

# Child & Youth Care

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

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**CREATE POSITIVE MOMENTS: ARE YOU READY?  
VALUES AND ATTITUDES FOR WORK WITH FAMILIES  
A LEADERSHIP TEST FOR ADMINISTRATORS**

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## Editorial

# National Executive, staff combine to promote practice excellence themes



We live in exciting times; we can all participate in and contribute to the transformation of our society and of our profession — but we must also keep our eye on the ball when it comes to our own practice.

This seems to be the message of the National Executive and the staff who have promoted the first of a series of "themes in practice excellence" — *Create Positive Moments: Make a difference for children and youth NOW!*

### Combination

The NACCW is fortunate in having regional membership structures (represented by their elected chairpersons on the National Executive), a professional staff team, and a journal which reaches all members each month. This combination gives us the opportunity to set in motion a nation-wide promotion through which we can act together and learn from each other.

The idea is that as we follow na-

tional developments in welfare — and child and youth care in particular — we should not allow this to distract us from our obligation to provide quality services to young people today. In fact, this is no time at all to rest on our laurels, for our profession is faced today with enormous challenges. Not only are we being challenged to learn and develop new tasks beyond the walls of our previously limited residential services; we are being asked to recognise that the resources for our important work are competed for by other equally deserving and urgent projects for children and families — including health, education, housing and justice.

### What we do best

What we are being asked to do in the *Create Positive Moments* programme is to use all of our existing forums (regional meetings, child care worker forums, staff team meetings, principals' and social workers' groups) to develop thinking and practice

around using the life space, using everyday events and using the moment to create positive experiences for children and youth and their families.

When we make it possible for people to take one effective step today, they are different as from today. Tomorrow will be different. Tomorrow our work will be different.

We hope that by next month we will be able to publish some of the ideas and experiences on this theme which come from the regions or from individual staff teams. There is immense power in the thought that we may, all of us, throughout South Africa, be concentrating on similar aspects of practice excellence at the same time.

What might this do for our profession? What might this do for the youngsters in our programmes? What might this do for our land?

### Nevertheless ...

Having said that, we still need to be better informed about the wider national developments in the child and family welfare field, and we thank Alan Jackson of Cape Town Child Welfare for walking us through some of these in a series of articles starting this month (see page 9).

*Above: Some NACCW staff and trainers with the National Executive while meeting last month at the NACCW KwaZulu Natal offices.*

## cyc-net

Connected? An e-mail message to [cyc-net@iafrica.com](mailto:cyc-net@iafrica.com) will connect you to a network of child and youth care colleagues world wide. Or sign on by visiting us at <http://os2.iafrica.com/naccw/cyc-net.htm> See you there

## Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Watterson





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Association Internationale des Educateurs de Jeunes Inadaptés  
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## People



### Ashley Theron

Ashley has been National Chairperson of the NACCW for ten years, and is one of the most prominent South Africans associated with the field of child and youth care. Matriculating in East London, he completed his BA (SW) and Hons BA in Psychology before working as a social worker, community worker and housing manager in Bellville, East London and Pretoria. In 1981 he became more directly involved in child care work when he was appointed by Cape Town Child Welfare Society as Principal of Annie Starck Village in Athlone. During this time he completed the National Higher Certificate in Residential Child Care through the Cape Technikon.

### Departmental posts

With the rank of Social Worker and Chief Social Worker, Ashley served for a period with CPA Social Services as Superintendent of Bonnytown Place of Safety before being transferred to the Head Office in 1988. Here he was given responsibility for the running of all Departmental Places of Safety, and by 1992 he had reached the level of Deputy Director of Social Services, with responsibility for policy and planning of services in the field of Child and Family Care. At this time he com-

pleted *cum laude* a course in Public Management at the University of Pretoria. In 1995, Ashley became Chief Director of Developmental Social Welfare in the Government of the North West Province, a post which he holds today.

### Man of many hats

By virtue of his position in the NACCW Ashley is also President of FICE-SA, the South African national section of the International Federation of Educative Communities, a Europe-based UNESCO body concerned with child and youth care. He has had wide international exposure to child care, having represented this country at conferences in Washington DC, Montreal, Slovenia, Wisconsin and Denmark, and made a study tour of programmes for young people at risk in Washington, New York, Minnesota, Michigan, South Dakota and Florida in the USA, as well as in England, Canada, Denmark and the Netherlands. He is a Consulting Editor of the journal *Reclaiming Children* and Youth edited by Larry Brendtro and Nicholas Long.

Ashley has taken a special interest in street children and in children in trouble with the law, serving on national workgroups for both of these groups. He was also a member of the Management Committee of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for Young People at Risk (IMC).

During his term as National Chairperson, Ashley Theron has been a familiar figure in most Regions of the NACCW. He lives in Mafikeng in the North West Province. Ashley has three daughters and three sons.

The NACCW has introduced the first in a series of Practice Excellence Themes through its membership structures, its staff and its journal. The first of these themes, filling the first half of 1997, is Creating Positive Moments. **Brian Gannon** takes us through the requirements of four essential stages for child and youth care workers to ...

## Create Positive Moments

Most organisations and staff teams prepare treatment plans for young people in care. These may be long-term permanency plans, extending over a year or more; and they may be shorter-term plans, looking a month or two into the future, during which we work towards particular treatment goals.

But the real action in our work with young people takes place moment by moment. The very next interaction, the very next moment, between you and a youngster can be the moment when something truly significant happens. What are the essential things we need in order to make that happen?

### 1. Being there

**Relationship:** *Have I already established some working relationship with the child which gives me permission to be part of the action in his life?*

The whole point of child and youth care is the relationship through which we express interest in — and influence — each others' lives. We must have some reason for "being there" in kids' lives. They will be uncomfortable with unexplained adults lurking around. We achieve nothing without initiating this relationship.

**Sharing space and time:**

*Does the daily timetable have me moving in the same spaces and times as the child so that I am there at significant times?*

A good daily programme creatively "mixes and matches" staff with children. I am no good at all if I am not actually present with the youngsters I work with. Usually (though not always!), the more formal and controlled the activity (study, mealtimes) the more predictable the situation; the more unstructured and spontaneous the activity, the greater the risks and the opportunity, the greater the need for alert and experienced staff.

### 2. Observing

**Selecting behaviours:** *Do I have some observational frame which helps me sift out behaviours which are significant or those I should let go?*

Our general experience of children and youth helps us to recognise what is normal and what is potentially problematic behaviour. Our *specific briefing* (from staff meetings, individual programmes, etc.) tells us what is significant for certain youngsters. We prefer to "go with the flow" and intervene as little as necessary, so as often as not we choose to "not see" certain behaviours.

**Signalling:** *Do I have some way (a sign, eye-contact) to let a child know that I have "red-flagged" a behaviour or incident for observation?*

It is reassuring for the children to know why they are in the programme and what skills and problems we are working at together. In our contracting we will often say "more sharing" or "express that in words". When we have established the learning tasks or critical behaviours, we can

use simple eye-contact or a cough to let the youngster know "This is what we were talking about."

### 3. Intervening

Are we skilled in (and can we choose between) the various levels of intervention which may be necessary? Here are four levels to consider:

**Monitoring:** *Am I good at maintaining a level of added alertness on my part, "keeping an eye" on a situation?*

This is not an unimportant level: it includes a deliberate act of *care-fulness* and a time of being present with young people, when we consider ourselves to be "on duty". This is the stage when child and youth care workers look out for risks and opportunities. As we become more experienced, we get to 'recognise the music' of kids' interactions — both major and minor keys!

**Accompanying:** *Can I choose the time to move nearer to a youngster or activity to reassure or to communicate my adult presence?*

Think of this as "moving away from the wall" and entering the "hot spot" of the action. The coach of a soccer or netball team often moves closely alongside a particular player or group with the message: "I am right here, I am interested in how you manage this, I recognise that this is a significant moment, we may talk about this later ..." We choose to move into this accompanying mode carefully, because the closer adult presence often triggers changes in the behaviour of the youngster or the group: perhaps an attempt to demonstrate skills and improvement, perhaps a studied indifference and independence ("I don't need you around right now") or perhaps



**We offer them compassion instead of indifference, understanding instead of blame, warmth instead of anger, inclusion instead of turning away, encounter instead of attack, commitment instead of rejection, teaching instead of punishment. Each of these can be a dramatic and never to be forgotten experience in a child's life — a positive moment.**



resentment and frustration at the adult challenge to their inappropriate behaviour or dominance.

We stay "with" the group or the child until we are sure that things will continue positively by themselves. This does not necessarily mean that all risk must have ended and that there is peace and quiet; on the contrary, it is good that robust, challenging and demanding interaction can continue, but that the kids concerned are *managing the situation* with the potential of learning and growing through it.

**Enriching:** *Am I skilled at adding some new element from the sidelines, an observation, some information or encouragement, suggesting some choices?*

This is the core of child and youth care work — *adding value* to the experience of the young people in the programme, without interrupting their activity. As always, we try to go with the flow: we usually don't want to *stop* behaviour, but rather to enable, facilitate and optimise it.

Enriching is the best level for intervention because it is rooted in the things the youngsters are already doing naturally. Here we have the opportunity to

reinforce positive behaviours, add information and skills, encourage and reward effort and achievement, and to work with the whole group at the same time as being able to single out individual performances and issues.

**A plus and a minus:** Enriching is of great value because it can happen anywhere. We don't need a special room or a special activity to practise enrichment — meal breaks, classrooms, talk sessions, sports training, activity groups, just hanging out — all are occasions when we have the opportunity to be with kids while they do their own thing. BUT this does not mean that we have to keep tossing "good advice" into every situation. Child care work should be a good dialogue, with us doing rather more listening than talking. Enrichment should add spice and stimulation; it should not be boring. We ensure that our contributions are well-chosen and we keep them to the minimum.

This process of enrichment can be profitably workshoped in your teams and discussion groups, because each programme has its own special settings and possibilities. The *Create Positive Moments* programme would especially like to hear of your experience and suggestions in this area.

**Engagement:** *Last of all, what are my skills when actually intervening in a process to change its direction, to avoid unhelpful developments, to teach alternative — or to instil new skills and possibilities?*

There are two levels at which we intervene. At one level we include youngsters in more formal learning or treatment routines — such as activity/therapeutic groups or social skills classes. These formal interventions take children *out of* their life space for a period, build new awareness, attitudes and abilities, and then return them to daily life. All child care workers need some skills in such "extra lessons" for troubled youth.

At the other level we learn to work *within* the children's life space. This is the whole area of behaviour management, crisis intervention, and what Fritz Redl called "life space interviews" and "therapy on the hoof". It takes courage to interrupt negative behaviours and difficult situations, and it takes skill and experience to be able to engage youngsters in running repairs and return them as soon as possible to the action.

The circumstances of such engagement are often tough, because through our monitoring and enrichment phases we will already have tried to prevent and avoid escalating situations. However, the better our earlier levels of intervention, the less often will we have to be able to interrupt crisis processes.

## 4. Outcome

**Follow-through and debriefing:** *Do I ensure that the incident, the learning or activity resulted in a successful, positive and useable experience?*

By reflecting on an experience afterwards, a youngster can often make more sense of it. We can highlight the changes made and the gains achieved, and we can translate the experience to a verbal and conceptual level which allows us to talk about it subsequently. Troubled youngsters are often satisfied just to "get through" a difficult experience and simply feel relieved when the pressure is off. That's not enough because they will often then live in some suspense or anxiety anticipating the next crisis. So it is crucial that we show them the steps they have made, how we are changed and improved by our experiences, and that the next challenges and tasks will be different. Perhaps even more important is helping youngsters to generalise what they have learned to their own lives. So part of follow-through is providing opportunities for the kids to put into practice their new learning, to see that it works.

**Programme adjustments:** *Do I take away from the incident any information or tasks to contribute to the youngster's individual programme?*

If we can help the child or youth to see growth and change in himself, then our programme must respond accordingly by also seeing him differently. His individual programme is now different. From today we should be working at a slightly higher level, with different challenges, different tasks, different expectations and goals.

## Positive moments

Throughout these four stages — being there, observing and assessing, intervention and outcome — we have the opportunity as child and youth care workers to offer youngsters *something different* from what they have been used to.

We offer them compassion instead of indifference, understanding instead of blame, warmth instead of anger, inclusion instead of turning away, encounter instead of attack, commitment instead of rejection, teaching instead of punishment.

Each of these can be a dramatic and never to be forgotten moment in a child's life — a positive moment. This can happen when we consciously think of these four stages whenever we are on duty, never missing an opportunity.

*Send your ideas and experiences to Create Positive Moments, P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735. We'd like to hear.*

# Time for that Annual Report!

Dear Odella

*The time is coming closer when we write our Annual Report and I have been given the task to co-ordinate it and see to it that it is produced. I am at my wit's end! I have browsed through so many reports from other organisations in a desperate attempt to come up with a magic solution that will make for a readable report. Many of these documents end up being boring and unreadable. Please help me with some ideas. I am feeling very uncreative. — Distraught*

Dear Distraught

I can fully empathise with your position. It has been said that more people read an annual report *before* it has been printed than afterwards! A recent American survey into annual reports reveals that 55% of readers spend only 6-10 minutes on an annual report! Bearing this in mind, there are some critical questions that one should ask oneself when writing a report: *Who am I writing it for?* (funders, clients); *What am I hoping to achieve by writing it?* (message, content); *What image do I want to share with my audience?* (suggests level of language; density of text; whether you use a high-gloss finish, recycled paper or photocopy).

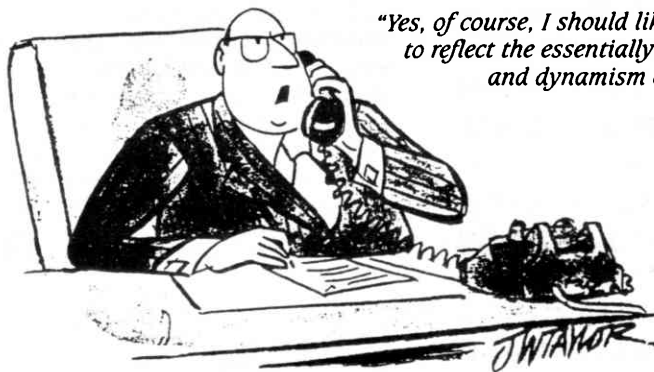
## 5 types of annual reports come to mind

1. The high gloss report that holds minimal information. It usually cites the organisation's vision, mission, a word from the director or chair and financial statements for the year.

2. The 'We-Are-So-Good' Report. The report that is written by all staff members of the organisation, reflecting on their work. It often results in competitiveness amongst staff members who attempt to show off who has done the most.

3. Bringing the reader into the living experience of the organisation. This type of report talks about what the organisation has done in real terms, by using photos, pictures and examples.

4. Reflecting on the thinking behind the organisation's practice. This report reflects the soul and feelings of



*"Yes, of course, I should like our Annual Report to reflect the essentially youthful exuberance and dynamism of our organisation."*

an organisation — what has been occupying the staff's thinking in that year. It is a side that the client does not always see.

5. **Thematic report.** this report engages with the vision of an organisation and how that manifests itself in practice, showing how the organisation would analyse the government's policy according to its own vision.

## What makes for a readable Annual Report?

There are no rules for good annual report design, but when it comes to readability, certain typographical fundamentals apply:

- the size of the type face (anything below 10 points gets tricky)
- the style of the typeface (lower case, serif type generally reads easier, e.g. **Annual Report**, as opposed to **ANNUAL REPORT**. Avoid ornate or hard-to-read type faces, particularly when it comes to financial figures)
- avoid setting body copy (the main text) in reverse (white on black).
- break up your text into friendlier chunks, e.g. paragraphs and heads.
- don't run your text too wide across the page, or over illustrations, making it illegible
- don't think you have to cover every available piece of the page with text or graphics: allow some "white space" for an uncluttered look.

The design should cohesively promote the theme of the annual report and reflect the desired image of the organisation, be that solid and successful, young and dynamic, or cash-strapped but resourceful.

## What makes for a **Funky** Report?

A funky designer! But there is a big difference between a modern Annual Report which encourages reading and enhances the progressive image of the organisation, and an over-designed publication which uses every digital trick on offer, violating proven readability factors.

If you decide to have it designed professionally — from a professional

designer's point of view, what have been some of the difficulties in translating what clients want?

Probably the biggest frustration is being briefed according to the personal views of one person, doing the design according to this brief — and then discovering after the first proof has been submitted that the director, for example, thinks that an entirely different approach to the publication is needed! Ideally the designer should attend a joint first briefing with all decision makers.

## What would you need to bring when a professional designer works on your Annual Report?

You need to have thought about a theme and the broad contents of the Annual Report, the sequence of the contents, good quality visual support material — and have some idea of the budget.

In the first briefing, general design issues will be established. Once a design concept has been finalised, the text and graphic material (photos, charts, illustrations, etc.) will need to be provided. Expect a minimum of two months from the first briefing to final delivery of the report, but start preparing the report well in advance of the financial year end.

## What should people expect to pay to have their report laid out professionally?

This varies tremendously. A full colour 60-page Annual Report for a large multinational with a substantial print order could cost in excess of R100 000; a smaller full colour publication may come in at under R40 000; while a two-colour, 12-page report could cost even less. A good design firm or printer would guide you through all the options appropriate to your budget and draw up an obligation-free quote. You could also do an in-house publication on a desk-top publishing programme and keep your costs very low.

*Acknowledgements to OD Debate. Odella thanks Alan Argulle, the designer she consulted for more information.*

Marilyn Gardner writes in The Monitor on families who are trying new roles

# When Mom works and Dad's at home

Jennifer Warne always assumed that she and her husband, Steve, would remain a two-career family after their baby was born. She worked days as a project manager for an insurance company. He worked evenings as a supervisor in a packing plant. But with only 30 minutes together each day, Mrs. Warne says, "Family life was falling apart. Steve worked six days a week. Sunday he wanted to sleep. I felt like a single parent."

A year ago, the couple devised a radical solution. Mr. Warne quit his job to care for Jack, now 22 months old, and she became the sole wage-earner. While stay-at-home fathers have long enjoyed media attention, their breadwinning wives still remain largely invisible. Yet "these women are as groundbreaking as the men," says Gwen Nyden, associate professor of sociology at Oakton Community College in Des Plaines, Illinois.

## Negotiating new deals

Issues of budgets, discipline, housework, and the balance of power in a marriage often require couples to negotiate entirely new arrangements. They must also deal with inquisitive comments from relatives and friends who find their new roles an oddity. To share experiences and con-

cerns, a small group of breadwinner wives accompanied their husbands to the first national convention of stay-at-home fathers, held in November in Des Plaines. Only 10 percent of working wives earn more than their husbands, according to Lynne Gasper, a Census Bureau demographer. Even fewer wives are the sole wage earners in marriages like the Warnes'. The Census Bureau does not count stay-at-home fathers, but Dr. Gasper estimates that in 1993, 340,000 non-employed fathers provided primary care for children while their wives worked. That figure rises to an estimated 1.9 million when employed fathers are included.

For some couples, it is the husband who proposes the arrangement. Donna Mains of Oak Park, a technical planner for an advertising agency, explains that her husband left his administrative post at a university two years ago to care for their first child. "We were looking for day care, but I wasn't happy with what I was finding," Mrs. Mains recalls. "One day Jim said, 'I could stay home.' I said, 'Oh yeah, sure.' I kept looking for day care. A month later, he said it again." Like Warne's, her salary and career potential made it logical for her to work.

## "Better at raising kids"

Some wives say that their husbands are more nurturing. "He's better at raising kids," says Lynn Horn of Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, whose husband, Peter, worked for a construction company. For four years he has cared for their four-year-old daughter and two-year-old son while she works as a claims adjuster in an insurance company.

Linda Frank of Glenview, Idaho, a hospital administrator, offers a similar reason for the shift she and her husband, Robert, made nine years ago when their first child was born. "He's more patient," she says. Even so, comparisons with other women inevitably occur. "There are situations where I'm better off, and situations where they're better off," says Mains. "My women friends who work can't appreciate the level of responsibility you feel when you're the primary breadwinner. And the lost salary makes things tighter."

## Long-term role reversal

But the primary reward, she emphasises, is that "one of us gets to be with our children. They're getting the best care we could possibly give them. I never worry about them when I'm at work."

Nor must these women think about certain domestic details. Most of their husbands do much of the shopping, cleaning, laundry, and errands. Some also cook. "Jim does the cooking and cleaning for the most part," says Mains. She cooks on weekends, pays the bills, and goes grocery shopping alone on Saturday morning so he doesn't have to take their two children, ages 23 months and seven months.

Mrs. Frank's husband cooks three or four nights a week. "I keep saying, 'You can't serve pasta and potatoes at the







**"I asked him, 'Do you want to do this because you want to stay with the baby, or because you hate your job?'" she recalls. "He thought about it for a week and said he'd like to do it because of the baby." He has cared for their 21-month-old son since he was born.**

same meal, if that's all you serve," she says with a laugh. "But I see it as a positive because I don't have to worry about trying to get a meal when I come home."

Although role-reversing parents share discipline, some women find their husbands taking a firmer stand.

"When I'm home, I probably let things slide more, just because I haven't seen them do it 10 times that day, and Jim has," says Mains.

Ann Rosenthal, a mechanical engineer and mother of five in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, adds, "If I disagree with the way he's disciplining, I don't interfere. I'll talk to him about it later." Her husband, Eric, a former certified public accountant, has cared for their children for five years.

Yet even pioneering arrangements have their limits. After work, these breadwinning wives, like women in two-career marriages, begin a second shift at home.

"The role reversal is only when the mother is at work — then we switch back," says Robert Frank.

Speaking of his own routine when the couple's children (now ages 7 and 9) were small, he says, "At 5.30, when Linda walked in, I would say 'Here you go' and hand the kids over.

Based on a national survey he conducted last year of 371 stay-at-home fathers, Dr. Frank, who holds a doctorate in educational psychology, says, "Stay-at-home dads' wives are very involved in the family." He also finds that these role reversals tend to be long-term. Fathers in his study had been primary caregivers for 33 months, on average.

### Seeing both sides now

There are clear reasons why couples revert to conventional roles, says Professor Nyden. "In a traditional marriage, I'm not absolutely certain that a husband understands what a stay-at-home wife does all day. He works hard at the office, and when he comes home it may not occur to him that his wife has worked hard and needs a break too.

"But when the women come home, they understand that their husbands need a break, so they take over a lot of playing with the kids and helping with dinner. We're seeing more 50-50 sharing."

Despite the complexities of these roles, Warne finds that tensions arise "very rarely". "We did have a conversation once, where Steve said he felt I wasn't very appreciative of what he does at home, such as walking in and saying, "Wow, the house looks really nice," she says. "Sometimes when I get my quarterly performance review, he'll say, 'When am I getting mine?'"

Calling their arrangement "pretty normal," Mrs. Horn adds, "We haven't had a lot of conflict about it." And Mains says firmly, "I don't feel at all like I have the power. It's not my money, it's our money."

### Financial planning

Even so, Mary Balmer of Waukegan, Illinois, an associate scientist at a laboratory, emphasizes the importance of being clear on the motivation for changing roles. When her husband, Bill, proposed the idea during her pregnancy, he was unhappy with his job at a bank.

"I asked him, 'Do you want to do this because you want to stay with the baby, or because you hate your job?'" she recalls. "He thought about it for a week and said he'd like to do it because of the baby." He has cared for their 21-month-old son since he was born. "It's great," Mr. Balmer says. "We're both very happy with the arrangement."

Warne, too, stresses the need to plan.

Before her husband quit his job, the couple practised living on her salary and saving his pay cheques. They sold their car and bought a used car. They also scrapped plans to buy a bigger house.

In addition, Mrs. Warne's mother came for three months to help her son-in-law establish a routine with the baby. Mr. Warne admits that his first day alone was "pretty tough," but adds, "I've adjusted real well and enjoy it." Even with planning, no one pretends that such major changes are easy. Warne sometimes feels "a tinge of jealousy" when her husband tells her what he and Jack did that day.

"But that doesn't take away from the happiness of knowing that this is what works for our family. He's doing a really great job," she says.

How long will these arrangements continue? "We didn't put a time limit on it — this is the decision for now," says Mrs. Rosenthal. "When the kids are older, Eric could start a home-based business or work for a small company. He has an entrepreneurial spirit."

Mrs. Mains adds, "My feeling is, it would be nice if Jim goes back to work when the children are in school. I wouldn't feel such a financial burden. It would also help out for college."

Others worry about their husband's isolation and ability to re-enter the work force. "He's doing me a great service, and I think he's doing what he wants to be doing," says a woman from Michigan who does not wish to be identified. "But I'm concerned about the ramifications five years from now. I think people already view him as being different. That's going to affect an interview."

Yet Mrs. Warne sees many advantages. "We have dinner together now, and we enjoy family time in the evening. I don't come home and have laundry and errands and housework to do. Echoing the comments of other wives in breadwinning roles, Mrs. Frank says, "I'm always grateful that I have this opportunity. I'm proud that I can do this for my family."

### CALL FOR PAPERS

NACCW 11th Biennial Conference

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2 to 4 July 1997

As planning for Conference proceeds, we continue to welcome proposals for papers or presentations. If you or your organisation wish to make a presentation, please fax your name, address and telephone number, with the title of your presentation, to **0331-42-2526** and a member of the Conference Planning Committee will contact you.

**NACCW**

**KWAZULU NATAL REGION**



What are all the big words and acronyms we hear in the field of welfare – such as Programmes, the White Paper, the SWAP and the Children's Budget? Child care workers should know about such developments, but many, busy with on-line work, are confused. The first in a series in which we ask **Alan Jackson** of Cape Town Child Welfare to explain ...

# National Developments in Child and Family Welfare

## **C&YC: How will institutions be affected by programme funding?**

I saw in the journal that many homes hadn't yet been notified of this — probably because there is a difference between *welfare programmes* and *welfare facilities* like institutions. These always had certain fixed costs and were dealt with separately. Examples of welfare *programmes* are foster care, adoptions, child protection, preventive street children work and parenting programmes. How the principles will apply to residential services has not been worked out. With the IMC suggesting additional services for existing institutions, for example, becoming local centres which also offer prevention, early intervention and after care, this may well involve programmes. Each province must set up its own programme system, but at the moment the financing system has not yet been put in place. The minister talks about phasing the system in over two years from July. This could mean that some places will come on stream in July and others later — or it may mean we will only begin to put the building blocks in place from July.

## **C&YC: What is the status of the White Paper on Welfare?**

This is not yet accepted by Cabinet — questions are being posed by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee. (Each department has a portfolio committee, and that on welfare has questioned some white paper contents. My feeling about the development of the White Paper is that it was extremely democratic, and it was the result of many requests for input as well as the very well organised three-day National Summit in July 1995. Each province sent departmental

reps as well as elected representatives of the private sector NGOs.

The white paper was dealt with chapter by chapter. Points of satisfaction were recorded, as well as points of criticism. If people felt that there were issues needing to be discussed further, then a group was delegated to do this. The process was excellent.

## **C&YC: What is the the SWAP?**

SWAP stands for the Social Welfare Action Plan, which is an attempt to put on paper the nuts and bolts of the White Paper. It has not followed quite the same democratic process, and participants have been mostly departmental officials and national councils, with some comments from provinces. The SWAP is a noble attempt at making the White Paper more tangible and operational. Everything in the White Paper is dealt with in the SWAP, so it is a very broad document, and it does not prioritise enough. By not prioritising, we are not deciding what needs to be done urgently, and what can safely be left over for five years or so. The timetable is also unrealistic and many of the deadlines set in the first SWAP document have already passed, often with no start being made on the plans. One reason is that there wasn't the staff: only very recently, for example, have Chief Directors been appointed, and people haven't settled in. Linked to that, we simply don't have the resources in this country. This is not only a welfare problem — we see it also in medicine and education. We South Africans generally know what is wrong, and we want to put it right — but we want to put it right all at once. We can make a seri-

ous mistake by putting in place things which have not been carefully thought through, which we will have to undo later. We've already seen this confusion over children in prison. The attempts are noble, the motives are pure, but realities must be faced.

The SWAP is not entirely an internal welfare department plan. It should be involving the other departments with which it needs to interact in implementing the Plan, as well as the private sector. It should be something which has the blessing of everyone, and it will not, unless it properly incorporates the work which has been done in the provinces.

Certainly, at the moment they are asking for comment, but in the last *Welfare Update* (the Department's national publication) there is a report that provincial comments are being integrated into the *third* draft of the SWAP — while in this province we have only so far seen the *first* — not even the second. In fact there has been no discussion yet on a provincial level, so the fact that there is already a third draft will create problems.

## **C&YC: What are some of the issues in the SWAP?**

There is an idea to separate the *social security* (pensions, grants, etc.) and the *social welfare* budgets. The *social welfare* budget is really small fry making up only about 12% of the overall welfare budget while 88% relates to social security.

A reason for separating is that if the department found itself in trouble regarding social security, it couldn't raid the welfare funds. Welfare policy aims to reduce social security — making people more independent. If we reduce social security spending, the department would like to use at least



some of what would be saved in the welfare budget. It makes sense. But the politicians may not decide that way.

Another issue is corruption such as pension fraud. The progress being made in dealing with this is slow. The estimate is that R1 to 2 Billion is involved! *This is the same size as the whole welfare budget!* Rather depressing for welfare.

## **C&YC: What is 'The Children's Budget'?**

This is an interesting lobby which asks questions like: How much money goes to issues important to women? How much to issues important to children? The view is expressed that although government makes noises about gender issues, does it have the political will to do much about these? The same with children. These are the more marginalised sections of the community. Women at least have the vote; children don't. People say there may be something in President Mandela's idea that children of 14 and older should have the vote, for then they would be a more important constituency. Today they are voteless, and politicians generally look at votes. The Children's Budget is a useful initiative — and makes for a good rallying point.

*Future subjects in this series: The NPA and the PPA, the Consolidated Child Care Act, the Lund Report, and the national strategy on Child Abuse and Neglect*



# The World of Child Care Workers

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Lead, follow — or get out

Lets hope that the new year is going to be free of some of the moans and groans that I heard last year. Many of the meetings I attended seemed to focus around peoples' dissatisfaction with their work:

- the hours were too long
- the job was too stressful
- the pay was too little
- the children were too naughty
- the subsidy was too small, etc.

My answer to these who complained was "But that's the job!" If you chose to work with troubled children, that's what you must expect. It's your choice.

#### Goes with the territory

If you are thinking of becoming an airline pilot, don't go to the trouble of all the training and the exams if you are afraid of heights — because if you pass the exams and join the airline pilots' profession, you will be expected to fly at heights of about 30,000 ft. That's the job!

We child care workers have chosen to work with hurting, anxious and angry children and youth. That's a tough job, and we must expect the job to be stressful. Most of us work in an under-funded welfare sector, so the pay is not good, we often have to work long hours, and the children are going to be difficult.

#### Who wants this job?

I can easily see why 999 people out of a thousand wouldn't want to work in child care, but those who do should come in knowing what to expect. Of course we must do all we can to improve conditions but not at the expense of the children.

#### Leaders or followers?

Right now a lot of children and youth are going through a hard time. Right now our field is going through a hard time. There is no doubt that this is a time for commitment.

Child care is crying out for leaders — people at all levels who can plan, lead, organise and be responsible for activities and programmes. It is also crying out for doers, those can follow the lead of others.

Right now all of us, both the profession itself and the young people it serves, are relying on positive leaders and followers. If you can't be either of these, it could be that you are not in the right job.

Maybe the message should be: Lead, follow — or get out!

**Chris Smith**  
*Cape Town*

## GOOD NEWS

### Hutu kids reunited with families

**Geneva:** The International Committee of the Red Cross said yesterday that it had reunited three-quarters of the 10 500 lost Rwandan Hutu refugee children with their families, who lost them during their mass influx from Zaïre and Tanzania.

The children were separated from their parents when half a million Rwandan Hutus in Tanzania were expelled by troops in December and 600 000 returned home from Eastern Zaïre.

The ICRC's computer tracing programme in Rwanda for children is the largest since World War II and it has registered the names of more than 80 000 children so far.

About 100 000 children were lost or orphaned during Rwanda's 1994 Hutu-led genocide of Tutsis.

The programme is assisted by radio broadcasts, Polaroid photos of children and parents, and messages delivered by the Red Cross.

— *Reuter*

**Sylvion Dhlamini**, a child care worker at Durban Children's Home, responded at a Durban meeting to recent state and other moves to downgrade our profession

## Shosholoza Child and Youth Care

Who says you don't exist?

I heard people calling you names  
calling child care workers names  
calling them nannies,  
calling them auxiliary social workers.  
What's that?  
calling them housemothers  
calling them housefathers  
calling them fathers, mothers  
Which they are not.

Forgetting the wonderful, vital profession,

the profession that keeps families together,  
the profession that makes friends,  
the profession that promotes development of children and families,  
of children who are the flowers of every nation (the nation without children is nothing).

We are not the smugglers, the thieves,  
the murderers, the hijackers ...  
So tell me, who says we don't exist?

NACCW, Social Workers, UNISA, Children's Rights Ministry and others —  
We thank you.

Oh yes! We do thank you,

we thank you for your support,  
supporting us with knowledge,  
knowledge for upliftment,  
upliftment for development.

Development for children and the world,  
Development for child care workers themselves.

Then, who says we don't exist?

Who works 24 hours, like who?

a soldier, no,  
a nurse, no,  
a teacher, no,  
a manager, no,  
a doctor, no,  
a social worker, no,

It's only you the child and youth care worker.

Who takes risks?

the risk to discipline and care for  
physically, emotionally, socially or  
sexually abused children;

I mean children who don't belong to you,  
yet children you cannot ignore, absolutely not.

Who says we don't exist?

Now is the time to say —

the time to say, We do ...

We do exist

now is the time to say  
we are living and we are here  
oh yes! we do exist —

Oh yes! we do exist

I mean exist, exist, exist and exist —

**Yes! We do exist!**



"I really wanted to  
be a mass murderer,  
but I'm just not  
very gregarious."



## I Am A Teacher

One might just as easily read this piece thinking of its title as "I am a Child Care Worker" — It is an extract from the book *Chicken Soup for the Soul — 101 stories to open the heart and rekindle the spirit* by Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen

I am a Teacher.

I was born the first moment that a question leaped from the mouth of a child.

I have been many people in many places.

I am Socrates exciting the youth of Athens to discover new ideas through the use of questions.

I am Aesop and Hans Christian Andersen revealing truth through countless stories.

I am Marva Collins fighting for every child's right to an education.

I am Mary McCleod Bethune building a great college for my people, using orange crates for desks.

And I am Bel Kaufman struggling to go *Up The Down Staircase*.

The names of those who have practiced my profession ring like a hall of fame for humanity... Booker T. Washington, Buddha, Confucius, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Leo Buscaglia, Moses and Jesus.

I am also those whose names and faces have long been forgotten but whose lessons and character will always be remembered in the accomplishments of their students.

I have wept for joy at the weddings of former students, laughed with glee at the birth of their children and stood with head bowed in grief and confusion by graves dug too soon for bodies far too young.

Throughout the course of a day I have been called upon to be an actor, friend, nurse and doctor, coach, finder of lost articles, money lender, taxi driver, psychologist, substitute parent, salesman, politician and a

keeper of the faith.

Despite the maps, charts, formulas, verbs, stories and books, I have really had nothing to teach, for my students really have only themselves to learn, and I know it takes the whole world to tell you who you are.

I am a paradox. I speak loudest when I listen the most. My greatest gifts are in what I am willing to appreciatively receive from my students.



**M**aterial wealth is not one of my goals, but I am full-time treasure seeker in my quest for new opportunities for my students to use their talents and in my constant search for those talents that sometimes lie buried in self-defeat.

I am the most fortunate of all who labour.

A doctor is allowed to usher life into the world in one magic moment. I am allowed to see that life is reborn each day with new questions, ideas and friendships.

An architect knows that if he builds with care, his

structure may stand for centuries. A teacher knows that if he builds with love and truth, what he builds will last forever.

I am a warrior, daily doing battle against peer pressure, negatively, fear, conformity, prejudice, ignorance and apathy. But I have great allies: Intelligence, Curiosity, Parental Support, Individuality, Creativity, Faith, Love and Laughter all rush to my banner with indomitable support.

And who do I have to thank for this wonderful life I am so fortunate to experience, but you the public, the parents. For you have done me the great honour to entrust to me your greatest contribution to eternity, your children.

**A**nd so I have a past that is rich in memories. I have a present that is challenging, adventurous and fun because I am allowed to spend my days with the future. I am a teacher ... and I thank God for it every day.

— John W. Schlatter.

## Pay-out?

Did you know that the Department of Welfare has paid a significant sum of money to children's institutions as a one-off grant towards salaries of child care workers? This might not prove to be such a large sum when it is shared out between all of the institutions concerned. But it is at least something — something out of which all child care workers should at least get some small treat. What did you do with yours? Tea at a smart restaurant, a nice bottle of wine, a new pull-over for winter?

### CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Director of the NACCW is a member of the Reference Committee of a Task Group of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training, which has been appointed by the Minister of Education to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs in education and training and educational support services at all levels of education and training.

**Clearly troubled children and youth at risk with whom child and youth care workers are concerned should be included in the investigations and recommendation of this group.**

If you would like to make any input to the work of this group, please write to Merle Allsopp at NACCW, 47 Kromboom Road, Rondebosch 7700 or e-mail to [naccwct@iafrica.com](mailto:naccwct@iafrica.com)

**NACCW  
NATIONAL OFFICE**

**Situation Wanted:** Mature lady, ten years' experience in child care. Cape Town area, own transport. Mostly worked with adolescent boys. Looking for interesting live-out position, for example, street children or AIDS related work. Telephone Pauline Lake evenings on (021) 58-3574.

Wain Brown, PhD., founder and chairman of the William Gladden Foundation which provides publications and professional training on youth at risk, writes in *Reclaiming Children and Youth* of his own problematic childhood and youth — and of those who hindered and helped him

# Don't ever give up!

## The power of belief in promoting a turnaround

Such labels as "neurotic," "schizoid," "schizophrenic," "high psychotic potential," and other less than positive diagnoses, marked the files that followed me throughout my childhood (Brown, 1983). According to the doubters, my prognosis was, at best, somewhere between "guarded" and "unfavourable." They had deemed my potential to overcome the past to be extremely limited.

Fortunately, there were some professionals whose approach was far more Promethean. They saw potential where the doubters saw limitations. They provided alternatives, while the doubters sought concrete descriptions. They invested their efforts so that I might have an opportunity to prevail. They are the true heroes in my life. Without their altruism and dedication I would have proved the doubters correct.

### Product of the care system

I am a product of the child care system, albeit a "positive" representation of what intervention can accomplish. My life history echoes the theme of this journal which is providing information to professionals who work with children with emotional and behavioural problems. My life serves as an example of a job well done. Intervention can and does work. Even severely disturbed children can be saved.

In many ways, this paper reminds me of Franz Kafka's short story, *A Report to an Academy*. In this fictional tale, Kafka imbues an ape with the capacities of intellect and speech. The ape, because of his acquired human behaviours, is invited to give an account of the life he formerly led as an ape. Kafka's ape and I are much akin. We both have been asked to recount our sto-

ries. We both have a message to give. Kafka's ape tells the assembled academicians:

"I could never have achieved what I have done had I been stubbornly set on clinging to my origins, to the remembrances of my youth. In fact, to give up being stubborn was the supreme commandment I laid upon myself; free ape as I was, I submitted myself to that yoke. In revenge, however, my memory of the past has closed the door against me more and more. I could have returned at first, had human beings allowed it, through an archway as wide as the span of heaven over the earth, but as I spurred myself on in my forced career, the opening narrowed and shrank behind me; I felt more comfortable in the world of men and fitted it better; the strong wind that blew after me out of my past began to slacken; today it is

only a gentle puff of air that plays around my heels; and the opening in the distance, through which it comes and through which I once came myself has grown so small that, even if my strength and my will power sufficed to get me back to it, I should have to scrape the very skin from my body to crawl through. To put it plainly, much as I like expressing myself in images, to put it plainly: your life as apes, gentlemen, insofar as something of that kind lies behind you, cannot be farther removed from you than mine is from me." (Kafka, 1952).

For me, my past serves as a reminder of what might have been had not certain people and events dramatically altered the course of my life. Like Kafka's ape, there was a time when I could have returned to my former patterns





of behaviour, a period of vulnerability when I might have succumbed; but as the years and experience progressed, I was able to replace the pain of the past with the promise of the future. Like Kafka's ape, "I felt more comfortable in the world of men and fitted it better". I had found a way out of the cycle of emotional problems, delinquency, and institutionalisation that had plagued my childhood. I had proved the doubters wrong. I was free to become more than an ape.

### The doubters

But I did not accomplish this metamorphosis alone. Had I been left entirely to my own devices, I would have continued to exhibit a myriad of emotional and behavioural problems. And had my fate rested the hands of the doubters, I am reasonably certain that today I would be confined in a psychiatric ward or a prison. Instead, my life has run an entirely different course from that which the doubters predicted. They neglected to see that I had "positive" potential, and they chose to focus on my "negative" prognosis. And nowhere is this short-sighted perspective more revealing than in the clinical notes of the psychiatrists at the state hospital where I was placed for observation during the summer before my sixteenth birthday. I offer the following quotes as example:

**"It is felt that this boy's psychotic potential is high, that his prognosis is guarded and that we might even deal with the insidious beginning of a malignant, chronic schizophrenic process."**

**"Schizophrenic reaction, adolescent type, with a very poor prognosis."**

**"... agree with classification of schizoid personality and believe he will probably prove to be schizophrenic reaction. Should remain in hospital indefinitely and have intensive psychotherapy."**

**"Schizoid personality. Affect flattened. Autistic signs of repression noticeable. In Staff shows drilled upon superficial insight. No change felt since presentation for diagnostic staff. Prolonged psychiatric care appears to be of questionable value. Prognosis is guarded. Feel that patient will become schizophrenic."**

**"Clinically a schizoid personality, dynamically, he is schizophrenic. Consider his prognosis is very poor. In need of intensive psychotherapy." (Brown. 1983)**

These live quotes offered by five psychiatrists exemplify the doubters' view of my potential. To their way of think-

ing, I was doomed to a life of continued emotional and behavioural problems. Were my destiny in their hands, they would have kept me in the state hospital indefinitely. That would have ruined me.

### ... also believers

Thank God, there also were believers in my life, people who had not given up on me, professionals who nurtured my potential. Chief among these believers was my probation officer, Mr Lantz. As a child, I blamed Mr. Lantz for many of my woes. I still can remember his wrinkled face, no neck, scrawny frame, piercing eyes and constant questions. Throughout my teens, he was the bane of my existence. Why didn't he just leave me alone? Why was he always prodding into my life and sending me away to mean and restrictive places whenever I did something that did not meet his standards of conduct? What did he know about my life? Oh, how I disliked that man and the power he held over me!

I am no longer a confused and angry child. Today I am armed with the perspective of being able to read and understand the copious probation records Mr. Lantz kept about my case. And what I have come to realize is that he, more than any person other than myself, had the most influence in determining how my life has turned out. He was the one steadfast influence in an otherwise tumultuous childhood. He was the difference between what I am and what I might have become. He was a believer, and he believed in me. When poring through the volumes of probation records Mr. Lantz kept on my case, I am struck by three insights: One, how precise and complete were his notes; two, how well he understood the circumstances that influenced my emotional and behavioural problems; and three, how his notes were nearly devoid of criticism, labeling, or other forms of negativity when chronicling my life.

Indeed, he was the consummate professional who believed that it was possible to turn around the lives of even the most severely disturbed juveniles. I was lucky to have him.

### Belief is a strong medicine

There were others, too, who believed I could be reclaimed, as there also were other doubters. The doubters are anachronisms who should never have touched my life, and who definitely should have pursued different vocations — preferably bookkeeping or some other form of impersonal activity. Doubters should never work with children, especially dysfunctional kids. They will do more harm than good. Children are sensitive creatures whose

egos are quite fragile and still forming. Doubters limit the potential of "normal" children to conquer even the simplest problem. How dramatically, then, do they affect the outcomes of seriously emotionally disturbed juveniles?

The believers, on the other hand, are to be recognised and applauded for their inspiration. Their faith is what breathes new life into our confused and pained young minds. They do not give up on us. They merely seek to find other avenues to reach us, support us, guide us, put us in a position to turn our own lives around. That is what Mr. Lantz and several other child-care professionals did for me. They looked beyond labels and saw potential — perhaps only a little — but potential nonetheless, and they nurtured it until it took root and flourished. Some child-care professionals believe that many emotionally or behaviourally disturbed kids are beyond repair. In my experience, psychiatrists seemed particularly adept at weeding out those of us who were doomed to lives of dysfunction. But not all are jaded by impersonal clinical diagnoses. Many believe that every kid has a chance of recovery, and they set about to prove their belief correct. Even when the evidence seems to the contrary, they merely redouble their efforts and plod forth, believing they will find some way to "get to" a child. They refuse to give up on their young clients, just as Mr. Lantz refused to give up on me.

Belief can be a strong medicine for even the most disturbed child. And it certainly makes a difference when it comes to deciding how to handle a case. The doubters would have confined me to the state hospital. At 15 years old, I would have been initiated into a life of insanity, a victim of labels, never to know my full potential. But the believers, caring professionals like Mr. Lantz, made it possible for me to master my problems and turn my life around. He and others like him were the critical difference between what I was and what I have become. To you, the professionals who work with emotionally and behaviourally disordered children like I once was, I have tried to impart what I consider to be my most critical insight, the product of a lifetime of introspection: Don't give up! Don't ever give up! For, you see, we are not destined to remain apes.

Brown, W.K. (1983). *The other side of delinquency*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Kafka, F. (1952) A report to an academy. In *Selected short stories of Franz Kafka*. New York: The Modern Library. 168-180.



# Missing Gigi

What happens when you face the loss you least expected!

**Amari Meader**

A brother, a sister, I believe, is a gift. I say this not only because I am blessed with one of each, but because I remember so clearly thinking through this myself, as a parent. I remember wanting so badly for my first-born to have a connection, a complement as she grew, a balancing point — someone to share the blame, the burden, the bewilderment the intimacy and idiocy of family. I remember wanting for my first child one other in the world who stood to understand the particular nature of the concoction, of that unique configuration, into which we each are born, to which we become inextricably bound, and from which we all struggle to distance ourselves, only to discover how futile is the endeavour. Siblings may be cut from the same bolt of cloth — may be born of some shared vision, some well-meant intention, but despite the undeniable and enduring, there is something so fragile in the connection that binds us one to the other. Blood and beliefs, assumptions and ar-

guments, histories and histrionics, faults and futures — future faultlines — all work to weld or waylay us. A messy matrix with no promise as to the outcome. I was lucky. My sister Gigi — my only and older sister — and I spent forty years attracting and repelling one another. We ricocheted off each others' lives like mercury that shatters and repairs itself over and again endlessly; that, when coalesced in that molten and mysterious way was the most sensitive gauge of family temperature and temperament of our combined eternal heat.

**B**onded from the beginning by birth, by necessity, by our common history and most recently by our beautiful children, we nevertheless were bonded most by a love we *chose* to pursue; a love I have held so close to the bone that it is almost impossible to describe. Gigi, for me, was a radar reading, a set of points, often consciously sought, sometimes unconsciously known. She was someone

to steer by, to resonate with, to react against; someone I could define myself in relation to. We loved and laughed and quarrelled and cried. We moved in separate spheres that overlapped and underlaid one another. We moved as if by charged particles on a stormy night run through with the force of lightning, connecting cloud to ground, my heart to hers. There is no doubt my sister was a force to contend with; I am one too. Members of our family don't take themselves, or life, lightly. We rage and roil, help and harangue, order and organise, expect loyalty and give ourselves over wholly in return. There is not much about tempered stances in our lives, or mild-mannered, measured approaches to things. In this manner, my sister and I engaged the world and each other, providing, alternately, the safest and most treacherous ground for one another. And it was this most precious dynamic, the very stuff of our lives, both ferocious and fragile, from which neither of us ever ran.

**W**hen Gigi discovered that she was dying of cancer only six short months ago, we did not run from that, either. Though the disease had crept in virtually unnoticed, its destructive intentions, its slash-and-burn tactics, became all too clear, all too soon. Three months from diagnosis to death gave us little time to integrate the harshness of her sentence. I remember Gigi saying that she was not afraid to die, only that she couldn't get her mind around the absoluteness of this terminal thing. And so it is for me as, still, at times, I find the losing of her intolerable and incomprehensible. What will it be like to be loose in the world without my anchor, my balancing counterpoint, without my ground? Until now, I never once, in all my life,

thought about losing her, about her dying. I've run through many other dark scenarios of loss, but somehow never Gigi. She was a solid, a known quantity for me, part of my landscape. Stubbornly tenacious in life, she was at all times present and accounted for. Unlike me, she never worried about her health. Hardly sick a day in her life, she minimised the pains she did feel, and couldn't understand why I would dwell on the negative, the slightest symptom, and get all worked up and fearful about things. And it was this rootedness, this profound fearlessness, that I admired and envied in her the most. As a dear friend of hers recently said to me, "Gigi was so not neurotic".

**N**ow as I look into this yawning absence, face this new longing head-on, and try to make sense of what seems so senseless, I need to live into my sister's fearlessness, and take strength in just knowing that she was not afraid to die, only angry that it had come this soon. So, like her I must lean into that from which I want so much to run, even when it's myself that scares me most. I must come to trust that, like her, I can make a difference, not just a lot of noise. That whatever time I have left is enough, and that I can use it, minute by minute, to its fullest, as she did. I can't do this in her name, or in her way, but I *can* do it with her clearly in my mind, as my unshakable inspiration, my only sister whom I will miss forever.

*Amari Meader lives with her partner and two children in Ithaca, New York, where she is a clinical social worker at a family counselling centre.*

Acknowledgements to *Hope Magazine*. For information about this magazine contact the Editor.

If you are in a leadership position of any kind, try this quick quiz ...

# A Leadership Test for Administrators

Score each statement below in terms of your own attitudes and practice. Ring 3 points for APPLIES ALWAYS, 2 points for APPLIES SOMETIMES, 1 point for APPLIES SELDOM . Total up your points for each section, A, B, C, etc. Check your scores over the page.

	APPLIES ALWAYS	APPLIES SOMETIMES	APPLIES SELDOM	GROUP TOTAL
I am able to lead others by demonstrating my own skills	3	2	1	A
I avoid using my power to enforce decisions or resolve differences	3	2	1	
My leadership position is based on my conceptual knowledge	3	2	1	
I spend time thinking about what we do — and what we <i>could</i> be doing	3	2	1	B
Our organisation's practice reflects current thinking in the field	3	2	1	
I have a good grasp of the spirit and goals of political developments in my field	3	2	1	
I avoid routine for routine's sake	3	2	1	C
Our team questions its motivations and practice from day to day	3	2	1	
I am not afraid to introduce change or go along with change	3	2	1	
I set a good example by my own work ethic	3	2	1	D
Colleagues and children know me as quick to participate, help and support	3	2	1	
I contribute much of my own skills and interests to the daily activity timetable	3	2	1	
Staff would agree that I make decisions after consulting with others	3	2	1	E
I have good knowledge of what is going on in my organisation	3	2	1	
Colleagues feel that I listen carefully to the other person's point of view	3	2	1	
Staff feel well-informed, rather than me keeping information to myself	3	2	1	F
I can communicate both positive and negative messages effectively	3	2	1	
Our team reports good openness and cohesiveness in the organisation	3	2	1	
Staff benefit from new things I am able to share with them	3	2	1	G
I look for ways to add to my skills and qualifications	3	2	1	
I am constantly stimulated by and learn new things from my practice	3	2	1	
Colleagues or children would agree that I let them try their own solutions	3	2	1	H
I am able to take personal responsibility for trying out new approaches	3	2	1	
I believe people benefit from challenge or change as much as from consistency	3	2	1	
I avoid "quick-fix" solutions which undermine long-term, sustainable gains	3	2	1	I
Our organisation has a clear and understood set of values	3	2	1	
My practice is characterised by respect — at all levels of our service	3	2	1	
I believe strongly in the value and potential of what I do	3	2	1	J
I think all children and youth and staff have the capacity of change and grow	3	2	1	
Most of the staff and clients in our organisation will probably do well this year	3	2	1	

Turn over the page to score yourself

GRAND TOTAL: GROUPS A TO J:

# Scoring

**A Leaders have the authority of knowledge.** High score (7-9): You probably find yourself respected as a practitioner, and colleagues are inspired by you and willing to follow. Low score (1-3): You may find yourself having to remind staff that you are "the boss" and using power too often in your management style.

**B Leaders are visionaries.** High score (7-9): Your colleagues are well motivated and look to you to see the goals and directions of your organisation and your field. You do your homework. Low score (1-3): Without enough forward momentum you may find your team is rather static and routine based — and their boredom can rub off on the youngsters.

**C Leaders produce change.** High score (7-9): You allow a lot of challenge and stimulation which keeps your staff and children "on their toes". Low score (1-3): There is a danger that for many in your organisation, today will be much the same as yesterday, and too few problem-solving skills are being learned.

**D Leaders give their all.** High score (7-9): You will see a high activity level in your organisation, which invites participation and involvement of all. Low score (1-3): You will likely find a general lethargy and unwillingness amongst staff and pupils.

**E Leaders are good listeners.** High score (7-9): You probably use a good participative management style, and others feel respected and involved in your organisation. Low score (1-3): There is a danger that others feel untrusted and excluded — or that you don't want to hear different view-

points. You may be surprised at how much wisdom you can learn from others.

**F Leaders are good communicators.** High score (7-9): Both children and colleagues will feel empowered and well-informed — which also contributes to lower levels of anxiety in your organisation. Low score (1-3): You are keeping too much to yourself, limiting other peoples' confidence and limiting their ability to make decisions.

**G Leaders are students.** High score (7-9): The more you introduce new ideas and new thinking, the more energy there is in your programme. Low score (1-3): People are bored by the repetition of information and ideas which have passed their "sell by" date — and you may be failing to demonstrate to others the value of learning.

**H Leaders take risks.** High score (7-9): You enjoy (and allow others to enjoy) the excitement of "let's try this and see what happens!" by remembering that people learn their best lessons from their own experience. Low score (1-3): Everyone needs the stimulation of new experiences and new insights, both staff colleagues and children. We have to fine tune the balance between order and freshness, between security and discovery ...

**I Leaders are ethical.** High score (7-9): You consider the whole ecology of your organisation, your responsibility to every element — society at large, your mission statement, your team, the children and their families and communities. Low score (1-3): More practice may be needed in asking "Would this decision contribute to the individual circumstances and to the general good? What will be the positive impacts — and the potential negatives?"

**J Leaders are optimists.** High score (7-9): Believers make things happen — specifically in child and youth care work. You are rebuilding hope for those who have lost hope. Low score (1-3): Beware the self-fulfilling prophecy. Beware the doubt and discouragement you may convey. Beware the surgeon cutting into you heart who believes you don't have a chance anyway!

## Grand Total

**Above 60:** Your score suggests that you are making the effort, both in your profession and in your organisational leadership. You take a positive and enthusiastic view of your work — and of your colleagues and clients. While growing and aware yourself, you are giving others space to develop themselves.

**40 to 60:** You are at a point where with a little more awareness, training and commitment you could be moving your leadership up to really good levels. You clearly have a number of strengths to offer. (You are, of course, also at a point where with *less* commitment your leadership could slide back to the mediocre and less than adequate.)

**Below 40:** Most of us realise at some time or other that we need to clean house or take stock. Work out which aspects of your practice have perhaps become a little tired. Make a point of reading a more about current leadership styles — and maybe enrolling on a management course. Take another look around you at your team colleagues and the children and families your organisation is working with, and recognise your mutual responsibility to one another.

## The Integrity of your Programme

How "together" is your programme? Probably the child care administrator's hardest task is to ensure that the organisation's philosophy and mission statement is reflected faithfully at all levels — from management committee to the smallest child. A principal was interviewing a new child care worker, explaining how the staff policy was based on mutual re-

spect and empowerment, when a senior staff member popped in to report that Thomas (aged 15) would not join the group to visit the museum.

*"You tell Thomas to get on that damn bus or he'll be very familiar with the inside of his room this weekend!"* snapped the principal. He turned and smiled at the new child care worker.

### A house divided ...

A memorandum arrived on a child care worker's desk which closed: "In summary,

all staff are to deal with children on the basis of tolerance and giving choices. *No deviation from this will be tolerated.*"

The 'tolerance and choices' plan will not fly. These two approaches cannot exist side by side in an organisation, without intense conflict and friction being generated at their points of contact — in this case within the child care worker. Often the point of friction is within principals themselves, with a state department or management

committee breathing down their necks with impossible expectations regarding order and behaviour — irreconcilable with the child-centred programme operating within the living units.

There are only two ways to resolve this: one is by deceit, by running with the hares and hunting with the hounds (which is no resolution at all); the other is by openly facing the contradictions and by re-examining the organisation's whole mission and philosophy. The choice is yours. *Or else!*



The NACCW is presently selecting potential child and youth care professionals as trainers. In this article **Patrick Brennan**, Head of Care at a Special School who spent ten years as Director of a one-year training course in Ireland, considers two separate aspects of training

## Training for Caring

There are no final solutions to the questions about training for those who care for others. It is a debate that needs to be ongoing.

As new needs arise, new insights and skills will be required. No matter what these may be, it is and always will be central and critical to any such debate, carefully to understand the final 'objective' of such training. In our field of the residential care of children and young people, it is the child in care who must be the 'measure', the 'framework', the 'focus' of such training. It is by carefully studying and understanding who that child is, where it has come from, and where it might be going and the needs it has in the light of such a journey, that we need to design our training courses.

### Two levels

It can be very broadly stated, that two levels of need can be seen.

The first is fairly practical and easily understood. Children or young persons need to be physically and safely cared for; they need opportunities for intellectual development; they need stimulating and recreative opportunities; they need to be able to learn and master personal and social skills that enable them to cope with the practicalities of daily living, and which give them easy access to much that society has to offer; and they need to develop vocational skills, some sense of responsibility and accountability that may enable them to seek and acquire worthwhile work.

The second level of needs is much more complex and subtle. The very fact that children are in residential care itself is a disruption of what is seen as ordinary growing-up. It also denotes that family, neighbourhood and community have found it difficult, or



**They can feel for and with the child, and yet not be overwhelmed by the pain and anger in the child. They can allow the child to be vulnerable because they know how to be vulnerable themselves, and the child then knows it is safe, and may begin to take steps in its own life journey**

indeed impossible to cope with them and to meet their needs. Invariably, it is their 'behaviour' that brings them to the attention of the authorities, either through missing school, disruption in the school, stealing, weird behaviour — in fact, a whole litany of unacceptable or inexplicable actions. Here we are now talking about the inner world of the person seldom open to ordinary investigation, as so much of the need arises from pain, anger, hurt, loss, trauma — often buried in the subconscious.

It is buried there either because what gave rise to it happened in the earliest days of infancy, when the baby 'knew'

that to be left alone was to die, or later in childhood when the experiences were so appalling and threatening that the child blocks out their memory in order to survive.

### Two dimensions to training

This two-fold aspect to caring suggests two dimensions to training. The first of these is knowledge — knowledge about human growth and development, personal and interpersonal skills. It requires knowledge of the research and the literature. It requires practical skills and drills. All of these may be easily listed and agreed upon, and they form the subjects of a training course — for example, psychiatry, psychology, sociology, social psychology, law, first aid, recreational studies, play and art therapy, housekeeping and homemaking. This is a list of subjects that may be added to, that can be divided up in terms of hours, and so a programme or timetable can be formulated. This is training in the strict sense — where in terms of the eventual tasks, "knowledge about" and skills are determined and each and every student must reach and acquire a specific level of awareness and practice. So we have 'content'.

The second aspect is like the second level of needs in the child — it is much more complex and subtle. How are the "knowledge about" and the skills to be brought to focus on and be at the service of grief, hurt, pain, loss, trauma, depression, self-harm, self-destruction, anger, depravity, terror, deprivation, denial? These are all emotions and feelings, the roots of which are buried in the past, overlaid with 'survival techniques', and often there is not only the lack of language ability to express them on the part of the child, but there may be complete denial, a blank as to the causes. To meet these dynamics, let

alone seek to deal with them, requires more than "knowledge about" and skills. Knowledge about something exists at a completely different level from deep-seated feelings and emotions. Indeed, in this context of care and help, knowledge can be remote and sterile. Skills deriving from such knowledge can be purely mechanical. It is not uncommon to find that such knowledge is in fact used by workers to defend themselves from the pain they encounter in the child — there is much discussion and talking about the behaviours and problems, and no real empathy or personal encounter and engagement with the child.

To illustrate this point, some years ago I was in hospital, seriously ill, anxious and almost tormented by the possible outcome. For seven weeks I was dealt with very professionally, but only once was I 'touched'. It was almost as if a fairly delicate piece of china of some value was being packaged. Yes, the knowledge about the china and the skill in packaging was there, but the awareness was not. After a while one just folds, packs and ties the string. This second aspect of training I would call the *process* as against the content.

#### Here-and-now

This process aspect, as distinct from the content, is the way that the content is used to focus on *this student* in the here-and-now. The insights into family dynamics are directed at enabling the child to own, and purposefully use for its own growth, the experiences it has had as a member of its family. The value systems and problem solving techniques acquired through 'culture' are examined in such a way that the child begins to discern what its own values are rather than being overlaid by passively accepted norms and systems. Looking at 'separation anxiety' is to invite the child to re-experience those moments in its own life when it felt abandoned or lost. Good knowledge and skills in hygiene and homemaking are seen and experienced as potentially carrying very significant messages for deprived and damaged children because these emotional dimensions are the priority, rather than just skills to be replicated. Such a process then, focuses on enabling the child to have experiential knowledge about itself first. The knowledge is internalised, it is incorporated into its very self. The process enables it to use the tools of "knowledge about" and skills, in developmental way, so that it becomes a process of self formulation, self clarification, with a re-ordering of emotions and a re-evaluation of past growth and experiences. It is a process of self discovery, where purposes and meaning, alternatives and decision making, en-

rich the child as a person. The child begins, perhaps for the first time, to see itself grow, to understand how this happens, to recognise what may have been (and may still be) blocks or denial, and how these may be dealt with. In this way, understanding, sensitivity, empathy, an inner authority, a reality and completeness in relationships, a certain robustness, are brought into our interventions in children's lives. It is basically the absence of these in the child's early and subsequent life that have brought it into care in the first place.

#### Meaningful moments

The basis of such child care is then shifted from "knowledge about" and "things to do", to the making available to the child the human and professional integrity of adults who, because they see themselves more acutely and accurately, can discern those moments of enormous potential and meaning in their meetings and moments with the child. They can feel for and with the child, and yet not be overwhelmed by the pain and anger in the child. They can allow the child to be vulnerable because they know how to be vulnerable

themselves, and the child then knows it is safe, and may begin to take steps in its own life journey towards a self formulation that is not only viable but valuable and rewarding.

The child can see adults who respect and accept each other, adults who can disagree without the relationship falling apart or resorting to violence. Self knowledge gives insight. Self awareness enables one to discern the reality of another. Integrity equips one fully to confront root causes — rather than simply address behaviour.

This approach is much more exploratory than didactic, more to do with tutorials, seminars and counselling than with examinations, more to do with the real interpreted encounters between students than with exercises and role-plays, more the exercise of the individual than learning things to do with the children. It is a workshop of growth and insight, of exploration and analysis, drawing on the subjects as pointers to enlightenment. It is to enable the child care worker in turn to establish workshops of growth and development, of insight and healing for the child, where the main tool of the work is the self of the worker.



## A personal vision for Trainers

We read of expected changes in the training of child and youth care workers, with more of this function possibly going to Technikons to complement the NACCW's own training. A positive feature of this is the emphasis which Technikons place on *practical* training, which accords with the nature of our work. The question arises: Where will we find teachers?

#### Growing body of professionals

Every year at this time we see at our NACCW Graduations a growing body of child and youth care workers who have taken the trouble to earn qualifications — from entry level to tertiary level. Once these graduates combine their training with years of experience in the field they may register as child and youth care professionals. From this group, in turn, the NACCW seeks those who wish to be trained as trainers — and it is here we see the development of a vitally important resource for our field.

#### Teacher-practitioners

I have a personal vision of a new group of child and youth care professionals who spend most of their working week in practice — but then devote a number of hours a week to teaching and training. *What an advantage for students:* to be trained by experienced, qualified and registered professionals who are themselves in daily practice with troubled children and youth at risk — in residential, family and community settings. *What an advantage for training institutions:* to be able to use trainers who are familiar with both the theory and the practice of child and youth care. *What an advantage for employers:* to have staff whose knowledge and skills are valued within and beyond the programmes they run. *What an advantage for child and youth care workers:* to have a stimulating and rewarding rung added to their career ladders. Worth thinking about.

— BG

Child and youth care workers, whether working in a residential or community setting, have a valuable role to play in working with the child's family. **Lyn Dimotoff**, writing in the *Journal of Child and Youth Care*, presents a set of values and attitudes which the worker must display in helping families towards positive growth and development

## Values and Attitudes in Family Work

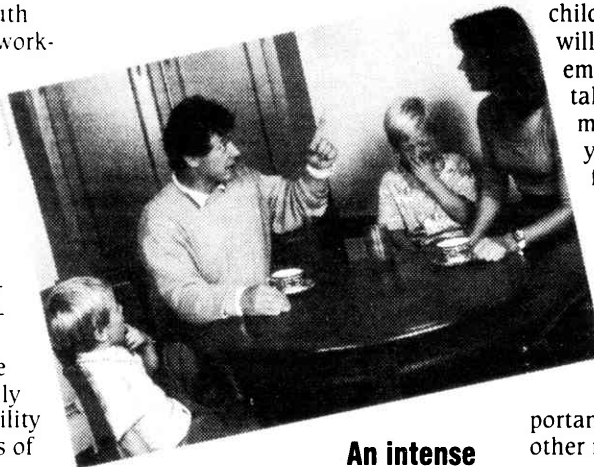
The family is the single most important influence in a child's life. Recognition of this has influenced the way in which the child welfare system deals with the care and protection of children. Placement of children outside of the home is now more often viewed as a support to the family rather than as substitute care. Child and youth care workers, whether working in a residential or community setting, have a valuable role to play in working with the child's family.

The values and attitudes which child and youth care workers display will have a significant impact on their ability to affect positive change within the family and, therefore, their ability to provide for the needs of the child.

### Values about families

The child and youth care worker, in working with families, must hold the basic value that families are important to the child's treatment, and that child and youth care workers have a role in working with children's families. So often child and youth care workers, in their admirable desire to protect a child, align themselves with the child in a manner which is damaging to the child/parent bond. They believe that the family has, after all, created the child's problems and so they, the child and youth care workers, become in a sense the family. Child and youth care workers often recognize that the child is a product of his family system, but they must go beyond this to seek out knowledge of the dynamics of this system.

They must believe that the parent is doing the best that they can given their skill and knowledge of children, and that in most cases the parent has a genuine desire to adequately care for the child's needs — "if only they knew how, if only things were different."



**An intense level of emotional expression is often engendered by the child and youth care worker's involvement in the family's system. The parents' feelings of worthlessness, helplessness and anger often surface. The child and youth care worker must be comfortable with the degree of emotion and the expression of feeling and need.**

### Contacts with family

The child and youth care worker must have contacts with the family, and use these contacts in positive ways for the benefit of the child. He must show a desire for more

child-family contact and a desire to reunite children with their families as expediently as possible. This should be actively expressed behaviour based on the value that contact with the family is a child's right, and not a reward to be given for good behaviour or withheld for misbehaviour.

Permanent separation of the child from his or her family will in most cases cause emotional harm. The parental loss will be forever mourned. In the child and youth care worker's efforts to provide the child with a safer, better environment than his parents have been providing, there is a tendency to discount the emotional bond to the parent as non-existent or of lesser importance than the child's other needs.

### Worker's skill levels

To strengthen the family bond and make it beneficial for the child, the child and youth care worker must demonstrate attitudes which facilitate the change process in families (Satir 1975). The child and youth care worker need not possess the specialized expertise of a family therapist in order to affect change; their attitudes towards the family's system and its individual members is the critical tool. The child and youth care worker must show an acceptance of the reality of the family situation, and be willing to view the family from the family's own point of view. The child and youth care worker must focus on the strengths inherent in every family and avoid over emphasis on the weaknesses. Most families, even before the child and

youth care worker becomes involved with their children, already know that they have problems, that something is wrong with them, and that they had better change. They do not need to be told yet again.

#### Using family's own values

Each family's unique qualities and dynamics must be recognized and appreciated by the child and youth care worker. Trying to force a family into the mould of what the child and youth care worker considers acceptable only causes resistance and hostility on the parent's part. Demonstrated respect for the innate dignity and worth of each family member, is essential. Child and youth care workers working with families must display a non-judgemental attitude, free of assigning guilt or innocence to the behaviour of family members. Rather they should use behavioural description to help the family evaluate for themselves the effectiveness of their behaviour. Empowerment is an essential ingredient in working with any client population. The child and youth care worker must demonstrate an acceptance of the family's right to self-direction based on the values which they hold. The child and youth care worker helps the family to use their own external and internal resources for self-direction and empowerment. The family must be allowed to play an active role in the child's treatment. They must be encouraged to feel as if they are part of the treatment team, and that their opinions, concerns and needs will be heard and addressed. Things are done *with* them, rather than *to* them, or *for* them.

#### Comfortable with emotion

An intense level of emotional expression is often engendered by the child and youth care worker's involvement in the family's system. The parents' feeling of worthlessness, helplessness and anger often surface. The child and youth care worker must be comfortable with the degree of emotion, and also able to accept and respond to the family's purposeful expression of feeling and need.

Virginia Satir has suggested that another important aspect in working with families is our understanding of our own family of origin. Child care workers must understand how their experiences in their family of origin has impacted on their own development as children and as adults, their behaviour in everyday situations, their reaction a stressful situations, their relationships with others, and their beliefs and attitudes.

This understanding, however, only goes so far; there must also be some learning beyond this. To be effective in

working with families, the child we counsellor must also have learned a variety of family roles, rules, communication styles, problem solving techniques and affective responses. A child and youth care worker who was abused as a child can be a very effective helper to an abusing family, but only if he has examined the impact that abuse has had on him, and he has learned a variety of healthy family roles. The individual who is stuck in the victim or family scapegoat role will not be helpful to abusing parents who are trying to change their behaviour. In addition, getting emotionally enmeshed with a family will cancel out any positive effect that the child and youth care worker might have.

#### Resistance

Resistance is often a difficult issue for child and youth care workers to deal with in working with families. Too often this resistance is labelled as the family's problem. The child and youth care worker must demonstrate an ability to identify the signs and sources of resistance to the helping process

within a family. The child care worker must also be able to identify his/her own resistance to working with a family and be open to accepting responsibility. They must demonstrate a creative ability to work *with* resistance, not *against* it, based on their attitudes and values about families. They must not be blaming in confronting the resistant family, but must recognize that resistance is a natural response to change and serves to protect the family's system from disintegration.

Child and youth care workers who are very successful in managing the problem behaviours of children in isolation from their families, may not be effective in working with their families. However, the child and youth care worker who demonstrates an effective repertoire of skills and knowledge in child care, and whose values and attitudes in relation to families are congruent with those presented here, will most likely experience success in helping families to better provide for the growth and development of their children.

**Mia Kellmer Pringle**, in her book *The Needs of Children*, offers these concluding principles which are of value and importance for parents and for child and youth care workers

## 10 Child Care Commandments

1. Give continuous, consistent, loving care — it's as essential for the mind's health as food is for the body.
2. Give generously of your time and understanding — playing with and reading to children matters more than a tidy, smooth-running home.
3. Provide new experiences and bathe your children in language from birth onwards — they enrich their growing minds.
4. Encourage them to play in every way both by themselves and with other children —exploring, imitating, constructing, pretending and creating.
5. Give more praise for effort than for achievement.
6. Give children ever-increasing responsibility — like all skills, it needs to be practised.
7. Remember that every child is unique — so what is suitable handling for one child may not be right for another.
8. Make the way in which you show disapproval fit each child's temperament, age and understanding.
9. Never threaten that you will stop loving children or send them away; you may reject their behaviour but never suggest that you might reject them.
10. Don't expect gratitude; children did not ask to be born — the choice was made by their parents.

— Pringle, M.K. (1975). *The Needs of Children*. London, Hutchinson