Unity Through Relationship

presents

Care • Connection • Context

Commitment to Relational Based Practice

Regency Hotel, Dublin, Ireland
13 & 14 November 2017
9am – 5pm

http://unitythroughrelationship.com
## Programme at-a-glance

### Monday 13 November 2017

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
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<td>9:45</td>
<td>Opening</td>
<td>MC opening and welcoming. Housekeeping.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Keynote</td>
<td>Jack Phelan (Alberta, Canada) Relational Child and Youth Care Supervision Working at a Professional Level</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:40</td>
<td>Plenary</td>
<td>Dr John Digney and Maxwell Smart (Ireland / Scotland) Celtic Connections International Perspectives on Care, Connection and Context</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:20</td>
<td>Break / Networking</td>
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### WORKSHOPS

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<td>11:45</td>
<td>Dr Paul Baker (USA) Using a NeuroRelational Approach to Provide Hope for Challenging Children and Youth</td>
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<td>11:45</td>
<td>Dr Thom Garfat (Canada) Introducing The International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)</td>
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<td>Derek McDonnell (Ireland) Focusing through Interactive Pausing</td>
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<td>11:45</td>
<td>Maria Lotty (Ireland) Promoting Placement Stability through Relational Practice in Foster Care</td>
<td>Theresa Brown (Ireland) Hear Our Voice: Relationship-based Practice in a Changing Landscape of Care</td>
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<td>13:15</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:15</td>
<td>Dr Larry Bredetro (USA) Respectful Alliances with Youth</td>
<td>Willie Brazil (Ireland) Back on the High Wire</td>
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<tr>
<td>14:15</td>
<td>Rachel Charles (Canada) Connection – Through The Chaos</td>
<td>John Byrne (Ireland) Too fat, too old or too mad to practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>15:45</td>
<td>Networking Break and Transition to Plenary</td>
<td>Wolfgang Vachon (Canada) Frictions within the 'erotics' of Child and Youth Care</td>
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<td>16:00</td>
<td>Closing Address</td>
<td>Dr Thom Garfat (Quebec, Canada) Mattering Matters Most</td>
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<td>16:45</td>
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| 10:00   | Keynote                               | Dr Larry Brendtro (USA)  
The Resilience Compass                                               |
| 10.40   | Plenary                               | Dr Mark Smith (Scotland)  
What’s love got to do with it?                                                                                  |
| 11:20   | Break / Networking                    |                                                                                                  |
| 11:45   | WORKSHOPS                             | Frank Delano and Dawn Schaefer (USA)  
The real money in the bank: Building relationships with kids in care.                      |
|         |                                       | Liam Curran (Canada)  
The vicissitude lives of children and youth with an FASD                             |
|         |                                       | Dr Patrick Ryan (Ireland) and Joerg Schleuter (Germany)  
Social Pedagogy in Action: Real world experiences of pedagogues, managers and commissioners. |
|         |                                       | Shelby Stevenson (Canada)  
Alternative Child & Youth care In Outdoor Settings                                             |
|         |                                       | Maxwell Smart and Ben Smart (Scotland)  
The Long and The Short of It.                                                                     |
| 13:15   | Lunch                                 |                                                                                                  |
| 14.15   | WORKSHOPS                             | Kelly Shaw (Canada)  
Taken for Granted: Exploring Assumptions about our world view                                    |
|         |                                       | Michele Briegel (Canada)  
Relational Practice: A Family Perspective                                                            |
|         |                                       | David Power (Ireland)  
Care, Connection and Context within a Therapeutic Community                                        |
|         |                                       | Dr Clive Acraman (UK)  
| 15:30   | Networking Break and Transition to Plenary |                                                                                              |
| 16:00   | Closing Address                       | Brian Hogan and Trish McDonnell (Ireland)  
Hitting the High Notes: The Joy (Importance) of Effective Teamwork                                  |
| 16:45   | End of Conference                     |                                                                                                  |
Understanding the importance of Relational Practice

Dr Thom Garfat explained in 2003 that a relational approach is "... the presence of the necessary clarity, boundaries and relationship-based expectations that provide containment while promoting empowerment and growth."

The Gateway Organisation, in conjunction with TransformAction International, Empower Ireland and CYC-Net are delighted to host the 4th annual Unity Through Relationship International Conference. As usual this will be an inclusive learning and development event building and strengthening connections, relationships and interdisciplinary working.

The theoretical basis for effective child and youth care is the creation and maintenance of the therapeutic relationship from within the life space of the client. All other intervention strategies and theoretical applications are secondary to the creation and maintenance of this vital element. – Jack Phelan

Programme

An effective alliance with the children, youth, families and communities we work with is essential if we are to be of any assistance to them. At the foundation of this is an understanding of key principles such as making connections, understanding context and really caring. Unity 2017 brings together both International and home grown experts in the field of relational practice including Jack Phelan, (Canada), Dr Larry Brendtro (USA), Dr Mark Smith (Scotland), Dr John Digney (Ireland), Thom Garfat (Canada) and many others who will share their knowledge and insights.

The objectives of this event are (within a relational framework):
(i) to provide a forum to present thinking and share the views and practice experiences;
(ii) to aid in the understanding of the components of relational practice;
(iii) to share progressive and contemporary knowledge, with a focus on a relational response.

Bookings

To register for the conference, please visit the conference website or use the following link: https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/unity-through-relationship-2017-tickets-37190454651 to book your place.

The full rate is €89 PER DAY and this includes: conference pack, refreshments, lunch and full online access to materials. A limited number of places are being made available with a 30% discount for early booking (see booking page link above on Eventbrite).

Book both days for only €150 (including conference dinner and booking fee).

If you prefer to book directly, please send an email to info@empowerireland.com with your details and requirements and request an invoice.

All aspects of the week can be booked separately and attendance on any given day is NOT contingent on attending any other day. The conference dinner (Monday 13th) can also be booked on the Eventbrite website.

Accommodation

Accommodation should be booked directly via The Regency Hotel Reservations Office 01-8373544 (Open Mon-Thu 9am-8pm, Fri & Sat 9am-6pm, closed Sundays) or on the hotel website www.regencyhotels.com using Promo Code Unity17.

Rates:
Single Room – €79 Bed & Full Irish Breakfast
Twin/Double Room - €99 Bed & Full Irish Breakfast
Keynote

Relational Child & Youth Care Supervision: Working at a Professional Level

Jack Phelan

Skilled life space practitioners use relational approaches and require relational supervision approaches. This session will address awareness of relational supervision skills, limitations of behavioural approaches and developmental levels of both practitioners and supervisors discussed.

Jack Phelan is a faculty member in the CYC degree program at MacEwan University in Canada. He is a regular contributor to CYC-Online and the author of Child and Youth Care: The Long and Short of it.

Plenary

Celtic Connection: International Perspectives on Care, Connection and Context

Dr John Digney and Maxwell Smart

This session will address the conference themes through the lens of lesson learned from a four year cross jurisdictional writing collaboration.

John Digney has been working in alternative care since 1991. He has professional qualifications in psychology, psychotherapy, project management, training and education, and facilitation and mediation. He completed a doctoral degree in 2010 focusing on the therapeutic uses of humour. John has worked in disability services in Northern Ireland and more latterly in residential care. He is a certified senior trainer in all Reclaiming Youth and Transform Action International trainings. He is currently National Training and Development Co-ordinator for the Child and Family Agency.

Maxwell Smart qualified as a social worker in 1986 and since then has worked in all areas of social care, specialising in child protection and family practice. After practising in Scotland and England as a social worker, he moved to residential child care in 1995. He has a Diploma in Social Work and a Master in Advanced Residential Child Care. He is also a certified trainer in various child and youth care disciplines, such as, Response Ability Pathways™ and ‘The Therapeutic Use of Daily Life Events’. Max is currently Assistant Residential Manager at Lothian Villa, Musselburgh, Scotland.
Workshop 1

Using a NeuroRelational Approach to Provide Hope for Challenging Children and Youth

Dr Paul Baker

Dr. Baker will introduce The PersonBrain Model, a NeuroRelational approach, that promotes hope and opportunity. The Model provides positive, brain-based supports that are grounded in research proven theories and practices. Dr. Baker will discuss how our brains are continuously developing within the contexts of our relationships and given environments. From the moment we are born, our brains are learning to respond to these experiences.

Key Messages

• Understand the impact of relational and ecological experience on brain development
• Provided an example of the NeuroRelational Reimbursement across six needs based areas: Relational, Eco-Cultural, Experiential, Regulatory, Biological and Academic
• Gain increased understanding of how trauma and chaos influence neural pathway development and organization
• Describe why cultural experience is important in designing transformative support plans
• Demonstrate a basic understanding of the ACT QUICK model of support.

Dr. Paul Baker is a developmental neuropsychologist who currently divides his residency between Chattanooga, Tennessee, USA where he is CEO of Accentra Behavioral and Educational Services and Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia. He is the developer of The PersonBrain Model, a comprehensive, strength-based neurorelational support model, the co-author of The Hopeful Brain: NeuroRelational Repair for Disconnected Children and Youth, The Minded Brain: An Educational Curriculum to Enhance Social, Emotional and Cultural Experience and Better Behavior…Positively! Over the past twenty-eight years he has accumulated direct experiences a clinical director, special education administrator and foster and adoptive parent.
Workshop 2

Introducing The International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)

Dr Thom Garfat

Since 1999, The International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net) has been one of the most valued and visited child and youth care resource webs in the world. CYC-Net is a network of thousands of people around the world, of all colors, languages, interests and skills, who are involved in the care of children, youth and families who for some reason are being looked after. Its main objectives are to promote and facilitate reading, learning, information sharing, discussion, networking, support and accountable practice amongst all who work with children, youth and families in difficulty. It has often been said that CYC-Net is the most valuable resource in the world for those who work with troubled children and their families. CYC-Net receives over a million unique visits annually and manages a moderated discussion group list of over 4000 group members. CYC-Net and its resources are entirely open-access.

Key Messages

- This session is an introduction into what CYC-Net is, how it operates, what it offers and how it connects the field of child and youth care and social care.

Thom Garfat has worked with children, youth, families and those who work with them for almost 50 years. He is co-founder of CYC-Net, Relational Child and Youth Care Practice Journal and is co-creator of the international training, The Purposeful Use of Daily Life Events (DLE). Thom works as an international consultant and trainer for foster care, family care, kinship care and residential/secure care and has carried out significant work projects in Canada, USA, South Africa, UK, Ireland and Australia. He is co-author of 10 books and hundreds of professional articles.
Focusing through Interactive Pausing: A new way to connect and empathise in a relational way with the self and others

Derek McDonnell

Exploring how the daily Skill of Focusing and Interactive Pausing offer's a practical way to connect and care for your own emotional well, as a professional. Exploring how this skill deepens ones connection and empathy, with a true understanding of young people's lived experiences in all aspects of their lives, be it at home, in care and educational setting. Experiential exercises "all about" Pausing and Noticing your inner space and how to be with it in responsive rather than reactive way.

Key Messages

• Awareness of the benefits of Focusing and Pausing
• An understanding of a Road Map of Pausing in your own daily life
• How this Road Map offers a way to connect and care for young people from an open stance with a quality of presence that enables more of their Lived Experiences to be heard.

Derek McDonnell is Certifying Coordinator with The International Focusing Institute (www.focusing.org) and is support and mentoring number of FTIP programme in Ireland Europe and USA. Social Care Leader with Tusla Midland PPFS. He runs Focusing through Interactive Pausing Skilled based Intervention: To develop emotional resiliency, conflict management, and understanding of Transitions for young people in the educational setting. He give one to one therapeutic sessions of pausing to young people and adults.
Workshop 4

Listening to the Voices of Practitioners and Foster Carers: Promoting Placement Stability through Relational Practice in Foster Care

Maria Lotty

This presentation will involve:

(i) practitioners and foster carers views of the challenges and strengths in the current child welfare and protection system in meeting the needs of children in foster care from research findings gathered in February 2017;

(ii) the development of a relational based model that incorporates the wisdom and values of practitioners and foster carers that aims to promote placement stability;

(iii) the current implementation of this model.

Key Messages

- Placements are best supported by building trusting, respectful relationships through relational practice with foster carers
- To have an understanding the principles of The Trauma-informed Foster Care Approach
- Update on the implementation of this approach in Cork and Kerry Areas (Tusla).

Maria Lotty is a practicing Fostering Social Worker and PhD student in UCC. Maria has a background in youth work, residential social work and worked for a number of years as child protection social worker prior to joining the fostering team in Cork. Maria is currently undertaking a research collaboration between UCC and Tulsa involving the design, development and evaluation of Fostering Connections: The Trauma-informed Foster Care Programme.
In a context dominated by media reports of the historical institutional abuse of children and young people in residential homes, and where the voice of residential childcare workers is largely silent, this paper presents the findings of research undertaken with a sample of residential childcare workers on their views and experiences of relationship-based practice.

Using an exploratory, qualitative approach and informed by Appreciative Inquiry (AI), in-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 26 residential care workers in the Republic of Ireland to elicit their views and perspectives. The findings reveal that relationship-based practice has not been fully embraced in practice. In attempting to understand why this is the case, the presentation uses concepts from the sociology of fear to argue that residential childcare practice has been shaped and constrained by a culture of fear that permeates the child welfare system. The effects of this are amplified given the current low status of residential care workers, the impact of media reports and the influence of current discourses around professional practice in which ‘objective’ and ‘emotionally detached’ practice is viewed as synonymous with efficiency and effectiveness. This paper considers the implications of these findings for social care practice. The presentation concludes that placing the perspectives of residential childcare workers into the public domain is an important way of contributing to debates and further enhancing an environment conducive to relationship-based practice.

Teresa Brown is a social care worker currently lecturing on Social Care degree and masters programmes in Athlone Institute of Technology. Teresa has extensive experience as a social care worker in Northern Ireland, Ireland and Romania. She has practiced in the areas of Residential Care, Secure Care and Child Protection/Family Support. Teresa completed her Doctorate in Queens University Belfast, her thesis title, ‘Hear Our Voice: Residential Workers Views Of Effective Relationship-based Practice’. Teresa's teaching and research interests are in the areas of youth at risk, relationship-based practice and empirical studies that include the ‘voice’ of the social care worker and service user.
Respectful Alliances with Youth

Dr Larry Brendtro

In any group setting, the youth culture can either support or sabotage positive growth. There is now extensive evidence and practice wisdom on the principles and strategies for building positive youth climates which foster prosocial values and behaviour. The presentation draws from applied research in North America and Europe on creating cultures of respect in residential, community, and educational settings. This workshop presents practical strategies that build respectful bonds between adults and youth, making caring fashionable and engaging youth in peer helping.

Key Messages

- Identify strength-based principles for empowering youth in peer helping and serving the community.
- Reframe problems as unmet needs.
- Disengage from adversarial youth/adult relationships.
- Effectively challenge irresponsible, hurting behaviour.
- Use group strategies to build a culture of respect.

Larry K. Brendtro's first contribution to child and youth care was *The Other 23 Hours* (Trieschman, Whittaker & Brendtro, 1969). After working in residential group care settings, he began his doctoral studies at the University of Michigan Fresh Air Camp, founded by Life Space pioneers, Fritz Redl and David Wineman. He established graduate programs in the area of children’s behavioural disorders at the University of Illinois followed by fourteen years as president of Starr Commonwealth serving troubled youth with programs in Michigan and Ohio. Returning to his native South Dakota as a professor at Augustana University, he collaborated with Lakota psychologist Martin Brokenleg and educator Steve Van Bockern to author *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*, which introduced the Circle of Courage model of positive youth development. He is the author or co-author of 300 publications including 15 books. He trains youth professionals worldwide in collaboration with the non-profit institute, CF Learning.
Workshop 7

Back on the High Wire

Willie Brazil

This will be a discursive workshop designed to help the presenter and other to reclaim quality relational practice. It will introduce 'vulnerability' in trying to re-learn essential approaches in relational work. This session will pick up some of the themes from Jack Phelan’s CYC: The Long and the Short of it with the purpose to reflect on and affirm relational practice.

Key Messages

- This session will use 2 short personal stories:
  1) Frightened by The ‘G-Man, and
  2) How it helps to get a little crazy with ‘S’.

By inviting participants to form small groups and share stories, the presenter seeks to examine how like stories might emerge and what themes stand out.

Willie Brazil moved to Ireland in 1974 and in 1979 began volunteering with Cork Simon Community. Alson with some colleagues he established a community home in which people from the shelter got to experience a different way of living. Willie has over 20 years experience in Residential Childcare and holds a Masters Degree in 'Youth Identity and Popular Culture'. Since July 2017 Willie has been seconded to co-ordinate a 'pilot' initiative in Cork City and County entitled ‘Creative Community Alternatives to Care’ with the purpose of diverting kids being admitted to the alternative care system because entering the system is fraught with its own risks. Creative Community Alternatives will see a set of individual interventions provided by a range of skilled individuals that seek to use Relational Practice approaches to help kids and families meet their needs within their family and community contexts and to reunify current 'care kids' with their 'families'.
Workshop 8

Connection – through the Chaos

Rachel Charles

Collectively we will explore our relationships with the clients we work with through the lens of Traditional Anishnaabek (Indigenous) Culture. Participants will learn about the Four Sacred Teachings (Sharing & Caring, Strength, Honesty and Kindness), as well as the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Participants will gain greater knowledge on how to reframe their practice inspired by these traditional Teachings. Using the values embedded in the Seven Grandfather Teachings, such as honesty and humility, we will reflect on how we embody our practice, uncovering the layers of our individual ways of being, using a strengths-based approach. The Four Sacred Teaching and the Seven Grandfathers Teachings are values that provide compassion for our clients and ourselves, guiding our practice in authentic relationships.

Key Messages

- Learning new Traditional Anishnaabek teachings (Four Sacred Teachings & Seven Grandfather Teachings) to use in practice
- Understanding the importance of living language
- Making connections of the Anishnaabek (Indigenous) ways of knowing and how it is congruent with Child and Youth Care
- Reinforcing the importance of strengths-based approaches and the influence of language in perceptions

Rachel Charles’ traditional Anishnaabek name is Zigwan Binesii and she is Bear Clan from Mnijikaning (Rama) First Nation. Having graduated from the Child & Youth Worker program at Fleming College and registering with Ontario Association of Child & Youth Care Practitioners, Zigwi is currently Aboriginal Youth in Transition Worker at Niijkiwendidaa Anishnaabekwewag Services Circle in Nogojiwanong. As an Anishnaabekwe (Chippewa women) she is dedicated to empowering Indigenous youth who are involved or are at risk of being in the care of the Children’s Aid Society. She works from a holistic way of being to assist young people in discovering their identity, connecting to their community, and realizing their potential and by using Indigenous knowledge gained through Traditional Mentorship in Nogojiwanong community, she helps children and youth on their personal healing journey.
Too fat, too old or too mad to practice. Exploring the skills and qualities required for social/child and youth care work

John Byrne

This workshop aims to explore the skills and values required for social/child and youth care practice. Rather than focusing on the traditional passion and compassion, or the ability of the worker to form trusting relationships (which are all taken as a pre-requisite for practice), it will explore questions such as:

- Can you be a social care worker and be morbidly obese?
- Can you be a social care worker and be in active addiction?
- Can you be a social care worker with a clinical diagnosis of depression/anxiety or other form of mental health difficulty?
- To what extent should a criminal record/history affect a workers ability to access employment?
- Should there be an upper or lower age limit to work in residential child care?

Key Messages

Participants of this workshop will have engaged in an in-depth critical reflection of the role of a worker in residential child care. Participant will be encouraged to reflect on what they bring to the relationship with the young people and reflect on whether they are appropriate role models for vulnerable young people in care.

John Byrne is a social care worker and lecturer in social care practice at WIT in Waterford. He is also a practicing Humanistic/Integrative counsellor psychotherapist. He has contributed to several texts on issues related to social care practice.
Workshop 10

Frictions Within the Erotics of Child and Youth Care

Wolfgang Vachon

Social relationships between people are frequently based upon a mutual attraction, this is challenged (and challenging) in a professional care giving context. We don’t like everyone we work with, yet, there is also tremendous discomfort in acknowledging and discussing when there is attraction. Attraction between young people and care providers exists within many professional contexts and can be an essential element in a therapeutic relationship. This session explores the uncomfortable, challenging, and beneficial implications of love, desire, and attraction as they relate to working with young people in professional care contexts. There will be opportunity for participants to discuss how to navigate in a healthy, boundaried, and professional way these fraught moments.

Key Messages

- Discuss the implications (professionally, relationally, and therapeutically) of acknowledging uncomfortable, and frequently taboo, emotions
- Begin to develop tools to address moments regarding attraction.

Wolfgang Vachon has worked with children and youth as a practitioner, artist, and educator for close to three decades. Community-arts practice has informed his work with diverse young people, in multiple contexts. Wolfgang is on faculty at Humber College and hosts CYC Podcast: Discussions on Child and Youth Care (www.cycpodcast.org)
Mattering Matters Most

Dr Thom Garfat

Mattering is more than caring. It involves helping a person to understand that they are of significance / importance. Whether in direct care encounters, or the supervision of staff, ‘mattering’ lets people know they are of value, of significance and, in doing so, generates hope for the future.

Thom Garfat has worked with children, youth, families and those who work with them for almost 50 years. He is co-founder of CYC-Net, Relational Child and Youth Care Practice Journal and is co-creator of the international training, The Purposeful Use of Daily Life Events (DLE). Thom works as an international consultant and trainer for foster care, family care, kinship care and residential/secure care and has carried out significant work projects in Canada, USA, South Africa, UK, Ireland and Australia. He is co-author of 10 books and hundreds of professional articles.
Keynote

The Resilience Compass

Dr Larry Brendtro

The flood of recent research on trauma, resilience, and neuroscience can obscure this essential truth: Developmental relationships are the active ingredient in all therapeutic change according to University of Pittsburgh researchers. Why do developmental relationships have such potency? Because they provide the only avenue for meeting universal growth needs. This presentation draws from the forthcoming book, The Drive to Thrive: The Resilience Compass, based on the Model of Leadership and Service developed by CF Learning, a program of Cal Farley’s Ranch of Amarillo, Texas. Specifically, developmental relationships meet universal needs for safety, belonging, mastery, power, purpose, and adventure. These needs are crucial points on the resilience compass providing pathways to positive development. Further, these needs must be met in leaders and caregivers as well as children and families being served.

Larry K. Brendtro’s first contribution to child and youth care was The Other 23 Hours (Trieschman, Whittaker, & Brendtro, 1969). After working in residential group care settings, he began his doctoral studies at the University of Michigan Fresh Air Camp, founded by Life Space pioneers, Fritz Redl and David Wineman. He established graduate programs in the area of children’s behavioural disorders at the University of Illinois followed by fourteen years as president of Starr Commonwealth. Returning to his native South Dakota as a professor at Augustana University, he collaborated with Lakota psychologist Dr Martin Brokenleg and Steve Van Bockern on Reclaiming Youth at Risk, introducing the Circle of Courage model. He is the author or co-author of 300 publications including 15 books. He trains youth professionals worldwide in collaboration with the non-profit institute, CF Learning.

Plenary

What’s Love got to do with it?

Dr Mark Smith

While we have become comfortable talking about the importance of relationships in child and youth care, we can still baulk at any suggestion that strong emotions, which might include love, might enter into professional practice. But it does and this fact is beginning to be recognised in professional discourse and in public policy. This presentation will address the presenter’s experience of editing a journal issue around a theme of love, highlighting some of the themes and messages that emerge from it and considering how love might, safely, be incorporated into CYC thinking and practice.

Dr Mark Smith is a residential care practitioner and manager. He developed and taught the Masters in Residential Child Care at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. For the past 12 years he has taught social work at the University of Edinburgh, during which time he published two books on residential child care and edited journal special issues on a theme of ‘Love’. In September 2017, he took up a Chair in Social Work at the University of Dundee.
Workshop 1

The Real “Money in the Bank”: Building Relationships with Children in Care

Frank Delano, LMSW and Dawn Schaefer, LCSW

This highly interactive workshop will use Frank Delano’s article on “The Real Money in the Bank: Building Relationships with Children in Care” published in the CYC-Net on line journal as a foundation to introduce this concept of relational money as well as to introduce a number of strategies to use in the “moments” we share with kids to place relational money deposits with them. The presenters will use real life stories from their practice to provide examples, and participants will be invited to share theirs.

• Understanding the importance of relationships in helping children grow in a healthy way
• Identifying and understanding the concept of relationship “money in the bank”
• The importance of having relationship money in the bank to “draw out” when a child is in crisis
• How a child can “withdraw” relational money even years after leaving the program
• The importance of “moments” and times when just “hanging out” in depositing relational money.

Frank Delano worked for 25 years in a large children’s residential center near New York City beginning as a direct service Child and Youth Care worker and spent the last 13 years there as the agency Associate Director. He has been on a number of national boards and was on the committee that revised the CWLA Standards of Excellence for children in residential care in the United States.

Dawn Schaefer is currently the Assistant Clinical Director at a large children’s residential treatment center near New York City. She is a licensed social worker who received her Masters Degree from New York University and also studied at the University of Hawaii. She has worked with a variety of different populations in Child and Youth Care settings for the past 13 years and is a strong advocate for relational care models with children.
Workshop 2

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders
The vicissitude lives of children and youth with an FASD prevailing in Irish child welfare settings – what is needed, what should we do and how can we respond?

Liam Curran

Alcohol use/misuse during pregnancy is a leading cause of intellectual disability, birth defects and developmental disorders which impacts the child welfare services significantly in respect of the resulting disability of fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASDs). Although a large body of scientific exists documenting the risk of alcohol to fetal brain development, it is likely that FASDs are a widely occurring and largely unrecognized neuro-developmental disability in society. The role of social workers responding to FASDs when intervening in cases of child welfare and protection within child welfare settings, is one that has received little discussion in the history of FASD literature. Although saturated with medical and scientific evidence on FASDs, we are suffering a paucity of understanding on service development and skilled professional responses. This workshop will discuss the challenges the social work and social care face in responding to FASDs.

Key Messages

• Understand the scientific evidence of preventing FASDs in society
• Developing a psychosocial concept of FASDs
• Understanding the lived experiences of those living with FASDs
• Understanding practical approaches of responses in a social model
• Learning to advocate for a social model response.

Liam Curran is a qualified social work and Certified CDC Educator of FASDs. Liam is currently understating his PhD at Concordia University, Montreal. Liam is also a member of the Centre for Research on Children and Families (CRCF) at McGill university, Montreal. Liam’s research focus is on how social workers respond to FASDs in child welfare settings. Liam has research and published numerous articles, chapters and co-authored book on the topic of FASDs from a social lens.
This workshop will have two elements. It will introduce findings from a qualitative research study on the experience of an out of home care setting in Ireland underpinned by social pedagogical principals. Experiences were captured from various stakeholders involved in the settings. Secondly the workshop will outline the experiences of a range of professionals that work in a social pedagogical setting in Ireland. It will outline the context, ethos, practice and experiences of staff that set up this service four years ago.

It will present the first set of results from research designed to capture and evaluate the experiences of those who commission and deliver the service. The results will be contextualised by a particular model of group supervision that aims to mirror the desired experiences for the children that are being cared for.

Key Messages

- Main findings of a qualitative research study on the experience of social pedagogy in an Irish Children’s Residential Home
- Discussion of same and further application and research
- Introduction and discussion of an applied supervisory model for such settings.

Patrick Ryan is the head of Department of Psychology and Director of Clinical Psychology at the University of Limerick.

Maleika Sund is Lead Pedagogue in a ‘Shared Living Environment, an out of home care setting for children and young people with Compass CFS.

Joerg Schlueter is a Director and co-founder of Compass CFS.
Alternative Child and Youth Care in Outdoor settings

Shelby Stevenson

This presentation will be focused on what it is like for a Child and Youth Counsellor to be working in an outdoor setting and the importance of having CYCs in the outdoor education realm. With the prevalence of mental illness in children’s lives, their extra curricular activities and alternative learning environments need trained practitioners now, more than ever.

Key Messages

• Benefits of having CYCs in outdoor programs and learning environment
• Why camps and outdoor centres need CYC practitioners and involvement
• To learn about another milieu that is highly under rated o Ways to break into this field and succeed
• Employment positions that are great for outdoor loving CYCs in supervisory positions
• Fostering positive, lasting and meaningful connections between CYCs & youth in these settings
• The benefit of CYCs in emergency situations in the outdoor field (and why untrained staff simply are not qualified).

Shelby Stevenson is a graduate of the Sir Sandford Fleming College CYC program and has been working with children and youth for 7 years now in a variety of milieus, working to better the lives of youth as best she can. Alternative care is her line of work and she strives to make change in her own way. From residential care facilities and schools, now to camps and outdoor centres, she has worked with over 12,000 youth in her career to date with a passion in leadership development and creating spaces where mental health is a priority. Although it may be a little unconventional, there are so many connections to be had with youth in the great outdoors, and her mission is to make the outdoors a valued and accessible space for young people.
The Long and The Short of It

Maxwell Smart and Ben Smart

How do adults working with youth in difficulty, connect with those whom are relationally wary? Adults whose task it is to work with troubled young people can often become frustrated and deskilled by youth who keep them at a distance and who present as impervious to traditional interventions in helping.

Consequently, rather than connection, “disconnection” and rejection often take the places of healing and helpful engagement. Seita (2013) notes, “resistance to relationships is not personal, but actually are attempts to avoid further emotional pain”.

This workshop will examine the ‘long and short’ of Seita’s observations and focus on how carers can create helpful, healing alliances with troubled kids.

Key Messages

• That we can create trust with even the most troubled youth
• That we can intervene and help kids with kindness, respect and dignity
• That “therapeutic space” built into our daily life of care can facilitate emotional pauses for youth that help in understanding self and other people.

Max Smart has worked in the field of Child & Youth Care for 30 years. He qualified as a Social Worker in 1986 and has worked in all areas of social care, specialised in child protection & family practice. He has practiced SW in Scotland & England and moved into residential care in 1995. He has a diploma in Social Work and MSc in Advanced Residential Child Care and is a Certified RAP & ‘DLE’ trainer. He is presently Assistant Residential Manager at Lothian Villa Musselburgh East Lothian.

Ben Smart has recently commenced his Bachelors degree in University of Highland and Islands.
Workshop 6

Taken for Granted: Exploring Assumptions about our World View

Kelly Shaw

A child and youth care approach requires us to be thoughtful about context. Sometimes (often times?) that context is outside of our understanding and therefore we cannot be thoughtful about it. Increasing our self-awareness offers us some window into increasing our ability to relate to and be empathic with others as does expanding our world view.

This workshop will offer participants an opportunity to examine and explore taken for granted assumptions and to develop ways to support colleagues, youth, and parents in expanding their understanding of themselves and others.

Key Messages

- Participants will have an increased understanding of world view and the assumptions that support our meaning making processes.

Kelly Shaw is currently core faculty at the Nova Scotia Community College in the Child and Youth Care Diploma Program & Child and Youth Care Supervisor with 4D North Centre for Youth – which is believed to be the most northerly group care program in the world. She has an MA in Child and Youth Study, holds certification from the CYC Certification Board and is completing a PhD in Educational Studies at Brock University. Prior to moving to pre-service CYC education she spent a number of years working in a group treatment program that focused on family support and intervention and believes that family is always present.
Workshop 7

Relational Practice: A Family Perspective

Michelle Briegel

This presentation explores relational practice, within the context of life space, from the perspective of client and family. In this presentation Michelle shares a personal journey of counsellor to client/family, and the impact that relational practice has on treatment.

As a CYC Counsellor, Child Studies Educator, and parent of a child with an illness Michelle has had the unique opportunity to experience, reflect, and evaluate both sides of relational practice.

Key Messages

- Participants will gain an appreciation for the experience of clients and families, and the impact on treatment outcomes that relational practice influences.

Michelle Briegel (M.Ed) is a certified CYC Counsellor, Professor in the Bachelor of Child Studies Program at Mount Royal University in Calgary Alberta Canada, Research Affiliate with the Centre for Child Well-Being, and parent. Michelle has over 20 years experience in residential services; specifically in group care facilities for sexually exploited youth and youth custody treatment.
Workshop 8

Care, Connection and Context within a Therapeutic Community

David Power

David will introduce the concept of Therapeutic Community and the theoretical Framework that it sits within (inc. the ethos and value system that the organisation is built on and why communication plays an important role in our task). This presentation will begin to explore the concepts that communication in a therapeutic community forms the key components to effectively engaging young people in a therapeutic approach and explore the concept of the keyworker as the main therapist in the young person life, allowing exploration of the young person’s feelings and understanding of life events.

Key Messages

• Understanding of what is a therapeutic community (Standards- Value System)
• Supporting young people (help put words and meaning to actions)
• Concepts of Communication in a therapeutic Community
• Community Meetings – Empowering decision-making
• Special Time and One to One Communication.

David Power has a MA in Management, BA Hons Social Care, BA in Social Studies & National Certificate in Vocational Rehabilitation. I was President of the IASCW and part of the founding members of Social Care Ireland Executive. I have represented the profession on the HSCPC for 8 years. Over 27 years’ experience in the provision of services to the most vulnerable people in our communities. These years include The Children Detention Schools, The Crisis Interventions Service, Community Care HSE and I am now the Director of Smyly Trust Service one of the Voluntary agencies. Smyly Trust is a Therapeutic Community catering for young people aged 8 to 18. We also have an aftercare service.
Workshop 9

Relational Practice: A New Strategy – A New Hope

**Dr Clive Acraman and Dr Mairi McLean**

Over the last 2 years Ireland’s Children and Family agency (Tusla) has been engaged in a significant project to develop a clear strategy for Alternative Care. This project has had several phases, with the penultimate aspect being the writing of a strategy guidance. Having been the consultants on this piece, the presenters wish to explore some of the finding that emerged over their involvement in the project.

At the core of the findings were the importance of permanence and relational practice. Central to all people who were consulted was the concept of children and young people feeling ‘loved’ however, children being believed was a more difficult concept for people to grasp. This workshop will explore this a little deeper.

**Clive Acraman** believes that while there is no substitute for experience, this needs to be informed by a theoretical understanding of what we do and why we do it. He has gained degrees in Social Work, Child Protection and a Doctorate through Action Research. This underpins his approach to Organisational Learning and the Personalisation of Service Delivery. Clive attributes his person centred approach to his 30 year friendship with Paul, a man who lives with learning and physical disabilities. “Paul is central to my understanding, and the driving force behind my passion to influence service delivery through praxis.”
Hitting the High Notes: The Joy (Importance) of Effective Teamwork

Brian Hogan and Tricia McDonnell

When teams are working cohesively, ethically and effectively, the opportunity for high quality work with young people is multiplied considerably. This is not a stage to be arrived at but rather is an ongoing process that needs to be understood and supported. We are familiar with the challenges that leave individual staff and teams feeling disempowered, de-skilled and at times overwhelmed. Yet effective, cohesive teams can experience great satisfaction and joy when together they discover skillful, sophisticated and nuanced ways of supporting vulnerable young people. In this presentation we will share our understanding of the factors that support effective teamwork along with dynamics that can undermine it.

Brian Hogan has been CEO of Don Bosco Care since November 2013 and currently a member of the executive of the IASCM. He was Director, Deputy Director and Unit Manager at Oberstown Boys School (1991-2013) and previously worked for St Patrick’s College Maynooth and the Child Psychiatric Services at Warrenstown House (1989-1991). His interests centre around the belief that motivated empowered professionals provide quality care for young people experiencing difficulties. Brian is a member of the social care workers registration board (CORU) and Director of the consortium of therapeutic communities (UK).

Tricia McDonnell worked for 13 years in a variety of Social Care settings in Dublin and London, and at middle and senior management level in a large voluntary organization for 11 years. Having trained as a psychotherapist, the focus of her work changed from managing services, to facilitating the development and support of teams and individual staff. For the past 20 years Tricia has worked has a consultant/ facilitator/ trainer with organizations providing services to vulnerable and marginalised groups. Her main interest is in supporting staff in providing high quality care to young people, while maintaining their own well-being. Tricia is accredited with the I.A.H.I.P and I.C.P. She also qualified in Mediation and Conflict Resolution.
TransformAction International consulting and training is proud to sponsor

Unity Through Relationship 2017

The Purposeful Use of Daily Life Events helps direct care practitioners become more effective in daily interactions with young people and families with a focus on making moments meaningful.

The Therapeutic Application of Humour focuses on the use of humour for therapeutic purposes in daily interactions with children and youth.

Outcomes That Matter provides a framework for recording and reporting weekly achievements of resilience outcomes by children, young people and others in out-of-home care.

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In the context of a relationship of safety I notice that I might benefit from change.

I am supported in taking the risk to try something different from what I usually do.

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Action Transforms
Social Care and Child Welfare in Ireland
Maurice Fenton

Engrossing, informative and challenging. Maurice Fenton has written a book which, although not exactly bedside reading, is surprisingly readable for such an important and serious topic. It is written with a passion by someone immersed in, and committed to, children in care. It examines the child care and aftercare system in Ireland, in the light of international comparisons, examines the myths and misconceptions surrounding them, and poses very challenging, and sometimes disturbing, questions and reflections. It critically examines some of the theories relevant to the development process of children in care and children transitioning to aftercare. It brings together a large amount of data and information regarding children in care and aftercare which will be very useful to those working in, or reflecting on, this area. This book is essential reading for all those with an interest in children in care. – Fr Peter McVerry, PMV Trust.

This book is a must-read for anyone who has an interest in the Irish care system. From academics to policy makers, to social workers and care leavers, we all have a responsibility to understand the many aspects of the care system. Maurice’s effort to provide an objective analysis, together with compelling arguments for improvement, make it a compelling read. – Wayne Dignam: Chairman Irish Care Leavers Network

Social carers and social workers are ever more subject to supposed certainties couched in jargon -“outcomes”, “key performance indicators”, “sophisticated risk assessments”, “regulation”, “compliance”. These, and other gems of bureaucracy are not absent from Maurice Fenton’s book. However, he has managed to challenge their efficacy and intent by imbuing his findings with a personal narrative that leads to a core concept: many children and young people in care and aftercare as well as those tasked to care for them live “at the edge”. Success and often survival for both groups is dependent on another core concept: the essence of caring is not about commodification but about relationships. – Noel Howard: Secretary of Social Care Ireland.

This is an epic book about child and youth work, in residential care and beyond. The title is somewhat misleading, as the author explores and offers great insights into child and youth work that transcends the Irish context. A bonus is the story (the first chapter in the book) written by a former youth in care with whom the author worked, and it demonstrates in convincing fashion the developmental and therapeutic power of the author’s approach to working with young people. I found this book both informative and inspiring, and I highly recommend it for all students and practitioners – experienced or inexperienced. – Professor James Anglin

This is a thoroughly researched, well-argued and very readable book, written by an author who has a vision of a seamless social care service for children, young people and care leavers. The book provides a thorough analysis of the state of social care for children and young people in Ireland now, but readers outside of Ireland will recognise and find relevance in the matters the book raises for it covers in some depth so many of the issues which exercise all those concerned with social care today wherever they may be, including, healthy child development for children in care, children’s rights, children’s and young people’s experience of social care, professionalism, social pedagogy, relationship-based practice, resilience, attachment theory, research issues, policy-making and its concomitant economic and political restraints, among many more. This book should be read by social care practitioners, social care students, social care teachers, managers, policy-makers and politicians. This is a book whose content is relevant far beyond Ireland for it covers in some depth so many of the issues which exercise all those concerned with social care today. Its learning, humanity, comprehensive thoroughness, and emotional insight gives the reader so much. I recommend this book to all involved in the social care of children and young people.

Charles Sharpe
Good Enough Caring
Gateway are proud to partner with TransformAction International, CYC-Net, and Empower Ireland in hosting the 2017 ‘Unity Through Relationship’ Conference.

Care • Connection • Context
Commitment to Relational Based Practice

Gateway Organisation Limited, an Irish owned company, has for almost 10 years provided a range of services for children and young people (under contract with Tusla and the HSE). Gateway’s model of care and intervention places high values on the principles of participation, family inclusion, relational practice and therapeutic commitment. Each services centre and residential unit has an individual strength-based and needs-led specific purpose and function. We strive to leave positive footprints.

For additional information contact us at info@gateway.ie