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The Significance and Power of Physical Touch

Lee Loynes

Those of us working within the child and youth care sector are constantly faced with challenges regarding our 'being' in care – and how we interact with our young people in a way that is in their best interests. As research improves within the neurobiological environment, so our opportunities for practice improves. A particularly topical aspect regarding practice involves the role of touch as a developmental opportunity in our work with vulnerable children.

Physical touch is an essential experience in the lives of all human's. Physical touch and/or the lack of it triggers responses from the brain, in turn altering our biological responses, thinking and feeling processes – and then ultimately behaviour. The lack of such demonstrations of care, warmth, love and safety are not only detrimental to childhood development and attachment but continue to impact negatively on a healthy sense of well-being and development into adulthood.

Research has helped us to understand the significance of touch. Healthy, caring moderate to firm touch positively stimulates the body's receptors from the largest organ, the skin, to the systems within the body – gastric, vocal,

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heart, etc. Such positive moderate to firm touch experiences shifts the brains production and release of chemicals or hormones into the body, where it:

- decreases stress chemical (cortisol) releases, thus strengthening the immune system by saving natural killer cells that kill viral, bacterial and killer cells;
- has an effect on the release of both a hormone fundamental to influencing our social behaviour (oxytocin) and the brain's reward system (dopamine);
- increases anti-depressant and anti-pain (serotonin) chemicals and so connected to our feeling levels of joy, happiness and well-being.

It is interesting to note that light touch does not have the same positive impact as a moderate to firm touch (Fields, 2010). Following moderate to firm touch, brain wave analysis shows an increase in theta waves, typically associated with relaxation, with a calming effect on the nervous system as heart rate and blood pressure levels decrease. Light touch results in an increase in brain beta waves, typically associated with arousal, resulting in an increase in blood pressure and heart rate.



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Outcomes from 'Lack of Touch' studies, at and from infancy, showed adverse effects on behaviour and emotion including eating difficulties, excessive crying, hostile aggression, withdrawal and/or shyness or stubbornness. These outcomes have also indicated that lack of touch can lead to significant physical development and growth delays.

Thus, a caring, loving hug or positive touch can serve to enhance the child or person's sense of well-being and sense and feeling of comfort and safety, calm the nervous system by reducing heart rate and blood pressure, strengthen immunity, alleviate anxiety and stress and assist with stabilising mental health anxieties – wellbeing and trust.

Lack or abuse of that critical appropriate caring touch or hug can find that a child or person's immune system is debilitated or compromised – and their mental health compromised with aggravated depression and/or withdrawal. Professor McGlone (2014) goes on to point out that with the brains reward system depleted the individual might be driven to search for inappropriate replications to fill that reward void including drugs, alcohol or food.

When left alone and lonely, the hug of a soft toyed teddy can help to ease negative emotions (Dr Jon Reeves) – but appropriate touch or hug from a caring and trusted human being is beyond any measurable value – and can literally change feelings, experiences and lives.

We, within the field, so often work with young people who, as a result of negative or abusive touch, have been traumatised and so suffer on levels than cannot be detected with the naked eye and not easily understood by broader society. It is incumbent upon ourselves to continue to educate ourselves within this fast expanding field of research and then walk gentle, insightful, developmental journeys with our vulnerable youth as we help them to understand, overcome and then flourish.

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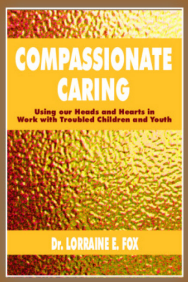
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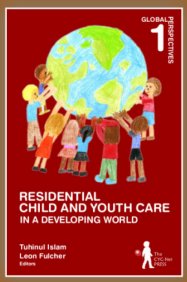


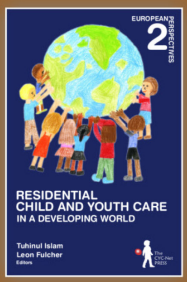
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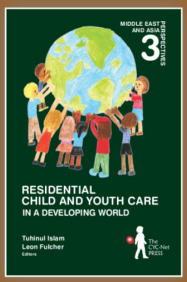
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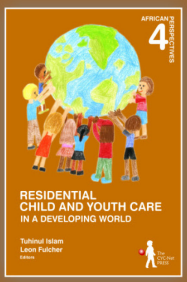
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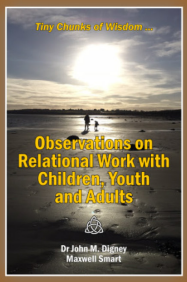


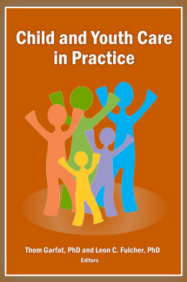


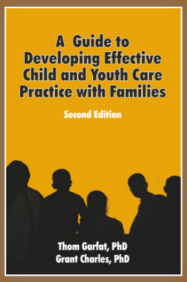


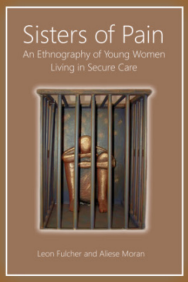


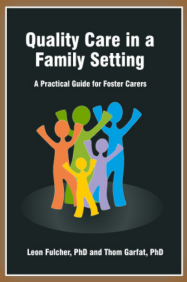


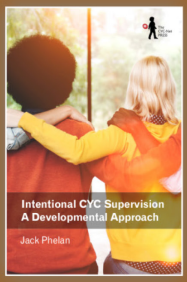


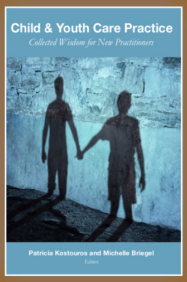


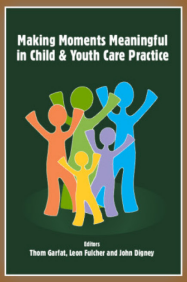


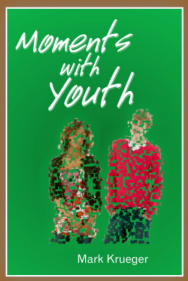


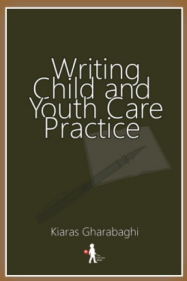


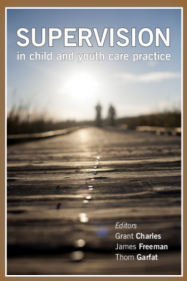


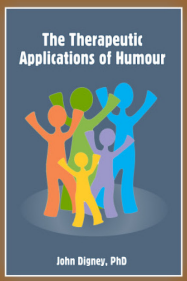


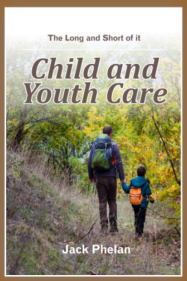












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Transnational Practice: Child and Youth Care Counsellors Without Borders

Michelle Briegel



A children's playground in Chernihiv, Ukraine

Katy Stone, Personal Communication, March 31, 2022

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With the invasion of Ukraine, I am wondering about the children, youth, and families who are fleeing their country. As of March 24, UNICEF reports that 4.5 million children had fled Ukraine (UNICEF, 2022). FICE International has reported that 80,000 children were living away from their families in orphanages and foster homes (personal communication, March 9, 2022). Many people working in these homes and orphanages have had to flee with their own families (FICE International personal communication, March 9, 2022). There will be a shortage of people to work with and care for the children, children's rights are being violated, and severe harm is coming to vulnerable children, youth and families. How can the Child and Youth Care Community help? Can professional transnationalism apply to Child and Youth Care Counsellors?

The countries surrounding Ukraine that have been accepting refugees at their borders have been doing such a remarkable job of supporting the immediate needs of refugees. However, what will happen with the children and youth in care that do not have families who can help them once they reach a safe location? FICE International has asked its member countries to support the children however they can (personal communication, March 9, 2022). Governments have been accepting children into their existing care programs and helping the agencies that have taken children into their care by providing their current workers (FICE International personal communication, March 9, 2022).

Children's Rights

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989) states that all children have the right to health, education, and protection from violence. UNICEF (2022) describes six grave violations against children in

times of war as killing, maiming, abduction, sexual violence, and recruitment. We are seeing unfold before our eyes on almost every news channel: strikes on schools and hospitals, denial of humanitarian access to safety, and reports of sexual predators seeking out children and young women for possible sex trafficking. The risk is high for those displaced with nothing more than the clothes on their backs. According to UNICEF (2022), international humanitarian law requires armed forces to protect children during the war. Yet, civilian infrastructures have been hit, leaving communities that have children with no access to power, food, or water.

Impact on Children

Children and youth are being displaced as a result of the invasion of Ukraine. They are displaced to refugee camps and other refuge areas, where they are at high risk of violence, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse. Children are at increased risk of malnutrition and other physical or health emergencies. Children and youth fleeing from war are at higher risk than their peers of similar age and stage, who have not been displaced, for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder due to the trauma of fearing and running for their life. Young people of Ukraine fear for the lives of their fathers and brothers who were left behind to fight and are under the constant toxic stress of being refugees. Without reliable access to food, shelter, money, and medications, the adults who are caring for the children are in perpetual distress, fearful of what will happen. The safety and security the children have known and relied on have been ripped away from them by the atrocities of war.

Based on the knowledge that human services workers leaving their home country to go to another country to support displaced children,

youth, and families, I am curious what other transnational developments can be taken up to continue to offer support? For example, are there global practices that might support Child and Youth Care Counsellors to provide support for displaced children?

Transnational Child and Youth Care can be less limited in scope by considering how to participate in cross-border interrelationships, much like Oliver-Mensah et al. (2017) talk about concerning international social work. Oliver-Mensah et al. (2017) discuss the idea that social work is not limited to the physical mobility of changing locations; instead, the transnational patterns and practices of the diversity of the target group should be recognized. The same could apply to Child and Youth Care as is proposed for social work.

The global interconnectedness of the world today, due to advancements in technology, has softened the rigid borders of national, state, and provincial practice as it pertains to the physical mobility of people, allowing for a quick and easy transnational approach (Oliver-Mensah et al., 2017). However, local policies and restrictions often cause disciplines to become entangled in transnational work dynamics and process (Oliver-Mensah et al., 2017). Again, thinking about the children, youth, and families displaced from Ukraine that need support and trauma-aware counselling services in the surrounding countries that have taken them in as refugees, it seems that the rules of entanglement regarding cross-border practice have been lifted to allow for immediate aid. Therefore, one can propose that the regulations can also be raised to virtually provide support and access to Child and Youth Care Counsellors.

For the profession of Child and Youth Care, this could mean a new innovative and collaborative global approach to work that could build into an international Child and Youth Care Counsellor practice. An international approach could provide a mobile and internationally created model of practice that works in interprofessional collaboration with social work and other human service professions throughout the world.

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Case Files and Real Lives: When Children's Lives Become Documented

Kiaras Gharabaghi

These days, I spent a lot of time reading case files for children and youth in foster care, group homes, or other types of involvements with child welfare, child and youth mental health services or youth criminal justice services. Reading case files is not an uplifting process; quite to the contrary, it is a process that exposes the enormous gulf between professional measures designed to yield accountability, safety and transparency in case management and case coordination activities on the one hand, and the lives lived by young people every day on the other hand. It is worthwhile to consider what a case file presents us with and how it shapes the narrative of young people's lives.

In case you never had occasion to read a complete case file of a young person involved with out of home care systems, let me provide a description of what is in those files, how they are structured and organized, and what the nature of the narrative is that these files present us with. While I am drawing primarily on my experience of these files in the Canadian context, I have in fact reviewed files in other jurisdictions, and although they are differences, these are not substantively all that pronounced.

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A case file is usually a large document (these days, often digital), sectioned into core areas of case management, such as assessments, social history, education, family, placements, etc. It begins with identifying information about the young person, including information about their age, where they were born, their birth family context, their cultural, racial, and spiritual identifications and associations, as well as their involvement in schools. It also provides a brief snapshot of the young person's involvement in systems; it tells us who opened a file for the young person, when they did that, when the file was closed, and it usually provides a list of out of home placements and other services that may have been provided over time. Then we go into the sections of the file. Very often, the assessment section is near the front, and it provides us with any of the psychological, psycho-educational, or psychiatric assessments that have been completed at various times in the child's life. The education section provides us with report cards from schools, any school reports beyond that, as well as incident reports about things that may have happened at school. The family section gives us a social history for the child, explains who the family members and sometimes other significant adults in the child's life are, and similar kind of information.

Every placement of the child typically produces their own placement-specific files, so that the case file also has sections for daily logs, incident reports, and other information that comes directly from each of the placements. As you can imagine, for children with multiple placements, these case files are quite large, sometimes several thousand pages.

What brings these case files to life, however, is not so much the descriptive information, the reports, the daily logs, and so on, but rather the much more interesting copies of emails, notes about phone calls, and other communication records exchanged between the professionals that have been involved at various stages of the child's life. It is in those communications that we can find the dynamic of case management and case coordination, including the tensions that emerge while children are being managed by adults with varying vested interests. Of particular note is that almost all of these communications are based on regulatory standards and the accuracies of templated forms. In other words, professionals are talking to each other about their adherence to regulations much more so than about the child. For example, there are usually countless emails from a regulator to a service provider pointing to incomplete information, such as missing dates for medical visits, or inaccurately field incident reports. Then we find revised submissions from the service provider that simply correct whatever the regulator complained about.

In some instances, the level of superficiality is truly astounding. For example, when a child identifies as racialized or Indigenous, the communication about that child is primarily focused on whether specific actions have been taken to recognize the identity of the child. It matters not so much what those actions are. But it does matter that the section of a form demanding comment on those actions is completed. For example, I often come across comments such as this:

> *The child identifies as Indigenous, but at the moment expresses no desire to engage this identity.*

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This kind of comment satisfies the needs of the case file, despite lacking any kind of substantive meaning. Case files about children with identities other than Indigenous (in the Canadian context) lack any kind of commentary on how such identities are taken up or how they might be important in a child's life. Another very common element of the communication between professionals reflected in case files relates to the actions taken in response to various assessment reports. These are almost always limited to instrumental actions and turn out to be surprisingly uniform across case files for different children. For example, assessment reports that include diagnoses are almost always followed up with a demand that the child be referred to 'treatment'. The nature of that treatment seems quite irrelevant. So long as there is an indication that the child was referred to a counsellor or therapist, we are good to go.

Case files tend to center documentation about decision-making much more so than documentation about everyday life. It is clear that professional systems see themselves as accountable in the context of the decisions they make. Decision-making includes a wide range of actions. Decisions to refer the child to other services, decisions to change placements, decisions with respect to family access to the child, and, at the micro level, decisions with respect to specific program choices, consequences, loss of privileges, and so on are all well documented and rationalized. In all of this, case files provide very limited information about the perspectives of the child, and virtually no information that dives into the everyday activities of the child. To the extent that they do refer to such activities, such references are problem focused. In other words, child activities that are in violation of program rules, that involve conflict with the law, or that might involve challenges at school (including suspensions) are

well documented. On the other hand, a child's relationships with friends, their everyday chatter about things of interest to them, or even their perspectives on interpersonal relationships are largely absent in the file. Similarly absent is an indication about the child's way of being in the world, particularly as this might reflect intersectional identity characteristics. For example, nothing in the case file speaks to how a Black child might experience being Black in the communities where they are placed (in Canada, most foster homes and group homes are situated in predominantly white communities, often in rural or small-town spaces).

I am writing about case files this month because I am increasingly concerned about how these documents are used to understand child and youth experiences of 'life in the system'. This is important, since our understanding of those experiences are major drivers of system development and transformation. Based on case files, our approach to systems will largely focus on the needs of professionals, and beyond their needs, also their vested interests. In other words, it is perhaps not surprising that child and youth serving systems feed primarily themselves. Having read dozens of case files end to end, I am realizing that the humanity of the child is really quite invisible. With an invisible humanity, it is difficult to imagine meaningful approaches to what are fundamentally human processes, including care and caring, relational engagements, and authentic acknowledgments of intersectional identities. Instead, I am experiencing case file reviews as a process that objectifies children and youth. As objects, we can measure the degree of regulatory compliance in relation to specific characteristic of the object, but we cannot create space for agency, self-efficacy, autonomy, and subjectivity. While it is true that in recent years, even case files have had to create some space for child and

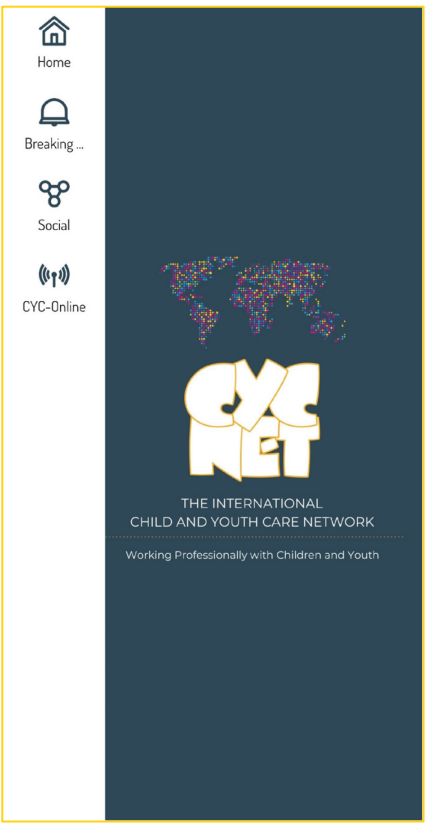
youth voice, that voice is itself commodified to go with the object being described. I sense no real engagement with voice as an expression of autonomous human agency. Instead, I see voice as reflected in case files as much more analogous to a battery-operated toy, whereby case files now more regularly actually ensure that there is a functioning battery in the toy that dutifully allows for voice to be audible and documented.

Perhaps most notable for me is the absence of child and youth care practice in case files. Despite most of the files pertaining to children and youth who regularly, sometimes 24 hours per day, are engaged with child and youth care practitioners, this work finds little expression in case files (beyond the program specific file and its daily logs). This means that the child's life is essentially devoid of everyday ways of being, and specifically being in relationship with others. It is a life of appointments and referrals, incidents and problems, and efforts to ensure complete case files rather than meaningful lives. Perhaps this helps us understand why change in child and youth serving systems is rarely transformative.

Something to think about.

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Self-Development for CYC Staff, a Supervisory Focus

Jack Phelan

Our treatment efforts emphasize changing the young people and families in our programs almost exclusively, while ignoring the need to change the attitudes and thinking processes of the CYC staff members. Effective CYC supervision should include deliberate attempts to change the way that CYC staff think about the intention of their efforts with young people and families. I have based some of my understanding of intentional interventions on the work of Laura Steckley (2021) in Scotland concerning Threshold Concepts and the research of Heather Modlin (2013) in Newfoundland on adult thinking stages.

As CYC practitioners mature and develop increasingly complex ideas about effective life space treatment, their conceptualization of "self" in this relational dynamic changes dramatically. My premise is that how a practitioner thinks about what they are doing in the helping process is a result of how they think about the "self" that they bring forward in the interactions which are created in life space work. It is important for CYC supervisors to both understand how the "self" understood by each practitioner influences his/her ability to think about what is happening and also how to support a continual increase in complex thinking about "self".

These conceptualizations of "self" mirror the developmental stages described as Level 1 Competent Care Giver, Level 2 Treatment Planner and

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Change Agent and Level 3 The Creative, Free-Thinking Professional, Phelan (2017). I will describe the "self" issues for Level 1 practitioners this month and the later stages in the next months.

Level 1 practitioners usually develop quickly over the first year of CYC experience, beginning with an awkward period of nervous anxiety about competence and personal safety during the initial three months of practice, followed by increasing self-confidence and skill building resulting in a practitioner who can competently organize and implement the existing daily program or home visit protocols, generally by the end of 9-12 months of experience.

The thinking of new practitioners is very focussed on personal feelings, generally concerned about safety and control. The anxiety about loss of control which is typical of new practitioners causes young people and families to act badly around them because this atmosphere of anxiety affects them too. As the practitioner acquires more experience, he/she settles down and things become more manageable. The practitioner often believes that the young person or family has changed, but he/she is the one who has changed, having built a safer belief about "self". Foster parents often go through this process with new youth or if they are new to fostering and once a safe personal attitude has been established, no longer need to be reassured that a youth will be removed from their home if the poor behavior continues. As they become safer in their own sense of self, the issue goes away.

After this difficult early experience of self fades, the new practitioner is ready to think more clearly about the person being helped, and less about their own discomfort. When challenging behavior occurs and the practitioner shifts from thinking "or no, what am I going to do now?" to "I

wonder what is bothering the youth or family?", the "self" of the practitioner has become able to focus on treatment needs. Level 1 practitioners still think about their own needs and generally see success linked to being liked by the person being helped. Personal attractiveness is an ongoing issue and Level 1 practitioners strive to be a role model and hope that they are missed when absent. This conceptualization of "self" is useful in many ways but has serious limitations. The intentional behavior of the helper includes thinking about their own image being projected, which limits their ability to fully appreciate the other person's reality.

The Competent Care Giver is a valuable asset to the treatment program because he/she can competently run the requirements of the pre-determined set of routines and expectations, as well as creating experiences of being cared about for young people and families who often feel neglected and unimportant. The ability to create these moments result from supervision that emphasizes the need to go beyond the minimum requirements of job descriptions.

Themes arising in the first year of practice that supervisors will address include focussing on reducing anxiety in very recent staff, avoiding the agenda of the poor behavior of young people and family members. By supporting staff to reduce anxiety, they will more smoothly develop better thinking skills and strategies for helping, rather than getting stuck in the cycle of anxiousness that increases conflict. Newer staff also think of themselves as deserving of gratitude for being so willing to help, which only invites the distrust of young people and families. Supervisors can focus staff on the professional nature of the role and the issues that arise when staff feel unappreciated. The personal "self" focus of newer staff can also result in them wanting to be seen as a trusted friend, when they should be

trying to create a more impersonal safer boundary for themselves. When supervisors can support Level 1 staff to think about the needs of the other person first, reducing the tendency to look for gratitude, trying to create moments of caring that exceed basic job expectations, and looking inside themselves to evaluate quality of performance rather than external approval, they will be building the foundation for shifting into a conceptualization of "self" which will be further developed at Level 2 practice.

We will look at Level 2 issues next month.

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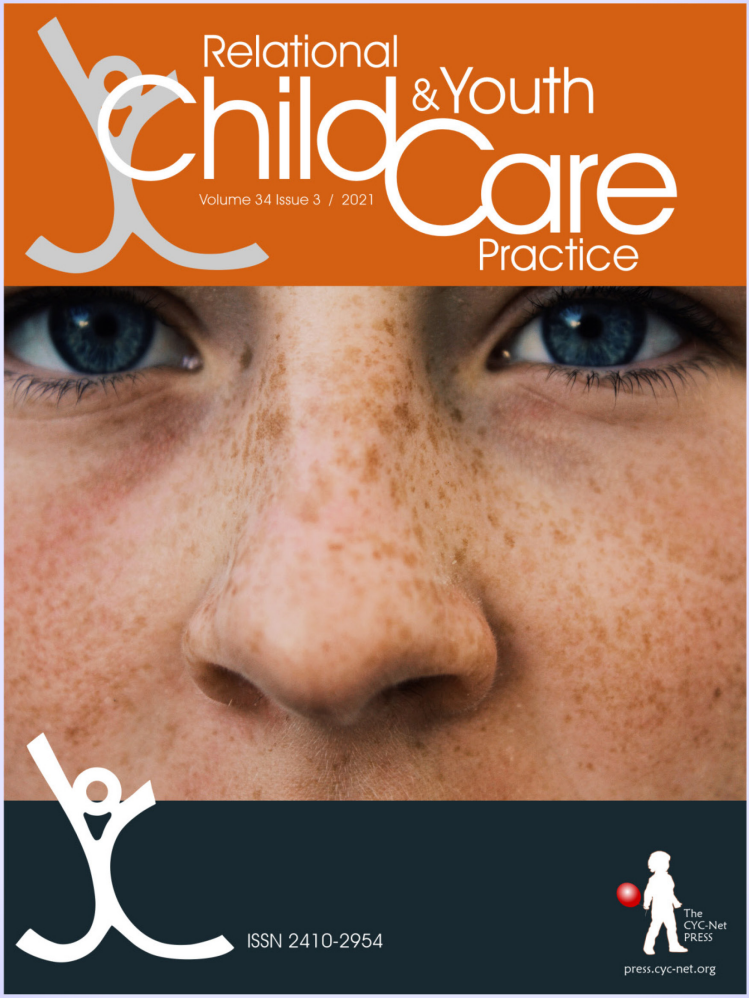
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Is Canadian CYC Viable?

Doug Magnuson

Imagine if a philosophy professor taught her own theories as if they were the "right" answer to historical questions rather than teaching about the variety of theories, current and historical, that have been developed to respond to those questions. Students would likely be graded on their agreement with the instructor, not on the quality of their thought, the quality of their writing, or the creativity of their engagement with diverse ideas. They would not learn to have a disciplined mind, only an obedient one.

Philosophical theories begin as hunches, and then they are tested against the thought of thousands of people, and sometimes tested against empirical data. Even then, they are taught as theories, with room for disagreement and arguments pro and con. They are part of and a result of a process of "reflexive equilibrium," in which ideas get clarified over time.

CYC in Canada is a young and small field, and there is not enough friendly, public debate or critique of ideas; students in CYC rarely learn to consider and evaluate different points of view, despite plenty of alternatives. Some programs have an ideological bias to which students are expected to conform, that is, propaganda. Not many programs teach the history of a practice, except in simplistic terms, and students as a result suffer from "recentism," the assumption that the best ideas are the newest. CYC as a field does not keep up with ideas from other parts of the world, and we do not know our history.

Like philosophy, few ideas in CYC are absolutely true, and there is more than one way to do the work – more than one method and more than one theory that is useful in any particular situation – there is also more than one acceptable ideology and belief system. Yet some instructors are intolerant of dissent from their own views or current fads, calling students "resistant," a lethal and loaded word in CYC. Agreement with the instructor should not be the educational goal.

Alternatively, you might want to know something about CYC practices and be able to think about how well those practices serve real people rather than serve ideologies. A strength of graduates ought to be their ability to implement a variety of methods, as well as understand the weaknesses of each approach. There is room for alternatives.

If one will not learn a disciplined mind and a set of tools for solving practice problems drawn from the history of the field, why major in CYC? There are alternatives. The Conference Board of Canada published a report on the "skill vacancies" in Canada, and the skills they worry about track well with CYC competencies--but they also track well with liberal arts competencies. Why not major in history, philosophy, a language art, lingistics, or something similar?

Another option is therapeutic recreation (TR). In TR you will be exposed to progressive theories of inclusion and universal design, as relevant as any "critical disabilities" study course in CYC. You will value play as a modality of human growth and therapeutic healing, and you will learn about working alongside rather than telling people what to do. You will learn to assist others using democratic methods of reciprocity. You will learn concrete skills for working with diverse people while also learning how to generalize those skills. You can also learn to work in mental health and addiction

settings. You can do clinical or community work. You might have some fun, and you can do CYC with a TR education. Of course, the quality of TR instruction varies too.

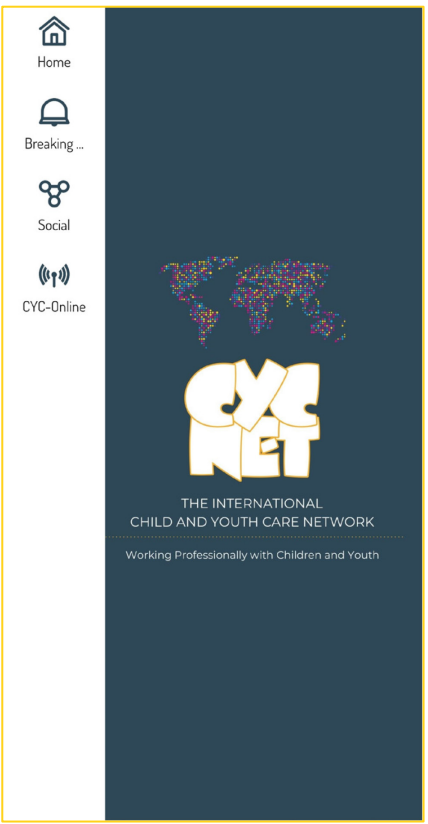
Thankfully, a few Canadian CYC higher education programs include these practices and are still trying to do this work. The interesting educational, learning challenge in education is to think about more practices that are possible rather than fewer, more practices that are interesting rather than the right theory or right practice, and then to figure out how to recognize when it is working – or not. We want students with diverse ideas and practices, not just diverse students who subscribe to one view. We can be critical, but we also want to know where and how to start a practice and knowing how to recognize whether that practice is helpful to clients, is where professionalism begins.

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Time Has Come Today

Hans Skott-Myhre

Time has come today
The rules have changed today
I have no place to stay
I have no home
I have no home
Now the time has come
There's no place to run
I might get burned up by the sun
I've been crushed by the tumbling tide
There are things to realize
Time has come today
Time has come today

Chambers Brothers

I would like to take a moment in this month's column to set a certain kind of context for the work we do in CYC. Living our lives and doing the work we do, it is sometimes difficult to make sense of the events in the world that shape our struggles and hardships. Without a doubt, we are living in a world in transition between the colonial and the postcolonial, the modern and the postmodern, industrial capitalism and virtual global capitalism, as well as the world of the nation state and the realm of global capitalist empire. The struggle between the faux democratic regimes that

have masked the rule of the capitalist class in the U.S and its allies, and the rise of overtly dictatorial rule is shaping the descriptions we are being given of the choices we have for sovereignty and self-governance. We are gradually being subsumed into what Tony Sampson calls neuroculture, where our deepest desires are appropriated at a neurological level by corporate capital. We are living in an ever-proliferating open asylum where more and more of us are diagnosed and medicated. In short, we are living at the edges of an emerging world and suffering through the ambivalence not knowing what comes next.

The young people we encounter in our work live on the front lines of this ambivalence. They know the world will never be the same, They watch as adults try to force the world backwards into a semblance of what it once was and they know this cannot work. Things cannot go back, but the old world can continue to break though into the present as a form of collective PTSD flashback that haunts us and won't seem to go away. To the degree we don't account for this in our work, we will miss the opportunity to work with young people to shape an alternative future that puts our rampaging ghosts to rest. We need an exorcism, a ceremony, a new set of practices to move us through this transition to the other side without losing more young people to unnecessary death, pain, and despair. But first, perhaps we need to be able to see the ways in which time no longer functions in a progressive developmental linear fashion, because time is out of joint.

It is with that in mind that, like most of the world, I have been watching the Russian invasion of the Ukraine with dismay and horror at any number of levels. There is so much to say about the brutality of wars of occupation and colonization. My father, who fought the Nazis when they occupied his country as an underground Norwegian partisan in his mid-teens, once told

me that to successfully occupy a country requires a willingness to be absolutely merciless. Ironically, he felt that the United States, as he knew it in the late twentieth century, was not capable of that level of brutality.

While that may or may not be true of the contemporary U.S., historically the colonization of what is now the United States was carried out with precisely that level of merciless force. Indeed, A number of Indigenous tribes in the U.S. have condemned the invasion of Ukraine, likening it to attacks on tribal nations by settler-colonists,

> *Yakama Nation Tribal Council members likened the Ukraine invasion to attacks on tribal nations by non-tribal people upon their arrival in 1492. The tribal council said the assault is no different than the invasion of Yakama Nation tribes.*

And there is no doubt that processes of colonization and Empire building hold both structural and tactical similarities across historical periods. There are, however, an array of anomalies in this particular savage assault on the sovereignty of the Ukrainian people that also have colonial roots. Among these, I would note that the preponderance of African nations have not stepped forward to support European and American actions intended to counter the invasion. There seems to be a colonial residue left by the European occupation of Africa in the postcolonial period, while Russia has no history of colonization in Africa.

Nations such as Kenya sees parallels between the emergence of Ukraine after the fall of the Soviet Union and the ways in which Africa was shaped during the process of decolonization. There is a recognition of the dangers of the rise of modes of colonial domination in the Ukrainian

invasion by Russia, while simultaneously an understanding that there is a certain hypocrisy in the positioning of nations such as the U.S., who continue wars that assert global hegemony and colonial control in the Mideast, among other places. Kenya's UN Security Council representative Martin Kimani stated in a speech before the U.N, that

> There are many people in many parts of the world who would like to see other regions gaining strength and would like to see the end of Western domination of the world order, putting it simply … of course, no right-thinking person in Africa or anywhere in the world looks at what is going on in Ukraine now and thinks that it's a good thing … but many people do see the hypocrisy.

The complicated set of postcolonial conditions that creates an ambivalent response among African nations, might also be used to read the relations of countries such as India and China. These nations were also colonized by European powers such as Britain and have taken what might be generously described as an agnostic position on the invasion of the Ukraine by Russia, who despite geographic proximity never invaded or attempted to colonize either China or India.

All of this is to say that, the ghosts of colonization continue to exert a powerful force in world politics within the world of the 21st century. As Faulkner put it, in *Requiem for a Nun*, "The past is never dead. It's not even past." One of the most troubling and disconcerting aspects of life as we know it today is the way in which notions of linear progressive time, have become increasingly difficult to articulate. Time has become entangled in ways that make it ever more difficult to put the past in the past and even

harder to assert the present as an entry point to the future. Our ghosts, such as colonization, genocide, fascism, and white supremacy continue to intrude with an insistence that makes them impossible to ignore. Of course, it is possible that we are in a transition that will move us beyond such horrific enactments of human depravity, but it would seem that, at least for now, our nightmares seem to be always on the edge of the daybreak of new worlds.

I think of this when I see the reassertions of white supremacy, homophobia, religious fundamentalism, and the rise of plutocracies in the U.S, and elsewhere. Much of this is in play in the conflict in Ukraine, although it is not generally described in these terms. One might wonder why this conflict in particular has garnered so much emotional support and media attention. Why does the invasion of the Ukraine resonate so deeply with the West.

For example, I am thinking of the Biden administration's decision to accept 100,000 Ukrainian refugees into the U.S. There are a number of things that are puzzling about this decision. One being that the U.S. is not actually a major destination for Ukrainian refugees and its seems quite unlikely that such a capacity will be necessary. Don't get me wrong, I am all for admitting Ukrainian refuges in those numbers or more. But I have to wonder, why Ukrainian's refugees, when the U.S. is refusing large numbers of other desperate people from Haiti, Central and South America, and Somalia. What makes the Ukrainians uniquely situated for asylum?

In the course that I teach on cultural competence, I teach a section on White Privilege. One of the assertions that I make in the class, is that the most fundamental aspect of privilege is the ability to claim without

ambivalence that you belong here, that you will never have to worry about being forced to leave where you live because you don't belong.

In that portion of the class, I trace U.S. immigration law and policy along with legislation such as the Indian Removal Act to trace the history of who gets to belong as defined by who can be legally removed. Not surprisingly, the groups who face removal or who are barred from immigrating are overwhelmingly people of color or Indigenous. When there have been immigration restrictions on people of European origin, such as the Irish, Eastern or Southern Europeans, it was because they were considered non-white. With the expansion of whiteness to include all Europeans, those restrictions have faded away. On the other hand, they have not faded away for immigrants of color trying to seek asylum in the U.S. When read in this light, the Biden administration's approach to Ukrainian immigration, at same time the U.S. is deporting people of color, has to be seen as another instance of we the people as, we the *white* people. In some respects even our acts of kindness and generosity are tinged with colonial residue that we can't seem to move beyond.



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At the end of the day, however, perhaps one the most telling aspects of the Russian invasion is the question of land. There is no doubt that any serious effort at decolonization includes the repatriation of stolen land. And there is also no doubt that this continues to be an issue as settler states such as the U.S. and other nations continue to steal land and violate indigenous sovereignty. There are certainly still armed encounters between the state and indigenous peoples over such continued colonial practices. However, nothing on the scale of what Russia has been doing in the Ukraine. To militarily invade land in order to reestablish the previous borders of a 19th century empire is an act profoundly out of synch with the increasingly virtual mechanisms of appropriation by global capitalism. It is a reactionary anomaly unprecedented in scope and aspiration. And this is reflected in the asymmetry of response by NATO countries including the U.S. While Russia fights the war on the land, slaughters thousands of civilians, and bombs cities into oblivion, the U.S. and its allies fight the war on the terrain of virtual capital, trying to inflict pain through attacks on the economy of Russia. This is an odd war indeed, between a 19th century invasion using 21st century weaponry and a virtual war fought on the terrain of virtual capitalism. We would appear to be in a moment where, as Yeats would have it –

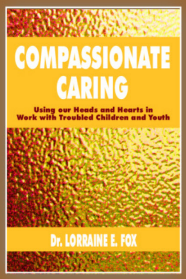


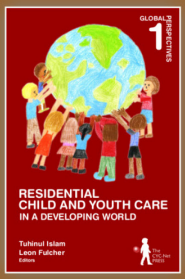
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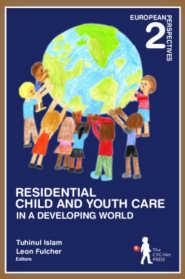
Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
Surely some revelation is at hand

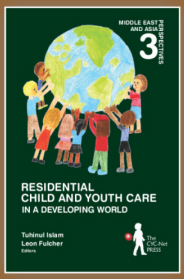
I would argue, that for those of us working with young people, this is the world we need to take to take into account. We cannot continue to harken back to whatever world we, as adults, miss and wish to reestablish. The future is now emerging and we need to work together to bring the best of it forward, or without a doubt we will live through the worst of it. The time is now and the revelation is at hand. The question is, can we read the writing on the wall, or are we turned ever backwards to a world that can never be again. Young people are already living in the future. We need to join them there, however unsettling that might be.

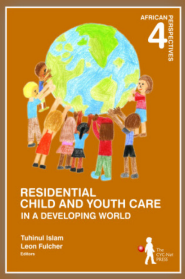
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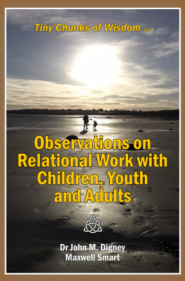


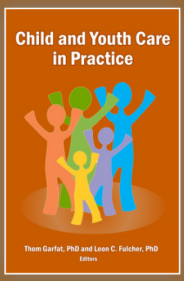


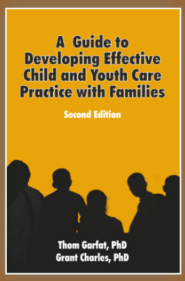


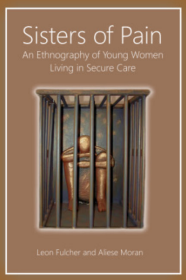


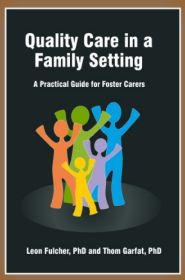


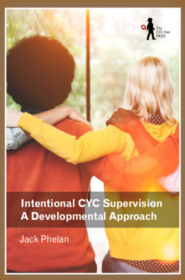


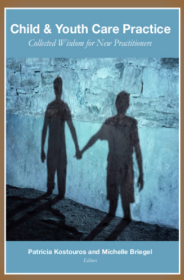


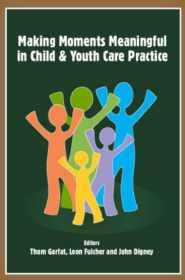


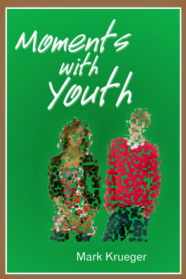


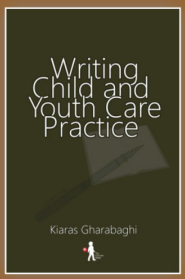


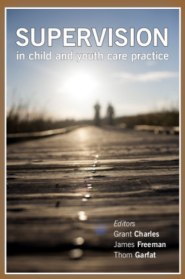


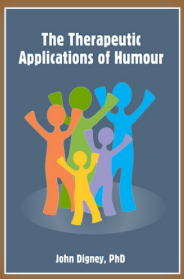


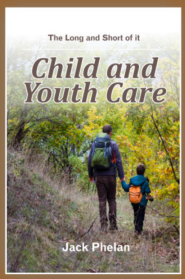












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What is "Self"?

Adrian Ward

What I am seeking to establish in this chapter is that our self is our primary tool of practice "it is the means through which we experience and conduct our practice, including the psychological and emotional demands which practice entails. I would argue that this remains true whether or not we think of our work as specifically relationship-based. However, this raises several questions including, first, what do we mean by self in this context, and then what do we mean by the use of self?

We might initially assume that our self is a single, fixed quantity, because we all know roughly who we are and what we are like (we would not have got far in this work if this were not the case). Self, in this set of assumptions, represents continuity in our personality, security in our identity and reliability and consistency in relationship "it is our human nature. However, although this view has its appeal, self is more complicated and elusive than it may seem, as I hope to show.

The term "self" is also often used as shorthand for a whole set of aspects of personality and identity, including our personal beliefs and values, our anxieties and "constructs" "a combination of our rational and intuitive views on the way the world and other people operate, and therefore on how we can interact with the world and other people. It may be seen as

being not so much the sum of our experience as the continually evolving process through which we experience, grow and act. Each of us evolves our own unique character and self through our own individual pattern of experience, feeling and thought, and we also develop a "sense of self" in which we become aware of and protective of our own self. This is true not just of our personal lives but also of the professional world.

This does not mean, however, that self is a fixed single quantity. We all know that we may behave and relate differently in our personal relationships than in our work or study relationships; that others may see different sides of us in these different contexts and may know little or nothing of our other sides. So self may be said to be to some extent contingent upon environment and context, and adaptable or at least selectable according to our strategy. Thus I may be (or attempt to be) a different self in my interactions with my boss than I am with my friends, or I may find I am quite a different person with my own family or partner than I am with my clients. Some of these decisions about shifting self/selves may be made at a conscious and deliberate level, whereas others are probably more unconscious.

Self may also shift over time: I may develop my self as I mature in my life and my practice, so that I become more responsive, less insecure or more confident. Experience may teach me not to worry so much about what may happen if I make a mistake "or perhaps that I should worry more! As I evolve, I may also feel more able to draw on certain aspects of myself in different situations, and more able to leave behind anxieties which troubled me before. So self may be said to be mutable and selectable over time "I can begin to choose more about myself in order to use different parts of myself as I wish to. It is partly through this variability and the ability

to select and employ different aspects of our self that we start to develop the capacity to actively use the self in practice.

Self is not a purely internal quality, however, solely dependent on our immediate family environment. We are all also located in our community and society as a whole, and our sense of our own identity and potential, our self-worth and self-belief are further contingent on the extent to which we feel we can identify with others and feel valued and respected by them and by the extent to which we find we have genuine opportunities to assert and achieve for ourselves within society. For many people, however, including some of those who find themselves in the position of becoming service users, there may be a struggle to feel accepted or heard, known or valued within society, and they may feel ignored or despised or actively conspired-against by those in authority. People may feel excluded or devalued because of negative stereotypes about their ethnic origin, their gender, their sexuality or about the particular part of town in which they live. They may feel that these negative stereotypes are almost branded on them, making it impossible to be heard fairly or treated equally. As social workers, we need to know about such stigma and to understand something of what it means for people "as well as understanding how we and our agency may be contributing to it.

Furthermore, it is not only the service user who may have such experiences of conflict between self and society. We may all have ways in which we differ from the perceived norm and may thus have been subject to negative stereotyping and the consequent threats to or impingements on a sound sense of self. See Kumsa (2007) for a powerful example of the ways in which such experiences may inform and affect our assumptions in practice (in this case, in working with refugees). As social workers, we will

need to reflect on our own self in similar terms: what experience do we ourselves have of feeling oppressed, overlooked or rejected by society, and if we cannot identify such experience, how can we ensure that we will understand the full range and depth of the service user's experience? As with other aspects of this theme, questions such as these need to be continually asked in respect to each new encounter, rather than assuming they can be put aside after brief consideration in a training exercise.

There is finally a sense in which the whole concept of self can be seen as contested and elusive in a postmodern world in which there are few fixed entities and no absolute certainties, and in which competing ideologies and discourses put everything in doubt. In particular, although in much of the earlier literature on the use of self there are echoes of the white western Christian "soul", firmly located in historical certainties about good and evil, "normality" and "abnormality", all of that now needs to be seen in a different light. The self is a much less solid and secure concept than it may have appeared even 50 years ago. Although we do need to think about self in social work as if it is an identifiable and perhaps core aspect of personality, we may also have to accept that this is shifting ground and that ultimately when we think about what we mean by "self ", we can perhaps say, rather as St Augustine said about time, "So long as nobody asks me what it is, I know, but as soon as I am asked, it disappears from my view".

This piece was published in *CYC-Online*, 139, September 2010 and originally in *Relationship Based Social Work* by Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From New Zealand, thinking about Managing Stormy Weather

Kia Ora Kotou Katoa and Warm Greetings Comrades! This month I am writing after an 8-hour drive from sunshine into stormy weather. I found myself thinking of family and friends living on the east coast of Australia who had more tropical rain in three days than would normally fall in a year. Flooding left hundreds needing to be rescued.



A once in a 100-year rainfall hit the Wairoa District full force for 10 days

I found myself thinking about how stormy weather invoked images of child and youth care practice. Aided by James Freeman's exciting new *Characteristics of a Child and Youth Care Approach to Practice Cards*, I began thinking about some of my own unseasonal flooding experiences and how these were often reflected in the daily life events that we share.

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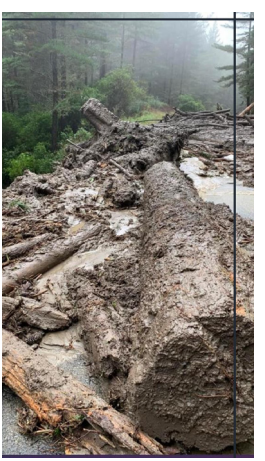
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Our journey began with beautiful sunny weather and target goals were achieved and progress left us smiling. Throughout the drive, however, there was an awareness of potential stormy weather ahead. Alas, our own practice experiences with teenagers sometimes started off with everyone presenting their best impressions with glimpses of a clear road ahead. Beginnings can be like that but sometimes like moving from stormy weather into DLE sunshine metaphors.



Rockfalls, trees and road slips blocked State Highways at many precarious points

As we encountered our storm and the full impact of 10-day rains, the question was whether Special Purpose Road 38 homeward would be open. Formerly New Zealand's last



Forestry slash uncleared after tree-felling rapidly blocked rivers and roads

State Highway with 159 km of unsealed road weaves through Te Urewera Rainforest and alongside the cliffs around the north side of Lake Waikaremoana.



All roads were quickly flooded, blocking pickup and delivery of everything

Rockfalls had been cleared to allow single-lane passage, and road slips had basic warnings of unstable roadworks. During these tense moments that I found myself thinking about old friend Aliese Moran who taught me so much about child and youth care practice during tense moments in our lives. I remembered 'what if' questions whilst negotiating rockfall hazards.



Roads became quagmired in mud, forestry bi-product and rockfall slips

And then there was the lovely child and youth care metaphor associated with

sometimes feeling that you're stuck in the mud. Or things have become muddied through circumstances or missed opportunity moments. By staying focused on daily life moments and opportunities as they unfolded in our journey, we found our way through muddy waters and confusion.



Nearer the coast, swollen rivers carried everything that floated away to the sea

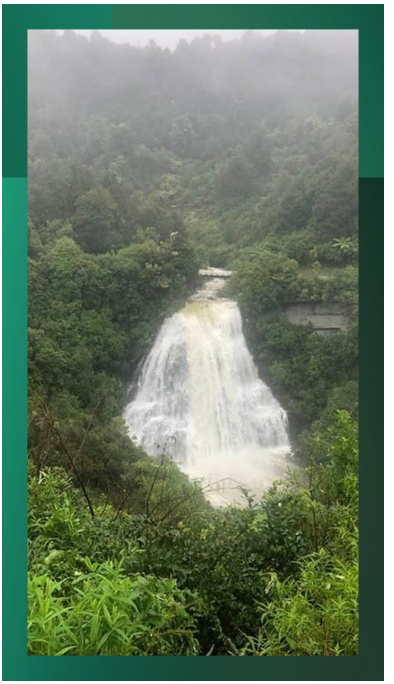


Children's play areas abandoned until after clean-up

And then we encountered a new rock fall that blocked most of the road ahead. Life moments may confront us, and intense fears of failure, or potential failure. A vehicle-wide opening between rockfalls heightened our heartbeats, drawing attention to the stormy conditions around us. Water and flooding, and nearer the coast, the more

water and flooding there was. I thought of the metaphor of stress and burnout how such experiences are not too far removed from feeling flooded and exhausted from cleaning up from the past floods.

Images of children's play areas abandoned to flooding conditions highlighted the importance of clean-up and recovery. That, too, requires energy and relationships with others who help clean up after the floods. It reminded me of how important it is to seek opportunities for playful moments, that can be sought, even during challenging times that are flooding around us.



Mokau Falls in full flood into an already full and overflowing Lake Waikaremoana

This reminded me of how important it is to seek moments of beauty also found during times of stormy weather and flooding. And please do something about climate change around you!



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