

# Child & Youth Care

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

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**WHAT WE LEARN FROM ADVENTURE ENCOUNTERS**  
**SHORT STORY: TWO SONS TO TEACH**  
**THE TRANSFORMATION: HOW ARE WE DOING?**

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# Take it easy — things can only get worse!

In my first years as Director of the NACCW, when I was the only staff member and felt very much like David taking on a dozen Goliaths, the National Chairman would phone me on Friday afternoons and say "Take it easy!" It was reassuring to have someone tell me this at the end of a tough week, though secretly we both knew that I *had* to take it easy because next week was going to be tougher!

If you have been one of those great people in child care who devoted the past year to helping kids to believe in themselves and to take on the Goliaths in their own lives, then Thank You. It is unlikely that your many acts of generosity and love will hit the world's headlines, but to steal an idea from Robert Bolt's play *A Man for All Seasons*, you will know that you have done good work, your friends and colleagues will know, the children will know, and God will know — and that's quite a public!

## The hard part

The recent scare about a 42% subsidy cut in the Eastern Cape serves to remind us that the fortunes of the child care service in South Africa are precarious indeed. Anyone who expects some pleasant resolution to the political, financial or practice realities which face our profession is deluded.

We all accept that we stand at a crossroads, and that in all the confusion we are being asked: "Please help with our children and youth — nobody is quite sure yet

just *how*, and we are sure that our resources are minimal, but a lot of kids need you right now. They need your time, your skills, your ingenuity, your thinking, your patience and your love." The way we do child and youth care over the next year — or the next twenty years — will probably look very different from what we are doing now, but the motivation and commitment will flow from the same values which we operate from now.

Welfare in South Africa has never been a favoured child of the state, nor, really, of any other sector of society, but those who work in the field have always been creative, hardy souls with an independent spirit and who just get on with the job anyway. This is what we are being called to be and called to do in the times ahead. With our loyalty to the higher issues like the rights of children, and our loyalty to the children themselves, I have no doubt that we shall achieve much in building an appropriate child and youth care service for the new millennium.

## Two sides to every story

"Ask not what your country can do for you ..." Kennedy's rhetoric in his inaugural address was moving at the time, but the idea can wear a little thin if this effort for our country's children is not going to be reciprocal.

I was at a meeting the other night where senior child care people were seeking the way forward. There was full agreement with the IMC policy and principles, but very

strong resentment about a whole string of issues which might have been better handled by the IMC and the state and provincial departments: an insulting level of reporting and information giving; no acknowledgement that many IMC principles had been generated in existing practice and had been already applied by many; the opportunity to participate in pilot programmes awarded entirely outside the existing child care service, and then minimal feed-back on what was learned in the pilots.

## Partnership

No doubt there are answers to these issues, and there has been variation from province to province, but it is essential that the effort we are being asked to make in the coming years must be based on real, operational partnership and respect between state and service providers. In fact without that, we have no capacity — and we have no hope. That having been said, the time is right for intelligent leadership and consultation, for generosity and commitment, for creativity and experiment, for acknowledgement and appreciation. With such a 'mix', who can beat us? So over the coming holiday period our wish for all remains: Take it easy — things can only get worse.

## New Internet addresses

Please note that as from 1st of August 1997, our web sites have moved to the following locations:

**NACCW**

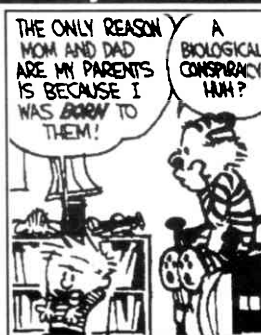
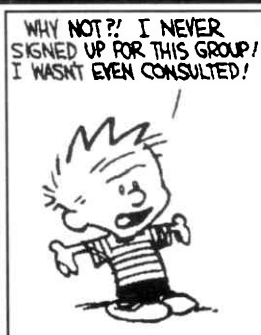
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**CYC-net**

Are you connected? Send e-mail to [cyc-net@iafrica.com](mailto:cyc-net@iafrica.com) and you will be connected to a network of child and youth care colleagues world wide.

**Calvin and Hobbes**

**By Bill Waterson**



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Volume 15 Number 11 November 1997

EDITORIAL: THINGS COULD BE WORSE — AND WILL BE	2
ANNETTE COCKBURN AND THE WORLD OF STREET KIDS	4
CHILDREN'S IDEAS ABOUT BULLYING	6
PROHIBITED DISCIPLINARY MEASURES	7
SHORT STORY: TWO SONS TO TEACH	8
A SOCIAL WORKER AND CHILD CARE WORKER COMPARE JOBS	10
THE EDUCO WILDERNESS ENCOUNTER PROGRAMME	11
LEARNING AND TEACHING SELF-ESTEEM	13
"IT HAD TO GET BETTER!" — MESSAGE FROM A SURVIVOR	14
IMC REPORT — AND A YEAR OF PROGRESS	16
INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT ON CHILD EXPLOITATION	18
WHAT TO PUT IN YOUR 1998 NEW YEAR RESOLUTION	20

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

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## People



**Mark Tomlinson**

Mark has for some years been a trainer for the NACCW. He has been involved in child care work for the past ten years. He started as a child care worker at Oranjia in Cape Town after completing his Honours degree in Psychology in 1987, and in 1995 he became Assistant Programme Director in this children's home.

### Changed direction

At school Mark was 'sports mad' with plans to become a tennis professional, and he also played hockey at provincial level.

In 1984 he enrolled at Rhodes University to study Journalism, but switched courses and ended 1986 with a bachelors degree in Psychology. He did Honours in this subject at Wits University. Then by chance found himself in the field of child care.

A year overseas in 1990 didn't change his mind, and Mark returned to Oranjia where he progressed to senior child care worker and then to unit supervisor.

### Training

During this time Mark completed the Diploma in Child Care Administration (DCCA). He had become concerned that when staff left a post in a home, the children often went through a difficult time while an inexperienced new worker took over. For his DCCA Practicum,

Mark devised a model for recruiting, training and developing a corps or relief workers who, by regularly working with and becoming familiar to the children, could help greatly with this transition. Mark also contributed to the training of others during this time. He is a qualified child care trainer for the NACCW, and he co-ordinated the BQCC training in the Western Cape Region, also doing some of the training himself. For the past two years he has been tutor in three modules of the DCCA course.

### Back to university

In 1996 Mark began his training as a Clinical Psychologist at the Child Guidance Clinic at the University of Cape Town, and this year he has been doing his internship year to complete his MA. His thesis is on mother-infant attachment.

Always a believer in the importance of work within the context of the family as a whole (rather than focussing on the child alone), Mark feels that when children need to come into care they should as soon as possible move out again. "Child care is by no means necessarily bad, but long-term institutionalisation is."

### The future

Mark continues to be interested in training. "Instead of being able to work with ten children, as a trainer I can work with ten child care workers who can in turn work with 100 children." Training and positive relationships are the essential ingredients of child care work. "The good relationship avoids us having to work mechanistically with rules; we are enabled to choose appropriate treatment alternatives — but we must also know how to apply those." Mark has not finalised any plans for 1998.



**Annette Cockburn** once again shares her unique insights into

## The World of Street Children

There were tiny cockroaches in the phone. Annie brings out the Doom. "No! No! says Bongani "I sprayed my radio at home and the Doom killed it. It speaks no more."

\* \* \*

Phumzile had just started the year in Std Five. Well aware that last minute requests seldom produce the desired results, (even requests well in advance don't always) he comes into the office to place an order "I will need", he tells us, "New shoes, a new suit, a bow tie and a new shirt for the Standard Five farewell." "And when may this be?" we ask. "In November," he replies. Well this one at least has learnt to defer gratification — but by ten months!

\* \* \*

Small Andile (we have three Andiles — small, medium and large) comes into the office to report that Xolile is smoking in the toilets. Julie and Annie look at him: there is smoke billowing from his person. Investigation reveals a cigarette burning in his pocket. Annie and Julie have a lot to say.

\* \* \*

They've never really tumbled to it but the sound of one of them crying really hooks me. They have so much cause to cry and

they cry so little. But this one was wailing, sobbing and crying in a heartbroken way at my door "What's the matter? what's wrong?" we ask alarmed. "I miss my mother! I want my mother!" he sobs. "Tesswell come sit on my lap". His little body is taut, wracked with grief.

Annie rushes for his file, we try sweeties and cool drinks, he turns his head away. The other two children in the office are aghast. "Has he got a tooth ache?" asks Elias "No he has a heart ache" I say. He wants his mother. "His mother!" says Alfred amazed.

We find a phone number in the file put Tesswell on the line, to Worcester "I want to come home", "I long for you" "I miss you" he wails, he can hardly breathe he is crying so hard. Now no one is dry eyed.

I take the phone and tell the mother, "Come to Cape Town, come and see him. We'll pay, we'll pay for everything." She agrees.

Tesswell calms down, talks to the Social Worker Washila, accepts cuddles and sweets from me and Annie and Julie. Mother came the following week. Tesswell pops into the office — a smile like the sun! "I'm going to meet my mother at the station" he says. "She must love you so much to come all this way on a taxi!" He beams! R60.00, a small

price to pay for that smile.

But the sadness, the desperation of his loss haunts me. Nine years old!

Most of the time he is so valiant! Enthusiastic about colouring in, Learn to Live, washing my car, soccer and life!

\* \* \*

Lukas left school last year with a matric exemption, and before the ink had dried on his last exam paper, Andrew was in the office: "Can I have his pants, and his school bag, also his blazer?" — Ja well no fine!

\* \* \*

Roger stands watching Zaitoon bookkeeping on the computer. "Do you also get a pocket money fine for mistakes?" he asks her. She takes the opportunity of explaining to him that it is not mistakes that they get fined for. Smoking dagga is not a mistake!

\* \* \*

Anthony Julies was a very clever, small fat boy who ran away from Patrick's House. I met him at the robots selling flowers. "Oh," I said "I see you have a job now, but its a great waste because you were so clever at school."

"This is only one of my jobs," he tells me indignantly. "In the early morning I work for a taxi, then I have a job at the square cleaning up, then I work for a vegetable seller in Church Square then I sell these flowers, and after this I unpack bottles and wash glasses at a shebeen" ... I feel exhausted at the thought! He's about sixteen now, still fat and obviously still clever.

As I drive off I want to tell him he's wasting his talents. But suddenly I'm not so sure.

\* \* \*

The children got hold of some obsolete bank notes shredded by the Reserve Bank into minute pieces. Excited, they bring a box full into the office.

"Only good for confetti," I pronounce. No Pali we're going to stick them together. "Go for it!" we say — dreaming of the peaceful hours this fruitless task would bring us.

A child brings me a present. It's a ring, thin but silver. Four little hearts on a band.

I hesitate: "It's lovely Lazuko but where did you get it?"  
 "Don't worry Pali, I didn't steal it! I wouldn't steal a present."  
 Having heard what I didn't want to hear, I decide not to pursue the matter.  
 "Thank you very much Lazuko."  
 I wear it still.

\* \* \*

The fish tank stands behind the stove at Patrick's House. One day Julie takes a pinch of fish food from the bottle and reaching towards the stove absent mindedly tosses it into the spaghetti. Realizing what she's done she rushes into the office — "What shall I do?" she wails.  
 "Nothing," we say impassively.

\* \* \*

We ask one of the bigger boys to escort the forever-truanting Koekemuis to school. Andrew checks him over.  
 "I can't take him like this!" he says.  
 "I've got to cut and comb his hair." Some minutes and several screams later, Koekemuis, with a distinctly prisoner-of-war hairstyle, is marched off!

\* \* \*

Brendan comes into the office looking very serious.  
 "I want to know who are the parents of this white mouse."  
 "Brendan, I don't know, I have no idea who they are."  
 "Does the mouse always know its mother?" he asks.  
 I feel very vague about kinship patterns among white mice, but I sense where we are going, so when he asks "Does his mother like him, Pali?"  
 "Of course," I reply firmly, "All mothers love their children."  
 Brendan's mother has been in jail for most of his life.

\* \* \*

A German friend gives me a pair of sun-glasses. Freddie picks them up.  
 "They're expensive" I say "Special from Germany"  
 "Huh!" says Freddie dismissively.  
 "They look very Parade to me!"

\* \* \*

Alfred has always been a great hit with the staff. When he came to us he was so tiny, and quite indomitable, but for some time he was extremely unsettled sniffing thinners and often sleeping out. One day he was brought back from the street by a puzzled but sympathetic police officer.  
 "Man!" said the officer, "I've never seen anyone so small and so stoned!" Alfred uncharacteristically burst into floods of tears. "Dronk en verdriet" (al-

coholic remorse) we decided. He then did two jigsaw puzzles in rapid succession and fell asleep.  
 A year later he is affectionate and responsive, never sleeps out, attends Learn to Live regularly and very seldom resorts to thinners.

\* \* \*

When I got to work one morning there were a whole lot of children peering into a cardboard box in my office. Inside? — a fledgling Cape Canary which they had "found" in the street.  
 "Look," I said, knowing how difficult it is to rear nestlings, "I think they must take it back."

"To the street?!" shrieked Alfred, as if he hadn't spent months there himself.  
 "Never!"

I gave up, and began to work at my desk to the accompaniment of incessant chirping from the baby bird in the box.

Dan popped in from Learn to Live, and took stock of the situation,  
 "Well," he said, "I have a neighbour who rears canaries. Perhaps I could take it"

Later that day the box went to the kitchen, and then Dan came back to fetch the bird.

"Where is it?" I asked the children.

"No Pali there are four now."

"Four? Four?" Dan left in a hurry — small boys and box appeared in my office.

"Take them back," I said with deadly calm. "At once, to where you found them, or else no pocket money for any of you!" They scuttled off.

Leaving work I saw the children playing in the yard, "So where are the birds?"

"They are very happy now," Alfred tells me with an enigmatic look.

I decide to drop the subject.

\* \* \*

The four unit managers, Annie and I, meet every two weeks on a Friday. It was early October, a lovely Spring day, and Annie suggested that we hold the meeting over a pizza and coke at a nearby pub. Walking back to the office afterwards we passed a group of street kids on the grass in Buitengracht. They spotted Shane first: "Hi Shane," they called, then noticed the rest of us "Hey Pali, Miss Annie, Meneer Archie, Ninnette!"

What a haul! They flocked towards us, clutching, grasping, exclaiming, high as kites, filthy, ragged, needy.  
 Oh "What If!" I said. "What are you doing here?"

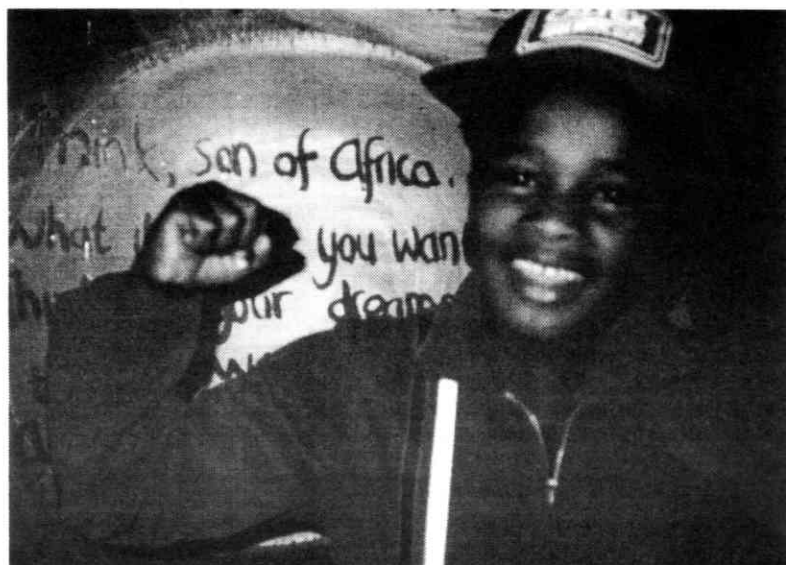
"I'm strolling again," he said happily enough. "And what would your mother say?" said Annie. "She's by the house," he said looking a bit downcast. Eventually we get away, and back into the Patricks House yard.

Children are swinging on a rope from the parking canopy, and playing ball. They are sober, and calm. Impulsively I hug them, so thankful that these ones at least are safe and settled.

\* \* \*

Recently my car was sent for a service and the dealer put the removed parts in boxes, so when I arrived "late" the next day I distracted the book carriers with the spare parts. "The spark plugs will do well as sinkers for fishing and the air filter? "Will be a fine Frisbee" they said.

These children are so resourceful — who else would see the potential in these useless things. Visvang (Fishing) is a favourite activity at the moment. There are very few fish caught, but the process attracts interest and warm vibes. The volunteers who take them, came back with a R50 donation one day, and stories of free bait and caring help from other fishermen.



**Suzie Hayman** runs the problem page in *Who CARES?* the UK magazine for young people in care. Recently she received this letter from a boy in care, and rather than answer it herself, took it along to a children's home in Coventry to ask the kids there. Her conclusion?

The professionals aren't the only ones with the answers!

# What to do about bullying?



"I'm a 12-year-old boy and I live in a children's unit. I have been in care for a while, but a few weeks ago I moved here. The problem is that I am being bullied. I am picked on by the kids here, mainly two other boys. They do it because I'm young and weak. The staff do speak to them, but it just keeps going. It's getting on my nerves."

## Emma

I think it's out of order that you're getting picked on. No one should do that to you. The bullies probably think they're cool and hard. They're just showing off and trying to get their own way. If you said something about them, they wouldn't like it. You could try to ignore them. You could also talk to your friends in the unit, but you're new there and might not have many friends. If things get really bad, you could phone the police. People tend to get picked on when they're seen as different or outsiders. Maybe that is why it's happening — you're seen as the new boy. Once you settle in, you will feel better.

## Jamie

There are a number of things you can do. You can tell your key worker and, if possible, your parents. With their support, you should talk to the boys. You need to tell them to stop, but you shouldn't have to do this on your own. Ask them what they're playing at and say how it's making you feel. It's probably making you feel depressed. I also think it makes a difference that you're new to the unit. Maybe you've left other friends behind? It might be that these new kids are jealous that you've got things that they haven't got. You say they pick on you because you're young and weak, but that might just be the way you think about yourself.

## Lynsey

I think it's right to keep talking to the staff, but be careful about what you

say to the other kids. A lot of the time, if you threaten to tell on people, they do something to you.

The staff should always be around and they should spend more time with you. That would make things better in the unit, but it would also mean that there's no chance of the kids being left on their own to keep bullying you. If that doesn't work, someone should be moved. I don't think you should always have to stick up for yourself. Some people will do that, but it won't be so easy for others. It also depends how much experience you have of living in a unit.

The other thing is that kids *do* stick up for each other. As long as it's not your fault that you're getting picked on, other kids can help you. This is hard because we've all been there too. We know what it's like. Everyone has been bullied, but we've also had a go at someone who is smaller than us. If you've been bullied, maybe you're more likely to do it yourself. Half the time, kids do it to feel better.

## Suzy

Talk to your mum and dad when you go home to see them. If you can't do that, I strongly suggest that you get to know one of the staff in the unit. Talk it through.

If the bullying is still going on, then sit down with the people who are bullying you and say how you feel about what they are doing. You're probably feeling really hurt. If things still don't go well, ask the staff to speak to everyone.

They can ask the bullies to remember how they felt when they first moved into a strange place. Maybe they see that you're a good lad, and that's why they're picking on you. When bullies see that one person has got something going for him, they might feel that they haven't. They can also do it if they see you to be different, like if you have a disability.

You could ask to be moved, but that might not work. If you keep on moving, you won't know where you are!

## Nikki

There's something we talk about here where I am, which I think you should do — it's "stop, think, discuss, plan and agree action."

This means that you stop and think about what's happening. Think before you speak and don't just lash out. It would be easy to say something nasty, but that wouldn't be fair. Instead, discuss the problem with the staff and the unit. If there's one person you can trust, go to a corner and tell them about it.

You're then ready to plan how to deal with the bullying. The final part is about agreeing the action. It might be that you agree to stay away from the bullies and to walk away when they pick on you.

Before someone moves into a unit, I think they should be welcomed to the group. They should feel wanted. The other kids should think about the new person — think before they speak.

## Michael

You should tell your best friend, or your friends in the unit. They could talk to the staff for you.

The staff should deal with it. Ask them to speak to all the kids about bullying. Also, they should talk privately to the kids who are picking on you.

You could also get another adult to help you. If you have a brother who comes to visit, you could tell him. Maybe your brother could ask the other kids why they're doing it. Tell them to pick on someone their own size.

You need to know that other people care about you. If not, you can be really scared and feel like you just want to run away. It wouldn't sort out the problem, but that's what you might think of doing.

Get the bullies on your side. Find out what they like doing, such as football, and invite them for a game.

# **PROHIBITED** **DISCIPLINARY** **MEASURES**



A preview of South Africa's coming Minimum Standards for child and youth care. Below are a number of measures staff *may not use* to discipline children. The Guidelines also include descriptions of *preferred* disciplinary measures.

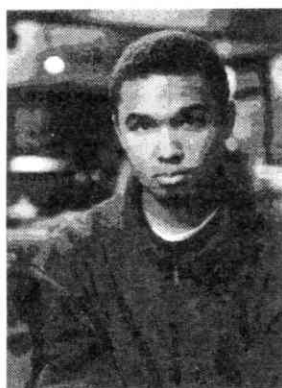
- X Humiliation or ridicule**
- X Physical punishment**
- X Deprivation of a child or youth's basic rights and needs, for example, food, clothing, shelter, bedding, access to parent**
- X Denial (outside of the programme service plan) of visits, telephone or correspondence with family members**
- X Threats of removal from the programme**
  - X Assignment of inappropriate or excessive exercise or work**
  - X Undue influence by caregiver or staff members regarding their religious or personal beliefs**
- X Degrading punishment which includes verbal, emotional or physical harm**
- X Group punishment for individual behaviour**
- X Restraint, isolation or seclusion, other than for the immediate safety of children, youth or staff members, or as specifically defined in the overall plan of care**
- X Being punished by another child or youth**



# Two sons to teach

Lukas Africa was 42. He had grown up in an institution himself – which had been a very positive experience for him and which he remembered with affection and gratitude. He was happily married to Marti, and had two children, Nico and Julia. He trained as a teacher and taught for several years in an ordinary high school, but now worked in an institution for difficult youth, Langkloof, combining the jobs of workshop teacher and care worker.

He lived with his family about three miles from Langkloof. He enjoyed his work, and got on well with his colleagues and the youngsters. He was content with life.



That is, until one Friday afternoon when Nico, his 16-year-old son, borrowed his mother's small car for a joyride with a friend around the neigh-

bourhood, lost control of the car and smashed it into the rockery wall in their driveway.

Lukas was furious. Nico had never done anything like this before. He yelled at him: "But think of the cost! And this is a criminal thing – if it had been someone else's car you could have got a criminal record!"

Nico, defensive, had replied: "But it wasn't someone else's car."

"That's not the point," his father shouted, angered even more that Nico was now arguing about this. "I'm sorry," he said firmly. "You have gone too far and you have to learn your lesson. I'm grounding you for as long as I think nec-

essary, and right now, you can go to your room and stay there for the weekend!"

It was a painful weekend for young Nico, as he struggled with the shame and guilt of having done something so stupid and destructive. Worse, he had never experienced this sense of separation and rejection in his life, and his mixed feelings of embarrassment and resentment troubled him deeply. It was also uncomfortable for his mother and Julia for whom the house without Nico was a new experience. Of course there had been the occasional rows, as in any family, but they always seemed to get resolved around the breakfast table or at dinner when the family was together. But mostly, it was painful for Lukas. He was angry with Nico, and found himself running over their encounter in his head again and again. There was the huge conflict of missing his son with whom he had enjoyed so close and loving a relationship – and the disturbing thought that maybe he didn't know him at all. How could he have done such a thing? He was appalled at the idea of Nico being involved in something rather like car theft, and he found words like 'underhand' and 'deceitful' on the tip of his tongue. And also, there was the damage and the expense: the left front quarter of Marti's little car looked beyond repair – and a large section of the rock retaining wall had collapsed on to the driveway.

Lukas had to go in to Langkloof on the Saturday, and he couldn't remember ever leaving such a strangely silent house behind him as drove away. All of the care workers had volunteered to contribute their services for one-third of the boys' 15 hours of free time over weekends. Nearly all of them were at Langkloof on juvenile court orders and so they were not able to go out anywhere by themselves. This meant that there was lots of non-school time to make the most of. The staff tried to make their five hours' worth as productive and interesting as possible for the boys, so many groups and outings were always planned. This morning he was running a soccer skills group. The boys valued these opportunities to develop personal skills which they could offer to their teams when they played soccer against other schools and institutions, so it would be a session of heading, trapping, kicking and passing footballs.

A few of the boys came up to his car to meet him when he arrived. Joshua, whom most of the staff thought rather troublesome and surly, was amongst them. Joshua, however, often hung around Lukas, and spoke quite openly about his family – or lack of it. His father had left his mother with three boys when Joshua was about twelve. Father had been largely absent from the house ("Your father's still at work" or "Your fa-

ther's had to go away for a while" were common reasons given by his mother) and Joshua had few good memories of his father whom he had not seen for five years now.

"Well, other adults here are fathers to you in a way," said Lukas, trying to reassure Joshua.

"Not really fathers," said the boy sadly. "The staff here don't think of us as their real sons, do they?"

Lukas knew better than to say something superficial like 'Of course we do.' He just squeezed the boy's shoulder in silent empathy.

This morning Joshua would be in his ball skills group, and Lukas would normally bear in mind family issues like this, but today he found himself rather subdued and mechanical in the group. His own thoughts about Nico kept crowding in on what should have been a time with these other children. Who were these other kids, anyway? How come he was here, away from home, giving his time and attention to strangers' children, while his own son was at home ... He checked himself. Other adults had done this for him when he was a boy without parents. Of course he should be doing this – and he should be doing it open-heartedly and generously, too, as others had done for him. In the end, the group progressed well.

Marti and Julia walked down to the local shop. Normally they would have driven, but with the car out of commission it meant going on foot. It wasn't very far so they didn't mind, and it gave them a chance to talk.

They found they were in agreement about Nico's dangerous and expensive escapade of the previous day; but they were also both uncomfortable at what was happening in their family.

"I wonder how the wild Nico will enjoy spending time in captivity?" mused Julia.

"This is not a joke, you know," returned her mother. "He must learn, and what he did was serious."

"I suppose so," said Julia, "but already I miss having him around." She paused.

"I guess if I am angry with him – or sympathetic – I would prefer to be able to say so to his face, rather than not be able to communicate at all."

Marti thought about this.





After a light lunch with the staff at Langkloof, Lukas was on his way home and not looking forward to getting there. The staff had been talking over lunch about Joshua who had apparently had something of a temper tantrum after the ball skills group. Some kids had teased him and he had run outside and returned with some large stones which he had then heaved at his tormentors. Nobody had been hurt, but half-a-dozen large windows had been smashed.

"I think he should be CB'd," said Philip Roberts. 'CB' (confined to barracks) was an old military term which had survived the years at Langkloof, and several of the staff agreed with him. To be CB'd meant not being able to participate in any activities except meals and school classes, and it was an unpopular punishment with the boys. "Damned dangerous thing to do! Someone could have been seriously injured," added Philip for emphasis.

Although he rather liked Joshua, even Lukas had agreed at the time. The boys had to know that Langkloof would not tolerate dangerous and destructive behaviour, and that was that. After lunch Joshua would have his sentence pronounced, and he would be out of the picture for a week or so.

It was never nice walking into a conflict, and the spirit of Nico loomed large in the empty space he had left behind in the Afrikas' house. Lukas picked up the day's newspaper and tried to read, but his thoughts kept returning to his conflicted feelings about Nico – justifying his banishment but at the same time feeling uncomfortable about it. He was relieved to hear the kitchen door banging as Marti and Julia arrived back from the shops, for this would take his mind off things.

It didn't, because they wanted to talk to him about Nico. Marti told Lukas what Julia had said about preferring to say what she thought to Nico's face, rather than stopping all communication like this.

"I must say I agree with Julia," she said. "If we want to teach him a lesson, we must have teacher and pupil in the same room!"

"Yes, and he doesn't stop being my brother – or your son – just because he does something wrong," added Julia. "Maybe right now he most needs you to be his father."

Lukas was moved by these words from his fourteen-year-old daughter. He'd often thought of her as wise beyond her years. And he knew at once that her point was the key to his conflict.

Lukas got up and went through to Nico's room and tapped on the door. No answer. He tapped again and again there was no answer. Good Lord, he

thought. Don't say he has run away! He opened the door a crack, and there was Nico, curled up in a ball on his bed, fast asleep, looking as vulnerable and desolate as a frightened six-year-old. His heart went out to him. He knew he could have handled this whole thing better and that the past 24 hours' isolation was serving no positive purpose. There was no question that Nico had done something very wrong – and, yes, illegal – and that he was going to have to put it right. But, as Julia had said, Nico was still his son and he still had the responsibilities of a father.

As he touched the top of his head, the boy woke up. There was a momentary hesitation while Nico read Lukas' face and saw that the tension and enmity was gone. Nico stood up and for a long minute they held each other. As the weight of the past day lifted from Lukas' shoulders and the circulation was restored between father and son, an extraordinary thing happened. Lukas thought of Joshua – confined to barracks out at Langkloof, but without family, without a sister and parents who might think more carefully about what was happening to him. He had an idea.

Lukas assembled his family at the table in the kitchen. "Okay," he said to Julia. "You said that you would like to tell Nico to his face what you thought about all this. Now's your chance."



Julia did just that. "You scared me," she said. "It's quite important to me that I feel I understand you, and can predict what you do, so that I can rely on you. You scared me when you did

something so destructive and out of character."

Nico nodded gravely.

"And Mom?" said Lukas, turning toward Marti.

"I agree with Julia," she said, looking at Nico. "But I also felt a bit ... betrayed that when I was away on Friday you did something you knew I would never allow and would strongly disapprove of. I was hurt about that – and also angry about my car. Apart from the cost, I'm going to have to go without the car until I can get it fixed, and that will inconvenience all of us."

Nico got up and put his arm around his mother. He was pretty close to tears so he didn't trust his voice to say anything, but his gesture was eloquent enough. Lukas cleared his throat. "I don't know what you think, but I see three things we have to do to get this right. One, you are

going to share the inconvenience of Mom not having a car for a while. Two, I think Mom will lend you the money, but you will have to lose quite a lot of your part-time job money to pay her back for the repair of the car. We'll see on Monday how much that will be."

"I understand," said Nico. "I think that's fair." Julia smiled at him. He asked: "And what's number 3?"

"The rock wall in the driveway," answered Lukas. "Now that's going to be a back-breaker which is going to take a while – and I'd like to offer to help."

"You mean — ?" started Nico.

"I mean," said Lukas, "that that's something we could do together. It'll take two people, anyway, to move those rocks and all that sand. Let's see how we go on that – and get it done by Christmas. Hard work ahead!"

It was clear that Nico was quite moved by this. On the one hand, there was no way he was going to get away with what he had done and there was, in Lukas' words, hard work ahead. On the other hand, his father's unexpected gesture took him by surprise and turned the grim future weeks into something he found himself looking forward to.

"And then there's one other thing I would like your help with," said Lukas mysteriously.

"Done!" said Nico.

It was again on a Saturday that Lukas' car pulled into the grounds of Langkloof, though this time he did not have a group to run. There to meet him, as usual, was Joshua. Joshua had been the subject of a long staff meeting the previous afternoon, when Lukas had persuaded his colleagues that the CB sentence was not the most helpful way of dealing with his recent window-smashing tantrum. Initially the staff was reluctant, but when Lukas told them openly of his experience with Nico, they were clearly struck by the story and agreed to Lukas' suggestion.

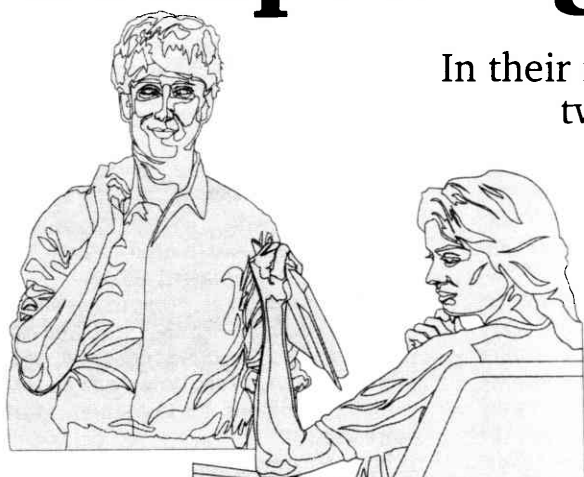
So it was that Lukas and Joshua (with Nico along to help) made up an intriguing threesome as they carried sheets of glass and packs of glazing putty into the building.

They spent the rest of the day cleaning out the frames, then measuring, cutting and fitting new glass. Both of the boys managed to cut themselves – though not seriously. Judging by the noise and laughter, they had a good time, even though the work was difficult. And by the end of the day all three of them had much to be thankful for – and Joshua's wrongs had been righted.

Lukas had also asked permission for Joshua to come home with them for the evening, and the boy was thrilled to be able to join a family for dinner.

The table in the Afrikas' household was, that Saturday night, a contented one indeed. ■

# Comparing jobs



In their recent newsletter  
two staff members  
at the Oranjia  
Children's Home  
in Cape Town  
talk about their  
respective roles  
on the team

## A child and youth care worker speaks

When asked what I do for a living I often get this type of response: "Oh, you must really love kids" or "I would never be able to work with those poor children — you must have so much patience ..."

Rone Gerber, a senior child and youth care worker at Oranjia says that "in actual fact I feel that the most important characteristic of a good child and youth care worker is knowledge and skills to deal with highly demanding children and adolescents as well as adults.

Rone thinks that a child care worker needs to be flexible, non-judgmental and very self-aware. "A child care worker has to use her or himself as a tool to help heal."

"An average day in child care would start with waking up every youngster in a way that gets him or her in a good frame of mind for the day. Breakfast is served after every child is dressed. In this short time a lot of emotional issues could already have arisen, like refusing to get up (school refusal) or remembering nightmares. Many of the kids had such a rough time the day before that they do not want to get up to face another day. For others the mornings are times when mom and dad are really missed and some kids feel very homesick. So while trying to get the kids ready for school or for the day's activities, the child and youth care worker also has to help each one through emotional issues".

Rone says that in the afternoons the time is spent involving children to all their extra-mural activities and helping to get homework done. All these practical tasks are never made easy due to the fact that the kids special needs,

hurts and vulnerabilities do not go away. "It is not possible to get tasks done without addressing these overall needs and problems. These issues are a huge part of the care worker's focus". The careworker aims to develop and promote competency and therefore throughout the day must be on the alert for opportunities to encourage the young people to practise skills and realise strengths. In this positive approach healing energies are harnessed from within the child.

"For example, while driving a child to soccer an opportunity might arise to talk about a problem. Or a game is lost and an opportunity arises to teach a life skill on how to handle defeat," says Rone.

Mealtimes, bathtimes and bedtimes are all potentially difficult times in residential care. Bone says "while feeding, bathing or putting a child to bed can be considered a routine physical activity, in residential child and youth care it is the times when the child or youth gets confronted with his own emotional insecurities, needs and demands. Therefore individual time has to be spent with every child to help him or her 'work through' a lot of these issues."

Child and youth care in a residential setting is a very demanding profession which requires a careworker to be highly trained, skilled and responsible.

## A social worker's view

Belinda Slavin has been a social worker at Oranjia for the past three years. The social worker's role is primarily to help the children through the use of social work methods which include individual casework and group work. In helping the children the social worker also works with the parents.

One of the social worker's tasks is to co-ordinate admissions to the residential program. This includes gathering relevant information, collating the data and setting up admission meetings. This is a very large responsibility, since the decision to admit a child, and the way in which a child is admitted, has enormous ramifications for the child's later functioning on the program.

Certain children and youth are seen by the social worker on a regular basis to support the work done by care workers in the group homes. The social worker also visits the group homes to make regular contacts with the other children and youth. The development of relationships is essential for being able to help a child. The social worker takes meals at the unit at least once a week, takes the kids shopping or to appointments, and sometimes helps out practically at the homes doing shifts when care staff are ill or on leave.

Residential social work is not like social work at most agencies. There are no 8 to 5 days. The social worker spends many hours at work, often late into the night as and when the need arises. Weekends are not necessarily free either. Every alternate weekend the social worker is on call. The intensity of the work (everything is about relationship) and the fact that we are a small team means that we all have to be available as and when the need arises. There is no neat separation of work from private life, not if you care about what you are doing.

The social worker also sees parents regularly for supportive counselling, helping with parenting skills, problem-solving, crisis management and support, as well as the evaluation of progress made by child and family. Family meetings are a norm when planning for children to leave the residential program — a step which involves careful preparation. This is part of case management which means the social worker must liaise with various other professionals both within and outside of Oranjia. This is an important role and helps to ensure that management is integrated. Data collation and communication are essential skills for the social worker.

The social worker is also responsible for the hosting and foster care program, consults with the community child and youth care team, provides staff supervision and manages the relief worker program, while handling the usual social work administrative tasks.

The social worker is an integral part of the child and youth care team, who brings a different and useful perspective to residential child and youth care, and contributing to the multidisciplinary nature of the team. ■



We talk to **Mark Gamble** of Educo Africa about the impact of the wilderness encounter approach in work with young people at risk

# Rethinking life choices

Educo Africa has a soaring eagle in its logo, appropriate for its mission of helping youngsters to fly free of their past with wider vision.



The organisation gives groups of young people at risk a period in the wilderness to facilitate their self-discovery and development through action learning. Courses include such experiences as rock climbing, abseiling, hiking, arts and crafts, discussion groups, specific team building and leadership challenges, and solitary time for reflection.

## Youth at risk

The special programmes run for troubled youth have a number of important extra elements. Firstly, the Educo staff involved in these programmes include professional child and youth

care workers, who understand and base their work upon ecological and developmental principles.

Secondly, to help with continuity and on-going application of course gains in their lives, the youngsters' own child care staff accompany them on the courses.

Educo has entered into partnerships with a number of existing child care organisations, so that its contribution is integrated into their own work — instead of competing philosophies, a degree of synergy is achieved through shared programmes. The partnerships are with children's homes, a reform school and a street children's project.

## Working models

The child and youth care link makes available to the staff team a range of theory and practice models that are familiar to those working with the young people in the longer term. One model which has proved useful is the Circle of Courage (Brendtro et al) which promotes self-esteem along the four continua of belonging (through significant relationships), mastery (through grow-

ing competence), generosity (through building values) and independence (through giving opportunities for self-reliance and responsibility).

## Portability

One of the concerns of the Educo staff is that the learning done by youngsters on the wilderness experience can be carried over into their own lives back home. This is often accomplished through the insights and skills which are gained on a course. A youth may return to life circumstances which are unchanged — but the youth with improved self-esteem, trust and competence is certainly not the same.

Another way to "export" the gains of the course is to set about defining the working concepts of wilderness encounter so that these can be passed on to colleagues in the child and youth care field. What exactly makes this experience effective? What are the specific goals and methods used in this type of learning?

Some valuable insights are emerging from this enquiry, which can be presented to the wider field.

## Methods

Some of the methods currently used include:

*Building team and trust:* the activities encourage people to take a risk and find new levels of confidence in trusting and working with others. This includes communication, problem solving and group skills.

*Conflict resolution:* Teaching skills in finding common ground with others while maintaining one's own sense of integrity.

*Wilderness skills:* Basic training includes fire-building, low





**Participants leave behind many of their routines, habits and support systems — including, for example, a possibly negative peer support group — and must rediscover their personal resources and responsibilities.**

impact bushveld travel, hazards, navigation.

*Environment:* Attuning the senses to the diversity and mystery of the natural world — rekindling our oneness with and our responsibility for the earth.



*Community building:* Empowering individuals to discover their own value and ability who then contribute naturally to others around them. Group skills and listening skills are included.

*Personal presentation:* The ability to present oneself with confidence before others.

*Service project:* Contribution to others through a sound work ethic draws on the youths' teamwork, co-operation, selflessness and discipline.

*Mountain backpacking:* The hiking trip is the heart of the encounter, an integration for each individual of risk, teamwork, responsibility and effort.

*Mission statements:* Individuals are helped to translate the Educo experience into future goals and planning for their own lives.

*Story-telling:* An almost lost art which is effective in conveying timeless messages to people — and also to encourage personal story-telling in a safe and nurturing human environment.

*Graduation:* A "rite of passage" to end the course, when each participant is acknowledged and honoured by the staff.

#### **Why does it work?**

Any practice research exercise will want to discover why a particular approach works. This helps us to build a conceptual framework for what we are doing — and also allows for our work to be replicated by others in analogous situations.

A number of hypotheses have been proposed for success in this work. Having to function in an unknown environment is an important aspect. On a wilderness course, participants leave behind many of their routines, habits and support systems — including, for example, a possibly negative peer support group — and must rediscover their personal resources and responsibilities.

They also leave at home their established roles and find themselves relating to others in different relationships. The experience of community is consciously built in a number of ways: while at first interdependence is demonstrated, personal skills are devel-

oped so that the individual acquires an ability to contribute — and so is valued accordingly.

Appropriate challenge and risk have always been central to the wilderness encounter. Its early proponents tried to change the "Do I *have* to do this?" of the bored and disinclined youth to the more positive question "Can I do this?" And this transformation takes place in a positive and supportive human context which conveys belief in the individual while offering the opportunity to relate to positive adult role models.

There is a lot here for all of us to learn as we go through the current process of developing new and valid models in the transformation of the child and youth care system in South Africa.

**Enquiries:** You can contact Mark Gamble on (021) 761-8939, fax (021) 797-5292 or e-mail [educ@iafrica.com](mailto:educ@iafrica.com)







**Vuyi Mbele collects some helpful points for both staff and children**

# Helping children and youth build self-esteem

## How to build self-esteem

**1. Stop criticising yourself.** If we tell ourselves we are okay no matter what is going on, we can make changes in our lives easily. Our ability to adapt and flow with the process of life is our power.

Those who come from problem homes often become super-responsible and get into the habit of judging themselves unmercifully. They have grown up amidst tension and anxiety, so they feel "there must be something wrong with me." Words often used when scolding yourself are, bad, useless, ugly, worthless, stupid, dirty, etc. When we feel we are not good enough, we tend to find ways which will confirm this and thus keep ourselves miserable.

**2. Believe that you are special** and learn to be who you are. Many of us terrorize ourselves with negative thoughts and make situations worse than they are. We take small problems and make them big monsters.

**3. Be positive about yourself.** Whenever you feel frightened, unhappy or rejected, say something good about yourself — and believe in it. It takes practice to push away your negative thoughts.

**4. Be gentle and patient with yourself.** We all make mistakes in life. Our mistakes should be our stepping stones. Criticism breaks down the inner spirit and praise builds it up. Keep on telling yourself that you are okay and that every day is a new day. We also need to build our patience and stop expecting immediate gratification.

**5. The need to be over-dependent on others must be broken.** Believe in yourself. You know yourself better than any other person, especially your strengths and weaknesses.

## Becoming more confident

**1. There is always hope that your life can change,** because you have the potential to learn new things. The possibility for learning lasts from birth till death, and at any point in a person's life he can begin to feel better about himself. Knowing that change is possible, and wanting to change, are two important steps.

**2. Be prepared to practise.** Become less dependent on the opinions of others. Take a look at yourself, and determine what *you* think and not what others think.

**3. Positive thinking can change your reality;** confident people perform better.

**4. Learn to accept failure.** That frees you from the fear of taking risks. Don't punish yourself for making a mistake. If you are willing to learn and grow from that mistake, then it serves as a step forward in your life. A mistake or failure is a stepping stone.

## How we can help

**1. Offer unconditional love and support.** Children and youth need to sense that they are being loved all the time, not only when they have been good. When young people feel rejected by their peers, our support and encouragement can counterbalance their feeling that no one cares.

**2. Give praise daily.** Try to find one good thing to affirm.

**3. Never compare the child with another.** If a child senses that you are disappointed with his/her performance, self-esteem is lowered.

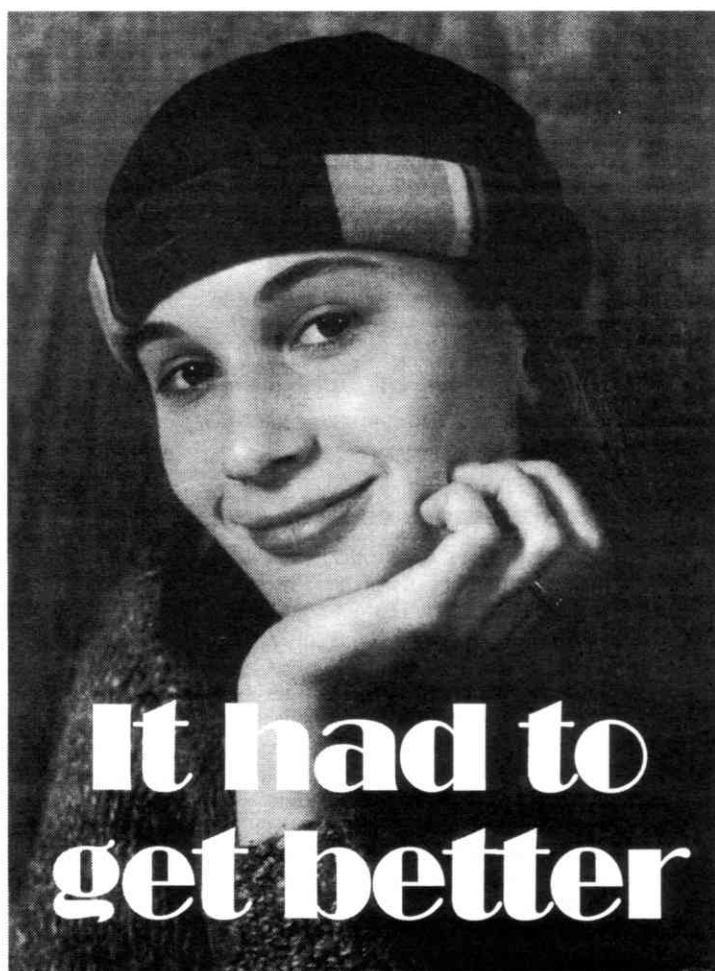
**4. Help children and youth feel that they are valuable** and important because of who they are and not what they do. Encourage them to develop skills or hobbies that they enjoys — this gives them a feeling of accomplishment.

**5. Banish putdowns.** Make a group pledge not to criticise each other. Put-downs must be balanced with positive affirmation. When a child says he can't do anything right, allow him to name at least two things he can do well — or you or another group member can volunteer to help.

**6. Give a child enough space to make bad choices** and to learn from them, without saying "I told you so." Over-protectiveness may backfire horribly.

**7. Encourage children and youth to develop decision making skills,** and a sense of self-identity so that they will be free to explore and to fully experience the world around him. ■





*Many youth with horrific childhoods need a number of years of independence in order to gradually learn how to put their lives back together. This account by a psychiatric nurse demonstrates the time it took her to overcome years of abuse, neglect, and failure in her childhood and adolescence. She attributes her own healing to "patience," by which she means that it takes time for growth in problem-solving abilities. The author questions the common assumption that present problems will last forever, and she challenges professionals who convey messages of sarcasm and distaste to troubled youth. Hollar believes that, even if we can't change the painful environment of children, we must invest in them and teach the perspective of patience — a simple but powerful belief that things will get better.*

I cannot remember ever being praised, hugged, or told I was loved as a child. At age 12, I was taken from the only environment I'd ever known and placed in what appeared to be a sterile, hostile situation. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania took custody of me, and I was sent to what I perceived to

be an orphanage — Scotland School for Veterans' Children. I felt like I'd been thrown away. It seemed as if my life had ended, because I was sent away from my parents and separated from my eight siblings. In a sense, I became autistic — mute, using gestures, and hiding in closets, under beds, and in any other dark sanctuary I could find. During my adjustment period at the school, I attempted starvation by only allowing liquids pre-poured at each meal by the matron. I wouldn't and didn't ask for anything else, and, for a period of weeks, I was on a liquid diet. In retrospect, it is interesting to realize that, once people ceased to prompt and encourage, I began to take food when the dishes were passed.

#### Escape

The only place I thrived was in the library, where I read books to escape the reality of my pain. I also searched psychology books in an attempt to discover if I was really as bad as I felt I must be. I did not understand what I had done to deserve this separation from my home. By the age of 15, I was a Satanist. I believed God had abandoned me, and I wondered

if he even existed. I couldn't quite grasp this concept because I had been baptized at age 10. If God had let me down, maybe Satan would take me. This is how dark and empty my soul felt. I was spiritually bankrupt for years, choosing bad relationships and consuming alcohol.

I know now the reasons I was taken from my world as I knew it: I lived with violence, perpetration, and unpredictability. My father was an alcoholic. My mother had her own strange sense of values — she was both a devout Christian and a harlot. In spite of their character flaws, my parents also had positive attributes: My father had a natural gift for healing and an uncanny sixth sense, and my mother had a great passion for music, books, and writing. Accordion music in the autumn still makes my heart ache.

#### Patience

I owe my survival to patience. At the age of 16, I was doing more scheming than planning — I hoped to run away the following summer. I knew the school would come after me because I was under age, unless I could get far enough away to increase the difficulty and decrease the probability of being caught. That summer I went to California as planned with my younger sister and her much older boyfriend. I came home in time for my senior year of school, scared and pregnant. I was kicked out of the school. I kept the baby.

Over the next 20 years, I used patience and planning. I wasn't aware that this was called goal setting. Unfortunately, during my patient periods I drank a lot. By the time I was 28, I had decided my life did not have to run parallel to those of my parents. I had gotten my GED years earlier on the pretence of joining the Navy. I entered a vocational school and became a licensed practical nurse, then started nursing school to get my registered nurse license the following year. After some formal education and therapy, I was able to rid myself of the bitterness I'd held in me all those years. I can look back on my life with an open heart and mind and try to build on the positive aspects of my parents. In the meantime, I took care of

a house and three children. To my surprise, I was nominated for Phi Theta Kappa in my college freshman year. What made this so surprising is that my high school classmates had voted me least likely to do anything after school. This honour frightened me because I did not feel confident that I could maintain the expectations of the standards. I held a 3.0 average, however, which is all that was expected. If it hadn't been for being placed in a structured environment, as much as I hated it at the time, I probably would not have survived. I now realize structure was something that I needed and had not found in the previous home environment in which I had lived.

#### Kids on the edge

I have worked with kids on the edge for 10 years. Many of them have been in the facility where I work as free or Medicaid patients. I've heard many colleagues express sarcasm and distaste for these children who so desperately need help. I choose to look at them as an investment of my tax dollars. I enjoy good returns on these "investments" just as parents would hope their child did well in college. In an effort to help children at risk, I would encourage parents and practitioners to listen actively to children. If they ask questions, answer them honestly. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know but maybe we can find the answer together." Don't be critical of children and don't put conditions on any relationship. Boundaries are one thing, but conditions say "I only love you if ...". Be willing to compromise. It gives youth some control and enables them to learn to make choices. Search to establish some common ground. This allows them to know you heard something they said, and the chance that they will come back to you is increased.

Even in the face of problems, I support the positive aspects of each child or adolescent by communicating the following basic message: "I've never met a kid I didn't like." There's no such thing as a bad kid, but there is socially unacceptable behaviour, which can be changed. When these children make progress I say, "I knew you could do it." A child who feels different doesn't have to feel like a misfit. Different can be beautiful. As adults we need to develop our own uniqueness and style. Our words and actions communicate whether we respect the child as a person. I tell the child who has been abused: "You don't have to continue to be a victim. You have the power to change this. It's bound to get better."

#### Living skills

Kids are our future. If we do not invest in them, none of us should expect our

own futures to be safe. Our children deserve more than just survival skills — they deserve safe and healthy living skills. A society that continues to victimise its own offspring is acting counter to the principles of survival. As we annihilate, assassinate and abandon our own children, we abandon our future.

As a survivor, I feel that I have made it in spite of, and also because of, the years I have spent trying to answer the question "Why me?" I've learned to accept "Why not me?" I never knew how

exhilarating competition could be.

**Audrey Hollar** is a registered nurse certified in psychiatric mental health nursing. She works in a co-educational residential treatment centre at Charter Behavioural Health Systems in Leesburg, Virginia.

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BOYS TOWNS SA

## CHILD CARE WORKER

The ideal applicant will:

- Be in possession of a Matric Certificate and/or Child Care qualification
- Have experience in residential child care / or related work
- Have a desire to work with youth
- Possess a driver's licence
- Be able to work under stress
- Be prepared to live-in or out
- Be over 25 years
- Preferably have no more than two dependent children (for live-in option)

**Benefits include: Medical Aid, Pension Fund, Generous Leave, Competitive Salary.**

Interested persons can send applications to: Fax (021) 8571168 or post to: The Principal, P O Box 32, Macassar 7134

#### SITUATION WANTED

### Child Care Worker

I have been a volunteer child care worker at St. Vincent's Childrens' Home for two years and now require a permanent position as a child care worker. I am a matriculated 24 year old female and am at present busy completing the Basic Qualification in Child Care.

Please contact Ntombizodwa Remegia Mjwara on (031) 700-2054.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT

### Diploma in Child Care Administration

Due to the current work being undertaken on the revision of the curriculum and the updating of the material for this course, there will be no intake of new first year students in 1998. The second year course will be offered without interruption to those who were enrolled as first year students in 1997.

All DCCA students who have courses or practica to complete are invited to use this opportunity during 1998 to complete the programme. The Course Co-ordinator will be available to students for this purpose.

Enquiries to Brian Gannon  
P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735  
Telephone (021) 788-3610  
e-mail: pretext@iafrica.com

# DCCA

Training for leaders in the field

# News Bites

*So much is happening in the field; so little news seems to trickle down to the people in the front line. A summary of what's doing in child and youth care.*

## Funding alarm

On the 19th November institutions and other agencies in the Eastern Cape were told that their subsidies were to be cut by 42%! A day later it seemed that the cut would only be of the order of 10% in this province with acute funding problems. Nevertheless this is bad news, and demonstrates the vulnerability of child care services — and possible variations between provinces.

## PAS gone — now CORE

After many months of debate and negotiation about a Personnel Administration Standard for our profession, the whole PAS concept has been replaced by CORE — a "Code of Remuneration". This is meant to give provinces more flexibility in defining internal job descriptions and skills levels for specific posts. The state will define social welfare professionals in terms of the "work outputs" which it expects for certain levels of work.

## Registration

The subject of registration of child and youth care workers passes back to the professionals responsible. The Social Work Council has considered widening its structures to include all social welfare professionals, and the NACCW which at present registers child and youth care workers has expressed interest in linking in with this process. Others involved include probation officers, youth workers and mediators.

## Training

The NACCW has had a busy and productive year. In addition to maintaining all of its basic training courses in all centres, it has started important training in deep rural areas, and has prepared the new Basic Qualification in Secure Care for these new facilities being established.

The Association is also involved in the exciting move of child care training to the Technikons where a Certificate Course will be starting in August 1998, with a three-year Diploma and a four-year B.Tech degree following on. Students who have completed the UNISA

Certificate course will, for example, be able to start the B.Tech degree in third year.

## Special Needs in Education

The NACCW has provided input into the National Committee for Education Support Services. As the Education Departments have been applying their own new paradigm, so NACCW has been able to speak up for children in care and youth at risk, and their needs in the school situation. The end product will be a draft report from the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training on *Overcoming Barriers to Learning and Development*.

## IMC REPORT-BACK

### Policy Document

Based on the input from people in the field, the Policy Document is to be reviewed in December this year, and will be placed before the Cabinet again early in the new year.

A Ministers' meeting on 17 November was aware that progress was slow, particularly in view of the May 1998 deadline regarding children in prison. However all provinces have been working to put teams in place.

### Transformation — GO

A programme to pilot the implementation of the transformation process at a provincial level, entitled *Project Go*, has been launched in the Western Cape. A steering committee met on the 19th November with the participation of the Education, Welfare and Justice departments, NGOs, and child and family welfare and residential care organisations. Project Go will be training trainers for such tasks as assessment to assist in the appropriate placement of children. A manager for the project has been appointed and a venue set up.

### Minimum standards

As promised, the Minimum Standards documentation, which will include practice guidelines and quality assurance frameworks, will be available to the field early in December. (See box).

*Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk*

### Minimum Standards

If you would like a copy of the draft *Minimum Standards* document, please telephone Heleen van Heerden on 012-312-7720 from Friday 5 December.

## Funding

We all wait with baited breath to see what will happen about the new subsidy system for child and youth care. The IMC, however, is anxious to support any organisation which seeks to assist in the transformation process within the IMC's policy and principles. The IMC wishes to invite organisations to discuss their ideas and to submit business plans, and if approved will offer support in the form of whatever training is needed for new service developments, and also recommendations to certain major funders (who have already expressed interest) for specific support. The idea has been approved in concept, and more detail will be available soon.

## May 1998 deadline

In the mean time another date looms closer on the horizon for all of us in child care. Section 29 of the Correctional Services Act was amended in 1994 (and the President signed an order which brought the amended section into force on 5 May 1995) whereby some 700 children were released from prison — into a largely unprepared child and youth care service, thus provoking something of a crisis which led in turn to the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk. It is well known that on-going problems regarding the management of young people in trouble with the law led to yet another change to Section 29 on 10 May 1996, allowing for the holding in prison of children over 14 and under 18 while awaiting trial on serious offences. A time limit was contained within this legislation, namely that this provision would expire after one year, but the period could be extended by at most one further year. This means that by May 1998 the child care system must again be in a position to work with these difficult youth.

## Information

Following on dissatisfaction with the dissemination of information to all on the practice level, both administrators and on-line workers, as from January 1998 much more space in this journal will be allocated to keeping everyone better informed.

This will apply to progress at IMC level on the transformation of the child and youth care system as a whole, and for this purpose Child & Youth Care has set up a regular interview with the IMC management.

This better information service will apply also to developments within the NACCW itself — national and regional.





## Open Democracy Bill

We the undersigned organisations, following a consultative meeting called by the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), have found the present version Open Democracy Bill, which is meant to give effect to citizens' right of access to information, to be seriously deficient and flawed. The Bill fails to clarify the right of access to information as contained in the Constitution, while also falling short of the actual Constitutional clause calling for the promulgation of this legislation.

We have found too that the Bill detracts largely from the spirit and purpose of the recommendations of the government-appointed Task Group responsible for drafting this legislation. The Bill has also been seriously watered down by government resulting in the current Bill providing an alarmingly diminished right of access to information.

### *The changes include:*

- The scrapping of the entire section granting citizens access to important government meetings;
- A change in the definition of a private body subject to the ODB provisions resulting in access to information held by the private sector being limited to private information;
- The scrapping of a specially constituted Open Democracy Commission to oversee the implementation of the Bill (the function has been handed over to the Human Rights Commission in the absence of assurances of dedicated funding for this task);
- The scrapping of specially constituted Information Courts to facilitate the judicial route citizens may follow in the event of non-disclosure of information (citizens will now have to resort to the the Supreme Court);

In view of this, we urgently call on government to account for this serious departure from the original recommendations and to advance reasons for the substantial changes that have been made to previous drafts of the Bill, which enjoyed substantial public input and support. Recognising that the ODB is the single most important piece of legislation that will give effect not only to citizens' right of access to information, but also to open, accountable and participatory governance, we call on members of civil society, including the media, to urgently examine the ODB with a view of ensuring that the Bill does not fail to secure our Constitutional rights fully. We further call on civil society, as a matter of urgency, to forward comments in this regard to the Office of the Deputy President before November 30.

**ISSUED BY:** Freedom of Expression Institute, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Ceasefire Campaign, Jewish Board of Deputies, South African National NGO Coalition, South African Democratic Teachers Union, South African Students Press Union, National Community Media Forum.

Enquiries: (011) 403-8403 or 082-9202264.  
E-mail: [fxi@wn.apc.org](mailto:fxi@wn.apc.org) <http://wn.apc.org/fxi/>

## Western Cape Region



*Child care people in the Western Cape Region took a few hours off on November 11 for a games morning and a braai. Regional Chairperson Michael Gaffley (top picture, left) changed roles for the occasion and became Chief Cook while everyone else (bottom picture) had fun!*

**The Department of Primary Health Care  
Faculty of Health Sciences  
Medical School, University of Cape Town**

### **Field Studies Tutors for 1998 (14 sessions)**

The field studies programme forms an important part of the Health and Society course, an interdisciplinary course for first year students registered for Medicine, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy. In examining various matters related to health care in South Africa, the programme provides students with an opportunity to develop a better understanding of the real needs and problems affecting health care. This is done by involving students in two research projects concerning communities in the Cape Peninsula.

The primary duties of a tutor will be to • supervise a group of 16 students • mark their groups' written project work • set and mark two examination questions.

Recommended qualifications are an Honours Degree in Social Work or relevant professional accreditation and at least five years' experience in a related field. Tutors should be fluent in English with an ability to work with academically confident university students.

Tutors will work with their student group on fourteen afternoons between April and October, and will attend a number of preparation seminars at the Medical School. Payment will be in accordance with the protocol laid down by the University's Staffing Committee. Incidental costs incurred by the tutor (such as work related travel costs) will be paid by the Department.

**To apply please send curriculum vitae to G.S.Weir, Department of Primary Health Care, Lower Ground Floor, Falmouth Building, Medical School, UCT, Observatory 7925**

# Shining a light on the problem

The recent international conference on the commercial sexual exploitation of children is an accomplishment in its own right. Never before have governments and activists gathered to discuss the issue and what they should do about it. But the opening of the so-called World Congress held in Stockholm carried little sense of satisfaction. Recent events in Belgium — where 10 people have so far been charged with crimes related to the abduction, sexual abuse, and murder of young girls — have demonstrated the severity of the problem.

"The people of the world, not least those living in Europe, are today horrified and shocked by the most recent example ... the ghastly crimes that lately have been revealed" in Belgium, Prime Minister Goran Persson of Sweden told about 1,000 delegates from 130 countries. At the same time, the copious media coverage of the Belgian situation is helping to serve one of the major aims of the advocates and officials who gathered in Sweden. In the words of Carol Bellamy, executive director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF): "We must shine light on the problem."

## A million children

The conference, primarily organized by UNICEF, the Swedish government, and a Bangkok based advocacy group called End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT), was part of a rising level of public and governmental awareness of the sexual exploitation of young people. Some two dozen governments, including Canada and Germany but not the United States, were represented in Stockholm by cabinet members.

Ms. Bellamy's organization calculates that in Asia alone, one

million children a year are forced, deceived, or lured into sexual exploitation. Other estimates suggest that hundreds of thousands of children in other parts of the world are also affected.

The statistics cited in discussions of the sexual exploitation of children are rough estimates at best, but many advocates say the numbers are rising. The criminal organizations that profit from the child sex trade seem to be expanding their operations, as shown by increasing numbers of women and children being "trafficked" from place to place for sexual exploitation. The fear of AIDS is also increasing the demand for child prostitutes, since men in many countries mistakenly believe that sex with a young prostitute is less likely to lead to infection.



## New viewpoints, new efforts

Conference organizers say they hope to broaden co-operation between public officials such as police officers and members of non governmental organizations concerned with children's issues. Government delegations are also expected to sign documents pledging new efforts to keep children from being drawn into sexual exploitation and to help those who are already involved.

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a complex phenomenon. The most notorious manifestations of the problem are the activities of pedophiles, adults who have a sexual desire for children. But child advocates caution that

pedophiles are not the primary sexual abusers of children; most "exploiters" are brothel patrons who want a young partner or those who don't care how old their partner is. "In the big scheme of things, the pedophile market is only a small part of the child sex trade," says Christine Beddoe, a spokeswoman for ECPAT. Similarly, the role of the "sex tourist" is overemphasized, Ms. Beddoe and other analysts say.

## Economic factors

Most sexual exploiters of children are men of their own nationality. In many developing countries, children are sent into the sex industry to earn money, since prostitution in the short term tends to be more lucrative than just about any other type of labour. And all over the world, children who live on the streets often turn to prostitution or are lured into sexual exploitation as a way to survive. There are other economic factors as well. Ron O'Grady, the international co-ordinator of ECPAT, yesterday decried the trend toward economic globalization. "When global values are determined by television and commercial market forces, children and young women end up becoming commodities to be bought and sold," he said at the meeting.

But some experts say that economics is overemphasized as a cause of child sexual exploitation, noting that large numbers of poor people never send their children into the sex industry. These activists want to focus on the role that criminal organizations play in drawing children into prostitution and on the social values that allow child sexual exploitation to exist in the first place.

UNICEF director Bellamy noted that children who are sexually abused in the home are more likely to end up in prostitution.



"If we want to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children we must combat it in the private as well as in the public sphere," she said, drawing spontaneous applause from delegates. One of the most important tasks which faced the Stockholm delegates was figuring out what they are talking about. There is some disagreement, for instance, on what a child is. The UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child says it is a person under 18, except where the age of legal adulthood is lower. Some countries place the age of sexual consent at 14.

The nature of exploitation ranges from the use of children in pornography, to the prostitution of young girls in brothels, to the seduction of local children for money at certain resorts around the world.

Swedish Premier Persson urged the delegates to "reach a common definition of the scope of the problem." Then, he added, "we must go from words to deeds."

In turning promises into action, the Stockholm delegates may have had an advantage over those who have attended some of the UN's recent conferences on global issues. The World Congress was an unusual collaborative effort between a private advocacy group (ECPAT), a government (Sweden), and a multilateral organization (UNICEF).

Perhaps as a result, there seemed to be less controversy over the documents that this Congress would produce, a declaration and an "agenda for action." Instead, there was great emphasis on the sharing of technical information — such as investigation techniques, legal reforms, and research — between government representatives and those from private groups. That left less time for the speeches and political manoeuvring of individual nations.

**Cameron Barr**, writing in *The Monitor*

# Child & Youth Care

## Index for Volume 15

- Administration No.1,8; 2,6; 2,15; 3,16; 4,14; 10,11
- Adolescence No.4,12; 5,4; 5,12; 7,11
- Adventure No. 4,4; 11,11
- Africa Watch No.5,16; 6,9; 7,8
- Aggression No. 10,14
- Ainsworth, Frank and Small, Richard No.8,16
- Anderson, Rod No. 3,18
- Attitudes No. 7,10
- Banoub-Baddour, Suzan and Latyea, Maureen No. 9,4
- Books, No. 3,4; 4,6
- Brennan, Patrick No.2,17
- Brown, Waln, No. 2,12
- Bullying No. 10,4; 11,6
- Child Labour No.1,17
- Child Abuse No.3,6; 5,12; 11,18
- Child Care Workers No.6,19; 11,10
- Cockburn, A No.11,4
- Conference No.7,4
- Couture, Denise No. 6,6
- Creating Positive Moments No.1,20; 2,4; 5,9; 7,16
- Cultures No. 6,15; 9,4
- DeBord, Karen and Gore, Marilyn No.7,11
- Department No. 3,12
- Dimotoff, Lynn No. 2,19
- Donohue, E. No. 5,9
- Drugs No.1,7
- Elliott, Michele No. 10,4
- Ewing, Deborah No.3,7
- Families No. 2,19
- Fraser-Moleketi, Minister Geraldine No. 7,4
- Gamble, Mark No. 4, 4; 7,20; 11,11
- Gannon, Brian No. 1, 6&20; 2,4&15; 5,9; 7,16; 10,12; 11,8 and 20
- Gardener, Marilyn No. 2,7
- Garfat, Thom No.3,4
- van Weezel, Gualtherie Lies No. 8,12
- Health Care 10,17
- HIV Programmes No. 9,8; 10,7
- IMC Report-Back No 10,20; 11,16
- Innes, Melissa No.7,10
- Irmsher, Karen No. 3,16
- Jackson, Alan No. 2,9; 3,14; 5,12
- Jacobs, Don Trent No. 6,16
- Kellen, Liebe No. 7,15
- Klose, Robert No.4,20
- Konopka, Gisela No. 5,4; 5,12
- Korczak, Janusz No.6,4
- Legislation No. 4,7; 9,12
- Loss No. 2,14; 4,19
- Loudon, Mark No. 9,8; 10,7
- Marks, Alexandra No. 4,12
- Matloff, Judith No. 5,16
- Mattingly Martha No. 10,18
- Mbele, V. No.11,13
- McBride, Eileen No. 6,15
- Meador, Amari No. 2,14
- Moytiuk, Michele No.6,7
- Muscott, Howard 10,14
- Musick, Jamine No. 5,20
- Naidoo, Dolly No.8,10
- Ness, Arlin No. 3,4
- Offenders No. 5,17; 7,10; 7,20
- Orr, David No. 6,9
- Paul, Marla 7,19
- Pillay, Visanti No.5,12
- Practice No. 2, 12; 3,4; 3,18; 4,16; 5,6; 6,4; 6,16; 7,17; 8,12; 8,16; 11,7
- Programmes No. 1,4; 4,18; 5,14; 8,4; 8,6; 8,10; 8,14
- Ramsden, Noreen No.4,18
- Roles and Tasks No. 2,7
- Samakosky, Sydney No. 8,6
- Samjee, Sabitha No. 7,7
- Schmidt No. 5,17
- Scott, Kathy No. 8,4
- Sexual harassment No. 6,6
- Street Children No. 1,14; 7,15; 9,14; 11,4
- Students Report No. 1,13
- Supervision No. 9,16
- The Profession No 10,18
- The Regions No. 7,7; 10,11
- Tiberghien, Susan No. 9,15
- Training No. 2,17
- van Eeden, Karen No.1, 10
- Varenhorst, Barbara No. 5,14
- Vos, Dr M.S. No. 3,12
- Waldijk, Kees No. 6,4; 8,12
- Walters, Laurel No.8,14
- Welfare Funding No. 8,8
- Welfare Policy No. 2,9; 3,14
- Wood, Cecil No. 4,16
- Youth Justice No.1,10; 6,7





**Do I acknowledge your growth and change?** Do I secretly keep you categorised as "troubled", incapable, anti-social, or do I notice and applaud your movement and success towards greater maturity and competence? Do I recognise your changing status from struggling to coping, your changing role from helpee to helper, and your growth from child to adolescent to young adult? Do I notice your strengths — and in particular watch out for new and emerging strengths?

**Do I model for you good values?** Do I simply demand from you acceptable behaviour, or do my actions towards you reflect kindness, respect and encouragement? Do my actions match my words, so that I model integrity and honesty? Which of my attitudes and styles will you act out in your relationships with others in your life?

# New year's resolution: Practice excellence?

What are you planning for your career and your practice for 1998? Whatever other plans you make, include these basic skills of keeping in close touch with the children and youth in your programme.

Practice excellence. The phrase seems to imply the work of super-professionals, far removed from us ordinary child care workers who work in modest circumstances with youngsters who have messed up. "When I get to the end of a day with my group of kids," says one worker, "how hard it is to look back and see what I did as 'practice excellence'!"

Probably we are being too hard on ourselves when we think like this. Nobody expects a place of hurting, anxious and troubled kids to look peaceful and organised. In fact, one of the qualities of good child care workers is the ability to think on their feet — to suss out the situation in their group moment by moment, and to act in response to this kid's needs now. Such work will always look somewhat fragmented and spontaneous.

What makes for practice excellence is when these "surface phenomena" — the ripples and waves and storms of our work — are grounded upon a strong undercurrent of attitudes and knowledge which keep us facing in the right direction.

As you think of your resolution for 1998, check out the following questions. They are simple and profound. And they have a lot to do with practice excellence.

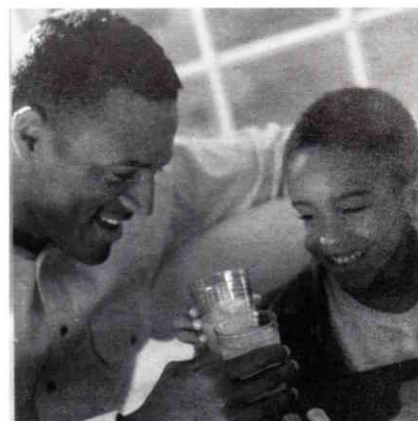
**Do I convey welcome?** Am I pleased to see you? The needy and grasping child often draws out exactly the opposite feeling from us, and so will go on being needy and anxious, and tomorrow will need even more from us. Instead of keeping people at arms length, or even intimidating them with my "don't cross this line" message, can I give this child — all children — the gift of welcome, inclusion, belonging, so that they feel comfortable with me?

**Do I try to keep you functioning?** Instead of labelling you as "dysfunctional", or making excuses for your non-functioning — or simply grounding you so that you cannot function — do I show you the way back up to where you were, do I suggest to you the next step, encourage you to try again — get you past the hurdle that I know is hard for you so that you can get going again? And then rejoice with you when you find once more that you can make it?

**Do I help you maintain your balance between skills and responsibility?**

When you don't manage, instead of criticising do I take the trouble to show you how and teach you how? And when you have learned how, do I give you a shot at trying it for yourself?

**Do I, in my dealings with you, offer what you would expect from an ordinary loving parent?** Do I give you the feeling that, no matter what, you are a loved child and significant to me? Urie Bronfenbrenner suggested that every child needs at least one adult who offers irrational love, "who is crazy about him." Otherwise you will walk an anxious tightrope all the time fearing that one mistake will equal rejection.



With warm greetings for the holiday season from the Editorial Board of this journal.