

The **child care worker**



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Better Leaders for the Future

Certainly one of the most stimulated groups of child care people in South Africa right now must be the class enrolled on the new Diploma in Child Care Administration. This is a course with high aims, and it has got off to a tough, no-nonsense start, with two of the Modules already completed. The students have already worked through hundreds of pages of printed lectures, have followed up recommended reading tasks, participated in telephone tutorials with their teachers, and submitted assignments based on the coursework. Next year, in their fourth semester, they will undertake a practical assignment within their own agencies. The students come from all parts of South Africa, and the course is run on the 'distance teaching' method with weekly telephone tutorials. There will be a week each year for face-to-face seminars. One of the most challenging positions in a children's institution is that of the Principal or Director. This person must in most cases be not only the administrator of a large, high-budget organisation, but also the leader of a child care team of which an increasingly sophisticated service is required. Until now there has simply been no training for such a position. The Diploma course is being offered explicitly at a tertiary level, and the demands on students are accordingly very high. Although it was initially difficult for the students to fit such an important new segment into their already full time-tables, most have now got

the hang of it. We all wish them well in their studies, and look forward to the end of next year when the first graduates of this Diploma will come off the assembly line!

Keep them coming

With some disappointment we recorded last month that only eleven questionnaires on the career status of child care staff had been received. The tally now stands at nearly 150 — but this is still too small a sample for the research to be really useful. One of the child care groups who originally requested this survey was the child care worker forums themselves, for whom the results will be of particular interest. If you have not yet returned your questionnaire, please do so as soon as you can — preferably before May 12 so that we can give you preliminary results in next month's issue.

A New Acronym: PCH

Prof. Cecile Muller of Wits University said to the Editor one day that when she receives *The Child Care Worker* (CCW) she always turns at once to the back page, for that is where she sees the *action* in the child care scene. "It's on the News page that one sees just how much happens from month to month at the grassroots level." Tucked away on this month's back page is the story of the Pietermaritzburg Children's Homes, a new organisation born out of two long-standing organisations in that city, Hilltops and Mary Cook Children's Home. Clive Willows and John Webster reported at our last

Biennial Conference on this scheme to rationalise child care services within a city, and the beginnings of this ambitious development are an encouragement. Now, to add to JCH, ABH, ASV, TCF, CWS, AGS, ICC, TMI, YFC and a dozen others, we welcome PCH to our list of child care acronyms.

John Saxey

On page 11 we bid farewell to Ros Halkett, Assistant Director in Natal. But also this month, John Saxey lays down his office as National Treasurer of the NACCW, a role he has fulfilled for nearly ten years since 1982 when the Association first needed somebody to count its pennies. The NACCW's annual budget of around R350 000 is not large by comparison with similar organisations, but that fact that this amount of money must be handled in such small amounts through seven different offices is what has made for a large job for the Treasurer. John combined all of those 'worst' qualities which made for a good Treasurer. He could make you feel guilty for buying paper clips, and even as you were arguing about it he was riffling through his files to see when you *last* bought paper clips! He was unruffled by having to write up a deposit slip with two hundred cheques and spend an hour in the bank, and could turn on the boyish charm as he kept our creditors at bay during the hard months. John's was never a conspicuous or sensational task, but a task faithfully carried out behind the scenes over a long period, and one which deserves the thanks of all of us in the NACCW.

National Association of Child Care Workers Nasionale Vereniging van Kinderversorgers

The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-racial organisation which provides the professional training and infrastructure to improve standards of care and treatment for children in residential settings. Die Nasionale Vereniging van Kinderversorgers is 'n onafhanklike, nie-rassige organisasie wat professionele opleiding en infrastruktuur verskaf om versorging en behandeling standarde vir kinders in residensiële omgewings te verbeter.

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Dr. Gary Weaver will be a guest-speaker at the NACCW's Biennial Conference this July. He spent seven years as a child care worker, and is now Professor of International Relations at the American University in Washington. As we approach multi-cultural child care settings in South Africa, we publish (courtesy *The Child & Youth Care Administrator*) two articles in which he shares some American thinking ...

The Multicultural Child Care Staff: Meeting the Needs of a Diverse Client Population

The demographics of child care

The number and percentage of minority youth in residential centres will dramatically increase in the next decade. While the median age of white or mainstream Americans is steadily rising, for nonwhite Americans it remains much lower. The rate of population increases among white Americans is near zero while it continues to rise among all other Americans. The age when minority women first begin child bearing is much younger than white Americans and their family size tends to be larger. Simply because an increasingly greater percentage of youth are nonwhite means a greater percentage of youth in residential child care should be minorities. Most of these youth come from inner-city families that are most likely to be poor and single-parent. Their neighbourhoods are often crime-ridden with inadequate education. Poverty and unemployment impacts the majority of their homes. The chances that these youngsters will be troubled is certainly much greater than those of mainstream youth. As a greater number of minority children enter residential centres and the percentage of mainstream youth declines, traditional definitions of normality and appropriate therapeutic approaches must be examined. Psychological tests must consider the norms of minority cultures and results interpreted in the context of their cultures. The stress of cross-cultural adjustment may cause many of the behavioural problems attributed to these youth. Therapeutic models which might be appropriate for mainstream children may be inappropriate and even counterproductive for minority children. The number and percentage of minority child care professionals is not keeping pace with minority youth. In fact, the gap seems to be growing wider each year. The pressures for affirmative action are not as strongly felt today as they were ten years ago. The percentage of minorities in higher education has been decreasing. And, the current fad of "colourblindness" implies that it is morally and ethically best to ignore race.

With the shrinking population of mainstream youth, eventually there will be

fewer whites available for entry-level positions in all occupations, including child care. Thus, residential centres will be forced to recruit more minorities. This may require offering greater educational and financial incentives for minorities to enter the field of child care, increased recruitment at historically black colleges, and promotion of more minorities to supervisory positions. With these efforts and the demographic pressures, the number and percentage of minority staff should increase. In the long run, most residential child care facilities will have multicultural staffs and, in turn, all of the difficulties of multicultural organisation behaviour.

The Culturally Diverse Staff

As role models, the multicultural staff ought to overcome the difficulties of cross-cultural communication, conflict and adjustment. They might even use their differences to develop new approaches to more effectively meet the needs of troubled youth. Rather than being barriers to be overcome or denied, cultural diversity can enhance the quality of therapy and bring about more creative ways of helping children. There exists a vast body of research and experience in cross-cultural communication and management. However, it has been applied primarily to international business, diplomatic training, and the military. It is now imperative that child care professionals extrapolate from these findings those applications that would be most appropriate for the multicultural residential center.

The multicultural dimensions of organisational behaviour must be understood if residential staffs are to work together effectively to better serve children from diverse cultural backgrounds. Frustrations can only mount if we ignore diversity or assume that the staff will function according to traditional mainstream expectations and norms.

Many supervisors might believe that simply bringing culturally different staff together will cause misunderstandings and conflict to disappear. As a matter of fact, exactly the opposite is likely to occur. Not only are cultural differences and iden-

ties more apparent and significant, sometimes hostilities actually *increase* when people of different cultures interact (Adler, 1986). The circumstances under which diverse people are brought together, the dynamics of their interaction, the ways in which they solve problems and view the world, and their values are all vital aspects of organisational behaviour that can inhibit or enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the groups. (Brislin, 1981) The first step in minimising difficulties is to understand the basic nature of different cultures and the dynamics of cross-cultural interaction. While the concept of culture is exceedingly complex, for our purpose we can use an iceberg as a metaphor for culture with the tip representing the overt or conscious part — language, customs, food, and so forth. The greatest part is under water. Most of culture is hidden or unconscious. This internal part of culture includes our values, beliefs, thought patterns, and world views that we share with others in our social groups. (Hall, 1976). When cultures come together, the impact is felt with the collision of internal cultures at the base of the iceberg. Furthermore, internal culture determines our behaviour. To really understand what motivates other peoples' behaviour and what attributes they use to explain our behaviour, we must understand their internal culture.

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Cultural Orientations: Doing and Being

Differences exist within and between cultures, but each culture favours certain behaviour, values, thought patterns, and world views and represses other. Every society has a dominant value orientation or norm that is the most common and acceptable pattern of internal and external culture. This overall cultural orientation describes the attitudes of most of the people most of the time, but not all the people all of time. In fact, it could not be used to predict the behaviour of any particular person.



At the very broadest level, we might categorise people as being primarily from one of two contrasting cultural orientations exemplified by such extremely different cultures as that of urban Swiss German and rural Africans. These are two ends of a continuum of differences with various gradations or combination in between. The demarcations between these orientations are not geographic, but rather psychological, social, and experiential. Rural people living in small communities all over the world have certain common values and ways of behaving and urban people living in a complex social and physical environment share many of the same attitudes and behaviours.

While there are a number of dimensions we might use to describe these two cultural orientations, attitudes toward activity and relationships with others offers a very useful focus when considering multicultural residential staff behaviour (Weaver, 1987). Most urban, white, mainstream Americans are individualistic "do-ers" who believe status is earned based upon what one does as an individual. Most minorities and rural people are "be-ers" who believe status is ascribed by who you are. Age, gender, family background, experience, and especially relationships with others are all important criteria that help to determine the identity and worth of a person. For mainstream Americans, you are what you do — lawyer, student, child care worker. This is true even when one dies. The obituaries in newspapers identify the deceased by occupation. Of course, if one has done little, then the subheading is "lifelong resident." For nonmainstream people, what one does is secondary to identity. Being an elder, parent, or Baptist is much more significant than occupation. A great deal of self-esteem for the do-er is determined by successful individual action such as earning grades or winning an award. Be-ers gain most of their self-esteem through their involvement with others beginning with the family and local community.

Groups

In groups, do-ers are concerned with getting the job done without regard for who the participants are in the group. Developing relationships is secondary to task completion. The only real reason to be together with others is to accomplish a

task. Thus, personal relationships are restricted to the group work itself and the primary value of any member is his or her competence in contributing to reaching a goal. Rural southerners are much more likely to want to develop rapport during the first


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few minutes of an initial group encounter. They value harmonious group relations, are often indirect and circuitous in their conversation, and they seem to be rather relaxed or "laid back." Time devoted to maintaining and cultivating good relations with others is perhaps more important than simply doing a job and, in fact, it allows business to progress more smoothly when it is time to get down to business. During discussions, New Yorkers not only cut off conversational loops, they often interrupt sentences of others or even complete them. A sign of rapport among New Yorkers is when someone cuts into your conversation. To a rural southerner this is aggressive, abrasive, abrupt, and disrespectful (Tannen, 1984). The tendency of the southerner to speak slowly and drag out the pronunciation of words may strike New Yorkers as childish or unsophisticated. The rapid, staccato speech pattern of New Yorkers may sound like machine gun fire to the rural southerner. Differences in rhythm or synchrony of conversation, in and of itself, creates misunderstanding and discomfort. A good conversation is like a dance where there is a specific tempo or pace. When people of different cultures come together, they are often out of sync in conversational style. How people communicate, not simply *what* they communicate, is determined by culture. And, conversational style may be even more important than the content of conversation in cross-cultural communication.

In all human interaction, perhaps as much as 90% of messages that determine how we feel about others are sent without using words by our posture, tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions, and so forth (Meharabian, 1968). The meanings we give to these affective messages are almost entirely unconsciously or tacitly learned while growing up in a particular culture. Nonverbal cues tell us if the other

person is trustworthy, sincere, or caring regardless of what is communicated verbally. In fact, if the nonverbal message contradicts the verbal message, most humans believe the nonverbal message. People may say they like us, but if their facial expression or tone of voice communicates hatred, in all likelihood we feel they dislike us.

Verbal and non-verbal messages

Be-ers tend to be much more adept at using and translating nonverbal messages. Most do-ers are nonverbally underdeveloped, which is why we train counsellors to pay attention to nonverbal cues. Mainstream people concentrate on words and even more on written words. Be-ers prefer the physical presence of another person so that they can relate nonverbal messages to verbal messages and use all their senses to know if the other person is honest, sincere, committed, and so on. They feel very uncomfortable with telephone conversations or memos unless they are supplemented with face-to-face encounters. When should a group get down to business?

In "to be" cultures, where group harmony is highly regarded, there is often a premium placed upon developing rapport before discussing business. To begin doing business before getting to know all members can imply that no one cares who you are and you don't care who they are.

During this get acquainted phase, it would be impolite to engage in a formal question and answer format. This would resemble an interrogation. Time ought to be allowed for all to reveal aspects of their character and status in a rather natural, almost poetic fashion. As in any polite conversation, room must be allowed for the very articulate to go off on tangents that may reveal subtle aspects of their character and abilities.

Indeed the style with which a person presents himself or herself, and interacts with others, provides a very good hint as to leadership capabilities, maturity, intelligence, sophistication, and insightfulness. Almost everything that is spoken and how it is presented is relevant to leadership skills.

All of this information is somewhat intuitively tied together to create a picture of the whole person, not simply what he or she does in a meeting.

In "to do" cultures, the emphasis is placed on getting down to business as quickly as possible. Initially developing rapport in this poetic fashion may be interpreted as wasting time or an indication of incompetence. Some might even suspect that this chit-chat is an attempt to sabotage efforts to do business. If the group must get acquainted, it can be accomplished by simply going from person-to-person and asking them to give their names, explain what they do, and perhaps describe

abilities they might have to contribute to the group task. Other information is just irrelevant.

Mainstream people want to stick to the task at hand in a very linear fashion. The best way to get from point A to point B is a direct line. From their viewpoint, non-mainstream people keep going off on loops or digressions. Every time do-ers try to pull the conversation back on the business track, they are cutting off the tangential loop. Worse, they fail to understand that each loop is relevant to be-ers in determining another person's background and character.

These differences are most apparent between extremely diverse cultural types. However, they even occur between Americans of different regional backgrounds. New Yorkers are often very task-oriented, even during the first few minutes of a meeting. They are highly individualistic, straight-forward, and appear intense or "highly-strung". Time is very valuable to them and they tend to want to get down to business as quickly as possible.

Be-ers are also concerned with getting a job done, but not at the expense of personal relationships that are developed at the onset of the group. They have a high need for affiliations or belonging to groups.

Most mainstream Americans are on the "to do" side of the cultural orientation continuum while most ethnic and nonwhite Americans are on the "to be" side. But, it is actually a matter of degree. A southern, rural, white American might fall very close to the "to be" side in terms of attitudes toward family, the importance placed on harmonious social relations within the community, the honour and respect one gives to elders, etc., while others may be near the "to do" side. Some people might actually move back and forth along this continuum depending upon the situation.

These somewhat multicultural or bicultural people are extremely effective intermediaries between people from the two extreme cultural orientations.

Assumptions regarding appropriate professional behaviour among residential staff are necessarily mainstream or "to do" because they most likely evolved from the dominant culture.

In child care, an enormous concentration of attention is paid to what children do — their behaviour — not who they are. And child care staff are often praised for what they do to control, observe, and evaluate behaviour. The norms for both staff and the behaviour of youth are overwhelmingly those of the dominant culture. Until now, minorities had to accept these norms and behave accordingly. As the staff becomes increasingly more multicultural, these assumptions will be questioned. Most of the functional and organisational aspects of residential staff will be affected by the multicultural nature of the group.

(To be continued)

Clean Your Room

Popular columnist **Art Buchwald** reflects on an experience which child care workers know only too well ...

You don't really feel the generation gap in this country until a son or daughter comes home from college for Christmas. Then it strikes you how out of it you really are.

This dialogue probably took place all over America last Christmas week:

'Nancy, you've been home from school for three days now. Why don't you clean up your room?'

'We don't have to clean up our rooms at college, Mother.'

'That's very nice, Nancy, and I'm happy you're going to such a freewheeling institution. But while you're in the house, your father and I would like you to clean up your room.'

'What difference does it make? It's my room.'

'I know, dear, and it really doesn't mean that much to me. But your father has a great fear of the plague. He said this morning that if it's going to start anywhere in this country, it's going to start in your room.'

'Mother, you people aren't interested in anything that's relevant. Do you realise how the major corporations are polluting our environment?'

'Your father and I are worried about it. But right now we're more concerned about the pollution in your bedroom. You haven't made your bed since you came home.'

'I never make it up at the dorm.'

'Of course you don't, and I'm sure the time you save goes towards your education. But we still have these old-fashioned ideas about making beds in the morning, and we can't shake them. Since you're home for such a short time, why don't you do it to humour us?'

'For heaven's sake Mother, I'm grown up now. Why do you have to treat me like a child?'

'We're not treating you like a child. But it's very hard for us to realise you're an adult when you throw all your clothes on the floor.'

'I haven't thrown all my clothes on the floor. Those are just the clothes I wore yesterday.'

'Forgive me. I exaggerated. Well, how about the dirty dishes and the soft-drink cans on your desk? Are you collecting them for a science project?'

'Mother, you don't understand us. You people were brought up to have clean rooms. But our generation doesn't care

about things like that. It's what you have in your head that counts.'

'No one respects education more than your father and I do, particularly at the prices they're charging. But we can't see how living in squalor can improve your mind.'

'That's because of your priorities. You would rather have me make up my bed and pick up my clothes than become a free spirit who thinks for myself.'

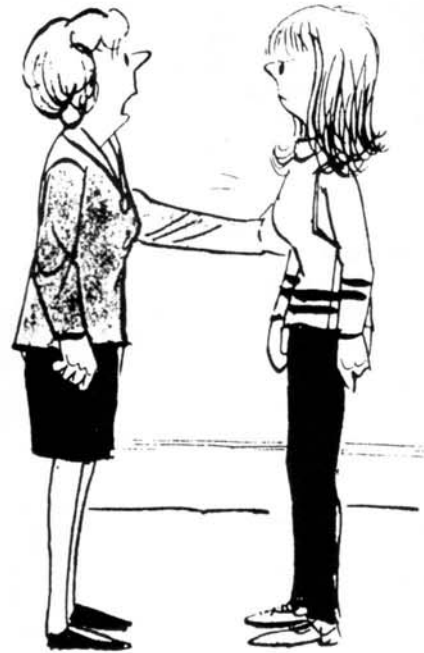
'We're not trying to stifle your free spirit. It's just that our medical insurance has run out, and we have no protection in case anybody in the family catches typhoid.'

'All right, I'll clean up my room if it means that much to you. But I want you to know you've ruined my vacation.'

'It was a calculated risk I had to take. Oh, by the way, I know this is a terrible thing to ask of you, but would you mind helping me to wash the dinner dishes?'

'Wash dishes? Nobody washes dishes at school.'

'Your father and I were afraid of that.'



From *Humorous Stories* published by Octopus Books Limited, 1985

Whatever the causes and issues surrounding a war, its effects on children, and especially on troubled children, become an added concern for their care-givers. Sharon Bacher writes from Israel during the Gulf War ...

Maintaining child care services during a time of war

The disruption to normal life in Israel caused by Saddam Hussein's terrifying missiles has been bad enough. But the tension and anxiety this caused families with retarded and disabled members, children and adults, simply cannot be imagined by people with ordinary problems. When it comes to security provisions, retarded children, while having very special needs, are in the same category as the rest of the school-going population. If the authorities ruled that schools had to be closed through the crisis, then this also applied to the Beit Issie Shapiro Day-Care Centre which caters for severely retarded and disabled children.

'Special' children

And as one may well imagine, the sudden withdrawal of vital and usually dependable support services from the families of these 'special' children, pulled the ground away from under their feet.

With schools closed for weeks on end, they have had not only to contain their traumatised healthy children through air-raid sirens and the ritual of sealing rooms and donning gas masks; they have also had to manage their bewildered and unco-operative retarded children.

They have had to reassure non-verbal children who cannot express their anxieties except by chaotic screaming, crying, or head-banging — children who have to be carried to the sealed rooms and who fight against having a mask put on them — children who are almost totally dependent.

Families

You can imagine the stress of these families, closeted together in fear for hours, even days on end. There's little to do to keep everyone calm, and while this is not easily achieved with most children, it is next to impossible when the child you are dealing with is retarded and unable to understand.

Parents have been stretched to the limit. At a time when their own nerves have been on the cutting edge and they've needed support more than ever, the decisions by the authorities to close all the schools and similar services, left

them frantic and vulnerable, incapable of managing the unmanageable.

While mindful of the security reasons for closing the centre, many parents were pushed beyond their coping limit and turned to us for help. Although the centre was forced to close, child care workers continued to have contact with the families. It was heartbreaking for them to hear the desperation in the families' voices. There had to be some ways to help. As a priority, we initiated a dialogue with the authorities and lobbied them to ease their regulations. We would take responsibility for ensuring the safety of any children and staff on our premises. To guarantee this, we consulted extensively with the civil defence offices in our area, and were advised on the sealing of rooms, the procedure for donning masks on young children, and the handling of babies who'd have to be put into air-tight protective infant carrier units.

Emergency services

As a result of much creative thinking, the Beit Issie Shapiro team were able to rally together with solutions to tide families over the emergency. These crisis support services included:

- A telephone hotline
- Face to face counselling services
- Support groups for parents, grandparents, siblings, etc.
- Outpatients therapeutic services (dental services, paramedical therapies, family counselling and therapy).
- Day care services: By arrangement with a local institution, two rooms were made available to Beit Issie Shapiro so that a modified morning day-care service could continue to be provided. In addition a staff member made her home available so that the nursery programmes could be continued. The Beit Issie Shapiro care worker team continued to look after the children.

... children who have to be carried to the sealed rooms and who fight against having a mask put on them ...

- A home therapy programme enabled babies with developmental delay to continue to receive their intensive regimen of therapies.
- Respite programme: Our regular respite services were made available on a modified basis to families requiring some 'time-out' from their retarded child.
- Beit Issie Shapiro's volunteers offered to help home-bound parents of 'special' children with light shopping. Since staff could only give of themselves and their attention to others if they felt

secure about their own families, Beit Issie Shapiro invited them to bring their home-bound children to the centre. A play-group was organised for these children under the supervision of volunteers and students.

These have been some of the ways Beit Issie Shapiro has continued helping families of retarded children cope with the turmoil which was unleashed on Israel's civilian population. This has been our child care workers' defiant answer to the terror and the threat.

*Sharon Bacher, a social worker, has been a frequent contributor to this journal, and was Programme Director of the Oran-
jia Children's Home in Cape Town. She now directs the Out-patient Treatment Centre of Beit
(House) Issie Shapiro in Israel, a Day-Care Centre for the training, treatment and support of retarded and disabled children and their families.*



Donning a gas mask becomes part of the curriculum

Anthropologist **Jill Swart** has studied and worked with street children since 1983. Di Levine interviewed her for *The Child Care Worker*

Street Children: Past, Present and Future

CCW: Jill, you were involved with the street children's services right from the earliest days. How did you get involved, and what were those early days like?

JS: I was interested in children in general, and in disadvantaged children in particular, and when I returned from a three-year stint in the UK and came to live in a big city, Johannesburg, for the first time, I became aware of the street children in Hillbrow. I was serving on the Regional Executive of the SA Institute of Race Relations, and people would approach the Institute to enquire about street children and to ask why the Institute was not concerned with them. My academic interest in anthropology focussed on children at the time, so the Institute asked me to look into the matter and to make some practical suggestions about setting up appropriate projects.

CCW: How did such projects start?

JS: This was as long ago as 1983. Tony Woods of the Ecumenical Centre was running a once-a-week soup kitchen, and he introduced me to some of the street children on the street. A few weeks later a school teacher friend came to the Institute reporting that she had picked up six street children who had been begging but who had also reported harrasment by the police and that they were afraid the police would kill them — so she took them to her home. The question arose as to what to do next. We telephoned all around the country and no children's homes could help. So the Institute's Executive said to me: Do something about this! So, long before I was ready for this, I inherited the six children.

CCW: So that was the start?

JS: Well, I decided to make these six children the focus of a pilot project. Many people had said that nothing could be done with them, that they were just drop-outs from society. There were no formal bodies attending to street children, the Institute did not have the funds to develop projects, and therefore I formed the organisation known as PROSCCESS. In the meantime, the soup kitchen operation was developing into the project known as the Twilight Children. PROSCCESS was from the start a residential service. We often considered the idea of what is called a first-stage service, namely a soup kitchen cum drop in centre, but we never

got around to doing that. Then again, another programme called Street-Wise started specifically as an educational project, so no one organisation started off in quite the same way as another; each had a different emphasis.

CCW: Its encouraging for new services to realise that a start can be made in different ways. But, looking back now on your experience, what would you recommend as the best way to start a service for street kids?

JS: First of all, you have to start where the children are — and not only geographically. Obviously one will set up a kitchen where there are hungry children. But its no good offering a service which doesn't reflect the childrens needs at the time. If they perceive their need for education, then they will respond to an education service. I became aware of this need whilst at PROSCCESS, but one couldn't fit such a programme in where all the other activities were happening, so I left to start Street-Wise solely as an educational service, open to all children living on the street. The answer is, therefore, that one starts with what the children need. In Johannesburg there were so many street children that each project drew 'enough' children. But in a smaller centre where there are perhaps fewer street children, one should begin by identifying what those children need.

CCW: How on earth did you go about finding venues for these projects?

JS: The first six children were the hardest! We housed them at the farm belonging to parents of the teacher who took them off the streets. When the parents returned from overseas they were initially horrified but we persuaded them to keep the children while we went on looking. In desperation we went to Father Sham at Boys Town Magaliesberg, and he allowed us to use a teacher's cottage which was temporarily vacant. This was meant to be for six months, but it went on for three years. This is why Boys Town has always had an interest in PROSCCESS and why that organisation is now incorporated in Boys Town. A venue in Johannesburg was more difficult. In 1985 there was a vigilante group threatening to drive the street children out because "the police were not doing their job". I visited the leader of this group, pointing out that we clearly shared an interest in these children

and that we needed to find solutions. He in fact referred me to some helpful people and this led to our finding the Esselen Street venue where PROSCCESS is currently housed.

Of course there were two different issues: first, the venue needed to be where the children were, and an inner city site is always difficult. Second, the children were black, the Group Areas Act was still very much in force, and residents in the area were initially hostile to the idea. Street-Wise also experienced hostile residents at first, but soon people in the area came to know the children, they learned that their lives and property were not threatened, and they were more accepting.

CCW: As you grew, so you had to move into the world of staff, volunteers, management committees?

JS: When the venue in Magaliesberg was secured, we needed to appoint staff since we were working far away in Pretoria and Johannesburg. And here we had to learn from our mistakes. The first staff members were not successful because they were not trained to deal with crises, or with the special problems presented by street kids. Even now, untrained people come to work with street children, and they don't know what to expect or how to handle difficult issues. Training is very important. Volunteers have also been a source of help. Many of these people, however well-intentioned, are on some sort of personal crusade, identifying with a popular cause perhaps, or sometimes over-involved emotionally, and this can cause problems regarding the daily routines — sometimes regarding the structure of the organisations themselves which some have needed to dominate or even hijack. Committees have also needed careful planning. Staff who work with the children on a day to day basis often resent the power of volunteers who sit on committees, and we have found it helpful to include some ground-level staff at management level. There is, with organisations, also the problem with founders: sometimes founders are seen to be possessive and to cling to power in what they consider 'their' organisations; at other times they are often the only ones who do have the necessary view of the field and the vision for the programme, and they need to be there.

“Of course, the idea is not so much to give children a shelter over their heads as to give them some sense of power over their own lives”



So, there is a time to stay and a time to move on.

CCW: That is true, but nevertheless there is a need for founders like yourself to be acknowledged and respected as such by the profession. We can easily lose a sense of depth and a sense of history in our field when we fail to remember the people who dreamed dreams and turned them into concrete action. But are you now moving away from work with street children?

JS: I should always like to have a small finger in the pie of the street children's organisations and to contribute when needed, but beyond that I am happy to move into the background. My interest in street children was originally part of my interest in disadvantaged children, and I want now to regain a wider view of this field. The latch-key children of Hillbrow have long concerned me and I want to pick this up again. I have done research into the refugee children of Moçambique, and am at present preparing a paper on post-traumatic stress experienced by schoolchildren in Gazankulu. I also serve on the local body of the National Council for Children's Rights, and here we will also be looking at latch-key children, child health, welfare, etc. I am also working with an international child abuse organisation, specifically preparing for their ninth international Congress in 1992, where I hope to be able to present some new material on preventive work and also on research methods.

I shall continue with consultative work on street children. This involvement has been very exciting. I have had the opportunity to visit projects in Guatemala, Rio, Paraguay, Zimbabwe — I am going to Kenya in April — and I do find that having added first-hand experience to my academic anthropological studies, I have something to offer. And then I learn something new from every project I visit, and I can share this in the future with others.

CCW: How do the street children's issues, and the street children's projects here in South Africa, compare with those in other parts of the world?

JS: I think the issues are remarkably similar, and the range of projects are about the same. You get 'back-door' projects and very structured projects; those with lots of money and those which are very poor. I was impressed in Latin America particularly by the role of so-called street educators who go out on to the streets where the children are, chat with them, play draughts with them — but often this can be because they largely fail to get the children back into formal educational structures. On the other hand, here in South Africa we have had success, for example with projects like Street-Wise, in getting the youngsters into some sort of educational setting and through this back into the schools. Those who went through

our school readiness programme over the past two years and back into formal schooling are actually doing exceptionally well. We can be proud of this achievement. Also in some overseas centres I found that clientele tended rather to be slum children who *did* go home to parents every night, and when projects were challenged about the real street children under the bridge, they replied that these children couldn't be helped because, for example, they were always high on glue. So there were often gaps between what people wanted to do, and what they really could do.

In South Africa I have been generally encouraged by the progress made. Of course, the idea is not so much to give children shelter over their heads as to give them some sense of power over their own lives.

CCW: As you go around this country, do you feel that we are simply not reaching most of these children, or do you think we are beginning to contain the street child problem?

JS: I don't think we are fully containing the problem yet. I think there are a number of children out on the streets whom we have reached in the past but who have fallen through the net for some reason. I don't think we are reaching the really difficult cases, because we are not equipped to do so. We need more consistent co-operation between state and private sector. For example, in Pretoria we have a good working relationship with Transvaal Provincial Administration (TPA) social workers whereby even absconders from places of safety who find their way into our projects and make some progress are released from the provisions of the Act and not hounded as absconders. In Johannesburg on the other hand we are not recognised by TPA social workers. They have said in interviews with news media that they don't approve of our activities at all. We still have problems in our continuing efforts to set up a working relationship with the police, but have had no success. Invitations have met with no response. Admittedly, we have seen in recent police directives a far more humane set of procedures for dealing with street children, but police are still given no alternatives but to go through law and court channels, and I think some are frustrated at not having better options as to what to do with these children. It is clear from research that a relatively small percentage of street children have been involved in any sort of criminal activity. Yet when the police pick up children they often pick up law-abiding kids, those who have perhaps been through one of our programmes and who are coping very adequately, and treat them all the same. We need to understand each other more. We do need, very badly, real working co-operation between state and street children projects.

FIVE YEARS AGO

A look at our April 1986 issue

In *The Developmental Tasks of Later Childhood* by Peter Harper: "Attaining double figures in life's years (like cricket) seems to be a significant advance ... but there is some danger of our being misled by the fact that 10-year-olds know more (for example through TV) or that they imitate teenage or adult fashions into thinking that they should also behave like miniature adults". Some important tasks at ten to twelve: acquisition of knowledge and competence (though "children are bound to want to make some mistakes for themselves"); the strengthening of gender identity ("children need a lot of time with adults of both sexes"); setting a balance between dependence and independence ("... the need to be part of the family and the simultaneous need to be different").

Op die nuus blaaie lees ons van die Nasionale Direkteur se gesprekke in Bloemfontein met Ds. Heyns van die AKDB, waarna hy 'n besoek aan Ons Kinderhuis afgelê het. Die volgende dag het hy 'n werksessie met die bestuur van die Abraham Kriel Kinderhuis in Langlaagte bygewoon. The NACCW's working group on residential care for black children met in Johannesburg with representatives from Child Welfare, SOS and World Vision.

A profile of the sexual abuse of children was presented by Dr Chris Molteno of Red Cross Children's Hospital in Cape Town. The problems of definition are discussed, since these often depend on their purpose, e.g. legal or social. A simple definition: Sexual abuse of a child by an adult for his own sexual gratification without consideration of the child's psychosexual development. The article dealt with the incidence, causes, management and consequences of abuse.

In haar finale artikel oor die STEP-TEEN benadering, het Reneé van der Merwe oor kommunikasie geskryf. Ons moet die tiener die kans gee om sy gevoelens nader te omskryf en te identifiseer. Die boodskap van die ouer moet bly: "Ek wil jou help en verstaan", nooit "Ek weet presies wat verkeerd is" nie. Die tiener is besig om sy eie vaardighede aan te leer. "In reflektiewe luister hoor ons die kind se gevoelens en bedoelings, en laat ons hom voel dat hy verstaan word. Ons is die spieël vir die tiener om homself duideliker te sien." Ons word herhaaldelik in hierdie artikels daaraan herinner dat in kinderhuse werk ons met kinders met besondere agtergronde en probleme, en dat programme soos STEP-TEEN nie altyd eenvoudige uitkomstie uitkomstie.

There are many different fields of child care. These include education, recreation, psychological and social services to name but a few. The old school of thought viewed child care work mainly as maintaining the smooth functioning of the institution; a child was just one of a mass who were kept in institutional centres. Today child care concentrates on the child, seeing to each one's individual needs. In some institutions there has been an increasing movement towards cottage-style units as opposed to the hostel style, and as a result children are instilled with a sense of belonging and family. Individual care and attention can be given to each child.

The nature of caring

Due to a varied spectrum of personal and family problems, emotional or physical deprivation, children are removed by court order and placed in children's homes, child care schools, reform schools, special residential schools and places of safety.

Among the problems leading to family disruptions and subsequent placement in child care centres are things such as alcoholism, drug dependency, sexual and physical abuse, unemployment, poverty, divorce and neglect.

Care involves four aspects. First new children need to be handled sensitively as those coming into care have usually been physically or emotionally broken. Furthermore care means to like or have a regard for children. Many of these children are often defensive or aggressive due to their previous history and are often not easy to like at first. Care involves protecting children from their own anger and violence or that of their parents. It also implies to worry over or be concerned about an individual. It involves a personal investment of time, money, hard work and (just like parents) sacrificing one's freedom of movement in order to care more effectively.

Care entails personal involvement with a child by making oneself vulnerable, and exposing oneself to possible hurt. It involves loving gestures, being kind and gentle and being willing to act in whatever capacity is required. The amount of care or attention given must be appropriate to the child's needs and sometimes smaller doses of attention must be given to the child until he can cope with more.

Residential child care workers are those people living with a small group of children in the dormitories, cottages or a section of building. They are responsible for the day-to-day care of the children, attending to their physical, emotional, intellectual, psychological, social and spiritual needs. They fill parental, adult, educative/counselling roles. They see to the children's meals and diet and share meals with them. Child care workers help to structure the children's daily routines from the time of rising to the time of going to bed. They attend to personal hygiene, health and discipline, seeing that all schooling and clothing needs are met. They play an important part in recreation and

As a first year child care student at the Ethelbert Training Centre
Leanne Preen
gets an overview of the field

Welcome to Child Care Work



stimulation, teaching children good social skills and how to cope emotionally with difficulties in life. They comfort and listen to the child, giving him the time, love and acceptance he has previously been deprived of.

The parenting role

Child care workers are primarily responsible for creating and maintaining a warm, homely, personalised and well-balanced environment which is secure and conducive to the growth of well-balanced, self-actualising individuals. These workers must provide the

content of the therapeutic living experience. They must teach the children everyday skills from table etiquette and dress sense and maintaining the neatness of a room — all in accordance with the treatment programme and therapist's guidance.

There is an important parenting role in which the child care worker engages, hopefully for only a temporary period, before children are reunited with their parents once rehabilitation is successful. In parenting, provision has to be made for three aspects of child rearing. Firstly, the *holding* aspect in which child care workers provide care, comfort and control and must protect children from danger, discomfort and distress. This can only be achieved through acceptance.

Clare Winnicott sums it up as "an active effort on the part of the worker to know the individual as he is, a person in his own right with his own life to live and his own intrinsic value as a human being". This imparts to the child a sense of self-worth.

Secondly, a *nurturing* aspect is required and involves encouraging the development of social, intellectual and physical skills so that the child can make sense of the outside world and himself in it. He can begin to experience it sensitively for his own benefit. Lastly, there is the 'becoming a whole person' aspect or the development and maintenance of *personal integrity* which is vital for maturation into a responsible adult who can meet the demands of adult life.

The child care worker teaches the children through constructive adult modelling and sound therapeutic relationships. Children learn through observation, experience and joining in with joint activities. Thus child care workers can help children to develop by providing them with these opportunities.

Child care workers must have high personal standards and beliefs and they must maintain these knowing that children are modelling on them at all times. It is therefore important that the child care worker has an increasing self-awareness and confidence in his values.

Bonding will occur between the child and child care worker if an effective therapeutic relationship has been established, and this allows more co-operation, understanding and acceptance between them which will in turn provide for a more effective learning environment.

Child care worker skills

Child care workers need skills in observation so that they are able to recognise and record significant small details of the child's behaviour, e.g. the way the child speaks, the words he uses, his gesture and bodily posture, how his behaviour varies over a period of time, the feelings he expresses through drawing, writing and play, as well as the reactions he evokes in those around him. They need to understand children and what motivates their behaviour and be able to predict behaviours. They also require an understanding of group processes as well as skills in group management.

Furthermore they require skills in comm-

unicating verbally and non-verbally. They must have the ability to listen "with the third ear" or to interpret the real feelings behind the facade of aggressive behaviour or to understand the real message behind the words.

The child care worker is a member of a team, and this enables him to turn to co-workers for advice and help with problems he is experiencing on the job. He attends staff meetings, shares in decision-making and makes inter-staff communication with other members of the team.

The work is demanding and the child care workers often need to deal with problems arising from the children's past unfavourable development. Children are often withdrawn, hostile and over-demanding. Child care workers require strong, positive and persevering characters and are needed as "signposts" guiding the child in the right way and not as "straightjackets" enforcing the children to rigid conformity.

Growing needs

Child care workers can play an increasingly significant part because more children are requiring care due to more family disruption arising from the deterioration of values, and lack of employment as a result of the recession. Furthermore, there are greater pressures developing due to out continually advancing society with the nuclear family emerging in preference to the extended family, of the past. The high staff turnover and the large number of under-trained child care workers requires that more posts become available to educated, skilled, professional child care workers.

Children rarely enter institutions due only to broken homes. Sometimes it is because parents, although being unable to provide for the children themselves resent and become jealous of foster parents, leading to children's placement within institutions.

When divorce occurs the children cannot sometimes accept living in 'another' family. Similarly in times of sudden illness, death or disaster, children cannot easily adjust to the intimate, personal atmosphere of a substitute family, and may require placement in a more neutral environment. Today, there is a shortage of foster homes and of social workers working with foster parents.

There has been an increase in the problems of divorce and alcohol abuse, and South Africa today has one of the highest divorce rates in the world. Furthermore there is an increasing awareness of problems in the field of abuse and children are encouraged to speak up for their rights, and with the special child protection services which exist today, this brings more cases to the attention of the courts.

With the breakdown in society more single parent families have come into existence. This poses difficulties if a mother is unemployed or falls ill. Moreover, with the only-parent having to work, there is no-one to care for the child and as a result day care centres have evolved.

Medical, vocational and educational facil-

ities are inadequately provided for handicapped people in the community and many have to be catered for in special schools or within institutions. All these factors imply that more child care services are required, with greater responsibilities for child care workers.

There are many difficulties in providing continuity of care, and high staff turnover as a result of child care being an exhausting, demanding job where workers are viewed

**All these factors imply
that more child care
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as having a low status and receiving little pay and gratitude. So there is a greater need for dedicated skilled professionals.

With the move to desegregate, more staff are required as there is a greater number of children needing care. Individual child care workers now attend to smaller groups in cottage units.

Child care workers are essential as they are the ones with an overview to what is happening to the children. They are the ones in direct and continuous contact with children and are responsible for implementing treatment plans. They are "forefront to the campaign to rehabilitate the child."

Children today are the adults of the future and therefore need to be instilled with sound moral values, self-confidence and self-discipline, and it is the child care worker who plays the primary role in this.

Our aims

Many child care workers are only fulfilling the primary needs of food and shelter for the child and are not focussing enough attention on the emotional and psychological needs which are vital if the child is to develop to his or her maximum potential. In the past, too little attention was given to reconstruction work with the family, and children were left in children's homes for too long rather than being reunited with the family or reintegrated into the community. Many are at the age of eighteen being forced into the outside world to cope on their own without being adequately prepared for it, thus experiencing a similar sense of despair as they did before, when they first came into the children's home.

Child care workers aim to provide for all the needs of the child resulting in the child's physical, emotional, intellectual and social development and his ultimate self-actualisation.

They aim to help the child to achieve a level of positive mental health which, according to Jahoda (1958), involves six main areas: "self-awareness and attitude to self, maturation, direction, purpose, self actualisation, integration, autonomy, perception of reality and mastery of the environment." Through work with children, child care workers aim to build up self-esteem and strength in the child so that he will be able to cope with the pressures of daily living once he leaves the institution.

If the institution has a warm, caring, therapeutic environment providing the child with enough experiences and opportunities to explore his world, he will begin to recognise his own talents and self-worth and it will be the place where he will form his beliefs and sense of personal identity. It is thus the task of child care workers to create this environment, one which cares for children uniquely focussing attention on their individual needs where they have their own personal space and enough personal quality time invested in them.

The child care workers aim is to help the child create boundaries and develop self-discipline which develops stronger characters.

Children who are placed in homes are often emotionally or physically broken and an aim must be to provide the healing experience where damage and hurts have occurred. As a medieval medical dictum put it, our task is "To cure sometimes, to relieve often, and to comfort always"

We must demonstrate to children that we are dependable so that we can build that trust in them which will result in their development of trust relationships later on in life.

Another aim is to stimulate recreation and play because it is a form of self-expression and communication as well as an important aspect of ego-building. Child care workers aim to reconcile the child and parents into a positive and stronger family unit through both sharing in the decision-making and treatment programmes. Rahn (1960) said "Rehabilitation must ultimately take place in the community. Institutionalisation is at best, a successful period of removal from the community in order to help the individual equip and prepare himself for his return." The child care worker also aims to share in the formation of after-care programmes.

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Ros Halkett has been the NACCW's Assistant Director in the Natal Region for the past eighteen months. For much of this time she has been the only member of the professional staff in Natal, especially since Lesley du Toit was appointed National Director early in 1990. It was a career move of her husband Peter's which brought Ros to Natal from the Western Cape in 1988; it is a further career move, this time to Johannesburg, which takes her away from Natal this month. *The Child Care Worker* looked back with her on her time with the NACCW.



ROS HALKETT

Adieu to a Lady

CCW: Was this a worthwhile period in your career?

RH: Worthwhile in many ways. I personally learned and grew a great deal in that time, and I felt involved in the learning of others. In some respects it has been frustrating in that it was such a short time: as I got used to the tasks and the people, I am having my wings clipped. It was a very specialised field to be working in; I have had to learn the particular practice field, the nature of the work, the people in the field, and the most importantly the course material and teaching methods applying in child care. Also, the child care workers and the students were often just getting used to me and my ways of working. In many ways I feel that only now I am understanding enough and developing my own skills enough to *begin* to be useful.

CCW: What were some of the achievements?

RH: The achievements were the gains made in individual people, mostly. It was good to work with people whose confidence grew before your eyes over the months. The child care students had themselves into a specialised and demanding field; often they were daunted or overwhelmed and lost confidence. One could see this in the classroom, child care students who sat there zipped up and silent, struggling with their own values and doubts — and then, through the coursework, through the discussion groups and the participation, feeling able to risk their ideas and viewpoints with the group, and even challenging the teachers! This was achievement. It was, of course, an achievement for the student, but in a way I felt it was an achievement for me too. And it is not only a story about skills and confidence. A major challenge for people who come into the child care field is the changing of *attitudes*. So often there is too romantic and pitying — or too judgemental and punitive — an attitude towards the handling of difficult children. I know how hard it often is for me to change my attitudes at my age! I was greatly humbled by students' ability to change attitudes — often people older than me.

CCW: We are talking here about some very basic and essential qualities in our profession, the ability to learn and grow and change. Were you optimistic about such qualities generally amongst child care workers?

RH: Yes, very much so. I saw it again and again in groups I worked with. But there are other qualities which perhaps impressed me more. One is courage. I think most people come into the field with certain expectations about the kind of children they will be working with, and about the kind of reception they will get from the children — only to discover that they have bitten off more than they can chew, that actually these children are not the children they had in mind, that they are far more troubled and demanding and hard to understand, and that they pose deep challenges. Now the child care workers realise that they need to build their knowledge and skills — and they find that *they* must take on the role of beginner, of learner. This takes courage. Many of them have not studied for years, many have difficulties grasping abstract concepts, many others struggle with the language-medium of the courses, although we do have both English and Zulu courses in Natal. But they have a go at this,

and put themselves on the line, because they want to do a better job for the kids. Often I saw them come into courses as members of *staff teams*, and this also takes courage, to admit to your colleagues and seniors that you don't know something and that you have to learn ...

CCW: It has been hard for the NACCW to pitch its coursework, in terms of language, academic level, etc., when practice varies so considerably from place to place. How well do you think the NACCW is achieving this?

RH: I think it's difficult. We need to develop and target our material more carefully. There is a proposal within the new training strategy that we should be streaming students more consciously. I have found that students who feel the material is too elevated are frankly intimidated; they zip up. When you really work at a level where they are comfortable, they come out like flowers opening, they participate.

I think that where we have failed to reach the students, we as staff have given ourselves double work. We have had to go back again to groups of students and do the work over again, perhaps in a different way. One example is student evaluation: often they are not comfortable with written evaluations and on paper they may not achieve. But when you go back and *talk* you know that they are quite suitable candidates, that they have mastered the material and that they're OK. So we do have to differentiate the course material in some way. I believe that there is a project at the moment where NACCW is working with UCT in developing a set of BQCC notes in basic English. This sort of thing is going to be very helpful.

CCW: All jobs have their tough sides, uncomfortable things. Did you hit some of these?

RH: Yes, I did. Always it has been difficult to deal with the feelings and the hurts which arise from the inequalities in our country. I get to feel helpless, I get to feel guilty. By having been always a non-racial organisation I think the NACCW became a place where those issues *could* froth to the top — and it is good that we have to deal with them.

I have been troubled by questions about the immediate relevance of what we do in courses: in recent months students have been coming to class from the most appalling situations of violence and horror, while I have been coming from a relatively unaffected suburb. It has been hard for me to listen to what has been happening to children, yet being so far from the front line myself.

Also hard for me have been the times when I have personally goofed. I've had to admit this and go back and put things right. Sometimes these have been dark moments, but just as often they are hilarious to look back on, for example, the

experience of going mentally blank in the middle of a lecture!

CCW: You have spend some years of your career in residential child care, firstly working with a couple of children's homes and now with the NACCW. Knowing it better from the inside, if you were to go off now and be a social worker in the field, how much confidence would you have in the child care service? How healthy would you say the field is? How easily would you refer a child to residential care?

RH: As always, I would be very cautious and selective as to where I would want to place a child. I would need to be pretty certain in my own mind that the child's needs would be adequately met and that no harm would come. I need to say that I have seen how child care is changing and growing, but that it still may be risky to refer children to care. I see many agencies changing their programmes in the direction which makes child welfare agencies happy, for example, there is growing agreement on shorter term, more goal-oriented, residential placements.

Then again, who knows what child care services are going to look like in just a year or two? Already one sees vast differences depending on which side of town you live. Here is a sophisticated programme opening itself up more and more to the community; here is another programme almost barricading itself from what is going on outside its gates.

There is one respect, and this I need to say loud and clear, in which child care is very unhealthy, and that is in the absence of a clear child care policy and plan on a national level. It is outrageous that with the overwhelming tasks we see just ahead, there is no clear picture of what we will all be needing to do. Where are the national policies and plans for children?

Counter to this, what I have seen the NACCW and its members doing in building of better awareness and skills can only contribute to a healthy field. To my colleagues in child care whom I have met, I want to say "Hang in there!" Their jobs are incredibly difficult, few people would have the courage to want to get involved and want to help, but the child care workers I have met have got in them what they need for this. I have been very conscious of people in Natal making the extra effort. They didn't have to come to courses and meetings, but they did. Members of the Regional Executive, for example, didn't have to devote all that time to the activities of the NACCW, heaven knows they had enough to do back home, but they did so much. In my time in Natal I saw so much willingness and giving amongst child care people — it makes me feel better about the children, knowing that these same child care people are giving people. Certainly they gave me a lot: I leave with my own cup running over. Thank you all.

The Task is always the same: Human Development

Mike Baizerman

However varied the job, however different the responsibilities, the task is always the same — human development. A tragic, preventable "accident" shows the point.

In the city of Minneapolis in the State of Minnesota there is a branch of an international, reputable youth serving agency. One aspect of program was group trips to athletic events. Last week, a child died on a group trip apparently after she fell out of the van through a window which was pushed open during some "fooling around". This was a tragic event for the child, the other children, the youthworker who was driving the van (small bus), the parents and the agency, among others.

Even a cursory examination of the facts showed that the youthworker was driving a group of ten to 12 year-olds; no other adult was aboard. The worker had driven to and from a city about 500 miles away. The roundtrip was done in less than three days. The worker had no special training on how to plan a trip, how to supervise a group of children in a moving vehicle, how to do this for about sixteen hours of driving, etc. In short, the youthworker "drove the van"

on "the trip" to a swimming meet. Neither she or her agency, it seems, understood that "the trip" was the surface, a metaphor, for human development; an opportunity for the worker and their learning about their own possibilities as individuals and as a group. It was an opportunity to live "responsibility", to learn how to plan and carry-out and evaluate a trip. It was a chance for the youth, along with an adult, to create, implement and assess expectations for the trip, including the roles each would play to maintain safety and order. Because "the trip" was seen as a trip and not as an opportunity to learn, to be and become, a chance was lost. Youthwork never showed its possibilities. Since we live in and through actions and deeds, it is in these that we must see and create opportunities to live justly, honourably and authentically — the ways of being human and human being. In that context, this tragedy would be meaningful. It is senseless. It was not an "accident"; it is understandable and the result of poor work, poor supervision, poor vehicular design and construction; and lousy luck. We can push the odds in our favour.

Situation Wanted

21 year old female seeks employment as Child Care Worker anywhere in South Africa. Studying Residential Child Care at Technikon RSA. Has also undergone training in USA (New York) and has been involved with Crisis Committee for Children's Rights and done practicals at Guild Cottage Children's Home.

Please contact Margaret Letebele, 345 Seme Street, Mohlakeng East Ext, Randfontein, 1760. Tel. 414-4669.

Enclosed with this issue:

Registration Card for the NACCW's Eighth Biennial National Conference, July 10 to 12, 1991, at the Aryan Benevolent Home, Durban.

Enquiries to NACCW, PO Box 28323, Malvern 4055 or Tel. 031-463-1033.

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We need to realise that what we, as adults today, see in any situation is not what the children see. Yet we once did see what the children see. **Alan Roberts** writes about an important, even vital, perspective in child care practice

Working Phenomenologically with Children

"Hell is ... other people".

— JEAN PAUL SARTRE

"Love is ... other people".

— MARTIN BUBER

Two diametrically opposite existential positions — the poles at either end of the spectrum of existence.

Naturally, "other people" includes children — one's own children or other people's children or both. Perhaps *particularly* in relation to children, one comes to feel more powerfully pulled and pushed from and towards either of these two existential poles.

Being in the life of another

A general phenomenological principle for working effectively with children, one which may make such work less hellish and one which provides an antidote to the equations that psychology can reduce people to, is expressed by Buber thus: To "imagine the real" — "a bold swinging — demanding the most intensive stirring of one's being — into the life of the other".

One can succeed in putting this principle into effect, not only by *imagining* what it is like to be a child involved in a particular behaviour, cognitive process or emotional state, but also *remembering* what it was like for oneself when one was the same age involved in the same (or similar) behaviour, cognitive process or emotional state, one begins to engage with the other person in what phenomenological-existential psychologists call "authentic" dialogue and relationship. One begins to work phenomenologically.

Imagination and memory

Authentic dialogue and relationship form the backbone of existential-phenomenological psychology. Authentic dialogue and relationship point to a way out of hell for both child and adult.

Imagination and memory are the tools of phenomenological work, the machinery behind perception. Affirmation and empathy for the child's experience may be the end product of the work.

However, working phenomenologically depends on the extent to which the individual adult can permit herself to be aware of the story of her own past, and the extent of her servility to it and curtailment by it in the present.

Perceiving, through the use of imagination and memory, what it's like to be the child can be threatening for the adult with strict, critical, (introjected) parents who condemned, censured and criticised him/her from behaving, thinking and feeling like a child in the past. For such an adult, hell is children. Especially children "who don't behave themselves".

Freedom to commit

Seeing "I" to "I" and working phenomenologically with children presents a challenge then. An unconscious taboo against being a child may emerge out of the adult person's own personal history. This unconscious dynamic may interfere with the adult's perceptions of children in the present.

Working phenomenologically thus involves in addition to conscious perception, employing memory and imagination, being well aware of one's own past childhood and how it affects one's work with children in the present, and lastly, stepping unreservedly into relationship and real dialogue.

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Alan Roberts is a child care worker at the Oranjia Children's Home in Cape Town

PRACTICE HINT

Nailing Down the Abstract with Concrete Images

Jeannie Karth of St Michael's Home in Cape Town

Because many of the young people I work with have difficulty with abstract ideas, I find myself looking for suitable concrete images that can help me put across an idea. I would like to share two that have worked quite well in the Life Skills sessions.

Relationships

When we dealt with relationships I suggested that they think of a relationship as a 3-legged race. Two individuals, quite separate and different, are bound together at the ankles by a commitment to run and race to the best of their abilities. Without the commitment there is no relationship — without the tie around their ankles there is no race. For these two individuals to be successful, they need to be tuned in to one another very sensitively; if one pulls too hard they fall down; if one hangs back they fall down. Unless they carefully gauge one another's capabilities they cannot make a success of the job. When they work together each putting their best foot forward, they move smoothly and successfully towards their goal.

Goals and Dreams

The other image was for goals and dreams. I used a motorcar here. The engine represented one's dreams and hopes — if you have lots of dreams and hopes, you have a strong motorcar with a big engine; it can travel faster and further. One's goals in life represent the destination — it's pointless just driving the car around without a destination in mind. Without effort and planning, the journey would also not be successful. These are represented by the oil and the petrol — both are essential for the smooth and efficient running of the car. From your dreams and hope you build your goals — e.g. to become a mechanic or dress designer. The effort and planning of passing courses and gaining experience brings fulfilment.

During a recent visit to this country, Capetonian *Linda Lines* contributed an article on *Child and Family Policy and the State*. In her second article she discusses similar issues in the British context

An overview of Child Care Legislation in Britain: The Children Act 1989

The vast majority of social workers in Britain are involved in child care work. child care, mental health and AIDS counselling are the three areas of work which have attracted earmarked grants from central government because of the increased workload and the need for developmental work.

In 1889 the Prevention of Cruelty and Protection of Children Act placed child care legislation on a statutory basis for the first time. This legislation was a response to a series of offences on children and since then legislation has been constructed in an unco-ordinated way. Subsequent legislation has been developed in response to specific events, which include, amongst others, public health, war, changes in the economy, individual pioneering, exploitation of children, pressure groups and tragedy enquiries. In recent years the impact of protest research and declarations on human rights and the rights of children has been evident in the legislation. What has also been apparent is the pendulum swing of responsibility. When child care is perceived to be the function of the family (or more specifically, women), then there tends to be minimal state intervention. When the economy requires more workers, then women are enticed into the workforce by the increased availability of child care facilities. The welfare principle which underpins child care policy and legislation, reflects the current thinking around the balance between the nature of the state's responsibility towards children and the conflict and surrounding notions of parental rights and responsibilities.

The Children Act was given Royal Assent on 16 November 1989 and is due to become law in October 1991, although some provisions are already in force. The Act consists of 108 clauses and is divided into twelve parts which cover virtually all the law relating to the upbringing of children and the social services to be provided for them. It creates a whole new jurisdiction scheme to deal with children cases under which all proceedings relating to the child (e.g. divorce, family procedures, care procedures, wardship etc.) of law (White et al, 1990, p.vii).

The Children Act is mistakenly viewed as

a direct outcome of the child sex abuse enquiry in Cleveland. The origins of the Act can be traced to 1984 when the Social Services Select Committee Report on "Children in care" argued that the present law was complex, confusing and piecemeal, and that private and public law should be unified. In July 1988 the Law Commission published "Family Law, review of child care law, guardianship and custody" which simplified and clarified the law and brought it more into line with public law (National Children's Bureau, 1990, unpag).

The Lord Chancellor states of the Children Act: "It emphasises that the days when a child should be regarded as a possession of his/her parents are now buried forever ... the overwhelming purpose of parenthood is the responsibility for caring and rearing the child to be a properly developed adult both physically and mentally." This statement encapsulates the underlying philosophy of the Act which can be divided into three broad principles.

- The prime responsibility for the upbringing of children rests with the parents.
 - The major role of the state is to help parents to discharge that responsibility by giving support to the family and by the provision of a variety of services in a voluntary partnership with the parents and with voluntary organisations
 - Where upbringing within the family is not consistent with the child's welfare and compulsory state intervention is required, the court should not make an order unless to do so is considered better for the child than making no order at all.
- I shall now examine each of these key messages in turn.

Family responsibility

The belief that children are best looked after within the family is indicated by the introduction of the concept of *parental responsibility* which replaces the phrases parental powers, duties and obligations which are scattered throughout the statute books. This is a crucial shift in emphasis on the relationship between children and parents which highlights "duty and obligation" towards children. Section 3 of the Act outlines the scope of parental responsibility as "all the rights, duties, powers,

responsibility and authority which by law a parent has in relation to the child and his/her property". Nowhere in the Act does it attempt to draw up a detailed list of factors that are comprised in parental responsibility as "such a list would have to change from time to time to meet the differing needs and circumstances" (White, Carr and Lowe, 1990, p.10). Who can hold parental responsibility? The Act introduces the new concept of "shared care." The central thrust of this concept is to promote greater inter-agency co-operation and partnerships with the parents. Married, divorced and unmarried mothers automatically have it and never lose it, except through adoption. Unmarried fathers can share this responsibility by written agreement with the mother or by Court Order. Third parties (relatives, friends, local authority) can acquire parental responsibility (called co-parents) by means of a residence order, but this does not mean that the person with parental responsibility ceases to have that responsibility. Where more than one person has parental responsibility, each of them may act independently, but their actions must be compatible with court orders. In the case of disagreement the issue has to be taken to court.

Transfer of powers

The transfer of legal parental powers and responsibility in caring for a child to the local authority is the thrust of the second key message of the Act and should only be done by a full court hearing. The basis for such transfer must rest on *harm* or risk of harm to the child related to inadequate parenting or control. The Act places a duty on local authorities to investigate when there is cause to suspect "significant harm". Harm is defined as "ill-treatment, impairment of health or development" but significant is not defined. Despite the fact that the Act does not define the term, its inclusion is seen as crucial in preventing unwarranted local authority intervention in family life. This concept is not only the basis for investigation, but also the basis for all court orders in relation to care and supervision and the protection of children. What is important is the recognition of the predictive element carried within the phrase "likely to suffer significant harm". Even when the significant harm test is satisfied, the Court will be guided by considerations about the welfare of the child as contained in the principle that the child's welfare is paramount and that the court will only make an order if to do so, is considered better for the child than making no order. Inter-agency co-operation is an important feature of the Act and this holds true for compulsory intervention. Though primary duty is placed on local authorities, the local education authority, housing and health authorities are all charged to assist if called upon to do so. Other considerations are that the Court

must also take into account the child's wishes and feelings and an important new consideration that it will not be lawful to ignore racial origin or cultural and linguistic background of the child.

In Part II of the Act the court's previous custody and access orders have been replaced by Section 8 orders. The residential order which settles the arrangement about the person with whom a child will live, a contact order to replace access, a specific issue or a prohibited steps order which are modelled on wardship jurisdiction. Another new order is the family assistance order whereby, usually a probation officer will help a family following family breakdown for a period of six months. Additionally Part II provides a clear plan governing who can apply for each order. To protect the child seven-day child Assessment Orders in Medical Examination and Emergency orders are necessary, but with Emergency orders removal has to be short duration of eight days in the first instance, followed by a seven-day order. The order can be appealed by the parent or child after 72 hours. Supervision orders will last, in the first place for one year, but can be renewed by court order to a total of 3 years. Interim Care Orders of eight weeks in the first instance and four weeks subsequently can lead to a Care Order which lasts until the child is eighteen years of age.

Local authorities

Local authority duties and powers to provide service for children and families are described in Part III of the Act and corresponds to the third key message of the Act. In the first instance local authorities have a duty to give support to children and their families to remain together by the provision of a range of services. These services must be published every three years and provided in partnership with the parent. This particular duty is only to "children in need", but the child's race, religion and cultural background have to be considered when providing services. These services include identification and assessment of needs, a register & services for disabled children, prevention of neglect and abuse of children, provision of family centres as well as to provide accommodation and services for children who have to live away from home. When the child lives at home supportive services in the form of advice and counselling, home help service, finance, day care and support for young people up to the age of twenty-one have to be available. In addition, the local authority has a very important preventative duty in respect of all children, "Every local authority shall take reasonable steps to prevent children suffering ill-treatment or neglect". Parts VI, VII and VIII of the Act provide a framework for the registration and inspection of community homes, voluntary homes, voluntary organisations and registered children's homes. The duties of

such establishments to safeguard the welfare of children are clearly set out in the Act.

Part IX "Private arrangements for Foster Children", replaces the Foster Children Act, 1980, and intends to impose a stricter regulatory framework on private fostering. In making arrangements for the provision of day care or fostering the local authority should have regard to the different racial group to which the children belong. Part X of the Act introduces important changes in registration of childminders and other Day Care Providers and specifies inspection requirements. Current developments include new rules which will deal with children's attendance at hearings, privacy for children and evidence given by or in respect of children. A significant role is being carved out for guardian *ad litem*'s, the independent Social Workers who will be appointed in almost all care and related proceedings, and also in applications for emergency protection orders. Guardian *ad litem*s have no casework responsibility for families and are appointed solely to make recommendations after a case has been proved.

The Act is undoubtedly a major piece of legislation which makes the law simple, more accessible and comprehensive. The Act encourages partnerships and shared care between parents, the local authority and voluntary services and aim to achieve a better balance between parental responsibility and local authority intervention. It has however been described as a non-

interventionist Act as the principle of judicial non-interference accepts that children are best reared in their families and the state only intervenes in family life if such intervention would be better for the welfare of the child than no intervention.

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"Oh, Fred! We've actually done it— we've brought a new human being into the world! How can we make it up to him?"

NACCW May Diary

WESTERN CAPE		TRANVAAL	
02 09:00	BQCC 2 Porter School	02 09:30	Regional Executive Meeting NACCW Offices
02 08:30	Editorial Board Meeting Regional Offices	03 09:00	Supervisors' Course NACCW Offices
07 09:00	BQCC 2 Porter School	06 09:15	BQCC Pretoria Abraham Kriel Kinderhuis
08 11:00	Regional Executive Meeting Regional Offices	13 09:15	BQCC Pretoria Abraham Kriel Kinderhuis
08 09:00	BQCC 1 Annie Starck Village	13 17:30	Street Children Training Subcommittee Twilight Shelter
14 09:30	Regional General Meeting St Georges Home	15 09:00	BQCC Johannesburg T M I
14 09:00	BQCC 3 Porter School	15 09:00	BQCC East Rand Norman House
15 09:00	BQCC 1 Annie Starck Village	16 10:00	Child Care Workers' Support Group NACCW Offices
15 08:30	PPA (Group 1) Regional Office	17 09:00	Supervision Course T M I
16 09:00	BQCC 3 Porter School	20 09:15	BQCC Pretoria Abraham Kriel Kinderhuis
21 09:00	BQCC 3 Porter School	21 09:00	Director's Support Group St Mary's Children's Home
22 09:30	PPA (Group 2) Heatherdale Home	22 09:00	BQCC Johannesburg T M I
22 09:00	BQCC 1 Annie Starck Village	22 09:00	BQCC East Rand Norman House
23 09:00	BQCC 3 Porter School	24 09:00	Supervision Course T M I
28 09:00	BQCC 3 Porter School	27 09:15	BQCC Pretoria Abraham Kriel
29 09:00	BQCC 1 Annie Starck	29 09:00	BQCC Johannesburg T M I
30 09:00	BQCC 3 Porter School	29 09:00	BQCC East Rand Norman House
NATAL			
08	Principals group NACCW Offices		
15	Regional Executive		
17	Child Care Workers Forum		
17	Social Workers Group		
17	Regional Meeting		

News

TRANSVAAL

Hail and Farewell

Rather late congratulations to Gaynor and Steven Morgan of Epworth Children's Village on the birth of a baby girl on 10th December 1990. They have named her Eirian-Aderyn. On the 15th March 1991 a farewell party was held for our beloved social worker Mrs Nthabisemg Mogale, a person we all cared for. We have all been in accord with togetherness — worked as a team which is necessary in child care. We wish her well and hope the new pastures will indeed be greener.

Support Group for Directors

The Support Group for Directors will be held on May 21st at St Mary's Children's Home. The theme of the meeting will be *Handling Staff Conflict*. Malcolm Montgomery, Director of St Joseph's has kindly agreed to survey the literature on the subject and will give us a presentation which will also be based on his own personal experiences. This is one of the areas in which you have all had much experience — come and hear how your colleagues handle their problems. Time: 09:00 to 11:00.

Child Care Workers' Support Group

Attention all Child Care Workers. Do you find there's too much month left at the end of the money? Do you feel you're talking and not being heard? Are you feeling tired and dejected? Are you bursting with ideas and visions of how to grow and develop in child care? How do you feel about child care in the new South Africa? What do we do and where do

we grow from here? COME SHARE ALL THIS AND MORE — NACCW Offices, 304 Toward Place, 33 Doris Street, Berea in time for tea at 10:00 on May 16th.

Alternative Child Care models for new SA

In terms of the national research study on possible models of child care appropriate to our changing circumstances, the Transvaal Region has established two committees. The first sub-committee is investigating existing gaps in our services and is attempting to establish exactly what is offered to children of different races at this point in time. Under the able leadership of Shirley Mabusela the committee is also attempting to pin-point and predict the needs for residential care in the future. Subjects such as street children, the impact of AIDS on children, children in squatter camps and the refugee problem are all under discussion. The second committee is a building committee made up of representatives from organisations which are planning to create new facilities in the future. This committee is investigating options in low cost housing. There is a full acceptance that our existing building methods and structures are simply too expensive to meet the increasing demand for residential care. Underpinning the work of both committees is a concern about the philosophy of child care, raising questions such as Will there be a place for treatment orientated child care or will we have to move back into custodial care, caring for large groups of children? Issues such as staffing and costs all impinge on building design and our future planning. A report on the workings of these committees will be presented at the conference in July.

Specialised Training for Work with Street Children

The new national training strategy calls for the development of specialised training courses for those serving street children. At a meeting of the Street Children Co-ordinating Committee it was agreed to form a committee under the

guidance of the NACCW that would assist in developing a module of training for street children projects. Each of the organisations involved will send a representative to the first meeting which will be held on the 13th May.

Lack of Facilities for Children with Severe Behaviour Problems

Several Homes in the Johannesburg area have experienced problems in finding placements for children who cannot be contained in an "open" children's home. The Places of Safety are full to overflowing and such children are not always appropriate for child care schools — which in many cases are themselves full. The Johannesburg Children's Home was so concerned about this matter that the Director, Joan Rubinstein, and the Chairman of the Board of Management, Adrian Steed, approached the Minister, Mr Sam de Beer to discuss this problem. The Minister suggested a meeting with all those concerned to analyse the situation and to report back to him. Such a meeting was held on the 11th April with representatives from the State and the private sector present. At the end of a very lively discussion it was decided that the children's homes should attempt to form a constellation of services — a linkage across organisations that could serve to meet a variety of clients' needs. The idea would be that some homes would specialise in a particular kind of service (for example, serving sexually abused children or highly disturbed children) whilst others would serve a different population (for example, children needing custodial care). It was agreed that a further meeting to discuss the process whereby such plans could be put into practice should be held.

NATAL

Ros Halkett

On 22 March at our Regional Meeting we said a sad farewell to Ros Halkett who left us with an inspiring message. We wish her well in the Transvaal and thank her for her contribution to the Natal Region. (See interview with Ros in this issue)

AIDS programme

Our programme to develop a policy regarding AIDS has begun. On March 22 we heard an informed background to the disease. A Regional meeting on 17 May (the Regional meeting, the Child Care Workers' Forum and Social Workers' Group combined) at St Philomena's will hear input from ATIC and Durban City Health. On 21 June we meet at Greenfields Place of Safety to workshop policies regarding staff and children.

Meetings

On 26 April the region meets at Boys Town, Tongaat for a business meeting. We will finalise our proposals regarding the structure of NACCW, receive feedback on the National Executive and make plans for the National Conference and BGM. There will be no regional meeting in July due to the Conference. On August 23 and September 27 we will hold workshops on issues relating to integration. Lots of work is evident from the Conference planning sub-committee and a varied and exciting programme is developing. Don't forget 10 to 12 July is Conference time in Durban.

PCH News

Mary Cook Children's Home and Hilltops Children's Home officially merged on 1 April to form Pietermaritzburg Children's Homes (PCH). This is the culmination of the first phase of "an integrated child care programme for a city" — the title of a paper presented by John Webster and Clive Willows at the 7th Biennial Conference. Since July 1990 the staff teams have worked closely together on the development of treatment and care programmes. John Webster reports: "In September 1990 the Boards of Management of the two homes formally combined, and the members have been exceedingly supportive, far-sighted and bold in their approach to the new programme. As we settle into our new structures, offices, positions and responsibilities, we look forward to being of assistance to all agencies in the city as together we develop new strategies to help children of all cultures and colours in a changing South Africa."