constantly on-the-go, with no time to meet supervisees, they must stop to assess why this is. Is this an avoidance tactic driven by a need to resist the new responsibility to give direction or feedback? When these behaviours are left unchecked by the supervisor, a cycle of unintentional games will ensue wherein both supervisor and supervisee are skirting important issues that have a direct impact on their work (Delano & Shah, 2011).

Anticipating Supervising: A Renewed Journey into Self

As a new graduate of a master's program looking forward to new roles in management and leadership positions, I anticipate a challenging transition that will require much reflection. During my undergraduate career, I underwent a journey into Self that dared me to acknowledge my deep-rooted values, beliefs and fears as they influenced my work with young people. Unfortunately, the absence of a supervisor in practice denied me the continued development of self honesty and risk taking that would have served me to provide optimal care to young people. Thus, I am grateful for this opportunity to recognize the value of self-exploration again - this time as a practitioner aspiring to become a supervisor with a commitment to a renewed journey into Self.

As I am pulled in several directions with the varied expectations of attending to managerial duties and providing meaningful supervision, I will need to learn how to mitigate the inconsistency of routines that contradict CYC values (Mann-Feder, 2009). To my disservice, the only experience I have had in this role is with supervising college students. Gharabaghi (2008a) explains that the tasks of supervising students and practitioners vary widely as the goals of supervising students focus mainly on training and redirection, and the goals of supervising practitioners focus on empowerment and autonomy. Fortunately, this mimics my own process of moving from a novice practitioner to a respected mentor via the levels of professional practitioner development outlined by Phelan (2015). Phelan explains that whereas level one practitioners focus on redirecting unsafe or unproductive behaviours, level three practitioners focus on empowering young

people through creative and relational CYC strategies. I feel I have successfully moved through these levels and am prepared for a parallel process of moving through similar levels as a supervisor, particularly now with a refreshed commitment to continued Self discovery.

Managing Self in relation to boundaries lies at the core of CYC work (Gharabaghi, 2008b). Throughout my career, I have experienced continued changing roles of professional boundaries. I have had to overcome my anxieties and let go of what I perceived to be my 'best' professional Self in order to merge it with my more natural, personal Self. This was not easy and I realize I will need to go through this process again as I negotiate new boundaries in more hierarchical positions of power. I know that a focused reflective process will help me to put forth a genuine portrayal of myself that challenges the more superficial representation of a "shelled-self", which only aims to meet my selfish needs of being liked or respected (Charles & Garfat, 2013). I hope that my thoughts here are helpful to those readers who wish to do the same.

Conclusion

With his seminal work, Fewster (1990) affirms that competent CYC practitioners are ones who can reflect on the implications of Self in their interactions with young people. In this way, seasoned practitioners already possess the skills needed to be good CYC supervisors (Charles, 2016), even in the absence of readily available guides for supervision (Phelan, 2015). Unfortunately, once we become competent and 'good' at our jobs, there is a tendency to rest on our laurels -to endure our work with complacency while waiting for our shift to end. Ultimately, supervisors help young people when they support practitioners to be the best they can be (Charles, Freeman & Garfat, 2016). Therefore, it is the supervisor's duty to provide practitioners the opportunity to practice Self exploration and critical thinking via supervision (Gharabaghi, 2008a). This cannot be done unless supervisors practice the same explorations into their own Selves. It was at the beginning of our journey in the late 20th century that the emerging

practice of Child and Youth Care embraced the concept of Self in order to move beyond the behavioural tactics that controlled young people's behaviours. Almost 30 years later, it is just as important for CYC supervisors to adopt a renewed journey into Self in order to transcend beyond managerial and task-oriented expectations of practice. As Fewster (1990) notes, without commitment to self-exploration, "how are we ever going to teach kids that life is a powerful force and not a passive pastime. It's a process, not a performance" (p. 13).

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Unity Through Relationship 2017

About Supervision

Jack Phelan

This month I have been asked to write about supervision, so I will. I have just finished writing a book on this topic, so I have spent some considerable effort focused here. I will talk about what supervisors experience and what they may not be fully aware of in working day to day. I also hope to tweak some people who may be challenged to struggle with what they didn't know they didn't know.

Most supervisors feel pretty good about their practice when they become effective managers. The staff under them are clear about the functions and duties required and behave in predictable and consistent ways, so there are few surprises and disruptions in the daily operation of the program. Paperwork, attendance, adherence to policy, and complaints are all within acceptable limits and things run smoothly, even if there are occasional disruptions.

Good managers are typically non-relational, choosing fairness and consistency over individual recognition or special treatment for different staff members. Training efforts stress behavioral approaches, and there is a regular schedule of pre-determined topics, such as non-abusive restraint, suicide prevention, and general policy guidelines that everyone must be qualified on or updated about as a job requirement. Administrators really value managers like this and are very satisfied with this type of supervisor.

This dynamic holds true for most types of supervision, not just CYC supervisors. The fact that you should be trying to develop the professional expertise of the people being led by you is often overlooked. Some professional supervisors claim that this is not their responsibility, since the individual professional should be fully qualified prior to hiring, which is actually not true for

any profession that I am aware of. Yet new supervisors must become competent managers before they can attempt to focus on the professional expertise of their staff. Even the most skilled supervisors had to perform as managers before they could progress to more sophisticated levels of practice. Until you are comfortable with being the boss, handling employee behavior, and managing the complexities of budgets, schedules, etc., you cannot progress to the more complex job of building expertise. I believe that a new supervisor needs to function as a manager for at least one year before they can begin to actually supervise professional practice.

One of my assumptions here is that newer staff, who need to learn simple behavioral approaches to create safety, and good employee habits like timely reports, agency procedures, and professional demeanor are not really performing professionally yet, just learning how to function according to guidelines and procedures. They will not need more than a managerial approach for at least a year from the start of their career. Again, this is true for most professionals, who are struggling with competence anxiety and being overwhelmed by the "non-classroom" reality of the workplace for several months. So new supervisors and new staff are a good combination, because they are developmentally needing to experience mutually useful things.

However, professional CYC practice is relational and developmental. Behavioral, non-relational approaches are only a small part of truly effective CYC practice. So supervisors have to be able to practice relational supervision, which is quite distinct from managerial efforts. Similar to relational CYC work with youths and families, our real goal is to develop self-initiative and competence, not compliance to a pre-set agenda. Relational supervision attempts to create professionals who are self-motivated to constantly improve effectiveness and challenge themselves to be less controlling with youth and family members. Relational supervision is theoretically based, skillfully demonstrated, and articulately explained, because it is the core of professional practice. My belief is that it is rare to find a CYC supervisor who is actually performing this way unless they have experienced a relational supervisor themselves. This is a major "you don't know

what you don't know" problem. The other major roadblock to relational supervision is that the supervisory process has a power imbalance, similar to the helping relationship, and the tendency to be worried about control is very compelling. Managers have a great deal of control, while relational supervisors share control, with a goal of ceding control to the other person.

The second issue is having a developmental perspective. Every practitioner and supervisor is on a specific developmental journey, which cannot be rushed or ignored. New supervisors cannot successfully attempt relational practice until they have become competent managers, even when they intellectually know what this looks like. Also, new workers have different developmental issues than more experienced staff, and each person requires specific approaches. Supervisors have to be dually aware of both the developmental stage occurring for each staff member as well as their own developmental progress. The most important habit to acquire is patience, there is no successful method to rush or skip the experiences and learning required to move ahead, so being focused on what you need in your present situation is much more useful than trying to be more skilled than possible at the moment.

The ability to be relationally present and developmentally congruent is a skill that constantly increases throughout one's professional career. There is a parallel process occurring as your professional developmental capacity increases, you are more able to build developmental capacity in others, in increasingly challenging situations.

Becoming a competent manager is not the goal of supervisory excellence, it is the starting point.

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NEW RELEASE

Intentional CYC Supervision
A Developmental Approach

Jack Phelan

Reflections of Supervision: The Development of a Growing CYC

Saira Batasar-Johnie

Introduction

Supervision should be implemented as a universal practice across all sectors in the field of child and youth care. The supervision of child and youth care (CYC) practitioners is one of the most important fundamental tasks in safeguarding the quality of care of young people (Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman, 2016). Yet, supervision is not practiced consistently across all sectors for practitioners (Gharabaghi, Tromce and Newman, 2016). Garfat (2003) proposes that in supervision, the relationship is an opportunity to support CYC practitioners in learning about their practice and processes through the engagement in a relational approach. Supervision is a right that fosters interactions to engage in feedback and constructive criticisms to help nurture growth and learning of self (Garfat, 1992; Garfat, Fulcher, & Digney, 2013). Thus, when the opportunity presents itself for supervision, it is important for the supervisee to seek supervision when it is being offered.

When someone enters this field, they have their own preconceptions of what their career will be. Some come into this field with the idea that they are going change the world and make an immediate difference. In 2006, when I entered the field, I did not realize what I was stepping into. A world of trauma, pain, vulnerability and love. The field of CYC changed my life both personally and professionally. I became immersed within the literature and practice of CYC, while engaging in daily reflection in my practice. In doing so, I have been able to explore my own experiences of supervision throughout my professional journey through

Phelan's (n.d.) "Stages of Development" for practitioners, which describes three levels and characteristics that a practitioner may enter throughout their professional development.

I was fortunate to have had the opportunity of supervision, to engage in dialogue about my practice and be offered guidance and support. Unfortunately, this is not the case for all practitioners in the field (Charles, Freeman, & Garfat, 2016). As I have encountered many different forms of supervision, they have all allowed me to grow and learn as a practitioner and become who I am today, and, it is safe to say that, without these experiences, I would not be the practitioner that I am. Supervision with previous supervisors and peers has supported my inner dialogue in figuring out who I am and where I want to be within the field. Supervision was a vital part in my growth as a practitioner which is why I encourage every new practitioner to ensure that they have some form of supervisory support for themselves. This article explores the stages of CYC development in connection to supervision that I have experienced as an individual, a student practitioner, a new practitioner, and a professional practitioner in the hope that it will speak to others' experiences.

An Individual – A Student Practitioner

All practitioners have different reasons for entering the field, whether it be personal experiences or simply wanting to work with children or youth in some capacity. Some of us may not have even realized that this field is more than just working with children or youth, as it is about working in the life space of these young people who may be going through difficult times. Apart from my life experience, I was given the opportunity to work as a peer mentor to young girls aged 11 to 13 at a local women's shelter. This was my first experience of child and youth care, where I eventually fell in love with the profession. There was a child and youth worker (CYW) that provided us with the training and skills that we needed to facilitate programming and discussion with the young people. It was this setting where I encountered supervision for the first time. The CYW would always

meet with us either in a group or one-on-one to discuss our reflections of ourselves and of the program. She would often engage in reflection about ourselves to help us recognize our 'Self'; and she encouraged us to be in the moment with our thoughts and challenging decisions (Garfat, Fulcher, & Digney, 2013). Reflection was the first CYC characteristic that I experienced, and one of the ones that I currently value most, as this is evidenced within my daily practice of reflection. I began to enjoy working with young people and advocating against the social injustices that the youth in my neighborhood were encountering. At this stage of life, you are still trying to figure out where you want to go and what you want to do. If, in fact, you do want to work with people, it is important to recognize what age range you would want to work with and what types of accomplishments you would want to achieve? with different people. Every career working with young people has its similarities but they are still different. This is important in distinguishing, for example, between an early childhood educator, a child and youth care practitioner, and a social worker.

Now, imagine that you are entering post-secondary education. What a difficult transition; your life changes from knowing most of your peers and having four classes with a predictable 8am-3pm schedule, with a large support team of teachers, guidance counselors, and, possibly, a school-based CYW or social worker, to being in a large institution with strangers in your classroom and a full course load of five to six classes per week. You may become overwhelmed and struggle to keep up with academic expectations. Within CYC academic programs, new students are introduced to many concepts of the field that will challenge their thinking and encourage curiosity. One that is important to be aware of as a new practitioner, is the 'Self' and inner dialogue. The 'Self' is what supports the practitioner in personal growth, connection, and engagement and important to be aware of when working with young people (Mann-Feder, 2002).

In my personal experience as a student, I was fortunate to have completed my placements with CYW's at a high school in Rexdale, Toronto and at a group home in Parkdale, Toronto. These were two neighborhoods with a high level of mental

health challenges, gun violence, poverty, responsibility of young people raising their younger siblings, teen pregnancy, trauma, violence, and crime. The feelings of the young people you will work with are quite similar to the feelings of a student practitioner. Feeling lost, trying to establish themselves, figuring out how to communicate with young people are all new skills that one is learning. The needs of the student practitioner are to feel safe, trusted, and validated, especially through the act of supervision. Supervision by a CYC practitioner would provide the student with an outlet to discuss their challenges, questions, and learn strategies to support themselves because the CYC practitioner will understand their role. It is important that educational institutions provide students with the opportunity to be supervised by a CYC. It is important that as a student you advocate for yourself to receive supervision from your supervisor. As student practitioners, you are fortunate enough to have seminar and a placement supervisor present for both support and challenge. Thus, it is imperative that CYC students, utilize these supervisory experiences to become better prepared for working in future environments where supervision may not exist. It is also important to learn and practice different strategies on how to take care of your 'Self' while in school to utilize when in the field, as well as create and foster your own support team. Whether you are in a three-year diploma program or four-year degree program, it is important to create a support system that will sustain throughout your professional journey to provide you with continual support, so that you do not burn out and that you grow as a professional.

A New Practitioner – Capable Caregiver

Next, imagine that you have just graduated from college or university from the child and youth care program. What comes next? You may continue your education and attend a post-graduate program, teachers' college, or a masters' program. Or, you may also enter the field right away, depending on placements and jobs you have applied for. No matter which path is taken, one thing is for sure: the emotions of a new practitioner include feelings of fear, excitement, and loneliness.

Your journey as a new practitioner has now begun. You are now 'The Capable Care-Giver' that is new to the field; you are trying to figure out how to navigate applying for different jobs and using your skills learned in school whilst applying them in practice. You are also discovering how to maintain a balance between your work and personal life (Phelan, n.d). You are trying to figure out your own style, how to engage with young people, and interact with your coworkers. It is okay to feel overwhelmed and unsure of things; just remember to ask questions.

As a new practitioner, there are a variety of different settings in which we can be employed and each organization or institution has its own set of policies. Supervision may not always be offered and, when it is offered, practitioners need to take advantage of the opportunity. Supervision is a right in our field; it is in opportunity and a place where there can be growth and development for individual practitioners (Garfat, 1992). As a student, you had opportunities to seek supervision from your seminar supervisor, your peers and support team. As a new practitioner, however, these different support systems may not always be present and available. Two of the most common examples of the lack of or presence of insufficient supervision include, for example, CYWs working in a school board in Ontario where supervisors do not have a CYC background, and part-time/relief staff opportunities where supervision is rarely ever offered. This reiterates the previous notion to create a support system of peers to be there for you to, possibly, provide peer supervision. Peer supervision is an outlet where practitioners can support each other mutually without the hierarchical relationship of traditional supervision (Benshoff, 2001; Wasmund, 1988). If this happens to be your case, you should be creative in how you seek support and challenge for yourself to grow and learn from your current practice. This will help your journey of becoming the 'Change Agent' (Phelan, n.d).

A Professional Practitioner – The Change Agent

The 'change agent' is viewed as being comfortable with their skills while also exploring and creating opportunities with young people (Phelan, n.d.). In this stage,

I would suggest that, as a practitioner, you should begin to understand how the 'Self' impacts the 'Other' (Garfat, 2008). By understanding who you are and your experiences, you can enter relational moments with another and, with that, are able to co-create experiences together (Garfat, 2008). The 'Self' is an uncomfortable topic for many people because, when delving inside, it requires vulnerability, as it can bring up unsettling feelings that might have not yet dealt with. Although in this stage we should be aware of ourselves, we will never truly be able to know our self. The 'Self' is a continually growing person that is evolving everyday based on the daily experiences encountered. Therefore, will we ever be able to know who we are? Regardless of being able to know the entirety of the Self, we are always trying to understand ourselves and our experiences and how you might transfer onto the young people we are engaging with daily.

Supervision provides an outlet for practitioners to be heard, feel supported and challenged, and allows the opportunity for growth (Charles, Freeman, & Garfat, 2016; Gharabaghi, 2008; Jenkinson, 2009). Although supervision is not practiced across all sectors within the field of CYC, it is important to be implemented in the field (Jenkinson, 2009). Typically, supervision should be strengths-based in order to build on a CYCPs strengths and work with them to help them grow. Gilberg and Charles (2002) define how a supervisor would practice a strength-based approach with their supervisee:

> *A supervisor, taking a strengths-based approach, sees value in having different employees with different strengths. The supervisor builds on those strengths. The supervisor challenges employees to broaden their repertoire of strengths and to apply their strengths in creative ways to meet the needs of clients, co-workers, the program, and themselves (p.24).*

As practitioners use a strength-based approach while working frontline with young people, it would only make sense to mirror these same characteristics within

supervision. A supervisor should also be present within the daily life space of the supervisee to provide them with meaningful feedback about their practice. The impact of this provides a wider sense for practitioners to feel confident in their practice and encourage creative thinking (Phelan, n.d). As this is often not the case for supervisors and supervisees, it takes away from the relational engagement supervisors are able to have with their employees.

Conclusion

The journey of a practitioner can be long, complicated, and rewarding. It may lead to many different career opportunities. Some of which may not be what you have planned for yourself. Some of which may be. However, what is important is that, as a practitioner, you must not lose your drive and passion, as it will enable burnout by the obstacles that you may encounter. As a new CYC practitioner, you should be aware of the consequent encounters from this moment to determine how to best prepare and set yourself up for success. Phelan's (n.d) last level of development, 'the creative, free-thinking professional', requires a professional to be creative, and autonomous professional that has mastered all levels of the developmental stages of a practitioner (Phelan, n.d). Once mastering the skillsets of being within the 'care giver' and 'change agent' stages, you will be able to be versatile and creative in your practice with confidence (Phelan, n.d). Supervision has an important role in enabling the growth of a practitioner, as it is at the core of our development. It is a transformative process where growth and support is present. Therefore, as practitioners we must seek supervision to be our better selves in the field, because the children, youth and families deserve to have the best quality of care.

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Bad Supervisors

Kiaras Gharabaghi

It happens, not infrequently, that a CYC practitioner is confronted with a bad supervisor. In fact, in some sectors this can happen quite often. In private, for profit residential care, for example, people are sometimes promoted or hired into supervisory positions not for the skills they possess, but simply because they are related to the owner of the program, or because they are, shall we say, intimately connected to that owner. In other sectors, a bad supervisor may be perfectly skilled in providing supervision as per his, her or their professional standards, but those standards may have nothing whatsoever to do with child and youth care practice. This is the case in schools, where very often CYCs are supervised by principals (some of whom are excellent supervisors), in hospitals, where they are sometimes supervised by nurses (also some very good supervisors amongst nurses), and in community settings, where a social worker frequently is tasked with providing supervision (no comment).

So, what is one to do when confronted with a bad supervisor? Is one better off just avoiding supervision altogether? Or allowing the process called 'supervision' to unfold while secretly thinking about the debriefing one will have with one's spouse, partner, roommate or friend when the workday is over? Or how about drawing mental images of the so-called supervisor picking his, her or their nose and quietly smiling in self-designed disgust? Well, all of these options will likely help us get through the day, but we are still left without the experience of supervision that is so critical to excellent child and youth care practice. Perhaps we need a different strategy to benefit from the bad supervisor in spite of the absence of skill, competence, aptitude, or connection. It is in this context that I want to introduce the concept of refractive supervision.

The basic characteristics of refractive supervision are these:

1. It is a process driven entirely by the agency of supervisee;
2. It de-centers the incompetence of the supervisor into an object of curiosity;
3. It is based on a reflective process of the supervisee

Refractive supervision requires the supervisee to suspend judgment of the supervisor and to instead focus on his, her or their responses to the supervisee in a way that those responses are taken as a challenge to the supervisee's assumptions, perspectives and knowledge. For example, it could go something like this:

Bad Supervisor (BS): I am going to talk to you about what you are doing wrong today.

Supervisee Speaking (SS): **Ok, I am prepared to hear your concerns. Please don't feel bad about telling me either. I want to make sure I can benefit from your insights, so hearing your voice is important to me.**

Supervisee Thinking (ST)*: He is focusing on deficits; let's see how he proceeds. But I have to make sure that I validate him and his perspectives, otherwise this will become a very negative experience for me.*

BS: Basically, it seems like you just hang out with the kids and don't give them any consequences. Your colleagues are getting tired of carrying the weight of the shift.

SS: **You know that's a really interesting observation. I wonder if you could talk about what you mean by 'hanging out'?**

ST: *Clearly he has never heard of 'hanging out' and 'being present'; but he doesn't see any value in what he thinks I am doing. I wonder if young people see value in it?*

BS: Well, you keep spending your time on shift around the kids. Wherever they are, you are, and then you just seem to join them in whatever they are doing.

SS: **You are quite right. I am glad you are telling me this. You know, sometimes I think it might be important for the kids to just know that I am there, with them, and ready to join their activities rather than always telling them to do what I want them to do.**

ST: *I wonder if I should ask the kids what they would like me to do on shift? Or maybe that would ruin the connection we have established. They always know that I will be there with them, and maybe that is good enough. I wonder…*

BS: Well, it can't just be hanging out all the time. You have to provide treatment and get the kids to make changes.

SS: **I get it. I really do. It's just that I know from my own experience, and also from watching you, that we usually make changes because we want to, not because someone else tells us to. I notice that you are very strong and able to follow your own path. How do you do that?**

ST: *I wonder if he can see that his own experience might be relevant to how young people figure out their path?*

BS: Well, you know that I don't take shit from anyone. It is important to be clear with people and tell it as it is. And sometimes it's important to just ignore people so they know I don't give a damn about what they are thinking.

SS: **I really admire that. You know, this conversation has been very helpful to me. I think I am going to try and work with what you have told me and provide the young people with lots of opportunities to practice being like you; you know, do their thing, ignore when necessary, follow their own path. I'll think of ways of helping my colleagues to follow your lead too; maybe they could do less of redirecting and more of listening and observing. I like your concept of treatment! Thanks for this, much appreciated.**

ST: *So, I learned that my colleagues are probably not fully understanding their role here; they seem to think the goal is to make kids conform and comply. I can use the supervisor's ego to help the team move toward a more empowering way of being with the kids.*

The Bad Supervisor in this exchange clearly has no idea about child and youth care principles and approaches. His work is instinctual and ego-centered. He can see only his own shadow, nothing else. On the other hand, he has some strengths: he is very proud of how he is, and he takes pleasure in his fierce independence. On the face of it, nothing he is saying in this exchange is particularly useful to the supervisee. In fact, it could be quite destructive given its deficit-focus and its lack of understanding of meaningful engagement with young people. But he is as he is, and he is the supervisor, something that isn't likely going to change anytime soon.

The supervisee in this conversation already knows that this supervisor has nothing useful to contribute. But he also knows that the supervisor's comments will provide at least two great opportunities.

First, the supervisee will have an opportunity to practice his de-escalation skills and his ability to find points of connection with someone who doesn't intend to connect. The art of responding to the Bad Supervisor includes a balance of reasoning and trying to move the Bad Supervisor to a different position while also validating and encouraging him so that the conversation can move along and uncover new possibilities. In this sense, the Bad Supervisor provides an excellent simulated training opportunity for the supervisee.

And second, the ignorance of the Bad Supervisor provides an opportunity to the supervisee to reflect on how young people, who rightfully are cynical about practitioners and their intentions, might be interpreting what the supervisee does. This can be enormously useful, as a good supervisor typically guides our reflection processes in ways that lead us to positive perspectives; sometimes, reflection based on a real, unrehearsed and largely skill-less responses can lead to hard-hitting and soul-searching insights that are far more relevant when working with edgy young people.

I call this process of supervision 'refractive supervision' because it is a process that is driven entirely by the supervisee (the Bad Supervisor may believe he has a

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role, but that is entirely inconsequential); the supervisee is in effect shooting reflections at the Bad Supervisor and monitoring the refractive angle of those reflections as the clueless supervisor processes a fraction of what is said while the remainder goes right through at a slight angle of the original trajectory of the reflection. The supervisee exercises a great deal of agency in the process, and is able to evaluate the degree of refraction as either meaningful or not, and make adjustments accordingly. If the angle of refraction is too small, the supervisee might learn that his thoughts are too complex and perhaps not absorbable; not enough of the reflection is being processed by the Bad Supervisor. If the angle is very large, the risk of the Bad Supervisor taking the reflection and changing its intention is high. Ideally, the supervisee aims for a moderate angle of refraction, so that he can have confidence that the reflection has an impact, but he can control that impact sufficiently to avoid random interpretations.

Let's be honest, there are many excellent supervisors in the universe of child and youth care practice, regardless whether they are trained in child and youth care or not. But there are also some real 'idiots' (in the sense of Dostoyevsky's *The Village Idiot*) who can be harmful to practitioners and to young people and their families. Under these circumstances, we have to make choices. We can become miserable, negative and lament our misfortune; or we can find ways of benefitting from the supervisor regardless of his, her or their incompetence. A Bad Supervisor is an object of curiosity; as such, it is the perfect platform for creative reflection.

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Supervision in Child and Youth Care: A Personal Reflection on Two Experiences

Jack Deol

Supervision is an important concept for supporting the growth of practitioners within a profession. In Child and Youth Care (CYC) relationships are foundations to the work CYC practitioners undertake. These relationships are not limited to workers and the children, youth, and families they spend time with. The relationship between co-workers and a supervisor are just as vital. Relationships are not uniform; they all look different. A supervisor has a different relationship with each of his or her supervisees and vice versa. How do we apply supervision so it does not take away from the uniqueness and individuality of people? Hilton (2005) states the qualities and themes that construct your supervision process can be as unique as one decides (para. 3). The following is my reflection on supervision I received and the significance of my supervisor-supervisee relationships thus far in Child and Youth Care.

My Experience with an Effective Supervisory Relationship

During my first-year placement in a CYC program, I was in an elementary school, in a grade five/six behavior and learning assistance (BLA) class. Here the first supervisor I would have in CYC was introduced to me. The supervisor-supervisee relationship was extremely effective. The supervisor was always available to talk about classroom dynamics, areas of strengths, and areas for improvement. She placed the relationship high on her priority list and allowed autonomy in my practice while remaining present to offer guidance. Carifio and

Hess state that, superior supervisor attributes include, fluidity, consideration, inquisitiveness, and broad-mindedness (1987, p. 245). This description of a positive supervisor is aligned well with the characteristics demonstrated by this coach in regard to effective supervision. Carifio and Hess's depiction of a good supervisor came from the domain of psychotherapy. Phelan (2012) describes the supervisory traits of a level two CYC worker who embolden creative thinking, strength-based approach, which reduces the dependence of external control methods and bring to light new perspectives and unique approaches when working with others, and not chastising failed interventions (p. 86-87). The attributes mentioned by Phelan accurately reflect the supervision that I acquired. A product of this guidance was that I (supervisee) felt confident when working with children, self-assured when proposing new interventions, and optimistic when strategies did not go according to plan.

My Experience with an Ineffective Supervisory Relationship

This past summer (2016) I was employed as a literacy coordinator at an out of school care program. As a member of a team of four CYC practitioners, I was working with kids from kindergarten to grade five. The goal was to create and implement a summer program that promoted the continued growth of literacy. The affiliation between the supervisor and myself was ineffective. The supervisor was rarely available to talk, which meant questions about the agency's practice philosophies went unanswered. On the scarce occasion, there was a staff meeting the conversations were filled with gossip, focused on weaknesses of staff practice and did not mention strengths. Lack of clarity was expressed as promoting staff autonomy (however that did not take place) and perpetuated a culture of favoritism. Gilberg and Charles (2002) discuss that great supervisors and great CYC workers share key concepts, including strengths-based, promoting freedom, effective communication skills, action oriented, practice what they preach, experiential, nurturing, and creativity (p.24). These qualities that a good supervisor

in CYC possesses were not apparent and visible at the out of school care program. This supervisory relationship required an alteration. Hilton (2005) informs us that:

> *If you have any of the following characteristics, the chances are that the supervision you are experiencing needs an adjustment: resentment, blame, poor me syndrome, apathy, frustration and overall contempt for your work. It doesn't mean that to have these you are a terrible supervisor or supervisee, rather it means a process is needed to assist in understanding why these characteristics are present and to develop an action plan which offers change* (para.4).

The qualities that Hilton lists strikingly resemble my experience. The supervisor and I (supervisee) did not complement one another and thus were in an ineffective supervisor-supervisee relationship. There were also systemic issues that aided this unfavorable relationship. The director of the program was the immediate supervisor for staff. Unfortunately, the director was rarely present at the program. In the absence of a clear supervisor, there was confusion regarding who was the team lead. If there were staff, children, or parent concerns there was no authority figure to help alleviate these concerns. This raises the problem of trust within the team of CYC workers. If the director trusted one of the CYC practitioners to take a leadership role this issue might have been mitigated. Encouraging autonomy requires and develops trust. The supervisor must trust the supervisees to practice in their own unique way (autonomy), and trust them to request and accept guidance when needed. As this process unfolds trust is nurtured between the supervisor and the supervisees.

A key organizational characteristic that fosters good supervisor-supervisee relationships is one of leading by example. Decker and Hrenyk (2017) believe in performing tasks that they expected their employees to complete. This approach was missing in the out of school care program as the supervisor often delegated undesirable tasks to others.

This analysis of the ineffective supervisor-supervisee relationship may not be true for the rest of the staff. It is only a reflection of my experience. With that in mind this supervisor could be effective for others. I, in particular, enjoy autonomy and a limited amount of structure; I also need open communication with a supervisor. These characteristics were not present during my time at the out-of-school care program. In this case, it appears that both supervisor and supervisee did not complement each other's style, resulting in the ineffectiveness of supervision.

Lessons from my Experiences

In regard to the effective supervisor-supervisee relationship, a crucial organizational characteristic was that my supervisor had a good relationship with her supervisor (principal). The principal allowed my supervisor autonomy in how she worked within the classroom. This indelible experience was then transferred into her supervisory practice, which allowed for a potent relationship to be created between her and myself.

Another trait that made this relationship effective was the supervisor's previous work experience. Prior to teaching where I was placed as a student, she had spent a considerable amount of time teaching in a highly specialized school. The students at her previous school displayed extreme behaviors that required interventions one would see in an intensive group care home. This experience informed her of the value of talking to kids and connecting with them. As a result, the supervisor appreciated my relational skills and encouraged the creation of experiences through activities to further develop relationships with kids. I was supported to create these experiences based on the individual needs of the children. Ingram (2013) instructs that supervision and management need to repel restrictive practice and pursue a system that is fluid and recognizes the spontaneous methods of relationship-based practice (p.13). This piece of supervision was present in my experience, I believe, due to my supervisor's previous work experience. A supervisor impacts not only the supervisee but entire agency as well.

Staff morale was greatly affected by the ineffective supervisor. Due to the supervisor not being easily accessible there was a feeling of frustration in staff. When questions arose about policy application, there was no one present to answer, which lead to frustration and hopelessness in staff. Rigid staff expectations led to little room for new approaches and created an atmosphere in which staff felt defeated. Team members who were champions of advocacy slowly lost their voice.

Conversely, the staff morale was positive, optimistic, and upbeat with the effective supervisor. It remained that way due to a willingness to try new and inventive interventions, consistent discussions regarding the various dynamics at play in the classroom, and trust in one another. The outcome of this atmosphere was evident in the children. There was a decrease in the amount of aggressive behaviors displayed by the students, increased ability to understand and process the multiple emotions which dictated behaviors and boost in disclosing familial risks to staff, with trust that staff will try to the best of their ability alleviate these risks.

Supervision Style Affects the Organization

The learning gained from these two vastly different relationships was the significance this role has for not only the supervisees but for the entire organization. Supervisors become responsible for the spirit of the supervisees. This then affects the staff dynamics and plays a role in the services being provided for the children, youth, and families. In the case of the ineffective supervisor, the unyielding structure she imposed lead to staff losing their resolve to advocate for the children and for change. Comparatively the milieu created by the effective supervisor allowed me to attempt new tactics with the youth and voice my thoughts about classroom dynamics. This experience also created a foundation for my knowledge and skillset of advocacy.
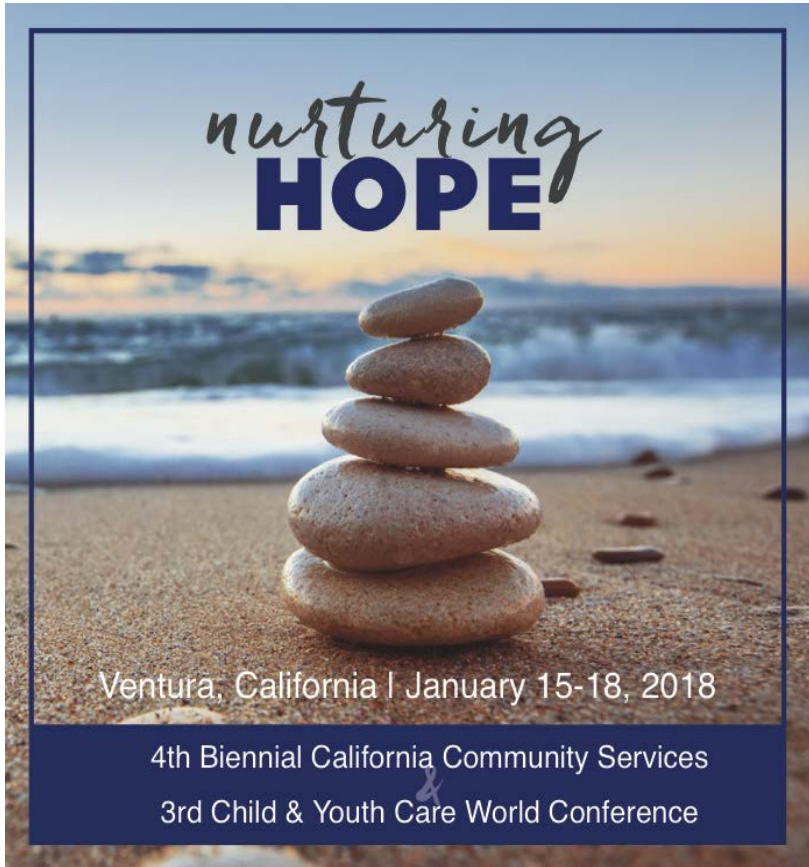
Gharabaghi (2008) states that most new supervisors have never had practice at being a supervisor; the only exception is when a worker works with a placement student (p. 341). If I am privileged enough to have the honor of supervising a CYC student I can use the supervisor-supervisee relationship to grow my supervision

skills while guiding a budding CYC practitioner. I only hope to provide the supervisee with a marvelous experience as I have had the privilege to experience.

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The Power of Description

Hans Skott-Myhre

arlier this month I had the good fortune to be able to attend a conference put on by *Asylums: An International Magazine for Democratic Psychiatry*. The occasion was the thirty-year anniversary of the magazine's publication as a vehicle for debate and discussion of what might be termed radical mental health. The one day conference was attended by academics, researchers and participants who identified themselves as psychiatric survivors and "voice hearers." I should note that the above identities and activities were not mutually exclusive. There were voice hearing researchers, academic psychiatric survivors and non-academic consumers of mental health services. What everyone held in common was the desire to advocate for, "the kind of political action we need to build to defend our rights and build better services, and the struggle against reactionary attacks on mental health provision." (https://freepsychotherapynetwork.com/asylum-conference-action-and-reaction-28-june-2017-manchester/) The talks and discussions were extremely interesting and provocative and gave me much to think about in terms of how we deliver mental health services to young people, but it was one comment in particular by a service user that really struck me. I have to paraphrase what they said, but what stuck with me was something like, "When I am described as a diagnosis or a bunch of neurons I feel profoundly dehumanized … it is like my experience as a living person is both denied and ignored. It's like my actual life no longer matters."

I came away thinking about whether this could also be true about ways we talk about the young service users we encounter in CYC work. In contemplating this special issue on supervision, I began to ponder what sorts of descriptions we encourage in our work when we are mentoring our colleagues and building our

programs. What are the normative vernaculars we valorize in our conversations about the young people we engage in our work. In particular, I found myself reflecting on a report that came out last year called "Therapeutic Residential Care for Children and Youth: A Consensus Statement of the International Work Group on Therapeutic Residential Care" (Whittaker et al, 2016). The report struck me as troublesome in a couple of different aspects.

The first of these was that the report presented itself as an international consensus statement on working with young people and yet there were only adult academics and professionals involved. There were no young people's voices even referenced in the document. The tone of the writing was authoritative and raised multiple complex issues about residential care, but the voice was that of adults talking about young people. Perhaps even more cogently, the language used to describe young people produced them as a problem to be solved. Nowhere in the document was there an indication that young people play a role in their own care or "treatment." Instead the international consensus seemed to be that young people should be the objects of intervention designed by adults. Such interventions were framed against a background of a population with "high resource needs" (p. 93) and "severe emotional and behavioral disorders" (p. 92). Young people were described using terms such as "looked after children" (p.92) with attachment disorders and multiple and complex needs. In short, they were portrayed as deficit ridden in the extreme with little resource of their own. The best they could hope for is that benevolent adults will step in and provide the,

> planful use of a purposefully constructed, multi-dimensional living environment designed to enhance or provide treatment, education, socialization, support, and protection to children and youth with identified mental health or behavioral needs in partnership with their families and in collaboration with a full spectrum of community based formal and informal helping resources (95).

I find this description of service extremely problematic. It appears to suggest that adult service providers can unilaterally produce a living environment designed to change the lives of young people entering the residential treatment space. The assumption seems to be that adults can purposefully plan and construct a kind of machine into which you can insert a child and they will be treated, educated, socialized, supported and protected. In order for this unilateral construction of space to work, even theoretically, as a kind of mental health factory where "good" children are produced out of "bad" (more on that later), we would need to exclude or homogenize the broad range of idiosyncratic and unique qualities that each young person brings to such constructed environment. To think that such a reductive mechanistic approach to service is laudable or desirable I find disconcerting in the extreme.

Of course, a token gesture is made towards the community. However, it is not the young person's actual lived community but a "community of formal and informal helping resources." In other words, what the institution can't provide through the machinery of residential treatment, it will outsource to other machines of social engineering outside of itself. I would argue strongly that these helping resources do not constitute community in any meaningful sense of the word. These are simply more well intentioned adult professionals who will assist in remediating the child's deficits.

The statement also notes that the treatment center will work in partnership with families i.e. another set of possibly helpful adults, but never mentions any effort to collaborate or partner with the young person themselves. In this description of service, the child is an object of intervention. There is no reasonable description of the child as an actual resourceful, resilient, creative, unique set of living capacities capable of collaboration in their own set of struggles and successes.

To be fair, this international consensus of adult academics and professionals does note that therapeutic residential care is "informed by a culture that stresses learning through living and where the heart of teaching occurs in a series of deeply personal, human relationships (p. 97)." However, this is never articulated in any

way that meaningfully includes young people as a living part of that set of relationships. Instead, we are pushed hard to accept the premise that any meaningful work needs to be "evidenced based" and accomplished through "applying the principles of applied behavior analysis in a family style group living context (97)."

One has to wonder about how this relationship of applied behavior analysis and evidence based treatment corresponds with the statement that residential treatment is founded on learning through "deeply personal human relationships." After all, applied behavior analysis is a scientifically derived application of learning theory designed to change behavior by manipulating the social environment of the subject. It places the service provider in the position of being a technician applying social technologies in order to produce a subject who is more socially acceptable. The relationship formed between the child and the service provider is to be utilized in order to effectively shift the behavior of the child. If this is the basis for treatment, then the "evidence" in evidence based treatment would be the production of socially acceptable young people. I am not at all sure how this fits with the development of human relationships as the center of service.

The report also notes the importance of strength based and culturally competent approaches that are individualized and community based. But we are informed that these practices should be deployed in the service of assuring that "children with severe emotional and behavioral problems will develop a more normal lifestyle" (p. 99). I could go on and note the obsession the authors seem to have with avoiding or remediating "deviancy training" or "peer contagion."

Ironically, this is the only time that young people are identified as having some role in participating in the formation of the residential environment. Even then, however, these actions by young people in the treatment center are noted as iatrogenic or an unfortunate side effect of the residential environment and not anything to do with their own creative capacities for resistance or revolt. What concerns me most, however, is what is defined as the ultimate epistemological goal

(that is the theory of knowledge or how we know what we know) for residential care.

> We view an ultimate epistemological goal for therapeutic residential care as the identification of a group of evidence-based models or strategies for practice that are effective in achieving desired outcomes for youth and families, replicable from one site to another, and scalable, i.e., sufficiently clear in procedures, structures, and protocols to provide for full access to service in a given locality, region, or jurisdiction (p. 98)

As might be assumed by what I have already said above, there is a great deal here I find problematic. Not the least of which is how a desirable outcome might come to be defined and who decides that definition in light of the rest of the report. But for me the central issue is the presumption that what constitutes residential care is not care, but a group of models and strategies. This strikes me as the goal of a technocrat rather than a care provider.

I would argue that it flies in the face of other epistemological understandings of care in our own literature in CYC, such as the work of Gharabaghi, Phelan, Krueger, Garfat, VanderVen, Maier, Fewster, Newberry, and White among many others. These authors argue for a description of our work centered not in models and strategies, but in living relations of care. They argue for a view of young people as creative and active participants in the formation of the institutions in which they are involved. Adults and young people are viewed as mutually co-creating the world they inhabit together. Community is a dynamic and ever shifting field of infinite possibility for a more equitable and sustainable world, not just as an adjunct to behavior change initiatives by technicians of residential treatment regimes. In short, our epistemological goals couldn't be at greater variance.

This concerns me in two ways. In the first instance, I worry that so many of our CYC workers are increasingly engaged in programs that operate on the principles

and practices advocated in this report. If this is an international consensus of what Residential Care should be, how is it that we in CYC are so out of step? Where are our voices in determining the direction of the institutions where so many of our colleagues practice or will practice?

Secondly, I worry about the dehumanizing effects of the descriptions of young people in this report. Like the quote at the opening of this column, I worry what happens to young people described as simply the object of behavioral intervention; where evidence based treatment has little or nothing to do with young people's concerns or political/social investments; where adults still make the key decisions about what happened to these "contagions of deviancy."

I would argue that we have an obligation to work with young people and our colleagues to re-humanize residential care. Certainly, a key place re-humanization can take place is in the supervisorial relationship. How we negotiate the descriptions of our work can have a profound influence on how we view what we do and why we do it. To the degree we value the complex living ecologies of humanity we are entangled within, our work with young people will be premised in the inherent value and infinite creative capacities of those seeking service. As supervisors, we have a powerful opportunity to assist in shaping our work as a truly humanistic endeavor. If not, we could well slip into a profoundly dystopic future in which the foundations of our epistemologies of care slip away like something drawn in the sand at the edge of an incoming tide.

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Being a Subject in Supervision Matters

Hailey Kavanagh

The concept of "doing with" rather than "doing to" or "doing for" young people is often cited as a way of distinguishing the interpretation of young people as subjects versus objects (Garfat, Fulcher, & Digney, 2013; Kornbeck & Jensen, 2013). The "subject versus object" debate stems from the field of social pedagogy, a discipline concerned with the theory and practice of holistic education and care (Kornbeck & Jensen, 2013). A "subject" is someone who possesses freedom of expression, is autonomous in nature, and exercises agency in making decisions pertaining to their life (Kornbeck & Jensen, 2013). In contrast, an "object", much like a chair or a table, has decisions made for them on their behalf. When trying to better understand what it means to be an "object", it is important to consider that, oftentimes, "objects" do not possess the freedom to oppose decisions that are made on their behalf, and instead, frequently comply with them (Kornbeck & Jensen, 2013).

In the field of Child and Youth Care (CYC), a similar debate can be applied to the supervisor-practitioner relationship. Oftentimes when expressing their experiences of supervision, practitioners mention negative encounters with their supervisors, characterized by moments of feeling blamed, ordered, and controlled (Borders, 2001; Kavanagh, 2016; Moscrip & Brown, 1989). However, there are other practitioners who describe moments of wonder, support, and growth in their supervisory encounters (Gilberg & Charles, 2002; Maas & Ney, 1996). To some, it may seem that the tension that exists between the "subject versus object" debate and CYC supervision lies in the notions of feeling connected and being engaged (Gilberg & Charles, 2002). "Connection and engagement" is noted as a critical relational characteristic that is conceptualized as one of the foundational elements of CYC practice (Garfat, et al., 2013; Garfat, Fulcher,

& Freeman, 2016). Thus, one can only wonder about the promises and perils associated with being connected and engaged in the supervisory relationship, or not, and, how might "mattering" (Charles & Garfat, 2016), a rather new concept to the field of CYC, play a role?

In looking at the relational characteristic of "connection and engagement", I will discuss the implications associated with supervisors treating practitioners as either subjects or objects. In addition, I will consider the importance of "mattering" as it relates to the mitigation of practitioners being treated as objects.

Connection and Engagement - Subject or Object?

Connection and engagement "builds from the notion that if someone is not connected with another, or if one cannot engage with them in a significant way, then the practitioner's interventions cannot be effective" (Garfat, et al., 2013, p. 12). Similarly to the practitioner-young person relationship, it is unacceptable for a supervisor to blame "other", or in this case the practitioner, if they are unresponsive to supervisory interventions (Garfat, et al., 2016). It is the responsibility of the supervisor to work towards such engagement and connection with the practitioner who is needing support from them (Garfat, et al., 2016). According to Brendtro and du Toit (2005), relationship is the foundation of all CYC work and connection is the foundation of relationship. When this kind of relationship is executed effectively, a supervisor connects with a practitioner, and then engages in relationship with them as they live their work lives (Garfat, et al., 2016; Garfat, et al., 2013). For example, going for coffee with a practitioner is an engagement that has the potential to be meaningful when one is connected in relationship with other (Garfat, et al., 2013).

As CYC practitioners value young people as subjects who have the potential to strive for autonomy and agency, the same can be said for CYC practitioners. When CYC supervisors value practitioners as subjects, "connection" and "engagement" become foundational elements of relational supervision. Garfat (2008) describes "the inter-personal in-between" when referencing relational practice as being a

space of connected engagement in which practitioners are in relationship with young people, or in this case, supervisors with practitioners. It is critical to note that the concepts of engagement and connection hinge on the practitioners' fundamental "right to freedom of expression or opinion" (United Nations General Assembly, 1948), or what we in the field of CYC commonly refer to as "voice" (Residential Services Review Panel, 2016). Practitioners in supervisory relationships not only have the right to use their voice in the planning of their work lives, but they also have a choice to either move in, or to move out, of the "in-between" (Garfat, 2008). As such, supervisors who value meaningful engagement understand respect and empathy as fundamental to being in supervisory relationships with practitioners (Garfat, et al., 2016).

Although simply stated, respect and empathy as a means to connect and engage is complex, requiring a supervisor to be aware of Self and be intentional in their interactions with Other (Garfat, 2008). Supervisors show practitioners respect by ensuring they feel they are heard, valued, supported, and acknowledged (Garfat, et al., 2016). In understanding the contexts that practitioners' work in, supervisors recognize the emotional, social, and physical impacts that working within the life-spaces of young people facing adversities have on practitioners (Garfat, et al., 2016). In understanding these contexts, supervisors engage practitioners to create revelatory moments that will elicit professional growth on behalf of both the practitioner and supervisor (Garfat, et al., 2016). This allows supervisors to better understand the importance of implementing "unconditional care" with practitioners, similarly to the ways that practitioners do this with young people (Stuart, 2009).

Like practitioners who treat young people as objects, some supervisors use the characteristic of "connection and engagement" while in relationship with practitioners as a means to exert "power over" them (Kavanagh, 2016). According to Phelan's (2016) model describing the process of professional growth that occurs for supervisors and administrators, many *level one* supervisors experience their authority, sense of competency, and personal safety challenged by practitioners and

other supervisors with whom they work. The experience of being challenged in this way can motivate a supervisor to use controlling techniques and engage in power struggles with the practitioners and other supervisors who they feel are challenging them (Phelan, 2016). This way of "being in relationship" (Garfat, et al., 2013), reinforces the objectification of practitioners by their supervisors, thus perpetuating an illusory sense of their value through fabricated and dishonest forms of connection and engagement.

Like practitioners who fear criticism and worry about their professional competency, supervisors also need to be encouraged to feel safe in their engagements with practitioners (Phelan, 2016). This form of encouragement from their superiors should be done in an effort for supervisors to eventually master the ability to create safe environments where they and the practitioners they supervise can challenge and embrace their practical decisions and thoughts (Phelan, 2016). Most importantly, the supervisory relationship is one that mirrors the practitioner-young person relationship in an effort to teach practitioners how to meaningfully engage and connect with young people as they live their lives (Garfat, 2001). By ensuring that supervisors, through supervision, are taught to treat, and interpret, practitioners as subjects with a voice, the same can be achieved for the young people those practitioners engage.

Mitigating Objectifying Practices Through Mattering

The concept of "mattering" is defined by Charles and Alexander (2014) as a dimension of Self which refers to the perception that we are significant in our world and in the worlds of those whom we care about. The counter to mattering is described by Elliot, Kao, and Grant as, "if people do not share themselves meaningfully with us, if no one listens to what we have to say, if we are interesting to no one, then we must cope with the realization that we do not matter" (2004, p. 339). To a CYC practitioner, the importance of ensuring a young person feels that they matter within, and beyond, the practitioner-young person relationship makes sense (Charles & Alexander, 2014). However, what about the practitioner in

the supervisor-practitioner relationship? Do they, too, need to feel that they matter? If so, what might that look like?

As Charles and Alexander (2014) state, "every one of us needs to feel that we make a difference in the world in both our personal and professional lives" (p. 28). In the field of CYC, many supervisors hold a common misconception that helping practitioners find meaning and feel that they matter in the work they do with young people is a simple task (Charles & Garfat, 2016). However, this could not be further from the truth. As practitioners bring to the supervisory relationship many past experiences, all with contextual nuances, some messages of mattering from the supervisor may not be interpreted as such by the practitioner (Charles & Garfat, 2016). It is for this reason, that the supervisor may have to "overcome a powerful internalized belief that they do not matter" (Charles & Garfat, 2016, p. 23). One way the supervisor can do this is by treating the practitioner as a subject within their supervisory relationship.

According to Charles and Garfat (2016), how the practitioner accepts a message of mattering from their supervisor is dependent on their internal sense of worth, as it is entirely possible that that practitioner has had objectifying experiences in the past: ones that elicited feelings of invalidation, exploitation, and dehumanization (Charles & Garfat, 2016). To counteract these past experiences of being treated as an object, it is important that the supervisor is mindful and thoughtful in their interactions with the practitioner, noting that "expressing mattering" will be key in their interactions (Charles & Garfat, 2016). When the supervisor treats the practitioner as a subject, their relationship is likely to be a supportive one characterized by mutuality and mattering, one person in relation to the other. A subject-subject relationship is equal, not hierarchical, and can be thought of as "accompaniment" (Kornbeck & Jensen, 2013). By this, I mean that the supervisor walks alongside the practitioner, valuing the everyday and the practitioner's professional world as well as their aspirations for the future. In doing so, the supervisor balances professional knowledge and theoretical understanding with experience and reflection (Charles & Garfat, 2016).

However, it should be noted that this type of supervisory relationship is also explicitly personal and professionally informed by the concept of a "professional heart" (Kornbeck & Jensen, 2013). This concept is defined as "feeling like family", although there is always a part of the practitioner that knows the relationship is not a familial one (Kornbeck & Jensen, 2013). Critically, this type of supervisory relationship is rooted in an emotional connection between the supervisor and practitioner, a connection which neither undermines, nor substitutes, for either person's professionalism. Using social pedagogical terms, supervision is a process of upbringing, supporting the practitioner's education, in the broadest sense of the word, through a supportive relationship between supervisor and supervisee (Kornbeck & Jensen, 2013). This perspective is similar to Redl's (1966) notion of "education for life", which speaks to the "need to develop and maintain the vital connection between a young person and the outside world - the family and the community - and their ability to live comfortability in it" (p. 79).

By ensuring a practitioner feels that they matter, the supervisor is fostering self-determinism within the practitioner (Charles & Garfat, 2016). By doing this, the supervisor leaves the practitioner with a responsibility for navigating their environments which may elicit wonder within them. Subjects, or in this case practitioners, require agency and its associated elements. Effective supervisors want practitioners to have a sense of agency, even if that sense of agency creates problems for the supervisor (Gharabaghi, 2016, personal communication). As even the most exceptional supervisors, and practitioners, recognize that they make errors or encounter problems, and that if they do not experience these things, then they are not taking the risks necessary to become the best they can be, errors and problems are a sign of development (Garfat, 2017, personal communication).

Conclusion

According to Charles and Alexander (2014), "people need social connection to thrive and interactions with others to affirm that we are alive and that we have a purpose and a role in this world. We need to believe that we make a difference in

the world. These are feelings that unite all of us regardless of our experiences or positions" (p. 30). Throughout this article, it has been suggested that in applying the relational CYC characteristic of "connection and engagement" to the supervisory relationship, supervisors can either treat practitioners as objects or subjects. The former resulting in dishonest ways of being with other, and the latter illuminates the potentially transformative nature of being in relationship with other (Garfat, 2008). Also, the role of "mattering" was discussed to suggest that if a supervisor ensures that the practitioner feels they matter, it is far less likely the practitioner will be treated as an object. Ultimately, it is, in part, the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure the practitioner feels they matter in the work they do with young people by reinforcing it through their actions and words. Oftentimes, this is not a simple task, but one that requires perseverance to ensure the supervisee is treated as a subject and made to believe they are important, valued, and meaningful.

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Is Formal Supervision Necessary?

Laura Steckley

I've never received regular formal supervision in any of the places I've worked. Aside from annual appraisals, it would be fair to say I've had almost none. This is not to say I didn't have any supervision. On the contrary, everywhere I've worked I've sought out and received generous supervision from all of my supervisors, as well as guidance and support from more experienced and/or knowledgeable colleagues.

Of course, good supervision doesn't just happen in formal supervision sessions and it's helpful to recognise the virtues of informal supervision. In a previous article in this journal, Mary Burnison offers a lovely account of her experiences of informal supervision:

> *What I remember most was when he would stop by the group home* *[…] It was the best of informal, "on the hoof" supervision. I felt cared* *about as an employee and that he was interested in the work I was* *doing with a group of lively and sometimes difficult adolescent girls […]* *he never felt intrusive, authoritarian or one-up.* (2007 n.p.)

While I tended to elicit the informal supervision I received, in almost all cases, I felt valued, respected and supported by my supervisors in a way similar to what Mary describes. This raises a question of whether formal supervision is really necessary.

I would wager that most who come into the field prefer less formal ways of working. It's one of the things that differentiates what we do in the life-space from what therapists do, for example, in the therapy hour. Our practice literature

encourages us to think about our work in terms of the everyday (Garfat, 2002) and capitalising on the opportunities it affords (Ward, 2002). The bulk of our work isn't done in a formal manner.

Perhaps more importantly, whether based on prior experiences of teachers, former bosses or other authority figures, some people have very negative associations with formal supervision. Too often supervision has (or still is) only used to address a problem, a problem which is almost always located with the practitioner and not the supervisor. These negative associations can be so deep and so automatic as to colour people's experience of a well-intended supervisor who has no intention of using sessions to criticize or hold them accountable. I've had colleagues stress for the whole week leading up to their supervision session.

Is all this stress necessary, when we know how valuable informal supervision can be? Is formal supervision just one more trapping of managerialism?

It doesn't have to be. It's important to stay clear about what supervision is in service to – supporting and developing practitioners so that they can support the development of children and young people – and not let supervision become the end in itself. This is one of the key problems with managerialism: procedures, practices and targets become the 'master', rather being 'servants' to providing a quality service.

In the long term, the stress around supervision isn't necessary but it may have to be overcome in the short term. Key to this is doing supervision, a form of *indirect practice*, in a way that is congruent with doing *direct practice* – and there's a lot written in this journal and elsewhere on this important parallel.

Unity Through Relationship 2017

Still, even if related stress can be minimised and managerialist trappings can be avoided, is formal supervision really needed?

Yes.

As I mentioned above, I consistently sought out guidance, support and feedback from my supervisors and others, but this was due, in part, to the fact that I had mostly positive experiences of authority figures. So initiating impromptu supervision when I needed it was pretty easy for me to do. This obviously won't be the case for everyone. Still, like Mary's example, the responsibility to initiate this kind of supervision could be held by both people, with the supervisor finding ways to connect and make spaces for listening, exploring, meaning making, coaching, identifying training needs, and/or sharing feedback. This might even be a necessary bridging strategy for those members of staff who are particularly resistant to formal supervision. Yet, on its own I would still argue this approach to supervision is inadequate.

Supervisors will also likely have their own resistance to supervision. Whether it's also based on previous poor experiences – who really wants to turn into the jerk who used to supervise them? – a lack of experience altogether, or a particular dynamic with one or more supervisees, it can be really easy just not to do it in spite of one's best intentions. With the high volume of demands and distractions in most life-space work, if supervision isn't planned (with a commitment to following through with the plan) then those processes of resistance can easily ensure it doesn't happen. I can remember the uncomfortable shift from supervisee to supervisor and how nervous and inadequate I felt approaching formal sessions. Who was I to be providing supervision to this more experienced colleague? What should we talk about? Did he feel I was on a power trip? What did I really have to offer her? Other times I anticipated a difficult conversation – one that perhaps needed to happen but one that I felt ill-equipped to have. So it was sometimes easier to avoid, and even when both my colleague and I were positively anticipating a session, it was sometimes really difficult to make it happen.

Planning regular sessions doesn't ensure they will happen, but it increases the likelihood. Specifying the duration affords predictability and more conscious choices about how to use the time. Sharing an agenda gives a sense of what to expect. Keeping a brief note of what's discussed supports continuity and coverage of all of the functions of supervision. For example, a highly practical supervisor can use the notes from her sessions to reflect on whether she is making spaces for meaning making.

I have seen supervision contracts espoused in some training, and I'm not sure whether this is too formal – I'd be interested in people's experiences of them – but I think discussion, right from the very first session, about how both parties would like to use the time as well as how they would like to see their relationship develop is important. I consistently ask my dissertation supervisees in our first session what they would like from supervision and what they expect from me, and I also offer my views. This sets an important foundation to normalise discussion about what is happening between us, there in the session and there in the relationship (as I write this, I'm reminded of Thom Garfat's wonderful chapter on the inter-person in-between from 2008). It's much easier to do this at the beginning than later, when we hit some difficulty. And because of this initial conversation, that difficulty is less likely to be swept under the carpet, if it happens at all. Starting this way also signals that the relationship and the sessions belong to both of us.

So essentially my column this month has been a pitch for formal supervision. In my corner of the world, I'm still hearing from far too many practitioners that it isn't happening with any regularity. It's easy to blame this on superficial (and very real) reasons – busyness, competing demands. The reasons below the surface are accessible and recognisable, and they're addressable too. Call it planned supervision if that works better, but it's more than the planned part that makes it so important. If it can be boiled down, I think it has everything to do with making things explicit. Identifying feelings and assumptions, co-creating aspirations, voicing difficulties – and naming the process enables more considered, jointly owned choices about how that process unfolds and what it becomes.

So, whether you're in a good supervision zone or struggling to get there, I wish all of you well in your efforts.

Until next time …

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@CYCAREWORKERS

Humour in the Supervisory Relationship

Shannon Brown

Introduction

> *Audience member: "What are you supposed to do if you are not very funny?"*
> *John Digney: "Get a new job"* (Digney, n.d)

In the early nineteenth century, the concept of humour was described as having a "sense of the ridiculous" (Martin, 2007, p. 24). Over time, having a 'sense of humour', which meant to suggest that one, had a "sensitivity to laughable things" (Martin, 2007, p. 24), replaced the notion of ridiculousness. It was a highly desirable feature that spoke positively to one's personal characteristics (Martin, 2007). However, as time went on, what it meant to have a sense of humour was overshadowed by what it suggested if one did *not* have a sense of humour. For instance, one was considered to be "excessively serious, fanatical, or egotistical, an inflexible, temperamental extremist" (Martin, 2007, p. 24) if they did not display characteristics of good humour. Humour is essential for the physical and mental health development of an individual, and it is present throughout many facets of society including for propaganda purposes and in political arenas, health care institutions and the media (Martin, 2007). Despite the multitude of definitions relating to humour and considering the contextual and varied methods of delivery, humour is a significant tool that can be used to aid in communication, demonstrate caring, encourage creativity and equalize power-imbalanced relationships (Digney, 2008a). This article will consider the use of humour in a supervisory relationship within the field of Child and Youth Care (CYC). Specifically, it will explore the

complex ways that humour can be present in the supervision process when considering the predicted developmental stages that a worker goes through as outlined by Jack Phelan (1990; 2010; 2015; 2016). This article will also explore considerations with the use of humour in the supervisory relationship, such as Phelan's lack of reference to relational development in his three-stage framework.

It is imperative that this exploration begins by considering a definition of humour that will assist in providing a framework for implementation in a CYC supervisory process. Digney (2005) proposes a definition that positions humour as, "A message whose ingenuity or verbal skill or incongruity has the power to evoke laughter" (Para. 4). This suggests that humour involves the delivery of a message that is absurd, which causes one to find it funny and laugh (Digney, 2005). Depending on the delivery method and the context of the humour, I believe that there is a considerable risk that its effectiveness is marred by how another may interpret it and what it may create in the relationship between two people. As such, for the context of considering humour in a CYC supervision process, I will focus on the therapeutic use of humour in relationships as opposed to the use of sarcasm, which can carry negative and demeaning connotations. Humour is far more than 'being funny'. In the supervision process, humour can be intentionally used to engage in moments of rhythmicity (Maier, 1979), which aid in the development of nurturing and trusting relationships.

Level 1 – The Competent Caregiver

Phelan (1990) has proposed a developmental framework to consider the stages that a worker undergoes as they progress in their experience as Child and Youth Care practitioners. Practitioners' seeking to establish personal safety and develop appropriate relational boundaries characterizes the first developmental stage (Phelan, 2016). "Sensory overload as well as fear of assault create physically palpable stress that increases during the first few weeks on the job" (Phelan, 1990, p. 134). As a result, workers make logical but short-sighted decisions in an effort to use external control techniques to offset the behavioural testing that a young person may be engaged in.

Phelan (1990) also suggests that utilizing previous training in therapeutic interventions is not an expectation at this level due to the immediate need of establishing safety, predictability and control. As one can imagine, when we feel unsafe (physically or emotionally) in a situation, the physical response of stress can be significant, and the potential to trigger an increase in feelings of anxiety is probable. Phelan (2016) suggests that the supervisor's task when in relationship with a Level 1 practitioner is to assist the supervisee in increasing comfortability in making mistakes and to encourage open communication, which will then help to create a sense of safety both internally as well as externally.

When considering the supervisor's use of humour with a Level 1 practitioner, it should be used with caution and only used to minimize feelings of anxiety and stress. I make this suggestion so that it does not impede in the development of relational safety by providing an interaction that could cause a worker to misinterpret a comment or joke being about them or the way they are with children and youth. As such, humour in this context should be directed at external incongruences as opposed to a specific moment that the worker may have just experienced. I believe that using humour to comment on current events or an event in the media, for example, is an appropriate use of this tool. In this example, humour is used as a means of releasing stress by momentarily diverting one's attention away from the here and now. Humour's ability to release tensioned feelings of stress has been well documented (Chubb, 2010; Digney, 2008b; Puder, 2003). In fact, Puder (2003) states "Laughter is credited with increasing the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers and protectors against depression" (Para. 7). Walsh (2015) suggest that humour "Psychologically… reduces stress, helps a person to relax, and enhances emotional communication. Physically it relaxes muscles, stimulates circulation, produces endorphins, and reduces one's pulse rate and blood pressure" (p. 71). In an environment in which a supervisee is establishing feelings of control and safety and must contend with inconsistency in their responses from children and youth, feelings of stress and anxiety are expected. Through a supervisory relationship, humour can play an integral part in

mitigating these stressful situations. By telling a joke, or making a quick quip about a general topic, one gives the supervisee permission to break from the moment and gives the body an opportunity to recover and release tension that may be building up. "The supervisor can encourage the new practitioner to relax about making mistakes and talk about the dynamics on the job" (Phelan, 2016, p. 59). If one were to make a joke about an interaction that the supervisee just experienced with a young person, and relational safety had not yet developed, the worker may feel that the humour is being directed at their performance as opposed to a light-hearted attempt to release built up stress through laughing. Thus, I believe that the supervisor has a considerable opportunity in this stage to use humour as a means of disarming stress that may be building up as a worker becomes comfortable with the tasks of this particular stage.

Level 2 – The Treatment Planner and Change Agent

Phelan (2010) suggests that the initial stage of development lasts between 9-15 months. After this time, "The job tasks, and even the clients, become more predictable and order often emerges from the chaos" (Phelan, 1990, p. 134). As practitioners continue, they ease into Level 2 of this developmental journey. This level is characterized as the level in which practitioners "fully begin to use theory and creative strategies in helping people" (Phelan, 2016, p. 60). In this stage, workers can let down their guard and live alongside children, youth and families. According to Phelan (2016), "Relationships become the main ingredient in all interactions" (p. 60). As such, a supervisor's task in relationship with a Level 2 practitioner is to help the worker exude less external control and develop deep relational connections with children and families (Phelan, 2016).

In considering Phelan's framework for the development of a CYC practitioner in relation to humour, it gives substantial respect to the process of the journey, both for a practitioner and for the practitioner who (most likely) has been moved up into a supervisor role. When one begins to imagine how certain characteristics present in this relationship, one should contemplate the context of the worker's development. In

doing so, I believe that it assists in determining how humour may be used to aid or impede a task from being accomplished. With a Level 2 practitioner, Phelan (1990) suggests that they have moved past developing relational and physical safety and should be well on their way in developing efficient and flexible treatment interventions for young people. As such, in a supervisory relationship, practitioners at this level should be challenged to utilize the knowledge that was gained while they were in training and revisit the foundational theories that shape the unique role CYC practitioners play in the lives of children and youth. At this point of development, the practitioner is managing well in their journey and begins to use the relationship as an agent of change with young people (Phelan, 2016). When I examine the potential for humour at this developmental level, it becomes evident that it need not be as constricted and specific as in the previous level. Humour in this context can be more laid back than in the previous stage and can still be used as a tool to release stress, but also as a means to assist the worker in developing concepts of Self through the exploration of personal incongruences in relation to their work with children and youth. As such, the supervisory relationship becomes an instrument to help the practitioner make sense out of the reality of their intricate role. Being humorous about a complex situation or about a challenging intervention that is about to happen can be done in a way that promotes thoughtful reflection and consideration. Where this type of humour may not be appropriate at the beginning stage of development, it can be used in this second stage through the relationship when it is used purposefully and with respect.

Level 3 – The Creative Free Thinking Professional

The final stage of development that a CYC practitioner moves to is one that is characterized by a firm sense of Self, an ability to be creative and flexible in intervention approaches and has "an 'observing ego' and a 'conscious use of self' ability in all her actions" (Phelan, 2016, p. 61). At this level of development, supervisor and supervisee engage in a mutually beneficial relationship as capable colleagues. I believe that in this stage, the use of humour is safer then in previous stages due to the workers continued development. Safety, both relational and

physical are established, the practitioner has an ability to work in the life space along with children and families while integrating theory and creativity into their interventions and they are reflective and ready to give back to the field in a multitude of different ways (Phelan, 2016). At this point, I believe that humour can then be used as a means of deepening the relationship through banter and providing moments of fun. This relaxed relationship allows for humour to be more personal than in past levels. I think that it will take work to find a balance as to where and when humour can be utilized so that it remains an intentional tool, while also becoming a natural element of a supervisory relationship.

Communication and Humour

While there are many structured ways to use humour in the supervision relationship, it will be most effective when one moves away from structure. Instead, a focus on shifting "to other forms that occur spontaneously in the course of ordinary conversation, such as teasing, irony, and witty banter" (Martin, 2007, p. 114) becomes appropriate. Martin (2007) cites sociologist Michael Mulkay (1988) when he explains that "people interact with one another using two basic modes of communication: serious and humorous" (p. 114). Citing Mulkay again, Martin (2007) speaks about serious communication as being clear, consistent and logically orientated. These communicators believe that there is a single external reality that all people subscribe to, which in and of itself, raises concerns. "Mulkay views humour as a way of incorporating, embracing, and even celebrating the contradictions, incongruities, and ambiguities inherent in interpersonal relationships. By simultaneously expressing opposite meanings, the humorous mode provides a shared conceptual framework that embraces contradictions, rather than avoiding them, and thereby enables people to negotiate otherwise difficult interpersonal transactions" (Martin, 2007, p. 115). When discussing the developmental stages of a CYC practitioner, Phelan does not spend much time speaking about the relational context of the supervision process. Rather he focuses on the tasks and the practical development of a worker. However, I believe that it

is important that we consider how the relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee is also developing in relation to the different stages. For when we do, we discover the different tools that can be used to mitigate feelings of insecurity, apprehension and power on the part of both people in the relationship. This is where Martin's (2007) discussion about using humour to address interpersonal difficulties becomes necessary. With a Level 2 practitioner, there is an expectation that the worker uses self, theory and everything in between to develop meaningful interventions. However, we must also consider how the practitioner is developing in relation to the other. When I imagine this task in a practical sense, I believe that the supervisor could use elements of wit and banter to acknowledge a game a practitioner is playing that relates to the supervisory process. Delano and Shah (2011) cite Alfred Kadushin (1975) when they surmise; "when there is an imbalance in the supervisory relationship with one party feeling disempowered they will play manipulative 'games' to seize power in an unhealthy way" (pg. 177). Both practitioners and supervisors can engage in 'game playing' and the task on both parties is to "constructively confront the games in a way that opens a forum to discuss the relationship dynamics fueling the games" (Delano and Shah, 2011, p. 177). For instance, if a practitioner is avoiding supervision by being 'too busy' or 'being absent' a quick quip, like "Oh look! There goes the polkaroo again!" said with a smile may convey an important message. It acknowledges that the supervisor recognizes the supervisee is taking steps not to be 'seen' and suggests, through the use of humour that there is a concern. To the benefit of the supervisee, this comment could mitigate the power dynamic of being 'caught', may eliminate some fear about re-engaging and may open an opportunity to acknowledge actions that may have led to the situation. However, perhaps it will not. It could be interpreted as misusing power by the supervisor, depending on the developing relationship between the supervisee and supervisor. Although just one example, it demonstrates how an efficient use of humour can be weaved into a relationship to assist in the building, and the development of, an effective supervisory relationship.

Considerations

While it is not difficult to see the benefits of humour in relation to the work that CYC practitioners are engaged in, there are obvious considerations that must be taken into account. These considerations transcend developmental level and must be kept in mind throughout the course of any relationship. Humour in any context "might be helpful to one individual and harmful to another. Those immersed in the crisis may experience humour aimed at the crisis as directed at themselves and therefore, as insensitive" (Digney, 2008b, Para. 11). It is imperative that the supervisor develops skills to know when and how humour can be beneficial in a relationship. In addition, knowing the practitioner's personality and understanding how they communicate is an important consideration before injecting humour into the relationship. Puder (2003) suggests that one considers the "timing, relationship and content" (Para. 17). This supports the need for supervisors to be cognizant of the use of humour and the development of the interpersonal relationship between themselves and the supervisee. An ironic joke or premature banter used on one that is establishing relational safety in the context of a new role can threaten this sense of security and lead one to disengage from seeking support. However, once a practitioner has evolved in their role, humour can go on to be a valuable element in deepening a relationship with self and other.

To be humorous is a skill. To know when, where and how to use this skill in relationships with others is a gift. As supervisors, we must value the opportunity to utilize this gift to develop relationships with supervisee's further. The benefit of humour is known to improve physiological and psychological health. While there has been considerable research done on the therapeutic use of humour by CYC practitioners, little has been done on how it can parallel in the supervisory relationship and the developmental levels of the practitioner – and there is considerable room for this relationship to use humour.

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'Hanging In' in CYC Supervision

Kate Hann

I have been a frontline Child and Youth Care (CYC) practitioner (CYC) for fifteen years. I am passionate about the field and have the utmost respect for our ongoing professionalization. I recently embarked on my journey as a Master's candidate in the Masters of CYC program at Ryerson University and , I have been reflecting on the importance of supervision in the field and the supervisor/supervisee relationship. I have been quite captivated by the parallel between the relational practice that guides frontline work and the supervisee/supervisor relationship. Effective supervision in CYC is imperative for quality care and there is a direct correlation between access to quality supervision and the quality of care for young people (Maier, 1987). According to Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman (2016), "…when the form of supervision parallels the form of practice we wish to encourage, then the practitioner learns and practices a 'way of doing and being' through the supervisory process (p. 30/31)." Thus, Garfat and Fulcher's (2013) 25 characteristics of relational practice can also be applied to the supervisor/supervisee relationship.

Garfat (2001) discusses the importance of CYC supervision in motivating workers to follow through on goals and interventions with young people. In addition, supervision can challenge a supervisee's perceptions and empower them to see how they can influence a situation, through increased self-awareness instead of blaming others (Graves, 2005). Hilton (2005) recognizes the importance of supervision in accessing support and further learning. Some of the benefits include feeling heard, resolving issues, increased self-efficacy and confidence, the supervisor

being more aware of the program and improved staff morale at an organizational level (Jenkinson, 2009).

According to Garfat and Fulcher (2011), 'hanging in' with young people means "… that the CYC practitioner does not give up when 'times are tough.' Rather, one hangs in and works things through, demonstrating commitment and caring… (p15)." Since CYC Supervision parallels the relational practice between frontline workers and children and youth (Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman, 2016), the meaning remains the same when applied to the approach utilized by CYC Supervisors. If they "hang in" with the supervisee, the practitioner will in turn experience and then practice the characteristic of 'hanging in' with young people. As Delano and Shah (2015) say so eloquently, "as the supervisor treats the worker, the worker will tend to treat the child and family (p. 78)." This characteristic is therefore vital to all aspects and stages of the supervisory role. 'Hanging in' needs to be an intentional focus from job offer through to becoming a seasoned supervisor. Despite the challenges that may arise, the supervisor must continue to persevere and 'hang in' with both Self and other and not lose hope or commitment when times get strenuous.

The Job Offer: 'Hanging in' with Self

Often frontline workers are offered supervisory positions due to their success in, and commitment to, direct work with young people. This can be challenging for the prospective leader and should be a time of great self-reflection and patience. As the use of Self is one of the most explored concepts in CYC practice (Garfat & Fulcher, 2011), it is important to recognize and reflect on all the moving pieces during this time of potential change. It is important to be patient as one gets clarity about the role they are considering before simply accepting it to ensure that the new role compliments and fits one's goals, personality and current skill set. It is, I believe, vital that you "hang in" with yourself and the process and give yourself time to reflect on the 5 areas outlined by Delano & Shah (2015). These include reflecting on strengths and areas of improvement, exploring whether or not supervision will

be provided, exploring whether or not professional development opportunities are available, evaluating the impacts on life outside the work environment, and timelines for the transition. I believe it is also pertinent for the prospective supervisor to take the time and 'hang in' while making themselves vulnerable in exploring some of the reasons why they would like to become a supervisor and what personal or professional need/benefits may be met/attained by accepting this role. Is it a desire for more power and control? Is it for financial gain, recognition or status? Is it to ensure culpability? This may seem an easy process, however it requires thorough and honest examination to properly assess your suitability (Garfat, 2017, personal communication). This can be a challenging stage and taking the extra time to talk to human resources, friends, mentors and family members throughout will ensure you are adequately prepared and informed about the new role and the 'hanging in' it will ultimately entail.

'Hanging in' During the Transition from Frontline Practitioner to Supervisor

Once the job offer has been accepted, transitioning from frontline practitioner to supervisor can be difficult. In fact, it may be one of the most challenging transitions as it means shifting focus from the familiar 'hanging in' with young people, an aspect CYCP's hold great value and pleasure in, to 'hanging in' with the supervisees. In addition, there may be administrative and evaluative tasks that require attention. Phelan (2006) discusses how the "beginner CYC supervisor should view themselves in a developmental process and be patient with themselves as they learn and adjust to the new position" (as cited in Delano & Shah, 2015, p. 80). In addition, the social and professional relationships may also take a different form, causing potential tension. For example, the new supervisor may have previously been friends with the members of the staff team and is now in a position of power and accountability. This transition may be difficult as new supervisors are often discouraged from being friends with their supervisees, at least in the beginning stages (Delano & Shah, 2015), to ensure their decision making and performance appraisal processes are unbiased. Staff may expect special treatment

or luxuries because of the previous friendship. It will take time to understand the culture of the staff team, community and services provided. This adjustment may generate uncomfortable feelings of longing or regret in the initial stages of this transition.

Whether one is moving from being a team member to a supervisory role or a new supervisor coming into an agency, shifting/building new relationships takes time and patience and the ability to "hang in" in order to withstand these necessary tasks is paramount.

According to Phelan (2016), a new supervisor is considered a "Level One Supervisor" and relies primarily on structure, routine and control measures, with a particular vulnerability to engagement in power struggles, while they establish their sense of safety and mastery in the new role. Demanding moments may arise as relational boundaries are set between new supervisors and level 2 or 3 practitioners (Phelan, 2016). The new supervisor must 'hang in' while she navigates the role, mitigates the new power dynamic and attempts to access the much needed supervision and support from her superiors. The supervisor's supervisor must also be committed to 'hanging in' at this stage as they, too, will need to provide the care, support and supervision needed to enable and empower the new supervisor to become proficient in their new venture.

Creating relational safety (Garfat, 2015) at this time is imperative and takes time and patience. 'Hanging in' with supervisees through the process of getting to know each individual and learning how best to address concerns and conflict with each, is imperative. Creating a climate where people feel as if they can take risks, make mistakes and one that promotes reflection versus correction requires attention and intentionality. Self-awareness is also crucial here. Being actively self-aware is an ongoing process that doesn't have a beginning or an end and is an ongoing lifelong journey. Being self-aware means being cognizant of one's own internal dialogue, physiological responses and feelings, and thoughts and behaviors associated with all interactions with others. Being truly self-aware includes recognizing the reasons (both historic and current) behind the "meaning-making" (Garfat & Fulcher, 2013)

in each situation. The supervisor is encouraged to reflect on how their actions and reactions are affecting the sense of security within the new relationship and how they are shaping and contributing to the context of each encounter (Garfat, 2007). This requires reflection and knowledge of Self, a progressive journey which requires 'hanging in.' As with the young people with whom we engage, establishing and maintaining relational safety can be a journey of progress and digression due to the dynamic elements each staff member and supervisor brings to each interaction. Previous experiences of the supervisor/supervisee within supervision relationships can influence openness to receiving support from a supervisor and frame the way the supervision process is viewed (Garfat, 2007). It then becomes the role of the supervisor to build trust and attempt to provide a different experience; an alternative way of being in relationship with a supervisor. 'Hanging in', with both Self and other at this stage, will ensure that 'safe' relationships are built with the staff team and safe forums are created for exploring practice, to challenge and provide feedback, to recognize influence on context and meaning making and to ensure all members of the team feel supported and valued.

'Hanging in' Once Established in the Supervisory Role

Once the new supervisor has endured the transitional journey from frontline to supervisor, the focus shifts from 'hanging in' with Self and supervisee to including all the other tasks encompassed in the Supervisory role. This includes 'hanging in' with practitioners once the relationship is built, through the inherent challenges of working with at risk youth and with those who may be experiencing burnout or even vicarious trauma. It also involves 'hanging in' when there isn't as much time to utilize the Daily Life Events (DLE) approach to supervision (Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman, 2016) the way one may desire, and know is most effective, due to conflicting administrative and program management demands. The DLE approach highlights the importance of utilizing the characteristics of relational practice to support the development of the supervisee's skills and efficiency while the interactions and interventions are occurring (Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman, 2016).

The supervisor is now faced with the task of having to support new practitioners in their developmental journey, seasoned practitioners who may be practicing outdated CYC approaches/interventions, or highly skilled CYC practitioners who have more experience than them. This can cause friction due to conflicting approaches and the reliance on power and control commonly demonstrated by new CYCs (Phelan, 2016). The focus with newer workers, for example, may be more on providing structure and routine and utilizing behaviour management techniques rather than on relational practice and creative interventions and engagement tools. It is the role of the supervisor to provide the support required for the practitioner, whatever their level of development, to reflect on the approaches being utilized and understand how past or present experiences may be playing a role in the young person's experiences of them and explore alternative ways of engaging. In frontline work, CYCP's make a concerted effort to see past the behaviours of young people in attempt to understand the need being met (Fewster, 2011; Garfat,2002). It is also then important for the supervisor to 'hang in' and explore the needs being met by the supervisee's behaviour to further support their evolution as a practitioner. There is a gradual and continual transformation that happens as you become more experienced and supervision can enhance this learning through training and education to create the circumstances necessary for change (Maier, 1985). The supervisor must then 'hang in' with the supervisee as they learn new skills and interventions and explore and practice new approaches.

Not only are supervisors responsible for promoting and supporting the development of the supervisees, but they are also tasked with completing the multiple tasks associated with program development and service delivery (Garfat, Fulcher & Freeman, 2016). Supervisors are becoming more and more subjected to insecure work environments and are obliged to acquire new skills. These often include learning how to establish and maintain collaborative working relationships/partnerships with other organizations, communities and government officials (Seel, 2014), In addition they must respond to the funding and

accountability pressures and stay on top of the current political and economic trends (Seel, 2014).

Supervisors often need to learn how to enhance the organization's reputation by building capacity with regards to policy research and development and increase their financial management skills. These competing demands make it increasingly difficult to utilize a DLE approach to supervision. This is not usually part of the frontline work of CYC's and therefore an unfamiliar experience for those new to the position. It is then important to 'hang in' with Self during this learning curve.

It is not uncommon for CYCP's to engage with young people who have been impacted by trauma (McCann & Pearlman, 1990). Empathy is at the forefront of CYC practice and it is through the process of empathetic engagement that the CYC is able to grasp a young person's traumatic experience and provide effective therapeutic support (Bloom, 2009). Graves (2005) recognizes the emotional intensity of the work in the field and states that ensuring provision of supervision can make one feel listened to, validated and can prevent burnout and vicarious trauma . Providing frequent and formal/informal supervision is powerful in the prevention of vicarious trauma (Holmes, 2015). It provides the CYCP an opportunity to speak about their experiences, reactions and allow time to reflect on the meaning of the work (Gharabaghi, 2009). It is therefore vital for the supervisor to 'hang in' and support the practitioner in acknowledging the symptoms related to vicarious trauma, recognize the impacts of vicarious trauma or burnout on their practice and to seek support to cope with them.

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Conclusion

As with frontline practice in the CYC field, supervision can be rewarding and emotionally challenging. Supervision is paramount in ensuring the best quality of care is achieved for young people, supervisees and supervisors. By 'hanging in' the new supervisor can continue to mature and provide the much-needed support and commitment required to encourage the professional development of CYCP's. It means 'hanging in' through the exploration of the ins and outs of the new position, while switching from direct care to leadership, while learning to confront observed behaviours and performance concerns, while building relational safety and while becoming more self-aware and supporting supervisees in their reflective practice. It means 'hanging in' through proposal writing in a competitive funding climate, possible cut-backs to programs and strategic planning. It means to 'hang in' while new skills are honed. Lastly, it means to continue to 'hang in'' even when things appear to be okay, recognizing that growth is gradual and often develops further by set-backs (Garfat & Fulcher, 2013).

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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From Colorado, on Grand-Parenting Duties

Warm greetings from Northern Colorado where we have been on grand-parenting duty for the past fortnight before the new school term begins. With this month's edition of CYC-Online dedicated to Supervision, our return to direct child care duties almost qualifies since it involved peer supervision as Granny and Papa sought to plan activities, compare notes and review progress through each day during the end of the Summer holiday break.

A week of unseasonable weather along the Rocky Mountains Front Range

Having left the Southern Hemisphere Winter, we anticipated Summer heat but unseasonable weather presented daily thunderstorms during the first week (even though the new leader here denies that climate change exists while Houston gets hammered by another hurricane and severe flooding!). So, lots of indoor activities and bus rides into town for ice creams.
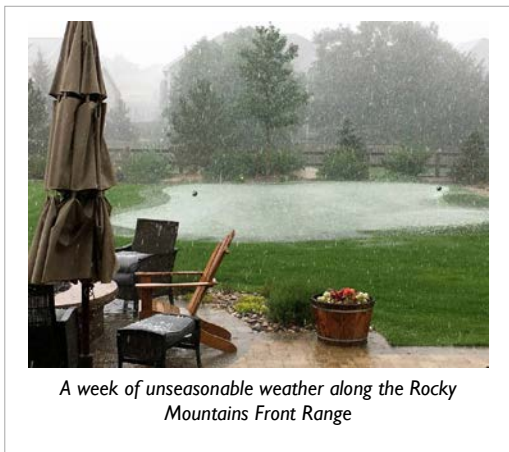
As the weather improved, so activities moved into outdoor mode with the local swimming pool offering opportunities, along with fishing for crawdads in the local stream. The crawdad 'fishers' used knitting wool and a bent paperclip with bits of chicken for bait. Great excitement as their fishing efforts yielded a dozen crawdads kept in a bucket of water.

Once the crawdads got wise to our efforts to catch them and our bait ran low, it came time to release them back into the stream so that we could catch them again at a future time. Instead of pouring the bucket of water with crawdads back into the stream, we learned how to reach down into the bucket and bring the little critters up out of the water on a flat hand and then into the water. Not an immediately enjoyable activity but successful in the end.

A visit to the local farm park offered another set of activities. Feeding the animals was a highlight, especially the battle with goats around who kept the bag of food!

Improving weather offered new opportunities for outdoor activities

Fishing for crawdads in the local stream

Catch and release crawdads but not in my hand!

A visit to a local farm park to feed the animals

Flying High trampoline park tired everyone out quickly

Energy levels for a 5 and 7 year-old are of course far higher than that operating for the grandparents! A visit to the trampoline park thus offered perfect opportunities to wear the young ones out while grandparents 'supervised' from the sidelines. Amazing facilities!

Then it was a drive to the Denver Zoo and opportunities to watch the elephant show along with tracking down the special exhibit of dinosaurs that moved and roared in 13 different locations around the park. The hatching of a new Crested Crane along with the snakes and reptiles were seemingly the other highlights for our young enthusiasts.

A special treat during this visit was being in the right place on earth to watch the full solar eclipse which drew people to prime viewing locations throughout the USA. It is hard to fathom that the population of the State of Wyoming doubled in size during the weekend leading up to this meteorological event! Our young ones loved it, special glasses and all.

And as each day got closer to the start of the new school year, we found ourselves dealing with anxieties around starting school with a new teacher, new classmates and new expectations about reading and learning. It's easy to underestimate just how much children worry about the unknowns of a new school year. But then, after Day 1, all seemed ok. And the grandparents go 'off duty' and contemplate holiday time. It was great fun – even if tiring!

A visit to the Denver Zoo and the elephant performance
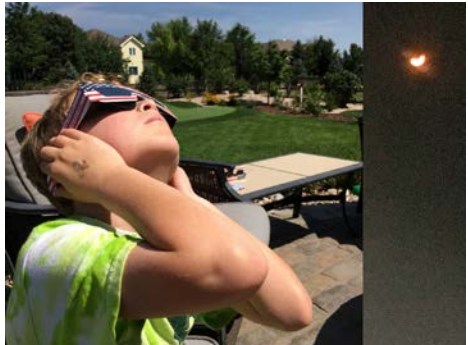
Watching the solar eclipse safely

Information

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