

CYC-Online

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



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

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CYC workers hold vital keys to global COVID-19 recovery

Jennifer Davidson

For something as small as a virus, the size of the impact it's had on all of our lives in the last couple of months is pretty extraordinary. And while children haven't been the primary focus of the public health measures in place around the world – given the disproportionate impact on older people – we can all see that children have nevertheless been massively impacted by the changes around us. In my view, Child and Youth Care workers have something essential to contribute to getting us through this pandemic well; in fact, the skills and wisdom of CYC will be essential to our global recovery.

Let me explain. We have seen the rapid spread of COVID-19 bringing complex challenges throughout the world, with children experiencing extended periods of 'containment' and isolation from other children, and sometimes even from parents, siblings and other family members. Children are also experiencing sudden and increased household poverty, they're missing out on education, they're struggling with both their physical and mental health, there are pressures on their families, and care leavers find themselves even more isolated than they were before.

It is a lot to get our heads and hearts around. Learning from past epidemics can help.

While it won't be true for every child, we know that overall, *our existing concerns about children's wellbeing are exacerbated in epidemics, with*



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new ones emerging – this comes from the health impacts of the epidemic as well as from prevention and control measures.

And through past epidemics, children and communities that recovered well were those where *children and families' needs and wellbeing were genuinely taken into account in the policy and community responses*, and where these were sustained long after the health-aspects of the epidemic were over. Where children and families aren't supported up front, a community will have a much harder climb to post-epidemic recovery:

"When we finally turned to children and the vulnerability created [by the Ebola epidemic], we found we were really far behind."

Humanitarian expert, Sierra Leone

But there's one particular lesson from past epidemics that I think best aligns with the core – the true North – of Child and Youth Care: the *responses that respected the importance of children's relationships were amongst the most effective for getting through the epidemic well*.

What does this look like? It means, for example, that child-oriented practitioners (CYC workers, teachers, social work, etc) continue to have regular, authentic contact with children during the 'containment' phase, as well as through the messy, non-linear phases that follow. Importantly, they're making sure that children's relationships with their friends, peers, and family members, are well supported.

Child and Youth Care workers know the importance of relationships better than anyone, because *relational care has always been at the heart of all we do*. It's not just theory, it's also our skill. It's inherent in the Child and Youth Care's instinctive 'head, heart and hands' holistic approach to others.

And now, it's not just important to those children we're caring for; this inherent skill and wisdom is going to be critical for our global recovery. What CYC workers do now matters more now than ever to our collective future.



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If past epidemics are anything to go by, the next many months will look more like that well-known dance step of *two steps forward, one step back*. Children's wellbeing needs to be not just one of many equal priorities—but at the forefront of – the range of decisions that are happening in response to COVID-19. So as we look to this messy set of phases ahead, for a proper recovery whole societies will, collectively, need to go right back to the basics, to a focus on children – yours, mine, theirs – and on supporting their relationships, and their families and wider caring networks.

Suddenly, the heart and wisdom of Child and Youth Care has become *more directly relevant, to more people*, than ever before. What Child and Youth Care has to say to the wider world has never been more important. While we grapple with efforts for a global recovery, finding a way through and out of this pandemic will ultimately not be solely driven by economic and health decisions—but by the care and priorities we place on children and families, and in particular those most likely to be left behind.

The Child and Youth Care workforce globally might be a comparatively small one, but its impact on global COVID recovery needs to be extraordinary.

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Writing for CYC-Online

CYC-*Online* is a monthly journal which reflects the activities of the field of Child and Youth Care. We welcome articles, pieces, poetry, case examples and general reflections from everyone.

In general:

- Submissions should be as close as possible to 2 500 words
- The style of a paper is up to the author
- We prefer APA formatting for referencing
- We are willing to help first-time authors to get published
- We accept previously published papers as long as copyright permission is assured
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What Would Henry Maier Do?

Kiaras Gharabaghi

I admire deeply the commitment child and youth care practitioners are demonstrating everywhere around the world in their attempts to simply continue their work with young people by virtual means.

Outside of the residential care and sheltering contexts, access to face-to-face interaction with young people is limited, if at all present. Practitioners are turning to Zoom, Google Meet, Skype and whatever other means to connect with the young people wherever they might live. The creativity is endless; some are playing card games, others are entertaining entire groups of young people through the gallery view in Zoom. Interpersonal practices include heavy conversations about anxieties, relationships, and difficult experiences of loss or adversity. They also include light-hearted conversations and exchanges meant to pass the time, create a relatively safe moment to be playful and innocent, and just to be engaging. All of this is amazing and to be celebrated.

And yet I ask myself at times, what would Henry Maier do if confronted with the current context? How would he respond to situations in which the sensory context of interaction and care is absent? Let us remember, for a moment, that the emphasis on sensory interaction was one of the core contributions Maier made to our understanding of interpersonal relational child and youth care practice. This is why he recommended that all practitioners always wear pants with deep pockets, so that they could carry



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with them balloons, pieces of string, paper bits, feathers, and other little things that might come in handy when engaging young people. Another major contribution of Maier, well represented in his various practice tips and hints, is the emphasis on transitional objects. This is quite an important element of relational practice particularly as that practice has become more focused on things like boundaries, professionalization, and similar trends. It is important specifically because the human element of relational connections must be sustained during times of absence, when we cannot be with the young people face to face, but when we seek to remind young people of the connections that already exist and that we can bring to life through the imagination, through day dreaming and through reflecting on past times of being together.

The other day something very special happened in my own life. During this time of staying at home, of avoiding face to face contact with friends and loved ones, I have of course used technology to remain connected in some way. I text people, Facetime, Zoom, and email. Sometimes I even use a phone, notwithstanding that this makes me feel old and passé! All of this has helped. But it never feels the same as having direct access to people I love and miss very much. Then on Monday this week, a package arrived at my house. A small box, very light, and although it had the address of the sender it did not have the sender's name on the label. I opened it thinking it must be some corporate promotion, something not relevant to my life per se; instead, written on the inside flaps of the cardboard box itself were fewer than 20 words that simply said 'thinking of you' and 'made these for you' and 'missing you'. And inside the box were five beautiful homemade facemasks, each with different patterns, one for each member of my family. This present came from two of my friends who at the best of times, I don't hang out with often, but who have grown important in my heart for



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all kinds of reasons and about whom I think often. This present brought me a level of joy, and a deep feeling of connection, that all of the text messages and emails we had shared over the past few weeks collectively cannot match. Simple objects, relevant to the current times, represent our togetherness, and I wear my mask not only for pragmatic reasons, but specifically because it makes me feel connected to people I love. In other words, just like Maier had envisioned it so many years ago, this present, the process of receiving it, and the condition of having it, has reintroduced a sensory experience in the connection with my friends that I realize I had missed tremendously. And since the masks are prominently displayed at the entrance to my house, so that I can grab one when I leave, they serve as transitional objects in my relationship with my friends, always in eyesight, ever present.

I am certain that Henry Maier would have embraced the current technologies as one important element of relational practice. Sadly, he passed away in 2005, just a few years before the rise of social media, smart phones, and easily accessible video conferencing software. But he would have also warned us not to rely on these technologies as replacements for *all* of the elements of interpersonal child and youth care practice.

Relational engagement inherently and categorically requires some level of sensory experience; for some young people even more so, especially in the context of autism, FASD, developmental challenges and other ways of being in the world. Sensory experience can mean many different things, but it almost always involves the opportunity to 'touch', 'smell', 'grab', 'hold', 'see', 'hear' or 'play' with something; transitional objects, in addition to their sensory contributions, also serve the purpose of bridging memory and experience by using the object to channel someone's presence.

Furthermore, transitional objects serve the purpose of personalizing



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relational feelings; the object serves as metaphor of the very personal and private context of being in relationship.

Given all of that, I am sure that Maier would have worked hard to make himself present with young people within his circle of connections and relational engagements. In addition to technology, he would have gone back in time rather than only forward, and he would have written letters to young people by hand and mailed them through Canada Post (or, in his case, the US Postal Service), knowing that the processes of receiving and owning the letters are themselves part of relational practice. And he would have pulled out the strings and balloons and paper bits from his pockets and made something with them before also mailing them to the young people, with a typically Maier message attached that would be funny but deeply personal – “Hi Abdul, I was thinking your cactus and this balloon could be great friends”.

So, I am writing this to remind us all that how we are with young people does not need to change all that much during these macabre times; the logistics of how we do things may have to adjust, but we would do well to remember that a pandemic and associated lockdown and restrictions do not, in a few months, impact our evolutionary track as humans. We care about each other, and sometimes we need to be able to touch that care. Technology can help us during these times, but it cannot (yet) make up for what Maier had always centered in his work – presence!

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The Value of Nature during the COVID-19 Pandemic

James Freeman

The impact of COVID-19 on our daily routines and habits has been life changing. It's led us into different ways of living, including how much time we spend together with some and how much time we spend apart from others. It is especially impacted our time spent outside and our contact with nature.

As we move into the summer months most of us look forward to the warmth and rhythms of summertime. For those of us living and working with children and adolescents, summer usually opens a season of greater flexibility in engaging young people in outdoor activity. This is important because experiences in the natural world play a significant role in their growth and development (Louv, 2011).

Even before the pandemic and 'stay at home' mandates, most of us have experienced increasing isolation and disconnection from the natural world. Young people in particular are experiencing less time in unstructured, creative play in the outdoors than ever before in history (Louv, 2008). Those who are in care, especially in highly structured or restrictive environments, are impacted by this even more. All of this is intensified with physical distancing requirements and directives to stay close to home.



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Experiences in Nature Impact a Child's Development

Exposure to nature has a significant impact on multiple developmental domains, including physical agility, mental health, and stress management. In one study, researchers found that preschoolers who play on uneven, natural surfaces surrounded by trees and rocks over the course of a year demonstrated greater agility and balance control than others who had access only to flat playground surfaces (Burdette & Whitaker, 2005). Another study found that when given the choice, adolescents tend to choose natural environments to refocus and center themselves (Korpela, 1992). This direct contact with nature has also been found to help the brain recover from mental fatigue and restore the ability to focus attention (Kaplan & Kaplan, 2005). Young people who live in settings surrounded by nature were also found to experience less distress from adverse life experiences than those living in more urban environments going through similar adverse experiences (Wells & Evans, 2003).

These effects span multiple areas in the developing brain, including the cerebellum (e.g. physical agility and motor control), limbic system (e.g. stress modulation and response), and the frontal cortex (e.g. emotional control and attention). Fresh air and open space play an important role in a healthy childhood.

So, what can we do differently in these coming summer days and nights? Of course, the public health directives will guide where and with whom we should go. Yet, as much as we are able, we can engage those we support in direct, unstructured, and shared experiences in nature.

1. Create experiences that include direct contact with nature

Every child has a basic need to explore, play, and interact with the natural world. This takes place in a variety of forms depending on the



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personality of the individual, the influences of culture, and the demands placed on them from their environment. This direct exposure to the elements of nature is a critical component in the developmental task of developing our sense of place in the world (Freeman, 2013). Challenges faced by some kids, such as multiple placements, displacement, and homelessness, make this even more challenging.

Think of ways you can get your kids directly in touch with the natural environment around them. It doesn't have to be a fancy or expensive outing – it may be a sandbox in the backyard or a walk through an open area. The more direct (and sometimes the muddier) it is, the better: "Dirt is proof that we are living life, participating, exploring and experiencing – something kids today encounter less than our generation did" (Persil, 2013). As you get out, try to set aside the worries and stress that life brings and simply enjoy the moment as it unfolds. These experiences, as brief as they may be, have the potential to help all of us feel more centered and balanced.



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2. Provide unstructured experiences in nature

Unstructured doesn't necessarily mean unsupervised, but it may mean loosening up on the time limits, boundaries, and overly organized agenda. If you're caring for multiple kids or a group, give them opportunity to explore, experience teamwork, and experiment with problem solving.

Recently I observed a group of kids work together to build a dam in a small creek near our neighborhood. They each took on various roles, exchanging them as the group developed and tasks were completed. They gathered rocks and placed branches, mingled their working and playing with occasional splashes at one another, and in the end seemed to feel the satisfaction of their accomplishment together as they sat back and watched their creation.

The century old classic, *The Story of a Sandpile* shares a perspective of a summer ritual discovered by a group of young boys. It tells the story of the development of a pile of sand by young boys without the interference of adults. At the end of the summer the parents assessed that the experience had “been of about as much yearly educational value to the boys as the eight months of school...[and] the boys have grown more companionable and rational, learned many a lesson of self-control, and developed a spirit of self-help” (Hall, 1897, p. 19-20). It reminds us that the simplicity of unstructured time can work to engage imagination, develop peer relationships, and nurture group development.

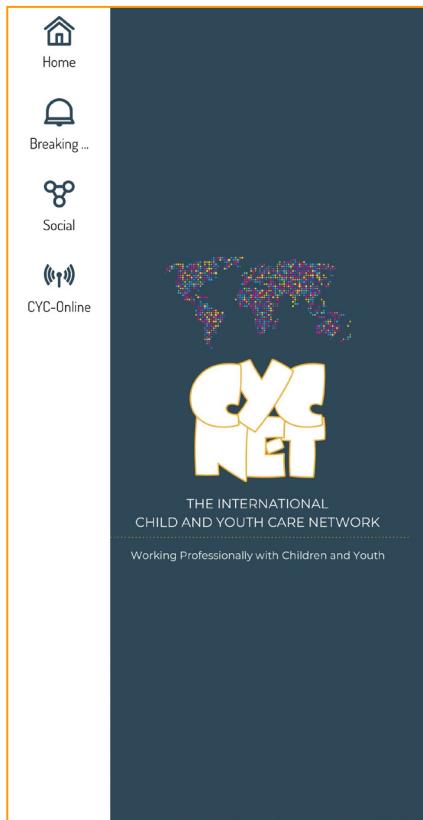
Don’t give up on all the structured activity. Organized sports are one thing many kids are longing to return after the pandemic passes. But make sure they get some sort of unstructured time for exploration and discovery.



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3. Share your experiences outdoors together

Outdoor adventures are prime opportunities for relationship building. This is something every child needs and even more so those who have experienced disrupted relationships. Sharing an experience simply means being with one another for the experience of a sunset, a walk through a eucalyptus grove, or digging in the sand.

The intentional use of outdoor activities can be used as a ‘common third’, a concept from social pedagogy which views shared activity as a means to strengthen a relationship and develop new skills. We can “teach by the example of our own attention and wonder...being there with them as they climb on rocks, play in streams and waves, dig in the rich soil of woods and gardens, putter and learn” (Nabhan & Trimble, 1994, p. 31). There are endless opportunities to do things together outdoors without overly structuring the time. What’s one you might experience with a child today?

Getting outside and involved in direct, unstructured, and shared experiences in nature can provide a range of developmental benefits for the growing child and adolescent. What will you do in the coming weeks to maximize those benefits for those in your care?

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Humour, Covid and a One Degree Shift: Little Changes and Coping with Crisis

John Digney and Maxwell Smart

One of the secrets of a happy life is continuous small treats.

Iris Murdoch, Irish Novelist and Philosopher.

Every step and every movement of the multitude, even in what are termed enlightened ages, are made with equal blindness to the future; and nations stumble upon establishments, which are indeed the result of human action, but not the execution of any human design.

Adam Ferguson. Scottish Philosopher.

Introduction

If the last few months have taught (or reminded) us anything, it is that we need to relish the small happy moments of contentment, joy, and connection whenever and wherever we encounter them. Perhaps it is a stretch to call such moments continuous small treats, but we have come to believe in the mighty power of all things small (the power of the wee, see Smart & Digney, 2019) and those which are in front of our faces all the time if we could only just focus on them.

We can stumble and fumble, almost every step of the way, to the conclusion that even when things are outside of control, we are always able



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to gain back some feeling of being able to cope with the crazy realities of everyday life. We can do this most effectively by embracing the belief that giant oaks from little acorns grow, remembering that things are achievable if we break them down into bit size chunks, and using humour as a safety value for relieving some of the stresses of everyday life.

For instance, we have both been suffering huge withdrawal symptoms from not being able to go to the gym for the three months ... more likely the past fifty odd years if our physiques are anything to go by, we hear you say. Well, this new norm has its advantages ... avoiding having to be seen in public!

New normal's can have their advantages, even being restricted in our movements has allowed us time to listen to the birds chirping in their nest, watch the bees and butterflies move through the air in our gardens and allow us catch up on 25 years of Dr Phil reruns on daytime TV. We are bombarded with social media in this time of crisis, often friends updating us on the horrors that Covid-19 brings, but just as often we are being sent messages with funny memes, videos, and songs that are laden with humour. Just this week we laughed as we watched the video blogs of German Doctors highlighting a lack of PPE by posing naked, like the film 'Calender Girls' with strategically placed signs hiding their modesty. The profoundly serious message being shared was that they were being left denuded of protection transmitted subtly and effectively through the medium of humour.

Looking at the Lighter Side

This type of humour is known as 'gallows humour' and it has some of its genesis within the health care professions, within the context of alleviating



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stress associated with the horrific things that unfold in nursing environments and emergency rooms (e.g. Moran and Massam, 1997).

Like many things recently, it has become evident that humour is being used to help us cope, help us connect and help us move from pessimism to optimism. We do not need to be regular readers of 'Scuba Diver Weekly' to realise how out of our depth we could have become in dealing with the social changes of this pandemic, had humour not played a part. However, very subtly we are seeing two clear methods of adapting, humour, and mindset. It seems so important that we have three things at this bleak time, a sense of humour, a sense of hope and a sense of purpose. The movement from one to another is often small but it is there, and almost beyond initial sight, something else emerges from that cloudy or clouded, horizon.

Clarity of intention

We need to be clear from the get-go that our intention is not to minimize or trivialize the pain and suffering that everyone of us is being subjected to. We have all lost friends and family to the awful virus, we have all had our lives disrupted in ways that only a few months ago were unimaginable and we are acutely aware of the continued suffering as this tragedy continues to unfold throughout every corner of the world. We do not intend to cause upset or distress to anyone; what we do wish is to seek ways to bring us all back to a safer and more controllable place where hope and optimism exist

So, this article is concerned with revisiting two important, universal and in many ways, interconnected truths.



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1. In situations where high levels of stress and hopelessness 'seem' to abound, we can always revert to the mighty weapon of self-defence that we know as 'humour',
2. In challenging situations where the usual mechanisms are not working for us, it only takes us to have a 'one-degree shift' from our usual way of doing and thinking, to enhance our problem-solving abilities allowing the potential for vastly different outcomes.

As humans have evolved, multiplied, and 'thrived', (numerically at least) in the world, they have had to have the ability to be resilient to survive.

Human beings, therefore, adapt to changes when faced with all manner of environment or circumstance. Seligman and Czikszentmihalyi (2000) decreed that all people have natural abilities to cope with challenges, although these abilities can be significantly varied. If ever a time requiring resilience and ability to cope was upon us, it is now – and not just physical survival, also emotional or psychological coping. So, the intention of this article, is to look at the Covid-19 crisis from a slightly different perspective, to begin a conversation, about how we might see things differently, with imagination and creativity.



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Conscious Humour

Bath (2019), in his discussion about trauma and coping, states, '... coping involves both conscious and unconscious strategies' (p.8), and in a 2008 paper Digney asserts that one of the main purposes of humour is to support coping. Humour can aid in communicating difficult messages to others, it can cajole others to enable coping, it can be used to conceal the horror or magnitude of a situation, it can help us connect through laughter and it can help protect and show caring to others. All told, humour can play an incredibly significant role in aiding how we cope with almost any situation.

Anyone who provides care to others has likely tried to use the lighter side of a situation to reframe and provide hope. For both authors using humour to help young people cope and reframe difficult situation was initially an unconscious technique, which has over the years become a very conscious practice phenomenon. Our deliberate use of humour is used with delicacy because we know that if used incorrectly or for the wrong reasons, humour can be a weapon of mass destruction. It is worth the effort for who can deny that both adults and kids alike tend to 'glow' just that little bit brighter when their mood is lifted and a little shift in mindset, in feeling, can be enough to aid connection with each other in time of difficulty and confusion.

In previous papers, the authors have written extensively on the power of humour and described humour as a 'mechanism for helping to cope with the harsh reality of life or death' (Digney, 2008) and that, laughter is believed to be beneficial in healing as it can reduce anxiety and stress and medically is felt to be able to render pain manageable (Digney & Smart, 2013).



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The use of humour as a weapon of self-defence during a not so long-ago event where many unspeakable deeds occurred, the Holocaust, was discussed by Morreall (1997), who described three main functions of humour, including:

- Allowing prisoners to focus attention on what was wrong and ignite emotional resistance,
- Social cohesion and solidarity,
- The coping function.

Mindess in 1972 expanded on this, 'while they relished the play of wit for its own sake, this perennially oppressed people (the Jewish people) took particular pleasure in the use of wit as a weapon. It was a weapon of self-defence ... turning the tables on their enemies—by giggling, smirking and [or simply] acting silly ...' (p.118). Without being disrespectful to the folks who endured this oppression and unimaginable horror, we wonder if the currently unprecedented horror could be made more manageable if we were to embrace a similar strategy. Again, we do not suggest trivialising the current situation, we merely recognise that we must find ways to be freed from the doom and gloom, if we are to engender hope for kids, carers, and families.

What's in an Inch

We are reminded of songs by two singers who had their heyday in the 1970's. Why you ask? Maybe it's because 'we are justified and we are ancient', (a music reference to the music of a band called KLF, if you are from a certain age range, ours).



But seriously, we are thinking of Anne Murray who in 1977 sang, 'Inch worm, inch worm, measuring the marigolds, you and your arithmetic, you'll probably go far', and John Denver, who in 1979 sang, 'Inch by inch, row by row, someone bless these seeds I sow, someone warm them from below, till the rain comes tumbling down'.

Why are we bringing this up here? It is to focus on the important of having an appropriate mindset, and if we can influence a positive one, we can shift how people cope. Within any crisis (such as Covid-19) things are changing from what we know, new ways to being, thinking and doing are required, but most cases require small and deliberate shifts, made within certain parameters and constraints.

This is a 'one degree of shift', and like the 'Inch worm', this mindset shift can make small deliberate movements which eventually go far. The gardener, in a slow and deliberate way, is seen as someone who understands the bigger picture and who thinks not only in the now, but also has an eye to the future. Small deeds and small changes all having the potential to take us to a distant or more productive place and time. We have previously discussed the idea of the 'one-degree of shift' (Smart and Digney, 2019) and it is within the context of 1 degree that we wish to shift the thinking and doing about coping using humour and subtle shifting.

Like the inch worm, if we are to pace ourselves and have a clear intention, the current crisis has the potential to open opportunities for intensified relational practices and purposeful activities with young people. Despite our recognition of all that can go wrong, we have experiences that demonstrate that the very nature of being in a 'lockdown' situation can allow for shared opportunities, if we are to consider ways to put this relational time to good use.



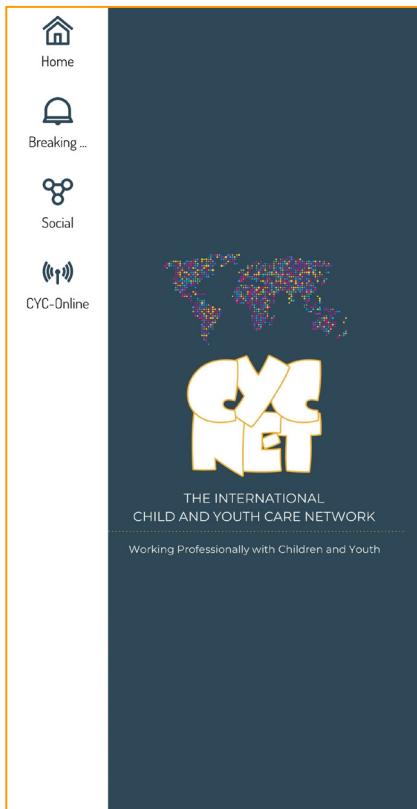
The Covid-19 crisis has thrust kids and adults into shared intense emotional spaces in a time requiring connection and purposeful engagement; to use life space opportunities to shift the mindset from bleak to optimism about ways forward. We must find ways to replace what can be dismal and energy sapping, to demonstrate, kindness, empathy, humour, compassion and understanding, the foundation stones for hopefulness.

In addition to affording abundant opportunities to jointly share moments, we can make joint memories. In many truly relational environments, the abundance of opportunities in the life space has allowed potential for better group cohesion and possibilities of seeing different thing. Within these contexts, staff and kids have adapted to the crazy new, new. By shifting mindset 1 degree they have redefined the problem, expanded their view of reality and activated different ways of being. As pressures have grown, humour and relational engagement, combined with compassion and empathy, have come to the fore. Tears have been shed, frustrations aired, and different ways of being with each other established.

During these times, relational engagement stands to the fore, unclogging blocked emotional arteries and shifting previously stuck perspectives and people and situations. For many, these shared and future focused moments have provided emotional relief and shifted the burdens of what could be considered an overwhelming situation. Whilst these moments of joy, humour, laughter, and optimism do not resolve, they do remediate, at least a little. They shift the situation one degree and allow us to laugh a little at the current adversity and take just a little bit of power back from Mother Nature.



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Moving Beyond Sermons

The cynical amongst us might become resentful towards Mother Nature, seeing her as mocking us by sending a 'virus' at the same times as providing one of the most beautiful Springs in twenty years. Looking out the window at the flowers and greenery, watching the birds arrive back from sunnier climates and feeling the heat of the life-giving Sun, amidst the unfolding horrors, we are more attuned to the cycles of the natural world.

Reframing the situation and thinking about how the current social conditions might be able to be used to allow us to have a shared enjoyment of the beauty of Nature can counter any feeling of being mocked. Together with young people the current situation provides opportunities to view the most glorious of sunsets, crimson skies at dusk, and the sounds and sights of nature in all its plumage, more clearly now as much light and sound pollution has been reduced. It has allowed youth and CYC's to encounter each other beyond words and to experience the sensations of this beauty, to live within a new shared context.

Phelan (2010), in his wise words, summoned us to be 'experience arrangers' for young people in our care, nature at its best and worst has provided this in sensations, seeing things and feeling things. This is what he referred to as sense data. This allows adults to communicate different with kids in difficulty. Rather than adult sermons, experiences and sensations can be refocused and allowing more involvement with the moments of 'now', which can then be linked to the overall situation.

Whilst there have been undoubtedly times of stress and distress during this crisis, it is also undoubtedly that there have also been spaces for fun, for laughter and for positive sensory engagement. Not only have these moments shown up naturally, they have also been created by the quick-



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witted and creative amongst us. In these moments, humour, and laughter have fostered more positive and hopeful attitudes, being able to laugh at that which threatens our very being. Staff with upbeat attitudes have created a bridge, allowing a crossing over from ‘disabling crisis’ and one of positive engagement and ‘hope for tomorrow’.

Practice experience has taught us that optimism trumps pessimism when working with difficult situations – something that should be clear as the nose on your face, but something that can become lost when we only focus on the horrors and negative consequences that MAY occur. People like Chinery (2007) are needed to remind us that when we laugh, we are less likely to succumb to feelings of depression and helplessness. A belief that is even more significant if we can laugh at what is troubling us.

Humour can provide a vehicle for a one-degree shift. It can provide a context for the provision of hopefulness and be a welcome distraction. Humour can work as a stress reducer even amongst the most distressful of situations. Demary (1998) emphasises the necessity of being able to laugh and articulates the safety-valve (both emotionally and physically) nature of humour and laughter, ‘the safety valve of laughter has a way of releasing us to gladness and restoring normalcy’ (p.28).

So what?

Humans are built to survive, to adopt and to fit whatever situation occurs. It is somewhat ironic that this is one of the things that we do, so well and yet it can seem to be a thing we resist. Change occurs all the time, whether it is forced on us by Mother nature or is man-made. Whether it is perceived as positive (e.g. enhancement in technology) or negatively (e.g. climate change). People seek to gain knowledge about the possible



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consequences of such world altering changes and when we do not see a clear way forward, it becomes a crisis.

We are no strangers to crisis, to change to adversity. We are not strangers to finding ways to reduce risk, mitigate harm and find remedies and repairs. What life has taught us it in addition to taxes and death, two other things are certainties, the power of making small and intentional changes (to how we are, how we think and how we do), and the potential for humour to help see us through.

In moving forward, we might all benefit from a bit of laughter and fun, to nudge our emotional states just a little. On reflection, maybe by making a one-degree shift in our thinking and doing will there be a disproportionate effect on all our functioning. It is a common idiom, now needing to be shared more than ever before, 'you know what, after all is said and done, it's better to laugh than to cry'.

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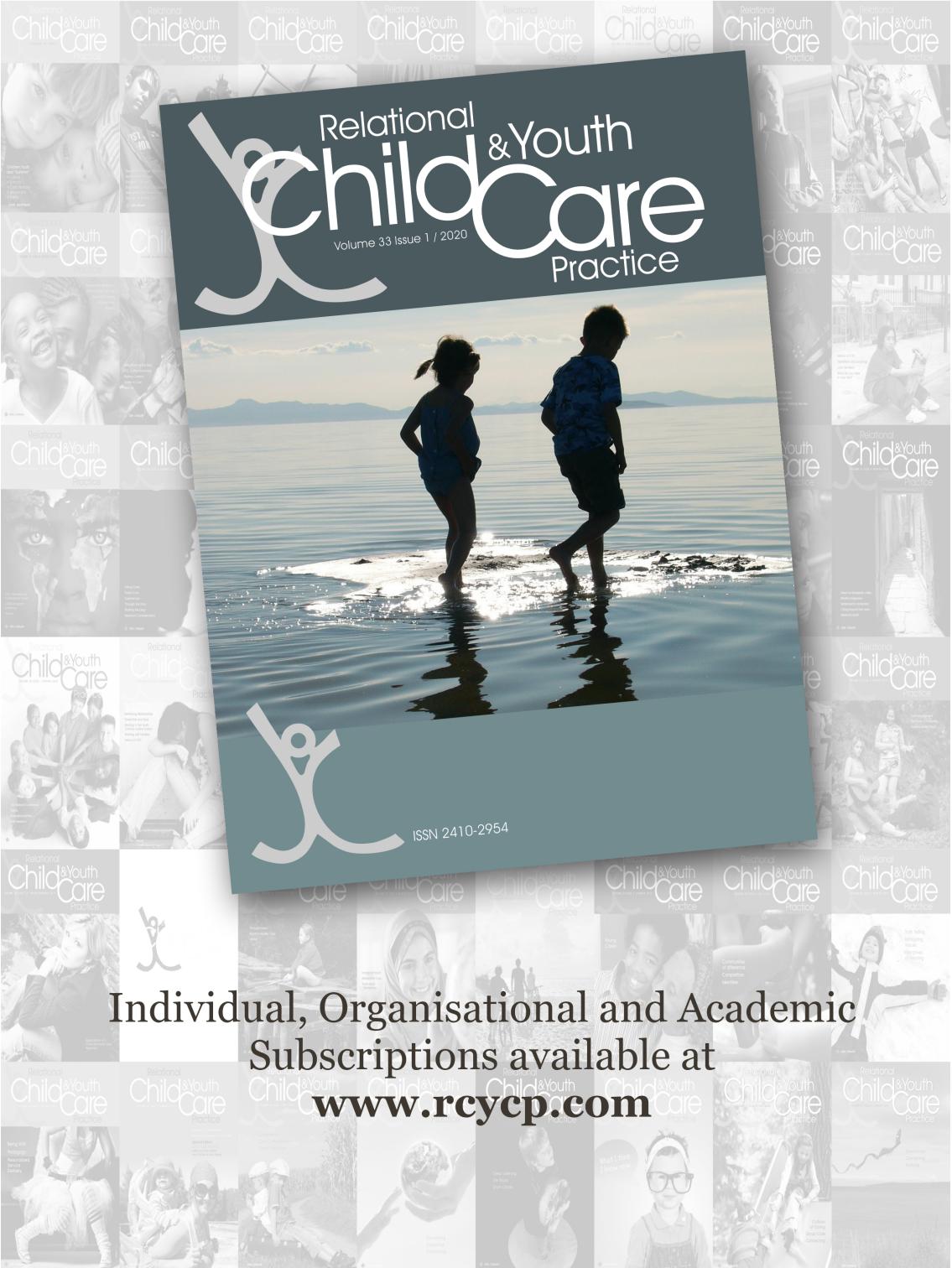


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Justice

Hans Skott-Myhre

Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public.

Cornell West

I have been drawn towards thinking about justice lately. Usually, I don't really think in terms of just and unjust, unless I am mad. And I have been angry of late. More angry than usual. For those of you who read this column with some degree of regularity or perhaps have read my books or other articles, you know that I can be a bit of a curmudgeon, kind of a cranky old man. So, it is not unusual for me to be irritated or angry about this thing or that. Sometimes (maybe most of the time these days) the way we humans behave towards each other, the planet, and other living things rubs me the wrong way. Or perhaps that is stating it too mildly. Often, the way we behave just pisses me off. Often, I frame this to myself in terms of injustice. The terms under which many of us find ourselves living simply isn't fair or just. When I encounter people living in ways of life that cause them a great deal of pain and hardship, I seldom find that such conditions seem reasonable.

In fact, I find that there seems to be no real justification for the kinds of cruelty we inflict on one another and other forms of living things. It can make me feel very sad and bring me fairly regularly to tears of frustration and anger. Since, these are not my favorite responses to the world (I prefer joyous shouting to tears any day), I resent personally being confronted with



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conditions that I find appalling and unnecessary. Lest anyone misunderstand my frustration and resentment as indications of compassion fatigue, an overamplification of 1st world ennui, or a narcissistic indulgence in my own sorrow, let me be clear that my tears of frustration and anger are not the at the center of my concern. I note them, in the spirit of transparency, not as a ranking of their importance in the overall scale of things. I also note them because they are indicative of a certain kind of complexity and contradiction, an entanglement of the personal and collective conditions in which we are immersed as social subjects in an age of unbridled human cruelty. That is to say that some of my tears indicate my degree of complicity in the brutality that comprises and is to some degree central to the society we create together every day.

So, when I get mad in these ways, I find myself attracted to notions of justice. But justice gets complicated very quickly. What does it mean to be just? Does it mean to be fair? Or equitable? To treat everyone with the same degree of consideration.

That sounds very good, but I suspect my sense of justice is also tinged with some resentment over the ways that people have been historically treated poorly and without due consideration or equitability. I also wonder, if contemporary acts of brutality and hypocrisy color my sense of justice. At some level, does justice mean some form of retribution. Does it entail a degree of vengeance masquerading as accountability? Do I want those who harmed others to suffer to some greater or lesser degree before I will feel justice has been done? To “level the playing field” do I desire that those who have lived in positions of privilege that are sustained through systemic inequity be brought down a peg or two? Do I somehow give myself a pass, as someone who is privileged precisely that way, but works towards social justice? Or should I suffer as well, at least in terms of feeling shame or



guilt? Perhaps, I should take on the equivalence of sack and ashes and seek to relinquish the trappings of obvious privilege? Would that be enough recompence for justice to be served? Or is there a greater price that must be paid?

This logic of vengeance and an equivalence of pain is deeply embedded in the various legal interpretations of justice to be found in the juvenile justice system for example. Our sense of justice in the legal sense, requires some degree of penance and an acknowledgement of remorse for justice "to be served." I would suggest that this is a kind of justice rooted in the kind of anger that drives me to think in terms of justice. For balance to be restored someone has to pay for the harm they have inflicted on others. There must be a consequence or there can be no real justice.

To some degree, this is the kind of thinking I often saw when working in residential settings in CYC. Although we never really talked in terms of equity or justice when it came to program policies of rules, We sometimes paid lip service in broader political discussions about how society was unjust or inequitable. Occasionally, there would be an instance in which the workers felt that a co-worker was being dealt with in an unjust or inequitable manner by the administration and sometime that kind of language was used. Every so often, we might talk about how a government agency or community was unjust or treated young people in our care unjustly or inequitably. We were offended and appalled that they didn't get the services they deserved, or that they were talked about in unfair ways by workers other than us. But, in our own discussions we seldom talked about our treatment of young people in terms of equitability or justice.

We did talk about rules and consequences (particularly natural consequences). We sometime talked about how young people discharged themselves by breaking rules that had the consequence of being kicked



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out of the program. Often, we would even tell the young people that it was their behavior that caused their dismissal, not our decisions. In deciding to remove someone from our community, I never heard anyone raise the question of whether this was a just or equitable decision. Any conversation about the assertion of staff privilege was absent in the case meetings that preceded discharge. It was all by the book. Unfortunate, but natural. Simply a cause and an effect.

But I suspected then, and I would assert now, that the kind of vengeful justice I have described above was at play in many of these decisions. Under the surface of objective evaluation was often a certain resentment towards young people who violated program rules and made it difficult for the workers to run a smoothly operating community of compliant and grateful young people. In some instances, young people had personally assaulted staff member(s) and that would elicit more overt frustration or outrage. In such cases, the call for discharge was loud and insistent. I would argue it was also founded in a sense that the staff member(s) deserved to see justice done and consequences enforced.

I also heard and saw the discourse of justice laced with anger and resentment applied to parents. There was often a strong reaction towards parental behavior that had an edge of injustice to it. How dare parents treat their own children in painful ways or abandon/neglect them? Mind you, when we discharge young people from our programs without a safety net, we somehow never seem to see that as intentional neglect. Of course, it is profoundly difficult to see children harmed, exploited, and neglected. Perhaps, a powerful desire to see someone held accountable is reasonable – maybe even just?

The kind of justice that requires personal accountability in the form of negative consequences might well hold edges of vengeance and



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resentment. I know that is true for me. As I write this, another unarmed black man has been killed in Minneapolis by police. As I read the news and hear from my black sons, I am deeply frustrated, pained, frightened, and angry. When I think of the kind of risk this places my sons and grandsons in, I become angry and desperately want someone to be held accountable. When I hear that the officers involved have been fired, I feel a surge of righteous vengeance. Perhaps justice will be done this time. Maybe this will stop if the police realize there will be consequences.

And then, I start hearing that the protests against the police murder of the young man had turned violent. That the police started firing rubber bullets and tear gas into the crowd. That children were being subjected to the tear gas and that young people and journalists had been hit by rubber bullets. It was an old story. Some of the protesters started throwing rocks and breaking out the windows of squad cars and the plate glass window of the precinct headquarters. Frustration and rage overflowing in the streets and calls for justice mixed with physical assertions of force. It reminded me of an old Frank Zappa song written during the Watts riots in 1966, over 50 years ago,

*Wednesday I watched the riot...
I seen the cops out on the street
Watched 'em throwin' rocks and stuff
And chokin' in the heat*

When I think about justice and injustice, the time frame of over 50 years of violent conflict in response to the assaults on the black community by the representatives of the dominant white community could certainly foster a sense of futility and even a tendency towards social nihilism. The kind of giving up we see in some of our colleagues who have faced year after year of working in programs built on discipline and control to little or



no discernible end. However, when this kind hopelessness about justice and accountability is endlessly thwarted or inadequately addressed, the impulse towards vengeance can be very powerful. As Zappa sings later in the song,

*You know we gotta sit around at home
And watch this thing begin
But I bet there won't be many left
To see it really end
'Cause the fire in the street
Ain't like the fire in my heart*

And perhaps it is the fire in the heart that is at issue at the end of the day. What happens between us is what stokes that kind of fire. No amount of vengeance can damp down the angry fire prompted by ongoing inequity and injustice. There is no end to the cycle of each of us responding with resentment to each other. So, does this mean that there can be no justice? Or that those protesters should just go home and not press their demands for justice? Is justice a malfunctioning social mechanism? Is the call for social justice in CYC forums an empty dream?

It is here that I want to return to the epigraph at the beginning of this column attributed to Cornell West, "Justice is what loves looks like in public." How could that be? How can love and justice be at all related? I know sometimes in our programs we talk about delivering consequences with love or holding young people accountable with love. For myself, I am not at all sure what that means, because I have a hard time seeing love as part of a mechanism of control and discipline. I know this runs against the grain of most western family logic, which sometimes asserts that love



requires corporeal violence between parents and children and that disciplining children is a loving act. Tough love is sometimes called for, in which parents take harsh measures to “rescue” their children from lives that the parents find intolerable.

But for me, love is not constraining or disciplinary. Love is liberatory. It is the kind of force we can build amongst ourselves that amplifies our maximal capacities for living creation. If that is what I am proposing, then how would I read West’s quote? It would mean that justice is not a force for discipline, consequence, or accountability. Instead, justice is a force for liberation and greater opportunities for life to express itself. In that sense, my own vengeful, resentful, angry form of justice is a corruption. It is a perversion that doesn’t open onto capacities for mutual liberation, but sinks me deeper and deeper into endless repetitions of the same old, same old. Real justice as love in public calls for transformation of social structures as a collective activity. It calls for radical revision of the logics of the current system. To have justice as an expression of love, is to open all of old dormant, stale, repetitive, violent, constraining, limiting, and hopeless social formations to the impossibility of who we might become if we were not this. It would mean not simply going to work in programs that shape and discipline each of us according the violent and oppressive logic of a system that is killing us all. Instead, we need to take every opportunity to join together with the young people and fellow CYC workers to create something new; something that takes life fully into account.

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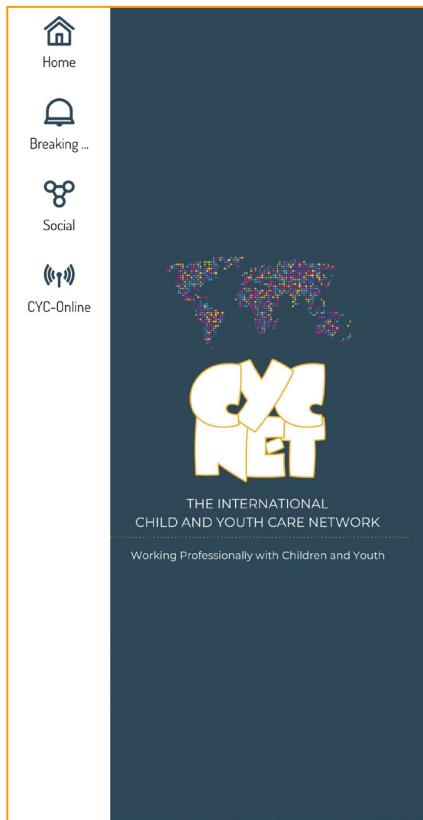
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Measuring Time

Doug Magnuson

Many others, such as John Dewey, have written eloquently about time, informal education, and raising children: “To save time you have to lose it.” It is difficult for most of us to translate these ideas into action, because we are so used to thinking about time as a series of linear units--seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years—in which we accumulate skills and behaviors.

We might learn different ways of thinking from the infectious disease and epidemiological experts. Early in the pandemic we simply counted the number of estimated cases per day, and these cases build up over time. Days or weeks was the unit of measurement, and it proceeded linearly. We compared the progress of the disease across jurisdictions, say country, by putting the date on the x-axis and the number of cases on the y-axis. The calendar is the dominant variable.

Yet it turns out that the virus has its own ideas. It is exponential: It begins slowly with a few people over a long period of time, and then its spread explodes as the vectors of infection ramp up. The calendar is secondary. Zero is the date of the 10th case or the 100th case, and from then on time is measured as the number of cases since day zero.

Another measurement method is the amount of time to double cases. When things are bad it is two days, and as the populace responds the number of days expands to three, four, five, and so on. Time is not linear but a multiple.



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A third lesson is that we have had to learn to practically separate cause and effect. Our data today reflects how we were organized 10 days to two weeks ago. Additionally, because of asymptomatic transmission, someone we met two weeks ago who had no symptoms might have been the cause of our developing symptoms right now. Goading people into acting on the basis of these realities has been difficult.

We could learn some things from this. Let's start with the issue of cause and effect. We expect ourselves to influence young people based on causal factors that are temporally close. I have a relationship with a youth, and what I do today is expected to materially cause effects in this youth right now. Causes must always precede effect in time. Even when we know the causes of trouble may be years in the past, the effect of our work is too often expected to be very concrete and measured in days and weeks. We are disappointed when someone does not respond to our intentions.

Yet effects in CYC are almost always indirect. Sometimes they are responses to experiences that are many years old. Sometimes they are responses to a glimmer of hope about the future – causes do not have to be in the past. It is hard work to stop thinking about the immediate effects.

Further, what if we thought about time in exponential terms, like the epidemiologists? The entry of a child into our program or our entry into her world is time zero. Experiences accumulate slowly. Change and growth happens, eventually, in spurts, but not linearly. Instead of days and hours, we observe and measure qualities of experience, relationships, aesthetics, practical virtue, accomplishments--the everyday interpretations that make life rich. As they accumulate, they begin to generate their own momentum, exponentially.

In most organizations time is the denominator, as in activities per day, behaviors per week, successes per month. We might drop the



denominator of time and worry less about how many and how often and think more about what experiences, ideas, culture with a small “c” we want to encounter with youth. The calendar is a thing, but not the most important thing.

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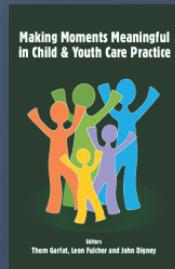
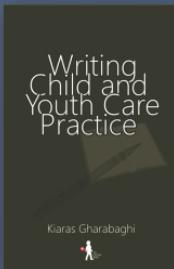
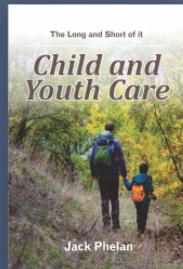
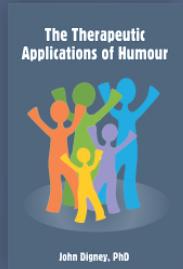
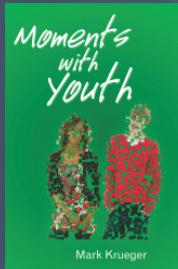
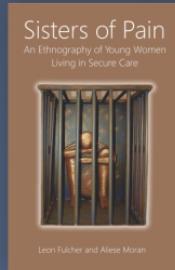
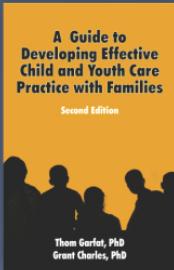
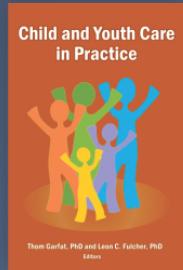
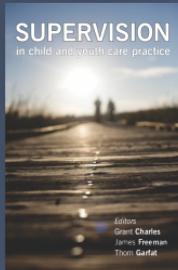
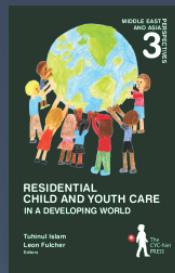
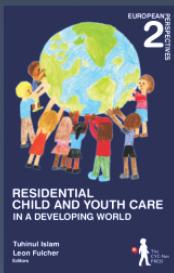
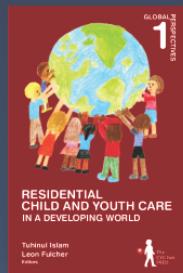
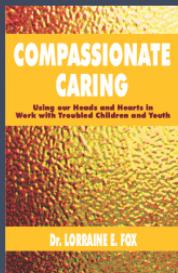
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Survive to Thrive – Self- Compassion during “COVID times”

Shelly Currie and Michelle Chalupa

A colleague returning from a leave shared some words of wisdom around recognizing her limits while still celebrating her strengths and abilities that have resonated internally since first hearing them, she said, “I will do the very best that I can, to the best of my skills and abilities in the time that I have.” (personal communication, March 30, 2020). Such a simple statement that has left a certain amount of liberation within and others that it has been shared with. These words came at a perfect time as we entered the first few weeks of self-isolation and quarantine from COVID 19. In an era where time seems to stand still in what many people are referencing as “Ground Hog Day” related to a movie Bill Murray starred in back in the early 1990s, one would think that we would be able to conquer all the tasks and items on our to do lists and remain home and stay safe. Although we are sanctioned to our homes for many days now, we might not recognize some of the challenges we have to overcome that go along with these imposed months at home that we find ourselves forced to accept.

As humans we are not used to social isolation and not being with the people that matter the most to us, we are creatures of habit and thrive in routine – these are things that have been removed from our



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normalcy. So, the big question is how do we create normalcy in this abnormal situation? We try our absolute best and accept that our COVID best currently is enough. Our best will look different from day to day depending on so many different things and most likely depending on where you call home. In many parts of the world the curve is still not in control and quarantine is largely in effect, whereas other areas the curve is flattening, and restrictions are being loosened. How much sleep did you get, how much exercise can you engage in, how much work did you have to do while managing children at home while they also need care, do you have a health concern, loss of a loved one, traumatic events that are occurring in areas around you, have you lost your employment or had a reduction in hours, have enough resources or support to access the proper nutrition or medical care if ill? These are all areas that are at times the invisible battles that others are not aware of, but you are as an individual aware of your own challenges.

Part of what we all need to remember is to show compassion and we believe that as a society in general we seem to be decently aware of showing this compassion to others as we do not know the challenges and adversity that they are facing daily and often forget to demonstrate self-compassion. Self-compassion is perhaps where the biggest change needs to happen – where we all need to take care of ourselves during this time to manage to survive or thrive during “COVID times”.

If you can relate to Demi Lovato’s song, “I love me” where she sings, “Cause I’m a black belt when I’m beating up on myself, but I’m an expert in giving love to somebody else” (AZLyrics, n.d.) then you should take note of Dr. Kristin Neff. She is an expert in self-compassion and states that it is all about taking care of ourselves the way we would others. As Child and Youth Care practitioners we are experts in caring for others and having



compassion for the young people and families we work with. What if we treated ourselves the same way? What if we were kind when confronted with our personal failings, and gave ourselves permission to engage in the human experience of failing the way we let the people we care for experience this? Quite a thought. Reflecting upon these questions allows us to shift our mindset to viewing self-compassion as a strength and as a muscle that we strengthen because we are continuously working on it, not something we try to learn once we burn out (Neff, n.d.).

Dr. Neff outlines 3 elements of self-compassion. The first is self-kindness versus self-judgment, the second is common humanity versus isolation, and the third is mindfulness versus over identification. These elements give much attention to allowing us to feel and accept our inadequacies as humans; being ok to be imperfect. Neff (n.d.) pays specific attention here to having us grasp the understanding that all humans are inadequate and fall short, it's not simply something that happens to a select few. If we accept our vulnerabilities and allow ourselves to be mindful of our feelings, instead of judging them; or worse ignoring them altogether we would see the beginnings of self-compassion blooming within us (n.d.). These pieces of acceptance, along with the words from our colleague outlined in the beginning of this article, are so simple yet so freeing.

Intentional use of language is another way we practice self-compassion. Ever find yourself answering the question “How are you doing?” with a response like “Surviving”, “Busy” or “Stressed”. This was a common response a few years ago for the both of us and then on further reflection and retrospection of life the responses started to change to “great” and internally understanding that perhaps we were even “thriving”. If we recognize how we are viewing ourselves and the things



that we are doing and thinking, then we have much more control over our situations. Our use of language can help us view our surroundings and ourselves differently. Hachey (2013) discusses how, when we shift our mind conversation we don't just see things (that have been there all along), but we connect with them in ways we never have. In a similar way, the words we use on the outside, allow us to recognize things on the inside that were there all the time, but we didn't see them under our negative language use.

We know that during tough times resilience is best established through the support of others but during these times there are limited means of support that can be experienced external to ourselves or our immediate households – unless we tap into a virtual world or pick up the telephone. This leaves self-compassion and care at the most paramount task of our current lives. How self-compassionate are you? Find out by using Dr. Neff's [Self-Compassion Test](#) on her website. Once you have completed the test, you can read her interpretations of your results, and she also includes tips for self-compassion practice (Neff, n.d.).

In response to [last month's article](#), we were excited to have heard from many of you, and you shared that you are practicing some great self-care during such a challenging time. Folks have shared that they have been connecting to old hobbies that they had gotten away from over time. Some of you are exercising and ensuring that you are getting adequate sleep. We are encouraging you to keep practicing self-care, but to consider self-compassion as the next level. Some people in our group discussion have already shared stories of self-compassion; they are giving themselves permission to feel those big feelings that surround this time of uncertainty by just having a good cry, or just sitting in the discomfort of guilt or anxiety for a bit and allowing it to take them over. With this comes the acceptance



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of these feelings and the understanding that it is okay to feel this, it is okay to not be okay, as Dr Neff would say; we are experiencing our imperfect humanness (Neff, n.d.). Thank you for your raw honesty and vulnerabilities. It is in this sharing that we grow and help others to grow as well. Let's keep this conversation going by connecting with us on the [CYC Net Facebook Discussion Group](#) or email at dearselfcare2020@gmail.com

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Supervision of Child and Youth Care Practitioners during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has far-reaching consequences for the population. Like other essential frontline workers, Child and Youth Care Practitioners are faced with working in unpredictable circumstances during these unprecedented times. Very little literature exists regarding what practitioners need from their supervisors during a crisis. This paper considers the impact of COVID-19 on Child and Youth Care Practitioners and their practice. Practitioner needs and requirements for support and supervision are explored and alternative methods of supervision are briefly discussed.

Keywords

Child and Youth Care, Supervision, Pandemic, COVID-19, Crisis

Formal supervision of Child and Youth Care Practitioners CYCPs is one of the most important components in safeguarding quality care and treatment for young people (Stuart, 2009). To be most effective in practice, CYCPs need recognition, support and the containment of



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supervision from an effective supervisor (Charles, Freeman, & Garfat, 2016a). However, supervision is frequently the first thing to be dropped to the bottom of the priority list when competing demands emerge, resulting in many CYCPs having little to no supervision (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012; Gharabaghi, 2012; Jenkinson, 2010). When there is a global pandemic such as COVID-19 occurring that has a great impact on everything, how is supervision affected and what do CYCPs require and desire from their supervisors?

Impact of the Pandemic

On an average day, CYCPs are tasked with difficult and challenging situations. Often, CYCPs are left to their own devices to navigate complicated, ever-changing circumstances, working independently despite the need for the support and guidance of a supervisor. In a crisis, the need for supervision may be even greater. Crises have a profound effect on CYCPs, regardless of their experience level, increasing the need for additional support and preparation (Wachter, Minton, & Clemens, 2008). COVID-19 may expose CYCPs to extreme stressors that could develop into PTSD, compassion fatigue, burnout, or vicarious traumatization (Sommer, 2008). The pandemic has forced the change of every aspect of the way that people are managing their daily lives. Its far-reaching impacts are affecting social interactions, recreational activities, work and much more. Stress levels are significantly increased, and anxieties are heightened as a result. The normalcy of routine CYCPs engaged in before a shift can no longer be taken for granted. Forced away from daily normalcy, CYCPs now must potentially consider; the contamination of clothing on-site which needs to be laundered immediately, completing self-screening assessments before



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reporting on shift and arriving prepared with food as outside options are not as readily available.

Everywhere one turns, they are inundated with social and news media regarding terrifying statistics and stories regarding the virus. People are extremely worried about their health and the health of their loved ones. CYCPs may also be faced with uncommon scenarios such as working from home due to their organizations being physically closed. The expectation to work from home may be a completely unfamiliar endeavor for many CYCPs. There are different requirements for the supervision of practitioners working from home. New avenues of care to consider include various models of support delivery via virtual or telephone connections. This can impact the realms of care within the relational practice as the face-to-face interactions and personal presence is absent. These new modes of care delivery can contribute to issues with confidentiality, completing risk assessments that are not face-to-face and other scenarios that arise. Practitioners who continue to work at their organizations may experience increasing fear of exposure to COVID-19. CYCPs with underlying health conditions or those who are older may worry about the implications of remaining on duty. Questions and worries about accommodations for these situations may weigh heavily on the practitioner's mind. Those CYCPs who do contract COVID-19 face additional stressors such as potential loss of wages and feelings of helplessness from not being able to report to work or having potentially contributed harm by infecting their clients.

The Need for Supportive Supervision

Things are constantly changing, often by the hour, as a result of COVID-19. Everyone is attempting to navigate through uncharted waters. To



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provide the best quality care that CYCPs can, they need a unique level of engagement from their supervisors at this time. They need supervision that provides a foundation for mental and emotional strength (Gharabaghi, 2009). They require experienced supervisors that can assist them in managing their duties as essential frontline workers while supporting their personal experiences and difficulties related to the pandemic. As discussed by Gharabaghi (2009) experienced supervisors "know that child and youth care practitioners carry the weight of their practice, both while at work and outside of work. It is, therefore, necessary to engage practitioners on issues and themes that transcend simple performance contexts" (p. 97).

Supportive Supervision During the Pandemic

Very little literature exists regarding supervision during a pandemic. The literature that is available certainly does not address the supervision of CYCPs. The manual on how to manage everything during COVID-19 is being written as it is being experienced and lived. I posed the question of what CYCPs truly need and desire from their supervisors during this time in several online forums. The responses were consistent across the various posts. CYCPs identified wanting a connection with their supervisors that allows them to remain updated and informed about the current situation and how it is affecting their organizations. Connection and engagement are vital at a time when insecurities and apprehensions are increased. CYCPs require a supervisor who connects with them continually, validates their fears and worries, and engages with them while they experience this new, unpredictable work and life crisis (Charles, Freeman, & Garfat, 2016b). CYCPs are craving validation, empathy, and acknowledgment of their fallibility and vulnerabilities. Most of all, CYCPs want supervisors to be compassionate and understanding about their stressors and anxieties.



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Now more than ever, it is crucial that supervisors respond with flexibility to the individual needs and characteristics of their supervisees (Charles, Freeman, & Garfat, 2016b).

Information in the form of web-based articles, organization documents, and media reports provide some generalized tips for employers on how to support employees during COVID-19. These suggestions included morale-building efforts, creating a consistent schedule of virtual meetings, individual check-ins with supervisees, engaging with compassion, active listening and caring, and creating opportunities for employees to connect and feel a sense of community with one another (MacArthur, 2020). Regular and consistent communication with staff regarding the pandemic should include ensuring staff understands the severity of the pandemic and how they can practice preventative measures to protect themselves (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2020). While this is an important aspect to communicate as a supervisor, this type of information is widely available to everyone already. I would argue most employees have an appreciation of the seriousness of this crisis. More crucial is the suggestion that the Chamber of Commerce makes for ongoing communication from supervisors about how the organization is planning and preparing to adapt to the pandemic (Ontario Chamber of Commerce, 2020). The CYCPs I engaged with stated that they want information about decisions that directly affect their role and their practice. They desire openness and transparency from their supervisors. It is important during this time that a supervisor 'hangs in' with their supervisees and provides caring, committed and patient support (Charles, Freeman, & Garfat, 2016b). CYCPs need to be included in decisions that affect them and about changes taking place within their organizations. Most of all, CYCPs want answers from their



supervisors when they ask questions of them, specifically when it comes to their and their client's safety.

Alternative Methods of Supervision

Given that supervisors are likely overwhelmed and burdened with increased responsibilities, such as developing policies related to COVID-19 it may be suitable for organizations to consider alternative methods of supervision during this time. Organizations may wish to appoint an external supervisor to provide meaningful supervision to CYCPs that is focused on addressing specific concerns related to the pandemic. External supervision is relationally and developmentally structured with a focus on reflective practice (Gharabaghi, 2009) and so might be very effective in supporting CYCPs during this crisis. However, there is a risk in practitioners feeling abandoned by their regular supervisor. Supervisors who are working from home while their supervisees are working on the frontlines may inadvertently alienate them further.

Group supervision such as offered in a team consultation format may also be suitable and helpful. Consultation to the team meetings offers the opportunity for CYCPs to stay connected as a staff group while being supported by clinical facilitators. This type of support can easily be done virtually using video conference calling and so supervisors who are working from home can still participate. Group supervision may offer many benefits such as group cohesion, peer support, and feedback. There may be an advantage of the participants learning from one another (Kobolt, n.d.). Group supervision may provide a safe space to share anxieties and worries. Pearson (2004) suggests that "supervisees are better able to recognize, process, and cope with feelings of anxiety when they perceive it as a natural part of the supervision process and are aware of common sources



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of anxiety in this setting" p. ? (as cited in Mastoras & Andrews, 2011). A potential downfall of using group supervision is that some CYCPs may not feel comfortable addressing their needs or concerns in a group or virtual format. Others may feel as though there is not enough time or space to fully process their concerns, feelings, and questions (Kobolt, n.d.).

A third alternative option to traditional supervision is peer consultation. Peer consultation may be the most readily available method for CYCPs whose supervisors are working from home to decrease the number of individuals at a workplace at one time.

Peer consultation that involves colleagues helping each other function more effectively in their professional roles has the advantages of peer support and encouragement (Benshoff, n.d.). It makes sense that CYCPs working on the frontlines together can offer one another a shared understanding and experience. The risk, however, is that there may be a contagion effect on negativity and stress levels.

Conclusion

During the unprecedented times of COVID-19, CYCPs must receive adequate support and supervision to prevent burnout or other issues related to working while in crisis. Compassionate, caring, and individualized support that focuses on connection and engagement, as well as morale building, is needed now more than ever. Supervisors should consider all avenues for providing supervision including virtual options such as video chatting. With effective and supportive supervision, CYCPs can continue to provide the best quality care to the young people they work with while in this lived experience of a global pandemic.



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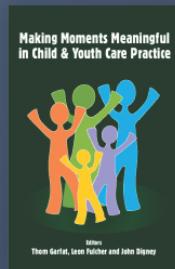
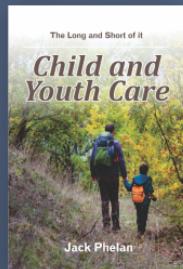
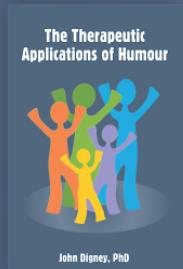
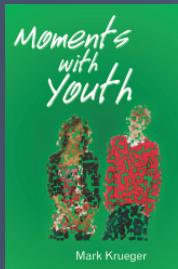
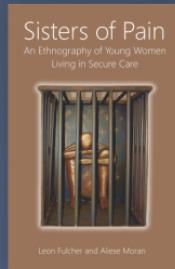
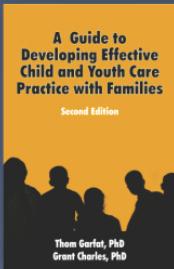
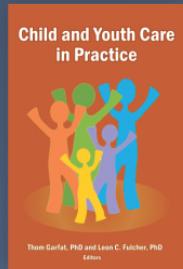
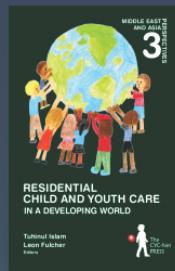
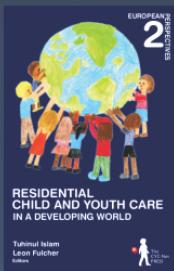
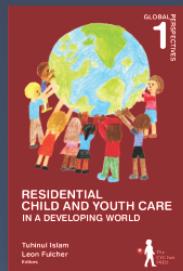
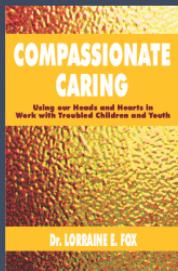
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Thinking about Resilience as a Process of Recovery: School-Based Implications

Lynette Longaretti and Mirella De Civita

Abstract

Resilience is commonly conceived as the process of and capacity for successful adaptation despite difficult circumstances. However, this view has been recently challenged by De Civita (2006) who posits that the term resilience, meaning to bounce back from difficulties, can be used to describe individuals who recover an appropriate level of functioning following a period of maladjustment. From this perspective, recovery entails a transformation in a child's stress response as a result of favorable changes in personal and contextual resources. In this paper we emphasize the significance of the school in nurturing recovery and we propose five principles that can be adopted by school practitioners to promote adaptive functioning in all children, especially those who are struggling emotionally and/or socially.

Keywords

resilience; recovery; protective processes; school; practitioners; competence; implications.

The concept of resilience continues to generate research and a fairly lively dialogue among researchers. By and large, researchers have defined "resilience" as the capacity to maintain an appropriate level



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of functioning under threatening circumstances (see Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; and Masten, 2001 for a review of this literature). In the high-risk literature, children who are well-adapted in spite of environmental conditions that threaten their development are usually conferred the label of resilient. It would seem that for a child to be labeled as resilient, he or she would need to: (1) be exposed to factors that have the potential to derail him or her off an adaptive pathway; and (2) demonstrate a level of competence deemed appropriate in areas of life considered to be relevant by a given society or culture in historical context (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998). Interestingly however, by definition the word “resilience” means to spring back after being bent out of shape. Metaphorically, then, the term ought to be used to describe children who regain an appropriate level of functioning following an initial period of maladjustment. This, therefore, means that the child would need to have experienced a prior period of maladjustment. Indeed, this was the definition of resilience that Garmezy (1993) had advanced more than a decade ago. Even so there continues to be an emphasis on developmental trajectories that reflect unusual or unexpected positive adaptation considering what is predicted to occur given the presence of adversity.

Notwithstanding methodological and conceptual issues that investigators must contend with when defining what constitutes a major threat to normative development, as well as what level of adaptive functioning children ought to display to be labeled resilient, Luthar et al. (2000) urge researchers to conceptualize resilience as a “dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (p. 543). In a similar vein, Masten (2001) underscores the importance of focusing on known adaptational processes that make it possible for children living in high risk situations to display good adaptive



outcomes. Although resilience ought to be studied as a process, De Civita (2006) suggests that this process is dynamic and it can be one of maintenance or recovery of adaptive functioning. She puts forth a cogent argument to suggest that processes that promote resilience-as-sustained adaptive functioning are distinct from those involved in resilience-as-recovery of functioning. She suggests that resilience-as-sustained adaptive functioning involves *continuity* in protective systems, shielding the child from adverse events. The child therefore does not manifest psychosocial maladjustment. Comparatively, resilience-as-recovery of functioning implies a transformation in a child's pattern of stress responding as a result of favorable changes in personal resources and environmental conditions. According to De Civita (2006), vastly different patterns of responding to adversity are evident depending on which definition is advanced.

In an attempt to shed light on the dual nature of resilience, De Civita and Longaretti (2006) take a closer look at the empirical literature for evidence supporting the assumption that processes underlying resilience-as-recovery of functioning are distinct from those underlying resilience-as-sustained adaptive functioning. From their synthesis of the empirical literature, the maintenance of adaptive functioning results from the operation of basic human adaptational or protective systems (such as authoritative parenting, positive relationships with other adults, strong personal resources, and supportive communities) that operate in concert. For example, children can rely on their personal resources such as good coping skills or intelligence while at the same time enjoying the protection of a care-giving adult. Should one of these protective mechanisms break down (e.g., departure of a protective caregiver), the child can still rely on his or her personal resources that continue to offer protection. Indeed, reviews by Masten (2001) and Luthar et al. (2000) list a number of studies that point



to these adaptational systems that assist children along an adaptive developmental pathway. In comparison, De Civita & Longaretti (2006) point out that recovery of adaptive functioning involves three mutually influential processes: (1) a shift in the relative importance of social contexts in response to changes in children's psychological needs and physical attributes; (2) a breakdown in the regulatory individual-contextual system sustaining maladaptive behavior; and (3) the child's growing capacity to derive meaning from experiences. The embeddedness of these processes makes the study of resilience-as-recovery of adaptive functioning a formidable task.

In thinking about resilience-as-recovery of adaptive functioning, one cannot help but wonder whether there are any practical implications for school-based professionals. For one, the school environment is a "community" setting where protective mechanisms can be secured in place. The school trajectory itself is best defined by important turning points (King, Cathers, Brown, Specht, Willoughby, Polgar, MacKinnon, Smith, & Havens, 2003) that is, experiences and realizations that have the power to change a child's developmental trajectory (Cohler, 1987; Denzin, 1989). Turning points can be understood to be negative and sudden or presenting opportunities for positive change (King et al, 2003:186). Events such as entering preschool, primary school, and transferring to secondary school bring major changes in children's school settings. They must move from the known to the unknown, often having to forge new relationships (with new teachers and new children), adapt to new teaching approaches, integrate new material, and adjust academic expectations accordingly. As such, these transitional points offer opportunities to promote, cultivate, and sustain the development of personal resources (e.g., coping skills, self-esteem), thereby promoting recovery of adaptive functioning in children



who show signs of maladjustment. Aside from explicit “turning points” that mark the child’s school trajectory, there are implicit moments to facilitate a shift in the relative importance of a child’s social context in response to changes in psychological needs and physical attributes. For example, the formation of positive friendships can be promoted through social skills training workshops, which can be conceived as one important protective mechanism. Another example involves the formation of a positive teacher-child relationship, which by way of modeling healthy relationships can lead to the breakdown in the regulatory individual-contextual system that sustained maladaptive behavior. While children have little control over their circumstances, their belief that they can withstand difficult circumstances may prove to be a powerful personal resource that can contribute to the interactive process underlying recovery of adaptive functioning. This belief can also be nurtured by school-based interventions that foster opportunities for children to experience mastery.

In this paper, we build on these ideas by proposing a set of principles for school-based practitioners (e.g., child and youth care practitioners, teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologists) to use as a guide to their intervention efforts to promote adaptive functioning in children who are displaying maladaptive behaviors in school. We wish to note here that we recognize the powerful role that familial influences play in altering child’s developmental trajectory. However, we also maintain that the child’s exposure to distal influences, those experiences that are outside his or her family (e.g., peer relationships, teachers or counselors as role models) can strengthen the family’s efforts to promote recovery of adaptive functioning. It is precisely the child’s experiences as they relate to both relationship building and personal exploration and mastery of capacities outside his or her home environment that makes understanding the magnitude of distal



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influences pertinent. Before turning to the discussion at hand, a few words must be said about viewing resilience-as-recovery of functioning.

Resilience-as-recovery of functioning: what does this mean for school-based practitioners?

As reviewed by De Civita and Longaretti (2006), high-risk children have the capacity for developmental recovery when certain conditions or resources are restored and basic needs are met. However, even when recovery does occur, not all children will demonstrate the same level of adaptive functioning. Nor will children demonstrate adaptive functioning in all spheres of life. For example, children who had experiences of extreme and long-term adversity can continue to flounder and, even if they do recover, may relapse in the face of later difficulties (Egeland, Carlson, & Soufre, 1993; Carlson, Sroufe, Collins, Jimerson, Weinfeld, Henninghausen, Egeland, Hyson, Anderson, & Meyer, 1999). Ungar (2001; 2004), asserts that reverting to or engaging in deviant behaviors can be viewed as ways for children to successfully cope with the risk factors they face. In such cases, children who relapse or flounder and continue to engage in problem behaviors are in effect reverting to strategies that enable them to adapt and survive unhealthy or chaotic circumstances, and in so doing, attempt to sustain a healthy and resilient identity.

Nevertheless, in spite of an inherent self-righting system, if a child's basic adaptational mechanism is in disarray, recovery from trauma or a profound negative life experience may be less likely to be sustained over the long haul. One must therefore ask the questions: What does recovery really mean? What happens to those children who continue to flounder? First, if we view recovery of functioning as an all or none phenomenon, we do a disservice to these children who continue to struggle. We fail to



acknowledge that research and theory converge on the idea that recovery is an ongoing process. We must therefore keep working toward positive adaptation even with children who continue to flounder. Children keep developing and adapting to their environment, for better or for worse (Masten, 2001; Ungar, 2001, 2004). And, although exposure to earlier traumatic experiences might have led to disarray in their psychological self-organization processes it does not mean that they are doomed to remain maladaptive.

Second, models of change and interventions that aim to promote recovery in high-risk children suggest searching for and subsequently nurturing what is best (in terms of personal resources) within children, building competence that might be absent or underdeveloped, as well as enhancing those protective systems that the child has access to such as those within the school environment (Seita, Mitchell & Tobin, 1996; De Civita, 2000; De Civita, 2006; De Civita & Longaretti, 2006). In essence, the work of school-based practitioners is to search for and build those conditions that can support children to make the changes necessary to function successfully.

Taking action: Implementing five principles to promote recovery

A comprehensive system of care that places children's needs (a sense of security, love, connectedness and chances to find meaning in life) and social emotional well-being at the center, is key to providing the kinds of support that can lead to recovery (Longaretti, 2005). Although the five principles described below are applicable in the school context, they do not negate the importance of strengthening personal abilities in children by collaborating, cooperating, and ensuring open communication with the



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family. In fact, families can be invited to participate in activities that are secure and inclusive, that serve to fortify and sustain family bonds.

The five principles evolve from prevalent concepts reflected in both educational and psychological literature in relation to adolescent well-being (e.g. Seita, Mitchell & Tobin, 1996; Schwarzer & Knoll, 2003) and academic success (e.g. Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 1996; Barratt, 1998). These five principles underscore the key tenets in fostering social emotional development during adolescence and are currently being empirically investigated (Longaretti, in progress).

Principle 1: Communicating Care

The first principle is that of communicating care, which is defined as showing genuine regard and respect. Care and support lay the foundation for trusting relationships in life and is the basis for healthy development (Rutter, 1987). Care is demonstrated by the relationships we build with children. In schools, interventions should strive to improve the quality of care given to children by adults. Importantly, translating care into action requires each child to be given respect and recognition as individuals with separate abilities, needs, and circumstances. Only then can we implement strategies that strengthen personal abilities in children and work towards reducing the negative influences and stresses in their lives. Tuning in and recognising a child's individuality and incorporating this insight into appropriate curriculum and pedagogical approaches demonstrates care to children.

Of course, it is not always clear why a child is finding school or learning difficult. For this reason, it is important that the teacher, not only be as sensitive and considerate to the child's individual needs, but also where appropriate seek support from counselors and support agencies. By



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working one-on-one with children, school counselors are able to listen attentively and affirm and guide children so they are able to realize their potential and work towards breaking the risk cycle.

Principle 2: Connectedness

The second principle is that of connectedness, defined as the experience of secure and trustworthy interpersonal relationships (Seita et al, 1996). Connectedness and attachment are of critical importance to a child's sense of belonging and in building resilience (Garmezy, 1985; Werner & Smith, 1988). Children want to feel they belong to a family, friendship group, school and community that accepts, protects and cares about them. The early years are particularly important for forming strong interpersonal relationships that can engender growth or productive coping. For this reason prevention programs should originate in early childhood and focus on building attachments (Luther & Zelazo, 2003; Yates, Egeland & Sroufe, 2003). Curriculum for early adolescents should also focus attention on issues that are relevant to this age group such as the need to belong to a peer group and the beginning of identity exploration (Wentzle, 1999).

Establishing social structures that foster a sense of connectedness by way of services and programs that focus on building relationships between children, their peers and teachers are valuable in promoting continuity of protective factors in children at risk. There are a number of ways schools can do this. Teachers could begin by celebrating and promoting friendships and supportive relationships across the school by involving children in Peer Support Programs and explicitly teaching the skills of friendship (formation and maintenance) and constructive conflict management. Programs such as "Buddy Systems", not only provide young



children with an older peer whom they "get to know" through a series of activities, but also teach children how to be a support for one another at school.

Being connected to others, the community and family, links strongly with having a healthy self-esteem and positive educational and life outcomes (Larson, 2000). School should look towards extending and enriching learning opportunities and relationships through involvement in activities and programs that involve families and the wider community. Together, these groups, can impart knowledge, inspire responsibility, build relationships and communicate care (Elias, Zins, Weissberg, Frey, Greenberg, Haynes, Kessler, Schwab-Stone, & Shriver, 1997).

Principle 3: Competence

The third principle is that of competence, defined as an active process that depends on both inner strengths and external support. Children are considered competent when they demonstrate overt behavioral functioning, as in academic performance, self-regulation, sociability and resourcefulness (De Civita, 2000). However, behavioral competence in one domain does not indicate competence in all other life domains. There is a danger in labeling children who are functioning well in spite of adversity as resilient as apparent early resilience (an absence of externalizing problems) sometimes masks unresolved emotional pain. For instance, some socially competent children who appear to be adapting positively despite their stressful experiences, can encounter profound emotional distress later in life (Seita et al, 1996; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). Unresolved emotional distress can contribute to various other problems such as delinquency, substance abuse, discordant relationships, and academic problems, which can contribute to declines in adaptive functioning (Masten, 1999).



Conversely, children can demonstrate disruptive behaviors to mask underlying emotional pain or a learning disability (O'Dougherty-Wright, Masten, Northwood, & Hubbard, 1997).

When working with children who are displaying maladaptive behaviors, it is crucial to pay attention to the entire child. This means focusing on covert and overt forms of maladaptive functioning that can affect functioning across different areas in life (Masten, 1999). For this reason, several researchers have suggested the need to assess children's level of competence over time and in a variety of domains (De Civita, 2000; Howard, & Johnson, 2000; Seita, 2000; Masten, 2001; Yates, Egeland, Sroufe, 2003). Programs could be individually tailored to make use of personal assessment information such as a child's level of social, emotional and academic competence. Seita (1994, 2006) describes this process as the "talent search" wherein the search is on for children's strengths. This can help determine the starting point in skilling children. Skilling is a concept used to describe the teaching of specific skills to individuals. It implies a dynamic process between the practitioner and child as it involves sound instruction, positive modeling, and guided practice. It is imperative that along with establishing the appropriate conditions for developing resilience, we also equip children with a range of skills to cope productively with life's challenges. Such skills include recognizing and regulating emotions, accepting and knowing how and when to ask for help, redefining oneself in a more positive way, solving problems constructively, and making decisions based on a rational process (Elias, Zins & Weissberg et al., 1997). Giving children an appropriate measure of responsibility in dealing with stress and adversity, gives children a sense of ownership and invites them to apply new skills and strategies, within a safe and supportive environment. Not only does this convey to children that they are trusted



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and valued, but also that they have the potential for positive change and that they can shape the course of their life. Responsibility encourages competence, self-worth and a sense of connectedness.

Nonetheless, work with children promptly brings to mind the limitations of empowering children to take charge of their lives. Children do not have control over their family situation. Certain aspects of their environment are “a given”. Family situations can change only when parents decide to make changes for the better. Nonetheless, school practitioners can help children feel a sense of responsibility for their own behaviors, for their accomplishments, as well as for their own failures. This begins by building children from the bottom up. This approach requires combining the search for talents using a caring approach based on trust, with providing the supportive structures that children need to challenge themselves and in the process come to appreciate their many talents. This, then, brings us to the fourth principle, which deals specifically with securing structures that facilitate positive learning.

Principle 4: Challenge and Scaffolding

The fourth principle is that of challenge and scaffolding. Challenge is defined as a demand on one's abilities, whereas scaffolding refers to supported learning or supportive experiences so that development is nurtured along an adaptive pathway. The two concepts are complementary. Just as children need to be challenged in their thinking, beliefs and actions to enhance recovery of adaptive functioning, so too do they need to be guided and supported through the learning and change process. Support and understanding from school practitioners are key ingredients that enable a child to maintain a positive attitude to school



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even when socioeconomic and other familial circumstances remain or become increasingly difficult.

With the right level of guidance and support structures in place, children set attainable goals for achieving successes at school. For example, children who are experiencing academic difficulties can be assisted and encouraged to take on learning challenges and to plan useful strategies to accomplish their goals. Children can prosper in an environment characterized by high expectations and constructive and honest feedback, providing the expectations are embedded in an understanding student welfare program. Children are then less likely to feel overwhelmed or helpless, for such a program communicates to them messages of steadfast guidance, structure and challenge. Most importantly, this approach shifts the focus from one of problems and deficits to one of solutions and potentials.

It is essential that any program implemented should provide a balance between challenging and scaffolding. This requires understanding how best to promote learning and how to ensure that capacities are enhanced. Teachers constantly endeavor to achieve a balance between guiding and stimulating children, in and out of the classroom. Research that can best demonstrate and inform teachers how much to challenge and support young people at school (Masten and Powel, 2003) would provide beneficial information in relation to teaching skills and fostering in children a healthy self-esteem, self-efficacy, confidence and psychological fortitude. The value of trusting relationships cannot be understated here. For within trusting relationships children may more readily accept and utilize the support offered, increase confidence in facing challenges and be open to being guided through problem solving and



decision making until they are in a stronger position to do so independently.

Principle 5: Chances

The final principle is that of chances or opportunities, which aims to capitalize on the talent search by identifying personal strengths. Schools are the ideal setting for the discovery and development of talents and abilities. In working with teachers, practitioners can help identify hidden talents or abilities, which hold promise for future successes particularly during difficult periods of maladjustment (De Civita, 2000). According to Gardner (1996), each child is unique in their possession and use of different cognitive strengths or intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical and bodily-kinesthetic, spatially intelligent, interpersonal and intrapersonal, and naturalistic. The extent to which children possess and use each of these abilities reveals something about the skills that have been instrumental in helping them cope with adversity. Once identified, these abilities would need to be recorded and reinforced in carefully planned activities that offer children fresh opportunities to develop the necessary skills and attitudes that can lead to positive adaptation in life. With regular opportunities for practice, children are empowered to reflect and make meaning of their experiences, make good choices and take positive action, within a protected and encouraging setting. Such efforts attend to the whole person and move beyond focusing on the maladaptive behaviour.

Closing comments

Most studies of competence have used the term “resilience” in reference to children who display an appropriate level of functioning under difficult circumstances. In her analysis of the resilience literature, Masten



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(2001) suggests that resilience-as-sustained adaptive functioning comes from ordinary magic in the sense that such children are able to continue on an adaptive pathway due to protective mechanisms found within themselves, their homes, communities, and relationships. This prevailing view of resilience, however, does not consider the possibility that some children may find their way back onto an adaptive pathway despite troubled beginnings. In fact, by dictionary definition, “resilience” truly means to spring back after being bent out of shape. As initially suggested by Garmezy (1993), one can use the term resilience metaphorically to describe children who regained an appropriate level of functioning following an initial period of maladjustment. De Civita (2006) challenges researchers and practitioner to pay equal attention to this view of resilience, wherein the focus is on resilience as recovery of functioning. From this perspective, resilience implies a transformation in a child’s pattern of stress-responding. Such transformation is often the result of important changes in personal and contextual resources. In addition, this view emphasizes the ability to learn how to manage personal vulnerability so as to increase psychological resistance to current and future stressors. This learning process can be nurtured in schools, given their relatively privileged position in children’s lives, to promote psychological wellness across development via the promotion of protective mechanisms. In this paper we propose five principles that can be adopted by individual school practitioners as well as the entire school via policies to promote adaptive functioning in all children, especially those who are struggling.

The first principle, communicating care, emphasizes the significance of genuine regard and respect for the individual. We suggested ways in which schools can translate care into action and recommended interventions to improve the quality of care giving. The second principle



emphasizes the critical importance of promoting and building significant relationships so that children feel connected and have established firm bonds with others that engender growth and productive coping. We suggested ways to foster a sense of connectedness through relationship building that are useful in promoting continuity in protective factors for children at risk. The third principle is that of competence, an active process that depends on both inner strengths and external supports. Several venues were presented to nurture opportunities for children to experience mastery. The fourth principle, challenge and scaffolding, describes the twofold nature and objectives of teaching. Not only do children need to be challenged in their learning and in living, they need to be supported and guided through it. In the process of doing so, they are able to confidently and securely develop their capacities for decision making and coping, and subsequently, take steps towards positive change in their lives. The final principle which capitalizes on chances underscored the importance of making children aware of their talents. While at times personal strengths may be difficult to identify, particularly with children who are displaying high levels of maladjustment, they certainly do exist – and teachers are in a favourable position to identify and help children exercise these hidden abilities.

These principles underscore the reality that how children adapt to difficult circumstances may at times be functional and at other times dysfunctional. The same child who demonstrates a maladjusted pattern of behavior at one point in time may have enough strength or be surrounded by opportunities to regain an appropriate level of functioning later on. In many ways, children can be vulnerable yet strong enough to withstand adversity as well as competent yet vulnerable enough to be placed at risk by environmental factors. With some modification, these principles can



extend to children in all settings holding a preventative capacity to promote social and emotional well-being across development. Indeed, fundamental to these principles is a deep level of genuine care and sensitivity for all children no matter where they are positioned on the recovery continuum.

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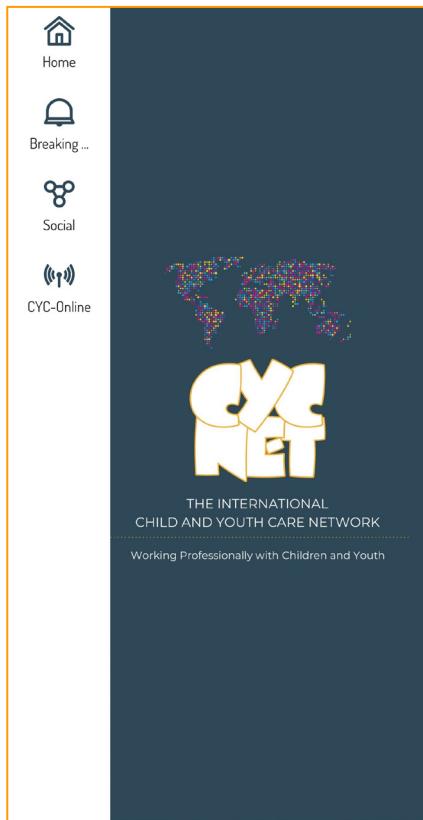
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Bite Me

Garth Goodwin

There was a time when the term *bite me* was used as a casual retort to someone requesting something of one that could not forthcoming such as a person nagging. Another way of saying no, that wonderful word both parts of which continue to confuse so many. The Coronavirus has had a few months to weave its way around the world. There are indications that mitigation has success with running it to ground with New Zealand taking the lead in having isolated and exhausted each incident on the island. The rub, of course, is that it is an island and will need to apply the isolation process to all who arrive. The uncertainty continues but now with a level of detail that often surprises and confounds. For example, a few hours from my home potatoes are grown in such numbers to provide all those French Fries we have taken for granted all our lives. With restaurants closed and only drive through windows active along with the collapse of the discretionary dollar fries are now only an at home option. Spring has brought a new planting season with millions of dollars' worth of potatoes sitting in storage forcing an adjustment to a new reality. This column will explore a few of these consequences of Covid-19 which bite.

The first was the Canadian National Child and Youth Care Conference: *Connecting through Culture* which was to be held in St. Johns, NL in June. Like many, hopefully 300+, I was looking forward to attending and had a car reserved. I had attended each and every conference since the 1996 inception of the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Associations



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and the CYCANL conferences, a first national that closed the loop for Canada proper and the first world's, a truly international child and youth care conference movement. Jamie Lundrigan along with her team had put an excellent program together and were taking in the initial registrations. If you must cancel using a viral pandemic and the collapse of the global economy as reasons should cover it.

Such cancelations have continued in incremental segments, looking forward to several months out now and even next year. Even then, the rescheduled Olympic Games have just been announced as threatened. Aside from the economic and cultural loss in the short term, the long-term implications are potentially significant. Prior to Covid-19 there was loss in geographical terms as glaciers melted away and shorelines began to erode or flood due to rising oceans. This is sudden and extensive canceling literally wiping decades of tradition off our shared calendars. Calgary Stampede, Stratford, PNE, Stanley Cup, Folklorama, and Canada Days across the nation. Each event, each festival, each anniversary had meaning in addition to participation. Our collective society had just been finding its stride in the ever-expanding expression of the arts and sports. One-time hobbies or pass times could become professions in and of themselves earning their practitioners a decent living on million-dollar platforms. Think extreme skier, specialized make-up artist, or poker player. It is the young who potentially may suffer as a seasonal loss compounds into a multiyear break or ultimately a historical curiosity. Imagine, we used to have this game known as hockey employing thousands in all the major cities in arenas where thousands gathered and sat together. Farfetched, certainly, yet folks are just beginning to address incorporating proper distancing in planes, classrooms and restaurants.



That question of meaning going forward is an active one and one for the child and youth care association movement. It was encouraging to see the individual members associations of the Council step forward with regrets and gratitude over the loss. As one totally attuned to communications and profile it has been a hard realization that there simply has been no national presence for child and youth care in Canada over the last three years. A social media post with platitudes about hard work. A website which is already stale dated calling for papers for the conference. When it comes to the membership at this time of incredible challenge and threat – crickets, as they say. There has always been this tension around membership being between the Council being made up of its provincial representatives who attend the annual AGM or the collective membership of each provincial association. The former is just a clique, private and remote while the latter is often indifferent or not even aware. The biennial conference was the one event where it comes together in actuality for the few who can pay or enjoy the sponsorship of agency or facility to attend. Add in the legendary reality of turnover, even at the Council board level and one realizes the challenge of maintaining profile and purpose for such an organization. Still, the absolute need to address is the representation of the practice of child and youth care to the membership. That there is a need is more than demonstrated by its global expression.

This writer has no idea if it were deliberate, but it was coincidental that Ireland's Dr. John Digney posted an open statement on behalf of Dublin's Unity Conference addressed to the 100 past registrants and supporters he could recall on the same day. It was simply a statement that the Unity Conference was booked and intent on going forward this upcoming November and seeking an expression of interest. Said expression was immediate and enthusiastic with perhaps half of those canvassed



responding in the affirmative. The Unity Conference is notable for its intimacy snug in a fine old suburban hotel in the bluster of November in Dublin drawing upon an international, local and United Kingdom audience. That international segment has grown over that last decade as truly international world child and youth care conferences have been held. This is now threatened due to this virus and the economic collapse that followed. The engine of globalism, the airline system literally fell from the sky leading to parked planes, floundering airlines and deserted temples to flight in every significant nation. There are only estimates for a return to flying. Planes were the way the virus spread around the world and the enclosed environment of a plane challenges mitigation like nothing else. Current estimates have gone from a month or so, to the Fall and now Christmas for the Canadian airlines. The additional wrinkle is the virus relaxing to the point where travel bans, and two-week quarantines become a thing of the past. Conferencing is many things: networking, information sharing and perhaps most important, a celebration of identity. Now, if the stars align there is the Unity Conference in November 2020 followed by an, as yet, anticipated world conference in Glasgow, Scotland in June 2021.

Prior to Covid-19 it seemed to this writer that the economies of the world were in transition away from the baby boom driven malls and brands toward small business vibrancy with remarkable levels of growth. This has collapsed into an era of harsh arrogance and divisiveness writ large and threatening the discipline to stay on course with mitigation. Conferencing and formal representation become mere frills up against the true heroes of the period, the children, youth and families shielding in place in their homes. Child and youth care practitioners deserve every portion of that heroism as all remains quiet on the care system front at this time as opposed to the sheer carnage in the elderly care system. Mitigation works



as has been demonstrated. The bare bones of the economy continue operated by heroes who keep the transit, food supply and food retail, medical and mortuary systems functioning. The anti-heroes have now emerged threatening to tilt the gains of all this staying home. The great unknown is the level of abuse suspected among all those families that have gone dark without the avenues of social information and support. It is a cruel age indeed but as a child and youth care practitioner I know this bite me moment will pass, safety will reassert itself, planes will fly and happy days will be here again.

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



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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

Postcard from Lake Waikaremoana New Zealand COVID-19 Level 2

Kia Ora Kotou
Comrades
and Warm
Greetings to you all! As
New Zealand moved
into COVID-19 Alert
Level 2, we were freed
up to start planning
the departure from our
Auckland Lockdown
Bubble and travel back
home to Lake



Roadblocks set up with support of the police to close State Highway 38 and te Urewera

Waikarmoana. We made our way eastward through te Urewera – formerly a National Park but now a legal entity that recognizes Papatuanuku the Earth Mother – a World's First giving legal status to this virgin North Island Rain Forest and its Lakes and Rivers.

Ngai Tuhoe – tangata whenua and people of the Lands of te Urewera negotiated enhanced safety and security for indigenous peoples who have immuno-compromised elders, adults and children who were especially vulnerable during the heights of the CoVID-19 pandemic impact in New Zealand. Maori and Pacific Island peoples carry oral histories of how the 1918-19 Spanish Flu pandemic decimated many of their isolated rural communities. Hence the spontaneous call for road monitoring.

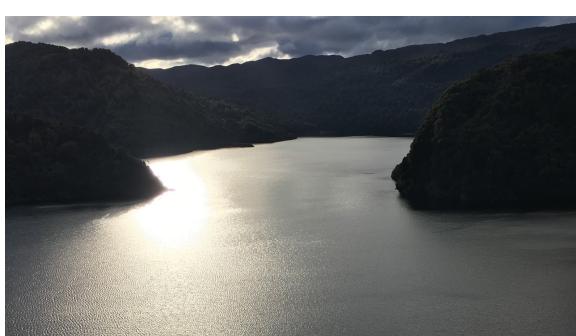


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In their 2014 Treaty of Waitangi Settlement the New Zealand Government made with the Ngai Tuhoe people, there is shared management of the former Urewera National Park and its 42 km Great Walk, with Tuhoe assigned as the majority partner. Lake Waikaremoana continues to offer one of 9 Great Walks, only 3 of which are located in the North Island.

Te Urewera National Park managed by the Department of Conservation had established a network of Huts scattered strategically around The Great Walk. These assume that walkers may take 3-4 days completing the walk. However, there have been seasoned



Protecting the Urewera and Lake Waikaremoana recognised as a legal entity



A carefully selected nesting position for this pair of Lake Waikaremoana black swans

IronMan competitors who have completed the Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk Circuit in less than half a day. Makes for a quick walk!

The newest hut on the Waikaremoana Great Walk is a spectacular facility. There is a sleeping house along with another house for cooking and social space. This hut replaced a smaller hut that was located to the right on the other side of the Bay. Few have complained about the upgrade!

An earthquake years ago blocked the Waikareteheke River flow out of Lake Waikaremoana and raised the Lake nearly 40 metres. One result was that the smaller Lake Wairauamoana joined up with Lake Waikaremoana at a place now called "The Narrows". There are now an 'outer Lake' and an 'inner Lake' and both are substantially



Four Star Waiharuru Hut on the Lake Waikaremoana Great Walk, Upokorora Bay



Wairauamoana Arm of the Lake black swans at Te Puna Bay

different in appearance. The 'outer Lake' has high cliffs and rock formations while the 'inner Lake' offers numerous grassy coves. Both parts are spectacular!

One can see in the waterfall photo, the layers of stone angle down from left to right, indicative of the earthquake activity that helped to shape Lake Waikaremoana what it is today. As one can imagine, there are plenty of waterfalls in the Urewera rain forest for those interested in tracking these down and photographing

the beauty and persona of waterfalls. It is an incredible learning place!

At the COVID-19 Roadblock leading up to the Lake, local people – especially youths – were reminded of important steps associated with



Earthquakes and waterfalls have influenced creation of Lake Waikaremoana



Basic personal safety practices for Lakies during the COVID-19 Virus Lockdown

keeping safe and
keeping others safe
at this time in
history – Glove Up!
Mask Up! And
Sanitize! Even more
important was a
more systematic
approach to hand
washing for 20
seconds – the most
important advice
since soap actually
attacks the COVID-19 virus!



Time for reflection about lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown

As we reflect on what has been learned since Stage 4 Lockdown and closure of national borders, international travel has been dramatically reduced and re-structured. This will remain a world-wide issue into 2021. Why not support discussions with the organisers of the November Dublin-based Unity Conference to create a virtual option for New Zealand and Australia, and colleagues in Canada and the USA? This might enable opportunities for those unable to travel to Dublin to engage in opportunities for personal and professional development via webinars in the virtual world!

A handwritten signature that appears to read "Leon".

Information

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Columnists

Kiaras Gharabaghi, Jack Phelan, Hans Skott-Myhre, Leon Fulcher, Doug Magnuson, Tara Collins, Garth Goodwin

Writing for CYC-Online

CYC-Online is a monthly journal which reflects the activities of the field of Child and Youth Care. We welcome articles, pieces, poetry, case examples and general reflections from everyone.

In general:

- Submissions should be no longer than 2500 words
- The style of a paper is up to the author
- We prefer APA formatting for referencing
- We are willing to work with first-time authors to help them get published
- We accept previously published papers as long as copyright permission is assured
- We are open to alternative presentations such as poems, artwork, photography, etc.

Articles can be submitted to the email address below for consideration.

Authors retain joint copyright privileges.

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