

Child & Youth Care

**THOM GARFAT ON
TRANSITIONS**

**PHINEAS MOLEPO ASKS
WHAT WE ARE DOING**

**USING VOLUNTEERS
IN YOUR AGENCY**

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

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Prime movers — and shakers

One of the reasons we came into this business of child care was that we believed that we could make a difference. Anyone who has been around for a year (or twenty) knows by now that as individuals our impact is limited. Yes, we can get close to people — listen to them, encourage them, show them — but alone we make only small ripples in a big pond. The way we *really* make a difference is by getting currents moving, by enthusing two or three people nearby who in turn inspire those around them, and thus swell larger group energies which carry individuals along, together, into new experiences, achievements and growth. That's synergy, man!

Just add people, and stir

Often the best things we do for kids and their families is to prise them out of their trap of futility and hurt, exchange their sameness for something different, turn on some lights in the darkness.

We succeed in this generally by adding people to their world — a variety of people:

- ordinary people with whom our clients can easily identify and with whom they can share with a degree of comfort (often these are fellow clients, neighbours, school or work colleagues);
- special people who play purposeful and programmed educative, recreational and therapeutic roles in their lives;
- someone to orchestrate all of this interaction.

This last person, the orchestrator, according to Barnes (1985), is the child care worker as *primary practitioner*. The worker in this role, he says, is crucial if we are truly to make optimum use of the milieu in which we work.

"It requires more than 'being like parents'. Why is it that we have so linked the child care worker with *parenthood*, and therefore settled that he or she is not a professional?" Barnes argues for the re-definition of the child and youth care worker as "a professionally responsible person who will manage

the curriculum, who will inter relate the helping processes of both the group and the individual, who will integrate the totality of this experience into the totality of each child, and, lastly, who will be broadly concerned with integrating the child into his own ecological system."

Human resources

In this issue there is much discussion of the *people* we need in child and youth care work. "Quality programmes have to do with people and interactions more than with comfort and possessions," says the reply to a reader's question on page 9.

A study on volunteers (page 12) tells us that "a high percentage of people lend their time and energy to one or more causes — and half of those who aren't currently volunteering say that they plan to do so in future."

At a time when resources are quite clearly under strain as a result of the three-year stand-off in subsidy increases and other uncertainties in the welfare world, inventive child care people would do well to explore afresh the possibilities afforded by volunteers.

When we cannot rely on natural increases in income to cover such things as normal inflation and annual salary increases, we might well succeed in taking up the slack by adding volunteer workers to the equation.

There are two factors which we might bear in mind.

1. *We are still expected, in spite of the constraints, to offer quality programmes.* Children and youth are still coming into care; we are still agreeing to work with them. Their need, as always, is first and foremost for people above comfort and possessions. Adding people to the mix which we provide is therefore a priority.
2. *In child care workers we have good primary practitioners, good orchestrators of the interactions which must happen between people — between adults and children, between children and children, and between adults and*

adults in our programmes. Barnes writes about this role: "Healthy families provide the administrative or co-ordinating function that makes it possible for the child to integrate his or her experiences at home, at school, on the playground, in the scout troop, in the community ... It is in this function that we find the real co-ordinate between the parent and the child care worker. It is not that the child care worker is like a parent, or that the child care worker's role can be described by describing that of parents. Rather, it is that parents, and child care workers uniquely among other professional disciplines, each have the executive function regarding the care, nurture, guidance and growth of children at their very core."

What's good — and good enough

Child and youth care workers can understand the child's normative (developmental) needs and his special (treatment) needs. Being what Barnes calls "the chief integrator and a major facilitator" in the child's life, the child and youth care worker is in a good position to initiate and co-ordinate volunteer activities in a programme for children and youth. Together with the team, the worker can decide what would be good for a child, and what would be good enough. And the worker would be good at using volunteers for the many tasks which really do make a difference to children and families and which might otherwise go by default in a cash-strapped programme. It's more than saying that maybe we have no choice: volunteers would probably be very good indeed at helping us maintain high quality programmes.

Barnes, E.H. (1985) *The Child Care Worker as Primary Practitioner. The Child Care Worker*, 3:2

CYC-net

A new international e-mail network for child & youth care, established by the NACCW. An e-mail request to cyc-net@iafrica.com will put you on-line to a direct link with colleagues in the profession — world-wide.

More details of CYC-net on <http://os2.iafrica.com/naccw>

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People



Annette Cockburn

Annette grew up in Maritzburg and Durban and attended the University of Natal majoring in Drama and English. She spent 25 years teaching at private schools from sub A- to Matric and at University lecturing in drama to postgraduate level.

In 1985 Annette moved to Cape Town. She realised that she was tired of working with only privileged children, so embarked on a mid-life career change.

At that stage the Homestead was a small intake centre and needed a principal to take it into its next phase. The advertisement said that "only registered social workers need apply." (She also later heard that they had actually been looking for a black, male registered social worker who was a committed Christian!) Annette got the job — persuading the Child Welfare Society what they needed at that stage was an educationalist — and a bridging programme before kids returned to formal schools.

Further studies

At about this time, Annette enrolled in the post-graduate Diploma in Adult Education at UCT where her research project was a design for a non-formal education programme for street children. From this, the Live and Learn project was born.

Other street children's projects followed fast and furiously. Some of these were inspired by her visits to North and South America. The concept of street work-

ers (working where the children were), and a Drop-In Centre, were introduced into South Africa for the first time. The Homestead was to become a model for intervention.

Annette presented a number of papers at conferences, and has published many articles on street children. She has also consulted on various street children projects throughout this country and in neighbouring countries. The Homestead's mission is "To Help Street Children Reconstruct their Shattered lives". It's not easy, but is enormously rewarding to see some 14-year-old newly admitted, covered with lice, half healed burns, runny nose — and layers of ragged clothes — emerge six months later as a confident teenager, back at school, glossy, flexing his muscles, with aspirations to designer sunglasses and a leather jacket. (No hope at all of getting these from The Homestead!) This metamorphosis is the most rewarding part of her job. The most difficult? Staff! The most exciting? Fund raising! The most frustrating? The transformation process! And the most challenging? Consulting with new projects across the country, having to think on your feet, helping to put systems and structures in place. Ten years — it's a long time in a high-stress, high-profile job, and there are other things she still wants to do with her life. Grow vegetables, become computer literate, write, build a house. Spend time with her grandson, go to Afghanistan and make jam! *Carpe Diem!* For the past 8 years Annette has served as a valued member of the Editorial Board of this journal. She has three grown up children: a banker, a doctor and a teacher, all of whom live in Cape Town.

From Canada's *Journal of Child and Youth Care*: As we reach the end of the year, and staff and children come and go, **Thom Garfat** considers child and youth care work in terms of shifting experiences of self

TRANSITIONS AND SEPARATIONS



We don't pay enough attention to transitions and separations in our field, which is really a shame, because they are among the few common experiences that we and the youth in our care share. Transitions and separations are one of the collective realities of our work. Now, I am talking about transitions and separations like those involved in Mary moving to another program, Eddie going home or Sharon moving to independent living. But those are the easy ones — at least they're easy to identify. We think about them because the children bring them to our attention through their anxiety and behaviour, and the administrative component of our organisations cause us to notice them because of the paperwork. But there are other, equally important, transitions and separations in our work to which we don't always pay adequate attention. Like the one which occurs when a child first moves into a program, or when a worker goes on vacation, or the team composition changes, or a youth moves from one phase of a program to another, or changes schools, or just develops different skills and abilities. You see, transitions involve shifting from one way of experiencing yourself to another way of experiencing yourself. The child who learns to succeed moves from experiencing herself as someone who *can't* — to someone who *can*. When one member of a team leaves (say it's Bill), others shift from an experience of self as one who works with Bill to an experience of self as one who works without Bill (or with someone new). I know it seems obvious. But transitions in the experience of self are places where we, as child and youth care workers, and the youth with whom we work, tend to get stuck a lot. Think of the child who has learned a new skill but still thinks of herself as a failure; or the team who used to work with older children and now works with younger ones — and how they cling to the belief that young children are still "outside of their mandate." Or the child who tries desperately to remain a child even in the face of rampant biology — because he's discovered that he can never live with his mother and his experience of self as a "child with mother" is more satisfying to him than experiencing himself as "adolescent without mother." I can hear some of you shouting that it's only denial — like what happens in death and other important separations in our lives. And, I guess to some extent you're



right, although I don't know if I would use the word "only"; or even the word "denial," which has become such a convenient label. Personally, I prefer the word "stuck." It lets me think of a car spinning its wheels and all I have to do is figure out how to provide the right amount of traction to get it moving again: a way to "get a grip" on things. This isn't a metaphor which works very well because it's the death part that I really want to talk about. In every transition there is a little death. In order to experience myself as different, the old experience of self has to die. And in order for it to die, I have to be able (or willing) to let it go. That's the hard part: letting something important die. No matter how bad my past experience of self, there was always something in it that was important to me. And when I let go, I have to let go of the important parts as well. Maybe if we could let ourselves think of transitions as involving some little death, we would allow ourselves to think about the processes involved in separation and grief. And then maybe we would pay a little more attention to this reality in our work. Let me give you a few examples. When a child moves into our program we might

realise that he is going through a grieving process and we can help him through it. We also might pay attention to some of the other unresolved separations that have occurred previously in his life, like when he left home or moved between foster homes.

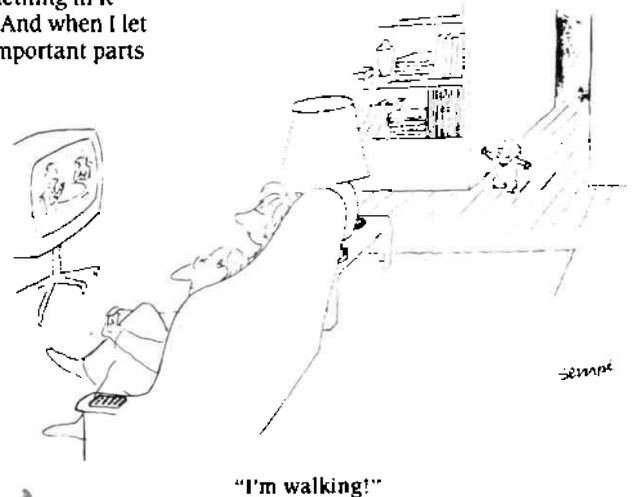
When a child leaves a program we might notice that the other children are going through a complicated process of individual and collective grief and we might spend time dealing with it individually and in group. We might use it as an opportunity to help the children prepare for other separations in their lives.

When a team member leaves we might realize that some of the charged effect on the team is related to our loss — and those other unresolved losses in our personal lives, that are triggered by this separation. When a time comes that it's important for us to let go of an old way of experiencing ourselves, we might understand our own resistance better and give ourselves permission to move on — and, we might be better positioned to help others who also have to adjust to their new experience of self.

All transitions, all separations, require a shift in our experience of self — who we are in the context within which we find ourselves.

And maybe, if we could let ourselves approach it like this, then we, as child and youth care people, could let go of our professional experience of "self as the adolescent low person on the ladder" and get on with experiencing ourselves as professionals with something valuable and different to contribute.

If I've annoyed you, let me know.



"I'm walking!"

1996 has been a year dominated by the transformation of our society, and child and youth care has had very little choice but to go along for the ride.

Most child care people have enjoyed the challenge and the opportunity to participate in a highly significant and exciting time in our country's history. Most of us have also been anxious as the impact of necessary change forces us to evaluate our structures, roles and tasks.

Jackie Loffell expressed this very well in her Guest Editorial last month:

"We live in a time of extraordinary contradictions — so much that child care workers, social service practitioners in general and concerned citizens of all persuasions have called for in the interests of children, is now enshrined in our Constitution, and also in our nation's formal commitment to a range of national and international agreements relating to the betterment of the lives of children ... and yet this is a time when, perhaps as never before, children's services and a range of provisions for children are weakening and crumbling."

The Year 1996

Not alone

We in the field of welfare — and child care in particular — have not been alone in riding the rough seas of change. We have watched our professional colleagues in education and health, and those in housing, labour relations, commerce, government — indeed every sector of our country — living out the day-to-day implications of a transforming society. A yachting friend once told me that at sea on a small craft there are two basic emotions: either you are bored out of your mind, or scared out of your pants. The analogy fits all of us who are travelling through these times. There are the long consultations and negotiations, talking, listening, referring back, more meetings, lobbying, waiting ... Then comes the courageous implementation of what has been decided, as we gauge reactions, count the cost, measure impact and fine-tune the planning. Probably no child welfare or child and youth care organisations have escaped serious challenges and threats in this process. But, to continue the yachting analogy, at least there is wide consensus that we are heading in the right direction, away from an untenable situation in the past to a future dispensation which we know is fair and right — albeit with some doubtful and scary detours!

Welfare policies

1996 has seen the firming up of welfare policy through the two White Paper documents which have taken the wider view of development over the narrower view of remediation. This accords with our child and youth care philosophies of competence building, concentrating on strengths, empowerment and prevention. The National Plan of Action for Children (NPA) is a strategy which seeks to apply these principles to the lives of children in our country, by concentrating on nutrition, child and maternal health, water and sanitation services, development, early childhood development and education, leisure and cultural activities and child protection. This is a formidable task at a macro level (see Shirin Motala's article in this issue) of which we as child care workers should be actively aware as we prioritise our own efforts. Healthy families in a health society — this is an ideal with which all of us would agree. There is no joy in treating the casualties which society itself has set up for failure. But as child care workers know,

there is often much work in bringing individuals and families through the personal dark times of abuse, addiction and incapacity to the point where these ideals can be seen, let alone reached.

Inter-Ministerial Committee

Parallel to the above developments, the year 1996 has seen the emergence of remarkable new thinking regarding young people at risk — that is, those likely to be removed or actually removed into care or custody. The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk started the year with a progress report on its work in February, followed almost immediately by the first Draft Discussion Document on the transformation of the child and youth care system. The Document drew an interesting range of comment, which has led to its redrafting for presentation to the Cabinet in its final form in February 1997. The IMC succeeded in laying down very positive guidelines for the management and treatment of children and youth in care, calling for the centrality of sound permanency planning principles within clear intervention levels — including prevention, early intervention, admission and after-care or reintegration. The IMC did more than talk and think. It put into practice a number of actions to inform and support its planning, such as

extensive research into existing practice in the field, and the setting up of a number of pilot studies, for example, into family preservation programmes and secure care provision for awaiting trial youth.

At the request of Cabinet, the IMC also conducted an investigation into conditions in state places of safety, schools of industry and reform schools, which confirmed strong needs for development and additional resources — and the circumstances under which many were struggling in these institutions.

Child Care Act

Alongside the new welfare legislation and the IMC proposals has been the debate between further tinkering with the 1983 Child Care Act (which already has an assortment of amendments and proposed amendments fluttering around it) and a complete redrafting. The danger has been that legislation concerning children can become more fragmented just at a time when the country is trying to be more conscious of its responsibility towards children and youth in the wake of last year's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Subsidies

Certainly one sign that the Child Care Act is rather dated has been the furore around subsidies to existing child care organisations — either through late or inefficient payment, or the three-year stand-still in subsidy increases. On the one hand, service providers are crying foul as the state is seen to be reneging on its responsibility for children it has found to be in need of care — and on the other, provincial governments are themselves caught in the musical chairs game of allocating limited and decreasing budgets to ever-growing needs.

Even the announcement in a recent IMC document that, as from April 1997, subsidies will finally be based on the presentation of clear programmes has drawn fire because organisations have themselves not yet been advised about this — with April less than four months away.

The PAS for child and youth care workers

Cutting across all the debate about policy in 1996 has been the almost universally rejected new PAS for workers in the field. In effect, any child and youth care worker (in the state system, at this stage, but the implications are wider than this) who does not have an "appropriate bachelor's degree" has been relegated to the status of a "social auxiliary worker" who must register as such with the Council for Social Work. There is a PAS for a "child and youth care worker", but as there is as yet no appropriate bachelor's degree, there are in fact no child and youth care workers in the country. At one fell swoop, it would seem, the profession has been defined out of existence.

Fortunately that is *not* the news item of

the year, for one cannot thus wish away the accumulated efforts and spirit of many thousands of people who have committed themselves to better than this — the view of all who have commented on this so far.

The Association

Important news for the NACCW during the year was the resignation of Lesley du Toit as Director, and her replacement in July by Merle Allsopp, a child and youth care person of very long standing who literally worked her way up through the ranks from a volunteer and an assistant child care worker to becoming principal of a children's home, before joining the staff of the NACCW 1994.

Merle was largely responsible, first as Manager of NACCW Training and then as Director, for the remarkable achievement of what came to be known as Project Upgrade — the development of five special short courses and the delivery of these courses to the staff of some sixty state institutions country-wide. Five temporary contract trainers, all experienced child and youth care professionals, trained in adult education and teaching in the field, were employed for this task.

1996 also saw a revamp in the format of our monthly journal, with a new name and a larger size. *Child & Youth Care* has a simple mission statement: to deliver to all in the field a regular "read" on all issues relating to children and the adults who work with them.

The year may also be remembered in times to come for the introduction of CYC-net, the first electronic network for child and youth care workers throughout the world. This was also the year in which the NACCW and its journal made an appearance on the world wide web, thus drawing interest from colleagues in many countries.

From the Editorial Board

Change for the better

Change is always the healthy and living meeting point between the past and the future. This journal would like to hear of plans and programmes which reach out creatively into the future of our work with children and youth — or even those which explore tentatively new insights and methods which take into account our changing situation in South Africa. We can all learn — we all *need* to learn — from what you are doing.

Please feel free at any time to call or write to the Editor to discuss how your ideas can be shared in the pages of *Child & Youth Care*. Telephone (021) 788-3610 e-mail: pretext@iafrica.com

When a tiny tyrant torments her son, this mom learns to contain her fury. Michele Weldon, writing in Parenting

The Bully Next Door

David (not his real name) was my middle child's first bully. He was a short, handsome boy with a fondness for fire trucks, monsters, chocolate milk, and injuring my son, Brendan. The summer he moved to our neighborhood, both he and Brendan were three years old. I assumed that David would fit neatly into Brendan's life as someone to catch lightning bugs with on warm evenings or build snowmen with on winter afternoons. I assumed they would be pals. I was wrong. David didn't foam at the mouth or wear a sweatshirt with "David's My Name, Cruelty's My Game" written across the front. So I had no warning that David would hurt my son often and on purpose. I wiped away Brendan's tears the first time he burst through the back door, wailing that David had pushed him off of the slide. I sent David home when I caught him scratching Brendan's face during a tee ball game. I called the doctor when David's bite broke Brendan's skin. Then I called David's mother — only to discover that she followed the "Oh well, boys will be boys" school of thought.

After each offence, a rage burst from deep within me, a bestial fury that blinded my rationality. In my eyes, this was not just a little boy who needed a time-out or a reminder to use his words. This was 35 pounds of pure evil. Something primal happens to me when my children are threatened. I become a lioness protecting her cub, adrenaline flowing, all systems go. The power flips on, the sirens blare, the blood pulsates in my ears, and a voice in my heart screams for vengeance. I wanted to strangle the kid.

Alone at night—while in bed or in the

shower—I would envision holding David firmly by the shoulders and growling between clenched teeth. "If you ever touch my son again ..." The litany of threats that would follow were sometimes so ludicrous they made me laugh out loud. These imagined attempts at intimidation also made me recall a bully from my own childhood. In sixth grade, Joey followed me home from

school one day, hurling spitballs at my back. One struck my new cream-colored cable-knit sweater. Another landed in my long brown hair. Four years later in high school, Joey asked me out on a date. He might have forgotten about the spitballs, but I hadn't.

The scum. And this is what I wanted to shield Brendan from — the sport of cruelty that all children play. I wanted to shelter each one of my boys from the sadistic side of other children, from a scar that never quite heals, from a spite that stings the soul. I wanted to save Brendan from the world. And it sobers me to know that I can't.

There will always be children sticking gum in a class-mate's hair, pushing a weaker child in the mud, or hiding a book bag in the bushes. Some kids will be luckier than others and won't have to endure anything more than a passing smirk or some random teasing. All I can do is love my son and show him how to navigate his own path, hoping that the Davids in his life are few. David was my son's first bully, but he won't be the last, I'm sure. After a few months, the reign of terror ended. I don't know why. But I do know that if ever any of my three boys are bullied again, my growl and fury will come naturally. And the growl will be loud, fierce, and relentless.



Shirin Motala, Chair of Southern Natal NCRC, writes of the need for a concerted, collaborative effort by both the government and NGOs to create an environment in which the National Programme of Action for Children (NPA) can be implemented

'FIRST CALL FOR CHILDREN'

The plan's great – now where's the action?

The launch of the NPA in May is an important milestone in a series of initiatives, including the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, taken by the Government of National Unity. Through this plan, the State reaffirmed its commitment to a "first call for children", implying that a high priority would be given to the allocation of resources, legislative changes and a review of policies and programmes to meet the needs of children at all levels of delivery. It has been described as an RDP for children: a worrying thought if we consider the status to which the RDP now seems to be relegated.

The NPA seeks to integrate all policies and programmes of both the State and NGOs; as such, it requires a process of national consensus-building around major social objectives. It is intended as a guide for all sectors in formulating their own plans. It contains firm recommendations concerning both goals and methods for the successful implementation of the UN Convention. It aims to improve co-ordination among the many agencies working with children, in order to ensure that South Africa moves closer to meeting its commitments to the Convention. The policy priorities outlined by the NPA are:

- Nutrition
- Child and Maternal Health
- Water and Sanitation
- Social Welfare Development
- ECD and Basic Education
- Leisure, Cultural Activities
- Child Protection Measures.

Within each policy area, attention has been given to setting short and long-term goals, linking these to the Articles of the Convention, developing national strategies to support these goals, estimating the resource requirements, as well as identifying the lead and supporting actors for implementation and monitoring.

In May 1996, a Cabinet Committee approved the NPA framework, acknowledging the centrality of children in the development process and providing that all government departments submit annual reports on progress.

Are the rights of children, who comprise almost half of our population, thus secured? International experience, unfortunately, shows that the struggle for the rights of the child is far from over. Daily across our screens we see images of the pain and suffering of children in many of the countries which are signatories to the UN Convention. Commitment alone cannot and does not deliver a new and more secure future for millions of our children, for whom the very effort to survive remains a nightmare. It has to be accompanied by evidence of shifts in terms of actual programmes, policies, and budgetary reallocations: this has been hard to find in many of those countries.

In a country whose infant mortality rate, of 12% nationally and 13.9% in rural households, ranks it amongst the 35 most lethal societies in the world for children, a serious commitment to the vast majority of South African children will best be met by actively confronting the obstacles in our path and by meeting the challenges through innovation, improvisation, and adaptation. It is not possible to present here all the substantive challenges that we need to grapple with. In an effort to stimulate debate, I wish to share with you a few themes that have captured my own interest as recurring themes in the successes or failures of NPAs across the world.

It is accepted wisdom that success in implementing an NPA is in direct proportion to the extent of dialogue and collaboration between the State and civil society. Only through the effective mobili-

sation of all sectors, including those who have not traditionally seen themselves as having children's survival, protection, and development as their major focus, can this plan succeed. Key elements in establishing successful partnerships include a willingness to share knowledge of each other's work, mutual trust, ongoing and open communication, sharing of resources, an acceptance that things may go wrong, and the ability to learn from each others' mistakes. Within the State this requires interdepartmental collaboration which, by the very nature of bureaucracy, is difficult to achieve; it will, therefore, require ongoing monitoring and review. There are very few good examples in South Africa of effective interdepartmental collaboration, the IMC on Children and Youth headed by Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi being one of them. At present, we have uneven levels of involvement by various government departments; this has been recognised by the NPA Steering Committee as an area requiring greater attention. The partnership between the government and the NGO sector has many facets. The government's commitment to effective involvement in policy and programme formulation has been demonstrated, for example, by the formulation of the White Paper on Welfare. What continues to frustrate the NGO sector is the apparent lack of support, especially financial, to enable NGOs to deliver, on a contractual basis, much needed services to disadvantaged communities which the government does not, at present, have the capacity to deliver. It is accepted, however, that blame for the collapse of many NGOs cannot be laid solely at the door of the government. Many of us who work with children simply assume that we are doing good: this can be danger-



ous. These assumptions need to be empirically tested and we need to develop our ability to examine the consequences, both intended and unintended, of our actions. It is essential that we look at our own plans with a critical eye and reposition ourselves for effective delivery of services. We cannot forget that we are in the business of promoting social change. South Africa's strong NGO involvement in development has been recognised in the RDP. This recognition needs, urgently, to be translated into concrete supporting mechanisms to prevent the further erosion of this capacity, which the country cannot do without. Plans and programmes are only as good as the situational analysis on which they are based. We are dealing with a situation that we understand insufficiently because of the absence of data. Quantifying the problem and developing a qualitative understanding of the needs of disadvantaged communities can only enhance our programme planning ability. The ability of the government to integrate the information systems of various departments needs to be strengthened. In Cuba — a country not at all rich in resources — the health information systems have become so sophisticated that they are able to monitor trends and to alert policy and programme managers to any adverse trends. They were able, for example, to identify a one percent increase in tuberculosis in the country. The challenge for NGOs is how to make available the vast amount of data that they have stored in their files, without detracting from their role as service providers. They already bear a heavy burden of under researching, lack of adequate access to training and skills development; also, perhaps, a lack of understanding of the potential value of this information for their own work. There are real pressures on our national budget for a range of essential needs to promote the overall growth and development of the country. The needs for housing, water, sanitation, health care, education, and the alleviation of poverty

are all essential for the development of human potential and are all equally important. I will not repeat the call for a reallocation of the Defence budget. There is already a long queue at the Defence Ministry making a claim on these funds which are not, in any event, sufficient on their own to meet all the budgetary needs of the country. What is needed is a re-assessment of the spending priorities of the various departments so that they favour children. (We must welcome the initiative taken by the Human Resources Trust and IDASA in undertaking a Children's Budget Project.) We need to examine what proportion of our funding is devoted to children. We are spending vast amounts on supporting the elderly and on young people in tertiary education and we must continue to do so. If the funding is disproportionate, however, there may be fewer young people in a position to enjoy tertiary education or to live until they are old.

Very little is being said about what functions of the NPA will be undertaken at the local government level; yet the conventional wisdom is that delivery which is close to the ground has greater potential for success. A fundamental principle of the UN Convention is the involvement of children in determining their future. We need to see the needs of children through a different lens, a lens which acknowledges that many of us who are not hungry, poor, uneducated, and vulnerable and who have long forgotten what it felt like to be children, are unable to have a contextual understanding of the everyday realities and choices which the poor, and children in particular, have to face. The work of the NCRC in facilitating the development of a National Children's Movement, through the two National Summits in 1992 and 1995, needs to be supported and expanded to the far corners of this country. It is a UN requirement that States which ratify the Convention must submit a progress report on the steps taken by the State to comply with the provisions of the Convention within two years and thereafter every five years. For South Africa the clock is ticking, as our first report is due in July 1997. The review Committee of the Convention, which receives the reports of the States, encourages progress rather than passing judgment. It is for this reason that we in civil society need to ensure that a strong and active lobby grows to ensure that the needs of children receive first priority. Our role and our ability in mobilising the sector, as well as our own efforts at monitoring, need to be urgently addressed.

Reprinted from *Recovery* — Research and co-operation on violence education and rehabilitation of young people. For more information on this journal and its mission, telephone its Editor on 031-83-5117, coskzn@wn.apc.org

Applications are invited from qualified and experienced child and youth care practitioners with strong people skills and an active interest in training, practice, advocacy and development to help promote the aims and objects of the Association

Deputy Director

Please reply, enclosing a brief CV and motivation, to our Director, Merle Allsopp, NACCW, 47 Kromboom Road, Rondebosch 7700

NACCW

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS IS AN INDEPENDENT NON-PROFIT ORGANISATION WHICH PROVIDES THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO PROMOTE HEALTHY CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND TO IMPROVE STANDARDS OF CARE AND TREATMENT FOR TROUBLED CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK IN FAMILY COMMUNITY AND RESIDENTIAL GROUP CARE SETTING'S.

Two readers raise questions about their services in the context of change and transformation in our society

Quality programmes — under threat?

Two seemingly different questions side by side this month — for they are related.

1. "I am one of many child care people right now who feel very demotivated. I have this awful feeling of seeing much of what we have worked for over the past ten years slipping away, and I ask whether it's worth going on."

2. "We were talking today about our feeling uncomfortable sometimes when we drive out in the Kombi, seeing the local children and families managing on what seem to be far fewer resources than we have in the children's home."

I am reminded of the story of the child care worker who thought she needed a change, and applied for a similar job at another children's home. She was rather horrified by what she saw when she got there — facilities varying between the basic and the primitive, a distinct lack of "taste" in the furnishings in the echoing rawness of the buildings, larger than expected groups of children and rather rough, rowdy activity groups going on with less than adequate equipment and space. The staff member who had been asked to show her around noticed the look of hesitancy and apprehension on her face, and remarked: "Well it's not meant to be Club Med, you know!" This story has relevance for both of our questions.

On the one hand, it has been very commendable of organisations, especially private organisations who have had to raise their own funds over the basic subsidy, to develop their resources over the years, for these have added much value to the general range of services available to children and families. The present cash crunch certainly threatens some of the standards built up in this way.

On the other hand, we have often been tempted to over-compensate for children's deprivation. It is easy to do this. We are taught that good physical care is fundamental to all child and youth care work, and in doing this we try to make up for past losses and disadvantage.

The central point here is this: It is true that our work with deprived, troubled and abused youngsters demands superior,

high quality programmes — but these, in turn, do not necessarily demand superior, high quality facilities.

Superior programmes

The programmes we offer should always be better than the experiences which have harmed and deprived the children at home — safer, more stimulating and more intensive, with better planning, better structure and better human resources. We know that when children enter a rational and responsive environment which offers adequate opportunity for growth and development, most of the consequences of their past experiences are alleviated. Indeed, if we are not offering them a programme which is different and better, we have no right to admit them in the first place.

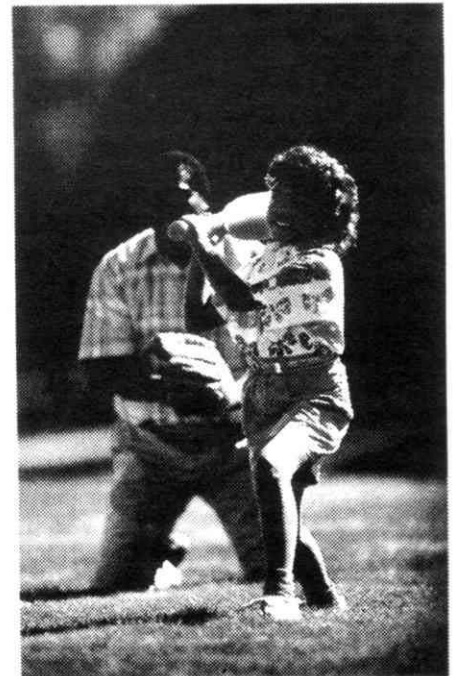
But having said this, there are two vital qualifications:

1. Quality programmes have to do with interaction and people more than with comfort and possessions, and
2. Quality programmes should demonstrate the use of the most basic equipment.



Quality programmes have to do with interaction and people more than with comfort and possessions

I remember once being unwilling to help a children's organisation with a fund raising drive they were engaged upon. They were starting out and had only two or three on-line staff members for almost sixty children — and they wanted to raise money for a swimming pool and two or three TV sets with VCRs. I was convinced that their need was not for things to



Quality programmes should demonstrate the use of the most basic equipment

"keep the children busy" but for more adults in the programme to interact with the children.

Ecological child care work

The essential principles of an ecological approach in our work are

1. The tasks we tackle with the children are relevant to their adequate functioning in their own worlds, in their families and neighbourhoods, and

2. The skills we teach the children are those which they can take away with them and which will work back home.

These simple sounding principles are in fact very demanding and hard to realise. It takes a well-informed, systematic and skilled team to apply them to the benefit of the children and their families — yet good programmes have always managed in the past to be inventive and resourceful. We need people to demonstrate these gifts to the field at large now.

And, yes, there is a sense in which welfare services in South Africa have often gone too far beyond these basics — most often out of kindness and concern. But when we make things inappropriately comfortable for children today, we don't help them with their tomorrows. —BG

STAFFING

1. How are hours allocated, prioritized and delegated to assist and facilitate child care staff working effectively with families and sharing their observations with other team members?

The hours of child care staff working with the family must be extremely flexible to (1) accommodate the needs of families served and

(2) to permit the worker's full participation at conferences and meetings. At the same time, other disciplines must make accommodations to provide support for child care personnel, especially during "non-typical" working hours.

Split shifts were viewed as detrimental. They decrease the worker's stamina and increase impatience and irritability; they do not provide time for intensive training, clinical supervision and professional brainstorming.

2. What types of career development and formal training are needed to prepare child care workers for the job-at-hand and to create a working environment that will allow them to develop and grow in ways that will help them to feel good about the job they are doing?

In an effort to minimize the "revolving door syndrome," career development and formal training must be uniform. Agencies should look carefully at their hiring policies to see where changes may be needed; they should implement effective, comprehensive orientation programs for new child care workers. Uniform job descriptions must be developed for workers at particular skill levels. Salaries must be upgraded to reflect differences in duties and responsibilities at each level; salaries should reflect education levels and provide an incentive to upgrade skills. A formal set of criteria should be established, statewide, to clearly delineate the requirements for professional child care workers. Statewide evaluations should be implemented to monitor and maintain standards of quality and professional expertise.

Agencies that are committed to full utilization of child care staff should link up with flexible college programs to foster educational opportunities and staff advancement.

3. How feasible is it to develop an inter/intra-agency networking system, focussed on the specific professional needs of child care staff, to facilitate involvement in the treatment of families?

It is not only feasible, but also necessary, to adopt networking systems that focus on the specific professional needs of child care staff in order to facilitate their involvement in family treatment. Networking also can add to credibility and provide a platform for professional recognition. Agencies or other disciplines may feel threatened by networking, but they can become supportive if they see how positively it impacts on programs and clients.

4. How does parent involvement impact on the formulation and implementation of cottage-based programs?

Parental involvement in cottage-based programs can have a major impact on the family system. Such involvement would allow children to see their parents in different, more productive and more competent ways. Cottage programming can provide opportunities for parents and children to teach one another, and to share, upgrade and develop new skills together. Parents can be involved in cottage programming in much the same way volunteers are, i.e., running how-to workshops in cooking, sewing, games, and arts and crafts; they also can participate in parent support groups.

REGULATIONS

1. How do child care workers face legal and regulatory restrictions in their work or involvement with families in treatment?

To some extent, all agency workers are subject to governmental regulations and sanctions. Agencies, and other disciplines, must respect the child care worker's competence to help meet these regulations, child care staff should be allowed to record their interactions and efforts with children and their families, and have their documentation exist as a legitimate part of the client's record. Agency liability should cover all disciplines, including child care.

2. Should a uniform child care career ladder be established to set specific criteria/standards for developing competent child care workers (capable of working with families in treatment)?

A career ladder should be standard and supported by state legislation. Child care workers should be licensed, and recognized as part of the treatment process.

BARRIERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Co-ordination of treatment efforts among the various helping disciplines

Many Agency philosophies do not embrace the child care worker's role as anything more than custodial in nature. These philosophies tend to preclude child care staff from becoming involved in the more professional treatment or family-oriented aspects of the program. They also tend to support "treatment teams" where mutual respect does not exist. Any change in Agency philosophy must be implemented at the top executives/administration) and filter down through the organizational layers. A clear understanding of the team concept must exist and allow for the provision of the best possible services, regardless of discipline. For the most part, line staff are seen as untrained and unprofessional and, therefore, incapable of engaging families. However, some members of the treatment team who do not view child care workers as professionally competent, responsible members of the team from 9:00 a.m. to

"However, some members of the treatment team who do not view child care workers as professionally competent, responsible members of the team from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, suddenly see them as fully competent from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. the next morning, and on weekends, when many treatment team members may be unavailable."

5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, suddenly see them as fully competent from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. the next morning, and on weekends, when many treatment team members may be unavailable.

On the other hand, some child care workers are not ready to accept the additional responsibilities and obligations that a more professional position would demand: Some feel insecure when relating to or interacting with parents or other members of the treatment team; some are unwilling to venture beyond the confines of the Agency to interact with professionals from other agencies, disciplines or backgrounds.

Those child care workers who are competent and who feel secure in their role must help to implement programs that will develop and maintain child care professionalism. They should participate fully in agency meetings and at conferences to develop credibility and to gain respect for themselves and their profession.

Staff Development and Training

Staff development and training must be incorporated, as part of an ongoing system, to upgrade and maintain professionalism in child care. Child care workers can, and should, be trained with other members of the treatment team to save money, eliminate scheduling conflicts and facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience among the various disciplines. All agencies should use existing staff, whenever possible, to train other staff and run parent education programs. Interns and others specializing in mental health disciplines also should be called upon for training assistance. All clinicians, as part of their training, should be required to spend some time in cottages, dormitories, units, etc. with child care workers, working cooperatively on day-to-day treatment issues. Agency philosophies which prohibit child care workers from being involved in therapeutic interventions with families must be changed. Child care professionals should not be excluded from this work or from sharing assessments and insights from their perspective. ■

The Role of Child Care Staff in Serving Families

PRACTICE ISSUES

1. How are child care workers used in serving the needs of families in treatment?

In some agencies, child care workers play an integral role in the therapeutic system, from participating in orientation programs to working extensively with families (modelling and sharing behaviour management expertise). In other agencies, child care workers play no part in the delivery of family service. In agencies using child care staff, personnel may be called upon to help families in a variety of ways: to teach parents how to interact more appropriately with their child; to provide primary services; to impart useful information; and to coach parents in using new skills and resources. Where flexible working schedules exist, the child care worker can do hands-on training in the home which helps to bridge the gap between institution and family. When child care workers serve as co-therapists, parents have access to an additional resource person.

2. At what point does the relationship between the professional child care worker and the family in treatment begin?

Whenever possible, the relationship between the child care worker and the family should begin prior to intake, primarily because the child care worker is most knowledgeable about the dynamics and systems that exist within the cottage environment and set the tone of interactions among the Agency, child care workers and the family. The establishment of clear expectations between child care workers and families at the outset can ease parents' minds about what will take place during the day-to-day care of their youngster.

3. What specific tasks are assigned to the child care workers who will interact with the families, and what is that interaction?

(a). As co-therapists, child care workers assess the family, ob-

serve their dynamics and interactions, and make suggestions and recommendations that will impact on the family system.

(b). As role models, child care workers teach families about concrete behavioural expectations by assigning tasks to children and parents, and holding them accountable for doing them. They teach parents and children how to enjoy one another (and how to have fun together) by sharing ideas for activities and modelling for them (within the unit or in the family's home). In addition, child care workers can offer families help in structuring their time so that daily activities flow in a more orderly manner.

(c). Child care workers can serve as liaisons between the child and family and the child and social worker to facilitate communications.

They also can foster the use of community support systems and teach parents the importance of utilizing such services to find jobs, day care services, alcohol abuse and drug rehabilitation programs, homemaker services, etc.

(d). Child care workers can visit families to monitor the child's home visits and the interactions between family members.

4. How do other disciplines support the child care worker's attendance at family meetings for the purpose of input and/or support?

The child care worker's attendance at family meetings depends on Agency philosophy and the immediate needs of social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists.

Wide variation exists among agencies: some provide child care workers with total support and access to meetings; other provide little or none of either. All agencies need to recognize and make a commitment to the field of child care as a separate treatment methodology.

They also must recognize that child care workers can bring valuable knowledge to the treatment team which can be used by other

therapists in their own work with families.

5. In regard to home visits, family sessions and follow-up, what acknowledgement, support or consideration is given to the professional opinions and/or assessments of the child care worker who deals directly with the child and family?

Again, Agency philosophy and orientation dictate whether or not child care workers will make home visits and become involved in family sessions or follow-up. In many agencies, this occurs only when there is a manpower shortage or when other professionals refuse to, are unable to, or are reluctant to perform these tasks. Agencies that utilize child care personnel to the fullest extent are finding that, when appropriately trained, they are capable of performing many functions usually performed by other disciplines.

6. How might the professionally trained child care worker's assessments and observations of the family during cottage-centred activities be used by the clinicians, and shared with the entire treatment team?

The professionally trained child care worker's assessments and observations of the family during cottage-centred activities are of vital importance: They provide insight into the family dynamics, and they can offer clinicians a view of the family system in a more relaxed, non-pressured atmosphere.

Documentation by child care personnel, which is accepted by all disciplines, helps to build better working relationships among treatment team members. It also gives child care workers a sense of being valued members of the team.

Participants in this work group felt strongly that

- (1) all disciplines must recognize and validate the expertise involved in child care work, and
- (2) that child care workers must view themselves as professionals.

Throughout South Africa programmes for troubled children and youth at risk have been struggling to maintain standards in the face of declining state funding. More than ever, this is the time for NGOs to develop further the role of volunteers. The assumptions are that (a) we have a great many tasks we need to tackle in our work with children and adolescents; and (b) there are a lot of people out there with skills to offer and a need to be engaged upon some worthwhile work.

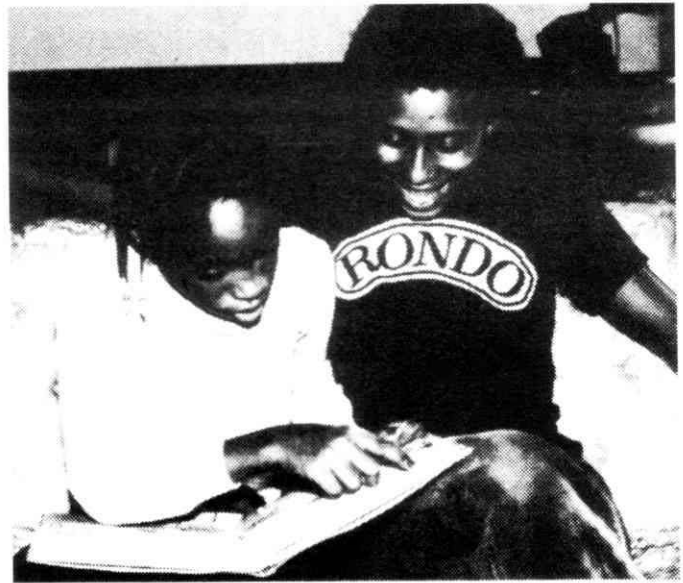
Happy ending

Lisa Gregory (not her real name) was a school Librarian whose job became redundant. She was in her late thirties at the time, and was crushed by this unexpected end to her chosen career. She spent eight months looking for alternative work, but for most jobs her qualifications were not appropriate, and for the rest she was considered 'over-qualified'. Living alone, although she could manage financially, she had little in the way of human support, and soon found herself getting into a bout of depression. She then started over-using alcohol. This could have been a story with a very unhappy ending. One afternoon out walking, she happened to be passing a children's home and wondered about all the children and adults living there. On an impulse she walked up the drive and asked to see the principal. She told her of her predicament, of her skills, and that she had time on her hands. Within an hour a room had been cleaned out, a base was established, and Lisa now spends three afternoons a week running a small library, reading group and homework programme for the children — and a research service for staff doing courses and for the team generally. Today she also has a morning job with an estate agent. "The volunteer job gave me the self-confidence I needed to get out looking for the morning job," she says, "but the real fire of my life is my three afternoons as week at the home — and from next week I am adding an evening a week for a literacy group for local domestic workers and one or two of the children's parents."

Using Volunteers

Getting started

Identify some need areas in your programme. Work out a volunteer "package" for each of these needs in terms of hours, skills level required, accommodation and facilities available — and a staff member responsible for managing and supervising — and then look for someone who fits the package. It does take effort to manage volunteers, for they need the same planning, support and feedback as other team members ("they cost everything but the salary") but in return for an hour or two of an existing staff member's time, your organisation can build valuable capacity by enlisting volunteers.



Secrets of Motivating Volunteers

From *What's Working in Non-profit Fundraising*

For years, fund raisers have lacked solid information about volunteers' interests and what motivates them. The Points of Light Foundation recently teamed up with the Gallup Organisation to study people's preferences for helping non-profit organisations to address serious social issues. The study shows that a high percentage of people lend their time and energy to one or more causes. And half of those who aren't currently volunteering said they plan to do so in the future. Here are some other findings that could help you attract more volunteers to your organisation:

People support causes that interest them

Participants indicated a clear preference for issues they want to attack: 55% volunteered for programmes aimed at the elderly; 46% for those supporting children;

36% for the disabled; 22% for housing; 17% for victims of violence; and 14% for drug or alcohol abuse prevention. Of course, these figures don't mean only human services will benefit. But wise fund raisers should make sure that their efforts to cultivate volunteers focus on projects that address these issues when possible.

Assign volunteers meaningful tasks

Volunteer participation often goes sour when organisations delegate boring labour to them.

The study indicates that non-profit organisations can increase their volunteer retention rate if they channel volunteers' energy toward more meaningful activities. For example:

- 74% say they want to work directly with people in need
- 70% want to help staff who provide services, such as driving, collecting food or providing child minding
- 64% want to help with fundraising, and
- 50% say they serve on non-profit boards.

Also, check out the issues which are important to various cultural groups in your community — some groups

may value education work, others service tasks, etc.

Take note of gender differences

You may also want to segment volunteer appeals by gender. The study shows men and women have distinctly different preferences when it comes to activities. Women tend to want to work with pregnant teenagers and children with learning disabilities. They're also more likely to serve on non-profit boards, provide companionship and tutoring, offer child care or substitute parenting, deliver or serve meals and perform office work. Men are significantly more likely to volunteer for alcohol abuse programmes, and also prefer activities such as counselling, recreation, neighbourhood clean-up, administration and leadership.

Broaden your scope

If you've always thought volunteers are only interested in assisting people in their own geographic region, you may want to rethink your approach. Two-thirds of volunteers reported their work benefits both their immediate area and other locations, and only 25% of those surveyed chose to help out in their own neighbourhoods.



How do we know that we do from day to day is any good? DCCA student **Phineas Molepo** remembers a set of challenging questions posed by educators

What are we doing today?

In their landmark book during the 1970s Postman and Wein-gartner challenged educators to ask themselves the following three questions:

- What am I going to have my students do today?
- What is it good for?
- How do I know?

We know that it is essential that all concerned have a clear picture, at all times, of the essential reason for the child's presence in our programme. A few questions have to be answered if we are to maintain sound direction in what we are doing. Are we educating these children to function adequately in the real world — or are we preparing them only to function adequately in our residential setting? To answer this question, we need to consciously look at the curriculum and the methods we use in our daily interaction with the children who are in our care.

What am I going to have my students do today?

Toffler made the point that we must prepare children to be able to live in their own future world, the world they will find waiting for them when they must function independently. In so saying he warns us to revisit our policies with regard to programmes, routines and teaching to see if they are really relevant to our present clients.

Some organisations, consciously or unconsciously regard their routines as more important than individual programmes and education. Child and youth care workers should be in a position to make decisions on a daily basis as to which activities are more important and which contribute towards the real education of the children.

This does not mean the child and youth care worker should go to work in the morning without any programme in mind, because if there is no programme, the children are quick to pick this up and fill the vacuum with their

own programme — and child and youth care workers then find themselves doing little more than "putting out fires" as Gannon puts it. He goes on to say that "when I see staff putting out fires it suggests that the kids have grabbed the initiative and are driving the action through their behaviour."

Child and youth care workers should be leaders rather than followers, but they should also know where to lead. More often they could be questioning their own sense of direction: "What is going on here? What would be the most helpful thing for me to do? How would adults handle this situation in a real world situation?"

For example, a child may decide to spend his afternoon working on his broken bicycle which he rides to school, instead of sitting around a table doing 'homework' which he does not have. Many a child and youth care worker would not allow this, because the 'routine' says otherwise. In the real world, it would make real sense to spend one's time fixing one's bike or car to be able to get to school or work the following day rather than following a meaningless timetable.

From the organisation's point of view, it means the administrator should encourage his staff to allow children to take more responsibility for planning their time, and to do things which promote their education.

Look at your practice today: what are your students doing? Just like progressive educators, we should believe that our educational philosophies not merely serve the residential community but can influence and change it.

What is it good for?

If a skill like fixing a bicycle can be mastered, and then be portable and relevant (that is, it will work back home in the child's real life) then a good educative organisation would rather allow the child to spend his afternoon

fixing his bicycle than forcing him into an artificial programme.

In work with difficult children we have a lot to do in a limited time. There are times when we are doing more technical 'treatment' work; there are times when we are doing more normative 'teaching' work; there are times when we are having fun. But everything we do must be useful — it must "be good for" something in the child's life.

But experiences can be good for the child's life *today* — good experiences today change a child's perceptions of his world and the way he responds to it. Most of us in my organisation have a tendency to emphasise the future rather than the present, which suggests that we fail to see that what we teach them today can be relevant to them now.

We often use the words, "When you grow up, when you leave this place ..." I think we must put our efforts into helping our children to understand the importance of our rules and routines now rather than giving them the impression that life is still to come — that what we do today is mere preparation for real life..

John Dewey, writing in the school journal in 1897 (did you get that date?) regretted that "much of present education fails because it neglects this fundamental principle of the school as a form of community life. It conceives the school as a place where certain information is to be given, where certain lessons are to be learned or where certain habits are to be formed. The values of these are conceived as lying largely in the remote future."

We should always keep Dewey's conclusion in mind that "Education, therefore, is a *process* of living and not a *preparation* for future living." This will enable the child to see education as a step forward for the child today — and allow him to see it as being good for him today.

How do I know?

What am I going to have my students do today? What is it good for? How do I know? This last question is a tricky one, because what I may regard as good for the child may not be experienced as good by the child or even by my fellow workers. It is through the feedback from the child and from those he lives with and interacts with that we can know that what we are doing is good for him or not. According to Brendtro et al. in their chapter on Brain-friendly learning, "the desire to master is seen in all cultures from childhood onwards. People explore, acquire language, construct things and attempt to cope with their environments. It is a mark of humanness that children and adults alike desire to do such things and in so doing, gain the joy of achievement." So we will recognise the value of what we teach when we see children trying more and more to do things without fear of failure. We will know by seeing children developing interest in what we are teaching them. We will know by seeing children gaining courage without feeling threatened.

All these can be seen if our curriculum is relevant, up to date and interesting without posing any threats to the children. However, we need to be very careful when we set criteria for assessing what is good and what is not, because our criteria may reflect expectations which might set up children for failure. Gannon (1988) suggest that "A group life environment should provide children with the incentives to grow and the freedom to fail. In other words we should not assess the child's progress by comparing him with other children. Children should be taught and encouraged to compete against themselves and not against others." How do we know? We will know when we see children deciding by themselves what to do and how to do it, without an adult having to prescribe for them. We will know when we see children being able to pursue their personal goals.

Conclusion

Postman and Weingartner warn that these three questions must be treated with caution as they can cause friction between the organisation and the individual worker. However, this can be averted by our building together a policy through which everyone on the team will want to facilitate demonstrably useful educational experiences, today, tomorrow and every day.

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Administrators

Empowering Staff

Dr. Larry Brendtro, who will be visiting South Africa soon, in conversation with Norman Powell

Although the concept of empowerment is useful, it has some limitations. Just giving power to someone doesn't ensure a desirable outcome. We have to see power as one of three elements that go together to make a healthy climate. Here I borrow from a classic definition of positive self-esteem. Many people say that positive self-esteem comes when you have three things: power, competence, and significance.

One cannot just walk into a cottage or into a treatment situation and turn over all responsibilities for decisions and say that he has empowered staff. Nor can one approach a group of adolescents and say, 'There is a new system in place. From now on you people are empowered.'

Competence

One must have competent staff if one is to empower them. Staff need particular skills in order to develop a curriculum for educational and group living models. In the European *educateur* model, child care workers enter the profession with a very long list of competencies, not only in understanding human behavior, counselling and teaching strategies, but also abilities in the areas of crafts, arts, music, and drama. There is a whole series of child care competencies which enable administrators to give staff power. It becomes more difficult in some traditional child care arrangements. An example is the pre-professional child care model

which Mark Krueger calls 'careless' instead of 'caring' in which incompetent parenting functions are mistaken for acceptable care. I suppose that concerned administrators in charge of agencies are quite right in not wanting to empower these types of people.

Significance

The third element of power is significance, the feeling that one belongs, that one is a part of a whole. Many organisations fail to create this magic group bond. I think that it was William Glasser in *The Identity Society* who said that one of the earliest instincts that developed in the human animal was the sense of identity, being a part of or belonging to some social group. We have not always created schools and treatment centres that have made children feel that they belong, and we certainly haven't created those kinds of organisations that make staff feel a strong part of those settings.

I read a paper recently on how one disciplines and manages behaviour in Native American children, by Hap Gilliland. He argued that the peer group process is the best way of managing the behaviour of Indian youth. If youths are not responsive to the peer process it is because they don't feel that they belong.

If it's true that belonging, feeling part of this almost primary group relationship, satisfies one of our most basic human needs, then we must design organisations that make people feel that they belong — or these organisations are not likely to be effective. By tapping the resources of all the people in the organisation, we release a massive power that generates the 'therapeutic community'. So I see this model as an



ideal organisation for child care.

A programme that creates this therapeutic community is Fritz Redl's "therapeutic milieu" or Harry Vorath's "positive culture" which create a certain sense of significance and belonging for participants. One works very hard to develop the competence of all the members. Young people need to see that they are competent in helping to solve their problems, in achieving academically, physically, and socially. Likewise, staff need to develop in these areas.

Adults and children

It may have struck you that I see very little difference, if any, in what you need to do to create an ideal community of young people, and what you need to do to create an ideal community of staff. I think it was Jean Vanier, a pioneer working in communities for severely handicapped persons in France and elsewhere, who made it very clear that this is not a caste system of adults in charge and a lonely group of people being helped — but all people living in a kind of community and all having something to offer. If you listen to the workers in such a programme they will tell you how these severely handicapped, sometimes mentally retarded persons, are enriching their own lives and their own development. It has to be seen as a two-way process throughout the whole organisation.

Jackie Winfield considers the value of a training programme which gives us professional skills for dealing with assaultive youth

Give Peace a Chance: Towards a culture of non-violence in the child and youth care system

It was tempting to begin this by examining the incidence of violence within South African society. However, one is able to find plenty of examples in the daily newspaper or on our television screens. Suffice it to say that young South Africans have been exposed to large doses of violence, and this is particularly true for those young people whom we describe as being "at risk".

Within the child and youth care system, there is a large number of clients who manifest behaviour which is not only difficult, but also, at times, dangerous and violent. A lack of appropriate training for child and youth care workers dealing with assaultive clients means that staff are often unable to respond in a therapeutic, caring and non-harmful manner. The *natural* responses of workers are fear and anger, which, in turn, usually lead to "fight" or "flight". Moreover, adults who are frightened by their clients' behaviour are likely

to respond in ways which compromise the rights of children and youth. Neither fight nor flight is an appropriate *professional* response to assaultive clients.

Many child and youth care workers became aware of their own inadequacies in this area of their work in May 1995 when more than 2000 young people who were awaiting trial were transferred from prisons and police cells. These children and youth represent some of the most troubled in South Africa, and as such, are legitimate clients in the child and youth care system. However, their particular difficulties require that

caregivers be highly skilled in order to deliver an effective therapeutic service. In an attempt to address the problem of assaultive behaviour, the NACCW brought Prof. Nick Smiar to South Africa for a two-week period in June 1995. The aim of this was to train a group of people as facilitators for a two-day workshop called Professional Assault Response Training-revised (referred to hereafter as PART-R). PART-R is a comprehensive workshop which is based on the philosophy that *all* human beings have the right to respect, dignity, and safety from physical harm. These rights apply to child and youth care workers but also to the young people who are our clients, *even if they become assaultive*.

Objectives of PART-R

PART-R is a two-day workshop which provides professionals with information so as to enable them to:

- * describe the importance of their own attitudes, moods and motivations on their work performance with clients who are impulsive and explosive
- * prepare themselves for the possibility of being required to respond to assaultive incidents at work

- * implement a system for identifying the signs of impending assault, including knowledge of:
 - the four most common states that drive attacks
 - the stress cycle and assaultive behaviour
 - human development and the potential for assault
 - assault as a method of interpersonal communication
 - assault as a response to environmental conditions
 - assault as a response to a perceived threat to one of the basic human needs
- * demonstrate the use of crisis intervention techniques that have proven useful in preventing simple assault (threats) from progressing to assault and battery

- * demonstrate proven evasion techniques that minimise the risk of injury to both the defending employee and the attacking client including:
 - evasion for slaps, punches and kicks
 - escapes from pinches, scratches, bites and hair-pulling
 - escapes from choking attacks, bear hugs and arm-grabbing
- * demonstrate restraint techniques that minimise the risk of injury during the most serious assaultive incidents
- * demonstrate the development of written reports of assaultive incidents that are complete, informative, concise and legally-useful

The five-day workshop for *trainers* of PART-R consists of the abovementioned two-day workshop followed by a three-day workshop to enable trainers to:

- * identify the components and functions of a successful workshop
- * demonstrate appropriate responses to difficult trainees
- * demonstrate the ability to evaluate participant performance
- * demonstrate the ability to teach PART-R concepts and techniques

Trainers who successfully complete the five-day workshop are certified to train the two-day workshop to staff who work in the same organisation. This certification is valid for three years provided that a minimum of two workshops are facilitated per year.

Training in South Africa

In June 1995, thirty-three participants from private institutions, State institutions, the Department of Correctional Services and the NACCW completed the five-day workshop and were certified as PART-R trainers. To date, these trainers have trained more than four hundred people from all over South Africa in the two-day PART-R workshop. This total includes an additional



twenty trainers from the Department of Correctional Services who were trained and certified by the NACCW in June 1996. These new trainers have trained 137 prison personnel in the last five months.

Evaluation

All participants who complete PART-R are asked to fill in a questionnaire so that the NACCW might gauge the appropriateness of the training. A selection of the students' responses follows:

"The course work had a direct bearing on the nature of the work I do at this institution. It can be put into effect immediately."

"It has given me self-confidence and esteem. I can work better in my environment without fear."

"I feel that I am now better equipped and therefore more confident about difficult children and situations."

"It has assisted me in acquiring skills in keeping myself safe and everyone around me safe."

"I feel I can handle a crisis situation in a professional way because I am more assertive, more confident. I now feel more safe at work knowing about the right ways of restraining."

"I think I gained a lot from this course which will help to perform my job professionally."

"The course serves to provide the members with adequate guidelines in respect of their treatment of clients and attitude towards clients."

"According to my view, this course is an excellent one. The only thing is to promote it."

Summary

Our children and youth reflect the norms and values which they have experienced in society. At this juncture in the history of our nation, it is hardly surprising that vast numbers of young people are not only "at risk" but also potentially violent. If we wish to teach our clients altruistic and humanitarian norms and values, it is necessary for us as professional child and youth care workers to understand the phenomenon of assault and respond to such behaviour in a caring and non-assaultive fashion.

We need to remember that "violence begets violence" just as "respect and dignity beget respect and dignity".

As a profession, let us commit ourselves to the highest standard of care for all of our clients. It is essential that we equip ourselves with the knowledge and skills to respond to difficult and dangerous behaviour so that every intervention is therapeutic and respectful.

Organisations which offer services to troubled children and youth will always be characterised by a measure of chaos. Let us be sure that this chaos and the difficulties of our clients are not exacerbated by ignorance or a lack of skill on the part of those of us who call ourselves professional child and youth care workers.

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Zeni Thumbadoo describes a new exchange opportunity for South African child and youth care workers through Pittsburgh University and Pressley Ridge Schools

International Institute



My visit during the second half of October, initiated by the Pittsburgh International Children and Families Institute, a joint partnership between the University of Pittsburgh and the Pressley Ridge Schools, brought together representatives from six different countries – the Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal, Argentina, Brazil and South Africa. The purpose was to share the range of programmes and services offered by these two organisations through further visits.

We had the opportunity to visit the different programmes and to discuss these with trainers, senior staff, on-line staff, and children and youth and parents/foster parents from the Pressley Ridge Schools and with academics at the University of Pittsburgh's Office of Child Development. The Office of Child Development at the university shared with us an innovative family support programme that they have set up together with communities.

Special programmes

The Pressley Ridge Schools offer programmes for very troubled children and youth who are mentally and emotionally challenged, who have had multiple placements and who require remedial education. Notable characteristics of the programmes are the strengths-based approach, the emphasis on family liaison and parent partnership, the use of the positive peer culture, the policy of non-refusal of admission to very challenging children and youth, an avoidance of inappropriate termination of cases, the skilful use of physical restraint, and a strong and diverse training component – designed to respond to the needs of children and youth in the state of Pennsylvania. Their programmes include a range of differentiated foster care programmes are offered including Kinship Foster Care and Treatment Foster Care.

There is a focus on intensive selection, training, and support of foster parents. Their residential programme comprises two cottages which offer almost one-to-one support to children. The Prism programme is less intense but offers a treatment programme for youth with challenging behaviour, dealing with issues that have not been addressed in other placements.

The Kinship Residential Programme offers short term (4 to 6 months) residential care for 10 children and youth who have critical reasons for not remaining at home. This programme emphasises an outreach to the educational system (youth remain in their schools with the child and youth care workers going into the schools to assist the teachers in coping with them), a parent support programme (a family liaison worker is employed), a strong training component for staff, and an intense and purposeful use of the group and the milieu in the treatment programme.

The Ohiophyle Wilderness Programme is for young males who are in trouble with the law and have very serious behaviour problems. The boys are accommodated in cabins of 10 each. The programme includes challenge courses and an emphasis on group interventions and relationship building with the adults. The educational component is creative and connected with daily experiences and tasks (for example, cooking, building, carpentry). The programme also has a strong family outreach component (a family liaison worker is employed).

Education

The Pressley Ridge School offers a structured and innovative educational programme for behaviourally troubled youth and children and those with the need for remedial education. The staff/child ratio is

intense with a strong positive peer culture component, family outreach services, individual treatment (educational) plans, and all with intensive staff training. The educational curriculum is most interesting and innovative.

Family Preservation

These are programmes that have the purpose of short term, intense service to families at risk of having children removed from their care. The programme also includes a Family Reunification component and works in close liaison with the family support programme. The programme is based on the basic philosophy of Family Preservation. The range and depth of skills in the Pressley Ridge programmes will be of great inter-

est to us. It is interesting to note that the three child and youth care programmes being piloted by South Africa's Inter-Ministerial Committee are similar to programmes offered by Pressley Ridge, namely, Professional Foster Care, Alternatives in Residential Care (such as Outward Bound) and Family Preservation. This contact has the potential to blossom into a positive partnership for the NACCW and for child care in South Africa. I would like to record my appreciation for the opportunity of this visit afforded to me by the NACCW.

International Institute Exchange Programme

**With the Pressley Ridge Schools
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

The NACCW invites applications from child and youth care practitioners who will be available for a two-month experience (March–April 1997) at the Pressley Ridge Schools. The schools have been visited by an NACCW representative who has identified two programmes for this exchange opportunity: the Kinship Residential Programme and the Ohiophyle Wilderness Programme — see information in the feature on this page.

Criteria for selection will include —

- Professional qualifications in child and youth care
- Substantial experience in the field
- An active interest in one of the designated programmes
- Paid-up membership of the NACCW
- Recommendation of Regional Executive/Chairperson
- Professional Registration recommended (not compulsory)

The successful applicant will be expected to give official feedback to the Association both in writing and in presentations, and to assist in the development of training and materials.

Interested applicants should apply to the Director, NACCW, 47 Kromboom Road, Rondebosch 7700, enclosing a full CV, by 31 December 1996.

NACCW

Jack Epstein describes how inexpensive training and new skills can lure youths away from drugs and gangs

A new path out of Brazil's slums

Zizelia Da Silva Borges gazes at the classroom wall riddled with gunfire and then at the blackboard with the plastered-over bullet hole. "It's a terrible way to live," she says, referring to the neighbourhood violence. "Unfortunately, there are a lot of idle young men who have nothing to do but join drug gangs."

Ms. Borges lives in Vila do Pinheiro, one of Rio's roughest slums. In July, the former secretary will teach computer science to youths who she says might otherwise turn to crime. "If we were offering a sewing class, they obviously wouldn't come. But computers are very alluring," she says.

The class is sponsored by a year-old non-profit organization called the Committee for Computer Science Democratization. It is part of a unique experiment to lure young slum residents away from gangs by giving them access to computers — and perhaps lead to a decent job and a boost of ego.

"The idea is that once the poor become computer literate, they will have more self-esteem and see themselves as people who can participate in society," says committee spokeswoman Julia Michaels.

The committee is the idea of Rodrigo Baggio, a high school computer teacher and consultant who dreams of hooking up most of Rio's slums by 2006. Currently, some 1.8 million people, or nearly one-third of the population, live in the city's estimated 600 slums, known locally as favelas.

"If we want a more just society, somebody must help the poor learn the technological changes that society is undergoing," Mr. Baggio explains. "Young people want an alternative to drug gangs and a more ethical lifestyle."

Using donated computers, software, and technical manuals, instructors teach a three-month course that includes word-processing, spreadsheets, accounting programs, and graphics. Each school has only five computers

and a printer; and classes — held in community centres, schools and churches — are divided into seven groups of 10 students each. Teachers are recruited from the favela, trained, and paid \$200 a month from the nominal \$10 monthly fee charged to each student. A team of 80 volunteers act as advisers and technicians.

In the past year, the committee has opened schools in 15 slums, serving more than 3,000 students. Five more favela classes, including Vila do Pinheiro, are set to open within several months.

At the Lidia dos Santos Community Centre in the Rio favela of Vila Isabel, 107 students are taking the computer classes in morning, afternoon, and night shifts.

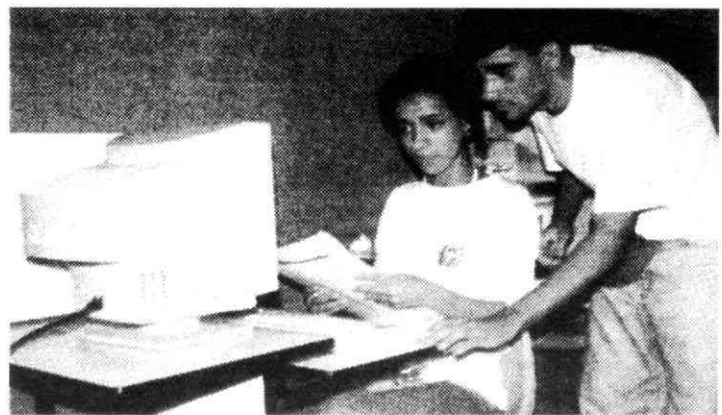
"These classes are motivating young people to stay in school," says Anna Marcondes Fuia, president of the centre. "They are a way to end the vicious circle of a lack of education, low salaries, and underemployment."

Baggio estimates that 50 percent of class graduates have already found work that require computer knowledge or have improved positions at their current jobs.

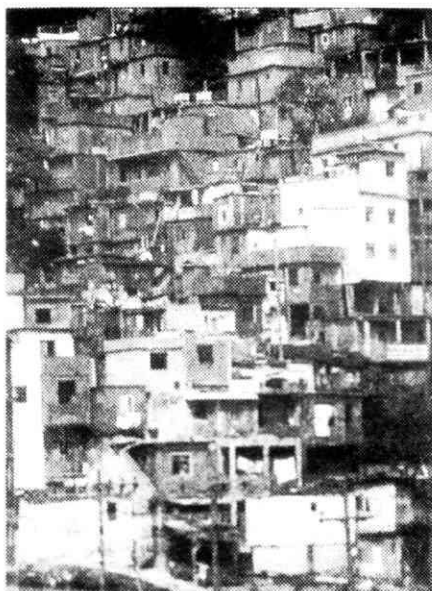
Marcio Rosa Ferreira, for example, took a three-month committee class at the Vila Isabel community centre that ended in February. A week later, he got a job at Kodak, designing advertisements on computers with

graphics programs that he had learned in class. "I told the manager that I had taken this computer course. I think it influenced him to give me the job," he says. Baggio also believes that the classes have "rescued the citizenship" of graduates. As examples, he points to a new electronic computer bulletin board that announces favela cultural events and software programs that have been introduced to teach students about health and protecting the environment. In the favela of Vila Isabel, students are printing out flyers and posters to educate residents about AIDS. Baggio says the committee is simply filling a vacuum for public education and an ever-widening gap between the literate rich and the uneducated poor. "If a rich kid can study computers, why can't a poor kid?" he asks. In the past two decades, rampant inflation, an economic recession, and government indifference have resulted in major spending cuts in public education. Classrooms are in shambles, students learn from out-of-date textbooks, and the average salary for a public school teacher is \$78 a month. In Rio, many teachers don't show up for class, while another 2,621 have quit in the past year.

Consequently, computer classes are offered mainly by private schools, which charge a monthly tuition of \$300, well beyond the reach of most Brazilians. Brazil's



Michelle da Silva Mora learns to use the computer with Leilton Mario Junior in Rio de Janeiro



Rio's Favela Rochina is the largest favela (slum) in South America. Youths often turn to crime for lack of better options.

average *per capita* income is \$3,000 a year.

Not surprisingly, officials at the Professor Ernesto Faria public school in Rio didn't hesitate when the committee offered five computers in exchange for a classroom that residents of Mangueira, a nearby favela of 70,000 inhabitants, could use.

"I didn't think twice," says school principal Paulo Ferrari. "These are the first computers that we have ever had."

On a rainy Thursday afternoon, Mr. Ferrari watched as Mangueira teenager Vitor Almarao Domingues learned how to create files and directories. The soft-spoken Mr. Domingues said that several of his friends had joined gangs, but he planned to "get a good job after learning how to work these machines."

For Baggio, that response confirms his strongly held belief that computers are enticing youths in the favela away from organized crime. Yet he is well aware that in almost every Rio slum, he can't operate without drug lords' permission.

Baggio -- like many favela residents -- calls traffickers "the boys" and uses euphemisms to describe their activities. His caution is justified.

After he was quoted in a Rio daily saying "computers are a revolutionary vehicle for living a more ethical life," gang members invaded three committee schools the following day.

"They came in, folded their arms, and just watched," says Serenito Moretti, the committee's director. "When they saw that it was nothing revolutionary or dangerous to their operation, they left."

Recently, both Baggio and Mr. Moretti spent several hours hugging the floor of a computer class room in the favela of Parada da Lucas, after being caught in a shootout between traffickers and police. In Vila do Pinheiro, violence between rival drug gangs is so fierce that few residents venture out of their homes after 9 p.m. As

"There is a way to end the vicious circle of a lack of education, low salaries and underemployment."

a result, the committee's school will schedule classes during daylight hours, and the computers have been strategically arranged out of the line of stray bullets.

In the meantime, Baggio says he plans to link the schools by modem, introduce the internet, and create home pages for each class. Moreover, he will soon inaugurate the committee's first Sao Paulo school and is discussing his model program with officials of five other states. "My goal is to include all of Brazil's excluded into society," he says.

Acknowledgements: *Christian Science Monitor*

Committee for Computer Science Democratization: <http://www.ibase.org.br>

Time to decide ...

If you are in a senior or middle management position in an agency serving children and youth, informed, quality programmes are your concern.

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What exactly is Child and Youth Care Work?

Continuing to answer this question, we listen this month to James Anglin's (1992) view of self, skills and knowledge in child and youth care worker development

The *personal* development and *professional* development of the child and youth care cannot be separated.

The focus of all our work is on high quality work in the tasks of our work, but there is an essential need for balance across the three areas of knowledge, skills, and self.

Self

Central to the educational process for child and youth care is self-awareness, sense of self, and development of self. Frances Ricks (1989) developed a model for addressing self-awareness in a systematic fashion. On one side are beliefs, values and ethics. These, together, constitute the inner "life position", or "world view" of the worker/person.

On the other side are thoughts, feelings and which together constitute our "styles" of presentation, or "postures", in the world. Our thoughts are the cognitive elements, our feelings are the emotional aspects, and our actions are our actual behaviours, or what we do. At any time, all three aspects are present. This model can be used to examine and explain aspects of one's self by providing a kind of map to assist in exploration. For example, if one becomes aware of a personal behaviour that one does not like, or does not understand, one can trace back through the related thoughts and feelings to the underlying beliefs, values and ethics, thereby enhancing one's self-awareness. Usually, the involvement of another person trained in the use of this model who is supportive, yet challenging, provides the optimal context for self-discovery and, thus, the opportunity for personal growth and change.

Skills

The concept of skill is often used quite casually, and even carelessly, in the literature on child and youth care practice. As with the notion of self-awareness, it deserves in-depth consideration. A skill is a complex phenomenon which has been analysed by Marcia Hills (1989) into four essential elements. *Contextual awareness*: Every situation is

bound by its context, and at any given moment, child and youth care workers experience a situation with all of its nuances. Some of these nuances are more salient than others because of the context within which they occur. The ability to recognize the salient features in a given situation is termed "contextual awareness".

Discretionary Decision-Making: In any situation there are a multitude of possible responses. Child and youth care workers need to choose one response from all these possibilities. The response they select is based on their judgement about what would be most effective in the situation. The ability to make decisions with discretion is what constitutes an intelligent action.

Performance: The behavioural component of skillfulness, referred to here as "performance", is often the prime focus of professional training programs. This critical component involves the ability of child and youth care workers to specific behaviour or *Confidence*: Workers must have faith and confidence in their own abilities and interventions. Professionals must trust in their ability to make sound judgements and decisions, and perform effectively.

In summary, the terms skill, skilful and skilfulness imply the presence of these four interdependent elements. How skilful a child and youth care worker is depends on the degree to which these four interconnected elements are present. The question now arises, how is skill developed across these four areas.

For education and training in skill development, experience is the key. "Experience" as used here, refers not simply to "putting in time", but rather refers to the process of *deriving new learning from participation in practical situations*.

Anglin suggests the following stages of growth of a child care worker: Beginner, Novice, competent worker, proficient worker and expert. These compare with Phelan's three stages of Year 1. The initial stage; Year 2. Beginning professionalism; and

Year 3. Competent professional.

Knowledge

A rather typical list of required knowledge elements would include the following:

- Theoretical approaches to behaviour change
 - Human growth and development
 - Assessment principles and methods
 - Case planning and management frameworks
 - Communication theory
 - Principles and models of intervention
 - Research and case/program evaluation principles and processes
 - Professional ethics and issues in current practice
 - Legislation and policies
 - Atypical development and behaviour.
- These knowledge areas need to be introduced not just through teaching, but in conjunction with the exploration of self and the development of skills; that is, as part of an integrated process of staff (or student) development.

What workers do

Anglin divides this into two categories:

A. Direct Service to Clients

These include: 1. Individual intervention, counselling or therapy; 2. Group intervention, counselling or therapy; 3. In home family intervention, counselling or therapy; 4. Office-based family intervention, counselling or therapy; 5. Assessment of child; 6. Assessment of family; 7. Child management; 8. Child abuse interventions; 9. Employment counselling or assistance; 10. Life skills training; 11. Health management; 12. Education remediation; 13. Recreational leadership; 14. Arts and crafts leadership; 15. Counselling on death, dying; 16. Therapeutic play; 17. Parenting skill training; 18. Sexuality counselling; 19. Marriage counselling; 20. Stress management; 21. Lifestyle modification.

B. Organizational Activities

These include: 1. Case management; 2. Client contracting; 3. Report writing and formal recording; 4. Court appearances/legal documentation; 5. Program planning and development; 6. Use and interpretation of policy; 7. Individual consultation with other professionals; 8. Participation in professional teams; 9. Co-ordination of professional teams; 10. Contracting for services; 11. Supervision of staff, students or volunteers; 12. Staff training and development; 13. Public relations/community education; 14. Organizational analysis and development; 15. Policy analysis and development; 16. Financial analysis/budgeting. Anglin concludes: Sensitive supervision based upon an understanding of the process of staff development can significantly enhance the quality of a staff member's working life.

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