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Editorial Comment

The Other 51 Weeks

Andy Leggett

Welcome to June, 2024.

A month that includes the coming of Summer (Solstice), National Donut Day, innumerable graduations, weddings and anniversaries, Juneteenth, World Sauntering Day and …

Father's Day!

Ever since I became a father too many years ago (I am a father of three and now a "Grandy" of one), I have struggled with the concept of Father's Day.

To me, it was much like having a "Happy Lottery Winner's Day"!

Having the true privilege of being a parent has been one of the greatest "gifts" or honours that I could ever imagine receiving. A responsibility which has always humbled, inspired, and scared the ever-living crap out of me!

Every year, I extend to each of my children a heart- felt apology for getting it so very wrong so very many times and an offer to" give them their money back".

I feel similarly about CYC Week, which this year was May 6 to 12.

Each year in early May, Child and Youth Care (CYC) Practitioners / Workers around the world are reminded and encouraged to do something special to celebrate our noble Calling / Profession.

Let me be clear! I am a proud CYC! Have been for almost 50 years! And I am a CYC who believes, as Thom Garfat so frequently, eloquently, and passionately insists, "CYC is not what We do. It is who We are"! I believe we are given the privilege of working with amazing young people who for so many reasons have often been traumatized, marginalized, disenfranchised, abandoned, scapegoated, and/or discarded by society. "Let's build homes for them … just not on MY block"!

"It is not what We do. It is who We are!"

I have followed one credo throughout my journey as a CYC. "Surround yourself with people who excel at doing what you want to do … and do what they do." And I knew from an early age that I wanted to do Child and Youth Care. I had no idea what "Being" one would entail until those I began surrounding myself with began to teach me.

And by actively seeking out those people … well … some would say stalking … I have come to learn that they all share the same way of being in the world. This Relational Way.

I have also worked with many colleagues who think differently. Who see this work as a job. Who put in their hours, do their shift, apply their skills and go home. Most of these colleagues were and/or are good people and competent workers. And I thank them all for their important work. But it WAS … however … "What they DID, not who they WERE".

I didn't want to DO THAT… I wanted to BE what these "Other" CYC's were.

So …

I started doing what they did. And my world changed.

I attended workshops and conferences they attended, taking every opportunity to hang out with them. I volunteered for committees and boards they sat on. I joined associations of which they were members. I read books and articles they wrote.

And bit by bit, month by month, year by year, they taught me a new way of being in the world. Child and Youth care to them and now to “us”, was and is so much more than just doing a job.

It has been said that true CYC’s can find each other in a crowded dark room without saying a word to each other. I am not sure I believed it … until I found them.

“It is not what We do, it is who We are.”

So, for those for whom CYC is “just a job”, one week a year to celebrate what they do is likely enough. A time to feel appreciated and remind them to take the time to celebrate this awesome work they do. And that is wonderful!



To me, CYC week is like Father's Day. A call to attention of a privilege and an honour I get to live out every week.

To me, every week is CYC week

To me, every week starts with a thought of thanks and thoughts of what can I do this week to honour this privilege I have.

To me, every week starts with a question about who can I "surround myself' with and how. And how to honour and thank them.

To me, every week starts with finding a journal and/or article I can read, or re-read.

To me, every week starts with my first of many visits to CYC-Net.

And to me, every week is one more week to confirm that "It is not what I do, it is who I am".

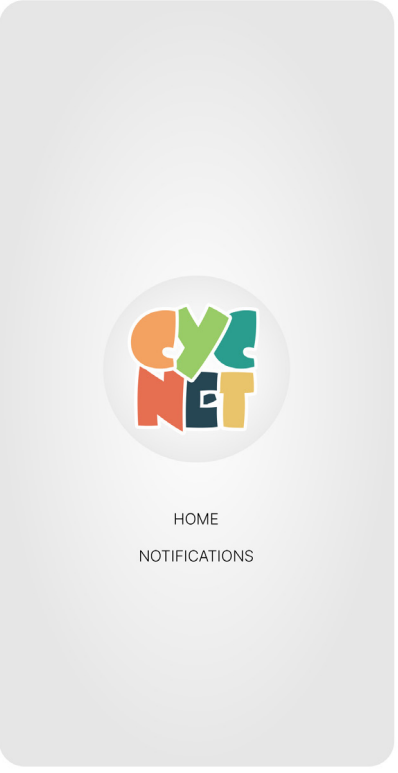
It, like most privileges and honours, carries great responsibility. A responsibility that has always humbled, inspired, and scared the ever-living crap out of me.

I wouldn't have it any other way. Otherwise, it would not be … who I am.

ANDY LEGGETT has been a proud Child and Youth Care Practitioner for well over 40 years. He is the CEO of Kalon Services, an agency providing family-based care and staff modelled homes in Ontario and Newfoundland and a director at TRCT.ca. His work with Kalon and TRCT has had him providing training and consultation provincially, nationally, and internationally. His most recent area of interest and focus in his work has been in the realm of Relational Practice. Andy has been being married for almost forty years and is a proud father of three and grandfather. He lives in Port Hope, Ontario, Canada.

Unless stated otherwise, Editorial Comments are provided by the writer in their personal capacity and without prior sight of journal content. As such, the views and opinions expressed in the writing elsewhere in this journal may not necessarily reflect the views of the Editorial Comment or it's writer.

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The Use of Digital Technology in Child and Youth Care Practice

Nadeem Saqlain

Introduction

The exponential growth of digital technology has profoundly woven itself into the fabric of our everyday lives, shaping how we communicate, work, learn, and entertain ourselves. From the proliferation of smartphones that have become extensions of ourselves to the omnipresence of social media platforms connecting us globally in an instant, digital technology has revolutionized human interaction. The advent of artificial intelligence has automated tasks once deemed impossible for machines, transforming industries and challenging traditional employment paradigms. Furthermore, the Internet of Things (IoT) has integrated our physical surroundings with digital intelligence, creating smart homes and cities that optimize efficiency and convenience. As technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, its impact on our daily existence becomes increasingly intricate and inseparable.

The surge in technology has revolutionized teaching and learning methodologies, reshaping the educational landscape. With the advent of digital tools, classrooms have evolved into dynamic hubs of innovation,

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where educators harness the power of technology to engage students in immersive learning experiences. From interactive whiteboards to educational apps, virtual reality simulations to online collaboration platforms, technology offers diverse avenues for personalized learning tailored to individual student needs. Furthermore, the integration of technology has democratized education, breaking down geographical barriers and providing access to quality resources and expertise irrespective of location. As technology continues to advance, its role in education is poised to expand further, empowering both educators and learners to navigate the complexities of the 21st-century knowledge economy with confidence and proficiency.



Digital Technology in CYC Practice

The use of digital technology in Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice is not a new phenomenon. As practitioners in this field, we observe that children and youth frequently use digital technology in their everyday lives, sometimes even more extensively than the adults within their environment. Digital games, social media apps, and learning platforms are common examples of technology used by children and young people in our care systems. Similarly, frontline practitioners in child and youth care, commonly known as CYC workers, also utilize digital technology for various purposes, including report writing, networking with colleagues, group chats, and professional development. Despite this increased reliance on digital technology in CYC practice, the focus on preparing digitally literate frontline practitioners appears to lag. Most post-secondary institutions that train future CYC practitioners offer very few undergraduate or graduate courses focusing on the use of digital technology in CYC practice.

Research Landscape

In many cases, research on children and youth in care and digital technology is conducted by scholars from other disciplines such as social work, psychology, and education. For instance, researchers in social work, like Copson et al. (2022), have conducted studies on relationship-based practice and digital technology in child and family social work in the UK. Another study from social work in the UK context by Larkins et al. (2023) explored the future of digital practice with and by care-experienced children and young people. Various other examples can be cited from scholars working in social work who have researched this topic, such as studies by Berzin, Singer, and Chan (2015), Mishna, Saini, and Solomon (2009), and Tregeagle and Darcy (2008). While these areas, including social

work, psychology, and education, are interconnected with child and youth care practice, very few researchers teaching in CYC programs have explored the use of digital technology and its impact on CYC practice. In the Canadian context, Parry and Bellefeuille (2015) conducted a qualitative research study examining the use of information communication technologies in CYC practice. A chapter by Martin and Stuart (2019) also provides a comprehensive overview of the use of digital technology in CYC practice in the Canadian context.

The Need for Digital Literacy in CYC Practice

As a child and youth practitioner, I argue that to prepare our future generation of CYC practitioners, there is a need to enhance our focus on digital technology and its usage in CYC practice for various reasons: For example, digital technology provides easy access to resources and information that can support child and youth care practitioners in their work, whether it's accessing educational materials, therapeutic resources, or connecting with other professionals for consultation. From our personal experiences, we see that many children and youth are already highly engaged with digital technology in their daily lives. Integrating technology into care practices can leverage this engagement to foster participation in therapeutic activities, educational interventions, and skill-building exercises.

Advantages of Digital Tools

Digital tools offer the flexibility to tailor interventions and activities to meet the specific needs and preferences of each child or youth. From interactive learning apps to personalized therapy programs, digital technology can be adapted to suit individual goals and challenges. Furthermore, digital platforms enable practitioners to collect and analyze

data more efficiently, allowing for better monitoring of progress and outcomes over time. This data-driven approach can inform decision-making, highlight areas for improvement, and demonstrate the effectiveness of interventions. Digital communication tools facilitate collaboration and coordination among multidisciplinary teams involved in the care of children and youth. Whether it's sharing updates, exchanging information securely, or coordinating services, technology streamlines communication to ensure everyone is on the same page.

Ensuring Inclusivity

Additionally, digital technology can be adapted to accommodate diverse needs, including those of children and youth with disabilities or special educational requirements. Accessibility features, such as screen readers, alternative input methods, and adaptive software, ensure that technology is inclusive and equitable for all. A wide range of digital apps and programs are specifically designed to support mental health and emotional well-being. From mindfulness meditation apps to virtual reality exposure therapy, digital technology offers innovative therapeutic tools that can complement traditional interventions in child and youth care.



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Building Online Communities for Support and Connection

Moreover, digital technology provides access to educational resources and opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting. Whether it's online tutoring, educational games, or virtual field trips, technology can enrich learning experiences and support academic progress for children and youth in care. Teaching children and youth how to use digital technology responsibly empowers them to advocate for themselves, access information, and develop critical digital literacy skills. Learning to navigate online resources safely and effectively prepares them for success in an increasingly digital world. Lastly, digital platforms offer opportunities for children and youth in care to connect with peers, mentors, and support networks outside of their immediate environment. Online communities, forums, and social media can provide valuable sources of social support, validation, and encouragement, enhancing their sense of belonging and well-being.



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Conclusion

In conclusion, the exponential integration of digital technology into our daily lives has not only revolutionized how we communicate, work, learn, and entertain ourselves but has also profoundly impacted various fields, including education and child and youth care practice. As technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, its role in shaping human interactions and societal structures becomes increasingly intricate and inseparable. The transformative potential of digital tools in education is evident, as they have democratized access to resources, personalized learning experiences, and facilitated collaboration among educators and learners. Similarly, in child and youth care practice, the utilization of digital technology holds immense promise in enhancing accessibility, engagement, customization, data tracking, communication, and therapeutic interventions. Moreover, digital technology fosters inclusivity, empowers self-advocacy, supports educational endeavors, and facilitates community engagement for children and youth in care. As we embrace the opportunities presented by digital innovation, it is imperative to prioritize the development of digital literacy skills and the integration of technology into child and youth care practice.

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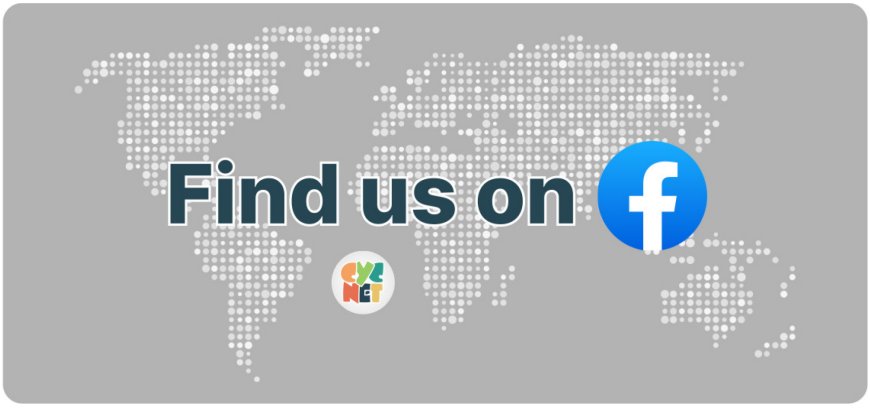
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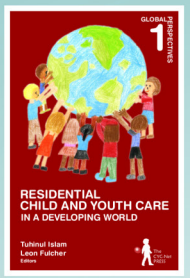
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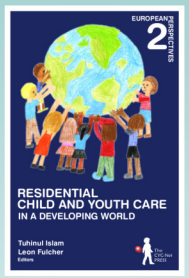
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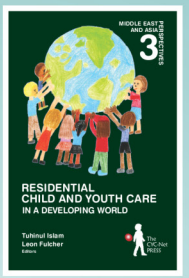
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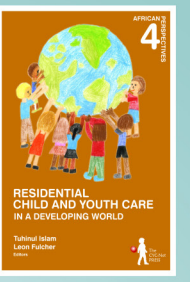






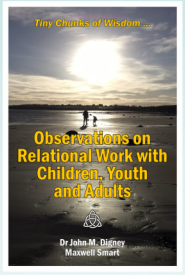


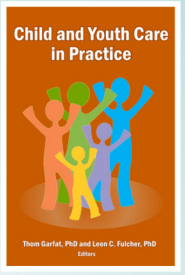


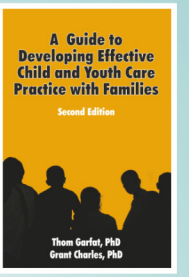


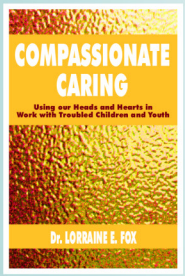


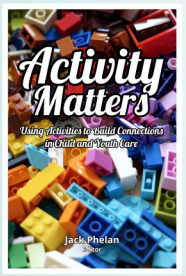


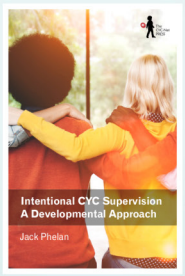




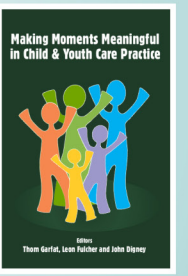


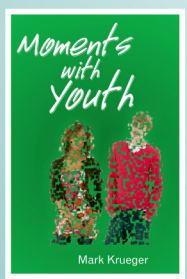


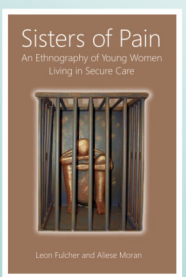


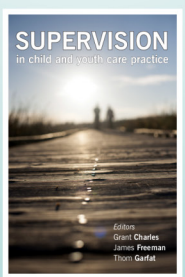


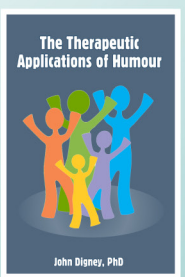


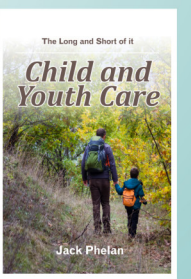












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Left behind: Reflections of residential care home managers when children leave

Yesha Bhagat and Barbara O' Reilly

Abstract

A case study of a children's therapeutic residential care provider consisting of five homes in England was carried out to consider the feelings and reflections of the managers on children leaving the home. This is an unexplored perspective/ subject which considers the significant and emotional transition of leaving care. The reflections in this case study can be used to improve practice for social care providers and give insights into a niche area of work. To explore this topic, a focus group was carried out with four residential home managers and two psychotherapists who work at the same care provider. It was found that the subject of leavers was not much reflected on and it was agreed that it needed to be to improve practice, as well as processing certain unconscious feelings around the child. Failure was a prominent feeling potentially derived from the pressure of ending cycles of failure for the children as well as

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unconscious projections held by the managers. There were also found to be certain issues around terminology, such as 'planned' and 'unplanned', used in this area of work which holds particular connotations. Lastly, it was found that relationships with local authorities were significant for ensuring healthy transitions.

Keywords

Residential care, care leavers, managers, reflections, children's homes, England

Introduction and rationale

Leaving a residential care home is an inevitable part of every child's placement and is argued to be the most emotional part of a placement for the child and those working with them (Tomlinson, Gonzales & Barton, 2012). This can generate feelings of separation and loss, requiring time and space for reflection on each leaver, their placement, and their transition, to reduce trauma for everyone involved (Black, Brearley, Gutridge, & Roberts, 2013; Tomlinson et al., 2012). Previous research has explored placements, breakdowns, and the impact of leaving care (Brown & Bednar, 2006; CELCIS, 2018; Egelund & Vitus, 2009; Harkin & Houston, 2016; Hek & Aiers, 2010; Khoo & Skoog, 2013; NICE, n.d; Rock, Michelson, Thomson, & Day 2013; Sallnäs, Vinnerljung, & Kyhle Westermark, 2004; Tomlinson, 2005; Tomlinson et al. 2012). However, there seems to be a gap around care home managers and their feelings and reflections on the subject of leavers both as a group and on individual cases. Often research may focus on the child's key worker, as they are seen as the 'main carer', but not on care

home managers despite them being just as emotionally invested (Black et al., 2013).

This case study set out to explore the feelings and reflections made by a group of care home managers on leavers. Using a psychoanalytic lens, we wanted to analyse if and how the managers are reflective and emotionally affected by leavers and also how this is changed based on the nature of the ending and the context. We believe that managers, and the home by extension, often do not have the space to reflect on children leaving. This is backed up by the lack of literature on the subject when arguably it is a significant matter which should have more light shed on it.

We would hope that the reflections taken will allow the managers to understand, accept and develop their awareness of both: the feelings that may be left behind by the children, and their approaches to leavers to improve care in future.

What the children bring with them and what they leave behind

The levels of trauma experienced by children in care mean that they generally have highly fragmented inner worlds, consequently, the fragmented inner world of the child is projected onto the adults (Dockar-Drysdale, 1993). Adult-child relationships are reciprocal, and though the adult influences the child, so does the child influence and impact the adult (Fahlberg, 1994). This is significant when thinking about how the children project feelings that are difficult to handle, certain 'bad parts' of themselves, such as feelings of anger or failure which the staff then internalise and manage (Ogden, 1982; Stokoe, 2003). *Projection* is an unconscious process as part of a defence mechanism, where one's own unpleasant, unmanageable or unacceptable feelings, impulses or stressors are externalised onto another person (Ogden, 1983). Due to their past, children

may arrive carrying failure, which can get left with staff when the placement ends (Chipungo & Everett, 1994). Any ending at any point is complex as there will be elements of projections which have not been fully processed in some groups.

Much of the emotion that is left behind in the staff will have emerged from the child's inner pain and become projections from the child's fragmented mind.

When thinking about the effect this has on the adults working with the child, we consider the idea of countertransference. This means the adult is then influenced and affected by the child's feelings and understanding about the world (Youell, 2006). These views may be difficult or upsetting for adults to take on.

Additionally, the complexities of these unconscious processes lend themselves to being interrelated; for example, splitting could be linked to projection and projection may be overlapped with transference or countertransference. To prevent this affecting the other children in the home, or potentially new children coming in, the adults in this care provider are offered regular reflective spaces e.g. groups and supervision. To process and hold all these emotions, there is a' holding environment' whereby a person's physical and emotional wellbeing are held safely by others (Winnicott, 1965). This offers layers of emotional containment which ensures that the children and staff are taken care of and held. Due to the intense trauma faced by the children, this holding environment is held within a therapeutic framework and forms organisational layers, of which the manager is the head and responsible for in the home. However, due to the emotional outputs of both the children and staff members, the manager is liable to receive many projections and transferences (Rose, 1990). They therefore will have the challenge of managing and processing all the parallel unconscious processes within the home while also looking after the smooth

running of their community (Bullock, 2008; Hicks, Gibbs, Weatherly, & Byford, 2007; Menzies- Lyth, 1988; Rose, 1990).

While receiving so many unconscious emotions, the managers must also be aware of changes in dynamics and stay in tune and emotionally connected to the children and staff in the home (Burton, 1998). At the time of placement ending, the individual child would be experiencing an abundance of ranging emotions and heightened anxiety at moving on (Tomlinson, 2005). There would also be mixed feelings of loss and happiness by the staff and children's group in response to a member of the care home family leaving (Tomlinson et al., 2012). This is why we argue that it is significant for the managers to reflect deeply on every leaver as they have built these emotional connections and become invested in their development. Through reflection they may also become more aware and responsive to the atmosphere, current residents, and staff, and therefore can better maintain the therapeutic ecology (Burton, 1998).

However, it is established that there is an uneasiness around the discussion of how children's therapy comes to an end (Lanyado, 1999). Nevertheless, it is argued that it is essential to discuss this area of endings as, to be truly helpful to the child, this must be thought about; it is a vital experience in the therapeutic process (Lanyado, 1999). It may be that the managers may find it difficult to reflect on the leavers, especially with cases that seemed 'unplanned' (in whichever definition they deemed suitable for the case). As mentioned, some unconscious processes will not reach a natural resolution; we contend that many of the most potent experiences for the managers can be related to those times when a process has not reached such a conclusion.

Defining the terminology of placement endings

Historically, there is certain terminology used in this area such as: 'placement breakdown', 'disruption', 'instability' and 'unplanned ending' (Harkin & Houston, 2016). However, one could argue that it is difficult to objectively assign one of these terms to a placement ending. For example, past research on this subject defined the term 'placement breakdown' based on just the length of placement or age of the child (Sallnäs et al., 2004). Other definitions describe a 'placement breakdown' as 'an unanticipated and untimely placement ending that is not included in the young person's care plan' (Berridge & Cleaver, 1987, p. 6). It is more recently argued that the definition should incorporate and consider the relationships involved between the care provider, the local authority and the child to define the nature of a placement ending (Sallnäs et al., 2004).

Furthermore, a Swedish study of foster carers found that rather than being an individual event, a placement breakdown was a complex process which was shaped by the individuals and context involved (Khoo & Skoog, 2013). It therefore seems vital to consider and examine each leaving event independently rather than assigning overarching definitions or terminology which do not allow for individuality and context.

We can see the inconsistency in how a 'breakdown', or an 'unplanned move' are defined and additionally we wonder what purpose it serves to label placement endings in such a way. This type of terminology inevitably produces certain 'negative' or 'positive' connotations which may not be very reflective of the situation. A move, though unsettling, does not always present a negative transition; it can be healthy based on the context (NICE, n.d).

Context

The organisation on which this case study is based is a therapeutic residential care provider made up of five homes in England at the time of writing. The homes are made up of four to 10 children, with age ranges of six to 12 in two homes and 13-16 in the other three. The primary objective of the care provider is to heal trauma, help children and young people build healthy relationships, and to hold and contain them in a way they have not been before within a nurturing family like environment.

The organisation is run via the Integrated Systemic Therapy (IST) Model. This applies psychodynamic/ psychoanalytic concepts to understand the unconscious processes affecting a child's wellbeing and functioning, while also therapeutically containing all the structural layers around each child including all staff and managers in their day-to-day work. IST is rooted in the therapeutic community and the psychoanalytic movement though both the planned environment or milieu therapy and systemic (family/ group) thinking via dynamic group spaces.

Method

In keeping with the IST methodology, which uses group dynamics and group work as a therapeutic intervention, it seemed appropriate to conduct this small- scale qualitative case study through a focus group. This method allows a natural interaction and journey through themes with the ability to experience the consensus and difference within the group (Bryman, 2008; Morgan, 1998).

Additionally, as this is a sensitive topic, and potentially quite provocative, a group may be more supportive rather than individual interviews as the participants would have alike experiences (Barbour, 2008).

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The focus group comprised four of the children's homes managers and two psychotherapists who work closely with the managers and other staff and are integrated with and knowledgeable about the work. The psychotherapists were added to the group to help mediate the sensitivity of the topic, facilitate conversation and to offer insight and reflection on the leavers, situations and the manager's feelings.

The focus group was somewhat 'unstructured' in that there were no set questions or guides. The aim was to see what the natural flow of the narrative or reflection on leavers would be. The discussion was guided around statistics on the children that left their placement in the last two years and the nature of their leaving. The focus group was audio-recorded and transcribed.

To analyse underlying themes and feelings, thematic analysis guided by Braun and Clarke's (2006) process, was used to examine the data which seemed appropriate at this exploratory stage (please see Table 1 for reference).

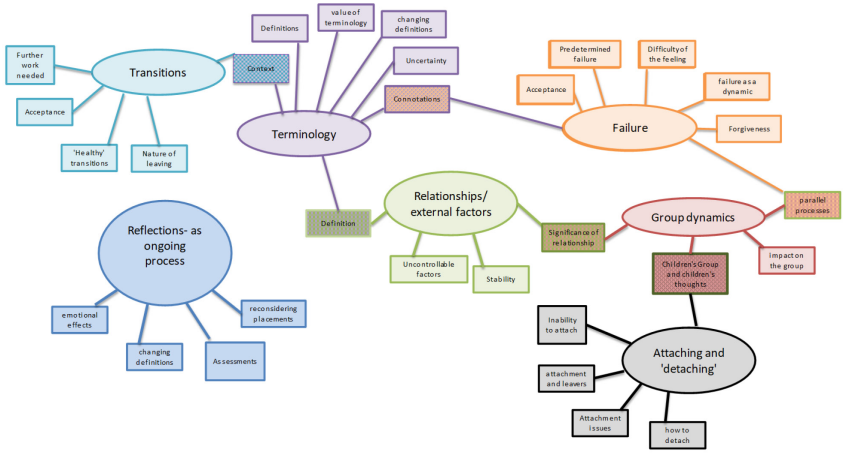
Ethical approval was granted by the organisation's ethics committee, and consent was obtained by all the participants.

Results

From the thematic analysis, certain themes and concepts emerged which flowed throughout the conversation.



Figure 1: Thematic analysis diagram



Transitions

The discussion began with transitions and the process of a child leaving the home and how this is managed. However, instantly there seemed to be some unease or space for excuses to be made in not having thought about leavers enough, as well as acknowledgement that more needs to be done:

> M1: … the process of transitions and letting go. So I agree there's some work to be done.

> M3: …we do a little bit of work … looking at who is leaving, why, where, when …

PSY1: … need to think further about how that works …

As hypothesised, it seemed that transitions of children leaving care, and these reflections, were not focused on enough and that more consideration and processes need to be put in place to consider the leavers. In addition to this, the idea of quick or unprocessed data around leavers gave the sense of not holding the child in mind:

> M3: … we were not able to finish the plan, so the child went in a precipitate way… it said something about systems and processes that weren't in place, or was it the fact that we could not hold this child in mind?



This seemed difficult, as though the child was let down. However, it was discussed that if the time and space can be given for their transition, it can be very healthy and positive. This included leaving 'ceremonies' of a sort which can process 'goodbyes', creating a healthier separation for the leaver and the rest of the home:

> M3: … experience a separation that is healthy…get her and the children to put together a programme of her leaving. So we've got a calendar of eight weeks… and how the children can work with her, and when her leaving date is…

Terminology

A significant area of debate was around the terminology of the nature of leavers in terms of 'planned' and 'unplanned'. These are quite generic terms for this area but hold inconsistency and uncertainty as can be seen from the quotes below:

> M1: Can you say something about how you defined planned and unplanned?
>
> PSY1: … looking at planned and unplanned in terms of if the child left within a certain period of time, but then we thought…was that an appropriate place for the child to move onto?
>
> M1: … it was unwanted that he left, but at the same it was planned in that it did not become disrupted.
>
> PSY2: … It probably feels like unplanned, meaning quite muddily.

As can be seen from the above quotes there was some confusion and contention when it came to the words 'planned and 'unplanned'. Additionally, the value of such terminology was disputed due to the connotations and the potential culture it can form, which ideally needs shifting:

> M3: We used to treat that as a tragedy. So, we're trying to rebrand it to say let's look at why this person is leaving…very difficult to turn a culture which says every leaving is bad.

> PSY2: I wonder if the categorisation of planned and unplanned is actually the most helpful thing…what we're grappling with is that planned is 'good' and unplanned is a 'failure'.

When considering terminology, one of the main outcomes was that context of each child/ case must be considered to understand the nature of a leaving rather than label it based on set rules:

> M3: What's quite right is the narrative to support what that means.

> PSY2: … it's also possible to have someone stay with you for 5 years and make a complete hash of the ending by contrast.

The discussion presented the importance of reflecting contextually by individual case to understand leavers.

Relationships and external factors

The nature of a leaving seemed closely linked with how relationships were managed, particularly with the local authority and social workers:

> M1: … unplanned becomes something about either the relationship with the child breaking down, or maybe even the relationship with the local authority breaking down.

> M2: …there's been a change in social worker and then whilst I was on holiday in August there was a plan to pull him.

> M3: I mean one child, his social worker, the first thing she said was this is too far for me to travel… So, the first time she came to us she was like, 'I need to get a taxi from the train station, who's going to pay then?' so in the end I said we're going to pay because we cannot have something like £27 become the showstopper for the child… driver is the social worker's needs, not the child's.

The managers seemed to feel helpless in these situations and frustrated at both the external factors and the lack of appreciation of the IST methodology by which they run; this emphasises relationships and long-term therapeutic interventions:

> M2: … an 'unappreciation', if that's the word… psychodynamic approach is not a quick fix, it's about relationships.

Regardless of such issues, there appeared to be a consensus on the parallel between keeping a healthy relationship with external bodies and ensuring a healthy placement and transition for the child. M1 explained later that even if a child must move on for whatever reason, a healthy transition can be ensured by maintaining a good relationship:

> … we managed to keep something of the relationship with the local authority kind of going so that he could leave in a planned way.

Failure

Regardless of the reason for ending the placement, the feeling of failure was heavy in the room upon reflection of the leavers. It was a concept that came up multiple times and the insecurity around it was very present and painful:

> M2: … I was thinking, well had I failed him?

The managers expressed failing via their main task of providing stability and containment:

> M4: … about containment and holding, because from day one, that's what we're providing- wanting to provide stability. So, if a child is only with us three months, then leaves, that's not providing stability for the child.

There were descriptions of unconscious processes around failure in the form of projections, parallel processes and self-fulfilling prophecies:

> PSY1: … they bring with them, that they've been failed. Then it gets into the adults … it's a parallel process.

> PSY1: … the social worker said, 'this has broken down so many times this child isn't going to survive more than a couple months here'. So already when you're thinking about the failure it's kind of like the social worker has that idea, suggesting that the child is going to fail.

> M3: … they almost had like an internal clock where they're thinking, 'they're about to chuck me out now'.

It felt as though failure was almost ingrained in the discussion about the leavers due to being constantly disappointed by the adults and the system around them. The managers accepted failings and the need to reflect on them. However, they also discussed the importance of acceptance to learn and move forward:

> M2: I think well did I fail, and it led me to think about how passionate I am about the current placements and what we're doing with the local authority and that.

Additionally, it was to be accepted that sometimes the placement is not fitting or healthy for a child and that the appropriate step is for them to move on to a more successful or fulfilling placement:

> M3: … we knew that the child needed to leave because we couldn't meet her needs… it might be safer for the child not to be here…so there is something about being able to forgive ourselves

> really …it was very intense but totally appropriate [moving on from the placement] and the child is thriving now where she is.

Assessments

Many of the above reflections led to and focused on formal assessments conducted at different stages and the need to review them:

> M4: … part of the assessment is what are the things that you've learnt from this placement breaking down…I think there's a need for end of placement assessment.

> M1: If a placement does become disrupted, then with the local authority, you must provide a disruption report. But it's a much better idea to have an end of placement report for all children. It might also help to bring these things together and define planned and unplanned.

Conducting an end of placement review seemed an agreeable plan to help evaluate placement endings regardless of the nature of leaving. This reflection on leavers through a formal assessment would be quite supportive in both guiding transitions and also learning from experiences of each placement. It would also provide a formal and allocated space for reflection that hasn't been present but seems imperative.

The other children in the home

The managers also considered the complexity and impact of leavers on the other children in the home and the importance of considering the change in the group dynamics.

> M1: It is important to put it back and ask the community … the group bit, what the children feel you know in the community. You have to take all of that into consideration.

As we can imagine, there may be feelings of separation and loss at a child leaving the care home family. However, for several reasons a placement may not be functioning and the ending of it can feel a healthy release for the rest of the group, as M3 describes a case:

> M3: My recollection was the sense of relief from the other children and the staff [after a child had left]. Some of the kids still talk to her.

Attaching and detaching

Attachments with leavers and the complications around them were debated. Such a care provider aims to help form healthy attachments with the children, creating a very close bond similar to parent and child. This, however, causes some problematic dynamics around 'ownership' (not in an objective sense to own them but a sense of family belonging):

> PSY2: … there's some sort of thing about who owns this child and who's this child most attached to and so on.

> M4: I think from the communities it's the link worker who 'owns' the child as you say or is it the community?

It was then argued that a wider problem occurs on leaving with the notion 'detachment':

> PSY2: I wonder how much we really know or think about the process of detaching, because that's what we're talking about here … want to provide stability… but maybe one of the things we're actually not so good at is about helping children detach from us, even in a planned way.

However, this felt a difficult and slightly unfair concept to consider for both the children and the staff:

> M2: … there should be some kind of attachment for the next couple years or so really in terms of making sure there's links and inviting them back to the home every year and so.

This process of a gradual 'detachment' appeared to be quite agreeable and further consideration on the process was planned for future discussion.

Discussion

Initially mentioning leavers seemed to elicit feelings of unease and defensiveness, which aligns with what Lanyado (1999) stated with regard to this topic. The group agreed and accepted there needed to be more reflective practice, improving formal assessments and general focus around leavers.

The work involves forming and developing healthy attachments, and when this is successful, it is difficult to say goodbye and 'detach' in a positive manner, which is why the leaving transition is significant to think about. Tomlinson (2012) argues this transition can celebrate the child's

therapeutic journey which does not have to be ‘sad’ or ‘negative’ as the move may be a healthy, natural, or appropriate next step for the child and the home. The managers also mentioned the negative culture around leavers which may need shifting, as M3 mentions: ‘we used to treat that as a tragedy. So, we’re trying to rebrand it to say let’s look at why this person is leaving…very difficult to turn a culture which says every leaving is bad’. The idea around creating a type of meaningful ‘goodbye ceremony’ to show the significance of the relationship to both the leaver and the rest of the children in the home seems an interesting idea which could be quite healthy from a therapeutic standpoint when considering how important endings are (Lanyado, 1999).

The discussion around definitions and terminology was significant due to the lack of consistency and differing connotations associated with certain words. Within this work, words such as 'unplanned', 'breakdown' or 'premature' are used regularly, however, the connotations around these words are not reflected upon much. As mentioned in the group, initially the data was categorised based on definitions similar to what Sallnäs et al. (2004) found around the length of placement. However, upon further reflection and consultation, it was discussed that each situation should be considered independently and in context. This would allow increased focus and attention, improving care, and transitions going forward. The group also debated whether using such terms are even helpful to begin with due to the connotations associated. Labelling a child's leaving as 'unplanned' or 'planned' can induce an idea of either success or failure which may not be justified, and such language can be damaging.

The experience of children leaving care can evoke intense emotions, and the difficulty was magnified through the belief of not holding or containing the child as planned or promised. This produced powerful feelings of failure in the managers who felt that they had let that child down.

As Chipungu and Everett (1994) argue, a child leaving care often results in their carer experiencing loss or failure. In the group, the managers reflected on cases where they felt they could have done more, especially for these children who have been consistently let down and disappointed.

In their parental/ responsible role, the managers may take it upon themselves to feel the pain of failure. This idea of the children being failed so tragically in the past by those who should have been reliable seems to resound. The managers must then be so anxious about not failing the children that when a placement ends in an abrupt way, the feeling resonates so much more. Additionally, there may be certain parallel processes involved whereby the children in the service have constantly faced and experienced failure in different forms and project these feelings onto the adults around them. As Rose (1990) describes, the managers receive projections from the children and will need to manage such parallel processes.

However, regardless of a 'successful'/ 'planned' move or an 'unplanned'/ 'abrupt' move, the transitions should ideally be managed or orientated so a child can leave in such a way where they are not carrying the feeling of failure with them, but feeling they are moving in a healthy appropriate way.

As mentioned in the group, often circumstance is out of their control and the local authority will need to make a final decision, which is based on several varying factors. Understandably, practical issues around time and cost will of course affect the logistics around a placement. Furthermore, we must also consider the various factors and contexts that play a part in the decisions and reflections made by the managers such as political agendas, statutory compliance, financial considerations and child welfare. There is an added pressure to an already difficult balance between emotional and practical management considerations. This understanding, however, does not stop us feeling disappointed in a system where the child's needs and

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wellbeing are not put first. When the group were discussing these issues around external factors affecting the placements and the therapeutic work, their anger, frustration and disappointment were tangible. One could sense their years of experience in dealing with such problems that, ultimately, they have no control over.

Unfortunately, this means the therapeutic work comes to a close, but also based on how abrupt the ending is, a healthy transition cannot take place. Interestingly it was stated that the relationship which may or may not be maintained with the local authority impacts on the therapeutic work and the nature of the child leaving. This is why the relationship with the social workers and the local authority is highly significant as they need to feel the child is well looked after and the placement and staff are worth the time and costs involved. It seems that keeping good relationships are key to supporting the child's placement and smooth transition.

In thinking about relationships, it was vital to consider the impact on the other children and the effects a leaver has on them, and subsequently the effect on the dynamics of the group. The managers are responsible for the many layers of containment in the group (Bullock, 2008; Hicks et al., 2007; Menzies-Lyth, 1988). They must always be in tune with the needs of the other children and maintain the therapeutic ecology (Burton, 1998). This may mean that though there is a sense of loss at a child leaving, it may at times be more beneficial to the leaver and the other children depending on the relationships or dynamics they had. This is also an important aspect the managers have to reflect on with every leaver.

Conclusion

This case study has provided an insight into the thoughts, processes and feelings of children's home managers on children moving on from those

care homes, and what emotions may be held by the managers when a child leaves home. From both the literature and the focus group findings, it was evident that this is not an area that has been explored- though arguably it should be. The managers already consider, deliberate and contain many areas and layers of their work within the therapeutic environment; however, they are unable to think about leavers in much detail.

It is highly significant within the care milieu to gain these perspectives of managers as they can implement vital change from their position, resulting in a culture shift. This shift may focus attention on leavers and transitions to improve children and young people's experiences of the care system as well as the emotional containment of those working with them.

We can hypothesise a few reasons why space may not be provided for reflection on leavers. This may be due to factors around: the amount of time, lack of structured or formal assessment, and emotional difficulty in thinking about leavers. It was established however, that it is vital to make space for this reflection for the benefit of both the child leaving and the therapeutic environment in the home. This was found through the various aspects discussed above such as processing unconscious feelings, understanding the therapeutic environment they manage, developing and sustaining relationships, and assessment techniques. It was also established that it would be better to reflect on each child individually within the context to contemplate the nature of the ending, how it could have been improved, and what can be learned from it to improve care going forward.

We are aware that this is a very niche small-scale study of only one group in one organisation. Though it is appropriate for this initial exploratory study, it is also the most significant limitation of this study as it would not give us a generalisable or representative picture of the subject. However, it has been able to give us the initial steps towards further exploring this area

of study by giving us a small window of insight. The next steps would be to include more children's homes managers from other organisations to cross-reference themes, feelings and processes. Additionally, the topic of managing transitions could be further examined: this could further inform practice on transitions and leavers to improve processes within the care system.



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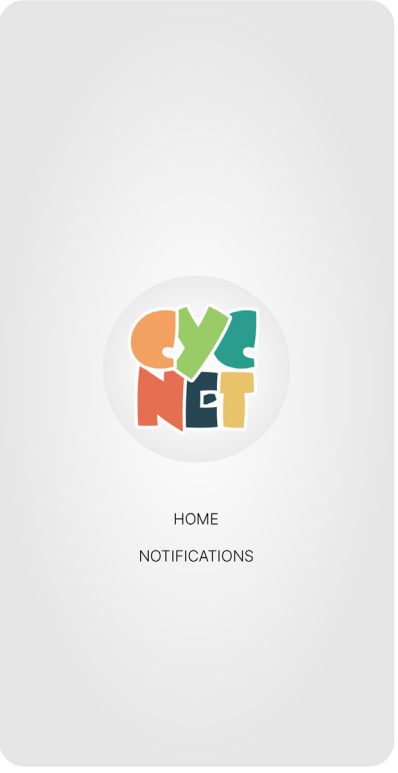
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Table 1: Thematic Analysis

Transitions		Definitions/ Terminology		Relationships/ external		Failure		Reflection		Other children/ group		Attach/de-tach	
a healthy transition	"It was intense, it was very intense but totally appropriate and the child is thriving now where she	planned and unplanned definition	"so can you say something about how you defined planned and unplanned"-M1	Definitions through relationships	"unplanned becomes something about either the relationship with the child breaking down, or	failure	I was thinking, well had I failed him? M2	changing definitions	"we looked at it in a different way" psy1	group/ children's thoughts	", it is important to put it back and ask the community"-M1	attachment to do with leavers	"holding and attachments and these are ideas that we work with on a regular basis,
acceptance + work to be done	"on transitions as these are really key and we need to think further about how that works."	planned and unplanned definition	"we were looking at planned and unplanned in terms of if the child left within a certain period of	uncontrollable factors	"Yeah if the LA decided that the placement ends, then literally our hands are tied and I think key to	learning from failure	"I do have some feeling about that because I think well did I fail and it led me to think about	reconsider the placement	"It might be safer for the child not to be here" M3	group/ children's thoughts	"about what's the group bit what the children feel you know in the community. You have to	innability to attach	"a whole lot of adults leaving that that wouldn't provide those kind of attachments with
inability to carry out transition	"we were not able to finish the plan, so the child went in a precipitate way" m3	changing definitions	"we looked at it in a different way" psy1	uncontrollable factors	"he complained to his LA about various things and based upon what he said, they pulled the switch,	difficulty of failure	"there is something there about the failure, and that really does resonate with me" -psy1	changing definitions	"we asked the communities who they felt were planned and unplanned, rather than	impact on the group	"the impact on the community might be that it was like an unplanned leaving regardless of	how to detach	"I wonder how much we really know or think about the process of detaching, because
the nature of leaving	"it's been very difficult to turn a culture which says every leaving is bad" M4	changing definitions	"we asked the communities who they felt were planned and unplanned, rather than	significance of the relationship	relationship with the LA nearly broke down, but I was thinking did it break down or did we manage	failure as a process/ dynamic	"The thing about failure is that I've never experienced it so powerful in my life as I	changing definitions	"maybe actually there's 4 or 5 different categories instead"	parallel processes	"part of the dynamic that's with the children, that they bring with them, that they've been	innability to attach	"because how are they meant to form those bonds if they constantly had to move" psy1
acceptance	"how do we accept a young person leaving, and what does that do to us on a feelings level"	uncertainty	"My take on it would be that it would not be unplanned" psy 1	significance of the relationship	"key bit is something about the breakdown of the relationship either with the child or with the	difficulty of failure	"about containment and holding, because from day 1, that's what we're providing- wanting to	assessments	"I think there's a need for end of placement assessment" M4		the sense of relief from the other children and the staff.	attachment to do with leavers	"there should be some kind of attachment for the next couple years or so really in terms of
acceptance + work to be done	"they're talking about the process of transitions and letting go. So I agree there's some work to be	value of terminology	"I wonder if the categorisation of planned and unplanned is actually the most	uncontrollable factors	", there's been a change in social worker and then whilst I was on holiday in August there was a plan	forgivness	"so there is something about being able to forgive ourselves really" M3	assessments	"part of the assessment is, what are the things that you've learnt from this placement breaking			innability to attach/ patterns	No ones' ever held him before, why would you, you won't care for him. What's that thing,
a healthy transition	"opportunity to leave somewhere and leave in a wholesome way. And also experience a	uncertainty	"the impact on the community might be that it was like an unplanned leaving regardless of	stability	"if you had a whole of number adults coming in, a whole lot of adults leaving that that	acceptance	"we knew that the child needed to leave because we couldn't meet her needs." M3	emotional effects	". I think it does, it all carries emotion for us it's such an emotional wave really." Psy1			issues around attachment	"there's some sort of thing about who owns this child and who's this child most attached to
acceptance + work to be done	"we do a bit of work on in our referrals meeting, so we start by looking at who is leaving, why,	connotations	"what we're grappling with is that planned is good and unplanned is a failure. " Psy2	significance of the relationship	"an 'unappreciation', if that's the word, of that psychodynamic approach is not a quick fix, it's	acceptance	"we're able to accept that yeah maybe we need to learn, to be able to do these things	assessments	"if a placement does become disrupted, then with the LA, you must provide a disruption				communities it's the link worker who 'owns' the child as you say or is it the community. M4
changing definitions	"because it's also possible to have someone stay with you for 5 years and make a	planned and unplanned definition	"it was unwanted that he left, but at the same it was planned in that it did not become disrupted"	uncontrollable factors	" for instance that social services department saying we need to get him so we can save some	predetermined failure	"the social worker said "this has broken down so many times this child isn't going to survive	acceptance + work to be done	very little data for the young people that left in an unplanned way. That was quite important to				
context	cannot base the idea of a plaanned or unplanned leaving on a set definiiton or stucture, it	value of terminology	"I think about whether it is helpful to say planned or unplanned"=psy1	uncontrollable factors	"I mean one child, his social worker, the first thing she said was this is too far for me to travel, it	predetermined failure	, they almost had like an internal clock where they thinking, "they're about to chuck me out now".						
context	"it might be safer for the child not to be here" M3												
context	what's quite right is the narrative to support what that means. M3												
value of terminology	"we do need to think about how planned and unplanned is it good or is it bad" psy1												

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Translating Social Justice and Anti-Oppression in/for Child and Youth Care Practice

Kiaras Gharabaghi

Theories of social justice, anti-oppressive practice, anti-racism, sanism, and other aspects of inequity are often complex. Some of this theory is barely readable and demands a nuanced understanding of everything from history to philosophy, ethics, Indigenous ways of being, and multiple knowledge systems, some of which are not easily accessed given their combination of oral and often intentionally and violently erased roots. Add to that decolonization, intersectionality, and various other knowledge and identity frameworks, and we are very quickly talking about something that likely very few individuals can meaningfully engage, and many others simplify, corrupt, or misinterpret in a desperate effort to be seen as relevant, allied, and – dare I say it – woke. And yet, these theories are in fact important, vital even, if any measure of democratic ideal is to be sustained. We cannot live without these theories, without the sometimes seemingly esoteric nature of these theories, and without the contestations, arguments, debates, and even battles about

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which theoretical movement holds greater promise in the context of social justice and equity more generally. To those who advance these discussions, I say thank you. No injustice can be fought through silence, avoidance, or lack of engagement. No action, however well intended, is likely going to lead us anywhere better without becoming subsumed in theoretical debate, without being theorized in context, without being historicized and materialized to its core elements.

Notwithstanding the importance of social justice and the theories that engage with this idea, I find myself thinking about the many child and youth care practitioners I have encountered over the years across diverse settings in many different countries around the world. There are a few observations I can make about what to me represents the overwhelming majority of the field of child and youth care. Here are some especially important ones:

1. Very few child and youth care practitioners actually engage with any of the theory on anti-oppressive practice that has been put forward by theorists; most have never encountered it.
2. Most practitioners around the world have no specific post-secondary education background before embarking on a career in child and youth care.
3. In fact, a strong majority in most places in the world don't actually know that they *are* child and youth care practitioners; they just do the work to the best of their ability, and it often turns out that their abilities are enormous and superb.
4. Those who do encounter the theories in their studies often struggle to find any connection between those theories and the job duties assigned to them by their employers, and therefore quickly focus on practice-based knowledge they gained during their studies rather than theoretical knowledge.

5. And finally, those who do engage the theoretical world of anti-oppressive practices with great enthusiasm and commitment during their studies often either bypass practice altogether and pursue graduate education and an academic or teaching career, or alternatively, enter practice, become frustrated with the demands of practice that prevent them from working differently than their employer's expectations, and then leave practice to take up further studies or to change careers.



All of this makes me think that we have not yet arrived at a meaningful way of preparing people for practice in child and youth care while at the same time taking steps to move that practice into much more equity-focused directions such that there is an impact on how young people, their families, and their communities experience the field of child and youth care. One reason for this is that notwithstanding the importance of considering context that is embedded in anti-oppressive practice, there is at best a very limited engagement of how the practice of child and youth care manifests across different settings and why certain patterns emerge that cumulatively provide the practice-based evidence for excellence in child and youth care practice. In fact, I think a particularly unhelpful way in which attempts are made to introduce anti-oppressive practices to child and youth care is based on an attempt to mirror the experience in the field of social work. There is no denying that some forms of social work have had considerable success in introducing anti-oppressive practices into curriculum and impacting social work practice generally in good ways. But even in social work, the success has not been even. Clinical social work practice, for example, continues to unfold overwhelmingly using the same practice methods that have always been at play; anti-oppressive practices are very much add-ons and peripheral in the more clinically based social work field, and as a result, have had at best minimal impact. And yet, the demand for clinical social work practice is growing rapidly, particularly in a post-COVID world that has seen a universal increase in mental health challenges and addictions (to drugs, to social media, to gambling). It is of course good to be critical of the modalities of clinical social work practice, but this doesn't stop social workers from providing clinical social work services to individuals and small groups, equity gaps notwithstanding. I fear that this is also what is happening in child and youth care practice, except that instead of clinical practices we speak more about interpersonal practices or group work.

Attempts to make child and youth care curricula and training efforts more equity-focused have not had the desired impact on such interpersonal and group work practices. These continue largely outside of the curricular changes unfolding in child and youth care programs, and they don't appear especially responsive to the equity training industry either. Somehow the worlds of anti-oppression theory and everyday child and youth care practice have not yet collided in a constructive manner.

In very general terms, I strongly support a greater emphasis on anti-oppressive practices, anti-racism, anti-ableism, and anti gender- and neuro-normativity in the field of child and youth care, and I have appreciated the contributions of anti-oppressive theorists to the discussions. But I am also conscious that the experience of a child and youth care practitioner, be that in a well-funded residential treatment centre in North America or an unfunded street outreach program in Mumbai, an in-home family or kinship support program in Germany or a care program in child headed households in the Isibindi projects in South Africa, is one that has benefitted enormously from the relational, in-the-moment care practices of individuals present as child and youth care practitioners, even if that is not their title. Daily life events, as Garfat and friends have argued, really are at the heart of that experience. For this reason, I want to encourage approaches to equity-focused work that directly engage with the experience of care and caring, with the significance of daily life events, and with the broader impact of relational connections in ways that practitioners on the ground can relate to.

I do believe that it is in fact possible to do this better and more effectively and with greater impact in the context of anti-oppressive practices. In fact, I think there are many approaches already underway that aim to do precisely that; in Canada, I am thinking about the work lead by Varda Mann Feder, for example, on ethics in child and youth care practice;

or the work led by Tara Collins on child rights in child and youth care practice; or the work led by Nicole Ineese-Nash on youth participation in Indigenous communities. I am also thinking about how the work of the National Association of Child Care Workers in South Africa, led by the brilliant Zeni Thumbadoo, has impacted equity in child and youth care practice. What sets these kinds of approaches apart is their direct engagement with the on the ground experience, an understanding of job descriptions of people hired into child and youth care jobs, and a respect for daily life events.

I am all for developing new ways of knowing and doing that are informed by anti-oppressive practices, anti-racism, and other equity-focused frameworks. But I also think that one could have far greater impact doing this specifically in the field of child and youth care if the efforts to create change actually engaged that field of practice across its many settings and contexts rather than dismissed this field of practice as oppressive and therefore not worthy of improvements. Sometimes theory can be the vanguard of change; a friend and colleague of mine, Juanita Stephen, has theorized the concept of care through Black feminist lenses in ways that directly engage child and youth care practice; as I read her work, which she refers to as *care-full writing*, I not only learn about theory, but I can vividly imagine her direct engagement with young people, with families, and with communities in ways that transform our practice not out of a desire to dismiss, but out of a commitment to make *care* better. And this, for me, at least, is the core of the matter: Anti-oppressive practice cannot lead to anti-care and caring practices. When it does, something is still missing from how we are engaging equity in child and youth care practice. This is why I think we would do well to theorize care and caring more, because the connections between care and caring and child and youth care practice

offer far greater potential for social justice in our practice than what we are currently doing.

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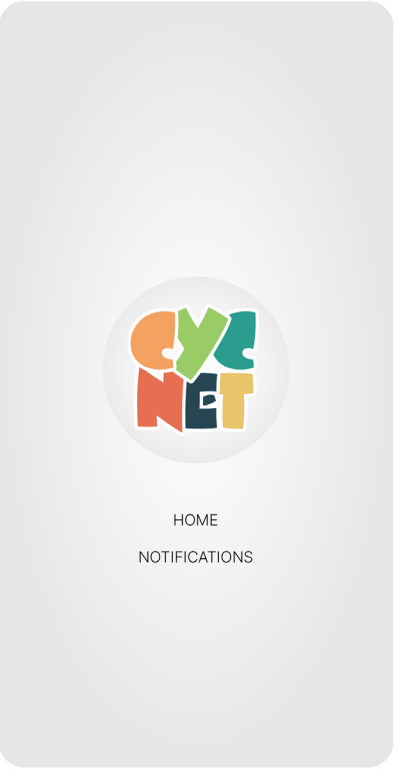
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Cyborg Relations in the 21st Century

Hans Skott-Myhre

The world has changed and is changing in very real and fundamental ways as we have moved from the late 20th century into the 21st. I know I have been hammering away at that point repeatedly, perhaps to the point of annoyance in much of my writing here. But I think it is a point that needs to be made, if only because the scope of the change we are undergoing is so immense. The world as we have known it, for anyone over 20 years old, is becoming socially and culturally alien. The tricky bit about this is that the change is taking place in such a way as to normalize the shifts so that everything seems to be recognizable. There are still families, communities, schools, churches, governments, shops, homes, students, workers, jobs, banks and so on. And for the most part we still feel as though these social structures are places where we function as social citizens. In fact, we rely on many, if not all of them, for our bearings as we maneuver though our lives.

Our identities are caught up in these social forms in the way that we take on roles as parents, children, brothers, sisters, employees, supervisors, church members, members of a neighborhood or community. In fact, for some of us these identifiers are a crucial part of how we know ourselves. At the same time, though, many of us are beginning to feel as though the social ground on which we stand is not as reliable as we had hoped. For an

increasing number of us, we feel as though our social coordinates are melting away and the ground on which we base our social identity is more like quicksand that bedrock.

175 years ago, Karl Marx, writing in the Communist Manifesto, noted that capitalism has the remarkable quality of destroying existing systems of social and political organization. He noted that the focus on profit as an abstract system of value erodes the living material reality of social relations. As capitalism spreads, the social world becomes ever more abstract and less connected to the world of lived human relations. Nearly 125 years later post-Marxist scholar Michael Hardt wrote an article he called "The Withering of Civil Society." In that piece he argued that much of what was constructed as civil society engendered by the European Enlightenment, was being emptied of its social force by the emerging world of virtual capitalism at the end of the 20th century.

Hardt proposed that the social functions of government, churches, schools, families, and other organizational structures of civil society were losing their primary function; that of producing a society that serves the needs of its members. Instead, these social institutions were shifting the task of society into giving primacy to the task of making money.

So, the task of social institutions such as schools, for example, shifts from producing a well-educated citizenry, to the task of producing good workers and consumers for capitalist corporations. In a recent article in the New York Times about Ivy League Universities, it was reported that students were increasingly interested in earning degrees that would make them large amounts of money, simply for the sake of becoming wealthy. The article notes that Ivy League universities have always produced a student body that generally went on to become wealthy, but that the current trend goes beyond that. The authors note that to "sell out" was no longer considered an insult, but instead a mark of ambition and success.

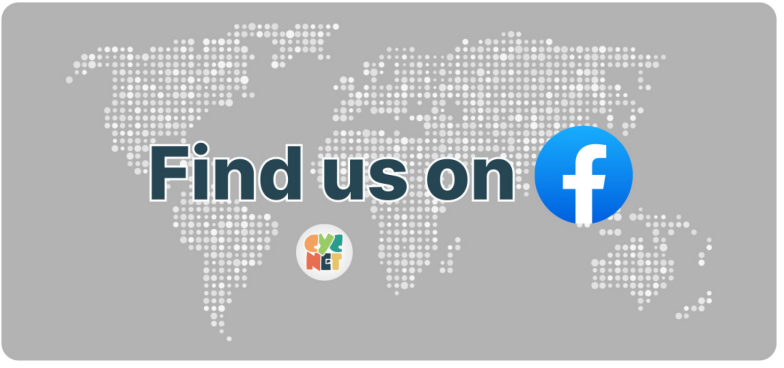
Making lots of money took precedence over improving the world, living one's dreams, or caring for each other.

This trend towards turning all social institutions towards the task of producing ever increasing profits in the form of the money sign means that money as a value increasingly displaces human care and compassion as key features of our society. And while this is disturbing in and of itself, the indirect consequences are even more disturbing still. Of course, we can see the direct effect in the ways that our social institutions are deteriorating through financial neglect or sheer appropriation. However, beyond the obvious decline in the quality of care delivered at all levels of society, there is another possibly less obvious effect of the rise of 21st century global capitalism and that is how we are being shaped emotionally, psychologically, and physically.

Theorists from Marx to Foucault have argued that who we are and who we might become is tied to the ways in which society produces itself and what that society values. From the moment we are born, there are a myriad of social diagrams for identity that begin shape the parameters of who we imagine we can be. These include prescriptive parameters of key social indicators such as gender or race, where we are inducted into descriptors driven by the historical residue of history as it erupts into the present over and over again. Or the demands of family structures that set the descriptors for us as mothers, brothers, sisters, fathers and so on. Of course, there are so many of these social molds that it would be impossible to delineate them all; child, parent, student, worker, consumer, homeowner, adolescent, friend, lover, wife, husband, partner, artist, professional, the list goes on. And for many, if not most of us, the entry into these mappings of who we are or might become feels natural, almost seamless. There is a sense of normalcy in being shaped into these roles through an extensive network of acts and gestures both large and small. Of course, we think to ourselves,

we are someone's sibling, parent, spouse, or employee with all the expectations of performance that comes with that role.

Within the frameworks of this extensive and complicated social mapping there are major and minor variations. The broad parameters of these roles are set by the dominant culture of any given historical period. In our time, the major reference points lead back to the colonial shaping of social institutions and the residual structures of industrial capitalism. However, within this dominant overlay of European colonial structures there are an almost infinite number of variations that have either refused the colonial diagram or have created hybrid forms of indigenous social structures and colonial mappings. That said, to one degree or another all these alternative forms of structures and roles are referenced against the dominant mapping of our times and to some degree found to be less optimal, less acceptable, and at times even simply alien and exotic. For all of their force, there is a crisis in all these social mappings. In significant ways, the substance of what each of these roles was to provide is slipping and opening a kind of uncertainty as to who we are supposed to be and what we are supposed to do.



On the positive end of this we have far more opportunity to discover and assert new social roles that can create new forms of gender, family, employment, education, sexuality, race, and government. On the more problematic aspect, these shifts open reactionary formations that try ever more brutally to enforce the old order no matter what it takes. But these attempts to force our practices and performances of our selves will inevitably fail because it is the nature of time to move on and if it returns it is never to the same place.

The uncertainty of all of these developments, both positive and negative also begins to form a significant aspect of who we are as subjects of the 21st century. We are unstable subjects who, in large degree are liminal. In other words, we are subjects living in what Anzaldua called the borderland; a space of indeterminacy. It is important to remember that such spaces are anything but neutral. Borderlands are immensely productive, made up of all the swirling elements of ontological possibility that make up historical moments of transition. We are not who we have been, and, in many respects, we are not anyone yet.

I have to wonder whether we have adequately accounted for this indeterminacy in the ways that we think about and practice our work with young people. Do we assume that both the young people and ourselves are essentially the same kinds of human beings we have always been? When we encounter the children of the 21st century are we continuing to map them onto developmental and relational diagrams of the last century? In our work are we prone to see the bodies of young people as simply human? Or are we beginning to account for the ways in which bodies are being reconfigured in our world today.

I would argue that there are many reasons we might want to rethink our 20th century diagrams of the human body in our work with young people born into the world of fully virtual capitalism. The developmental trajectory

of our bodies is being altered by hormones and chemicals in our food and water supplies, our psychological and emotional lives are being greatly impacted by both the velocity, intensity, and uncertainty of life in the 21st century, our neurology is being reconfigured by our encounters with the machines that more and more encompass significant amounts of time.

While I think shifts in our physiology, psychology, and emotions might at least seem familiar, the fact that we have become cyborgs may be less so. As theorists such as Donna Haraway have suggested we are no longer humans using machines, so much as a human/machine form of subjectivity in which it becomes almost impossible to disentangle where the machine ends and human begins. Marx writing in the middle of the 19th century, predicted a time when there would be a development in capitalist production that will create a web of machinery spread across the planet in a vast network of machinic communication within which humans would serve the role of points of conscious links between different elements of the machine. I am not at all sure he wasn't predicting specifically our historical moment. We are indeed linked as conscious elements in world wide web upon which we are no longer simply dependent but codependent. We might even say that our relation is co-evolutionary. That is to say that our relation to our phones, computers, algorithms, screens, and keypads is impacting dramatically on the very nature of what it means to be human.

So far as I can see, we haven't really taken this on in any significant way within our work with young people. To the degree we have even acknowledged the ways in which our children have become cyborgs, the discourse has been one of various levels of denial and confusion. We worry about phones, streaming platforms, and social media in the way we used to worry about different subcultures and countercultures and their ostensible disastrous effects on young people's lives. Such concern was both ineffectual and largely misplaced in the past and I would argue that moral

panic about the inevitable rise of cyborg generations is not only misplaced, but irrelevant. As a society, we will be ever more cyborg as long as we have the capacity to create and be created by cyber space.

From my perspective a more useful approach would begin with an acceptance of what is happening to us as coevolutionary components of a new form of cyborg consciousness. We need to start asking questions like, what does relational work look like if we are working with young people as cyborgs? Does communication look different? Do our programs need to change to accommodate more virtual activity? What kinds of self-reflection is necessary for workers to overcome their biases about an emerging world that may seem quite unfamiliar and alien? How do we resist the temptation for nostalgia about the world that is passing? What elements of being human are worth amplifying in our relationship with the machinery of global capitalism? How can we seize back this new form of social relations from the predations of capitalist production? Should we?

This is all uncharted territory, and I am certainly not of an age or position to do more than suggest possibilities. I have no idea if these are the questions we should be asking or if there is a while other set that can or will emerge from those who are born of this age. However, I do believe that asking questions as to how proceed by meeting young people where they are at is vastly preferable to wringing our hands and cursing the way the world has changed. The world is indeed changing, and I hope we as a field can keep up. The future is now if we can hold the faith necessary to engage it. That is the task if we are up to it.

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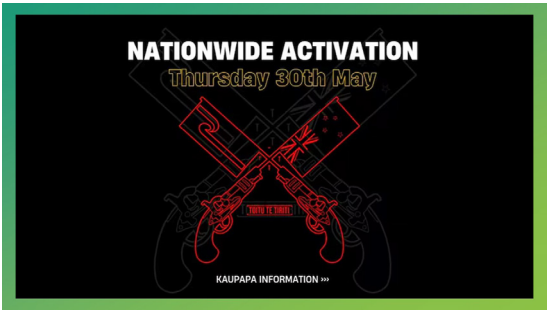
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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From New Zealand: Facing Treaty of Waitangi Protests



Te Pāti Māori of New Zealand calls for nationwide protest over Government plans

Kia Ora Tatau Katoa and warm greetings everyone! As we in the Southern Hemisphere are shivering amidst Winter storms and cold, those of you in the Northern Hemisphere will be hoping that wild weather will get no worse than the tornadoes, heavy rains and flooding that have hit both North America and Europe. Alas, climate change is a growing reality for all of us!

In New Zealand, nationwide protests were planned for Budget Day at the end of May. New Zealanders were encouraged to go on strike in response to the right-wing Coalition Government's perceived "assault on *tangata whenua* (the indigenous people of New Zealand) and *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* (our founding document signed with the British in 1840)". The coalition

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government seeks to have every citizen of New Zealand treated equally, with special recognition taken from Māori.



The new 3-party right-wing coalition will remove Treaty Principles from legislation

As a condition of joining the current Government coalition, the New Zealand ACT Party insisted that the Principles of the Treaty of Waitangi be reviewed so that these cover all New Zealanders, regardless of ethnic background. This is an issue debated since the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. First, the country's highest court declared the Treaty a "nullity" and for nearly a century, the Treaty was ignored. Then, the matter was appealed to the Privy Council of the British House of Lords where in a finding of 5-0 the Treaty was reaffirmed. For more than twenty years, Treaty Settlements have been settled with Māori tribes throughout the country. The Treaty lives!



Prime Minister Luxton runs New Zealand like the Executive of Air New Zealand

The ACT Party's Treaty Principles Bill introduced to the current Parliament argues that the nation's founding document needs to deliver on its promise of equal rights for all New Zealanders, not just Māori. Such an interpretation ignores history and the formal status of Māori chiefs who entered into the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, with lasting political implications. Claims are made that the ACT Party Treaty revisions follow examples experienced by indigenous peoples across Canada, the USA and everywhere else that treaties have been signed and then ignored.



Across New Zealand, Māori and non-Māori are challenging Government decisions

The Te Pāti Māori strike action has several key objectives, including: "demonstrating the might of *tangata whenua* (Māori) and *tanagata tiriti* (non-Māori) working together, the revolution of Generation Tiriti



Protestors oppose removal of the Treaty of Waitangi from New Zealand legislation

standing up for, and protecting the rights of all *mokopuna* (children and grandchildren), and asserting the *mana* (status) of *Te Tiriti o Waitangi* as enduring and everlasting". The Treaty is for everyone but gives the indigenous peoples of New Zealand special recognition.



Youthful and middle New Zealand voices don't want the Treaty of Waitangi ignored

The protest, a follow-up of Te Pāti Māori's Day of National Action in December last year, is a response to the policies of the coalition government, many of which have been panned as an "attack" on Māori. Disestablishment of the Māori Health Authority without consultation did little to promote good relations, especially as Māori health statistics are worse than for other citizens.



Not only Māori oppose right-wing changes proposed for New Zealand legislation

Asked whether the calls for strike action and nationwide activation on Budget Day, Prime Minister Luxon said: "No, that would be illegal. Taking a full day off work to

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strike, would be a breach of employment law", he said. "I think that's wrong. I think that's entirely wrong. Dismissively he said, "I think, feel free to protest – but that is probably a weekend sport."

Rallies, *hīkoi* and *carkoi* - marches like traditional *hīkoi*, but instead involving a long line of cars headed to a destination rather than walking – are planned across Aotearoa. In New Zealand's largest city, protesters were to meet near motorway on-ramps, north, south, and west of the city.



Deputy leader of a 3-party coalition government seeks to alter the Treaty completely



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