

Relational Child & Youth Care Practice

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We Have Work to Do

Aurora de Monte

*“Education is inherently political. Every decision that is made is political ... Silence is also political. This is about our responsibility as humans and as educators to truly *see* and reach our students. We cannot claim to care about their Social and Emotional Learning and completely ignore the work around us. We cannot claim to care about their well-being and not contribute to it concretely” (Teaching While Muslim, 2020).*

These past few months have been challenging and emotional. From the beginning (and continued presence) of the viral COVID-19 pandemic to the ongoing racial violence illustrated by the most recent displays of overt anti-Black racism. People and communities worldwide have responded to the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Ahmaud Arbery in the United States; their deaths, reminders of the innumerable lives lost throughout history and across nations at the hands of racial violence towards Black, Indigenous, and people of colour (BIPOC). Globally, individuals are protesting in solidarity demanding change; advocates are campaigning for accurate education and there are collective calls for action to put an end to the daily threats of racialized violence and inequity that Black, Indigenous and people of colour face due to the historical and present-day impacts of white supremacy and embedded systemic oppression that exists within our systems of governance, education, care and justice.

Our routines and relational care practices are being disrupted by these ongoing global crises, and many of us are taking steps to engage critically about racism and white supremacy; holding ourselves accountable to the discomfort as we build capacity to examine and dismantle our personal and professional relationships with these realities and the ways in which we have been complicit. Child and Youth Care (CYC) is a practice that upholds and defends the rights of all young people and families. It is also a practice that is built on, and profits from, systems of oppression that disproportionately puts BIPOC young people in our care. “Being for social justice is virtually meaningless without strategic intentional action” (The Conscious Kid, May 13, 2020). There is work for us to do to actively challenge the embedded racism and oppression that are perpetuated in our systems of care and institutions. We have an ethical responsibility to do so. As we individually and collectively do this work, I look forward to the ways in which we hold space, listen, learn, process and act.

As we engage in this important lifelong anti-racism work, I hope that the articles in this issue allow for a moment of pause; a reminder of the dedicated work practitioners and educators are doing across the globe to support young people and families in diverse settings. Some of the authors in this issue were presenters at the Unity 2019 Conference in Dublin, Ireland. The theme for this Conference was *Rhythms of Care: Ritual, Routines and Relational Care*. Today, a gathering such as this seems like a dream. However, I look forward to being able to join with other committed professionals in the future when it is safe again for us to do so. Until then, let us meet between the lines of these articles dedicated to supporting the development of CYC practice and the young people and families we have the pleasure of working alongside.

Christine Gaitens explores how rhythmicity, relationship, ritual and routine are significant to school-based CYC practice. Examining how small experiential and relational moments can be notable to the academic experiences of young people and encouraging us to remember that daily opportunities can create spaces for transformation.

Psychoeducational support that seeks to improve aspects of child welfare systems is always inspiring to read about. Dr. Maria Lotty shares with us research that is supporting the capacity of foster carers to provide trauma-informed care to young people with trauma-related difficulties.

During these times of uncertainty, many may be experiencing increased difficulties. Tonya Hotchkin introduces us to a framework that aims to cultivate resilience and holistic

wellness. This framework may support practitioners working with a variety of populations from assessment to planning and engagement.

Dr. Mark Smith shares personal reflections of fostering an unaccompanied minor seeking asylum and refugee status. From a context of cultural safety, Smith reflects on daily life with sensitivity and thoughtfulness. Smith challenges frameworks and preconceived ideas that are held within systems of care, shining a light on some of the ways western systems and institutions may be ill-prepared to support young asylum seekers and refugees.

Natasha Halliday reflects on how characteristics of CYC practice show up in acute care settings and contributes to the evolving literature of CYC practice in hospital settings. The article provides an excellent introduction to this practice setting and Halliday champions the use of a relational approach in multidisciplinary mental health teams.

Jamie Bennet, Lori Gray and Ann Dawson, share their work regarding a coaching model designed to support college students from foster care; a model based on principles of a relational and strength-based approach. With illustrative examples, they outline how the steps of this model seek to partner with students and support growth.

Allana Healey and Michele Preyde share research regarding the experiences of young people involved in the child welfare system discharged from residential treatment services. From their research considerations for improvements to services supporting young people as they transition from residential treatment facilities is highlighted.

Nadia Umadat shares personal reflections of supporting newcomers who are survivors of war and torture. Umadat uses illustrative examples to highlight the potential triggers and challenges newcomers face as they seek to settle into new communities. She encourages us to question our social norms, incorporating this new knowledge of lived experiences into our worldview and working to ensure our communities and spaces are welcoming to all.

In part two of *Evolution of a Woman* Darlene Pevach shares with us her personal journey on overcoming generational dysfunction. Pevach shares words of wisdom written during adolescence, sketching the outlines of identity and possibilities.

I hope that we all may find some inspiration in the pages of this edition, keeping us connected to our practice and deep, caring, relational values. In caring however, we can also get things wrong, no matter the good intention. So, let us not remain silent. Let us act and contribute in concrete ways; let us commit to the ongoing process of creating

change in our various practice and educational settings, while not overlooking ourselves and our communities.

References

- Teaching While Muslim [@teachingwhilemuslim]. (2020, June 5). *Education is inherently political. Every decision that is made is political. The choice of adding texts or choosing* [Photograph]. Instagram. <https://www.instagram.com/teachingwhilemuslim/>
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Information

Relational Child and Youth Care Practice (formerly *The Journal of Child & Youth Care*, established 1982) is committed to promoting and supporting the profession of Child and Youth Care through disseminating the knowledge and experience of individuals involved in the day-to-day lives of young people.

This commitment is founded upon the belief that all human issues, including personal growth and development, are essentially "relational".

Certain pieces in *RCYCP* have received peer review. However, we do not peer review all articles as we choose not to exclude those voices where peer review would be inappropriate or on request from writers.

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Relational Child and Youth Care Practice is committed to providing equitable and inclusive spaces that promote and support the global profession of Child and Youth Care through disseminating the knowledge and experience of individuals involved in the day-to-day lives of young people, families and communities. This commitment is founded upon the belief that all human issues, are essentially “relational”.

Relational Child & Youth Care Practice welcomes submissions on all aspects relating to young people, families and communities. This includes material that explores the intersectionality of Child and Youth Care practice and the lived experiences of all who are engaged in Child and Youth Care practice. Considerations will also be given to interpersonal dynamics of professional practice and all submissions that assume a relational perspective. This might include topics such as cultural values, ethics, social policy, program design, supervision, education, training etc. Welcomed are also submissions that address advocacy, social justice and reconciliation practices within the diverse spaces and places of Child and Youth Care. Each issue may include refereed articles that comply with acceptable ‘academic’ standards; submissions contributed by regular and guest columnists; short pieces that describe particular relational experiences and reflections; poetry; artwork and photographs.

Material should be submitted by email to rcycp@press.cyc-net.org in standard word processing format (eg. .doc, .rtf). Formal articles should not exceed 6000 words in length (excluding references). Referencing should conform to either APA or Harvard format. Author-date citations should be used within the text and a double-spaced reference section should accompany each article. In all submissions, authorship details including an abstract of no more than 150 words should be included, as well as a short list of keywords at the beginning of the article, a headshot photo and a short author bio of about 100 words to publish with your article. Importantly, authors should also indicate whether a peer review is required (in addition to the standard editorial review).

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