

# CYC-Online

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



**Using What We Know For Sure  
to Keep Hope Alive**

**Professionalization  
Through Doing**

**Canaries in the Coal Mine**

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

**Issue 230 / April 2018**



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# Play Ball!

James Freeman



It's baseball season in much of North America, and it's certainly in full swing at my home. My middle son is nine years old and is playing on a local youth league. Not a day goes by where he doesn't have practice with his team, a game, or some sort of study or practice of the sport.

It's a lot of work and a bit of sacrifice on part of our whole family. He appreciates it and we certainly enjoy the games – especially when they are on Saturday and local Santa Maria style tri-tip sandwiches are available at the snack shop at the fields. Really, more important than the grill is watching the young boys and girls enjoy the anticipation and thrill of the game on the field.



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Why do we do it? First of all, baseball is natural in my son. I wish I could claim that his ability at the sport was genetic or due to his father's smooth coaching. The reality is it is totally natural and a gift he brings into the world. He loves it and it is something he seems designed to do. It's his first year playing and his coaches and team parents find that hard to believe.

Secondly, it gives our family something to rally around. My daughter also played basketball over the winter and just as much we enjoyed supporting her in practice and on game days. Sport gives a family (or any group) something to focus on and nurture the strengths and effort of individuals and a team.

Thirdly, team sport focuses on and nurtures the strengths of those who participate. What better pastime is there than watching young people try, struggle, and succeed in getting better at something?

Most of all, sport brings out the human desire to see the best in humanity. Just this past week, the Blue Jays, Canada's contribution to the American League East division of Major League Baseball and whose home is at Rogers Centre in downtown Toronto, released a new video highlighting their work through Blue Jay's Cares #unstoppablekids – the community outreach sponsored by the league to 'inspire positive social change'. In it they share the following lyrics sung to the tune of the traditional "Take me out to the ballgame":

*Take me out to the ballgame  
All I need is one chance  
Life hasn't always been easy for me  
This is my big opportunity  
Can't you see my potential?  
If not it's really a shame  
A place on the team  
For me it would mean  
A whole new ballgame*



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Check out the video and more at <http://toronto.bluejays.mlb.com/tor/jays-care/unstoppable-kids>

Miles, an eight year-old who uses a wheelchair says “A barrier is nothing when you’re unstoppable”.

Nylla, a ten year-old girl says, “Yeah, I bat like a girl. A girl who bats .318”.

Kalifa, age ten, says the sport “...opened up a part of myself I didn’t even know was there. That’s the part that helped me make friends, helped me get here today – it’s the part that started to make me believe I was unstoppable”.

Every kid is ‘unstoppable’ as Kalifa expressed. Even those we may find difficult to identify and name strengths and gifts. Even those who have been dealt such a bad circumstance in life that the challenges seem unsurmountable.

Whether or not our most challenging young people enjoy sport or not, let’s not give up on looking for and naming their strengths and potential.

With you in the joy and journey this month.



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# Transitions & Transformations



## Influencing Change through Relational Practice

20th Canadian · 12th Triennial International  
Child & Youth Care Conference, May 2-4, 2018, Richmond, BC

May 1st, 2018

## CYC Education Day

**Topic:** *The integration of relational principles and practices within post-secondary CYC classrooms and curriculum.*

**Aim:** *Drawing on the 4 R's, respect, relevance, reciprocity and responsibility as guiding principles (Kirkness, 2013), the aim of this year's Education Day is to foster an inclusive space that will encourage creativity and connectivity between CYC learners and CYC educators.*

**What to Expect:** *A full day of learning, sharing and celebrating CYC Education. Beginning with 10 x 10 x 10: Ten Talks about Transitions and Transformations in CYC Education. Ten minutes – Ten slides – and Ten talks intended to ignite thinking and inspire conversations about CYC Education. Presented by CYC Students, Educators and Community Partners. Sharing of pre-conference educator and learner survey to be followed by Collaborative café style groups exploring themes emerging from the morning. We hope you will leave Education Day energized, reconnected and resourced with new ideas and new material.*

**In preparation for Education Day, CYC educators and learners are invited to participate in a short pre-conference survey. The results from the survey will be presented on Education Day and will serve as a guide for discussions:**

Kirkness, V. J. (2013). *Creating space: my life and work in Indigenous education*. Manitoba: University of Manitoba Press.

Education Day is sponsored by the Canadian Child and Youth Care Accreditation Board



<http://cycabc.com/conference2018/>

### Details

**Who:** CYC learners and CYC educators

**When:** May 1st, 2018, 930am- 4pm

**Where:** Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel,  
7551 Westminster Highway  
Richmond, BC V6X 1A3

**Registration Cost:** \$75.00



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# Using What We Know For Sure to Keep Hope Alive

Lorraine E. Fox, Ph.D

Editor's note

*This special feature is from a plenary session at the third CYC World Conference held in Ventura, California in January of 2018. The conference experience brought CYCs from every continent together with an amazing cross section of diversity of age, gender, and experience. Lorraine's session was one of several highlights from the conference and we are pleased to feature her column here for those who were there to remember and all who weren't able to be there to experience it live. These twelve points of wisdom will certainly be a classic for the field.*

Let me start with a story.

A couple of years ago I was driving to my Saturday training with Foster Parents and a song popped into my head. I don't think I had heard the song in over 50 years, and to my amazement I was able to remember every word in the song. I sang along and didn't miss a beat. The story is worth telling because I can barely remember what day it is anymore, or what I had for breakfast. And yet here in the recesses of my tired mind were all the words to a song I hadn't heard in half a century and assumed I had long forgotten.

With this in mind, I am newly in touch with a concern I've had for quite a while about professionals in Child and Youth Care thinking they have to know the latest trend, the newest approaches, what we know today that we didn't know yesterday. I'm concerned because many things are true today that were also true decades or



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even centuries ago. Good parents in the Stone Age were probably similar to good parents today. The earth has been round for a long time.

Good practice does not have to be based on something new. Good practice is good because it's good, not because it's "new". With that in mind I feel compelled to write about not what's new and true, but what's old and true. There are many things (ideas, principles, practices, insights) that anyone reading this article already knows. Just because you already know it doesn't imply that it's no longer valid. I'd like to talk about principles, ideas, "truths" you've learned over the course of your career that are as true today as when you first learned them.

If perchance you've gotten caught up in wanting to know the latest trend in child and youth care, you want to be on the edge of new frontiers of learning, you think "evidence based practice" has to be based on something current, let me entice you back to practice principles that have always been true. I believe "hope" can spring as much from something old as from something new. So you can put your pencils and pads away. No need to take notes. Like a long forgotten song let's review together notions of good practice that have been around since I was a pup in the field. If you have moments of feeling hopeless about the healing power of your work with kids and families it might be because you've forgotten to remember what you already know; remembering can keep kindling the fires of hope in your heart.

Granted, there's a lot new under the sun; but there are some things under the sun that have always been there.

It's not that I don't like new. I'm so old I used to have to get up out of my chair to change the channels on the television. Now I can **talk** to my remote, which actually listens/obeys better than the kids, and has never once said to me: "What if I don't want to change the channel to NBC".

Kind hearted people have been taking care of other peoples' children for centuries. I'm afraid there are some basic principles of child rearing that we can actually forget in our efforts to sound professional and erudite and on the cusp of the latest. But we have evidence-based practice from the stone-age. We know



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what children need to be happy and healthy. Abraham Maslow reminded us of the “six basic needs of children” over 50 years ago and those needs are still true.

We can read so many books and go to so many workshops looking for “the latest” that we overlook what has helped children thrive and heal in a multitude of settings in a multitude of countries over a multitude of centuries.

I suggest that we can mix new ideas and what we’re learning from new research with what we’ve always known. Although I have to cover things in an orderly fashion, the points of knowledge I will review are not rank ordered, and all are equally important. I offer 12 points of accumulated wisdom to store in your hope chest: wisdom acquired from studying children and families in and out of child welfare.

# SAVE THE DATE



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## **1. Programs don't create the mental and emotional wounds our clients have; people do. Programs don't heal people we are working with; people do**

**Relationships** cause the harm; relationships are the cure. We talk about “therapeutic programs” but it's not the programs that are therapeutic, it's the people working in the programs. Despite all the writing and talk about various treatment “programs”, it is crucial that we put our faith in the people; not the program. Whatever time we are investing in creating, developing, and evaluating various programs would probably be better spent investing in and developing our direct service staff, supervisors, foster parents and volunteers. The children are longing to have a healing relationship with a person, not with a program.

The good news here is that the ingredients of successful relationships haven't changed since the beginning of time. For those of you who are worried about keeping up with the latest in the field, here's the latest –there's nothing new about relationships.

The same things that make relationships work away from work make relationships work at work. Trust, respect, caring, affection, honesty – the ingredients of successful relationships between adults are the same ingredients of successful relationships with children and youth – yes, even children and teens with significant mental and emotional challenges. In a family, meeting kids needs cause them to grow up healthy. In treatment, meeting kids needs when they have not been met is the repair work we do to help them heal. Granted, it is more work and requires more creativity to meet needs for kids who have given up having their needs met by others. But it is what it is. Needs not met – people not healthy.

And so we feed and shelter them; we keep them safe; we find ways to let them know they have a home with us and belong; we love them; we give them new life skills to feel confident and competent; we help them grow into their best selves.

Our challenge is that we are trying to form relationships with people who have learned what makes relationships NOT work. Building relationships with betrayed, hurt, distrustful, and demoralized children and youth is a long, slow, tedious, laborious task. That's why we call it child care **work**.



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Child abuse and neglect affects the part of the brain that thinks, and the part of the brain that feels, that we often call the heart.

We are in an explosion of new knowledge about the brain, thanks to the invention of marvelous new brain imaging technologies. I urge you to keep current with all of the new research and the insight it offers. It expands our understanding and promotes empathy.

But we've always known about the part of the brain we refer to as the heart. We know what causes it to break; and we know what it needs to heal. The harm done to the heart doesn't reveal itself in imaging technology; it reveals itself in behavior. What the heart doesn't need to heal is a behavior management program. A therapeutic program simply provides structure for clients to receive what they need from people. The healing ingredients are not program ingredients, but relationship ingredients.

The same is true for programs we develop for parents and families. Sending parents to parenting class won't guarantee that they will become better parents. Evidence supports that most adults who hurt their children are grown children who were hurt. Giving harmful or inadequate parents what **they** need, as well as teaching them how to give their kids what the kids need, will make the class effective. Not the lesson, or the workbooks and power-points, or completing the required number of sessions. Positive relationships with those conducting the classes and therapy sessions will make parents receptive to these tools and will help motivate them to try them.

The key ingredients in any healthy relationship haven't changed since people started having relationships:

- Acceptance
- Warmth and caring
- Trust
- Honesty
- Respect



Forgiveness  
Flexibility  
Give and take  
Honoring differences  
Having the necessary “courageous conversations”

The dictionary says that hope is the feeling that what is wanted can be had. Hope can be ours because the ingredients of healthy relationships do not have to be invented, they are tried and true. Bring these ingredients to work each day in your heart; that’s where **our** tools are, not in a briefcase.

## 2. Clients need Love

Love is not **the** answer, but it’s an answer. Love is not enough, but it’s a lot. Love isn’t everything; but it’s something. Love doesn’t necessarily cure the head, but it always cures the heart.

Love and sex are not the same, but you’d sometimes think they were in our field since we’ve become so afraid of using the word with regard to our relationships with our clients. Every so often there are again long, international conversations on the internet about whether or not it is “appropriate” to use the word love with our clients. How would we feel if the people we saw every day, who shared all of our important life events, who laughed with us and cried with us, who put us to bed and woke us up, who ate with us and played with us, never told us they loved us?

A long-time colleague of mine named Laurie Kahn, former CYC now clinical therapist working with formerly abused adults, recently published a book titled “*Baffled by Love*”. It contains many vignettes of interactions between her and some of her clients. She tells the story of a client walking out the door after a therapy session who turned as she was leaving and said “thank you, I love you”. Then she added: “You know, it wouldn’t kill you to tell me you loved me too.” This turned



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out to be a transformative moment in Laurie’s relationships with her clients, as she examined the professional norm of avoiding the word love with clients.

Sex will contaminate our relationships with our clients; love will not.

Of course, it is more important to show love than to say it. We show love to those in our care when we respond to behavior in counter-intuitive ways: responding to an angry or aggressive child with tenderness, welcoming home the runaway with a cup of hot chocolate and a hug instead of a lecture, praising an effort that was not successful but that was tried. We show love when we come back to work the day after a hellish day and try again. We return “hoping” for a less challenging day, although having no good reason to expect one. Although we never know! Sometimes we get surprised when we are shown that treatment done in love actually works.

That people need love has always been true. It’s not part of the new frontier. It’s true that the word love has been misused by people who hurt others in their family. But that’s all the more reason to teach those we care for what the word really means. It won’t kill us.

### **3. You don’t always have to know what to say**

You don’t have to be a therapist to be therapeutic. It has been my experience that although the word is liberally bandied about when I ask people in training what the word actually means there is an uneasy silence, which is very unfortunate. The word **“Therapeutic” means “healing”**. Physical therapy is done to promote healing in the body. Psychological therapy is done to promote healing in the heart and mind. There are no credentials required to engage in therapeutic relationships with children and teens. The only requirement is the will to do it. **Anyone can do it.**

I’ve had kids talk to the cook who wouldn’t give any of the rest of us the time of day. I’ve seen kids confiding in Jose, the lawn man, who gives them unconditional positive regard because he doesn’t know what they’re saying. The kid can’t wait to “hang out” with him again the next day, although he avoids formal “therapy” like



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the plague. Kind and well-meaning foster parents with no advanced education often provide marvelous healing to terribly damaged individuals, not because they always say the right thing, but because what they say is said with love and good intention.

One of my favorite memories is of an interaction I witnessed between our most aggressive, unkind, provocative kid and a brand new staff member. On her first day our “princess” decided to put the new staff person through the standard initiation – see if they can get someone to quit on the first day. She started in on her with close approach, getting right up in her face. She wanted to know how she liked “getting her ass kicked”. The staff member stumbled and muttered and the kid began to tell her how stupid she was and how she’d never last. Blah. Blah. Blah. You’ve all seen it. I was afraid to leave the doorway given the girl’s history, but I didn’t want to disempower the new staff person by interfering so I stood nervously by in the ready position. All of a sudden, the girl threw up her hands, muttered a curse word, and walked away, leaving our newest recruit red-faced and trembling. I followed the girl to thank her for not hurting our newest staff. She replied:

*“Let me tell you something Fox, she’s bad. I mean she’s really bad. But she was trying really hard, so I cut her a break”.*

Competence in our work is a combination of attitude and skill: one without the other is not enough. Our new staff member was certainly not rewarded because of her skill, but all of our clients are experts at recognizing attitude.

Most of our child and adult clients have hypervigilance, a symptom of PTSD. This gives them an uncanny ability to see into us and they can spot a phony from a hundred yards. From years of having to “read” people for their own safety the kids can see into our hearts. What they find in there is more important than what comes out of our mouth. Hire for attitude; train for skill.



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#### **4. Listening is the most important communication skill**

No one does things for no reason despite what you may have heard (“she does that for no reason at all”; or, “there’s no good reason for you to act that way”).

I believe I owe my longevity in the work because of the first supervisor I ever had. I was 24 years old and my experience with children was as a camp counselor at a Christian camp. I was raised Baptist and had never heard the first words that were addressed to me on my first day at work in a treatment center for teenagers. I was frequently overwhelmed by the behavior and equally overwhelmed by the “case histories”. Every time I would go running to the Director with the latest tale of outrage due to a client’s behavior he’d say: “Let’s pull the file”. He would review with me what brought the client into treatment and how their history of profound abuse or neglect “explained” the behavior I was seeing. It saved my life and my career because for all of my fifty plus years in the field I always found it to be true. There’s always a “good reason” for the clients to think, feel, and behave as they do. Let the kids tell you who they are and why they are as they are.

As behavior “detectives” rather than just behavior interventionists we are most successful in redirecting harmful behavior into effective strategies when we understand what the behavior is telling us. Slapping consequences onto unacceptable does not give us the information about a motive for behavior; listening does.

Michael Arlen has said: “One of the greatest acts of love is to pay attention”.

#### **5. You can’t fix kids who are hurt by hurting them, and you can’t fix kids who have been controlled by controlling them**

While punishment may have some effect on well-tended children it has been shown to have little to no effect on those who have already been unjustly punished through abuse and/or neglect.

When we accept this, the problem we face with our attempts to avoid ineffective responses that are “punishing” – i.e. designed to cause emotional pain – and instead attempt to apply “therapeutic (healing) discipline” is that it is more



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complicated and takes longer than punishment. Since CYC's are often stressed, overwhelmed with caring for multiple clients in the same space, and sometimes poorly trained, it requires an ethical commitment on our part to put in the time and the effort. (I've written on this topic in an article entitled "Teachers or Taunters: The Dilemma of True Discipline for Direct Care Workers with Children", *Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, Vol.3, 1987).

It falls on the ethical CYC to consider carefully whether a young person will suffer more harm with an intervention that is being proposed or considered. Why do we put an emotionally damaged child with ADHD or PTSD in time out. They will spend their time thinking of ways to pay you back or believing that they are "bad" for not being able to control their symptoms. And they certainly will not "grow up" sitting in a chair or in their room for five minutes, or ten minutes, or a day.

Why do we send children who can't manage the stress of going to bed because of ADHD, PTSD, poor impulse control from neglect, fear of being alone in bed from experiences of sexual abuse to bed even earlier. Really?

Why do we "ground" kids who runaway. They do not have a problem with leaving, they have a problem returning. You do not learn to return by not being able to leave. Why don't we engage with them to uncover the reasons for their impulses to run – to leave. What are they running from? What are they running to? How does leaving from or going to make sense to them? How can we help them learn to stay home, or come home?

We are training our young people for the game of life. You can't hope to win a game if you haven't learned the skills required to be successful. How can they hope to win if we don't spend the time and effort to teach the skills they lack.

For both staff and client, Hope comes from feeling confident and successful. As practitioners we all know the hopeless feelings that result from interventions that are not successful. We promote hope for ourselves when we take the time to help them learn to manage their pain more successfully.



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## 6. There is no manual

This fact can be both frustrating and a relief.

It isn't possible to write a book about every person alive. That's what it would take to give us the key to the puzzle that is an individual client. There are no identical examples of maltreatment, and there are no identical responses to maltreatment. Any "how to" manual would certainly leave some situations out and would surely leave most unique individuals out.

Do yourself a favor: Stop looking for the manual. Your supervisor does not have it. It's not in a drawer, or cabinet, or library. You have probably wasted some time hoping that someone else – some teacher, some expert, some author - will give you the key, the answer, the correct path to healing for a particular young person or parent. Sorry. I may know a lot, but I do not know the particular circumstances or the particular child/teen you are trying to help. Any successful intervention will have to be tailored to what exactly happened to them, and to whom exactly they are.

What we learn is that the time would be better spent getting to know the secrets locked securely in the mind and heart of your client. Only by getting to know **them** do you stand a chance of figuring out how to motivate them, why something isn't working for them, or what new approach to try.

It is as important to read your clients as it is to read books.

## 7. Faster is slower

The appearance of **change** is much easier to achieve than real change.

I first learned this in 1969 when I worked in a correctional school run by very rigid nuns. I had total control over the day to day life of my 20 delinquent charges. It was up to me what they could and couldn't do, what they got or didn't get, and they couldn't get away from me because they were locked up with me. Everyone in the facility settled for compliance and appearance of change as good enough, and I started to be impressed as well. I was surprised by how "cooperative" they usually were, given that they were adjudicated delinquents. They got along by going along.



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And then I watched kids leave the program and return to their gang infested neighborhoods, racist schools and unhealthy families. I saw them quickly fall into their familiar patterns, ending up pregnant, truant, and in some cases dead. I became deeply disappointed and bewildered. Much of my writing since that time has been influenced by the heartbreak I experienced when I confronted the reality that conformity was not treatment. Prisoners released early for “good behavior” are not necessarily “good”. What they are is manipulative. And what we can be, if we take the easy way out, is duped.

Treatment is change; not mere compliance and not the appearance of change to manipulate the system. Real change is extremely tedious and full of relapses, which should be supported and not punished. We all know about relapse. Ever been on a diet? Tried to quit smoking? Tried to keep your New Year resolutions? When kids relapse, they show us they are trying to really change, and it’s as hard for them as it is for us.

There are some things we know that we wish we didn’t. One is that compliance is not an indicator of change. Going along to get along is a manipulation, not treatment.

Children and families traumatized by poverty, community violence, domestic violence, addiction, abuse and neglect cannot be healed in short term, get ‘em in get ‘em out models. We have not failed, and the clients have not failed, when we are not given or don’t take the time required to repair the mental and emotional injuries we are called on to treat.

Hope is nourished when we bite into reality and dig in for the long haul. Discouragement is nourished when we look for the easy fix. You know this from your own experience. We know better than to get sold on “short term treatment” for long-term wounds. There is no quick and easy fix!

## **8. With our clients, anger is almost always a cover for grief**

You don’t need a child and youth care worker if you have not experienced abandonment, loss, rejection, humiliation, feelings of insignificance, feelings of



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worthlessness, and feelings of helplessness. These are the fruits of child maltreatment.

Loss is the one thing all of our clients have in common.

Most of them have lost their innocence; a good number have lost their homes, neighborhoods, friends, schools, siblings, pets, and favorite pillow. I can tell you also from my extended time in rehab as the result of a traumatic leg injury, that even after being rescued from overt harm, one of the results of living in congregate care with unrelated adults taking care of unrelated kids in intimate quarters - they've also lost a lot of their dignity.

When we try to do treatment by taking things away (punishment), of course they become angry. Why do we want to take things away from kids who have already lost everything in an attempt to get them to "shape up". They will shape up when they get, not when they lose. Even when we say "I'm giving you a consequence" the consequence is more often than not some kind of loss. We are not here in CYC work to take things away; that's already been done. What makes us want to take even more? What can we give them is the question?

Of course, the most important thing you can give them is yourself. How about a consequence of having to spend time with you! Don't ground them to their room; ground them to yourself.

Instead of rushing our hostile, aggressive, angry clients into anger management I suggest we provide more grief counseling. Why not apply the proven benefits of empathy? Sit with them and let them tell you all that they've lost. Let them know that you understand that anger feels more powerful than grief, but it doesn't make the grief go away. Crying might help more than throwing a chair. Can we teach ourselves to look behind the fury for the silent tears!

## **9. Although we often write our treatment plans based on limitations and weaknesses, focusing on strengths is much more effective**

Experiences of abuse and neglect, experiences of being powerless to change the behavior of adults who are harming you, cause our clients to feel weak. Of course,



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we witness many previously powerless victims cover these embarrassing feelings of helplessness by desperate displays of bravado and acts of aggression and even violence. How can we help them learn to feel strong and be strong?

As part of my Physical therapy regimen I am put on an exercise machine and pump away with my arms and legs to strengthen them. Some of you may have had the pleasure of working out on what are called “New Step” exercise machines. As I exert away every so often a “message scrolls” across the top: “Good Job!”; “Keep Going”; “Good for You”; “Great Workout”. Even a machine knows enough to build in praise and encouragement as someone who is weak attempts to build up their strength.

Imagine if what popped up on the screen were repeated examples of what was wrong with me. “Is this the best you can do?”; “You call this a work out?”; “Not doing too well today are we?”

If you “hope” you can win it’s not because someone has pointed out everything that will prevent you from winning. Listen to yourself as you talk to the kids, even when they are displaying signs of weakness. Are you busy pointing out what they already know in terms of all the things they are struggling with? Or are you building into your daily interactions messages of encouragement and praise?

Hope requires faith, confidence, and a reasonable expectation that you will be successful.

One observation I’ve had over the years is that sometimes the flip side of what makes a particular kid unbearable is what also makes them wonderful. Just like walking down the street or driving in the rain, we can see what we decide to look for.

We know we should remember to tell them the ways in which they are wonderful as well as all the issues we think they should “work on”, but it’s easy to forget when we’re annoyed with them. Hope - “confident desire” – will be built with praise and encouragement. Try it; they’ll like it.



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## **10. Self-awareness is as important for the work as a college education**

To be effective in relationships with vulnerable clients (adults and children), and to manage the interactive stress effectively, it is as important to know who you are as to know who they are. If you begin the work not knowing who you are, you will learn from them: Because they always figure us out. Survival for victims is dependent on becoming finely tuned to the one who causes harm. Battered wives, children who are beat, children who are sexually abused, children who watch their mothers leave the house and “know” it will be a while before she comes home – each of these can spot a phony from across a football field. The well documented symptom of “hypervigilance” results in a uncanny “knowing” of others.

The client should never know more about us than we know about ourselves.

Being open and accepting with who we are will help them be more open and accepting with who they are.

Most importantly, knowing who you are will keep you humble. Humility and compassion have always helped and healed more people than being up on the latest standards of practice.

Think of those who have influenced you and whose manners and messages continue to influence millions: The Prophet Mohammed; Jesus of Nazareth; Pope Francis of Rome; Mother Teresa of Calcutta; Gandhi; Buddha ...

These people are not followed because they had money and advanced degrees from prestigious universities. Their compassion and humility is like a magnet. Yours will be the same.

## **11. Laughter heals**

We’re asked for “evidence-based practice” and there’s no debate here. We are fortunate to have vast amounts of research to support our general tendency to be silly and thoroughly enjoy things that people in other professions wouldn’t “get” at all!

Here’s what we know for sure from trauma research: Trauma produces an over-supply of cortisol and other stress hormones. Being traumatized and working



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with traumatized people produces large amount of stress and stress related hormones. Laughter produces an over-supply of endorphins: endorphins counter-act cortisol. So, laughing and finding humor in very unexpected places and situations is not only NOT “unprofessional”, it is a requirement of our profession. The next time you’re in a staff meeting and everyone gets the giggles which spread quickly around the room, and someone sticks their head in because it sounds like you’re all high on pot, just reassure them that you are engaging in a professional exercise.

No baby has to be taught to laugh. All people start out laughing. Kids have to be taught not to laugh by living in a world that is grim and frightening. They need to watch us laugh; and they need to learn to laugh again -for their mental health.

You can’t give what you don’t have. Give laughter back to people who have lost it.

Laugh at the kids; they’re hysterical. Laugh at yourself; you’re ridiculous sometimes as well.

When parents and young people get frustrated by trying to learn new ways of doing things, teach them to laugh at themselves. Tell them a funny story about yourself when you were learning something new.

If you can’t find the rose-colored glasses you had when you first applied for the job, share a story with a colleague. Tell them something ridiculous that happened recently. You won’t have to look hard. Tell them something ridiculous that you did and have them tell you something ridiculous they did. Have a good laugh. There’s a lot of stress in our work but there are equal amounts of joy. You don’t have to look hard.

CYC’s almost instinctively know about the power of laughter in our work. How many times have you or a colleague had an extremely fraught, tense, even frightening experience during your shift – and then when relaying the event to others you find yourself changing the experience into a tale of hilarity. Suddenly you’re a stand-up comic. The story that was so full of stress and tension is now full of laughter and shared release. Our systems seem to know that it’s something we need to do.



Rose colored lenses don't distort the truth, they just make the truth easier to look at.

Don't misplace those glasses – rosey because they are filled with faith, longing, belief, expectation, aspiration, and trust in the human spirit – will help to find compassion. The root word of compassion is passion, and passion is both exhausting and exhilarating. Knowing yourself, loving the kids, and enjoying the behavior that no one would believe if you told them, will help with both passion and compassion.

Mac Anderson said:

*“Remember to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant with the weak ... because in your life you will have been all of these”.*

## **12. It takes a village**

Treatment for severely wounded people is most effectively done by a therapeutic team. Hope springs from knowing we don't have to do everything alone, and from believing that our combined efforts will provide more healing for the hearts and minds of our young people than could ever be done by any one individual.

Sometimes we talk ourselves into believing that we don't have the time to put into developing a competent team, or we don't want to spend the money. You may tell yourself that the kids are more important than the team, but you will be wrong. Parents who don't work together as a team are not competent parents. We already know that any sports team that doesn't take the time and spend the money to practice working together are not going to win. Using that knowledge convinces us that we owe our clients to practice – working out our differences, getting on the same page, managing our conflicts well, developing consistency in our approach.

Everything we've talked about here will help with our teamwork. Remembering that it's **us**, not the program, that will help our clients heal. We want to put more



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time into us than into the program. Remembering that creating an environment of love will give children not only what they deserve but what they do not have an accurate experience of will help everyone in that environment. We not only don't have to say the "right thing" to clients, we don't have to know what to say to each other. It is the intent that will keep us working on figuring things out together. Listening is our most perfect gift for our clients and it is likewise the most perfect gift we can give each other. Remembering to use our power, our influence, with our team members will hone the skill most useful in our work. There's no "playbook" for a therapeutic team but there are basic principles of working together that we should learn and practice. It is the team's job to establish the therapeutic culture and when it needs repair we want to be as patient with ourselves as we are with those we serve. Grief is part and parcel of CYC work. Any practitioner who does not experience grief from their encounters with our client's histories does not belong in our work. We must guard against covering our grief with anger at each other. All relationships expose flaws in everyone; they also expose beauty and gifts. As with the clients, we want to remember to focus on what each team member brings to the task that makes us stronger. Self-awareness is the primary ingredient to facilitate the ability to give and receive constructive feedback on personal performance, in the service of those who need us to be as good as we can be at any given moment. Laughter will heal the team as well as it heals the clients; it needs to be abundant. We can laugh with people we don't like or understand. Sometimes that's enough.

## **Conclusion**

Hopefully we all try to "keep up" and learn some new ideas and truths to enlighten us and build up our skills because like the field of medicine our knowledge and understanding is in a constant state of discovery. But I also hope you remember to remind yourself of important truths of our work you've learned along the way, from both your academic education and your experience.



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I don't believe there are any "old" books in CYC work. All the good books ever written are as relevant today as when they were written. That's because the truth never changes. I get dismayed by how many CYC workers don't read the rich literature that is our heritage. Many agencies don't even have a staff library with all the wonderful books written by our standard bearers – Aichhorn, Redl, Brendtro, Krueger, Bettleheim, Garfat, Treischman. Every one of these authors provide pages and pages of hope. Dig them out and read them like you read familiar poems that still speak to you. Those who came before us left us many treasures – bits of wisdom that never grow old.

Think of the basic principles of child and youth care work like words to a song that you used to know but can't remember. Or you remember some of the words but not all of them. Start playing the song and suddenly you're singing along; you know all the words.

The CYC-Net discussion groups reveal a wonderful smattering of new insights and ideas, along with old "nuggets" that have been around forever it seems. But workers keep changing and need to learn the old songs. They've got a good beat – suitable for feisty, challenging, interesting kids from all cultures and backgrounds. Learn the beat and you'll find it easier to dance with the kids – and each other.

Remember to do what you know to do. We center our expectations in hope when we do what's always been done for children by those who love them.

I wish I had come across this wonderful quote from my colleague Charlie Applestein (author of *The Gus Chronicles* and other fine books) because I would certainly have ended my talk with his words:

**Give your kids hope – It is humanity's fuel.**



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# Professionalization Through Doing

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One of the things that the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) in South Africa has done differently than all other professional associations is that they not only talk about the worth of child and youth care as a profession, but they demonstrate it through their work in the Isibindi projects and other initiatives every day. As a result, child and youth care in South Africa is not only a profession, but it is a vehicle of national development. Through child and youth care, South Africa is addressing national health care crises (Aids/HIV), poverty, employment in rural areas, post-secondary education and vocational training structures, and many other things. The bold ambition of the NACCW comes with big ideas, big initiatives, big mobilization, and a mix of frontline CYC practice wisdom, organizational development initiatives, and a managerial innovation culture. In other words, the NACCW is what social mobilization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be – bold, courageous, willing to learn from set backs or mistakes, and constantly redefining itself to capture current and future needs. Perhaps more than anything else, what is unique about the NACCW as a professional association of child and youth care, is that it is local, nationally and internationally relevant, connected, active, and ‘a player’; in other words, the NACCW doesn’t just respond to the agenda of government or service systems, nor does it merely beg for recognition. In many respects, it sets the agenda and it paves the way forward in the context of social policy and national conversations about children, youth, families, poverty, unemployment, education, health, inequities, inclusion and so many other themes.



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Of course, when an organization is highly successful, it does not remain without its critics. The success of the NACCW is sometimes seen as displacing other, smaller, more grassroots organizations and social movements, and of overshadowing other ways of approaching a child and youth care way of being in the world. Notwithstanding these issues, it is without a doubt the case that the NACCW has changed the social location of the child and youth care profession in South Africa and has rendered the opportunities that flow from this location limitless.

In much of the rest of the world, and certainly in my home base of Canada, the professionalization movements are focused squarely on the status of the profession itself. Professional associations exist in abundance, but for the most part, limit their activities to advocacy on behalf of child and youth care professionals. They seek regulation and legislation so that the child and youth care profession is recognized as one of many human service professions that can legitimately be brought to bear in human service organizations. They seek a re-valuing of child and youth care practice so that individual practitioners have legitimate title to better working conditions. And they seek an understanding amongst service providers and policymakers that child and youth care is not a hobby that can be undertaken by anyone; it is instead a professional activity that requires specific competencies and the training and qualifications that come with that.

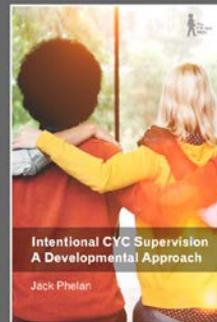
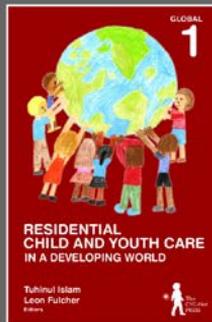
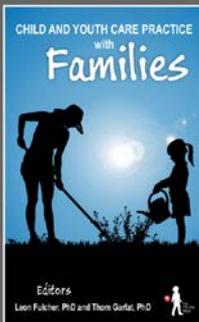
The point is that professional associations 'seek' things. They don't 'do' things. Of course, seeking things requires doing a lot of things; I am not suggesting that professional associations are inactive or lazy. Quite to the contrary, leaders within these associations are some of the busiest people I know. They engage their members, stakeholders, government officials and academics regularly; they plan and execute professional development activities; they do whatever they can to build ever greater membership for the associations; they produce written materials to explain the rationale for regulation and legislation; and they travel tirelessly to be present at major child and youth care gatherings in their own jurisdictions and



sometimes far beyond. In spite of these activities, however, the message is always the same and goes something like this:

*Child and youth care is a professional practice that makes a significant difference in the lives of young people and their families. The practice is based on specific competencies and certified practitioners are tested on these and must continue to demonstrate on-going learning and professional development in order to maintain their certification. Child and youth care adds value to human service provision, and given that it adds value, it is necessary to protect this profession from those who practice without having demonstrated the necessary competencies. Once regulated and legislated, child and youth care practitioners need to be valued through better compensation and better gate keeping of who is considered to be part of the profession. Since we have worked hard as a professional association to articulate the scope of practice and the specific competencies needed to engage this practice, we respectfully ask government to regulate and legislate our profession.*

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There is nothing inherently wrong with this message. But it is a message that puts forth the demand and then relies on government to take action. This basic approach is one that has rarely produced the desirable outcome. Making the case that child and youth care is an important profession is in and of itself not much of a case, and is therefore unlikely to lead to governmental action. In Canada, across most provinces, this demand has been firmly in place for decades, and the outcomes are, one has to acknowledge, profoundly disappointing.

I think the time has come to reverse the structure of the process. Rather than 'seeking', we ought to be 'doing'. Rather than demanding, we ought to be demonstrating. And rather than waiting, we ought to lead. What might this look like?

I want to use the example of Canada to make the case that professional associations of child and youth care ought to do things rather than just demand things. By doing things, I explicitly mean they ought to provide a service or services that impact children, youth, families and communities directly and without government mediation. I think the idea of doing things is not uniquely applicable in Canada; but the specific context in which things are being done will vary depending on the jurisdiction.

An example of a theme in need of a service response in Canada is the issue of young people transitioning out of child and youth service settings and into emerging adulthood. One reason this issue has presented challenges with respect to developing effective and reliable responses is that funding structures for child and youth services are distinct from those for adult services, so that service providers who are situated either in the child and youth service system (usually to the age of 18) or the adult service system (usually from the age of 18) are neither mandated nor funded to provide transition services. This theme is reflected in all jurisdictions across Canada with relatively little variations in how challenges and barriers to a successful transition are manifested (noting that there are considerable variations in how these issues are manifested based on identity contexts – indigenous youth face very different and additional barriers to white youth; similarly, the issues for Trans\*



young people, Black Youth, and others also entail additional components). Over the past twenty years or so, the response to this issue has come primarily in response to advocacy on the part of service providers (and young people themselves), followed by government policy and funding, and then implemented through newly funded service provider initiatives, albeit it rarely systematically and with enormous variation across jurisdictions. What is absent is a systematic, consistent, reliable and sustainable structure and process that specifically is designed to support such transitions nationally.

Supporting young people in transitions is a core element of child and youth care practice. Few areas of support align more neatly with the competencies of child and youth care practitioners, and few align more concretely and meaningfully with the 25 Characteristics of Child and Youth Care Practice articulated by Garfat & Fulcher (2012). Furthermore, few practice contexts provide as much of an opportunity to engage service sectors and professionals from as expansive a range of contexts, such as, for example, housing, employment, education, health care, and criminal justice. This then raises the question whether it would be possible to use the model of NACCW, as a professional association and service provider, to develop a national, systematic, sophisticated approach, steeped in child and youth care practice and lead by the professional associations of Child and Youth Care, to take this issue outside of the dependence on government mediation and instead set the agenda and take the lead. What if child and youth care provided the answer to a vexing and deeply embedded problem in child and youth services? What if we actually did what we say we are good at?

Why should we do that? And how could we do it? Let's look at the second question first. Without outlining all of the details and nuances of developing a national program to support young people in transition, we can take stock of the resources that professional associations of child and youth care bring to the table. In Canada, that includes connection with about 3000 child and youth care practitioners plus a large number (perhaps 1000) of psychoeducateurs in Quebec. Nine different associations have nine Boards of Directors typically consisting of



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about ten different individuals who have coordinating skills and capacity. The already existing national Council of Child and Youth Care Associations can provide coordinating functions for the provincial associations, as it already does in the context of conferences and other activities. Basic seed funding can be obtained through a voluntary \$25 membership fee contribution specifically for this purpose, which would net about \$75,000. Extensive connections to the academic sector would allow for access to funding mechanisms independent of government funding for service. And access to technology and the skills to use technology are available to innovate a way of supporting young people not just face to face but also virtually (Colleen Kamps has written about the need to ethically incorporate technology into every day child and youth care practice and has even developed a Code of Ethics for that very purpose). With all of these resources at hand, we can easily imagine, even if this is sketched out only very broadly here, a virtual network of child and youth care practitioners available to young people 24/7 to be present in their lives, to help problem solve barriers encountered, and to arrange for face to face support through a child and youth care practitioner quickly and as needed anywhere in the country. We can also imagine this network to be able to respond to identity, cultural and lifestyle needs as they arise; indigenous perspectives for indigenous youth, African heritage CYCs to consult on the issues and concerns facing Black Youth, an accessible sub-group of Trans\* CYCs to engage Trans\* youth, and so on. Not unlike the Isibindi project in South Africa coordinated by the NACCW, this project too could draw on local resources, in this case young people in a position to mentor or support other young people, to strengthen the human resource within the initiative.

There is no question that this could be done. And there is no question that it won't get done if we wait for governments to do so; at best, there will be provincial initiatives that will improve the transition process for some young people, but almost always in ways that still require CYC support just to figure out how to take advantage of new government programs offered to young people. It also won't happen if we wait for service providers to take the initiative; these are



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far too fragmented, even within sub-regions of provinces, to take any sort of coordinated initiative in this area. National child and youth care initiatives simply don't exist in Canada because almost everything in the context of child and youth services is a provincial or territorial jurisdiction (with the exception of some aspects of indigenous youth services).

Why should we do this? Well, for one thing we should do this because we know that transitioning out of care presents challenges to young people that are currently not addressed. But from the perspective of professionalization, we should do this because we need something more than the stale argument that we are inherently valuable, and government therefore ought to legislate us. We ought to create a service context that becomes indispensable and that requires us to be sustained. We should lead, not follow, and not seek, and not beg. We should demonstrate that we have solutions to deeply embedded problems, that those solutions are sustainable, cost effective, and reflective of the highest quality interventions, support systems and relational approaches anywhere. Our goal should not be to prepare a thank you speech to some bureaucrat for moving our dream of professionalization along. Our goal ought to be to have government, in its role as representing civil society, plead with us to allow our professional name to be referenced in legislation, which we may or may not want to do when the time comes.



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There is another reason why the professionalization of child and youth care ought to unfold through doing; as I have written elsewhere repeatedly, we must challenge ourselves to recognize our own perpetuation of on-going marginalizations and oppressions. As traditional professional associations that seek to gain recognition through the argument that ‘we matter’, we have not been successful (and perhaps we haven’t even given it a good try) to become inclusive, just, and open associations. We continue to represent the privilege of whiteness, of settlers, of colonialists. The dream of gaining access to more privilege through regulation and legislation has proven insufficiently credible to individuals and communities that have for decades found themselves on the margins (and sometimes entirely outside) of our privilege-seeking activities. In my view, the ‘seeking privilege’ approach to professionalization will forever cement the exclusivity and injustices associated with our current approach. A ‘doing’ approach to professionalization, on the other hand, will open the possibility for new leadership, new opportunity, new agenda setting, new narratives and new access for individuals and communities previously excluded. As professional associations that are doing something, we will learn very quickly that inclusivity is not a matter of our generosity, but our dire need for Black History, for Indigenous ways of knowing, for Trans\* and gender-questioning, and indeed for queer ways, of being in the world.

In this short essay, I simply want to suggest that the undoubtedly valuable and extremely difficult work done by so many individuals in leadership positions of professional associations across Canada, and likely around the world, will likely never quite be enough. Leadership teams will change, new teams will try, and we will end up where we started over and over again. What we need are transformational ideas about how to advance our field, our discipline, our practice. We have models for this, and I think the most relevant model is the NACCW. It stands apart from professional associations of child and youth care around the world in that it shapes the agenda, drives national development, and has become, locally, nationally and increasingly internationally a force to be reckoned with. For the purpose of this essay, I have focused on professionalization in Canada using the



theme of transitioning to generate ideas for doing rather than seeking. Other jurisdictions around the world may have other themes that are relevant; even in Canada, we could rally around a range of other nationally relevant themes, including, for example, the issues and themes at the root of the suicide crisis in indigenous communities.

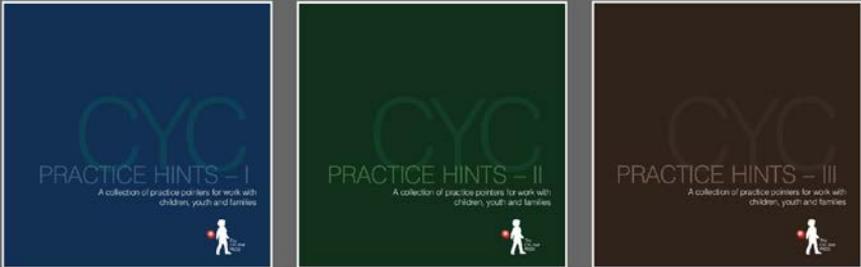
The point is simply this: I am a Child & Youth Care Practitioner. Therefore, I do. Recognition of what I do won't come because I ask for it. It comes when what I do makes a difference beyond my own privilege.

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KIARAS GHARABAGHI is the director of the School of Child and Youth Care at Ryerson University and a regular writer for CYC-Net. He is the author of the chapter 'External Models of Supervision' in the recently released book, *Supervision in Child and Youth Care Practice* (Charles, Freeman & Garfat, 2016). The book is available at <http://press.cyc-net.org/books/supervision.aspx>

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A collection of pointers written by Brian Gannon  
for work with children, youth and families



The image displays three book covers for the 'Practice Hints' series. The first cover is blue and titled 'PRACTICE HINTS – I'. The second cover is green and titled 'PRACTICE HINTS – II'. The third cover is brown and titled 'PRACTICE HINTS – III'. Each cover features the CYC logo at the top, the title in the middle, and a small illustration of a person with a red heart at the bottom right.



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# Canaries in the Coal Mine

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*And these children that you spit on  
As they try to change their worlds  
Are immune to your consultations  
They're quite aware of what they're goin' through*

David Bowie

From the early part of the twentieth century until 1986, coal miners would bring canaries with them into the mines where they worked. The purpose was to determine poisonous levels of methane or carbon monoxide before they reached levels that would kill the miners. Canaries would die before the levels reached a level hazardous to humans. I have been thinking about canaries and coal mines in terms of the socio-economic landscape that we are producing as adults in general and CYC workers/scholars in particular.

Coal mining, of course, is a way of producing energy that has been used extensively across the planet to do everything from running factories, heating homes, propelling trains, and lighting up cities. We are able to do these things because we have found ways to extract massive amounts of fossilized plants and dinosaurs from deep within the earth. However, this process of opening the earth to extract coal has had severe and significant ecological implications, from air and water pollution, to habitat destruction for both humans and other species. In addition, coal mining has created deadly health hazards for miners themselves.



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In spite of the obvious drawbacks globally, we have continued to endanger ourselves and the planet by mining coal since the dawn of industrial capitalism. Recently, it looks as though coal is losing its popularity as an energy source and there is some possibility that the industry may shrink somewhat in years to come. That said, it has become emblematic for the current U.S. administration, as a symbol of returning America to a bygone world of privilege and power for white working class men. Of course, this world never existed and white working class men were often at the forefront of labor disputes that sometimes became bloody, such as the Columbine coal mine massacre in 1927, where miners were attacked and killed by state police and mine guards with machine guns.

Of course, the name Columbine evokes another massacre for those of us living in the 21st century. Columbine High School was the site of one of the most infamous school shootings in the U.S., where 12 students, one teacher, the two perpetrators lost their lives and 21 others were wounded. It wasn't the first school shooting though. That occurred prior to the founding of the nation in 1764, when two men shot 10 children to death in a schoolhouse in what is now Pennsylvania. And then, there was the mass shooting at the University of Texas at Austin in 1966 in which 17 people were killed and 31 others wounded. As we know, there has been an escalating number of such murderous events culminating most recently in the Parkland shootings and the marches and demonstrations by hundreds of thousands organized and led by young people.

Which brings me back to the practice of bringing canaries into coal mines. Canaries were deployed to warn us of life threatening degradations in our environment. As a miner, if you ignored the dying canaries, you were putting your own life in imminent danger. To my mind, we have been surrounded by dying canaries for some time now and on the whole we have been ignoring them.

Perhaps, no one knows this better than those of us on the front lines of Child and Youth Care. Our kids might well be described as the canaries in our society. They have been the ones involved in the open warfare spurred on by the war on drugs. It is the young people that we encounter, as street outreach workers and in



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gang intervention programs, who have been dying for decades now in the streets of cities, and now in rural and suburban areas as well. Our kids are those designated as troubled or diagnosed as oppositionally defiant who have been freezing to death on the streets as homeless or being beaten, stabbed or shot for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The Native young people we encounter in our work have been dying by their own hands, the hands of others, and of alcohol poisoning or drug addictions for decades under regimes of varying forms of colonial rule. Young people of alternate genders and sexualities gathered roughly under the acronym LGBTQ have been assaulted and murdered for generations as well.

Certainly, some of these young people have been the victims of gun violence, but even more have been the victims of our societal indifference and the mayhem of public policy that continues to put profits above people. We are surrounded by tens of thousands of dead canaries and yet we as a society refuse to acknowledge the possibility that we are poisoning ourselves socially, culturally and environmentally and our children are paying the price.

The horror of this is that it is not a new issue. Our children have been dying unnecessarily for generations. It's just, until recently most of them were the wrong color, colonial status, sexuality or class. Just like when we sent coal miners to do the dangerous and potentially life-threatening work of digging coal, we have been able to pretend that the danger would stay underground. In coal mining, we knew at some abstract level that the miners died in explosions, mine collapses, and by breathing toxic gasses. Every so often, we would see a documentary or read a newspaper article about miners with debilitating respiratory illnesses. Possibly, we might learn about the devastation of communities and ways of life as a result of strip mining a mountain top. But, as long as the factories ran and produced the goods we wanted to buy and the heat in our homes and the electricity for our ever-expanding cities, the cost was seemingly acceptable. That is, until the poisoned water and air began to affect us more directly.

I was reminded of this when one of the Parkland survivors, David Hogg, pointed out that the black community has been largely ignored when they have attempted



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to raise awareness of the deaths of young people in their communities. In an opinion piece on NBC.com, LeVar Burton commented on Hogg's remarks:

*People of color in this country, in this culture, tend to not matter as much as those who are white; that is the truth of America. In the Black Lives Matter movement, young black people have been shouting from the rooftops until their voices are raw and hoarse, and America hasn't listened. But now that it's white kids who are shouting at the tops of their lungs, people pay attention. We're in deep trouble in this country, and the Parkland kids know it.*

# SAVE THE DATE



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So, it would seem that we have been ignoring a lot of the canaries because they are the wrong color. But, now that the poison is starting to seep into the cracks and crevices of the dominant society, we may be starting to see the trouble we are in. Mind you, our recognition of any canaries at all has taken quite a lot of deaths, even among the children of the middle class across the U.S. Our capacity for denial is profound.

Our denial is certainly not limited to the U.S., but cuts across the planet. There are canaries in every corner of what Hardt and Negri in their book *Empire* refer to as global capitalist empire. There are children involved in an array of armed conflicts, both as victims and perpetrators of violence. Death through neglect in the form of starvation and disease is spread across the planet. The ravages of addiction and alcoholism are also not the sole province of the U.S.

To be fair, not all of us are ignoring these canaries. There are key efforts and some successes in eliminating or having real impact on pernicious and nasty diseases like guinea worm and malaria. But the underlying logic that fuels our denial remains stubbornly rooted in the logic of profit over people. This is the logic that forces even the best intentioned of us to pick a place and group of people we can assist and to neglect others for “lack of funds.” It is, of course a false logic. There is no lack of funds. This is apparent when we have individuals that have a net worth that exceeds many national economies.

For those of us working down in the mine as CYC workers and scholars, the question of denial about the conditions facing our kids is vexing to say the least. There are, however, several things I think we can do. 1) We can refuse the logic that insists that social violence as it affects young people is correlated with individual mental illness and trauma. 2) We can resist the idea that the conditions killing young people can be legislated out of existence 3) We can fight any definition of young people that denies them legitimacy on developmental grounds.

In the first instance, we need to stop individualizing psychic pain and trauma as though it is anything other than endemic across all sectors of our society. To some degree, each of us is out of touch with the actuality of our circumstances and immersed in denial or overwhelming anxiety and pain. Put in another term, our



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young people don't have symptoms, they are symptoms. This is not to say that we shouldn't do everything we can to remediate the pain and suffering of the young people we encounter in our work, but we need to stop being technicians who diagnose and medicalize their pain. We are a field ostensibly built on the healing force of relationship. Sometimes, when faced with the force of massive alienation with its attendant psychic and physical trauma, it seems to me that we encounter a crisis of faith. Do we really believe in relationship as truly transformative or not? Are we CYC workers or the minions of psychiatry, medicalized psychology and big pharma? I don't believe we can diagnose or dose ourselves out of the mess we have made of our society. We need to stop saying that young people are crazy. We need to start realizing we all are mad and that our only hope is to find a way back to sanity though each other.

The second thing we can do, is to quit imagining that we can resolve the severe problems in our system of values by asking a government deeply indebted to global capitalism to solve them. While we can and should attempt to achieve whatever reforms we can by way of grassroots political organizing and the electoral process, we should also realize that unless we shift the culture of denial and death we have created, such reforms will always fall short. As CYC workers this requires that we move beyond the "treatment" of young people in our care and move towards utilizing relational work to transform the agencies and programs we are involved in, so that they truly reflect the open, free and democratic system of value to which I hope we aspire.

Finally, we as CYC workers and scholars need to be on the front lines in our institutions, with the media and with our colleagues, to stop the de-legitimization of young people's voices as being developmentally disqualified to speak. This application of the most recent pseudo-scientific denigration of a group of human beings is reprehensible in the extreme. Similar "science" was used historically to attempt to silence women and people of color. This "brain science" has a long and dubious history that seems to me to be at odds with any kind of egalitarian development of relationship. But worse, it is being used to discount and discredit

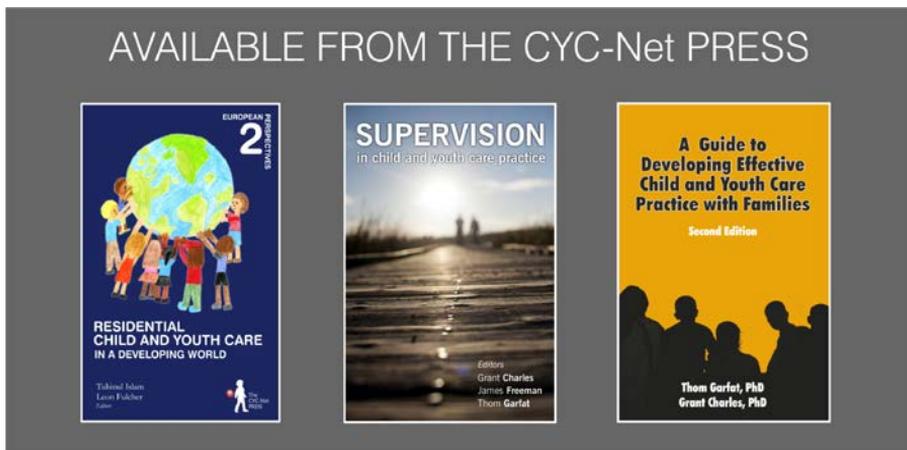


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young people's voices as viable political intervention and commentary. I would argue we have an obligation as CYC workers to oppose this kind of attack wherever we see it occurring.

There are canaries and they are dying. We in CYC have a role in preventing further deaths. The question is do we have faith in the force of living relations over the force of nihilism and death? The next generation seems to have more faith in new worlds and peoples than I have seen in quite a while, but they will need us to join them. CYC is in a unique position to do so. So, let's quit sending canaries and close the mines in which we extract the best of who we are in order to make money. Let us instead seek an alternative and life affirming way to love and live through our relations with each other.



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# Evidence Based Practices: Are They Becoming Extinct?

Dan Thorne

**T**he drumbeat among behavioral health agencies in the United States, especially California, is for them to treat youth and families with evidence-based practices, or EBP's for short. The EBP definition is a practice which was researched, had several randomized clinical trials (using control and experimental groups), and different settings can replicate. Yet for all the emphasis on EBP's, they may be doing more harm to our youth and families than good.

Why? Academic institutions are the source of most EBP's. And the researchers/professors only test practices if they have grant funds. The process, like drugs going through the FDA approval, can take years. Besides, their test populations may not be like the socioeconomic or cultural makeup of behavioral health agencies. And while they develop many outstanding practices, aren't the ones created by local agencies who know their populations just as good if researched?

EBP's are also expensive. To start some in an organization can cost up to \$50,000. This doesn't count the travel expenses of bringing out trainers to a location or annual updates of materials such as manuals. Agencies are told by their county contract partners to choose these practices to use funds, but the costs are prohibitive. Yet other practices can be just as effective for less costs.

EBP's don't account for staff turnover. If an agency trains staff in a particular practice and then the staff leaves, the agency can't retrain someone until the EBP comes out again. This keeps the program "hostage", preventing them from using local government funds until a new staff is trained.



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EBP's don't always work. A practice is only as good as the staff who provides it. Just because a staff is trained and supervised, it doesn't mean they will use it properly. Maybe they mix it with other methods, don't stick to fidelity measures.

EBP's are hard to sustain. When staff leave, especially the champion of that practice, the motivation and momentum can leave as well. Then the ship starts to take on water and eventually sink. All that money and time gone to waste.

What's the answer? EBP's are valuable, but agencies and counties need to be open to new and innovative ideas. Concepts. Approaches. Try community-based programs, out-of-the-box thinking, and help develop their own path in creating the new practices of the future. Ones which can be sustained and not vanish.

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# Redefining Policies: Black Youth Participation and Critical Civic Praxis

Travonne Edwards

Participation can be an emancipatory tool for Black Youth to overcome intersecting marginalization's of age, ability, race, and gender. However, Black Youth in care are additionally disadvantaged by having their autonomy and voice to choose what's best for their own lives taken away in the various processes related to child welfare and education systems (Horwath, Kalyva, & Spyru, 2012). According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), young people have the right to participate in choices that impact their lives. Unfortunately, the term "participation" is unclear and can mean a variety of activities that occur in a variety of locations (Horwath, Kalyva, & Spyru, 2012). For the purpose of this article review, participation refers to the direct engagement of young people in decisions that impact their everyday lives, individually or collectively (Hill, Davis, Prout, & Tisdall 2004).

## Youth Participation as Emancipation

The issue of youth voice and participation has become central in recent policy developments in Ontario. In June 2017, The Government of Ontario passed *Bill 89*, a revision of the (former) Child and Family Services Act that governs child welfare and youth justice services (Couteau, 2017). The new Act places greater emphasis on youth voice, and requires social workers assessing a young person's circumstance to consider what is in the best interests of the youth from their own perspective, in addition to considering specifics about their: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, family diversity, sexual orientation, gender



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identity and gender expression (Couteau, 2017). Though this Bill is a positive movement for youth, more participatory action and engagement from young people is needed in all aspect related to their lives.

Political and civic participation is the foundation for democratic ideology (Ginwright & James, 2002). Participating in policy and program creation is often restricted to young people (Hill, et., 2004; Horwath, Kalyva, & Spyru, 2012; Timor-Shlevin & Krumer-Nevo, 2016). Hindering young Black people’s rights to be heard stifles their ability to participate meaningfully and can lead to heightening overall risk (Ginwright & James, 2002; Hill et al., 2004; Horwath, Kalyva, & Spyru, 2012).

A youth perspective in the development of policy is valuable because areas of importance to adults, do not always reflect what is meaningful to young people. Understanding the needs of Black Youth is only authentically done through shared dialogue with adults who have the power to make change (Hill et al., 2004). An important point to mention is that often the overly ‘sympathetic’ service providers can also hinder participation by not valuing youth resiliency and participation skills, particularly those who are additionally marginalized, such as Black Youth.

Very few would oppose the fact that young Black people face difficult social issues. People such as policymakers and academics may highlight research on teen violence and negative educational outcomes and its impacts; Ginwright and James (2002) articulate that barriers to collaborative participation is the direst obstacle for youth.



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Social research that includes Black Youth is seldom conducted, and the focus is typically on “problem” behaviours (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). On the positive side, the focus on Black Youth creates the potential to analyze social barriers and decide how to innovatively respond through civic and political pedagogy and identity growth.

This framework is an ideal concept in creating fair democratic processes, improved communities and overall nurturing conditions for youth (Ginwright & James, 2002). Ginwright and Cammarota (2007) argue that researchers’ ‘social capital perspective’ which refers to “a static view of urban youth behavior and conceptualizes young people’s choices as maladaptive responses to social, economic, or cultural decay in poor communities” (p.654) is excessively deterministic and neglects the importance of agency, and of young peoples’ capacity to evaluate and respond to problems that hinder their social and economic growth. Social capital and problem behaviour frameworks muddle the truth that young people in urban communities utilize social networks regarding their families, social institutions, peers and programs to make positive decisions and engage in civic activities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

## **Critical Civic Praxis**

Very seldom do researchers study agency in Black communities. There is limited focus on how they respond to community and school oppressions through civic engagement (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Ginwright and Cammarota substantiate that community driven organizations can give youth access to networks, ideas and experiences that increases their capability to advocate for social justice, ultimately giving them the opportunity to participate in *critical civic praxis*, a development of critical consciousness that shapes young people’s ability to challenge and modify oppressive conditions in their everyday lives. Critical civic praxis is manifested as youth led movements/programs, spoken word, volunteering and participation in society issues to tackle everyday injustices (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). This perspective recognizes systemic barriers in the young



people's community, but also views them as engaged participants for change (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Community based organizations ultimately have the power to aid young people in experiencing critical civic praxis, heightening their ability to create social change, recognizing their individual and combined agency (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Watts, Williams & Jagers, 2003).

Social capital for marginalized communities should be viewed as mutual trust and shared ambitions for the 'common good'; community organizations provide youth with a variety of networks that tackle social community issues (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). This standpoint defines social relationship as actions supporting justice in organizations, that aid in developing social capital for marginalized groups and their communities (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). "This understanding of the role of social capital in urban communities highlights the importance of critical consciousness and social justice activism with the development of effective social networks" (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007, p.697).

Community organizations can offer Black Youth critical knowledge about their community and find ways to challenge oppressive infrastructures. Critical consciousness is a reference of Paulo Freire's explanation of the term; this is ultimately an awareness of systemic levels of oppression that hinders one's potential and subsequently one's capability to advocate for emancipation (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007; Watts, Williams & Jagers, 2003). By participating in activism to mitigate real world issues that form their everyday lives, such as discrimination and lack of safety in school, police harassment and other systemic injustices; youth can grow past victimization and challenge social injustices (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

Critical civic praxis is fostered through ties with supportive community members, facilitated by criticizing damaging perspectives about urban youth in public policy, and is maintained by collaborative interest through critical consciousness among urban youth (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Once youth



gain a new worldview of circumstances that shape their reality, they can develop approaches to improving their lives (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).

This new viewpoint is focused on the understanding that their everyday life circumstances are connected to their communities, and any substantial individual changes occurs through actions that improve their community. Ginwright and Cammarota (2007) highlight a program ran in America known as the “Young Black Leaders” (YBL). This program promotes and maintains critical civics praxis by providing a network of caring adults who provide enlightenments about important political viewpoints. They utilize a youth friendly space (colourfully painted space with couches and beanbag chairs), to have civil educational sessions for youth. The program is created to equip youth with the ability to understand how power is utilized and misused in their everyday lives, and how to solve it with analytical support from the facilitators (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Programs are run through role-plays, videos and dialogue about the connections from personal and political power and how it has created a sense of bleakness among the Black Youth (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). Through discussions about relevant issues, and then linking them to both systemic figures and personal choices, youth can successfully develop a fruitful understanding of their surroundings, which is the root of developing critical civic praxis (Ginwright & James, 2002; Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007). The youth in the study are aware that such drastic movement require personal growth and continual education allows one to develop their critical consciousness (Ginwright & Cammarota, 2007).



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## A Step Forward

Recent youth participatory opportunities for Black Youth in care systems in Ontario include the “*Our Hairstory*,” a project that was conducted in collaboration with Ontario’s Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth (Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, 2016). The project was led by a panel of 10 Black Youth who have had lived experiences in the child welfare system. They had the opportunity to communicate with policy makers about their experiences and suggestions for improvement.

The youth panel spent three months speaking to young Black people across numerous care sectors such as: group homes, youth shelters, mental health program and justice facilities. This was done in order to obtain perspective and discuss Young Black people’s experiences in these programs and hear their suggestions for change; these sessions were done in isolation from adults so the youths perspective could not be influenced (Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, 2016). From these valuable sessions, the young people provided areas to target moving forward such as: identity, racism, stigmas, parenting, programming, resources, immigration, and reasons for current disparities in these systems.

Black Youth are overrepresented in the child welfare system within Canada which reflects broader systemic racism faced by Black Canadians. Government officials, policy makers and people who hold relevant power must utilize the voice of the oppressed groups in creating legislations which impact their lives. There is a need urgency to be placed on this issue as people of colour continue to live with subpar care and education within Ontario today.

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# Working with Play

**Bernard Altman**

## Editor's note

*At the time of writing, Bernard Altman was a student and a child and youth care worker. He wrote this article for The Child Care Worker, 4(8) originally published in 1986. The article may be found in full at <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0102-altman.html>*

In many children's homes an attempt is made by the staff to define their role in facilitating the developmental tasks facing the children. A broad range of tasks are identified:

1. Cognitive development
2. Social and emotional development
3. Education and language development
4. Independence and responsibility.

Staff are, however, often faced with the difficulty of finding effective methods to implement in order to facilitate the child's growth. In this situation, play may be used not only as a basic activity resource but in many instances as an appropriate child care methodology. Play is a behaviour format which can facilitate rapport and communication and through which information and learning can pass between child and adult. Through play the child learns by doing with the least amount of resistance.



The significance of play within, the human experience has been widely recognised (d'Heule, 1979) and play is a natural activity for children (Weininger, 1978). It is a way in which children explore their environment and come to terms with its realities.

Child care practice might use the high levels of motivation apparent in play and its undeniable educational value. In order to do so the validity of play in respect of child development must be established; play must be placed within a theoretical framework; an attempt must be made to integrate this knowledge into our child care techniques.

## **The validity of play**

Generally speaking our children are under pressure to perform. They are encouraged and primed to prepare for the tasks facing them in the next phase of life. Our economy expects skilled, cognitively competent and qualified young people in order to perpetuate itself. This pressure is particularly evident in our school systems. The nature and strength of resistance to the present educational format is reflected in the rebellious attitude of our children towards school. We are most often confronted by this rebelliousness from adolescents, but for underachievers and deprived children school can become a negative experience even at the junior primary level.

The emphasis on performance both in class and on the sports field to some extent denies the importance of play. This is especially so in the context of learning that takes place through the daily living experiences of the child — learning that cannot be taught formally and theoretically but which must be experienced within social interaction.

According to Piaget (1972) play can serve many purposes and since children learn more effectively through activity rather than instruction, play provides an excellent vehicle for learning. Weininger (1978) emphasises an inner reality (intellectual and emotional life) and an outer reality (world experience) and the child's use of play to accommodate and connect these realities. During the first five



or six years it is the child's own sense of exploration that puts him in contact with outer reality (Frank, 1979). Through play the child's life-encounters can be restructured, dramatised and symbolised so that the elements of his environment can be evaluated, comprehended and assimilated. Through fantasy the child will fill in gaps of information or distort reality for his own inner needs and satisfaction, or when reality becomes unbearable or too threatening he may retreat into his own exclusive world of fantasy.

At the interface between inner and outer reality, where fantasy is challenged, the child's cognitive functions (e.g. perception, comprehension and evaluation) are exercised.

The various forms of play have been cited as significant in the development of:

- Conservation (the ability to perceive that properties of substances remain the same despite changes to shape or arrangement) (Golomb and Cornelius. 1977)
- Spatial and classification skills (Conolly and Doyle. 1984).
- Language fluency (Weininger. 1978).
- Innovative problem-solving (Smith and Dutton, 1979).
- Mathematical concept formation (Zammarelli and Bolten, 1977).
- Abstract thought and intelligence (Weininger. 1978).

According to Weininger (1978) play promises a valuable experience within which language skills are stimulated. Through verbalisation of activities the child may freely communicate his experiences.

Play activity provides a stable, logical, pre-verbal structure to which the child applies his reasoning. The reasoning is put into language and the language in turn assists reasoning because it helps the child to recognise what others think of his speech efforts.



It is suggested that play, although not a prerequisite for language, facilitates language acquisition and skills by providing a vehicle through which language can be practised and encouraged.

It is not only through language but through play itself that the child can learn to express himself in a unique and individual manner. He discovers qualities about himself and finds his own sense of satisfaction (Weininger, 1978). He can construct 'as if' situations in which he can play mother, father, sister, teacher, etc. In the acting out of various situations and roles, play has a constructive function. It is an attempt by the child to master and integrate reality. In this sense play also has the adaptive function of defusing and divesting situations of their negative and threatening qualities. This facilitates the positive assimilation of experiences for the child (Klein, 1979).

The socialising function of play cannot be underestimated. Through imitation, role-play, modelling and identification, various culture-specific games entrench social patterns of behaviour. Sex-typed roles especially are practised in children's play, for example studies involving primates suggest that play facilitates the development of mothering roles (Lancaster, 1976).

The validity of play lies in the fact that it is part of a process of growth. Play is a process of experimentation and exploration. Through play the child attempts to master various skills to cope with his changing roles in a changing environment, to assimilate and integrate processes and to develop an adaptive and individual personality. It is through play that the child is learning to learn (Frank, 1979).

## **Theoretical formulations**

In one sense play can be defined as the work of children. It consists of a set of meaningful activities that help the child to relate to his surroundings (Helms and Turner, 1981). Play is voluntary, abundant, diffuse and global. It is characterised by 'imaginary qualities' and rules. The relationship between imagination and rules changes so that "... the development from an overt imagining situation and covert rules in early childhood to games with overt rules and covert imagination in later



childhood and adulthood outlines the child's evolution from one pole to the other" (Vygotsky. 1966). Play can be intense and serious; it can be creative and spontaneous. It seems that it is the attitude of the child which is important in establishing whether an activity is play.

The difficulty in finding a useful operational definition can be dealt with to some degree by looking at different theories on play.

## **Evolutionary theories**

Herbert Spencer suggested a 'surplus energy theory' which explained that the child's playing (jumping, climbing, running, etc.) was a manifestation of his inner energy. Organisms generally use their energy for survival but children are provided for, resulting in an energy surplus which is rechannelled into play.

Another evolutionary theory suggests that play is a method of exercising survival skills that are needed by the individual later in life (Helms and Turner, 1981).

## **Cognitive-developmental theories**

Lewin (Herron and Sutton-Smith, 1971) suggested that play reflects the child's unstructured cognitive functioning. The young child cannot differentiate between reality and fantasy. The manner in which he plays will therefore reflect his level of cognition and his internal state of mind (e.g. angry, shy, sad, etc.).

Buytendijk (Helms and Turner, 1981) postulates that the child's internal infantile dynamics (cognitive and intellectual functioning) are primitive. Therefore, because of the child's lack of cognitive coherence, play is virtually the only activity he is capable of.

Piaget (d'Heule. 1979) suggests that cognitive development takes place as a result of the interaction between the child and the environment. Piaget felt that play emerges in the sensorimotor stage (0-2 years) during which the child practises basic sensorimotor skills (blowing, sucking, grabbing. etc.). Play, like cognitive development, develops sequentially. In the 2-4 age period preconceptual thought



emerges. The child at this stage is able to utilise objects symbolically. Intuitive thought (4-7 years) is marked by the child's ability to perceive and to imagine. The child can form a more accurate representation of his environment during the concrete operations stage (7-11 years) and in the formal operations stage (11-15 years) his skills become socialised, refined and expanded.

Throughout these stages the child is developing cognitive schemes and adopting aspects of the environment that fit these schemes (assimilation). In addition the child may revise or adapt his cognitive schemes to fit in with realities observed through interaction with his environment (accommodation).

During this developmental process three types of play can be distinguished: practice play (sensorimotor exercise), symbolic play (imagination and representation using symbols) and play with rules (development of moral concepts).

Only the barest fragments of Piaget's thoughts are presented here. The crucial point made in respect of play has to do with the processes of accommodation and assimilation. These processes indicate that through play the child is developing a concept of reality and is not merely imitating what is seen in the environment. The child's initial sensorimotoric play reactions contribute a basis to his future thought and reason.

## **Psychoanalytic theories**

Psychoanalysis stresses the importance of fantasy and symbolic play. Through play the child 'acts out' his wishes. Desires which cannot be satisfied because they are too threatening for the child himself to recognise, or desires which cannot be satisfied in reality are represented symbolically in play. Thus, the child is able to attain mastery over ego-threatening and painful experience as well as gain a degree of satisfaction of unattainable goals. In psychoanalysis, play has important therapeutic value because of its cathartic potential.

Erikson supported the psychoanalytic position that play has defensive and cathartic elements and added that play is a means by which the child learns to cope



with the environment. Model situations are created by the child through which he learns how to adjust to the demands of external reality. Erikson distinguishes three phases of play development (d'Heule, 1979).

Firstly, the sphere in which the ego attempts to adjust itself to the world. During this stage the senses and body co-ordinations are exercised. Secondly, the microsphere in which an attempt is made to gain mastery over experiences through the projection of internal feelings upon toys. Finally, the macrosphere in which the child is exposed to other children. Through this contact the play behaviour of others can be observed and social rules can be learned.

Only a few features of the psychoanalytic thought on play are presented here. However, essential contributions made by this school of thought include:

1. Play is the child's natural mode of self-expression.
2. When a child plays freely he can express his inner feelings and problems; he can express his personality.
3. Through play the child gains satisfaction from exercising capabilities, mastering his motor skills.
4. The child can use symbolic games to resolve or master conflicts which are otherwise passively endured.
5. Play facilitates the learning of identity, the definition of roles and the acceptance of rule-regulated behaviour.

## **Symbolic interactionist theories**

Cooley and Mead (d'Heule, 1979) understand play in the context of personality and social development. Play is an interaction between the self and the environment. Through play the attitudes and role definitions of others are internalised and socialisation is thus evolved. Through contact with the environment, the child gains knowledge of his material/spatial environment and his distinction from that environment.



The importance of play to this school of thought is that all forms of communication are vital to the process of development. "Fertile research of the past twenty years into kinesics, non-verbal communications and proxemics, the study of spatial relations, has shown that an underlying communicative baseline of any culture begins with the acquisition of the early sensorimotoric patterns".

## **Play and child and youth care**

Given the various theories, the meaning of play to any one child may be as individual as the child himself. The complex of factors which need to be gathered in order to make sense of play in the highly disturbed child is best left in the skilled and trained hands of therapists. But care workers work on a daily basis with both normal and troubled children. Since play is a large part of childhood a good child care work orientation will include an understanding that play has a meaning, just as all behaviour has a meaning. It is also good in our practice to recognise that play has intrinsic value, that it is not merely idle activity.

By observing children at play care workers can identify personality and character traits that may prove valuable in setting goals. A checklist, for example, with various dimensions such as 'social', 'isolated', 'aggressive', 'withdrawn', etc. can be constructed. The details of such a checklist is left to the effort and imagination of those interested. A checklist may be valuable in making care workers conscious of previously unobserved or unremarked behaviour.

A significant proportion of child care work consists of establishing and enforcing group rules. When children are playing they should be allowed to play freely. This is not to say that limits are unnecessary, particularly limits on non-verbal behaviour. Play, however, provides a scenario in which the care worker can be non-directive and display a maximum acceptance of what the child brings into his play. If it is accepted that the child can express anger, conflict, trauma, etc. in the context of play, then it is accepted that the child is communicating with an understanding adult. In this way the child can express himself in his own terms because he is given



the space and freedom to do so. Without this freedom and space the relationship between adult and child becomes ritualised and begins to lose its meaning.

Care workers can use games with rules, word games, story-telling, art, puppets and a wide range of toys such as toy soldiers, dolls, doll houses, cars, telephones, animals, puzzles, etc. In fact, once the power of play as a mode of communication is accepted, that is, once the care worker recognises how much information can be exchanged through non-verbal communication, assimilation, accommodation, modelling, role-play, identification, sensation, internalisation, socialisation and consolidation, then these channels can be used with great efficiency and facilitating the developmental tasks facing children.

## **Conclusion**

Through play the child has an opportunity of discovering his own strengths and weaknesses. He can select and improve particular skills, and practise the range of functional capacities that are inherent. As a result of the interaction between himself and the world he is able to establish a sense of personal identity and a definition of his social context. There seems to be no remedial or educational programme that could replace the child's own observations and spontaneous encounters with his environment.

By recognising and understanding the nature of children's play we learn something of 'children's language' through which we can communicate.

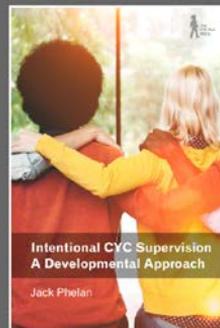
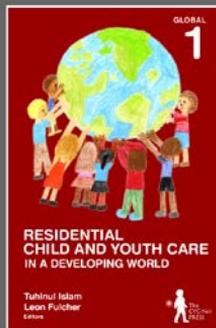
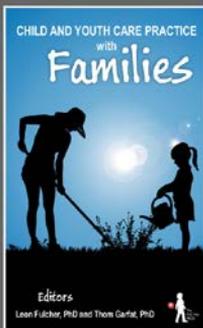
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# Postcard from Leon Fulcher

*From Auckland and New Zealand's Bay of Plenty*

**K**ia Ora and Warm Greetings to all who read this each month! This month, I am writing about immersion in grand-parenting experiences with 5 grandchildren ages 9, 7, 7, 5 and 1. For the first time, we have just completed a successful 'combined grand-parents, parents and two families of grand-children' living together or near to each other for a fortnight. Whew!

Those visiting New Zealand normally fly into Auckland, known as the City of Sails and rated one of the top three cities to live in anywhere in the World. This is where our travels began.

Our first stop was in the Waikato, at Waitomo Caves where the children and adults could view the luminescence created by tiny little worms that attract mosquitoes to the light. I thought of child and youth care workers – working night shifts sharing their light with others.



*Auckland City of Sails from the Waiheke Island Ferry*



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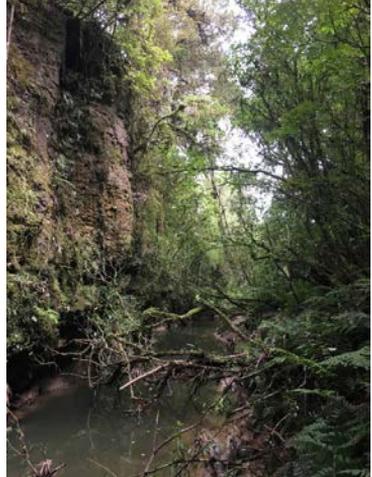
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We provided a guided tour of home and tourist destinations for first-time visitors to New Zealand grand-parents, joined with Colorado grandchildren and parents on a road trip that carried on to Rotorua, heartland of the Bay of Plenty. There, a visit tot the Te Puia Cultural Centre with geysersland, leading up to a cultural performance that included participants.

The Skyline Restaurant and Luge Track accessed via the Gondola takes sight-seers and luge riders up and down the hill. Child and Youth Care Workers in the World! Look at the photo of Lake Rotorua and write this place down as a 'must visit' tourism location some day!

Those into adventure tourism can do the advanced Luge track or the 'flying ride' down the hill. Tourism is a major part of the Te Arawa, Maori tribal economic activities in the region!

Another clever idea which generated huge amounts of conversation with our 9 and 7 year-olds came about through the Redwoods Treetop Walk.



*Waitomo Stream flows into limestone caves above which the Glow Worms Hang*



*Mokopuna Caitlin joined a Poi Cultural Presentation at Te Puia Centre, Rotorua*





*Gondola Ride to Skyline Rotorua and Luge Track*



*The Skyline Luge Track in Rotorua is a very attractive tourist destination*



*Rotorua Redwoods Tree Top Walk offers learning opportunities at every tree*

The Rotorua Redwoods were introduced from California at the end of World War II, and these have been maintained, now transformed into public walkways through the forest, or user-pays access to the extensive elevated walk-ways through the Redwoods. *Really cool* was our evaluation!



Moving up to Auckland, and after local sports obligations, the combined family travelled by ferry to Waiheke Island where we had 4 days in a luxurious old 6 bedroom house which demonstrated its reputation for a leaky roof as the remnants of Cyclone Hola blew through. When the weather was good, it was a very suitable location where we could all hang out!

Birthday parties are another feature of grand-parenting, especially when 5 year-old Harley celebrates his birthday 2 days before mine. It was fun watching children and parents make use of the model trains that operate Sunday afternoons. Great activity, weather permitting.

My learning experiences as a grand-parent during the past 4 weeks has highlighted the extent to which younger children look to and imitate the behaviours they notice and experience with the older children around them.



*Water Polo is a specialist sport that builds on swimming capabilities*



*Miniature Train Rides by the Local Model Engineers each Sunday afternoon*



It is one thing to read about this dynamic. It is quite a more challenging matter to engage in opportunity moments with individuals and with small alliances or coalitions that enable older cousins to influence younger cousins.



*Younger children are almost always learning to walk in an older sibling's shoes*



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- The style of a paper is up to the author
- We prefer APA formatting for referencing
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