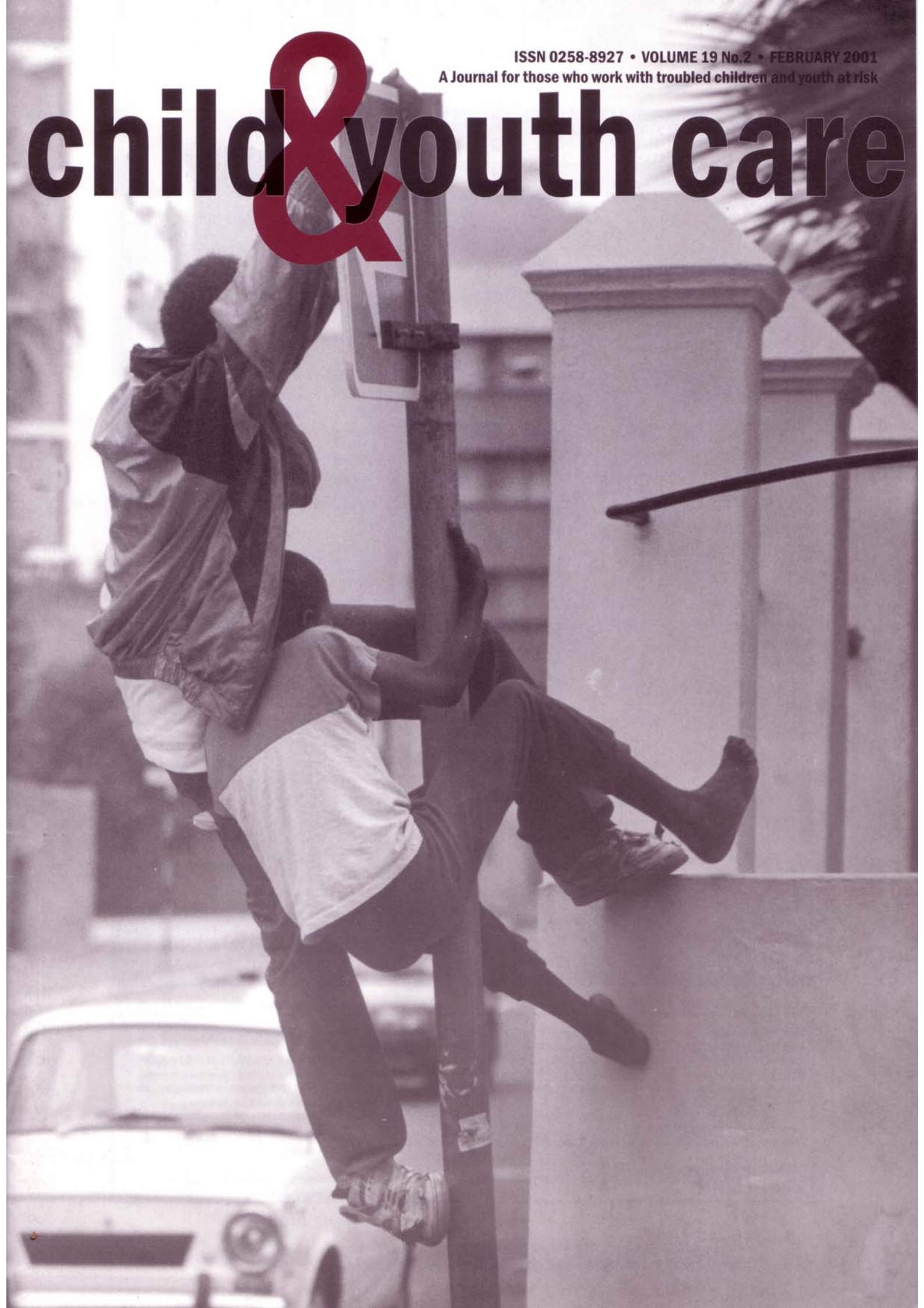


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A Journal for those who work with troubled children and youth at risk

# child & youth care



## Let us come together – about *this* child



**W**e have much for which to thank the founders of the NACCW. Brian Gannon, Ernie Nightingale, Roger Pitt and our other great child and youth care elders were people of foresight who recognised in forming the Association that child and youth care practitioners are important resources to one another. They knew that in coming together we would engage in dialogue which would expand our horizons and mold us into a collective voice – a prerequisite for advocating on behalf of those whom we serve. Our Association was born in order to increase our effectiveness, to provide a vehicle for connecting with others in the same field whose different circumstances and experiences can profoundly impact on our own.

The Biennial Conference has provided a national platform for cross pollination since 1977. Beginning in Cape Town in that year Conference then moved to two other centres, Durban and then Johannesburg. Two dozen years later we have another centre in the Eastern Cape joining the Conference hosting circuit.

In 1977 in Cape Town just over 100 people met from different parts of the country. We expect to host 300-400 delegates in Port Elizabeth this year from all corners of the country. Child and youth care practitioners working in a variety of settings, in the community and in residential settings, from rural and urban areas will have opportunities to share wisdom and experiences both in the formal program and the (often even richer) informal program! We expect to host child and youth care practitioners from both government and non-government facilities as well as those connected to the Education Departments in various provinces.

Adding to this rich mix of locals will be a group of delegates from other African countries who will be sponsored by the Royal Netherlands Embassy to attend the Biennial Conference. We hope this

very exciting development will strengthen our connections with other African countries and stimulate continued networking of those working with children in difficult circumstances across our continent. We look forward to hosting a contingent of colleagues from Namibia as well as delegates from Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Ghana.

Frank Mulhern and colleagues from the USA are also expected to share with us – along with a group of youth – their experience of using the Circle of Courage in working with youth in New York. We hope to host Danish colleagues from SL, our partner Association as well as colleagues from the Netherlands. So the first part of the theme of our conference is fitting... we will be coming together here in South Africa from all parts of our country, continent and world to share our concern for "this child".

The NACCW is also privileged to be hosting as keynote speaker De John Seita a psychologist whose books and writings have contributed to our knowledge here in South Africa. Drawing on his own experience as a young person in difficult circumstances in the worlds richest country, Dr Seita's work has helped us to understand the experience of this child. It is thus particularly fitting to have someone with both an academic and a personal experience of our field to come to South Africa to set the tone for us as we come together to deepen our capacity to serve children, youth and families on the levels of practice, program and policy in the year 2001.

See you at Conference...

**Merle Allsopp**

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## ERRATA: January 2001 issue

The HIV/AIDS article on page 9 under HIV Testing and non-discrimination should read:

"All participants strongly supported the SALC recommendation that **a code of good practice should be developed** around this issue."

The printing error is regretted.

## 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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## Practice

### *U nga timi ndzilo hi ndzilo*

*Tsonga Proverb:*

**Do not extinguish a fire with fire.**

**A**nger is a normal emotion or feeling. Anger may be a very useful feeling as it can motivate and energise. It can also lead to change where change is necessary. However, how we act while we are angry may not always be good and useful. Anger may lead to aggressive and destructive behaviour. Our task is to help children to express their anger and behave in acceptable ways while they are angry. Children model their behaviour on what adults do and say. This means we have to be skilled in dealing with our own anger.

#### **Quick ANGER SELF-CHECK**

- What makes you angry?
- What do you do when you are angry?
- How do you deal with your own anger?
- How do you express yourself when you are angry?
- What do you do when children get angry?

You may want to discuss your answers with a friend or colleague to get some feedback. Perhaps you react differently to anger, depending on the situation. Talk about the situations where you find it difficult to cope with anger.

It is not useful or appropriate to:

- Hit, shout, swear or lose your temper when angry.
- Repress or reject or deny your anger.
- Respond to others' anger with anger.



# Understanding and Dealing with Anger

*Edna Rooth of the Schools Development Unit, UCT helps us to teach young people constructive ways of dealing with anger. Adults can also learn a method or two.*

- Take no responsibility for your anger – blame others or events.
- Put yourself down or feel guilty for feeling angry.
- Feel angry most of the time.
- Allow your anger to turn to rage and aggression.

#### **UNDERSTANDING ANGER**

Anger is a very powerful emotion that many have many causes. Anger is often used as a defence for some other feelings. Sometimes children feel angry because they are afraid, frustrated, confused, shy, or anxious. In children, anger is often a reaction to sadness. We need to understand that anger may have deeper causes than we can immediately see. Unresolved anger can lead to rage, aggression and uncontrolled behaviour. Fre-

quently children react to anger with aggression. This is usually because they have seen and experienced people modelling aggressive behaviour.

#### **ACTIVITIES TO HELP CHILDREN DEAL WITH ANGER**

Note that these are not punishments. Rather, they are fun activities offering learning opportunities. It is useful to have a brief discussion about anger and other feelings after each activity. Get the children used to talking freely about their feelings, without fear of punishment or ridicule.

#### **Time-Out**

This is removing the child from the situation where she may hurt herself or others, or

distract others. This is not a punishment, but rather creating a space for the child to sit alone, quietly and collect herself. The time-out should not be too long, as it may give the child too much time to dwell on the anger without thinking of ways to resolve the anger. A few minutes are usually enough.

It is useful if children get used to the idea of a time-out, and even have the knowledge to ask for a time-out when they feel the need. You may also give yourself a time-out!

***In children, anger is often a reaction to sadness.***

***Listening In and Out***

Ask the child to sit quietly and close her eyes. She has to send her listening out and listen to the furthest sounds she can hear. She has to listen to sounds that are beyond the room, beyond the house, beyond the street.

After a minute, gently ask the child to bring her listening in and listen to the closest sounds she can hear: her own sounds, her breathing, and her heartbeat.

After half a minute, gently tell the child to send the listening out again and listen to the furthest, far away sounds she can hear. After another 30 seconds, ask her to bring her listening in again and listen to the closest sounds she can hear in the room.

Very slowly ask the child to stretch, sigh and yawn as she opens her eyes. Do not rush the child or speak in a loud voice.

Conclude by asking the child if she would like to say anything about how she is feeling.

This exercise can also be used with a group of children. It calms them down and helps them to listen to each other. It is useful for preventing a loss of self-control.

***Deep Breathing***

Get the child to stand or lie down. Ask the child to breath in deeply, put his hands on his tummy to feel the breath, and hold for 3 seconds. Then slowly breathe out. Repeat a few times. The focus is on breathing slowly and deeply. When we are angry, we often breathe very shallowly and deprive the brain of oxygen. Then it becomes difficult to control our anger.

After a few deep breathing exercises, ask the child to talk about his feelings.

***Drum Drama***

Try to get a drum for the programme. If you cannot get one, use an upturned rubbish bin or a cake tin or a cardboard box.

Allow the angry child to beat the drum. Tell him to beat the drum as much as he wants and to develop a drum beat that explains what he is feeling.

After a few minutes, ask the child to express himself in words.

It is a good idea to leave the drum in the same place. Children can use the drum when they feel the need. Also make sure you let them use the drum for expressing other emotions. You do not want them to associate the drum only with anger.

The drum serves as an outlet for anger and may prevent the child hitting out at other children. The child is also learning to express his feelings.

***Pass the Frown/Smile***

Get the children to stand in a circle. Start the group off by giving a serious frown and say that the child next to you must pass the frown on. Give each child a chance to frown and pass on.

Ask the children to talk about the implications of this exercise. Sometimes we get angry because others are angry – but do we need to? It is important that children realise that it is their choice to feel angry or not.

End this exercise by passing the smile on. It usually ends in giggles!

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES**

Physical activity is a way to channel anger. It is essential that children have an outlet for their feelings. Physical activity not only prevents anger, but also helps children to cope with anger.

***Run-Run Game***

This is a useful game for indoors when it is raining or dark.

Get the children to stand in their own space. They have to run on the spot according to instructions you will give them. If you have music available, you can use music to help.

***It is essential that children have an outlet for their feelings.***

First run on the spot to get the feel of running on the spot – this means you do not run around the room, but stay in one place. If children find it difficult or keep bumping into each other, draw a chalk circle for each child on the floor – they have to stay in that circle.

Now run very fast, still run-

## Practice

ning on the spot. Swing your arms, move those legs!

Slow down and stand still.

Now you need to get fit, so run with your knees up, imagine you are running up steps.

And lastly, imagine you are running a lap of honour after winning the Olympic gold medal! The fans are cheering, trumpets are blaring, and you are the star of the show! Wave to the crowds, smile for the photographers!

Relax.

### **Walk the Walk!**

Get the children to walk by stamping their feet. Call out the different walks for them to walk. You can use music to go with the different walks, but that is not essential. Allow them to make as much noise as they want by stamping their feet!

- Walk an angry walk.
- Walk a scared walk
- Walk a peaceful walk
- Walk a happy walk.

[You can add to this activity by getting the children to sing songs to go with each walk- they make up the words themselves!]

### **MIMES & MOVEMENTS**

This is a similar activity. Call out instructions:

- Make a fist
- Clench your teeth
- Shout as loudly as you can
- Jump up and down
- Frown
- Smile
- Laugh as much as you can

Briefly discuss with the children. Ask them how they felt during this activity.

### **Angry Dance/Happy Dance**

Get children into small groups. Ask them to develop and present a dance that shows anger. They can call it their angry dance. Get each small group to present their dance and get the other children to join in each dance.

Have a brief discussion afterwards. Get the children to talk about what their dances meant, how they felt and ask them to suggest ways of coping with anger.

End off by getting the children in the same groups, and asking them to develop and present a happy dance.

It is important that both anger and happy feelings are accepted, but try to always end an exercise on a happier note, so as not to leave the children with unresolved feelings of anger.

### **HINTS FOR DEALING WITH ANGER**

*If we can control ourselves in one moment of anger, we could stop ourselves feeling a thousand moments of regret ...*

It is essential to make an action plan to decide how you will resolve whatever it is that made you angry. Do something constructive about your anger.

- Acknowledge your anger – accept the fact that you are angry. To deny it makes it worse.
- Try to recognise what made you feel angry.
- Share your anger with a friend – tell them why you are angry – have a whine and moan session.
- Go outside for a short walk.

- Breathe in and out very slowly until you become aware of your breathing.
- Listen to music you find peaceful.
- Write a letter and vent your anger – then toss it away!
- Tell the other party that you need time to calm down before you respond. However, do not wait too long before you deal with the situation.
- Go for a run..
- Watch your self-talk so that you do not say destructive things to yourself.
- Spend time with people who affirm you.
- Get perspective – is this really that important in the bigger scheme of things?

Add your own hints to this list and ask the children to draw up lists for themselves. Keep adding to the list. Have regular discussions on which hints work, when and how. Get children to talk about their own coping strategies. When children get aggressive or act unacceptably, use the incident as a learning experience in a non-punitive way. By showing understanding and offering more acceptable ways of behaviour, the children will have an opportunity to learn how to deal with their own anger. ○

*“Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.” – Buddha*

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# TO EACH HIS OWN: Theory and Practice models



*Jack Phelan*

**I was on sabbatical in 1999, and it gave me an opportunity to step back and think about many concepts in our work.**

I am struck with how compatible my thinking is with other practitioners who struggle with good models to do this work. John Sullivan, Mark Krueger, lots of others, but the issue of what makes sense at the front line still puzzles me. I am worried that the writers and teachers whom I talk to only really make sense to other writers and teachers, not actual practitioners.

New staff, and especially students in field placement, quickly abandon all theoretical concepts in the face of the sensory overload that immobilizes them as they start to work in residential group care. There often is a lot of support from less skilled staff to do this and to start using "common sense" approaches.

I know that the developmental process of needing to create control and safety can get in the way of being theoretical, yet there is a resistance to theory in front-line work at most periods of growth. As a person learns a new problem approach (e.g. sexual abusers) it is easier to teach ideas and techniques, because you aren't asking staff to accommodate new info into existing ex-

perience. I believe the big stumbling block is getting child and youth care workers to move away from having physical control and therefore let go of needing safety for themselves.

I talk to workers and it is very important to use real stories and examples to explain concepts. This also fits with the need to use stories and narrative to understand each person and what is useful. John Sullivan described using stories in his thesis and my wife Marilyn has done such powerful stuff here too. Mark Krueger has known and used this for 15 years. I would like to translate this approach into strategies that work for me – it will be slightly different than everyone else's.

John and I were talking about not playing the expert with clients, and I really know this to be true. There is a certain confidence in yourself that is important to project, but it can't be translated by the client as "I have the answer for you". The consistent message to really effective workers that you are *different* than those other ineffective folks voiced by parents in distress is a key issue and the difference is imbedded in the worker's respect for the clients' competence to know what they need.

When child and youth care workers experience this attitude of "I know the answer for you" from other professionals, they immediately turn off. The ability to smell an unrealistic approach is imbedded in child and youth care workers. The problem of letting go of control gets into this and I am looking for ways to honor healthy skepticism while encouraging workers to give power away to clients. How can I support child and youth care workers to use the personal experience of not being treated as competent by other professionals to see how they may be doing this with youth and families.

I am also struck by the agreement in the latest literature about using strength-based approaches. I hear this all the time and believe it is a sea change in our thinking. When the front line wisdom reflects this, we will move ahead rapidly. How does this get to the front line?

*Reprinted from*



*the online magazine for Child and Youth Care Workers worldwide.*

*<http://www.cyc-net.org>*

## Launch of the Southern Cape Region

**T**here are times when I ask people – “How are you?” and they answer “Fine, but not fine”.

This is how I would answer if you asked me “How is the Transformation of the Child and Youth Care System in this Country – Fine but not fine!”

Let me deal with the “not fine” part first.

The process of transformation and its funding has been, and still is, too slow.

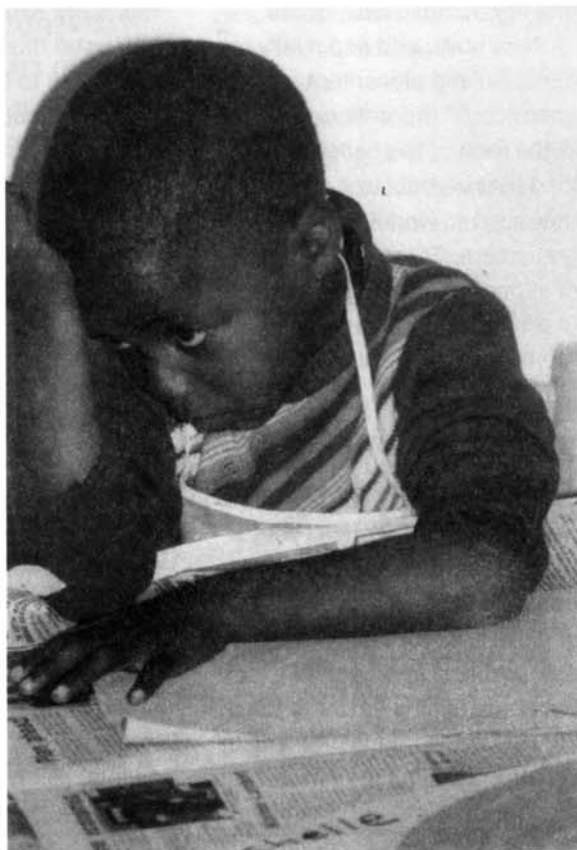
The spirit of transformation and the principles upon which it is based captured the imagination and inspired many agencies throughout the country. I know of agencies that had developed programmes that operated on the principles and spirit of the transformation process well before it was entrenched in State policy. Most of the really forward looking programmes and agencies offering services to families, children and youth, have been anticipating these principles and concurrent programme funding for many years. Each year for at least five years, they have, religiously submitted programme proposals and business plans to the State anticipating that State would fund the quality and nature of the programmes that they offer, rather than the per-capita subsidisation system that had been used in the past. Many had “posi-

tioned” themselves with programmes up and running and with proven track records of performance and results, and had done so at their own financial risk or with hard won public funding. Most funders have a policy laying down that programmes must be self sufficient within at least three years. So when seed monies or public funding dried up, these programmes of promise have in most instances run into financial difficulty. The irony of what is happening is, that in meeting the demands of State policy requirements in the Transformation process, many of the better programmes in the country are now facing the threat of closure. This is clearly **not fine**.

There is another ironic situation in the “not fine” category that will have to be faced now. State run organisations like Places of Safety are presently fully funded by State. The extent of NGO funding cannot compare with the funding of State facilities, yet, we can point to NGO *programmes of promise* in this country that are providing programmes that far exceed some State programmes in quality, in depth of understanding and in demonstrating the requirements of the Transformation of the system. What we expect

*Barrie Lodge asks...*

# Child Care in South Africa 2001: How Are You? Fine – But Not Fine





should happen is that the same **programme-based** funding criteria will be used for State as for NGO programmes — and this is tied up with the *not fine* status of the Developmental Quality Assurance or DQA.



Firstly, the process of Developmental Quality Assurance started as a partnership between the State and NGO's. The combined knowledge, skills and experience of these two agencies was effectively used in assessing, with the agency concerned, where the agency was operating on the journey toward the transformation of services into the new paradigm. Over the last year the use of the State/NGO partnership has dwindled significantly. The trend seems to point to the State more frequently attempting DQA's on its own. The problem may be one of funding, or it may be one of attitude or both – the result is that the practice and experience of the day to day skills and knowledge of the real practitioners in the field is not reaching the agencies. There is a great difference between knowing “*what to...*” and the knowledge of “*how to...*” in the professional field of child and youth care

practice.

The question then arises with regards to the evaluation of programmes. Will the State be evaluating its own programmes in State institutions and then deciding on the funding for its own programmes without NGO partnerships in the process? This is a **not fine** thought.

Children and youth are still in jails and with some notable exceptions the system is still not able to accommodate them in effective programmes. This is a clear demonstration that the transformation system, has not happened quickly enough since 1995 to meet the needs of many of the more challenging children and youth in this country.

*There is a great difference between knowing “what to...” and the knowledge of “how to...” in the professional field of child and youth care practice.*

Let us get on with the response that Child and Youth Care and its Transformation “is fine” and identify some of the common features of most of the programmes of promise.

The first of these common features is the insistence in these programmes that residential placement is an ethical issue. Criteria are used to decide whether it is **morally right** to suggest any configuration of separation of a child or youth from his family; roots; group; community. These **moral** criteria

ask whether one has the *moral and ethical right* to suggest residential separation. Certainly there are some few situations that suggest a period of residential care is needed to avoid irreversible damage to the development of a child or youth. However, in the main these situations are rare compared with those where services can be provided that keep the family intact and in their own environment.

Our programmes of promise are also redefining the idea of what is “family” – especially in the context of Africa and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. They are redefining concepts such as “who is a primary care giver” and redefining requirements for emotional and developmental thriving.



Significant in the programmes of promise throughout the country is the preparedness of the agencies to create programmes that will meet the individual needs of the child, youth and their care givers in **their community-based situations** rather than focus on residential care. The end result of this has been the development of specialised but diversified

## Launch of the Southern Cape Region

services such as professionalisation of foster care and the creation of supportive ecologies for care-givers in the community.

There are, for example, many informal care-giving configurations for children and youth that in days of long ago would have resulted in children being herded (without much other thought or energy) into Children's Homes. We find a benevolent woman in a street either being a neighbourly caring adult to children living in their own settings in their own houses in her street or children meeting under a tree to receive meals from a primary care giver but living as community of children under the first level of leadership of, say, an older youth. Poverty alleviation programmes including life-campuses in which earning and independent living skills are taught are typical features of programmes of promise. A focus is on teaching coping skills to care-givers and children and on internalising developmental appropriateness in children's behaviours.

This leads agencies to place child and youth care workers in various settings and to provide community-based care-givers with support, skills, networks and resources to continue with the caring that is needed for the developmental well-being of the children in their care. Child and Youth Care Workers are using their specialised knowledge and professional skills to strengthen and enhance the impact of **multi-disciplinary teams** in community-based care, all manner of family settings, in the fields of preventative work, restorative justice, youth capacity building and supportive services to care givers in any number of formal and informal models.

Another significant trend is the recognition by the agency in the programmes of promise, that there are distinctly African solutions to African problems.



Many of the child rearing practices in the culture and in the community that are essentially traditional and deeply rooted in African culture have proved to have considerable developmental advantage for children and youth. Much of this is unfortunately being discarded as rural, and of the old people. Certainly in the city, some of the cultural practices of child rearing, rights of passage, the role of elders, the spirit of uBuntu, has become lost to a distorted culture of inner city Americanism – children and youth in Johannesburg are even talking with American accents. What programmes of promise are doing is to recognise and recapture something of the principles underlying African child rearing and community practices and respectfully encouraging these if they are in the best developmental interest of

the child. It is called the principle of African Renaissance and will, it is hoped, develop over time a child care practice that will be a beacon to the rest of our Eurocentric world.

The other significant quality of programmes of promise is that they are making decisions about child and youth care practice based on **principles**. These are the irrevocable rules or laws that decide what must be done in child and youth care practice. All of these are described very well in the **Transformation of the Child and Youth Care System Policy Documents**; entrenched in the **Welfare Funding Policy** and have a huge impact on what is being practiced in the programmes of promise.

Other promising features are the formation of controlled networks, partnerships and co-operatives of agencies, programmes that are going the route of **diversified but specialised** services. The range of services that can be offered in these consortia provide a good continuum of different services and programmes from preventative through to fairly long-term arrangements like group foster care programmes.

**All this adds up to individualisation** – it means that the best programmes in the country are planning and providing programmes for THIS child; for each individual child; meeting individual needs and putting themselves out to use their child and youth care workers' skills in various creative patterns of programmes possibly using combinations of residential and community-based services. ○

Photographs: Fanus Oosthuizen

**E**ngage them in conversation – and here there are two possibilities: firstly when you ask their name, where they live, and why they are not in a 'shelter' you demonstrate concern. These kids have been rejected so often in their lives. Don't tell them to 'push off' or 'leave me alone', don't swear at them or insult them; it's the best way to elicit aggression. They don't want to chat! They'll quickly leave you, and move on to the next car.

### **MONEY**

If you give money – you need to know that there are basically two kinds of children who live on the street, who may use their money for food, but who are more likely to use it for thinners of glue, or less destructive for video games. Access to food is not a major problem. There are many sources of food for the homeless in Cape Town. Then there are children who come into the streets of Cape Town on a daily basis to beg in order to supplement their families' income. This is endemic to all developing countries. They go home at night with enough money for a couple of loaves of bread, or, after a few days, enough money for a pair of shoes so that they may go to school. We call them 'day time strollers'. Research in third world countries suggests that three out of four street children fit into this category, i.e. only one out of four children begging or doing 'quasi' jobs like parking and washing cars, actually live on streets. There is no evidence to suggest that the position in SA is any different.

### **'MANAGED' CHILDREN**

Thirdly there are those children, usually very small and often 'cute' who are 'managed' by an older youth, a Fagin type character lurking in the background who himself would have no success at the robots. Or even more sadly by a parent, usually a mother, who keeps a low profile but a close watch from nearby. These children are in my opinion the saddest, most exploited, abused and neglected of all kids who are on the streets, coerced and afraid; they have little choice.

### **CHILDREN , AFTER ALL**

If you feel you want to give something then give a couple of sweets, a balloon. They are, after all, children first, simply children!

Finally members of the public could donate money, food, clothes or time to a number of organisations like the Homestead, who provide a wide range of services to children and youth 'on' and 'off' the streets of Cape Town.

## **Saying Hi to Street Kids**

*We at The Homestead (Projects for Street Children) are often asked for tips and suggestions by the general public in Cape Town for responding to children begging at the robots, 'watching' cars and asking for money in the street or in parking lots.*



### **KICKED OUT?**

Often when children are asked why they are not in a shelter or going to a programme they have to find an excuse. Usually this goes something like this. "Hulle het my uitgejag" 'the children there hit me' or 'Meneer het my uitgeskop'. I want to be very upfront about this. No child under 16 is refused admission to our Intake Centres. We enforce a strict policy of no corporal punishment whatsoever. A child may be suspended for a period ranging from a few hours to a couple of weeks for the following:

- Being high on drugs (they are re-admitted when sober)
- Assault
- Excessive bullying
- Refusal to attend school (though this would apply only at the Children's Homes where the children are expected to go to school). The only reason a child may be expelled is for sexual molestation – and this happens only very occasionally.

*Reprinted with permission from the Homestead Annual Report 2000*

## Sexual Abuse

The incidence of sexual misconduct is certainly frequent enough and serious enough to deserve more attention than it presently receives. While other institutions such as residential childcare facilities have confronted the problem of sexual abuse head on, to even mention this area in the educational domain is to be seen to be drawing negative public attention to educators.

Educator sexual misconduct is sufficiently prevalent to warrant special attention.

It is evident from the relevant research literature that there is no typical offence or offender. However, sexual misconduct by educators is perpetrated overwhelmingly by males, and overwhelmingly against females but does occur in all combinations of gender. The popular conception that anyone who sexually abuses a child is a paedophile is simply wrong. In fact, educators who engage in sexual misconduct with children and adolescents are not paedophiles in most cases. Terms such as "boundary violators", "romantic/bad judgment abusers" or "situational offenders" have been used to describe different types of abusers.

Young people abused by educators probably delay disclosure out of deference to an authority figure, embarrassment, guilt and fear. They fear retaliation by the offender, that no one will believe them, being blamed and some sort of punishment. A child's desire to comply with the requests of an adult whom he or she trusts and by whom he or she wishes to be accepted is another inhibitor of disclosure. The genuine affection a child may have for the educator, especially one who promotes the "special

*Tom Suchanandan of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) speaks out on ...*

# ROOTING OUT SEXUAL ABUSE IN OUR SCHOOLS



relationship" also prevents young people from disclosing.

Many administrators cling to the belief that one complaint is insufficient, two do not necessarily form a pattern, and anonymous complaints should be discounted entirely. Faced with

growing suspicion, some will convince themselves that only a written or in person complaint is sufficient. Many believe that because school personnel are professionals, if the educator is asked and denies inappropriate behaviour, that is the end of it;



the denial must be respected.

Heightened sensitivity to the difficulties that face victims when called upon to testify has been addressed by a number of relatively new evidentiary and procedural rules that apply to various kinds of proceedings involving witnesses. Learners are sometimes requested to give testimony in both criminal and disciplinary proceedings. Occasionally, they may be called upon to testify both in grievance hearings and proceedings before the school's governing body. Each of these proceedings may themselves involve multiple interviews, formal statements and repeated testimony. Testimony may span many days. Children find these proceedings unbearable. These prolonged proceedings contribute to their emotional distress, interferes with counselling and delays well-being. They further discourage seeking redress for wrongs, and ultimately deters other victims from coming forward.

However, the serious impact of false complaints requires an approach to such complaints, which remains fair in all respects. Each case should be evaluated on its own merits, devoid of stereotypical notions about either party or about sexual misconduct itself. Young people need to feel that they will be heard, that their accounts will not be discounted or minimized solely because they are learners and the alleged offender is an educator. Educators also need to feel that they will be heard and that complaints will not be accepted just because they are made by children.

The impact of sexual victimization on children has been widely researched and reported on. The impact is often less correlated with the severity or intrusiveness of the sexual behaviour than with the pre-abuse relationship to the abuser, the vulnerability of the victim or the way in which disclosure of abuse was responded to. A seemingly minor inci-

dent of sexual touching by a close and trusted adult can have a profound and lasting impact.

Rooting out sexual abuse in our schools is the responsibility of education departments, school authorities and parent bodies. Prevention strategies are twofold: education and training on what constitutes sexual misconduct and how it can be identified and prevented; and ensuring, so far as possible, that sexual perpetrators do not enter the profession and that, when discovered, they are not permitted to continue to teach. This strategy involves adherence to policies and protocols that ensure that new educators or those seeking to transfer to another school, are fully screened. It requires prospective employers to have access to accurate and complete information about applicants. Clear and unequivocal policy statements that reflect no tolerance for sexual misconduct and that defining the boundaries of acceptable behaviour are required.

Policies and procedures represent important tools for the prevention and early identification of sexual abuse, and for protecting those already victimized by such abuse. A school's policy should be clear, fair and known to all. It is then able to protect children, ensure fairness to the affected educator, provide assurance to the community and enhance the school environment. The absence of such a policy often produces uneven or inappropriate treatment of learners and educators, unnecessary uncertainty, speculation, gossip and heightened trauma to all involved.

A number of school governing bodies have policies on learner misbehaviour but no policies on educator misbehaviour. Prevention at the school district level requires strong, clear policies that warn educators of inappropriate conduct, such as putting themselves in vulnerable positions where they are alone with the learner, ensuring appropriate distance between him/herself and learner, avoid socializing with learners, avoiding familial situations, favouritism and "special relationships", etc. However, school authorities and school governing need to be wary of becoming so ardent in their war against child sexual abuse that they make educators afraid to hug children and children so uneasy about touching that they interpret a warm and innocent arm around the shoulder as abuse.

In summary, the overwhelming majority of educators are dedicated, hard-working people whose values reflect our society and are role models to our children. Let us ensure that unscrupulous individuals do not taint the image of teaching. ○



Felix Oesthulzen

# ON HEALING ...

## A child & youth care worker reflects profoundly on the healing process

*Author Unknown*

**U**sing my photo albums as my point of reference for a reflection of my healing process up to now, I discovered a few things...

***Hurt was mainly caused by people who were hurting ...***

Sometimes unintentionally, sometimes recklessly, sometimes vindictively /vengefully, sometimes out of pure stupidity and insensitivity. And sadly so, but also due to my own over-sensitivity.

***“Let me seek to understand rather than be understood”.***

A very powerful tool in my healing, but I needed to take caution, denial lay close to this philosophy. I soon realized that unless I try to understand my own pain and process, I have little understanding for other people's pain and process.

***In my own life healing was not an event, it is a continuous process.***

I wish it was an event, over and out, “afgehandeld”, dealt with ... so much easier than a process. The process is really hard and painful at times and it seems never ending.

***Healing lies in the pain, no short cut around it.***

I tried the other routes, but it only caused more pain and lengthened my process.

***People/Relationships facilitate, speed up, help, promote my healing.***

Significant people throughout my life have been prominent components in my healing process, without them ever knowing. These have been my children, my friends, my family, my colleagues, strangers, teachers, my husband, my clients, childhood friends, etc.

***“The deep end” speeds up healing and can give fresh hope.***

When I felt drowning was the next inevitable thing that would happen and I needed to look in-

side myself for strength, skills, etc and found very little at first, when continuous digging surfaced some little rays of hope, which had always been there, but needed the "deep end" to help me see them ... healing continued...

***The darkest hours ...  
hard to believe but  
they do have healing  
components.***

For me the death of my father (suicide), the death of my mother (slow death through alcoholism) were catalysts in my healing process. New directions for healing were discovered and chained emotions were given wings to go free!!

***Books and music  
offered tremendous  
healing energy.***

From the Bible to "The world according to Garp", from "Jesus loves me this I know" to "Another brick in the wall" had relevance and assisted healing at the time. Making my own music was most probably the single most healing component / tool during adolescence.

God, as I understand him to be, then and now has been an anchor during the roughest storms in my life. I have been disappointed by Him many times

in my life and have many questions, but somehow it made sense to hang in there. My healing can only benefit from some faith.

***Nature was a  
steadfast certainty in  
my ever changing,  
insecure life...***

Through sunrise & sunsets, through mountains and valleys, through forests and fynbos, through rivers and fields. I could choose to see it or experience it or let it pass me by. I chose to draw from it daily through my bedroom window and on my way to school, observing it's beauty and moods and the knowing that it was there yesterday and will be there tomorrow, which offered me much security and strength to continue the process.

***Animals /Pets offer a  
companionship which  
ask so little in return.***

My dog consoled me when no-one else was around to support. He would ask no questions and did not offer a quick-fix. Not a major boost forward on my road to healing, but a very welcome resting place.

***Working with youth at  
risk reflected my own  
"at risk" state...***

Much needed intervention in my life had to be addressed. The children and youth I worked with formed an essential part of this intervention. They reflected the pain I had denied and tried to pray away for many years. They also became important tools needed for my healing – the connection to my inner-child. I owe much to these children and youth. My healing would have been significantly slowed down without them. The material I studied and which I now teach others, confronted me with the truths I never wanted to hear or see and gave me frameworks which I could use for my own healing.

"I give up", "I cannot take this anymore", "It hurts too much", "Forget about the process, I'm getting off the bus". Many a time I felt this and said this to many people who travel this road with me. I cannot find the courage some days to continue this "Road less travelled". I sometimes hate myself for ever starting it. The strange thing though is that I NEVER want to go back where I started. I never want to feel so desolate, scared, desperate, pitiful EVER again. I chose to start the process of healing, I chose to continue this process and I now choose again to see it through to wherever it takes me ...

**Life isn't a matter of milestones  
but of moments**

Rose Kennedy

## Spotlight on Students

**M**any students, particularly those who are fortunate enough to study full-time, ask the question, "Will there be a job for me when I have finished studying?" This is a legitimate question as few people can afford the luxury of studying without having to work in the end. In fact, most child and youth care students register to study courses because of a desire to work with children, youth and families. The concern of these students is also a reflection of the South African context where unemployment is high and even skilled people struggle to find jobs. Unfortunately potential employers do not form a queue outside our front doors waiting for us to finish our qualifications so that they can snap us up for their own programmes; nor do most of us walk straight into our perfect job after completing our studies. However, there are a number of other realities which indicate a bright future for students who take the profession of child and youth care seriously.

Child and youth care work is a developing and growing profession in South Africa. The transformation of the child and youth care system has resulted in more child and youth care workers operating in a range of different contexts including schools, courts, families and communities. This and the introduction of the B.Tech has increased public awareness of child and youth care as a profession. Skilled and ethical practitioners (including students) promote the image of child and youth care work and assist others to recognise the powerful impact of an appropriately trained person. The way that you speak about your profession and demonstrate your

knowledge and skills may contribute to the availability of future jobs.

The transformation of South Africa as a country provides great flexibility as systems, policies and legislation change to reflect principles of freedom and justice. This flexibility may mean that people and organisations are more open to change. Perhaps a few professional child and youth care workers could demonstrate their usefulness in one school and open the door to many further opportunities in school-based child and youth care work in South Africa.

Many people think that finding work is about 'luck' or 'being given an opportunity'.

Gary Player has this to say about luck: "The more I practise the luckier I get."

Basically, luck involves being prepared so that when the opportunity presents itself, you are able to recognise it and use it. The process of studying may well be the most important aspect of preparing yourself. Therefore, commit yourself to your studies. Appropriate knowledge, effective skills and conscious use of self (the KSS model) will prepare you for the time when a job opportunity arises.

Effective child and youth care workers are resourceful, cre-

ative, optimistic, enthusiastic, and resilient people. There are thousands, probably millions of young people in South Africa who can benefit from your input. In this sense, there is no shortage of work. However, it may be necessary for you to create your own employment by starting a project or offering a new service in your community. There are many organisations both nationally and internationally which provide funding for relevant projects. Information about drafting a funding proposal was published in the April 2000 issue of 'Child & Youth Care'.

Become aware of your particular interests. Do you prefer young children or adolescents? Would you like to work in families or in residential programmes? Are you interested in young people in conflict with the law, adventure programmes and / or sport? Discover your strengths and build on them. It is much easier to learn and become enthusiastic about things that genuinely interest us. Potential employers will be looking for knowledge and enthusiasm.

Sales people use a technique called 'the foot in the door'. A door-to-door sales person tries to prevent a potential customer from closing the door so as to increase the possibility of a sale.



*Jackie Winfield challenges students to prepare for employment in the child and youth care field.*



Child and youth care students can use a variation of this technique by offering voluntary (unpaid) services to child and youth care programmes. Volunteer work may serve as 'a foot in the door' and can result in later employment because:

- Volunteering will give you work experience. It is far easier to obtain a job if you have experience.
- You will get to know about what is happening in child and youth care in your region. For instance, a colleague at the programme where you

volunteer may hear about a salaried child and youth care position at another programme and tell you about it.

- If you have shown yourself to be professional in your dealings with young people at the programme, there is every chance that future available employment at that organisation will be offered to you before it is advertised elsewhere.
- Helping others (being generous) contributes to appropriate self-esteem. In

most instances, increased self-esteem will increase your attractiveness as a potential employee.

Many people in the field of child and youth care including many of those considered leaders in the NACCW entered this profession by accident. However, each one was prepared so that new, unexpected challenges could be met when necessary. A job will be ready for you when you are truly ready for it. ○

### **The CHILDREN'S HIV/AIDS NETWORK (CHAI*N*)**

A coordinated response to the impact of HIV/AIDS on children

**NEXT WORKSHOP : 15 MARCH 2001**

**VENUE: JOHNSON & JOHNSON HALL, RED CROSS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**

**TIME: 09H00 TO 14H00**

#### **About the CHAI*N***

On the 24th May 2000, a public meeting was held in Cape Town to bring together concerned individuals, organisations and service providers around the issue of children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. Participants at the meeting endorsed the recommendation that a Network be established within the Western Cape, to address the impact of HIV/AIDS on children and families in an holistic and integrated manner.

The aims of the network are:

1. To develop and maintain a database of organisations concerned with children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS in the Western Cape.
2. To disseminate pertinent information about HIV/AIDS.
3. To facilitate co-operation, networking, joint programmes and rationalization of services to children infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
4. To facilitate/promote education and training aimed at changing community perceptions, increasing HIV/AIDS awareness and promoting multi-sectoral responses.
5. To facilitate policy and legislative analysis and development on issues related to children who are infected or affected by HIV/AIDS.
6. To facilitate lobbying and advocacy on pertinent issues.

The Network meets every 3 months and has grown to include over 160 NGOs, CBOs, state departments, businesses, faith-based groups, academic institutions, hospitals and individuals concerned with the impact of HIV/AIDS on children. Information is distributed on an ongoing basis through the Network's electronic discussion forum (to subscribe, email [gracecat@global.co.za](mailto:gracecat@global.co.za)).

For further information on the CHAI*N*, or to become a member, please contact Sonja Giese at the Child Health Policy Institute on Tel: (021) 685 4103  
email [sonja@rmh.uct.ac.za](mailto:sonja@rmh.uct.ac.za).



## Letter

**J**ohnny is not his real name but the following are the events that led up to him spending time in Polsmoor Prison. This story is not written to place blame on anyone but to make sure events like this don't happen again. There must be better programmes for Johnny than Polsmoor Prison?

Johnny was admitted to a children's home in 1995. The main reason for his admission centred around his negative behaviour ranging from thefts at home to shoplifting in the community. His progress was satisfactory enough to have warranted his discharge back into his father's care during 1998.

This did not work out due to father being asked to vacate his flat and Johnny stealing a large amount of money from father's employer (around R1000,00). Father lost his job.

While the agency explored other placements Johnny came back to the children's home. Johnny was on a developmental roller coaster. He did show signs of progress in certain areas

(eg. academically) but regressed in other areas. His stealing started again and he also threatened (with life threatening instruments), bullied and negatively influenced other boys at the children's home. Johnny's programmes at the centre included individual and group counselling. During this time the stealing continued.

During March 2000 the multi disciplinary team at the centre decided that the programmes the children's home had access to weren't working for Johnny. Members of the team had been trained in the strengths based developmental assessment and a developmental plan had been drawn up with him.

A detailed report was sent to the Canalisation Office in March 2000 recommending that because the children's home was not the most enabling and empowering environment for Johnny, a more restrictive environment should be sort.

However, Johnny is at Polsmoor Prison because since March 13th 2000 to 9 November 2000 (that's over 240 days) something went wrong with the paperwork. From the children's home point of view there was a delay in placing Johnny in the correct programme. During this time Johnny continued with threatening behaviour and continued to steal. The staff and other residents became very concerned about their own safety. Eventually the domestic staff were so annoyed with Johnny's behaviour, that there was a real danger of them taking the law into their own hands.

While this was going on continual telephone calls were being made to the social services and

educational departments. Although people were very sympathetic regarding the children's home and Johnny's situation, there always seemed to be the wrong form or the wrong signature that could not be found.

A charge was laid and Johnny was taken to the police station. Johnny appeared at the night court where a social worker wrote a report stating that he recommended that Johnny should be in secure care for the evening. The social worker was not prepared to take the responsibility of Johnny going back to the children's home.

Johnny spent a night in the cells with a letter from a staff member plus some sweets sent by the children's home. The next day Johnny appeared in court and the magistrate informed all concerned that he had been informed that all the places of safety were full and Johnny was sent to Polsmoor until his trial date.

The questions we must be asking ourselves are:

- What happened during the 240 days that the report was written by the children's home?
- Will spending time in Polsmoor affect Johnny?
- We must find better programmes and better ways to care for Johnny and other Johnny's.
- How can a better service be provided for children's homes? And a quicker service be accessible for Johnny?

### THE LATEST ABOUT JOHNNY

Four days later Johnny appears in court. In the meantime the community worker at the children's home informs agencies of what has happened. Everyone seems very concerned and willing to help to get Johnny out of Polsmoor Prison and into a suitable programme. The community worker spends most of the day getting the right documents signed by the correct people and by late afternoon Johnny is settling into his new programme.

During Johnny's time at Polsmoor Prison his clothes were stolen. It seems that the new arrivals have to surrender their clothes to the more senior inmates in exchange for their old ones.

Johnny visited us three days later. He was a.w.o.l. and very angry. He had been beaten up and supported a bruised face and a sore body. The community worker took him back to the programme and held a meeting with the staff and boy concerned. All seemed to go well but we are left wondering that as a profession we all could have done better for Johnny!?

**Chris Smith - Director  
CAPE YOUTH CARE**

## Child & Youth Care Workers

Three posts

Belfast Children's Home Mpumalanga

### Requirements

- Fluency in Afrikaans and English. Knowledge of /fluency in Zulu will be an advantage.
- A valid driver's licence.
- The successful applicant will be required to work shifts, which include sleep over night duties at the facility.
- Formal training as child care workers.

### Fringe benefits

- Pension fund
- Medical aid
- Salary negotiable

Application forms can be obtained from Ms Rina Snyman and Ms Suzanne van Tonder. Telephone: (031) 253-1073.

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### MARCH

- 20 Week of Solidarity with People Struggling Against Racial Discrimination - UN
- 21 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- 21 Human Rights Day - South Africa
- 22 World Day for Water - UN
- 23 World Meteorological Day - UN
- 24 World Tuberculosis Day

### APRIL - Blood Donor Month

- 3 International Children's Book Day - UN
- 7 World Health Day
- 10 Chris Hani Assassinated - 1993
- 18 Zimbabwe's Independence Day

## Child & Youth Care Worker

### PIM COTTAGE FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS GAUTENG

A vacancy exists for a female live-out child & youth care worker in our Johannesburg home. All applicants must have a child & youth care or equivalent qualification and relevant experience in working with teenagers. This is a challenging position for someone with a genuine desire to help troubled youth.

A driver's licence is essential.

We offer a competitive salary, medical aid and pension, as well as good working hours.

Please phone Evelyn: (011)728 2241 or Fax CV to Anchie: (011) 331 1303

### NOTICE FROM THE SOUTHERN CAPE

John Gelderbloem and his wife gave birth to their first child, baby Waldimar, on 13 February 2001.

*Congratulations!*



Child Health Policy Institute



Save the Children UK South Africa Programme

### FREE COPY

#### NATIONAL DIRECTORY OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN INFECTED/AFFECTED BY HIV/AIDS

For a **free** copy of the national directory of services for children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, and to be included in the directory, please forward us the following details on your organisation: *(restricted to organisations providing a service to children / youth / families infected / affected by HIV/AIDS)*

Organisation name  
Province in which you are based  
Contact person  
Phone and Fax number

Please fax details to Lumka on (021) 418 1475 or Tel: (021) 421 5214 or email [sonja@rmh.uct.ac.za](mailto:sonja@rmh.uct.ac.za). You will be contacted shortly for further details.

*The directory will be in print ready format by the end of May 2001.*

# HELP ALONG THE WAY

Build your own self esteem

Respect and care about others

Expect the best

Ask for a non-violent way

Wait a minute before reacting

Trust your inner sense of what is needed

Don't rely on weapons, drugs or alcohol

Admit it when you are wrong, make amends if you can, forgive yourself and let go

Don't threaten or put down others

Make friends who will support you and support the best in them

Risk changing yourself

