

Hlokomelo ya bana le baswa: Ke mogomo
wa bao ba dirago ka bana le baswa bao
ba tshwenyegilego, ba ka welago kotsing.

Child & Youth Care

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A Journal for those who work with troubled children and youth at risk





EDITORIAL

Check your Buzz

The Home's social worker was an outspoken and fearless advocate for children and youth. She defended their rights with a passion. She fought for their dignity and respect. My approach was to develop systems. If you had a good system and adhered to it, the system would be therapeutic in itself. Children develop in a well researched, properly applied system — so I thought! We clashed. Her advocacy and urgency gave her all the qualities of my most difficult person. She once said to me, with an insistence bordering on hysteria "Forget about your systems, listen to the **dynamic**". What in heaven's name is the *dynamic*? It took an odd incident to make the meaning clear. I shared a railway compartment with a young military policeman accompanying an AWOL soldier back to headquarters. He was attracted to a young lady two compartments down the carriage. At every station through-

out the nighttime journey they would stick their heads out of the window. He would then yell "Check the buzz on this station!" It was right – each station had it's very own unique tone, buzz, dare I say *dynamic*. This is what our social worker wanted of me – to check the buzz of our facility for children and youth. To get tuned-in to the special and particular climate in the interactions among the people there. To get a feel of what was really going on among children, youth, among staff members. When I got back I saw it through different eyes, heard with different ears. She was right. The dynamic was not useful or helpful. It was spiked with covert threats, subtle power play and innuendo. On the surface it looked good. Underneath, the values had not changed. The old controlling style lurked just below a veneer, masked also by adherence to the new system. What the children and youth were doing in all this was to reflect through their behaviour –

not the sham on the surface but the naked unmasked values underneath. Nothing had transformed at all. For transformation to happen someone had to break the cycle of backbiting, game playing, camouflaged sniping, disguised muscle flexing and defensive put-downs and create a transformed **tone**. Within the new system we needed a new dynamic. A genuine change to a new style, a really sincere respect, open unselfish caring, putting the interests of the other person first, a deep down internalised shift in attitude and **values** – a transformed buzz – and it had to begin with me listening to my own dynamic. When methods people and values people work in the same system, when real professionalism is called for, when you're under pressure from difficult people – are you transformed – what is your buzz?

Barrie Lodge

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NACCW

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Working Developmentally with Juvenile Initiators of Child Sexual Offences

Dr. V. Lyell and L. Lamprecht

This paper, presented at the NACCW Biennial Conference, dealt with the individual and group based treatment themes, relapse prevention and the value of using the disempowerment model.

Introduction

This paper will explore the issues around adolescent offenders of sexual abuse. It will explore the young adolescents whom none of us want to be seen labelled with pejorative terms like "sex offender" and yet these are children whose behaviour can be defined by these terms. These are not children out to explore the wonders of the human body. They seldom are old enough to engage in legally consensual sexual relationships, yet their behaviour can involve force, coercion, intimidation and secrecy. Their victims, whose participation is usually obtained through threats, bribery and trickery, are younger, smaller and in some way disadvantaged in relation to themselves.

Families often minimise concern through disbelief and fear of opening the family up to professional scrutiny. A problem is that a young person may start off with an isolated incident, but left unchallenged and untreated, their behaviour can escalate into

a regular cycle of abuse.

There has been a strong inclination to deny or minimise the extent of such behaviour as being less serious or traumatic than sexual contact between an adult and a child (Davis & Leitenberg, 1987). This assumption is grossly inaccurate and untrue. Any sexual offence is traumatic and is a violation of the victim's emotional and physical space.

Definitions

For the purposes of this paper we will be using male gender descriptions which is not discounting the occurrence of female offenders.

A juvenile offender is someone who falls between the age of 12 and 19 years of age and has:

- Acted in a sexual way with another child (usually younger)
- Used force or coercion in order to obtain the participation of the other child, or the victim was too young to realise s/he was being violated and

did not resist the behaviour (coercion can be defined as: verbal cajoling, threats, enticements and bribes.)

Reasons for Offending

An analogy can be drawn between alcoholics and sex offenders. Alcoholics do not simply drink out of thirst, but a wide range of psychological problems. Similarly, sexual offenders do not commit sexual offences because they are desperate for sex, but rather use exploitative sex to meet a wide variety of emotional needs (Perry and Orchard, 1992).

Furthermore, the adolescent who was abused and neglected may seek revenge on substitute targets. Parental rejection may lower the child's self-esteem and the offence may be motivated by a need to restore self-worth. Parental rejection may also contribute to the fear of being rejected by his peer group or a fear of close or intimate relationships. Not knowing how to achieve in-





timacy may spark off abuse with younger children in an attempt to achieve the desired intimacy.

Assessment & Treatment Issues

The rationale for early intervention is to treat, disrupt and prevent the sexually abusive problem from becoming a compulsive problem. Treatment according to Sermabeillan & Martinez, 1994 is aimed at:

- managing and controlling the deviant sexual behaviour
- developing pro-social thinking
- encourage taking responsibility for the offending behaviour
- improving decision-making skills.

Group Work

Group work is essential as it capitalises on peer orientation, which is important to adolescents, and places them in a group where social training occurs. Inclusion in a peer group addresses the social isolation, shame, secrecy and communication difficulties which are such an integral part of the abusive life style pattern. It is advisable to use both male and female therapists so that the adolescent can learn to model his behaviour on the male therapist and learn to identify and communicate with the female therapist. The male therapist should not act as the

senior partner as the adolescents are alert to any indications that the woman is deferring to a man. The group should be open-ended and continuous intake allowed. The desired number per group is eight.

Therapists need to be aware that sex offenders cannot be treated like voluntary, self-motivated clients. A confrontational approach is advisable, in which the offender is constantly challenged to own responsibility for the offending behaviour. The offender needs to address his offending behaviour first, and once insight and understanding has developed with regards to his deviant arousal patterns, interventions can be introduced to treat other issues.

Themes in Therapy

Acceptance of Responsibility

Offenders have a tendency to minimise their offences and externalise blame. Various techniques will help offenders assume responsibility for their offences by increasing their knowledge about the thoughts, feelings and circumstances that precede the sexually assaultive behaviour. Sexual offending is conceived of as the culmination of a series of decisions made by the offender. We teach offenders to interrupt this decision-making process by identifying choices made as precursors to sexual assaults.

Treatment issues, which must be addressed, are:

- Denial, minimisation and projection of blame
- Thinking errors and myths about offending
- Responsibility for admitting to the offences

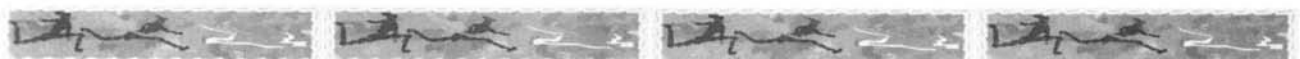
- Eliminating irresponsible decision-making in various areas of functioning (e.g. School)
- Resolution of power and control issues and finding appropriate ways to meet these needs
- Developing awareness of their sense of helplessness and lack of control and how this related to sexual offending.
- Impulsivity and poor judgement
- Sex-role stereotyping

Development of Empathy for Victims

This is crucial in avoiding relapse. To develop empathy they must cease to externalise blame and must connect with the sorrow, regret and self-disgust related to their offence. A particularly powerful approach is to have adult survivors attend group sessions and describe the immediate and long-term effects. Getting offenders to respond to the victim's questions regarding their offence patterns is equally powerful. One approach, which enhances the offenders identification with their victims, is requiring them to refer to their victims by their first names. This humanises the victims, making it more difficult for offenders to distance themselves. Finally, allowing offenders to describe a loss they experienced, (e.g. death, divorce etc.), and link the feelings they experienced, to the experience of loss for the victim of abuse.

Treatment issues:

- Identification and expression of emotions
- Development of good listening skills
- Understanding the negative impact of his abuse on his victims



- Constructing a series of apologies to victims (in the form of a letter in his journal)
- Identification of his emotions prior to, during and after the offences.

Development of a Survival Strategy

The adolescent must understand his offence pattern (ie. The thoughts, feelings and events that precede offences) and develop a survival strategy (relapse prevention) and develop a more healthy lifestyle.

Treatment issues:

- How long have I been planning the event?
- What events took place prior to the event, to trigger the behaviour? (was I sad, angry, lonely etc.)
- Had I masturbated to fantasies of sexual offending?
- How did I choose my victim?
- How did I make sure the victim did not tell?
- How did I feel after the assault?

Another useful tool is to draw the abuse cycle on a flipchart and explain each part of the cycle (SUD Model). Go around the group having each child give examples of how the stages relate to himself. Responses to these questions help the offender understand his offence pattern and plan ways to intervene early in the sequence to prevent repetition.

Treatment issues:

- Seemingly Unimportant Decisions (SUD) that set up the circumstances for the offence (e.g. it's OK to baby-sit the neighbour's children).
- Power and control issues that

lead to the offence.

- Arousal patterns and deviant fantasising.
- Sex-role stereotyping.
- Ability to experience pleasure in non-exploitative activities.

Re-Education with Regard to Sexuality

The purpose is to have offenders discuss their sexual history, experiences, abuse, feelings, attitudes and fantasies. Any programme relating to deviant sexuality must include a component on healthy and functional sexuality for that age group.

Treatment issues:

- Early sexual memories.
- Offenders' victimisation (emotional, physical and sexual).
- Masturbation – explore the onset, frequency, antecedents, fantasy and perceptions about masturbation.
- Dating experiences.
- How does the offender establish a relationship and how does he select a partner.
- Explore fantasies about consensual sexual activities.
- Basic sex education and the functioning of the human body.

Personal Competency

Perpetrators generally lack social skills and experience difficulty in relating to peers.

Treatment issues:

- communication and social skills training
- assertiveness training
- anger management
- stress identification and management
- self esteem enhancement
- conflict resolution

Conclusion

Finally, those who work with youth offenders need the following:

- They need to be comfortable with discussing sex.
- They must be able to feel comfortable with challenging discrepancies, distortions and smoke screens.
- They must be interested in working with the population and be aware of how this population differs from others.
- They should be experienced in interacting with the legal system, writing reports and testifying as expert witnesses.
- They must be aware that this work is stressful and demanding and need to monitor themselves frequently for burnout and attend regular supervision.
- They need to be aware that some offenders will change while others will re-offend and if a re-offence occurs it is not their fault. □



Live-in housemother required for organisation in Johannesburg. Experience will be a recommendation.

Please fax C.V. with contactable references to Y.A.L.E.

Tel: (011) 640-6560 or (011) 337-6396.

On Hanging-out

Thom Garfat “hung-out” with us at this year’s Biennial Conference. On CYC-online Thom (in his usual incisive manner) takes us through the complexities of a seemingly ordinary thing to do ...



When I first started in this field, I was sent out on to the floor to interact with a small group of adolescents who were sitting around the dining room table doing what appeared to my untrained eye to be nothing important. Was I wrong! Years later I learned that they were doing what adolescents did best — they were ‘hanging out’. Now, even more years later, I realize that this is a skill we lose as we get older. We tend to get ‘task orientated’ and think that we always have to be doing something with a specific and concrete objective, in order for our time to be used valuably. So, instead of ‘hanging-out’ we all think we have to be ‘doing something’ — writing a report, conducting an activity or intervening in some specific and defined way with a specific outcome in mind. Somehow ‘hanging-out’ doesn’t seem to fit into a definition of the valuable use of our time. But how wrong we are — or maybe I should just say, ‘how wrong I was’.

Hanging-out is one of the most important — and sometimes most difficult — of youth care activities. Important, because it is one of the ways in which we connect with youth, enter in to a shared realm of experiencing with them, and let them know

that we can be there, just be there, with them. Difficult, because we have come to a point in our cultural definition of things where ‘hanging-out’ is seen as a waste of time. Can you imagine the following exchange between a youth care worker and her supervisor?

Supervisor: Mary, I was watching you out the window this past half hour, and I noticed you were just sitting at the picnic table with the kids. You didn’t seem to be doing anything.

Mary: You’re right. We weren’t doing anything in particular. We were just hanging out.

Supervisor: Well, don’t you think it is important to have the youth doing something?

Mary: Yes. And they were doing something. They were hanging out. So, I decided to join them.

Supervisor: ...

Well, you can imagine the rest of the conversation as Mary tries to convince the supervisor that ‘hanging-out’ is a valid activity. And it is.

When we just hang-out with kids a thousand opportunities arise, such as the opportunity –

- for youth to experience you as a person, not just as a worker
- for you to experience the youth as a person
- to model appropriate boundaries
- to use real daily life events as they arise
- to explore the world of these particular youth
- to be there, to connect and come to understand what is important

Hard work

Now Mary was aware of all this, but her supervisor wasn’t. From the supervisor’s perspective she was just ‘hanging-out’ doing nothing, and he thought there were better things she could be doing with her time. The other thing that Mary knew was that ‘hanging-out’ was hard work. First, of course, she had to integrate herself into the group, so that she was a genuine part of it, albeit with a different role, so that she wasn’t just an outsider looking in or a non-participant. She had to become a part of the group. She had to do so while still maintaining her responsibilities as a youth care worker. This meant that she had to maintain her values, support her own beliefs and not sacrifice her role as



a helper, while at the same time managing to be non-intrusive in the group. A delicate balancing act, indeed! She also had to be present — engaged and engaging; attentive and responsive, without being an overt therapeutic presence. She had to be 'doing with' the young people, not 'doing to' them, while still maintaining appropriate boundaries. While attending to this she had also to ensure that she remained aware of each of the youths' individual plans, the flow of the day and what needed to come next, the responsibility she held to help facilitate each youth's growth and to facilitate appropriate direction to whatever discussions they engaged in. She also, of course, had to monitor the tone of the group, the state and energy of each individual and keep in mind that there were other youth in the program who weren't part of this group. She had to keep a part of herself attentive to other activities within the program. Finally, she was also noticing opportunities, as discussed above. And all the while, of course, she was just hanging-out, being there with the youth. All sounds pretty important to me. And hard to do. Go ahead, give it a try. But maybe you had better prepare your supervisor first. □

CYC-NET
 is an e-mail child and youth care discussion forum with hundreds of members world-wide — students, on-line workers, trainers, administrators — which you can join by sending mail to cyc-net@icon.co.za. It is also an informative web site which you are invited to visit at www.cyc-net.org

CYC-ONLINE
 is a monthly on-line magazine for child and youth care workers around the world which you may view at www.cyc-net.org/cyconline.html

The International Child and Youth Care Network

THE CHILD INTERVENTION PANEL

CHIP



Background

CHIP is a working group of the Children in Distress Network (CINDI), and was formed in an attempt to "unblock" difficulties which children and their caregivers may experience when trying to access protective/support mechanisms as articulated through Legislation, eg. The Child Care Act. CHIP works as a peer review system and seeks to hold service providers accountable to children and their caregivers, and pressurises these providers to address specific issues of concern. Eight volunteer panellists who are well-known champions for children serve on CHIP.

CHIP values the autonomy of their clients (namely the child or child's caregiver) and values their ability to act in their own interest. CHIP only intervenes in a matter if requested to do so, and if the clients' attempts to deal with the issue have proved fruitless.

How does CHIP work?

Anyone who believes that the best interests of the child are not being served and who has unsuccessfully tried all other avenues to resolve the problem, completes a CHIP report form which is obtainable from the Secretariat. In the interest of the free flow of information, a CHIP report may be submitted anonymously.

- CHIP asks the responsible caseworker for an explanation or corrective action by a certain date — usually within a week
- If no satisfactory response is received by then, the matter is automatically referred up the chain of command.
- If the next level of authority fails to respond or address the issue by the given date, the process is repeated until all levels of authority are exhausted, after which, remedies such as court or press exposure would be considered.

CHIP seeks to work within a three-month deadline.

CHIP maintains an administrative system for its written records and statistics.

To whom is CHIP accountable?

CHIP is an advocacy group that seeks to be accountable to:

- relevant Professional Societies, to CINDI and to the legal system
- To the Bill of Rights, to the Constitution and to the community.

CHIP produces an Annual Report which is distributed at the Annual General Meeting in October each year.

Some of the issues dealt with by CHIP in the past include:

- Non-payment of foster Grants
- Problems and delays in the appropriate placement of children
- Tracking children lost in the "system"
- Advocacy on behalf of abandoned children in hospitals.

For further information please contact:

Yvonne Spain, CHIP, c/o Youth for Christ, 1 Durban Road, Pietermaritzburg 3200. Tel: (0333) 45 2970, Fax: (0333) 45 1583, e-mail: yfc@pmb.lia.net



VISITING THE LAND OF THE VIKINGS

A Report on the Study Visit/Observation Tour To Denmark, 14-28 September 1999

Compiled by Jackie Winfield with contributions from Desmond De Wet, Jeanny Karth, Nomsa Mandoyi, Sbongile Manyathi, Mvuyo Manyungwane, Nozuko Nonkonyane, Alfred Rens, Claude Vergie and Cecil Wood.



were visited during the two-week period. A brief summary of some of these follows.

Bogholt is a residential school in Arhus. The entire programme is based on the "Theory of Activ-

ity", meaning that young people develop their abilities, skills, knowledge, social skills and emotional control when they "do" and are active in their relations to the surrounding world. As a result, all of the activities are compulsory and the element of choice for young people is mini-

mal. Adult authority is strongly emphasised. There seems to be very good co-operation between the school teachers and the social pedagogues who are assigned to the cottages.

An interesting project within this programme was the "Mini-Society". For one week each year, Bogholt becomes a mini business centre where each and every person living and/or working at Bogholt becomes actively involved in the commercial activities of this society. For example, the principal becomes an employment agent and pupils apply for posts through this agency. Currency is created especially for this week and trading takes place via sweet shops, coffee shops, bi-

Ten members of the NACCW were selected to visit Denmark to observe programmes and identify practice which could be implemented in the South African Child and Youth Care System. Numerous residential and community-based programmes





cycle repair shops, wood work factories, glass factories, etc. Musicians (also children) sell their services to "owners" of coffee shops and other businesses. The underlying message behind this project is that the harder you work, the more successful you become.

Korslokke in Odense is an institution which works very closely with families. Parents continue to take responsibility for their children, e.g. coming in any time to have teas and meals with their children and the staff. They bath their children, read to them and

SITUATION WANTED

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put them to bed if they can. They take them to school and fetch them if they are young. They also take them shopping or to hospital or doctors. Where possible, the children and youth visit their families at least two week ends a month. When coming from school to the institution, some children go via their natural homes. They also are visited by children from the community. Every three months, the institution holds family case discussions which include the parents, children, social pedagogues (child and youth care workers), social advisor (social worker), the district social worker and any other significant person. Recordings on files are open to the parents for reading. No report is sent out without it being discussed with the parent who comments on it if necessary and is allowed to make changes in writing if she/he so wishes. The social worker also writes down if there has been a difference of opinion and then sends it out to relevant parties. What was stressed was the importance of open communication between the young people, families and staff. The staff was heavily involved in doing things like drama, art, sports with the children. The community school or class is usually invited to birth-

days.

Despite the seemingly-high salaries of approximately R23000 per month, social pedagogues are poorly-paid relative to other professionals. Also every person who works pays 50% tax. Most people do this "with a smile on their faces" since hospital services and education (including tertiary education) are free and first class. Students even receive an allowance while they are studying! Both parents are given leave when their child is born.



Hedebakken in Roskilde is a residential institution divided into an upstairs and downstairs. Upstairs caters for six older teenagers who are preparing for independent living. Most of them have graduated from the downstairs programme. They are supported by pedagogues (child and youth care workers) who work from 3-11pm daily. The young people are allocated a budget and expected to carry out shopping, cooking and other tasks required for running a household. One of the boys cooked us a wonderful meal while we were there. The young people are given freedom to go out with friends until 11pm on weekdays and 3am on weekends. If they

are going to be late, they telephone the pedagogue to make arrangements. Communication is very open between young people and staff and there is an atmosphere of warmth and respect. One had the impression that no subjects were taboo. Support is offered for education, employment and the requirements of setting up an independent household. The pedagogues and other staff function as a team in which the strengths of different members are identified and utilised. There is a high level of professionalism and dialogue flows freely.

In order to help us make sense of our Danish experiences, we had a supervision workshop facilitated by a Palestinian psychologist, Laila Atshan. We compared the Danish programmes with our work and conditions in South Africa. This was a process which helped us to realise that many South African child and youth care workers are doing very good work despite a severe lack of resources. We concluded that the lack of money and equipment in many of our programmes means that child and youth care workers are required to draw on their inner resources, their creativity and innovation. We felt rather proud of the quality of services offered in South Africa and realised that we have a sound policy and theoretical base from which to work.

Towards the end of the two-week period, we regrouped in Copenhagen and spent three further days in supervision and evaluation. During this time, we discussed what we had learned and ideas for further collaboration. We identified the following features in Danish welfare services:

abundance of human and material resources available to all citizens, total attention to the individual (sometimes at the expense of the family and broader social networks), unconditional respect for young people, the importance of dialogue between young people and caregivers, good working conditions (a 37-hour working week) and salaries (to cover the high cost of living), and use of arts and crafts. Some of the institutions visited made good use of colour which contributes to a climate conducive to learning and living. It creates a very homely atmosphere and potentially has a therapeutic effect on the young people in care. Colour and music could be used more purposefully and effectively in South African child and youth care programmes. Many of us had noticed a lack of spirituality in programmes as well as in Danish society more broadly. The Danes openly gave



recognition and praise to our understanding of cultural diversity, something with which Danish society struggles as they try to assimilate refugees from the Middle East and Africa. This is an area in which South Africans have much to offer.

We appreciate the wonderful opportunity given to us by the NACCW and SL. This was a stimulating, enriching and empowering experience in which a spirit of personal and professional exchange was established. We trust that this will continue in further collaboration between South African and Danish child and youth care programmes. □

CONFERENCE TO SHARE MODELS OF SOCIAL INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN IN DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN SOUTH AFRICA

A Regional Committee consisting of representatives from Welfare Organisations in Kwa-Zulu Natal are hosting a Conference to share Indigenous Models of Intervention for Children in Difficult Circumstances. The Conference will take place on the 24th, 25th and 26th November 1999 at Coastlands Convention Centre, 47 West Street Durban 4001. Organisations and Individuals working with children are invited to attend.

The aim of the Conference is to modify the Models of Intervention in order to make them more effective for the needs of South African children and to encourage the adoption of these Models by both the State and NGOs.

Registration forms and application to present models can be obtained from Izani Event Specialists: Phone:(031) 573 1421; Fax (031) 563 3348.





Girl child in the Kenyan slums

One of our African partners, *Dandora Girls and Women Education and Development Project*, describe their work

After my observation I have a great feeling to share my views with the other child workers in the continent. The girl child in Kenya is facing an inhabitable and uncompromising situation especially those in the Kenya slums – specifically the slums of the capital city, Nairobi where I work. The girls are mainly victims of school drop-out, a major crisis in slum education in the Kenyan capital city. The slum dwellers are poor Kenyans who cannot afford the normal school expenses. The girls drop out of school at a very tender age to engage in child labour to be able to sustain their lives and support their families. Generally they work as house helpers and when they become youths they work in the bars. In both cases they are exposed to child abuse, oppression and sexual harassment. Their lives become very miserable after they are dumped by these subjects with a multitude of sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS and a number of fatherless children. Under such circumstances and without any source of income, these girls

are compelled to become commercial sex workers and the results are very unpleasant; more street children, increase in the spread of AIDS and a number of victims and deaths resulting from the same.

Dandora Girls and Women Education and development project was started back in 1997 to reduce the ever growing rate of school drop-outs especially among the girl child, the lack of education as a result of poverty and general ignorance in the area. It also highlighted the child labour increase and the violence against women and the girl child. Under this section the project advocates for the rights of women and children.

In general the project has gone as far as fighting for the rights of women and the oppressed girls by opening a full primary school that offers free basic education under the hard working co-ordinator Mrs Grace Omingo.

Objectives of the project

As already mentioned the project's objectives are as follows:

- Advocacy and the promotion of the rights of the girl child
- Offer affordable education to the girl child in the slums (in difficult circumstances)
- Act as protective pressure groups on safeguarding the rights of the girl child
- Reducing the ever-growing





number of school drop-outs in the slums, especially among the girls

- Eradication of child labour among the girl child (domestic child labour)
- Provide shelter for the homeless girls
- Provision of guidance and counselling
- Improve community's environment by cleaning
- Creating awareness on HIV/AIDS and Std's to reduce the rate of spread of these diseases

Education

In 1997 one of our candidates joined a provincial school with 495 marks.

In 1998 our first class of KCPE sat for their exams. Three of them managed to get over 300 marks with the best of them getting 427 marks.

This year, 1999, we have enrolled 9 candidates for KCPE (*Kenya Certificate Primary Education*).

Health

We have managed to create awareness on HIV/AIDS and STDs through poems, songs, drama and skits. We have also managed to reduce waterborne diseases by cleaning the estate hence improving the health standards.

Environment

We are improving hygienic standards by practising garbage collection on the estate.

Feeding

This feeding scheme has improved class concentration and hence a performance especially to those who used to go without food for some days. Thanks to Child Life Trust for sustaining our feeding program.

Child Labour

Child labour has been reduced for the girls have joined school.

Vocational training

We have trained two girls and two girls have joined this year. We have managed to take over 25 girls to Sinaga Centre for training in Typing, Cookery and Tailoring.

International Literacy Day

Our women won the International Literacy Day Trophy for Kenya held in September 1998.

Thanks

We acknowledge and appreciate the assistance and co-operation we have been receiving from all the other organisations that have seen us through thick and thin

until today that we can now forge ahead without fear. We also pass our sincere gratitude to The Church of God of Prophecy under which the project started just through the grace of God in the house of the Pastor, Rev. Paul Omanyia, a humble man who now only acts as a spiritual advisor and leader of the project especially the education section. In conjunction with other organisations such as Sinaga Centre, Care Kenya, Kenya Child Life Trust, and with the support of the Forum for African Women Educationalists – (FAWE), United Nations Children's Fund, UNIFERM – Kenya, Barclays Bank of Kenya, The Government of Kenya, just to mention a few, we have managed to fight for, advocate and promote the rights of the girl child. We have managed to create awareness on human rights while condemning violence against women and condemning child abuse especially to the girl child. □

– **Sixtus Vitalis Omari**

ERRATUM

The article on the **Pandipieri Catholic Centre Street Children Programme** which appeared in last month's issue (September 1999, p. 16-17) omitted to give the author's name and any reference to the country of origin.

The article was submitted by Denis Odinga Okiya and the project is run in Kisumu, Kenya.

Our apologies for this omission.



SWEARING....

A pastiche of opinions on the matter of swearing taken off CYC-net.

I work in a group home for adolescent boys. The kids who live here are swearing all the time.

Everything, it seems, is F#@ \$ this or F#@ \$ that. The staff in general ignore the swearing but it bothers me.

- Cheryl

I think it is completely unacceptable. There is something wrong that this has been allowed to infiltrate the environment. Is this the tip of the iceberg? I would seriously question what norms are being allowed and how they can be fixed. Why do staff think this is OK? What values and morals are being transmitted to the staff by supervisors and director?

- Jeff Walker

Thing is, when you work in a program with troubled kids, YOU enter THEIR life space by choice and THEY don't enter YOUR life space by choice. With our own kids at home they can choose to be different when they're with adults and when with their friends. In group care the whole point is that we get to be part of (most of) their space for a time.

- Gordon Brown

I work at a teen drop-in centre and the teens are not permitted to use vulgar language. Our problem is that they like to bring in their own tapes and music. A lot of this is rap and contains much worse language than the teens would dare to use in the centre. I have complained about the music and now we are trying to enforce the language policy on the music as well. While a lot of this smacks of censorship, the centre is located in the lower portion of a building that provides a lot of services to the public. The swearing on tape bothers the other staff who work upstairs and who knows what effect it has on the clients there. While I like the music, I dislike the lyrics because of the constant racial slurs and coarse language – much of which is degrading to women. I think that it desensitizes the youth to the issues and makes it easier for them to ignore.

- Mary Joe Arnold



These children are actually speaking in a way that has been accepted by their culture (peers, parents, gangs), and we should try and be patient and tolerant as they do develop an identity of their own and hopefully as they mature they will no longer rely on profanity as a form of communication. I feel most will follow a good role model, and actual nagging is not necessary. I have been around many who swear, and it does not make me think less of them because they do. I think you have to have vision beyond that. Do we have the right to force them to conform to our values at this stage? Do we have the right to tell them how to express their anger? I don't think so. It goes deeper than that in most I think.

- Tracey



It has been a while since I worked in a group home but on every occasion swearing, be it 'habitual' or 'for reaction', was a concern to myself and others. In my experience, ignoring tends to work when the swearing is for reaction and not a part of the acceptable norm of the place or not habitual on the part of the user. If swearing has become the norm and/or is habitual then more creative means are called for.

I would suggest that you raise the fact that the swearing is offensive to you with your colleagues and would like their support in working on reducing/eliminating the swearing. I would hope that the respect and relationship between yourself (care providers) and the teens is mutually respectful to the point that you can raise this as a problem for you and ask for their individual (caregivers and teens) and collective support (we would raise such issues at weekly house meetings [teens and caregivers] and commence a problem solving process).

An additional focus is the negative behaviour that swearing attracts, at school, at work, out to dinner etc., checking out that the negatives are not what the user is after – rejection, counter attack, etc. can start to show that the swearing is not only your concern for your own comfort but for the teens fit in their larger world (assuming they have one). Anyway some ways I have found effective when the individual and/or the group buys in include

- not having the casual conversation when swearing is part and stating this (exceptions made for angry/hurting sharings)

- the fine jar \$.05 a word and/or \$.25 a string as in a tantrum. The key has been the buy from the group and the ownership that the swearing is a shared concern. By the way the fines, which tended to be high for about two weeks was put into recreation or pizza night as decided by the collective.

– **John R**

P.S. The fines were imposed on all staff as well...

You can enter their space without allowing swearing or other things they may do.

They have a job to do and that is to be adolescents and assert themselves ... test out the waters. This is fine and it will happen and should happen. We as adults have a job to do and that is reflect society's values. Without these limits and boundaries children will not understand that they need to differentiate their behaviours depending on the situation.

This is what good practice is all about. Do not allow the temptation of "being with them" to allow you to throw out the value of good values. There are many other ways to "be with them" and still set reasonable limits. This judgement is what makes the profession an art not a science.

– **Jeff Walker**

I find that swearing is one of the least important of the behaviours which I need to attempt to correct.

I do not want to ever feel or be perceived as nagging clients, because then they will just block out everything I say. Obviously, age groups and types

of children will alter my response to them. For instance, I sometimes run groups for three to six year olds, and I would definitely address swearing in this group. Also, if the swearing is directed at someone I will have more of a problem with it.

The other thing I thought about was that when I am counselling a youth, the last thing I would usually want to do while they are talking to me is correct their language.

– **Heather Ramey**

Kids swear. Adults swear. Some, more than others. The question is not whether they should or should not swear, but in what context it is viewed as appropriate or not. For example... and child hurts him/herself and says ... f#@ \$ that hurt!!! He may not need to be cued again on the behaviour, however, someone calling you a F#@ \$ B\$#@, or whatever, may need to cease immediately. It is a matter of moderation and context as with any behaviour.

If swearing is the biggest issue at your home, feel lucky, it could always be worse.

– **Curt**

One thing that we work on is the realization of how people in the real world will perceive you. Swearing does not offend me so long as it is not directed at someone because this is aggressive behaviour meant to hurt someone. Realization of how people will perceive their language will help them get along socially better in jobs and school after the client moves on after treatment.

– **Kenneth □**





How to teach the Unteachable

Joseph Ciaccio

A veteran teacher describes a strategy of total positive response that can reverse the self-defeating cycle of punishment and failure in high-risk and troubled students, a strategy relating just as much to Child & Youth Care workers in their interaction with youth.

On a chilly March day, a colleague, upon hearing that a student named Alice had done her work in my class that day, turned to me and said, "We are all mere mortals compared to you." What could have happened that would have prompted this very successful teacher to make such a sweepingly definitive statement? Alice, an intelligent seventh grader, had entered school that day with the intention of getting into trouble. She had been eminently successful, having acquired seven pink slips (removal from virtually every class) and having had an emotionally devastating verbal exchange with her science teacher. When she arrived at my third-period class, I could see that her behaviour was different. All I did was to tell her one thing – I reminded Alice of her success in my class, and she got right on track. She worked hard all period, but with 5 minutes left, I could see she had had enough. She pushed the written work away from her, in spite of the fact that she still had one question to complete. I silently walked over to her and she looked up, grabbed her paper, and rapidly completed her work!

On a day of deliberate academic turmoil, Alice had 40 minutes of academic nourishment.

I would like to share with the readers a two-step program that I used with all my at-risk students – one that enabled Alice to scrap her game plan and choose learning instead.

The first step, which is to identify those students who are at risk, must be accomplished before their maladaptive behaviour is exhibited in your classroom. For example, if a student is disruptive, ideally you should start working with him or her before misbehaviour occurs.

On a day of deliberate academic turmoil, Alice had 40 minutes of academic nourishment.

Once identified, the teacher is ready to begin the second step – using "a learning readiness" program with the child. This program encourages the student to behave well voluntarily and work hard without coercion and threats of punishment. The teacher has great power to influence the most recalcitrant stu-

dent, but it comes from total positive response, not from punishment. (By total positive response I mean dealing with every misbehaviour by every student in a positive way rather than a negative one.) The master teacher must understand that these at-risk children are trapped

By total positive response I mean dealing with every misbehaviour by every student in a positive way rather than a negative one.

in an emotionally destructive set of responses that leaves their needs unsatisfied. When a teacher uses total positive feedback, he or she will feel calm and in control, which should result in powerful, positive emotional consequences for the teacher and the entire class. According to Strahan (1994), maintaining a caring relationship between teacher and student is the key to a successful school. Any student who receives total positive response from his or her teacher will feel that the teacher cares. In return, that child will develop a positive attitude toward him- or her-self, the class,



and the subject being taught. Total positive response will reroute the student from a normally destructive routine into a new course – one that will give the child success for the present and

Students who have emotional problems – who “get in trouble” – want to blame the teacher. If the teacher treats the disruptive student with acceptance, the child is disarmed.

hope for the future. Another important payoff from using total positive response is the creation of a valuable personal experience for the child. Students who have emotional problems – who “get in trouble” – want to blame the teacher. If the teacher treats the disruptive student with acceptance, the child is disarmed. In fact, the child is confronted with a problem solely of his or her own making in which he or she has to take responsibility for the solution. The child can then realize what he or she did is not the teacher’s problem, but the child’s.

The master teacher understands that the degree of acceptance toward a student will vary according to the ego strength of that child. If children have high self-esteem, they are perfectly capable of absorbing negative comments. If, on the other hand, a child comes from a home where there is little or no emotional nourishment and he or she is also alienated from the educational process, total positive feedback from the teacher is essential. Any negative comments might convince the child that the teacher is like all the other adults

in his or her world. These children see human relationships in terms of black-or-white: The adult is either part of the solution (help satisfy their needs) or part of the problem.

Professional teachers must develop techniques that will enable them to respond in a positive manner. To be positive in the face of disruptive behaviour is not difficult if the teacher begins working with the child from the first week of school to build a positive relationship. Use the sandwich method: start and end with positives, leaving the middle portion for criticism. For example, tell Jeremy positive comments to start, mention the aeroplane he flew across the room during the class, and end with additional positive remarks. Be specific. Don’t make general statements, because such compliments conflict with the child’s negative self-image and he or she may turn you off. If the child walks away feeling uplifted, the teacher has been successful. The teacher determines what is success and what isn’t, and I make sure that every one of those students who had a history of failure enjoyed positive experiences in my class.

I will use a personal example to illustrate this point of how a teacher determines what success is. I was trying to get Billy to participate in class. In the beginning, he made an effort, but his comments were academically inept. One day I asked, “Where did democracy start?” I was teaching U.S. history, specifically, the Puritans. I expected “the town meetings” to be a suitable answer. Billy said, “before Christ.” The class laughed at him. I said, “Billy how did you know that? It’s amazing! Democracy started

with the Greeks 500 years before Christ, but it is rare for a seventh grader to know that. I’m impressed!” The laughing stopped and Billy looked proud and delighted! I want to make two points about Billy’s experience. First, total positive response means abundant positive feedback, and Billy thrived on it. My early nurturing and continuous positive support resulted in this boy becoming a personal success and a model student for the class.

Second, and most important, the teacher should be able to find something positive in virtually all situations. Be creative. Saying

The teacher should be able to find something positive in virtually all situations.

just the right thing will be time-consuming, but the preparation will result in rewarding experiences with grateful children. All teachers can guarantee success to every receptive student, providing the teacher is willing to make the necessary radical changes to his or her thinking and practice.

Albert Shanker (1995) wrote, “If we want to change our schools for the better, we have to change what goes on in the classroom between teachers and students. There is nothing revolutionary about this idea. It is common sense. It is also extremely difficult to do.” (p.8). When the teacher uses total positive response, all he or she needs is a commitment to emotionally supporting the most needy students with only positive feedback, thus allowing the emotionally damaged child to begin the healing process. □





Mark Gamble
of EDUCO Africa
comes up with
another game

This initiative that looks at co-operation and trust can be played with a group of 10 or can be played with a group of 100, as those who were at the last conference will testify.

Here's how you play it

Get the group to stand in a circle, holding hands. Drop the hands and ask them to move towards the centre of the circle until their shoulders are touching. Each child to turn 90B to the right. Hands must be placed on shoulders f the child in front. Shuffle inwards to the centre until the children are touching.

Pause.

Explain that the group is now going to sit down, each child will sit on the lap of the child behind them. This is to be done on the count of three. There is always an awed look from some tiny who has the largest child in the group in front of him/her.

Count to three and let them sit.

Some tips...

The odds are that the circle will collapse the first time round. Make sure that the area where you run this activity is safe.

If they fall let them collect their wits and ask them if they want to play again. The odds are they do! You can ask them for suggestions on how to improve their chances of success.

What comes out ...

The group can support the individual; the individual can support the group.

If we use our heads we don't need to use our muscle.


If we failed first time round that didn't stop us.

We picked ourselves up and tried again.

Until we succeeded. □



Obituary –

Norman Turner 

Norman Turner, a child care worker at Tenderden Place of Safety in Wynberg since 1986, passed away on 28 October 1999 after a long battle with cancer. During his time at Tenderden he worked mainly with older boys. Norman was known as a very active and hard worker, a mobiliser and a person who spoke up for children's rights and worker rights. Over the years Norman emerged as the one child care worker who got the single most visits from boys who returned to greet him. He embraced the concept of the Circle of Courage with great enthusiasm when it was introduced some years ago. In many ways Norman was an example of courage to us as staff as he struggled with his illness. The Tenderden staff and children, past and present, salute a highly valued and courageous colleague. Our condolences to his wife and son.

Eugene Odendaal

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Movie Review

AMERICAN PIE

Starring: Jason Biggs, Jennifer Coolidge, Shannon Elizabeth, Alyson Hanning, Tara Reid.



This "coming of age" comedy brings to the fore the reality of "raging teenage male hormones" and the unquenchable drive to fulfil their most basic need "scoring with the female sex". It's funny, it's perverse, sometimes embarrassing and we

often find the main characters in humiliating situations, a movie most older teenagers can identify with.

This movie is not for the serious minded and may be offensive to some as strong language and a sexual tone is prominent. The movie does not condone promiscuity, but rather examines the "desperation" facing the 90s teenage generation, combining humour and the reality of daily life with the complexities of relationships and the desire for love.

Amongst the parties, the "over the top" high school pranks, friendships and peer pressure, begins a challenge for four 18 year old high school boys who, with outrageous ideas and schemes go about finding that one person to share the most important night of their young lives with ... The prom, and all the promises that go with it.

One must take this movie with a "tongue-in-cheek" attitude and be patient for the grand finale, as what starts out to be a riotous movie does not end that way. Mutual respect prevails, leaving instead of a one night stand, a better understanding of the opposite sex, a genuine need for friendship and the ever-present desire for mutual love.

The content of this movie could bring about great debate with adolescents who have seen it. I am not promoting this movie as a "huge hit", but as teenagers are flocking to the cinemas to see it, why don't you take this opportunity and join them? Who knows, you might connect with some serious talk.

– Adina Menhardt



Sticks and stones may break my bones,
but words can also hurt me.

Sticks and stones break only skin,
while words are ghosts that haunt me.

Slant and curved the word swords fall
to pierce and stick inside me,
Bats and bricks may ache through bones,
but words can mortify me.

Pain from words has left its scar
on mind and heart that's tender.
Cuts and bruises now have healed;
it's words that I remember.