

Relational

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Reflecting and Sharing

Aurora De Monte, Michelle Briegel, Patricia Kostouros and Jessica Morris

The past few years of the pandemic have been challenging to navigate for everyone. We acknowledge that for many, balancing all the competing priorities is ever changing. As we continue to learn to live within this pandemic, we want to acknowledge all the flexibility, creativity and dedication of students, faculty and practitioners across the globe in continuing to practice and support individuals and families in your communities. We know it has been hard but also rewarding.

As many of you know, RCYCP is committed to supporting the voices of students and alumni across programs, encouraging them to share their work and research with readers, and the profession. We learn so much from one another, the individuals, and families we work alongside, that it would be remiss if we did not encourage and support emerging practitioners to share their reflections and wisdom with us all. This issue is dedicated to highlighting student, alumni and faculty work from College and Degree programs. We have contributions from Mount Royal University, MacEwan University, Toronto Metropolitan University, the University of the Fraser Valley and Durban University of Technology.

A big thank you to our guest editors, Jessica Morris (Niagara College) and Patricia Kostouros and Michelle Briegel (Mount Royal University). They brought so much to the

process, and we are forever grateful for the support. We hope all of you are able to take a moment to enjoy the knowledge shared within the pages of this issue.

Nathan Millar and Susan Garrow-Oliver share with us their capstone project in which they partnered with WP Puppet Theatre Society to explore how puppetry may be applied as a creative tool for effective Child and Youth Care practice.

Adriana Bergman shares the heartfelt experiences of her parents growing up and facing racism. Bergman's racial biography provides insight into colonial privilege and how these systems impact those less privileged. The author addresses ways in which Child and Youth Care practitioners can deconstruct their own practice to decrease the perpetuation of colonialism.

Have you ever been injured, attacked, or threatened on the job as a CYCC? Mairéad Austin and Chantelle McCann center their writing on an overlooked topic and offer a critical student perspective regarding the potential for injury when working, and often learning, in high-risk environments. While reading this paper, you can expect to be in constant self-reflection of your own practice experiences. If you are a mentor, supervisor, or educator in the field, you will certainly appreciate the findings and insight presented to you through an authentic and constructive lens.

Dr. Carolyn Bjartveit, Hannele Gordon, Erin Manywounds, Anna Larden, Kayla Oschepok and Kaitlin Arnfinson discuss ethical spaces as relational spaces through exploring involvement in *The alliedFutures Project*, an electronic toolkit designed to support local businesses in decolonizing their workplace practices. The authors share the shifting perspectives of participants around decolonization as they progressed through the project.

Jordan Grant, Julie Leggett-Epp, Irene Muganza and Rebecca Stiller offer a self-study on their experiences of being parents while attending a post-secondary Child and Youth Care program. These authors provide background literature on this topic, they share their reflections of motherhood and the pressures of studies while trying to raise children. Their stories offer an opportunity for post-secondary instructors to increase sensitivity toward those who are engaging in studies while parenting and how instructors might see their strengths.

Shavickie Williams shares with us personal experiences seen through the lens of theoretical foundations within Child and Youth Care. By engaging in deep reflection, Williams encourages practitioners to consider personal experiences and their impacts to practice.

Bria Scarff presents issues pertaining to legislating the profession of Child and Youth Care Counselling (CYCC) in Alberta. The author examines legislation through an analysis of elements of Canadian historical contexts that led to an evolving role of Child and Youth Care, child human rights and current issues in the field.

Hope Makhanya uses Gibbs model of reflective practice as the framework of reflection on the use of a positive peer support group model at a South African university during the Covid-19 pandemic. The author provides a reflective look at the peer support model, the thoughts and feelings experienced by participants, an evaluation and analysis of the model, followed by an action plan.

Sarah Thomasen explores a project focused on promoting sleep hygiene within their community. As Thomasen shares about the project, we learn about sleep hygiene practices and ways we may incorporate these into practice.

Thank you to all authors, institutions, and guest editors for their dedication in making this issue happen. We hope all readers find something within these pages that supports deeper reflection and critique regarding personal and professional practice.

Aurora De Monte

is a graduate of the University of Victoria Child and Youth Care program and the University of Strathclyde MSc in Child and Youth Care Studies, where her dissertation explored relational teaching. Currently, she is full time faculty in the Child and Youth Care program at Fleming College, Ontario, and teaches in the MSc program at the University of Strathclyde. Aurora continues to practice supporting young people and families in a variety of capacities in the community.

Applying Puppetry in Child and Youth Care

Nathan Millar and Susan Garrow-Oliver

The Mount Royal University Child Studies program partnered with WP Puppet Theatre Society [WPTS] to undertake a final fourth year Capstone project during the 2021/2022 semesters. This project provides students the opportunity to apply the theories and knowledge gleaned from the first three years of the degree into practice with a community partner. This interdisciplinary collaborative experience has students lead a large project with the organization. Students from both the Early Learning and Child Care [ELCC], and Child and Youth Care Counsellor [CYCC] majors collaborated with representatives from WPTS to collaborate on Capstone work. Valuable learning emerged from this relationship, and the intention of this essay is to illustrate applied puppetry's connections to professional practice by identifying how it can be incorporated effectively. For this purpose of this paper, we plan to discuss applied puppetry's intersections within the practice and scope of CYCC. This paper will define applied puppetry, and discuss how it synthesizes with relevant theories and modalities as a method of teaching in the milieu that CYCC professionals work in. By integrating applied puppetry as a therapeutic tool, we argue that a creative option such as puppetry holds the potential to help youth express themselves and learn to self-regulate as a part of healing and response to trauma. We will also explore how applied puppetry can support anti-biased and inclusive Child and Youth Care (CYC) practice.

The Scope of Applied Puppetry

Puppetry is the act of animating the inanimate (W. Passmore-Godfrey, personal communication, October 2021). One could use a found object as a puppet by channeling

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unique movements and voices into a character they conceive of their own imagination. Alternatively, a group of Sesame Street puppets can be articulated, and sewn to perfection will achieve the same purpose - to tell a meaningful story. The term applied puppetry is defined as an approach for engaging a community using puppetry (Smith, 2015). To put applied puppetry in the scope of Child and Youth Care practice, consider how it could be applied in schools, secondary education, and therapy (Smith, 2015, p. 531) to “modify social practices” (Kruger, 2010, p. 316). Art as a form of expression allows space for interpretation, to “challenge customary concepts and beliefs” (p. 317). Applied puppetry has long held intersections with established theory-based modalities such as art therapy and trauma informed practice (Steele & Malchiodi, 2012). Applied puppetry can exist as a form of social activism and awareness that holds potential for the expression of the participants' creative self, but it can also be a solution to emergent issues.

The recent COVID-19 pandemic created a need for public education around enhanced hygiene practices. COVID-19 has emphasized the importance of teaching effective health and wellness to children across Canada, and puppetry became one of the avenues of community education. *Kahkakiw*, which means ‘raven’ in Cree, was created by a Manitoba man named Samson Hunter, who values the importance of teaching Indigenous children in their own language; he used puppetry to educate his community about COVID-19, using a Cree-speaking puppet (Kitatipithitamik Mithwayawin, 2020). Similar initiatives have popped up in Alberta where professional puppeteer DerRic Starlight, an Indigenous artist from Tsuut’ina Nation in southern Alberta, was asked to use his expertise and skills to share COVID-19 hygiene related healthy behaviors, as well as the importance of vaccinations. Starlight created ‘Nuppets’, by his own definition, an abbreviation of the term ‘native puppets’ (Dhaliwal, 2020), to educate Indigenous communities about the importance of COVID-19 safety and vaccines in a fun and engaging way. Starlight also adds a comedic dimension to his message, making culturally relevant jokes, inviting his audience to laugh and enjoy themselves (Black Horse, 2021). His television ads and video messages targeted small, isolated communities in southern Alberta, and was featured on provincial news outlets. This is just one example of how

puppets have been used to bring awareness to social issues and insight change, there are examples of puppetry's efficacy from around the world.

To influence voter turnout and celebrate democracy, puppets were used in South Africa in 1994, as a strategy to educate the population during the voting process of the first democratic election in the country (Friedman, 2021a). The blue and red puppets were also used to engage with the public as a strategy to calm racial reactions. Their message was perceived without bias in a racially divided country (Friedman, 2021a). The puppets created an otherwise unseen dialogue amongst the voting demographic. In explaining his work, Friedman (2021b) states “puppetry breaks down barriers... you can get away with saying so much more with puppets” (0:02:48). These examples utilized minimal spoken language to convey their message (Friedman, 2021a), and served as a non-verbal communicative medium. They related the message in a way that transcended language barrier, and it is important to keep in mind that South Africa has eleven official languages (Britannica, n.d.). Puppets allow for a degree of freedom for the individual to express complex, controversial, and sensitive subject matter. These examples demonstrate opportunities where puppets have been used for educational purposes, influencing social impact and change. Applied puppetry can also be used in therapeutic relationships with children and youth which is discussed in the following paragraphs.

Applied Puppetry as a Therapeutic Tool in Child and Youth Care Practice

Applied puppetry could be a beneficial intervention for youth in care. Puppetry, in relation to expressive therapy, creates a space where the practitioner could meet the client's needs in unique sensory-based ways (Steele & Malchiodi, 2012). The use of puppets can help foster a strong and secure relationship, which assists children and youth who have or continue to experience trauma in feeling safe to express themselves. Child and Youth Care counsellors working with children, youth and communities are often faced with unique and challenging scenarios where creating and maintaining safe spaces can be challenging. Child and Youth Care Counsellors are constantly navigating needs and expectations in creative ways and applied puppetry could become a part of their practice toolkit. Through engaging in individual counselling or group activities, puppets

can assist in breaking down barriers, fostering trusting relationships, expressing feelings, modeling behaviors and language, and overall communication.

With protection in the anonymity of the puppet, the opportunity to express themselves in healing ways with the support of the Child and Youth Care Counsellor is fostered. As children and youth engage in fantasy and create new stories and images, they are participating in the healing process (Hartwig, 2014). Wenger (as cited in White, 2015) also posits that the bonding and relationships formed in puppet play are therapeutically nourishing. Finding and sustaining healing is a significant challenge for the practice of Child and Youth Care, creating a need to “re-evaluate our theoretical and practice frameworks to determine if they are relevant and useful for the times in which we are now living” (White, 2015, p. 499). Developing and maintaining trusting relationships is complex and challenging work. Each young person presents their own trauma, needs, and expectations, so, logically, each Child and Youth Care Counsellor should be able to operate on a responsive spectrum. Applied Puppetry could be an approach on that spectrum that “goes beyond the familiar formation of CYC” (White, 2015, p. 501), creating a modality that interacts with all types of people uniquely and levels the stakes in the therapeutic moment. Applied puppetry can be a strategy for helping youth to heal, express feelings and thoughts in therapeutic settings, or as an outlet for creative expression, such as what we learn from DerRic Starlight’s personal story, discussed in the following paragraphs.

Fostering Identity and Relationships

Family and community play an integral role in fostering an individual’s sense of belonging and acceptance. Traditionally, family and community are aspects that are important to each of us, the need to belong, to be accepted, cared for, and trusted in (Brendtro et al, 1991) is a foundation that every human being deserves to experience. Applied puppetry is an engaging, creative activity that is strength-based in its approach, a feature which can be scaffolded to enhance accessibility with different demographic groups. Participants are encouraged to create puppets that reflect their unique voices

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 & 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).

Although no article or submission will be rejected purely for stylistic reasons, the editors reserve the right to return any manuscript for additional work. Authors requiring editorial assistance in this regard should indicate their request in a covering letter. Originality of material is the responsibility of the primary author. Previously published material must be identified as such and will be published only where the necessary permission has been granted from the original source.

Relational Child and Youth Care Practice may include Peer Reviewed contributions, stories, case studies, thought pieces, experiential descriptions and other forms of writing which will not be peer reviewed. In this way we aim to strike a balance between the values of Peer Reviewed articles and experiential voices from the field. This is a unique approach and one which we feel offers the best of both. Peer Review is available on request.

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