

CYC-Online

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



**Knowing and Doing
Child and Youth Care**

**They're Trying to
Wash Us Away**

**Being Competent about
Competence**

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

Issue 231 / May 2018



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What are we in for?

James Freeman

*But she said, where'd you wanna go?
How much you wanna risk?
I'm not looking for somebody
With some superhuman gifts
Some superhero
Some fairytale bliss
Just something I can turn to
Somebody I can miss*

The Chainsmokers & Coldplay (2017)

Being a Child and Youth Care (CYC) practitioner brings us into a profound and meaningful field of human engagement. Together we focus on nurturing human development and the advancement of human potential. It's one of the largest human serving professions in the world and is deeply meaningful in the way we engage young people and help them see their own worth, dignity, and future.

CYCs also have the experience of a deep connectedness with colleagues around the world. Just a few months ago at the CYC World conference in my hometown of Ventura, California, CYCs from nearly every corner of the world connected and are experiencing relationships that will last a lifetime. As special as the gathering was, it's not that unique from other gatherings of CYCs. Something



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about engaging people at the head and heart level of personal experience gives us something to share as we progress in our journey alongside others.

Being in the work of a CYC also means we engage in hard work and often get messy. The day to day life of those who are struggling on the margins of society is often far from clean and sanitary. Homelessness on the streets. Aversion to bathing. Behaviors that repel others. We face them all and we embrace the individual regardless of the outward circumstance. Some in our field eventually recognize that this opens parts of ourselves that we would never know otherwise.

Being a CYC also means we can discover some of the greatest rewards possible in life. What better reward is there than knowing we've impacted the direction of someone's life? It comes through sweat, tears – and sometimes blood – and is a special human experience. At the same time, we also get to experience fun along the way whether through shared moments of humor, sport, or the creative arts.

In my own life I had a youth counselor in a local community program who connected with me personally. He also helped a group of my peers connect with each other in ways that created lasting connections through our childhood. CYCs today have reminded and inspired me with hope for the future. We are often the only ones who maintain a 'seeking approach' to engaging with others who aren't seeking help themselves.

This is part of what makes our work so important. Together we make an invaluable contribution to our world. We enter the margins of society and work alongside kids many in our communities don't even know exist, much less want to get close to.

So, we say thank you. Thank you for opening this journal to read and explore how you might become more effective at caring for young people. Thank you for being willing to examine how you might grow yourself. Thank you for engaging in and supporting the larger field of CYC through CYC-Net.

We appreciate you, love you, and are delighted to be alongside you in your journey.



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Knowing and Doing Child and Youth Care

Jack Phelan

I was recently frustrated to read about and also have a discussion about a CYC graduate who still could not clearly distinguish CYC practice from more traditional counseling approaches. Some bachelor level grads also see counseling jobs and advanced degrees as the next logical step in their careers. Most strongly value their CYC education, then they find that it is awkward to build a connection to office-based counseling jobs that seem to offer better career paths. Unfortunately, in my opinion, many CYC educational programs have faculty who actually are therapists and office-based counselors, so the role model for many students is not a CYC practitioner.

I can hear some of the loud protests to my opening paragraph, mostly from people who are counselors in offices who identify as CYC practitioners. I do believe that it is possible to be a CYC practitioner who works in an office, but it is not the natural and most effective arena to create relational, developmental and experiential life space interactions. In fact, many of the rules of office-based therapy are contradictory to good CYC approaches.

Verbal change strategies require reflection and mental re-construction of meaning-making and thoughtful interpretation of past events. These approaches can be effective for people who are motivated and capable of reflecting on the past, with a goal to change. In fact, many people who need help are good candidates for therapy. However, people who have experienced serious abuse and neglect do not respond well to verbal support and intervention. Their brains have been hard-wired to reject thoughts that include trusting others or believing in personal power, and their past experience has created pain and isolation that block any desire to revisit earlier life events.



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CYC practice is based on life-space interventions that are experiential, not like office based neutral spaces, but real life natural spaces. The ability to override resistance to messages of trust and personal power is supported through physical sensation and experience, not verbal interventions. Effective CYC practice builds moments of experience that contradict mental beliefs about powerlessness and mistrust. The effective CYC practitioner can be an “experience arranger” (Phelan, 2016) who creates and co-experiences living in a trusting, hopeful place, anchored by a mutual feeling that contradicts negative beliefs. This mutual experience, creating physical, emotional responses in life-space situations, often is interpreted differently based on each person’s logic about the world.

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The CYC practitioner can use minimal verbal support to compare beliefs about attachment and autonomy, based on real sensations that were co-experienced. The cognitive dissonance that arises as experience and beliefs don't agree, will hopefully begin to create new ways of thinking.

I like to say that CYC approaches speak to the heart, not the head of the youths and families we serve. I picture a poorly attached teen, coming into a room and slowly approaching a CYC practitioner. As the teen's brain is saying "stay away" her heart is saying "but it feels so good to sit next to her".



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Transitions Into Capitalism and the Market-Based Human Condition

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It has occurred to me more than once that the organization of child & youth services, and the integration of child and youth care practice within that organizational form, comes with a dark side. Specifically, I wonder whether we have become somewhat complacent with respect to the aspirations we hold for young people disadvantaged in shaping their own social and economic location in the world. By complacent I mean two things: In our intellectual movements, are we using young people as pawns in our privileged context of articulating the critique of current social forms? And second, in our practice, are we actively contributing to a transition for young people out of child & youth service systems that significantly contributes to their chronic existence at the margins of social and economic activity in the world?

With respect to the first question, we can explore some basic facts. Within the broader intellectual movement within and nearby the field of child and youth care, most participants who offer critical perspectives are doing two things – they offer critiques that are often very compelling, that challenge dominant narratives and that centre issues of structural marginalization, oppression and social injustice. But they are also building their own career, which benefits considerably from ever more radical critique, ever more challenging ideas, and increasing recognition of unique intellectual contributions. And those careers are generally (not always) characterized by ascending economic privilege and reward. In fact, those careers are firmly embedded in the very social forms that are being criticized and they are



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intentionally and strategically configured to maximize benefit from those social forms (the market economy, capitalism, hierarchy, constructions of power and influence, etc.). This is not to suggest that critical intellectual movements are somehow more hypocritical or less legitimate than orthodox movements. It merely suggests that the difference between these intellectual movements is not as great as one might think. Both movements seek validation and reward within the existing social forms; one movement names the oppressive qualities of those forms but does not step outside of these; the other denies the oppressive qualities of those forms and celebrates their exclusion criteria. Whether or not either movement is particularly subject-centered (in that it recognizes young people as subjects in their own right) is an open question. For sure, in both intellectual movements, career progress is most furthered by ensuring a continued object-centered approach to young people, either as victims or markers of injustice or as benefactors of helping services.

The second question leads us in a different direction. Here I am concerned about how (and where) practice (child and youth care practice, social work practice, nursing practice, etc.) is designed to encounter the social forms within which our lives unfold. Regardless of whether practice is borne out of critical or orthodox perspectives, it seems to me that it is fundamentally oriented toward facilitating the encounter of the world around us (the social forms) at the lowest level of activity, and specifically at a level of activity that unfolds at the mercy of those much better placed within the social forms that spurn economic rewards. This may sound somewhat complicated but let me provide a simple example.

Employment surely is one very tangible, concrete aspect of planning transitions for (sadly, often not with) young people approaching emerging adulthood. How do we prepare young people for employment, and what sorts of expectations or aspirations do we have for young people as they prepare to exit our fields of practice? I would suggest that most of our planning and preparing is focused on the elements of economic activity that offer at best subsistence rewards for labour, that offer virtually no upward mobility opportunities, and that create long term



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dependencies on externally-controlled helping systems (such as welfare or social housing, for example). Working to connect a young person transitioning out of care to a minimum wage job in which he, she or they are expendable, always subject to the power and control of the employer who doesn't need them as humans but only as labour providers, hardly seems like an emancipatory practice.

In the 21st century, we have a better understanding of our social forms than at any other time in human history. We have better access to information, we understand both the drivers and the barriers to social and economic mobility better than ever before, and we know much more about the competencies that drive access to social and economic resources. We also know, more clearly than ever before, what it is that we are transitioning young people to. We know that we are not transitioning them into a social utopia of equity and inclusion. We know that we are not transitioning them into community frameworks of collaboration and equity. We even know that we are not transitioning them into structures of democracy, or at least democracy worth the label. We are transitioning them into social forms characterized by the overarching principles of capitalism, driven by market-mechanisms, but mitigated by structures of corruption, social cliques of the privileged, and on-going, intentional and highly sophisticated processes of racism, ableism, and gender divisions of labour that chronically maintain the non-male gender at the threshold of hoping for equity without ever attaining it. This is the world we hope that young people will be able to navigate based on how our services and our practice has prepared them for doing so.

In spite of knowing this, I continue to experience the narrative, the language, the practice and the aspiration of our child and youth service systems as relics of another time. We continue to aim for conformity and compliance. We continue to develop treatment programs that seek to cure the externalizing symptoms of young people struggling with mental health and regulatory challenges. We continue to seek moral purities in young people's outlooks that serve the perpetuation of privilege among the few (usually white, able-bodied, cis-gendered) social and economic leaders. And we continue to practice through the same institutional



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structures of education, health care, housing and employment that led to the chronicity of marginalization of young people exiting child and youth services in the first place.

What I rarely encounter in our child and youth serving systems, and by extension in our practice, is a commitment to push young people in those competencies that we already know to drive access to social and economic resources in the 21st century. Rarely do I encounter practice that seeks to build the innovation capacity of young people. Almost never do I encounter a focus on building advanced technology skills in young people living in residential care (in fact, most are not allowed access to the internet). Access to and support for real, measurable and high level academic achievement at the post-secondary level is still sporadic, often coincidental, and virtually nowhere systematic. No program I have encountered in schools, residential care, foster care, hospitals or youth shelters aims to build young people's competencies in public speaking, public debate, personal confidence and the courage to present oneself as a winner (instead, we say to young people don't do this or that lest you be seen as a loser).

From a child and youth care perspective, perhaps the most glaring omission in our work with young people is a realistic, pragmatic and goal-oriented approach to the core concept of our practice – the relationship. While we have done very well to centre relationship and connection in our practice, we have done so as if relationships are always meant to be genuine, always meant to have value beyond their logistical utility, and always meant to serve some higher purpose. In fact, within the context of the social forms that shape our everyday life, most relationships are purely pragmatic; they serve to sell something, to get something, to advance somewhere, and to position oneself. I have never seen an explicit approach to preparing young people to 'use' relationship and connection as a way of getting something; to use relationship and connection as a tool of social manipulation. And yet I know that I do so every day; when I try to return a product to a store for no good reason, I first connect with the clerk, and then I get down to business; when I try to get my bank to give me a loan, I first chat about the loan



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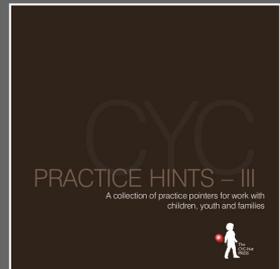
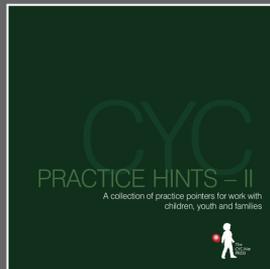
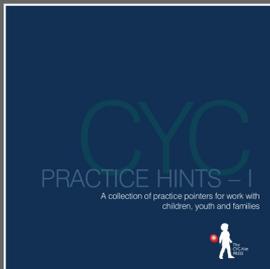
broker's kids and family, and then I get my loan; when I try to avoid paying a traffic ticket, I validate the challenges the cashier at the city office surely faces every day, and once I am seen as firmly empathetic to the hardship of that cashier, I usually pay less than I otherwise would.

My point is simply this: We owe young people an approach to being present with them that reflects the world into which we will facilitate their transition. We will, almost always, abandon our young people post-transition. We cannot do this ethically if we have spent our time with them preparing for a world we would like to see, but that we know isn't there. And at some point, we probably have to acknowledge that we ourselves, especially as academic commentators, are benefitting from the very world that we protect young people from, or that we simply fail to show them.

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AVAILABLE FROM THE CYC-Net PRESS

A collection of pointers written by Brian Gannon
for work with children, youth and families



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They're Trying to Wash Us Away

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"They're trying to wash us away"
Randy Newman

I recently went to a concert featuring the New Orleans piano players Marcia Ball and Joe Crown (also mind blowing on B3 organ). They put on an amazing show and I give them my highest recommendation if you want some serious New Orleans musical heart and soul. During the show Marcia Ball did an old song by Randy Newman I had almost forgotten about called "Louisiana 1927." The song refers to the devastating flood of 1927 which has been characterized as the worst river flood in U.S. history. It covered 27000 square miles to a depth of up to 30 feet of water. Tens of thousands of people were affected, as the river wiped away farms, plantations and towns across the Mississippi delta. One of the hardest hit groups was the African American community. It was estimated that over 200,000 African Americans were displaced to relief camps throughout the Mississippi delta region.

The history of the relief camps for African Americans, like most of the history of race relations in the United States, is complicated and problematic. The white population in the area constituted only about 25% of the population, but they controlled both agricultural and business interests. Historians suggest that the white railroad and plantation owners were afraid that the low wage labor of African American workers who comprised 75% of the agricultural labor force would be put at risk if African Americans fled the flood and moved to the north. Working conditions for the Black population were extremely substandard, but up



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until the flood they felt they were stuck in a system that bound them permanently to the old plantations system still functioning over fifty years after the end of slavery. The white business community saw that their workers were losing pretty much everything and being forced from their homes, very possibly never to return. With the impact of the flood many of these workers saw an opportunity to leave, because they literally had nothing to lose.

The establishment of the race segregated camps was an attempt to keep the workers in the area in order to protect the existing system of exploitation. In spite of this, many African Americans moved north to Midwestern industrial cities in what has been called the great migration. This migration, which began with the flood of 1927 continued throughout the twentieth century well into the 1970's. This migration re-shaped the U.S. demographically, culturally and racially in ways that still have significant repercussions today.

While the flood had an immense socio-political impact, it can also be read as a man-made ecological catastrophe. The Mississippi watershed traverses the United States from Minnesota in the north, to the Mississippi Delta in the south. It is a transcontinental eco-system that can respond in catastrophic ways to human intervention. In a way, it is a very good example of what has been called the Anthropocene (the period of history in which human behavior shapes and alters the geo-sphere). Historians and environmental scholars tell us that it was human mismanagement of the watershed that caused the flood of 1927. It wasn't simply an engineering mistake related to dams and levees, but the product of human re-engineering of the eco-systems in the upper Midwest. The massive deforestation of the forests by logging interests, destruction of the open prairies for farms which led to the industrial growth of corn and wheat, and finally the drainage of wetlands to accommodate human habitation all had a role to play in the flooding of the delta. As the Smithsonian notes:

Without trees, grasses, deep roots, and wetlands, the denuded soil of the watershed could not do its ancient work of absorbing and stalling water



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after seasons of intense snow and rain. All the work of water management was meant to be accomplished by the towering levee system, one which had no outlets or spillways at the time. When a four-story-high levee burst, the river emptied itself upon southern land with the fierceness of Niagara Falls. Not only were levee structures a modern, industrial feature in the Delta, then, but the water draining so swiftly into the “funnel” was a byproduct of industrialized environmental development.

In his song Randy Newman expresses the resentment southern whites had towards the North that had defeated them in the Civil War. He articulates the sense that the southerners had, that the developing northern US was not only neglecting the southern part of the country, but was making every effort to destroy their way of life. The fact that this way of life was deeply rooted in slavery, exploitation and oppression is overridden by a sense that the northern US was “trying to wash us away” and that the flood was physical evidence of this.

As we enter the second decade of 21st century and look back on the flood of 1927 there are several features that I would argue are still relevant to us in CYC. In the first instance, we live in a time where ecological catastrophes, rooted in the practices of capitalist industrial and agricultural interests, are once again displacing human beings and species across the planet. Climate change, de-forestation, massive pollution of watersheds and oceans, overpopulation and the global transmission of disease through international trade all have significant impacts on quality of our life and even our very survival. In addition, as Hardt and Negri in their book *Empire* and Jochen Bittner echoes in the New York Times (2018) economic and military wars between capitalist interests represented by nation states are displacing people and putting them on the move in extraordinary numbers. A significant percentage of these migrants end up in the refugee camps proliferating across the planet. And like the flood of 1927, these migrants are largely people of color.



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Of course, as I have noted in this column before, a significant percentage of these migrants are also young people and as such should be the concern of CYC as an international professional set of associations. Regrettably, our response as a global network has been one of benign neglect or worse currying favor with funding sources directly responsible for this catastrophe. In his last column Kiaras Gharabaghi called on CYC professional organizations to take action to address exactly this kind of problem. I can only hope we heed his call.

The other echo of the flood of 1927, for the field of CYC, is the sense that there is an effort to “wash us away.” In the simplest sense, we might read this in

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the constant reduction in financial and governmental support CYC and youthwork is experiencing globally. Since the late twentieth century and escalating into the current moment, the kind of relational work CYC does seems less and less attractive to funders interested in behavioral interventions and evidence-based programming. While it may be hard to visualize being washed away by a drought, that may be what is happening to the field of CYC as a set of practices founded in idiosyncratic lived relations between adults and young people.

Mind you, it is not that there are fewer jobs working with kids. The US labor bureau lists working with children as a field of employment that is growing faster than average. But, as Kiaras Gharabaghi, in his book chapter on the Purposes and Practices of CYC, also points out, what is happening in those programs is considerably at odds with any kind of practice related to the foundational principles of our field.

In a world driven by a logic that consistently places profits before people and only sees young people as possible consumers or employees, it is hard to argue for the kind of relational work that Garfat and Fulcher articulate in their work on the characteristics of CYC practice. How does one describe to such funders or bureaucrats, ideas like “rituals of encounter,” “being in a relationship,” “examining context,” or “relationality” as job skills, behavioral interventions or evidence-based practice? Of course, all of us as good grant writers can do this. But in doing it, we do violence to the heart and soul of our work and contribute to the erosion that is washing us away.

Perhaps the most egregious form of eco-systemic damage being done to CYC by the floods of capitalist practice and logic is very possibly that done to our social ecologies and ecologies of thought. Felix Guattari, in his ever more relevant book *The Three Ecologies*, argues that the damage that has occurred during the Anthropocene (starting in the industrial revolution) has not been limited to the physical ecological systems of the planet. In addition, there has been significant impacts on the richness and diversity of thought, emotion and sociality. He argues



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that just as species are suffering monumental rates of physical extinction, our ecologies of thought and social intercourse are also losing diversity and complexity.

Environmentalists argue that a healthy ecosystem is composed of a rich complexity of different life forms. The greater the genetic and biological diversity of an ecosystem, the more resilient it is in surviving catastrophes. In the event that something occurs that destroys some portion of the eco-system, there are many other forms of life close enough in form to those destroyed, but also different enough to survive and sustain the system. Rapid extinction of large numbers of species or the proliferation of a single species, so that you have a mono-culture, creates a weaker eco-system less likely to survive threats to its existence. The current practices of planting large tracts of mon-cultural plants such as wheat, corn or the planting of single types of trees for harvesting, reduces bio-diversity. Of course, unintended mass extinctions such as global reductions in coral reefs due to ocean warming and pollution also significantly impacts on ecological health.

I would argue that this has profound implications for our children and their children that might be of concern to us as CYC workers and scholars. It is difficult if not impossible to discount the environment in which our young people live and in which they grow and develop. There is certainly some thinking that links erosions in biodiversity to ecologically related increases in allergic responses and immune system disorders. These physical challenges can have a profound effect on a young person's capacity to function and learn without significant accommodation. This leaves aside more directly pressing concerns such as habitat destruction that can lead to the malnutrition and starvation of children.

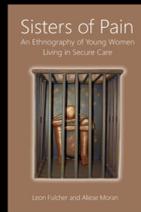
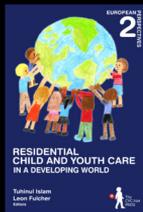
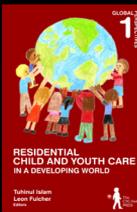
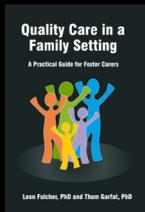
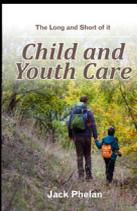
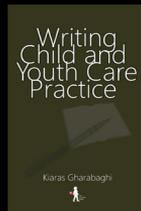
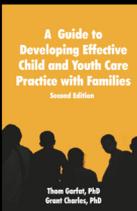
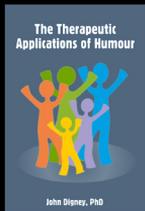
Guattari argues that in addition to these concerns, capitalism is rapidly producing a mono-culture of thought and emotion in which rich and complex ecosystems of thought, emotion and social relations are reduced to the desert of the dollar sign as the only significant social signifier. He argues that forms of relationship such as deep affiliation and the words, phrases and gestures of human solidarity are in danger of extinction. Certainly, any sense of the kind of relational work premised in the random variability of living encounter is rapidly being



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replaced with a mono-culture of goals, skills, entrepreneurship, resourcefulness, communication skills, leadership, organizational skills, collaboration, initiative and sociability. Gone are the messy relations one finds in the CYC work of Mark Krueger, with its poetic reflections on the richness of encounter. Instead, children are being trained at an earlier and earlier age to be mini-capitalists and competition minded over-achievers who will learn to “win” at the “game” of life.

While there are a lot of words in the neo-liberal vocabulary (many of them find their way into our grant writing and from there into our programs) they are neither complex nor rich, They have no capacity to plumb the profound depths of living experience, but force it to the surface where it can be exploited and appropriated. Guattari argues that this socio-emotive ecological disaster of thought and experience can be averted, but first we must recognize that it is happening. Regrettably, like climate change, we have a whole set of colleagues and pundits that would deny that we are losing our capacity for rich and complex thought and relationship. They would argue that we need to accommodate ourselves and the young people we engage to the dominant system. They argue that is no point in criticizing capitalism or bringing “politics” into CYC.

But, I would argue that, just like climate change, this practice of denial and accommodation is a slow form of suicide (or maybe not so slow). CYC is premised in the complexity of youth/adult relations. This is our rich and fecund ecological legacy of thought and practice. I would argue it is life affirming and worth fighting for. But make no mistake about it, the dominant system of capitalist logic is trying to “wash us away.” I hope that we are capable of managing and surviving the flood.

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Being Competent about Competence

Doug Magnuson & Wolfgang Vachon

In the first few courses of my (Doug's) M.A. graduate program it was not unusual to hear insiders say that some youth workers had "it" and others did not, a perception that still exists in many classrooms and practice settings. What they meant is that some had a certain charisma and intrigue to which young people gravitated. Central to this charm were leather jackets, cigarettes, Doc Martens, faux anti-establishment attitudes, and an ambiguous sexuality. This is a bit of a caricature, but only a bit!

Fortunately, this was a long time ago, and we have moved on, though we still have much more work explaining what we do, when we do. It continues to be easier to learn what professionals and academics do not like than obtain from them a clear, specific, rich description of good work. This is true even though most of us are involved somehow in the enterprises of naming, identifying, recognizing, interpreting, defining, and explaining practice—in CYC education, in supervision of practice, in accreditation and certification, in evaluation and research, and in training. Yet competence remains, "... like truth, beauty, and contact lenses... in the eye of the beholder" (The Peter Principle, 1969).

We use a specific example. One type of competence is working with youth in silence, perhaps in play, in art, in comforting and supporting, in moments of spirituality, even in redirecting or correcting. Silence is a kind of communication, and there is a depth and variety to how good youth workers practice it. If I am learning this skill, and if my learning is organized for me by an academic program or my agency, I would expect clear, rich descriptions of the skill, examples of when and how it is practiced, and opportunities to learn and practice the skill, from the simple to complex. I would also expect opportunities to talk and write about this



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skill in my own reflection and in dialogue with other students and with instructors/mentors who are experts. I would expect the assessment of my ability to support my learning and to show me how to improve. After some time I would expect to become an expert myself.

Accurately assessing one's ability, and accurately identifying specific skills, remains a challenge in education and in agencies. This is the process of moving from "knowing about" to "knowing how" to "showing how" to "does"—the level of mastery (Miller, cited in van der Vleuten, et al, 2010). Educators and researchers in medical schools have been studying this, and their learning is instructive.

For one, high-stakes methods of evaluating competence impede learning, for example, grades and annual evaluations. Second, perhaps surprisingly, practice supervisors are often not very good at assessing/evaluating the competence of their employees. (We wonder if the same is true of classroom instructors!) Third, to be generalized, a skill needs to be encountered in multiple situations over multiple times and in diverse settings. In education, these need to be planned, with forethought.

Fourth, if the skill takes time to learn, the assessment of that skill also takes time and resources for its measurement to be valid. In medical education, van der Vleuten, et al (2010) suggest that assessing a skill also takes time. They recommend 8-10 data points and 3-4 total hours. This is a lot of data and time for one skill, but spread over a year or two it is not so much.

Finally, the "Does" level of competence requires experts, and it requires "authenticity" of setting. The experts have to be operating with similar ideas about the expertise, and the skills have to be demonstrated in settings that are similar to where they will be practiced—and/or in the practice setting itself. By the time I become an expert at silence, I would expect to have studied it, to have had many experiences where I have used it—successfully and sometimes not, and I would expect to have received some help thinking richly about these experiences. I would also expect to have received support, guidance and challenge from assessment of



my skill—in watching me work, in evaluating my writing about it, in teaching the skill to others and, ideally, with feedback from those with whom I work.

There is some support here for what we do. There is support for being patient with how long it takes to acquire a skill in practice organizations and in higher education. There is support for the validity and reliability of expert judgement, as long as those experts use a good sample of data and their expertise is documented. There is also support here for assessment of the cognitive and emotional complexity of competencies rather than trivial definitions.

The cautions for us are, first, that academic grades and performance evaluations are a lousy way to assess and support learning. Second, those of us who claim to be experts will need to demonstrate our mastery and ability to accurately assess the expertise of others. Third, we want to be more clear about the ladder of expertise and the sample of experiences—academic, personal, and professional—that together contribute to mastery so that novices can more clearly understand pathways to becoming an expert. Finally, we will need a wider and inclusive set of assessment procedures, publicly available and community property, so that assessment can be used to drive learning and that novices and students can use them as motivation and for practice.

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Implementing and Monitoring Children's Rights

Tara M. Collins

“The way a child is treated by a society is an indication of what that society is all about”

Young person (as cited in Landon Pearson Resource Centre, 2007, p. 11).

Introduction

Before considering specific populations and various issues related to children's rights in future columns, I want to enunciate how international children's rights treaties are implemented and monitored. When a state ratifies or accedes to an international treaty,¹ such as the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), it becomes a State party to the treaty. (Note that it is no longer merely a “signatory” as commonly described.) Then, the provisions have influence or direct bind the authorities to their responsibility to implement. Who has the responsibility for the next steps with implementation then? What does that mean for Child and Youth Care practitioners (CYCs)? In essence, I wish to describe in this piece the general opportunities for young people and CYCs to engage and advocate for international child rights at local, national and international levels.

¹ This varying legal terminology depends upon the legal context of the state to reflect the commitment to be bound by the treaty's terms.



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How International Law Relates to Domestic Legal Framework

The state's domestic legal system determines how it internalizes international human rights. In civil legal contexts that are described as monist including Germany and France, international legal commitments can generally become part of the domestic legal framework with immediate effect. In contrast, dualistic or common legal systems, such as Canada or India, are so described because there is a clear distinction between international and domestic law. Unless international human rights are provided for in the country's constitution, international obligations often have limited effect in domestic law unless legislation is adopted and in force to incorporate the obligations.² As a result, the treaty takes longer to have impact as legislators, judges, programmers and others need to incorporate the standards in their day-to-day work. As a result, international law sometimes considered "soft law" because states decide ultimately what to do (or what not to do). In limited circumstances, the international community may decide to apply pressure through economic sanctions or more rarely, use force to restore peace and security in a country. But diplomatic pressure on states is usually what can bring progress for child rights at an international level.

Implementing International Children's Rights Domestically

How can children's rights be advanced within a country? The CRC's category of the general measures of implementation includes articles 4, 42, and 44 (paragraph 6), which the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2003) has identified, involves several responsibilities. These general measures require: law reform and jurisprudence; budgeting; national plans of action; monitoring processes and mechanisms; child rights education, awareness and training; independent national human rights institutions; coordination efforts and mechanisms; participation of civil society in CRC implementation; international cooperation; and ratification and

² For more details, see Aust, Anthony (2000). *Modern Treaty Law and Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 150.



implementation of other relevant international standards. These efforts cannot simply be the responsibility of governments. **In order to be effective, other actors in society concerned with young people including CYCs and children and youth themselves must be engaged to support the interpretation and advance children’s rights.** These general measures of implementation offer much guidance about how to do so.

For example, Child Rights Impact Assessments (CRIAs) support implementation through, as Sylwander (2001) explains, “appraisals, analysis, reviews and evaluations” and facilitate “*assessment of the impact* which a decision can have on the child or group of children affected by it” (p. 20). This tool can be used to evaluate the potential or actual impacts upon rights, either before or after decisions are made.³ Perhaps you can identify national or provincial/state program or policy decision(s) that seems to have disregarded the rights or concerns of the children and young people? **As a result, it would be valuable for CYC practitioners to consider for instance where conducting a CRIA could have been helpful in residential policy-making about the provision of hair care products for different needs or snacks or that could avoid negative outcomes for a child or groups of children in other decision(s) in the future?**

Role of Monitoring

In order to support child rights implementation, monitoring is significant. This activity involves the collection and assessment of information about the status of these rights. It is only through such analysis of the situation that there can be understanding about how children are experiencing their rights or not. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is mandated in CRC article 44 to receive reports about CRC progress by states. In its assessment reports entitled

³ You can find more information about CRIAs at the following website:

<https://www.unicef.ca/en/article/child-rights-impact-assessment-symposium>



“concluding observations”, the UN Committee generally notes the State party’s progress and identifies its concerns and recommendations. It is essential to note that no matter the economic or political status of a country, it is obligated to implement the CRC consistently over time.

For example, at its last review of Canada, the UN Committee (2012) had a long list of concerns and recommendations. It urged that the country take “all necessary measures” to address concerns from previous Committee reviews “related to reservations, legislation, coordination, data collection, independent monitoring, non-discrimination, corporal punishment, family environment, adoption, economic exploitation, and administration of juvenile justice” (p. 2). The UN Committee (2012) also highlighted the realities of discrimination and the necessity to pay attention to the over-representation of Indigenous children and African-Canadian children in the criminal justice and protection/care systems (p. 7). Therefore, the all-too-common label of “developed” status for such Minority world countries as Canada is a misnomer when considering human rights. No matter where they are found, there is always much more that can be done in every jurisdiction to support implementation and monitoring of child rights.

But there are numerous challenges with monitoring. The CRC’s success with 196 States parties means that the UN Committee is overburdened. Further, the process cannot only depend upon the government and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to accurately ascertain the situation of children and young people. Can you imagine relying only on the government to produce its own report card about its CRC efforts or lack thereof? Accordingly, CRC a. 45 identifies other actors including UNICEF and “other competent bodies”, which is understood to mean non-governmental organizations as pertinent to the process. Networks or coalitions within countries often facilitate both implementation and monitoring in most countries around the world.⁴ For example, Together: Scottish Alliance for

⁴ Click on the regions and countries tab on the upper right-hand corner of the website of the Child Rights Information Network as pertinent organizations are identified under each country at <https://www.crin.org/en>



Children’s Rights produces a national report about the situation of children’s rights and convened a seminar series last year about how to support CRC progress there.⁵ **These national-level networks would benefit from the vital knowledge, understanding and expertise of individual CYCs and CYC professional associations if they are not yet involved.**

National human rights institutions have significance too. In another example, the South African Human Rights Commission has made numerous contributions over the years since it includes children’s rights as a focus area.⁶ These institutions also involve local and national-level organizations and individuals in their efforts to support and monitor children’s rights within the jurisdiction.

In sum, in order to be effective in accurately ascertaining the situation of children’s rights, monitoring requires the sustained engagement of all those actors and organizations concerned about children and young people at local, provincial/state and national levels as well as internationally.

Additional Instruments Relevant to Children’s Rights

In order to improve understanding of children in relation to specific issues, it is useful to know that the United Nations has adopted optional protocols to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, as well as the involvement of children in armed conflict. As noted in an earlier column, there is a range of other significant international, regional and national instruments that define and elaborate children’s rights along with different monitors around the world.

Various Actors Involved

There are numerous actors working at the international, regional and national levels to support implementation and monitoring of various child rights concerns and populations. For instance, at the UN, there is an Independent Expert on the

⁵ See <http://www.togetherscotland.org.uk/>

⁶ See <https://www.sahrc.org.za/index.php/focus-areas/children-s-rights-and-basic-education>



human rights by persons with albinism as well as special rapporteurs of relevance to children's rights for several countries of concern (e.g. Cambodia, Mali and Syrian Arab Republic) as well as critical themes including: the sale and sexual exploitation of children; trafficking in persons, especially women and children; and the right to education.⁷ These experts support understanding about the realities related to specific issues and contexts and how they affect human rights; and **their reports can be useful to highlight the human rights issues and lend weight to our advocacy efforts**. Further, if a state has ratified the optional protocol to the CRC on a communications procedure, it allows the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to consider individual complaints about the violation of the rights in the CRC or the aforementioned other optional protocols to the CRC once national avenues for their consideration are exhausted. **This is significant because not only children but their advocates (including CYCs) can pursue their complaints at the international level if national level efforts have been unsuccessful. Consequently, in order to be effective, the important task of ongoing monitoring of children's rights over time must be understood and carried out as a participatory process.**

Conclusion

Implementation and monitoring are necessary to support progress and identify the constraints as well as the opportunities with international child rights law within a jurisdiction. But there are significant challenges to ensure effectiveness and consistency over time of these efforts around the world. Consequently, I think that it is essential that all pertinent actors from across society including young people and CYCs are aware of these tasks. They are needed to engage in and support

⁷ See further

http://spinternet.ohchr.org/_Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/ViewAllCountryMandates.aspx
and

http://spinternet.ohchr.org/_Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/ViewAllCountryMandates.aspx?type=TM respectively.



effective awareness-raising and advocacy work in order to advance better child rights implementation and monitoring at local, national and international levels. **As described in the opening quotation, young people are aware of how society treats them and CYCs also keenly understand their realities; they can work together to advance their rights in their communities and countries.**

Even so, children’s rights should inform our work with young people in another key way. As Yordi, Foad, Denomy and Carothers (2009) aptly describe, “rights are also expressed through everyday attitudes and practices” (p.8). We will explore these “attitudes and practices” in future columns.

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Relatedness and Control

Varda Mann-Feder

Abstract

One of the significant dilemmas Child and Youth Care Workers face is reconciling the need for relationship with the necessity of providing control. This article reviews two major theories that have contributed to the view that attachment and discipline are mutually exclusive. However, a review of research findings suggests that it is only through the integration of relatedness and control that optimal growth and development can be encouraged. Implications for practice are outlined.

Child and Youth Care Work is a demanding profession in which the practitioner is confronted by multiple and sometimes contradictory mandates. One of the significant dilemmas Child and Youth Care Workers face daily is reconciling the need for relationship with the necessity of providing control. How can the role of attachment figure and disciplinarian be reconciled? How can discipline, even necessary punishment, be provided without destroying trust and security?

The literature of the helping professions has not always helped us to deal with the difficult problem of integrating relatedness and control. Traditionally, views on this topic have been polarized. This is because two distinct conceptual frameworks that have competed since their inception have dominated Western thinking about how human beings are socialized and develop internal controls.

Theoretical influences

Psychodynamic theory, originated with Freud but including contemporary models such as Attachment theory, was the earliest approach to espouse views



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about human development and child rearing. This theory champions the primacy of emotional relationships, especially early adult-child relationships, and teaches that self-control comes from relatedness. This theory also privileges relationships as the central tool in any therapeutic intervention. Psychodynamic theory explains that acting out and poor self-control in young people result from relationship deficits in early life. Individual behavioral difficulties can only be addressed through the provision of a relationship with a non-punitive, nurturing adult whose focus is to interact with the youth in a close loving manner. The idea here is that once the child begins to experience the reliable and predictable satisfaction of needs that a loving relationship provides, a sense of security will emerge which also promotes self-control. Psychodynamic theory goes on to say that any approach to child management other than this will not have any lasting effect on behaviour, because only relatedness can stimulate the development of internal controls.

The implication for practice is that, paradoxically, discipline is best served through acceptance, permissiveness and an emphasis on relationships. “Nurturance must come first. Nor will limit-setting responses alone be effective with patients who have been deprived in their early life of both limit setting and nurturance. For them, acting out behavior has been a cry for attention and love” (p.11, Wilson & Soth, 1985). Some authors even exhort the worker to tolerate minor behavioural lapses whenever possible in favour of a more long-term goal of instilling security and the motivation to become self-disciplined. Implied in this model is that closeness with adults inspires respect for rules and the wish to maintain approval, while the explicit role of disciplinarian actually negates the closeness. “ In essence, the successful therapeutic approach to action-oriented individuals is based on reducing the unrelatedness that all these youngsters have” (p.367, Symonds, 1974).

Learning theory first emerged as a reaction against psychodynamic theory. Major criticisms were that change strategies that rely on the development of relationships are time consuming and expensive and do not address the specific problems of individuals whose behavioural functioning has been problematic. The major assumption of learning theory (advanced in its most radical form by Skinner)



is that all behaviour is learned and reflects each young person's individual history of reward and punishment. The consequences of actions influence whether or not an individual learns self-control and acting out has little to do with early experiences with relatedness. If a young person engages repeatedly in inappropriate behaviour, it is because this behaviour has brought benefits to the individual in the past. Even punishment can be gratifying, especially if the youth has gotten attention and/or notoriety though negative behaviour. In a learning model, any adult can manage behaviour if they are adept at manipulating the consequences of a young person's behaviour consistently. "The better one understands the principles and theories of learning, the better one will be at changing behavior" (p.110, Stein, 1995). The internal state of the youth is irrelevant — as is the relationship with the intervener.

Both psychodynamic and learning theory have had a powerful impact on the evolution of Child and Youth Care Work, as is evident especially in models of residential care (Whittaker, 1981). Both theories held a fascination for me at different times in my career. Early on, I was trained in the use of Behaviourism or radical learning theory. I came to my first job in a Child and Youth Care setting with a passionate belief in contingency management, which in our context meant point and level systems that relied heavily on rewards to modify behaviour (Craig, 1999). I spent many a team meeting designing behavioural charts, discussing the merits of reinforcement over punishment and assisting Child and Youth Care Workers in identifying relevant rewards. We never concerned ourselves with who would dispense these rewards, or what the relationship context would contribute. In fact, as a consultant, I stressed that all Child and Youth Care Workers involved with the youth needed to respond in exactly the same way in relation to the "target behaviours" — the critical ingredient was the provision of consistent consequences. This often proved to be a very effective technique for specific behavioural problems. The youth in question did learn prosocial alternatives and soon complied to earn rewards. But as many authors have pointed out (Schaffer, 1979) the application of learning theory is most effective in promoting change in discrete behaviours. It does little to instill an overall sense of self-control. At the



same time, the charts and points assumed monumental importance in the daily interactions between Child and Youth Care Workers and young people, creating a distance that was difficult to overcome. The relationship was between a youth and the team, who acted in concert as behavioural technicians.

Over time, I became disenchanted with learning theory. It began to feel mechanistic, overly simplistic and like I was advocating a cookie cutter approach to our work. Many young people who experienced this model seemed to learn within the structure provided, but it was less clear that any more lasting change in behavior was occurring. As stated by Bettelheim, “The fundamental issue is the creation of conditions that will not only allow but strongly induce a child to wish to be a moral, disciplined person” (1985, p.52). There was little evidence that learning approaches had any long-term impact on moral development, self-control, or self-discipline.

With the emerging popularity of Attachment theory in the 80’s and 90s, and the thriving literature of Child and Youth Care Work, which stressed relatedness and synchronicity (Fewster, 1990: Garfat, 1998: Weisman, 1999), my thinking began to change. A crucial ingredient in any intervention had to be relationship, and not just the relationship to a program or a team. The relationship had to be specific and intimate, involving one identified adult whose task it was to make a meaningful connection with one young person.



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This dyadic interaction was necessary to compensate for the inadequate early attachments experienced by most children and adolescents in our care. The critical elements in this relationship included unconditional acceptance, responsiveness, reliability, and a capacity for attuned interactions. “Being present is not enough, it means visible involvement in the children’s daily lives, beyond the tasks of being supervisors or appraisers of their behavior” (Maier, 1994).

My subsequent discussions with Child and Youth Care Workers focused on relationship issues. Discipline was now secondary and could only be a long-term goal. Intervention planning meetings involved identifying the person who would devote time and energy in investing in a young person. We looked at ways to create opportunities for high quality dyadic interactions and debated on issues of selection — should a primary worker be selected, or should the young person’s preferences prevail? How could natural affinities be taken into account and what were the implications for the team?

In advocating an approach more in line with Psychodynamic theory, discipline became a contentious issue.

In many instances, the young person’s connections to a Child Care Worker are tenuous and tentative, reflecting early deprivations and a reluctance to trust. It soon became common, in some settings, to separate the role of attachment figure from that of disciplinarian. If limits had to be set or if a consequence for negative behaviour was needed, someone other than the “special worker” would step in to exert control. A kind of “good cop, bad cop” model evolved in some programs, leading to tensions in the team and splitting reactions in the youth. Were we further ahead?

Research contributions

It turns out that there have been major efforts to clarify the interaction of relatedness and control through research. The application of findings in two areas will be described below, but the punch line is the same similar: internal controls are acquired in the best possible way when behavioural restrictions are provided in the



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context of a nurturing relationship. The relationship context matters a great deal, as does the provision of structure and limit setting. Relatedness does promote control, but only when consistent discipline and limits are provided by the adults who have a specific and warm connection to a young person. Not only does this combination promote age appropriate behavioural functioning, it also impacts positively on overall adjustment. Henry Maier suggested this years ago. In 1987, he explained: “Social capability rests upon personal attachment. Children learn most readily from those who have meaning for them. It is essential to keep in mind that the most potent behavioural treatment goes hand in had with a sense of reciprocal closeness and attachment” (p.118).

The research on parenting styles grew out of a need to clarify the specific aspects of parental behavior that impact on children early in life. Overtime, investigators identified four consistent and reliable dimensions of parenting style: warmth, control (as contrasted with permissiveness), consistency, and democratic decision-making (as contrasted with autocratic functioning). These dimensions can be measured, and are relatively stable over time (Baumrind, 1971). Researchers, in trying to capture the complexity of parent child interactions in real life, began to examine combinations of the parenting style dimensions, and relate them to observations of child behavior. This work, which began with families of young children, has been extended to adolescents, and reflects multiple studies over many years (Santrock, Mackenzie-Rivers, Leung & Malcolmson, 2003).

The most powerful and consistent finding of research in this area is that warmth and moderate control correlate significantly with self-esteem, altruism, coping, achievement and age appropriate self-discipline (Bee & Boyd, 2002). Contrary to the predictions of many psychodynamic theorists, permissiveness with warmth correlates significantly with non-compliance, low self-esteem, domineering tendencies and immaturity (Santrock et al, 2003). On the other hand, the absence of warmth in the presence of control correlates with compliance, but also is strongly associated with aggression towards the self, poor self-esteem, fearfulness, unhappiness and poor communication skills (Baumrind, 1971).



This research strongly suggests that the dichotomy between relationship and control is misleading. The weight of the evidence, though admittedly correlational, suggests that both are needed to promote behavioural competence and positive adjustment. A supporting finding of direct relevance to our work, is that in the absence of warmth, more extreme and punitive disciplinary techniques are required to elicit cooperation. On the other hand, there is no evidence that control interferes with warmth between adults and young people.

A model developed after Skinner within the parameters of learning theory was that of observational learning. Associated with the work of Bandura, this model posits that many complex social behaviors are learned through imitation, and through the observation of consequences for others. In this theory, internal states do influence the acquisition of behavioural controls, because in order to learn, youth people must watch and remember (attend and retain) what has been modeled.

The Bandurians have widely researched the process of learning, and specifically the conditions that influence successful attention and retention. A major finding of this research is that we all attend differentially to different models and that how we attend reflects relationship issues. It turns out we learn best from individuals who we admire, we identify with, and with whom we have a warm connection (Shaffer, 1989). In addition, the more verbal contact we have with the model, and the more that is explained, the better our learning will be, especially in relation to inhibitory controls (Brody & Shaffer, 1982).

These findings suggest that even within a learning paradigm, relationships facilitate the acquisition of discipline. A further contribution is that verbal communication and explanations of discipline enhance learning and further create conditions for the integration of self-control.

Final thoughts

Competing theories in the literature of the helping professions have led to a false dichotomy between the concepts of relatedness and control. It is now



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abundantly clear that practitioners of different orientations have had to acknowledge the critical importance of integrating discipline with warmth and acceptance. To choose one over the other deprives young people in our care of appropriate developmental conditions.

Another implication of the research is that warmth works best in concert with moderate control, that emphasizes verbal contact and rational explanations of behavioral restrictions (Brody & Shaffer, 1982). Too much restrictiveness has been found to create resentment and increase the likelihood of an adversarial situation, while at the same time creating dependency on external structures and an incapacity for initiative (Santrock et al, 2003).

In the final analysis, the greatest challenge may be to consider the balance between relatedness and control as it relates to us as interveners. Wilson & Soth (1985) acknowledge that most individuals who practice with young people are forced to face their own needs for control as part of the initiation into the work, and that often this takes the form of a crisis. Our perceptions of our own competency may be at issue when the youth in our care are defiant or noncompliant. There is a real risk that our needs for control may, at times, dominate over our needs to connect. At the same time, we need to be aware of our own issues with attachment and how this can play out with the young people in our care. Relatedness and control are not at odds but are in fact complementary. The best evidence available to date would dictate that we provide moderate control in the context of warm, available relationships with adults and that we encourage development, not compliance for its own sake. As stated eloquently by Fox (1994), “kids can be loved (affirmed) and managed while they are becoming ‘empowered’”. It truly is this combination that is at the heart of our profession.

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Beyond Beats and Rhymes: Looking For Leadership

Mark Krueger

Editor's note

This column was originally published in issue 98 of CYC-Online in 2007.

The need for leaders is just as needed today as it was when this was penned by Mark Krueger. You can view the original posting at <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0307-krueger.html>

A couple weeks ago I attended a screening of a documentary movie titled: HIP-HOP: Beyond Beats and Rhymes. The event was well attended. In the Milwaukee audience were university professors, youth workers, agency administrators, and youth from programs in our community including, Running Rebels and Urban Underground, two youth groups engaged in community building (civic engagement) activities in Milwaukee. The movie was directed by Byron Hurt and featured known artists Mos Def, Busta Rhymes, Nelly, and others.

The intent was to raise questions about the messages and meanings of hip hop. Like many people, the director, an African American athlete who grew up on rap and hip hop, was concerned about the sexist, misogynistic, violent, homophobic, materialistic messages that the music was conveying to African American youth. The film would be followed by a panel/audience discussion (by coincidence CNN devoted two hours of prime-time discussion to the same topic the next week).



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We saw the uncut version of the documentary. I've been around, but I must say I was shocked at what the male youth (boys really) and musicians were saying and doing, to women and themselves in particular with their self-demeaning behavior. It was far more extreme than I thought. Worse yet, they didn't even seem to know that rather than look tough and cool, they really looked insecure and crude to the rest of the world outside of their little circle. A circle we all knew was very difficult to break free from, the pressures to "be tough" in the hood these days being perhaps greater than ever. The survival of many youth is dependent upon their ability to conform to these hip hop "norms." Breaking free, which is something that many youth dream of, takes an almost heroic act. I admire no one more than the youth who have the strength to move out of these cycles of self-destruction.

As I watched the performers spew their hate and anger for the establishment, themselves, women, gays, and whites, I tried to remind myself that all generations of youth go through something like this. The goal is to shock adults. We did it with rock and roll, free love, etc. Yet this still seemed excessive. The glorification of violence and the disrespect for women and gays really got to me. The only purpose in the music and videos, it seemed, was to demean others, and for young men, who were basically frightened and insecure, to appear mean, tough, and macho.

Some in the audience thought it was funny. I was in the group that did not. We saw this form of commercial hip hop and rap as undermining and weakening a whole generation of African American youth. What could be a beautiful, poetic, powerful art form was being used to exploit, for the sake of profit, youth. Most of the rappers in the documentary and videos (we were told) drove rented cars and wore rented jewelry. Further, they were singing what the producers (mostly wealthy, white, men at the head of record companies and radio distributions) told them to sing. It was like they were slaves all over again to commercialism and the market. And victimization, sexism, violence, and death were hot.

One commentator used an analogy to cowboy movies. Violence, racism, homophobia, and sexism have been part of American society forever, he argued. Indeed, it is pervasive throughout the U.S., as it is in much of the rest of the world.



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Commentators on CNN built on this argument the following week. But as I sat there that night I asked myself, does that mean we should continue? Is this the example from white culture that you want to emulate? Same thing for materialism, I thought. Just because mainstream American culture is so materialistic and empty, does that mean you want to claim it as your right and create a symbol of happiness by showing all that expensive “bling (jewelry, gold chains, etc),” clothes, and cars? What does that get you — stuff, but not happiness? “Make love not war,” was our cry. There were problems with this, of course, but at least the message one of love not hate, and inclusiveness, not division.

Maybe I was missing something I told myself as two people next to me seemed to agree with the commentator. Maybe there was some hidden or subliminal message here aimed at telling us all to wake up and fight for change? But if the intent was to stir people to positive action, a subliminal message would only work if it did more good than bad, in my opinion, and this one clearly did more bad, at least the way I saw it. It shocked, and stirred negative reaction. It did not attempt to propose an avenue for change, or maybe it did.

What struck me about midway through the film, as I am sure it has struck many others, is that these young men do not have any leaders. We had Malcolm X, MLK, and Bobby Kennedy during civil rights, each with a different approach but all working for change. The rappers in this documentary appeared to have no purposeful agenda other than to shock, demean, and make money. They were in the face of society with nothing to back it up other than self-abuse.

Fortunately, most of the youth and the panelists agreed with the filmmaker, who said that he had become very concerned about what it was doing to the “black” community. A couple of young African American men who were working on their PhD.s and a professor along with a woman who ran a shelter for battered women gave the youth a clear and powerful message that this kind of music and commercialism was hurting them. And, the youth for the most part agreed. Several stood up and said they wanted to be known for who they were, not as part of a culture of destruction. These young men and women were proud, thoughtful, and



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creative. The snickering stopped because the mood of the crowd was that this was not cool. I left feeling better, more hopeful, and ready to discuss the documentary in my class.

Two days later I went to a movie called the *Factory Girl*, which was the story of Edie Sedgwick, a woman who Andy Warhol made famous for “fifteen minutes” in New York, who died of an overdose after he stopped exploiting her and she was left, abandoned by her wealthy family, to fend for herself out of the street. It struck me that our generation, while involved in a movement for change and civil rights, had also turned its back to some of the same kind of sexism, and exploitation for profit — something which remains widespread today in the media and over the internet.

* * *

When I got home there was an e-mail from my friend Norman Powell. Ralph Kelly the first president of our national child and youth care association had died at age 69. He had been ill for a while, but it was still a shock. Ralph, an African American, from the New York association of workers, had been our role model, the first child and youth care worker to lead us toward a multicultural effort to improve the quality of care for youth, and gain respect for people who worked with them. He was the man who led us through the early (and in many ways most difficult) stage of professional development. He had harnessed the energy and racial, geographical, cultural, and social differences, and got us to work together. The leader of the caravan of vans that carried us across the country to meet in hotel rooms where we slept in closets and anywhere else we could to pile as many people as possible into one room. We were poor, broke, child and youth care workers who found each other in our cause to improve care for kids. And he was the one with the maturity, experience, and sense of self-command and leadership to rein us in and keep us on task. Later he went on to reform the juvenile justice system in Kentucky while completing his Ph.D. He will be missed.



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I called Norman the next morning and we talked about Ralph, helped each other grieve. Norman, also an African American, was the second President. For many of us he was the model of how we wanted to be seen as workers. Having served in the Peace Corp before working as a child and youth care worker and then going on to get his PhD at American University, Norman was and is “the professional worker.”

It was good to reconnect. We talked for some time about the past and present, his family, my family, etc. At one point I told him about the documentary on Hip Hop. We were in agreement about the need for leadership. “They need it more than ever today,” he said. As usual we talked a little about the good old days. Like most generations, of course, we thought the leaders of our age were better.

As we talked I was reminded of a conversation I had with Doug Magnuson, a professor in the University of Victoria School of Child and Youth Care (considered by many a leader in the generation following the one Norman and I were part of), who said he wished he had been part of our generation of child and youth care leaders: the ones who started it all in the 1960s and 1970s. It was flattering to think that I was part of that group, but to be honest I think the best leaders and leadership styles are still evolving.

When the conversation shifted to politics, Norman and I both agreed that Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton would bring youth into the forefront during the next presidential election. Hillary had been involved with the U.S. national association in the early days when Bill Clinton was Governor of Arkansas. Her work with the Children’s Defense Fund had been an important part of drawing awareness to issues with youth at risk in the U.S. And Barack Obama, what a positive role model he would be. Maybe like Martin and Bobby Kennedy they would bring youth and civil rights and inclusiveness back into the discussion.

When Norman and I began the conversation I was nostalgic and sad about Ralph. Afterwards I was energized by my discussion with my “ol’ buddy,” and went through the day thinking maybe more young people today would find the purpose in child and youth care that we had found, and make it something better. The youth



and leaders at the Hip Hop discussion, “the civic minded, capacity building running rebels and urban under-grounders,” were good examples in my opinion of what we can look forward to. In the meantime, maybe those of us who have been around for a while should work harder at mentoring and recruiting the next batch of world changers in child and youth care. My sense is that they are all around us in droves, and just need a little nudge.

So long Ralph. Thanks. You’re the first. Keep the faith, bro.

SAVE THE DATE



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Postcard from Leon Fulcher

From New Zealand

Kia Ora and Warm Greetings everyone! While pausing to consider the importance of International Child and Youth Care Week, I found myself locating images that prompted symbolic reminders of direct practice activities in our field. So, let's see what symbolism emerges from a selection of 9 photographic images.

A visit to the Central North Island town of Rotorua offers a sulphuric ambiance that greets one strongly at the Te Puia Maori Village. I recall thinking of how often one 'gets a whiff' or notices something bubbling along – just at the surface – with every now and then, eruptions!



Te Puia Geyser at Rotorua, Bay of Plenty, North Island



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A second bit of symbolism was found on Waiheke Island, off Auckland, which made me think of teamwork and how important it is in child and youth care work to find shared directions.

And then after stormy times, suddenly there may be special highlights. It is all too easy to take daily and weekly highlights for granted. Special moments need to be celebrated!

If anyone ever asks where paradise is located, tell them New Zealand, where the Paradise Ducks live! These birds offer interesting developmental parallels with child and youth care work as the ducklings start off all looking the same. At adolescence, the birds experience body changes that leave females with white heads, males with black heads. And they mate for life.

The two young lads in the Bumper Boats made me smile at the memory of Henry Maier talking about “Go-Go” Kids who engage in activities that intrude into the life space activities of others. Henry highlighted the ways in which other kids are like “Living Radars”, spending more time in their own activities, hypersensitive to what is happening around them.



Woven Figures on Waiheke Island



Waikaremoana Rainbow



Paradise Ducks with Adult White-Headed Female and Black-Headed Male



Rural and urban differences in our field are huge, even though much of the relational work that child and youth care workers facilitate each day is similar. Entering a zone of potential connection with young people in our work begins with shared experiences and interests. If we aren't carefully monitoring our own personal 'radar', we can fail to notice important cues.

How many child and youth care workers do you know who can step up and hold a crawdad as it wriggles and nips away at its holder? Such feats require a delicate touch and in so many ways, this reminded me of how a delicate touch is required when engaging with a young person in distress, or while giving first aid after an accident.

Then of course there is *Hinepukohurangi*, the Mist Maiden, who reminds us of how often child and youth care workers are working in the fog, with only fleeting glimpses of the shared goals that youths and families seek to achieve with their help. Sometimes, she tells us to wait!

My last image offering symbolic meaning for International Child and Youth Care Week looks out over the Pacific Ocean towards Mahia Peninsula, site of a new Space-X Launch Station that has launched new micro-satellites into lower, and less expensive orbits with re-useable booster rockets. Every child, young



Luke and Friend at the Bumper Boat



Two young cowboys at the local rodeo



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person and family member benefits from what 're-useable boosters' they are offered by a responsive youth care worker! Kia Kaha! Stand Tall!

High Fives for Successful Opportunity Moments with Colleagues this Month!



New Zealand's Mahia Peninsula Location of Space-X Launch Site



Learning to Hold a Crawdad



Hinepukohurangi – The Mist Maiden at Dawn over Waikaremoana



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- We prefer APA formatting for referencing
- We are willing to work with first-time authors to help them get published
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