

# *The child care worker*



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**Cover Picture:** Graduates at the recent ceremony in Natal. [Photo: John Webster]

Journal of the  
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Child Care Workers  
**NACCW/NVK**

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# The Chicken or the Egg?

An important aspect of the debate over professionalisation in child care has been the question of which comes first: 1. Improved qualifications and quality service, which earn status and recognition, or 2. Status and recognition, to encourage improved qualifications and quality service. The playing field, of course, has not been exactly level during the debate. When a state employer has paid child care workers (in the staff category of 'labourer') a salary equal to one-third of that paid to kombi drivers, it has been difficult for them to get any foot-hold on an upward career pathway. When child care workers have been excluded from staff meetings and from any information about the children they care for, status-wise they have been pretty well nailed to the floor anyway. When there has been no feed-back from on-line practice and child care staff have been told that their job is to do as they're told by

senior staff and social workers, it comes as no surprise to hear child care referred to as 'the cinderella of the helping services'. Child care has now loosened this logjam by deciding for itself what constitutes sound criteria for professional practice, and challenges its members to prove themselves. Says the NACCW: "To gain status and recognition in reality will now depend on the registered professionals. True status and recognition, like respect, can only be commanded and not demanded. Other professionals, particularly social workers who have not easily accepted this move, will be watching our practice with keen interest." [See Lesley du Toit's address on the facing page.] The first child and youth care professionals have been registered over this past month against the background of a new definition of the field and clear entrance criteria which include accredited qualifications (including a new course at UNISA from 1994) and experience requirements. Also in place are a code of ethics and the machinery for disciplinary action. Registration has not been made easy, requiring a minimum of two years' full-time service and at least two years of study. And the challenge seems to have been taken up by child care workers: in Johannesburg and Durban alone, no fewer than 270 registered for the new Orientation



The first registration of child and youth care workers in Durban

to Child and Youth Care — with seven of the NACCW's centres (the Western Cape, Port Elizabeth, George, Kimberley, Pretoria, Pietermaritzburg and Namaqualand) yet to start their 1993 training programmes. The first Module of the new Basic Qualification in Child Care (BQCC) course has already begun in some regions with high attendances. A booklet on the subject, *The Registration of Child and Youth Care Professionals*, is available without cost from any NACCW office.

## Did you get your orange card yet?

No, not a fruit coupon, or anything to do with a Free State political party! The NACCW's 1993 membership card is a

highly visible orange — so bright, in fact, that it will be very obvious that you *haven't* got one when you want to vote at the Biennial General Meeting at our forthcoming Conference in Johannesburg in July! There is only one way to get your card, and that is by becoming a member or by renewing your expired membership. Individual membership, for example, costs you only R30.00 (you save that in your discount on the very first BQCC module you attend — and you save another R50.00 on the 1993 Conference fees!) Membership also allows you to subscribe to the journal and to attend any NACCW course at a 25% discount. If you receive a renewal notice in the coming weeks (individual or corporate) secure your voting rights and discount privileges by replying immediately. To vote at the BGM you need to renew no later than 15 June.

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The International Federation of Educative Communities



The International Association of Workers with Troubled Children

NACCW Director Lesley du Toit speaks at the Transvaal Region's Graduation Ceremony in February, at which the Registration of Child and Youth Care Professionals was officially introduced

# The Child and Youth Care Profession comes of Age

With the graduation ceremonies in the Border, Natal, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Kimberley regions, it has been a very special few weeks for the NACCW. By the time we complete today's proceedings 400 child and youth care practitioners from across South Africa will have received certificates for course-work completed in 1992, and the first 50 professionals will have been registered at the start of what we hope will be an ever increasing process of professionalisation our field of work. Congratulations to all who receive their certificates at this time — and a special word of thanks to those who co-ordinated and taught the courses.

## Registration

Today, although we do not have the support of all child care bodies, nor will we have as yet the legal status ascribed to other national councils who register professionals, we within the NACCW celebrate the *birth of a profession*. In registration, we have chosen to initiate, for the sake of the children in our care and the specialists who work with them, a long overdue process. For any birth there has to be a period of labour! In this case it has lasted a long time, sometimes painful and very discouraging, sometimes absolutely thrilling — mostly plain hard work — but always moving on relentlessly towards this moment. So *Happy Birthday!*

## Appreciation

As is the case with any work done by a team, its always a great honour and humbling moment to be there at the fin-

ishing line knowing that you are for the most part reaping what your colleagues have in fact sown. Today we cannot celebrate this birth without paying tribute to those who over the last 17 years have contributed to what we are fortunate enough to experience today: To Brian Gannon, for his many years of sacrifice, hard work, wisdom and inspiration. To Ernie Nightingale, for his twelve years of leadership of the NACCW and his unceasing advocacy on behalf of the profession and the children, and for all the support and encouragement of staff, through the years and still today. To Joy Hansen, the first-ever NACCW staff member, to Jacqui Michael, Roger Pitt, Barrie Lodge, Vivien Lewis and Di Levine ... all of whom have each contributed so much. To the many many child and youth care workers who have "hung in there" regardless, and to the children and families whom we serve each day. To Dr Harvey of the Department of National Health and Population Development for his willingness to really listen; and to Professor de Bruyn, Head of the Social Work Department at UNISA, for her support for Child and Youth Care as a profession in its own right, for her willingness to advocate on our behalf at the Social Work Council, and for her help in the establishment of the first ever University course in this field. To others I may have overlooked ... To the donors who have over the years made it possible for us to educate child and youth care workers by keeping us "financially alive" long enough to reach

this milestone.

And finally to our National Chairman over the past six years, the head of our profession in South Africa, Ashley Theron, who has, with his guidance, encouragement, support, example and great dedication, given us all the courage to achieve everything that we celebrate today. Many of these people are not able to be present today, but I would ask that you stand and celebrate their contribution and extend our appreciation with our applause.

## Home and abroad

Our profession in South Africa has come a long way. Not only have we struggled through many issues together within South Africa, but we have also worked hard to build international links. Last year was particularly important — we were admitted in May to FICE (the International Federation of Educative Communities) which is the UN body for residential care. New demands will be made on us because of this affiliation, but it also provides us with a forum for learning and sharing at an international level — an essential process if we are not to become isolated or outdated in our practice, or worse still, to waste time by reinventing the wheel. This United Nations link will be particularly important if South Africa signs the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We will, on behalf of troubled children, be the watch dogs who must ensure that their rights are upheld. We were also accepted as members of The International Association for Workers with Troubled Children and will be

liaising closely with their African Bureau. Last year we were also invited to participate in the International Child and Youth Care Education Consortium as well as the International Working Group on ethics. These are all exciting opportunities, and form part of our growth as a profession. We are very grateful to our friends and colleagues in Europe, Canada, the USA and Britain for their encouragement and support.

## The Birth

As we celebrate this birth today, we might be inclined to pat ourselves on the back and rejoice that at last child and youth care professionals receive some status. At the same time we need to reaffirm our dedication to the devalued children and youth of our country. Ultimately, the purpose of registration has relatively little to do with ourselves, and much to do with those whom we serve.

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***"Ultimately, the purpose of registration has relatively little to do with ourselves, and much to do with those whom we serve"***

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It is nevertheless true that when child and youth care workers (who do one of the most devoted, specialised and stressful jobs in the world) are disregarded by other professionals, humiliated, given little respect and dignity and paid salaries which bear no relation to the responsibility they carry, they are not encouraged to provide a quality service. It is my hope and prayer therefore that today will mark the beginning of a new era in child care and child welfare services in this country:

- that never again will child care workers be ordered from meetings because they are "not professionals";
- that never again will other professionals withhold information because "child care workers cannot be trusted" with confidential information;

- that new revisions to children's legislation will recognise the central role of those who undertake the 24-hour-a-day care and treatment of hurt and needy children. (That there is a Child Care Act with no reference or acknowledgement of child care workers is absolutely astonishing!)
- that throughout South Africa child and youth care workers can take up their place in the multidisciplinary professional team with dignity and pride!

### Earning respect

Our profession is not demanding status and respect without earning it. I have said that this birthday will demand from us a renewed dedication to quality services for children and their families. We have also seen the impressive number of child care workers who have successfully followed courses over the past years. Those who register today and in the future carry a responsibility to demonstrate our right to such respect and status.

### Growing up

We who understand child development know that giving birth is only the beginning.

The essence of child care work is to ensure healthy development in spite of all the ups and downs that children have faced. Growing up is not easy ...

So too, I believe, it will be with our profession. We have now to start crawling, walking and then hopefully one day running. It will take time and patience. If we want the support and acknowledgement of the more established professions, we will need to prove that we can and will offer a quality service, governed in all respects by ethical practice. The code of ethics, which you will hear today and at all similar occasions in the future, outlines many different areas of practice. All are important and essential.

### Three challenges

In closing, I would like to leave those who will register at this time with a challenge to pay special attention to three practices:

1. To actively advocate for the children and youth of our country. Without the children we would not be here and *no* group in South Africa is more oppressed or devalued than

our children, particularly those whom we refer to as children at risk. We are members of the international profession which subscribes to the UN declaration on children's rights. We must be *seen* to uphold those rights.

2. To act towards children and families who are at risk with compassion. To know that beneath the troubled behaviour is a human being who deserves no less than any other. To understand that when children and families share their pain, their problems, their hatreds and their joys with us, they honour us with their trust.
3. Finally to act towards children and youth and their families with the utmost respect. In all situations where one human being is given or assumes power over another, people are made vulnerable. There is always the temptation to expect respect from others but not give it in return. In the case of difficult and needy parents and children this sometimes happens without our thinking. We cannot afford to be unthinking or careless with children whose lives we can influence for better or worse. Ethical practice demands that

we offer the deepest respect to our clients — the hurting, troubled, demanding, abused, courageous, wonderful kids who allow us into their lives. I would like to end with a very powerful message from a young native American youth:

## As I Grow

by Echo Lebeau (Grade 5)

*Treat me with respect, the way you would to a person who you look up to.  
Teach me things from right to wrong.  
Understand me and have patience with me when I'm having hard times.  
Be proud of me when I do things right.  
When something does go wrong, show me the right way without getting mad.  
When your anger flares up put your hands in your pocket and don't use them on me.  
Remember, I am a gift to you from God and you are a gift to me from God, and His love is always there for us to share.*

Acknowledgements to *The Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Problems*.



## Nomsa Mandoyi is our first registered child care worker

**Nomsa Mabel Mandoyi** was born in Cathcart, where she completed her Std 8 Certificate. She married Judge Mandoyi and they have a seven-year-old son Luvuyo. The family moved from Cathcart to Zwelitsha, where she continued her education.

Nomsa started working at the King William's Town Children's Home in July 1987 as a domestic worker. During this time she proved to have many skills valuable to the Home's child care team. Her observation skills were excellent and were a tremendous asset to her colleagues. She has a lovely warmth about her and built some good sound relationships with the children and staff.

In October 1989 she was promoted to the position of child care worker. She worked with children between the ages of 3 to 7. She has an infectious sense of humour and an ability to role-play inci-

dents that have happened so realistically that staff are enthralled by the retelling of her stories. During her stay at the King William's Town Children's Home she felt well supported and received a great deal of encouragement from her colleagues.

Roger Pitt was Principal of the King Williams Town Children's Home at the time. At the beginning of 1991 this children's home was asked by the Woodlands Children's Home to release Roger to advise and consult with them in order to help them develop their organisation. Faced with this challenge, Roger negotiated the release of certain staff members from King Williams Town to assist at Woodlands. When experienced on-line staff became an urgent need for the further development of Woodlands on to two campuses, Roger's mind turned to Nomsa, and her release to the Woodlands project was negotiated

as from February 1992.

At first she was very unsure about move, but once at Woodlands, the staff and children welcomed her warmly and she feels that this is where she belongs.

At present Nomsa is working with a group of seven teenage boys and is enjoying her work tremendously.

Nomsa has been working on her BQCC for the past two years and completed the course in 1992. She completed three years of service as a child care worker in October 1992.

With her training and experience she qualified for registration as a Child and Youth Care Worker, and on February the 17th, Nomsa received registration certificate number 93001 — thus becoming the first child care worker in South Africa to be registered as a professional.

The voices of young people are seldom heard in the tribunals of educational and treatment planning. With very few exceptions, the child or adolescent is only an object for our examination, and not a participating subject. Brian Raychaba has said that young people must become partners in their own healing. This will require the creation of new ways of teaming youth with professionals, much as we seek to do with parents.



What are the barriers that prevent access of young people to responsible team participation? As in any case of oppression, the subjugated are "kept in their place" by prejudicial stereotypes and rationalisations which justify paternalistic authority. Among these myths and misconceptions are the following:

**Youth would not want to participate in team meetings anyway.**

Typically, youth who try to avoid participation have had bad previous experiences with such meetings. Their meeting avoidance may be rooted in the expectation that nobody really cares what they think, and powerful adults will remain in control of what happens to them. With such youth it will be important for adults to take time and effort to rebuild the trust needed to overcome their reluctance to participate. Schultz tells of a psychiatrist who confronted a teacher about the absence of a student at a conference about the child's behaviour: "Doesn't he know we are talking about him? If you were in that position, wouldn't you rather be on this side of the door?" As Adelman and colleagues suggest "...there is an increasing body of research suggesting that many youngsters, even pre-teenagers and those with psychoeducational problems, are capable of participat-

ing competently in decision-making forums". If we do not bar the door, youth will enter.

**Children would not understand what's happening at the meeting.**

Many adults have the same problem. Parents may not fathom the fine points of the team meeting: the procedures, the vocabulary, how the systems of a school or agency work, or what role they have in the meeting. The result is that parents tend to be passive participants or, like youth who have meeting aversions, simply avoid them altogether. Professionals are often just as confused when drowned in jargon or overtechnical vocabulary. When "insiders" use language as an instrument of power and domination, others are robbed of their right to understand and participate in important decisions.

**It isn't necessary for children to attend the meeting. Parents or other adults can tell them about it later.**

Those locked out of the meeting run a great risk of misunderstanding what happened in their absence. Sometimes students receive almost no information about discussions held at the meetings. In other cases, the "designated messenger adult" brings a tale so cursive or distorted that the child cannot possibly comprehend what has transpired.

Second-hand information often stresses what the child has done wrong. Receiving only negative feedback from a team meeting discourages children and compounds the feeling that adults do not appreciate the child's efforts or feelings. Such miscommunications exacerbate conflicts between the child, the parents and other team members.

**Having the child participate in the meeting will take too much time away from "doing the business" of the meeting.**

Democratic processes are slower than snap authoritarian decision making. Gaining a group consensus is more cumbersome than top-down patriarchal management. However, any advantage of 'boss management' is lost when it comes time to implement decisions. People are notoriously reluctant to support a plan in which they had no input. But when the team has a sense of ownership and understands the decision, the commitment to action has been built. When we "team up" without the child's participation, without considering the child's priorities or interests, we cannot blame the child for being resistant or passive. While excluding the child may streamline meetings, it impedes implementation.

**Students might become resistant, disruptive or manipulative and would upset the meeting.**

Shea and Bauer found that some parents were reluctant to have their children present at conferences. They were afraid that the child might disclose private family information, that the child's presence might inhibit them or other team members from speaking openly, and that the meeting might be too stressful for the child. Other parents may fear that the child will show the same kinds of negative behaviours that required a meeting in the first place. Professionals also may be concerned that the child might say or do something embarrassing. The child's opinions and actions are less predictable than those of most adults and may not be couched in terms and behaviours that are

socially appropriate. As adults we must overcome the fear that we will be unable to "control" the child during the meeting, and become courageous enough even to risk being uncomfortable or embarrassed. It was, after all, a child who announced in the middle of an otherwise dignified and formal procession: "The Emperor has no clothes!" The candour of children can free us all from polite little lies that cloak the nakedness of our interventions.

**Children need to be protected from information that might be damaging to their self-esteem.**

Children are realists concerning their own performance and behaviour. Very young children are capable of making comparisons between themselves and others. Schools send all sorts of messages about winners and losers: report cards, tests graded on the curve, creative writing corrected with red ink, 'special' curricula, and so on. Children are also aware of labels given them by their peers that are much more potent than the ones we use in meetings, many so colourful that we won't repeat them here. Children and youth need reliable, factual information about their abilities and their disabilities. Unfortunately, we have not done a very good job of giving them accurate information. Recent literature on helping students with disabilities bridges the gap between school and adult life and tells us that many students do not understand their disabilities. Yet such understanding is vital to students' academic and psychological growth, and can be provided to students as early as in the elementary grades. Keeping children out of team meetings may serve to enable undesirable behaviours such as avoidance, denial of responsibility, and learned helplessness, all of which further undermine self-esteem and contribute to discouragement.

*An extract from **The Missing Team Member** by Joan Bacon and Larry Brendtro in the **Journal of Emotional and Behavioural Problems**, Vol. 1:3. For information on this journal, contact the Editor.*



Gaye Francis was becoming discouraged. As social worker at St Crispin's she had been working very hard with a number of the children's families and — she thought — had made a lot of progress with several of them. She had a natural, warm manner with the parents, and was quickly liked and trusted by all of them. Gaye had two small children of her own, and she had always felt sympathetic towards parents whose families had gotten into difficulties. "It must be awful", she confided in friends, "to have your children taken away while you try to get your life back together again." Her attitude of 'there, but for the grace of God, go I' meant that she was always positive and encouraging with parents, never critical or judgemental. The parents appreciated this, and most often responded well and were willing to work with her. But several times, when Gaye had parents motivated to work at taking back the responsibility for their children, things started to go badly again. The children were negative, acted out, or seemed unwilling to go along with the game-plan. Weekends at home ended in conflict.

Parents felt inadequate with their children, and often unequal to their demands — not only their material demands, but also their needs for control or discipline.

Eleven-year-old Peter just wasn't interested in going home, and Alan (17) and his dad fought over his coming in at 1 am on Sunday mornings. The twins (eight years old, Toni and Tony!) forever complained of being bored at home. Tracey (14) just wanted to be away from the house all the time, while Ros seemed to expect her mother to wait on her hand and foot.

"You warned me that it would be difficult," said one parent to Gaye, "but I find the weekends when my daughter comes home are really high stress and hard work times. I'm ashamed to say that I don't look forward to them!"

## EVALUATION

There are no simple answers here. A problem with our plans for families, which are so obvi-

ously right, is that parents and children have a strong sense of guilt or failure when the plans don't come together, and these feelings make it all the harder for either to try again. Often we will never get families together again — and often we shouldn't try — but the *plans* we may make for children and their families are seldom as good as the *relationships* between them which we make possible and facilitate. It is these which may or may not hatch into new beginnings.

1. Just like a horse, you can take a child to the water, but you can't make him drink. Children are extraordinarily resilient to difficult conditions at home, but when they finally lose faith in their families it is very hard to restore this. Eleven-year-old Peter, with the wisdom of hard-earned experience, may have a far more realistic picture of what he can expect at home, and therefore doesn't share our en-

thusiasm for our plan to put him back there. We have to ask ourselves the prior question as to whether Peter has really been able to regain trust in *anyone*, because only after this has happened will we be able to work on re-establishing trust at home. In other words, we may have more work to do before different living arrangements can be expected to succeed.

2. The problem with Alan and his dad is also related to trust. We trust people to play various *roles* in our lives, and those roles, to be real, are not simply handed over with the custody papers. At 17, Alan is working at important developmental tasks about values, identity, career choices, autonomy, and his approaching young adulthood. Another horse analogy seems to work here: Alan may have been working at these issues in the children's home with a child care worker in the role of authority figure, and it will be

risky indeed for Alan to change horses in mid-stream. Serious family work would have included the father in this precarious process long before any transfer of responsibility takes place. Before discharging youngsters, we always have to ask: what are they working on; with whom; who will take this role over?

3. Toni and Tony, being seven, may have received a lot of attention at the children's home. They would very likely have had access to very good recreational facilities (TV, pool, toys). They would have had activities and outings regularly organised for them, and there would have been child care workers with them most of the time. For their working single mother, all this is a hard act to follow. A difficult question for us to ask ourselves here is — did we succeed only in *mismatching* the twins with the reality of their home, instead of ensuring that we kept them compatible? Children's homes often have far greater resources — in terms of money, staff, facilities, transport — than the children's own parents, and all of these resources can distance the children from their homes, rather than assist them to reintegrate with their homes.

4. What Tracey and her parents learn is the very sad truth that when children are removed from home, there are parts of their childhood which they may lose forever. Tracey's mother is disappointed that she wants to be out of the house all the time, but that is how 14-year-old kids are. Maybe Tracey was ten or eleven when she came into care, maybe even younger, and we cannot offer her or her mother a simplistic 'happy family' solution now. Idealised images of living happily ever after are never helpful at these times of transition back to the reality. Tracey's elevens, twelves and thirteens are gone. She has moved on now to a very different place in her life. They last worked together in Chapter 10 of her life story, and everyone needs to know that it is going to be hard for both mother and daughter to pick up the threads in Chapter 14.

## BRIAN GANNON

### A Child Care Worker's Casebook

# For better, for worse; for richer, for poorer



## Really Working for Families

5. Perhaps Ros is an example of an area where children's institutions can be least effective in sound family work. In our quest for nutritious meals, hygienic kitchens and bathrooms, attractive surroundings and smooth, efficient organisation, we introduce a whole level of human resource quite unknown to the families we work with — household staff. Can it be that every time we appoint a cook, a cleaner or a gardener, we cut off one of the children's hands; that every time we employ a driver or a fetcher-and-carrier, we cut off a foot? When we then try to re-integrate into a family a youngster who cannot wash or iron, who cannot contribute to the cooking and cleaning, or help with shopping and paying bills, we overload that already vulnerable family. In terms of domestic attitudes and skills, instead of adding a functional contributor to enhance the family, we add a new burden.

\* \* \*

Gaye Francis mustn't despair. She is doing well. She obviously has good skills with parents and encourages them in the right direction. But reintegrating families doesn't come about only through working with the parents; the programmes *inside* the children's institution can make or break any attempts at rebuilding families, and they must also be genuinely committed to the match.



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ANNETTE COCKBURN

## More from those Street Kids!

A donation of second hand toys was brought in, and the boys disappeared into the back yard delighted with the bats and balls, etc. Leaving the office, I noticed a group watching Xolani systematically dropping a huge concrete block onto a skateboard. I opened the window "That's it! I shouted I'm taking back all the toys", — A dozen faces looked up anxiously. "No, No Prinsipaal it's fine, he's fixing it. He's adjusting the wheel alignment!"

\* \* \*

Recruiting child care workers for Street Children projects is not an easy task. A recent applicant considered himself an especially suitable candidate because he had a number of years experience in pest control! One of my (largely undisclosed) criteria, is the ability to "run fast" — either towards, or away from!!

\* \* \*

Petrol stations in Cape Town have, on the whole, a good education programme for their workers. Potential solvent abusers who ask for "30c petrol to clean my school pants" are met with a firm "NO!" I wish hardware shops were as enlightened, and refused to sell glue and thinners to children.

\* \* \*

We have informally linked up with a children's project in Langa and have been able to share some of our resources with them. Privilege

is a relative concept. From Ulwazi, two very small boys called Siyabonga and Bongeni were referred to us. They could speak no English or Afrikaans. One afternoon I taught them some key words: "Pocket money", "moneer", "shoes", "slaan", etc. The next day Siyabonga stood at my desk and rattled off a stream of Xhosa, ending loudly and firmly with the word "shoes". I got the message!

\* \* \*

While we try to get as many children as possible to 'real' school, our Learn to Live centre offers a hands-on vocational programme for those for whom school is not suitable. Niklaus was tired of school — "I don't want to go to proper school anymore" he says. "I want to go back to 'Learn to Love' "

\* \* \*

During this year, we have had to do extensive repairs at The Homestead, which included the laying of a new vinyl floor. The suppliers arrived with drums of glue and thinners. The Street Children sat wide-eyed on their bunks. Food, shelter *and* all this — delivered to the door! Truly, this is Nirvana! "Out", we said, "All out! You're going to the Long Street Baths for the whole day!" Reluctantly they left with a picnic, for their second-favourite occupation — swimming.

\* \* \*

For the first time ever, we asked our children to give to children even less fortunate than they: children in a local hospital had no toys and little stimulation. Their response was extremely moving. They brought their pictures, pocket money, sweets, sweaters, a card, a balloon, a jigsaw filched from the Patricks House supply. "For the hospital children" they said. Ismael brought a clay animal he'd made, somewhat battered — "would the hospital children like this?" "Yes, put it in the box." Another child brought a pack of koki pens which he'd just been given for school: "I want to give these to the hospital child-

ren." "Sure," I said, overwhelmed by his generosity. (This particular little philanthropist was back in my office two days later: "I gave my koki pens to the hospital children — can I have some more?" I sigh, "Yes"! I believe that in this context there are real insights for us. Whilst these children have learned to take and to receive, they have never been afforded the opportunity to give, and how magnificently they responded when this opportunity arose. It is truly very touching from those who have so very little. I celebrate my overworked staff, and the children, for their warm and lovely caring.

\* \* \*

Annie and Headman put all the curtains and duvets into the wash. They were reorganising the dormitories. The washing machine ran all day. "It's going to burn out" said Annie in passing. Quick as a flash Headman, our domestic worker, responded: "and so am I".

\* \* \*

Terrence needed to go back to school. Not at all keen, he reported with great delight that while they were happy to have him in the class, they could not provide him with a desk, so as we could clearly see, school was out of the question! Having established that this unlikely story was in fact true, Annie picked up the phone. Two days later a sullen Terrence was carted off to school sitting in the back of the bakkie, in a worn but workable school desk.



"As two unnamed children stood in a Liverpool courtroom on Monday 22 February accused of abducting and killing another child (two-year-old James Bulger), Britons found themselves obsessed about crime in their society, but also troubled by a broader array of doubts about their country and their collective future." (*The Guardian*) *Newsweek* commented: "Crimes of this sort are rare in Britain. The country has one of the world's lowest murder rates, and only ten children under 13 have been convicted of murder or manslaughter in the past decade. But the Bulger case has outraged Britons and led to accusations that the courts are too soft on juveniles. Only weeks before, a 15-year-old boy found guilty of rape got off with a fine." High Court Judge Sir Robin Dunn pointed out that in the case of ten-year-olds 'criminal intent' cannot be adduced and that the courts can only make a care order, detention orders being applicable only from 14. He felt this age could be reduced to single figures. (Radio South Africa)

# The Horrors of Crime to Come

Adults must hold children responsible for their actions or England's prospects as a peaceful country are grim writes Masud Houghi in *The Independent*

In nearly 30 years of working with disordered and delinquent young people I have never seen such a tide of public anxiety about their condition and behaviour. Yet the horrors we see now are nothing to what is coming unless we take fundamental measures to deal with our alienated young people.

There have always been delinquent and murderous children, often coming from the margins of our society. But the evidence suggests that the margin is getting wider and its extreme edge more outlandish. The explanations offered in the media span "causes" from the "underclass" at one extreme to "nasty videos" at the other. What is not recognised is that all "causes" are linked in an interdependent *ecology* of deviance of which detected and prosecuted crime is only one aspect.

We know that persistent young offenders are more likely to come from poor and broken families, from dismal estates where there is a high incidence of parental adversity. These children tend to be mistreated, to have poor schooling histories, difficulty with social relationships and specific psychological features. They drift into trouble

with other youngsters. To sustain their social, psychological and material "needs", they gradually become involved in active and persistent criminality. The more disordered of them are also likely to have some genetic or constitutional vulnerability, compounded by abuse. Often, the help they receive is ill-focused, partial and short-range, certainly not enough to stop their anti-social activities.

While the statistics are open to various interpretations, the number of young people "processed" by the courts has dropped, partly because of deliberate attempts by police, social services and courts to keep youngsters out of the courts. This policy is sometimes effective and the offender manages to get back on the straight and narrow. But diverting young offenders away from traditional social and legal institutions does not address the fundamental factors associated with persistent deviant behaviour. Crime committed by young people is burgeoning not only in numbers but also in range, intensity and quality. As a group, youngsters now commit the most burglaries and car thefts for joy riding and burning. They are also probably responsible

for a third to a half of all sexual offences against children. Whilst murders are rare, the number of youngsters found guilty of rape, arson and aggravated robbery has risen significantly. However, many more young people display a sense of hopelessness and anger which makes them implacable. Their experiences seem to have given them a hard shell and made them resistant to therapeutic work.

The reasons lie in the way the factors of social environment, family, parenting, social control and individual psychological make-up interact. In a "go-getting" society designed for successful people there are more adversities in terms of poverty, unemployment, poor environmental amenities, education and health that can affect these youngsters. They even find it more difficult than others to gain access to the services that could help them, because they and their families are troublesome and often unco-operative. In such families, man-woman partnerships are more easily formed and dissolved than ever before. Children are no longer the central concern of their parents but part of a wider "balance sheet" of trading between the partners and

others. More important, marginal families, less competent at dealing with stress and adversity, often find their children's demands unbearable and react inconsistently with harshness, collusion, indifference or outright rejection. Parenting entails not only care but the setting of fundamental boundaries. Some parents find it difficult to do this or, even worse having done so, to enforce them. Parents' casual relationships provide the children with confused role-models. Fatherless families, increasingly common, are particularly prone to producing angry and violent children. This is where video nasties and television come in. Children who have no internal boundaries rely on external stimulation to guide their behaviour towards what is and is not acceptable. According to the most fundamental law of human behaviour, all activity that has a purpose is aimed at seeking gratification or avoiding unpleasantness. Even a superficial analysis of our current social conditions shows that these young people have very little to lose and much to gain from deviant and criminal behaviour.

The whole thrust of our legislation and professional services has been to treat them with more "understanding" and therefore leniency. Unfortunately, understanding — though necessary for intelligent action — is confused with "justification", which removes or mitigates guilt. If guilt is not established, responsibility cannot be; the action cannot be "wrong" and the necessary, and painful, change of behaviour seems not to be justified. This is the sense in which the Prime Minister was right to ask for "less understanding". Even when the youngster goes through the courts and is identified as needing help, that help is based mainly on talking and lacks coherence. Any proper treatment must address the child's ideas, feelings and behaviour patterns whilst ensuring that he or she does not get into further trouble. Anti-social behaviour must be discouraged and socially responsible activity encouraged. This rarely





***Parenting entails not only care but the setting of fundamental boundaries. Some parents find it difficult to do this or, even worse, having done so, to enforce them.***

happens. Even in children's establishments, the staff are often ill-trained, confused and above all, not sufficiently supported when they try to set and enforce boundaries. They are barred from asserting adult authority for fear of complaints.

The Department of Health is the chief architect of regulations that have massively undermined adult authority in dealing with delinquent youngsters. The latter often have the controlling power now, as anyone who deals regularly with them would confirm. Any family therapist knows that when a child is in control the result is explosive; the child will push with ever grimmer and stranger behaviour until adult authority is re-established.

No complex problem can be resolved quickly and a damaged human being cannot be made whole. The damage can only be modified, but this takes time. Locking up youngsters may incapacitate them for a while but is not sustainable unless confinement is used as part of continuing help. Nor is punishment likely to help, because youngsters have so often and inconsistently been punished that they simply expect it. To make any punishment effective *by itself*, it would have to be so harsh as to be beyond the pale of a civilised society. In any case, our national tendency to be punitive is part of these children's problem.

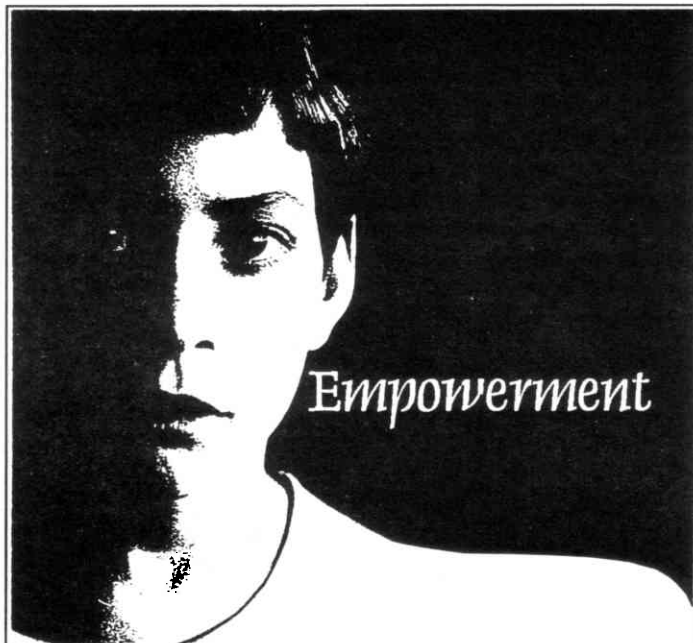
There must, however be sanctions for wrongdoing and these *must be* an integral part of treatment. They are only effective, though, if combined with rewards for pro-social behaviour. Such behaviour must be made more rewarding.

There are many ways of achieving this. They may not sit easily with market-orientated or "anti-welfare" policies but they make sense when set against the economic and social costs of juvenile crime. Above all, we need to reassert adult authority over children and do so through a *compact* which entitles them to the generous help *in return* for their orderly and pro-social behaviour. Stressing rights without corresponding responsibilities is a recipe for the disorder we increasingly face.

Removing responsibility from youngsters who know they are creating mayhem, and writing off offences in the interests of diverting people from the judicial process, is an abysmal way of promoting such a compact.

It is almost an article of faith for me never to despair of individual children but I foresee an ascending spiral of disorder and grimly antisocial behaviour. Every known factor associated with such deterioration is escalating. Unless we address the issues, our prospects as a peaceful country are terrible beyond measure.

*The author is director of the Ay-cliffe Centre for Children and honorary professor of psychology at the University of Hull.*



*Empowerment is not something you can give me.  
Empowerment is something I must achieve.  
You may assist me.*

#### ENCOURAGE

Show me and tell me that you believe in me

#### ENVISION

Help me to see all the possibilities

#### EXCITE

I really do want to feel positive about my future

#### EVALUATE

Help me to help myself rise above adversities

#### EXAMPLE

If I do it wrong, show me; I want to learn

#### ENDURE

Help me to remember that things take time

#### ENABLE

Just give me a chance to try

#### ENRICH

If I help to improve another's life, it will enrich mine

*[From National Youth in Care Network, Ottawa, Canada]*



The publication of this journal in 1993 has been generously sponsored by

**THE PG FOUNDATION**

Margaret Legum shares the principles she uses in her workshops on racism

## Understanding racism

# Developing good practice



GRAPHICS: COURTESY BOYS TOWNS

**T**he word 'racism' derives from the invention of word 'race' to describe people different to themselves by reason of some physical characteristics such as skin colour and hair texture. Since we now know that the nineteenth-century pseudo-science around this area is unsupported, we know there is no such thing as a race distinguishable from the human race. But we are stuck with the word 'racism' to describe all those attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that we have around people who are different from us by reason of those particular physical characteristics. Since it is impossible in a short article to fully describe the training — though, briefly, it involves exercises, role-play, self-scrutiny/discovery and exploration of racist models and stereotypes — I will focus on the propositions which underlie the training.

**1 We are what we are because of our experience.** The truth that we see is partial because we can only have our own experience. Some of that has the quality of conditioning, so that unless something happens which we must review, we tend to think, believe and act on assumptions which are largely unacknowledged. Many workshop exercises are available to help people understand this. Try asking people to choose twelve out of a list of twenty people (described in two or three words) to accompany

them to a deserted island where they will be isolated for fifty years in order to start a new society.

Why will one person take, say, a 'school cook', another a 'farm foreman', yet another a 'jazz musician'? Their choice will be based on the images which each has formed from their own experiences about the skills and characteristics of school cooks, farm foremen and jazz musicians. If you ask groups to come to a consensus, you will find a lot of impassioned arguments raging, because each person's experience has taught them something different. But each will imagine that their value system is better than that of other people.

**2 A number of factors, some of which we are born with, give us power in any society.** They give us privilege — in fact, an unfair advantage in life. But if we have these, we can imagine they are normal: not privileges, but a standard by which we assess and judge others. For example, I might introduce myself as follows: "As you can see, I am almost entirely normal. I am white, heterosexual, middle class, have 'no accent' and am able-bodied. There is only one way in which I am not normal..." Leave a silence and see if anyone — probably a woman — guesses that my abnormality lies in my femaleness.

**3 If we have privilege it is hard for us to ascribe at least some of our suc-**

**cess to it.** We like to think our power comes from personal strength, not from unfair advantage.

Because this is hard, training must be careful, non-aggressive and growth-oriented, not punitive.

Two major areas of unacknowledged (as well as acknowledged) power in our society are skin colour (or 'race') and sex (or gender). The fact that they are not acknowledged leads to abuse, even oppression. However, you will have noticed that if you start talking about racism and sexism the conversation tends to deteriorate fast. So training in these areas needs to be a series of stepping stones. We do not launch into them head on.

**4 Understanding in itself empowers people, even if they suffer some pain in getting there.** Understanding creates a sense of breakthrough, healing, even joy. There is a tendency to want training in racism to be practice-oriented from the start. But people need first a clear understanding of the nature of the problem, before they can start designing means of solving it. The understanding itself opens out, for each person, methods of working and living which contradict racism in their own area of competence.

**5 By contrast personal guilt can paralyse people at best; at worst it produces defensiveness and aggression.** So from understanding follows good practice; from personal guilt, only at best grudging, resentful changes of behaviour. So the design of the training ensures that one outcome is the understanding that racism is no single person's fault: we cannot help the way we and our institutions are conditioned. Blame lies only in refusal to do anything about unlearning racism, once we have understood it.

**6 The understanding created is around the distinction between (race) prejudice, (race) discrimination and racism.** Prejudice is about personal attitudes and relates to personal experience; discrimination is about behaviour based on prejudice; racism derives from culturally

embedded systems of ideology about inferiority and superiority. These systems are accepted at some level, unacknowledged — by practically everyone, black and white — because they are deep in the culture of both.

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***'However, you will have noticed that if you start talking about racism and sexism, the conversation tends to deteriorate fast.'***

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If the system of racism is not interrupted and reversed it is self-reinforcing. It includes within itself not only personal and institutional attitudes and behaviours, but also the very fabric of all our cultural expressions — language, artefacts, aesthetics, verbal and visual images.

For instance, see how many English words and phrases you know which use the word 'black' not to describe the colour, but to signify something negative. Here are a few: Black Wednesday, a black mood, the future is black, black spot, blackmail, blackball, the Black Death. None of these has anything to do with the colour — unlike black coffee, blackboard etc. Imagine what it means for a person with a black complexion. This is only one example of the way the culture we have all inherited is invaded by images of inferiority of black people.

**7 Finally, the development of good practice is the essential last ingredient of good training around racism.** As trainers we cannot leave people not knowing what to do with what they have learnt.

*Reprinted with permission from Track Two (February 1993), a publication of the Centre for Intergroup Studies at the University of Cape Town.*



## who CARES?

*From the UK magazine for young people in care, we listen to Jan's story ...*

# From home to secure unit in eight moves

My name is Jan. I am 15 and have been in the Gardener Unit in Manchester for the last few months. It is the only National Health secure unit built especially for teenagers. I am not sure what my future is. I was raised in Staffordshire. My first few years were all right. I got on with my sister and went to a catholic primary school for 7 years. Then my stepdad moved in. We didn't get on. He used to shout at me "You'll go where I say!" and beat me. My mum was

scared of him; he beat her too. He adopted me but even so just after that I was put into care. I lived in a Family Centre. I kept away from my family and was going to school but doing no work. Then I was sent to a clinic in Birmingham but came back to the Family Centre at the weekend. I caused some mischief so they refused to keep me. I was sent to another Family Centre in Burton but there was no school to go to. The other kids and I got each other into

trouble. I used to set fire to things; once it was a lorry. By the age of 12, I was wild and out of control. After several more moves, I was sent to the Corvedale Care Crisis Intervention Centre in Shropshire. It was an Outward Bound (adventure training) place. I stayed 2 months and enjoyed it. I liked canoeing, abseiling and rock climbing. It helped to keep me out of trouble. Then I went to a boarding-school in Wales. It was snobby and boring. I stayed about 3 months but they did not want me there. Finally, I came here and have stayed in Manchester for nine months. This is my longest home for some time. I am not bothered about its being a secure unit. I have been ice skating and swimming and am still working on my problems. Being in one place has helped me with my education. I was never very good at reading, having missed so much school. The Gardener Unit has a school called Cloughside and I have passed an exam in English. I never thought I could do this. It is called SAIL (Staged Assessment in Literacy), Stage One. I have also taken a word-processing exam and will do a spreadsheet test soon. I will get a school certificate in basic maths.

Some of my art has been shown in the unit. We can use computers in art and do colour printing. We make birthday cards for people. I feel better in myself for doing well in school. I hope to go to college and work on computers. I have also found that I am good at music. My key workers applied for a grant from the Prince's Trust. I wrote a letter myself too and a couple of days later a cheque arrived; it was for £210, to buy a keyboard. I thought it was brilliant, getting something I'd always wanted.

I enjoyed playing it, making up my own music. Rachael, the Music Therapist, has taught me how to read music. I hope to carry on with my music when I am older. Looking back on my life, I do feel angry sometimes. I haven't seen my real dad for a couple of years. I wish I could have been kept in one place and not moved around so much. When I used to walk

out of my class because everything just got on top of me, the teachers didn't try to find out what was wrong. My mum couldn't tell the social workers about all that was going on at home because she was afraid.

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***I wish I could  
have been kept  
in one place  
and not moved  
around so  
much.***

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I know it is hard for kids in care to find good jobs. How can we get a good education when we move around so much? I know I have not finished moving. I shall be going somewhere else in the New Year and I'm not sure where. I know I will not have an easy future, but at least my education and my exams make me feel good about myself, and I really love my keyboard.

**The Brian Gannon Fellowship is attached to the Centre for Adolescent Studies at Aycliffe Centre, and to Hatfield College, Durham University, U.K.**

The Fellowship is open to an individual member of the NACCW who is a registered child care professional (or someone who has chosen not to register, but meets the qualification and experience criteria for registration).

The successful applicant will be based at Aycliffe for three months and required to carry out practice-based study or research through placement with youth during the period.

*Free board, lodging, return airfare to UK, transport to Aycliffe will be provided by the NACCW. Subsistence and pocket money provided by the applicant.*

**The  
Brian Gannon  
Fellowship**

*Information and application forms available from NACCW, P.O. Box 28323, Malvern 4055*

# Two things managers need to know about staff morale

**Jimmy MoAdams**

**Georgia Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries, Inc.**

As downsizing and competition for funds bring new challenges to the child care service, more organisations are looking for ways to increase efficiency and ensure success. Organisations are looking toward their own work force and asking such questions as "Are our employees giving all they have?", "What can we do to generate higher commitment?," and "Why don't all workers have the drive of management?" These questions centre around the issue of staff morale.

Here are two suggestions that will help managers capitalise on staff commitments, interests and energies for the accomplishment of organisational goals.

## **MANAGEMENT STYLE CAN BE A MORALE BUILDER — OR A MORALE KILLER**

On-line managers generally have a greater opportunity for influencing staff satisfaction than others within the organisation. How the manager is perceived by the workers translates into motivational or demotivational energy. It has been said that the most significant factor in a leader's effectiveness is self-awareness. Add to this the awareness of his field and the awareness of his people, and the result is all the information necessary to do a good job of management. Because managerial behaviour can nurture or starve fundamental employee needs, self-awareness helps the leader to know whether his or her style is building or killing morale. The following styles, arranged in a contrasting format, can serve as an illuminating self-test for the conscientious manager. The style listed first in each pair is generally considered morale producing, while the second has morale reducing potential.

### **Trusting — or suspicious**

How a manager perceives the workers will provide the basis out of which structure, supervision models, and management/employee relationships evolve.

If workers are perceived as eager, industrious, and self-motivated, a reasonably high level of trust pervades the organisation. Rules and procedures are present but not foremost.

However, if workers are perceived as lazy and lacking self-motivation, the leadership style adopted generally reflects more suspicion than trust. Rules are likely more rigidly applied; accountability is highly formalised.

These contrasting styles were first popularised by Douglas McGregor (1960), in his now famous 'X' and 'Y' theories of organisational leadership.

### **With them — or over them**

While it is true that some employees cannot handle freedom well and therefore function more efficiently with clear and firm directions repeated often by a stay-around supervisor, by far the majority of workers bloom most fully when hierarchy is minimized and there is a real sense of teamship which transcends power levels.

Viktor Frankl, existential psychologist, suggested that it is necessary to democratise the workplace to develop autonomous behaviours which link one's personal life and one's work life together in a psychological whole.

A word of caution is in order. The natural tension between these two positions of leadership sometimes results in managers superficially claiming democracy while actually practising autocracy.

Such a dilemma is illustrated in a statement attributed to Woodrow Wilson during his term as president of Princeton

University: "How can I democratise this university if the faculty won't do what I ask?"

Such hypocrisy is not likely to escape the attention and subsequent reactions of the employees for very long.

### **Supportive — or exploitive**

This test gets at the heart of what motivates the manager's thoughts and actions toward the workers.

Is there a genuine desire to support the employees in both their work and personal concerns, or to use them just as means to an end? Are individual workers valued as persons apart from their importance to the organisation?

How frequently do encounters with workers reflect conversation and action extraneous to the work setting? Are 'task orientation' and 'people orientation' properly balanced?

These questions provide some insight into whether a manager operates primarily from a supportive perspective or from an exploitive perspective.

### **Champion of the vision — or custodian of the system**

People identify closely and forcefully with a noble purpose.

Perhaps the most valuable function a manager performs is the championing of the organisation's purpose and vision (the 'mission') in such a way that employees identify with it and claim it for themselves.

Karl Price suggests that one definition of morale is "a sense of shared direction". This relies inevitably on the ability and willingness of the manager to instill in the organisation a sense of purpose. Failing in this task, a manager often resorts to custodial care over the system. Fortunately, most staff are not willing to support a *system* over a noble purpose for long.

## **A WORKER NEEDS MORE THAN A SALARY CHEQUE**

We have addressed the manager's self-awareness. We now move to what managers need to know about the needs of their staff. Following a 1989 survey of 1,500 office workers and bosses, pollster Louis Harris observed, "In our research, we are detecting an 'aspiration' gap between what workers want and what they have in their jobs". Understanding what contributes to the disparity between *what is desired* and *what actually is*, is the first step toward effecting a minor revolution in the workplace. Improvement is possible for the proactive manager.

A number of analysts have looked at staff morale using Maslow's hierarchy of needs, beginning at physical concerns at the bottom and progressing to self-actualisation near the top. While Barnes is right in saying that most people are partially satisfied and partially unsatisfied in each area, it is true that most staff needs are those which cannot be met through external rewards such as salary. Intrinsic needs, including

1. a sense of purpose,
  2. a sense of belonging, and
  3. a sense of accomplishment
- are the issues that drive most staff.

Managers should focus on these "internal motors" and manage so that such motors will not lack the vital motivational fuel necessary for energising persons.

### **A sense of purpose**

Once basic physical and safety needs are satisfied, workers' motivation and morale must come from a different source. One of these sources is the feeling that what one is doing makes a difference. Recognising the power of this sense of purpose, Abraham Maslow remarked, "The only happy people I know are those who are working well at something they consider important". A sense of purpose links employees with something larger than any individual or organisation. It brings satisfaction beyond that reachable through salary, recognition or position. If the work environment does not answer this pursuit of

meaning, people must seek it elsewhere or otherwise feel unattached and out-of-place in the world.

The employee's need for a sense of purpose underscores the manager's need to promote the vision of the organisation. If the organisation has a vital and worthy function in society, consistent heralding of this function can keep a sense of purpose alive and out in front.

#### **A sense of belonging**

For a worker to remain charged up and eager, a sense of belonging must run alongside a sense of purpose. A sense of belonging answers yes to such questions as: "Have I found my niche?" "Am I part of the team?", "Am I supported both by administration and my peers?" Belonging implies acceptability, respectability and support. How can managers foster a sense of belonging among their employees? Helpful methods include effective communication, opportunities for social expression, administrative presence and decision-making involvement.

**Communication.** Belonging is affirmed through useful communication in the administration of employees' duties. Communication, or the lack of it, between managers and employees has an impact on employee morale. In the research of Frieman, employees placed the top executive among the three most desirable sources of information. In reality, however the grapevine was the primary source of information, and the top executive was way down the list.

**Opportunity for social expression.** A sense of belonging flows from the undeniable fact that humans are social creatures with needs to regularly relate to one another. They do not leave this need at the door when they come to work. The wise manager will steer clear of two equally damaging mistakes:

1. Assuming that the social need can be suppressed, and
  2. Acting as if socialisation is the main reason the employees are regularly assembled.
- McKoon (1958) suggests that group morale is affected by

the extent to which membership of the group meets the congenial needs of individual employees. Ways for staff to support and reward each other socially should certainly enhance employee morale.

**Administrative presence.** Belonging is further cemented by administrative interest and support for all employees, even those at the lower level of the hierarchy. Isolation and insulation from the top person within the organisation will set up a climate of suspicion, turf-guarding and alienation. Frequent and positive contacts with top management can do much to negate such negative attitudes and replace them with feelings of belonging, comradeship and community. This high administrative presence has been referred to as "management by walking around." (Peters and Waterman, 1982).

**Decision involvement.** Involvement in decision-making is another way staff will measure their belonging to an organisation. Questions such as, "Do I have an opinion?", "Is my opinion sought?", and "Is my opinion valued?" help the worker in such evaluation. A growing list of research confirms the correlation between decision involvement and staff satisfaction and morale. Staff usually do not insist on having an input for every decision, but strong identification (belonging) cannot survive long in an environment where hands are useful and welcomed but ideas are not.

#### **A sense of accomplishment**

Among the stronger employee needs is a sense of accomplishment. Is there advancement toward a goal? Does the employee make a difference? Does the "get back" equal or exceed the "out-put?" Accomplishment needs are most often met through

1. Appropriate reward or recognition and opportunities for promotion within the organisation, and
2. Professional development inventives.

**Rewards and recognitions.** Rewards or recognitions, properly given, serve to mark

accomplishment and encourage employees. (Improperly given, they may actually prove to be disincentives and thus undermine intrinsic motivators.) The following principles may serve to guide managers in developing a sense of accomplishment. Rewards and recognitions are most effective when they are:

- spontaneous as opposed to being planned in advance;
- offered to express the value of the employee's work rather than meeting the supervisor's standards;
- accessible to employees at all levels;
- awarded soon after the deserving achievement;
- awarded in public meetings or at official functions and;
- clearly tied to performance within the job role.

**Upward mobility.** In the area of employment, *accomplishment* and *advancement* are considered nearly synonymous. For this reason, vertical mobility within an organisation serves as a concrete measure of accomplishment.

A survey of child and youth care settings by Krueger, *et al.* (1978) found that step plans (internal career ladders) were stronger predictors of staff satisfaction than salary. There is no reason to think that child care workers are vastly different in their need for verifiable accomplishment increments than any other group of workers. In almost every case, upward movement is seen as accomplishment by the person being promoted.

#### **Professional development.**

Professional development is somewhat broader than advancement within an organisation. In order for a sense of accomplishment to be felt in the professional realm, the employee asks not "Am I advancing within my organisation?", but "Am I advancing toward career goals?" The latter question is considerably more far-sighted.

Factors which actualise the wider professional goals of employees are the ones that contribute significantly to staff morale. Thus, managers can manage with the knowledge that keeping people happy for the moment cannot replace long-term opportunities for the development of a sense of professional accomplishment.

#### **Awareness will enhance staff efficiency and strength**

Changes and challenges among organisations will continue to ensure the 'survival of the fittest'. Efficiency and strength reside in the *people* of an organisation, and tapping their qualities begins with simple awareness — awareness of what turns people on and awareness of the managerial styles, habits and attitudes which enhance or impede the energy of people.

Awareness is not the only tool needed for effective management and staff morale; it is, however, a crucial and essential first step. No other skill will help if managers lack self-awareness and an awareness of the real needs of staff.



"And naturally as an executive you would be entitled to a Company car."





# For the Unloved Child Care Worker

**Harry L. Blackman, Supervisor, Group Homes  
Lutheran Orphans & Old Folks Home Toledo, Ohio**

Does the child expect a child care worker in his life? Does it surprise you that you're unwanted?

Because the child care worker is not seen as being a part of the natural order of a child's life, the worker is not entitled to any of the pre-conceived responses from the child which a parent or a peer might expect. The child care worker must, therefore, understand the *roles* which the child already perceives, and using this information and his skills, develop his role according to reasonable and professional expectations.

Following are several of the stresses or pressures acting upon the child in care, and the effect of these stresses on the child and on the child care worker's efforts.

## "Fantasy Family"

The "Fantasy family" is a phenomenon which occurs between the child and his mother in the first few minutes of their physical meeting and continues in spurts in the mind of the child, perhaps in anticipation of coming visits or in an attempt to escape from reality, by dreaming of living within the "fantasy family."

The "fantasy family" is different for each individual. Basically, it consists of a caring and loving mother who has need for the child and protects the child. She is the child's "wonder mommy." The child sees himself as obedient and good. He does not get into

trouble, is successful, and makes his mother proud. The mother sees the child as her baby who needs her nurture, love, experience, and attention. She also sees the child as someone who should give her a thankful response for the efforts and sacrifices that she has made and will make.

Although the idea will be different for different individuals, the situation will follow a general pattern. It makes little difference that the child has been physically abused by the natural family or that he is mentally scarred by emotional disturbance, retardation, malnutrition, or lack of affection. It makes little difference that the mother is out of the picture for weeks, months, or even years at a time. It makes little difference that the child verbalises his hatred for his mother or his mother's hatred for him. The "fantasy family" still exists for the child, and the personalities identified in that "fantasy family" are his natural parents as he perceives them.

Although the "fantasy family" appears to fade as the child grows older, it still continues; it is just under a pile of reality. This affects both the child in care and the child care worker directly, since the child care worker is rarely perceived as a personality of this "fantasy family" and fights the battle of being a parent in the child's mind. Thus, the child care worker does 'not deserve' the devotion or responses the "fantasy family" is entitled to.

When the child care worker must act as a disciplinarian, or has sacrificed to the nth degree, the child may remark how great and wonderful his parents are. It is important that the child care worker keep in context the fact that these great and wonderful people are the "fantasy family" who are nothing but good in the mind of the child.

When the child and the mother do meet, the child care worker can readily see the syrupy exchanges — that usually lasts only a short time. The mother assumes her natural role of protector, a strong individual who supplies the child's nurturing needs; the child, in turn, takes on the image of the ideal child. The breakdown of this stage of the relationship is very rapid and the overprotective mother reverts to meeting her own needs. The child is no longer capable of playing the fantasy role.

Mom hasn't lived up to expectations and the child hasn't lived up to expectations. Depending upon the level of disturbance and the weakness of the relationship, the child comes away from the visit drained, bored, upset, and almost always angry because he realises that his mother will not be taking him with her. Reality has crept in, but has not destroyed the "fantasy family"; merely disorganised and repressed thoughts of it for a time.

## Mary Hartman

The child's real world today is shaped by the stresses created by what I call the 'Mary Hartman' effect. Mary's life is patterned from fad after fad. Her speech is spattered with phrases from commercials. She is controlled by television, magazine ads, soap operas and other media-type fantasies. Mary Hartman, although a dramatisation of the effect of commercialism and artificial living situations in entertainment, is, I believe, a good characterisation of the phenomenon.

The expectations of children today are far greater than those of children 10 or 15 years ago because they have been bombarded with a media fantasy world. The child expects jets, money, sailboats and world vacations. He ex-

pects family drama and at the same time an ideal family. And, because the child's goals are way out of reach, he tends not to grasp for them. Many of the children who do attempt to reach for goals find that the traditional work-for-a-living ethic isn't working, and they resort to other ways of attaining the goal.

## Peer Pressure

What about peer pressure?

This is an area that has been talked to death. Every child care worker is aware of it. It is the effect that one child or group of children have on another child. It can be a positive effect or a negative effect as far as the child care worker is concerned. Peer pressure can be the very destructive element that helps construct anti-social views. Children may have rejected the traditional values of the communities we live in, usually as a result of conflicting value systems among parents, child care workers, peers, and school systems. Often peer pressure amounts to a fantasy perception of what the child believes are his peers' expectations of him. The perceptions are manifested by the anxiety of rejection by peers.

## Child Care Worker

So who is the child care worker and with what feelings is he contending? The child care worker is the individual in the child's life who is like the elf in a story book. While the child sleeps and is unaware, the worker is meeting his nurturing needs, coping with the problems, raising the child, and teaching the child how to operate in the real world. At the same time, the child care worker earns the parents' jealousy because right now he is managing the child's life better than the parent can. He earns the child's hostility because of the conflict he represents as a competitive figure with the "fantasy family" — the child's immediate needs for the child care worker are infinitely more apparent than the need for the natural parent.

The child care worker hasn't grown up within the Mary Hartman stresses as the child has. He sees the child striving for fantasy goals. Knowing how difficult it has been just to at-

tain his own level of success, the child care worker has a responsibility to meet even the fantasy needs of the child, and yet may be completely rejected by the child. He becomes aware that the more he does for some children, the more he gets hurt personally. The worker must realise that as a professional there are skills he can perfect to make his work more effective — and less painful to himself and to the children and the families he serves. Because he is so vital to the children and families he serves, he knows he cannot give up. The child care worker is not a peer and should not attempt to compete in the role of a peer. He is a professional who must have more influence on the child's direction and growth than the other stresses have.

### The Stresses

There are many other stresses and strains that can act upon the child in care. In a diagram one could show the child in the middle, with the fantasy family, the Mary Hartman effect, the peers, and the child care worker all pulling in different directions. Philosophically, you can talk about who is right. Pragmatically, it doesn't matter. It is the child care worker's responsibility to be right. So who wins? Well, unless something has changed, no one wins. In fact, this atmosphere all too often destroys the child, the family, and the child care worker.

### Solutions?

One approach might be to cut some of the strings. Then the stresses are in your favour — or are they? The chances are that you are only delaying the inevitable. Another approach might be to pull harder, fight harder and stronger than the peers, than the Mary Hartman effect, and the fantasy family effect. To do this you may use harsher discipline, more conferences, more devotion, and more rewards. This may work for a while, but what happens when you come to face the ultimate problem of child care workers — burning out? And what happens when that strong figure of the child care worker is gone from the child's life? Is the child strong enough

to manage all of these pressures by himself? Are there enough adults or time to devote to each child to accomplish that kind of success? One successful approach used in the group homes of the Lutheran Homes is making it the responsibility of the child care worker to be a group leader and to challenge the children to participate in all decisions concerning their own rearing — including the hiring of the child care worker.

The following topics for group discussion may help you to deal with the stresses you and the children face.

1. Help your children identify their perceptions of the ideal family. This will give you clues to the "fantasy family".
2. Hold short group sessions which are designed to recognise how each of you help each other. In these sessions, everyone toots his own horn. Each member tells how he sees his role in helping others, and what he or she has actually done for the others in the house. Here is the opportunity to receive recognition from the children and separate your actions from the "fantasy family". This will reduce the anxiety surrounding your competitive role, and will make children aware of the expectation that they should help and care for each other. The skill of group leadership is one way to draw the stresses of the peer group, the 'fantasy family', and the Mary Hartman effect into the direction you feel are most helpful.

Too often the child care worker expects treatment to be imposed on the child by psychiatrist, psychologist and social worker. Your influence and skills are more powerful than any outside treatment could reasonably expect to be. For further reading on developing these particular skills, you may wish to read the book *Positive Peer Culture* by Larry Brendtro and Harry H. Vorrath and *The Child Care Worker — Concepts, Tasks and Relationships* by Jack Adler, Ed. D. Contact your professional Child Care Workers' Association for training workshop dates, resource materials, and reading lists.

From *Child Care Work in Focus*

WORLD  REPORT

# As Welfare Shrinks, Maoris Try to Help Themselves

## Whakapara, New Zealand.

For thousands of years the Kaumatua — the Maori elders — have met to solve problems. Now, the elders are meeting again to try to solve a modern-day New Zealand problem: how to make up for cutbacks in government services.

The elders hope to provide education, health and counseling services themselves. Eventually, they might set up a meat or fish processing plant to provide ongoing funding for their activities.

"What we are seeing is a great need for those who can meet the needs of our people", says Taina Waipouri, one of the Kaumatua.

There is no question, the needs of the people around Whakapara, about a three hour drive north of Auckland, are great. The Maori unemployment rate is about 40 percent, the New Zealand employment service in Whangarei estimates. As a result, many Maori families survive by living on welfare.

However, these benefits may be inadequate, some local social workers say. Most overseas countries figure 25 percent of a welfare check should go to food. New Zealand estimates 33 percent should be used for food.

"Once you take that out of balance other problems increase," says a local social worker.

One of the other problems in this region is crime. National statistics indicate crime is on the rise nationally but especially among Maoris, who have a disproportionate number of people in jail. "Dishonesty offenses such as shoplifting or burglary have gone up sharply," says Senior Sergeant Pat Coghlan in Whangarei. In northern New Zealand, the seizure of marijuana plants is soaring, up 46 percent this year compared to 1990. The plants are now considered a cash crop, with the drug sold in Auckland or other New Zealand cities. Many local youths smoke the weed.

To try to counter these trends, the Maori elders are running special services for the young, including anger-management programmes to teach Maori males how to resolve conflict without violence, and special classes to help underperforming youths in school. There are also programmes to teach Maoris how to avoid getting deeply into debt, and classes to help Maoris formulate better diets and healthier lifestyles. Almost all of the effort will be run by volunteers with only Z\$17,000 (about R28,000) in funding from the government. The programmes also "will have a Maori perspective," says Ani Waipouri, a Maori social worker. This means a greater emphasis on spiritual and family values. Maori families are large extended groups.

"The idea is to share the responsibility," says a local social worker. This concept is carried through to the *Marae*, where the elders meet. Said on the floor of the structure and it will not be used outside. Problems can be aired and the whole *Marae* takes responsibility. Thus, if a child is a truant, the whole group tries to find solutions. It's a centuries-old way to solve problems in a modern society.

— Ron Scherer

Christian Science Monitor

# Family Treatment in Residential Care in Denmark

**Marlanne Egelund**

**Director of a Danish Treatment Centre**

When a child in Denmark is placed in a residential home, this is almost always caused by severe social, psychological and family problems. Therefore, even if the residential home is defined as a treatment place, there is a need to strive for extensive changes involving the individual child as well as the family, in order to make the child's return to the family successful.

In order to better cope with this need, a new development supported by official social policy can be discerned inside many residential homes in Denmark — a development representing a shift of focus from the child towards family orientation, and from residential care towards day arrangements.

The change of work model and the redesigning of methods have become a necessity, partly as a result of a general economic tightening and, at the same time, because of the continuing increase in social problems. At the Dalgarden treatment centre — a 30 year old residential home with four units — this development started in 1984, after a long period of preparation, by changing one residential unit to a "family day unit" (inspired by the Family Day Unit at Marlborough Hospital, London). Another unit followed later.

## The Families

Families attend the "family unit" four full days a week, for a maximum of six months. At least one of the parents is always present, and the entire family participates once a week. Most of the registered

families have had severe problems over several years, often through several generations. Many have a tense relationship with the authorities and their general experience is that others, rather than they themselves, define what their problems are and what to do about them. The situation can be described as a long process of increasing lack of ability and qualification of the parents — the adults responsible for the children. The fundamental attitude of the unit is that

1. The parents know best where "the shoe hurts" and know also what changes are necessary inside the family;
2. The parents are responsible for their own children and the treatment the family must have.

## Contracting

Methodologically, this attitude means that, before registration, a contract is drawn up with a concrete formulation of the goal to be attained with the individual family — a contract which is evaluated and perhaps revised sometime during the stay.

The treatment is carried out through numerous 'family activities' planned in a structured weekly programme, during which

1. The staff create an exercise or task for the family (often creating a conflict between the parents and their children);
- 2) The staff help the parents to plan the steps for solving the problem;
- 3) The parents carry out the plan together with the children (perhaps with some alterations); and

- 4) The staff evaluate the process together with the parents.

## Generating activities and interactions

Other regular programme elements are the "common activities" of the families and the "therapy group" for adults (designed to deal with every special subject not concerning parenthood). Altogether, contact between the different families is encouraged. Many are socially isolated before registration at the unit and feel that all other parents are doing well, while they themselves are failures. By constant generalization and by the staff allowing the parents to advise each other (instead of staff acting as experts), many parents achieve, perhaps for the first time, the feeling of being useful to others.

The activities mentioned above take into account detailed considerations of the structure of the individual family. The exercises are planned to ensure the necessary structural changes, often through specifying borders, hierarchies and conflict patterns.

## Families in Communities

Work with the "family units" is promising. Experience has shown how many resources the so-called "resource-poor" families have when they get a chance to unfold within a secure framework. At the same time, however, it has very soon become evident that changes *inside the family*,

while necessary, are not always sufficient; that the problem of the child is only partly a reflection of the family situation and that the possibility of change often also depends on the *community surroundings*. Networks can help to advance or block changes, and often there are different understandings of the problem and how it should be solved. Grandparents, school, family friends, the social case worker, colleagues, neighbours and others all regard matters from different viewpoints. Disagreement between these persons may draw energy off the parents.

## Conclusion

Throughout the last years at Dalgarden, we have also been experimenting with different ways of involving private and professional networks in the treatment, without treating the parents as incompetents. This is difficult, but an absolute necessity, as parents are the only important resource persons for the development of children in a complex society. At the same time, I find it important to warn against the view that all residential work can be replaced by family work. Unfortunately, there will always be children needing a good residential home over a longer period. Among others this is true of the increasing number of children who, in fact, do not have an existing or functioning family home to live in.



**'Experience has shown how many resources the so-called "resource-poor" families have when they get a chance to unfold within a secure framework.'**