

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, BEYOND BORDERS

As youth workers—practitioners and researchers—we are dedicated to developmental practices that organize change over time. We often observe first-hand the worst implications of society in the lives of the young for whom we care.

And promote and witness the evolution of healing and hope around the globe!.

In this endeavor, youth and youth workers reduce the effects of violence, poverty, depression, and the lack of instrumental supports. Together, against all odds, we make strong attachments and form life saving relationships that teach trust, competencies, and skills for social growth and success. In “Developmental Group Care”, Henry Maier called this the “wellspring of life” itself.

Articles presented in this edition were delivered as papers at the 8th Triennial International Child and Youth Care Conference, which had more than 1,500 representatives from over 36 countries meeting in Montreal. Our theme was “Beyond Borders: Caring for the Future of Children, Youth, and Families.”.

Through relationships, we cross the borders of the defenses that youth put up to protect themselves against those who have hurt them. We directly confront contested spaces of violence and replace aggression in the life space. Our approach is to offer opportunities for new perspective-taking and learning in the activities of daily life, in what Al Trieschman called “the other twenty-three hours.” This is the time spent outside therapy appointments that becomes just as valuable, if not more critical, to taking healthy risks and putting change into action.

As we discover and understand what needs to be changed in the lives of youth, we reach out to families and work with communities to acknowledge and prevent the root etiology for risk. Our work is at once a multisectoral and multimodal strategy that invites collaboration across borders to bring strength-based systems and relationships together to promote a healthy interdependence. Relying on one another in healthy ways transforms who we are and the neighborhoods we live in.

We hold in trust a deep interpersonal and societal responsibility for the care of children and youth. Their roles in civil society come down to how we treat each other in the intimacy of immediate relationships, the associations we make, the peer networks we encourage, and the alliances we create in the larger scheme of things. These produce a healthy society. Youth work is a common ground in which we meet the youth where they are. We are present together with the youth. We effectively engage and connect relationships around us—family, neighborhood community, and country—to provide the necessary supports for youth to thrive!

In this edition, we open with “practice” first. Following in the tradition of Nicholas Long, there is an article from A. Mark Amendola and Robert Oliver on life space intervention and the efficacy of the strategies we use as youth workers to counter aggression. Life space interview as an evidence-based practice provides instrumental social skills for communication, anger management, and the opportunity to experience moral reasoning. It is followed by an empirical study that confirms for us that we should always pay attention to victimization as an important factor when

working with youth who are aggressive and violent. Sibylle Artz, Diana Nicholson, and Jessica McNamara give us a window into gender difference in violence and make recommendations for youth work practice. Using this data to tell the story of the youth, these articles serve as powerful evidence-driven exemplars of moving from theory to findings that are tested empirically.

Often youth who struggle with poverty and violence end up affected even more by legal problems. A second pair of articles give voice to the experience of youth in this regard. The authors examine what happens to youth when they are in conflict with the law. Examples are given by Desiree de Kock in South Africa of the ways that prevention and education can be utilized to effect change. Kiaras Gharabaghi in Canada takes an incisive look at what happens when policy turns to a "get tough" approach. He builds the case that it is more effective to respond with "accountability through engagement," than legalizing consequences for acting out behaviors.

Next we delve most intimately into the work of making connections with children and youth by exploring attachment disorder and impacts that result when youth are denied "knowledge of caretaking." N.P. Rygaard, a practicing psychologist in the Danish Psychological Association, uses a hypothetical, typical life-span case to help us understand the societal disruptions that produce a lack of attachment, and proposes possible developmental interventions by age. In the next article, Maas, who is a psychologist at the Batshaw Youth and Family Centers in Canada, like Rygaard uses the story of a youth to illustrate and demonstrate the power of making healthy relationships. He describes how the therapeutic relationship works to "build strength and sense of identity and worth" by integrating self-image, effectively negotiating healthy autonomy, and changing patterns with family and social circles.

We follow with a phenomenological exploration of relationships. Heather Sanrud uses qualitative method to suggest the ways in which our own self-doubt leads to reflection about the challenges we face.

Moving from practice to the professional movement growing to advance and sustain youth work, in the second half of this edition we turn to "field building." Emerging around the world as a full-fledged profession, youth work needs journals to transfer the knowledge generated in the profession. Articles cover new efforts to credential youth workers, initiatives that extend access, and opportunities for training, as well as a commitment to the ethics that keep us honest in the work.

To this end, Dale Curry, Frank Eckles, and colleagues update our profession with processes that have been established and data that validates the newest youth worker certification offered by the Association of Child and Youth Care Practice through its recently founded National Certification Board. Andy Schneider-Muñoz follows with a comprehensive report from a youth worker summit recently convened in Washington, D.C., to strengthen the learning and coaching that prepare youth care workers for certification and leadership in our field. These proceedings and next steps demonstrate where we stand on developing and delivering high quality training and certification.

The next three articles take into account new directions as the field matures for the delivery of services in foster care, family work, and Juvenile Justice. Nash,

Leschied, Rodgers, and Cummings explore the delivery of foster care and focus on the turnover of foster parents as related to satisfaction with training and their relationships with their foster children. Jack Phelan breaks new ground for the coming of age of our field through family work. Jonker and Swanzen take a look at the court system in South Africa and recommend that “intermediaries” advocating for youth receive increased recognition, training and support.

Finally, as much as we work to build the institutional structures of a profession, Hans Skott-Myhre and Kathleen Skott-Myhre encourage us to gain perspective by diverging from field building to propose instead a radical ethics of care. They ask youth workers to consider not only what emerges as their identity, but to engage in conversation—a deep give and take—that can produce an interdependent meaning between those engaged.

Joining in this edition are our founding editor, Mark Krueger, and two immediate past editors, Karen VanderVen and Varda Mann-Feder, who continue to guide us along the way. In the spirit of the international nature of this volume, which has contributions from the comparative work in South Africa, Denmark, Canada, and the United States, our colleague editors offer brief perspective columns on the importance of global youth work.

We wish you good reading!!!!.

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