

CYC-Online

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



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HEALING OUR WORLD: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

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Scotland, Right?

Jennifer Davidson

In Scotland, we're actively preparing for the incorporation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This is a historic moment for our wee nation because it's the first time we'll have properly incorporated a UN human rights treaty in Scotland. Driven by long effort of many children's advocates over the past 20 years, this will be the country's first legally incorporated human rights instrument which encompasses not only children's civil and political rights – like the right to be treated equally, and to participate in decisions that affect them - and economic, social and cultural rights - like the right to an adequate standard of living, to enjoy their own language and culture, and to equitable education.¹ It's not that we haven't had these ambitions for children long before, but meaningful incorporation strengthens the leverage of those ambitions and enables children and adults to hold government, and the public services they deliver, more accountable than before.

Technically, these aren't new or more rights than before – the UNCRC has applied to children in Scotland since the UK ratified the treaty in 1991 as international law. The difference is that these rights will now become recognised in domestic law, bringing human rights more tangible to

¹ Shields, S. (in press). 'CRC Incorporation in Scotland: What are Children Participating in?' *Inspiring Children's Futures Learning Report Series 4/2022*. University of Strathclyde, UK



children in Scotland. The expectation is that over time, incorporation has the potential to improve how our society treats children. Through culture change, and by making it more possible for children to experience their rights, this step means strengthening the policies, systems, and practices that touch on children's lives. Ultimately, we expect we'll be better at respecting children's dignity as a country.

It's early days yet. While the Scottish Parliament is working through some hiccups with the Bill, the rest of us are getting on with preparing for next steps. For example, the [Observatory for Children's Human Rights Scotland](#) is a 'collaborative of Scottish organisations working to drive implementation of children's human rights in Scotland, with local impact and global learning'.² Commissioned by the Scottish Government, we recently led a highly collaborative effort to develop an overarching map to inform *how* this new incorporation will actually make a difference in children's lives.³ The development of this '[Theory of Change](#)' for the process of UNCRC implementation in Scotland drew on the wisdom of people from over 60 organisations, consultation with children and young people, and commissioned research and analysis on what effects change. The project report introduces 'outcome maps' that make up the 'Theory of Change' and offers principles to consider in applying it to each of our areas of work. While it's primarily intended to spark the thinking of people in strategic

² The Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland, <https://www.ed.ac.uk/education/rke/our-research/children-young-people/childhood-and-youth-studies-research-group/research/observatory-of-childrens-human-rights-scotland>

³ Observatory of Children's Human Rights Scotland, Matter of Focus and Public Health Scotland. (2022) '[Theory of Change for Making Children's Rights Real in Scotland.](https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/cys-theory-of-change-summary-june-2022.pdf)' <https://www.ed.ac.uk/sites/default/files/atoms/files/cys-theory-of-change-summary-june-2022.pdf>



roles, it can help all of us to drive actions and best prepare for our new duties once the UNCRC comes into effect.

Part of this work involved naming the interconnected change processes which might be key to seeing these human rights implemented in a felt way in children's lives. Some of these change processes included aligning policies, developing the skills and capacities of practitioners, ensuring systems help to realise those rights, and nurturing societal culture change. The project has also drawn together rapid reviews of the evidence into what can make change happen in these four key areas. Our work to map the UNCRC's incorporation in Scotland is in the hopes that we might help policy-makers and practitioners make evidence-based decisions, as we move towards the next steps of UNCRC implementation and search for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms which underlie change.

Child and youth care workers across Scotland will be working to apply a rights-based approach to strengthen their practices as they support children's agency and voice in their worlds. At times, a rights-based approach can be misperceived as driving an adversarial, rather than relational, approach to practice.



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And so, there is important thinking going on about how to frame human rights to be best understood in the context of inter-relational practice - sometimes using the concept of dignity⁴ as a phrase which sits better for some practitioners. These are exciting times to think more deeply about how a human rights-based approach can strengthen our effort to secure the dignity and rights of all the children and young people we work with. Stay with us for this rich learning journey!

PROFESSOR JENNIFER DAVIDSON is the Executive Director of the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures, and its Inspiring Children's Futures Doctoral Research Centre in Scotland. Jennifer is the Founding Director of CELCIS (the Centre for Excellence for Children's Care and Protection), and directed its predecessor SIRCC (the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care) at the University of Strathclyde. Jennifer was awarded an OBE in the 2020 Queen's Honours for services to the care and protection of children in Scotland and abroad.

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⁴ See: <https://hrcscotland.org/2022/04/07/talking-about-dignity-can-support-the-growth-of-human-rights-culture-finds-dr-elaine-webster/#:~:text=Dr%20Elaine%20Webster%2C%20leader%20of,a%20positive%20human%20rights%20culture.>



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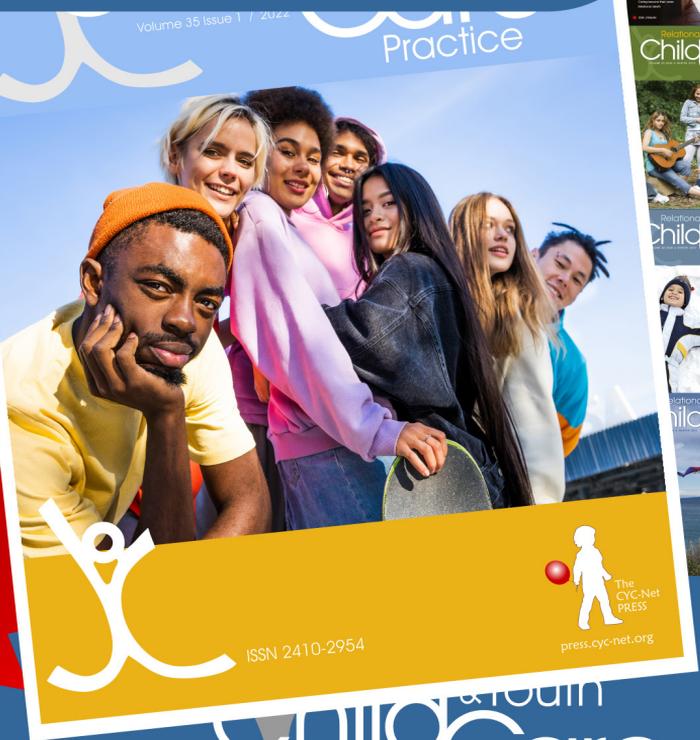
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Both Sides Now

Jenny McGrath

I am listening to Joni Mitchell. I have always been a fan, but this week I watched in wonderment as she at 78 years young, made her return to the Newport Folk Festival. A full circle moment “on the carousel of time”. In 2015, an aneurism required a relearning of many things, so witnessing her play guitar and sing again, was soul filling.

I am turning 50 in October. After all, “the seasons they go’ round and round”. I find I am differently contemplative now. I am sure that my age is



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part of the reason, but the last few years in a lonely pandemic has also given me much space to ponder, to re-evaluate, and to imagine new possibilities for my life. Some days I have had to dig deep to find the positives, but I remind myself that “something’s lost but something’s gained in living every day”, so I continue.

I have been thinking about what gives me purpose and what brings me joy. I have a few things that are “constant like the northern star” in family, friends, nature, travel, books, and great music.

The other is child and youth care. I have been a child and youth care worker for over half my life, and it has brought me both purpose and joy.

What stood out the most in watching Joni Mitchell return to the stage, was how she was surrounded in love by other artists and musicians. They celebrated and honoured the ways they have gained inspiration and learned from her. They also acknowledged her lasting contributions to music. I think about the insightful lyrics that Mitchell wrote in her youth. Songs like “both sides now”, “big yellow taxi”, “and “the circle game” although poignant then, hold renewed meaning today.

I am writing today to show love and respect to those child and youth care workers that came before me. There are too many to mention here but know that I see you and I value you. I have been in relationship with many of you throughout my career. You have inspired me, challenged me, and encouraged me. You gave me hope and helped me see possibilities, in myself, and for the field of child and youth care.

“I don't know who I am
But you know, life is for learning”



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I honour those no longer with us. I continue to revisit your teachings.

“Oh, don't it always seem to go
You don't know what you got 'til it's gone”

I purposefully maintain relationships with many child and youth care workers of my generation, and the next. I seek their guidance, knowledge, and support. I am grateful to work alongside you and I look forward to our continued journey.

“There'll be new dreams,
Maybe better dreams and plenty”

I am fortunate now to teach those that will continue to move our field forward. I learn from you every day. You give me hope for our future. I know you also feel the passion and commitment that has carried many of us. I encourage you to learn about those who came before you. Read, listen, and visit. They too were change-makers. They still are.

“We can't return, we can only look
Behind, from where we came”

I often think child and youth care is like music. The lyrics, the instruments, the voices, the rhythms can all exist in isolation, but the collaborations create magic. We can blend our history with our present, and together we can move forward with hope and possibility.



“All I really want our love to do is to bring out the best in me and you too”

The next Canadian national child and youth care conference will occur this October in Canmore, Alberta. Conferences are where I revisit my purpose and commitment to this work. The people, being all of you, help reignite my passion. It is also the 50th anniversary for our hosts, the *Child and Youth Care Association of Alberta*. There is much to celebrate!

I hope to see you there so we can re-visit and continue to re-imagine the wonder of child and youth care.

“People will tell you where they’ve gone
They’ll tell you where to go,
but ‘til you get there yourself,
You’ll never really know”

Until then ...

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I feel I can be even more help to the
young people in my life.” - Tonia

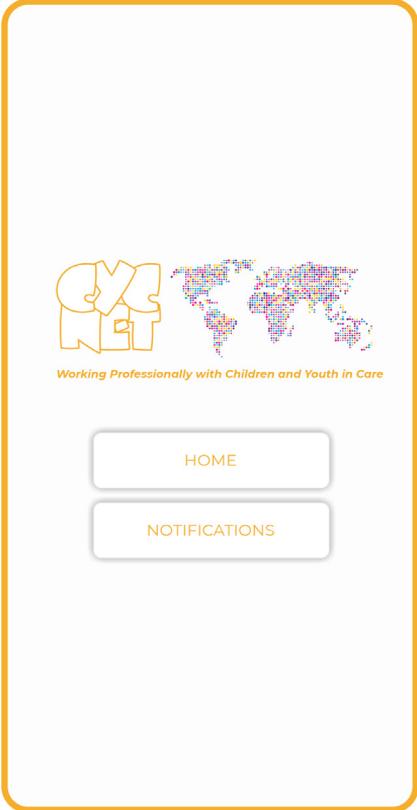


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Goal Setting and Plans of Care

Kiaras Gharabaghi

Over the past few months, I have had repeated occasion to review plans of care developed for (rarely with) young people involved in child welfare. I remember being confused by plans of care many years ago, when I encountered these regularly either as part of my own work in child welfare or as part of my research. Turns out, not much has changed, and planning care seems to have remained quite static even though the context in which care is being planned has changed quite significantly. Of particular interest to me is the way we think about goal setting as part of the plan of care process. This month, I want to offer some thoughts on why we may want to re-think this.

The first observation about goal setting is that the extent to which the process itself reflects the participation of young people is rather limited. Common goals one encounters are clearly not articulated by the young people. They include such things as ‘learning to abide by the rules of the setting’, ‘doing well in school’, and ‘developing positive peer relationships’. Sometimes, goals are very specific to the circumstances of a young person, and may include such things as ‘abstaining from drug use’, ‘eating healthy’, or ‘finding a part-time job’. At other times, goals are less specific and include seemingly positive aspects, such as ‘improving family relationships’ or ‘improving self-esteem and reducing self-harm’. These goals strike me as



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profoundly uninspiring, particularly when seen through the lens of a teenager. That doesn't mean that there is anything wrong with having positive peer relationships, or eating healthy, or getting a part-time job. Quite to the contrary, these are all good things, and one would hope that we aspire to enable these things for all children and youth all the time. It strikes me as explicitly discriminatory to set these things as 'goals' for young people in care while working to enable these things for children and youth with stable and loving families as a matter of course. It implies that for young people in care, the responsibility of achieving access to routine benefits lies with the individual young person (set a goal and then work to achieve it), whereas for everyone else, that responsibility is a social responsibility that is embedded in the parent-child, community-family relationships. Most young people *receive* the benefits associated with these goals; young people in care have to work to *achieve* these benefits (often in the face of institutionally generated barriers).

Perhaps more importantly, I often wonder whether these are the kinds of things that are relevant in the 21st century world. In the 20th century, groups homes and foster care were places of coercion, designed to enforce conformity and compliance. I know that this was not the prevailing view at the time, but there is little point in arguing about the enormous coercive content of care twenty plus years ago. Then again, for much of the 20th century, particularly from the 1950s to the 1980s in North America, the nature of the world in the context of which we were providing that care was clear. It was a white world, where power flowed from the top and the masses were asked to (coerced to) comply. Treatment was chemical, identity was binary, relationships were instrumental, and value was material. Both in the societal and the global context, we operated based on



the balance of power, in which resistance and change were mediated through the generosity of those holding the most power. Patriarchy, ableism, white supremacy, and highly gendered social relations reflected the everyday reality for almost everyone. We paid the price for the protection of our existence by allowing the concentration of power within the military-industrial complex that kept us safe from nuclear annihilation.

Within that kind of system, it certainly made sense to reduce the concept of care to one of conformity and compliance. Care meant that young people *in care* learned their place within the power structures of society and the global world. In fact, we could just as well have used the phrase 'young people in training' as opposed to young people in care (and indeed, congregate care, especially in the disability sector, was often called 'training schools'), since the goal of much of child welfare was training young people to become complacent, rule-abiding, but largely invisible citizens of the white state. Doing this served to maintain the balance of power, which served as the ultimate good.

The world we live in today has changed quite dramatically. Some might call it the postmodern world, or a collection of societies governed by fluidity rather than balance. Today, binaries clearly are in retreat, whether we are talking about gender binaries, ability and disability, or racial contexts where it is no longer just about identifying this race or that, but also recognizing that white supremacy has given us concepts such as shadism, white-passing, intersectionality, and mental health as a complex interface of many states of being. Even in the material context, things have changed; today, you can accumulate absurd wealth doing absolutely nothing, but you can also condemn yourself to chronic poverty working 70 hours per week. Globally, we have accepted contradictions and tensions that run



counter to the purity and sterility agenda of the previous century. We allow migrants to drown in the Mediterranean Sea by the thousands and call this unfortunate; wars are erupting in which one side claims moral superiority over the other despite both sides enabling bloodshed with their high-profit weapon production sectors. We can accept the sale of highly destructive weapons to Ukraine, designed to kill 19-year-old Russians on the battlefield, but we are deeply offended by a Russian oligarch owning a British soccer team. And our relative safety from nuclear annihilation has given way to our assured extinction (at some point) resulting from our refusal to accept the ecological limits of the planet.



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This begs the question: Does training for conformity, for fitting in, and for compliance with existing power structures, really make for relevant goals? I think not, and I worry a great deal about young people who submit to this new coercive practice. Their 'treatment' is very much like a root canal; it extracts the roots of capacity to navigate a world filled with contradictions, and it aims explicitly to diminish the courage necessary to move around and to reinvent oneself within this world. It is of course true that many young people in care systems engage in behaviours that will for many years strengthen the barriers they will face for self-determination and for acting on opportunities that may meet their interests and aspirations. Dropping out of school, addictions, incarceration, and self-harm are not helpful. The idea of working with young people to mitigate long term damage is a good one, and relational practices in child and youth care are well suited to do exactly that. At the same time, however, setting goals that are assessed and measured based on behavioural responses of young people to imposed structures and rules are probably not meaningful ways of ensuring that young people can see themselves as autonomous subjects in the world. For this reason, I think goal setting and planning care needs to adjust to reflect much deeper engagements with young people than current processes allow for. For one thing, I think a sense of Self, coupled with a strong sense of personal autonomy, is an essential goal for young people who by virtue of being in care, have had their sense of Self as subject replaced by their objectification/commodification through case management. But beyond personal autonomy, the goal for young people ought to always be about finding much more fluid systems of belonging, which inherently means working to develop social networks that are diverse, reflect multiple



capacities and ways of being in the world, and that can greet the contradictions young people encounter along the way through creativity, courage, and connection.

In many ways, I think 'planning care' ought to reflect the organic forms of care that are ever present for young people who are not absorbed into formal care systems. This means that the goals set as part of care planning cannot be linear goals in which behaviour is modified to greater levels of conformity. Instead, much more multidimensional and intersectional goals, that extend beyond the individualistic and performance-based construction of young people, are necessary that focus first and foremost on helping young people develop responses to these questions:

- Who am I right now?
- Who do I want to become?
- Where do I belong right now?
- Where (else) do I want to belong next?
- How am I connected in this world right now?
- How do I need to become connected moving forward?
- Where is (are) my communit(ies)?
- How am I in my communit(ies)?
- Where is my power now?
- Where can I find power next?

When young people engage these kinds of questions, we no longer need to set goals related to conformity and compliance. Young people will choose the context in which conformity is important to support their emerging sense of Self and their aspirations for connection. Their decisions



will matter, which means they will matter. How they are, and how they become, in the world will reflect the world they are actually experiencing, rather than the constructed world in which we have been trying to render them irrelevant.

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Expanding “Self in Practice Skills”, The Treatment Planner and Change Agent

Jack Phelan

The ongoing development of “self” in maturing CYC practitioners, typically after one or two years, has shifted dramatically from a self-referential helper who sees interactions through a lens of “how well liked am I?” or “how would I feel if that situation had happened to me”. Now a CYC practitioner can clearly move beyond worrying about personal attractiveness as an indicator of success and reduce the impact of his/her own views and values about how to live so that he/she is able to be more present and accepting of the human dignity of the person being helped.

This may seem like a harsh statement, but as long as we judge other people through our own life logic we are diminishing their inherent dignity and agency.

As the gradually maturing CYC practitioner loses a need for personal input, there emerges a “self-awareness” that is attuned to listening carefully, without a filter of personal logic, and hearing the life logic, values and strategies for survival being expressed by youths and families which he/she has been unable to hear. Strength-based treatment ideas, so cherished until now, shift dramatically as the newly attuned CYC practitioner finally can appreciate the genuine strengths being used daily



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by the youths and families, ignored and discarded by him/her when the personal filter dominated.

When a CYC practitioner is transformed by accepting the threshold concepts so crucial to being a genuine treatment and change agent, he/she can now focus on the other person without the distortion of his own logic about living well. This shift can be disorienting for a time because the helper still must provide direction and support and letting go of many of our cherished values about how to be successful may create a temporary void, but there is great energy being created for both parties and new direction and support ideas are readily accessible.

Competent CYC supervision is crucial for this professional transition to occur, the developing practitioner needs a safe place to discuss and be supported to think about the pitfalls inherent in both staying the same and changing. Supervisors can challenge emerging practitioners to take risks and also provide cautions and buffers when clumsy initial experiments go awry.



The biggest issue for many programs is an ongoing dynamic of external control and this transition is reversing direction and gradually handing control back to the youth or family, which must be addressed regularly, since it is the Elephant in the room during many supervisory sessions. Sophisticated supervisors and mature colleagues handle this dynamic competently, but many agencies have new or poorly trained staff and developing a more professional treatment and change agent is not on the agenda. Skilled CYC practitioners regularly leave agencies, often leaving the CYC profession because of this dynamic, stating that their experience of supervision was disappointing.

CYC supervisors who can support this “self” development will be building a competent team of mature practitioners who will continue to improve both the agency programs and each other.

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



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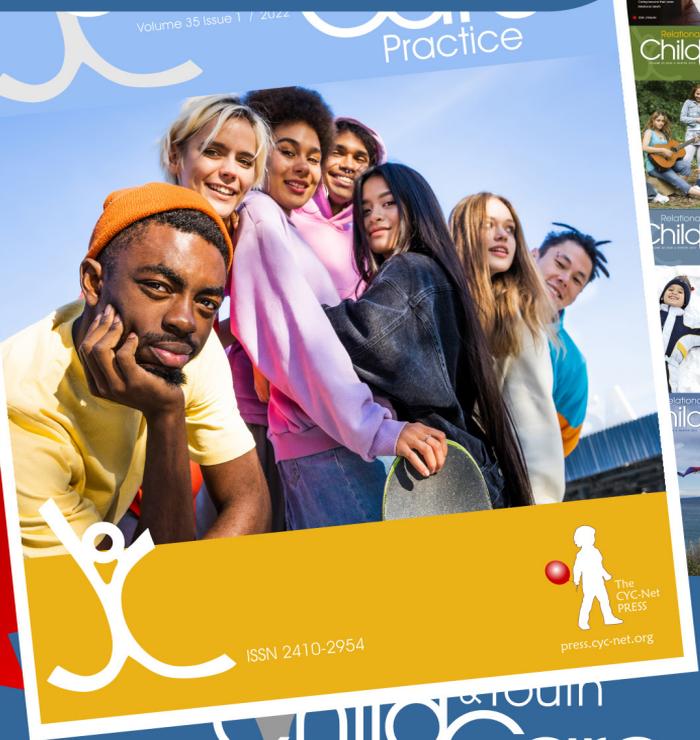
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Simulation Innovation in Cyberspace: A Collaborative Approach to Teaching and Learning in Child and Youth Care Education

Nancy Marshall and Jennifer Martin

Abstract

Leveraging digital technology for practice innovation is a compelling challenge. Limited education and training prevent human service practitioners from incorporating technology into practice. Progress in this area will be achieved when significant changes to pedagogy support technology integration with teaching/learning partnerships in higher education. With the recent attention to relational Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice in cyberspace (Martin & Stuart, 2011), this paper aims to highlight student/teacher explorations in this emerging area of clinical practice using student-driven simulated online counselling sessions supervised by the course instructor. Beyond critical learning within the roleplay activities, students engaged in solving disruptions to simulations, which can enhance their future agility in real practice situations (Rooney, Hopwood, Boud, & Kelly, 2015). Foundations in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), experiential learning theory, and learner-led approaches guided student engagement with technology and reflexive practice in this graduate level classroom.



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Key words

Child and Youth Care, digital technology, simulation pedagogy, learner-led approaches, experiential learning, online relational practice

There is currently a dearth of literature discussing innovative andragogical approaches to Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice principles in postsecondary education. Furthermore, literature about technology integration and online relational practice in CYC, a field dedicated to supporting the mental health and well-being of young people who are “digital natives” (Prensky, 2001), is absent. Integrating digital technology into postsecondary education for CYC practice settings prepares students to work with young people whose relationships are persistently influenced by technology (Martin & Stuart, 2011). As digital technology integration in mental health remains a largely underrepresented topic in postsecondary literature, innovative educational approaches in this area can be beneficial to teachers and students preparing for unfamiliar territories in emerging online practices. Further, as Martin and Stuart point out, it provides opportunity for students (and teachers) to take risks with technology in the safety of the academic setting. Thus, the aim of this paper is twofold: 1) to highlight the benefits of innovative teaching and learning in higher education classrooms preparing for novel areas of practice and 2) to explore collaborative learning through simulating relational CYC practice in cyberspace- an area that currently has few established ethical or practical guidelines. These aims will be discussed using a thematic analysis of eight graduate students’ papers reflecting theoretical and practical implications for learning and practice in an emerging social service field.



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Setting the Stage: Theoretical Foundations and Methodology

Theoretical Foundations

Utilizing postsecondary activities as opportunities for collaborative research inquiries with students (Boyer, 1991; McCarthy, 2008) provides social service fields, such as Child and Youth Care (CYC), with a starting point to explore uncharted challenges and guidelines in new areas of practice. When professors look to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), which involves the elements of discovery, integration, application, and teaching (Boyer, 1991), they create an important juncture to extend research alongside student inquiries for the betterment of practice (Huber & Hutchings, 2005, as cited in McCarthy, 2008). While looking to foundational knowledge from other practice fields, CYC generates theoretical foundations based on its own practice discoveries in relational lifespace work (Gharabaghi & Stuart, 2013). Thus, the planning of the course activities reflected in this paper involved bringing together ideas from other social service fields, noted as an important component of SoTL (McCarthy, 2008). The course instructor, in collaboration with a graduate level teaching assistant (both authors of this paper), incorporated elements of experiential learning theory to guide students in transforming their experiences into reliable knowledge acquisition for field work (Kolb, 2015).

This collaborative partnership to learning, involving a former graduate student, a professor, and students from diverse professional backgrounds in youth service settings, allowed for a holistic creation of theoretical and practical groundwork in the emerging area of online relational practice with young people. To further this goal, simulation pedagogy became an excellent foundation for analysis; simulation pedagogy, particularly for



health professions, draws on important connections between the learning acquired through navigating unpredictable events together as classmates, and the skills needed for practice in human service fields (Rooney, Hopwood, Boud, & Kelly, 2015). This was complemented with a respect for students as leaders in education through learner-led approaches (Iversen, Pedersen, Krogh, & Jensen, 2015). In this way, skill-building in the classroom paralleled the continued independent skill-building of relational CYC practitioners in the field.

Methodology

This paper examines the experiential use of technology in an online relational practice course with CYC students in a one-year Master's level program offered through a faculty of community services. We realized, in discussion with students during the course, that this unique learning experience would be of interest to other learners and teachers, and that it would make an important contribution to the scholarship of teaching and learning. After the course had ended and all marks had been submitted, we sent an email to the students letting them know that we were interested in developing a paper about the simulation activities based on their reflection papers. We asked students who were interested to send their written permission and their reflection papers to the teaching assistant via email. We informed the students that their names would be confidential and that we could not guarantee anonymity because the university and the program would be identified in the paper. We received emailed consent from eight students. Reflection papers from a total of sixteen roleplays (practitioner/youth and practitioner/supervisor simulations) were analyzed in relation to the aforementioned learning



theories and CYC practice principles. Using thematic analysis, two themes and six sub-themes emerged. The theme Relational Safety and Paralleling Practice in the Classroom included the sub-themes: Fidelity, Co-existing Forces of Learning, and Simulation and Real Life Balance. The theme Ethical and Practical Considerations included the sub-themes: Informed Consent and Confidentiality, Boundaries, and Interpretation of Text.

Thematic Analysis

Relational Safety and Paralleling Practice in the Classroom

Discussing ethical dilemmas and challenges that arise within simulated roleplay scenarios requires a particular trust between classmates who are assigned as partners. For this reason, it is important that a sense of relational safety is created in the classroom to allow for honest discussions which facilitate genuine, reflective learning. In CYC practice, relational safety refers to the positive outcome produced for young people when the characteristics of CYC practice are carried out effectively (Editorial, 2015). These characteristics include being emotionally present, connecting and engaging, examining context, and reflecting on the co-created space between Self and Other (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). From a SoTL (Boyer, 1991) and experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2015) perspective, it is interesting how these characteristics of our practice can be paralleled in course work to create a safe learning environment. When classmates take care to be present, connected, engaged, to examine context, and to reflect on their interactions with their classmates, they not only create the safety needed to challenge each other in class, they also practice the skills required for the field.



Both SoTL and experiential learning theory emphasize active, creative scholarship that lends itself to lifelong journeys of learning. Similarly, scholars in simulation-based pedagogy explain that when coexisting learning forces of classroom dynamics and professional practice naturally “hang together”, profound and enduring opportunities for learning occur (Rooney et al., 2015, p. 280). The simulation activities reflected in this analysis prepared students to work with some of the most vulnerable people in society – children and youth with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges who have experienced complex trauma, abuse, and life crises. Creating a safe learning environment to model how CYC practitioners connect to this population with sensitivity, kindness, and respect was paramount (Delay & Martin, 2015). Therefore, trust became an essential component in creating a respectful learning environment to practice these skills. Roleplay activities that paralleled these practice principles, both in simulation and the complexities of real-life dynamics, became incredibly valuable pedagogical tools for this course. To illustrate this, the theme of relational safety and paralleling practice in the classroom is divided into three sub-themes: fidelity, co-existing forces of learning, and simulation and real life balance.

Fidelity. In the reflection papers, many students discussed the role play scenarios as if they were happening in real life. In simulation pedagogy, this realistic experience is referred to as *fidelity* (Rooney et al., 2015). In both sets of role-plays, students were encouraged to stay in character even when disruptions to the fidelity of the role plays occurred due to uncomfortable feelings and/or misunderstandings. Rooney et al. explain that these disruptions, much like when actors ‘break the fourth wall’, prepare students to become both “agile learners” and “agile practitioners” as they



maneuver through unpredictable events (p. 280). The authors further posit that this non-linear learning process, that balances important occurrences within two domains (the clinical and the classroom), is invaluable when practiced in the safety of a classroom with supervision from the course instructor. With a lack of guidelines and supervision to online therapeutic engagement with young people in CYC practice, unpredictable events are bound to occur. Thus, the value of safely navigating unpredictable events in unexplored territories is an important learning objective for this field of practice.

The roleplay scenarios, which were conducted to simulate asynchronous email exchanges outside of classroom time, seemed to be of high fidelity. A common example expressed the practitioner's real feelings of relational breakdown: "I experienced many challenges at connecting and engaging with [her] ... I failed to respond to her initial email within a short time frame, our relationship didn't recover." The fidelity was so high that one student reflected on how the lack of reply from her young client interfered with her real-life job: "[She] did not reply all weekend, and this amplified my anxiety ... made it challenging to be present in the moment with other young people I was working with simultaneously." While the exchanges were taking place, the course instructor made herself available online to provide assurance and guidance when such difficult feelings emerged. Similarly, the teaching assistant, as a former student who had previously engaged in these roleplays, provided peer support in the classroom when students debriefed their experiences. This coordinated support was key to deepen the safe and reflexive learning of students who invested such energy to simulated experiences.





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Authentic connection
is not a luxury

it's the **solution** to
many of our troubles.

JAMES FREEMAN, EDITOR



CARING TO CONNECT

NURTURING HOPEFUL,
HEALING RELATIONSHIPS
WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

JAMES FREEMAN
EDITOR

“I love it! I wish I had this year's ago.
I feel I can be even more help to the
young people in my life.” - Tonia



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Coexisting forces of learning. In such high-fidelity simulations, while students are negotiating their comfort levels with their partners, coexisting learning forces are at play: learning that occurs from exploring clinical possibilities in practice and learning that occurs from experiencing each other as students in a university classroom (Rooney et al., 2015). In the reflection papers analyzed here, some students reported feeling safe to challenge their simulation partner, while others reported feeling held back. Important learning about Self and Other occurred in both sets of experiences. In the following example, a student connected the difficulty of accepting critical feedback to the importance of self-reflection in practice: "... my partner brought up in the in-class discussion of [sic] I, as the [CYC Practitioner], ultimately broke the relationship ... This was very difficult to hear; however, self-reflection is such a large aspect of our practice, thus creating room for growth." In another example, a student revealed reflection of Self when choosing *not* to challenge his partner when she offended him during the roleplay: "I did not choose to negatively respond ... despite feeling that way ... much of our later conversation alluded to me being a people-pleaser ... I did not express my true feelings because I felt uncomfortable being perceived as negative and domineering."

In other examples, coexisting forces of learning presented themselves as permeable boundaries between the imaginary roleplay and real experiences of themselves as classmates. That is, it was often difficult to discern whether students were experiencing feelings as the *character* in the roleplay or as a *classmate* being challenged. In the following example, the student expressed frustration with his roleplay partner when she refused to engage (reply to emails) on several occasions: "I found it extremely difficult to be in relationship with [her] ... I would argue that both



of us were involved in our online relational interaction and therefore both of us were responsible for the direction of it.” This student further connected this to practice principles: “... how do we reconcile a young person’s lack of responsiveness with our role as a CYC [practitioner] if we’re the ones solely responsible for connection?” This anxiety over the direction of the roleplay exemplifies a dual learning process. The student is addressing feelings of frustration as a student who needs to get the assignment done *and* as a student learning clinical practice skills to successfully engage with young people online- a form of connection that differs greatly from the face-to-face engagement he is accustomed to.

In this next example, the roleplay partners experienced a significant disruption to fidelity. Early on in the roleplay, the supervisee in the simulation admitted she felt her simulation supervisor did not understand her experiences: “... I felt a sense of anger because [she] continued to tell me ... how I should feel in a situation.” Within the scenario, after much strenuous back and forth engagement with her simulation supervisor, she responded to her supervisor’s attempt at empathy with this reply: “I really hate how you keep telling me you can hear the pain in my voice. You have no clue what I went through so stop assuming!” After realizing her partner must have misunderstood the assignment instructions, the simulation supervisor reflected: “... most workers would not ordinarily speak to their supervisors in this manner ... I realized that I was feeling frustrated, confused and overwhelmed myself. I needed supervision as well so I reached out and emailed [the instructor].” Both students in this scenario expressed frustrations with each other that represented genuine feelings below the surface of the roleplay. The student playing the supervisee also admitted she misunderstood the assignment. With the support of the



course instructor, they restarted the roleplay and were encouraged to stay in role to work out these problems using strategies from the course materials and classroom discussions. This required an immense amount of trust, established at the beginning of the course when the foundations of safety were negotiated by the instructor, the teaching assistant, and the students. When the simulation was completed, they reflected on how they persevered: "... we were rushing for time to ensure that we both had ample amount of time to participate in both roles and write a well written reflection that we both would be proud of." The supervisee in the scenario finally reflected on how they reconciled their differences: "I gained a genuine relationship with the supervisor." This complex process of learning to work out problems, reflect on Self, meet a deadline, and respect each other's feelings in the context of safety and trust, paralleled the skills necessary for professional practice.

Simulation and real life balance. In summary, while the courage to challenge each other depended on the relational safety established between roleplay partners, important learning occurred whether fidelity was strictly adhered to or not. As one student reflected: "I found it incredibly challenging to be realistic in my responses in the beginning. I struggled moving myself out of a 'simulation' headspace and into a 'real life' headspace. My responses became more authentic when I became more comfortable ..." The very process of 'moving into a real life headspace' reflects the dedication university students apply to learning and practice. As shown by the examples given, important skill building happens when students begin to explore their experience of Self in relation to their partner, push boundaries, challenge each other, and break the fidelity of roleplay. Rooney and colleagues (2015) argue that strict adherence to



fidelity in roleplay scenarios, without a focus on this process, should be reconsidered. Without the ‘hanging together’ of the clinical and the classroom learning that occurs when safety is co-created and disruptions to fidelity occur, practitioner agility to problem solve within uncharted areas of practice is sacrificed.

Ethical and Practical Considerations: Exploring a New Frontier Together

Currently, there are no ethical guidelines framing how CYC practitioners intervene with young people online. Indeed, there are few regulations to guide online services in general (Harris & Birnbaum, 2015). Although improvements are being made in other fields such as social work, psychotherapy and psychology, the same guidelines are not necessarily a good fit for CYC practice with its unique approach to supporting young people. CYC focuses on using Daily Life Events with distinct characteristics defined for our practice (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). We focus on the lifespace and relational work within that lifespace (Gharabaghi & Stuart, 2013). As the course instructor has determined previously, cyberspace is an extension of lifespace for young people (Martin & Stuart, 2011). In fact, this discovery built the foundation for the course discussed in this paper. However, this discovery marks only the beginning journey of inquiry into this dawning era of practice.

Teaching and learning theories such as SoTL (Boyer, 1991) and experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2015) emphasize explorative learning through experience. SoTL, in particular, focuses on exploring this learning *alongside* the teacher. Such foundational theories have refreshed teaching and learning to push higher education in new directions such as learner-



led approaches in education, which position students as knowledge producers in classrooms (Iversen, Pedersen, Krogh & Jensen, 2015). In tandem with simulation pedagogy (Rooney et al., 2015), learner-led approaches assist students in navigating the unknown and becoming flexible against uncertain conditions. This approach becomes imperative to the practice-based field of CYC, which is in need of guidelines that fit our new frontier of online relational work with young people. Thus, the examples discussed here pose the important question: who better to develop these guidelines than the emerging practitioners themselves? This process of learner-led knowledge mirrors yet another important characteristic of CYC practice - to 'do with' not 'for' or 'to' (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012).

The student authors of these reflections come from different ages and stages of professional practice, which stimulates in-depth exploration of ethical and practical issues from several angles. Some students were self-identified technical luddites, while others were digital natives; some were veteran CYC practitioners, while others were novice. Taking this into account, a collaborative approach facilitated student-led learning (Iversen et al., 2015), which aided the course instructor, teaching assistant, and students to explore potential challenges to CYC practice online. For the purpose of analysis, important ethical and practical discoveries were divided into three sub-themes: informed consent and confidentiality, boundaries, and interpretation of text.

Informed consent and confidentiality. Students reflected that obtaining informed consent felt awkward and hindered the relationship with their youth (simulation partner): "I didn't believe explaining confidentiality to the youth at that moment during the cyber counselling



would be appropriate.” In CYC practice, relational connection is paramount to the therapeutic process (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). Therefore, this became a critical point of reflection. Students further considered the advantages of anonymity and disinhibition, but also to the implications of not obtaining identification: “I asked her name and she was reluctant to share ... I can only assume that this online space offered her anonymity...” Another student deliberated: “ ‘... verifying a client’s identity becomes most critical’ (Harris & Birnbaum, 2015, p. 135) ... If she had committed suicide, what would have been the legal ramifications for me as the CYC?”

Boundaries. Similarly, boundary issues were a common theme, for example: “My failure to establish boundaries ... led to the work ‘creeping in’ to my daily life (Mishna, Bogo, Root, Sawyer, & Khoury-Kassabri, 2012) as I constantly checked my phone and email to make sure I didn’t miss any messages ...” It is interesting to note that the simulations took place close to the Canadian Thanksgiving holiday, causing students to explore real feelings of homesickness, which further exemplifies the duality of learning processes hanging together. One student reflected: “Mishna et. al. (2012) discuss the concept of permeable boundaries, and how the online world blurs usual boundaries that exist ...knowing she was going to be away from family during Thanksgiving ... I found myself offering services beyond a typical workday.”

Interpretation of text. Finally, students remarked on challenges to connect with youth in the absence of facial and non-verbal cues. They tried *emotional bracketing* techniques with some to little success: “Emotional bracketing (Martin & Stuart, 2011; Mishna, Bogo & Sawyer, 2013) was a highly effective technique to ensure that ...my message was articulated despite the lack of non-verbal cues ... [big smile and kind eyes], [said with a head



nod] and [eye-roll]” Other students reflected this to be ‘cheesy’: “I judged her use of emoting in the brackets like “[groan]” and “[wink]” and similar to the MSW interns in the online counselling study, I found them “‘unnatural’ and ‘cheesy’ (Mishna, Bogo & Sawyer, 2013, pg. 174)”. In a rapidly progressive digital age, young people create unique rituals to compensate for visual facial cues. Deeper exploration into this area became an interesting topic for discussion led by the students.

Conclusion

Such important inquiries, probed in dedicated partnership with students, allows for teachers to be creative in their teaching of new fields of practice (Boyer, 1991). This is critical in the field of CYC as it is not only a practice, it is a way of being with people (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). The roleplays in this course lasted weeks, which is not typical of traditional roleplay modalities in higher education. Thus, the students practiced skills that enhanced their way of being with people and enforced critical skills for practice with young people. Students learned to become good communicators, reflect on Self in relationship to Other, and explore challenges and possibilities of clinical practice. Teaching and learning of this stature is only effective when supervision, discussion, debriefing and care is co-created in a safe and trusting space for students to feel supported in taking risks. As one student noted: “The ease at which we were able to share our reflections mirrored the increased self-disclosure present in online counselling relationships ... Powell (2012) refers to this as *virtual intimacy* (para. 10)”. Feeling safe in a relationship to risk new ways of being is the foundation of CYC work (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). Finding this safety in the online world through simulation pedagogy, experiential



learning, learner-led approaches, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning embodies essential elements of both CYC practice and effective higher education. This produces agile, open, and ethical practitioners ready for 21st century practice.

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Metaphors of Practice: Evaluating Everyday Life

Doug Magnuson

When I was an undergraduate, Lakov and Johnson's book, *Metaphors We Live By*, was published, describing how metaphors shape our everyday life. This seemed at the time to be something new, but poets have always known this (the moon buttering the sky).

Gisela Konopka's classic book, *The Adolescent Girl in Conflict*, used a simple example of girls whose primary self-image—a metaphor of sorts—was a “delinquent.” Later Mark Krueger, Thom Garfat, Jerry Beker, and Michael Baizerman also played with metaphors to describe youth work, for example, youthwork as a dance.

What Lakov and Johnson did accomplish was to help people notice the metaphors we used individually and used in a shared subculture. Famous examples from their work include argument as war and communication as a conduit pipe. We can use this simple idea to think about—even evaluate—our individual and collective work, in the formative evaluation sense.

These questions include: What metaphors do we make available to each other, including youth? Do our metaphors open new worlds and enrich our lives? What do our metaphors obscure about daily life and how do they limit us? What metaphors do youth use, and how might we build on those? We can evaluate our work in daily life with colleagues, thinking about the usefulness of and hidden problems with our metaphors.



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Each of these examples is an invitation to jump inside the metaphor:

We float on the surface, we scratch the surface, or we dig in the dirt. We find the root. We locate a piece of the puzzle, and we untangle threads. We open the door, or we close the windows. We are warm, or cold. We have good chemistry, or we are trying the poison. Something is stuck or something came unstuck. That's the disease talking. That was the monster in me. Everything is dark, and I am searching for the light. I have unloaded the burden. Life is a journey (okay, maybe that is overused!). I have more tools available to me. When all I have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail. We have untangled the knot and rewoven the threads. I'm flying, or I'm grounded. We have planted the seed, now let's feed it. We cut through the brush. I'll be your safety net. That was a wake-up call. I'll stand on your shoulders. I'll take the medicine. I'm riding a bicycle now—not a unicycle. That's a light load to carry. That tree is scarred but keeps growing. Middle school is a battleground, and you're the hero. The tide has turned, and I'm swimming. I've lost my way. Write a new ending. Color in the details. I grabbed that thorn! Ride up alongside that wild horse rather than running directly at it. Let's look at it from this angle. Let's finish the rest of this picture, or let's delete that part of the picture. I was dreaming, and I'm slowly awakening. I am liberated. I am shattered, or I feel whole. I have been on a long journey, but I am coming home. You are not the king of the castle or the "dirty rascal."

We encourage reciprocity with youth by noticing with them and exploring the opportunities and limitations of a metaphor. It is enjoyable to co-create new metaphors with them, and it is fun when they turn the tables on us, using metaphors to tease us. If we use metaphors in lighter moments, the precedent will make it possible to use them when life is



hard. Further, there are many metaphors inside local cultures that will be entertaining and useful.

Youth workers who are artists seem to grasp quickly how to apply these ideas: They know how to alter a perspective, how to symbolize reality so we notice differently, how to make a metaphor concrete for youth. They more quickly reinterpret, and they more quickly see the playful opportunities.

We can learn something from artists. For one thing, artists have a practical skill that they can use to the benefit of these purposes. Whatever our tools, we want to see differently than teachers, probation officers, counselors, coaches, and parents. We want to see differently more flexibly. We want to see and practice in a way that reciprocity happens more often than not, and metaphors are one tool to make this happen. This is our superpower.

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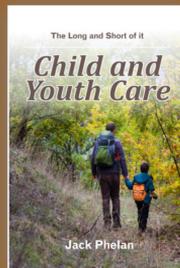
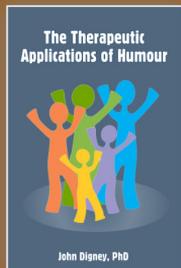
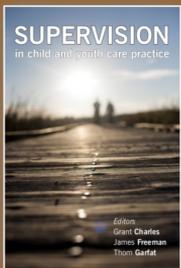
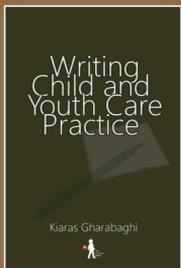
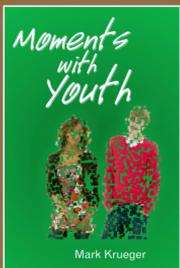
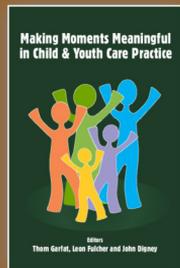
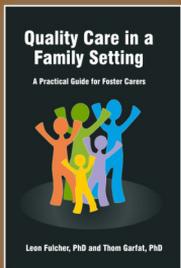
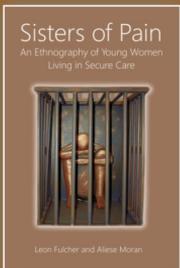
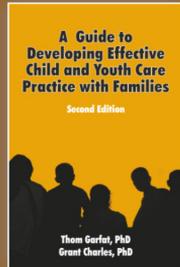
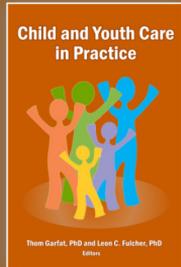
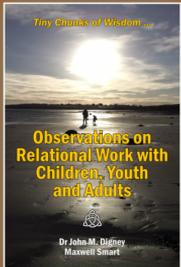
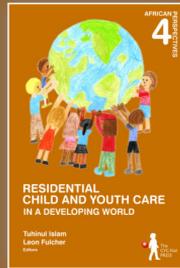
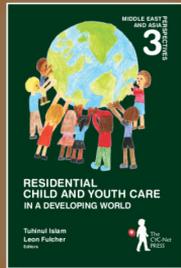
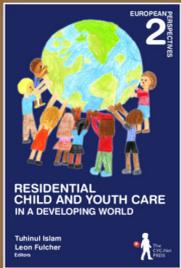
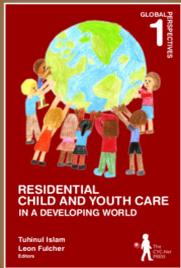
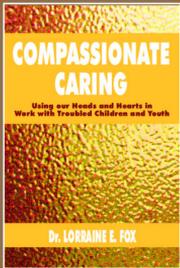
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The Best Way to Stop a Bully

Loren Soeiro

If you've ever seen an old after-school special or caught a PSA in the past few years, you've probably gotten the message that bullying is a serious problem. For its victims, bullying fits into the range of "adverse childhood experiences," and is identified as being dangerous to a young person's future physical and emotional health. And children aren't the only ones who suffer. A recent article in the journal *Education* (Piotrowski, 2022) pointed out several ways in which adults can be bullied at work: interpersonal mistreatment and harassment, destructive leadership, abusive supervision, and incivility. It's not difficult to see the problem and to agree that bullying needs to be addressed wherever it crops up. But the best way to cut down on bullying might surprise you.

The simplest way to understand bullying suggests that being bullied causes children to grow up to become bullies themselves, and that suffering child abuse can create a predisposition toward abusing others. But bullying is not just an isolated, self-replicating behavior: according to a 2013 review article by Sharon Padgett and Charles Notar, published in the *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, it's really a group process whose audience may play as significant a part as its perpetrator and its victim.



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“Peer relationships,” Padgett and Notar say, “are like oxygen that allows bullying [to] breathe and spread.” Young people are quite heavily influenced by their peers; if these peers simply stand by as bullying takes place, their silence is often taken as encouragement. “With peers looking on and providing at least tacit support, the bully is no longer acting alone,” Padgett and Notar report. Bullies, they go on to say, enjoy the approval of an audience, and when they have an audience that does not intervene, their cruelty is reinforced.

In many of the aforementioned after-school specials, though, some heroic member of the school community steps in to stop the bully in a rallying, energizing moment. But in real life, bystander apathy, as Padgett and Notar call it, is all too common. They reported on a study suggesting that peers are present in up to 85 percent of episodes of bullying, but that they intervene in only about 10 percent. When interviewed and asked if they wished to intervene, about 80 percent of these bystanders said they found it unpleasant to watch the bullying and wished someone would step up to stop it; however, very few of them actually did so.

The truth is, it may be these bystanders — and the friends or colleagues of the victim — who can do the most to stop bullying. Many school-based anti-bullying programs place their primary emphasis on convincing onlookers to support anyone who becomes the target of bullying, rather than tacitly endorsing the behavior by saying nothing. One doesn’t need to confront a bully directly, either. Padgett and Notar reported on a 2011 study in *Educational Leadership* by Davis and Nixon concluding that bystanders don’t even need to stand up to bullies directly. Instead, they can connect with a bully’s victims afterward by contacting them individually to offer more subtle support.



And after an act of bullying takes place, the way bystanders talk about the incident in their social circles can also either contribute to or stop the process of victimization. When participants react negatively to the victim, that person may be seen by the social group as something like an outcast, whereas “[perceiving] the physical bullying victim in a positive light” can place them in the “in-group,” and can cut down on any ongoing victimization after the original incident, as Padgett and Notar indicate.

If you’ve seen the high school movies and after-school specials mentioned earlier, you’ve probably imagined yourself heroically standing up to a bully. It’s the right impulse, although as we’ve seen, it happens too rarely in the real world — among adults, that is. Children do better, according to Padgett and Notar. In one of the studies they reviewed, “Younger students and girls were more likely to report taking positive action than were older students and boys by directly intervening, helping the victim, or talking to an adult.”

If our kids know it’s the right thing to do, and we ourselves now know the power of bystander action in the face of bullying, there’s no excuse for failing to intervene. If you see an incident of bullying, don’t be an apathetic bystander; find some way to take supportive action and help put an end to it.

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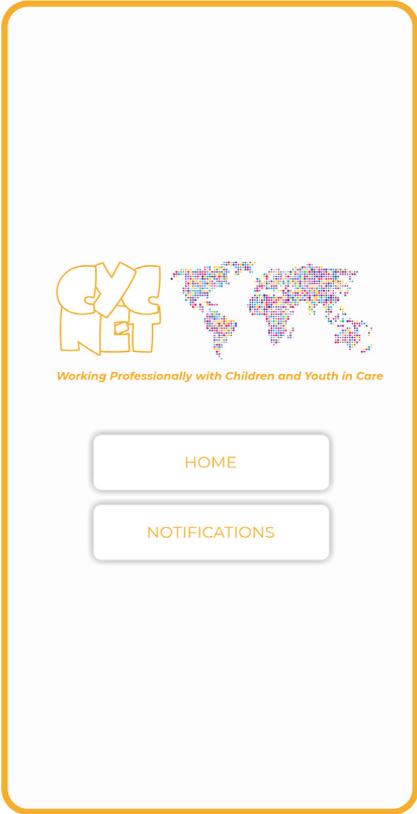
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How Do We Understand Development Now?

Hans Skott-Myhre

I have been wondering for some time, how the ever shifting world of 21st century capitalism has impacted the bodies that we work with in CYC. The question is whether the bodies of the young people we serve are, in any meaningful way comprehensible to those of us raised in the late twentieth or even the early decades of the 21st century. Do the frameworks we teach about physical and emotional development still make sense or are we working in an environment in which the very categories of child, adolescent, and adult no longer work in the ways we imagine they should.

Of course there is a [substantial literature](#) arguing that these categories are social conventions that really never did describe young people's bodies in an adequate fashion. In the first-place traditional theories of development have been quite reductive in the ways they teach us about neurology, biochemistry, hormones, and the differing physical capacities of the individual young person.

These developmental approaches to young people's bodies tend to homogenize them into broad categories that focus on emotional and behavioral aspects that might require intervention by helpful adults. We have used these standardized metrics to measure what we consider to be appropriate developmental milestones of physical, emotional, and psychological well-being. This medicalized model of standardized



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development has become the primary, if not the only way, to assess the bodily well-being of young people.

Significantly, the norms implied by this approach have also found their way into how we assess our own well-being. We worry about whether our own bodies are sufficiently normed hormonally, chemically, and physically. We go to physicians who measure us against standardized measures of physical well-being. We modify our diets, take medications to alter our brain chemistry, other medications to regulate our immune systems, we exercise in hopes of living longer and worry of we don't measure up to the body fat index for our age. In short, we are deeply inducted in a very personal way into the developmental standards for bodies. It is no surprise then, that we would bring that profoundly personal perspective into our encounters with young people.

The question I have to wonder about though, is whether the developmental frameworks we are using are taking account of the ways in which bodies are being reshaped within the ever-shifting landscape of virtual global capitalism. To start with what may appear to be a very small, but actually significant example, [Tony Sampson](#) notes the ways in which young people's thumbs are reconfiguring their neurology outside of cognitive awareness. He notes that current accounts of emerging consciousness tend to focus on the ways in which our conscious awareness is being shaped by our interactions with the virtual world of gaming, cyberspace, and social media. However, Sampson points out that there is a simultaneous development of what he terms, non-cognitive ecologies.

He reminds us that before our brains became conscious, in the sense of processing the world in linear terms, our neurology was composed of a "complex intermingling of gut brains, vision brains, tactile brains, ear brains,



brain matter connected to the full sensorium.” (p. 124) In focusing on the conscious brain as the site of human development, Sampson argues that we miss the fact that our brain is not one, but multiple and is not located within our skull.

This non-conscious full body neurological ecology comprises a great deal of what we understand as affect or desire. Such affect and desire precedes our capacity to make sense with our consciousness, and in some cases exceeds that capacity in ways that make it difficult to rationally apprehend our behavior at times. Sampson argues that this corporeal brain is now being integrated into the realm of digital networks and having a powerful influence on how we make sense. As an example he notes the way that our thumb has taken an entirely new and central role in our daily lives, particularly in the lives of young people.

As an example, he uses the virtual organizing of the Arab Spring a few years back, although his remarks could easily be applied to Black Lives Matter or any other contemporary movement.

The tweeting, facebooking crowds that made up the Arab Spring were clearly composed of a swirling mass of thumbs ... in many ways, the inclusivity of body parts other than brains, begins to reorient the question concerning what can a brain do, towards a comprehensive model of neurodiversity, inclusive of the sense making capacity of the thumb brain. (p 124-125)

The thumb brain may sound a bit trivial at first glance, until we begin to actually consider how much time, in any given day, young people are using their thumbs to communicate with each other. Sampson argues that these



actions are deeply embedded within a worldwide network of communication which might well begin to be thought about as a kind of collective consciousness that operates outside of our conscious ability to process its impacts on our lives. And when we add all the ever proliferating virtual extensions of our body into the realm of the virtual through devices that monitor and feeds back information to us that shapes our behavior at a very physical level, it becomes quite clear that young people's bodies are becoming ever increasingly **cyborg** in ways we are only beginning to understand.

If bodies are being physically reshaped in ways that are altering our neurological ecology through their immersion into cyber space, then it might be worthwhile to consider the way we process time as well. Time, of course, is the foundational framework for developmental theory and thought. We base so much of how we think about development on our assumptions about linear progressive time. We operate as though time was both universal and predictable. That is to say that time is a constant that we can use to measure the movement of our bodies across the life span.



However, it is important to note that in the 21st century, time and its impacts on young people's bodies shifts, as they are immersed in the sphere of cyberspace. The speed of 20th century life was much faster than the speed of the early 1800's. Factory time worked in very different ways than agricultural time. Cars and airplanes move at velocities almost impossible to measure against a world of where the mode of transportation was the horse or walking. Our experience of the world in terms of speed is increased even more as we enter the realm of the virtual.

As we move from industrial time to virtual time, there are new tensions and new contradictions. [Lohmeier, Kaun, and Pentzold](#) sketch the complexities of our experience of time as we engage the world of virtual media. They note that it is not simply a matter of acceleration, although that has large implications for how we produce ourselves and are produced within a virtual context. Newly emergent technologies speed up the ways in which information is processed and presented to us. We have instantaneous access to an almost infinite amount of data arriving through an array of screens at work, home, and in our hands or on our wrists. The constant flow of information in e-mails, texts, social media platforms, introjected advertisements and enticements, and internet searches we initiate as serious forms of inquiry or as casual exercises of curiosity, move at astonishing speeds. Some of this information we are capable of processing consciously, but it would be fair to say that quite a lot is processed subliminally and effectuates a range of unconscious processing modes.

However, Lohmeier et al. suggest that our sense of time is even more powerfully altered by what they call datafication. Datafication refers to the ways in which the information about our lives is processed through an



ever-proliferating array of algorithms that automate how we make judgements, how we evaluate things and perhaps most importantly, how we make decisions. The complex array of data processing points that we engage in the course of daily living gives us a powerful stream of constant data that overcodes our phenomenological experience of the life world and colonizes it with increasingly abstract modes of signification. These algorithmic forms of coalescing and processing the data of our lives is extracted from the field of our social relations and fed back to us translated into capitalist sets of value. The way in which data is collected and processed operates outside of lived time.

In the virtual world of post-industrial capitalism, the algorithms deployed, draw from our memories, our contemporary experience, and projections of future desire. The now commonplace ad campaign that states or infers that the *future is now* is premised the in ways in which data about future probabilities is mediated through vast computer networks running possible scenarios of virtual futures at atomic speeds. In the virtual world, the future is always being produced now and being streamed to us in ways that collapses time into a series of temporal multiplicities that leaves us disoriented and yearning for a way to enter the time of our lives as participants rather than subjects alienated from our own experience. The quantification and transformation of all the elements of our lives into digital streams that simultaneously weave our nostalgia for a past that no longer exists into a future imploded into a present into which we never arrive.

Of course, this has immense implications for how young people experience time, as each succeeding generation is inducted ever more deeply into the realm of the virtual as a normal part of their lived



experience. For those of us living in a world in which we experience time as if it was still working the way it did when we grew up, these shifts are very hard to imagine. But I would argue, that if you are to adequately account for time and development in the 21st century, our models are going to need to shift.

Finally, I would note that the maturation process for bodies as we enter the second decade of the 21st century has undergone a significant change. In a recent article in the [New York Times](#), it was reported that researchers were finding that girls were experiencing the development of secondary sexual characteristics as early as age 6. The trend was noticed first in the 1980s and has been accelerating since that time. The shift in the age of onset seems to be more prevalent among Black girls but is occurring across racial groups. Although the trend is most pronounced in the United States, it has been confirmed in dozens of countries across the world. There is a similar but less pronounced trend among boys as well.

While the causes of this change are not fully known, factors such as obesity, stress, sexual assault, and chemicals in the environment may play a role. That said, the fact that young people's bodies are changing in term of their biological development has significant implications for the work we do in CYC and the ways in which we frame development. Not the least of these concerns are the possible impacts on the young people themselves. As the Times article notes,

Although it is difficult to tease apart cause and effect, earlier puberty may have harmful impacts, especially for girls. Girls who go through puberty early are at a higher risk of depression, anxiety, substance abuse and other psychological problems,



compared with peers who hit puberty later. Girls who get their periods earlier may also be at a higher risk of developing breast or uterine cancer in adulthood.

The question, I would ask here, as I have been throughout, is – are we taking account of this shift in the ways we work with young people? The bodies of the young people we encounter in our work on not the same bodies we encountered in the 20th century when the field of CYC was developing. If that is case, how do we need to update our models? What do we need to do so that we are re-thinking our approaches to development in the context of 21st century bodies? I would argue that this is an area in need of serious attention. I sincerely hope that we can fully enter the 21st century and move beyond trying to manage 21st century bodies with 20th century models. The young people are already living now, we need to join them.

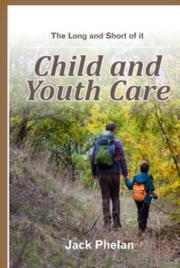
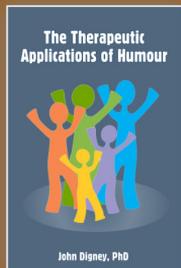
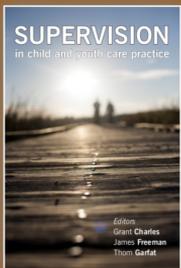
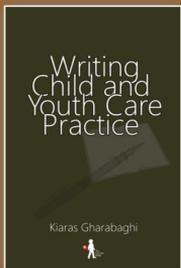
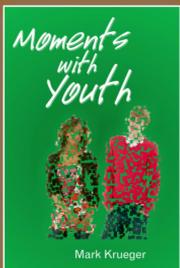
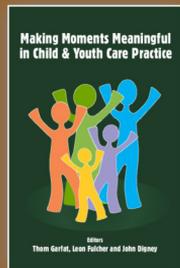
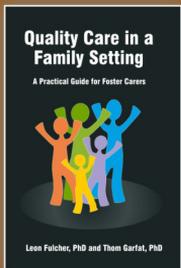
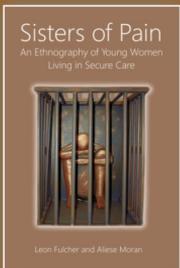
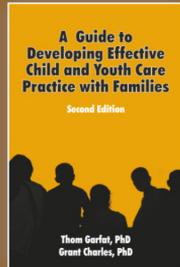
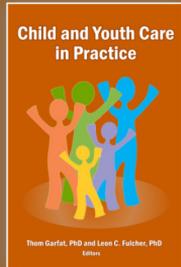
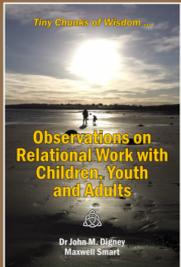
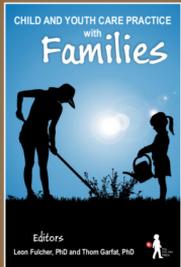
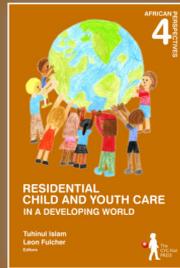
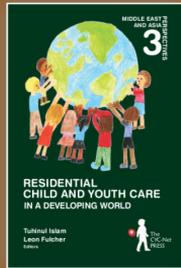
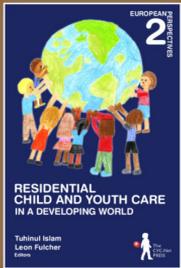
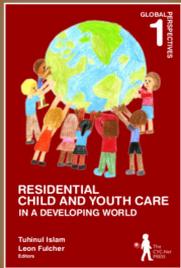
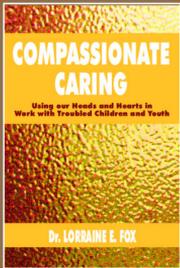
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Taking a Moment Out

Garth Goodwin

Even as pandemics go, it has been a long one, over two years and well, still counting in parts of the world. In late winter Dr. John M. Digney sent out an email invitation to a retreat to all those who had attended the Unity Conferences in Dublin, Ireland and gatherings in Scotland. This seemed fitting as the last actual conference was Unity 2019, a very distant memory after the few years of locked down isolation with only the supermarket and a thrift store to fuel and restore one. There were only twenty places in the venue, a retreat center deep in Ireland an hour and



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some out of Dublin, few specifics beyond that. It seemed an excellent way to bring the pandemic to a close. The trip became more than a retreat in the end but also one of the final hoorays of the boomer generation with children in tow. This column explores the experience of the retreat and the emerging sense of concern for the welfare and betterment of mankind.

Retreating is a fairly common practice for many in religious or religion related employment. Seeking out quiet, reflective time away from the norm is viewed as a way to reframe life, retool the soul. Many child and youth care professionals live for hiking in natural settings often taking photographs as they go. Others tend to gardens, travel, watercraft or kick back at resorts. In my front-line experience taking the group away for a weekend to cabins in the woods, lodging with a large swimming pool, activity centers or simply out to provincial parks under canvas or now, nylon tents. Often there is no assigned purpose or agenda to such retreats beyond enjoying the experience. Initial attempts to develop one online fell flat, perhaps due to the evocative power of the word retreat.



One had to get there first, and the first indicators of issues came about a month out. My airline cancelled my flight moving me from a relaxed afternoon flight to the red eye at 5am. This meant staying in Terminal 3 at Pearson International Airport for 13.5 hours as leaving meant passing out of secure status which had become a hard realized thing with long lines, delays and so forth. Fortunately, I was part of a delegation from Canada booked on the same flight. Andy Leggett arrived about the halfway point and introduced me to the shelter of the Air France lounge for the afternoon. If you ever find yourself in a similar situation, consider the retreat of the lounge. The noise stops, seating is generous, there is a range of potables and of nibbles, more than enough to justify the expense. The remainder of the party arrived just in time to make the transition to the flight to Ireland. With the masking and meal service reduced to mystery objects in a wee, warmed up box I soon realized flying at reached its baseline, something akin to a bus. Now due to a spinal quirk I use wheelchairs in airports as I cannot walk those distances without extreme pain. Arriving in Dublin brought a total surprise – airstairs. I made it down and into the airport. The guests all left, the flight crew all left, there was no expected chair. Andy kindly went to inform someone. A unique bus showed up that was designed to move wheelchairs from plane height to ground and I was swooped up in a seat and we were taken along the inner route to Customs and guided though. Outside was a maze of people on the move. Dublin has a stop for every bus going everywhere in Ireland. Young people especially swarmed out of the terminal. This was a hint of what was to come.

Thanks to the Unity Conferences, Dublin was like an old friend, familiar and welcoming. I bought a one-day Leap Card and leapt onto the rails of



the tram, Dart and quite by mistake Irish Rail. Thinking I was on the coastal Dart I caught the train going down to the south-central part of Ireland running parallel to old canal from pre railroad days. Fields, cattle, some sheep and golf courses for miles. The Dart took me up and over to Howth, the harbour you see flying in. Ironically, the local businesses are built up so that you do not see the ocean. Finally, a tram ride that took me to the edge of Dublin and back. I was ready for the country.

We set off for County Cavan and the little town of Virginia. In a way it was all right out of Finian's Rainbow, a drive to an imaginary land which was rumples by hills, dales, valleys and 350 lakes with perfect just two lane (no shoulders here) roads which never straighten all awash in every shade of green possible. Our motel slanted down to a decent lake with a fine marina bordered by the hills and fens along its shore. Swans capped it all off. The next day Andy took us to the Rectory, founded in 1929 or built then in the Georgian manor of stone, large windows with a fine lane and vistas of tumbling fields. Rabbits, young rabbits everywhere.

The final group of eighteen settled into generous black leather couches and agenda built with the guidance of John and Maxwell Smart, co-authors of a book generously provided to each attendee: [Observations on Relational Work with Children, Youth and Adults](#). We introduced ourselves to each other and worked our way through an agenda. Regretfully, I suffer from cushy chair syndrome and tend to nod off when parked on plush. I kid you not, several test sits confirmed this, and I avoid the comfy for that reason. Finding a hard chair helped correct the issue and at some point John and Max will issue an outcome.

The more immediate outcomes were in the comradeship of the group, preparing meals, cleaning up, chatting along the way clearing up long held



painful misunderstandings in my case and learning of new misunderstandings being created. The group went out for supper one night for what else in Ireland, Indian Food. I was apprehensive being shy of hot and spicy anything. The combination of a huge table for the group, shared tasting and the thorough menus which list every allergen, ingredients and more took away the mystery and with the help of an incredible prawn dish converted me to being a fan. Now, ironically, I am seeking the atmospheric heat to try out a mango cooler that is awesome. Regretfully, good things end, and the time came to leave the enchanted hill and return to the real world.

Or so we thought. We had to leave early, skipping breakfast, to ensure passing through security for a 10 am flight. My wheelchair dependency meant leaving our little delegation to be processed through to the gate. Andy caught up with me and brought the requested egg salad sandwich and orange juice that was going to see me through the next 24 hours. The truck crew was ready for the chair set and transferred three of us to the plane door. It always seems faster going home in the light of day. At some point as we landed our flight to Winnipeg was cancelled and I was taken to special agents. The woman set me up with a flight in the morning, a voucher for a Holiday Inn Express in Brampton and four food vouchers. My guide and I soon learned the hotel did not have the expected shuttle, so a cab was called. I get to the hotel and a woman at the window is hearing the voucher is no good, she will have to pay for the room. She booked as did I and some half dozen others who wandered in. We learned the airline had not called the hotel, had burnt them and many others in the past not negotiating a living room rate with them. It was in an office/light industrial park with no apparent restaurants. I never got to properly say goodbye to



Andy. The others in our little delegation boarded the same flight and deplaned without saying much. It was like returning to chaos.

Since then, the baggage mounds continue to grow, hundreds of flights are cancelled. Those with plans are becoming anxious about weddings they will miss, reunions under attended, events missed. When I picked up my dog a woman from the flight came in. Her family of four was put up at the Crown Plaza, with meals and breakfast only minutes from the airport. What gives? A friend told me about ordering meals with one of those delivery services. The driver refused to leave his car in the rain, they had to go out to retrieve their food. I had a taxi driver tell me he may not be able to drive me to my home due to snowfall last winter. He did get me there, but I could have done without the anxiety. Professionalism, courtesy, empathy all seems to have gone the way of the doe-doe. People don't just walk away from their luggage, or do they? One company is suggesting you can keep the items you want to return for free. They don't want the burden of exchanging anything. A society built on feelings alone will not work. Discipline, putting in your time, getting it right, patience with the process seems passe. Sounds like a global retreat may be in order.

GARTH GOODWIN spent his 41-year career in both practice and as a database designer and administrator. In over 30 years of frontline practice, he worked for both public/board and private agencies. He was the first recipient of the National Child and Youth Care Award in 1986. He nurtured the Child and Youth Care Workers Association of Manitoba through its formative years and became its representative to the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations. He has been privileged to be the witness and participant in significant events in CYC history and remains an active observer in the field of CYC.



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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From New Zealand, Preparing for International Travel

Kia Ora Koutou Katoa
and warm greetings
from a Wintery New
Zealand where I am
preparing for international
travel from Auckland via Los
Angeles to Denver, and then
Ft Collins, Colorado to spend
time with our daughter and
her family. This will be my
first visit back to the

Homeland since the January 2018 *Nurturing Hope* Conference in Ventura, California. I'm feeling out of practice with international travel in this new pandemic world in which we live.

While preparing, I am reminded of child and youth care workers and teachers associated with residential schools who have helped young people prepare for returning home during the school term break. Similar issues are involved, from working out baggage entitlements to the potential for suitcases being overweight. Will family members be there to collect you?



Weighing suitcases after packing them to the limit is a common challenge



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Check-in confronts us with challenges associated with face masks and social distancing. Being a masker myself, I will be hypervigilant about being very close to anyone not wearing a mask. For me, wearing a mask isn't a political manifesto against those who argue that "nobody is gonna tell me what to do!". While in the Homeland, we plan a short visit to the Valley of my birth where masking and social distancing are not politically supported. I'm already feeling 'culture shock'!

Memories return of busy airport corridors moving passengers to and from aircraft gates at major urban centres. With vicarious interest I followed the recent Facebook accounts of Canadian child and youth care colleagues launching out on their own post pandemic journeys, travelling from Canada via London to Dublin and then a House named Virginia. Special travel memories!



Queuing or lining up at the airline ticket counter is remembered as an excitement



Going through security and then to departure gates is a people-moving experience



The Covid Pandemic has resulted in new health passports and vaccination certificates that some find challenging. It helps to remember that the first vaccination certificates for Yellow Fever were introduced in 1938 for international travel to Southern Hemisphere countries. Few make that connection with today's pandemic. On the whole, international travel between New Zealand and the USA is pretty straightforward on Air New Zealand, voted Airline of the Pacific.

I think back to my first international air travel, between Seattle, Washington to New York and then via Reykjavik, Iceland to London. So much has changed. Apart from feeling really crowded, I remember stepping out of the airplane at Reykjavik at midnight on 21st June, in daylight on the Northern Hemisphere's longest day of the year. Now, Air New Zealand is planning to



Once at Departure Gates it is usually only a matter of minutes before boarding



Take-off on Air New Zealand is almost always an on-time experience



fly their long-haul Boeing Dreamliner non-stop from Auckland to New York.

Connecting flights are invariably a testing experience. Little wonder, given the complex travel grids that are managed by air traffic control professionals. We put a lot of confidence in these folk and I always wish them well. How often might child and youth care workers feel like ‘air traffic controllers’ during preparations for a group activity or family visits?

Arrival at destinations, or the first stop during international travels invariably involves going through passport control, changing terminals, finding new departure gates, and settling in for the next leg of the journey. As with child and youth care workers travelling with children or youths, finding an agreed food outlet helps keep everyone happy and distracted from tiredness.



And then there is the 12-hour flight from Auckland to Los Angeles



Passport Control and gate transfers before boarding connecting flights to Denver



More arrival queues and lines of passengers that challenge social distancing rules



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