

A CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO A LEXICON FOR CHILD CARE WORKERS

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The development of a lexicon for child care workers has closely paralleled the evolution of the English Dictionary. Although the early English dictionary makers in the seventeenth century were concerned exclusively with words which were considered to be unfamiliar, expanding to include ordinary terms by the eighteenth century, the definitions were often the expression of the author's knowledge, experience and, sometimes, opinion and imagination. Samuel Johnson was the first to use quotations from literature to illustrate and justify his definitions. Submitting proofs of words that related to specific fields of interest to those people involved in those fields for their criticisms, suggestions and additions was a later development. Today, most dictionaries define words with a phrase, a synonym and a literary illustration. Similarly, the lexicon for child care workers has followed a path of first gathering and listing the words and terms that are particular to the field, then defining them as they are used in every day practice and administration.

Last June Herb Barnes, Executive Director, Youthorizons, and Mark Krueger, Director of the Child and Youth Care Learning Center, contacted me to see if I'd be interested in preparing a lexicon of key terms that could be given to students and practitioners from foreign countries who would be coming here to work and study through Youthorizons' International Learning Exchange in Professional Youthwork. After further discussions with the co-sponsors of the project (Herb, Mark, Jerry Beker, University of Minnesota, and Anthony Maluccio, University of Connecticut) it was concluded that the lexicon might also be of interest to the field in general.

With the aid of another youth worker, Mike O'Leary, I contacted group care facilities in the Milwaukee area and submitted to them a list of terms and phrases that, based on our experiences as workers, we felt were commonly used yet whose meanings were unique when applied to the child and youth care profession. Taking into consideration their suggestions, we compiled a list of approximately 200 words which met our criteria of being (1) particular to the field and (2) used in such a manner as to have a meaning separate from ordinary usage. With the assistance of Mike, Mark, Rita Sutter and Donna Stordock, as well as the reference books listed at the end of this article, I was able to determine the

significant descriptive factors in the definitions that distinguished the selected terms and phrases. A copy of the lexicon was then prepared and submitted to the co-sponsors, all of whom have considerable experience in the field, for their comments and emendations.

The lexicon is now at a point in its development where it should expand to include *every* term and phrase occurring in the literature of the child care field. The original list of 200 words is much too limited. The definitions are perhaps imprecise or too broad. If the lexicon is to become a true reference book for the profession, the participation of many contributors is now needed. Suggested guidelines to be followed are: during reading or research in the literature of child care, take special note of passages which show or imply that a word is either peculiar to the field or is used in such a manner that it needs a new and different explanation. Make as many quotations as you can for ordinary words, especially when they are used significantly and tend by the context to explain or suggest their own meaning. Submit your clippings, signed and dated, with a clear and precise reference as to the origin, listing the periodical, article or book and the page number, as well as the author and the date of the publication, to *The Journal of Child and Youth Care Work*, The Child Care Learning Center, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201, Attention: Mark Krueger. There will be no payment but one will have the satisfaction of knowing he or she has contributed to an important work. It is hoped that this lexicon will eventually include not only all the words used in the field, but will also reflect the various theoretical persuasions that have influenced child care and will become part of a knowledge base that will unify our understanding of the work we do.

Following is a short selection of terms and phrases from the original list of two hundred. It is presented here as an illustration of the profound nature of the work. Words are keys to a kingdom. The knowledge they represent establishes the parameters of our ability, our wisdom and, as in the case of the English dictionary, our very existence.

alternate care – (1) a term to describe group care facilities (2) referring to the placement of a youth in a setting other than his natural home.

basic needs – the physical and emotional needs of a person which must be satisfied before treatment can begin: food, clothing, shelter, and security. (Also included in Maslow's hierarchy of needs: physical, safety, social, loving and belonging, and self-fulfillment.)

behavior – the observable activity of an individual which may be characterized as responsive or spontaneous.

caregiver – the person charged with attending to the daily basic needs of residents in group care facilities.

Child Care – a human service profession promoting the physical, emotional, social, and cognitive welfare of children by creating and participating in a therapeutic environment and the treatment process.

Child Care Counselor – (1) one who works with residents on a one-to-one basis providing guidance and advice (2) one who is a supervisor to child care workers (3) another term for child care worker.

Child Care Worker – a caregiver for residents who uses the relationship established between himself and the residents as the primary instrument for therapeutic treatment.

confrontation – reality based interpretation of behavior that, when presented to the perpetrator, challenges his perception or interpretation of the behavior.

consequence – a natural or logical result of a specific behavior.

control – to be in command of one's own behavior or an influence to maintain another's behavior within acceptable social behavior.

crisis – (1) a proxysmal attack indicating an emotionally significant event or radical change of behavior for better or worse for the individual (2) out of control behavior of resident or a group of residents.

crisis intervention – the attempt to influence or mitigate a crisis for the benefit of those involved.

development – the process of growth which can be indicated by degrees or levels and can be affected by treatment.

escalate – the increase in intensity in the behavior or agitation of an individual or group, usually used as a negative connotation.

expectations – the placing of goals, demands and norms upon an individual or group with an inference of obligation.

external control – the regulation and maintenance of behavior of an individual or group through the use of therapeutic treatment and its values and principles; influence.

group – two or more individuals bonded by common experience or like behavior.

group dynamics – the pattern of interactions between individuals com-

prising a group and its effects upon them.

group identity – the sense of self received from participation in a group.

honeymoon period – a period of unusual and often uncharacteristic harmony immediately following placement of a youth in an institution or group home.

inappropriate behavior – behavior that is incongruent with social norms and expectations; often disruptive.

influence – the power to affect another through various overt and subtle means.

internal control – the use of the values and principles acquired through therapeutic treatment by a resident to regulate and maintain himself.

intervention – (1) intercession to influence the development of another
(2) the act of controlling or preventing the behavior of one or more residents.

learned behavior – behavior that is acquired by practice.

learning environment – an aggregate of all the external conditions that are structured to enhance the development of an individual.

limits – degrees of restrictions on behavior which is regarded as permissible or tolerable; boundaries.

limit setting – the act of imposing limits.

limit testing – escalating misbehavior or inappropriate behavior until a limit is passed and a response is provoked.

manipulation – controlling others by artful yet insidious means to influence them and gain an advantage over them.

manipulative behavior – purposefully acting in a manipulative manner.

out of control – the loss of ability to control one's own behavior or react to the influence of another.

power – potency to control or influence others.

power play – a manipulative maneuver intended to wrest power from one person or group and confer it onto another person or group.

power struggle – the fight between two or more persons for power.

relationship – the emotional bond shared between two or more people.
For the child care worker: the primary means of influencing a resident and effecting therapeutic treatment.

risk taking – (1) the ability to change one’s behavior, attitude or values
(2) the act of trying out a new behavior (3) the act of exposing oneself to a new and different situation.

structure – referring to the components of a milieu, its physical design, its routines, expectations and treatment program and their consistent application.

technique – a method for influencing or controlling behavior.

therapeutic treatment – the beneficial application of knowledge and skills to affect the growth and development of youth.

treatment – (1) the application and implementation of child care principles and techniques to promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of youth (2) the practice of therapy.

values – beliefs deemed to be of a social worth to a person signifying essential standards for existence.

REFERENCES

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