

Die Kinderversorger



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CWLA

Child Welfare League of America

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When is a policy not a policy? Paying lip-service to short-term care

Considerable exposure has been given, both here and overseas, to the short-term family service model instituted two years ago at Ethelbert Children's Home in Durban.

At that time the issues surrounding the future of residential care seemed clear: long-term placements were not generally successful in restoring families, they tended to reach a point of diminishing returns in terms of what the youngsters gained from them, they were beyond our means in raw financial terms, and — as the new Child Care Act arrived — they were not what our legislation wanted. The state wanted good reasons for turn-around times longer than two-years; it wanted programmes aimed at keeping families together; it wanted more for its money.

Ethelbert, which had operated on a cottage system since the 1950's, responded promptly and generously. It put itself through the trauma of change, committed two-thirds of its resources to a two-year programme, developed new roles and tasks of its staff, built new attitudes towards parents and families, bravely redefined treatment goals for the children, and then learned the new skills to implement a whole new way of working. For its trouble, Ethelbert may have to close down the whole programme within a year. In his latest annual report Management Board Chairman Anthony Haley expresses his extreme concern about the large number of vacancies for children in the Home. "It is difficult to understand," he continues, "that the programmes offered by us are so underutilised when the need for alternate care for children is so great. The Board of Management is seriously investigating alternative ways of using the fine facilities which exist ..." Mr Haley is not the first person to feel like this. A number of children's homes in the 1980's developed more responsible admissions procedures. Children were not simply admitted on the grounds that they had an empty bed and there was "an emergency". Questions were asked regarding the appropriateness of the placement, the locality of significant family members, the availability of treatment resources, the level of commitment of the referring agency.

Some children's homes were punished for this attitude. A senior state official asked on one occasion "How dare you introduce obstacles like this?!" An entire fami-

ly welfare agency boycotted local children's homes implementing such procedures. It was easier to place children where there would be no questions asked, no demands made ...

There are other administrative snags to running better programmes. Every time you succeed in your child and family goals and discharge a child, your capitation grant goes down proportionately. Zap! Instant negative reinforcement. Since it is helpful to discharge children at the least disruptive times, for example at the end of school terms, groups of eight or ten children may leave simultaneously: The immediate dive in state grant can instantly wipe out the financing of two or three staff posts, and the programme itself is thus jeopardised. Good thinking! The NACCW's 1985 National Conference, prior to personal representations to government, finalised a carefully worked proposal regarding subsidies, a major feature of which was incentives for short turn-around times. Yet the disincentives remain.

It is recognised that short-term care is but one modality of the child care service and, in spite of the intentions of our legislation, is not always feasible for all of the children and families we work with. But to the extent that it is policy, should it not be helped rather than hindered? The fact that we can so absurdly shoot ourselves in the foot in this way is part of a greater anomaly regularly highlighted in these columns: we have no coherent policy for children.

It is praiseworthy that the Child Care Act emphasises a maximum committal period of two years, but this is mere window-dressing if it is just a fad nailed on to a tottering Heath Robinson structure. Various state departments have recently had the child care industry jumping through all sorts of hoops (permanency planning, programming) which are simply not followed through in the system as a whole. If those who make up the policies have egg on their faces, then they have only themselves to blame. There could, however, be deep and justifiable resentment when the fooling around and equivocating puts at risk the future of organisations like Ethelbert Children's Home which has never been short on commitment and contribution to good child care in South Africa

And at the very time when we need such organisations most.

Techniques for Avoiding Director Burnout

Roger Neugebauer

Roger Neugebauer, M.S., is the editor of Exchange Press and is a regular speaker at national conferences and workshops. He is a noted leader in the child care field.

Elizabeth Prescott, a child development specialist, has focused considerable attention on children who are thrivers and non-thrivers in day care centres. But just as there are children who seem to thrive in these centres and others who don't, there are also directors in residential care who are thrivers and others who are non-thrivers. The scant attention that has been paid to this issue in research seems to indicate that as many as one in three directors are non-thrivers, persons in the process of burning out. Another large segment of directors clearly appear to be thrivers. *Characteristics of Thrivers* (see box) provides a simplified picture of what these thriving directors look like. To get an idea as to whether you are a thriver or a non-thrivers and whether you have a need for the burnout solutions described below, before reading on, test yourself on the Burnout Quiz printed on page 4. While this is not a scientifically-tested instrument, it has been field tested on a wide variety of directors with the following implications: If you scored 6 or less, you are clearly a thriver — you should probably be writing this article, not reading it. If you scored between 6 and 14, you are probably a marginal thriver — you need to make some moderate adjustments to your lifestyle. If you scored 15 or more, you are clearly a non-thrivers — and you probably won't survive in your current position without radically adjusting your lifestyle.

The Search for Solutions

Experts on organisational stress acknowledge that work stress is not necessarily a negative force. Without a certain level of stress to challenge us, our jobs would be boring and unrewarding. Stress only becomes a problem when it builds to such an extreme that we are unable to cope with it. The solution to burnout, therefore, is not to eliminate stress altogether but to maintain it at a level where it is still a positive motivating force. Stress overload can occur in many ways. It may occur simply when the volume of



work to be done requires far more time than is available. It may occur when a person's tasks require a higher level of skill or ability than he possesses — such as when a director with no financial training must complete detailed accounting or

tax reports. It also may result when the interpersonal requirements of a job force a person to relate to people in an unaccustomed manner — as when a shy, soft-spoken director must continually meet prospective parents or contend with belligerent bureaucrats. Given the complex nature of work stress, there is no single or simple answer to the director burnout problem. Rather, there are a wide array of solutions. Below, these have been organised into four levels, ranging from the most routine to the most profound. *Note:* The numbers in parentheses after the description for each level are the question numbers from the Burnout Quiz. If you answered "yes" to a majority of them at a particular level, you may need to concentrate attention on the solutions at that level.

Level 1: Improve overall body condition and develop ability to truly relax (1-5)

Level 2: Manage time effectively (6-10)

Level 3: Develop feedback and support systems (11-17)

Level 4: Promote professional growth and stimulation (18-24).

The remainder of this article will describe solutions at the most critical of these levels — three and four.

Characteristics of Thrivers

- Have a sense of what they hope to accomplish and how they plan to do it
- Set moderately difficult goals and work with persistence and patience to accomplish them
- Continually reassess their organization's goals and the progress toward meeting them
- Project an image of competence and confidence
- Look at everything with the view of improving it
- Exhibit initiative and decisiveness
- Take moderate risks and are open to new ideas and ventures
- Set priorities among tasks and stick to them
- Continually seek feedback on their performance
- Regularly seek out expert resource

people for advice and assistance

- Continually broaden acquaintances in their own and related fields
- Surround themselves with competent, responsible co-workers, and delegate major work to them
- Invite participation of co-workers in organizational planning and decision making
- Care about co-workers and build bonds of trust with them
- Operate with complete openness and honesty
- Exhibit a sense of humor, enjoy work, keep problems in perspective, and don't take themselves too seriously

This profile of thrivers was developed based on observations of effective child and youth care directors, as well as on relevant findings from research in child care, psychology, and business.

DEVELOP A FEEDBACK SYSTEM

People do not aspire to be child and youth care directors because of the prestige or economic rewards of such positions. Typically, they are in the field because they want to accomplish something beneficial for children and families. What brings them satisfaction, therefore, is evidence that they are accomplishing those objectives. Unfortunately, in the normal course of events, most directors seldom see clear-cut indications that their efforts make a difference in the life of the centre or in the lives of the children and families they serve. By making a deliberate effort, directors can increase the flow of feedback on the effects of their performance. Such feedback can inform the director of the immediate impact of his or her actions within the agency as well as the long-term impact of these efforts on children and families.

Invite informal staff feedback

The best source of information about the effects of your performance is the people who see the most of you — your staff. In many cases, they are not always aware of what you do on a day to day basis at the agency. But they are directly affected by your style of leadership and supervision, by the decisions you make, by the expertise you share, and by the resources you marshal for them. On these issues, they can provide you with direct feedback. Such feedback can bring you satisfaction when it is positive and can help you identify needed changes when it is negative. The simplest way to receive such feedback is to have staff routinely share their reactions to your efforts. To do so, you must prove to your staff that you truly want this feedback in order to improve your performance. You must develop your listening skills so that you don't react emotionally or defensively to negative feedback. Also, if you do act on this feedback and make changes that the staff can see, they will know you take it seriously.

Initiate formal feedback systems

Informal staff feedback as discussed can take place in casual conversation and in staff meeting discussions. Directors can also ask staff members to rate their performance in specific areas more formally by using a list of functions and a rating scale developed by the agency or by using an outside assessment or rating scale. To use a formal assessment tool effectively, you should fully discuss it with the staff beforehand. Staff members should complete it anonymously, and the results of the survey should be reported back to the staff. Some programmes have benefited

by having the director and staff identify jointly the area where they would like to see improvement, and develop approaches for making this improvement happen. Ideally, such an assessment should be performed periodically to determine if progress is being made.

Set and monitor short-term goals

To help provide a gauge of your accomplishments, it may be helpful to list quarterly the specific activities you hope to accomplish in the upcoming three months and to set a deadline for each activity. Post this list in a prominent place in your office and record the dates when you actually complete the activities. Hold onto these three-monthly lists so you can see if you are becoming more or less effective in meeting your deadlines.

Conduct agency evaluations

Since directors often do not work directly with the children, they do not receive the direct satisfaction of seeing an individual child respond to their programme. But directors are ultimately responsible for everything that goes on in the agency, for seeing to it that the programme achieves its goals for children and families. One valid indication of the effectiveness of the director is the performance of the agency as a whole. Directors have a variety of methods available to them for evaluating the agency's programme. They can hire outside consultants to perform the evaluation. Staff members from various agencies can form a team to evaluate each others' agencies. A committee of parents and staff from the agency can perform a self-assess-

Are you a candidate for burnout?

How do you rate? Answer "yes" or "no" whether the descriptions below apply to you. Then count up how many "yes" answers you recorded. If the total is greater than 7 you are a candidate for burnout.

1. I am often tense and anxious and/or I often experience tightness in my leg, back, or neck muscles.
2. I often have trouble getting to sleep and/or I seldom feel truly rested when I awake. I can't keep work problems from my mind at night.
3. I can't stop my nervous habits — biting my nails, chewing my cheeks, etc.
4. I am more and more prone to negative addictions — smoking, overeating, drinking, using drugs or tranquilizers.
5. After an intense effort to meet a deadline or handle a crisis, it takes me more than a day to recover my stamina and alertness and/or I often feel worn out during working hours.
6. I often work more than 50 hours per week.
7. I often bring work home on evenings and weekends.
8. I seldom have time to work on my really important tasks such as planning, evaluation, and training.
9. When I try to relax, I feel guilty about important unfinished work.
10. I seldom control how my time is used. It is controlled by crises and outside parties — bureaucrats, parents,

staff, and children.

11. No one fully understands what I do. Many people understand little parts of my work, but no one has the complete picture.
12. Few people truly appreciate my work.
13. I feel isolated. I have no one to let off steam to, no one's shoulder to cry on.
14. I'm supposed to have all the answers. I often have no one to turn to for advice in dealing with especially difficult problems.
15. I seldom get feedback on the effectiveness of my efforts.
16. I do not feel respected as a professional in my community.
17. My job consumes my life. I seldom have time to pursue other activities, interests, or hobbies.
18. I spend most of my time on parts of my job that I don't enjoy.
19. I don't keep up to date on current trends and future directions in the field.
20. I'm not sure what my long-term goals in life are.
21. My current work is not moving me closer to accomplishing my long-term goals.
22. My best skills and talents are not being fully utilised or tested in my current work.
23. My job is not the spice of my life. I am no longer challenged or excited by it.
24. I seem to be in a dead end career. There are few positions I can advance to.

ment. An agency can use any number of formal evaluation formats or develop its own. One informal method that has been useful is the "critical incidents" technique. Interviewers ask parents or staff to list three incidents, major or trivial, that made them satisfied with the agency in the past month and three that made them dissatisfied. All the pro and con incidents are then compiled to identify patterns in which interviewers cited similar incidents. These patterns can point to existing strengths and weaknesses in the program.

No matter what methods are employed, certain ground rules should be observed. The evaluation should focus on the agency's goals. It should not collect more data than will be used. Finally, it should not be a one-time effort but should take place periodically so that trends and progress can be followed.

Avoid frustrations

Hard work does not necessarily cause burnout. Hard work that results in success can be exhilarating. On the other hand, work resulting in frustration can be emotionally and physically damaging. Since man does not have an endless supply of strength to bounce back from such failures, Hans Selye argues that "... we must, at all cost, avoid frustration, the humiliation of failure; we must not aim too high and undertake tasks which are beyond us."

Directors should set goals for themselves and their agencies that are challenging but not impossible to achieve.

Increase sources of satisfaction

According to Harry Levinson, one hedge against stress overload is having a variety of sources for gratification. A director whose entire life is consumed by his or her job is prone to becoming overwhelmed when that job is going poorly. One who has a reasonable variety of other interests is much less likely to be overwhelmed by job frustration.

Seek recognition

Surveys have shown that the vast majority of child care staff and directors believe that they are not respected as professionals in their communities. Agencies that are respected in the community are in the minority. The staff at such agencies is visibly proud to be part of the agency and are motivated by this pride. These agencies make a conscious effort to publicise the strengths of their agencies in the community. Directors should not be reluctant to promote their agency's image. An improved public image not only can raise staff morale, but will make fundraising and recruitment easier.

Develop a Support System

The "burned out" directors all comment on the extreme isolation of the director's job. When they experience stress over staff conflicts or bureaucratic hassles, they seldom have anyone they can turn to for a sympathetic ear. Directors who are thriving have developed informal support networks such as the following:

- *Participate in a directors' support group:* Once a month, directors in Chula

Many directors who quit do so because the challenge and excitement of the job has disappeared

Vista, California, meet for a noon luncheon where they hear a guest speaker and discuss child and youth care issues. This phenomenon is occurring in other communities as directors seek to exchange ideas and concerns about issues they all confront. Directors who participate commonly find these meetings to be useful places for letting off steam, and for receiving moral support and helpful advice. Characteristics of the most successful of these groups are that they are informal, have no name, bylaws, dues, or officers, and there is no attendance requirement; and they meet regularly but not frequently; the meetings are informal with no set agendas, their purpose is to share ideas.

- *Cultivate relationships:* It may seem unusual that directors feel isolated, since most of their day is spent interacting with others. But these interactions are brief, involving only an interchange of business information.

Directors can add to their support network by converting some of these casual business relationships into personal friendships. According to Selye, we can contain stress without distress if we "greedily hoard wealth and strength, not in the form of money or domination of others, but by earning the goodwill, gratitude, respect, and love of those who surround us."

- *Develop a group of advisors:* Some directors have solved their need of technical advice by establishing a group of ad-

visors. The only commitment these advisors make is to be available a few times per year when the director has a problem requiring their expert advice. They are not required to attend any meetings or functions. In this way, the expertise of those who are unwilling or unable to serve on a board can be tapped.

PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND STIMULATION

Many directors who quit do so because the challenge and excitement of the job has disappeared. They experience the feeling common to middle-aged business executives, that "one has reached an occupational dead end, has done all one can do, and is destined to remain in the same rut for the rest of one's life" (Levinson 1975.)

Before a director's attitude reaches this low point, there are several alternatives which should be explored:

- *Reassess personal goals:* "To give meaning and direction to life," contends Selye, "we need a lofty long-range purpose."

He further argues that this purpose must have two salient characteristics: "It must be something that requires hard work, and its fruits must be sufficiently permanent to accumulate as life goes by." As stated earlier, most directors chose this profession due to an interest in helping children and families. As the years pass, and people become involved in the daily challenges of running their agencies, they lose sight of original goals.

It is important for directors periodically to reassess their personal goals to evaluate whether their current position is moving them in a direction that would enable them to accomplish those goals.

- *Restructure current position:* Sometimes when a person's goals and position are not in harmony, it might be possible to achieve a better match by restructuring the job. One director, for example, found that the one part of his job that directly related to a long-term goal was researching the state of the art in delivery systems. This was only a small part of his job as structured. He obtained a research grant that paid three-fourths of his salary and he was able to use the money left over to hire an assistant director to carry out his daily responsibilities. He was able to spend 75% of his time on research consistent with this personal goal.

- *Expand the organisation:* Some directors have been able to revitalise their jobs by exploring alternative ways their agencies could meet child and youth care needs. In some cases, this involved developing programmes in independent living and day treatment. In other cases, it involved starting additional programmes by adding satellite agencies and

projects. In still others, it resulted in new services, such as parenting workshops or foster care referral.

● *Seek additional professional outlets:* Directors often find that their talents, skills, and interests are not, and cannot be, fully challenged in their jobs. As a result, they seek to explore various outlets for their abilities. Examples of such outlets include writing books or magazine articles, consulting to less experienced agencies, teaching courses at community colleges, and conducting workshops and conferences. In some cases, directors have been able to pursue these professional challenges as part of their jobs; in others, they have done it on their own time.

● *Change jobs:* In some instances, no amount of readjusting of one's current job responsibilities can make it work. Possibly, there is no way to restructure the job to avoid burnout. Or perhaps, it is not possible to reconcile one's personal goals with the demands of the job. In either case, a job change might be given consideration.

Deciding what new job to pursue is not often easy. Being the best child and youth care director in the world may not necessarily qualify a person for something else. If you do decide to quit being a child and youth care director, don't be concerned that you are somehow failing. You can do more good by beginning a new career with vigour and commitment than by continuing halfheartedly in your current position.

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BOOKS

Straight talking to kids

How to talk to children about really important things

Charles E Schaefer, Ph.D

There is no "one best way" to talk with children, nor "one best thing" to say in every situation. But, one can offer helpful guidelines based on common sense, current research and practical experience. This is exactly what Charles Schaefer succeeds in doing in this straightforward, warm and reassuring book.

Comprehensive in scope, *How to talk to children about really important things* covers both stressful major life events and day-to-day concerns of growing up, including such topics as the death of a loved one, having an alcoholic parent, witnessing marital strife, when a beloved pet dies and learning about the meaning of love, risk-taking, homosexuality and Father Christmas. Schaefer addresses himself primarily to parents (and surrogate parents) of children aged roughly 5 to 12 years.

These are the formative years when children are developing the foundation for basic beliefs, values and attitudes. In addition, it is the period when children are usually most open to and interested in receiving parental guidance. However, since parental guidance should begin during the pre-school years and continue through adolescence, many topics will be of interest to parents of younger and/or older children.

Issues of the 'when', 'why' and 'how' of talking with children are also discussed and the author recommends being an "askable" parent – one who answers questions as soon as they are asked; who speaks honestly and without distortion and who shows respect by listening to and acknowledging the child's point of view.

Although addressed primarily to parents, this book is highly recommended to all adults who work with children.

— Lauren Fine

FROM THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN

Appreciation to The Children's Foundation for its Support over the Years

One of the major problems which faced the child care service in the Seventies and Eighties was the lack of trained staff in our child care facilities. The NACCW took up the challenge to equip child care staff with knowledge and skill to become effective partners in the helping process. It also challenged and supported the Management Boards of these facilities to move away from merely custodial to more treatment-oriented institutions. It was only able to do this work successfully with the support of others. As we enter the Nineties and the work this decade will ask of us, we record our gratitude to our donors, but particularly to The Children's Foundation which remains our major sponsor. The bond between our two organisations is deeply valued by us.

I am also aware of the support TCF is giving to many children's homes and individual staff members who are committed to better services for children, and on their behalf would also like to thank you.

To us 'The Children's Foundation' has become synonymous with 'support'. It is good to feel that we in the NACCW, together with TCF, have become partners with child care organisations throughout South Africa in ensuring effective services for children and young people. Thank you to Jack Sutton and Jacqui Michael for the part you have played and continue to play.

ASHLEY THERON
National Chairman, NACCW

Using Theory in Practice

Brian Gannon writes on getting more practical mileage out of the theories they teach you in child care training courses

Often we sit in a class or read a book and learn something of a particular theory in child care or child development. If we are students we specially try to memorise the theory so that we can do well in our examinations or assessments — and we can easily forget that the theory was not taught for our examinations, but for our practice back home with the youngsters we work with.

It's not always easy to connect what we learn in our studies with the kids back home. What on earth can Freud's theory of the unconscious have to do with Kenny who keeps picking on Pamela? Gail sprawled in her room reading silly picture books doesn't look much like Erickson's adolescent identity-building. When I yelled at the twins for fighting and spilling tomato-sauce on the table cloth, Fritz Redl would hardly have called that a "life-space interview". At least, it certainly wasn't a very good one! Maybe Freud, Erickson and Redl would have been more interested than we think. Let's take one of the better known developmental theories, and see how we can more consciously — and profitably — use it in our practice.

A Theory of Moral Development

Kohlberg developed a model of moral development in which (in vastly simplified terms) he proposed three stages:

Stage 1: Kids do what we expect of them because grown-ups can make life unpleasant for them if they don't. William, who is four, doesn't really want to leave Daddy's workshop tools alone, but he does because he knows there will be a row, maybe a clip on the ear, if he doesn't. In Kohlberg's stage 1 of moral development, therefore, youngsters are saying: "I'll do what you want for fear of punishment — or whatever unpleasant consequence you apply to my acceptable behaviour".

Stage 2: Kids do what we expect of them because they have come to value grown-ups' positive attention and affection. Sally, who is seven, is going to stop eating so disgustingly and noisily because she can see this turns people off — the very people she needs to accept her and love her. In Kohlberg's stage 2, the youngsters are saying: "I'll do what you ask because

I value being in your favour — I want to secure your on-going approval".

Stage 3: Kids do what we expect of them because they have come to understand for themselves the basic values of their family and their culture. Carl, who is seventeen, can grasp and respect his community's values around issues like stealing, dishonesty, violence. In Kohlberg's stage 3, the youngsters are saying: "I'll go along with that because it's also what I have come to want — I am

... we buy ourselves
some peace and
quiet, but we are
putting off a hell of
a job for later, or for
someone else!

building my own set of values which seem to work for me".

That's the basic theory.

Of course it doesn't work with all kids the same way at the same times. Some can take a little longer to get through stages 1 to 3; others may get stuck somewhere along the way.

Again, stage 3 may look very different on opposite sides of town: at one end we may crook our little finger while we hold our tea-cup, sip sherry and converse ever so politely; at the other we may be a little rougher, do a little grass and speak more frankly. But we get by in our neighbourhood, and that's is what matters. Somehow (although we never even heard of Mr Kohlberg) we got through his stages 1, 2 and 3.

So what about our young people in the children's home, I hear you asking? Well, there are two ways, at least, in which we can helpfully use this or any developmental model or theory.

Keeping development on track

Any developmental model is useful as a yardstick by which to measure how children are growing. Height and weight norms are the most obvious examples. Young mothers who are being specially careful about nutrition will often monitor their babies' weight and growth — and become anxious if the baby doesn't thrive. Other developmental models give us an indication as to what we can expect children to be doing at what ages ... roughly. Of course there are individual variations: there may be years between the ages at which children enter puberty, just as there might be feet between their heights at maturity. But a model gives us a guide.

With Kohlberg's model, for example, most youngsters pass from stage 1 to stage 2 by six or seven years of age. By this time they have moved away from a self-centred position and are more able to judge the social and interpersonal consequences of their own behaviour. Just stop and think of that: by this age a child should be saying: "I'll do what you want because I value your approval". Now think of your group of children in the children's home. Have your seven and eight-year-olds developed this level of social interdependence, where they can moderate their own behaviour in the light of your approval, in the interests of the relationship between you? It is an important question to ask. Not many children in care easily get to this stage of moral development. Relationships have more often been the cause of hurt and disappointment to them. In their confusion the children have been ambivalent about the significant adults in their lives, often distressed by them and angry at them.

Applying theory to practice

By asking these questions, you begin to build your list of developmental tasks which lie ahead of the children. This takes us directly to the second way in which we use theory — and this is a crucial step which we often get wrong when there are so many kids in our face. Here it is ...

If Margie doesn't in fact value her relationship with us and she goes on with difficult and provocative behaviour, do we (a) force her by threats and sanctions to toe the line? Or do we (b) recognise that we must try harder from our side with the relationship so that she will get to value it and come to behave accordingly?

This is what makes things so difficult for child care workers: If we choose (a) and stop her wrong behaviour by punishment, we may go on winning the behaviour battle for a while, but we are confirming her place down there on Kohlberg's stage 1.

She will behave to avoid punishment. We are not giving her footholds up to stage 2 — and somehow we owe this not just to Margie but to society. If nothing else, we need to hand on to society someone who climbed up through the three stages, *not* someone who only behaves through fear of punishment. We choose (a) and we buy ourselves some peace and quiet, but we are putting off a hell of a job for later, or for someone else! In other words, as busy child care workers we can easily be tempted to solve problems by saying “Do this, or else!” Mr Kohlberg says, if we want to be true to child development principles, we have to try harder than that! Trying out some theories to see if they ‘fit’ our particular situation, often shines some light on things we can’t understand. Rick is eleven and has pushed us to the limit. He goes on with his stealing and bullying, he abuses the younger children verbally and physically, and is rude and unco-operative with adults. We haven’t known how to handle this, and we are hurt by our continuing sense of failure. There are a number of diagnostic or evaluative models we can apply, but what does Kohlberg’s developmental theory offer? By eleven Rick should be well into stage 2 (“I want to behave because I value our relationship”). We must then ask: “With whom does Rick have a valued relationship? For whom would he modify his behaviour? Who is significant enough to Rick that he wouldn’t want to spoil the relationship by his uncouth behaviour?” I wonder what the answer would be!

Ever heard of I-messages?

Often we adults perversely insist on controlling youngsters when we should be teaching them to control themselves. We forget that when they’re nineteen we won’t be there to say “Pick up your clothes” or “Don’t speak like that”. The whole task of child rearing is to get children to get better and better at being adults. We often get on the wrong side of Kohlberg by forcing them down into lower stages of moral development. When we threaten a child, we simply keep him operating at stage 1. We all learned about “I-messages”. The very point of these is to emphasise the effect of children’s behaviour on *us* so that the kids get to see us as people, not controllers. We are taught not to say: “You are rude! Don’t you dare speak to me like that!”, but rather to say “I feel abused and humiliated when you talk to me like that ...”

I-messages like this make youngsters aware of the social context of their behaviour, and responsible for their behaviour within that social context — and

they help kids to climb from Kohlberg’s stage 1 to stage 2.

Ever heard of giving choices?

Child care workers will be aware that similar situations arise between stages 2 and 3. Liz, who is eighteen, comes to her housemother: “My relationship with Chris is becoming more and more important to me. Can you give me some advice about contraception?” Here, Liz is beginning to function on stage 3, having made some decisions for herself as a young adult. But her housemother replies: “You know how I feel about that sort of thing. You stretch my feelings for you to the limit when you get into that stuff. I’m not sure I’m going to be happy with our relationship if you ...” The housemother forces Liz back into stage 2 by threatening the relationship. She is not understanding the developmental process: When Liz was eight, building this relationship was important, but Liz is a big girl now, the nature of the relationship must change.

We all learned about giving youngsters opportunities to make real choices. The point of these is to let them test their wings with regard to their own autonomy and decision-making. We are taught not

to say “Wear the green pullover with that skirt” but “What do you think will look good with that?” This helps children take responsibility for their own feelings and tastes — so that progressively more adult decisions can be left to them, based on their own developing values. Giving sensible opportunities for making choices helps kids to climb from Kohlberg’s stage 2 to stage 3.

Staffing strategies

The transition from stage 1 to stage 2 with deprived children is particularly difficult, and this is probably where institutions fail most. Certainly discouraging is the number of stage 1 adolescents who pass on down through the welfare system to go on living stage 1 lives. For very seriously disturbed children, the building of relationships requires often going back and rebuilding some very basic foundations, and many writers have suggested that such children need what amounts to a second shot at babyhood in a particularly caring, trustworthy and predictable environment to achieve this. But most children in care can achieve this in a more normative environment.

The building of a relationship, though, is often not what it seems. Many talk about



IN "PUNCH"

“Hello, Dr. Spock. Say, I hate to bother you, but I’ve got this forty-year-old kid ...”

relationship building as if it were a specific task, whereas it is really the by-product of a number of tasks. Relationship really means 'connectedness' or 'bonding' and the only way we can achieve this bonding is by doing things together, lots of things over a period of time. Building a relationship means building a store of shared experiences. The children's home is the ideal place where adults and children can make time and space to do things together, to group and re-group for different purposes, to spend one-on-one time and group time, to do serious things and have fun together — and because this is a children's service and not a holiday camp, we do these things after intelligent and purposeful planning.

At a children's home where I was principal, we regularly monitored the quality of relationship between each staff member and each child, using a descriptive

scale of 0 to 7. (0 meant no contact at all, 1 meant only routine contact, 2 meant some time regularly spent in some activity ... to 7 which meant a frequent, mutual and trusting relationship.) This exercise taught us a lot about the 'economy' of our human resources: there were some youngsters, who because they were functioning at a high level anyway, many staff related to well — while other youngsters were not getting anything beyond routine relationships. We could afford, therefore, to 'detach' some staff from better functioning children and assign them to others more needy of adult time and attention. Another exercise indicated how individual children valued individual staff members, so we were guided in matching adults with children.

Conclusion

How are your kids doing with their moral development? Are you struggling to

build those relationships to hoist them up from stage 1 to stage 2? How do you do that? Many child care workers would like to improve that skill!

Are you holding your breath as they make ever more significant decisions in their lives, scrambling up from stage 2 to stage 3? That's scary too, and takes special generosity and courage from child care workers. But when we do these things, we are moving away from being just baby-sitters and child minders; we are being more like the child development specialists we ought to be as child care workers.

Vivien Lewis used to say that in the children's home we must help the children to grow through three stages:

1. where they see staff as staff;
2. where they see staff as people;
3. where they see staff as friends.

I cannot think of a better summary or application of Kohlberg's theory.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH: THEIR FUTURE IS NOW



Third International Child and Youth Care Conference

May 14-17, 1991

Sheraton Centre, Montréal

Conference Mission

This Conference is committed to worker, youth, and family empowerment.

a unique opportunity for all those who serve children, youth and families.

No longer can we say: "Our children are the future"; their future is NOW!

The third millenium is upon us; we must act today to create a world in which children can live tomorrow.

Lesley du Toit reports back on her six-week visit to UK and America ...

Old friends, new ideas

One of the first things I would like to do on return from overseas, is to tell our members, colleagues and friends something of my short visit to England and America last month. This will be a rather superficial 'first report', and in the coming months there is lots that we can explore more deeply.

Aycliffe

First of all, I had the opportunity to visit Aycliffe Centre in England where Masud Hoghughi is Director. I was deeply impressed by the place. For one thing it was far larger and more complicated than I had imagined. Aycliffe offers a whole continuum of programmes from secure units, treatment units to community-based programmes, and all with excellent liaison with outside agencies and the judicial system. Aycliffe is used very much as a local and national resource, and they are very particular as to how they approach this responsibility, and one cannot fail to be impressed.

Of course, the very next thing one realises is that there is a staff ratio of something like two staff members to every one child, with a solid financial backing beyond anything we could wish for here. Aycliffe has just built a training centre which would be the envy of all of our trainers. The facilities, the space and buildings are quite overwhelming, yet somehow it doesn't come across as a huge 'institution'. There are some 140 youngsters there, yet this is not obvious due to the spacing and privacy they have achieved.

The manner in which Aycliffe manages the secure unit is very good. From outside, it looks like any other residential unit on the campus; inside, every single structure has been most closely planned and designed for the security and safety of the children. In all respects it is a prison, yet one would never gain that impression. Even here, caring is paramount, not only physically but also in terms of staff attitudes. Aycliffe, as we know, has its own clear philosophy, and throughout the facility it is assiduously applied. There is, for example, a unit which functions entirely on the behaviour modification model, yet the over-riding philosophy runs through this as well: the care, the respect for children and families, the MCAT model. I watched

with admiration as this was most sensitively applied in a session with a difficult youngster and her family.

Staff teamwork was the next thing which impacted on me at Aycliffe. There is a large team, well over 300 staff members, yet the consistency of practice and attitude is never lost — not in a military precision sense, though certainly in accordance with agreed procedures, but with co-operativeness, with humour. Staff hand-overs, for example, in so large a staff, from one shift to another and at the height of the day's programme, are simply very well done.

Some of the staff have been at Aycliffe for fifteen to twenty years. It says something for the stimulating nature of the programme that they are at it, as actively as ever, after that time.

Congress

This was run under the auspices of AEIJI (in English, the International Association of Workers with Troubled Youth). Here there were so many familiar faces. Meeting with the child care fraternity was a high point: those who have written and taught and led the profession were great to meet: Henry Maier, Larry Brentro, Frank Ainsworth, Jack Kirkland, Mark Krueger, James Anglin — they all conveyed incredible support, interest and care in child care in South Africa, and I felt I was being welcomed into the bigger child care family. Norman Powell, Jerry Beker, Mike Baizerman ... so many friends. The meeting with people is always the real value in a congress like this, probably more so than the presentations which one could read in a book later. One might have expected more difficulties as a South African, but it was clear to me that those who knew the NACCW were prepared to be advocates for us, they seemed to have paved the way for us and to protect us. They were determined that we would be allowed to attend, and that we would not be subjected to difficulties. There was no excuse for South Africa and its politics, but the NACCW was seen as 'family', as an organisation which had never supported apartheid, and of course there were many delegates there who knew us and knew the NACCW at first hand.

It is interesting to reflect on the content

of the congress presentations: there was much material that was not new to us, things we would be expected to have heard and read about already. Of course there are limits and shortcomings in South Africa as to how well that material is mediated and circulated, and many of our child care people are not getting it all, but much of what we heard was already available material. There was, nevertheless, much new territory. One thing I went there hungry to learn, in the context of the coming period in South Africa, was information as to how we set about multi-cultural child care programmes. I gained the impression that the view in America was "Okay, guys, we've been travelling along this route for some time; we're not sure how well we're doing; let's stop and look at some of our anxieties ..." From my point of view, this allowed us in South Africa some proactive opportunity: we could use their experience to save ourselves going down some blind alleys.

Two approaches emerged. Gary Weaver's criticism was of the white-oriented 'cookie-cutter' approach whereby they expected kids to emerge in standard shapes from their programmes. When we ask what is healthy, we need to see the answer in the context of each culture; so far the reference point has been white American culture. When black or Hispanic kids didn't measure up to that, there was a sense of them having failed. We in South Africa could so easily have taken that path. It's good to be warned. That was only one aspect of Dr Weaver's material, but one which stood out for me. The other thinking was from Larry Brentro and his colleague Dr Martin Brokenleg (who is a Sioux Indian) who were working on the use of culture as therapy. They shared much of the native American culture, finding much in it which was of value in child care. Putting kids back in touch with their natural culture was important to them. In this short review this is only very superficially stated, but it is very important for us and I would like to devote particular space and time to it in the near future. We are all going to find it of value.

Three visits

We were able to visit Mark Krueger in Wisconsin. We spent some time at the training centre where he works. He also took us to see two of the treatment centres with which he is involved. At one of these, there is on-going pilot-study work going on relating to the generic team approach. This is an interesting approach whereby every member of the team is regarded as absolutely equal in status. They are all qualified in their own disciplines. They are all paid the same

salary, they have equal authority, but they have different training. This is in its eighth year, and it will be interesting to see the data which comes from this. A comment: it seemed to me that in American child care generally, the emphasis is more on the treatment programme and far less trouble seems to be taken in making the physical environment warm and inviting. One gets the impression that the clinical programmes are very smart and chromium-plated, but there is a baldness in the living units. Rooms were without pictures on the walls, without doors (presumably to monitor abuse?) and somehow lacking in homeliness. The European educators were also rather surprised by this aspect of American care.

Another programme we visited was the Starr Commonwealth Schools. Here again, a huge campus, very beautiful. In many ways similar to Aycliffe when it comes to the care given to grounds and buildings, the attention to detail. The programme is totally committed to peer group management. Here again, the one thing which impresses is the total commitment to the philosophy they have chosen — it permeates through the entire programme. The youngsters talk the language of that philosophy, even the administrative staff do. What it means is that those who work there not only have to learn about child care, but also about the particular model within which they will work. This was new to me, since we don't really have programmes which are so dedicated to a model. I had the privilege of 'walking' through a whole day with one group of youngsters. I sat in, for example, as a group of students confronted a peer who was having difficulty. More impressive, youngsters are moving through this programme in six months to a maximum of one year — this is very important to us in South Africa, having programmes which, because they are expensive, must deliver the goods. I believe we need to examine more closely peer management models for certain groups of kids here.

At this point I need to express a view on American children: when I look in on the work being done, especially in places like Starr Commonwealth, I see that American children have been through an upbringing and education experience which makes them far more expressive, confident and articulate and therefore better able to participate in and gain from such programmes. The youngsters have been taught to problem-solve, to speak for themselves and that they will be listened to. Very often our children here don't have that, our school systems don't encourage that, and it seems to me that some programme models, for example

the peer management model, could become abusive of children here rather than empowering of them.

Then my visit to the University of Minnesota was important, the base of Jerry Beker and Mike Baizerman who have been especially helpful to us. Here I was able to meet 'detached' youth workers who work not on campuses or offices but on the street itself, and I learned from those who train such workers.

So what?

People may well ask me: What difference does your six-week overseas trip make for me? What did you bring home with you for ordinary child care workers in South Africa?

The child care workers generally seem to have a strong degree of self-confidence and professional confidence. They are respected as important in teams and they act like that. They feel okay enough about themselves to contribute in any setting. This is of course linked to competence. They had been empowered with the skills and the knowledge to have that status. Like the kids, they are a product of the United States system, having been taught to project themselves. Most of them have already been to college, they have been trained in psychology or social science and have more extensive child care training than we offer here. They are an upwardly mobile group, mostly going on to higher education. I could not help feeling that we have not been similarly careful about 'growing' and empowering child care workers in South Africa. A major comparison that hit me in the eye was that in South Africa child care workers work far harder, and for far longer hours. Overseas, everything is shift work: you do a job of work and then go home. Here it seems, most child care workers offer up their whole lives. So that's something I bring back with me: I think we have not motivated strongly enough for better hours, better salaries, better working conditions, and so we contribute to the under-valuing of child care workers. I would like to work towards, accordingly, some changes in training, and more advocacy for child care workers in respect of career pathways, conditions of service — and respect.

The majority of the delegates at the Congress were educators, and it was most valuable to be able to learn something more of this model of training and practice. I believe they have a further dimension to add to our view of training. I was able to meet and talk with the president of AIEJI who warmly invited NACCW to link with them, which will mean new contacts and input for all of us from Europe. In parentheses, I was amazed by the number of *men* in child care overseas! Here



... we have not been similarly careful about 'growing' and empowering child care workers in South Africa

we seem to believe it's women's work and it has the elements of mothering in it. There, the majority of child care workers I met were men.

Conclusion

Overall, the World Congress was the high point. Of course, Aycliffe was in many other ways important, but the Congress was the central experience. Being part of workshops run by (I might almost say learning at the feet of) people like Mark Krueger, Larry Brentro and Gary Weaver had a deep impact. Even here I could say that the content of what they had to say was as inspiring as their passionate belief in child care work and the people who do it.

The students of Starr Commonwealth presented an 'entertainment' — a demonstration in song and mime of the breaking down of walls between people, including between troubled kids and their care workers. This was a most moving experience for all of the thousand people present, that these youngsters who were themselves experiencing so much doubt and hurt could have something so significant to teach us. There was a message there about all of what we do. More soberly, later, I considered what sort of programme these youngsters must have been through so that they were helped to the point where they *could* present such an item, with such insight and competence. It said to me more than ever, child care programmes *can* help, it really is all worthwhile!

Child Care and Education in the Bible

Dr Azila Talit Reisenberger of the Department of Hebrew at the University of Cape Town, recalls some ancient precepts in child rearing and education

Ancient people loved their children as much as we do. They also had dreams and aspirations, but these differed from our plans for our children's future. The good fortune and success of biblical people was not measured by their financial power, but rather by their integrity and their contribution to the well being of the community to which they belonged. To achieve these goals the children were guided from a very young age by their parents. The mother was expected to love her children, and by way of setting an example, had to impart to them the skill of knowing how to distinguish between right and wrong; while the father was expected to instill morality through religious ethics and teach them a profession.

How was it done?

The most important element in the education was the action, and not the words. Setting an example rather than verbal demands and enacting of the commandments together, rather than demanding the young ones to do it alone!

The Mother-Child relationship

From birth onwards, the infant stayed with his mother.

At night, the Bible records, the mother laid her baby beside her, warming him with her own body-warmth (2 Samuel 12:3), so that she was ready to feed him any time the baby was hungry or her breasts were full and had to be relieved. A dangerous consequence of this practice was that it increased the possibility of suffocating the sleeping child by lying on him (1 Kings 3:17-21).

During the day, the infant was carried gently under his mother's arm, (*hek* – in Hebrew), (Numbers 11:12; Isaiah 40:11), or tied on her side while she performed her daily tasks (Isaiah 66:12).

When the mother was at leisure, the baby was hugged (2 Kings 4:16) and fondled on the mother's knees (Isaiah 66:12).

There is no place more comfortable for a young child than in close body contact with his parents. The Bible tells of Joseph who went to visit his ailing father, Jacob. When the old man saw his two grandchildren and wanted to bless them "Joseph brought them out from between his knees" (Genesis 48:12). As the body contact with parents provides a sense of security, even the older child who feels

sick likes to come and sit on his mother's knees (2 Kings 4:20).

The children spent their days in the streets playing with their peers, singing and dancing, (Jeremiah 6:11) usually under the supervision of the elderly who did not work any more.

When together with the children, the mother would recite the very basic codes of religion, as well as basic codes of behaviour (Deuteronomy 6:4, 7; Proverb 1:8, etc.) and the young would mumble it with her; and when she was busy with the preparations for festivals, the children would help her, at the same time absorbing the customs and sharing in the excitement.

When children became more independent and did not hang around the mother, the girls stayed at home and learnt to bake (2 Samuels 13:8), to spin (Exodus 35:25) and all the skills required to run a household, whereas boys' instruction was the responsibility of the fathers.

Father-Child relationship

It was the solemn duty of every father to educate his sons (Deuteronomy 11:19). They were taught the commandments for righteous living, and the history of their people (Deuteronomy 4:9f, 6:20f).

Apart from the spiritual and religious guideness, the children were also taught the skills they would need to be successful members of their communities. It was common for a son to enter his fathers profession (John 5:19) and the father's in-

struction included the secrets of the trade or craft. Though craftsmen belonged to guilds and were also educators, they took charge of youth only in the absence of a father or when he, for any reason, could not teach his son a craft.

There were no public schools until the turning of the common era, and Jesus time.

Some scholars who claim that schools were established earlier, rely on a story of Gideon who "caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and enquired of him; and he wrote for him the princes of Succoth and the elder thereof, even threescore and seventeen men" (Judges 8:14). They conclude from this verse, that already at the Judges era (about 1200 BC), the children were taught to read and write. However, one must realise that a youth who off-handedly could recite and write down the names of all seventy seven members of the city council does not represent the rule but rather the exception. His father might have been the city scribe and he might had been trained in his family profession.

Disciplinary measures

As long as teaching took the form of participating in the household activities it was an interaction of love and naturally was carried out with enthusiasm.

However, as the children grew older, the demands put to them were greater, and could, in certain circumstances, invoke some resistance.

The book of Proverbs echoes this mood, by encouraging the youth to listen as it is for their benefit. All the teachings in the book are preceded by sayings as: "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother" (Proverbs 1:8), "My son, keep my words, and lay up my commandments with thee" (Proverbs 2:1), etc.

From the great number of verses which



encourage the biblical youth to listen to their parents, there is no doubt that they were like young people of today, experimenting with their sense of independence and freedom, and therefore appeared to the older generation as rebellious. But one must emphasise that it is a natural behaviour, and one must be careful to allow the youth some freedom in experimenting at "being an adult". It is not easy to sit and watch the loved children, who are under our supervision, make mistakes. It is easier to discipline them as soldiers, who are told what to do and carry out orders. But by this we destroy their individuality and rob them of the experience of maturing into responsible, self-confident adults.

The Bible encourages guidance rather than punishment, and we, in modern times, should uphold the same code of ethics. For many years, educators who could not cope with the fresh spirit of youth, used physical punishment to break what seemed to them unruly behaviour, excusing their actions by quoting from the Bible: "He that spare his rod hath his son" (Proverbs 13:24). But this understanding of the verse is totally wrong as the rod in the ancient time was not the cane in which we chastised our undisciplined children. It was the rod which helped us indicate the right direction — symbolising guidance. In the book of Proverbs, King Solomon, the wisest of all mankind, teaches us that he who spares the guidance, hath his son, as the same verse ends: "... but he that love him (his son) will show him the righteous way" (Proverbs 13:24).

In Conclusion

To reinforce the importance of the educators' duties, as well as the respect that should be given to them, the Bible emphasises the reward the individual and the community will gain from fulfilling them.

"Honour thy father and thy mother" is the only commandment in the Ten Commandments that is rewarded, right there and then, with "that thy days may be long upon the land" (Exodus 20:12).

And about the parents and educators it is said: "... for I have chosen him (Abraham), that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what he has promised him." (Genesis 18:19). This verse underscores the importance of instruction within the family, its purpose (that the children might live righteously and justly), and the integral relationship of this kind of instruction to the hope of the nation ("that the Lord may bring ... " the blessing).

Five Years Ago

For readers who weren't around then, this regular feature remembers features from the pages of this journal this month five years ago

The issue looked forward to the coming National Conference in Durban, entitled "The Dilemma of Risk". Features of the conference would include an exhibition of model children's homes by Natal University architecture students, and the launch (which in the event was to wait some years) of the Institute of Child Care.

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The Editorial charged us with "fiddling while Rome burns" by not acting resolutely enough on previous conference resolutions, mainly those on standards of practice and racially unequal subsidies. The NACCW's first ever Conference resolution dating from 1977 was quoted: "This Conference does not accept that there should be differences in standards of care as are implied by the differences in subsidies paid for various race groups". It was hard to see, went on the Editorial, "when subsidies for whites, coloured and blacks were still being paid in the ratio of 237:158:73, that our representations over the years have been taken seriously by the state."

□ □ □

A younger Chris Giles summarised his recent M.Sc. thesis on the choice of placement for children coming into care. Although choice of placement seemed to be dictated more by availability and accessibility than by the suitability of treatment resources, children's homes were associated with short-term interventions and were preferred for disturbed children.

Jenny Davids wrote about two prominent loss themes in psychotherapy with deprived children: holding and falling, and the reversal of painful feelings. Marcelle Biderman-Pam wrote a letter to the Editor commending the "waking method" following Karen Isaacson's previous article on enuresis.

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Ashley Theron (then Principal of Annie Starck Village in Athlone) contributed a major Afrikaans article on Supervision of Child Care Workers. There was an article on principles of residential treatment which was described as "personality change through action on both the causes and the manifestations of problems".

□ □ □

Some feedback on a recent course in the Western Cape informed us that some of the most difficult things for principals of children's homes were managing their time, firing staff, handling conflict amongst staff, acting as the buffer between management committee and staff, lack of appreciation and disciplining adolescents.

□ □ □

Katharine Pulvermacher wrote on Child and Family Care, highlighting the political constraints on effective welfare services. She highlighted the wastage resulting from duplication of services — and the inequalities which could be hidden in this way.

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Child Welfare Society, Cape Town: Research Report No. 4

The usefulness of a self report questionnaire as an aid in assessing the suitability of prospective adoptive parents

Sian Hasenwinkel, Adoption Centre,
Child Welfare Society, Cape Town

A recurring thorny issue facing adoption agencies is whether professionals should be assessing couples as to their suitability to be adoptive parents, or whether couples should be allowed to screen themselves in or out of adoption programmes. Secondly, if professionals are assessing couples, what form should the assessment take so that it would yield reliable indications of possible success or failure of placement?

At the Adoption Centre we believe in the importance of a professional assessment of prospective adoptive parents. However, four years ago we began to question the methods that we were using to achieve this end. The assessment was based on two social workers' interactions with the prospective adoptive parents during individual and conjoint interviews and group sessions. We came to the conclusion that this was too subjective an approach and that the social workers' assessment should be supplemented with a more objective measurement.

Our Requirements

In consultation with our psychologist we decided that a self-report questionnaire completed by the prospective adoptive parents would be the most suitable. Our requirements of a questionnaire were that it had to be short, be easily understood and quickly completed by the applicants, and be uncomplicated to administer by the social worker. A further expectation was that the questionnaire would highlight areas that needed further exploration by the social worker. In other words, apart from being a possible predictor of suitability, it had to have a possible treatment component. After investigating a few questionnaires we finally decided to implement the Family Assessment Device (FAD) as our 'objective' measuring tool. There were a number of reasons why the FAD was suited to our purposes. It was developed out of a family research programme and based on the McMaster model of family functioning. It is therefore part of a well-developed and coherent theory of family functioning. Norms had been developed

based on both clinical and non-clinical samples. As we are dealing largely with normal, reasonably well functioning families it would be inappropriate to compare them only against norms developed out of troubled families. The non-clinical norms gave us a picture of an average well functioning family against which to compare our clients. A very important consideration was that

We came to the
conclusion that
this was too
subjective an
approach ...

it was available in both English and Afrikaans. A local baseline derived from the averages of the 100+ couples assessed to date is used for comparisons. The FAD met our requirements of length and ease with which it could be completed and administered.

Structure and Administration of the Family Assessment Device (FAD)

Both husband and wife are asked to complete the questionnaire independently of each other and this is done immediately prior to their individual interviews. They are asked to respond to the questions as they pertain to their immediate family and not to spend too much thought on each question. At their interview, they are asked whether they were unclear about any aspect of the questionnaire and, if so, this is then discussed. The social worker can score the questionnaire herself and this does not take longer than 20 minutes, including plotting the results on to a graph. We have found the graph to be one of the most useful aspects of the FAD. Couples are able to see most concretely their similarities and differences in perception

of family life, as well as their position relative to our adoptive families' norm. The graph is discussed with the couple during the home visit and affords the social worker an opportunity to investigate more closely aspects of the couple's inter-personal relationships that are of concern. In discussing their answers to the questions, more information on the couple's functioning inevitably comes to light and this is often information that would not otherwise have emerged. Very often the scores and the profile reflect the social worker's assessment but where it does not, it is an opportunity for the social worker to assess more closely the couple's inter-personal dynamics, as well as her own personal response to them.

Structure

The FAD consists of 60 questions which tap seven aspects of family functioning. The applicants can respond to each question in one of four ways, from strongly agree, agree, disagree to strongly disagree. The seven areas that are tapped are as follows and examples from the questionnaire are given with each. The initials refer to the labels on the graph on the next page.

PS: Ability to problem solve

"We resolve most everyday problems around the house".

"We usually act on our decisions regarding problems".

CM: Communication

"When someone is upset the others know why"

"You can't tell how a person is feeling from what they are saying"

RL: Roles

"When you ask someone to do something, you have to check that they did it"
"We make sure members meet their family responsibilities"

AR: Affective responsiveness

"We are reluctant to show our affection for each other"

"We do not show our love for each other"

AI: Affective involvement

"If someone is in trouble the others become too involved"

"You only get the interest of others when something is important to them"

BC: Behaviour content

"We don't know what to do when an emergency comes up"

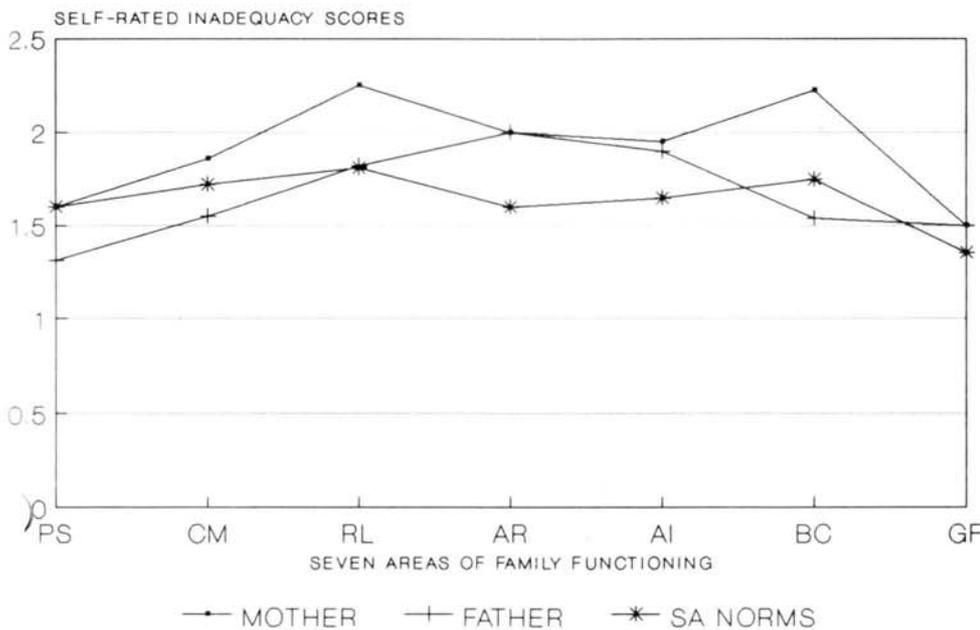
"You can easily get away with breaking the rules"

GF: General functioning

"Planning family activities is difficult because we misunderstand each other"

"In times of crisis we can turn to each other for support".

FAD Scores With South African Norms



Illustrating the FAD

The graph above is a profile of a couple who applied to adopt and who were accepted. The South African norms are indicated by the line with stars. To keep it simpler, the American clinical and non-clinical norms are not included on this graph.

If we start by comparing the couple to the SA norms we see that the wife rates herself as functioning less well than average on every aspect of functioning. In Behaviour Control (BC) she rates more poorly than the American clinical sample. Her husband, on the other hand, rates himself as functioning reasonably well and it is only with Affective Response (AR) and Involvement (AI) that he rates himself as performing less well.

If we then evaluate the couple's responses relative to each other we can see that the wife is less satisfied with most aspects of their family functioning, with the exception of their emotional response to each other. Both perceive this aspect of their functioning similarly.

Their general functioning also seems compatible. There is statistically significant difference in their responses to problem solving, communication and roles and behaviour control, although in problem solving and communication they see themselves as performing reasonably well as it is either below or close to average.

It would be particularly important to discuss with them their ideas on behaviour control, especially as she has indicated the least amount of confidence in this

aspect of their life together. As she feels less satisfied with their communication and problem solving abilities than he, this has a very important bearing on how they are going to perform as parents and how well they can work together as a parenting team in developing rules, communicating these rules to each other and the child and then being able to follow through with their plan. The social worker also needs to explore the difference in their perception of their roles, as the wife is not as satisfied as her husband. Unless this is resolved, a child could cause serious strain if the wife perceives herself as taking on more responsibility than her husband.

The wife's poorer score could also indicate that she is more critical than her husband, or more honest than he! One of the drawbacks of the FAD is that it is reasonably easy for respondents to identify the most socially acceptable answer and respond accordingly.

As we have been recording scores for three years now, we have been able to develop norms for various sub groups, notably male, female, White, Coloured, and the various religions. Our case work section has also been able to use the norm developed from the adoption section and compare the scores obtained from dysfunctional families that they are treating in order to identify problem areas.

The Adoption Assessment Device

Last year we re-evaluated our use of the FAD. We concluded that it had been beneficial to the assessment process, for

all the reasons enumerated thus far. However, there were drawbacks. Some of the questions, being American in origin, were puzzling in the South African context. Other questions were worded ambiguously or were difficult to understand for some of our clients. Furthermore, we felt strongly that we should incorporate a further dimension that would tap the couple's experiences with infertility and how resolved they were about it. We anticipated that just as the F.A.D. highlights differences between the couple that needed to be explored, so questions on infertility would act as a valuable springboard for further discussion on a very sensitive, and often denied, subject.

We have, therefore, adapted the FAD. Questions have been rephrased to make them simpler, less ambiguous and more appropriate to the South African context. We are also now able to offer the Adoption Assessment Device (AAD) to the less educated client. Twenty questions directly relating to infertility have been incorporated, e.g. "We no longer have feelings of anger when we think of our childlessness." In doing this, we have remained faithful to the structure of the FAD. We feel that we have taken the best that the FAD has to offer and then tailored it to our exact requirements. The development of the AAD has been an exciting venture and we are looking forward to developing new norms, particularly in the area of infertility. A computer programme is now available, which makes data analysis and the drawing of graphs, quick and easy.

Conclusion

Using a self-report questionnaire as an additional more objective assessment device has been a valuable experience for us. There is great value in using it as a balance against our own subjective assessment but an even greater value is in the wealth of additional information that it yields on the couple and the opportunity it affords to explore with the couple the effect their interpersonal relationship would have on their parenting ability.

Given enough couples to develop norms, we anticipate at some point in the future a pattern will emerge that will allow us to use the FAD, and now latterly the AAD, as one of the predictors of a successful adoptive placement.

Using a quantifiable assessment device also means that we are amassing a wealth of information that could be used for research purposes at some stage in the future.

Any queries can be addressed to the writer, c/o Director, Child Welfare Society, P O Box 18008, Wynberg, Cape 7800.

TRANSVAAL

Annual General Meeting of the Transvaal Region

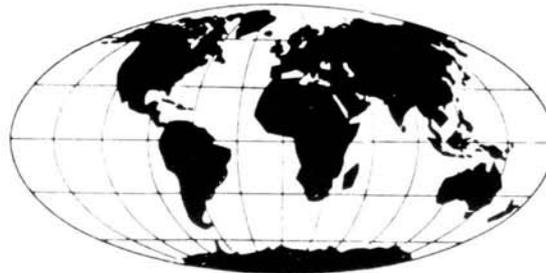
The Annual General Meeting of the Region will be held on the 25th September at St George's Home at 09h30 – 12h00. All organisations present will be asked to present entertainment in the form of dance, song, drama for the group. Everyone will be expected to participate.

AGM of the Children's Foundation

The well attended Annual General Meeting of The Children's Foundation was held on the 7th August at the Wanderers Club. This organisation, which provides the bulk of the NACCW Funds has grown from strength to strength. R1,5 million was distributed to various child care services. Ashley Theron the NACCW National Chairman was present to receive a generous cheque of R70 000.00. The Children's Foundation plans to build a training centre in the coming year, and also intends extending their own professional services. The Quest Programme which teaches youngsters life skills will be offered to an increasingly large range of community organisations. Shirley Mabusela an active member of the Transvaal Region Executive Committee and previously Assistant Director of the Johannesburg Child Welfare Society, has joined the staff of The Children's Foundation. We wish her well in her new position. NACCW looks forward to another year of close co-operation with The Children's Foundation. Congratulations to Jacqui Michael and her team!

Integration of Children's Homes

Many of the Children's Homes who have previously served White children only have now opened their doors to serve children of all races. Congratulations to Guild Cottage who were the first organisation to take this bold step. The House of Delegates and House of Representatives have agreed to subsidise Coloured and Indian children placed at Guild. Cotlands Baby Sanctuary and Johannesburg



Newsbriefs

Children's Home are now officially open homes. Other organisations that will be fully multi-racial in the near future include Epworth Children's Village and St Georges.

75th Anniversary of St George's Home

The 75th anniversary of St George's was celebrated with luncheon for 600 guests and old boys of the Home. It was an occasion tinged with sadness as the older ex-residents formally acknowledged the changed nature of the service. The existing buildings will be used for a private school as the children move out into homes in the community. To mark the transition a museum of the St George's Home was opened. Filled with old photographs, outdated equipment and other interesting memorabilia, this collection provides a living memory of the past. The museum put together by the present director, Barrie Lodge must surely be unique in child care in this country.

Expansion of Street-Wise

In January this year Street-wise attempted to encourage youths living on the street to attend their educational programme. This was done by providing food and clothing for these youngsters. However, it rapidly emerged that they needed greater stability in their lives before they could benefit from education. Accordingly the organisation found it necessary to develop a residential shelter. The Anglican Church donated a site in Mayfair and this new street shelter, known as Tshepo was opened to serve 50 children. The educational service offered by Street-wise continued unabated,

and at present has a daily attendance of between 100 – 120 children. These youngsters come from Tshepo, from the Twilight Shelter and directly from the street. The staff is headed by Burt Neethling who has ine teachers and five child care staff in his team. In November Burt will move from the post of Principal at the local school to that of National Director of the Street-wise organisation. Good wishes to this rapidly growing service.

Child Care Worker's Support Group

The next meeting of the Child Care Workers' Support Group will take place on the 27th September at St Mary's Children's Home. Neville Blatt will give a report-back on the Needs Assessment conducted at the last meeting.

WESTERN CAPE

Leliebloem AGM

Bishop Geoffrey Quinlan was the guest speaker at the Annual General Meeting of the Leliebloem House Association on 26th August. It was an honour to have him bless the new extensions.

Regional Meeting

We held a most successful regional meeting at Heatherdale Children's Home. The meeting was very well supported with more than 160 persons attending. It was good to see so many old faces again. The chairman welcomed new members to the field of child care and discussed procedures for attaining membership. After tea three experienced child care workers addressed us on prac-

tice issues. Jeannie Karth from St Michaels spoke on Life Skills training; Basil Arendse spoke on gangsterism amongst juveniles and David Fortune from Beth Uriel spoke on what it meant to be a child care worker. All the speakers spoke in plain child care language (no jargon) and were very enthusiastically received by their audience – with several tear filled eyes. Pumela Mncayi from Masekhule Children's Home in Crossroads told us about the violent clashes between factions in their community and how it has affected their homes. This was a very fruitful morning and well worth leaving other duties to attend.

End-of-year function

To be held on 29th November 1990 at the Holiday Inn, Woodstock. Tickets available from J.Jacobs on telephone 461-2381. Only 199 places reserved. Students who will be graduating at this function must contact Vivien Lewis on 47-9750.

NATAL

Effects of Violence

On the 27th July Pata Place of Safety and Elayabuleni did a presentation on the "Effect of violence on children in their institutions". This proved to be a deeply moving and informative presentation.

New group home

The first "PMB Children's Homes" group home opened on the 18th August. Our congratulations and best wishes to all involved.

NORTHERN CAPE

Training Starts

Eight staff members of the Galeshewe and Mimosa Places of Safety attended a two-day course run by Barrie Lodge and Di Levine in Johannesburg on Adult Teaching Skills for the BQCC course. This was planned to enable Module I of the course to be offered s from Wednesday 12 September in Kimberley. A meeting has also been arranged for Friday 29 September to launch a Northern Cape Region of NACCW.

NACCW DIARY SEPTEMBER 1990

Transvaal

- 03 09:00 BQCC Bramley Home Pretoria
- 05 09:00 BQCC TMI Johannesburg
- 09:00 BQCC Norman House East Rand
- 09:00 Social Skills Training Course TMI
- 10 09:00 BQCC Bramley Home Pretoria
- 12 09:00 BQCC Norman House East Rand
- 09:00 BQCC TMI Johannesburg
- 09:00 Social Skills Training Course TMI
- 17 09:00 BQCC Bramley Home Pretoria
- 19 09:00 BQCC TMI Johannesburg
- 19 09:00 BQCC Norman House East Rand
- 19 09:00 Social Skills Training Course TMI
- 24 09:00 BQCC Bramley Home Pretoria
- 25 09:30 NACCW AGM St George's Home

- 26 09:00 BQCC TMI Johannesburg
- 26 09:00 BQCC Norman House East Rand
- 27 10:00 Child Care Workers' Support Group St Mary's Children's Home

Western Cape

- 02 18:00 Namaqualand Course – presenters final meeting Boys Town Macassar
- 04 08:30 Regional Exec Regional Offices
- 05 09:00 BQCC Annie Starck Village
- 05 09:00 Supervision Course Oranjia
- 11 09:30 Forum Magarets House
- 12 09:00 BQCC Annie Starck
- 13 08:30 PPA Oranjia Children's Home
- 18 09:45 BGM Wittebome School for the Deaf
- 19 09:00 BQCC Annie Starck
- 26 09:00 S.Workers Group Fredriech Schweizer

Eastern Province

- 08 09:00 BQCC Module 4

Natal

- 04 09:00 BQCC Module 2 St Philomena's
- 11 09:00 National workshop Dr M Hoghughi (Prior registration necessary)
- 12 09:00 National workshop conducted by Dr M Hoghughi
- 18 09:00 BQCC St Philomena's
- 21 09:00 Social Workers Meeting (Venue to be advised)
- 28 09:00 Institute of Child Care – Natal Chapter William Clark Gardens

Northern Cape

- 12 09:00 BQCC Module I
- 29 Inaugural meeting Ring H Booysen on 4-1831