

child & youth care

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

A Trust Walk into the Future: The outgoing Chairperson comments



My two year term of office as National Chairperson draws to a close. It is a time for me to reflect and to look ahead. This editorial is not a biennial report, but just some thoughts that the Association, I believe, needs to consider in the next two years.

I think that I am really, only now starting to get a glimmer of insight into the vast range of complex, inter-related functions that the NACCW has to orchestrate for the development of professionalism, the professional, the field of child and youth care and the best interest of children and youth.

I list a few of the domains in which expertise and work is done to help you see the symphonic orchestration that has to be performed... policy development, finance, funding and administration, staff and regional offices, research and training, course development, publications, consultancy, advocacy at national, regional and local levels, Africa links, international links, development and maintenance of standards of practice, membership and registration. The list goes on.

Sometimes it is a well scripted melody of practice and principle. At other times the work demands a level of complicated improvisations weaving inter-connected themes and orchestrating complex counter-point and harmonious discord. For the Directorate of the NACCW, the multifaceted inter-related areas of expertise that are needed to do all this is somewhat like having to be a master performer of each instrument in the orchestra and the conductor at the same time!

Over the last two years I have come to think that the existing structures of Regional Executive Committees is suitable for some of the functions of the NACCW. These structures, their portfolios, forums and something of the foundation traditions were developed 15 - 20 years ago and determine the way they function even today. However, I am predicting that the demand to integrate all the facets of our field and practice, and to find consensus in the process will require us to find new and different structures for more effective functioning.

Over the next short while I believe that the NACCW will have to embark on a trust walk into as yet unvisualised structures; unlock the perhaps hidden strengths of our full membership and provide a truly supportive structure for the leadership in various specific areas of expertise and knowledge. Some of the structures used in other fields may have to be investigated such as councils of elders, resource teams, advisory groups, task teams, portfolio committees, communication networks, stakeholders involvement, ad hoc structures co-ordinating groups, specialised boards.

Wherever the trust walk may lead, I am convinced that the NACCW is capable of journeying into an unique effective value-based system that will point the way for other emerging professions.

Barrie Lodge

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contents

ISSN 0258-8927 • VOLUME 19 No.5 • MAY 2001

4	Beyond Discipline Survival <i>Allen Mendler</i>
7	Introducing the Conference Keynote Speaker, Don Matera
8	Kids in Court – give them a voice <i>Edith Kriel</i>
10	The Justice system must start at home <i>Buyi Mbambo</i>
13	HIV/AIDS – Who will bury our babies? <i>Kathy Scott</i>
14	Students – More thoughts about Touch <i>Jackie Winfield</i>
17	Drugs – The Reality <i>Sarah Fisher</i>
18	Graduation ceremony in the Winterveldt
19	Sentenced and Unsented Children in Prisons <i>Lukas Muntingh</i>

Conference Newsflash



Masidibane
Ngalomntwana

"Let us come together about this child."

Read the article on page 7 about the esteemed activist, journalist, poet and previously a youth at risk, **Don Matera** whom we are honoured to have as our local keynote speaker. As a result of personal circumstances **John Seita** is unable to attend the Biennial Conference and will therefore deliver a conference presentation via video.

Register by 15 June 2001 for the conference in order to secure your place and accommodation. A 10% surcharge will be levied for registrations after this date.

Contact Helen Carrington at 041-378 1718 for further information.

Cover picture: Courtesy James House, Hout Bay, Cape Town

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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The author outlines the elements of the Discipline with Dignity paradigm, which moves beyond old models that simply coerce the student into short-term compliance. The article describes three kinds of intervention – crisis, short-term, and long-term – in which students develop new strategies for success in school and life.

BEYOND DISCIPLINE SURVIVAL

Allen Mendler



Tips for effective discipline abound. Be friendly. Be tough and firm. Have clear rules and consequences. Be consistent. Don't let them get away with anything. Give them another chance. The issue usually boils down to "Love 'em or lock em up."

When it comes to discipline, nearly everyone considers him or herself an expert either on why students misbehave or on what to do about it. Some advice borrows from the halls of pop psychology — give more love to children who are deprived. In contrast, the proponents of boot-camp toughness believe in the necessity of a non-mollycoddling message of misery to instill respect for the rights of others. In actuality, effective discipline for difficult students requires methods that focus on addressing three basic questions:

1. Does use of the method elicit dignity or humiliation?
2. Is the method primarily obedience-oriented, or does it teach responsibility?
3. Does the method work?

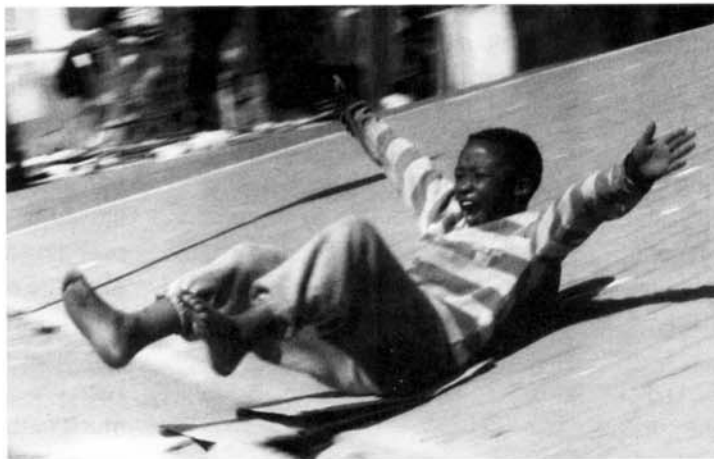
Dignity or Humiliation?

One key question that needs to be asked about a method of discipline is whether it attacks dignity or keeps it intact. Most people have an easier time evaluating this concept by experiencing how it feels to be at the receiving end of the discipline method. Although youngsters may cognitively process an experience differently from an adult, how they feel is no different. A short-term solution that leads to a long-term disaster is rarely a good trade-off.

Obedience or Responsibility?

Obedience-based discipline relies primarily upon rewards and coercion. The adult defines the system and controls the delivery of rewards and punishments. I believe that responsibility-based discipline needs to emphasize the main objective of all interactions in which an adult corrects a child's behaviour — the child learns to behave responsibly in the absence of the adult. For example, rules that structure behaviour should be a shared responsibility between an authoritative adult and students. The emphasis is on helping youngsters define rules that reflect necessary and educationally relevant principles and val-

ues. It is the obligation of all caring adults to assist children in the process of living their lives independently. Providing youngsters with choices and supportively allowing them to experience the positive and negative consequences of their decisions are daily processes available in our interactions with them. Children need both choices and limits.



Independent Newspapers

Does the Method Work?

Methods of discipline should be effective at stopping undesirable behaviour and/or getting better behaviour started. This seems to be stating the obvious, but most schools and treatment centres persist in using certain ineffective methods. Sometimes professionals know that a method won't work, but they don't know what else to do. There is a need to do something (even if it won't work), for fear that doing nothing sends an uncaring message to the student who broke the rule and sets a poor precedent for others. Working with difficult students requires a multitude of methods guided by an unflagging belief in the capacity of people to change. It is necessary to have consistency of purpose along with creativity in methodology.

Three Types of Strategies

Effective discipline that moves the conversation beyond each specific incident of misbehaviour means understanding, having, and using three types of strategies: crisis, short-term, and long-term. Many educators intu-

itively know that they must do things differently to be successful, but they are unsure about what to do. My research has

found that most educators were well-behaved students when they were in school. Most were successful in schools that operated according to the obedience-based paradigm of "Do it my way or else!" It thus is difficult for many of them to truly comprehend the inner workings of students in their classes who refuse to follow the rules. The thinking follows the line, "If it worked for me, then it must be okay" Fortunately, most educators are open to considering alternatives when these are presented in a logical way with lots of ideas that can be applied after practice.

Crisis Strategies

Crisis strategies prepare us in the best possible ways to handle events beyond our control. Some are effective; others do little more than offer an illusion of control. We need to anticipate probable trouble spots and be adequately prepared.

The educator must be prepared to handle the unexpected, and preparation means studying the dynamics of the situation

and reading probable responses. For example, when an educator happens upon a fight, he or she knows that an audience will form around the combatants in a nano-second. Some of the audience closest to the action will be ringed around the combatant. The further from the fight one gets, the more likely it is that the observing students are less emotionally involved. The educator learns to tap three or four

students on the shoulder and give each a specific direction for getting help. His or her next move is to head closer to the action and pause upon reaching the third or fourth row from the fighters, asking all of the students in the immediate vicinity to name the person who appears to be losing the fight. Being given this information, he or she loudly gives a specific direction to the loser, for example, saying, "Jan, this is Mr. (Ms.) Smith, a teacher. Fighting is against the rules. Move away this minute. Hustle, before there's more trouble."

Most students who are losing a fight are looking for a reason to get out but won't walk away on their own for fear of losing face. Knowing this, the prepared educator can often more easily distract the loser and then deal with the other student. By that time, help has often arrived. Finally, the educator should keep in reserve a special distracting sound to make in the event that the fighters are so involved that neither hears what is said.

Short-Term Strategies

Sam, a 14-year-old student with strong needs for attention and control, challenges his teacher in a middle school classroom. He loudly asks, "How many times have you had sex with your husband?" Momentarily startled, Ms. Flint is silent. Before she can respond, Sam says, "You're just ignoring me, aren't you!" Unexpectedly, she responds, "No, Sam, I'm not ignoring you, I was just counting!" There are no further challenges from Sam.

Wood and Long (1991) discussed the effects of the conflict cycle in which angry youth recreate their feelings through "mirroring" those feelings in others. In working effectively with difficult youth, educators must continually guard against counter-aggressive behaviour. Wounded youth believe that the world is a hostile place, so they behave in a way that triggers hostility in others. When they get the familiar hostile response, their beliefs are confirmed. As noted by Tierney, Dowd, and O'Kane (1993), educators and youth workers "must have skills to maintain a calm, positive effect [sic] when the youth is engaging in verbally abusive behaviours, and to respond with frequent expressions of concern and empathy" (p. 45). The combined skills of caring and defusing without anger interrupt the conflict cycle and often force the youth to consider alternative, pro-social behaviour. Short-term strategies are designed for this purpose. A particularly effective short-term strategy applicable to numerous situations and requiring little repartee is the "I-Message," which assertively and respectfully tells the youth what he or she did, how you feel, and

what you need.

Although short-term strategies can be used in all situations, they are particularly necessary when the individual is involved in group activities. A group situation involves a complex dynamic that must be managed. The adult needs to be concerned about stopping the inappropriate behavior, maintaining the youth's dignity, commanding respect from the youth and others in a situation that is on the threshold of becoming out of control, and preserving the integrity of the group.

Children need both choices and limits

Long-Term Strategies

Working successfully with difficult youth requires an unflagging belief in the capacity of human beings to change. Youth workers and educators must see themselves as integral to the process. They must realize that caring relationships characterized by a lot of little nurturing things make huge differences over a longer period of time. Because bonds of trust have often been severely frayed by abusive, neglectful, uncaring adults or through continuous movement from home to home, these youth rarely trust easily and are continuously wary. They expect to be rejected and often make the first move as a way of protecting themselves. The wise, caring adult refuses to give up and understands that he or she can influence behaviour by offering genuine moments of appreciation and support. Latham (1988) indicated that teachers

fail to recognize 95% of all appropriate behaviour (p. 10). The significance of this finding is profound. It suggests that all educators should be able to find several additional moments every day in which they notice accomplishments, identify behaviours they admire, and focus on small gains in a targeted behaviour. Correcting behaviour should be done specifically while providing alternatives that explain the personal and social benefits of responding in a more prosocial way, for example, "Joe, I can listen to what you want much better when you talk to me rather than yell at me."

Long-term strategies can grow from a basic needs paradigm (Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Bockern, 1990; Glasser, 1984; Maslow, 1943; Mendler, 1992) in which educational experiences and interactive moments are guided by the strengthening of each need. For example, the educator or youth worker searches for ways to increase a sense of belonging by arranging activities that require kids to do meaningful things together.

Building competence and mastery might involve youth in concrete projects that contribute to the community.

Developing a stronger sense of autonomy, influence, and generosity can occur both formally and informally. A greater sense of autonomy can be enhanced by asking opinions of students and by deferring to their opinions and knowledge. For example, the "What do you think about ...?" question and ones like it that are carefully listened to and at least occasionally implemented build a stronger sense of autonomy.

By understanding the frame-

work for the three types of strategies, the educator and youth worker are better prepared to handle the many challenging moments presented by hurt, angry, and aggressive youth. Crisis strategies help get everybody through out-of-control situations. Short-term strategies show us numerous ways of defusing potential power struggles while still preserving dignity. Finally, long-term strategies provide the hope and tools to keep connecting, along with the realization that change is usually a long trip that includes rest stops, detours, and winding roads leading to the superhighway.

Allen Mendler is a trainer and consultant who works with educators and youth workers nationwide. He is author or co-author of several books and articles, including Discipline with Dignity. He can be reached at: Discipline Associates, PC Box 20481, Rochester, NY 14602.

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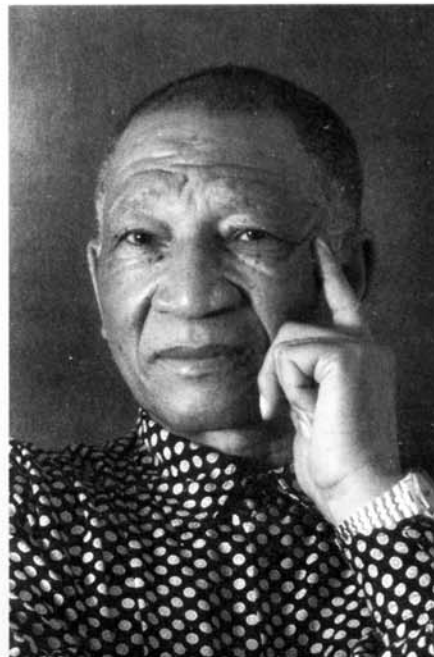
NACCW Conference 2001



Masidibane
Ngalomntwana

"Let us come together about this child."

Keynote Speaker



We are privileged to have as our keynote speaker, **Don Mattera**, a renowned South African poet, writer and activist for children and youth who was awarded a Doctorate of Literature (PhD) (HONORIS CAUSA) at the University of Natal this year.

Don Mattera hails from Sophiatown, Johannesburg. His active participation in cultural and political activities led to his banning order under the Suppression of Communism Act from 1973 to 1982 – three years of

which he spent under strict house arrest.

Mattera is best known for his seminal poetry collection, *Azanian Love Song* and his autobiography *Memory is the Weapon*. He has published collections of short stories, children's stories and plays. He has also won several international Literary and Humanitarian Awards. In 1986 he was awarded the Steve Biko Prize in Sweden. In 1997 Don Mattera received the prestigious Peace Award from the United Nations World Health Organisation's Centre for Violence and Injury Prevention.

Presently, he is working at the Sowetan as an Associate Editor and as the Personal Assistant of Sowetan's Editor-In-Chief. A founder of many community based organisations aimed at uplifting young people, Don Mattera is dedicated to helping youth at risk such as street children, gang groupings and prisoners. He will present the following:

- Keynote address: **Don Mattera Speaks – I AM THIS CHILD**
- A workshop on **Gangs: Break them up or Transform Them?**
- A youth session on **UBUNTU – Reclaiming Indigenous Wisdom.**



Independent Newspapers

Kids in Court – giving them a voice

Edith Kriel takes a brief look at the problems faced by child witnesses, and gives RAPCAN's response to their plight.

Those of us who work with children know the traumatic reality that testifying in criminal court holds for children. Often, the child's caregivers are also immobilized in supporting the child, as they too are traumatised both by the abusive experience the child has undergone, as well as the process of the criminal investigation and trial. The traumatised family is then faced with a legal system and environment that is not always child friendly.

This article hopes to give a brief insight into some of the difficulties that child witnesses face and RAPCAN's (Resources Aimed at the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect) response to this quandary. This is to be a discussion without a multitude of theoretical quotations of the latest literature on the topic, but rather what has been learnt through experience.

Testifying in court

Testifying in a criminal court of law can be a frightening experience for adults, even though they may have some of the skills needed to cope with this very serious and austere environment,

personnel and process. However, when children are faced with the responsibility of this experience it is often overwhelming, which leads to children not wanting to testify, or not doing it to their full potential. It is often the intense fear and negative emotions experienced by children in court that get in the way of them being seen as credible witnesses.

Children's Fears

So, what is it that children are really afraid of? Children generally have very limited knowledge about the court process and related issues. Children struggle with the following:

- **Am I going to see the alleged offender in court?**
- **Will I go to prison or be taken away from home?**
- **Will I be believed in court, will someone listen to me?**
- **How do I explain what happened to me in front of strangers, and what words do I use to do this?**
- **What if I start crying while testifying?**
- **Will my mom/caregiver be**

with me?

- **Will everyone know what has happened to me, will the newspaper tell everyone?**
- **Will I understand what is going on in the court room, and how will I know what I need to do?**
- **What will happen to the alleged offender - will he go to prison, or will they let him out? Can he come and hurt me?**
- **When will all this be over and finished?**

The concerns that children experience about court need to be discussed with them in detail in order to ascertain what the child's perception is, and then to clarify any misconceptions. The child's fears can be lessened to a large degree once this discussion has taken place.

It is important to note that although most children worry about some of the above issues, they each have individual concerns. For example, one child may not want to see the offender, however, another may be concerned as to his welfare in prison and would like to check with him on how he is coping.

Children also experience different fears at different times during their involvement in the court process.

Children have many fears about the court process. How best can we help them to cope with this experience?

RAPCAN's Response

RAPCAN is an organisation with a history of activism and advocacy regarding children's rights. We have taken advocacy one step further in piloting a court preparation and support project at Wynberg Court, Western Cape. The project material is based on international and local research and years of experience in the field. This project will focus on empowering children and their caregivers to be confident and effective witnesses. This will be achieved through providing:

- knowledge about the court process and personnel
- dealing with their fears
- giving them skills to cope

while testifying

- emotional support and comfort throughout the process.

Families and caregivers are an integral part of the preparation process, as they also need to be supported. It is through their support that the child will feel more contained about the experience.

The project will also focus on building the multi-disciplinary team in order to improve the child's experience from disclosure through to testifying.

Another reality with which many of our children are faced is that they have very limited access to any therapy due to financial and practical constraints. Thus the process of healing for a child and family seems to focus solely on the outcome of the court-case. However, whether there is a conviction or not, the court process does not provide healing. RAPCAN will be exploring creative ways in which to pro-

vide a start to the healing process with those children and families with whom they work.

Children's Challenge

In a Children's Participation Workshop for the development of the RAPCAN court preparation programme, children requested that adults help them through the court process in the following ways:

- Make me feel welcome
- Be kind and good to me
- Help me
- Care for me
- Respect me

It is with these five points that I would like to challenge you, as adults dealing with children who need to testify in court. Let us take on this challenge, help children by really implementing the above and make a difference for our children. ●

Contact RAPCAN on Tel: (021) 448-9034

National Workshop on Secure Care

Report by Andre Viviers of the Department of Social Development, Free State

The National Department of Social Development hosted this workshop in Bloemfontein from 13 to 15 March 2001. The aims were to facilitate discussion on progress with regard to secure care, to develop a protocol, to discuss regulations, to promote a national forum for secure care, and to establish a training programme in secure care practice. The need and requirements for adequate training and a Code of Conduct were discussed in depth by participants, and the importance of monitoring secure care programmes through developmental quality assurance was highlighted. Numerous resolutions were taken on aspects that influence the system, its programmes, and emerging practice. These were

concretised in a comprehensive Agenda for Action, the key outcome of the workshop. They include matters such as intersectoral collaboration, effective guidelines, labour relations matters and a capacity-building programme for provinces. Finally, it was agreed that a National Task Team on Secure Care must be established to take the process further.

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ARTICLE 40

March 2001

The Justice system must start at home

BUYI MBAMBO, Assistant Project Co-ordinator of the United Nations Child Justice Project in Pretoria, looks at the critical importance of prevention in the Proposed Child Justice System.

This is part one which introduces the Child Justice Bill and issues of Prevention.

In next month's edition, we feature programmes which build resiliency.



Prevention efforts are generally aimed at preventing children:

- from entering the criminal justice system or the child care system;
- from incurring a criminal record;
- from developing a criminal career path – graduating from minor offences to committing more serious and violent offences
- from being harmful to others and society at large;
- from learning harmful and destructive ways of coping with the challenges of growing up.

United Nations guidelines

The United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency¹, also known as the Riyadh Guidelines, reveal a positive approach to prevention. Skelton² suggests that the heart of the document is the chapter headed 'Socialisation Processes', which looks at the involvement of the family, education, the central role of the community, and community-based prevention programmes.

Guideline 12 emphasises the involvement of the **family**:

'Since the family is the central unit responsible for the primary socialization of children, governmental and social efforts to preserve the integrity of the family, including the extended family, should be pursued. The society has a responsibility to assist the family in providing care and protection and in ensuring the physical and mental well being of children.'

Education is another focus in the socialisation process. The guidelines specify that educational systems should seek to work together with parents and community organisations. **Community involvement as well as community-based solutions are stressed.** Guideline 32 states:

'Community based services and programmes which respond to the special needs, problems, interests and concerns of young persons and which offer appropriate counseling and guidance to young persons and their families should be developed, or strengthened where they exist.'

The guidelines also stress the **participation** of young people within their communities.

Prevention was also an integral part of traditional child rearing practices and beliefs. For instance in the Zulu culture, prevention is implied

through idioms/proverbs³ such as *libunjwa liseva* meaning that one can only mould children when they are still young. Another proverb *ligotshwa lisemanzi* literally translated means that you can only bend a branch whilst it is still wet. Another traditional concept recognizes the potential of children *umthente uhlaba usamila* meaning that children have potential to do good things or learn good practices at a young age; so it makes sense to build on their potential through preventative programmes.

The Child Justice Bill

The Draft Child Justice Bill to be introduced into parliament later this year proposes a new and comprehensive system and legislative framework for the management of children accused of crimes. Although the proposed system does not specifically focus on prevention, since it starts dealing with children once they have 'knocked on the doors' of the criminal justice system, a closer examination of the proposals suggests a highly preventative component. The Bill proposes that diversion be used as much as possible to prevent children accused of less serious offences from getting deeper into the criminal justice system. The purposes of diversion as set out in the Bill are highly preventative in nature and they include:

- Encouraging the child to be accountable for the harm caused;
- Meeting the needs of the individual child;
- Promoting reintegration of

the child into the family and community;

- Providing an opportunity to those affected by the harm to express their views on its impact on them;
- Preventing stigmatising the child and prevent adverse consequences flowing from being subject to the criminal justice system;
- Promoting reconciliation between the child and the person or community affected by the harm caused;
- Preventing the child from having a criminal record.

At the first sign of problem behaviour, no matter how small, a major intervention should happen. Contrary to popular belief that diversion allows children to 'get away with' their wrongdoing, the Bill seeks to 'nip' the problem as early as possible through providing a wide range of diversion options.



Courts' role

Courts have a very important role in prevention. The proposed

child justice system is founded on the premise that children are different from adults and as such the courts have a judicial responsibility to give children a chance to make better choices than following a criminal career. Further, the court professionals are challenged to enable children to make the kinds of decisions that will ensure a better future for themselves and their communities.

Courts will have a more defined role in helping children prosper in adulthood:

- Through mechanisms to enable diversion such as the preliminary enquiry⁴, many children will be helped to avoid incurring a criminal record.
- They will be offered a chance to change their behaviour, correcting the wrong done and repairing broken relationships through restorative justice processes.
- They will be afforded an opportunity to receive individualised attention through assessment and appropriate developmental programmes with an emphasis on helping and supporting, rather than simply punishing.

Guiding principles

- 'Risk focused prevention' is the cornerstone. Factors that put children at risk should be identified before they occur, in order to eliminate or reduce the effects of exposure to the risk. Prevention must address known risk factors.

Child Justice

Prevention should target all children, with more emphasis on those at greatest risk.

- Strengthening the family in its primary responsibility to instill positive values and to provide support and guidance to children.
- Programmes should be appropriate to developmental stages of children – the 'one-size-fits-all' programming could be disastrous.
- The community should be included in the programmes. Participants who can model the skills and adaptive behaviours should be part of the prevention initiatives.
- Intervene early before the problem behaviour stabilises.

Understanding risk factors

A risk-focused prevention strategy is based on the premise that to prevent a problem from occurring, one needs to identify and address risk factors contributing to the development of the problem. Risk factors associated with committing crimes exist in five main domains: individual, family, peer, school and the community. These domains presented below have been adapted from Catalano and Hawkins⁵:

Individual risk factors

- Early onset of challenging behaviour
- Rebelliousness
- Learning problems
- Alienation.

Peer risk factors

- Peer attitude that rewards problem

- Substance abusing peers
- Rejection by peers.

Family risk factors

- Family conflict
- Family alcohol and substance abuse
- Inappropriate discipline
- Favourable parental attitudes towards an involvement in problem behaviour
- Poor parenting skills
- Low level of parental involvement
- Parental involvement in crime.

School risk factors

- Academic failure
- Lack of commitment to school
- Inappropriate school curriculum.

Community risk factors

- Exposure to drugs and firearms
- Community laws and practices that favour use of firearms
- Community mobility
- Community violence
- Poverty and extreme economic deprivation.

Building resiliency

Assessing risk factors is not an end in itself. It is the beginning of a prevention process, because once risk factors are known a plan to develop what is known as **protective factors or resiliency** should be developed. Protective factors are those factors that 'insulate' children from a problem. They either reduce the impact of risk factors or change the way children respond to risks. Examples of protective factors include:

development of resiliency through problem solving and conflict resolution skills, improved bonding with positive and strong adults, well-developed sense of responsibility and accountability, development of a healthy set of values and community responsibility values, clear communication skills, ability to control one's emotions, etc.

Buyi writes that this article is "a tribute to one of the greatest mentors and role models I have shared a womb with." Her younger brother, Ziphelele Mbambo was killed by criminals last year at the age of 32. He was a lecturer at the University of Durban-Westville and had just introduced a range of crime prevention initiatives in schools.

Endnotes

1. UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, adopted by the UN General Assembly 14 December 1990, Resolution 45/112
2. Developing a Juvenile Justice System for South Africa: International Instruments and Restorative Justice in Acta Juridica 1996.
3. Useful comments and insights on Zulu child rearing beliefs and idioms obtained through discussions with Mafika Cele, a language teacher, and Mr Mbongeni Mtshali, a Commissioner for Child Welfare in Pietermaritzburg.
4. Chapter 7 of the Report on Juvenile Justice Delinquency (Commonly referred to as the Draft Child Justice Report).
5. Catalano RF, and Hawkins JD 1996. *The Social Development Model: A theory of antisocial behaviour*. In *Delinquency and Crime: Current Theories*, edited by JD Hawkins. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, pp. 149-197

Reprinted with permission from ChildrenFIRST
April/May 2001

Kathy Scott asks:

“WHO WILL BURY OUR BABIES?”

We're a small children's home in the Western Cape situated in an area where there is an high incidence of HIV/AIDS. Thus we are aware that we have some children and families affected by HIV. We are also offering a Family Preservation service in the community from which the children come. Through this we have formed many links with other service providers in the community, one of which is the local clinic and the Health Forum. We are very involved with the various issues around HIV/AIDS. We receive numerous referrals for assistance with families affected by HIV. Many of the families have no income at all and much of our work is sourcing resources for them. One of the major issues that we are now facing is that of funeral costs and procedures around the funerals. It cost about R750 for the funeral of a baby last month and this was the cheapest that we could arrange. Has anybody advice/suggestions about this issue – policies, procedures, possible donors for funeral costs? We are seriously thinking about motivating the community to start making coffins and to form a roster for digging the graves.

Any ideas would be most welcome.



Contact Kathy at (021) 790-5616

Talking about sex? It's against our culture!

- We all have sex but many of us have been taught to think of it as immoral, dirty or embarrassing, unless it is practised within the bonds of marriage.
- We are not used to talking openly about sex, hearing about sex or speaking words like penis or vagina or intercourse.
- We are not used to talking with children about sexual matters.

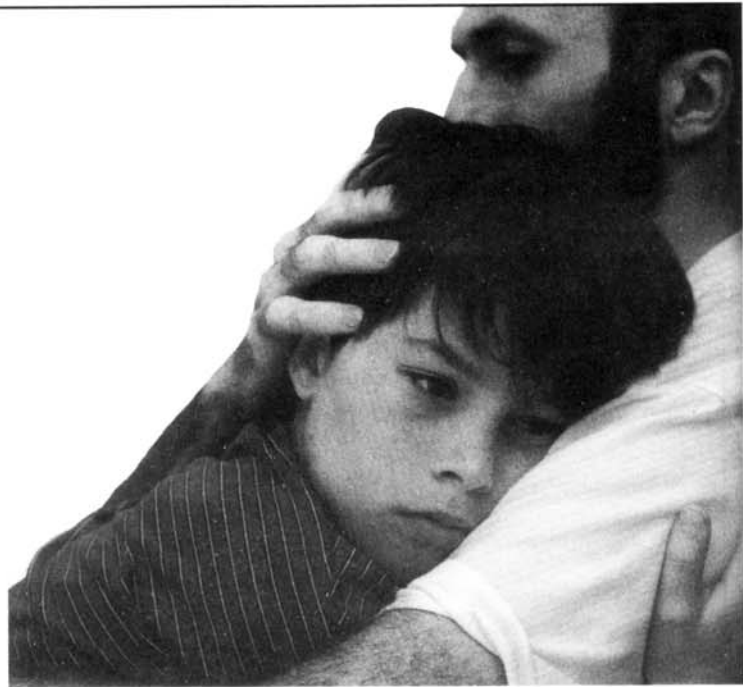
These aspects of our culture, that have made us shy about sex, were developed in different times. We now have a completely new challenge with HIV. It is new disease that was not there when our old customs were created.

The arrival of HIV means we have to make some changes to our culture because if we do not make these changes very large numbers of our young people will die and we may, too. Changing the rules about discussing sex does not mean that our culture will be threatened. There is much more to our culture than codes and practices relating to sex.

In fact, culture changes all the time. That is how it survives. Think how many customs have changed in our lifetimes, and in our parents and grandparents' lifetimes. If we don't control HIV/AIDS it will destroy our society and our cultures will be history. We need to adapt our customary attitude toward sex and talking about sex because the lives of our spouses and partners, our children, and those in our care depend on it. It shows maturity to talk about sexuality in a straightforward and responsible way. Young people will appreciate our concerns for their problems.

An extract from 'HIV/AIDS Guidelines for Educators' published by the of Education Department.

More thoughts about Touch



Last month, "Spotlight on Students" began a discussion on touch and identified some of the issues to be considered in using touch appropriately in child and youth care work.

In this issue JACKIE WINFIELD continues to explore this important topic.

Physical comfort

Remember Harlow's baby monkeys who preferred the cloth-covered surrogate "mother" to the "mothers" who provided food. Despite the necessity of food for survival, the infant monkeys chose to spend more time with the source of warmth and softness. According to Maier (1987:55), human beings have a similar need for such bodily comfort: "Throughout life a sense of well-being and caring is closely related to the degree of bodily security and comfort a person experiences. Moreover, as an individual's bodily comforts are met, so does the person feel welcomed and wanted and more receptive to risk experience beyond his or her physical demands. Physical sustenance and comfort are thus essential measures of care."

Maier's words indicate a strong relationship between the physical aspects of being cared for and the emotional experience of being accepted and valued. Touching is also a social activity in that it happens between people. Therefore, it becomes clear that appropriate use of touch can contribute to the holistic development of the child or youth.

Attachment

**"Studies of securely-attached children bring out that in moments of stress, such as at points of separation, they seek the proximity of the caregiver."
(Maier, 1987: 51)**

Most child and youth care practitioners know about the importance of attachment as the basis for healthy relationships throughout life. The development of appropriate attachment is facilitated by attachment behaviours such as clinging and staying close. Infants, children and youth may strive for attachment with caregivers by touching them, even if their "touching" consists of behaviours such as messing up your freshly-combed hair or poking you painfully in the ribs! Child and youth care workers who are able to understand such behaviour and respond in a caring way provide opportunities for young people to establish social bonds through which new behaviour may be learned.

Sex and Power

Many young people at risk have had traumatic experiences of touch. Adults may have hit them, pinched them, handled them roughly or fondled them in a sexual way. For these children and youth, touch may be frightening or even repulsive. Such experiences may also become tied up with issues of power in that the abusive adult is bigger, physically stronger and socially, more powerful. Indeed,

Spotlight on Students

in many contexts, initiators of touch are often more powerful than those they are touching. This insight provides an additional reason for asking young people for permission before touching them. To touch another without knowing that it is OK for them is to presume that one knows best and may well be a subtle abuse of power.

Physical Restraint

Children and youth who struggle to control themselves occasionally become so out-of-control that it becomes necessary for child and youth care workers to use physical restraint. The aim of this intervention is to provide some form of external control to the young person who has temporarily lost inner control. It is essential to remember that physical restraint techniques should be used only by workers who have been trained to use them correctly. Firm yet non-harmful holding by a caring adult restores a sense of physical and emotional safety for the child or youth. It is interesting to note that some young people derive pleasure from being restrained, perhaps due to the physical closeness of the adult (Smiar, 1995).

Conclusion

The touch of another human being can be exhilarating or devastating. It can enrich or destroy. Either way, touch is a factor which impacts on the development of the children and youth with whom we work. As professionals, we should always think carefully about what we do and why and how? Are we hugging Simon because he has had a bad day or because we have had a bad day? Does Simon even want a hug when he is feeling miserable and worthless? Do we offer to brush Lungi's hair because she needs a bit of extra care or because we need to feel needed? Child and youth care work should consist of purposeful action, reflection and planning. Whatever we do, we need to ask ourselves the question, "Is this in the best interests of this young person in this moment?" If we answer "yes", we must be able to justify our actions. Consider how touch is used at your place of work. Is there a policy about touching? Are the children clear about what touching is allowed and what is not allowed? Do the child and youth care workers demonstrate appropriate touch in their interactions with young people and each other? Let's think about the questions and strive to ensure that children and youth in our programmes experience the human touch as gentle, healing, and perhaps, even magical! ●



TIPS ON WRITING PROPOSALS

Corporate, Trusts and Foundations

Before you start writing learn the ground rules:

- ▶ **Rule One:** write your proposal in simple straightforward language; avoid jargon; explain terms; don't use acronyms.
- ▶ **Rule Two:** have it typed. This looks neater than handwriting and above all is easier to photocopy. Electric typewriter is better than manual and computer generated documents are better still.
- ▶ **Rule Three:** lay it out in a simple and easy to follow format.
- ▶ **Rule Four:** follow orders. If you are asked to use an application form then use it. If information is requested in a certain way, then do so. Try to understand why the information is required in a specific way rather than reacting against it.
- ▶ **Rule Five:** avoid over the top packaging: don't have it bound in a fancy system – it looks flash and may make it hard to copy. Likewise with using colour inks, or including photographs in the text – they sometimes copy badly.
- ▶ **Rule Six:** make sure the proposal is neat – no coffee stains, drips of midnight oil, obviously changed text. They make you look like a messy and untogether organisation.
- ▶ **Rule Seven:** have it proofed. So many proposals contain appalling spelling, typographical and even adding up mistakes. Have someone outside the organisation check it for such bloopers!

The above Rules are courtesy of Bernard Ross of the NPO Management Centre, London.

DRUGS —

The Reality

Sarah Fisher of the Bridges Drug and Alcohol Out-patient Treatment and Education Centre in the Western Cape shares some helpful information to raise awareness about the issue of drugs.



Many South Africans, particularly young people, experiment with both legal and illegal drugs. Most people who take drugs are ordinary people who attend school, work and run homes and families. Some adults feel out of their depth when it comes to drug and alcohol abuse. There is a lot of confusing and scary information out there. There are more addictive substances available, legal and illegal, than ever before and every young person is at risk.

By the time they finish high school every teenager will have been exposed to drugs in one form

or another, irrespective of where they come from, what school they go to or how bright they are. You can help them to avoid the horrors of addiction by being informed. No one becomes addicted overnight, it is a process – experimentation, regular use, abuse, addiction. If you have the slightest suspicion that a young person may be using drugs please do not ignore it – get help.

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF A CHILD IS USING DRUGS?

Here are some signs to look out for:

- Sudden mood swings. Sullen and moody to happy and alert
- Loss of appetite. A change in eating patterns like sudden binging on sweets
- Unusual aggression or apath
- Change of friends
- Loss of interest in hobbies, sport and school
- Becoming secretive, furtive behaviour and lying
- Change in sleeping patterns and bouts of drowsiness
- Unexplained loss of possessions and money
- Unusual smells or stains on the body, clothes and around the house
- Disappearance of medicines or alcohol
- Change in appearance. Less interest in personal hygiene. Weight loss or gain
- Drug related paraphernalia. Posters, clothes and jewelry

Please remember that some of these symptoms could be confused with those of normal adolescence. So don't over-react but don't allow your reality to be challenged either. It is important not to jump to the wrong conclusions.

HOW ADULTS CAN HELP

There is the possibility that a youth will be offered drugs, both legal and illegal. You can influence a youth's decision whether to accept or not, but you cannot guarantee that he/she will not experiment. By being supportive and giving young people accurate information helps them to make informed decisions. Most of their information comes from friends or "urban legend" which is often wrong. Be correctly informed yourself, so that you can pass on accurate information.

- Give accurate information about drugs – it helps

young people to make informed choices.

- Help them to understand that consequences, both good and bad, follow choices and encourage them to take responsibility for their choices.
- Let them know that we all make mistakes it's part of growing up and being human.
- Do not be hypocritical
- Make sure the lines of communications are always open
- Talk about drugs and alcohol in an honest, relaxed and open way.
- Negotiate and involve children & youth in setting guidelines for behaviour such as curfews.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK A YOUNG PERSON IS USING DRUGS

Don't panic. Stay calm and discuss the situation without fighting. Listen to what a child/youth is saying without being judgmental, if what they are saying concerns you express this honestly and without anger or tears. Explain why you are worried and what your concerns are. Negotiate guidelines and let the young person be part of the process. By being part of these they are more likely to stick to them. Keep your word, for example, if you have told them the consequences for certain actions, make sure those consequences are carried out. Be firm, consistent and caring, but show that using drugs is an unacceptable practice and that you disapprove.

Don't be afraid to screen a young person. Doctors and pathologists can test either urine or blood. If you do choose this

method ask them to test for a variety of substances such as: opiates, methamphetamine, LSD, dagga, cocaine, amphetamine and mandrax.

- Do support young people — this is vital no matter what the circumstances
- Do understand that a young person may need more help than you are able to give.
- Do contact someone to help you
- Do distinguish between the child/youth and the drugs — you love them but not the drug or the behaviour it causes
- Do let young people take responsibility for their own actions
- Don't blame yourself
- Don't tell lies for young people – to school, family and friends
- Don't, either directly or indirectly, fund their drug



- habit by giving them money
- Don't expect the situation to go away if you ignore it
- Don't believe everything you're told
- Don't make threats or promises which you cannot carry out

Extracts adapted with permission from Bridges booklet compiled by Sarah Fisher – 1999

BRIDGES – 24 HOURS
 021-852 6065/0833 273 911
 Information, education, school programmes, policies, intervention and referrals

DATES TO REMEMBER

JUNE Men's Health Awareness Month

JUNE

- 1 International Children's Day
- 1 - 7 International Volunteers Week
- 16 S.A. Youth Day
- 25 S. A. Drug Awareness Week
- 26 International Day in Support of Victims of Torture
- 26 International Day Against Drug Abuse & Ellicit Trafficking

JULY

11 World Population Day

Share with us what you will be doing to celebrate/commemorate these days and/or raise awareness about these special events.



Graduation Ceremony in the Winterveldt – NORTHERN PROVINCE

Congratulations! Thirty-two students were over the moon on Saturday 12 May 2001 after a lot of hard work towards the completion of the BQCC (Basic Qualification in Child Care). The graduation took place at Bungeni in the Northern Province. Thirteen sub-villages under the chieftaincy of Bungeni were represented by students who had been selected by their sub-villages to represent them.

The graduation ceremony was attended by key government departments, community organisations from Bungeni and the surrounding areas like Waterval. Amongst them were the Dept of Safety and Security represented by Inspector Sadiki, Sports Against Crime, Local Government represented by several councillors and the representative to the mayor Mr I.N. Mphaphuli, TLC, Aids Awareness, People with disabilities project, SANCO, Health, the Honourable

Chief Xitaci of Bungeni and many more.

In representing the local council, Mr Indion Mdaka said repeatedly how much the council appreciated initiatives like the one at Bungeni and that the council sees it as a beginning. They will go all the way to support the project. He said that there is a need for committed community members to start community projects because they are sure of the government support unlike in the apartheid era.

The Honourable chief Xitaci of Bungeni, who could not hide his excitement, thanked the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund (NMCF) who funded the training and the NACCW including Mr Donald Nghonyama for the facilitation and effort put into making the training a success. He reminded the students that it is very important to always do their work with respect.

Mr Donald Nghonyama, the guest speaker, indicated in his

speech that just after the BQCC training the students started youth projects. He went on to say that in order for the projects to be successful, the child and youth care workers at Bungeni will have to work very hard with determination and commitment to make a difference in the villages and in the lives of children and youth. It is very important that leaders do not monopolise projects. It is always remembered that you are not alone in working for the best of the community. There were other stakeholders represented at the ceremony. Involve and network with them – that is the integrated approach.

Two children and youth projects were started during the course of the training, they are Nhlalala Child and Youth Care aimed at development of sports and cultural activities – this project has already been started and Langavi community project aimed at family preservation.

“We must return our education to the people who gave it to us.” – Julius Nyerere

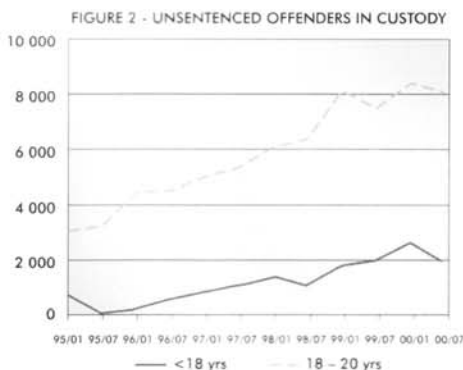
Sentenced and Unsented Children in Prisons

Lukas M Muntingh of NICRO gives us an update

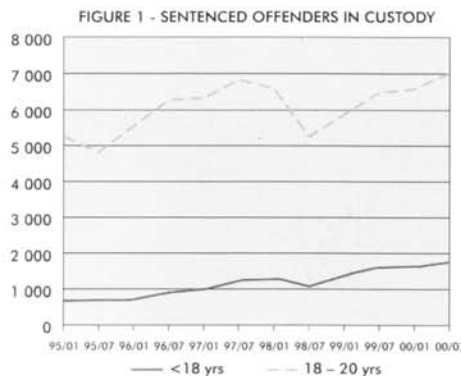
The Department of Correctional Services recently made available a comprehensive set of statistical information on trends in the prison population that includes projections for the future. It is, among other things, projected that the total prison population will be approximately

170 000 by March 2001, indicating a stabilising trend since July 2000.

The overall situation pertaining to children is, however, less encouraging. Figure 1 shows the numbers of sentenced children in prisons since January 1995. Despite a bursting around July 1998, because of the Presidential birthday, there has been a steady increase in the number of children serving prison sentences, and numbers have more than doubled over this period. For comparative purposes, the figures for 18 - 20-year-olds are



also presented. Since January 1995 to July 2000, there has been an increase of 158,67% in the number of children serving prison sentences – the highest of all the age cohorts analysed



by the Department of Correctional Services. For 18 - 20-year-olds the increase for the same period was 33,23%; for 20 - 25 years-olds 25,15%, and for prisoners older than 25 years, 16,52%. Children under 18 years constitute 1,45% of the prison population.

Although children make up only around 3% of the population of unsented prisoners, the fact that they are there in the first instance has been the focus of sustained government ef-

orts since 1995. Figure 2 does show that since January 2000 their numbers have decreased from 2 649 to 1 908 in July 2000 – a decrease of 39%. The numbers of adult awaiting-trial prisoners also decreased after interdepartmental teams were set up to deal with the overcrowding of prisons.

If the downward trend continues (a decrease of 6,5% per month under normal conditions) there could be no more children awaiting trial in prisons by July 2009!

In July 1996 the average period that a person would be held awaiting trial in prison was 76 days, but by July 2000 this had increased to 138 days or in excess of four and a half months. For regional court cases the situation is even worse and a prisoner being tried in regional court can expect to sit 221 days on average, or just less than seven and a half months. It is therefore possible that a substantial number of children currently awaiting trial in prison will celebrate their 18th birthday there.

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ARTICLE 40

March 2001

Ways to show Kids you care

- Ask them about themselves**
- Look into their eyes when you talk to them**
- Listen to their stories**
- Notice when they're absent**
- Admit when you've made a mistake**
- Ask them to help you**
- Give them immediate feedback**
- Give them good choices**
- Build something together**
- Introduce them to new experiences**

Extracts from Joeline L. Roehkepartain's "150 ways to show kids you care."

