

**CHILDREN WHO NEED
TO GRIEVE**

**FINDING DEPRESSION
BEHIND AGGRESSION**

**THE ARGUMENT FOR
AFFORDABLE
HIV/AIDS TREATMENT**

Child & Youth Care

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

Ukunakekelwa kwezingane nentsha: Incwadi yalabo abasebenza nabantwana kanye nentsha abahlukumezekile

What's in a name?

EDITORIAL



This week I met a *control officer*, an *oom*, an *onnie*, a principal auxiliary social worker and a housemother. All of these people were child and youth care workers in different agencies. Residential child care programmes in this country have had a long history of varied origins and traditions. One of these has to do with Children's Homes being built to provide what was called *alternative care* for true orphans, or for children and youth regarded as pragmatically *orphaned* as a result of poverty or parental debility. As an alternative to nuclear family care it is not surprising that a family model and nomenclature would develop. Many of these early models were started 100 years ago and grew out of the numbers of true orphans needing care because of the influenza epidemic or lives lost in the world wars. But by 1982 only 2% of the children in Children's Homes were true orphans. Debility and poverty was even then being addressed increasingly by services directed to families and children where they were living. By 1983

nearly a third of all the Children's Homes established for alternative residential care had been closed. The familial model no longer applied. The profile of the children in residential programmes was essentially different, so were their needs and so therefore was the demands on the child and youth care worker. Well before the 1980's the professionalisation of the Child and Youth Care Worker was clearly essential. We have lived through many models. The family model has left us with a legacy of terms for child and youth care workers such as *housemother* and *father*, *tannie*, *oom*, *uncle*, *Ma* and *auntie*. The hospital model has still a residual number of practitioners known as *sister*, *matron* and *supervisor*. The school model has left with us its traditional number of *principals*, *onnies* (short for 'onderwyser') and *mam's*. The social work model is fraught with jaw breakers each containing the idea that Child and Youth Care Workers are extensions of the arm and work of the social worker, mainly characterised by

the prefix *auxiliary*. The prison military model gives us words like *officer* and *control officer*. The problem is that the Child and Youth Care Workers I met last week seemed to me at risk of growing into their names, of colouring if not modelling their Child and Youth Care practice on what they are called. Tannies becoming aunties to the children, and housemothers attempting substitute mothering. Is there a risk that control officers will pull rank and control in their professional style, that principals will be tempted to run *hostel* styled facilities? What are you called by the children? What as a professional Child and Youth Care Worker makes you feel comfortable or uncomfortable when children refer to you by your title? What is **your** name? What's **in** your name? Clearly professional practice in the field of Child and Youth Care requires that we bring about some consistency in what we call ourselves as professionals in the field and what our clients call us.

Barrie Lodge

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Peace is having no one to put
 down, because you feel good
 enough about yourself.

Johnny, 13 years, Washington

NACCW

The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-profit organisation in South Africa which provides the professional training and infrastructure to promote healthy child and youth development and to improve standards of care and treatment for troubled children and youth at risk in family, community and residential group care settings.

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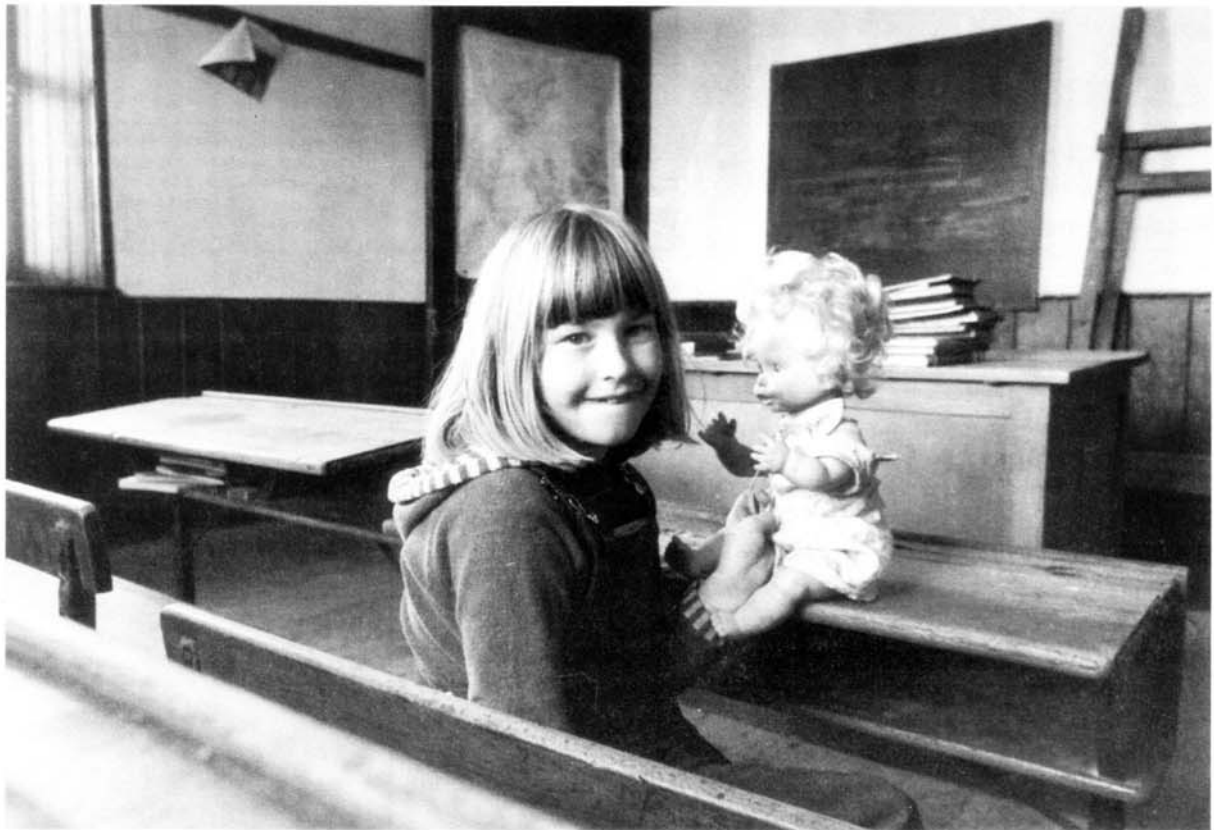
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CHILDREN WHO NEED TO GRIEVE

*An NACCW 1999 Conference Paper presented by
Thobile Hlophe (3rd year student in Child & Youth Development at Natal Technikon - 1999)
supervised by Frida Rundell*

***"Mphefumulo wami
wophelelaphi
Wezinhlungu zolowo mhlaba
Ilanga lami seliyashona
Nkosi yami
Nguwe qwaziyo"***

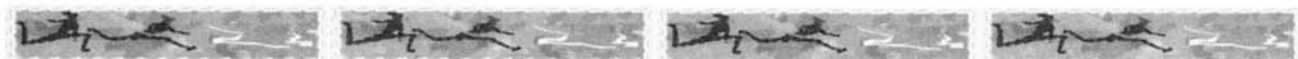
- Lundi

This song signifies a person who's lost in this world because he/she has nobody in his/her life.

Introduction

As part of our national diploma qualification, I needed to choose a placement in which to do my research and community service. I chose to work with bereaved children. These were children who had lost their mothers re-

cently and who have not had the chance to grieve about their loss. The children were between the ages of 10-14 years, both boys and girls. They lived at a child care facility in Durban. The institution has three types of care: the Cottage system; the Edith Benson Nursery and Golden Hours Preprimary. The youth that I worked with lived in a cottage system.



I chose this placement because all of my life I've been scared of losing my mother. I wanted to understand the children's feelings and maybe help them through the grieving process. I thought that if I did I would be able to cope with any crisis I may face in the future. I wanted to impress everybody (Frida, my supervisor and colleagues) I wanted to do something that had not been done in our programme before. I was going to be the first – a pioneer!

Profile of the Children

Rony: according to Kubler Ross's grieving stages was very angry about losing her mom (death) and brother (moved to another institution). She allowed anyone to build any kind of relationship with her. Because she was unhappy, she made everybody unhappy. Bowlby explains how important significant relationships/attachments in the early stages are and form later ones in life. With Rony, all her significant attachments were threatened. She could not trust having a lasting relationship and so she protected herself at all costs.

Mandy: according to the grieving stages, was in depression. She started having nightmares and believed that she was able to see the unseen. She also mentioned that her mother had the same powers and that's why she was killed. This added to her state of depression. Basically she was waiting for her own death.

Stone: ended up being the only boy in the group. He seemed to be in the bargaining stage because he helped everybody. He was active in the group. It was as if he was saying, "If I'm happy enough, I wouldn't feel the pain of loss". This boy saw his mother being killed in front of

him by his father.

Monica: seemed to be in the bargaining stage because she used to say if her mother didn't die she wouldn't be feeling this pain. She was also withdrawn at first because she used to come into the session and sit back and do nothing.

The Process

My aim was to use music as a healing medium for the children. We met for 2 hours, 5 days a week. During this time we would sing, hold group discussions and even individual sessions. The sessions were conducted in the office, after hours. The children started complaining that these sessions were a lot like school and not fun, as I had promised in the beginning. The children started to absent themselves from the session. That made me angry because I 'thought' I was doing them a favour. Something definitely wasn't working i.e. I was angry and they were angry too.

It took a paradigm shift, looking through other lenses to help me move back on track. Firstly, I had an intensive meeting with the Technikon class group where debriefing took place. For the first time I asked myself what the children wanted to do. I then had a private debriefing with my supervisor. It was during that session that I realised how great my need for control was.

I went back to the children with new eyes. I stopped trying to fix their problem and tried being there for their needs. This was done by taking them to the park, pool and even eating supper with them. And also for the first time I consulted with child care workers caring for their needs. I shifted from a model of 'I want

...' to a model of empowerment where the children were given back the control over their lives. It actually dawned on me that the only coping skills and support systems I can help children enhance, are the ones deep rooted in themselves.

We got the ball rolling and the end result was having a variety concert performed by almost every child in the children's home for the public. We raised money for a braai. Rony received the task of teaching modelling to the young ones. I made myself available to talk to her anytime she needed to. She listened and enjoyed the responsibility. Mandy was given the task of being master of ceremonies and preparation manager. Monica was the lead singer in the group. She did something she could be proud of. This raised her self esteem. Stone, as always, had that smile on his face. Most importantly, he got to model clothes and received constant attention. He needed love and received it from everyone.

Lessons Learnt

- Communicating with every person involved in a child's life is crucial. Don't think you are all alone, you don't need to be.
- Since children grow, moods change every day. The child care worker needs to be flexible in planning the programme and to cater for any unexpected surprise.
- The child care worker must learn to use the asset/strength building, holistic approach with children. Catch them doing something right.
- Always use available moments in the child's life span to empower the child. □



FINDING DEPRESSION BEHIND AGGRESSION

Anne McKay, formerly Durban Co-ordinator of the Kwazulu-Natal Programme for Survivors of Violence and presently studying at the Tavistock Institute in London, discusses the relationship between poverty and violence.

Violent crime committed by young boys or men against their friends, their families, their neighbours and complete strangers is of deep concern in South Africa. Many factors are known to have contributed: poverty, the experience of violence from the authorities during the long years of apartheid, frustration at seeing no future in a context of unemployment, increasing use of alcohol, the rise in numbers of street children, fathers being away from their families, by choice or because of job-seeking.

But the situation may be more complex than that. In 1997, I heard a social worker from the Durban courts telling the Interministerial Committee on Young People at Risk about young people who were involved in crime (she was talking about all crime, not just violence, but I'm using her insights to make a point). She emphasised that the perpetrators did not conform to media stereotypes; they were not mostly street children—although some were; nor were they all traumatised youth—though again some were.

A high percentage of the young people appearing in court, were living with their families and were in school; their families were poor but not from the poorest of the poor. So, the question arises, why

are they turning to crime? The answer is not so obvious.

In Britain, where, although there is a huge gap between rich and poor, social security gives a basic income (very basic) to those who cannot find work. Yet, since the 1980s there has been a large increase in the number of young men committing violence against other people. There has also been an increase in teenage pregnancies (the highest rate in Europe). Youth involvement in drugs is growing. The factors that the Labour government have identified as contributing to destructive behaviour in young people are: poverty, social exclusion and maternal depression.

Poverty and Violence

Oliver James is a psychologist who researches social issues. His 1997 book *Juvenile Violence in a Winner-Loser Culture* attempts to find out exactly what it is about poverty that seems to lead to an increase in violence in young men. His conclusions are:

- 1) low income for families causes depression in parents, and most importantly, in mothers, and depressed mothers bring up depressed and angry children.
- 2) that a 'winner/loser' culture portrays owning possessions as the most important symbol of social status and identity. This makes those who do not own

the right car/ house/ jacket/ account feel like 'losers' (social exclusion) instead of just poor—thus creating conditions for aggression.

What I thought was important about his research was that it showed how poverty created the conditions for violence. The link is psychological as well as social and economic. It is because of how poverty makes people feel about themselves, and others, that violence becomes a way of getting rid of these painful and unmanageable emotions.

Social exclusion

Social exclusion has been targeted in the British government's anti-poverty campaign.

Oliver James comments on the need for this in *Juvenile Violence*. In the 1980s, James says, Britain became more unequal than at any other time since 1945. Unemployment increased, wages were lower, and the quality of work available for the poor became worse. At the same time the UK developed a 'winner-loser' culture. In this new culture, he argues, people with low incomes were judged as inadequate morally, intellectually, and emotionally. It was not only being poor that was against you, it was the attitude of society that being poor meant you did not belong.

He points out that it was only in



Rodney Andrews, Ipopeng Project, 1999



the mid-1980s that the consumer culture idealising the lifestyles of the wealthy – “sex’n’shopping” novels and TV soap operas based on Hollywood lifestyles – emerged in the UK. This reinforced the idea that only being rich was worthwhile, which made poor young people feel even worse about themselves.

Poverty and depression

James does admit that there is no absolute proof that the winner-loser culture is responsible for the rise in juvenile violence. But there is a lot of research that suggests that poverty leads to depression in mothers, and that depression in mothers is linked to boy children becoming ag-

gressive as teenagers, and girl children becoming depressed.

- Research shows that violence is associated with being male, young and from a low-income family. Women from the same type of families will tend to be depressed, maybe misuse alcohol, or otherwise take out violent feelings on themselves.
- The difference between the families of violent and non-violent males from low-income families is explained by the presence of parental abuse, parents arguing and parents being constantly irritable. This irritability and disharmony means that children get very

little positive loving attention. Their parents are worried and angry and may punish children too harshly or shout at them too much.

- Depressed mothers are more likely to be irritable; and poor mothers are significantly more likely to be depressed than other mothers. Obviously mothers who have money worries are more depressed, so children in poor families are doubly disadvantaged: no money in the family and, in some cases no loving attention from their mother either.
- Irritable mothers are more likely to use inconsistent, arbitrary, neglectful or abusive parenting styles that lead to aggressive boy children, and depressed girls. Children who are punished for no good reason do not easily understand the difference between right and wrong. Children who are constantly told they are naughty or stupid become depressed and stop listening to adults.
- Boys who are aggressive in childhood are more likely to be violent as adults.

Because of the severity of economic deprivation and inequality in South Africa, explanations of violent or criminal behaviour are often fairly mechanistic. Sometimes the personal experience of individuals is lost in the political analysis. What might be interesting is to talk more about how family and personal experience is linked to the social, economic and cultural realities already implicated in the ‘crime wave’. Offering psychological support for poor mothers and fathers so that they can – despite their difficulties – be more available to lis-

ten to and love their children would be important in preventing this pattern passing onto a second generation. Community, family and professional support for depressed mothers might be more effective in preventing crime in the long run, than putting more money into police and prisons. This is one of the reasons the UK government is funding the Sure Start programme.

Combatting the lie of 'you can have it all!'

James asks the interesting question of why have the British become more, rather than less, violent over the last forty years, when they have become several times richer, not poorer? Why are Third World nations not violent to the same degree? He concludes that relative inequality in incomes, combined with the *false promise of equality of opportunity* – the American 'anyone can run for president' is cited as a prime example – together with the 'American style' lack of welfare support for the disadvantaged families and low job quality are the major causes of violence in developing and developed nations alike.

James takes this argument further in his more recent book, *Britain on the Couch* (1998). It seems that it is only when things get better that 'trouble starts'. 'Under complete oppression – such as in the USSR and South Africa – it was very hard to imagine anything different, and people didn't feel entitled. Now that the TV is offering all the goodies you can have – and in practice, if you're poor, you can't – it starts to be very frustrating'. He comments that this consumer culture locates the cause of relative poverty in the individual,

even when they have no practical means of advancing themselves. People tell themselves that "It is no longer external circumstances to blame, if I can't have it, it's my fault".

In *Britain on the Couch*, James looks at how a winner-loser culture removes the restraints imposed by community, 'especially the channelling of frustration into political action'. This is replaced by the idea that competition is a virtue, and those who don't or can't compete are losers.

Depression and comparing yourself to others

He also looks at the effects of social comparison, at how people who are depressed make upward social comparisons ("How come I'm not as successful/ beautiful/loved as he/she is?") rather than downward ("How come I'm better off than them?") which increase the sense of isolation and humiliation. When downward comparisons are made by depressed people, it is often with a realistic sense of the practical limitations faced by people 'worse off than ourselves'. This is not applied to the self; people criticise themselves for not being better off (and they forget that those who are doing better may have had unfair advantages to begin with). And envy? "We can go two ways with envy", James says. "Communities can decide to contain it by co-operation, or get into competitiveness which only increases it. The latter can encourage the conditions for violence".

Valuing people?

Perhaps because of the isolation of South Africa from the West during the final years of apartheid and the community solidarity

built up during the struggle for democracy, we are not yet in the grip of a 'winner-loser' culture. However the dissolution of community structures, as parliamentary democracy replaced local organisation, has, in an odd way opened the door for this winner/loser culture. Despite the call for *Ubuntu* there seems to have been a shift from community solidarity to a 'money equals status' hierarchy. Not that there is anything wrong with people having money; it is just that over-valuing only money in a country where so many people are trapped in poverty, means that half the population are defined as 'losers' by that value system.

It is true that community action for economic justice might do more than mental health projects to alleviate the depression that comes from a desperate struggle to survive. But, as the experience in the UK shows, there is more to people than money or the lack of it.

Feeling loved, cared for, appreciated, supported are powerful supports that money cannot buy, and that even those who are poor can have. This is not, as the UK research shows, just 'touchy feely' psychology; it is a crucial element in building a safe and secure society.

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SAN STORY OF THE WHITE BIRD

In a time that stretched back to when the land was young, there lived a clan of people in a far away place. They were a contented people. Now within this clan their lived the finest hunter ever known. So fine was his skill that the people never felt the pain of hunger. On a day that was no different from the others that had past the hunter was walking with bow and arrow ready. In the heat of the day the hunter stopped at a pool of water to quench his thirst. As he bent to drink, the hunter saw the reflection of the most truly magnificent White Bird. He looked up as quickly as he could, but to no avail the bird was out of site. For all the rest of the day the hunter thought only of the beautiful White Bird and such was his distraction that he was no longer able to hunt and returned to the village that night with

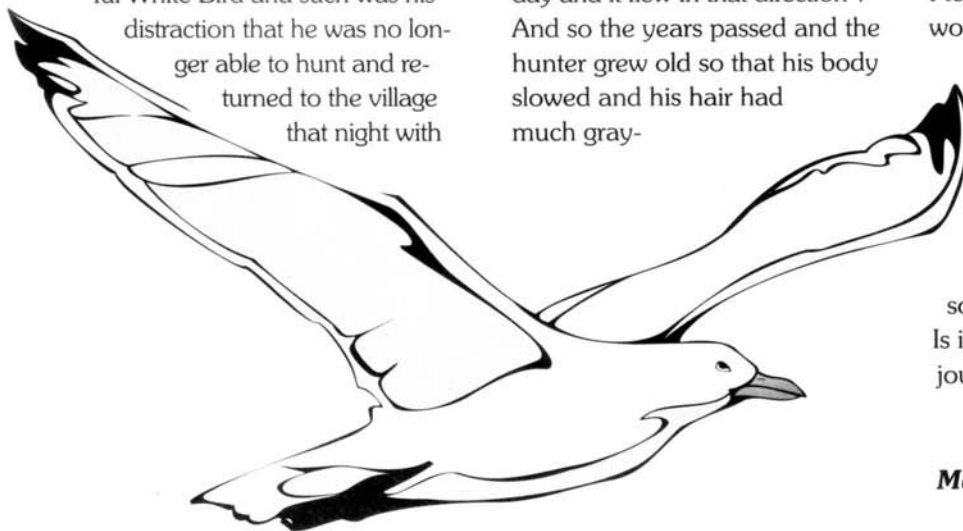
no meat for the people. The days past and the people grew hungry, but every thought, every action, every dream of the hunter was concerned with the beauty and magnificence of the White Bird. On a day that was to be a sad one for the people that hunter declared that he was going to walk and look for the White Bird, that he would not return until he had found it. And so he left. He walked for many days until he came to another village. Here he asked the people if they had seen the White Bird. "Yes" was their reply, "it flew past only yesterday, it flew in that direction". And the hunter would walk on, until he came to another village. Again he would ask and again they would reply: "Yes only yesterday and it flew in that direction". And so the years passed and the hunter grew old so that his body slowed and his hair had much gray-

ness. Again he came to a village, a village at the base of a mountain. "Ah!" the people cried when he asked of the White Bird, "yes it lives here on top of the mountain". The old hunter set off to climb the mountain, but he was old and weary. As he climbed he realised that he did not have the strength left to climb any further, that it was his time to pass into the spirit world. He lay down with sadness in his heart as he had never again seen the magnificent White Bird. And as his eyelids fluttered closed for the final time he felt a rush of air as the White Bird flew past and with his last sight he looked at the white feather that had come to rest in his outstretched hand.

I tell this story in the spirit of our work, of the seeking for that perfect approach, method, intervention.

We will walk our lifetime searching for this, the likelihood is that it won't be found in the here and now... maybe finding the solution is not our prerogative. Is it not rather how we walk the journey? □

Mark Gamble



THE HELENVALE FAMILY PRESERVATION PROJECT

This overview by Valmai Bubb of the Port Elizabeth Child and Family Welfare Society reflects the positive influence of services rendered to the Helenvale Community in the Eastern Cape, selected as one of the IMC's "New Initiatives" in the "Make a Difference" Programme.

This innovative community based programme functions according to the principles and minimum standards of the Transformation in Child and Youth Care Services Policy. The staff component of a Project Manager, 2 Social Workers and 3 Social Auxiliary Workers from the community work unit of PE Childline and Family Centre received training in Family Preservation from trainers from the Inanda Project. The project has been operating for the past 12 months and aims to:

- provide intensive support to 'at risk' families where the removal of children is imminent;
- prevent the removal of children and keep the family as the primary caregiver of children;
- reunify families where children are in alternative statutory care (residential or foster care);
- provide Youth Mentor and Support Services and programmes to "youth at risk";
- provide developmental services to children of all developmental stages through community responsibility and participatory efforts;

- facilitate community and neighbourhood capacity building.

This project is one of the few which has replicated all 4 components of the Inanda Family Preservation Project namely:

- Intensive family support services;
- Family Reunification Services
- Community Conferencing
- Youth Mentorship and Support Services

Intensive Family Support Services

This programme provides a 24 hour support service to families experiencing a crisis so as to prevent out-of-home placements for

children and young people at risk. These services are community based, family and child centred, flexible and are of 8 to 12 week duration per family. A unique aspect is working in the moment which brings about growth and success.

To date we have been able to prevent the removal of 32 children from their parental homes. The very first family we accepted into family preservation proved to be non-qualifiers, but making a mistake has surely made us more alert to our selection criteria – it was thus a learning experience.

Family Reunification Services

These services are directed at re-



Ubuntu Play Group in the back of Ubuntu Mother's Home

unifying families where children have been placed in residential foster care out of the community. Often contact with the families has ceased and the children have been alienated from their communities. At present services are being rendered to 6 families and one child has been successfully reunified with his family. Four children who were totally alienated prior to our involvement have been reintroduced to their community, and two children have re-established contact with a father with whom they had lost contact. These services are about mending broken relationships, about preparing whole communities for the return of the child – it is extremely rewarding work. Both the Intensive Family support and Family Reunification Services are rendered by a multi-disciplinary team made up of a Social Worker, Social Auxiliary Worker and Community Facilitator – and when necessary, this team is expanded by drawing in other members, such as a teacher, a minister, etc. Complimentary support services have also been developed to give support to families benefiting from our services and these include:

Neighbourhood Friends

Neighbouring friends are volunteers who are trained to assist their neighbours in crisis. They are taught to act as an overnight safehouse for victims of abuse and also to offer support services to families who have received intensive Family Support and Reunification Services.

After-School Development Centre

This is an innovative programme where the primary school child

can find information for projects, develop his talents in sketching, painting, choir singing and social skills. The programme is designed to develop the child holistically in ways that are no longer being addressed by schools.

Ubuntu Play Groups

“Ubuntu Mothers” are trained to run informal play groups on a voluntary basis. This programme prepares the pre-school child for formal schooling and enables the parent to seek employment.

Parenting Skills

The first 3 sessions concentrate on their childhood experiences of how they were parented, owning what was good and rejecting what was bad. A special module has been developed for the teenage mother.

Enrichment Services

Monthly programmes are presented to the community at large which cover topics such as human rights, children’s rights, child abuse and neglect, aids education, etc.

Community Conferencing

We are actively involved in community capacity building in churches, schools and clubs as well as through our involvement with a number of committees such as:

*Helenvale Community Labour and Economic Committee
Health and Welfare Committee
Community Police Forum*

On Community level we assist with poverty alleviation projects and a community creche. We have also enabled cross-cultural bridging at the creche, ubuntu groups and Youth Forum.

Youth Mentorship and Support Services

The community’s youth have been empowered by the establishment of the Helenvale Victory Youth Forum. The youth forum organises sport tournaments, outings and hikes. They meet on Friday evenings for social and life skills activities.

A Youth assessment programme is being developed as an early intervention strategy to prevent youth from getting deeper into the justice system. Together with the mentorship component it will serve as a diversion programme for youth in trouble with the law. The development of a youth centre to house these services is being investigated and Peer Counsellors will also be trained at high schools to run youth desks.

Evaluation

We are not going to create a quick-fix in Helenvale. There is a lot of healing and learning which needs to take place. Intensive PRO work has been undertaken. We have linked with Stepping Stones, UPE, Children’s Homes and Phandul’wazi Life Centre in King William’s Town, amongst others.

The success of this programme is to a large extent dependent on the active involvement of volunteers and is cost effective when one takes into account that it costs R24 000 to keep one child in an institution for one year. All in all we are proud of our project. We have become Helenvale’s people and they have become our people. With a foundation like that we can only go from strength to strength. □



LIFE IN AN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT

'Child and Youth Care' Interviews Johanna Vlotman, domestic worker at James House, Hout Bay, Cape Town

Johanna has been working at James House for the past twelve years. She has two boys, aged 13 and 17, is fostering one of James House's children and has taken in someone who needs a place to stay in addition to having 'boarders' on her plot. This is her experience of living in Mandela Park, the informal settlement in Hout Bay.



Where are you from originally, Johanna?

J: I was born in Saron and my family moved to Hout Bay when I was a baby.

Tell us how you reached Mandela Park.

J: We first lived at Scotts Estate and then had to move from farm to farm because of the Group Areas Act. We were evicted from Dormans (then Davids Kraal) and ended up at Mandela Park. After 3 years we received plots here. We moved here as a community from Dormans but became estranged after we got our plots.

What is your experience of Mandela Park?

J: As more people entered Mandela Park, fights increased and there was tension. All the people don't get along. There is a lot of jealousy.

How have you coped under the circumstances?

J: Everyone knows who I am, because I always greet and help where I can. I get along with most people and also mind my own business.

What are the most difficult times to cope with?

J: Over weekends when the shebeens are busy and the music plays loudly all night. In the places where there are no toilets, no water, and no electricity, there is dirt all over. The council only fetches dirt once a week. When you step outside the smell is not nice. Our air is full of pollution. The people living in our yards worry me most. On a Monday morning I wake up with a headache.

Can you talk to anyone about these problems?

J: There was a committee who did not do anything about our problems. They also did not want the police to be called in. Organisations from overseas have come to help in the area.

How do the children grow up in Mandela Park?

It is not good for the children but we have learnt to accept this. We make friends with the other residents and try to respect one another. I learnt Xhosa when I was small. We are one nation now. Our children all play together and accept each other.



things and become upset and scared when the electricity goes off. It is not my wish to leave Hout Bay.

How do you feel about all the influences on the children?

J: While we as parents are there we must struggle with our children. The seed has been given to us.

In spite of the hardships you are raising two teenage sons, a foster child and sharing your home and plot with others. What can we do to further protect children?

J: We need to sit down and talk to our children and engage with them (ordentlik praat). There is hope. The future is bright for us (Die toekoms is maanskyn). □

There is thus a spirit of tolerance and openness in spite of all the difficulties that you face. What can the parents do to build on this?

J: We must stand together. Sometimes we make promises and then we change our minds.

You spoke of the challenges and that there was not a sense of community at first.

What is the situation now?

J: Now we are becoming stronger because we belong here. We feel better now because of the Council structure here. We can go to the office if we have complaints.

What does the future look like for the children?

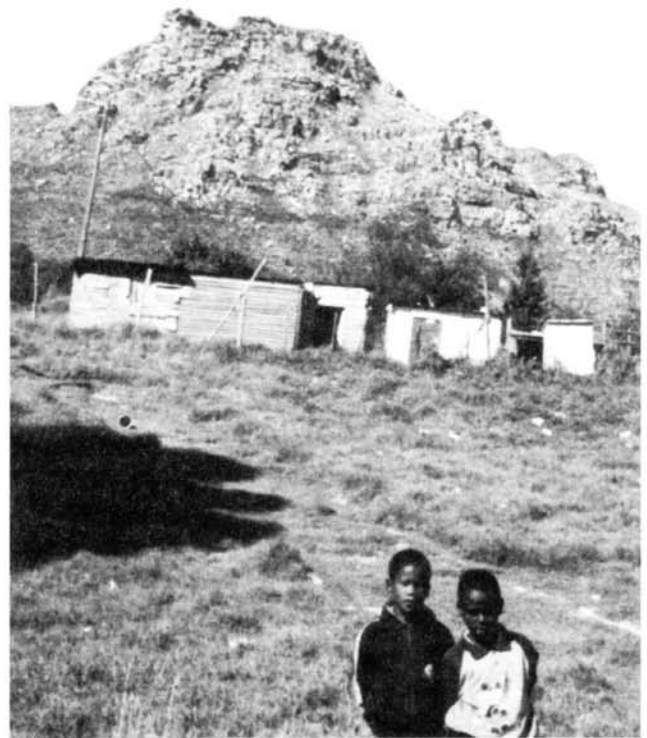
J: Children must stay with their parents to get love. My children are my children. Things will change. The parents who drink so much neglect their children. The lack of water and toilets make children sick.

How do you feel about Mandela Park?

As a small group it was better.

There were times when I wished I could move away. Since the Council took over things are better. I am more for myself because I work all day. I am always friendly with everyone and share where I can because we are all human.

I was raised in the Christian tradition and although I have strayed, I am back on the path. Even with the mountain fire, I told my children to sleep because it is school the next day. I did not want them to worry. We must go through storms. Sharing our plot is hard but the boarders will receive their own plots. I have experienced eating bread and water, living on dungfloors (misvloere), and using lamps. Today's children are experiencing all the modern



Relationships we build with children and youth



"Do you know what I would really like?" asked Nerina, grinning into her child care worker Margaret's face. "I would like a boy friend who treats me like a lady! He wouldn't have to be cute or even rich — just treat me like a lady."

Margaret replied: "You know the saying — 'Nice work if you can get it'." They both laughed.

Margaret thought back. It was only seven or eight months earlier that Nerina had arrived in her group, a mixture of anger and uncertainty, in all sorts of trouble, and keeping all of the staff strictly at arms length. The director had warned the child and youth care workers at the time: "Our relationship with Nerina right now is pretty scratchy — but don't accept that it will stay like that. Our job is to move the relationship along. With her family in the state it is, we're all she has, and we don't have much time."

Most of our relationships with new kids are like those between teachers and new pupils in a school. We size each other up and tread warily for a while. The teacher sees a pupil in terms of academic potential and performance and in terms of attitude and behavior in class; the pupil sees the teacher as staff. But we who work with children in child and youth care settings cannot

be satisfied with just a staff-child relationship. We are having to catch up with more than school work and we are preparing the child for more than school leaving. We are often having to make up for years of lost or troubled experience with parents and adults and neighbors — and we are preparing the child for life.

From staff to adults

So Margaret's and Nerina's director is right. We may start off with a staff-pupil relationship, which is based very much on roles and authority and external control. This formal period in the relationship is nevertheless extremely useful. Within the structure of the program, we at least get to spend time with Nerina — we work together at tasks, spend time in activity and recreation groups, eat together — where normally we might not easily have come into contact with her at all.

But Nerina will have to manage relationships not only with authority figures, but also with people at a more mutual and co-operative level. So in the life space we facilitate (help, encourage, promote) all of her interpersonal relationships, not only with her peers, but also between her and ourselves. We must consciously move from being staff members towards being part of a wider circle of adults whom she doesn't otherwise have in her life.

So (as in all families) we move beyond parental authority and discipline to being just "other people" — people with ideas, skills, feelings and hurts. Nerina has probably lived in very difficult circumstances at home, perhaps with absent parents, with poverty, with alcoholism, with violence. Now, as close people in her life, we have the opportunity to fill out her personal picture of what adults and people are: so we become role-models, with whom she can practice being a person-with-others.

If our relationship with Nerina sticks at the staff-pupil level, it is our responsibility to find ways of moving it forward. If, after some months, we find ourselves complaining that she is "disobedient" or "defiant" or "unmanageable" then we are certainly stuck at the staff-pupil relationship.

From adults to friends

It is one thing for Nerina to get a fuller picture of people from her role-models. It is much harder for her to build her self-confidence and trust as she tries out her own roles — inevitably failing and trying again. We are seldom much good in institutions at allowing young people to build a capacity for intimacy, an essential element of her late adolescent and young adult relationships. With its qualities of self-disclosure, trust, sharing and

confidentiality, this capacity is only achieved through deeper levels of understanding, acceptance and sympathy as she experiments in her attempts to succeed in her many life tasks — things she will get from a true friend who cares about her, no matter what she does.

In short, we do not want Nerina to grow up with an unconfident nature and a need forever to defend herself and her feelings.

Just as we had to move from a teacher-pupil relationship to the adult-child relationship, so we must also move to the friend-friend relationship — or at

least satisfy ourselves that she can build such a relationship with somebody. On our staff

team it is often necessary to ask: “Who among us likes this young

person, thinks highly of her, would be able to offer these deeper relationships?” Anyone who says “I can,” or “I would like to do that,” is a vital staff resource for this child.

Nerina probably didn't have a secure authority relationship at her own home — a sort of teacher-pupil relationship through which she learned basic discipline as a young child. She probably also didn't have reliable and consistent adult-child relationships from which she could gain reasonable pictures of people and roles. Most of all, she very likely did not have the accepting and supportive relationship of a true friend.

We as child and youth care workers must be able to offer all of these relationships — and more important, we must understand when it is necessary for us to move on from one to another. □

From: CYCOnline - February 2000



Lolo Sibuk, *Isopeng Project*, 1997

THE STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE

Jeannie Karth

The Strengths Perspective is often thought of as something complex that we all have to be trained to apply. However we can begin by asking simple and ordinary questions about a particular young person. It is often surprising to see how quickly one's picture of the young person changes as one develops a sense of his/her capacity.

- Does the child have a good appetite
- Can s/he behave during meals
- Can s/he dress her/himself
- Can s/he bath/shower her/himself
- Can s/he make her/his bed
- Does s/he take care of her/his clothes
- Is her/his cupboard tidy
- Is s/he well built and healthy
- Does s/he go to school
- Does s/he do her/his homework
- Can s/he read and write
- Does s/he like playing

- Does s/he have friends
- Is s/he good to siblings
- Is s/he polite to anyone at all
- Is s/he kind to animals
- Can s/he go to the shops on her/his own
- Can s/he catch a taxi, train, bus on her/his own
- Does s/he know how to use the telephone and remember important numbers

The list is endless but you will find that every time you say “yes” to one of these questions you are revising a negative picture of a child. It seems that it is a question of practice. We are so used to seeing all the things we have to help the child with that we forget what is there already. It helps to change one's relationship with a child when s/he starts hearing positive things about her/himself. So choose a child with whom you struggle and set to work finding some “yes” answers. □

CYC Workers: Caring for ourselves if we want to care for others

Nomonde Dingiswayo shares her experience of feeling cared for when she recently participated in an Educo Wilderness Programme

CARING FOR CARERS/
UKUKHATHALELA
ABAKHATHALELI (CCW'S)
NGU NOMONDE
DINGISWAYO KING
WILLIAMS TOWN CHILD
AND YOUTH CARE
CENTRE PROGRAMME
CO-ORDINATOR

AMAGQABANTSHINTSHI
NOOKWAKUSENZEKA
APHO

Usuku Lokuqala

Samkelwa ngoMthunzi noColeridge sazazisa omnye komnye. Safika sesilungiselelwe isidlo sasemini. Emva kwesidlo saye sajikeleziswa sibuka indawo leyo. Sathabatha uhambo olufutshane senyuka intaba. Kwakunganyanzelwa mntu kulonto kwahamba umntu onomdla, kodwa saye sahamba sonke sihamba sifotwa. Imvula yaye isina kakhulu kodwa sasilonwabele olo hambo, sasonwabe emiphfumleni. Nangona sasihamba sisiwa nje kuba kwakumanzi sayingeyongxaki leyo kuba sasisazi ukuba sikhuselekile. Sabuya sele litshonile ilanga, sadla isidlo sangokuhlwa, sadlala imidlalwana.

Usuku Lwesibini

Imvula yayisina kakhulu, yonke into sayenza sihleli endlwini. Saye sazoba imithi yobom umntu ngamnye. Umntu ngamnye kwafika ixesha lokuba achaze ngobom bakhe ukusuka ekukhuleni, yayilithuba elinzima elo kodwa elimshiya umntu eziva ekhaphu-khaphu. Into eyaye ingamandla uninzi lwethu sasichaza ubunzima obukhulu esisuka kubo. Saye sanikwa amazwi enkuthazo nathi sikhuthazana. UColeridge wasinika incwadi zokuba umntu ngamnye abhale nantonina kuzo, zibizwa ngokuba ziJournal. Yeyonanto yathabatha ixesha elide leyo, kodwa thina sashiyeka sikhaphu-khaphu ngokwasemphefumleni. Lonto yakha nokuthembana okukhulu phakathi kwethu.

Usuku Lwesithathu

Sachazelana indlela esiziva ngayo emva kokwabelana ngenzima esikhule phantsi kwazo sashiyeka sonwabile kuba saziva sikhathalelekile. Sadlala imidlalo emifutshane sacula nokucula. Ilanga laye lishushu sathabatha uhambo sibuka iindidi zezilwanyana. Sasihamba sisitya izimuncu-muncu. Sabuya uColeridge selesenzele isidlo sasemini. Sadlala imidlalo

emifutshane emva kwemidlalo safumana nethuba lokuqubha edamini. Kwakumnandi kakhulu siqubha ngaphandle koloyiko kuba sasizazi ukuba sikhuselekile. Sabuya saphumla kuba sasidiniwe sadla isidlo sasemini emva koko sadlala.

Usuku Lwesine

Saye sahamba sachazelana ngamaphupha ethu apha ebomini sakugqiba sachola izinto ezinokuba sisikhumbuzo salandawo sasikuyo. Sabhala nokubhala ngezinto ezahlukeneyo esifuna ukuthetha ngazo ndaye ndabhala umbongo mna. Saye soja inyama kwisidlo sangokuhlwa. Uyakuhaphela ke mfundi ukuba yonke into endiyithethayo inesidlo phakathi, lonto ithetha ukuba ukukhathalelwa kunxulumene nokutya okuyimfuno emizimbeni yethu. Kulonto ndiye ndafunda ukuba njengokuba ukutya kuyimfuno kum kunjalo nasebantwaneni.

Ekubuyeni kwethu sibuyela emsebenzini sinomoya omhle sithembana omnye nomnye ethakazelela ukukhathalela ulutsha.

For an English version of this article please contact the NACCW Head Office.

The Argument for Affordable HIV/AIDS Treatment

Anneke Meerkotter, a volunteer for the Treatment Action Campaign, briefly explores the role that the provision of treatment can play in alleviating the burden of HIV/AIDS on working class women who bear the brunt of this epidemic.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on Women

HIV/AIDS has had an enormous impact on already poor communities. A large part of the family income is spent on health care for the infected and eventually funeral costs as a result of HIV/AIDS. This impact should be seen in the context of vast unemployment, where each breadwinner has to support many dependants. Sometimes family members, mostly women, must give up paid employment to look after the sick. Children facing such dire circumstances are affected in their health, mortality, education and overall quality of life. Discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS and their families often makes an already unbearable situation worse. In rural areas a lack of access to even meagre health services compounds the problem. Women are more at risk of HIV infections. There seems to be a link between the incidence of HIV and issues like the lack of access to information and treatment of sexually transmitted infections, the unequal power relations between men and women, the development of the genital tract, and the higher risk of injury in the vagina. Campaigns for treatment are often led by women who through

their experiences of bearing the responsibility of health care, either formally as nurses and social workers, or informally as care givers, mothers, sisters, grandmothers and partners within the family and the broader community, have a better understanding of the limitations of present reforms and the challenges that lie ahead. Unfortunately this vision has grown out of necessity, with women being forced to carry the tasks of providing home-based care where public health services are inadequate.

Providing Primary Health Care

Primary Health Care includes nutrition, safe water, basic sanitation, maternal and child care, prevention and control of endemic diseases, education, and the provision of essential drugs, amongst others. Essential drugs are those defined as satisfying the health care needs of the majority of the population and which should therefore be available at all times in adequate amounts and in appropriate dosage forms. Throughout the world people are dying for no other reason than that treatment costs are too high.

Challenging Drug Companies and Governments

Governments need to develop a policy to address, at least, the access of poor communities to essential drugs and adequate health care. A major problem with the provision of essential drugs lies with the prices charged by drug companies. Government needs to join community campaigns arguing for a reduction in the excessive profits drug companies make on HIV/AIDS and other drugs.

Conclusion

HIV/AIDS can be treated. People with HIV/AIDS can live long and productive lives if they have access to treatment, clean water and food. It is up to community organisations, trade unions, religious bodies, and non-governmental organisations to learn from other countries' struggles and face the challenge of making the fight against HIV/AIDS an essential part of their daily struggles against injustice. □

*An extract from Gender News Vol 4
No.1 Feb/March 2000*

The Treatment Action Campaign can be contacted through Elize and Vicky
Tel. (021) 4235026
Fax (021) 4235046

Information Day at the Reamogetswe Secure Care Centre

On the 15th March 2000 a very successful Information Day was held at the Reamogetswe Secure Care Centre at Sonop near Brits. Thirty six people attended.

The idea of this special day was to promote Child and Youth Care in the North West Province as not many people seem to know that such a profession exists.

The Manager, Mr Nkwapa Moloto, welcomed everyone. The chief social worker, Mrs Faith Namathe gave a short talk on our Open Days which takes place every second Wednesday of the month. Mrs Linda de Villiers, Head of the Care Unit spoke on how the profession has evolved over the years in South Africa. Mrs Anna Sepeng, a senior child and youth care worker, gave an address on the different roles and functions of child and youth care workers in different settings. Another senior child and youth care worker, Mrs Mpopi Boikanyo, shared with the group the different courses which are available through the NACCW and Technikon SA, for people who would like to become child and youth care workers. There was a short certification ceremony where a number of staff members received their Basic Qualification in Secure Care Certificate and some received a Fire-Fighting Certificate.

The day ended with a tour around the Centre and then refreshments for all in the dining-room. Mr Moloto closed with a poem which he had written himself.

The Centre plans to hold Information Days once every quarter to promote Child and Youth Care in the province.

Linda de Villiers

Senior Child and Youth Care Worker



Theme: Break the Silence

Dates: 9-14 July 2000

Venue: International Convention Centre, Durban

Contact: Wayne Alexander

Email: waynea@aids2000.com

I work in Nairobi with a project called the Ukweli



Home of Hope. This

relatively small street children's project was begun in 1995 by a Maryknoll Father and Brother. I am also a Maryknoll Lay missionary helping out with this Program. It now consists of a Drop-In Center (kiosk) for street kids in the Westlands area of Nairobi and a Home for about 20 boys who are referred there from the Drop In Center.

I would be very interested in receiving your journal and in sharing it with our Ukweli Home of Hope staff and others who visit and work with us. I also work with the Kibagare Good News Centre which is a feeding and educational program for over 1200 orphans and destitute children in Kibagare village and Kangemi slum on the outskirts of Nairobi. We have an office for the Ukweli Project but are waiting for a P.O. Box number still. In the meantime, please use this postal mailing address for sending the journal to:

Vicki Simon

MMAF (Maryknoll Mission Association of the Faithful)

P.O. Box 43058

Nairobi, Kenya

I look forward to your reply and to receiving the journal.

Sincerely yours
Vicki Simon

FAMILY SUPPORT TEAM MEMBERS IN NEED OF EMPLOYMENT

The Family Support Team is one of the support structures developed within PROJECT GO, which operated in the Western Cape during 1998/1999.

This team was developed to promote effective family support services in the Western Cape in line with the Transformation of the Child and Youth Care System.

The team was further involved in supporting, assisting and empowering families and practitioners in the reunification of families. It was also involved with relationship building and capacity building. There was a one-year contract with the IMC. Near the end of the contract and after a DQA of the team it was agreed that a new contract be formed in order to deal with the many requests for assistance from a variety of organisations and service providers.

The team has broken down much antagonism, skepticism and opposition in the way of working with families according to a strengths-based and developmental approach.

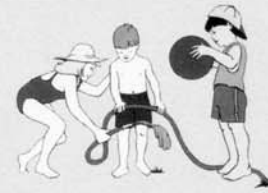
Team members have participated in an extensive training programme.

The Team members are the breadwinners of their respective families and will be unemployed after May 2000. This valuable group of people with all their knowledge, skills and experience will soon be lost to families and communities.

Thus, we appeal to any organisation or institution in the Child and Youth Care field or any person in a Managerial position to inform us if you are able to employ a Team member or if you need more information on the project.

**Please contact Coordinator of the Team:
Kathy Scott at James House, Hout Bay**

**Tel: (021) 790-5616/4581/0928
or 082-259-1792**



**Games for
laughter**

**Games to
build Unity**

**Games to
understand
Trust**

**Games that
you can play
with your
kids**

**... In your
programme**

Mark Gamble will be offering a course in Games, Team and Trust Initiatives.

8:30 – 1:00
25th – 28th July 2000
in Durban

Cost: R150 per person

**This Course is interactive
and is limited to 14 people**

Enquiries:
Mark 082 6760565

**We share responsibility for
creating the external world
by projecting either a spirit of light
or a spirit of shadow
on that which is 'other' than us.**

**Either a spirit of hope or a
spirit of despair.**

**Either an inner confidence in
wholeness and integration,
or an inner terror about life
being diseased
and ultimately terminal.**

**We have a choice about what we are
going to project,
and in that choice we help create
the world that is.**

P. Palmer