

Child & Youth Care

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BETTER NEWS FROM AFRICA

HUMANISING INSTITUTIONS

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AT BLACK HILLS SEMINAR**

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Editorial

Developmental and rehabilitative welfare: Getting the whole picture

Much useful debate is going on during these months on the draft discussion document of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, now out for discussion before a final draft is prepared. The draft is being subjected to healthy scrutiny — and this is welcomed, for when it comes to children and youth at risk, we all want to get our thinking, planning and services *right*.

Either-or; for-against

One mistaken impression which seems to characterise the comments of many of those who are critical of the document is that it sets out to offer the final solution for all of the troubled children and families in our country. It doesn't. It isn't even concerned with all of those who fall within the ambit of statutory services. *It is concerned only with that very small proportion of young people at risk of removal or who have already been removed from parental care.*

Many competent agencies work, at a number of levels, with thousands more families who are in difficulties. A relatively small number slip between the fingers of these agencies — at present there are under 40 000 children and young people in care.

It is with this group that child and youth care agencies are already working and with whom they are now being asked to help with prevention, early intervention, direct programmes and reintegration.

Other children

The White Paper on Welfare makes the important point that "residential programmes are expensive and the standards set for these programmes need to be reviewed." When a better subsidy system stops paying only for "bed and meals", then the expensive residential component of child and youth care work will be significantly reduced. An essential feature of the IMC proposals is that residential care is as much about *families* as it is about anything else — and that residential facilities should always be empowering *resources* for their surrounding communities. But even as we say this, we need to see child and youth care work in

the context of South Africa's total population of children.

The recently launched National Programmes of Action for Children (NPA) highlight a wholly numbing picture of deprivation which has as great a claim on our attention.

At the launch of the NPA, President Mandela said that it was not necessary to allow one out of every eight of our nation's children to die before their fifth birthday. One of the modest aims of the NPA is to reduce this under-fives mortality rate to *one in fourteen* by the year 2000! With this stark reminder of the work ahead of us in South Africa, if developmental welfare approaches are seeking to reduce such unnecessary malnutrition, illness and premature death, they deserve our fullest understanding and support.

Responsibility

It is no surprise that children from this severely deprived group can easily cross over, as they grow up, into the concern of the child and youth care service. We, in turn, are then responsible for a service which responds adequately and efficiently. *In fact, the very genesis of the Inter-Ministerial Committee was due to the fact that when children and youth at risk needed this special attention, the child and youth care service as a whole was not able to deliver.*

But we are also responsible for ensuring that our services are sharply focussed and that we don't waste any material or human resources. In these ways we *co-operate* with developmental welfare rather than *compete* with it.

In short, child and youth care, youth justice and youth work must see themselves as part of the wider solution for children and youth in this country. When the President asks us to contribute our power and wisdom in support of the NPA endeavours, we must ask ourselves what we have to offer as we get on with our own work.

Throughput

Another fundamental expectation of the IMC document is that within any particular facility, a *range of programme options* should be available, of which a residential option might be just *one*.

A residential service is expensive — indeed wasteful — when it is confused with other aspects of a child and youth care programme, and it comes to be seen as the only option. A principle long promoted by NACCW, and fully in accord with the thinking of the IMC, is that there should be recourse to a residential admission *only when necessary and only as long as necessary*. We should never again be satisfied with a situation in which children and young people are simply living in residential institutions.

With this thinking, a residential programme achieves a whole new value — not in terms of how many beds it has, but how many children can be served by those beds over a set period.

Western Cape Health and Welfare Minister Ebrahim Rasool recognised this when he spoke this month at the AGM of Leliebloem House in Cape Town: "You have gone a long way towards transforming the principles of the White Paper into practical reality. This is reflected in the demonstrable success your transformed service delivery is having. I refer here to the increased number of children that you were able to return to their parental homes last year: 5 in 1994 and 30 in 1995. If Leliebloem's excellence can become a role-model for other institutions, including the state, then institutional care can become what it was originally intended to be, that is, *temporary care of children in need*." He went on to conclude: "While others grapple with defining developmental social welfare, Leliebloem House simply *does* developmental social welfare."

For the time being ...

We have heard talk of "phasing out" residential programmes. In a lecture printed on page 13, Jan Berry assumes that institutions are not going to go away: "I regularly argue for their elimination but, for the time being, it appears that some people, both children and adults, must live away from their family or loved ones for a period of time, or need help in meeting the basic needs of their families." As long as residential places are needed in our country (and the forty thousand children and youth in care today confirm that this is so) we must work urgently towards making them only a temporary part of more focussed child and youth care programmes to get youngsters and their families functional again — and we must do so in the full awareness of the whole picture of children in South Africa — of the shocking extent of deprivation and need suffered by so many.

Child & Youth Care

A JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH
TROUBLED CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK

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Cover Picture: Peter Magubane, Soweto 1979



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International Federation of Educative Communities (UNESCO)



Association Internationale des Educateurs de Jeunes Inadaptés
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National Association of Child Care Workers
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People



Phineas Molepo

It was by accident that Phineas landed up in child care after matric. He did not have the funds to continue studying and so in 1986, the year after he matriculated he began working with street children in an organisation called *Proccess* (Project of Street Children Educational and Support Systems). This organisation merged with Boys' Town in 1988. He continued working here for the next six years, building up a wealth of knowledge and experience.

On-going study

Phineas completed the BQCC course in 1990 and then completed his BA degree with Unisa in 1992. In 1993 he served as the chairman of the Child Care Workers' Forum in the Gauteng Region. At the end of 1994 he resigned from Boys' Town, where he was a senior child care worker, so that he could concentrate on doing his Higher Education Diploma (HED) full-time at Wits University the following year.

Stimulation programmes

In 1995 Phineas joined St. Georges Home where he is currently an on-line child care worker as well as being responsible for running one of the houses in the commu-

nity attached to St George's Home. He is also at present an out-reach consultant of Fikelela project which is a project of St Georges Home designed to reach the broader community. Here he runs, among other projects, stimulation programmes with the homeless. Last year he acted as an interpreter for the BQCC in Mamelodi and this year is training two modules of this course. He is also currently a first year student of the Diploma in Child Care Administration course (DCCA).

Change in status

Over the last years Phineas has seen the status of child care workers change. Far more child care workers now view their jobs as a profession and are therefore eager to undergo further training in the field. He feels it is vital for on-line child care workers to receive relevant training as this not only benefits the children but serves to empower them.

"In 1986, with no qualifications behind my name, it was very difficult to query my salary or my working conditions — but now with the experience I have and the training I have received I have a much stronger base from which to work." Phineas regrets that he does not have the time at present to attend more forums of the NACCW in the region. He feels that it is an important support system. "Here you realise you are not alone, and the problems you face are common amongst child care workers — you can draw strength from these forums."



AFRICA: THE NEWS IS NOT ALL BAD

News of internal conflicts in Somalia, Liberia and Rwanda, lead many to conclude that Africa is rife with unrest and killing. It is important to keep the continent in perspective. Africa consists of 52 distinct nations and a population of 900 million. The tragedies of a few do not represent the whole.

Positive elements provide balance to the picture.

In an uprising in Burundi in 1972, I asked an African foreign minister why Africans did not speak out more forcefully in condemning the tribal warfare then engulfing that nation. He replied, "If we call attention to the problems of other Africans, Europeans will say, 'That's Africa'.

But when you speak out about the troubles in Northern Ireland, people don't say, 'See, that's the way Europeans are.' "

He had a point. People generalize about Africa on the basis of current internal conflicts in six of the continent's 52 countries: Chad, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, and Somalia. Similar generalizations are not made about Europeans on the basis of the wars and terrorism taking place in Ireland and Bosnia. Cur-

rent local wars in Asia are even more numerous.

Africa is a disadvantaged continent. It is, perhaps, remarkable that there are not more conflicts. Most countries inherited tribal divisions, artificial boundaries, and development problems. They faced independence with weak governmental institutions; colonial rule tended to be authoritarian. The façade of democratic rule that European governments left behind eroded in favour of rule by individuals and the military. Corruption drained resources and undermined confidence in government; Africa's largest nation, Nigeria, is an example.

Local roots

Each of the current conflicts has distinct local roots not necessarily typical of the rest of the continent. The clashes in Chad and Sudan grow out of an old confrontation between Muslim and non-Muslim groups along the Sahara desert's northern rim. The troubles in both Sierra Leone and Liberia stem from confrontations between indigenous people and resettled American and British slaves. The unrest is further complicated by efforts of politi-

cians and the military to control rich and often illicit trade in gold and diamonds. Rwanda and Burundi suffer from the age-old resentment of the Hutu majority against domination by the Tutsis. Somalia represents a rare nation-state in disintegration. Angola's remaining struggles are a vestige of issues unresolved at the time of decolonization.

Positive trends

These conspicuous problems, however, are balanced by positive trends. Nigeria's military regime is under more and more pressure to return to democracy. This pressure includes rare criticism from African-American leaders. The Republic of Benin, the site of many coups, held a democratic election on March 18 followed by a peaceful transfer of power. On March 29, Sierra Leone's military rulers turned over power peacefully to a civilian president after an election. Although the honesty of elections in many places is in dispute, democratically elected officials rule in Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Ivory Coast, The Congo, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, and Namibia.



"Africa is a disadvantaged continent. It is, perhaps, remarkable that there are not more conflicts."

Economic bright spots exist, also. The press reported in April that seven of France's former colonies — Benin, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo — in 1995 posted average gains of 6% in their gross domestic product. Benin, Malawi, Namibia, Uganda, and Zambia in 1994 had more than 4% increases in their gross national income. Mozambique, only recently recovering from a civil war, showed national income growth of 22%.

Some of the world's most oppressive regimes have been eliminated in the Central African Republic, Guinea, and Ethiopia. The former Ethiopian rulers are currently on trial in Addis Ababa for their crimes against the population.

The most spectacular progress of all, of course, is in South Africa, where a peaceful transition from white-majority rule has been effected. Under the remarkable leadership of Nelson Mandela, that nation is seeking to bridge the gap of decades of racial separation and antagonism. A decade ago, predictions of what is happening there today would have been ridiculed.

Except for France, concern for Africa is low on most Western governments' priority lists. If neglect is based on an assumption of hopelessness because of the tragic events in a few countries, it is worth taking a second look at the rest.

This story by David D. Newsom, former Under Secretary of State, who is interim Dean of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University in Washington. The story in the box on the right from Dakar, Senegal, by David Hecht. Acknowledgements for both stories to The Christian Science Monitor.

Photos: Previous page — Craig Sillitoe for Kodak. This page: Robert Harbison

The focus of education on our continent changes as we realise that

FOR MOST AFRICANS JOB OPTIONS LIE IN THE INFORMAL ECONOMY

A new basket woven from old plastic bags; shoes cobbled from used car tires; an oil lamp made from a soda can.

If you can get past the desolation, African shantytowns are full of good ideas. The poor may have almost nothing, but, for the most part, they meet daily needs.

With an eye on this resourcefulness, some economic-development organizations in Africa are aiming to support the initiatives poor people come up with for themselves, rather than channeling increasingly scarce aid dollars into big top-down initiatives. According to United Nations sources, 60 percent of Africa's labour force is employed in so-called "informal" economic activities that avoid taxes and are thus usually illegal. The sector is estimated to grow 6 to 7 percent a year, on average.

The expansion is a sign of a crisis, says Jacques Bugnicourt, head of Environmental Development Action (ENDA), which supports activities of impoverished communities in Africa and elsewhere. "But this crisis

also implies new possibilities."

Last month, ENDA opened a large complex in the middle of an inner-city slum in Senegal's capital, Dakar, for poor people. "We feel there is a need for the disenfranchised, particularly youths, to try out their ideas; show each other what they are doing and what they plan to do," Mr. Bugnicourt says.

Among a maze of rooms and courtyards is a library, a crafts workshop, and an exhibition of "indigenous devices" from all over Africa. In an office, a group of metalworkers discusses setting up a factory together. The centre, called Ecopole, is also the base for several music groups and will soon have a radio station and a computer site on the Internet's World Wide Web. The centre is run mostly by volunteers, says Amadou Diallo, one of the organizers. It gets funding from the European Union.

African governments have often ignored or suppressed informal activities, holding that they undermine the formal economy. But with dwindling aid levels and little private investment, "they are beginning to realize that the poor are the only hope they have," says Taoufik Ben Abdallah, an ENDA economist. To the surprise of many, two African presidents — Senegal's Abdou Diouf and Mali's Alpha Oumar Konare — were among the guests at the centre's opening. Despite years of difficult restructuring, most African economies continue to flounder. In Senegal, for example, each year sees 100,000 more people looking for work, but only about 2,000 new official job openings, says World Bank economist Abdoulaye Seck. "What

the other 98,000 are doing to survive we really don't know."

Meanwhile, a 50-percent devaluation of the currency in French-speaking African nations has caused costs to skyrocket for the poor, while governmental domestic spending has been cut to pay for higher foreign-debt service charges. The result, the World Bank says, is a rise in informal activity: Semi-legal taxis are replacing public buses; people who can no longer afford sit-down restaurants eat at street vendors; the few people who can afford a telephone often do so as an investment, charging others to use it.

This means money is circulating more among the poor, and they often reinvest it in their own communities. In Pikine, one of Dakar's impoverished outer suburbs, traders recently pooled resources and constructed a big new market. Pikine's mayor admits that informal initiatives are responsible for more infrastructure development than his own administration can boast of.

In education, even though the share of government spending on primary schools has grown steadily since 1987, the percentage of primary-school age children enrolled in government schools has fallen.

The reason, claims education specialist Adel Arab, is that poor communities are creating their own schools. Research suggests that two-thirds of the newly literate children in Dakar have had community rather than government schooling. State education is still based on the colonial system of more than 30 years ago, he says. "It was largely irrelevant for the poor then, and it is even more irrelevant now."

The conflict cycle: A strategy for responding to difficult behaviour in working with children and youth

The dynamics of conflict and power struggles can be understood through the use of the conflict cycle. Based on a series of assumptions, this psychodynamic model is made up of three pre-conditioning components — self-concept, world view and values — and four primary components — the stressful situation, feelings, observable behaviour and response. **By Carolyn Braun Publicom Inc.**

Many child and youth care workers deal with conflict on a regular basis. It is often an unpleasant experience; but if the adult has developed response strategies for not overreacting, the experience will be less painful for the adult and child.

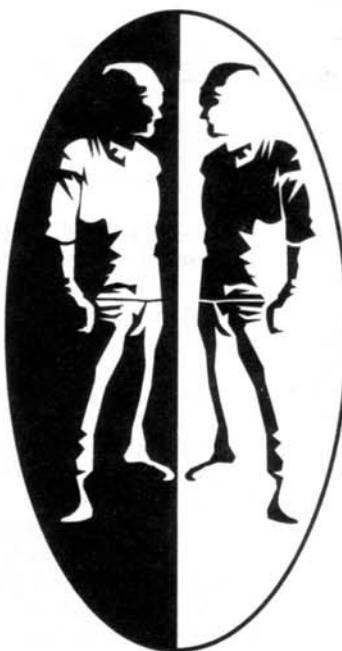
The conflict cycle is a psychodynamic model, developed by Dr. Nicholas J. Long, that enables practitioners to better understand the dynamics of power struggle and conflict.

It allows the adult to focus on the child's feelings and behaviour, and also monitors his or her own feelings and behaviour.

The psychodynamic model is based on the premise that early childhood experiences have an influence on development. It is during this period that a child's self concept, world view and values begin to develop. If a child's growth needs are not adequately met during this time, social and emotional difficulties can result. The concept is based on the following assumptions:

1. A youth in conflict views the situation and the world in terms of his or her life history. The workers often serve as psychological punching bags for troubled children.
2. A youth involved in a stressful situation often creates in us his or her feelings and behaviour. One of the youth's negative goals is to hook the adult into acting like them. For example, if a youth spits on you, there is often the immediate natural urge to spit back. It is important, however, for the adult to respond to negative behaviour in a manner that does not perpetuate it.
3. Crises can be opportune times for adults to model and teach social and emotional competence. It is important for the adult to set constructive limits for the youth, yet still have

the ability to remain supportive and not be overcome by their own emotions.



Many of the negative confrontations between adults and youth are related to inappropriate adult responses.

4. For a youth in stress we must reinterpret adult intervention as an act of support and protection rather than hostility. When an adult intervenes with a youngster in stress, it is important that it is done in such a way that it is not perceived as an act of hostility.

Seven components make up the conflict cycle

Stressful conflicts tend to follow a circular pattern. The conflict cycle provides us with a model for

understanding the dynamics of these conflicts and power struggles (Figure opposite). It describes the phases and identifies the elements.

There are seven components — three pre-conditioning components and four primary components.

The three pre-conditioning components are *self-concept*, *world view* and *values*. Usually the result of early childhood experiences, these components greatly influence the primary components and how the child expresses himself or herself in each stage of the conflict cycle.

The four primary components are the stressful situation itself, feelings, observable behaviour and response.

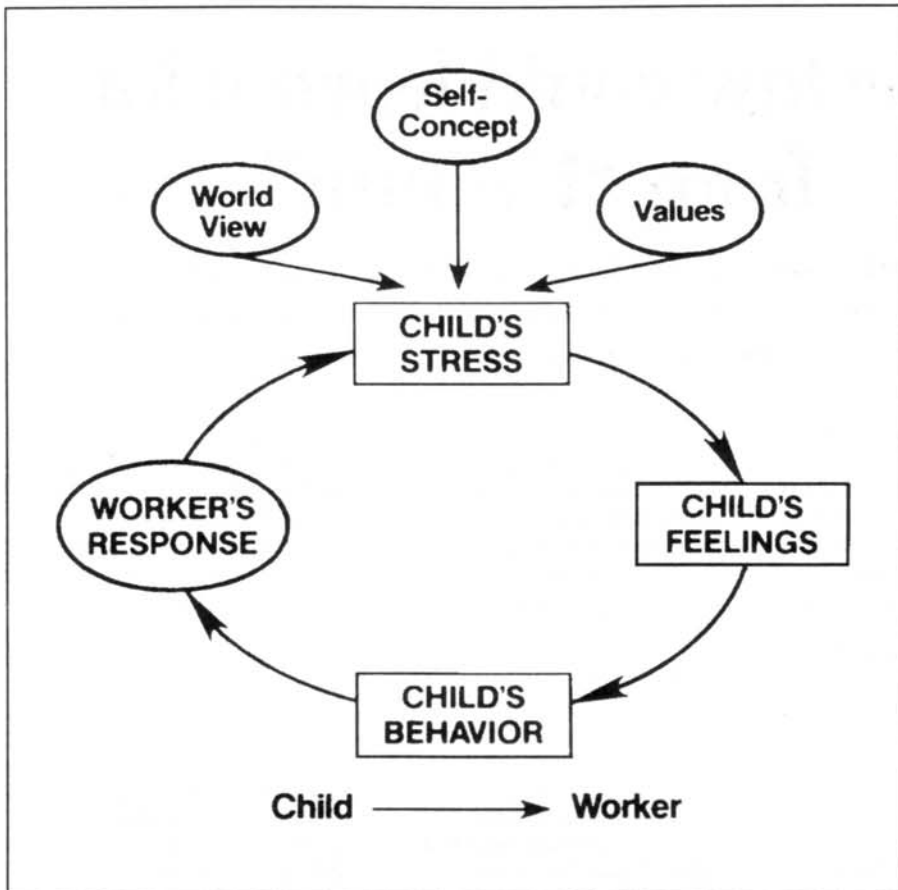
Self-concept: This is the child's perception about himself or herself as related to his or her early life experiences and environment. **World view:** Again, the child's world view is a product of early childhood experiences and environment.

Values: Modelled by significant adults from the child's early life, values are internalized principles, rules of behaviour, and beliefs.

Stress: The stressful incident itself is the first phase of the conflict cycle. Four types of stress have been identified by Long: physical stress, psychological stress, reality stress or unplanned events and developmental stress. There are numerous factors that cause people to experience stress, and it can make people react in either a positive or negative way.

The three pre-conditioning factors — self-concept, world view and values — greatly influence adult responses to stress.

Feelings: Feelings are the second phase in the conflict cycle. The stress caused by the stressful incident feeds the feelings, and the



feelings caused by the stress will be different according to experiences and perceptions.

Behaviour: Behaviour is the child's response and solution to a situation or incident that is creating stressful feelings, and is the observable expression of the feelings of the people involved in the power struggle.

Behaviour is the result of early modelling and socialization, and for the disturbed and troubled child, this was not sufficiently constructive.

Response: Of all the phases in the conflict cycle, the response phase gives the adult the best opportunity to model for the child. The goal of the adult in the conflict is to reduce the amount of the child's stress.

The quality of the worker's response can provide a youngster with a model for responding to stressful situations and in turn help to develop social and emotional competence.

Many of the negative confrontations between adults and youth are related to inappropriate adult responses.

If a worker over-reacts to child's negative behaviour, for example, the child's stress level is often increased. It is important that the adult not overreact but keep the primary goal in focus — to minimize the stress level of the young person and resolve the conflict in a non-destructive manner.

This strategy has been useful in the training of staff and youth. It is one more area of knowledge to be applied in the challenging work with troubled youngsters.

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Books

Being Bodywise

Bodywise: Sex Education, Health and Advice for South African Youth
Edited by Harriet Perlman
Sached Books, Johannesburg

The editor has collected into this volume material which first appeared in the educational magazine *Upbeat*. The book has the merit of a well-paced variety of formats — information, replies to letters, "talkshops" in which young people express their own views, quizzes, comic strips and discussion. The intent of the book is well summarised by a paragraph on the title page: "As a young person, I know that the more information I have about myself and my body, the more responsible I will be in life. I don't want to ruin my life through ignorance and misinformation."

Choice of material

The contents reflect an intelligent and realistic response to the concerns our society has for youth today: Your changing body; Sex, love and relationships; Preventing pregnancy; Sexually transmitted diseases; Your changing feelings; Taking care of yourself; Getting on with parents; Girls and boys — the same but different. A team of contributors and consultants from respected organisations give the book not only a good balance of viewpoints, but also an authority to be trusted.

Suggestions on ways to use the book are offered — as a reference book for adults as well as for young people themselves, as a source for reading together or discussion groups, or for designing the curriculum for a youth education programme.



What impresses about *Bodywise* is its sense of open debate and discussion; on any subject there is a diversity of opinion which leaves the reader with the need to go on talking and thinking about things. Also, the book is light on generalised polemics about what *should* be — and focusses rather on practical, daily realities about which young people must make choices.

— BG

The law could learn a lot from "Ubuntu"

Oscar Makhathini of Lawyers for Human Rights in Pietermaritzburg, looks at our very complex, adversarial criminal justice system and proposes the incorporation of some traditional methods of dispute resolution.

The child, a 14-year old boy, was standing shivering in the holding cell one cold winter morning. Barefoot, he wore only shorts and a skimpy T-shirt. He was to appear in court, with a group of other homeless children, on a charge of house-breaking with intent to commit an offence unknown to the prosecutor, and/or trespass.

The previous night these children had gone to a disused building in town to seek shelter from the cold and a place to sleep. They were discovered during a police patrol and arrested. This is but one example of the realities which faced us when we launched a court-based juvenile justice project in July 1992.

It was noted that more than 90% of children appearing in court were not legally represented and that sentencing was most unimaginative, with hundreds of whippings being a daily occurrence: in 1992, more than thirty thousand sentences of whipping were imposed by South African magistrates' courts.

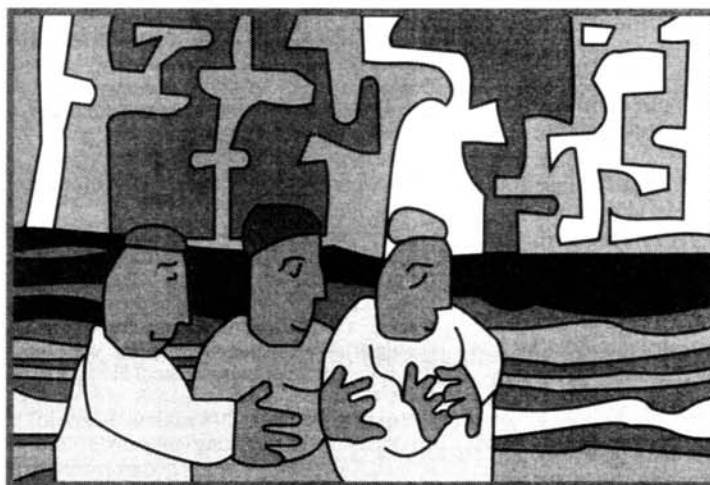
Justice project

The Lawyers for Human Rights Juvenile Justice Project was aimed at rendering direct assistance by securing the release of as many children as possible into the custody of their parents or guardians, affording them other '(diversionary) options to the criminal justice system;' providing legal representation; shortening their period of imprisonment; and also at changing the atmosphere of the court, as well as the attitudes of the police

and court personnel. Our ultimate aim was to use the information gathered in order to effect lasting changes to the juvenile justice system and to develop more creative, community-based methods of dealing with youthful offenders.

No legislation

There is no comprehensive legislation in South Africa that specifically deals with children who come into conflict with the law. Instead, certain sections of the Criminal Procedure Act, Child Care Act, Correctional Services Act and the Probation Services Act provide for some variations when it comes to cases involving children.



Although the Correctional Services Act has been amended, as explained below, the rest of the process remains the same. It begins when the child is arrested and taken to the police station, where a docket is opened. In terms of the Criminal Procedure Act, the arresting and/or investigating officer has the duty of informing the parent or guardian of the child where such a parent or guardian is known to be within the magisterial district and can be traced without undue delay. If the parent or guardian is not in court, the case cannot proceed. Prior to the amendment dis-

cussed below, the child would then be remanded in custody until the parent or guardian could be traced. In some instances, apathy on the part of the police doing the tracing meant that some children spent weeks or even months in custody.

When the child appears in court to plead, the charges are put by the prosecutor just as they would be to an adult accused. The child might have legal representation, depending on whether the parent or guardian can afford a lawyer or whether, when the right to legal representation was explained, the application was successful. Another protection afforded by the Act is that the court proceedings are held *in camera*; though police and court officials do come and go during the proceedings. The child is then asked whether s/he pleads guilty or not guilty. If the plea is one of guilty, the presiding officer questions the child as to whether s/he admits to all elements of the offence. If the court is satisfied

with the admission, the child is convicted and sentenced. If the court is not satisfied, a plea of not guilty is entered on his or her behalf and the child has to go through all the trial process, where evidence is led and witnesses called, as would happen if the child pleaded not guilty in the first place. The magistrate then passes judgement and imposes a sentence.

If the child is found guilty, various sentencing options are available to the magistrate. Before the Constitutional Court ruled against whipping as a punishment, that was a very common

sentence.

Other options are: postponement of passing sentence, placement under the supervision of a probation officer; reform school; correctional supervision; caution and discharge; or imprisonment.

We can, therefore, see the complexity of our criminal justice system. Once a young person comes into conflict with it, it does not provide mechanisms to make him or her feel accountable for what he or she has done. Rather, the young person feels victimised by it. Instead of feeling blame-worthy, he or she points a damning finger at the 'adversary' — the criminal justice system.

Section 29 amendments

The amendment to section 29 of the Correctional Services Act came into effect on 8 May 1995. It provided that no unconvicted person under the age of 18 shall be detained in a prison or police cell or lock-up, except in special circumstances. Thus a child under the age of 14, no matter what he or she is charged with, can only be held for up to 24 hours in a police cell or lock-up, not in a prison. This can only be done if such detention is necessary and in the interests of justice and if he or she cannot be placed in the care of a parent, guardian or other suitable person, or any institution or place of safety.

The same provisions apply to children over the age of 14 — but below 18 — who are charged with less serious crimes. The police officer ordering such detention must provide written reasons to the court where the child first appears explaining why it was necessary.

Children between the ages of 14 and 18 who are charged with serious crimes (which are listed in a schedule to the Act and include murder, rape, drug-dealing) may, by order of a court, be detained for up to 48 hours in a prison, police cell or lock-up, provided the court has ordered that he or she be sent to a place of safety and the court is satisfied that this cannot take place immediately.

While the amendment was a step forward, it created problems because the Department of Correctional Services had not held proper consultations with other departments that deal with children's issues — Safety and Security, Justice, and Welfare. There was no proper infrastructure even to deal with the initial crisis.

People working with the amendment have also come across problems occasioned by its wording (for example, "unconvicted young persons" and "a suitable person") and by its provisions (for example, what happens after the expiry of 24 or 48 hours; the question of bail, determination of age). There are also problems with the list of scheduled offences.

(On 10 May 1996 a new Section 29 of the Correctional Services Act came into operation which allows children aged 14 to 18 years charged with serious offences to be detained in prison, police cells, or lockup. (See *Child & Youth Care*, July 1996.)

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child, in Article 42, makes specific reference to juvenile justice. A few of the relevant provisions are:

- 42(1) recognises the right of every accused child "to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society."
- 42(3) states that laws, procedures, authorities and institutions specifically applicable to children in conflict with the law shall be established. By ratifying the Covenant, South Africa has, therefore, undertaken to move towards a specialised legal framework and infrastructure designed to deal with this group of children.
- 42(3)(b) provides for diversion, that is, taking children out of the criminal justice system and processing them through other suitable programmes.

Traditional solutions

There are also other internationally accepted standards: for example, the Beijing Rules (UN standard minimum rules for the administration of juvenile justice), the Riyadh Guidelines (UN guidelines for the prevention of juvenile delinquency) and the UN standard minimum rules for the protection of juveniles deprived of their liberty (generally known as JDL's). Traditionally, Africans did not have prisons. This does not mean that people did not commit wrongs against one another; it means that people had ways and means of resolving disputes which enabled normal co-existence.



This brings us to the concept of 'Ubuntu': "a person is a person because of other people". The wrongdoer acknowledges that the victim has been harmed and by this acknowledgement is prepared to make good the wrong. The reparation

and/or restoration could be by way of assisting the victim in harvesting his or her fields, or by handing over some cattle.

This whole process would be regulated by the elders of the community. Once the issue has been satisfactorily resolved, it would be celebrated by the slaughter of a goat or a bull, depending on the magnitude of the offence. The harm has been compensated for and harmony is restored. This is not an argument for the return of people's courts. What went wrong with these courts is that they were politicised. They 'tried' political dissidents and personal enemies. They also became staffed by incompetent people, whose aim was to strengthen their political hold by the punishments they imposed.

Nor does the argument propose a return to customary law. It rather takes the best features of traditional African problem solving and seeks to incorporate them into a modern system.

A set of proposals for a new juvenile justice system has been drawn up by a group of representatives of NGOs. These are based on principles gleaned from the international instruments and are firmly based on the concept of restorative justice. The central feature of the proposed system is diversion of children away from the formal criminal justice and penal system. This can take place in a number of ways: by means of caution, by transfer to the welfare system, or by a family group conference.

In the family group conference, a juvenile justice worker convenes a meeting of people who are significant in the young person's life — such as family, friends, teachers — the victim, and/or a representative of the victim — such as a family member — and a police representative.

The aim of the meeting is discuss the incident and to decide how best to respond to it. The young person must accept responsibility; then the meeting will negotiate an agreement, by consensus, about what should be done. This could involve an apology to the victim, reparation, a donation to charity. The idea is that "conferecing" will become the primary method of dealing with young offenders and the formal criminal system will serve only as a back-up when the conference cannot reach consensus or is not appropriate, such as in cases of serious or very violent crimes.

Can we restore these old features to our present day healing process? Can we be re-enlivened by community justice in order to regain our lost self. This struggle will be within ourselves to fight to win.

Reprinted from *Recovery* (Research and co-operation on violence education and rehabilitation of young people).

For more information on this publication, contact the editor at The Children's Inquiry Trust, Glenrand Building, 4th floor, 24 Fredman Drive, Sandton 2146

Questions

Why can't these children put their minds to their schoolwork? They could all matriculate and end up in useful careers.

In many ways it is positive that we have such ambitions for children.

We have hopes that they can get past their experiences of deprivation and abuse, and pursue fulfilled and happy lives. And so they can, and this should be our goal for them.

But the reality is that a minority of school pupils in the general population is going to matriculate, and it is unfair, therefore, for us to expect from children in care that they are going to do better than their peers.

What are you going to be when you grow up?

Our values about "useful careers" differ widely.

We are taught as child care workers to respect the cultures and traditions of the children and their families, and not to impose our own values on them. When we refer to "useful careers" we should try to understand what this might mean to others. In a recent television documentary on the restoration of an eighteenth century building, a plasterer said: "I come from a family of plasterers — in fact for five generations this has been my family's trade." He said this with considerable pride, and he clearly brought great skill and commitment to his admirable restoration work. In today's world, too, no one would wish to undervalue or scorn blue-collar or manual work, which underlies all of the tech-

nology and comforts which we enjoy. There's many a joke that the doctor may earn well, but the plumber out-earns us all!

Career choice is closely associated with identity.

A very strong factor operating in the children's lives is their sense of identity — of who they would like to be like, and what, in their minds, makes for the ideal man or woman. And most often, this ideal is built from significant adults in their own lives. For children in care, sometimes all they have is the dream they wish to fulfil to be "like my mother (aunt, father)". When such role models are strongly established it is highly risky for us to discourage them for they are highly valued, and we will only succeed in creating intolerable splitting and conflict for the young

person to deal with. Remember that a role model with whom a youngster has identified is likely to be healthier and less superficial than none at all.

Vocational testing takes into account many dimensions of difference.

The simplistic idea of a "useful career" is not supported by the sheer variety of options and requirements reflected by an ordinary vocational test. This test (or rather set of tests) would look at intelligence and school achievement, but also at aptitude (itself a very differentiated concept) and such psychological qualities as temperament, adaptability, etc. Thirty years ago one might have thought of "banking" as a "useful career", but work in a banking company today might involve any one



"Lawyers make a lot of money. Yes, if I were you, I'd mug a lawyer."

of dozens of different kinds of jobs — from financial, accounting, actuarial and marketing, to technical, design, mechanical, transport, supportive, etc. So for a career in banking you may be white-collar or blue-collar, you may need to attend a university or technikon, or perhaps receive specialised training in computers or security; you may have to finish high school — or not.

Unravel your real aims for the youngsters in your care.

When you think about it, when one of the children comes back to visit you in ten years' time, it won't really matter whether he or she matriculated, or whether they are in some 'respectable' job or other.

What will really matter is that they are happy, fulfilled and coping reasonably well with life — at a pace and level which is stimulating, rewarding and comfortable for them.

You would hate to be visited by a young person who had spent ten frustrating years struggling against his own nature in order to satisfy *your* expectations — and who now had to face you with the news that he had failed!

There is more to life than school achievement and lofty job title.

When you are planning the curriculum for the future lives of the kids you work with, don't leave out the fun, the relationships, the life skills, the feelings of self-worth, the understanding, the generosity, the experiences of success, the acceptance and belonging, the confidence, the hope and the values which they will need to build their own adult lives and their own families.

It is from these things that they will derive the motivation and the good sense to plan their careers — and the training and education they may need. And if they get to this point, who cares if they are a year or two late?

Many kids don't put their minds to their schoolwork because we have taken education and made it a grim thing in their lives to which (we tell them) so much else must be sacrificed.

Especially for youngsters in care, we need first to show them the value of the good things in life, so that they can be empowered to make their own good decisions.



"If she doesn't make it as a ballet dancer, she wants to be a dentist."

Professionals



We recently saw a plumber's advertisement which read "No job too deep, too dark or too dirty" — and we joked that this could equally apply to child care work! Phil Carradice tells a story which comes very close ...

I always remember it as 'one of those nights.'
 There had been a problem with the smoke detectors and the fire alarms went off at 11.30. Then again at 12.05 and, thereafter, at regular half-hour intervals throughout the night. And, of course, like all residential establishments, each time the alarms went off we had to evacuate the children.
 It was 4.30 before we managed to locate the fault. I finally collapsed into bed at 5.00am.
 'Wake me at mid-day,' I said to my wife before I fell asleep. 'I'm not going in this morning!'
 The next thing I remember was a hand on my shoulder, a mug of tea being thrust under my nose. 'It's 9.30,' said Elaine. 'The Principal's just phoned. Paul and Jack have both gone sick and he's off to a meeting at County Hall. You're the only other senior staff member available. You've got to go in.'
 I cursed solidly through the tea, through dressing and shaving as well. Eventually, I arrived back at Bracken House just after ten. Wearily I sat in my chair and closed my eyes. It would have been very easy to drop off to sleep ...
 'Phil?'

It was Bob, the Group Leader, bending over me, roughly shaking my arm. I tried to pretend he was not there but it was no use. He would not go away.

'We've got a problem with the drains. The sewer outside the boys'

common room is overflowing. I followed him outside. Even before we came near the common room we could smell the problem. It hung in the air like the stench of death and I was suddenly reminded of the rotting carcass of a dead cow I had once seen back home in Wales. From the top of the main sewer cover a stream of filthy water trickled in an unending line. And the smell was cloying, overpowering.
 'Bloody hell!' I gasped. 'It must be full to the brim.'
 'Should I 'phone the drains people?' asked Bob.
 'Unless you fancy clearing it?' 'No thanks', he said, inching slowly away. 'I'll 'phone them.'

I watched Bob disappear in the direction of the offices and then walked up the steps to the common room. At first sight the room seemed empty. Then, a small, sudden sound made me glance across the room to the dark shadows of the far corner. There were three shapes close up against the wall — Brian and Chris, two of our residential workers, and Tommy, perhaps the most maladjusted or disturbed boy in the Centre. He was six feet tall but thin and wiry. Tell him that two and two were four, he'd swear they made six. He was that type of boy. When I came in through the door Chris smiled resignedly at me. Brian was sitting alongside the prostrate boy who was silently, seriously, kicking and punching at the man who held him. Presently he began to scream. 'Get off, you bastard!' he yelled. 'I'll get you done for this!' Brian looked up, saw me and raised his eyebrows in despair. 'What a delightful child,' I said. 'You get stuffed, as well,' screeched Tommy. 'He's been like this since he got up, sighed Brian. 'I don't know what's wrong with him — prob-

ably tired out after last night. I'd let him go but all he wants to do is smash me about.'
 'Do you want me to take over?' Brian shook his head.
 'Just as well,' I said. 'I don't really feel up to him this morning.' With Tommy's screams bounding around my ears and the smell from the drains clinging to my nose, I moved off.
 I went back to my office and sat down at the desk. Slowly I began to work my way through the mail. Bills, invoices, requests for admission — all the usual Monday morning paraphernalia. As boring and as necessary as ever. At break time Tommy was still performing.
 'You'd better keep the coffee hot,' said Bob as he came into the staff room. 'Brian and Chris are still battling it out with Tommy.' 'Do they need any help?' 'I shouldn't think so. Mind you, anything's possible. When I came past them just now Tommy was threatening us all with the local chapter of Hells Angels or some such outfit.'
 'What a way to earn a living,' I said and yawned.

At 11.30 the drains man turned up. Tall and mo-rose, a large dew drop dangling from the end of his nose. His name was Bill and, in a strangely aggressive, rather offhand manner, he was something of a character. 'Bloody place this is,' he muttered. 'Always something wrong.' I made no comment but took him to the overflowing sewer. He took one look and shuddered. 'Gordon Bennett!' he said, wiping a grimy overall sleeve across his nose. 'You haven't half got a blockage down there.' He pulled a large key out of his bag and lifted the lid of the man-hole. The stench wafted out like rancid butter; I felt my stomach turn over.



'Bloody hell!' said Bill. 'You *have* got problems.' He tried using his rods but the blockage would not clear. 'Only one thing for it,' he said, at last. I watched as he donned huge, waist high waders. Like a fisherman, I thought, a sanitary fisherman.

Slowly he lowered himself into the stagnant sewer. A professional at work but I couldn't, for the life of me, see how anyone in their right mind would want to do that for a living.

At that moment the common room door crashed open. It smashed back against the wall and the glass shattered, falling like crystal dewdrops to the grass. Tommy came diving through the open doorway and vaulted with Olympic agility over the sewer and the drains man.

'What the hell?' yelled Bill as the boy's foot missed him by half an inch.

'Tommy!' I called. 'Hold it!'

But before I had time to move Brian appeared on the path ahead of the running boy. Tommy had no chance to stop, crashed into Brian and together they fell sprawling to the ground. There was a brief struggle, arms and legs waving like semaphore poles.

'You'll have to excuse me,' I said. 'I think I might be needed.' Bill looked up from his hole in the ground, the smell of his profession wafting and hanging around his nose. Slowly he shook his head. 'Know something?' he sighed. 'I wouldn't have your job for all the tea in China.'

From *The Hour of the Wolf* by Phil Carradice, a teacher who became Deputy Principal (Ed.) of a Dr Barnados special school for dull and disturbed pupils in Kent.

Private Institutions

More on State Subsidies

Last month we reported on widespread dissatisfaction over the erratic payment of subsidies to private institutions. There was more to come.

Having to go into overdraft threatens our survival

Children's homes are small-fry to banks. The non-payment or late payment of subsidies puts our account directly into overdraft and the bank refuses us more money. We literally cannot buy food and clothes or pay salaries!

We were not paid our subsidy at the end of February, at the end of March and at the end of April — three months in a row. As a result we were R230 000 overdrawn and our management committee were seriously working on the closure of the children's home. The interest due on this overdraft then had to be paid by us, not to mention our embarrassment with unpaid bills to suppliers and unpaid salaries to staff. What was worse — while we were in a life and death situation, we could get no proper reasons for late payment: reasons were different according to the official we spoke to!

Insult to injury

In our subsidy crisis (state funding now amounts to only 38% of our income) the Department visits us to inspect. They check the millilitres of milk and the grams of meat we feed to the children per day! They tell us to replace the chipped tile in the kitchen and the cracked mirror in a bathroom — and remind us that they told us that we have rubbish bins without lids. And then they demand from us the details of our "programme" for the coming year — simply not realising that we cannot maintain our organisation into the foreseeable future, let alone make programme commitments!

But whatever else you do, at least take us seriously!

It is with some desperation that we have to go downtown personally to collect our subsidy cheques ... partly because we don't always trust the "your cheque is in the mail" messages, and partly because we actually need the money for food and other direct expenses today. But nothing is worse than arriving at the offices of the Department of Welfare to find the clerical staff horsing around or playing computer games!

On what basis are subsidy payments scheduled? One month we are paid on time, for three months we are paid late — and then in another month we are paid in advance!

We read in the journal that from April 1997 that "funding will be approved on the basis of programmes." Why have we not been told this by the Department? Surely this is a milestone in welfare funding, and will require some committed advance planning?!

Child care services are forced to take retrogressive steps to survive financially

Putting the children first is no longer possible. We feel bad that maintaining our physical resources and our staff team now takes precedence over what we can do for the children — if we are to continue to be of any help in the future. Each year we are cutting back on staff and essential repairs to buildings and facilities.

Talk to us

Channels for communication do not exist in our province: there is no accountability shown by the state for these



But whatever else you do, at least take us seriously!

resources which it nevertheless continues to use.

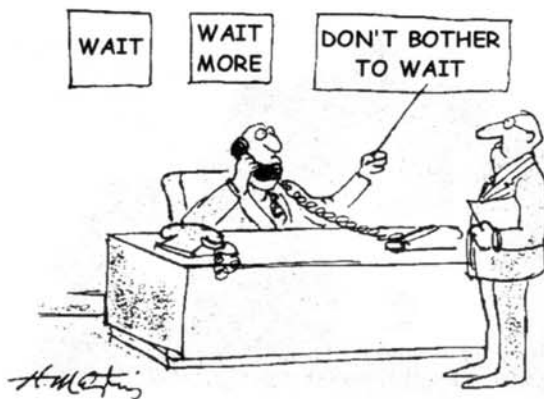
In spite of our correspondence over the past year with the relevant Minister in our province (copies of which are enclosed), *nothing has happened!*

It seems that all of the same numbers of staff are employed in the offices of the department — but when we are looking for answers there is nobody to explain things to us. We are left in a position of not knowing what is going on now or what is to happen in the future.

Remnants of apartheid subsidies remain

The incentive subsidy relating to the category of institution (as determined by the ratio of professional and care staff) seems to be a threatened species — though its retention until April 1997 is likely. But, in one province this additional subsidy has been paid until very recently only in respect of white children — and now is paid for all but black children!

Those responsible for reprioritising welfare services have a hard job. So do those trying to maintain acceptable levels of care in children's services.



Gisela Konopka (Gisa to her friends) has been a major contributor to both social work and child and youth care. After escaping from a Nazi concentration camp she immigrated to the United States where she became director of the Centre for Youth Development and Research at the University of Minnesota. **Jan Berry**, Executive Director Freeport West, a shelter for runaway youth, was a recent lecturer in an ongoing series in honour of Gisela Konopka.

Humanising Institutions for Youth

The only real grounds for any expertise that I have are in my having been the Executive Director of Freeport West for the past 16 years, a job I love. During that time I have met thousands of young people. And it is in their voices, their stories, their passion for life, for love and for a just and fair world that I trust.

I believe they can guide all of us to create humane institutions.

Two assumptions

I need to begin with two assumptions:

The first is that institutions — shelters, residential treatment centres and jails — are not going to go away. I regularly argue for their elimination but, for the time being, it appears that some people, both children and adults, must live away from their family or loved ones for a period of time or need help in meeting the basic needs of their families. Such situations can arise from behaviours that put others at high risk of harm, circumstances that make a family's home unsafe for children, or circumstances that force whole families to be disrupted.

Please forgive my failure here to address the larger engines driving these conditions, such as poverty and war and the promotion of violence for the sake of money. I am

only saying that we must make the best of difficult community conditions for some time to come.

The second assumption is that you all admire Gisa, and that you have some knowledge of the principles she has stood for, promoted, and held up to the scrutiny of scholars as well as those who see the needs of youth from other points of view. I share Gisa's bias about punishment. I believe that punishment (a word used regularly and righteously in corrections terminology and methodology) is simply a sanctioned, sometimes sophisticated, form of cruelty. It generally results in the devastation of the spirit and in the loss of the contributions which people treated more humanely might have made to all of us.

Gisa has often spoken about factors which humanize institutions — ways to transform places of confinement or places of welfare into places characterized by kindness, mercy and compassion. Most of you have heard them before, and you may take them for granted. Many of you believe that our institutions are already humane or, at least, that punishment, cruelty, isolation and disrespect of youth are rare and isolated events. I am not so sure of that.

Five themes

For the last year and a half at Freeport, we have been conducting focus groups made up of youth and families who are currently receiving our services. We ask them to be our consultants on a range of topics — everything from services they wish we would provide to other services they wish were available in the neighbourhood. Last August, we asked them about services and institutions for teenagers. Some of the incidents they described clearly involved institutional abuse and have been reported. I want you to hear what these youth had to say.

There are five themes or factors that humanize institutions which are commonly mentioned by youth in interviews:

1. Choices and control

Teenagers believe that choices and control over things that affect their lives are essential to a humane environment. Listen as one young girl describes her predicament: "... There's not enough homes for teenagers. There's lots of times when your parents don't care about their children. They say you've got to leave — 'Who cares where you go?' And when you tell some authority that, they act like you must have been something bad. You must have done something wrong. Or they put you in a foster care system that's not doing anything for you — it keeps sending you to St. Joe's and then it takes you out and then it sends you back to St. Joe's. There's not enough homes for teenagers."

Another youth said, "These people really think that [punishment] is going to solve these kids' problems. They probably did the same thing at home or worse. You've got people telling you what time you've got to go to bed, what time you can eat, and you know it's all about restricting communication between young people and adults — and it's just going to make kids worse."

Young people need institutions that listen, give real choices. They need institutions where youth are expected to exercise control over things that affect them. For example, several teens with children criticized Project SOLO for not having any "sipper cups" (those little cups kids use that don't spill). Yes, I said "criticized." They did not offer it as a helpful suggestion. They told us to get our act together with a simple provision that any mom would recognize the need for. So we went out and bought sipper cups. At a subsequent focus group, one young woman mentioned the fact that we listened and 'came through'. She said it was important to her that the group was not "just talk," that Project SOLO acted on their complaint, and she thanked us. Youth at SOLO judge our institution and other places for kids by their ability to be heard and to make real choices in their environments.





Young people know when a place treats them with dignity and respect. It's a place where they can see their friends, a place where they are listened to and believed.

2. Safe places

The second theme we hear from youth regarding institutions is about the need for a safe place to be yourself. Listen to a young girl describe her experience in a local hospital:

"And then, when I was [in the hospital], one of the kids, one of my friends that was there, she started going crazy, so they called all these guys, like big huge wrestler dudes in white, and they all came up there and restrained her and like tied her to a bed. It was just super crazy, and this guy stomped on her knee, he almost broke her knee, right, so she kicked him, kicked him where it counted. They locked her up in there for two days because she kicked him, but he almost broke her knee. And that's not what I'm there to see. I'm trying to deal with all this stuff that's going on in my life and she's trying to do the same thing. I'm not in there to see somebody beat up. That's not something that's good for somebody that's in the hospital because they are depressed and want to kill themselves."

At the same session, a young boy asked, "What do you do if you get injured while they're restraining you? This one kid, they grabbed him and held him, you know how they do, and they put him on his back and they dropped him on the floor, got on his chest. And he was all red, he was saying, 'I can't breathe, I can't breathe!' And they said, 'Tell us you were wrong, tell us you were wrong.' After they got done, I think he had almost broken his arm, and they took him to the hospital. What can you do?"

Restraint of some kind remains a common institutional practice. Youth tell us that they hate it. At Freeport, I won't allow it. It is my observation that force is used most often by adults bigger and stronger than the child they are restraining. Those of us who are little in stature have learned other methods to de-escalate a situation or to earn trust and truth from young people. It is probably true that at times restraint removes other youngsters from immediate danger. But the larger message sent to all youth in the institution is that it is not safe here; it is particularly risky to be yourself. Such practices are counterproductive to ensuring a humane environment for youth.

3. Dignity and respect

A third theme we hear from youth regards their need to be treated with dignity and respect. That includes respect for their pri-

vacancy, respect for their culture, for whom-ever and whatever a young person considers valuable.

Listen to a teen mom tell about her visit to get some financial help: "I wouldn't go to the Emergency Assistance for nothing ..., because every time I go down there they look at me like I'm crazy. And the first time I had signed up for welfare they told me, 'I think you're just a young mother trying to have a baby just to get a welfare cheque.' I know I made a mistake and had a child, but ain't no way I have a kid for a measly \$437 a month. I'd rather be single and working two jobs."

Listen to another teenager's insight: "Sometimes [when] you're in school, they always make you look like the bad person all the time, or you talk about something that may be going on at home and you're trying to get out of it or you're trying to help your mother if she have a drug problem or something like that, it's [as though] you always have to be the one with the problem That kind of attention, when the kids try to express their feelings and the professionals just block them off or just say, Oh, yeah, I hear you, but I don't want to pay any attention to you."

Young people know when a place treats them with dignity and respect. It's a place where they can see their friends, a place where they are listened to and believed. It is also a place that respects their privacy and the dignity of ownership of their own bodies.

Listen to another youth's experience in a hospital:

"One time, me and this girl were fighting, I guess. Anyway, they locked us both up in different seclusion rooms on the unit. They locked us both up, and they take off all your clothes and all your jewelry and all that and give you those little robes; you've got on no underwear, no bra, nothing, and then they lock you up in this room, there ain't no bathroom in there or nothin'.

"So then something happened. I think I was screaming because I wanted to get out. They took my robe, they took my robe and made me sit right in the middle of the room, and there's this little window in there, so they come by and look in there and I had to sit in the middle of the room just like that, no robe or nothing." Being treated with dignity and respect is an essential element of the humane institution.

4. Relationships and connectedness

A fourth theme teens raise when talking about kind and compassionate institutions is relationships that create connectedness. Such relationships go beyond "this is just my job"; they are about caring between human beings.

"This happened to a friend of mine. She was at a shelter. She was working with a staff person. Then about five years later, the staff met this girl again and she was homeless. She had no place to stay, no food or nothing, she was getting beat up and everything. She was real sick. So the staff member said 'you can come stay at my house a couple of days until we can get you hooked

up with some programs and stuff.' The shelter found out about it and they fired her. They fired her for taking this girl off the street when nobody else would help her. That is crazy!"

Temporary caring doesn't cut it with the youth I talk to. They are looking for more, they value being connected, they need caring that lasts. That takes great skill and commitment on the part of youth workers and so called "caregivers." What does enduring care look like? It means being able to come back to the institution even when you screwed up the first time. It means more than one chance to get it right. It takes a lot of patience. It means less worrying about rules and more worrying about teens getting what they need in order to thrive. It means that kindness, compassion and mercy come first.

5. Hope

Finally, teens in humane institutions value the presence of hope and promise.

There are lots of ways to make sure that hope and promise are in the air. Youth workers need to project high energy and a belief in the value of each youth's contribution. They need to say, often and clearly, that they believe in young people. They need to mean it.

Our institutions need to be environments where art and beauty are valued, where paintings and drawings are on the walls, where dancing happens spontaneously, where people tell jokes and laugh and have a lot of fun.

Our institutions need to be places where there are lots of small opportunities to be successful and to be praised for succeeding. We need to stop seeing everything as problems to be solved — and rather focus our energies on discovering and building on the strengths each youth brings. When hope and promise is in the air, youth thrive.

We know when children are thriving in institutions. There is light in their eyes. They are engaged with and connected to others — both adults and peers. They dare to try new things. They participate in the creation of their lives. They have a hunger for learning and mastery and move to those modes without prodding. They can afford to be kind to others.

In the preface of Gisa's autobiography, *Courage and Love*, she says, "I want to convey a basic conviction about human beings: They carry in them the seeds of destruction as well as great love and giving. It will depend on us, each person within each generation at all times, what we help to bring forth. This is an unending task."

We have a lot of work to do. If we listen to what these youth have said to us, we must all look at our institutions and ask ourselves hard questions about our practices and the environments we have created. If youth are to thrive, if what we do is to have value, we have to do it right. We have to create institutions that are truly kind, compassionate and merciful.

Acknowledgements: University of Minnesota, Gisela Konopka Lecture.

Annette Cockburn reminds us of the funny side ...

More of those street kids!

The Salesians' security guard arrived in my office, *incensed!* The small boys from Patrick's House were teasing him, running away, being disobedient and obstreperous. Largely to pacify him, I asked Linde our young driver to go down to the gate and get the names of the miscreants. He came back quickly with a list headed "Shoes." "What's this all about?" I asked. "Well" he said, "To get their names, I told them that I was writing a list of all the boys who wanted new shoes. I didn't say they would *get* them, merely whether they *wanted* them. Of course they all rushed up to me and gave their real names eagerly." "Brilliant strategy" I said. "50c pocket money fine for each of them for being rude to the security guard!"

Small Vernon comes to my car as I arrive at work. "Did I sleep in last night?" he asks me in a challenging sort of way. "Well, I don't know — did you?" "If I was good I would have, wouldn't I? If I was naughty I wouldn't have," he replies. I feel like someone at the Mad Hatter's tea party, but the logic is irrefutable. "Vernon did you sleep in or out?" "I've forgotten" he says firmly. "I'll look in the register" I say weakly, and make my escape.

The Tandemuis (Tooth Mouse) enjoyed at one time a spell of great popularity at The Homestead. Now we have a new mouse called "Koeke-



One afternoon the intake centre received a big donation of cakes and biscuits which was stacked on the counter in the kitchen for the next day. In the dead of night, Nico crept in and started nibbling and nibbling ...

Discovered by the child care worker, he was instantly nicknamed "Koekehuis" — and it stuck, maybe because he looks so like a little mouse, bright beady eyes and a pointed nose. When he moved to Patrick's House he became obsessed with the idea of having a mouse of his own. "A wit huis, *please* Principal!" he begged. A clear case of over-identification, I decided, but eventually I relented. They're looking at me now, Koekehuis on the chair, his mouse in a cage on his lap — bright beady eyes and pointed noses ...

It expressed their sentiments exactly! The DP pre-election poster. They appropriated the one outside Yizani and stuck their faces over that of Tony Leon. They'd been saying it for years, and now it was official, printed, and all over town. It was perfect and succinct.



The boys love videos, the more violent the better. We wage a constant battle, not always successfully, with video outlets who supply them with movies that have an age limit. One afternoon I came back to Patrick's House after a meeting. A video was playing. Forty boys from the oldest to the youngest sat there mesmerised (as did some of the staff!) Next day two of the oldest boys slouched into the office. They were wearing the mandatory Rasta hairstyle, balaclavas (with the South African flag in front) and dark glasses. "Yes?" I said sharply looking up from my work. "Pali," one said. "Will you buy for us that video?" We have never in the history of The Homestead bought a video! R74.00! "Yes" I said. "I will" The name of the movie? "The Lion King". I've said it before I know, but

they never fail to surprise us.

And in contrast: One night at 1 am the house father heard sounds from the kitchen. Going through, he found some of the boys watching a "blue" movie. The staff next day were aghast! Where did they get it? Who brought it in? (One staff member suggested that he should watch it to make sure it really was a blue movie!) "Don't lets overreact" I said, and put the cassette in my desk drawer. Sure enough a day or two later Mark, visibly uncomfortable, appeared before me. "Please Pali, can I have the movie back? It belongs to a boy at school". "What movie?" I asked him opening my eyes wide with bewilderment. "Um, Ugh, (shuffle) ... *that* movie."

"Bring some of the other boys who watched it with you into the office and I'll give it back to you." I said. I delivered a short lecture to them on the exploitation of women as sexual objects and then gave back the movie. Maybe, just maybe, one or two of them may remember something of what I said. But then on the other hand, maybe they won't.

One spectacular spring day Annie brought some jasmine into the office. The scent became overpowering and the vase was moved onto a partition in the dormitory. The oldest group took it into their section and a few days later Simphewe came in "Die blomme is gevrek" he said drawing his finger across his throat in the classic gesture. So Annie brought some more jasmine for them. They tended the flowers carefully. "Perhaps its because the scent covers up the smell of cigarette smoke" I said cynically. But when next there was a donation from Woolworths which included fresh flowers, they fought over possession of the roses, while chocolate mousses were quite neglected! Here is a picture of unexpected passion!



David Moloto has been working with street children in Pretoria for two years and recently completed the UNISA Certificate in Child and Youth Care. His concern is that the problems continue to grow and that helping resources are still far behind.

Children on the Streets: Some Facts we are up Against

Fact One: Causes

Repercussions of apartheid philosophy
 Unequal distribution of resources
 Socio-economic imbalances
 Lack of supportive networks within source communities
 Total collapse of family values
 Abuse — physical, emotional, sexual
 Truancy, negative peer influence
 Lack of recreational facilities
 Need to supplement income

Fact Two: Attractions

Attraction to city life
 Would-be street children visit the streets after school, on holidays, during weekends
 Zola zola, earn money
 Visit video arcades, cinemas
 Come to visit friends already on the street

Fact Three: Substance Abuse

Use drugs — marijuana, sniff glue fumes
 Need to alleviate hunger, coldness
 A way to escape realities of harsh life

Fact Four: Nowhere Else

Streets populated by boys above 17 years of age
 No safe, positive attractions
 No effective programmes available to address joblessness
 Lack of skills to enter job market

Fact Five: Obstacles

Illiterate, innumerate
 Have no proper identification
 Sexually active
 Distrusting of adult figures

Fact Six: Abuse

Suffer abuse of all forms
 Covert police/official brutality
 Community rejection
 Perceived, characterised as criminals

Fact Seven: Access

Need mental-health and other services but most organisations are not prepared to go where these children are — "on the streets"

Fact Eight: Available Options

Compete over few resources
 Hardly raise enough money to buy food, clothing and entertain themselves
 Option like criminal activities, chip-chop are easier ways of obtaining money

Fact Nine: Resources

Only two organisations working with street children in Pretoria
 Nowhere to refer children

Fact Ten: Supports

Street worker met a child daily who had been reconciled with his family but relapsed into street life (Why?)
 Problems at home not adequately solved
 Inadequate supervision or after care programmes
 Unequal distribution of resources still prevails
 Lack of supportive networks, extended families
 Collapse of education
 Lack of recreational facilities
 Total collapse of our social welfare systems
 Social workers' offices centrally located, not reaching the grass-roots

The way forward?

Without community awareness and participation in the street children's problems our work becomes futile.

- We need to design an array of programmes within *source communities* ranging from dealing with teenage pregnancies, juvenile delinquency, violent youths ...
- The employment of school social workers will help identify problems of children (and children with problems) at school.
- After-school care centres, keeping children stimulated and busy with a variety of activities — developing, learning, and out of mischief!
- Services, both state and private, wherever they exist, need to be integrated, co-ordinated and community-based.
- Constructive youth development services need to be created so that children and youth have positive options, especially in the evenings and weekends.
- Family support networks are essential, as are family crisis centres.

- Drop-in centres, soup kitchens in source communities help "field" at-risk kids.
- Impoverished families need support grants from government to get back on their feet.
- More emphasis might be placed on prevention — programmes running in schools and neighbourhoods, identifying children at risk.



Conclusion

If communities are unhealthy, lacking the necessary supportive structures that all communities need to produce healthy children and families (good schools, security, decent housing, employment opportunities) then many of the residents of that community — especially children — will be unhealthy as well.
 While it is true that children can be helped on the streets, it is also true that squatter camps and informal settlements can be helped to develop into functioning communities and suburbs.
 We all need to move towards thinking, planning and developing real prevention services for children and families.
 Our communities, our families, remain the beacons of hope. Apartheid has destabilised communities, with such tools as the migrant labour systems, influx control, pass laws; so the rich, warm support networks that existed died.
 It is equally important for us to support Reconstruction and Development Programmes, because by only organising communities for their own futures will real change ever happen. Period.



MARSH
 MEMORIAL
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Child Care Workers

Marsh Memorial Homes have vacancies for energetic child care workers. Our children are committed by the courts and aged between 4 and 18 years.

The ideal applicant will —

- have experience in working with children
- possess a driver's licence
- be able to work under stress
- be prepared to work long hours and live in
- be a team player working under supervision
- be over 25 years of age

You will have the opportunity of contributing towards the health development of the children in your care

Please phone Sue Gillespie on 689-9301 (09:30 and 12:00)



THE CIRCLE OF COURAGE

Sabitha Samjee, one of the NACCW's contract trainers for Project Upgrade, recently attended the Black Hills Seminar hosted by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg and Steve Van Bockern, authors of *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*. In the setting of the Black Hills of South Dakota, sacred to tribes of the great plains, students learned something of Native American models of self-concept and belonging.

The circle is a sacred symbol of life ... Individual parts within the circle connect with every other; and what happens to one, or what one part does, affects all within the circle.

— Virginia Driving Hawk Sneve

Reference to the Circle of Courage throughout the recent Black Hills Seminar was very powerful and thought provoking — especially as the seminar was hosted on the soils of the Lakoto People, and delegates from different life experiences were able to spiritually identify with the Native American Model of positive self concept.

The spirit of belonging is most significant in detached children and youth of broken belongings as opposed to the attachment theory (Rutler, 1981; Ainsworth, 1989) where we once were taught that attention getting behaviour should be ignored and it would be extinguished. We now have discovered that children are most receptive to human attachment in such times of crisis and difficulty.

The spirit of belonging in Native American culture is expressed in these simple words: "Be related, some how, to everyone you know". Native American communities believed that all must be part of the circle of relatives. This sense of belonging also extended to nature, in the belief that all of creation must live in harmony as relatives.

"The First Nations cultures of North America have developed a wealth of core principles for rearing caring, confident, respectful and generous children. These concepts are supported by the ideas of the great European youth work pioneers who chal-

lenged the authoritarian traditions of western culture. Now, emerging research is validating this early wisdom.

The universal need to belong

Mortimar Alder (1990) writes:

"All values are expression of either *Wants* or *Needs*. Our wants are personal or cultural preferences and thus based on values that are relative. But human needs are universal and absolute, and absolute human values are those tied to absolute human needs."

By Alder's definition, the Native American 'Circle of Courage' would seem to express absolute values. Children in every culture need to belong; therefore depriving a child of caring is universally evil. Children by their nature are created to strive for mastery; thus school that sabotage this motivation to competence are wasting and mistreating children. Children from any background have inalienable rights to self determination. To block this development of independence is to commit an injustice. Finally, children from the



... children are most receptive to human attachment in such times of crisis and difficulty.

dawn of co-operative civilization have sought to give to others the concerns that they have known. If we fail to provide opportunity for caring and generosity we extinguish the human spirit.

(Quotations from *Beyond the Curriculum of Control* by Larry K. Brendtro and Martin Brokenleg.)

Aspects of discipline

With a good discipline plan students —

1. Learn from their mistakes.
2. Learn to predict the consequences of their behaviour ahead of time.
3. Learn to accept responsibility for the outcome of their choices.
4. Attempt to control their own behaviour instead of that of others.

THE D'S OF DISCIPLINE

1. *Develop* caring relationships.
2. *Design* a classroom which is structured for success.
3. *Defuse* (disengage and de-escalate) potential problems at lowest, earliest possible level.
4. *Debrief* later so students can learn from mistakes.

Don't think "He's so disobedient!" — rather think "He's so self directed!"

Don't try to control him: Rather structure positive and negative consequences and give choices — so he will direct his own behaviour to earn the pay-offs and avoid the pitfalls.

Be his encouraging coach.

WHEN CHILDREN OR YOUTH ACT UP —

- Realise that you can't control what *others do!* You can only control *what you do!*
- If you are not part of the problem, separate from it and don't own it.
- Don't personalise — Aim for caring detachment. Be diagnostic. Don't let a student push your buttons.
- Watch yourself talk — don't lose your control. Don't accuse. Don't panic.
- Realise that if you change *your* behaviour, their behaviour has got to change.
- Trust that things would work out if you follow the right process and use the right skills.
- Focus on the *student's needs* instead of *your feelings*.

To get a student to change his behaviour, don't focus on the *behaviour* — rather focus on *how he sees himself or the situation*. (Vickie Phillips 1995)

No discipline is imposed — youth and child care workers must give consequences so the child/youth will learn from his experiences. Don't sabotage this learning by letting the child/youth get mad at *you*, instead of looking at the choices *he* made!



Some children emerge from traumatic, abusive experience with a resiliency that enables them to survive and to cope with the stress.

Personal Development Philosophy

1. Look for things to like in people you don't know.
2. Welcome diversity (those of other races, ages, places)
3. Build others up so that they feel *better* about themselves.
4. Use a *positive attitude* to make yourself feel better.
5. Develop a sense of pride based upon your own *strengths* and those of your culture.
6. Be *assertive* when communicating.
7. Attempt to control your *own* actions.
8. *Give respect* to others so that you will receive it in return.
9. Take *responsibility* for your own actions.
10. Always think for yourself rather than uncritically follow the crowd.
11. Think of the *consequences* before you make a decision.
12. Create your own *future* by setting *goals* for yourself.
(1993 by Vicki Phillips)

Peer counselling

The focus in many of the caring environment in USA is on building strengths and resilience in youth at risk through peer counselling.

Some children emerge from traumatic, abusive experience with a resiliency that enables them to survive and to cope with the stress. These resilient adolescents provide an untapped resource for peer counselling programs.

Peer counselling includes tutoring, helping, facilitating, or supporting. Such counselling includes reaching out to a peer to assist him or her with a problem. The process requires systematic training in interpersonal communication skills and education about helping and caring. Peer counselling includes a trained "helper"; and it involves a focus on the problems, needs, or concerns of the helpee. (Carol Stuart, University of Victoria.) Since peers speak the same language, and have similar interests, attitudes, values

and personal demands, there is a level of trust that encourages them to seek out each other. They act as models for each other and establish norms and standards for the peer group.

For peer counsellors who have experienced some trauma, focusing on the self becomes an important way to "share, integrate and hopefully master painful memories and fears" (Mogtader & Leff, 1986, p 175). It is important to focus on both the process of the helper and the process of helping.

Resilient adolescents are likely to have more experience with problem behaviour and, perhaps, are more emotionally vulnerable. Yet they still can provide a great resource to their peers. It is our responsibility as professionals to prepare them for the challenges they will encounter.

Some reflections of delegates

"I was refreshed and thoroughly enjoyed material on *Strategies for building self discipline in at risk youth*." The reframing technique was quite exciting, and the fact that my communicating skills are required to explore alternatives when conveying messages to at risk youth."

* * *

"*Control* is the word I hear most often in child and youth care — and to me this is the opposite of *creativity*. I see this crisis internationally as a *reaction* to the aggression that these children show, but also as a *cause* for some children to be aggressive. How can you teach youngsters to be independent when there is so much control on their behaviour. I had a feeling of heaviness and immobility."

* * *

"*Creative people can revert to simpler ways of experiencing to fresher ways of perceiving. They can throw away the common templates that are used to order the world and confidently seek simpler new ones.*" (Nicholas Hobbs and Schools of Joy 1960)

"There was a powerful presence of young people in care giving testimony of their broken lives, and the process towards healing and recovery. I was touched and overcome by feelings of guilt as some of the young people unfolded their tragic, painful, hurting experiences and shattered dreams. Unashamedly they talked about having picked up pieces of their shattered dreams to make healing a "reality". This was possible because of the dedicated nurturance, love, acceptance and non-judgemental child and youth care practitioners who believe in children. This characteristic in child and youth care is very special and spiritual — it goes beyond degrees, facilities and resources. "You either have it or you don't."

* * *

"*I admired the young peoples great strength, tenacity, courage and resilience.*"

* * *

"This was a seminar with a difference — not much child and youth care jargon floating around — not much talk on techniques, methodologies, strategies, interventions, behaviour management procedures, etc. It was spirited and spiritual in the sense that the focus was on practitioners and educators searching their innermost soul around the use and involvement of the total self as a tool in the personal development philosophy."

TAMING DRAGONS

Experiential education is much more than a trip down the river or a climb up a mountain. **Jeff Wilson**, a twenty-year veteran of alternative education tells his story and reveals the evolution of his work.

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."
— **Marcel Proust**

Twenty years ago, I led my first group of teenagers into the woods. We canoed, hiked, bicycled and explored. We grappled with issues of sharing, honesty, trust, self-esteem, integrity, and spirituality. We were young and walked into each adventure with anticipation and little skill. Each of us was after something, and we were after it together. Perhaps seventy such wilderness experiences later, the 'landscape' has remained the same: I still take teenagers into the "woods". We still struggle with the same virtues, and we still are after something together. What changed and continues to change is the way in which I view and approach these experiences.

The mountains speak for themselves

We are on our final expedition. It is Day 18 of 21 days. We have canoed 157 miles with 43 portages. The next portage is crowded with people having lunch. Without a word, they hit the water before the canoes touch land, hefting packs and flipping canoes. Under two minutes, and we are moving across the portage. They are proud and confident. They showed their best.

In the early years we just did the trips. We were there for safety and skill instruction. With a strong programme format like Outward Bound, we provided some tools of teamwork, reflection, service, and self-reliance. As an instructor, I relied on shared hardship, adventure, and relationship to provide the learning opportunity. I believe we worked on commitment, passion, and gut feelings, which, of course, grow with experiences. Justifying the value of experiential learning was difficult. Learning was a personal matter; and when the learning conversation took place between an individual and the "mountain", results were random.

On this same canoe trip, we did one 16-hour "push" day, travelling 43 miles. The "kids" had a choice (they wanted to make a rock-climbing site), they had support (whenever we saw them struggling "too much"), and the experience was processed (we asked them how they felt about it the next day). The majority did seem to feel accomplishment, having done what they thought impossible. However, in the actual experience, in the action, each person had to create their own interpretation of value, and use whatever resources they had during the physical, emotional and mental challenge. A few had a firm view of the goal and pushed onward. A few were pulled along by the pressure of not appearing weak. Bobby was driven to success at all costs, something he was very used to. Tim just did whatever he was told to do. Yes, they ended up with a tangible feeling of accomplishment; but one wonders what myriad of other feelings were triggered in each of them, and what relative power each of those feelings had. We knew these experiences, these conversations with the mountain were powerful; we just trusted our gut as to why or in what ways.

The conscious use of metaphor

In 1983, Stephen Bacon brought the use of metaphor to my outdoor world. We started talking about the motivation and sense of accomplishment that occurs when kids learn successfully with natural consequences. We knew this already through experiences with rain and setting up tents properly. What was missing was the conscious design of the experience and the possibility of creating metaphoric learning opportunities for a group, without waiting for the natural teaching moment. Through a carefully designed experience, we could create metaphors to evoke personal transformation or behavioural change. The other goals of accomplishment and acceptance of responsibility for actions would still have been

realised.

Dr. Bacon added assessment, isomorphism, and transderivational search to our toolbox. We read the group through a variety of planned activities (assessment). We decided what they might need, and then designed a challenge that was similar to their real-life needs (isomorphic experience). The challenge needed to be compelling enough to hold their attention. When the experience began, the teenagers searched for any past strategies that may have relevance to their current challenge (transderivational search). They would likely try old strategies, so we designed the climbing experience to tease out these existing strategies and to offer new approaches toward successful resolution of "problems," rather than just present a challenge for kids to struggle with on their own. This started to add a margin of control over results, as well as meeting more specific needs of each child. With all of the real learning occurring during the experience, we were able to look at how to frame it to make sure critical conditions of change were met. We used debriefing as a reinforcement tool, rather than allowing chatter to bring meaning out of a random experience.

For example, with a group of teenage girls (age 13-15) at risk of going to the streets, we identified control issues between mothers and daughters as one critical issue to explore. We designed a high-ropes course where each mother and daughter team would navigate the events together. To shift the power balance and the perceptions of care and responsibility the girls were taken through the course on an earlier date and were given a frame of personal power and self-confidence. The girls then were asked to lead and support their mothers through the course. The mothers' and daughters' altered perceptions of capabilities, their shared "risk" adventure, and the clear imprint of responsible behaviour when trust was given were all felt in action, not words. The experience would certainly be re-visited in the next home session as control issues again surfaced. We were getting clear on tailoring each experience to the needs of individuals and groups for maximum transfer of learning back to their lives.

The power and possibility

As one can see, the therapeutic possibilities are immense. New



experiences and challenges elicit a search for past experiences that are similar (a metaphorical process), and for the solutions that were used for those previous experiences. For example, Candy was very keen to try her first rock climb. She was athletic and ready to show the boys that she was as able as they. When she hit a bulge in the rock 25 feet up that demanded a swinging move where one has to trust the safety rope, she was not prepared for the metaphorical search that brought out sexual abuse by her father. Feeling out of control, afraid of falling, and being frozen in action brought the image of her father's face at night. Candy's choice (and in experiential learning, choice must always be free and respected) was to be lowered off the climb. Candy had met one of her dragons. We discussed the connections, identified the feelings, and saved the confrontation for another time when Candy was ready.

Designing experiences

We were designing experiences, with specific results for each individual, as well as for the group.

We started with their needs. Then we looked for the concerns behind those needs — the larger stories that drive their outward needs. This provided the critical conditions for change. Then we decided what intensity to give the experience (in order to meet or exceed the intensity of the problem or behaviour that was to be opened to change).

Only after all of this did we choose the direct experience that might best produce the desired results. For example, if you first decide that you are hiking and then realise that the group needs an intensity of co-operation, since people can hike by themselves within a group.

However, if you first decide on an experience that includes co-operation, you then can choose one big raft, where everyone must communicate and paddle as a team. There is also great potential for bringing back to human-made environments the very real behaviour changes that the natural environment allows.

Experiential learning is not just the rock face or the river or the trek up a glacier, though I believe there is an accelerated learning available in the "original" environment. Experiential learning provides a direct connection of the body to a new set of strategies, solutions, and actions.

Simplicity beyond complexity

At a certain point, one must step beyond the metaphor. Ultimately, experiential learning is a spiritual journey. It is an opportunity to seek understanding of yourself and to choose how you wish to stand in the world.

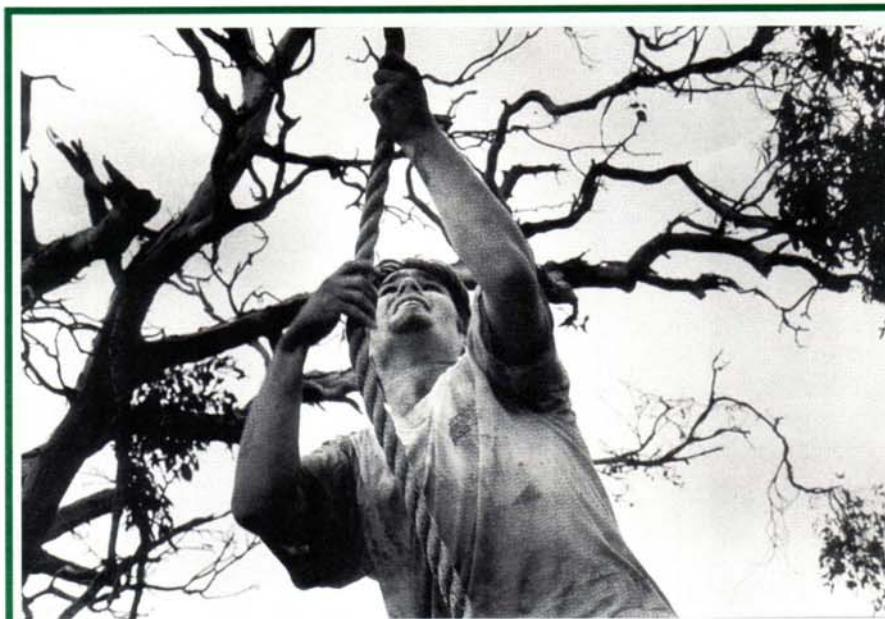
Whether through wilderness or other tools, the distractions we all choose to concern ourselves with must be quieted for a time to impel us to consideration of who we are, who we have become, and who we will become.

These are the desired results. The meta-

phors and challenges are the tools. And taming the dragons simply means accepting who we are and learning to work with ourselves to allow new ways of being in the world. By embracing our dragons, rather than denying or trying to slay them, we give ourselves the chance to create our future with full knowledge of the

driving forces from our past. It is a dance with powerful implications for the children with whom we work. It is a dance of new eyes.

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HOPE ON A ROPE

Sunday afternoon, my vision filled with lounging youths. Too many kids in for the weekend to take to them for a walk in the mountains. My mind searching for a suitable activity that would keep the boredom at bay, I head towards the pool area.

There I find Matthew and Mark busy with the task of tensioning a piece of rope from one end of the pool to the other, at a height of about half a metre above the water.

"What's up guys?" I ask indicating the rope.

"We just thought we would tie the rope," answered Matthew, "Maybe we will try to cross the pool without getting wet."

Mark feels the tension in the rope with his hand, it's so slack that he almost loses his balance and falls into the pool. "So much for that idea, Matthew," he says with a wry smile.

"This has got a kind of obstacle course feel to it." I comment.

POW!!

An explosion of creative activity follows as an obstacle course is built in the backyard of our centre. A plank is nailed to a dead tree trunk, a swing is transformed into a climbing rope, an old door is placed on some blocks.

This to be crept under, that to be balanced on; this you have to climb up and touch

with both hands, that to be jumped over — "and over there by the pool ... well that you have to cross over and under the rope or you will fall in the water."

In my mind I see the fearsome sharks swimming in our very normal suburban swimming pool, so descriptive are the explanations given by Matthew and Mark to the large group of boys that have gathered and are now waiting in anticipation for their turn to complete the course. "I'm going first" says Hilton.

Sammy grabs the whistle, I'm given the role of time-keeper, but Sammy he is the judge. The whistle blows. Up, down, around, run, balance, jump, under and over. Hilton collapses. "Wat is my tyd?" he asks. "One minute 36 seconds" I reply.

Thus it went, the boys competing, improving on the times. I think we all felt as tense as any of the Olympic competitors when Kenneth finally got the time down to under a minute.

Only when the call for supper was heard did the passion over the obstacle course decline. The boys moved towards the dining room.

Sure they were nursing blisters and a few cuts and grazes, but they were also nurturing the experience of the last few hours — experience of creating and owning their own good time, of challenge, mastery and of support of one another.

— Mark Gamble