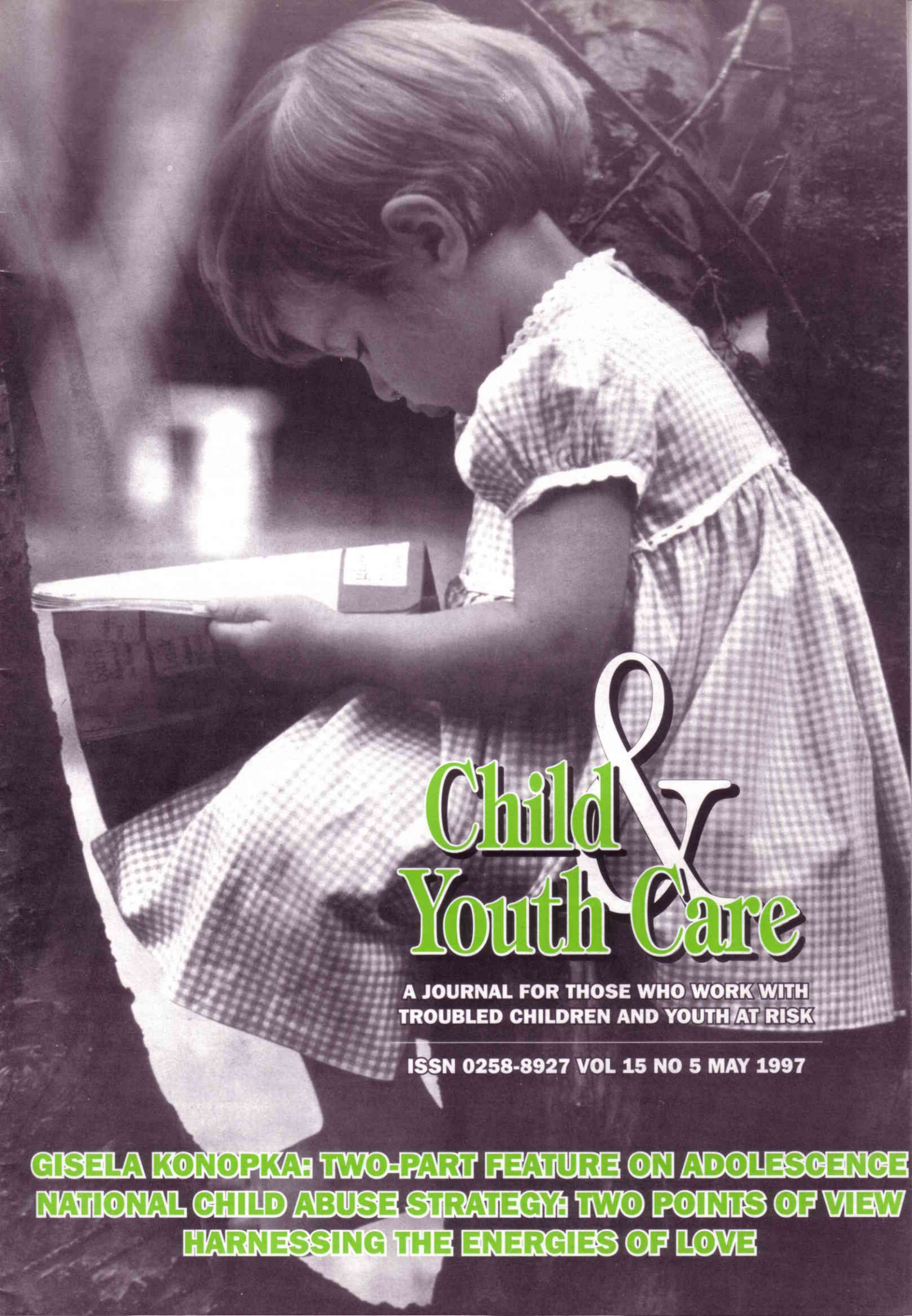

Child & Youth Care

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

ISSN 0258-8927 VOL 15 NO 5 MAY 1997

GISELA KONOPKA: TWO-PART FEATURE ON ADOLESCENCE

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE STRATEGY: TWO POINTS OF VIEW

HARNESSING THE ENERGIES OF LOVE

Editorial

One child in Butterworth

It's a terrible thought that a child could be vulnerable to abuse or rejection within its own family. It's a terrible thought that a child could be vulnerable to hurt and danger within its own neighbourhood and community, or to violence or exploitation within its own city. But out there in the homes, neighbourhoods and cities of our country, no matter how good our precepts and laws, we ultimately depend on ordinary family members, neighbours, teachers, employers — and the public at large — for the safety of our children. Who knows what might happen around the next corner?

But for many, there comes a time or a set of circumstances when *the state itself* assumes responsibility for a child. And it does so with authority. By an order of court it says "For a specified period, you, the legal guardians and family members of this child, forego your rights and responsibilities for the care and protection of this child. We, the state, are placing this child, in terms of the law, into a particular place of care and custody — which falls within the legal definition of a "place of safety". Here, there can be no vulnerability, no mistakes. Here, the state sets an example to the whole land of what it means by care and custody and safety of children. Here, the standards are to be set. This is the same state which will arbitrate on the adequacy of the care and protection afforded by others to children — whether in their own families, in alternative care, in its own institutions and in other institutions.

Past record

The state does not, in fact, have a good record in this regard. In past years, whether through poverty, through ignorance, through political ill-will or simply through neglect and irresponsibility, state custody of children has not generally been a model of excellence. There have been individual examples within this system of very admirable work, and these must be praised and acknowledged, but on the whole the state has not been a good caregiver.

Under the previous administration in South Africa profound injustices were perpetrated upon children by the state, with rank discrimination against most children. NGOs, human rights organisations, political movements and much of the international community spoke out bravely and strongly against this abuse — on the whole to deaf ears. Relationships between children's organisations and the state were largely adversarial. The work of advocacy for children was unpleasant and frustrating, and this resulted in a lot of dammed up feeling and thinking about children when the new administration took over. Things would be different now. It would be a pleasure to be able to work *with* government administrations rather than *against* them.

Honeymoon over?

We look back on the past three years and we see a flurry of talking and planning, of conferences and consultations, of new ideas and new legislation. There has been much nodding of heads, much agreement on what *should* be and what *could* be, in this new South Africa for children. The experience of listening to others and being listened to in turn has been stirring. The words going down on paper at one level or another have been encouraging. One began to think that maybe we were getting this right. For once the hundreds of hours talked and the thousands of miles travelled were achieving something realistic and positive for children.

But is all this really going somewhere? For the individual child in difficulties in South Africa is there really a better hope? For all the plans — even all the *actions*, for there have been clear actions like committees formed and conferences held and bodies set up and enquiries undertaken — what better care and protection has the individual child gained? A child fearfully gives evidence of abuse in a special court — what resources are there to follow this up? A child is admitted to a state institution — what has made that different following on last year's ministerial enquiry? A child on a petty theft charge in a poverty-stricken town like Butterworth is held over in custody — what single thing, after all this talk, was different, which could guarantee him the care and protection which we had all agreed he deserved, and which could have prevented his being attacked and murdered by a known mentally defective adult prisoner in the self-same cell?

This must be said ...

Old dispensation, new dispensation, whatever — the same questions must be asked, the same watchfulness must be maintained, the same pressure must be applied. The first responsibility of an organisation like the NACCW (and any other NGO working with children) must be to the children. It does not matter who we have to say this to; it has to be said: The blood of a young child in a prison cell in Butterworth speaks of your attitude to the care and protection of children. You are now responsible and accountable. Your task is to carry words and plans over into action, and if this does not happen, then all the policy statements, committee reports, conference recommendations and legislation are just paper. And the children remain where they were before.

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International Federation of Educative Communities (UNESCO)

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

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People

Harold Malgas

Harold comes from the vibrant, historical Eastern Cape town, Uitenhage, where his mother still lives, and he speaks with great passion of the values she instilled in him. After six years using his coaching skills as co-ordinator of the University of the Western Cape's Squash Centre, he entered the field of Child and Youth Care when he assumed duty at Rosendal Place of Safety in March 1989. He immediately embarked on and completed the BQCC course and completed a two-day workshop in conflict resolution and physical crisis intervention in 1990.

Forum

Harold exercised his leadership skills as convener of the Child Care Workers' Forum in the Western Cape in 1992. While at Rosendal Place of Safety he was a member of NACCW Western Cape Regional Executive. Because of his practice standards at Rosendal, he earned a merit award in 1991.

He was promoted to the rank of Senior Child Care Worker and assumed duty at Outeniekwa House. During 1993, Harold completed the NACCW Supervision Course and in 1993 he completed the NACCW'S Training for Trainers (adult learning) course, since when he has been involved with the empowerment and training of Child and Youth Care Workers in the Southern Cape.

Training and learning

Harold helped with training of "Operation Upgrade" in 1996 and completed courses in Situation Analysis, Supervision and Labour Relations. He has been enrolled in the Junior Management Course.

In his eight years in the work, he has emerged as a strong advocate for children's rights and for professionalism in Child and Youth Care Workers.

He has served on the Juvenile Justice Committee in the Southern Cape between 1993 and 1997 and was involved in an Outward Bound Course with 20 awaiting trial youths in 1995. Betwen 1993 and 1995 he helped in the running of Kid Shelter, a facility for Street Children, and he supervised the Child and Youth Care Worker who took care of those streetwise children.

Despite work and family obligations, he gained his Certificate in Child and Youth Care at UNISA in 1994, specialising in Juvenile Justice.

Currently Harold is the co-ordinator of all NACCW training in the Southern Cape, and his ambition is to be one of the first candidates to acquire the Degree in Child and Youth Care.

Harold has left his footprints in the Gospel Music world as a member for 21 years of the Christadelphians Gospel Group who have achieved four Gospel albums.

Harold is married to Gaylene who has supported him in all his endeavours. As the father of three children, he makes the same commitment to their needs as he does to the children he works with in the field of care.

The first in a two-part series in which **Gisela Konopka**, one of the best known writers and practitioners in the fields of social work, child development and child care work, reflects on the essence of adolescence and the ways in which adolescents learn to cope with difficulties.

Learning to Cope with Stresses and Strains

To discuss the question of coping with stresses and strains of adolescence, I will present —
1) My concept of adolescence, including the specific qualities of adolescence;
2) The content areas of life especially significant in adolescence;
3) How human beings in general, at all ages, cope with stresses and strains;
4) The specifics of adolescence, such as how adolescents deal with stresses and strains;
5) How to develop the strength in adolescents to cope positively with stresses and strains.

Concept of Adolescence

It seems to me best to let an adolescent talk first before I say anything about that age group. A girl wrote:

> **I am a bottle sealed with feeling**
> **too deep for anything else.**
> **I am a bottle floating in an eternal ocean**
> **of people trying to help.**
> **I am a bottle keeping my fragile contents inside.**
> **Always afraid of breaking and exposing me.**
> **I am a bottle frail and afraid of the rock.**
> **And afraid of the storm.**
> **For if the storm or rocks burst or cracked me,**
> **I would sink and become part of the ocean.**
> **I am a person in the people of the world.**

This 16-year-old expresses clearly that an adolescent is part of humanity, is a person. This should be self-evident; yet in recent years adolescents have been treated often as if they are a species apart, to be feared or occasionally to be flattered.

The period of adolescence is as significant a period in life for the development of the total personality as are the first years in childhood. It is a time of "rebirth."

To me — and this differs from many textbook descriptions of adolescence — this period does not represent only a "pre", a preparation for adulthood, or worse, a "no-man's land" between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents are not "pre-adults", "pre-parents", or "pre-workers", but human beings participating in their particular way in the activities of the world around them.

Adolescence is not a passage to somewhere but an important stage in itself, though all stages of human development connect with each other. There is an "adolescenthood".

The key experiences of adolescence (which always include stresses and strains) are certain *firsts* which need to be worked through.

It must be understood that no generalization about human beings ever totally applies to one person and that in working with people, we will have to each time look afresh at the human being with whom we interact. A 15-year-old said this best:

> **I used to be ...**
> **a grape in a bunch**
> **and all the other**
> **grapes were the same.**
>
> **But now ...**
> **I'm an apple, crisp**
> **and fresh, and every**
> **one is different.**
> **My, how life has changed!**

Some of the "firsts" are:

1. Experiencing physical sexual maturity. A phenomenon particular to adolescence that never occurs again in the life of the individual is the process of *developing* sexual maturation, different from the state of *accomplished* sexual maturation. Biologically this is a totally new experience. Its significance is due both to its pervasiveness and to the societal expectations surrounding it. It creates in adolescents a great wonderment about themselves and a feeling of having something in common with all human beings. It influences all their relationships with each other, male or female. Entering this part of maturity also stimulates them to a new assessment of the world.

2. Experiencing withdrawal of — and from — adult benevolent protection. Along with the biological maturity attained in adolescence come varying degrees of withdrawal of, and from, the protection generally given to dependent children by parents or substitutes. We know that some young people were never protected, even as children; but, whatever the degree of previous protection, the adolescent is moving out from the family toward interdependence (not independence, but interdependence) in three areas: (a) with his peers, his own generation; (b) with his elders, but on an interacting or questioning level instead of a dependent level; and (c) with younger children, not on a play level but on a beginning- to-care-for-and-nurture level. This process of moving away from dependency creates tensions and emotional conflicts.

3. Consciousness of self in interaction. The development of self and the searching for self starts in childhood, but the in-

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tellectual and the emotional consciousness of self in interaction with others is a particular characteristic of adolescence. It is a time when personal meaning is given to new social experiences. What may have been clear and explicable may suddenly become inexplicable. This makes for inner excitement, frightening and yet enjoyable.

4. **Re-evaluation of values**. Though the formation of values is a lifelong developmental process, it peaks in adolescence. It is related to both thinking and feeling. In our culture, where young people are likely to be exposed to a variety of contradictory values, (and I welcome this) questioning begins even in childhood. But adolescents become more philosophers concerned with "shoulds" and "oughts" and they may be subtle or outspoken about it. Value confrontations are inevitable in this age period. The young, because of their intensity, tend to be uncompromising. They may opt clearly for a thoroughly egalitarian value system, or they may give up and become cynics. They often are "true believers", rigid, and therefore feel deeply hurt when others do not accept their value system.

5. **Wanting to be an active participant in society**. Adolescents encounter their world with a new intellectual and emotional consciousness. They meet it less as observers who are satisfied with this role, than as participants who actually have a place to fill. I see this wish to participate as a most significant "first" in adolescence. In the old, mostly European, textbooks it appears as the adolescent quality of rebellion, and for years we have considered rebellion an inevitable attribute of adolescence. I think that this is true in authoritarian societies — and we are partially still an authoritarian society — but basically it is not rebellion that characterizes adolescence, but this extraordinary new awakening to the fact that one must develop one's values, and not only by imitation. This is a terribly hard task and brings with it enormous stress.
Another key characteristic of adolescents is their enormous *life force*. It is an age of extraordinary physical capacity. This is sometimes at variance with the emotional development, and that again makes for great strain. It is an age where the mood swings with utmost intensity from omnipotence to despair. Adolescents can go without sleep for a long time; they run, jump, dance. In one of the Youth Polls done by the Centre for Youth Development and Research in which the subject of health was at issue, it became clear that adolescents define health as "activity and energy." One said, "I think I am healthy when I am able to walk and run and run around all day and not be tired."

Content areas of life significant to adolescence

The major institutions in which adolescents move have begun to be the same all over the world. Cultures change rapidly. For example, the teenage Bedouin, until recently, had to develop predominantly within the extended family and handle stresses within this system. His work environment was static in terms of its tasks, namely herding goats, but it was changing geographically because of the tribe's nomad existence. The girl had no decisions to make, only to obey. Yet, today, most of the Bedouin teenagers have to deal with a smaller family unit, with school, with a variety of work tasks, and with less nomadic movement. These changes impinge on the girls, too.
Now, discussing institutions, the most significant ones in adolescent life today are: the family, the school, the place of work, and the peer group.

1. **The family**. It is a myth that North American young people do not care for the family. In every survey the Centre for Youth Development and Research has made, the yearning for close family ties emerges clearly. Even a runaway wrote:

> **The first night was cold**
> **damn cold.**
> **And walking around the avenues,**
> **we would mock the whores.**
> **The big man and his badge would**
> **give us a cold eye.**
> **And without hesitation,**
> **we would flip him a bird.**
> **I wished for my mother,**
> **and I wished for sympathy —**
> **For a warm bed, and not the cold**
> **shipyard or the park swings.**
> **I feel really old for 15,**
> **there just isn't any place to go.**
> **Mama I miss you —**
> **and I just spent my last dollar for**
> **cigarettes.**

The major frustration for an adolescent within the family is to suffer the role of an inferior at an age when the wish to be taken seriously, and as an equal, is very intense. Frustrating experiences range from being treated "like a kid" to serious abuse. And additional frustration can result from the youth's keen awareness of problems between parents.
Younger children suffer deeply from strife between parents, but adolescents often feel that they have to do something about it, that they have to take on the responsibility in the situation. I found again and again a deep resentment of divorce, and at the same time, a feeling that the adolescent should have done something to prevent it.
Also, adolescents, unlike younger children, begin to look to the future. Many expressed a wish for starting a family, but also feared it.

Adolescence is not a passage to somewhere but an important stage in itself, though all stages of human development connect with each other. There is an "adolescenthood".

2. **The school**. Some of the same dynamics as in the family apply to the relationship of the adolescent to school. Again, the strong sense of self comes in conflict with possible violation of the vulnerable self-integrity. The youth wants to be seen as an individual as expressed by the wishes: "There should be a one to ten ratio of teachers to students." They should treat young people "like adults, not like two-year-olds, unless students just don't co-operate. Discuss all material that will be tested. Make every effort to answer all questions. Do best to help each student by keeping classes smaller. Not like we are their slaves or workers and they are the boss."
There are other stresses in school. It is the place where the students expect to learn. Adolescents in their own way begin to evaluate whether they learn what they need, and whether they measure up. They feel strongly injustice and discrimination:

> **The teachers are sort of scared of Blacks here. I'm not the kind of person that shows how much I hate them. I just sit back and do mostly what I' supposed I'm supposed to do. But teachers are still scared. If I ask a question, some of the teachers just ignore me. And I sit back and I watch this and I feel it.**

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Sometimes, I don't understand what they are saying. The teachers, they talk but when you go up to the desk and ask what they mean, they don't say nothing. They just say, 'Go on and do it!' They don't explain. They just say, 'Go back to your desk and do it.'

3. **The place of work.** Many adolescents do work while in school, though others see it as part of the future. We found in our observations a generally quite strong work ethic. Two students expressed themselves: " ... looking forward to starting a job because it gives one a sense of responsibility," and "... want to work ... because we've trained for it for so long and we're anxious to start." Contrary to popular assumption, adolescents felt a responsibility for the work they were doing. They frequently regretted not having an opportunity to work on something that would prepare them for a future career. Young people can rarely find work related to special interests. A 16-year-old volunteered to work in the Rape Centre of the Attorney General's Office and saw this as an opportunity not only for feeling significant at that particular time in her life, but also to find out what her specific interests would be. But a recent study showed that usually adolescents felt frustrated because their jobs had no connection with their interests and were not realistic experiences.
They make us work like people in yester-years, like out of the 18th century. With machinery, the government could accomplish something with more speed, efficiency and effectiveness. Instead, they give you old-time machines to do the work.

4. **The peer group.** For adolescents it is a most important one. In our culture this world exists within organized institutions and in informal encounters. School is seen by practically all adolescents as the major formal institution where they can find friends. Youth organizations may also provide friends along with very positive experiences.

On midsummer's eve the moon
was high in the sky.
We danced all night in the moon's
smiling, gleaming face ,
We ran about the park with
youngness and freedom,
We sang songs of old and new.
We played on midsummer's eve as
though it were
never to leave us.
The morning soon followed, so we
left.
But we will be back on midsummer's.

But for others, school may mean the unpleasant strain or, for a variety of reasons, painful rejection by one's peers. The world of peers is really the lifeblood of adolescence. Friendships with both sexes, intensified by growing sexual maturity, are exceedingly important — and comlex. They demand decision-making about oneself, about others, about the present and the future. Decision-making is written large all through adolescence, and no decisions are more important than those about peer relationships.

In next month's concluding part: How do human beings in general cope with stresses and strains? Coping in adolescance. Help with coping in adolescence.

Brokering, B. (1978) *Requirements for healthy development of adolescent youth: with examples from a Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP).* Centre for Youth Development and Research, University of Minnesota.
Konopka, G. (1976) *Young girls: A portrait of adolescence.* Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice Hall.

Social Development Issues, 4.3. Fall 1980
Reprinted with the permission of the author.

Tyn-y-Pwll (the House in the Hollow), a 300-year-old stone farmhouse in the mountains of North Wales, was used for a time as a short-term (ten-week) treatment centre for troubled girls from downtown Liverpool. Here a staff member reflects on some of the thinking and practice of this unique programme

Acceptance, Touch and Hunger

Many of the young people who went to Tyn-y-Pwll felt that they were victims of the lack of understanding and acceptance. Whilst the staff acknowledged the fact that they accepted them as they were rather than as they wanted them to be, they also took pains to enable them to establish two very important provisos.

The first was that, although the staff were prepared to accept the young people, it did not mean that they would necessarily condone or approve of all their behaviour, their methods of expression, or their reactions to other people. The second proviso was that acceptance had to be seen as a two-way process. That is, if they wanted other people to accept them, they must also practise the acceptance of others. The first step in this process was persuading them to accept themselves and this was probably the hardest part of the job. They had experienced much rejection and had come to believe that they were of little value. It was obviously impossible to love other people unless one could believe-such love could be reciprocated.

The next stage was to persuade them to try and accept their parents and families. This too was difficult because many of them felt that their parents had washed their hands of them. When they first arrived at Tyn-y-Pwll they were quite convinced that it was everybody's fault but theirs that they had got into trouble in the first place, and it was an important milestone when they began to acknowledge their own responsibility for the things they had done and the problems that they had to cope with.

The third stage was to enable them to accept people who, on the face of things, were very different from them. Old people were a good example and it is often therapeutic for both sides if a disturbed adolescent and an elderly person can get to the stage of sitting and listening to each other. Several opportunities were taken to meet with, talk to and, where appropriate, help some of the local old people. Both sides were usually surprised to discover how much they had in common.

Cynicism, egocentricism

One of the problems of present day society is the frantic pace of living, and this causes most of us to view life in a cynical and egocentric way. It can sometimes be very helpful to realise that other people have problems similar to, or worse than, our own.

Once young people could accept that adults too had fears, needs and anxieties they were on the road to two-way acceptance.

"Unfortunately, there was no guarantee that they would find themselves with accepting adults in the future, but at least they would have learnt that acceptance was possible."

This we believed was a very important move towards rehabilitation in society and towards the quality of life which was their right. Unfortunately, there was no guarantee that they would find themselves with accepting adults in the future, but at least they would have learnt that acceptance was possible.

Mary was one of the girls with whom they took some time to help her realise that adults too had their needs and problems. She herself was like a large puppy, constantly demanding attention, and resolved her need for touch by rough physical contact, pushing and pulling and, when possible, developing this into a wrestling contest.

At one period during her stay she went around seizing people by the lapels and butting them in the face, seemingly unaware that this could be a very painful process to her victims, some of whom were members of the staff group. Unfortunately for her, or perhaps fortunately in the long term, on one Saturday evening she forgot herself and whilst Edward was standing in front of the fire she advanced upon him, seized his sweater and butted him in he face. Feeling slightly dazed, he looked at Mary, thought for a moment and then seized her by the lapels and butted her, albeit fairly gently, back, whereupon she became very contrite and said, 'Oh! I am sorry, I didn't mean to butt you', he replied, 'Well perhaps now you know how it feels maybe you won't butt anyone else'. In fact Mary did then give up this particular habit, although she did not stop demanding lots of physical contact.

She had found herself in trouble originally because she was not able to cope in school. She played truant constantly and had been refused admission by at least two schools because of what was described as her 'anti-social behaviour'.

Most of the young people who came to Tyn-y-Pwll saw schools as very authoritarian establishments and many of them thought that teachers regarded themselves as god-like figures whose word was law. Unfortu-

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nately, our educational system seems geared to providing answers rather than encouraging children to ask questions. It was the belief of the staff that good teaching has much more to do with enabling students to ask the right questions and many of the educational aspects of the work at Tyn-y-Pwll were geared to this philosophy.

Two-way acceptance

Mary was yet another girl who had no father and, in fact, this was one of the most common characteristics of all the girls who came to Tyn-y-Pwll. In the period of six years only about twenty per cent of all the girls who attended actually had a father living at home, and only half of those could be considered to be taking a proper place in family life. Mary herself spent most of her time living with her Gran and she had, from an early age, been deprived of the sort of play and affection which ordinary children get from their own parents.

Once she settled down at Tyn-y-Pwll and learned something about two-way acceptance she became one of the most popular members of the group, participating readily in all activities and smiling cheerfully most of the time. She developed a particular affection for Janet and they spent a lot of time working together. Mary worried constantly about what would happen after she left Tyn-y-Pwll and retreated sometimes into fantasies about what she was going to be or what sort of lifestyle she was going to lead. She was fifteen when she came to Tyn-y-Pwll and saw no point in going back to school once she got back home. She was interested in finding a job, but as she freely admitted, was not really qualified for any particular type of work. In fact, the first job she got when she eventually became eligible was as a petrol pump attendant, and this, for a while, seemed to help her settle down. She maintained strong contact with Janet for several years after leaving Tyn-y-Pwll by writing, telephoning and occasionally turning up on the doorstep.

Whilst Mary was at Tyn-y-Pwll the IRA bomb incidents in Birmingham occurred and on one occasion, the girls had a very angry discussion about the IRA and their methods. The majority of them seemed to feel that there was a degree of justice in the Irish question and most of them thought that the ultimate answer would be for the six counties to be returned to the whole of Ireland. However, they were unanimous in condemning the cowardly and barbaric acts which were committed by the IRA and one of the girls suggested that, just as one of the terrorist groups abroad was known as the Red Brigade, so the IRA should be known as the Yellow Brigade. She justified this by pointing out that they rarely attacked in the open and most of their atrocities were committed by stealth. This discussion, like many others, indicated the girls' interest in current affairs and, if they were given the chance, could produce interesting and worthwhile comments and opinions.

Mary, like many of the other children who visited Tyn-y-Pwll suffered from what Bettelheim had described as 'touch hunger'. Many of them had been deprived of the opportunities to romp, to play with mum and dad and to experience physical contact. It was found that drama provided a satisfactory outlet for feelings and fantasies and some of the activities such as playing with clay and splashing colour on paper could also be extremely useful. What never ceased to astonish the staff was the sort of fantasies which were brought by girls from previous residential establishments, both about physical contact and about adults they had met. Most stories were obviously exaggerated but it was clear that there were some emotional problems which are exacerbated by, and which emanate from, a small proportion of residential staff.

Transference situations

Residential child-care has in the past been bedevilled by fears of emotional involvement and the dangers which unwise men have had to put up with from adolescent girls. In addition to the male members of staff at Tyn-y-Pwll there was a considerable number of male visitors, such as students, social workers and boyfriends and at no time did we experience any serious problems with heterosexual relationships. One female psychiatrist finished several of her reports on girls by writing 'This girl is inadequate and oversexed; in my opinion she is doomed to prostitution'. In fact, the experiences at Tyn-y-Pwll showed that these girls, in common with many others, were actually seeking love and affection. Sex and sexual relationships were often poor substitutes for the real feelings they needed.

The staff themselves had another experience of the way fantasies can be created about establishments when Tyn-y-Pwll was officially visited in 1972. The visitor, who was from the Department, proved to be extremely kind and helpful but he admitted before he left that he had wondered just what sort of thing he was going to find at Tyn-y-Pwll. The stories he had heard, led him to believe "that the staff would be a collection of long haired weirdies". They were relieved to hear that he was considerably reassured by his visit. The staff frequently had to accept that they were involved in transference situations and they soon learned to cope with hostility which was not meant for them personally. There was no pretence that any of the therapy was conducted at great depth; nevertheless it was firmly believed that providing an environment where the young people felt completely secure and accepted made it possible for them to re-examine past experiences, however bitter and, in many cases, come to terms with them. In the process it also

"In order to look forward in a healthy and positive way, they had to be able to look back without anger and bitterness. The staff believed that this was impossible if experiences were repressed and ignored."

helped young people to see where their own actions had created problems and to make plans for ensuring more care in the future. In order to look forward in a healthy and positive way they had to be able to look back without anger and bitterness and the staff believed that this was impossible if experiences were repressed and ignored. Aggressive behaviour, therefore, was considered not only acceptable but, in their opinion, vital for healthy development. One example of this was the need for noise outlets and it was felt that satisfactory opportunities for making a noise and learning to cope with silences were both essential in the treatment and care of children and young people. There are obvious links between noise and aggression and very often the opportunity to display the former helped to dispel the latter. There were a number of useful quarries in the Tyn-y-Pwll area where satisfactory echoes could be obtained and shouting and loud laughter disturbed nobody but the occasional passing sandpiper.

Noise and silence

The inevitable pop music on records were also extremely useful for, although there were occasions when for the sake of the total group, the noise level was kept at a reasonable pitch, there were also other occasions when it was felt the young people should be able to play the music as loudly as possible and gyrate as frenetically as they wished. The discussions about noise and music were often a useful opportunity for communication and, although the staff and girls often differed in their choice of music, it was

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usually possible for both sides to accept the other points of view.

The ability to cope with silence was something that many of the young people found extremely difficult. In the main the silences were divided into two types. Firstly those silences which were apparent at the end of the week meetings, when the silence contained anger and hostility. Secondly, silences when all was going well in the group and people just enjoyed sitting around the common room fire quietly together with the more extroverted members occasionally breaking the silence.

Mary was particularly bad at coping with silence and would frequently break it by jumping up and attacking one of her fellow group members. On the other hand, a number of the young people commented that one of the things that they really liked about Tyn-y-Pwll were those periods of calm and gentle response when they had expected some kind of reprimand for bad behaviour.

Quite often the first type of silence would be used to bring fears and anxieties into the open and occasional, but very controlled, disagreements could magically clear the air. The staff believed that careful and positive use of hostility could be helpful to those children who had been brought up in an atmosphere of noise and violence. Similarly, calm silences could be used to introduce discussions on beliefs and attitudes and to indulge in fantasies when future problems could be discussed and fears allayed. It was interesting to note that all the groups preferred noise during the first half of the course and were much happier with silence during the second half. It could be argued that the use of both was effectively therapeutic.

Adolescence has been described as a kind of no-mans land, a period between the innocence and happiness of childhood and the exciting world of the adult. Most of the young people who came to Tyn-y-Pwll felt that they were in some kind of limbo. Too young to enjoy the independence of adulthood but too old to enjoy the pleasures of childhood. There were problems, both physical and emotional, which complicated this period of growth. However, all the staff believed that adolescence should be just as exciting and meaningful as any other stage of life and that young people should be enabled to enjoy life and to find satisfying outlets for their emotions which were neither completely childish nor yet adult. They should enjoy the journey through adolescence and if Tyn-y-Pwll did nothing else, it assisted many young people to enjoy at least a small part of their otherwise stormy and troubled adolescence.

Donohue, E. (ed.) (1985) *Echoes in the Hills: Tyn-y-Pwll*. Social Care Association, Surrey.

CREATING POSITIVE MOMENTS

Protecting themselves from Love

"She needs a little TLC (tender loving care)" is common advice to a parent or caregiver when a youngster is feeling discouraged or down. And for most kids, this is exactly right. They have had some upset, they are hurt or disappointed, and with a touch of kindness or a word of reassurance they are reminded that their world is really OK, that people care about them, and they pick themselves up.

But with many children in care or in other programmes for young people at risk, it may not be that easy. The upset, hurt or disappointment, for them, is usually not just a hiccup or a temporary problem: it is, for them, confirmation of a hostile world, a reinforcement of their own worthlessness, proof that people cannot be trusted.

Usually children are helped by TLC. Troubled children may reject it because it threatens their fragile sense of control and understanding.

Hostility, a refusal of love

My favourite psychologist is George Kelly — not one of the big names, though certainly one of the greats. He developed a psychology which did not rely on other people's opinions and diagnoses of a person, but *on that person's own experience of himself or herself.* And so Kelly saw behaviour not so much in terms of *motivation* (other people and outside circumstances pushing us to do things) but rather in terms of *our own expectations* (what do *I* anticipate in this situation?)

Normally we all learn to "read" situations. Our experiences mount up so that we understand our world, and so we learn what we can expect from it, and how we can live competently and comfortably in that world. Every time the "expected" happens, we are reassured about our ability to "read" situations. When the "unexpected" happens, we are challenged to revise our understanding of the world.

In Kelly's words: "Man predicts what will happen. If it happens, his prediction is validated, the grounds he used for predicting are strengthened, and he can venture further next time. If it doesn't happen, his prediction is invalidated, the structure he used in making the prediction is brought into question, and the road ahead becomes less clear."

So for young people whose world is not easy to understand, when it is inconsistent and unpredictable, and when the experiences it offers are hurtful and scary, their expectations are negative and anxiety-producing. *Such a person's whole make-up is based on the expectation that the worst will happen — and they defend themselves from further hurt.*

Kelly thus explains the hostile or love resistant person. We approach the repeatedly hurt and rejected child with warmth and a smile. The child has two choices: (a) "This experience doesn't fit in with my model of expectations; maybe I will have to change my negative view of life"; or (b) "This experience doesn't fit in with my model of expectations; *therefore the warm smile is not for real.* I don't trust this. Why should I expect this person to be different? She isn't. She's just the same as everyone else. She is just what I expect her to be!"

Kelly says: Instead of building and modifying his theories about life on the basis of the data he observes, the hostile person has come to accept only one theory, that the world and the people in it are hateful and untrustworthy. So instead of modifying his theory, *he chooses to distort the data to fit in with his theory.* One warm smile, then, is no good.

Tipping the scales

We child care workers are often called on to provide not just one, not just twenty, but *enough* positive experiences to challenge a child's view of life to make him consider changing his theory.

In this month's issue, there are two wonderful articles which deal with this. In the article which ends alongside on this page, the writer accepts that youngsters will leave a programme with no guarantee that they would find themselves with accepting adults in the future, but that *"at least they would have learnt that acceptance was possible."* So, as we build their expectations of life, we care workers can at least show children that it is possible for them to be liked, to be accepted, to be loved.

Varenhorst, in her article on page 14 uses these words: *"One moment of unconditional love may call into question a life-time of feeling unworthy, and invalidate it"!*

— BG

The World of Child Care Workers

NICE THINKING

"South Africa has eleven official languages — and the twelfth is music."

— Magic Cactus
(A South African Reggae group)

Obituary

Tony Noble

Probably many people reading this won't have heard of Tony Noble, as he was not a person to push himself into the limelight. He worked at St John's Hostel in Cape Town from 1970 to 1984, and went on to Sea Point Primary School where he remained until he died this month. He was qualified as both an accountant and a lawyer, but found more meaning in a career in child care.

Enthusiasm shared

During the eight years that I was privileged to work with him at St John's, Tony taught me many things which I am still able to use in my present position. His great quality was that he was a person who just 'got on with the job' of caring for children. The hours he worked were the hours that were required to get the job done, whether it was balancing the St. John's books or organising sports days, five-a-side soccer tournaments or encouraging children to support Newcastle United.

It was Tony's belief that you could do almost anything with children as long as you were enthusiastic. Everything he did, he did with an enthusiasm which was catchy and full of encouragement. An example of this was that on most Friday evenings he would take kids up to the end of the road below Table Mountain to run the three miles back to the cable station. The support he gave along the route and the delight he showed when someone had broken their own record, rebounded around the hostel.

Listening and understanding

Tony's attitude to child care was to talk about it only as much as necessary — and then *do*. His work was real, "practical practice".

Not that he ignored the theory — when the Certificate in Child Care at Institutions was introduced in the early 1970s, he was one of the very first students to enrol and complete the course.

Tony had the ability to get alongside troubled and hurting youngsters, to listen to them, to understand and to guide them. Very many boys who passed through St John's Hostel through the 70s and 80s will have benefited by Tony's presence. He was truly a giving person.

Some words from the prayer attributed to St Francis: 'For it is in giving that we receive and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life'.

Rest in peace, Tony. We will remember you.

Chris Smith
Principal, Cape Youth Care

A first for the Greenfields Place of Safety

Miss Nellisiwe Manquele is the first and only staff member presently employed at Greenfields Place of Safety to qualify with the BQCC. Miss Manquele was newly appointed in October 1996. Prior to this date she was employed by a private Security Company at Greenfields Place of Safety.

During her five years as a security officer she developed an interest in Child Care. Her flair for working with children and youth was perceived as a strong quality for Child and Youth Care work and she was encouraged to pursue a career in Child and Youth Care, which she did, at her own cost.

We are indeed proud at present to have her on our staff establishment knowing full well that she will be in a better position to fulfill a vital role in the team functioning at Greenfields.

— *Pam Peters*

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International Child and Youth Care Workers' Day: What did we do?

I know it is from the 1st to 7th May. I expected it was to be a day upon which we child and youth care workers could talk, spell out our concerns, our doubts and needs, and shape the way forward. A day also to acknowledge and give praise to child and youth care practitioners, both locally and internationally, and to celebrate the 22 years of the NACCW's toil in putting child and youth care where it is in South Africa today. In our province, the Northern Province, there were no activities.

Challenges

I assume that we are still at a formative stage. We do not have giants and powerful child care administrators who are able to advocate on behalf of child and youth care.

More confusing is that often, when child and youth care workers do meet to identify themselves, to discuss common concerns and spell out their problems, they are met with contempt, or with fear that they will destabilise the residential settings. And to add to this, our identity crisis as a result of the new PAS causes more confusion and demotivation to child care personnel, not knowing who they are and what the future holds for them. We are in a state of limbo.

The Need

There is an urgent need for us to observe the international child and youth care workers' day, and to plan events which depict the importance of the day and the field at large. We certainly cannot expect others from other fields to speak on our behalf. The onus is on us to inform and educate others of this noble calling to care for others. We need to identify those child care professionals who may rekindle and ignite passion for those who are still at a formative stage in child and youth care.

Regions share the same problems, concerns and doubts, and we have got to liaise more, giving each other support. There is need for child and youth care workers to stand strong, erect and proud to be counted. If we fail to cherish special days like this, which encourage us locally and internationally, then there is a cause for concern.

Way forward

Many of us regard the NACCW as the legitimate body which has to give us direction and assistance in planning these events. From its more than 22 years of existence, many of us could learn by sharing information about how these years were spent. We have a double job: while we must assume our own responsibilities, sharing our trials and tribulations, and recommitting ourselves to child care, we must at the same time serve and advocate on behalf of children and youth in our care who are subjected to all forms of neglect and abuse —acknowledging that despite our own trials, the interests of children and youth supersedes all others.

We cannot sit idly by and await miracles. When we fail to acknowledge a special day for our own field, what are we saying to others? Let's exchange advice, suggestions and ideas in our planning and preparing International Child and Youth Care Workers Day 1998!

Nkwapa D. Moloto
Pietersburg

Warm Thank You. *Children at Andrew Murray Kinderhuis in Wellington say thank you to local senior citizens (aged 75 to 92!) who knitted and donated warm jerseys and bedsocks for the cold days ahead.*

New BQCC fees

Slight increases to cover costs have been applied to the Basic Qualification in Child Care (BQCC course). Below are the new prices, with the old prices in brackets:

Orientation: R34.50 (R30)
Module 1: R172.50 (R150)
Module 2: R230.00 (R200)
Module 3: R172.50 (R150)
Module 4: R287.50 (R250)

As before, individual members of the NACCW receive a 25% discount on all of these fees.

"NO, REALLY I'M 27... IT'S JUST THAT SMOKING STUNTED MY GROWTH..."

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A National Strategy on Child Abuse

Visanti Pillay of the Child Care Sub-directorate of the Department of Welfare outlines the National Child Protection Strategy, and Cape Town Child Welfare's **Alan Jackson** comments

The National Child Protection Plan document, prepared by the National Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN), provides an analysis of current problems experienced in the field of child protection, and outlines a National Child Protection Strategy, which can be developed by the turn of the century.

This Strategy is an integral part of the National Plan of Action for Children in South Africa (NPA) and is in accordance with South Africa's international obligations in terms of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and of the World Summit Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children.

It is designed to ensure compliance with section 28(1) of the Constitution, which deals with the rights of the child to protection from abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and as a means of implementing a number of current government policies and initiatives relating to children, youth, and families.

Proposed Strategy

The components of the Strategy are:

- policy and legislation;
- prevention;
- child protective service management;
- application and diffusion of knowledge: 'structural provision to ensure effective service delivery.

The document recommends that the implementation of the strategy be driven by an inter-sectoral, national child protection mechanism, comprising senior government representatives from the welfare, health, education, police, and justice sectors, as well as the NGO sector.

The following important issues have been identified in the strategy:

Current Policy and Legislation

There is need to develop, intersectorally, a clear policy framework in relation to child abuse prevention. This includes proposals for reform in all current government initiatives regarding legislation which affects children.

Prevention

Education, primary health care, social services, NGOs, the media, and the broad community have critical roles to play in the prevention of child abuse.

Child Protective Services Management

The effective management of child protection will require a concerted effort to devote attention to the planning, resourcing, and operation of all components of the child protection system. This will involve co-operative action between all relevant sectors at every level of government, in partnership with welfare organisations, NGOs, and CBOs. The Department of Welfare can only address the critical issue of child abuse with the collaboration of these sectors. The National Child Protection Strategy document clearly outlines the relevant issues. Consequently, the Department of Welfare has identified the following protective action:

- registration and comprehensive assessment;
- services to the offender;
- attention to special categories of abuse and neglect;
- research;
- policy and legislation;
- developing norms and standards;
- monitoring, evaluation, and assessment of services.
- funding/fund development;
- co-ordinating/networking with all relevant stakeholders;
- capacity building/empowering individuals, communities, and organisations;
- hosting workshops and conferences.

The National Child Emergency Line — an information and referral service provided by the Department of Welfare — receives numerous calls regarding child abuse. Research on the nature and scope of such abuse has been identified and will be pursued further during 1997. The awareness campaigns of 1 June (Children's Day) and 16 June (Youth Day) serve to make the public more aware of the necessity of protecting vulnerable children. It is envisaged that these campaigns will become a continuing activity throughout the year. The Department is in the process of establishing a pilot

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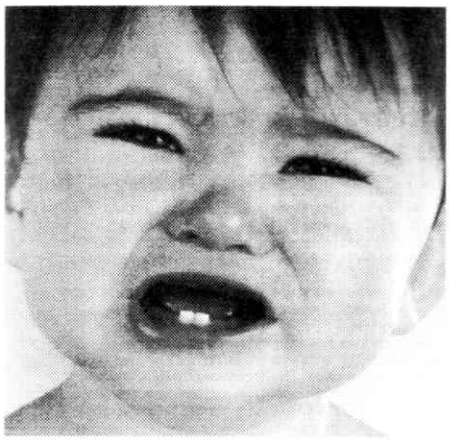
project in Gauteng, in collaboration with the Child Protection Unit of the South African Police Service. Counselling services will be provided to victims and their families on a 24-hour basis. This service will be expanded to the other provinces.
The launching of the Child Protection Strategy will take place in the near future, once the document has been aligned with the Department's business plan.
(Acknowledgements: *Recovery*)



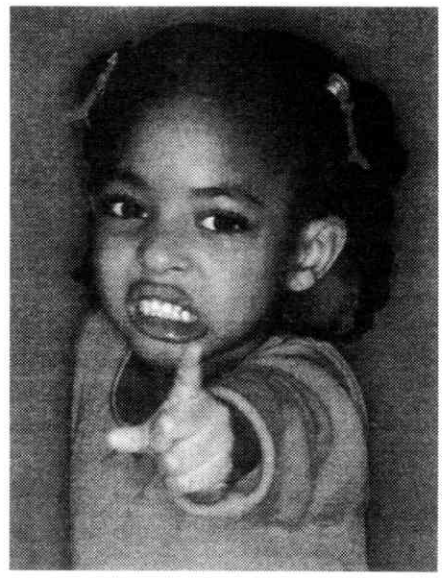
Comment

This is a noble attempt at addressing what must be one of the greatest priorities facing South Africa. The document also contains very useful recommendations for tackling this major issue.

The scope and nature of the problem
The draft blueprint points out that the Child Protection Unit of the South African Police reported an increase of 20.4% on cases referred to them over the 1994 figure which was, in turn, 37,6% higher than the 1993 figure.
In 1993 Child Welfare Societies throughout South Africa reported investigating 1548 cases of child abuse, 2075 cases of sexual abuse, and 5939 cases of neglect. In 1994 these figures had risen to 1753, 3060 and 6177 respectively, and in 1995 the figures were 1851, 1972 and 7087 respectively.
What does this mean? An increase in child abuse and neglect? The draft indicates that this is indeed the case. I think the only fair answer to this question is that no-one knows.
A number of factors could be contributing to these increases. I would suggest that chief among them would be that greater publicity with respect to child abuse and neglect and recently increased capacity on the part of organisations, the police and the courts for dealing with the problem, means a greater willingness on the part of people to make allegations in this connection.
The extent of the problem is therefore not known, as the draft blueprint points out. This is used in the document as a basis for the need for research. I would suggest that the conspiracy of silence surrounding this issue means that we might never know the extent of the problem, and that research into this field is therefore of limited usefulness from this point of view. What is certain, however, is that the incidence of the reporting of abuse and neglect increases as the public become aware of these issues. It has been our experience that Cape Town Child Welfare Society's involvement in Community Work, and especially in public education, has also increased the number of reports of abuse and neglect to the Society.

The need for a comprehensive, well-funded child protection system
This need is well dealt with in the document, and the range of intersectoral services is useful. There is no doubt that there is a need for a comprehensive system, and that this issue requires greater funding than has been the case in the past.
However, given the limitations of financial and human resources in South Africa, the recommendations in this document are unworkable and unaffordable. Had the document made priority, workable, and achievable recommendations within fuller recommendations, it would have been more acceptable.
The notion that the state has primary responsibility for management and funding of child protection services, well-documented in the draft blueprint and supported by the draft White Paper on Welfare, is fully supported.

The need for an appropriate strategy
Many of the recommendations in the document are not remotely workable or achievable in the rural and semi-rural areas, and the document does little to address the needs or the nature of this problem in these areas.
The even greater limitations with respect to human resources must, for example, be considered far more carefully.
As capacity to tackle the problem is increased, we will gain a clearer picture of the nature of the problem. The nature (as well as the extent) of this problem in semi-rural communities is glimpsed by means of example.
In one particular Western Cape town, a large number of girls in a school made statements which indicated their involvement and the involvement of their friends in sex-rings involving the buying of groceries by perpetrators in return for favours. Many of the parents, especially mothers were aware of the situation, but allowed it to continue. Teachers, and even the police were also aware of these events but turned a blind eye, because "it has been happening for many years".
This is a situation in which the difference between right and wrong has become blurred, where sexual abuse has become the "norm", and where ethics and values are confused.



" ... the difference between right and wrong has become blurred, where sexual abuse has become the "norm", and where ethics and values are confused."

It is also a situation which the usual legal methods are unlikely to resolve. An awareness campaign and a thorough debate about these events at a community level is essential.

Community involvement in child protection
This issue has been addressed, but inadequately, in the document.

The national child protection agencies and dignitaries
It is our belief that awareness of child abuse and neglect will not be promoted by the creation of a National Child Protection Agency, but by work in local organisations and communities.
We also believe that national co-ordination can be adequately addressed by the National Welfare Department, and that greater bureaucracy is not affordable.
The involvement of dignitaries to promote the countering of child abuse and neglect, as recommended in this document, is however, welcome and fully supported.

Documents: *Visanti Pillay reports that the final National Child Protection Plan document is not yet available to the public. Cape Town Child Welfare Society has prepared a document which includes priority recommendations on this issue.*

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Barbara Varenhorst writes in *Reclaiming Children and Youth* of a programme which illustrates that young people can learn to help each other by ...

Harnessing the energies of love

Molly Hardy, a consultant on teenage suicide, was called to a high school following a suicide.

Meeting with 1,500 teenagers in a gymnasium, she started by saying "This is a pretty nice school. I noticed a lot of expensive cars in the student parking lot. Nice cars, nice school, nice homes ... so what's missing around here? *How* is it possible that Lisa (not her real name), one of the most popular girls in school, an A student, varsity cheerleader ... would commit suicide? What's really going on?"

A student rose, went to the microphone, and with quivering voice began —

> **Some of you think the so-called popular kids have it easy. Let me tell you. I've got a great act, and so far everyone's bought it. Except me. No one knows who I really am, and that hurts. I'm not so sure I know anymore. We've got to cut out the cliques, reach out to each other. We have to care about *us* ... it's our only way out.**

Everyone applauded.

Breaking down cliques, reaching out to each other, caring — this is what these students were saying was missing and desperately needed in their lives. But how do they go about doing it?

They recognized their need but felt trapped in the "system," their way of life, or their lack of training or modelling regarding how to act and be the kind of person they wanted to be.

Another student speaking at the same assembly said —

> **We need to confront the real problems underneath the drugs, alcohol, and suicide. It's despair, loneliness, and hopelessness. We need someone to talk to; we need to be taught how to talk. We need people who really care about us, support us ... we need to be loved. Suicide crisis prevention is okay to learn about in a crisis, but we need to be taught to be ourselves, be open, honest, real. Teach us to hope. Bring some kind of meaning and purpose to our lives.**

These youth were speaking out of the brokenness of their lives. They were opening themselves to honest needs and hurts, pleading for help directly, so often expressed in masked behaviours and often misunderstood by those who are expected to help. Teach us how to hope! Teach us how to love!

Teaching love through peer ministry

Many youth are now learning how to give hope and to demonstrate love through the Peer Ministry Program, a biblically based peer helping program.

Its focus is to educate the heart through exploring

(a) what the Bible teaches through concrete acts and words, and

(b) what it means to love, especially those who are different from us and who, perhaps, seem unlovable.

The Bible tells us to love one another as we love ourselves, but there are not a lot of very specific directions on how to do this. Quantities of books have been written about how to learn to love one's self, but these do not provide a great deal of success. Fewer books have defined how to love another person in a caring, unconditional way.

Peer Ministry training leads youth to discover that the way to learn to love one's self is to give love to others through very practical and ordinary ways of service and caring. As they help others, they learn to hope and find meaning in their own lives.

The basic element of the Peer Ministry Program is the training, which is based on a curriculum that teaches systematically, and sequentially, the following skills:

1. How to make friends and be a friend to others;
2. How to meet people and establish conversations;
3. How to listen to the feelings as well as the words that people share;
4. How to welcome a new person to a group;
5. How to help someone work through a problem; and
6. When and how to get professional help when needed.

Perhaps more basic to Peer Ministry, however, is the learning of why a person should do these things — the motivations and responses of the heart: compassion, caring, and love beyond what the youth would get for himself or herself through acts of kindness and help.

Youth are learning to live, to be loved, to have friends, to be a friend, to feel worthy and capable, and to experience God's love and care. They are also learning and experiencing what it means to live out one's faith in daily life. Through the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), youth see that five ingredients are necessary to be an effective Peer Minister (see box).

The principles become relevant and real as they become a habit of life. Youth need to practise and apply them to others in their lives so that these principles become an integral part of how they respond to others. Thus, service to others

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is an essential ingredient of the training and subsequent work of the Peer Ministry program.

During and following training, youth are given a variety of "assignments" involving reaching out to or working with others who are hurting or lonely, or who have a need that only a peer can fill. Many youth have found that one of the most frequent tasks of service is just being able to listen. As one youth minister, Julie Neitzel, said, her training prepared her for listening to some very tough situations, including the traumatic death of a student and member of her church.

The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* cited Julie as one of the Peer Ministers most sought out by fellow students. When asked what she felt had been the most meaningful experience she had as a trained Peer Minister, she said it was acquiring confidence that she did have the skills to talk to people at a difficult time: "This stance of listening has become part of my life. I think listening includes being approachable — open to hearing someone else without being a judge. I can feel with another person, offer alternatives — not advice — and when necessary, tell them where to go for help" (cited in *Peer Update*, a newsletter of the Peer Ministry).

The program's real power is that it is open to the "broken" as well as the "whole." Most broken youth are this way because they have never learned how to reach out, how to make friends, or how to love themselves or others. They find no meaning or purpose to their lives. They have nothing to look forward to, and the future often seems dark and full of more loneliness. By learning the skills, opening their hearts to the message of love through the biblical context of this training, and finding meaningful tasks to perform in relationship to others, they discover meaning and purpose. Their own healing is the result of giving to others what they most want for themselves. As Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen (1996) said, "One moment of unconditional love may call into question a life-time of feeling unworthy and invalidate it" (p. 258). By experiencing unconditional love through a Peer Ministry friendship, many youth are invalidating their feelings of worthlessness. By seeking and finding meaning to their lives through service, they often experience the healing they need to survive, to start another day with hope.

All youth are suffering in one way or another, some more vividly and concretely than others. Through their own experiences in suffering, they find the ability to heal others when they are challenged to do it; through the training, they are equipped with the interpersonal skills they need and supported in their efforts to put caring into action. As Remen (1996) noted, "Expertise cures, but wounded people can best be healed by other wounded people. Only other wounded people can understand what is needed, for the healing of suffering is compassion, not expertise" (p. 217). Compassion comes from the heart. Peer Ministry educates the heart and calls it into action through learning and experiencing the gospel of love as Christ taught and demonstrated it.

Peer Ministry Program youth are not just sitting around, singing, having fun, and worshiping. They are also learning the reality of what it means to be a Christian in their everyday lives. At the same time, they are discovering their own uniqueness and how they can use their talents and gifts to serve all kinds of people, thus giving meaning to their lives.

As Mother Teresa once said, "We will never know until we get to Heaven how much we owe the poor for allowing us to serve them."

The youth owe those they help, not just because they want to help, but because they need to do it for their own selves — for their own happiness and sense of self-worth.

"One moment of unconditional love may call into question a life-time of feeling unworthy, and invalidate it"

William Barclay (1971) once wrote:

> **There is nothing more moving in life than to hear someone say, "I need you; I cannot do without you." There is no more uplifting feeling, however, than to see someone ... a child, a pupil or friend ... facing the tasks of life competently, adequately and gallantly, and to know that you had something to do with equipping him or her through the caring that makes them real. (p. 142)**

Here is the answer to what youth at that assembly discussing suicide were seeking. They want someone to care enough about them to make them real. They want to know how to give to others to help them face the tasks of life "competently, adequately, and gallantly." In this way, these youth will also be able to face life in the same manner. Broken spirits thus are mended, and the wounds suffered by all persons in the journey of life thus are healed. Through simple acts, done daily, we can gradually harness the energies of love and discover the love we all are seeking to heal our own broken spirits.

Principles of Peer Ministry Work

1. The least likely person is the one who may be the most capable of helping a wounded person. The Samaritan, perhaps, never thought of helping a Jew — but he did! You may think you are totally incapable of ministering to other wounded. However, you may be just the person to perform that service to another.

2. A person has to come close and touch someone who is wounded to realize the extent of need. We cannot help another from a distance or even recognize real needs without becoming involved. This may take time, patience, and testing before we know the needs of those we wish to help.

3. We have to put ourselves at risk. Risk can involve rejection from our group, being laughed at, being misunderstood by the one you are helping, even making mistakes. The willingness to take those risks is ministry.

4. The Samaritan took action, action that involved expenditure of time, energy, and money. We can be concerned about another, but if we do nothing, we cannot really minister.

5. You have to help another without expecting any thanks or gratitude. The Samaritan helped out of compassion without any expectations of reward or appreciation.

Barbara Varenhorst *received her PhD in counselling psychology at Stanford University. She started the Palo Alto Peer Counselling Program in the Palo Alto, California, school district in 1970. The author may be contacted at: 350 Grove Drive, Portolla Valley, California CA 94028.*

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OTHER CHILDREN / AFRICA

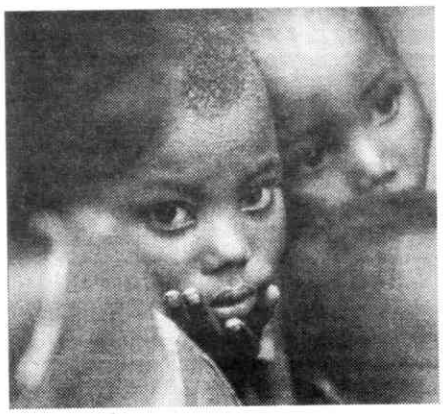
The Wanderers

After years in camps and months scavenging in woods, some Hutu refugees go home. Many remain on the run.

FAUSTIN RUKURATABARO'S only possession was a shredded beige jacket infested with spiders, but he considered himself a most fortunate man. He emerged from eastern Zaire's Walikale woods with several thousand other Rwandan Hutu refugees last month, exhausted but very much alive after nearly three months of scavenging while in hiding. Mr. Rukuratabaro, a small man who does not consider himself especially strong, and his fellow travellers have proved just how hardy humans can be.

Hiding

His feet were sore and his shirt sleeves hung in dirty strips. He became separated from his wife and doesn't know where she is. But unlike tens of thousands of other refugees who have been hiding in the dense bamboo forest since early November, he was discovered by the United Nations agency for refugees in Zaire, which planned to take him home.



"I sometimes wondered whether the ordeal would ever end," he said, climbing aboard a UN truck.

Rukuratabaro and up to 200,000 others fled deeper into Eastern Zaire in early November after Zairean rebels, reportedly backed by Rwanda's Tutsi leaders, attacked their refugee camps.

Fearful of reprisals by the current Tutsi government, the refugees were among the more than 1 million Hutus who fled Rwanda after the 1994 genocide of ethnic Tutsis. Once in the camps, they were held virtually hostage by Hutu militias and former soldiers for more than two-and-a-half years.

Living on roots and bugs

Their captivity lasted even after the breakup of the camps, and they were only able to free themselves during a rebel advance on the forest.

Rukuratabaro described people being herded in small groups by the Hutu militias. He says the militiamen threatened to shoot them if they strayed from the group — even to search for food.

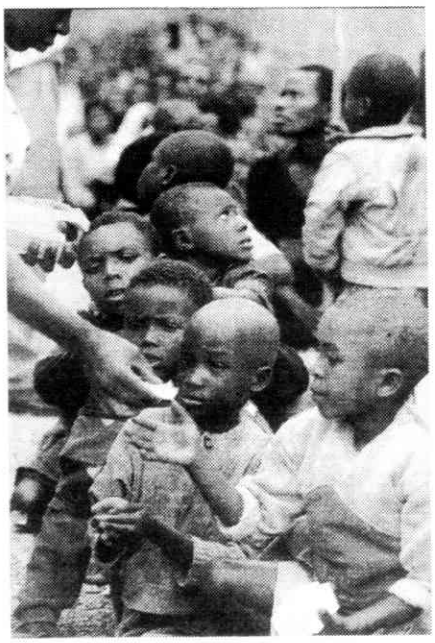
His band decided to make a run for it when the rebels attacked. The militias were too busy fighting the rebels to stop them, and they escaped safely.

Rukuratabaro and his small group of 60 other refugees survived in the inhospitable woods by scooping up rain water with leaves and digging for roots and bugs. "We ate as many leaves as we could," Rukuratabaro said. "I wouldn't even know how to identify what we ate."

His group started out with about two weeks' worth of provisions from the UN-supervised refugee camps that they fled. When supplies ran out, they raided the plots of local farmers, stealing cassava, mangos, and corn.

By the time they reached Buniakiri in the middle of January, most had traded their UN-issued blue plastic sheeting and water jugs for food, and few had the mattress rolls or jackets they had set out with.

For months, the Rwandan government has rejected claims by relief organizations that hundreds of thousands of refugees like Rukuratabaro remained behind when more than 1 million returned home in November and December from eastern Zaire and Tanzania. However, relief workers say that as many as 200,000 more refugees may still be hiding in the dense forest, which was once a sanctuary for gorillas.



Among them are 40,000 refugees who fled encampments in the Shabunda area the past week following reports that the Zairean rebels had captured a nearby town. The UN says an additional 130,000 gathered around Tingi-Tingi are in poor condition and have little food.

On Feb. 3, Rwanda's envoy to the UN insisted that those people included 40,000 former Hutu soldiers involved in the genocide and their families, and thus did not qualify for humanitarian support.

Judith Matloff is a staff writer of the *Christian Science Monitor*. The photographs are by **Chris Collingridge**.

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A central principle of restorative justice is rebuilding lives and relationships rather than just punishing and rejecting offenders. **Janet Schmidt**, trainer and co-ordinator of a conflict resolution programme in Canada, writes of the task of mediation between offenders and victims. What do we learn for practice?

The Healing Journey towards Forgiveness

Forgiveness is defined by many as one piece of a longer healing journey. It represents that time when an event no longer has control over the lives of both victims and offenders. Nonetheless, forgiveness is rarely, if ever, a one-time event and may take years to complete. Both victims and offenders cycle through and revisit forgiveness in various ways at different times of their lives. Indeed, the experience of forgiveness is itself a journey which is dynamic and always changing.

Although the larger healing journey is unique to each individual, several general stages can be identified for both victims and offenders. But the journey of forgiveness need not be a linear process. People not only move through the process repeatedly, they often move back and forth between the stages. Sometimes two or more stages can happen almost simultaneously.

THE VICTIMS' JOURNEY

The first stage in the healing journey for victims is often denial. Certainly, the level of violation will influence how this denial is expressed. Victims may say, "This is not really happening," or "I must have done something to cause this." Mediators don't often see participants at this stage as cases are usually brought to their attention only after victims have begun acknowledging their experience. Where victims are still in this stage, the effectiveness of a third party intervention is limited. Victims will minimise an apology and will be unable to articulate their need for a complete release from the experience. Even more disconcerting is the impact on offenders, who may conclude that the offence is unimportant, therefore increasing the likelihood it will be repeated. The following four stages are based on Lewis B. Smedes' book, *Forgive and Forget*.

Hurting

The victim may next experience the stage called *hurting*. The victim has acknowledged a violation has occurred, feels emotional pain, and is primarily interested in finding release from pain. This is a significant motivating factor for participation in a mediation. For instance, a victim may readily agree to a meeting, hoping it will take the pain away. If the offender apologises, the victim may quickly grant forgiveness, hoping this will stop the pain. Even at this stage victims are often unable to articulate what they will need from offenders to continue their healing journey.

Anger

The victim's next stage is *anger*, directed at the offender and the offence. The harm inflicted upon a victim is acknowledged in this anger. Here victims are less likely to participate in meetings as they are angry about the injustice and may feel the offender should be punished "to the full extent of the law". If the victim does agree to participate, their motivation can include a need for revenge.

It is not unusual at this point for the victim to vilify the offender, defining them only by the action that caused the pain. If the victim granted forgiveness before reaching this stage, it may well be retracted. Final agreements at this stage are frequently unsatisfying for all parties involved.

Mediators who see victims at this stage must work with these additional dynamics, being patient and gentle with the victim. Often it is helpful for victims if the intervention is not a one-time event. A second session, scheduled after a given period of time, can allow victims to consider the new information they received during the mediation, thus freeing them to move on.

Mediators must also learn to recognise the difference between anger at the offence, and the type of anger expressed in the anger stage. The latter anger is unfocused, delighting in the suffering of the offender. Anger at the offence expresses itself in different ways and is often a necessary ingredient to motivate positive action, protect against further victimisation, call for accountability and even protect others. Anger at the offence should he encouraged by third party interveners throughout the healing journey.

Understanding

Once through the anger stage, the victim can move towards *understanding*. It is here that victims can experience healing, in that the violation no longer controls them.

Here, too, victims often ask for three things. First, they want to know why the event happened. They ask the offender questions to understand, not only the event, but also the circumstances that made it possible.

Second, they want some form of compensation, perhaps a sincere apology, counselling or financial remuneration.

Third, victims often want assurance that the event will not be repeated, which is important for their peace of mind.

The understanding stage is an ideal time for victims to enter into a third party process. Victims are often able to articulate what they need in a constructive manner and are better able to hold the offender accountable. It

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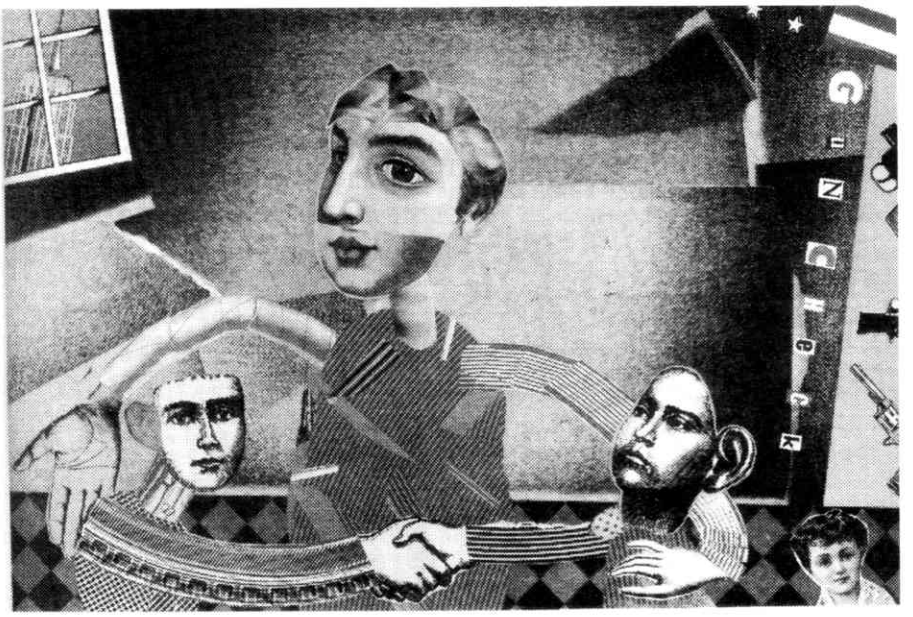
is at this stage that victims may grant an offender's request for forgiveness.

Reconciliation

At the understanding stage there is also potential for the victim to move on to *reconciliation*. Reconciliation occurs when the relationship between the victim and the offender experiences transformation, evidenced by new understandings and greater intimacy. Healing, however, does not depend on whether the parties choose to reestablish a relationship. If they are able to pursue reconciliation, there will be a further healing effect for both of them. But reconciliation is not always possible or necessary and in some situations is unwise.

Victims need patience and support throughout this process. In the earlier stages, mediators can anticipate questions victims will have later on, and can gently encourage offenders to answer the questions many victims have during the understanding stage. Mediators also need to be comfortable with the victim's anger and see it as an essential part of the healing process.



Forgiveness is not a one time event, and may even take years, especially following deeply wounding or repeated offences.

THE OFFENDERS' JOURNEY

Following a conflict or violation, offenders also need to find some way of putting the incident in the past. While victims seek healing from the "offence", offenders often wish to change old patterns of behaviour. For many, their offence continues to control them, whether through guilt, self-hatred, emotional turmoil or a predisposition to re-offend. Only as they move through a healing process can the event lose this power.

Denial

Like victims, offenders first experience *denial*. At this point they make excuses for their behaviour and acknowledge very little, if any, of their wrongdoing. When the offender is in denial, a face-to-face encounter is rarely safe for the victim. Only when the offender begins to take responsibility should a meeting be arranged. Unfortunately, this may take years or it may never happen.

Remorse

The second stage is *remorse*. Offenders have some feeling of wrongdoing but qualify their actions with excuses, including "Yes, but ..." comments. They may be able to acknowledge their deeds and even apologise for them, yet focus on the circumstances that "led" them to behave in this way. They have difficulty taking responsibility and often look for a "quick fix" which will allow them to "forget" the incident.

Many offenders enter into mediation at the remorse stage. A mediator has a number of responsibilities when an offender is at this stage. Victims will interpret offenders' behaviour justifications as attempts to avoid taking responsibility. If victims accept a quickly given apology without sharing their pain, offenders will not complete their healing journey and are more likely to re-offend. For the sake of both, mediators must encourage victims to speak about the emotional, spiritual and physical impact of their experience, and assist offenders in hearing the victims' stories.

Repentance

The third stage is *repentance*. It is here that offenders confront the consequences of their behaviour and take full responsibility for their offence without making excuses. Offenders experience significant personal pain, realising the pain they have inflicted on the victim. Offenders not only offer restitution to victims, they also seek help to change their behaviour. True repentance is displayed when offenders take steps to ensure this happens.

Mediators should encourage offenders to enter this stage. It is unlikely that offenders entering mediation at the previous remorse stage will experience the profound, life-altering experience the repentance stage can bring. Offenders can, however be brought to the threshold of repentance and encouraged to explore it. It is very difficult to journey through repentance and mediators must feel comfortable entering the realm of strong emotions.

Forgiveness

During the fourth stage the offender authentically asks for *forgiveness* and is able to apologise with no strings attached. Offenders recognise their wrongdoing and wish to express this regret to the victim.

Conclusion

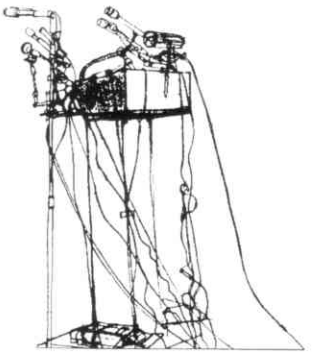
Understanding victims' and offenders' journeys of healing is crucial for mediators. In many situations, however, the journeys are somewhat blurred as participants play the roles of both victims and offenders. This is particularly true in cases involving longstanding relationships. The challenge is to be as helpful as possible for all participants in their own healing process and not inadvertently bring more hurt.

Regrettably some mediators give the impression that mediation is the end of the healing process. Experienced mediators know that other experiences may reactivate the hurt and the victim may need to recycle through some of the healing stages. In cases of significant victimisation it is important for the mediator to contact the victim to see how they are doing and assure them that mediation does not necessarily mark the end of the healing journey. Also, if mediators make it too easy for offenders to move from remorse to forgiveness, they deprive offenders of the true healing and forgiveness they need and often long for.

Forgiveness is not a one time event, and may even take years, especially following deeply wounding or repeated offences. Forgiveness is something offenders request and their victims grant. Mediators must understand that this is only possible after victims and offenders have taken a healing journey so that the difficult events no longer control their lives and both victim and offender are enriched by their new understandings.

Reprinted from *Track Two*, a publication of the Centre for Conflict Resolution at the University of Cape Town.

Conference Update



New Paradigms

Conference Dates

Day 1: Wednesday 2 July
The NACCW's Biennial General meeting will be held from 8.30am — 1.00pm.
Conference will continue at 2.00 pm — 4.30 pm.
Day 2: Thursday 3 July
8.30 — 4.30
Day 3: Friday 4 July
8.30 — 4.30

Venue

Shepstone House, University of Natal, Durban

Social Functions

Civic Hospitality

South Central Local Council Durban
Her Worship the Mayor, Councillor Theresa Mthembu
5.30 — 7.00 pm Wed 2 July

Dinner/Dance

'The Trawlers' restaurant, Durban Harbour
Thursday 3 July 7.00 pm till late. Band and three-course dinner.
No additional charge for those who register for the full three days.

Meals

Costs of conference include teas and lunches.

"Of course we come to conferences for the mental stimulation, the collegial sharing and the professional challenge. But I guess mostly we come for the food!"

Registration

Registration forms — available from Durban office. Closing date for registration 26 June. Cancellations after this date are non-refundable. Draft conference programme will be sent as your confirmation of registration.

Hotels, etc.

Range of affordable accommodation available — BOOK EARLY — contact Children's Homes/ University / Hotels yourself.

Travel

Delegates are responsible for their own arrangements.

Ceremonies

Opening and Closing Ceremonies by Aryan Benevolent Home and Lakehaven Children's Home.

Extras

Book sale and display in the foyer. Also "What's On in Durban" information. Commemorative conference mug for all delegates registering for three days. Daily delegates will be able to purchase these for R12.00

Speakers

International and national speakers will include —

- Jim Anglin, *Consultant to the NACCW*
- Dr Frank Ainsworth, *Australia*
- Geraldine Fraser-Moloketi *Minister of Welfare*
- Lesley du Toit, *Manager of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk*

Other speakers include —

- Ann Skelton, *Lawyers for Human Rights, IMC*
- Pinkie Kunene, *KwaZulu Natal Youth Commissioner*
- Jackie Winfield, Sibongile Manyathi, *NACCW staff members*
- Tsitsi Dangaremb, Zimbabwe (HIV/AIDS)
- Chris Smith, *Cape Town*
- IMC Pilot project Reports:
  - Arrest, Reception and Referral
  - Family Preservation
  - Residential Care
  - Family Group Conference
- Michael Gaffley
- Dr Pat Hansen
- Patrick Vorster, *St Philomenas Children's Home*
- Mathilda Morolong, *House Ocean View Place of Safety, Durban*
- Cotlands Baby Sanctuary Johannesburg, *HIV/AIDS*

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Please stop!

One family's short and sweet approach to discipline and empowerment

When I was a child, my dad used to tickle us until we cried, and there was nothing we could do about it. We could scream, we could kick, we could sob, and he thought it was funny.

I remember feeling impotent, and that filled me with rage. I was stuck in a world where I couldn't even be the boss over my own body. So I picked on my siblings to prove that I had power, if not over myself, then over someone else.

It was that memory of feeling powerless, plus the need to have a respectful method of keeping peace in our home, that inspired my husband and me to develop the "Please stop" rule.

When our daughter and son were 2 and 5 respectively, we told them that if someone used the words "Please stop," they had to knock off the tickling, teasing, kicking, or whatever annoying behaviour had surpassed that person's tolerance level.

Of course, they tested us. They would pick on each other, sing loudly, or shout insults. The intended victim would invoke the rule, and they'd both wait to see if we'd enforce it. We always did, answering, "Your sister said, 'Please stop.' That means stop." And whenever one of the kids came running to us to complain about some kid-crime, like, "He's making faces at me," I would ask, "Did you say, 'Please stop!'" If the answer was no, I would say, "Go say, 'Please stop,' and he will." After two weeks, they stopped testing and started internalising the rule.

So if our now 11-year-old Billy is shooting rubber bands at his 8-year-old sister, Cara, all she has to say is "Please stop." Or if she's playing her kazoo full blast while he's trying to study, it takes only two words and she quits.

Other parents who have heard about this have raised their eyebrows and smirked. "Sure," they say. "A kid will stop picking on his sister if she just asks. Uh-huh."

But it works for us for three reasons.

First, we implemented the rule when the kids were young, and we refused to negotiate. We never made threats or offered consequences if the behaviour didn't stop. The rule was presented like the law of gravity — no discussion, no excuses.

Second, the rule applies to me and my husband as well. If I'm being excessively fussy about the need to hustle, the kids can use those two words to tell me to back off. It doesn't mean they don't have to hurry, only that I've made my point and my nagging has become annoying.

Third, keeping the wording specific gives the kids room to argue, wrestle, or pelt each other with snowballs. Nothing stops if someone is giggling and squealing, "Quit it." (The specific wording also encourages politeness. Nothing stops if Cara yells, "Shut up!" in her brother's face.)

Aside from the short-term advantages, the rule teaches the children that they have authority over their own body. So years from now — or even next week — if someone does something that makes my daughter uncomfortable, she can ask him to stop. And if he doesn't, she'll know that it's his problem, not hers, and she can raise the roof.

We're giving both of our children the confidence to say, "I don't like what you're doing to me and it must end." It's a confidence I know I didn't have as a child, or even as a teenager.

The rule also teaches them that other people deserve the same respect. Which means that when my son is on a date, he'll stop when the girl asks him to, without debate.

The "Please stop" rule has become somewhat famous in our neighbourhood. One day two children who live across the street were having a water fight. The boy was getting thoroughly doused and had obviously had enough. As his sister came toward him with a hose, he ran into our yard. "Please stop!" he yelled. "You know you have to listen to me when I say that here!" And his sister did.

But the most satisfying application of the rule was the time my daughter invoked it to stop the behaviour that had inspired it in the first place. When Cara was three, my father came to visit. He was playing on the floor with her, tickling her until she screamed. From the kitchen I heard her say, "Please stop." But he continued. Again she said, "Please stop!" but louder. Still he didn't Listen. Finally she wriggled away, and with her small hands on her hips she lectured: "I said, 'Please stop' and in this house, stop means stop!"

My dad expected her to be scolded for talking to him that way, but I was filled with pride. "Dad," I said, coming in from the kitchen, "she said 'stop.' She even said 'please.' And in this house, that's enough."

Jamine Latus Musick
a freelance writer, in *Parents* magazine.

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