

# CYC-Online

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



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July 2021

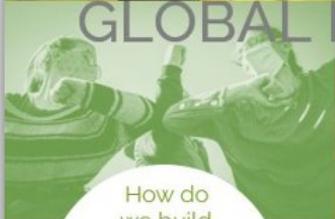
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# **A Moment of Reflection ...**

**Okpara Rice**

**A**s I sit at my desk, I am taken back to the events of the latter part of January 2020. I was teaching a graduate course in social work and talking with my students about a new virus that was rearing its head overseas. We talked about how what happens in one part of the world affects us all. Little did we know what was yet to come: a pandemic of proportions to something only Hollywood could dream up. Never did I think it would happen in my lifetime, and it did. I remember watching the news each day and seeing the death toll tick up to numbers that were alarming and appalling. Soon, we were all shaken because our world, which had made sense until now, no longer did. But something amazing was happening, too.

I am honored to lead a child-serving organization in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, where I work with an incredible team of professionals dedicated to improving the lives of the more than 4000 youth who participate in our services annually. As the world collectively stopped in early 2020, the need for support from children and families did not. No doubt, there were countless places around the globe who, like us, observed those needs both ongoing and growing. What amazed me was that even in a pandemic, even when we saw daily death tolls rise, even when we were surrounded by increasing fear, those incredible professionals did not stop (in fact, they



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didn't even slow down) delivering services to the young people reaching out for help.

Whether it was working on the milieu, conducting a therapy session virtually, holding a support group or even playing a game virtually, they persisted. If you stop to pause and reflect on the mindset and conviction of those staff, you, like me, begin to understand the gravity and magnitude of those moments that stretched into months. Their unrelenting support was an anchor of normalcy to a child or family who was drowning in a sea of uncertainty. For many, this care was the vessel of hope, the life jacket, the lifeline that would rescue them from the raging waves in the storm that surrounded not only them – it surrounded us all.

My career began years ago in a residential treatment unit in Chicago. Although not that long ago, it seems like a lifetime away from the work I do now. Those days were spent among the kids, laughing with them, helping them through life's struggles and enjoying the daily teachable moments that come with that part of the work. Those experiences prepared me to appreciate and admire those who, in spite of their personal risk, choose to come to work day after day and continue to lift others in their time of need – even amidst a pandemic. These are the team members who fought through exhaustion to make sure the young people, who were separated from their loved ones, never felt alone. They were the ones who sat beside a sick child in isolation, brought a smile to their face, and ensured that the young person felt cared for and loved. As I truly considered that level of selflessness, that level of devotion, that level of understanding, I was left speechless. My pride continued to grow as I discovered this team's strength and determination while we worked together to navigate uncharted waters. I realized they were doing the 'true work' that I'd once



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done. In fact, the 'true work' had never really stopped; it had only been re-imagined.

I know the word "hero" gets tossed around a lot in our society, but this is one of those times when it undeniably applies. There are countless unsung heroes in every corner of this earth whose goal is to shine as a beacon of hope for a child. The impact of these heroes is immeasurable. These heroes, who work behind the scenes unnoticed, may not be featured on television or depicted in movies, but it doesn't take away from the important fact that they are making a difference in the life of a young person. That is a powerful gift. That is a valuable gift.

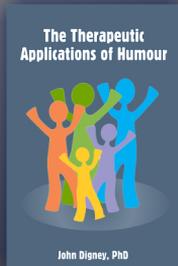
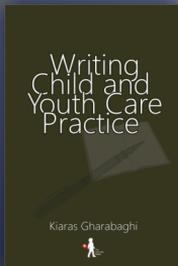
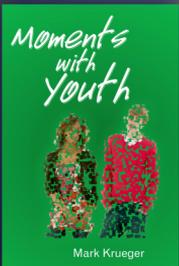
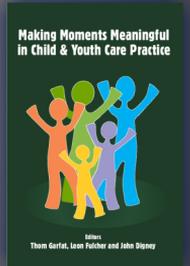
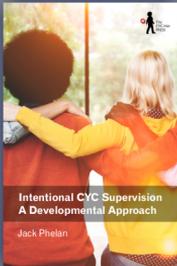
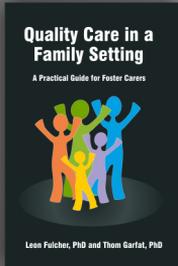
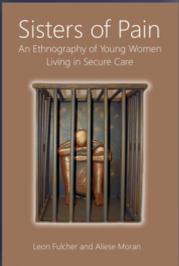
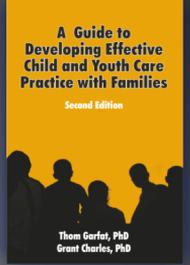
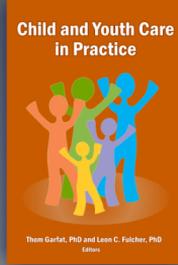
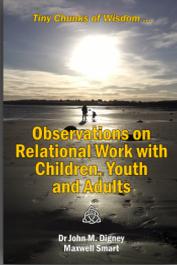
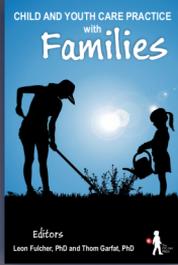
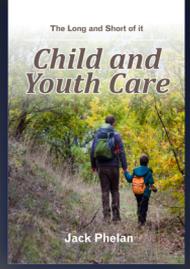
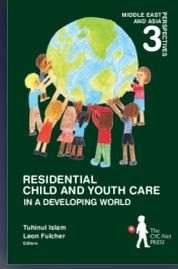
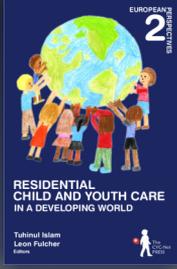
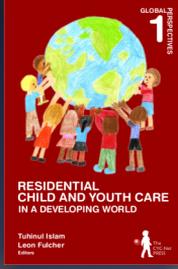
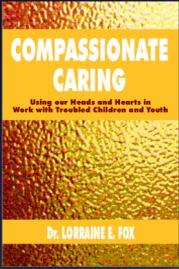
While the memories of 2020 stir up many emotions and memories, it is my hope that you will join me in remembering the lessons we learned and the heroes we encountered. My memories of this time will include how thankful I was (and am) to work with a team who lives mission in both their hearts and actions. Even in the worst of times, they chose to forge a path that brought healing and joy to not only those they served, but also to themselves. I owe this team a great deal of thanks for reminding me of my "why" and serving as an example to all of us on how to rise up, no matter the odds.

**OKPARA RICE** is Chief Executive of Tanager Place, Cedar Rapids, Iowa and a member of the CYC-Net Board of Governors.



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# Re-Naming Child and Youth Care Practice

Kiaras Gharabaghi

Although it's been a fairly quiet debate, there have been, for some time now, many voices in our field who have expressed discomfort with the field's name. The term child and youth care, unlike the name of other professions, is not a term used everywhere; in fact, it really has currency primarily in a handful of countries, notably Canada, South Africa, and to a much lesser extent in places like the United States, Australia, Israel, and a few others. This is quite different than Social Work, for example, which is a broadly understood term across much of the world, both in the global North and in the global South; or the term Social Pedagogy, which at least has currency across much of Europe and South America. In Canada, where I live, the term child and youth care is quite ubiquitous. It is used both to describe a professional practice and it is the name of the academic discipline one can study at college or university to engage in that practice. Most provinces in Canada have a professional association that uses the term as well, and there are at least some journals that I am aware of that have the phrase child and youth care in their name: One is called *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*, another is *Child & Youth Care Forum*, and in South Africa, there is the journal of the National Association of Child Care Workers called *Child & Youth Care Work*. There used to be another journal based in the US by the same name, but it seems to have disappeared in recent years, or at least I have not come across it for



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some time. And then there is CYC-Net and CYC-Net Press, which at least use the acronym for child and youth care in their names.

Over the years, debates in Canada about the name of the field have been somewhat muted, but nevertheless re-emerge at regular intervals. The core argument against the name is that it doesn't entirely capture what the field is actually about. This perspective is often held by those who see child and youth care practice as hopelessly stuck in interpersonal, often transactional, practices taken largely from a white, middle class lived experience and struggling to meaningfully engage with the whole range of histories, economies, politics and identities embedded in how we are in the world. Even in Canada, many communities really don't see themselves reflected in either the phrase or the practice of child and youth care. This includes Indigenous communities, African and Afro-Caribbean communities, disability communities, and communities that fall outside of the binary gender constructions. Ironically, those who do support the name child and youth care often find themselves working precisely with individuals and groups from within these communities, all of whom tend to be disproportionately represented in the institutions and settings where child and youth care takes place. Additionally, the large numbers of cultural and spiritual communities that shape their lives according to values and ways of being that reflect their heritage or traditions (often referred to as newcomer communities despite having been in Canada for generations), don't really engage with child and youth care either and are often puzzled when confronted with a child and youth care practitioner.

Even those who like the name are nevertheless challenged by its exclusions. Much of child and youth care practice unfolds, at the very least, in the context of families, so that a name that excludes work with adults (caregivers, parents, kin, significant others) can appear as problematic.



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Furthermore, particularly in developmental and autism sectors, child and youth care practitioners often work directly with 'youth' who are actually adults. This suggests a degree of ableism and neuro-normative biases that are an inherent by-product of the name of our field, perhaps mixed with a dose of patronizing arrogance in that we deny these adults their identities by imposing a child or youth label on their needs (if you need a child and youth care practitioner, you must be a child or a youth).

There is in fact no *inherent* reason why a practice that goes by the name child and youth care cannot substantively be meaningful beyond an interpersonal focus on children and youth, nor is there an *inherent* reason why the field itself cannot continue to evolve beyond its white foundations under its current name. But there may be *inherent* compromises that the field demands of individuals and groups of people that are ethically unacceptable. I think it is important that we engage this possibility.

Several scenarios come to mind, all of which point to some major problems. I think, for example, of friends and colleagues who have been engaged in particular communities doing work (paid or unpaid) that is entirely in keeping with what everyone seems to agree are some core principles of child and youth care practice, including relational ways of being, participatory structures and processes, care expressed in multiple ways appropriate for the communities where care is offered, and even behavioural guidance, spiritual guidance, academic performance, trauma-informed healing practices, and so on. They may be doing this work completely outside of the field of child and youth care, having never set foot in a child and youth care program offered at colleges or universities, but what they do nevertheless is what people are taught is child and youth care in their academic programs. In order for these friends and colleagues to find space within our field, and potentially to get paid for the work they



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do by institutional employers, they have to adopt the language and the politics of the field (such as the demand to join professional associations, to participate in training events, to seek certification and write certification exams, etc.), and most importantly the name of our field, even if that field has explicitly and intentionally excluded them. This is very similar to Indigenous peoples having to say that they live in Canada, which is the name given to their lands by settlers who stole those lands through violence and deceit (the word is based on a Haudenosaunee term but it is not the name of the lands where Indigenous people live; note also that the word *indigenous* is not an Indigenous word).

In another scenario, we can focus on how the name child and youth care centers children and youth in describing, or naming, our practice. The idea of centering children and youth may sound innocuous enough, but in fact, this too is already a political act that runs counter to many community traditions and ways of being. Furthermore, the name child and youth care suggests that care for children and youth can be constructed separately from care for community, care for other generations, and care as spiritual good rather than pragmatic practice. Once again, we can see how the name itself creates boundaries for truth in our practice. One might even argue that framing care as a practice is already a step toward denying other possibilities.

Finally, we can imagine people engaged in their communities who did in fact complete a child and youth care academic program and use the principles and skills associated with child and youth care in their community practice. In calling themselves child and youth care practitioners, they are forced to fit their practice in a child and youth centered framework that may not at all correspond to their desire or intention. In other words, the name child and youth care may force people



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to convey understandings of their intentions that are quite different from what they desire.

I am sure there are other scenarios where the name of our field is itself a burden to people whose practices reflect the most contemporary and critical articulations of the field itself. The point really is that almost no one thinks that child and youth care is strictly about children and youth; even the characteristics of child and youth care as articulated by Garfat and others suggest that there is far more to child and youth care than the name is able to convey. So why do we hang on to this name?

Perhaps it is an emotional attachment to the hard work that has gone into putting child and youth care on the map of professional disciplines. Perhaps it is about the protection of the investments that have been made by organizations, academic institutions, businesses and individuals in branding this name and sustaining their livelihood. Or maybe it is about the fear of losing relevance if we were to change the name now, at a time when we are seeking professional regulation and government mandates for our field. I understand all of these reasons, but I am not sure any hold up to scrutiny. The field has already changed its name multiple times; at the very least, in Canada it has moved from child care to child and youth work, to child and youth counselling to child and youth care. Elsewhere, a wide range of other terms and names are used that include youth work, youth development work, community service work, social service work, and others. No matter what we have called it, we have largely failed in our quest for regulation and governmental mandates (with the exception of South Africa, child and youth care is not mandated anywhere; the same professional practice based on pretty much the same principles is called *Upbringing Assistance* (Erziehungshilfen) in Germany and is regulated and government mandated; social pedagogy is also government regulated and



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mandated across Europe and in some South American jurisdictions, and psycho-éducation is regulated and mandated in both France and Quebec).

Does tradition matter? Should we keep the name because it has a history, a tradition associated with the hard work of people who prepared this field of practice for the rest of us? Well, I always think that traditions that are meant to honour those who came before always end up limiting those who are here now and future generations. I think the tradition we should uphold in our field is really about constantly striving to do things better, in more inclusive ways, relevant to the current state of knowledge representing multiple knowledge traditions. If child and youth care really is about the moment and making it meaningful, then this moment calls for an openness to re-think our name. I don't want to suggest a new name, largely because I am not new, and I am not the key to our future. I heard that some Schools of Child & Youth Care in other parts of Canada are thinking about changing the name of their School to engage precisely the debate I have highlighted here. I don't think they should, because I know that for the most part, the people leading the charge are old like me, and the last thing they ought to be doing is setting the limits for the next generation. But I do think the invitation to change the name ought to be given to those who will shape how we are in the years to come. Whatever they come up with, I will support it.

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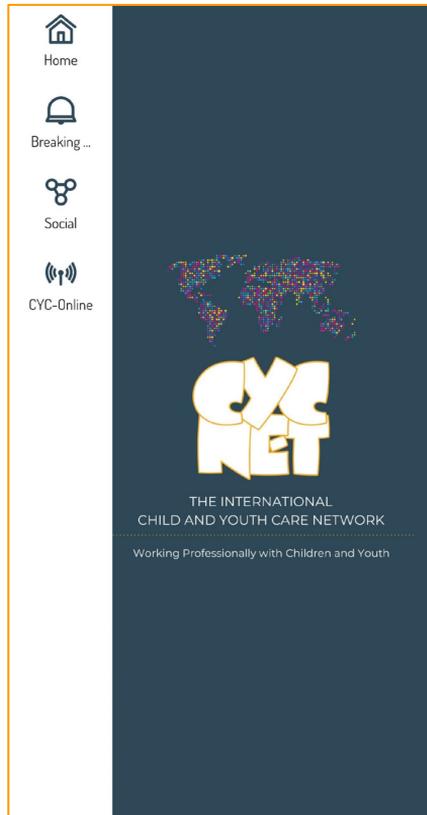


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# Social Pedagogy as Relational Attachment Practice

Darrell Fox and Sara Thiessen

## Abstract

*The utility of social pedagogy as an approach to building resiliency and developing positive relationships with children and youth is currently underdeveloped in North America. However, there are signs of growth in this field. For example, one youth project in British Columbia, Canada, employs relationship building, collaboration and creativity in terms of music- or art-based community interventions as part of its programme. The findings from a recent evaluation report on this youth project will be used to explore the potential for a social pedagogical approach being deployed more widely, and possibly more effectively, than current youth-focused practice. Specifically, the importance of relational practice, underpinned by aspects of attachment theory will be used to explore the utility of social pedagogical practices and examine the possibility of its development within a number of professional contexts.*

## Keywords

*social pedagogy; young people; relational attachment practice; attachment theory*

## Introduction

The utility of social pedagogy as an approach in assisting to build resiliency and develop positive relationships with children and youth is



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currently underdeveloped in North America. However, there are signs of growth in this field. For example, one youth project, the Basic Life Skills Training (BLT) programme in British Columbia, Canada, promotes relationship building, collaboration and creativity through relationship-centred programming. Youth can become involved in programmes of their choice, such as yoga, and music- or art-based community interventions, activities all associated with the core attributes of social pedagogy.

This paper explores the positive findings from a recent evaluation report of the BLT project. We draw upon interview data from participants of the project to highlight their experiences of the programme and establish how this particular approach varies from other interventions. We identify how these individual experiences correlate with social pedagogy's core principles of the 3Ps (professional, personal and private use of self), zone of proximal development, diamond model of intervention and the common third. Within a framework of attachment theory these principles will be explored using the core precepts of attachment styles, the internal working model, and the secure base. Finally, once explained, these concepts are applied to the research findings to highlight the importance of relationships, and what we are calling 'relational attachment practice', an area of practice that combines the above attributes of social pedagogy and attachment theory when engaging with young people.

## **Basic Life Skills Training programme**

The BLT programme is a well-established (over 20 years) 'drop in' and outreach youth work programme delivered through a community service organisation in British Columbia, Canada. The flexibility of the programme allows for young people to attend (drop in) during the day (or after school)



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or meet their worker in the community. Referrals to the programme are from colleagues in statutory social services, and the criteria require young people to be 14–21 years of age and living with diagnosed mental health challenges. Attendance is voluntary. Given the unstructured nature of the delivery of the programme, referrals do not reflect actual numbers of young people who attend, or the frequency or intensity of the interactions when they are in attendance or engaging. BLT is designed as a place for young people to meet and build skills through support, education and recreation. BLT strives to empower youth, promote healing and foster healthy social connections. It is a place where young people feel safe, develop positive relationships, and are able to access a diversity of programming in terms of counselling sessions, peer support, music therapy, yoga, and outdoor recreation activities. Once on the programme, young people can remain until they age out at 21; for many, this means becoming peer mentors at the programme and supporting younger attendees.

One young person said of the BLT:

You could call this unconventional therapy, you could call this whatever you want . . . it's life skill training . . . we can have a conversation about anything . . . kids come here and they stay because you're helping kids learn how to live. (2)

The aim of this paper is to explore the youth-orientated service provision offered by BLT as described by the youth themselves. We discuss and examine the relational attachment practice approach located in social pedagogy practice, underpinned by the main precepts of attachment theory.



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## Literature review

Social pedagogy is a practice used for addressing issues with clients through social interaction and education or 'pedagogy' (education in its broadest sense). The approach assists in establishing capacity in individuals to allow them to become fully integrated and contributing citizens within their immediate community and broader societal context. Social pedagogy practice seeks to 'promote people's growth into active citizenship [enhancing] their ability to act socially and display social responsibility while rationally fulfilling personal interests as a member of society' (Hämäläinen, 2015, p. 1028).

Social pedagogy is strengths based (Saleebey, 2009), and individually or group focused, traditionally deployed with children and youth in their local environment. It combines individual person-centred intervention or group process within a broader community and structural focus. This aligns with a 'person(s) in environment' (PIE) perspective, which allows for an understanding of behaviour by examining the environment in which a person lives (Payne, 2014). Initially, social pedagogy was developed to address 'the discrepancy between individual autonomy and the requirements that modern society imposes upon a person, especially of the younger generation' (Hämäläinen, 2015, p. 92). In this context it seeks to work with the 'whole' child in the child's community context, focusing on improving daily activities (Cameron et al., 2011), and addressing developmental risks in children (Milligan, 2011). This role had developed over time to encompass a wider range of client groups and practice settings, while maintaining its PIE focus.

For example, social pedagogues (qualified social pedagogy practitioners) are currently employed in a variety of settings, often aligning with types of residential care, such as group homes for youth in care,



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prisons and, more recently, older adults in care facilities (ThemPra, 2015–19a). The role of a pedagogue is to develop positive ‘growth’ relationships with their clients. This connectedness has the potential to foster sharing power and creating equality in reciprocal relationships (Duffey, 2006).

Social pedagogical interactions at the individual level are based on the 3Ps approach (professional, personal, private), and reflect practice that establishes distinctions between these aspects of the self, and thus create clear professional boundaries (Cameron et al., 2011). This is considered essential in ensuring that when using ‘self’ in interactions with clients, it is done in a healthy and productive manner. Social pedagogy encourages workers to give more of themselves, the ‘personal’ P, while maintaining professional and private boundaries (Cameron et al., 2011). This requires a practice focus that is self-reflective and authentic, and not procedural and managerialist. Intervention from a social pedagogue’s perspective views both ‘process’ and ‘outcomes’ as essential in their engagement with clients. Additional core concepts of social pedagogy are the zone of proximal development, the diamond model of intervention and the common third (ThemPra, 2015–19b, 2015–19c, 2015–19d). The first concept explores how the social context enhances and supports learning through the collaborative practices of imitation and prosocial modelling (Bandura, 1977). The second concept is the philosophy that reflects the practice that all people have intrinsic worth as human beings. Pedagogues seek to establish the well-being and happiness of their clients through holistic learning, relationship building, and empowering practices (ThemPra, 2015–19c). In addition, this concept also encompasses the common third, where principles such as empowerment and building positive healthy relationships are used in the practice of social pedagogy with clients (ThemPra, 2015–19d). For example, the long-term relational goals of social pedagogues are achieved through



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interventions with an individual or group for a significant period of time, and during a particular phase or phases of their lives. This engagement is seen as working in the common third or undertaking a shared activity, where social pedagogues develop relationship-based opportunities to learn together with the client by undertaking daily tasks with them (Cameron et al., 2011).

Social pedagogy embraces a community- and activity-based methodology, as well as promoting an experience-orientated practice (Hämäläinen, 2015). The social pedagogy approach embraces notions of informal, less-structured activities, and creativity in terms of music- or art-based interventions. These can be undertaken in community settings, as well as in more formal environments, such as prison. These aspects of social pedagogy, along with its focus on relationship building and consistency, can provide a useful frame to explore and address issues experienced by many young people in a variety of practice settings.

Of the many theories that underpin social pedagogy as a practice, attachment appeared as a relevant framework to assist in exploring young people's experiences of BLT. Attachment theory has a number of core precepts: attachment styles, secure base and internal working model. Each of these corresponds to the capacity an individual has to build and sustain relationships with others (Holmes, 1993). Within the first core concept, attachment styles, there are four subcategories: secure, insecure avoidant, insecure ambivalent, and disorganised. The goal is to nurture children to grow into having a secure positive attachment with caregivers and significant others in their lives (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The other three styles of attachment – insecure avoidant, insecure ambivalent, and disorganised – offer explanations of differing levels of the individual's inability to build trusting and healthy relationships with others (Fox, 2018).



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While instructive to have a definition of all the attachment styles, for this paper we are going to focus on defining secure attachment only, and combine the other three styles (insecure avoidant, insecure ambivalent, disorganised) under the one heading of 'negative' attachment. An examination of the young people's attachment styles was not explored in the research interviews, and therefore there were not sufficient data to provide an in-depth analysis. However, the data does highlight where positive attachments have been created and developed. Secure attachment occurs when the child is cared for by sensitive and responsive caregivers. Securely attached children are able to regulate their distress and know that they can show their needs and feelings without being rejected ([Brown and Ward, 2012](#)).

Attachment styles develop as a consequence of the nurturing that children receive in their early years, from birth onwards. If this development process is successful for the young person, their formative positive attachments create an internal working model (IWM) that dictates how future attachments and interactions develop over the lifespan. However, if trusting relationships are not built with carers, then one of the three dysfunctional attachment styles can occur, each one influencing the IWM in a negative way, establishing unhealthy patterns of attachment behaviour in future relationship building ([Waters et al., 2002](#)).

Another precept drawn from attachment theory is the 'secure base control' system of attachment, which promotes the idea that in healthy attachment development, 'both infants and adults [have] the capacity to use one or a few primary figures as a secure base from which to explore and, as necessary, as a haven of safety in retreat' ([Waters et al., 2002](#), p. 5). Therefore, the social pedagogue seeks to build and sustain a positive secure relationship with the young person. This in turn assists the young



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person in having more trusting relationships, and this creates a pattern of healthy relationship building.

## **Relational practice**

Social pedagogy practice, and how attachment plays a pivotal role in its success with clients, reflects how relationships are key to individual and social development. Much has been written about relational practice, especially in associated professions such as social work. Indeed, it was once considered a core aim of social work practitioner interaction ([Collins and Collins, 1981](#)). The quality of the relationship between practitioner and client allowed for trust to be built and issues to be addressed more collaboratively. It has been written elsewhere that ‘we become more relationally competent as we represent ourselves authentically in our relationships’ ([Duffey, 2006](#), p. 50). [Trevithick \(2003](#), p. 167) suggests that ‘the relationships that we strive to build involve creating a sound “working relationship”, or “working alliance”, as the platform and the medium for the work we undertake with service users’. This approach is seen as useful for assessing clients and determining intervention. It can be seen as a two-way, reciprocal process that seeks both to remedy the client’s issues and to provide a forum that in itself may be therapeutic ([Trevithick, 2000](#); [Salzberger-Wittenberg, 1970](#)). In social pedagogical practice, the ‘work’ is considered ongoing and, in relation to children, it is part of their development process into adulthood. Clients who have experienced difficulties in their relationships in the past may, if the relationship with the practitioner is positive, start to correct this negative experience and begin to build toward a positive and healthy attachment. According to [Miller and Stiver \(1997](#), p. 22), these early experiences, which often relate to negative attachment histories, can be overcome by ‘participating in growth



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fostering relationships'. However, these positive relationships require time to develop and need to be based on the core attributes of warmth, empathy and authenticity. Relational social pedagogical practice identifies that attachment and many of its requisites are core to its ability to provide a healthy and enriching interaction between client and practitioner (Trevithick, 2003). After discussion of the methodology and findings, the core concepts of social pedagogy, and attachment theory will be combined to establish a relational attachment practice framework that will be applied to the research data.

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## Methodology

An ethics application was made to the University Human Research Ethics Board to video interview staff and youth from the BLT, along with alumni and other professionals, to evaluate the success of the programme. Ethics permission was granted in September 2015. A thematic analysis explored the interviewees' data through the identification, description and analysis of the most predominant themes that occurred throughout interviews undertaken between January and March 2016. The application of a qualitative, open-ended narrative interview strategy allowed for open dialogue and the opportunity to explore young people's views of the service they received as they emerged (Sarantakos, 2005). The interviews encompassed the experiences with BLT of 15 youths, 1 BLT alumnus and 1 child welfare social worker. The overarching aim of this paper is to capture and qualify the youth-orientated service provision offered by BLT as described by the youth themselves. To achieve this goal, a thematic analysis was undertaken, which provided an inductive approach to organising, describing and interpreting the themes that surfaced during the interviews with BLT's youth participants (Braun and Clarke, 2006).



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## Findings

Many youth interviewees described BLT as 'unique' because of the physical environment, relational approaches and practice models employed. For this paper, we are focusing on the relational attachment practice approach used, as this lends itself more suitably to social pedagogy and attachment theory. [ThemPra \(2015–19a\)](#) identity that 'social pedagogy is not something we do or don't do – the question to ask ourselves is to what degree we are working in a social pedagogical way!' Using the interview data, we analyse to what degree the BLT programme achieved social pedagogical practice. As social pedagogy involves both a practice approach and the interconnection of specific core practices, we will apply the social pedagogical attributes – 3Ps (professional, personal and private use of self), the common third, the diamond model, and the zone of proximal development – to the quotations below. The main concepts of attachment theory – attachment styles, internal working model and secure base – will also assist in the analysis, highlighting the intersection of these two approaches within a relational attachment practice framework.

### Relational attachment practice

Many of the quotations below not only reflect that the BLT programme is consistent with the practice of social pedagogy generally, but also that many of the core concepts of pedagogical practice overlap and integrate concurrently within the practice environment. For example, interviewees stated:

It's a different environment. Just in general, we have open space. I mean when I sit across from a counsellor [referring



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to past experiences], I feel intimidated. She's just kinda right in front of me staring at me, asking personal questions. (4)

You relate to us better than they can. (14)

There were more quotations about the ability of the BLT staff to relate to the young people attending the programme. While no direct correlation can be made regarding the ability of BLT staff to negotiate their practice between the professional, personal and private use of self (3Ps), it appears implicitly in the quotations in relation to being able to 'relate' rather than 'intimidate' the young people using the service. One could therefore assume that the use of self-disclosure (personal and private use of self) within specified boundaries (the professional P) to build collaborative relationships resulted in collaborative and positive interactions and outcomes (Cameron et al., 2011).

One young person compared experiences at BLT with experiences in a hospital, stating that:

[In the hospital] you feel like s\*\*\*. Because it's like, wow . . . I'm this kid, who's at this hospital [it's like being] in f\*\*\*ing little school, and I even got kicked out of that for misbehaviour problems, and you feel so much worse when you get kicked out of that. When you go home and tell your parents you got kicked out of that f\*\*\*ing school and you're like, where now? (2)



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Another youth expressed the feeling of safety they experienced at BLT, when asked, 'Where else have you gone for programmes where you have felt safe?':

nowhere . . . I can't even go home and feel safe . . . In here there is no fear and out there, there's just war. (10)

These feelings of safety resulted in youth feeling comfortable with themselves. The young people expressed the ease they had in discussing themselves honestly:

Here what I have found is the energy is safe. Like, the first five times we hung out, we just talked about random stuff. We focused on positive thinking because if you are always thinking about the negative, you are not going to want to go back. Every time I see my counsellor, I am reliving the worst moments of my life. (10)

The relaxed, informal 'drop in' approach of the BLT programmes reflects the different energy mentioned above. It also reflects an empowering client-led practice (diamond model) in a physical environment that is not the norm for young people receiving services. Working collaboratively with young people to achieve their goals while building their life skills can be seen to reflect both the zone of proximal development and working in the common third ([ThemPra, 2015–19b](#), [2015–19c](#), [2015–19d](#)).

Young people take feelings of safety and connectedness a step further in discussing how these feelings have led to personal ownership and



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empowerment through the beliefs of the BLT staff acknowledging that youth would make the right decision for themselves:

You can sit down and just talk. If I don't want to talk about something, I don't have to. I don't have to feel scared or uncomfortable. You just chill and it's nice because I can get different perspectives. (8)

You didn't even know us and you had so much faith that we would do the right thing for ourselves. (10)

Once young people realised that their stories were recognised and legitimised, they felt free to express themselves openly and honestly, without the fear of being traumatised in the process of reliving their experiences. It can be argued that once again BLT workers used aspects of the 3Ps and the diamond model to create an environment of empowerment where inclusiveness and safety allow for healthy relationships to form and grow (Cameron et al., 2011). In addition, young people did not feel that there would be negative consequences of their honest confession of what could often be perceived as antisocial behaviours. This was supported by a social worker who regularly referred youth to the programme, stating that:

What I hear from all the youth is that they feel at ease with who they are. They don't have to pretend to be something they are not, and they are not judged; they are taken for who they are and they are given guidance and are supported in a way that makes sense to them. That's another thing I've



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heard from clients I have referred here . . . they don't feel they are to follow somebody's agenda or plan. Here kids feel comfortable enough to bring up whatever is bothering them and go with the flow and figure out a process that allows for each side to be equal. In our offices, it is almost not possible. (38)

The above quotations highlight how the social context (environment) enhances the potential for learning (zone of proximal development), where developing trusting and healthy relationships appears to have established positive secure attachment with the programme staff, allowing for growth relationships to form, which in turn creates resiliency (ThemPra, 2015–19b). This reflects an intervention framework of prosocial modelling and imitation (zone of proximal development).

Research indicates that adolescents with friends who are both responsive and supportive of their needs have better overall health and well-being (Williams and Anthony, 2015). Furthermore, they identify that peer-to-peer social support significantly increases resilience among adolescents (Williams and Anthony, 2015). This research is consistent with the youths' experience in peer-to-peer relationships at BLT.

The application of attachment theory and the building of trusting relationships between BLT staff and youth cannot be emphasised enough in its importance for creating change for the youth themselves.

These relationships once again reflect the secure base control system of attachment that provides 'both infants and adults with the capacity to use one or a few primary figures as a secure base from which to explore and, as necessary, as a haven of safety in retreat' (Waters et al., 2002, p. 5). One youth highlights the power of the trusting relationships they built with BLT



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staff members in their comparison of relationships they have built with other social workers and counsellors:

If you go see people at other offices, it's like they're a social worker and you're [BLT worker name] . . . the difference between these guys [BLT staff members] and what a worker does, is those guys have a lot of clout, they can sign things and get stuff done, but they cannot get on a personal level with the kids and actually truly deal with it. Whereas [BLT staff] don't have any clout, their words would piss in the wind but, they have more emotional attachment and you can push more with that. (32)

This quotation reflects the change in role of social worker from being interventionist to exercising brokerage, thereby reinforcing notions of de-professionalisation, where the utilisation or expropriation of relational practice has shifted from social work practitioner to another pseudo- or semi-professional group. We can see that professional power resides here with the social worker. However, the quality of the relationship and its capacity to achieve positive change through relational practice resides with the BLT worker. In some social pedagogy degree courses, the use of power in the practice context is being addressed through the training process, educating pedagogues in creative, inclusive practice (Hatton, 2013). The ethical use of power in practice needs careful reflection, as it has the potential to have both positive and negative impact on relationship building with the client. A social pedagogue needs to be critically aware of how power is transmitted through the use of the 3Ps (professional, personal and private use of self), and must ensure that they have



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developed good boundaries regarding the use of these aspects of their practice (Cameron et al., 2011).

The collaborative and empowering relationships that the youth experienced at BLT were arguably major influencing factors in the youth viewing their relationships with staff members in terms of friendship or companionship. Attachment theory highlights the importance of developing 'an attachment relationship with a single keyworker' as important in connecting with 'hard to reach' youth (Bevington et al., 2015, p. 158). Furthermore, Trevarthen (2001, pp. 117–8) claims that 'an experience dubbed as companionship or one of being meaningful to someone important is a core need evident even in infancy and present throughout the lifespan'. Therefore, the attachment bonding is significant for the future development and sustainability of positive relationships, and in turn highlights how relationships can be therapeutic in and of themselves.

The majority of the youth interviewed used terms such as uniqueness and realness, which correlate to the professional language of authenticity, collaboration and consistency. In relation to service provision, one BLT alumnus described BLT as an 'anti-programme' in comparison to other programmes, stating that:

you're getting kids that have gone through how many f\*\*\*ing programmes and they end up here. A lot of them stay, and that shows something big to me . . . it wasn't just a one-off personal relationship. You're doing it with all sorts of people, all the time. (1)



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At BLT, the learning or 'social education' is focused on life skills in the relational sense. Young people are offered emotional support that helps regulate emotion to cope with the stressors in their everyday lives (Hämäläinen, 2015). The young people participating in the programme create informal personal connections with staff and peers that assist in teaching broader interpersonal and communication skills for building capacity and empowerment. The concepts of therapeutic community and of employing a practice that focuses on a sustained relationship with the individual (Payne, 2014) reflect the informal 'drop in' practice of BLT. However, while the structure of the BLT programme is similar to a therapeutic community or residential programme, the goal is not to solve or manage a pathologised problem within a client, in what could be seen as an overly medicalised way. The goal is to develop the individual youth into a contributing member of broader society, and, in many ways, this requires less structure and fewer boundaries rather than more.

Blanchet-Cohen and Brunson (2014) argue that the context in which a programme operates can promote youth leadership and empowerment. It is claimed that if workers had 'organizational or community development skills' they could promote 'power-sharing' in young people by creating environments that are youth-orientated (Blanchet-Cohen and Brunson, 2014, p. 7). As far as the interviewees that received BLT's services were concerned, the way in which the programme was structured made a difference to how power-sharing was perceived. In comparing their experience at BLT with other programmes, one youth stated:

everyone I talked to in professional settings was just really weird but when I came here everyone was really casual. (11)



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Evidenced throughout the interviews, youth appreciated the reciprocal disclosure and shared conversation provided by BLT staff members:

With them [other counsellors], you're allowing them to see a vulnerable part of you and they are not being vulnerable back. With you guys [BLT staff], you either have feedback from another story with someone else or connections with yourself. (10)

For some youth, reciprocal disclosure and the willingness to use aspects of two of the 3Ps, their personal and private selves (Cameron et al., 2011), allowed for casual conversation with staff that was an essential part in reducing their anxiety when accessing services, and a necessary part of the process of developing trusting relationships:

With other counsellors, I've never heard a single life story. They don't talk about themselves. All they talk about is you. It feels like the pressure is on. I would get so anxious sitting in those tight little rooms. Like I told them once, I did this [referring to drug use] and she (counsellor) automatically calls up a drug and alcohol counsellor . . . here it is a casual conversation. It's like talking to my friends. I don't want to be stuck in a room with a doctor that really doesn't care about me. (8)

When comparing their experiences with other programmes, the interviewees appeared pleasantly surprised by the balance achieved by BLT staff in terms of the collaboration and openness they experienced. For



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many young people interviewed, the professional setting that they had experienced with other counsellors in the past created barriers that increased their anxiety and discomfort. This appears to correlate with social pedagogy's focus on relational practice that is more self-reflective and authentic (Trevithick, 2003), and less procedural and managerialist. It is not focused solely on outcomes, but on a practice that values an empowering process based on excellent relationship building and trust (Watson and West, 2006).

Lavie-Ajayi and Krumer-Nevo (2013, p. 1770) argue that if workers wish to prove themselves as 'relevant, reliable and trustworthy', they must 'take an on-going social and political position of standing *by* the youth in the face of their hardship, even in times it involves conflict with other professionals or institutions'. The fact that BLT staff members stood alongside young people to the extent that youth could trust that they would be consistent and reliable made a huge impact on the youths' ability to trust them. Young people entering the BLT programme could rely on that BLT staff would show up and be there for them on a long-term, continuous basis. This reinforces Bevington et al.'s (2015) notion of the importance of developing an important attachment relationship in connecting with hard-to-reach youth.

The interviewees from the BLT programme all highlighted that it was the relationship between them and their worker that provided the opportunity to learn and to grow. The ability to allow our clients to 'use us' affirms Winnicott's (1971) belief in the therapeutic nature of relational practice that provides an environment that helps build capacity, which in turn establishes a secure base to venture from dependency on services to independence and citizenship in a broader context of society.



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The following interview quotations support BLT's success in creating positive change in the lives of many of the youth they work with, and, support the idea of BLT being unique in its ability to create change compared to other youth programmes. Interview excerpts made clear that for youth who had experienced many other programme opportunities, BLT was preferable. Youth interviewed attribute the changes in their life trajectory to the support they received through BLT:

I've been asked about going to see formal therapist and I'm like, no way, I'm done with that. I've improved so much since being here [BLT]. I mean when I first started coming here, I was like, what, 16 . . . I remember I had such huge issues. I had an eating disorder and huge a\*\* anxiety issues. I wanted to stay in bed all the time. I slept either 23 hours a day or I didn't sleep at all. I didn't do anything and then now I've been actively searching for a job and I have plans to move out in September. (5)

Going to school every day wasn't easy . . . and then when I started coming here it, started to get easier and easier because I could really look to you guys [BLT staff] and you guys really guided me and showed me a way. You know, coming here, having someone to talk to and being able to relate to someone is a lot, it means a lot. (13)

The last sentence highlights particularly how valuable consistent, reliable and authentic collaborative relational attachment practice is for young people to initially build trust and to develop healthy connections



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individually and in their broader communities. For example, another youth makes a direct correlation between the relationship skills they learned through BLT and a healthy change to the relationships they have with their parents:

Honestly, if I didn't come here I would probably have the worst f\*\*\*ing relationship with my parents. I hate to go there but I would probably be dead. It was different vibe and different feeling and everything than I had ever felt. If I hadn't come here, I would probably off myself or spend years arguing with my parents. (2)

Furthermore, one youth expressed increased feelings of inner strength in themselves after accessing services from BLT:

I've really changed a lot since I've come here. I've been open more and showing a lot of my strong qualities, instead of being introverted and weak. Maybe weak isn't the best word, but I was making myself weak. (11)

These enhanced feelings of control over one's life connect with the positive attributes of social learning theory in terms of imitation and role modelling ([Bandura, 1977](#)), and more broadly with the strengths-based philosophy of social pedagogy ([Saleebey, 2009](#)), especially the diamond model, where the intrinsic worth of the young person is acknowledged through empowering practices.



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Another youth stated how the safe atmosphere and skill development they experienced at BLT gave them hope for themselves and other struggling youth:

I myself never imagined a place like this. It was only just a safe place in my mind and now that it is here, it fills a lot of people with hope. People can come here, touch base and recharge, and go back into the world and face it and survive. You guys fill us with everything we need to just survive and be comfortable in our own skin. (34)

These developments can be seen to reflect how the zone of proximal development has the potential to influence a positive change in attachment style from negative 'insecure or ambivalent' attachment, to 'secure and trusting relationship'. This reflects a positive change in the young people's IWM of themselves, and seeks to address negative attachment styles developed from their early childhood experiences (Bowlby, 1979). In turn, many young people's relational behaviours have changed, establishing positive 'secure and trusting relationships' with BLT staff, their peers and, as seen above, their family members (Bowlby, 1979).

## Discussion

While a number of themes emerged from the data, it was the interconnection between social pedagogical practices and aspects of attachment theory that established trusting therapeutic relationships that consistently appeared as positive in the young people's narratives. The data clearly identify that support offered by staff and peers at the BLT programme was a major influence in a young person establishing positive



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relationships and building resiliency. The defining relational attachment attributes of trust, empathy and authenticity were identified by many of the participants. The literature identifies these attributes as having the potential to establish positive attachment relationships, therapeutic growth and collaborative working practices with clients (Miller and Stiver, 1997; Bowlby, 1979). Relational attachment practice therefore provides the intersection between the practices of BLT, social pedagogy and the core aspects of attachment theory, which can assist us in understanding how those practices can be effective in developing self and the core characteristics of citizenship.

BLT's less formally structured 'drop in' approach to working with youth, differing from more traditional residential or therapeutic community approaches, allows for the combination of music therapy, yoga and outdoor recreation pursuits within a youth-focused strengths-based framework. Having a safe place to heal, explore and feel safe, highlights connections to attachment theory, where a 'secure base' is essential for developing independent life skills, both emotional and practical (Bowlby, 1988). The relational social pedagogical practices of the staff, especially the interconnected use of two of the 3Ps, their personal and professional selves, while working alongside the youth in the common third (ThemPra, 2015–19d; Cameron et al., 2011), created the potential to build trusting, authentic and ongoing relationships with their service users. As seen in the quotations above, these positive growth relationships have been life-affirming, and have assisted with sustaining and managing other relationships in the young people's lives. Again, relational attachment practices can be seen to assist young people create positive relationships, and these can help overcome negative attachment experiences either in their past or in their current relationships. These will assist in establishing a



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healthier IWM ([Bowlby, 1979](#)), which hopefully will allow young people to experience other significant relationships in the same positive way.

The somewhat unstructured nature of BLT practice appears to appeal more to the most marginalised and hard-to-reach young people, and this in turn appears to encourage an environment that builds trusting and respectful relationships between this particular peer group and staff. This was an interesting finding, as practice wisdom often suggests that while working with young people who may have an unstructured lifestyle, stronger boundaries are required ([Hart, 2016](#)). Social pedagogy's approach to working with youth – for example, creating and maintaining positive longer-term relationships – highlights a practice that historically was often seen in other professional fields, such as social work. Social pedagogy, underpinned by its own code of ethics and practice, has managed to negotiate a trajectory where professionalisation has not diminished its relational practice. For example, in the notion of 'friends' or being 'friendly' identified in the interviews, one can view relationships and boundaries as perhaps less rigid than in other professional fields. Using the comparison of social work, much of its professional education promotes the use of self. This can appear contradictory, in that practitioners are then trained to reduce this aspect of their personal selves (for example, self-disclosure) and create strong boundaries when working with individuals ([Reamer, 2013](#)), a practice that often establishes barriers rather than boundaries in building relationships ([Fox, 2018](#)). Social pedagogues, however, are encouraged to use aspects of themselves, the professional, personal and private (3Ps) aspects of their lives in building rapport with their clients. The emphasis in pedagogue training is the use of ethical boundaries and professional discretion when disclosing personal information. As [Bevington et al. \(2015\)](#) and [Williams and Anthony \(2015\)](#) point out, these more informal types of



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attachment are essential in establishing relationships and building resiliency with the most disenfranchised young people, and this is especially relevant to BLT.

The BLT programme has flexible creative activities such as music therapy and yoga, and the utility of the programming allows either for group connection, or for the possibility of the activity being undertaken as a solo exercise. The 'drop in' environment also allows for a safe space in which youth can disconnect safely from their other personal and professional relationships, and just talk with peers and staff in a very informal manner. According to [Bowlby \(1988\)](#) attachment styles formed in early childhood (by age 6) shape a person's ability to relate to others, and unless a corrective experience such as therapy is experienced, that style will continue throughout their lives. We are not suggesting that BLT is therapy in the traditional sense of the word; however, as suggested by [Trevithick \(2003\)](#), BLT relational practices were, according to the young people themselves, therapeutic. Therefore, the overarching practice of social pedagogy, with its focus on communitarian education and working in partnership and collaboration with clients, and where practitioners' use of self is authentic, establishes a practice to assist in correcting previous insecure attachment issues.

There are some areas for consideration and a need to pause for critical reflection. One important issue to consider relates to the level of independence the BLT programme fosters. Several of the youth mentioned that they still keep in regular contact with BLT staff even after leaving the programme. Some opponents of the approach used at BLT may consider that dependency is nurtured rather than independency, and while continued support is positive, 'dependency' at some point becomes limiting in terms of young people's development ([Winnicott, 1963](#)). In



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addition, although not undertaken for this project, an intersectional analysis of the service user data from the programme would assist in identifying categories of difference (Verloo, 2006) among the youth and how much, and in what ways, the social pedagogical relational practices of BLT may mitigate or enhance experiences of oppression and discrimination. While gender and age did not manifest themselves as problematic in the interviews, age, patriarchy, culture, race and sexuality are categories that could be further explored for both young people and staff members.

If one takes the view that BLT is developing citizenship, this highlights interpersonal connection and the potential to reciprocally mentor others at both staff and peer level. While acknowledging the potential for discrimination to occur within categories of difference, it appears that social pedagogy and its practices can offer great insights for youth-related practice, perhaps especially in how we address the perennial concerns that arise between assuring young people's autonomy and the requirement of their commitment to broader society responsibilities and values.

More broadly, concerns may be identified regarding the reduction in relational attachment practice by other associated professional groups, such as social work. These professional groups, with their preoccupation on case management rather than relational practice, may lose much of their initial practice intent, establishing targets as the only measure of success, rather than the empowerment and growth of the client. This focus in turn creates spaces for allied professions, such as social pedagogy, to grow and claim areas of practice that are client focused.



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## Conclusion

The interview data established that the interpersonal connections at BLT highlight relational attachment practice at its most effective. Locating these practices within attachment theory and a social pedagogical practice framework allowed young people to voice what they felt were the most effective aspects of the programme's success. The explicit and implicit nature of the quality of the connection between BLT staff and young people identified authenticity, inclusiveness and collaboration defined within positive secure attachment relationships. The data identify BLT practice as concurrently embracing the interconnecting social pedagogy practices of working across the 3Ps, the professional, personal and private aspects of the pedagogues' use of self, the zone of proximal development, the diamond model and working in the common third. These practices enhanced the ability of staff to develop positive attachments with young people and through these relationships help young people develop into healthy adults and responsible citizens.

Many professional groups such as social work, probation and the prison service have similar service goals to those that underpin social pedagogy. However, as these professions have become more professionalised, they appear to have lost some of the interpersonal client-focused practice approach that social pedagogy promotes, and exchanged these for a more managerialist case-management focus. It is our assertion that associated professional groups, and the multiple client groups they work with, could benefit from the reintegration of the core relational attachment practices exemplified in social pedagogy practice.



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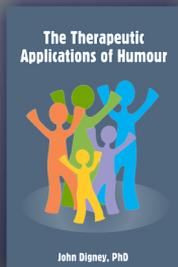
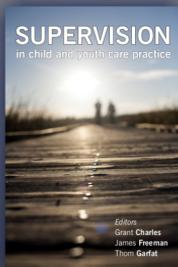
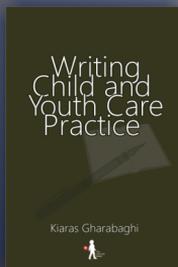
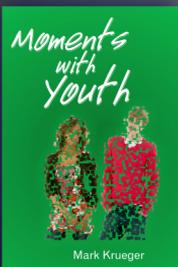
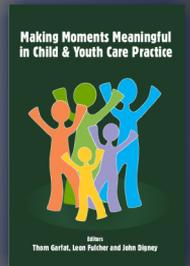
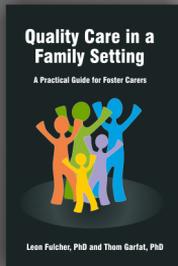
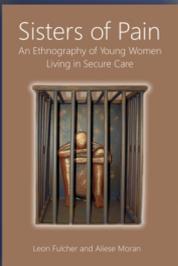
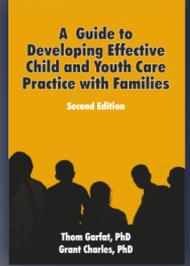
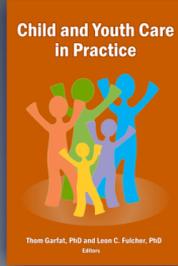
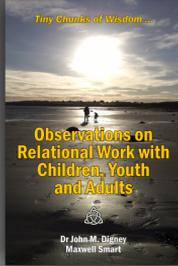
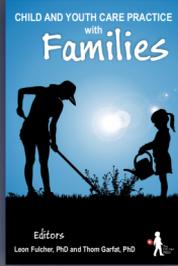
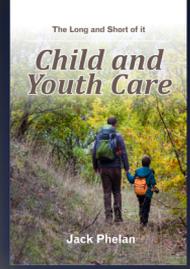
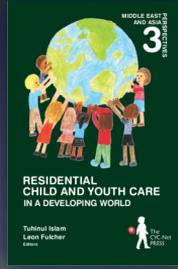
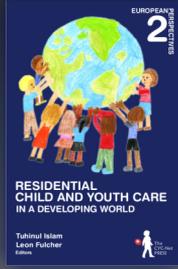
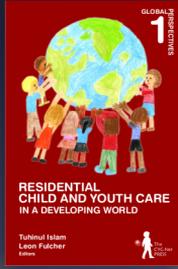
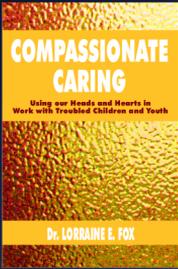
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# Integrating the Relational into Academia

Heather Sago and Aurrora De Monte

## Abstract

*Alignment between the philosophical values of Child and Youth Care and the methods we use in the delivery of our educational curriculum is critical.*

*This article provides reflections and practical strategies for integrating relational practice into the classroom and nurturing reflective Child and Youth Care practitioners.*

## Keywords

*Relational practice, responsive learning, relational teaching, safety in learning, sustainability, situational experiences, academic institutions*

Imagine a learning atmosphere that enhances engagement to the point where students don't want to miss a thing. Away with the days where learners sit on a cold hard chair, behind a wooden tabletop desk, facing the front of the room while an 'expert' takes their place reading from slides, regurgitating what was already heard as a result of assigned readings.

Academic institutions are in a state of re-grouping, being progressive, attempting to create a constructivist learning environments (Jonassen, 1991). They are striving to assist the learner to reach self-authoring levels of critical thinking (Kegan, 1982). They build curriculum, bottom up using the *Structure of the Observed Learning Outcomes* (Biggs & Collis, 1982). They



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teach progressively through Bloom's *Expanded and Revised Taxonomy* (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The training room, while still sterile in color, is modified so that the moveable chairs and desks form a U shape. No one's back is to that of another individual. Flipped classrooms (Bergmann & Sams, 2012) are the trend; where learners come prepared for class having pre-read all materials and ready to play with the application of the most difficult concepts. Learners participate in large or small group reflective discussions every 10-15 minutes and at least one interactive activity for every 60 minutes of session. Learners are allowed choice in how they complete some assignments, using their creativity to build their professional identity. As a result, they come away with depth and breadth of knowledge and practice skills.

As academia moves forward by meeting the needs of learners in these new ways, we've seen disparities and incongruence within our learners' identity formation. If not directly addressed, this discrepancy has the potential to cause impairment in ability to practice, dramatically reducing chances of post-graduate success. This disjointedness seems to come from the ecology of our learners, which appears to be increasingly toxic and elder deprived. A majority of them appear in our education rooms with personal trauma histories, potential mental, cognitive, emotional or physical health difficulties, familial stressors, financial distress, or other, just as significant, concerns that add challenge in participating in postsecondary education. The American College Health Association (2016) surveyed 25,168 Ontario post-secondary learners in the spring of 2016 using the ACHA National College Health Assessment II. Their results highlight increasing student stress states:



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- 65% of students reported experiencing overwhelming anxiety in the previous year (up from 57% in 2013)
- 46% reported feeling so depressed in the previous year it was difficult to function (up from 40% in 2013)
- 13% had seriously considered suicide in the previous year (up from 10% in 2013)
- 2.2% reported attempting suicide in the last year (up from 1.5% in 2013)
- 9% reported attempting suicide sometime in the past (not restricted to last year)

While colleges do their best to manage the impact of this stress (offering counseling, mindfulness sessions, brokering services, etc.) the fact is that these individuals spend most of their time (upwards of 20-25 hours per week) within their specific programs. Thus, faculty is positioned in a way in which connecting, caring for and eliciting safety is crucial. Hobbs (1974) suggests that “no one waits for a special therapeutic hour. We try, as best we can, to make all hours special. We strive for immediate and sustained involvement in purposive and consequential living (p. 393)”. Under these conditions, we hypothesize that learners wouldn’t hesitate to take significant risks in their plight for congruency of professional and personal.

## **Relational Learning**

Child and Youth Care (CYC) teachings are grounded in the concept of relational care. The context of our work occurs in relation to, and with, others (Bellefeuille & Ricks, 2010). However, some learners may not have experienced this type of caring in their own upbringing, or haven’t felt it in



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quite some time, and this may add additional layers of learning when then attempting to apply program knowledge in practice. In our CYC program we want emerging practitioners to be able to support a different way of being in the world with the young people with whom they work, through the relationship they develop with them. If our learners have not experienced themselves in a different way, they may struggle with both understanding and applying relational care within their practice. Often learners can recount what they are to do, but they often struggle to actually do it. A barrier may be the wall they've built around themselves as protection from pain, as we see in their hesitancy to be present and engage with others. Similar to the children, youth and families they hope to work with, some learners' private logic reflects either a hide or be hurt (i.e. flight), or that of hurt or be hurt (i.e. fight) mentality (Adler, 1969; Chambers & Freado, 2015). This private logic has helped them survive potentially harmful events within their world. However, as they move forward with fostering a professional CYC identity, it may impair their abilities to practice new knowledge of relational care due to a potential reluctance to experience further rejection or hurt. In essence, they are wounded (Phelan, 2009).

We have a duty as educators to meet our students 'where they are at' (Garfat & Fulcher, 2011), just as we would the children, youth, and families with whom we might practice. By inserting Hobbs (1982) principles of Project Re-Ed into our classrooms, we specifically target the student's unmet need for belonging and well-being, *if* our faculty meets Hobbs (1966) criteria:

... a decent adult; educated, well trained; able to give and receive affection, to live relaxed, and to be firm; a person with



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private resources for the nourishment and refreshment of his own life; not an itinerant worker but a professional through and through; a person with a sense of the significance of time, of the usefulness of today and the promise of tomorrow; a person of hope, quiet confidence, and joy; one who is committed to children and to the proposition that children who are emotionally disturbed can be helped by the process of reeducation (p.105).

Hobbs' principles (1982) are as follows. However, note we have replaced 'child/adolescent' with the word 'learner' and the word 'adult' with the term 'faculty':

1. **Life is to be lived now**, not in the past, and lived in the future only as a present challenge.
2. **Trust between learner and faculty is essential**, the foundation on which all other principles rest, the glue that holds teaching and learning together; the beginning point for re-education.
3. **Time is an ally**, working on the side of growth in a period of development when life has a tremendous forward thrust.
4. **Competence makes a difference**; learners should be helped to be good at something, and especially at schoolwork.
5. **Self-control can be taught** and learners helped to manage their behavior without the development of psychodynamic insight; symptoms can and should be controlled by direct address, not necessarily by an uncovering therapy.
6. **Cognitive competence of learners can be considerably enhanced**; they can be taught generic skills in the management of



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their lives as well as strategies for coping with the complex array of demands placed on them by family, school, community, or job; in other words, **intelligence can be taught**.

7. **Feelings should be nurtured**, shared spontaneously, controlled when necessary, expressed when too long repressed, and explored with trusted others.
8. **The group is very important** to learners; it can be a major source of instruction in growing up.
9. **Ceremony and ritual give order**, stability, and confidence to troubled learners, whose lives are often in considerable disarray.
10. **The body is the armature of the self**, the physical self around which the psychological self is constructed.
11. **Communities are important** for learners, but the uses and benefits of community must be experienced to be learned.
12. In growing up, **a learner should know some JOY in each day**, and look forward to some joyous event for the morrow.

The application of these principles leads to opportunities for learners to create new associations of safety in relationship with others. They support both independent and inter-dependent identity to be nurtured and developed. When learners experience a sense of community with its own capacity of healing, helping and mentoring they may then be able to replicate CYC program knowledge of being cared for in relationship with others with whom they work.

## **Responsive Learning Environments**

There are several concepts that can help modify a post-secondary CYC college program experience to be a better fit with our learners'



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developmental needs as well as CYC professional practice and values. We like to think of our role in post-secondary education as “building training rooms with heart” (Curry, Lawler, Schneider-Munoz & Fox, 2011). By doing so, we support the deeper connection to the material and to practice. The holding environment (Winnicott, 1945) and/or containments (Bion, 1962) should be responsive to unmet needs, mediating stressors to build positive narratives all the while gradually reducing dependency. They should include Maier’s (1979) core ingredients of care: bodily comfort, differentiations, rhythmic interactions, elements of predictability, dependability and caring of the caregiver. Thus, it is our goal to build CYC family where learners feel held, supported and challenged because the premise of human experience is emotional, not just cognitive. Regardless of our unique challenges, all people feel. It is our responsibility as educators to facilitate emotional learning in diverse ways via lived experience in our training spaces. It is through facilitating responsive learning environments that we believe sustainable learning occurs. We should be asking ourselves, how do we make this moment meaningful for the learner and for ourselves? In doing so we inhabit the inter-subjectivity of our practice as well as offering critical care experiences to our learners.

## **The Role of Safety in Learning**

Felt safety, which refers to an individual's need for emotional security within a relationship, may begin with the incorporation of extended time to foster the relationship between students and faculty. Attending to the personal, the emotional needs of students are vital in creating a sense of safety and security. Open door policies, office hours, and before/after class connections are enhanced with the use of regular ‘hang outs’ (Garfat and Fulcher, 2011) independent of credit hours. These gatherings can take place



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in the physical academic and non-academic spaces as well as in the virtual space (through closed Facebook intake groups, twitter time, etc.). We are working on creating covenants in each course to share power in the building of norms as well as content specific opening/closing rituals and routines. In earlier semesters risk taking is buffered with instant access to peer support through the use of such mechanisms as time in/out role-plays, whereas in later semesters risk includes giving/receiving constructive feedback on individualized performance. Overall learner workload is managed with oversight so as to ensure outcome-based assignments that are limited in number and separated in submission timelines. Emotional regulation is taught early on so it can then be reinforced and evaluated through doing activities where practice occurs during high stress periods within a semester. We are also starting to plan for failure as our best learning can come from these moments. Hanging-in (Garfat & Fulcher, 2011) while a student sits with the discomfort that arises when they become or are made aware of their own incongruences between personhood and their learning is a necessity. Students who might not be in the right state to move forward step out of their course work but are provided with opportunities to remain program connected.

## **Spatial Co-Design**

We are exploring alternatives to spatial design of the classroom (yes, this may take a little more time to set up, but if the benefits and experiences outweigh the time needs, it is well worth it). Faculty are beginning to re-organize learning spaces in conjunction with students so there is a consensus on what works best for the group in the different moments that arise. We have created a supplies list that includes a variety of seating choices such as rocking, balance and beanbag chairs as



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well as hard surface items like yoga mats, carpets, etc. Taking the time to construct teaching spaces together provides an opportunity to learn more about the individual feelings as well as group dynamics of a class. Engaging in co-creation of physical spaces provides active opportunity to demonstrate characteristics of relational practice which faculty can refer back to throughout their teaching.

**10-WEEK WORLD TOUR**

## Characteristics of a Relational Child and Youth Care Approach

**GLOBAL DISCUSSION SERIES**

How do we build trust, connection, and safety?

How can we respect individual desires for growth and change?

What's involved in our inner and shared experiences?

**Begins July 12, 2021**



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## **Instilling Passion and Sustainability**

In our program, we have given special attention to creating a diverse and complementary faculty team so as promote both the uniqueness of experiences in our field and a multitude of authentic connections to it. Teaching that which we are most passionate about allows our faculty to transmit relationship and investment with discipline content and demonstrate competence, complexity, and sustainability of career within CYC practice. Through this varied exposure, learners receive opportunities to explore where their own passions might lie. This can be harnessed in both faculty and learners through their active role in on-going personal and professional development plans. In our program we re-visit these plans, often consisting of goals related to four different categories: self-care, self-growth, knowledge, and skills. These categories nurture the growth and development of both personal and professional identities, supporting the integrative nature of these parts of Self. We also request that our students take into account lifespace strengths and barriers as well as Redl & Wineman's (1952) surface management techniques to help stay on course. Regular check-ins on these plans are crucial to determine if an individual needs to be more realistic, hasn't acknowledged something getting in their way or if assistance might be needed from others. Involving others in such plans is essential as interdependence may help us to be responsible when we have to adapt based on feedback and provide tangible evidence of outcome.

Cultivating the peer community helps extend this focus on continuous learning and growth. As part of placement experiences, learners are put into small groups of seven along with one faculty. We refer to these as pods because the expectation is that the individuals work harmoniously in support to move across their semester. Those that have more give more



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and those that need more take more with the idea that this should balance out to a 50:50 ratio over the course of each term. In the first placement, faculty model pod facilitation while in the second placement learners try this on and by third placement, the pods become self-authoring. To move this experience beyond campus, it is important that we also help learners first connect with external resources and networks. We are aware that not all alumni stay in our region, nor do they progress at the same pace following graduation. With this in mind, we try to encourage program faculty to be active in the CYC world and share these connections with their learners by bringing in guest speakers, creating awareness about external events and encouraging participation in them as well as virtual gathering through CYC-Net.

Throughout a learner's formal education, they cover a vast amount of content and it can be overwhelming – especially, when they are still in the developmental stage of worrying about themselves (Phelan, 2012). The glue that seems to allow them to take the time necessary to integrate this into identity, while creating confidence at graduation, is the use of a common and consistent language while a learner has been on site. By embedding the characteristics of a CYC approach (Garfat & Fulcher, 2011) across curriculum it serves as a form of grounding for early practice. This is enhanced when all program assessments also evaluate based on the domains of practice (Stuart, 2013).

### **The Modeling and Practice of the In-Between Space**

It is rare that faculty would co-facilitate the whole of a course. For a variety of systemic reasons, it usually cannot or does not occur. However, our most recent experience has reinforced how beneficial sharing the



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space is for both students as well as faculty, suggesting that it promotes greater congruence and 'matching' with CYC practice.

By engaging in co-facilitation students witness the dialectical presence and relationship of two practitioners and the negotiation of shared space between them and with students in the class. We can demonstrate presence and rhythmicity (Krueger, 2000) as well as trust and vulnerability at engaging in the in-between space, the space of connected and co-created experience (Garfat, 2012), as we share in the art and practice of teaching. Sometimes students may forget that faculty are human too and make mistakes. One great benefit of co-facilitation is the noting of our errors to each other as well as to the class; in doing so, we get 'unstuck' while demonstrating the significance of being genuine, honest and imperfect – all characteristics important in negotiating the forever fluid landscapes of our relationships with others.

## **Storytelling that Speaks to Being Human – Showing Vulnerabilities**

Storytellers have disseminated our histories, myths, collective and individual truths, since the dawn of time. Each profession has its own narratives and storytellers. The sharing of stories evokes feelings and has the ability to impact identity; challenging perceptions and private logic that people may have. Sharing our personal experiences is an act of vulnerability. When we risk vulnerability, we have the potential to build trust, safety and connection to others. Storytelling has the potential to increase self-control and competence, as facilitators can link skills and knowledge demonstrated in the story to domains of practice.

Sharing stories from practice also reaffirms that faculty are human, have made mistakes, are imperfect and have experienced 'not knowing'



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(Anderson-Nathe, 2010). The stories of facilitators can 'bring to life' tougher concepts which students may be struggling with, offering an alternative route to understanding and application. The effective use of stories may also cultivate different feelings for individuals and for the larger group. Thus, facilitators share to enhance both individualized learning and also that of the group, paying attention to both the general and specific goals of the members.

## **Improvisation and Situational Experiences**

Within our program, we focus on mirroring the mode of practice and "aim for the felt experience of the learning situation" (Ward, 2010, p.184). Making use of the everyday events (rituals, routines and events) in the lives of our learners promotes and demonstrates the effective use of lifespace, and the embodiment of CYC practice in an academic setting. We can use naturally occurring events, such as someone coming unprepared for the tasks at hand, or created events, such as forced group work. To take advantage of all the little moments that make up learning, we encourage the use of a professionalism and engagement mark assigned to each course. Professionalism rubrics would measure presence through dress, preparedness, teamwork, use of supervision, communication skills, ethical practice and willingness to work on self, while engagement rubrics would look to assess contribution, bi-directional caring, and inclusive practice. Students are encouraged to keep daily notes to document how they demonstrate and participate in weekly course content, submitting a self-evaluation including 'proof', to support their grade. Faculty take notes and provide constructive on the fly feedback but also formalize comments at mid and final points based on a rubric clearly laying out performance expectations. At those times, if students are concerned, they are



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encouraged to speak to their faculty about their concerns and how to improve their marks. Often when we first introduce the professionalism and engagement mark, we are met with reluctance as those who are more gregarious discover they will need to make space for others, while individuals who are more reserved learn that they will need to take more space. While we appreciate both types of individuals, we challenge learners to think back to how relationships are developed and grow. Respectful engagement is a necessary component and this method encourages and supports learners to be more cognoscente of their moment-to-moment interactions with and impact on others.

## Conclusion

By matching the classroom to the complex needs of the practice environment, along with the processes of practice, educators can promote “true caring [which] largely reflects the mutuality of care received and care rendered” (Maier, 1979, p.9). As Angelou’s (2002) poem reminds us, “people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people never forget how you made them feel”.

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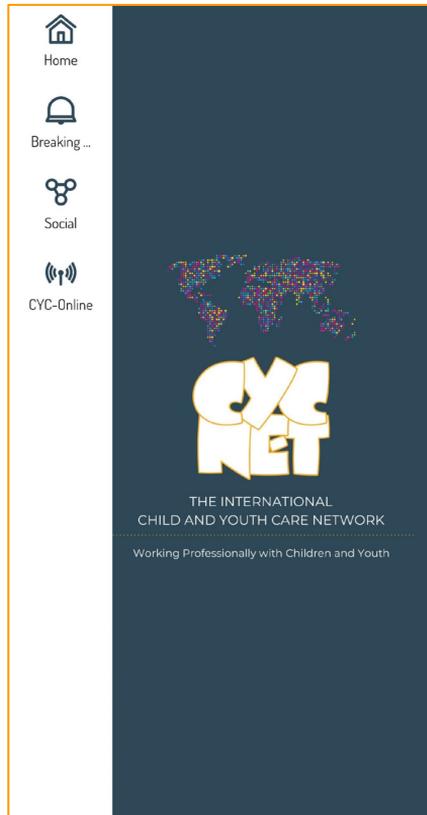


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# A Question of Exchange

Hans Skott-Myhre

I have been reflecting on the ways that capitalist logic saturates our daily lives and loves. The ways in which our core values are infiltrated by the logic and value of capitalism until predatory behavior becomes almost second nature. By capitalist logic, I am specifically thinking of the ways in which capitalism shapes what we value both behaviorally and conceptually. In other words, I am wondering how we ascribe value to things, people, and other species as well as how that influences how we treat them. I would suggest that capitalism offers us a fairly limited lens for ascribing such values.

Capitalism, as the name suggests, is a system premised on the accumulation of capital i.e. profit or wealth by private individuals. The driving impetus of capitalist value is the ability to ever increase the capacity of the private property to increase wealth. As a result, investments are premised on a logic that puts the development of profit over any other system of value. Put simply, it means that capitalism will put profit ahead of any other set of social relations including the comfort or well-being of living things. While capitalism is not opposed to meeting the needs of all living things, those needs will always be met after the accumulation of wealth is accomplished or likely. We can see this in the ways in which we as a society promote the accumulation of trillions of dollars in the hands of private individuals, while refusing to fund relatively small amounts of money for CYC services, schoolbooks or clean drinking water.



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Because we live in a thoroughly capitalist milieu, the logic of the system influences us in a myriad of different ways. Some of these influences are obvious. Others are more subtle and operate at an almost unconscious level. For example, it is fairly common for us to have our self-worth tied up with our ability to have a “good job” and to be able to “support ourselves.” For many of us, this is a deeply rooted value. We feel increasingly good about who we are, if we are gainfully employed at a relatively high rate of compensation. We like to be seen as a hard worker who is responsible to the requirements of our job. If we lose our job or our ability to support ourselves, it can be very hard on our sense of our self as a worthwhile person. We can become depressed, anxious, and sometimes self-destructive if we are not economically self-sufficient.

Similarly, many of us are a bit suspicious of our fellow citizens who are unemployed or not economically successful according to our values. As a society we have, at the very best, an ambivalent relationship with people who struggle economically. For those who have experienced generations of economic insecurity, we hold both sympathy for their struggle, while at the same time too often describing them as unmotivated or lazy. On the one hand, we see the suffering of children living in poverty and cry out against a society that would treat its children in such a way. On the other hand, we scold their parents and adult family members for not climbing the ladder of meritocracy or pulling themselves up by their own bootstraps. Surely, if we have made it through our own struggle, we think, so can they.

In a way, the poor make us nervous. We know in the back of our minds (or maybe even more consciously) that our own economic position is actually fairly precarious if we are among the majority that relies on the movements of capitalist investments. Depending on what the current trend is in making money, any sector of the economy could be abandoned



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on short notice and any number of us could lose our livelihoods. We have seen this time and time again over the past four hundred years, but we don't really need to look that far back. The economic collapses and rapid reversals of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century offer us a plenitude of examples. The gig economy and the rise of the entrepreneur are premier examples of an economy that is highly variable, unstable, and incredibly risky. In fact it is more like a casino than a functioning social system.

And so, the poor make us nervous and we don't like things or people that make us nervous. Of course, the capitalist economy also makes us nervous, but we really can't relate to an impersonal system like capitalism, which in many respects seems completely beyond us, even if it directly organizes our daily behavior. And so, for many of us, we remain agnostic on how much we do or don't dislike capitalism or capitalists. They are simply too alien and removed from our lived experience.

But the poor are much more accessible to us. They are who we must not become and we fear and hate them for this reason. We seek out ways of assuring ourselves that whatever made them poor is not something that will make us poor or homeless, or addicted, or crazy. And so we tell the stories about how the poor are lazy, unmotivated, damaged, criminal, or mad. Because these are qualities that we can resist in our selves. We can work harder, we can take motivational seminars on-line, we can seek therapy for our trauma, we can stay within the law, we can take our medications to manage our depression, anxiety, or rage. We can behave like people who are middle class and safe from poverty.

It is striking how pervasive this kind of logic is. Our willingness to subject ourselves and our sense of self to a system that would divide us and pit us against one another is a certain kind of madness. Of course, we don't logically think these sets of relations in the ways I have described them



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here. In fact, if confronted with the argument I have just made, many of us would argue strongly that our logic is our own and the conclusions that we draw are based on real world experience.

What we fail to realize is that all our observations about the world we live in are filtered through the lens of the society that has produced us. We are trained in innumerable ways to think and act in accordance with the way that our society makes sense of the world. This is nowhere more true than in the world of social relations.

When we say that CYC is built on relationships, we might want to be quite careful about what kinds of relational logic are at play in our CYC engagements. I would argue, that it is quite likely that however well-intentioned we might be, we tend towards purveying and replicating capitalist logic in all of our relational engagements. Of course, we can and do work quite hard to cut through the social logic that saturates our world view. We might well point out that many of us in the field of CYC are well versed in social justice theories and practices. Our view of the poor is a liberatory one. We seek to be allies to the poor, disenfranchised, and marginalized groups in our society.

But, how many of us can put aside the logic of hard work and meritocracy even in our advocacy for social justice? And how many of us can have a relationship that is not premised in emotional or psychological profit? Indeed, I would argue that the logic of profit runs deep under the surface of our relational engagements. One way this is talked about overtly is in the psychological framework of [social exchange theory](#). This theoretical framework comes from the field of psychology, which I have argued in other columns, here and elsewhere, is deeply intertwined with capitalism and one of the main vehicles for disseminating the logic of the system. In this case, the idea is that it is human nature to seek out



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relationships that offer us a positive “cost-benefit.” That is to say we measure the effort we put into a relationship against the rewards we receive from that relationship. I would argue that this view of human relations is neither natural nor human nature, but an effect of living within the frameworks of capitalist logic.

Remember that I proposed that capitalism is a system of value. I borrow that idea from Karl Marx who saw value as central to the way capitalism functions. For Marx, what is fundamental to human nature is the capacity to act and create, The act of creation in and of itself has no inherent value except in the enjoyment we receive from our ability to be creative. And we create an infinitude of productive acts. Some of these are physical innovations in which we alter the material world in an immeasurable number of ways, and some are relational in which we create connections and alter our neuro-biology through our entanglements with others. In either case, the fundamental value of social engagement according to Marx is to enhance our ability to do as much creatively as possible. This kind of value he called “use value.” That is the value of an activity is immanent to its own effects. In other words, use value is the pleasure we get from producing, creating, and acting. Certainly, one way to organize society would be to set it up so that we are as free as possible to express our capacities to their full extent. Indeed, [Marx](#) described a perfect communist society as,

*where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity but each can become accomplished in any branch he wishes, society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the*



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*afternoon, rear **cattle** in the evening, **criticize** after dinner,  
just as I have a mind, **without** ever **becoming** hunter,  
fisherman, **shepherd** or critic.*

We might note that there is no cost/benefit analysis as to how social relations are arranged. Society regulates the way things are produced so as to provide the maximum degree of possible expression by its citizens.

Under capitalist logic such as exchange theory, we have a different set of values. Here we have what Marx described as exchange value. To open the possibility of exchange value we have to take use value and add something to its inherent value. After all, my enjoyment of what I do is not something I can exchange with you for something you have that I want. My enjoyment of an activity is mine and is limited to the duration of the event or activity I am involved in producing. To exchange it, I have to add an additional value to my production. That is to say I need to create an abstract cost or benefit beyond my sheer pleasure. In other words, I am moving from a system that inherently values human activity, to a system that places variable value on some forms of human creativity and not others. This shifts the question from, what can I do to express my unique capacities as a human being, to what are my activities worth to other people? Will others value what I am capable of doing or will they insist that I do other things that they have determined are valuable?

This is particularly powerful as a lens for understanding emotional entanglements. To the degree we are invested in social exchange or capitalist logic, we look to see how our relationships offer us an emotional profit. That is to say, we want others to make us feel better and better. If they fail to do this, then under social exchange logic, we should seriously question the cost/benefit of the relationship.



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I would argue that this is a truly pernicious view of human relations that is deeply influential in complex and problematic ideas about self-care and burnout. The logic of emotional exchange is built on the idea that there should be an emotional profit to human relations, but under that is another idea, This largely unconscious motivation is the sense that we are at core missing something and that through our relations with others we can fill that emptiness up. This kind of drive can create a voracious appetite for emotional exchange that cannot help but fail. Such failure drives us from failed relationship to failed relationship, always looking for that person or persons who can fill us up. I would suggest that this underlies the logic of burnout when it is premised on the idea that one can be emptied of emotional reserves by encounters with trauma and pain.

The alternative logic to the idea of emotions as a field of exchange with costs and benefits, winners and losers, might be found in the work of the philosopher Spinoza. He suggests that we are not empty, nor can we be emptied, because we are inherently entangled with the force of all living things. When we artificially bound ourselves off from others because we are afraid we will lose or win something in the game of emotional exchange, we diminish our access to the infinite energy of life itself.



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Spinoza suggests that emotions are not things that we have and can exchange, Instead, emotions are degrees of experiential intensity that indicate a possible movement between who we are and who we might become. To the degree we try to own them and contain them for resale to another in exchange for what we imagine others might have to offer, we lose the some of the capacity to fully express who are becoming. And it is who we are becoming that is signaled by the intensity of feelings we are experiencing. This is not unlike the moment that precedes any other act of creation. The moment before we write the first word of a poem, make the first brush stroke of a painting, make the first cut on lumber for a building project. In that moment there is an intensity of possibility, of what might now happen. Relational entanglements can also open us to the full intensity of the free interchange of emotions without cost or benefit. Just the use value of seeing what can happen here. Spinoza refers to this as joy and in CYC, I think we can all use a bit more joy.

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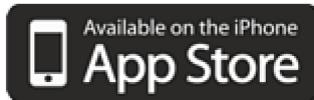
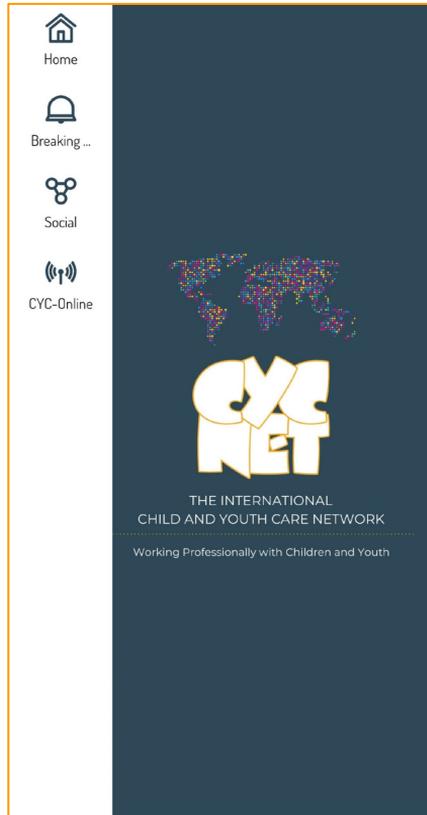


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# Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From New Zealand Celebrating the World Test Cricket Championship  
July 2021

**K**ia Ora Kotou  
Katoa and  
Warm

Greetings to you all!  
New Zealand is still celebrating after winning the Inaugural World Test Cricket Championship in Southampton, England, even as there are worries in our Capital

City, Wellington after an Australian visitor spent 4 days walking around the city's day and night life while infected with the Delta variant of Covid-19. The whole country is holding its breath right now as critical testing, contact tracing and quarantine efforts proceed.

But Test Cricket has given New Zealanders opportunity to celebrate, even as it involved staying up all night because of time zone differences with England. Test cricket! There is every possibility that some readers will not really know about the details and nuances of the Commonwealth game of Cricket. I never learned about Cricket growing up. We had baseball which is a totally different mindset. So it was that my first



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observation of Cricket, where batters stand at each end of a strip of carefully manicured lawn with 3 little posts standing upright with bails on top at each end. Somebody runs up and throws a hard red ball so that it bounces off the ground in front of the batter who tries to hit the ball and run back and forth between wickets to score runs. At first, I thought a 5-day Test Cricket match was like watching paint dry. How wrong I was!

Test Cricket is played over the course of 5 days during which each team of 11 play through 2 innings. Each inning involves time in the field bowling and defending twice, and also batting twice. Rain and weather conditions always

feature in the play of Test Cricket, so that it is not uncommon for both teams to play for a Draw, if neither team can Win the Test outright. The true fans and fanatics about Cricket argue that 5-day Test Cricket is the true spectacle of this game. Others claim that limited-over One Day Cricket holds more public appeal. More recently, the new 20-20 game of limited overs Cricket has also proved popular, especially in India.

New Zealand cricket fans on Thursday hailed a “David and Goliath” victory over India in the inaugural World Test Championship, praising



Captain Kane Williamson's men for erasing the heartache of recent big-match failures. "This was a masterful performance from a team at the top of their game and on top of the world," New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said.

The final was screened through the night in New Zealand and bleary-eyed viewers were mindful of Black Caps' defeats in the past two one-day World Cup deciders. Many pointed to the huge disparity in financial and playing resources between India and New Zealand. Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar said New Zealand deserved their victory, calling them the superior team.

The first day of the inaugural World Test Championship Final in Southampton was a complete washout after persistent rain frustrated both fans and players from India and New Zealand. The umpires called it a day at 2.45pm. Then Day 3 saw further rain delays and the decision was made to plan for the rain-delay extended Day 6 for this Test.



***New Zealand slowly gained advantage over India***



***Then India came back leaving the Test finely poised***



***Then there were more rain delays***

In the end, after rain delays, each team faced the other in the final inning with 8 Indian batsmen remaining. By the first session after lunch, the last Indian batsmen had been bowled out and the New Zealand Black Caps went into bat. The Kiwi's got off to a slow start, and lost 2 early wickets.

New Zealand's greatest Cricketers, Ross Taylor and Kane Williamson then steadied the batting and carried New Zealand through to a win. Good example of Littlies overcoming the Biggies!



***Extra Day 6 left the Test Match delicately poised up to the last hour***



***New Zealand's finest, Ross Taylor and Kane Williamson, see the Black Caps through***



***Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said the cricket team has become an inspiration to many***

# Information

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In general:

- Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words
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- We prefer APA formatting for referencing
- We are willing to work with first-time authors to help them get published
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