



Child & Youth Care

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

ISSN 0258-8927 VOL 14 NO 1 FEBRUARY 1996

**A LOOK AT THE UN AND
UNICEF: PROS AND CONS**

**SPARING THE ROD IN THE
NEW SOUTH AFRICA:
LEARNING NEW WAYS**

**YOUTH CRIME: PARENTS
SHARE RESPONSIBILITY**

**CHILD CARE WORKERS CAN HELP TO
HEAL THE PAIN OF SEXUAL ABUSE**

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Children's homes and institutions are looking for more realistic planning

There is always a gap between idealism and practice. The thing about idealism is that it allows us to suspend reality while we think, however sincerely, about what is desirable. The thing about practice is that it is here-and-now stuff, grounded in reality.

The reality

We are told that there are about thirty thousand children and young people in care in South Africa. Many of the institutions working with these children are seriously doubting at this time their ability to continue their work. The 'subsidy crunch' (see News, page 18) is leading directly to staff cuts and an inevitable decline in services. A common route in such circumstances is middle management stripping, following the argument that this at least allows basic services on the ground to continue. The fact is ignored that this characteristically leads us back to the days of overwhelmed leadership (preoccupied with funding rather than practice) and unsupported, burned out on-line staff (sitting ducks for allegations of neglect and abuse).

Phased out

Into this situation comes the reported statement of the director general of the Department of Welfare (*Sunday Times* 4.2.96) that "the Department is hoping to phase out these homes within the next few years, and replace them with family,

foster and community-based care." Such a statement is unnecessarily alarming to the many organisations which care for children, and, it must be said, not by any means wholly at the state's cost. These institutions have worked hard and contributed generously to the care of young wards of the state. The threat of "phasing out" may well convince them that it is not worth continuing. This was not the intention of the Welfare Ministry's discussion document which led up to the White Paper. This document introduced the section on residential care thus:

"Where placement of children in family and community-based programmes is not an option, children will be placed in residential facilities, but only as a last resort."

There was really nothing new in this. Children were never placed in care unless extensive efforts had been made with their families and all other options considered.

Policy

Idealism and policy do not remove from the world the children and youth who fall through the cracks of our family and community services. After the exalted words, we look back down to the streets and there, still, are the children – looking us in the eyes.

Where will this one sleep tonight? Who will take care of this one whom nobody else wants? Which organisation will protect this one – and pro-

tect us from this one?

VanderVen and Peterson reported to FICE International ten years ago that deinstitutionalisation in the US had done no more than confirm that the institutions were needed:

"Despite the increase of institutional alternatives, the number of children in institutional care remains at the same general level, although the population (of these institutions) has changed: fewer children are in corrections and more are in the mental health system. It appears that rather than decreasing the use of institutions, children have been placed in different diagnostic categories qualifying them for different institutional categories."

The irony is that the community resources which replaced the institutions consisted largely of residential care group homes – which simply illustrated, like it or not, that there are always kids whom society's normal resources cannot cope with.

Left and right hand?

Perhaps it is as well that the departments of welfare and health are now separate: similar enthusiasm for the denial of ill-health might otherwise prompt the "phasing out" of all of our hospitals!

On the other hand, the policy which is emerging from the Inter-Ministerial Committee seems to affirm the place of the child and youth care service, expecting of it wider involvement in family and community work (something it has been neither permitted nor subsidised for in the past).

What is more, the child and youth care service (the institutions themselves and the child care profession which drives them) has itself both contributed to this thinking, and promised its help.

Confused messages now must not be allowed to dishearten or undermine this valuable and willing resource – or worse, leave it with the impression that it is of no further use and might as well give up and disband sooner rather than later. ■

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Watterson

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Fédération Internationale des Communautés Éducatives
International Federation of Educative Communities (UNESCO)



Association Internationale des Educateurs de Jeunes Inadaptés
International Association of Workers with Troubled Children

Cover Picture: Errol Higgins



National Association of Child Care Workers
<http://jos2.iafrica.com/naccw>

Child & Youth Care ISSN 0258-8927 is non-commercial and private subscription journal, formerly published in Volumes 1 through 13 (1983 to 1995) as *The Child Care Worker*. Copyright © 1996 The National Association of Child Care Workers

Editorial: P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735, South Africa. e-Mail: pretext@iafrica.com. Telephone/Fax: (021) 788-3610. *Child & Youth Care* is published on the 25th of each month except December. Copy deadline for all material is the 10th of each month.

Subscriptions: NACCW Members: Journal and Individual Membership of the Association is R70.00 p.a. Non-members, Agency or Library Subscriptions: R70.00 p.a. post free. Commercial advertisements: R312 page *pro rata*. Situations Vacant/Wanted advertisements for child and youth care posts are free to Corporate and Individual Members. All enquiries, articles, letters and new subscriptions may be sent to the Editor at the above address.

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People



Sbongile Manyathi

Sbo has worked for the NACCW for two years. With responsibility for liaison and communication, she joined us at a time when there was a proliferation of NGOs and meetings, and it was very necessary to keep in touch with others, to hear about needs, developments and plans, and to inform others of what we were doing. Sbo went on to manage the NACCW's Project CHAMPS (Community HIV/AIDS Model for Prevention and Support), which was an education and support programme within the community. The Project linked with mothers who discovered they were HIV when their babies were born, and followed them back home where they could teach and support other mothers and families. Even though KwaZulu is the worst affected province, the project was up against huge problems. There is still much denial around AIDS, and awareness and acceptance were primary goals of CHAMPS. "It was not feasible to develop much in the way of prevention, since our clients were already HIV positive. But we did develop an awareness among fellow professionals and others that AIDS is more than a medical condition. At the same time we learned that to change people's attitudes takes a very long time." There were other circumstances which

made the work difficult. Limited hospital facilities for Blacks meant that low priority was afforded to check-ups; hospital staff were busy enough with really sick people. Few could qualify for medical aid. Thus patients would complain of a cough or a tummy, think they had 'flu and hope it would get better – and thus not know their HIV status until full-blown AIDS developed.

The CHAMPS project winds up in March as the funding contract ends. Many will miss it for what it offered, and for what was learned about the disease.

* * *

Sbo gained her social work degree at the University of Zululand, and her honours degree at UNISA.

She first worked for six years with the Epilepsy Foundation before joining Keep Durban Beautiful, doing community work, education and project development. Then for seven years she was Principal of Ngwelezane Reform School in KwaZulu. Here Sbo discovered the unique nature of child and youth care work – as against her existing qualifications and experience. "Child care and social work were simply two very different things," she says. She enrolled for the BQCC, the Problem Profile Approach (PPA) course and the course in Consultative Supervision in Child Care. In recent months Sbo has been managing the NACCW's National Office and participating in the training of state institution staff as part of the IMC initiatives. Sbo is excited about the tasks ahead of the child and youth care service in South Africa. "There is a very strong focus on training, especially for those who were never trained." She lives in Umlazi with her 21-year-old son and ten-year-old foster daughter. ■

The Constitutional Court decided on 9 June 1995 that a legal system which employs corporal punishment as a penal measure demonstrates that "an element of cruelty" has been incorporated in the judicial system. This is a breach of the Interim Constitution. The legal implications of this verdict for education resulted in the Department suspending all forms of corporal punishment in schools. Teachers are still expected to maintain discipline, but have not been provided with alternatives by the Department. Though alternatives to corporal punishment and other authoritarian practices do exist, and are being sought out by teachers, they require a commitment to long-term processes. **Micheline Benson** of the Centre for Conflict Resolution's Youth Project discusses in *Track Two* some of the issues confronting both teachers and conflict resolution trainers since the banning of corporal punishment.

Sparing the Rod

Finding alternatives to authoritarian discipline practices

In workshops and seminars run by the Centre for Conflict Resolution's Youth Project, trainers are often confronted with the question of whether conflict resolution is an absolute alternative to corporal punishment. The Youth Project's trainers are flexible on this issue. Many workshop participants either represent schools which used corporal punishment as a method of discipline, or themselves hold the view that caning is an effective form of discipline. Instead of judging or blaming, the Youth Project challenges these schools and individuals to use constructive conflict resolution as an additional approach to discipline. Demanding that schools do away

with corporal punishment and use conflict resolution as the only approach to discipline would be narrow-minded at best. By encouraging the use of conflict resolution as one of many alternatives to corporal punishment, teachers are encouraged to experiment with some of the suggested skills and strategies. Most teachers return to their schools and attempt only a few exercises, role-plays and interventions. Some still opt for the traditional and more familiar approaches to dealing with conflict. Few schools attempt conflict resolution programmes on a larger scale and in many cases, the work is a result of the commitment of an individual or a few interested teachers. In addition to the commitment of the staff, a supportive staff body and principal and a school culture which lends itself to constructive problem-solving are essential.

However, conflict resolution programmes are usually an extra-mural activity for which teachers are

not paid. With their existing workload, assuming more responsibility than is required takes real dedication. The result is that finding alternative ways of dealing with discipline and other conflict issues remains an issue of choice.

Alternatives are necessary

The banning of corporal punishment in schools has made teachers desperate to find alternative, effective methods of discipline. The authorities have banned what was, for many schools, the only form of discipline, and left nothing in its place. Teachers have been forced to scout around for organisations which can offer assistance and some relief. Looking for and trying out alternatives can no longer be an issue of choice, but of necessity. Initiatives which offer support and guidance to teachers and other interested parties have mushroomed. These mainly involve educationists, NGOs, teachers, student organisations and parents. Discussions so far have made it clear that there is not yet consensus that corporal punishment is really an ineffective and degrading form of punishment. Be-

fore people look at alternatives, they must want to abandon the traditional way, understand why they should, and want to find an alternative.

Schools, teachers, parents and even pupils are divided on this topic. For some, the banning came as a relief and a victory for human rights. Others are pleased with the banning of the cane, but angered that teachers are still expected to discipline pupils even though they have not been provided with alternatives. Others, still, feel that corporal punishment should be reinstated.

In some cases, parents have demanded that teachers or principals cane their children. In one case, pupils themselves asked for corporal punishment to be reinstated. Some teachers and principals have decided to ignore the banning order and have made this decision public.

The alternatives of conflict resolution, whole school development, child management and so on, require hard work and dedication, fuelled only by a belief in the approach and a commitment to its implementation. These approaches often necessitate challenging



the behaviour patterns of teachers, parents and pupils alike. For example, rather than viewing pupils as irresponsible youngsters who need to be policed, they are taught and challenged to be responsible for their own actions and the consequences thereof.

The positive aspect of the banning of corporal punishment is that teachers are forced to explore other, often ignored, methods of discipline. Perhaps they will find new solutions to old problems. Perhaps the alternatives will present them with challenges they will enjoy.

The negative aspect is that the element of choice has been removed. The exploring of alternatives has become a desperate, unavoidable measure to prevent chaos. In addition, some teachers will undoubtedly view any extra training they will need to implement alternative methods as an added burden on an already pressurised schedule. The more this process is seen as something they have to do, the more there will be resentment and resistance.

Process vs results

All the alternative methods emphasise the importance of good *process* — one which takes into account the needs, interests, concerns and aspirations of all involved in the process, including the less powerful.

In the past, *results* were emphasised and little if any attention was paid to process — the way in which results are obtained. In consequence, many of the measures used to bring about discipline produced only short-term gains. In the long-term, such stop-gap approaches to discipline are really more time-consuming and less effective.

The Youth Project's training emphasises that Peace Education is a long-term process. A conflict resolution programme cannot be operational in a school in two months. Much time needs to be dedicated to changing the culture of the school to understand, practise and encourage constructive conflict resolution.

Long-term effort

Even in schools where teachers have worked hard at creating such a culture, the implementation process has taken approximately a year.

There is no doubt that serious attention must be paid to effective discipline in schools. Teachers and parents need to be trained and exposed to various methods of dealing with conflict, discipline and other school-related problems. Together, educationists, NGOs and other organisations and individuals can do much to address these problems.

Although the banning of corporal punishment has forced teachers into a sometimes unwelcome situation, immediate action must be taken. If this action is to be of any value, commitment to long-term process is essential. ■

Questions

Finding our Way

I am a new child care worker, and there seems to be so much to learn. I am guided by daily timetables and the rules of our organisation — but there is so much I don't know. Where are the road maps?

There are two kinds of road maps. There is the kind you have already met in your timetables and rules, the ones with fine detail. "Travel along Main Road for exactly five blocks, at the traffic lights turn left, opposite the doggy parlour there is a lane to the right. The place you want is the fifth house on the left (the one with the red roof)." You can't go wrong with maps like that, which are usually very helpful. So, your seniors and colleagues will soon teach you the finer details of the job. But there are other kinds of road maps — the ones which say "Keep heading towards the north, you will see the vegetation change, its gets drier for a while, but then you get to the mountains ..." or the ones which say "You will begin to smell the ocean, keep heading into the sunrise, the road gets a little bumpy, and then there's the beach."

Child care work has maps like this too. Often it is only when we keep our eyes on the distant objective, when we consider the broader strokes or the "big picture", that we see the meaning of the daily fine detail. You need a bagful of these large-scale maps. "Remember when you were a kid." Pull that one out and study it from time to time, and you will find yourself readjusting your course, however slightly. "Think of someone who was really helpful and influential in your life." Not what he or she actually did, but how they were with you, how they related to you. "After an encounter with a child, ask yourself how *useful* you were — who gained what from your actions?"



All of these guidelines have no particular connection with table manners, angry outbursts, being late for school or problems with parents; they are general things, connected with anything we do with kids.

Instead of ticking off twenty tasks, ask what sort of day did Rosie have today? Was it OK or was it tough? When you picture John, what kind of expression does he have on his face — is it happy or troubled, confident or confused?

These questions and observations are the same as noticing the vegetation, sniffing the breeze. Not very scientific, but vital ways of checking out the lie of the land, of sensing the climate of children's lives.

Yes, we do have to concentrate on the timetable and the rules every day, but we truly find our way by knowing generally where we are headed, and what we want to leave with the youngsters. Re-read the familiar lines of Dorothy Nolte as you consider some things to avoid, and some of the many gifts you have to offer —

If a child lives with criticism,

He learns to condemn.

If a child lives with hostility,

He learns to fight.

If a child lives with ridicule,

He learns to be shy.

If a child lives with shame,

He learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives with tolerance,

He learns to be patient.

If a child lives with encouragement,

He learns confidence.

If a child lives with praise,

He learns to appreciate.

If a child lives with fairness,

He learns justice.

If a child lives with security,

He learns to have faith.

If a child lives with approval,

He learns to like himself.

If a child lives with acceptance and friendship,

He learns to find love in the world.

Research and clinical experience indicate that the effects of sexual abuse can be both profound and long-term, sometimes affecting the quality of life for the victim/survivor forever. While the therapeutic benefits of traditional clinical interventions are well documented, it is important that direct caregivers also recognise that they have much to offer. **Lorraine Fox**, well known to South African readers, contributes this article to the *Journal of Child and Youth Care* of Canada.

Exploiting Daily Events to Heal the Pain of Sexual Abuse

There are a variety of interventions by a variety of people in different helping positions that can be effective in providing comfort, soothing, new learning and eventual healing for the wounds of abuse. Therapists, direct service child care workers, recreational workers, foster parents, cooks, maintenance personnel, and volunteers each have something significant to contribute to the successful adaptation to life for hurt and hurting children and youth. No contribution is to be seen as "better" or more useful. Working as a team committed to the growth and healing of our wounded young people, we strive together to fill the gaps of love and care, and to teach coping skills that enable a successful and fulfilling life.

Professional child care literature reveals a strong commitment to using the daily routines of group living, such as meals and food (Rose, 1988), chores (The Child Care Worker journal, 1992), bedtimes (Augustin, 1984), and the like. We would like to explore specific events and interactions that may occur during the course of a day that can be "exploited" for healing purposes in the lives of sexually traumatised children and youth.

First, let us briefly review some of the traumatic aspects of sexual abuse that have the potential to cause distortion and deep wounds, and that pose a risk to successful adjustment.

Traumatic Sex

Sexual abuse, of course, involves sex. It is a very specific form of abuse with very specific implications. The discomfort of many with the very nature of this form of abuse is conveyed by the common substitution of non-sexual words (such as "molest") to describe it. It is abuse, of course, because it is sex that is unwanted,

non-mutual (forceful or coercive), and something for which young children are not physically, mentally, or emotionally prepared. The result of this aspect of the abuse is often referred to as "traumatic sexualisation." Workers with sexually abused children/youth should never be surprised or dismayed when part of the abuse trauma is acted out sexually. We know that when children are victimised by violence, there is a tendency to re-enact the violent situation in an attempt to master an event over which they were powerless (Cameron, 1994). Victims of school-yard shootings can be predicted to play "gunman" for a while after the event. And, of course, they insist that they take turns being the gunman. Using this knowledge, it can be reasonably predicted that victims of terrifying sexual abuse will attempt to gain mastery by engaging in various sexual behaviours and activities. It is not "treatment" to punish such activity. The therapeutic response will be to "exploit" such events to help with the working out, the mastery. An additional sexual trauma results from the very way kids are "set up" for abuse. Adults do not begin to molest by grabbing a child's genitals, but by offering initial physical contact that is experienced as affection. Before turning sexual, the contact consists of benign touch: sitting on someone's lap, having your back rubbed, snuggling, an arm around the shoulder, or a pat on the thigh. As this contact graduates to sexual intrusiveness, the child becomes confused and is often not even clear about when things changed from "OK" to "not-OK." This confusion is often manifest in touching interactions between abused children/youth and adults who engage with them. How many

workers have had a child hug them in a way that felt uncomfortable? How often has a child kissed us on the lips rather than the cheek? Sometimes we have become gradually uneasy as a benign touch from a child turned to touch that had sexual tones. Confusion between sex and affection also results in a variety of symptomatic interactions between child and child, where innocent play turns to sex play, or age-appropriate play promotes sudden rage as memories are triggered. Responses from adults to these events have potential either for further confusion as a result of a harsh response, or for re-education in an area where faulty notions have been formed.

A traumatic component of all abuse is the "powerlessness" experienced by the child, as he or she experiences his or her complete inability to influence the behaviour of the hurting adult(s). There is now an abundance of research and longitudinal study that illuminates the life-long effect of such experiences. When powerlessness is introjected, made part of the belief system and adaptation of an individual, we have the frightening phenomenon of "learned helplessness" (Seligman, 1973, 1975). When there is a compensatory reaction to this powerlessness, we find the equally frightening adaptation where the young person begin to confuse "power" with "control," and we find the victim now the victimiser; the hurt now the hurting; the scared now the scary (Groth, 1979; Hunter, 1990).

Betrayal

To be sexually abused is to be betrayed; and to be betrayed is to forever be unsure of who can be trusted. Average children are taught by their parents to fear strangers: don't open the door if

you don't recognise the person; don't get into a car if the person is a stranger. Things become clear: if I know you, you're safe; if I don't, I become afraid. Young, and even older, children have a natural recoiling response when meeting new people; hanging onto daddy's hand, hiding behind mom's skirt, backing up and giving clear evidence of not wanting to engage even when being perfectly polite in the greeting. But what if the person who hurt you is someone you were close to? What do you learn about safety if you, in the past, allowed yourself to relax with someone who was nice to you, who offered you friendship and affection, and then gave you sex and terror? Who's to be trusted now? It is crucial that direct service caretakers learn to both expect and understand what may seem like a rejection from a child or adolescent, just when "things seemed to be going so well." A youngster may run away, ask for a new worker, or just turn strange. This will most likely stem from a deep terror of trusting, based on past experience. The young person will need patience, a stance of acceptance, and an "open arms" policy, allowing them to react to the terror, and then come back to learn that *this* relationship will not exploit their trust. Too often we find individuals and programmes closing the door on those who seem to reject us, rather than making the commitment to hang in with them. Not only is this sad, but terribly unfair.

Secrecy

To be sexually abused is to be incredibly lonely. It is impossible to believe that this could be happening to anyone else. You are told not only not to tell, but that awful things will happen to you if you do tell. You gradually learn to feel "safe" when you are being deceitful; telling the truth will cause terrible things to happen to you or your family, and your molester, about whom you are usually very ambivalent. (While not usually ambivalent about wanting the sex to stop, many children are quite ambivalent about their feelings toward the person who is abusing them.) Better to be quiet, or to lie. Truth begins to equal danger. You develop a habit pattern of saying little: "OK," "not much," "nothing." Or you learn to use sounds instead of words, grunting in response to questions, using gestures. Perhaps you learn to employ "empty speech": lots of words with no substance or meaning, which sounds like you're sharing, but you're not really saying anything. Or, you just learn to lie: Say you had fun; lie about where you went, why you were late, what you did. Whatever you do, don't give it away. You become very adept at covering up what's happening. "Good boy/girl," says the molester. "Good girl/boy," implies the parent of the child who really doesn't want to know. Over what period of time was the child/youth in your care sexually molested? A year, two years, more? Count the days. Three years of keeping a secret equals more

than a thousand days of practice in deception. A thousand days of profound loneliness. The secret becomes as painful as the sex. How cruel to "punish" kids for lying, when that is the only safety they've known until now.

There was a recent incident in a residential treatment centre in the author's state where a resident successfully committed suicide in the facility by hanging himself. While investigating the death, it was learned that while the young person did not share his intention with any adult staff, he did, in fact, confide in a number of his peers. Not one child said a word, until it was too late. Why? Not for any malicious reasons, but because collections of abused children/youth are, unfortunately, entirely comfortable with secrets, and very fearful of the consequences of truth. How urgent that we keep this in mind while attempting to provide safety for our vulnerable residents.

Lack of protection

It takes more than an "offender" for a child to be abused. Perhaps we have become overly focused on those who overtly hurt our children. If we can step into the experience of an abused child, we realise that abuse requires more than someone hurting you; it also requires a non-protector. No one can hurt you if someone protects you. When you lie or stand there, feeling or being forced to let someone touch you, being forced to touch sexual parts of an adult, bleeding from being penetrated, gagging from feeling suffocated, you wonder not only why someone is doing this to you, but why someone isn't stopping it! How can they go on pretending it's not happening? Why can't they see behind my feeble lies? Why can't they see and feel my pain and fear? There are more traumatic components to sexual abuse, but let's focus on how events in the daily "life-space" present opportunities to be helpful with these.

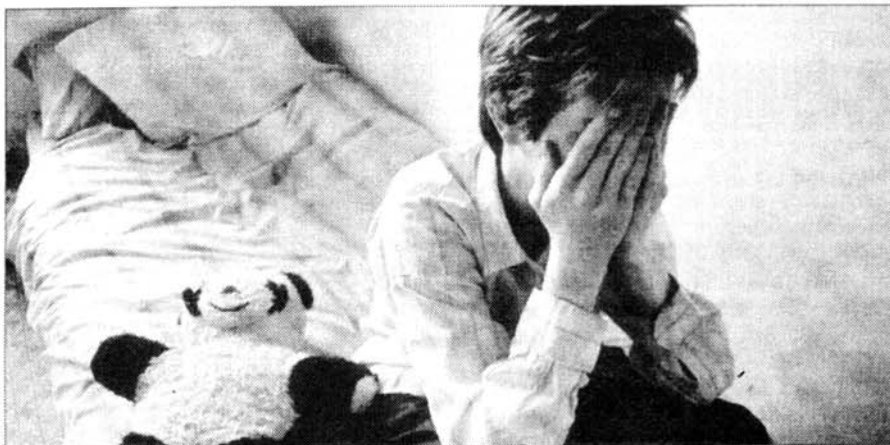
Traumatic sexualisation

There are a great many daily activities that can prompt a symptomatic response to real or perceived sexual stimuli for sexually abused children/youth: Sharing a bathroom, showering/bathing, dressing, gym class, contact playing, adult affection, bedtime. Let's focus our observation skills to see and hear what our youngsters are telling us (usually with behaviour rather than words). Do we need to be more sensitive with regard to providing privacy for children for bathroom activities? Can we "read" the unnecessary layers of clothing as a signal that the young person does not feel safe, and does not feel able to protect him or herself without clothing used as armour? Can we give them comfort and reassurance at night: a night-light, a roommate, some music to listen to while falling asleep, awake staff, permission to sleep in clothes if too scared to put on pajamas? Are we talking enough about sex? Sexually abused children have trouble with



... it can be reasonably predicted that victims of terrifying sexual abuse will attempt to gain mastery by engaging in various sexual behaviours and activities. It is not "treatment" to punish such activity.

sex! We are now able to correct their distortions and misinformation. We can give them education and re-education. Are there books to read? Are the books accessible? Do we have regular conversations about sex and how it is supposed to be, and about how hard it is to have it introduced into young lives before nature intended. When sexual remarks are made at the dinner table, do we hush the child(ren), or do we postpone the discussion until after dinner, but schedule a time to talk about what was brought up? Have staff told kids explicitly that they are open to questions about sex? We want to monitor our responses to their sexual behaviour (talk or activity) to be sure we are not causing shame about something the child had no control over. Sexual talk, and sexual activity, provide wonderful opportunities for us to interact with kids about a part of their life that they cannot deal with alone. They have questions and wonder if anyone has answers. Of course we don't always have good answers, but we can always be clear that we are not hiding anything from them, leaving them to imagine what might have happened to them. We don't want to leave our immature young minds on their own to figure out what's happened to them: and if we don't help, they will. The author can assure you that there is an inverse relationship between sexual activity and verbalisation: the less adults are willing to talk, the more kids will sort out and act out their concerns behaviourally.² Staff and other helping adults are in a wonderful position to use their own experiences and interactions with youth to help them gain insight and sort through



Mark P. Phillips

Let's also be sure to have caring male workers who are not just biding time until they can move "up," and away from the kids. Loving and caring for kids is not a "woman thing." Kids are owed—and their future kids are owed—strong and protective men and women to keep them safe now, and to show how it's done.

their confusion. We can use uncomfortable touch to teach exactly what makes it uncomfortable, and why, and to provide guidance about more acceptable physical interaction. We can use activity between peers to try to understand the meaning of the activity for the children. If we can find out what they were trying to understand or solve with the sexual interaction, we can help them do so more appropriately ... with us. Staff can use displays of affection between themselves, which invariably produce hoots of innuendo, to discuss differences between sexual and affectionate touch. (This, of course, implies that we have done work on the treatment team to ensure that they have developed positive enough feelings between the members so that displays of affection—back rubs, hugs, and so on—are likely!) Another very challenging aspect of interventions with sexual behaviour is the opportunity to join the struggle experienced by same-sex abused youth. In my work with organisations, I have found this probably the most "loaded" issue for staff to deal with. Literature on sexual abuse reveals that, as far as we know from reported cases, offenders are more often men, whether the child-victim is male or female. This presents specific trauma for male victims abused by men, since many questions and fears arise with regard to the effects of same-sex abuse on sexual development. Specifically, boys (usually) must resolve two very complex—and controversial—issues: resolving their sexual identity as well as their sexual orientation. It is important to distinguish between these two processes, because they are quite separate, although many cultural stereotypes cause them to seem fused. (Gay men do not, because they are gay, feel and act like women. Lesbians do not, because they are gay, feel and act like men.) Sexual identity has to do with one's com-

fort and acceptance with one's maleness or femaleness. Because of many cultural roles, some boys see victimisation as a "girl" problem, and thus have difficulty living with their former inability to control abusive situations, especially sexual ones, which are often not overtly forceful. This discomfort sometimes causes post-pubertal and adolescent boys to become estranged and alienated from their vulnerable small-boy past, and to thus risk losing "empathy" for others who are hurt.

Adults can be very helpful in re-framing the abuse as a crime of adults against children, which is not sex-specific. We can also try to keep them in touch with the realistic reasons for their compliance: smallness in size, vulnerability to the relationship, and conformity to the expectation of obedience.

A very simple, practical intervention with some boys is to simply take them to a school or play yard and show them small boys—to give permission, as it were, for their past behaviour. It is crucial that our male victims not lose touch with their vulnerable self, for an unfortunate characteristic of many abusers is lack of "empathy" for their victims, which stems from lack of empathy for themselves. Sexual orientation is a separate developmental process, and has to do with the development of an emotional and sexual feeling for one's own sex. In our "homophobic" society this can lead to an incredibly lonely, and sometimes dangerous, journey for teens as they try to understand themselves.

Perhaps a teen girl's only experience with intercourse was during the abuse, which she hated; she then might wonder if she doesn't like men. Perhaps a young boy had some sexual pleasure during the abuse, although the context was miserable, leading him to wonder if he's gay. Some same-sex molested youth come to

believe that they've been "made" a homosexual by the abuser. The rate of suicide for gay youth is frightening; and suicide is a result of loneliness and hopelessness. We owe our abused youth relationships in which they can sort out their questions and feelings without recrimination and condemnation.

Feelings of powerlessness

We can study the daily behaviour of children in our care to see how they are struggling with their anger about having been powerless to influence adult behaviour. Are they showing us that they are becoming comfortable (i.e., used to) being victims? Do they turn to others to solve their problems? Are they allowing themselves to be scapegoated? Who are they dating and how do they allow themselves to be treated? Are they, rather, showing us that they are reacting to their victimisation by identifying with the aggressor, believing that it is better to "give it" than to "get it"? Are they beginning to feel "powerful" when they are controlling others?

It is not helpful for staff to solve problems for children/youth, because it reinforces for the child or youth that he or she can't. It is more important that adults teach problem-solving skills; that coaching is provided, not interference. When peers are having trouble with each other, work with them to solve it, but don't solve it for them.

Working through betrayal

It is important to be alert for signs of "panic" when a young person starts to feel too comfortable. They often "blow" a placement, or a relationship, when they realise they are letting their guard down and relaxing too much. It reminds them of when they did this before, and then got done in! We want to be careful not to reject a child when he or she rejects us. We want to examine our willingness to "hang on" to someone who's too scared to stick with us right now. Can we wait for the runner to return? Can we use care before assigning a new worker?

It is important to provide opportunities for betrayed young people to learn that getting close and feeling vulnerable does not always result in being "used" or hurt by someone. When a child/youth makes an overt sexual gesture, or offers an explicit sexual favour, we can show care to respond not to the language, which is not the issue, but to the "real" question: are you interested in having sex with me? The most reassuring response is the most explicit: not "don't be silly," but "I'm not interested in having sex with children." We want to look, also, at signs that bewilderment over trust is not causing youngsters to be careless with their personal safety. Many of our young people feel perfectly comfortable getting into a car full of strangers, letting someone they don't know hold them or take them by the hand. Great patience is needed to give good information about personal safety, while not discounting their previous experience.

Learning to live with the truth

The longer a child/young person has had to live fearing the truth, that is, discovery of their "secret," the more patient we must be with their inclination to avoid honesty. It is crucial that we not moralise this behaviour: it has nothing to do with values or morality, it had to do with their very survival, as they understood it. Punishing these children for lying reinforces the notion that the truth is dangerous. Opportunities must be provided for them to try saying scary things out loud, without retribution. Obviously, this complicates interactions in group settings! We don't want to compromise our belief that "honesty is the best policy," but we also can't afford to be naive. Sexually abused children/youth have been taught something quite different. Learning to hear the "sound" of reality can take a very long time. One of our uncomfortable tasks is to examine our own interactions: are they honest? Do staff say out loud what it really is, or do we also compromise truth, rationalising away our reasons for not confronting each other, for giving children less than complete information.

"Wimps" need not apply

Abused youngsters cannot heal or feel safe when in the care of those overwhelmed with the job! Stress junkies, step right up. The job will never get easy. The challenges never stop. Not everyone with a good heart is suited. Hire, pay, and reward those who actually enjoy the challenges of working with troubled and troubling children. Beware of getting caught in the "bar at closing time" trap when there are staff shortages: remember that people look better to us when we're desperate than they should. Sexually abused children are either abused by women, or not protected by women, which places a strong burden/opportunity on women to demonstrate protective skills. It is urgent that women not back off in favour of men during explosive situations. Sexually abused children have either been abused by men, or abandoned by men. Strong, nurturing, "present" men can teach new roles. It is crucial that all adults in the environment demonstrate protection skills, or we fail our mission and release young people who will produce children with no notions of how to protect them: by sticking around, by knowing what's going on, by not allowing others to hurt or get hurt, by facing the truth. All of you "clucking mother hens" out there ... go for it! What a gift to abused kids. Find out what they're up to. Ask questions. Be nosy. Give and get lots of information. Let's also be sure to have caring male workers who are not just biding time until they can move "up," and away from the kids. Loving and caring for kids is not a "woman thing." Kids are owed—and their future kids are owed—strong and protective men and women to keep them safe now, and to show how it's done.

Reasons for optimism

Each day, in hundreds of ways, those who attempt to "help" those who need us are provided with a multitude of opportunities. We may not know exactly what to say, and it doesn't matter. Kids will know if we have taken the trouble to understand their experience, and this can always be communicated. If we are willing to take a step in their shoes (and those shoes do hurt!), we can walk with them into new ways of looking at the world, new ways of learning to carefully trust, new ways to exercise personal power so they can be in charge of their own safety. What a wonderful way to spend a life!

Notes

1. For a more complete discussion of the effects of, and therapeutic interventions with, the experience of powerlessness for victims, see Fox, 1994.
2. Solicited reports from agencies the author has worked with, who reported a sometimes dramatic decrease in covert sexual activity in response to changes in staff openness about sexuality. See also Fox, 1989.

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Jean Wright

1949-1996

I feel tremendously honoured and privileged to be able to pay tribute today to Jean Wright – a colleague and friend. Jean died of cancer on the 19th February, 1996 at the age of 47 years. Jean was born in Springs in 1949 and she attended Welkom High School until Std 8 when she left to complete her matric in Witbank. After matric, Jean went on to do a social work degree through Wits University and qualified in 1971. She began working at Johannesburg Child Welfare Society in 1972 as a field worker. In 1981 she completed her Master's degree at RAU. Jean dedicated her life to troubled children and their families. There was never a situation which she was not prepared to tackle. Even the most difficult clients were a challenge for her and she never appeared daunted. Because of her tenacity and lack of fear in confronting any situation, she had her nose broken, her arm broken, her car vandalised and a child who tried to jump out of her car on the highway! Jean always believed that her clients deserved the best and she never gave up on them. She became a leader in the field of child care and developed courses and programmes which have become an integral part of the profession. Some of her contributions include the concept of voluntary counsellors working with troubled youth and the initial development of this course in 1981/82 – still used

widely today in our child care training. When Jean became the Director of Guild Cottage in 1987, she did pioneering work in making it one of the first racially integrated facilities in South Africa – often against great odds, but Jean fought on in her determined way. Jean did her Master's Degree on multi-problem families and deprivation, using the Cycle of Deprivation theory, and integrated this into the work we do with troubled families. She did much research on work with families and children using this theoretical framework and in fact, this has been integrated into much of what we use presently. Another exceptional contribution which Jean made to the field was her work in the field of sexually abused children and their families. She together with a colleague, Cecile Frankel, developed a course for the management of sexually abused children in 1989. This course forms the basis in training in this area in residential facilities throughout South Africa. Jean was a driving force behind the Guild Cottage publications. The field of child care has indeed lost a tremendous resource – Jean still had so much to give – and her untimely passing has left a gap that will be felt by many of us, personally and professionally, for a long time to come. Thank you Jean, for all of this, and for your lovely sense of humour – as well as what you taught us all about living and dying. You handled this situation with your typical courage and dignity. May you rest in peace.

— Jacqui Michael

PROGRESS REPORT: INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON YOUNG PEOPLE AT RISK

Human Resources

On our News page (page 18) there is a brief report on progress with training of staff in state institutions. The IMC has also considered re-orientation and training for probation personnel. The team has agreed that young people up to 21 should be of concern, with priority given to those up to 18 years of age. In practice, because of the shortage of probation staff, the role is seldom differentiated between adults and children, particularly in rural areas.

To date 80 probation personnel (in KwaZulu/Natal and the Eastern Cape) have received re-orientation training — with all personnel in South Africa being trained by May. There has been extremely positive feedback from both participants and trainers. Many probation officers work without any on-going development and support, and some, again in the rural areas, are quite isolated.

A second training phase, which will include about 40 hours of skills training in probation and diversion, concentrating on children and youth, is to be developed and ready for delivery from February.

Personnel Administration Standards (PAS)

After discussion with the Public Service Commission a new PAS for Child and Youth Care Workers and one for Probation Personnel have

been established. These new standards are among a number of new occupational classes established in the broader field of welfare. They will eventually bring a considerable upliftment in salaries and service conditions — with requirements for appropriate qualifications at all levels. Child Care and Probation will be considered disciplines in their own right, and will require registration. The PAS for Youth Work, Child and Youth Care Work, and Probation Work will look similar to that for Social Work, providing for vertical and lateral career pathways at a number of levels.

Previous training will be taken into consideration, and staff will be given time to upgrade qualifications. A proposal for the detailed PAS for these categories will be circulated for comment and discussion before finalisation in 1996.

University qualifications

The above developments have opened the way for serious discussion with universities with regard to a BA degree in Child and Youth Care Work and Youth Work, as well as a post-graduate diploma in Probation, Youth Probation or Child and Youth Care for social workers and other human service professionals. It is envisaged that the first BA degree in Child and Youth Care might be available by January 1998.

Provincial IMCs

Most of the provinces have responded positively to the request to establish a provincial IMC. A few seem to have been unable to establish the inter-sectoral committee effectively. While some of the provinces have duplicated the structure of the national working group, others have opted for one overall inter-sectoral committee.

For the next few months the provinces are being asked to concentrate on information, communication, and ensuring that every possible organisation and individual in the child and youth care system has been oriented to the new model and has had a chance to respond with their ideas and concerns.

Youth development and employment

Together with the Departments of Health and Labour, youth development organisations and youth workers, the committee plans to develop a large pilot project which will provide life skills and work skills to young people at risk, and will then assist in job opportunities. Two meetings have been held with the Labour Department. It is envisaged that a number of departments, together with business, will co-operate on a pilot programme which will offer young people positive alternatives to militarisation, violence and involvement in gangs — with emphasis on development, empowerment and strengths. ■

Reviews



We review films of interest to child care workers — for recreation or professionally.

House of Cards

*Kathleen Turner,
Tommy Lee Jones*

Rather far-fetched and esoteric solution to a nevertheless intriguing psy-fi situation, which has lots for child and youth care workers. Mother, son (11) and daughter (8) arrive back at their old home at the end of a professional posting in a far-off land where father died in an accident. Sally, the daughter, had been comforted by local native beliefs around death, but now back home she is unhelped within her own culture, especially when mother is herself struggling with her loss. Sally takes refuge within the obsessions of a post-traumatic autistic, and altogether stops talking. The story is about the mother's denial of the problem — first she needs Sally's condition to be pointed out to her, and then refuses to acknowledge it as a problem — and the efforts of a well-meaning and committed psychologist to get Sally into his programme. Impressive were two separate, but connected, issues: one was the vulnerability of the nuclear family to which the threesome have returned; the other was the hope and strength engendered by the fact that even one member of this family (in this case, the eleven-year-old son) remained functional.

This Boy's Life

Robert de Niro, Ellen Barkin, Leonardo di Caprio

This second film deals very much more with the raw material of our field. Child care workers will immediately recognise both the characters and their circumstances as familiar. This is the story of a mother and her son who survive the domination of a vicious step-father. The central character (de Niro) enters the story rougously charming, and seems to offer new hope to the divorced mother and her son. But as the veneer comes away we see the power this immature bully has over their lives, and the ways in which they manage to deal with (or not deal with) this.

Murder or Memory

*Leigh Taylor-Young,
Michael Brandon and
Karl David Djerf*

This is the most compelling of these three films, and concerns the murder of a teenage girl who sleeps over at the home of family friends. An immature small-town policeman, abetted by a gullible public prosecutor, jumps too hastily to his own conclusions, and what follows is a horrifying tale of the legal abuse of the 14-year-old son of the host family. This is an excellent film for a staff team to watch together, dealing as it does with legal principles, the professional ethics of so-called experts, the idea of 'false memories', the abandonment of accountable practice — and the appalling consequences for the boy and his family. This being a true story, one missed the *denouement* which we awaited!

Parents Share Responsibility for Children's Crimes



One teenager is caught smoking. Another swipes a \$14.99 bottle of cologne. A third is found drinking beer in a pool hall. Authorities cite the parents — not just the teens — for failing to supervise their children and order them to take special classes or face a \$1,000 fine.

Innovative response to juvenile crime? Or unconstitutional intrusion into family matters?

Recently, Oregon became the first state to make this kind of parental responsibility a concern of government. For "failing to supervise a child" under the age of 15 who violates the juvenile code, breaks a local curfew, or skips school, parents here may be fined up to \$1,000 and have to pay as much as \$2,500 in restitution to crime victims.

"Anything we can do to keep children from getting deeper into a life of crime is going to be good for them and good for society," Oregon's Democrat Governor John Kitzhaber said in signing the law, which went into effect in September.

Experts see this as part of two trends in the country: the move to affix personal responsibility for wrongdoing — including the wrongdoing of one's teenagers — and a more general crack-down on serious juvenile crime, which a new Justice Department report says is accelerating at an alarming rate.

Looking to families

"People are very concerned about what's going on with kids today," says Julie Shapiro, who teaches family law at Seattle University Law School. "So it's neither surprising nor inappropriate that they look for some problem within the family."

The new state law here is pat-

terned after one in Silverton, Oregon, that's been in effect since the start of 1995 and has gained widespread attention. (The three cases referred to at the start of this story were in Silverton.)

In this town of fewer than 6,200 people, eleven parents have been cited under the law. Of those cases, four were dismissed on technical grounds, two resulted in parents being ordered to take parent-effectiveness courses, two parents were found not guilty, and three cases are pending.

Drop in crime

Those numbers are small, but the most interesting development to Mayor Ken Hector is that juvenile crime is down 53 percent over the same period last year.

"That's shoplifting, assault, burglary, runaways, possession of tobacco — the whole gamut,"

Mr. Hector says. In addition, the mayor says, merchants report fewer thefts, the number of parents attending parent-teacher conferences and other school activities is noticeably up, and more adults are volunteering for parent-effectiveness courses. Also, there have been no new citations since April — indicating that parents are taking more responsibility for those children age 17 and younger covered by Silverton's ordinance. "I think it's absolutely clear that there's a correlation," says the mayor.

Other states, including California, Virginia, and Alabama, now order parents to compensate crime victims, pay for cleanup of graffiti, or pay fines for offences their children commit. But Oregon is the first to mandate classes designed to make them better parents, thus expanding the notion of legal responsibility.

Wake-up call to parents

State Rep. Mike Lehman, author of Oregon's new law, says the idea is "simply to get parents involved with their kids."

This is not meant to be punitive," says Mr. Lehman, father of 10- and 12-year-old sons. "Our goal is that no parent ever be fined under this bill.

"It's meant to get parents to pay attention to their children," he adds, "and to make resources available to parents who want to know the proper way to supervise their child."

But whose job is it to decide the "proper way" to supervise children, especially adolescents who spend more and more time away from parental view? And don't laws like this pose a philosophical conflict for those advocating a get-tough approach to crime while also opposing big government interference in family issues?

"I know the [Oregon] law doesn't list the things that parents should do, but I wouldn't be surprised if it played out that way, Professor Shapiro says.

"I think it's unconstitutional," says Jossi Davidson, an attorney representing several Silverton parents charged under that city's law. "Sure, the government needs to be able to regulate parenting. But between the poles of abuse on the one hand and neglect on the other, parents need to be free to make their own parenting decisions as they see fit. "What this law wets out to do is make all of those decisions subject to some judge's notion of what's good parenting," Mr. Davidson says.

Constitutional questions aside, some critics doubt the law's effectiveness outside of Silverton. "Maybe as a political statement

it's good to have," says Gerald Arenberg, a police officer for more than 40 years before retiring to join the board of directors of the National Association of Chiefs of Police. "But I can't see it having a tremendous effect on crime."

The Justice Department reported last week that juvenile arrests for major violent crimes grew 55 percent between 1983 and 1992. In response to such figures, Sen. John Ashcroft of Missouri introduced on Capitol Hill "The Violent and Hard-

Core Juvenile Offender Reform Act of 1995." on September 15.

Under this bill, states receiving federal grants to fight crime must prosecute as adults those as young as 14 who commit serious crimes like murder, armed robbery, assault with a deadly weapon, forceable rape, or drug trafficking.

Big city challenge

Some wonder whether laws like Oregon's will work in big cities, where juvenile

crimes can be more serious than petty theft, underage smoking, or breaking curfew.

"It probably isn't going to dissuade some 17-year-old kid from doing a drive-by shooting," Hector says. "But our thinking is that that 17-year-old might have a two-year-old brother or sister, and there's still hope for those younger kids if the parents will get involved."

— Brad Knickerbocker writing in *The Monitor*

Rachael Emerson, former Youth Aid officer from Takapuna, New Zealand, discusses the role of the victim in Youth Justice.

Allowing crime victims a voice — and holding offenders accountable

The victim of a crime committed by a young person is involved more in the Justice process than a victim of a crime committed by an adult. In New Zealand the victim's role becomes one of attending a Family Group Conference (FGC), where they express their feelings in regard to the actual event — and as to what they would like to see happen to the young person as a consequence of his/her actions. They may wish to see an apology and reparation. The victim's role does not always run smoothly. There are many problems that occur within the system. In my account of the victim's role, I outline these problems and discuss both positive and negative aspects.

New legislation

In 1989 a new act emerged here, "The Children, Young Persons and their Families Act 1989". Along with the Act came changes in the way we would approach offending by our young people. Also with this Act came the Family Group Conference (FGC) process. One of the principles of the Act is that

any measures for dealing with offending by children or young persons should have due regard to the interests of any victims of that offending. FGC's are a way of ensuring that this happens, as victims of the offence or alleged offence are entitled to attend and take part in the discussions. As part of a FGC plan, the child or young person may be required to pay reparation to the victim.

Changes in the process

The Mason review recommended that the victim be consulted as to date, time and place of the FGC. I have had many problems with victims not being consulted about time and venue. Often they simply receive a letter from the Children and Young Persons Service inviting them to a FGC on a given date, time and venue, without being consulted as to these factors. The FGC may also be held at the offender's residence, which I consider to be unfair play as this may drive the victim away from attending the FGC. A FGC should be held on common ground for all.

The Mason review also brought about changes to allow a victim and/or supporters or their representative to attend the FGC, adding that this should not be limited to one person. I have had difficulties with this when Youth Justice Co-ordinators discourage the attendance of supporters for the victim. There is also a requirement that the explanatory material be prepared and issued to all victims explaining the purposes and format of a FGC, their rights, the role of the Victim Support Groups and the assistance which can be offered by such groups. This is not being offered to many victims.

Is it working?

Victims, if they so request, and supporters or representatives, are to be reimbursed by Children and Young Persons Service for travel expenses and any other expenses reasonably incurred in attending a FGC. This, to my knowledge, does not very often occur.

In a 1992/93 survey by the Justice Department, it was found that no consensus about how well the provision which entitles victims to attend FGCs is working. About one half of the respondents to the questionnaire were critical of the way it is working, five respondents said that it worked well, and a few said that it varied.

On the positive side, it was said that the provision provides victims with an opportunity to express their views; they can benefit from meeting the offender; they feel empowered; there had been positive feedback from those who had attended. There are also critical comments. Victims can become intimidated by the other people at the conference and the balance favours the offender in many ways. Victims can feel re-victimised and need support and information.

Victim blaming

In my experience, victims can be blamed by the offender's family for the offence taking place. In a case of an unlawful taking of an unlocked motor vehicle, the family of the offender have suggested that this is an open invitation and what young person would pass up the chance of attempting to take the vehicle? In another example where the vehicle taken was involved in an accident, the family blamed the victim for the accident as the vehicle

did not hold a current roadworthy certificate, although one of the charges was dangerous driving. Assault victims are often accused of inciting, provoking the offender. In a recent case the victim mouthed something out his window at a passing motorist. The offender took offence to this and proceeded to follow the vehicle, force it off the road and set upon the victim by dragging him from his vehicle and beating him unconscious on the side of the road. In the eyes of the offender's family he should not have been arrested as he had been provoked and that was a good enough reason for his actions.

Rewards for the victim

However, the experience can be very positive for the victim. In the perfect Family Group Conference, the offender and his/her family are very remorseful and warm toward the victim. The victims are made to feel very welcome and are the centre of the FGC in the offender's and family's eyes. The offence is discussed, the victim has the opportunity to express how they feel and what they wish as an outcome. The offender makes an apology and talks of the offence. The victim feels empowered and comes away with a feeling of peace. In other regions, Victim Support persons are available to offer support and information and also attend the FGC. The Co-ordinators need to give the victim space at a FGC and encourage an environment where the victim will feel comfortable in speaking and expressing their feelings.

— Te Rangatahi, New Zealand Youth Justice Newsletter

A child care worker's Toolbox: Brian Gannon continues this series on take-away skills for those who work with troubled children and youth at risk

Modelling — who we are

Last month we looked at modelling *what we do* — what we might call skills and behaviour modelling.

We saw that behaviour modelling helped children and youth by enriching their experience, exposing them to alternative behaviours, and coaching or rehearsing more effective behaviour. By modelling *what we do*, we offer to children a wider choice of building blocks for their daily lives and relationships. But our behavioural building blocks are just one aspect of our total selves. We add to these our understanding and attitudes, our culture, things of significance, value and meaning, and our characteristic ways of being ... to arrive at the broader picture of *who we are*.

* * *

Stephen Covey, in *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, says:

What we are communicates far more eloquently than anything we say or do. There are people we trust because we know their character.

While we are modelling skills and behaviours, the kids are also getting the big picture — what kind of *people* we are — and from this they build their own images of *what kind of people they want to be*.

So we are more than behaviour models to the youngsters we work with — we are also role models.

All the time they are growing up, with different degrees of seriousness and concreteness through their developmental stages, children are working at their own identities, at the answer to the huge question "Who am I?" This is a very complex task. Normal children assemble literally millions of concepts and images

— by watching, interacting with, comparing and evaluating their experiences of other people — their parents, family, close neighbours, peers, teachers, and so on. From this they build a fairly rounded and complete idea of humankind, and where they fit in with everyone else.

Troubled kids usually have two problems in this area:

1. They don't get enough data on which to build a rounded picture of who they are and who they want to be; and
2. They often collect a set of negative images, and they often also build an idea of who they *don't* want to be.

Too little data

If you are lucky enough to grow up in a two-parent family, by the time you are eighteen you probably have a pretty thorough, three-dimensional idea of what it is to be a man or a woman. You have seen your parents and your family in every conceivable context — at their best, at their worst, and all stations in between. As a result, your role model, and your sex-role model, is a complex mixture of good and bad, of successful and not so successful, but all of which is nevertheless acceptable and which reflects healthy reality.

Even if you have grown up in a single-parent family, it is probable that you have experienced that one parent playing a wide range of parental roles, both the traditional "mother" and "father" roles.

But if you have grown up with parents preoccupied by their own problems, with parents who have come and gone (either physically or emotionally) so that their *presence or absence* has been more important to you than *what they were or what they did*, or with parents who have struggled with their own identity and maturity

so that they have never presented a clear and consistent picture, by the time you are eighteen you will probably have a ragged and incomplete set of images on which to base your own identity. The resulting adult and sex-role model is often highly stereotyped, either good or bad, acceptable or rejected ... and a very fragile, two-dimensional picture.

Care workers will recognise the common identity knots in which troubled kids are tied: they treasure, idealistically and simplistically, the "good" times and the "good" people in their past — and they have not dealt adequately with the "bad" times or "bad" people.

Quality and quantity

The adults who work with such deprived and vulnerable youth, whether as educators, counsellors or child and youth care workers, have a responsibility to provide lots of interaction and lots of opportunity for enriched and corrective experience for identity building. Erikson (1965) tells us that the integration which takes place during adolescence "is more than the sum of childhood identifications." It is the combination of past relationships, inner energies, accumulated skills and *new social opportunities*. Thus, we often hear it said that adolescence offers "a second chance" at achieving positive role identity. But it takes lots of action, lots of opportunities, and lots of talk. Child and youth care workers provide these opportunities. Maier (1987) says: "Accompanying all of these encounters, there is the necessity for continuous reflection about these experiences. The latter requires lots of 'rapping'. Such unending talk serves as a means for thinking, sorting out, ordering, and eventually

conceptualizing the invisible, but very real contextual world. It is in these moments, in rap session or an informal chat, where residential workers prove their mettle (their real professional relevance), for their occasional input, questions, and frequently, for their symbolic silent presence as representatives of a joint complex world."

Links to the world

The task of the role model is not to establish some sort of one-to-one relationship with a young person — or in any way to make them as we are; it is to be a guide or a sign-post for the young person to establish his or her relationship with society as a whole.

In the popular literature you will find the idea of role models most used in the sense of showing kids *how to be* within certain worlds: "He or she was my role model in ..." business, black society, sport, the world of women, music, etc. He or she showed me the ropes, the goals, the values, the methods of an area of life. So we, as child care workers, must be able to offer these signposts toward adulthood in general. Maier refers to this process as the children's "migration" from their primary or immediate worlds to secondary or wider worlds, and their role models as those who "accompany" them through this transition.

New world, new roles

Today adult roles are in a state of change. Thirty years ago, for example, there were clearer pictures about the roles of men and of women in families and in the world. Today these roles are in flux and are subsumed under other values, and child and youth care workers often have the more difficult task of modelling *openness and adaptiveness* to new roles — rather than roles themselves.

Sex role modelling takes a lot of thought in single-parent families and in residential homes where there are not always clear mother and father figures, male and female role models. In one way or another, children are going to need these. I remember talking about this in an institution with an all-male staff. Where do the children find female role models? "Oh, one of the staff-member's wives lives on the property," I was assured.

But role modelling is not a passive, observational thing; it is a participatory and interactive thing. We owe it to the youngsters who live with us to offer them such interactive role modelling opportunities, or else we continue to deprive them.

We can also correct wrongly learned and superficial stereotypes. VanderVen (in Foster et al, 1981) mentions, for example, institutionalised girls who have learned that seductive mannerisms can help them make their way in the world. These girls "need to have male workers available to them who can help them learn appropriate ways of behaving towards men by responding warmly but not in a way that mirrors the child's flirtatious behaviour."

Androgynous styles

But what about the reality of single-sex staff designs? We learn a lot from single parents, who so often have to be both 'fathers' and 'mothers'. They cannot say to their children "Just wait until your father comes home!" or "Ask your mother to show you how to do that."

So, often, with child and youth care workers, we are called on to play adult roles which are androgynous — both male and female.

We must be careful not to fall into the same sex stereotypes we fear for the youngsters. Of course we will, respectively, be male and female role models of adulthood. But if you are male, children (both male and female) will also look to you for gentleness, compassion and warmth. And if you are female, children (both male and female) will also look to you for authoritativeness, strength and protection.

New functional roles for men and women, at home and at work (more women are in leadership positions, go out to work; more men help with the children, cook) make such androgynous styles easier, and indeed more accurate role models for the world the youngsters will live in.

Intimacy

I am always troubled by child development coursework which ends abruptly at adolescence — as if that is as far as we need to go in order to work with children and youth.

The test of adolescence is how well it stands up in young adulthood, and Erikson reminds us that the young adult, "emerging from the search for and insistence on identity, is eager and willing to fuse his identity with that of others. He is ready for intimacy, that is, the capacity to commit himself to concrete affiliations and partnerships, and to develop the ethical strength to abide by such commitments, even though they may call for significant sacrifices and compromises." Without present and accessible sex role models, young people (especially those in care) may be left with extreme attitudes to intimacy: too-easy, superficial intimacy or bitter rejection and distancing from intimacy. Neither would get good grades for a successful adolescence.

(Erikson illustrates this compellingly when he dedicates his book *Childhood and Society* "To our children's children.") We need to ask ourselves more often in our evaluation of our programmes, how well we have helped youngsters to develop a healthy capacity for intimacy.

Occupational models

This task of role modelling does not have to be complex and 'psychological'. It is also very practical. An aspect of identity in our world is our work status. People say: "I am a nurse" or "I am a taxi driver." This is an important aspect of identity, and our building of abilities and recognition of occupational hopes and plans are significant ways of helping.



"But role modelling is not a passive, observational thing; it is a participatory and interactive thing."

But this idea leads us further. "I am a ..." is the opposite of "I am nobody" — a cry often heard from children in care. In modelling *who we are*, we should articulate more of these "I am ..." ideas: "I am a child care worker; I am a hockey player; I am a Bon Jovi fan; I am a keen movie-goer ..."

These simple ideas about who we are can easily be converted into identity building blocks for youngsters: "John is a pigeon lover; Monica is a reader; Mark is a real handyman ..." and from there: "He wants to be a plumber or canoeist or whatever." This also links a child through identity to meaning in the wider world — a goal of role modelling mentioned earlier.

* * *

Role modelling is a complex skill. It is no as easy as "just being yourself" — especially with troubled youth.

Because of the role we play, we have to balance our own privacy with the children's need for information. Foster et al (1981) say: "The worker will naturally not want to answer every question about his private life, and the decision where to draw the line will depend on many factors, such as the length and quality of the relationship with the child, the age and maturity of the child, and the apparent motive in asking the question." Ultimately the test is that we are good, average examples of functional adults, and that we share this actively with the children as they build their own pictures of what they want to be. ■

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Shared decision making is one of the 'in' phrases of residential work. It has become a justification in itself, a necessary part of progressive practice. Yet it is an elusive phrase, both because it is difficult to define and also because it is even harder to turn into reality.

I want to discuss some general points and then move on to a discussion of methods — what ways are there to help staff share in decisions?

A leader in a residential unit may find himself frustrated when his good ideas, which staff have appeared to accept, fail to get put into practice.

A first essential is for a leader to acknowledge that others may have good ideas too. The leader who believes that only he knows both what is wrong and how to put it right, cannot involve staff in shared decision making. He is in the business simply of selling his own views. Of course, the leader *ought* to have ideas (not certainties) based on experience and theory of what should be done. But if he is not open to change, it is unrealistic of him to expect it of others.

One step at a time

Before proceeding to discuss what ought to be done, one should consider what people's opinions are of what is happening at the present. Staff must share with each other their beliefs, their attitudes and their feelings.

It is dangerous to proceed to the next stage until this has happened. Staff must openly share with each other some of their feelings, perhaps their uncertainties, their likes and dislikes about what happens in the organisation. Without this sharing it is possible to reach a rapid public agreement about tasks, but outside the meeting there will be private disagreement expressed in a multitude of ways. Such cracks should not be papered over. Having set the scene by encouraging discussion so that staff members have a better understanding of each other, it is appropriate to proceed to the next two stages. These are, to share ideas of what might be done and to reach an agreement about some aspect of what will be done.

Getting to the decisions

The underlying premise in what has been written so far is that if people understand each others' positions and work together towards planning, they will have a greater commitment to carrying through what is to be agreed.

How then is this to be achieved? What ways are there of running a meeting which allows such a sharing of ideas, leading to shared decision making?

The first task is to encourage each person to make a statement to himself and then to make this to others. It is common in meetings for a few individuals to talk, some to listen and others to be flotsam, carried along by the tide. Nobody is to be allowed to be flotsam — each is to commit him or

ROGER CLOUGH

Involving Staff in Decision Making

Account must be taken of the processes that are taking place in the group, the capacities of members, their stage of working together.



herself to thinking and stating their viewpoints, even though at first only to themselves.

An important proviso here is that groups of people may be at different stages of development and cohesiveness. In some it may be possible for individuals to make their view known to others more or less straight away — this means that in such groups two stages may be combined.

Thinking in writing

Thus the task is to get people to think and to commit themselves. Writing is a very good way of giving time for reflection and developing commitment. There are many possibilities. One is to devise simple pencil and paper exercises for everyone (leader included) to complete. Sentence completion exercises are useful. For example: "What I like about my job is ... What I am not so sure about is ... or I wish other staff members would ..."

These should be simple and clear in format and should be completed quickly by everyone at the same time. A staff meeting is one possibility.

Another technique is to ask everyone to

write down their feeling about something during the meeting. For example: "I'd like to start by each of us writing down a few words about how we felt when we heard about ... " The subsequent meeting is very different, since it starts with each person having thought about the issue.

Sharing

Following on, one must find ways of sharing this information with others. It may be useful to do this first in small groups, pairs or trios, but a way must be found for sharing in public. People may feel that their views are not very useful, perhaps because they think they are not very bright or because they have not been on a course and cannot speak the right 'language'. One way of helping to overcome such hesitancy is to forbid discussion as part of the initial exercise — only allow the statement of views.

A comment is made by or on behalf of each person (in the latter case each member of a pair would comment for the other). Having made a statement one may allow questions of fact: "Did you mean ... ?" "Would you develop ... ?"

Subsequently one may proceed to working on ideas in the group and it is at this point that discussion becomes appropriate. The leader should look for differences in opinions, for what distinguishes one person's view from another. Otherwise there will be a false unanimity and differences will be left to lurk beneath the surface.

Questioning may lead to confrontation or challenge and this may not be comfortable. The leader or facilitator will be conscious of this.

Listening

It is crucial for people to listen to each other. There are ways of learning

this, for example, by getting each speaker to repeat to the satisfaction of the last speaker his statement before proceeding to one's own. Role-play, putting people in different or opposite situations, may also help an understanding of others' viewpoints.

As work in the group develops, it is possible to move towards planning tasks. At all stages the leader needs to think about how to get people to commit themselves, how to ensure that others listen, and to check with each member their position in relation to a particular suggestion.

The leader must think about the purpose of the meetings. Account must be taken of the processes that are taking place in the group, the capacities of members, their stage of working together.

The more neglected part is that attention must also be given to techniques. Holding staff meetings will not necessarily lead to people sharing in decisions since it is easy for a few to speak and others not to listen. Such techniques may seem mechanical but knowledge of mechanics is essential.

With permission: *Social Work Today* 11(27)

NEW UNICEF DIRECTOR LOOKS AHEAD

The State of the World's Children

Wars that now kill more civilians than soldiers are prodding the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to resume a largely abandoned emergency role.

"There are probably more children caught in armed conflict today than anytime in the last 50 years," says UNICEF's new executive director Carol Bellamy. By UN estimates, some two million children have been killed in wars during the last decade. Millions more have been orphaned or separated from their families. UNICEF tries to reunite children with lost relatives or foster parents and supply needed food, vaccines, water, and schooling.

Armed conflict and children

In recognition of its 50th anniversary year in 1996, UNICEF issued a new study on December 11 on the effects of armed conflict on children, along with its annual "State of the World's Children" report. The latter focuses on progress in child health, nutrition, and education.

Yet just how much attention UNICEF, one of the UN's best-known and most-admired agencies, now should devote to children in emergency situations is a matter of some controversy. UNICEF was founded in 1946 as a humanitarian agency to meet the emergency needs of children after World War II. In the 1950s, the agency took on a broader, long-term development role.

Emergency or development

Emergencies again are intervening. They absorb almost a fourth of UNICEF's \$1 billion annual budget. "UNICEF has a special role to play with regard to children in difficult circumstances," concedes Lennarth Hjelmar of Sweden, UNICEF's second-largest financial supporter. "Yet if you talk about emergencies in a broad context — humanitarian assistance — there are many other actors in the UN family. For Sweden, it is important that UNICEF works on long-term development."

"When it is an emergency, you have to go for it," says Alberto Augusto, Mozambique's UNICEF board member, "but in terms of planning, we should always plan

for long-term development." Ms. Bellamy, a former director of the United States Peace Corps, who took on the top UNICEF post last May, stresses in an interview that UNICEF workers rarely have to rush to the scene in emergencies; usually they are there when the trouble starts.

"We are not a direct relief organization," she says. "We are trying to provide some consistent normality for children, so development can continue even after the



Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF

conflict goes away. I think that is where we are headed." Some 85 percent of the UNICEF staff works in field offices in 150 nations. One of the major jobs these days is to promote and monitor progress toward the 10-year goals set by the UN World Summit for Children in 1990.

Preventable deaths

Aimed at cutting back on the 12.6 million child deaths each year that UNICEF deems "preventable," the summit set specific goals ranging from a one-third reduction in the deaths of children under age 5 to universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation by 2000.

UNICEF's *The State of the World's Children* report shows, as last year, that more than 90 percent of the developing world's children live in nations making significant progress toward the goals.

Yet Bellamy says some goals, such as the pledge to cut maternal mortality in half, remain "elusive." Also, she says, the quality

of progress is not easily measured, and just sustaining progress can be a major feat. "I know we won't hit 100% on everything ... but this isn't a matter of, 'Oh, you failed,'" she says.

Education goals

Still, Bellamy notes that some sharp geographical differences are emerging as mid-decade goals are monitored: Much of South Asia, for example, lags behind the goals of ensuring that at least 80 percent of all children complete primary school and of equal access to education for girls. "The education of the girl child is a very, very key-issue," Bellamy says. UNICEF officials say evidence is strong that educated women have fewer children and take better care of them. In Africa, primary-school enrolment has declined. Also, though sub-Saharan Africa has only 16 percent of the child population of developing nations, the region now accounts for 35 percent of all deaths of children under age 5.

Rights

Another major UNICEF concern is the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child which has been ratified by 181 nations. The treaty obligates governments to protect young children from such intrusions as sexual exploitation and full-time jobs that can threaten their health, education, or development. Last spring Bellamy announced that UNICEF, which spends a large \$380 million a year on supplies, would no longer buy from suppliers that violate the Convention. Though Bellamy took on the UNICEF post with seemingly boundless enthusiasm right from the start, UN diplomats say she came into a very difficult situation.

First, she succeeded the widely respected late James Grant, who had held the job for 15 years and was the driving force behind the World Summit for Children and its very specific goals. "It has not been easy," she says. "I think it's harder to follow somebody who's been terrific than somebody who's been not great." Yet she calls Mr. Grant an extraordinary



man of vision and says she hopes to build on that.

Second, UNICEF was facing some major charges of mismanagement. Changes would have to be made. Also, Bellamy's appointment to the job by UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali was somewhat controversial. The US is the largest single financial contributor to UNICEF. An American always has held the top job. Yet European diplomats, arguing that Europe now supplies half of UNICEF's budget, lobbied hard but unsuccessfully for a European appointee.

Great job

So far, Bellamy, a former New York City Council president, is drawing high marks for her directness and her "can do" approach. Her tremendous energy and natural openness are strong assets, says Petru Dumitriu of Romania, a vice-president of UNICEF's executive board. He says he thinks Bellamy is tough enough to withstand political pressure and make needed reforms. "She is doing a great job, concurs Sweden's Lennarth Hjelmaker.

UNICEF has had a number of internal problems which Bellamy has made no effort to hide.

Last spring she briefed both the UNICEF executive board and, later, reporters on the results of an investigation into charges of fraud and mismanagement involving \$10 million in the agency's Nairobi office during 1993-94. Some 17 employees now have been dismissed or suspended. Terming the event a "serious blow" to UNICEF, Bellamy promptly appointed a new office chief in Kenya with a strong background in finance and administration.

Also openly on the table is a Booz-Allen & Hamilton Inc. report for UNICEF that pinpoints in-house problems ranging from low staff morale to tension between UNICEF's board and secretariat. The report also says that UNICEF is not well equipped to handle such new social challenges as child abuse and street children.

"Every organisation needs to look at itself and say, 'OK, what are we doing and how well are we doing it?'" Bellamy says.

"There's no reason a 'do-gooder' organization should be any less well run or well managed than any other." ■

Lucia Mouat writing in the *Monitor*

A DISSENTING VOICE

If you go down to the UN today, you're in for a big surprise

The Editor of the charity magazine UNITY, has some reservations about the UN and UNICEF.

I can't speak for everyone, but I personally thought the United Nations was the international organisation bringing these global answers to national problems. However, after a visit to the United Nations Headquarters in London, I am no longer sure the UN can even handle their own problems.

After the second world war the ineffective League of Nations was born again under the title of the United Nations and today, celebrating its 50th Anniversary year, membership has grown from 51 to 185 nations.

The United Nations, an organisation of sovereign nations, claims to find solutions to disputes and problems and to deal with virtually any matter of concern to humanity.

Success stories

The UN's objectives are to provide a forum for discussion, to actively maintain peace, to improve the quality of life, to smooth the transition of nations to self rule, to administer world justice and to provide the practical means to achieve these. But if you go down to the UN today is this what you would find? I did go down to the UN — to discover the reality.

I was looking for the success stories of how children, the elderly and the mentally and physically disadvantaged have been helped by the UN's formula.

I started with UNICEF, the United Nations Children's

Fund, as this part of the UN sets the global priorities for children. UNICEF has decided on mid-decade goals, and goals for the year 2000. They believe "with each child the world begins anew" and we have the opportunity and reason each time to remake the world, to create a world society based on cultural tolerance, economic fairness and equality between men and women; obviously they do not watch the same nightly news as the rest of us!

Their guiding principle is the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, now ratified by 160 countries. It is different from international human rights because it considers political, economic and cultural rights to be integral to the child's well-being. It also considers that there is not only a national, but also international responsibility to implement the Convention.

The convention itself is made up of Articles which build to recognise every child's right to develop physically, mentally and socially to his or her fullest potential, to express his or her opinions freely and to participate in decisions affecting his or her future. Because the UN must produce Articles which meet the huge differences between national politics, economy and culture the type of objectives seem so general that even Western nations would be hard pressed to meet. But given such a comprehensive Convention, I would have expected to be shown the up-to-the minute evaluation of its effectiveness. There was not only no current information available from the UN database, but also no details for the last six months.

The elderly

After my failure to get heart of the UN's news on children, I thought I would have more luck examining their records for the world's elderly. I could not find, or be given, even a policy statement, let alone current information, so again I was disappointed. I finally turned to the men-

tally and physically disadvantaged — surely there would be a better level of information on the 500 million world-wide within this group? I was encouraged that the UN had adopted the World Health Organisation's definitions of disadvantage, but again these policies were not being popularised, implemented, monitored, recorded, collated or conclusions for a better future being made. Yet again there was no current information anywhere in the world on the UN database regarding any aspect of disadvantage.

The reality

The popular understanding of the role of the UN is obviously different from the reality. Will the real UN please stand up! Are you an organisation which pontificates and sets policy or do you want action? It seems that at present the UN is a useful international guidance agency. It does superficially take a role as a peace-keeper, but all other published policy seems misplaced.

Can we help?

We ask so much of the UN, but what do you and I do? How can we help? Well the United Nations are in a "Catch 22" situation: they are supported by national grants, but the individual countries do not wish to give too much money as it would undermine their own power. It is this kind of political fear that is stopping any chance of a real global approach to the needs of the disadvantaged.

Also, there is the way in which a caring policy worsens other problems. Population figures within countries of greatest concern to the UN up to 150 years ago was reasonably steady. In an humanitarian attempt to avoid preventable deaths, the larger problem of mushrooming population growth was created. There were more mouths to feed and less food to go around. As the UN and concerned nations continue to struggle to help, the problems are being made worse! ■

Training developments

Merle Allsopp gives the following report on training: It is with great pleasure that we are able to report that the training of child and youth care workers in state institutions has continued actively over the last month following the Christmas break. Western Cape training has taken place at Constantia Boys, Faure Boys and Atlantis schools. In the Eastern Cape Khayalethemba Children's Home and Enkuselweni Place of Detention have received training, whilst in Kimberley another 30 child and youth care workers have completed 40 hours of training. In Gauteng five institutions have received training so far this year and in KwaZulu/Natal Umlazi Place of Safety have continued their training program. In this province Pata Place of Safety and Vuma School have begun training with great enthusiasm, putting a total of 90 students through "Core Concepts in Child and Youth Care" and "Introduction to Behaviour Management" – a total of 40 hours of training. A "Life Skills" and an "Activity Programming" package have been piloted in several places and plans have been made to engage in this next phase of training in those centres which have completed the first phase. In addition, the management teams of institutions in six provinces have enjoyed a two-day training program individually designed to meet the province's needs. It is exciting to note that a total of over 1 000 child and youth care workers in state institutions around the country have been trained since August of last year as a result of funds being

made available via the IMC.

At the same time many members of the NACCW have expressed quite understandable concern about this training benefitting only state institutions who are already far better resourced than the private sector. I am able to report with great pleasure therefore that the training courses offered to the state institutions will now be available to child and youth care workers from private institutions, beginning with those who for reasons of locality and lack of finances have had least access to training in the past. This means that a very significant number of child and youth care workers in the private sector will receive the benefit of training provided at the expense of the state. This is the first time in our history that such an opportunity has been available and we hope that the response in the private sector will be as enthusiastic as it has been from state employees. Plans for delivering this training are underway and if all goes well we expect to begin with "Core Concepts" and "Introduction to Behaviour Management" in April in at least 4 provinces. For enquiries on this training please phone Merle or Celecia at (021) 697-4123 / 696 4247 or fax us at the former number.

Subsidy crunch

The retrenchment of 16% of the staff of a children's home in Pietermaritzburg has focused attention on a growing crisis in child care services, reports the welfare and development forum *Briefing*. "While the retrenchment was achieved without reducing the number of children in care, or the quality of

care they receive, it forced the organisation to place two of its community homes on the market, and to scrap plans to extend its services." The root cause of the crisis, experienced country-wide, is the failure of the government to increase *per capita* subsidies in line with costs. Statistics quoted from seven homes in the Durban area show a 21% increase in costs over the past three years, while subsidies have remained static. Fikile Mazibuko said that children's homes need priority attention when it comes to public funding. Effectively reducing subsidies to children's homes was a direct contradiction of the government's Youth at Risk programme.

Protest on welfare funding

The Western Cape Task Group on Welfare Funding called a protest outside the Provincial Parliament Building on 18 January to coincide with the meeting of the Provincial Standing Committee on Public Finances. The group said that the National Welfare Department had allocated only R129 million of R200 million required to keep services at the same level and to provide subsidies for new services. They also noted that Premier Kriel had taken R2 million from the Western Cape's Welfare Budget and allocated it to Sport.

Shock UK foster care survey

Young people are more likely to be abused in foster care than in residential homes, reveals new research by the charity ChildLine, an abuse help line. A re-

cent survey showed that 26% of 259 callers from foster care had been abused, as against 19% of 353 callers from residential homes. Director Val Howarth said: "It's a false assumption children are better off in foster care than in residential care. There needs to be as much vigilance and care about children in foster homes and those in residential units."

President Mandela on children and war

Addressing the UN Eminent Persons Group to study the impact of armed conflict on children, meeting recently in Somerset West, President Mandela charged combatants not to target children and civilians. He said that two million children had been killed in armed conflict over the past decade, with more than four million being disabled, 12 million left homeless and 10 millions psychologically traumatised. Teenagers barely able to judge right and wrong were recruited to use weapons. "It should be a matter of principle that women and children should not be targeted. It should be a matter of course that children are not drafted into combat forces as instruments of war."

Child labour an offence

An estimated 200 000 children aged between 10 and 14 are employed as child labour — and this practice should be ended, Minister of Labour Tito Mboweni says. Although it was not clear how many were in part-time or full-time jobs, about half of these children were employed in agriculture. In his Green Paper, chil-

dren under the age of 12 would be prohibited from being employed. Ministerial exemptions could be granted to children between 12 and 14 if the work was not likely to be harmful to their health or education. Contraventions should be a criminal offence.

Scottish Conference

The international conference on residential child care, *Realities and Dreams*, is part of the bicentennial celebrations of the University of Strathclyde. This promises to be a major event for work with children and young people, and the organisers intend to present a high-calibre conference involving excellent speakers from across the world – including Europe, Asia, North and South America, Australia and the Pacific. The Conference will include workshops and plenary sessions describing on-going work and research, discussing policy issues, and reflecting theory and practice. Subjects will include children's homes and schools, services for children with disabilities, young homeless people, secure care, orphanages, etc. Enquiries to: Realities and Dreams, Conference Secretariat, Meeting Makers Ltd., 50 George Street, Glasgow G1 1QE. e-mail: A.Macquarrie@stgrath.ac.uk.

Staff do not control children, claim police

A senior police officer in England has claimed that care workers may have overreacted to the pin down scandal and now make little or no effort to control young people in their care. This follows a case in Mansfield where a

group of six boys, aged 12 to 14 and in the care of Nottinghamshire social services, are alleged to have been responsible for a mini crime wave, committing over 400 offences from April to November last year. The police officer said: "Since Pindown there's almost a reluctance to do anything to check these children. In this latest case, one of them was referred to secure accommodation in Leeds, but we had to send a policeman to go with him to make sure he got there. I would like to see people who work with these children say 'Hang on – you're not getting out of this car.' It's not a question of assaulting them, and it's not a question of locking them up and throwing away the key. What's happening is they are going in the front door of the local authority home and straight out of the back door."

Juveniles bill an interim measure

ANC spokesman on correctional services, Carl Niehaus, said that the proposed bill that would allow the jailing of juveniles accused of serious offences was a temporary measure and would be reviewed by Parliament after a year. At any one time, the provisions of the proposed measure would cover 200 to 300 youngsters under the age of 18. He regretted having to introduce the private member's bill, because the ideal was that no children should be held in prisons. However, until adequate places of safety had been built in each of the nine provinces, the bill was necessary to protect the public. "We should be idealistic, but with a heavy dose of reality."

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS

Director

The NACCW, established in 1975, plays a significant and active role in the development of child and youth care in South Africa. The present incumbent retires from office in June 1996. The Association is very open to alternative models for a Directorate, and while considering various options, the National Executive would like to hear from senior child and youth care professionals who might wish to explore such an appointment.

For further details and an information package on this appointment, send a very brief CV with your name and address to Ashley Theron, Chairman, NACCW, P.O. Box X2068, Mmabatho 8681.



Experts divided over physical punishment

Charges against a New York school superintendent who beat his eight-year-old son with a one-metre rubber "snake" sparked a debate about physical punishment.

Head of the Child Protection Unit in the Western Cape, Col. Johan Meyer, said that, speaking in his personal capacity, he believed that corporal punishment was the best form of discipline. He emphasised that care should be taken not to cross the border between discipline and abuse. A Cape Town Magistrate's Court social worker said "I wouldn't mind if a father gave his child a smack on the bottom, but in cases such as the (New York incident) I feel it is only right to charge the father with assault."

Child Welfare Society Director Alan Jackson said the society was opposed to all forms of corporal punishment. "South Africa is a violent country and violence is often perpetrated in the home. Through corporal punishment in the home the idea that violence is a legitimate

Child Care Staff Johannesburg

Child care workers, preferably senior citizens with a love for children and who can live in.

Registered Social Worker with about 5 years experience of social work in a child care environment. Must be able to speak an African language and have a driver's licence.

These vacancies are in a dynamic Christian Mission Organisation that is making a difference in the inner city. Interested people should contact: Vivian or Thalitha on (011) 642-7581

way of resolving differences is made acceptable."

Deputy Minister of Welfare and Population Development, Mrs Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, said violence was not the right way to try to solve problems. The state was vehemently opposed to any form of child abuse and would intervene in any case in which excessive use of force was used, she said. — *Cape Times*

Victim programme succeeds

Support for victims programmes within youth justice (see report on page 12 of this issue) comes from the Canadian state of Saskatche-

wan. Social Services Minister Bob Pringle said: "The partnerships we build together between communities, agencies, families and government are so important in strengthening our communities. It is wonderful to see that by working together we can improve correctional services for youth, support victims and improve communities."

The programme is a low-cost alternative to custody. A variety of work experiences have been developed through which sentenced youth earn money from which victims are compensated – usually for crimes against property. The programme employs only two full-time staff. ■



SHORT STORY BY PHIL CARRADICE

The Promised Land

I WAS SUPPOSED to be working, writing reports. In reality I was day dreaming. I don't know how long I sat there, eyes distant and my mind skirting over many different topics; I don't know how much longer I would have continued to sit there had a hand not darted suddenly in front of my nose. I looked up. It was Jenny, rattling a cardboard box.

'Money,' she demanded. 'Pay up.' I looked at her from under arched eyebrows.

'What for?'

'For Penny. Leaving present-remember?'

I remembered. Penny was the longest serving member of our staff. For over twenty years she had worked at St Margarets, our old people's unit, and was now due to retire next week. Happily, I dug into my pocket and deposited money into Jenny's box.

'What are we going to get her?' Jenny frowned. She perched herself on the corner of my desk. 'I don't know. It would help if she was looking forward to retiring. As it is, anything we get her is going to be like a slap in the face. She hates the very thought of retirement.'

I hadn't realized. I thought she would have been looking forward to it – when I bothered to think at all. Considering it now, I was able to recall her attitude when I'd told her, weeks back, that the committee felt she had gone on long enough.

'Sorry, love,' I had said. 'No extension. They say it's time to call it a day.'

She had snarled, turned away. 'Typical! Scrap-heap time!' After that I'd been too busy to give it much consideration. I suppose I simply put my own values onto her – I'd have been happy to go tomorrow. Penny was different, however, one of the most dedicated workers I had ever seen. St Margarets and the old people were her life. She lived, breathed, existed purely for them. 'She likes reading,' I suggested. 'What about a couple of books?' Jenny nodded and wandered away in search of more contributions. I tried to force my mind back onto the reports but it was no use. Eventually I threw down the pen and went off to find Penny.

I discovered her in the laundry room, folding clean sheets. Penny had obviously been beautiful in her youth. She was still a striking lady. Her hair had lost none of its colour, a deep and glossy black which framed her head like night around the moon. To look at her you would never have thought she was well over sixty. She should have re-

tired several years ago – somehow or other she had persuaded the Department to give her an extension. Now, however, her time had run out.

'Soon be a lady of leisure,' I quipped, standing alongside her as she worked.

Penny nodded, glumly.

'Yes. Soon be all over. This time next week I'll be sitting, vegetating in a bath chair.'

I was shocked by her bitterness.

'Oh, come on Penn,' I said. 'It's not that bad. You've worked hard all your life, you deserve a little peace. Just take it easy and enjoy the rest of your time. There's a promised land out there, just waiting for you.'

'There's no point in life if there's no point in life,' she said. I smiled.

'That's original.'

'It's true. I don't want retirement, Paul. I can still do a useful job, I still want to work. As of next week my life's as good as over – all my useful life, anyway. I'll be no good for anything. You might as well admit me to St Margarets!'

She slammed down the bedding and went out of the door.

Poor Penny. Hardly the right frame of mind to start your retirement, I thought. All her life she'd been building up to this and now that it was nearly on her she didn't want it. I decided to give her husband a ring to see how he felt about it all. Perhaps he could give her some help in facing the inevitable. I was in the act of picking up the telephone when Jenny burst into the room.

'The laundry's been flooded – washing machine's on the blink.' I spent the next hour sorting out

the flood. Penny and her problem simply disappeared from my mind. It wasn't until two days later that I saw her again. We sat together and drank coffee and I broached the subject once more.

'It's just that I feel so useless,' she said. 'All my life I've been important. Not anything great, just a small cog in a big wheel. But important none the less. Without me, and others like me, this place would never run, for a start.'

I agreed with her and told her so. I don't think she even heard me. 'All our old folk – May, Kitty, Grace, the rest of them – I'm important to them. When I retire I won't mean anything any more. We sat for half an hour and I got nowhere. Penny's dread of a useless old age was worrying, but not as bad as the one constant thought which kept nagging away at the back of my mind. I should have seen it sooner.

Eventually, Penny left to take Grace and Kitty shopping in town. I wandered into my office, stood watching them through the window. As I watched, noting Penny's skilful care and concern, another emotion began to make itself felt. Selfish but practical, I cursed myself even as I thought of it: 'I don't know how the hell we're going to replace her,' I told Jenny. 'She's one of the best residential workers we've got.'

Jenny nodded. 'They don't make them like her every day, that's for sure.' Penny's last day was memorable for all of us. The residents had arranged a Farewell Party which took her totally by surprise. I don't think she'd ever considered how her clients might feel about her. Grace presented her with a large bouquet of flowers and made a short speech.

'We'll always remember you, Penny,' she said. 'Not as a member of staff but as a friend.' Penny dissolved into tears and we dragged her off into the staff room.

'I don't want to make a big fuss,' I told her, 'but we've got something for you, too.'

She stood quietly at the front of the room, her face twisted into a strange, distorted mask. She seemed suddenly very old and frail, deep lines etched into her cheeks and around her eyes. I handed her our present and made a brief speech. Something inside told me to keep it short.

'We'll never replace you, Penny,' I said. 'You know where we are if you want to come and see us.' Penny was already far away. Her eyes were distant and her skin deathly white. She said only a few words in reply.

'Thank you for everything. I don't want to leave – but I won't be back.'

A few days later Penny's husband rang to say she had been rushed into hospital.

'It was a heart attack,' he said. 'She's still in intensive care.' We were shocked, hardly able to comprehend. Jenny and I drove to the local hospital. They wouldn't let us see Penny, so we watched for a few moments through the glass viewing panel in the door. She lay, motionless on the bed, her silent body rising and falling with laboured breaths. It was too painful to stay long. We said some empty, useless words of comfort to her husband and went home. Two days later Penny died. She had never recovered consciousness and finally just slipped away. It was only one week since her retirement.

'She just didn't see any point in living,' her husband told us. 'All last week she kept on and on. 'What use am I now?' she kept saying. I suppose it was a blessing in some ways.' I went back to St Margarets and tried, desperately, to reason it out. What her husband had said was true enough. Work with the old people had been her life. When that ended, so too did her existence. I don't think any of us would ever forget Penny, the marvellous, rewarding memories she conjured up. And yet, they weren't all good memories. There was guilt as well, crippling, cloying guilt. Penny's death had been our failure as well as hers. Nobody should ever have work and nothing else.

I accepted the guilt and made a quick decision. Never again! I would know it next time. n