PROFESSIONAL YOUTH WORK

PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES AND PRIORITIES

PROFESSIONAL **YOUTH WORK:** PRINCIPLES, PRACTICES AND PRIORITIES

TIM CORNEY & ROBYN BROADBENT

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

YWA YOUTH WORKERS' ASSOCIATION

YCR Youth & Community Research Group Victoria University

Editors: Tim Corney and Robyn Broadbent

Publisher: Youth Workers' Association, Victoria, Australia

Preferred Citation: Corney, T., & Broadbent, R. (Eds) (2021). *Professional youth work: Principles, practices and priorities.* Victoria, Australia: Youth Workers' Association.

ISBN: 9780646836775
DOI: 10.26196/jwr0-vh04

Note of thanks: Martti Martinson, project management; Mary-Jo O'Rourke AE, editing; Celeste Davidson-Riza, design.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Tim Corney is an Associate Professor at Victoria University, coordinating youth and community research programs. He has been a Senior Fellow in the Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne and a Visiting Fellow at the University of Tallinn, Estonia. He trained as a youth and community worker before moving into academia, and has a long background in managing youth services and in face-to-face youth and community work. Tim has been an adviser to governments and international organisations on youth affairs and currently advises the Commonwealth of Nations Secretariat Youth Development Programme.

Dr Robyn Broadbent has recently retired as Professor of Youth Work at Victoria University. Her background before academia was as a qualified youth worker. She has been a long-term executive member of the Youth Workers' Association and worked for many years as a local council youth worker in the western suburbs of Melbourne. She taught youth work for over 30 years and was previously the coordinator of the youth and community work degrees at VU.

Dr Glenys Bristow is a Senior Adviser for the Centre for Excellence in Therapeutic Care (CETC) in NSW and brings over 35 years' experience in therapeutic residential care as a practitioner, unit and regional manager, trainer, mentor and consultant across statutory and voluntary agencies. Glenys uses this experience to write chapters, articles and useful practice guides and blogs for therapeutic care workers and managers. Glenys was awarded the Robin Clark Award and Residential Care Learning & Development Strategy (RCLDS) Leadership Award in Residential Care for demonstrating outstanding achievement and innovation with significant impact on residential care systems and outcomes for children and young people. She is passionate about ensuring the best possible intensive therapeutic residential care service design and operation for young people, and providing relevant, up-to-date and informed industry training and caring for the workers who care for the young people. Glenys's Doctor of Education researched 'What makes a good residential worker – Artistry: Fact or fiction?'

Perri Broadbent-Hogan is a teacher whose passion is ensuring young people have equal access to education regardless of their barriers. Perri has undergraduate degrees in science and education from La Trobe University and a Master of Education (Student Wellbeing) from the University of Melbourne. She has focused her teaching career on ensuring young people are provided with biologically respectful learning opportunities within a trauma-informed classroom setting, promoting maximal engagement for young people exposed to trauma. Perri has held a range of leadership positions in alternative education across both Victoria and Tasmania, and is currently the Campus Principal at St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre in North Melbourne.

Dr Michael Hallpike made a career change into higher education to pursue his interests in historical sociology and social and political theory after 20 years of school teaching. He lectured at La Trobe, Monash and Melbourne universities before teaching in arts and education at Victoria University. His PhD is on the relationship between imperial formations and knowledge systems. At VU he has played a leading role in cross-faculty collaborative curriculum design. He co-designed an award-winning legal writing course and a discipline-linked academic writing unit to help community services and community development students transition successfully into higher education. He was also co-designer of the highly successful Diploma of Education Studies. He figured out some time ago that whatever research interests he is pursuing, his true passion is equipping young people from non-privileged backgrounds with the knowledge and critical-analytical skills that will enable them to 'crack the code' and find their way into 'the system' while also developing the ability to critique it.

Dr Karen Hart is a Senior Lecturer and Course Chair of Youth Work and Community Development programs at Victoria University. Karen promotes and enhances the scholarly practices of teaching, learning and research in youth work, community development and criminal justice in order to make a significant contribution to those disciplines at national and international levels through innovation and collaboration. She is also an active researcher and evaluator with special interest in the needs and experiences of young people involved in the criminal justice system, specifically the examination of interventions that build social capital and capacity to prevent further re-offending in the lives of young people. Prior to joining VU in 2019, Karen held senior roles in child protection, court advocacy, youth justice, not-for- profit leadership and social purpose project management in both the UK and Australia for over 25 years.

Jane Hickey is an Australian youth worker and university lecturer in the College of Arts and Education at Victoria University. Jane has a background working in not-for-profit organisations, supporting young people with disability to participate in education and access the community. She continues to advocate for young people across Australia and internationally through speaking engagements, collaborative projects and teaching opportunities. Her work is underpinned by the belief that there is strength in diversity and she is passionate about advocating for a fair and just community. Jane is keen to challenge assumptions and create new ways to work together to promote inclusion for all.

Grace Langton has a wealth of teaching and community/youth work experience and an abiding passion for improving learning and wellbeing outcomes for young people. Grace has worked with a diverse range of people in differing contexts and, having worked extensively with children, adolescents and adults, she has a sound understanding of the needs and challenges facing school systems. She has leadership experience in assisting teams to design and implement education and training programs in schools, TAFEs, the university sector and welfare and juvenile justice settings. Her work has a particular focus on the educational experience of students with disabilities and those whose lives have been impacted by trauma or disadvantage. She currently works with schools to support their capacity to reach and teach all students, including those who present with challenging behaviours. Grace began her career as a performing arts teacher and her work continues to be informed by an appreciation of play, laughter and joy in the classroom.

Dr John Martino has taught in a range of settings and institutions for more than two decades. John is an active researcher with a special interest in information technology and new media (video games) and their impact on young people and society. He also has a special interest in the militarisation of society and the use of new forms of technology to promote peace and to counter the growing weaponisation of forms of new media which target young people. He has been successful in winning both internal Victoria University and external research grants. He has published in the fields of educational policy, political sociology, technology and youth. His interests include the study of militarisation and emergent technologies and their impact on young people. In 2008 he was awarded an Australian Teaching and Learning Council national award for his 'Outstanding contribution to student learning'.

Martti Martinson is the Head of the Youth Sector Quality Bureau at the Estonian Government Education and Youth Board and holds the appointment of Honorary Fellow at Victoria University. Martti's work is focused on developing a holistic, evidence-based youth monitoring system to inform policy and service design for young people and on creating an enabling environment for youth participation in decision-making processes. He is a strong advocate for the concept of human rights–based youth work, legislating youth participation and internationalisation within the youth sector.

PREFACE

Professor Robyn Broadbent DEd

This book comes in the twilight of a long career in youth work education. I have been privy to numerous conversations with colleagues and postgraduate students about youth work over this time. Many have written passionately about their ideas, research and expertise in youth work, and it seemed appropriate to invite them to contribute a chapter for this book. The aim of the book is to add to the conversations and debates on youth work practice. It is also to provide an Australian resource for youth workers on a number of different but topical issues. As academics and teachers, we want to provide a resource for youth work students that is accessible and practical, and will inform their journey to professional youth work. Given the move to understand complex frameworks such as trauma-informed practice in our schools, which is included in several chapters in the book, we hope that it will also reach out beyond the university to those practising youth workers, teachers and others.

To start our conversation, my long-term colleague and co-editor Tim Corney shares his knowledge, along with an array of international collaborators, on youth participation as a foundational practice of youth and community work. Tim is well known for his work on human rights and codes of ethical practice in youth work. The idea for this book was birthed in conversations with Tim over many years.

Michael Hallpike has written a different but important chapter. Michael has spent a lot of time interrogating the influence of neoliberal governments and their impact on young people. His ire is widespread, as the fate of the most vulnerable is often at the behest of the wealthiest and this is only too evident as the wealth divide grows not only in Australia but around the world. Michael has written this chapter based on his work in the Victoria University Change and Community Justice unit. He sees this content as fundamental for every youth worker and so has introduced his ideas in the form of a 'how to' guide for use in a youth work classroom.

Jane Hickey writes about the social model of disability and the structural lens through which we should see, act and support young people with disability. Jane is a fierce advocate for greater inclusion of disabled young people. They are, at times, the most vulnerable of cohorts, living in a society that does not meet their needs and often places barriers in front of them, stopping them from reaching their own potential.

I have written on youth work as an education practice. This has not been a common language in Australia and I think we should own it in a most robust manner. In Europe, youth work is often referred to as 'non-formal' and/or 'informal' education. We need to think of our youth work as working alongside young people, building relationships and having conversations, running programs that have an educative focus and even working in classrooms. Youth work is an education practice and describing it as such may assist in building recognition more broadly as a profession.

Karen Hart has written a chapter from her PhD thesis. Karen is a much respected advocate for young adults in the criminal justice system. She calls for reform in this chapter and it is a key focus of all of her work. The spotlight is on young adults, for whom in many instances it would seem that society is ready to turn its back on their futures.

Martti Martinson is a fierce believer in the voices of young people and their right to be included and to participate in the decisions of a civil society. Martti has lots of experience, having been involved from a young age in local, state and then international youth councils and committees. He aptly names his chapter 'Time to share the power' with an explicit message, in this case to local governments, that they are not enabling young people to participate.

My daughter, Perri Broadbent-Hogan, has written a chapter on her work leading a school that frames itself entirely around trauma-informed practice. I am both proud and pleased to be publishing with Perri. She has travelled far from the shadow of being 'Robyn and Gerard's daughter' (a challenging part of her own professional journey) to becoming a respected educational leader creating educational opportunities for vulnerable young people. Perri sees education as a key protective factor. As professionals, we should always rejoice in good teaching practice because good teachers, as do good youth workers, make a difference in the lives of young people every day.

Next Grace Langton reflects on the lessons learned from schools in her role at Berry Street working with schools and training in trauma-informed practice. This is timely and important work as schools grapple with the complexities of behaviour they are encountering.

Glenys Bristow provides a gem of a chapter on the artistry of residential youth work. Her work talks about how we build, through the synapses of our brains, all those experiences in youth work that support our decision-making. Most of us refer to that as our 'gut feeling'. Well, that gut feeling has a lot of substance and is critical to our practice, even at times keeping us safe as we work with a young person who is struggling to regulate their emotions.

Finally, John Martino contributes some very interesting work on the current levels of violence and conflict between groups of young people, particularly from migrant communities. It is distressing to witness charges of murder against young people, one as young as 13 in a recent attack. The levels of violence are not only very concerning, but we are also looking to understand how some young people move on to very serious offences, sometimes after very minor prior offences or even none. John discusses the level of violence that young people now participate in while playing video games and how this has normalised violence in a way no other generation has experienced.

I hope you find this resource useful.

Associate Professor Tim Corney PhD

This publication is intended to serve as a curriculum and teaching resource in higher education courses, and is focused on improving the quality of professional practice for the youth work and community work sector generally. The initial idea for this publication emerged nearly 25 years ago from collegial discussions between myself and Robyn Broadbent as we lamented the lack of specific teaching resources and published research on youth and community work practice available to us as we taught undergraduate courses together. A particular need was for practical and accessible texts that were contextualised to professional youth work in Australia. The idea slowly grew and took shape as we shared our thoughts and aspirations with our colleagues and postgraduate students within the youth and community programs group at Victoria University and beyond. We discussed the need for a cost-free resource for our students, who could not afford the often exorbitant prices charged by the established publishers. The decision to publish with the Youth Workers' Association in order to enable the book to be accessible to students without cost was difficult for academics, whose promotion and career progression are linked to the narrow academic impact of certain publishing houses.

In the youth and community work sectors, peer-reviewed publications are not the only place where theoretical conversations take place and where an applied researcher or practitioner might want to share their ideas or findings. In fact, it is our view that open-access resources have a broader reach and result in stimulating a wider dialogue and discussion of the issues facing young people. As applied and translational researchers and practitioners concerned with social justice, we are dedicated to building a body of knowledge for a fledgling profession and sector. As such, we have made a deliberate choice to publish this work in an accessible and open format consistent with an applied and translation approach. We are extremely grateful for the backing of the Youth Workers' Association and for its ongoing support and publication of this book, which is the summation of those long discussions and robust discipline group meetings had over many years, and we hope that it lives up to our collective expectations.

The book is structured as a series of standalone chapters focused on the specific needs and issues of young people and on the frameworks, principles, practices and priorities associated with addressing those issues and needs. Youth and community

work with young people, whether it is paid or voluntary, is multifaceted and reflects the complexities of young people's lives and the communities they live in. The preparation and training of youth and community workers have benefited from the developments in youth research and from the ongoing discussion on definitions, ethics and practices found in state, national and international forums stimulated by the Youth Workers' Association and other state and federal youth peak bodies such as the Youth Affairs Council Victoria and the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition. The most recent national statement on youth work being an important case in point, it is cited here, as this definitional statement is an important underpinning assumption on which many of the chapters in this book are based:

> Youth work is a practice that places young people and their interests first. Youth work is a relational practice, where the youth worker operates alongside the young person in their context. Youth work is an empowering practice that advocates for and facilitates a young person's independence, participation in society, connectedness and realisation of their rights (Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, October 2013).

As an editor and contributor, I have found the various chapters compelling and insightful, and the particular authors deserve special mention and thanks for their unique contributions and perspectives. I commend this publication to the reader in the hope that those involved in the teaching and practice of youth and community work will find it to be a useful resource.

CHAPTER 1

HUMAN RIGHTS AND YOUTH PARTICIPATION: THE PRACTICE OF PROFESSIONAL YOUTH WORK

T. Corney, H. Williamson, H. Shier, T. Cooper, R. Holdsworth, K. Ellis and R. Broadbent

Abstract

In this chapter we argue that human rights (as defined in various United Nations declarations and charters), and in particular the rights of young people to participate in decisions being made about them, form a basis for professional youth work practice. We argue that an understanding of these assumptions and an appreciation of the practical application of these concepts are important to the practice of professional youth work. Young people's engagement in decisions that affect them, described as 'youth participation', is central to professional youth and community work practice. While various conceptualisations of youth participation have been contested, the authors contend that these concepts are central to a definition of professional youth work.

Participation has sometimes been described as being 'actively involved in something', such as participating in activities. The authors contend that the way participation is conceptualised is both ideological and cultural, and that its translation into action is mediated through a particular context. A chorus of voices from the youth work literature suggest that enabling the participation of young people in decisions that affect them is a key principle underpinning the practice of professional youth work.

In most countries young people under the age of majority or enfranchisement are 'disenfranchised'. Young people are treated unequally within the political process and governance structures of their jurisdiction by virtue of their age and are often excluded from political and civic decision-making. Some young people are further marginalised from mainstream society by the social, political, cultural and economic contexts in which they live. Enfranchisement of young people – the facilitating of their involvement in political and social decision-making – is what links professional youth work to human rights. As such, this chapter identifies and makes the case for human rights and the practices of youth participation as fundamental to professional youth work.

Introduction

This chapter argues that human rights, and in particular the right of young people to participate in decisions being made about them, as enshrined in various United Nations declarations and charters, form the basis of professional youth work practice. The authors suggest that an understanding of this perspective and an appreciation of the practical application of these concepts are essential to the practice of professional youth work.

Governments and non-government youth agencies in many countries have embraced the role and place of youth participation in the delivery of funded programs and services for young people. Terms such as 'co-design', 'co-creation', 'co-production' and 'co-management' appear regularly in the youth sector literature and concepts such as 'client-centred practice' are often mandated in funding agreements in Australia. This renewal of interest requires a reflective, nuanced understanding of the theory and practice of youth participation and associated concepts (Farthing 2010, 2012; Lansdown 2010).

What is 'participation'?

The inclusion of young people in decisions that affect them, beyond just 'taking part', commonly described as 'youth participation', is important to professional youth work practice (Batsleer & Davies 2010; Corney 2014a, 2014b; Harrison & Wise 2005; Irving, Maunders & Sherrington 1995; Jeffs & Smith 1987; Ord 2007; Sapin 2013; Smith 1983, 1988; Wood & Hine 2009). While the application of youth participation in youth work has not been well understood (Smith 1983; Williamson 2005), and in some quarters has been contested (Farthing 2010, 2012), many see the concept as central to a definition of professional youth work. Ord (2007) states that understanding what is meant by participation is essential to good youth and community work practice.

While participation can be described as being 'actively involved in something' (Kellet 2009:43), in youth work 'participation' is more commonly understood to mean engagement (in many different ways) with, and in, the processes that seek to influence decisions and determine outcomes (Pope & Jones 2011). Others suggest that the way participation is conceptualised is both ideological and cultural and that its translation into action is mediated through a particular context (Reddy & Ratna 2002). Still other voices from the youth work literature (Batsleer & Davies 2010; Sapin 2013) suggest that enabling the participation of young people in decisions that affect them is a key principle underpinning the practice of professional youth and community work.

Participation and human rights

The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (1948) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) (United Nations, 1989) inform the principle of participation within (and indeed beyond) youth work practice. The principle is strengthened by ratification of the UNCRC and enabling legislation, and/or regulatory measures in the various international contexts where professional youth work takes place (Lansdown 2010).

In most countries young people under the age of majority are 'disenfranchised', that is to say, they have limited opportunities to engage with the political process and governance structures of their country, state or province by virtue of their age and thus are often excluded from political and civic decision-making (Corney 2004, 2014a, 2014b; Farson 1974; Hoiles & Corney 2007; Sapin 2013; Seebach 2008). Some young people are further marginalised from mainstream society by the social, political, cultural and economic contexts in which they live (Brown 1992, 2010; Cooper & Brooker 2020; Joseph, Akpokavi, Chauhan & Cummins 2002). It is the lack of participation, through the social and political marginalisation of young people, which links professional youth work to human rights (Corney 2014a, 2014b). As such, this chapter identifies and makes the case for human rights and the practices of youth participation as foundational to professional youth work.

However, the implementation of participation processes means different things in different contexts. Outcome-led funding criteria for youth services are one example where context can shape the form that participation may take. Youth worker education and training and the level of qualification are also important to the understanding and application of youth participation processes, and a lack of understanding of the

relevance of the UNCRC can be an inhibitor and barrier to the facilitation of young people's participation. As Lansdown (2010:12) has said:

> If advocacy to promote [young people's and] children's right to participation is to be effective, it is imperative that it is grounded in a clear understanding of the scope of the relevant rights in the [UN] Convention and the obligations they impose.

The human right of young people to participate and the ramifications of this right for youth work practice, particularly Article 12 of the UNCRC, are clear. However, beyond rights the literature confirms that the participation of young people in decision-making is useful in the development and evaluation of policy, programs and services. It improves the quality and informs the effectiveness of service delivery and the meeting of young people's needs (Shtebunaev 2020). Participation is also useful for the practice of active citizenship and democracy, and youth work programs have been described as 'laboratories for democracy'.

Participation models

There are numerous models of participation and they often contain measures or levels of participation. Models of participation, despite their limitations, are useful. A well-known model is Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation, which continues to provide a starting point for considering the various models of youth participation. Hart's Ladder has become synonymous with youth participation. It drew from work in the 1960s by Sherry Arnstein (1969), who proposed a ladder of citizen participation to depict the different ways that we all participate in society. Hart's Ladder starts with very low, or 'token', levels of involvement, which Hart calls non-participation (also described as false participation), and goes right through to a high level of 'genuine' participation and collaboration with adults. One of the criticisms of Hart's Ladder is that it is too linear, with sequential and hierarchical levels or rungs that follow each other and build on one another. Hart (2008) has written about this, recognising that this can lead the reader to assume that for participation to be successful, it must progressively move up the Ladder.

Shier's (2001) pathways and Treseder's (1997) degrees of participation have built on Hart's Ladder; their work is also informative and widely recognised. Shier provides a number of models of youth participation. He has shifted his ideas from an earlier sequential pathway model (advanced in 2001) to a more complex and organic model called the Participation Tree (Shier 2010), which is based on asserting the right to participate, albeit still developmentally. Reddy and Ratna's (2002) various discursive diagrams can also be construed as developmental, where they describe participation through a series of complex schemas.

In more recent times, there have emerged a range of new models. For example, Wong, Zimmerman and Parker (2010) built on Shier's work to create an interesting typology of youth participation and Andersson (2017) drew on Swedish youth research to propose a pedagogical political participation model (3-PM). While no model is perfect, all are useful in some way when contextualised to the needs of young people and their particular environment.

It is important not to confuse *consultation* with *participation* (Lansdown 2001, 2010) and there are differences between adult-led and youth-led participation processes, what Shier (2019) calls 'protagonismo'.

Critique of participation models

Underpinning most models is the right to participate in decision-making and that this right needs a mandated process. Once it is legislated, government entities, institutions and funded bodies are then required to provide a process and/or models to ensure that young people are involved in decision-making. However, the danger with mandated or compulsory participation is the potential for the process, paradoxically, to be disempowering or even oppressive, as Farthing (2010, 2012) has noted. The role of adults in the participation process and the limits or constraints on adult power are contested, but these remain important for the success or otherwise of youth participation models, as does the capacity of young people to take part in them (Francis & Lorenzo 2002; Malone & Hartung 2010).

It is important to acknowledge that young people are 'participating' all the time in different ways and at different levels, often without assistance from adults or models of participation (Reddy & Ratna 2002; Vromen & Collin 2010). Adult models, however well-intentioned, can unwittingly be used to limit or restrict young people's organic participation (Francis & Lorenzo 2002; Malone & Hartung 2010). Ideally, youth workers will facilitate and/or use models of participation that are developed by and/or with young people for use by them and with them, assisting youth workers to include young people in the organisational processes of doing youth work, rather than only as a way of measuring how involved young people are in the decision-making of an organisation.

There are many other models and theories of participation, some recent, that have not been discussed here but are nevertheless important to the ongoing development of participatory processes and to youth work practice. These include models advanced by writers such as Cahill and Dadvand (2018) and Holdsworth (2020) and theoretical perspectives proposed by writers such as Abbott (2020), Francis and Lorenzo (2002), Grace and Grace (2017), Grimm and Pilkington (2015), Havlicek, Curry and Villalpando (2018), Hussey (2020), Lansdown (2001, 2010, 2011), Lundy (2007), Malone and Hartung (2010), Theis (2010), Thomas (2007) and Villa-Torres and Svanemyr (2015), to name only a few.

Levels and measures of participation

The literature suggests that, despite the various forms that participation may take, not all young people will choose to participate. For those who do, not all will participate at the same level. For youth workers to remain consistent in their practice while promoting youth participation, they will need to reflect on and incorporate the key principles of youth work, such as *voluntary* participation, anti-oppressive practice and contextualisation (Batsleer & Davies 2010; Corney 2014a, 2014b; Ord 2007; Sapin 2013), in order to be sensitive to the diversity of young people. It is important to be reminded of the 'voluntary association' principle in youth work (UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2009) and that as soon as young people are mandated or obliged to participate, this undermines the point of participation as well as a key principle of youth work. Rhys Farthing (2010, 2012) has written

about this paradox that, if participation is made a compulsory process and young people don't have the choice of opting out, it actually functions as a form of social control.

Youth workers need to be able to understand the nature of participation *in situ*: the context in which it is taking place, the boundaries of decision-making, what is able to be negotiated and/or what is achievable within those boundaries, and the level and range of participation options for young people in a given time and place, and that there are limits – legal, ethical and others – to participation and decision-making for *all* people. A measure or rationale for making difficult decisions with young people can be found in the UNCRC 'best interests' principle. It is important to ask what the benefits for all young people are, what the direct outcomes or consequences will be for those who participate in the decisions and who will be affected by them – be these effects moral, ethical, legal, political or developmental.

Codes of ethical practice

The youth work literature acknowledges the importance of young people and adults working together, collaborating and sharing power, particularly in the context of social and political change. However, the literature also recognises that there are boundaries between the roles of professional youth work practitioner and active citizen, and limitations in collaborating with young people that professional practice may bring, such as the constraints of employment conditions, government funding criteria, professional ethics, the law and so on. Many countries around the world have developed codes of ethics and/or practice for youth work. These codes such as the Commonwealth Code of Ethical Practice (Corney 2014a) are designed to assist youth workers in the making of difficult decisions when working with young people. Hinman (2013) provides an introduction to the different theoretical positions associated with the moral and ethical issues surrounding the accepting or disobeying of unjust laws. For more information on ethical practice in youth work, see Banks (2010), Corney (2014a, 2014b), Davies (2016), Roberts (2009) and Sercombe (2010).

In Australia there are various state-based codes of ethics or practice for youth workers, most centred on the Western Australian 'Fairbridge' code. The exception to this is the Victorian Youth Sector Code of Ethical Practice (2007), which is explicitly embedded in a human rights framework. The influence of the human rights approach to youth work is revealed in the Victorian code through its use of the UNCRC to describe all young people as 'the primary consideration of youth workers' (YACVic 2007:4 & 7) and that youth workers will act in the 'best interests' of young people. The human rights approach is a key difference between the Victorian code and the Fairbridge code. Another difference between these codes is the use of language, demonstrated in the Fairbridge code by its use of the term 'client' in describing young people (YACWA 2003:3). While not the intention, this use of the term 'client' could be construed as managerial or neoliberal.

Sercombe (2010:13) acknowledges these differences between the Fairbridge code and the Victorian code. However, he defends the Fairbridge code by suggesting that the UNCRC human rights–based notion of 'primary concern' is too 'unilateral' and he prefers instead to individualise youth work as a 'relationship' with a particular 'client'. The Victorian code, however, is explicitly universal and, as such, sees the process of youth participation and the

role of youth workers through the lens of human rights. The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 12 (2009), outlines nine essential requirements for effective, ethical and meaningful participation; fully implemented, these provide a complete ethical code for facilitating participation with young people.

Dialogical conversations

The influence of seminal youth work texts (for example, Jeffs & Smith 1987, 1988, 2005; Smith 1988) has shaped much of the underpinning values of youth work practice, in particular the concept of youth work as an educational practice ('non-formal education and learning') and its pedagogy as critical, progressive and emancipatory (Beck & Purcell 2010; Corney 2004, 2006, 2019; Freire 1972; Mayo 1999). Maunders (1984, 1990, 2009) and Smith (1988) drew on the Gramscian notion of hegemony and its influence on youth work as a counter-hegemonic practice, further developed by Chouhan (2009) and Beck and Purcell (2010). This conceptualisation of youth work sees the youth worker acting as an 'organic intellectual' (Gramsci 1971; see also Chouhan 2009; Corney 2006, 2014; Singh & Cowden 2009; Smith 1988).

This emancipatory, educational concept of youth work draws directly on the critical pedagogy of Freire (1972) and his use of dialogue. These ideas are consistent with the concept of critical dialogue (Freire 1972). This entails the proposing of provocative questions and reflecting on them critically, enabling the responses to challenge and inform future action. Critical dialogue is a common practice within youth work. Youth work literature agrees on the importance of 'dialogical conversations' as a key part of youth work practice and youth participation and empowerment processes (Beck & Purcell 2010; Coburn 2010; Cooper, C. 2011). In relation to the concept of empowerment, a key method used in youth work is the undertaking of 'dialogical conversations' (Freire 1972; see also Beck & Purcell 2010; Coburn 2010; Cooper, C. 2011; Cooper, T. 1999; Cooper & White 1994; Corney 2004, 2006, 2019) with young people. These conversations simultaneously take young people's views seriously and challenge young people to think critically about the world and how socio-political structures shape the world that they live in (Chouhan 2009). Therefore, it is important that participation methods have a dialogical component, otherwise 'non-radical empowerment' (Cooper, T. 2012; Cooper & White 1994) may lead to simplistic and stereotypical thinking that is unreflective and lacks what Freire (1972) describes as consciousness raising.

However, as critical dialogue is central to youth work practice, so youth workers must be open to dialogue with young people who hold different views. Working with diverse voices and elevating those voices that are often silent are important and crucial to good participation. This may entail difficult encounters where youth workers do not always agree with the perspectives or opinions of young people. The welcoming of 'convenient voices' only and the manipulation of participation processes and/or outcomes are always a danger. Where to draw the line on inconvenient voices remains contested in youth participation processes.

Conclusion

This chapter about young people's participation began with an introduction that focused on young people's 'right' to participate in decisions that affect them, acknowledging that this right is based in broader UN human rights conventions and government legislation. However, the right to participate does not guarantee participation; it needs to be affirmed and enabled and, in some cases, asserted.

It is noted that the right to participate is not just for young people, but for all people, and is anchored to the conviction that participation is a good thing. Youth workers want to involve young people in decision-making processes to support their right to participate (or not) and to promote young people's personal development, enhance civic and community engagement, and support the political education essential for democratic societies. As a byproduct it can be expected that young people's participation will enhance the quality and effectiveness of youth policies, programs and services.

The chapter alludes to the importance of the values that underpin the participation of young people and of the fact that participation is both an end with intrinsic value in itself and a starting point for enabling social and political development – both individual and collective – acknowledging that participation has a wider frame than just decision-making and that, while young people should certainly be encouraged to be involved in decisions that affect their lives, they may choose not to be.

The chapter acknowledges that young people sharing their experience, knowledge and expectations informs and shapes better decisions and better policy outcomes. However, it is important to recognise that there are often conditions, boundaries and limits to participation. Youth work practitioners responsible for enabling young people's participation should continue to argue for why it is important, but must also keep asking themselves what the best way or model of doing it is and when, where and how it should be done. Youth workers must also keep asking about which young people are enabled to participate and who is excluded – and challenge divisive, manipulative and exclusionary practices.

While the chapter states unequivocally that young people's active participation is a good thing, it acknowledges that there is no one right way of doing this and that there should be different and multiple pathways to and for participation, a mosaic of options that cater to the diversity of young people. It states that consultation is not participation and outlines the inherent tension between the principled aspiration of participation and the practical realities of delivering it, acknowledging the rigidities and contradictions in cookie-cutter prescriptions such as ladders and other aspirational models of participation.

The ever-changing jargon and terms associated with youth participation have been noted and a warning sounded about the dangers of the corrupting power of language. In particular, there are evolving meanings of associated words and practices by those who may not share the same view of participation or what is in the best interests of young people. An example was provided of the word 'client' and its link to remedial and deficit-based forms of youth work that individualise and pathologise young people, labelling them as 'disengaged' and needing to be 're-engaged' or become 'more

engaged'. As such, there is further analytical work to be done on the relationship of young people's rights to the practice of youth work.

In closing, it is worth noting that, while governments continue to champion various forms of youth participation and despite campaigns from youth peak bodies, there is little evidence in Australia of a move to lower the voting age or to provide a legislative voice for those under the age of enfranchisement. However, there are powerful movements emerging in many different parts of the world, such as Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in the UK, in Europe in countries such as Germany, Austria, Malta, the Republic of Ireland and Greece (17 years) and in the Americas in Nicaragua, Argentina, Ecuador and Brazil, all of which have reduced the voting age to 16 years for various municipal and/or national elections and/or referendums.

While the current practice of youth participation may not be perfect, it is hoped that this conversation will help to refine the ideological and philosophical commitment to it and to temper the warm words with some grounded realities. It is also hoped that this contributes to a continued debate about perceptions and policies relating to the participation of young people and to the practice of youth and community work.

Note: Sections of this chapter first appeared in the publication: Corney, T., Williamson, H., Holdsworth, R., Broadbent, R., Ellis, K., Shier, H., & Cooper, T. (2020) Approaches to youth participation in youth and community work practice: A critical dialogue. Victoria, Australia: Youth Workers' Association. Used with permission.

References

Abbott, S. (2020). *Introductions to influential and widely used organizing, engagement, and equity models*. Organizing Engagement.

Andersson, E. (2017). The pedagogical political participation model (the 3P-M) for exploring, explaining and affecting young people's political participation. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 20(10), 1346–1361.

Arnstein, S. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216–224.

Banks, S. (2010). *Ethical issues in youth work*. Routledge.

Batsleer, J., & Davies, B. (Eds) (2010). *What is youth work?* Learning Matters, Sage.

Beck, D., & Purcell, S. (2010). *Popular education practice for youth and community development work*. Learning Matters, Sage.

Brown, C. (1992). Ideology and ethics in youth work practice. *Youth Issues Forum*, Spring, 14–19.

Brown, C. (2010). Marginalised young people and decision making. In R. White (Ed.), *Youth work and youth issues* (pp. 25–36). Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

Cahill, H., & Dadvand, B. (2018). Re-conceptualising youth participation: A framework to inform action. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 95, 243–253.

Chouhan, J. (2009). Anti-oppressive practice work with young people. In J. Wood & J. Hine (Eds), *Work with young people* (pp. 60–74). Sage.

Coburn, A. (2010). Youth work as border pedagogy. In J. Batsleer & B. Davies (Eds), *What is youth work?* (pp. 33–43). Learning Matters, Sage.

Cooper, C. (2011). Youth participation and emancipation. In A. Fitzsimons, M. Hope, C. Cooper & K. Russell (Eds), *Empowerment and participation in youth work* (pp. 41–66). Learning Matters, Sage.

Cooper T. (1999). Youth worker education: An approach to the development of skills in consciousness raising through group work practice. In R. Flowers (Ed.), *Youth work, community work and popular education* (Vol 2). University of Technology Sydney.

Cooper, T. (2012). Models of youth work: A framework for positive sceptical reflection. *Youth and Policy*, 1(109), 98–117.

Cooper, T., & Brooker, M.R. (2020). Support for homeless young people under 16-years-old: Towards a new paradigm. *Journal of Applied Youth Studies*, 3(1), 43–64.

Cooper, T., & White, R. (1994). Models of youth work practice. *Youth Studies Australia*, 13(4), 30–35.

Corney, T. (2004). Youth work: The problem of values. *Youth Studies Australia*, 23(4), 11–19.

Corney, T. (2006). Youth work in schools: Should youth workers also be teachers? *Youth Studies Australia*, 25(3), 7–24.

Corney, T. (2014a). *Code of ethical practice for youth workers: Commonwealth Youth Programme.* Commonwealth Secretariat.

Corney, T. (2014b). The human rights of young people: A catalyst for the professionalisation of youth work through the development of codes of practice. In T. Corney (Ed.), *Professional youth work: An Australian perspective* (pp. 13–34). Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

Corney, T. (2019). Teaching youth work in Australia: Values-based education and the threat of neoliberalism. In M. Seal (Ed.), *Teaching youth work in higher education* (pp. 160–176). University of Tartu.

Corney, T. (Ed.) (2014). *Professional youth work: An Australian perspective.* TAS: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

Corney, T., Williamson, H., Holdsworth, R., Broadbent, R., Ellis, K., Shier, H., & Cooper, T. (2020). *Approaches to youth participation in youth and community work practice: A critical dialogue.* Youth Workers' Association.

Davies, R. (2016). Youth work and ethics: Why the 'professional turn' won't do. *Ethics and Education*, 11(2), 186–196.

Farthing, R. (2010). The politics of youthful antipolitics: Representing the 'issue' of youth participation in politics. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13(2), 181–195.

Farthing, R. (2012). Why youth participation? Some justifications and critiques of youth participation using New Labour's youth policies as a case study. *Youth and Policy*, 109, 71–97.

Farson, R. (1974). *Birthrights*. Macmillan.

Francis, M., & Lorenzo, R. (2002). Seven realms of children's participation. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22, 157–169.

Freire, P. (1972). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Herder and Herder.

Grace, J., & Grace, P. (2017). *Participation handbook*. Youth Work Europe.

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the prison notebooks*. Lawrence & Wishart.

Grimm, R., & Pilkington, H. (2015). 'Loud and proud': Youth and the politics of silencing. *The Sociological Review*, 63.

Harrison, R., & Wise, C. (Eds) (2005). *Working with young people*. Sage.

Hart, R. (1992). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*. UNICEF Innocenti Essays, No. 4. International Child Development Centre of UNICEF.

Hart, R. (2008). Stepping back from 'the ladder': Reflections on a model of participatory work with children. In *Participation and learning* (pp. 19–31). Springer.

Havlicek, J., Curry, A., & Villalpando, F. (2018). Youth participation in foster youth advisory boards: Perspectives of facilitators. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 84, 255–270.

Hinman, L. (2013). *Ethics: A pluralistic approach to moral theory* (5th edn). Thomson Wadsworth.

Hoiles, L., & Corney, T. (2007). Why the youth sector in Victoria, Australia, needs a code of ethical practice. *Commonwealth Youth and Development*, 5(1), 2–10.

Holdsworth, R. (2020). Student voice, agency and participation: Understanding and practices. Professional voice. *Australian Education Union*, 13(12), 21–30.

Hussey, S. (2020). *International public participation models 1969–2020*. Bang the Table.

Irving, T., Maunders, D., & Sherington, G. (1995). *Youth in Australia: Policy, administration and politics*. Macmillan.

Istance, D., Rees, G., & Williamson, H. (1994). *Young people not in education, training or employment in South Glamorgan*. Wales: South Glamorgan Training and Enterprise Council.

Jeffs, T., & Smith, M. (2005). *Informal education: Conversation, democracy and learning* (3rd edn). YMCA.

Jeffs, T., & Smith, M. (Eds) (1987). *Youth work*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Jeffs, T., & Smith, M. (Eds) (1988). *Youth work and welfare practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Joseph, J., Akpokavi, K., Chauhan, V., & Cummins, V. (2002). *Towards global democracy: An exploration of black perspectives in youth work*. Development Education Association.

Lansdown, G. (2001). *Promoting children's participation in democratic decision-making*. Innocenti Insights, UNICEF.

Lansdown, G. (2010). The realisation of children's participation rights: Critical reflections. In B. Percy-Smith & N. Thomas (Eds), *A handbook of children and young people's participation: Perspectives from theory and practice* (pp. 11–23). Routledge.

Lansdown, G. (2011). *Every child's right to be heard*. Save the Children.

Lundy, L. (2007). 'Voice' is not enough: Conceptualising Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal*, 33(6), 927–942.

Malone, K., & Hartung, C. (2010). Challenges of participatory practice with children. In B. Percy- Smith & N. Thomas (Eds), *A handbook of children and young people's participation: Perspectives from theory and practice* (pp. 24–38). Routledge.

Maunders, D. (1984). *Keeping them off the streets: A history of voluntary youth organisations in Australia 1850–1980*. Phillip Institute of Technology, Centre for Youth & Community Studies.

Maunders, D. (1990). Youth work as a response to social values. *Youth Studies Australia*, 9(2), 42–50.

Maunders, D. (2009). Youth work as a response to social values. In R. White (Ed.), *Concepts and methods of youth work*. Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

Mayo, P. (1999). *Gramsci, Freire and adult education: Possibilities for transformative action*. Zed Books.

Ord, J. (2007). *Youth work process, product and practice: Creating an authentic curriculum in work with young people*. Russell House.

Pope, P., & Jones, C. (2011). *Discourses from youth work practice: The youth worker's story*. 5th International Narrative Practitioner Conference, 20–21 June 2011, Glyndwr University.

Reddy, N., & Ratna, K. (2002). *Journey in children's participation*. The Concerned for Working Children.

Roberts, J. (2009). *Youth work ethics*. Learning Matters, Sage.

Sapin, K. (2013). *Essential skills for youth work practice*. Sage.

Seebach, M. (2008). Youth participation and youth work: A conceptual review. *Youth Studies, Ireland*, 3(2), 37–53.

Sercombe, H. (2010). *Youth work ethics*. Sage.

Shier, H. (2001). Pathways to participation: Openings, opportunities and obligations. *Children and Society*, 15, 107–117.

Shier, H. (2010). 'Pathways to participation' revisited: Learning from Nicaragua's child coffee workers. In N. Thomas & B. Percy-Smith (Eds), *A handbook of children and young people's participation: Perspectives from theory and practice* (pp. 215–227). Routledge.

Shier, H. (2019). Student voice and childrens rights: Participation, empowerment and 'protagonismo'. *Encyclopedia of teacher education* (ed. Michael A. Peters). Springer Nature.

Shtebunaev, S. (2020). *10 Reasons: Giving young adults voice & power over what gets built: Advocating for youth participation in planning, regeneration, and neighbourhood management*. Grosvenor.

Singh, G., & Cowden, S. (2009). The social worker as intellectual. *European Journal of Social Work*, 12(4), 479–493.

Smith, M. (1983). *Creators not consumers*. National Association of Youth Clubs.

Smith, M. (1988). *Developing youth work: Informal education, mutual aid and popular practice*. Open University Press.

Theis, J. (2010). Children as active citizens: An agenda for children's civil rights and civic engagement. In B. Percy-Smith & N. Thomas (Eds), *A handbook of children and young people's participation: Perspectives from theory and practice* (pp. 343–355). Routledge.

Thomas, N. (2007). Towards a theory of children's participation. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 15(3), 199–218.

Treseder, P. (1997). *Empowering children and young people*. Save the Children.

United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. United Nations General Assembly.

United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. United Nations General Assembly.

United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2009). General Comment No 12: *The child's right to be heard*. United Nations.

Villa-Torres, L., & Svanemyr, J. (2015). Ensuring youth's right to participation and promotion of youth leadership in the development of sexual and reproductive health policies and programs. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 56(1), 51–57.

Vromen, A., & Collin, P. (2010). Everyday youth participation? Contrasting views from Australian policymakers and young people. *Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, 18(1), 97–112.

Williamson, H. (2005). Challenging practice: A personal view on 'youth work' in times of changed expectation. Chapter 6 in R. Harrison & C. Wise (Eds), 2005, *Working with young people*. Sage.

Wong, N., Zimmerman, M., & Parker, E. (2010). A typology of youth participation and empowerment for child and adolescent health promotion. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 46(1–2), 100–114.

Wood, J., & Hine, J. (Eds) (2009). *Work with young people*. Sage.

Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVic). (2007). *The Victorian youth sector – code of ethical practice*. Melbourne, VIC: YACVic.

Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA). (2003). *Code of ethics: A code of ethics for youth work*. YACWA.

CHAPTER 2

CHANGE AND COMMUNITY JUSTICE: THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH WORKERS ENGAGING IN POLITICAL ECONOMY DEBATE

Dr Michael Hallpike

Abstract

This chapter discusses the design of a unit of study, entitled Change and Community Justice, offered in the Bachelor of Youth Work program at Victoria University and it reflects upon the pedagogical intentions informing that design. The unit is an introduction to political economy. It invites students both to examine how structural changes have impacted on the most vulnerable members of our community and to think through the implications of this understanding for professional practice. It examines various ways in which economic globalisation, neoliberal policies and neoliberal forms of governance have, especially over the past three decades, intensified existing structural inequalities and generated new/old mechanisms of social exclusion. The unit invites students to examine the impacts of relatively recent structural changes that have generated extreme inequality, chronic youth unemployment and underemployment, homelessness, deepening social divisions and social insecurity in our society and other societies across the world. Students are introduced to the idea that we need to understand the underlying causes of these trends in order to defend vulnerable individuals and groups from being marginalised and deemed responsible for their own situations. They also gain insights into how this knowledge can help them to work more effectively with fellow community workers to advocate for system change. Our youth work and community development students also need to be made aware that the practice field they are preparing to enter is a conflict-ridden field of tensions, especially as the process of professionalisation across multiple fields has been dominated in recent decades by a neoliberal agenda, manifesting both in the guise of new public management and also, most insidiously, as a form of governance that empowers managerial elites while disempowering and 'responsibilising' vulnerable young people.

Introduction

> Youth workers will recognise the impact of social and structural forces on young people, so that their practice is responsive to young people's experiences and needs and to break down barriers that restrict young people's life opportunities (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) Code 2007).
>
> But academic learning can also be profoundly detached from contemporary social realities – to the intense annoyance of young people who somewhere along the road to university have responded to the appeal of idealism (the transformative role of ideas) (Richard Teese 2012).
>
> Expert practitioners not only have a store of professional practice knowledge that might be described as their expertise, but also have highly developed capacities to search for saliences that allow them to respond wisely and prudently to each situation, taking into account the likely consequences of their actions in relation to the many, often competing or conflicting aims, understandings, values and self-interests they bring to the situation and that others bring to it, and that reveal themselves in and through action and interaction – practice – in the situation as it unfolds (Stephen Kemmis 2005).

This chapter discusses the design of a unit of study in the Bachelor of Youth Work program offered at Victoria University and reflects upon the pedagogical intentions informing that design. The unit is entitled Change and Community Justice (hereafter CCJ). In keeping with the YACVic Code cited above, the unit offers a praxis-oriented (Kemmis 2005, 2010; Schwandt 2005) introduction to political economy, inviting students both to examine how structural changes have impacted on the most vulnerable members of our community and to think through the implications of this understanding for professional practice. It examines various ways in which economic globalisation, neoliberal policies and neoliberal forms of governance have, especially over the past three decades, intensified existing structural inequalities and generated new/old mechanisms of social exclusion. Students are required to report on impacts of structural change on a specific group, based on critical analysis of assigned academic papers and grey literature; they are also required to conduct wider research and critique a policy, program or intervention targeting this group of vulnerable young people. In their final assessment, students 'rehearse' various ways of responding to impacts of structural changes via individual, system and public advocacy.

Our youth work and community development students also need to be made aware that the practice field they are preparing to enter is a conflict-ridden field of tensions and our focus on structural change and the neoliberal agenda would be missing a vital component if this were not brought to the fore in CCJ. The process of professionalisation across multiple fields has been dominated in recent decades by a neoliberal agenda, manifesting both in the guise of new public management (NPM) and also, most insidiously, as a form of governance that empowers managerial elites while disempowering and 'responsibilising' vulnerable people. NPM:

> consists of a cluster of ideas from the conceptual framework of private [read: corporate] sector administrative practice [and] emphasizes cost control, financial transparency, the autonomization of organizational subunits, the decentralization of management authority, [and] the creation of market or quasi-market mechanisms (Power 1997, cited in Schwandt 2005).

As Bessant and Emslie (2014) observe, the NPM agenda has driven 'the privatization of state services, their corporatization, the implementation of new "accountability" and regulatory regimes such as "quality auditing," and the introduction of "evidence-based policy".' Such developments have added to the concerns of those who see academic credentialism and professionalisation 'as detrimental to radical practice because of its encouragement of individual vertical progression for learners and a favouring of professional practitioner benefits over collective community gain' (Fitzsimons 2010). These issues need to be confronted, but we agree with Bessant and Emslie (2014) that a university education is nevertheless the surest way to ensure that students are equipped with the critical-analytical tools to navigate this conflict-ridden terrain. So in acknowledging Fitzsimons's concerns, our first caveat is that while this neoliberal agenda has been rolled out both outside and within the universities, it is only in the universities (at least in Australia where, compared to some other OECD countries, radical

grassroots organisation is relatively weak) that future practitioners can be informed by serious theoretically grounded critique. A second caveat follows from the first: while it is undoubtedly the case that the struggle between the managerial elites imposing the neoliberal agenda and those fighting to resist is going on within the universities themselves, it is also the case that the post-WW2 universities have historically been the vital hub of the so-called new social movements, starting with second-wave feminism, postcolonialism and environmentalism, generating a new university-educated intelligentsia drawn from the middle and working classes, and forms of New Left activism that have forged deep connections between these movements.

Students need to be equipped to understand the nature of the conflicts (and creative tensions) that define the space they are in, and this most obviously and crucially comes to the fore in the feedback loops that are developed and maintained in other parts of the undergraduate program involving combinations of coursework and community placement. There are, however, multiple opportunities in CCJ to raise these issues and encourage students to exercise their critical skills, not least when we are examining the various ways in which the space they are in, both within and outside the University, have been shaped by the neoliberal agenda. This comes to the fore especially when discussing the way neoliberal policies and neoliberal forms of governance have constructed and micro-managed a new discourse of inclusion/exclusion focused on young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

The design of CCJ aims to facilitate what Barnett and Coate (2005) call 'ontological engagement' (see also Zepke & Leach 2010). Barnett and Coate (2005) see 'three curriculum projects in ontological engagement':

> The first is that students learn how to make legitimate claims in a world of uncertainty and to negotiate challenges to such claims. The second is how students can learn to act constructively in the world by using ethical political processes. The third involves students becoming aware of themselves and their potential to effect change in a world that is open, fluid and contested.

In answer to the question, 'Why study this stuff?' the *explanation* that CCJ gives to students is relatively straightforward. The challenge, however, is to find ways to encourage students not only to accept the explanation, but to 'buy in'. An explanation, no matter how convincing, will not suffice, so we need to discuss ways in which students are encouraged to buy in. We'll do that in the sections below, where the logic of the unit design and pedagogical issues are discussed. But first, the explanation that we offer to students:

> We need to understand the nature of relatively recent *structural* changes that have generated extreme inequality, chronic youth unemployment and under-employment, homelessness, deepening social divisions and social insecurity in our society and other societies across the world. We need to learn how *global* changes have profound impacts at the local level. We need to equip ourselves with the knowledge and theoretical tools to critique top-down responses to the impacts of structural change, such as: the rise of 'law-and-order' politics and

manufactured moral panics that raise the spectre of a growing number of 'out-of-control', anti-social and violent youth; the stigmatisation, ethnic profiling, aggressive policing and incarceration of young people; the ghettoization and social exclusion of those who live in the poorest neighbourhoods. We need to understand the underlying causes of these trends in order to defend vulnerable individuals and groups from being marginalised and deemed responsible for their own situation.

This unit of study is based on the belief that if we understand the underlying causes, we can more effectively defend vulnerable people in our community and more effectively work with fellow community workers to advocate for system change. We need to equip community workers with the knowledge and know-how to turn 'personal troubles' into 'public issues', as C. Wright Mills once famously put it. Along the way, we'll look at some examples of how some very brave individuals have ventured into the public sphere to show us what this means in practice.

So, what *structural changes* are we talking about? From about the middle of the 1970s, a global transformation occurred that has radically changed both the nature of industrial production and the distribution of wealth. This transformation was aided by the development of new technologies and the imposition of a *neoliberal* policy agenda, and it was driven by very powerful and wealthy people in the most advanced industrialised countries. We call this structural transformation *economic globalisation*. What is *economic globalisation*? What are *neoliberal* policies? We'll need a short introduction to get a basic idea of what they are and to see how they have generated extreme inequality, social insecurity and social exclusion over recent decades. As in all cases where major structural change occurs, there are winners and losers.

Over the past few decades we have witnessed an ever-widening gulf between 'haves and have-nots'. Across the world, extreme inequality of wealth and income is now widely acknowledged to be a massive problem. We'll be learning about the global *structural* changes that have produced this situation, and also examining how these changes have intensified already existing structural inequalities and injustices. We also examine how inequalities and injustices become *systemic* (i.e. deeply embedded in the way systems work – like the welfare system, the education system, the juvenile justice system) in ways that are stubbornly resistant to policy changes and attempted reforms. You are not expected to have any background knowledge about economics, or politics, or social theory. Our task is not to analyse, or theorize about, these structural changes in great depth; nor is it our task to determine whether they have been ultimately good or bad. But we do need to learn enough about the nature of these developments to get some insight into how they have impacted, and continue to impact, on our lives, and on the lives and 'life chances' of the most vulnerable members of our community.

> We will hopefully learn just enough to see why it is worth making a commitment to staying on the case and seeing this kind of learning as a vital component of our ongoing professional development as youth workers.

We begin the discussion by drawing students' attention to a very telling 'coincidence': following the election of Tony Blair in 1997, New Labour governments in the UK and Australia scrapped discourses around inequality and poverty, and shifted to a new discourse focusing on *social inclusion* and *social exclusion*. Anybody talking about inequality or poverty or social justice or class began looking very old-fashioned. What is especially interesting about this shift is that it occurred at precisely the moment when an exponential increase in wealth accumulation at 'the top end of town', extreme inequality of wealth and income, and deepening social divisions were becoming widely acknowledged across OECD countries as serious problems. A starkly visible and rapidly growing gulf between rich and poor was becoming a source of embarrassment in countries that had previously enjoyed – or pretended to enjoy – a general prosperity which included the middle and working classes and that had maintained the illusion of a permeable and fluid class structure sustaining high levels of social mobility. So what do we make of this 'coincidence'? We stop talking about inequality and poverty at precisely the moment when the so-called golden years appear to have come abruptly to an end and the rapidly widening gulf between rich and poor has become an embarrassment. What are we to make of this?

To get our discussion underway in CCJ, we do three things simultaneously: 1) we start unpacking the *social exclusion/inclusion* discourse; 2) we talk about *structural inequality* and why we need to learn about *economic* globalisation and *neoliberal* policies that facilitated this global structural transformation; and 3) we ask students to select a topic and get started, pointing out that as we learn about the global structural change, their primary task is to examine how this structural change, and the neoliberal policies that facilitated it, have impacted on the specific group of people they have decided to focus on. Each of these three aspects of the design will now be outlined.

Introducing social inclusion/exclusion

We read extracts from a wide range of sources and critically examine the 'official' story about why New Labour and the welfare sector embraced this concept. The New Labour story drew attention to the multidimensionality of this concept and exploited its obvious usefulness in extending the discourse around disadvantage beyond a narrow focus on distribution of money and resources, to include relational issues and issues relating to participation and so on (Pate 2009; Walker 2017). We then raise the question of how this story reads when examined in the light of the 'coincidence' noted above. We draw attention to ways in which the shift away from the Old Labour discourse around inequality, poverty and social justice, in favour of the amorphous and malleable concepts of social exclusion/inclusion, has had the (perhaps unintended) consequence of creating a common nomenclature that can easily be put to work across the political spectrum, blurring the boundaries between Left and Right. For example, the notion that

stable, remunerated employment is a necessary condition of social inclusion was initially part of an ostensibly left-of-centre, progressive discourse. In 2008, Julia Gillard defined social inclusion as 'meaningful participation in the mainstream economic and social life of the country' (cited in Pate 2009). But this vaguely progressive-sounding wording shifted seamlessly – and simultaneously – across the ideological spectrum, morphing into a 'workfare' discourse that both sides of mainstream politics have been complicit in promulgating and institutionalising. As Pate (2009) observes:

> Both 'social inclusion' and 'social exclusion' have been defined in various ways and used to justify a wide array of political agendas. Analysis of EU and UK usage of the terms suggests that in both cases there has been a shift over time from an emphasis on redistribution of resources to excluded groups, towards discourses and policies which stigmatise 'problem groups' in society, and emphasise workforce participation.

By extension, the same can be said of the linking of 'workfare' and 'prisonfare'. Arguably, the shift from welfare to an accommodation with Thatcherite workfare was already prefigured (and premeditated?) in Blair's 1993 declaration that 'We should be tough on crime and tough on the underlying causes of crime' (cited in CSSA 2010). This CSSA report goes on to note that Blair's slick formulation reappeared four years later in the wording of the Labour Party's 1997 election manifesto: 'We will be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime'. The underlying cause identified here was of course welfare-dependent youth who are NEET. This underlying cause naturally, as Blair declared in 2004, 'cannot be challenged other than through active community intervention' (cited in CSSA 2010). Read: 'workfare'.

Not only does the inclusion/exclusion discourse remain equally serviceable in this way to progressive and conservative (and 'Third Way') political agendas alike, but an even more pernicious aspect of this discourse is that it is predicated on fundamentally conservative presuppositions that serve to immunise the existing social order against critique. Walker (2009) concludes her analysis of inclusion discourse by observing that it is 'an essentially uncritical, conservative and value-laden view. It assumes that there is nothing essentially "wrong" with society'. It follows that the causes of 'exclusion' can easily be sheeted home to the excluded, whether their exclusion is explained in terms of their deviance and moral failings – what Ruth Levitas (2005, cited in Walker 2017) calls the moral underclass discourse (MUD) – or whether, on the progressive side of politics, it is explained in terms of a combination of external and personal factors that result in a deficit that requires intervention and remediation: Levitas's social integrationist discourse (SID). As Walker (2017) notes, SID can very easily slip into the MUD! Either way, whether we blame the excluded or offer to help them, exclusion is bad, inclusion is good and nowhere in this discourse will we find any occasion for, let alone conceptual foundation for, social critique. Meanwhile, sadly, the Old Labour discourse around poverty, inequality and demand for social justice – Levitas's redistributionist discourse (RED) – has gone missing at precisely the moment when it should be reasserting itself with a vengeance (alas, Jeremy Corbyn and Bernie Sanders have shown us clearly

where that goes). We have an obligation to ensure that our students – youth work and community development students alike – are equipped with the critical-analytical tools that will enable them to be wary of the traps that have been laid here. A strategically very important moment in the delivery of CCJ, after introducing students to neoliberal *policies* and their impacts, occurs when we introduce the concept of neoliberal *governance* in order to focus on the pervasive and systemic nature of the process of 'responsibilisation', as blame for the social impacts of structural change is placed on the most vulnerable people in our communities.

Introducing structural inequality

At the same time as we commence the above discussion about the concept of social inclusion/exclusion, we also introduce material drawing students' attention to the growing wealth divide and we identify some of the most starkly visible impacts of extreme inequality. At this point, it is opportune also to clarify what we mean when we use the term 'structure'. So we draw students' attention to the idea that when we talk about structural inequality, we are taking about deeply entrenched forms of inequality that are built into the structure of the whole society and persist over very long periods of time. We need to talk briefly about class, gender and race to illustrate how this works. At this point, it is worth noting that the *scaffolding* process is tricky and calls for careful decisions about the point at which key concepts are introduced, how much is said about them and what opportunities students have to put them to work and own them. Core concepts and key terminology (e.g. structural change, structural inequality, social exclusion/inclusion, economic globalisation, capitalism/capitalist system, neoliberalism, governance) need to be 'front-loaded' at strategic moments along the way and then students must be helped to take ownership of the acquired language. Nothing should be taken for granted about what students already know; statements such as 'This has already been covered' in some previous unit or 'This is just general knowledge and students should already know this' are banned! We have to explain up front, in very simple terms, for example what capitalism is, if we expect them to understand that economic globalisation refers to the globalisation of the capitalist system. But we need to find the right moment, which again means that students must then have an opportunity to put this knowledge to work, and we should never make students feel this is something they should already know.

To begin our discussion of extreme inequality, we view and critically analyse a film made by former US Secretary of Labor Robert Reich entitled *Inequality for all* (Chaiken & Dungan 2013). The film builds its story – about the dismantling, commencing in the late 1970s, of the post-WW2 social contract – around graphic representations of Picketty's and Saez's statistical analyses of the exponentially growing wealth divide. The film looks at this growing divide and examines its social and political repercussions from a liberal perspective. It harkens back to the 'golden years' when a working man's wage could buy a house, support a family and provide his children with a good education and he could be confident his children had all the means at their disposal to take advantage of opportunities for upward social mobility. Reich places strong emphasis on the

disastrous economic, social and political impacts of the radical reduction of taxes at the top end of town, and laments the equally disastrous impoverishment of the middle class. He sees an affluent, aspirational and confident middle class as fundamental to a nation's economic, social and political cohesion. We critically examine some of the strengths and weaknesses of Reich's analysis and then show why we need to re-examine these phenomena through the lenses of: a) economic globalisation; and b) the neoliberal policies that facilitated the global reconfiguring of industrial production and wealth distribution. The policies we draw attention to are: tax cuts for high-income earners; reduction and redirection of government spending; deregulation (or rather re-regulation) of banking and finance, foreign direct investment, industrial relations and trade; systematic removal of protection for local industry (tariffs and subsidies); privatisation of transport, power, telecommunications, ports, prisons, social security, welfare, education and so on; and the sale of government assets, underlining the intended permanence of this radical restructuring.

Engaging students in the debate

As noted above, we simultaneously commence the above discussions and introduce the list of topics that students will select from. Each topic focuses on an identifiable group of people who experience social exclusion; many in these groups would meet the Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) criteria for 'deep' and 'very deep' exclusion (BSL n.d.). As they look over the list of topics, students are advised that the academic papers provided focus on the various ways in which the structural and systemic issues we discuss in class impact directly on this specific group of people. For their first assessment, students, after selecting their topics, are assigned one substantial reading, which they are required to summarise and then write a commentary on in which they discuss their own responses to this reading.

The theoretical and pedagogical considerations underpinning this approach are very much in keeping with the approach reported on by Trudi Cooper (2019) in a paper entitled 'Calling out "alternative facts": Curriculum to develop students' capacity to engage critically with contradictory sources'. This paper reports on a research project at Edith Cowan University. The concern she raises in that paper about the urgent need to equip students with conceptual tools and strategies for exercising information discernment resonates with our decision to exercise strong controls over sources to ensure that they are academically sound, directly related to the structural and systemic issues we are examining, and authoritative.

The topics

Topic 1 examines the radical neoliberal restructuring of the disability sector that was initiated by the Howard Government (1996–2007) and that continues, to this day, to replace the so-called 'social model' with a combination of a brutal workfare policy (introduced under the guise of advancing the 'right to work' but actually designed to force people off the Disability Support Pension and onto NewStart) and a neoliberal form of governance instituted under the signs of autonomy and self-sufficiency

(culminating in the National Disability Insurance Scheme). The systematic dismantling of the progressive reforms achieved in the 1980s by the disability movement, which had 'actively reframed "disability" from a site of abjection, medicalization and biological inferiority to a site of social oppression and politics', has continued unabated (Soldatic & Chapman 2010), but under the signs of autonomy and freedom of choice. As stated by ex-banker Bruce Bonyhady in a 2011 Productivity Commission report: 'once people with disabilities become consumers who are free to choose, the market will drive innovation and provide individuals with value for money' (cited in Laffoley n.d.).

Topic 2 takes its cue from the work of Chris Cunneen and Rob White (see Cunneen 2015; Cunneen & White 2006; White & Cunneen 2015) but the framing of this topic is also inspired (as are White and Cunneen themselves) by the work of Löic Wacquant in the US, who argues that 'The punitive turn in penal policy responds not to *criminal* insecurity but to the *social* insecurity caused by the casualisation of wage labour and the disruption of ethno-racial hierarchy' (Wacquant 2012). Students who select this topic are encouraged, but not required, at least to peruse, if not seriously engage with, Wacquant's challenging and confronting book *Punishing the poor* (2009).

Topic 3 focuses on homelessness. The specific focus of this topic is the alarming recent increase in the incidence of homelessness among older women. This is both to offer a topic not specifically on youth, as this unit is also studied by community development students, but also because homelessness among older women tends not to be very visible in public concerns about homelessness, which largely concentrate on young people. Students are also given the option of focusing on youth homelessness. The topic directs students away from the mainstream preoccupation with individual life histories and requires them instead to engage with literature examining the impacts of neoliberal policies on housing affordability and the privatisation of public housing (see Arthurson & Jacobs 2009; Beer, Kearins & Pieters 2007; Nicholls 2014; Stonehouse, Threlkeld & Farmer 2015).

Topic 4 shifts attention to the exploitation of women in the Global South, taking the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh as a case in point. Students watch the *Four Corners* report that uncovered the complicity of several top fashion brands in the systematic exploitation of the women who died in that collapse and exposed the cruel conditions under which they had been forced to work. The topic is contextualised by discussion about the removal of tariffs from Australian clothing, footwear and textiles industries, and subsequent collapse of these industries. Instead of focusing on resulting job losses at home, we instead examine the plight of the women who supply cheap labour to these massively profitable industries. Taking issue with the corporate propaganda which promotes the idea that women of the Global South are empowered through opportunities to enter the paid labour market, the literature examined draws attention to the ways in which structural adjustment programs (SAPs) have deepened and intensified social insecurity for women (Taylor 2009; Wallimann & Lindio-McGovern 2009) and pressed them into the service of a patriarchal regime that is far more brutal than the traditional patriarchal familial structures they are supposedly being liberated from (see Salvat, Soetewey & Bruels n.d.).

Topic 5 focuses on the growing 'youth problem' as it came to be called in the UK: 'we turn our attention to those who are seen to "slip through the net" and end up as NEETs' (France 2016). Margaret Vickers (2017), in a chapter entitled 'Youth transitions', provides students with a useful point of entry into this topic as she describes the loss of industry, collapse of labour markets and disappearance of thousands of entry-level jobs for young school-leavers that occurred from the mid-1970s as a direct result of economic globalisation. Dwyer and Wyn (2001) also provide a very accessible point of entry into this topic in a chapter entitled 'Outside the mainstream', presenting a case study of a young man named Mark who finds himself adrift in the world after leaving school:

> Mark is a good example of a young man who would have had little trouble finding a job for himself on quitting school early – if only he had been born ten or so years earlier. Then, if anything, he would have in effect been part of the 'mainstream' – one of the many young people in Western societies who in the past had been able to establish themselves without completing their schooling or going on further to post-school studies. Unfortunately for him, now that educational credentials are in high demand, as one of the post-1970 generation he has ended up 'outside the mainstream' – a school 'dropout' entering a collapsed youth labour market without the necessary qualifications or experience to demonstrate that he is 'employable'.

This topic also focuses on neoliberal governance, responsibilisation and the ways the MUD (Levitas, cited in Walker 2017) has been deployed, on both sides of mainstream politics, in justifying harsh workfare policies. As Alan France (2016:139) observes:

> As neoliberalism has grown in influence, its moral position in relation to a market economy has been able to reshape the moral agenda … This moral discourse locates the problems of the economy as lying with the state, in that welfarism is seen as creating a generation of young people who are unwilling to work and believe in entitlement to benefits … New Labour's 'third way' politics drew upon this discourse of the 'immoral underclass' to justify focusing on supply-side problems in the labour market and introducing further conditionality to benefits and new workfare arrangements, while also laying the blame on the poor and the unemployed for being workless.

Topic 6 focuses on the emergence of what Guy Standing (2016) refers to as a 'dangerous new class'. He calls this new class 'the precariat'. Unpacking this word (proletariat + precarious = precariat) is a fun way to introduce this topic, as it takes us from Marx and Engels to Alice in Wonderland: in *Through the looking glass* Humpty Dumpty explains to Alice how 'portmanteau' words are constructed. The entry point to this topic is Standing's TED talk on this subject (https://youtu.be/nnYhZCUYOxs). The following excerpt from an ABC news article by Standing is also a very accessible place to start the discussion:

> Forty years ago, it was widely predicted that by now everybody would be working for income for about 20 hours a week, living in security and in

> professional positions of some kind. Instead, we have experienced the growth of a new and dangerously angry class, the precariat.
>
> Millions of people across the world, including many Australians, are living and working in economic and social insecurity, many in casual or short-term, low-paid jobs, with contracts they worry about. Their incomes fluctuate unpredictably, they lack benefits that most people used to take for granted. No paid holidays, no sick leave, no subsidised training, no worthwhile pension to look forward to, and no assurance that if they lose their job they will be able to rely on state benefits or other assistance …
>
> The precariat is a global phenomenon. It is not just a matter of economic insecurity. As bad is the fact that many people have no dignifying occupational identity. *They do not feel they are becoming somebody.*

Topic 7 – Racial exclusion in Australia: from colonisation to neoliberalism. Our main focus in this topic is to examine how neoliberal policies and neoliberal forms of governance not only intensify existing forms of institutionalised racism, but also constitute a 'return' to a brutal and undisguised form of colonial domination. The word 'return' is in quotes because, as Anna Haebich (2015) argues, colonialism is not an event in the historical past. It is a structure that persists. In studying this topic, students may decide to narrow their focus and concentrate, for example, on encounters between Indigenous youth and the criminal justice system, Indigenous housing issues and homelessness, Indigenous people with a disability or another related issue. Maggie Walter (2016) provides a very useful, nuanced discussion of the ways in which social inclusion/exclusion discourse can be viewed from an Indigenous perspective. She also provides a detailed study of the impact of neoliberal policies, commencing with Howard's abolition of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) in 2005 and culminating in the so-called Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER), which was initiated by Howard and, shamefully, continued by the Rudd and Gillard governments (Walter 2010).

Conclusion

We share Cooper's (2019) concern that students need to develop 'information literacy' and 'information discernment'. We find ourselves presently at a very dangerous crossroads – or perhaps it would be more accurate to say we are at the end of the road and staring into the abyss. Fostering a capacity for serious critical analysis and theoretically informed judgement (phronesis) requires a kind of training that is increasingly difficult to sustain in our contemporary universities. At precisely the moment when responsible journalism is giving way to a world in which 'the force of the better argument' (Habermas 1987) is replaced by the marketing of 'alternative truths', our universities are set to be swallowed up by Big Tech and the pandemic has allowed the managerial class to fast-track a radical reset long in the making. The post-WW2 liberal-democratic social contract is no more and the special relationship between the university and a critical public sphere that was integral to that contract would appear to

be all but extinct. In this context, we just go on doing what we do, in good faith, but in the full awareness that in all likelihood the game is up.

References

Arthurson, K., & Jacobs, K. (2009). Discourses about social housing, social exclusion and employment: Indications of the post-welfare state? *Housing, Theory and Society*, 26(3), 179–192.

Barnett, R., & Coate, K. (2005). *Engaging the curriculum in higher education*. Maidenhead, UK: Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.

Beer, A., Kearins, B., & Pieters, H. (2007). Housing affordability and planning in Australia: The challenge of policy under neo-liberalism. *Housing Studies*, 22(1), 11–24.

Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL). (nd). *Social exclusion monitor*, BSL. <www.bsl.org.au/research/our-research-and-policy-work/social-exclusion-monitor>.

Catholic Social Services Australia (CSSA). (2010). *The social inclusion agenda: Where it came from, what it means, and why it matters*, CSSA. <www.meetingpoint.org.au/assets/mp_s15_tsia.pdf>.

Chaiken, J., & Dungan, S. (Producers) (2013). *Inequality for all* [film], directed by Jacob Kornbluth. Beverley Hills, CA: Anchor Bay Entertainment.

Cooper, T. (2012). Models of youth work: A framework for positive sceptical reflection. *Youth and Policy*, 109.

Cooper, T. (2019). Calling out 'alternative facts': Curriculum to develop students' capacity to engage critically with contradictory sources. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 24(13), 444–459.

Cooper, T., & White, R. (1994). Models of youth work intervention. *Youth Studies Australia*, 13(4).

Côté, J.E. (2014). Towards an new political economy of youth. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(4), 527–543.

Cunneen, C. (2015). *Juvenile justice: Youth and crime in Australia*. Melbourne, VIC: OUP.

Cunneen, C., & White, R. (2006). Australia: Control, containment or empowerment? In J. Muncie & B. Goldson (Eds), *Comparative youth justice: Critical debates*. London: Sage.

Dwyer, P., & Wyn, J. (2001). Outside the mainstream. Chapter 2 in *Youth, education and risk: Facing the future*. Routledge.

Fitzsimons, C. (2010). Professionalising community work and its implications for radical community education. *The Adult Learner 2010: The Irish Journal of Adult and Community Education* (pp. 53–71). Dublin: AONTAS.

France, A. (2016). *Understanding youth in the global economic crisis*. University of Bristol, UK: Policy Press.

Grace, M., Townsend, R., Testa, D., Fox, J., O'Maley, P., Custance, J., & Daddow, A. (2013). Student diversity as grass roots internationalisation in social work education. *Advances in Social Work & Welfare Education*, 15(1), 120–134.

Grover, C., & Soldatic, K. (2013). Neoliberal restructuring, disabled people and social (in)security in Australia and Britain. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 15(3), 216–232.

Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action*, trans. T. McCarthy. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Haebich, A. (2015). Neoliberalism, settler colonialism and the history of Indigenous child removal in Australia. *Australian Indigenous Law Review*, 19(1), 20–31.

Hallpike, M. (2014). Rethinking engagement and transition: The case of the Diploma of Liberal Arts. In A, Funston, M. Gil & G. Gilmore (Eds), *Strong starts, supported transitions and student success*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Kemmis, S. (2005). Knowing practice searching for saliences. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 13(3).

Kemmis, S. (2010). Research for praxis: Knowing doing. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 18(1), 9–27.

Laffoly, N. (n.d.). *The market does not provide: A left critique of the NDIS*. <www.floodmedia.org/articles/the-market-does-not-provide-a-left-critique-of-the-ndis>.

Nicholls, S. (2014). Perpetuating the problem: Neoliberalism, Commonwealth public policy and housing affordability in Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 49(3), 329–347.

Pate, A. (2009). Social in/exclusion: Mere words, or a framework for understanding and addressing disadvantage? *Melbourne CityMission Foundation Paper*. <www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/fcdc/inquiries/57th/Disability/Submissions/111_Melbourne_City_Mission_Appendix_1.pdf>.

Salvat, J., Soetewey, S., & Bruels, P. (n.d.). *Free trade slaves* [videorecording], produced by TV Catalunya/Kanakna. <https://thoughtmaybe.com/free-trade-slaves>.

Schwandt, T. A. (2005). On modeling our understanding of the practice fields. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society*, 13(3).

Standing, G. (2012). The precariat is you and me. *ABC News Online*, 9 February 2012. <www.abc.net.au/news/2012-02-09/standing-the-precariat-is-you-and-me/3820486>.

Standing, G. (2014). *A precariat charter: From denizens to citizens*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Standing, G. (2016). *The precariat: The new dangerous class*. London: Bloomsbury.

Stonehouse, D., Threlkeld, G., & Farmer, J. (2015). 'Housing risk' and the neoliberal discourse of responsibilisation in Victoria. *Critical Social Policy*, 35(3), 393–413.

Taylor, V. (2001). Globalisation, the disappearing state and poor women: A view from the South. *Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 48, Globalisation: Challenging dominant discourses (pp. 51–60). <www-jstor-org.wallaby.vu.edu.au:4433/stable/4066514?origin=crossref&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents>.

Threadgold, S. (2020). Figures of youth: On the very object of youth studies. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 23(6), 686–701.

Vickers, M. (2017). Youth transitions. In A. Welch et al. (Eds), *Education, change and society*. Melbourne, VIC: OUP.

Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the poor: The neoliberal government of insecurity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Wacquant, L. (2012). The wedding of workfare and prisonfare in the 21st century: Responses to critics and commentators. In *Criminalisation and advanced marginality: Critically exploring the work of Löic Wacquant*. Bristol University Press.

Walker, M. (2017). Social exclusion. In *An introduction to social policy* (pp. 26–37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wallimann, I., & Lindio-McGovern, L. (2009). *Globalization and Third World women: Exploitation, coping and resistance*. Farnham, England: Ashgate.

Walter, M. (2010). Market forces and Indigenous resistance paradigms. *Social Movement Studies*, 9(2), 121–137.

Walter, M. (2016). Social exclusion/inclusion for urban Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. *Social Inclusion*, 4(1), 68–76.

White, R., & Cunneen, C. (2015). Social class, youth crime and justice. In B. Goldson & J. Muncie (Eds), *Youth, crime and justice* (2nd edn). London: Sage.

Zepke, N., & Leach, L. (2010). Improving student engagement: Ten proposals for action. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, 11(3), 167–177.

CHAPTER 3

INCLUSION: BEYOND A SENSE OF BELONGING

Jane Hickey

Abstract

The social model of disability was first created in the mid-1970s to challenge and disrupt the prevailing medical model of disability. The social model made a distinction between disability and impairment. Impairment is considered to be the medical diagnosis, whereas disability refers to the barriers that an individual faces in an inaccessible society. The focus switches from a perceived 'problem' existing within the individual to the 'problems' or barriers existing with the broader community. Over the past decades, legislation, policies and frameworks have now clearly outlined the ways in which young people with disability are entitled to protection from discrimination and to have their human rights upheld. While physical access is being addressed in some areas across the community, stigma and attitudinal and communication barriers continue to exist for young people with disability. Historically, specialist disability services have been the default for young people with disability, as schooling and recreational opportunities have both been segregated. There are legal and ethical obligations for youth services to improve accessibility and enable all young people to feel included. The YACVic Code of Ethical Practice includes principles of empowerment and participation of young people. This chapter explores the ways in which community structures continue to exclude young people with disability and the role of youth workers as advocates to eliminate the systemic and social barriers to an inclusive society.

*** Note from the author:** The use of 'person with disability' as a term within this chapter does not make a distinction between singular (disability) or plural (disabilities). The singular is used simply to draw attention to the social construction of disability as a barrier facing an individual in society.

Introduction

Disability and impairment exist in all societies throughout the world. In the broadest context, a disability is defined by the World Health Organization (2019) as any 'condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restriction)'. In 2018, 17.7% of the Australian population identified as having 'a disability' (ABS 2018). This percentage has remained relatively steady over the past seven years, with a relatively even gender split. The vast majority (78%) of people with disability report having a physical impairment, such as arthritis or a musculoskeletal back condition. In contrast, only 21.5% of people report having a non-physical impairment defined as a 'mental' or 'behavioural' condition. It is important to note that older Australians with impairments directly related to advancing age are included in these statistics.

The Australian landscape is painstakingly slow at times in adapting to the diverse needs of the community (Deane 2005). There is a general recognition of the needs of people with physical disability in ensuring that physical access is available in most facilities and services in the community. If a facility is considered an inclusive setting,

then the building regulations including ramps, railings, accessible lifts and toilets are clearly marked in order to ensure ease of access. These building regulations have a fundamental aim of preventing exclusion. However, despite these environmental improvements in creating an inclusive landscape, exclusion continues to occur. This is especially the case for people whose impairment is not easily identified by others. This chapter explores different types of access and the many subsequent barriers facing young people with disability.

Historical context

Braddock and Parish (2001:11) describe disability throughout Western recorded history as 'existing at the intersection between the particular demands of a given impairment, society's interpretation of that impairment and the larger political and economic context of disability'. In an attempt to understand why babies were born with impairments, different explanations were given under the traditional model of disability. There were religious faith influences in these societies that claimed demon possession, a spell of witchcraft, divine punishment for wrongdoing by the child or their parents, or moral failing (Shakespeare 2010) to be the causes of these impairments. Children and young people with impairments were often excluded from society or shunned on the outskirts of the community, for fear of spreading the impairment and other children in the community 'catching' the impairment or perceived 'misfortune'. An unfortunate consequence of this exclusion was that many children died from neglect and lack of access to health care in infancy and early childhood.

During the Enlightenment period, the traditional model of disability began to be rejected in favour of the medical model of disability. The medical model of disability was a product of the advancements in science and medical fields of study. It was the medical model of disability that focused on the deficit within the individual's body, stating that there was a 'problem' with the individual, who needed to be cured or treated (Kiernan 1999). Research during this period of history discovered the extra copy of chromosome 21 in individuals with Down syndrome (Patterson & Costa 2005), created medication to alleviate the symptoms and characteristics of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and made advancements in the technology now included in the hearing aid. The focus at this time was to understand the origin of the impairment in order to 'fix' the loss and fit the individual into a society that was seeking perfection.

The social model of disability was formed during the civil rights movement. The social model of disability radically challenged the way that society viewed and valued people with impairments or medical diagnoses, as it directly contradicted the deficit view of disability that the medical model of disability offered. It was Mike Oliver (1996:32) who argued that an 'impairment is simply a description of the physical body' and that 'a disability in fact had nothing to do with the body'. Oliver and others such as Kiernan (1999) and Siminski (2003) further argue that the term 'disability' was socially constructed by society and it was the lack of opportunity, societal ableist attitudes, lack of access to physical environments and stigma that led to an individual being 'disabled'. The social

model of disability therefore had underpinning human rights principles as it sought to eliminate the discrimination facing people with disability in the community.

Blaska (1993:25) notes that 'Language is a reflection on how people in society see each other'. There are ongoing debates in the community regarding the use of people-first language ('people with disability') versus identity-first language ('disabled people'). In recent history, there was a move towards people-first language in order to recognise the 'humanity' of the individual. Person-first language was introduced to refocus society's attention away from the impairment back to the person (Michalko 2002) as people with disability were valued less by society. However, many advocates in the sector now promote identity-first language, as they say that disability is central to their 'being', not just something that they 'have'. For example, identity-first language is most commonly used in the autistic community, as many autistic individuals see their diagnosis as an essential element of their being that cannot be separated from their personhood (Collier 2012). In saying this, not everyone who has an impairment considers themselves to 'be' disabled. As a result, both terms have validity and importance in broader discussions and it is always vital to use the preferred language of the individual.

A call for the discontinuation of terms such as 'handicap' evidences this shift in language. The inference that people with disability must come begging with a 'cap in hand' to receive charity does little to empower or affirm individuals. Rather, terms such as these seek to perpetuate notions of disempowerment and inability, rather than ability and strength (Oliver 1996). People with disability who are referred to in positive and strengths-based terms are more likely to see themselves as contributing members of the community (Blaska 1993). This helps to prevent feelings of alienation and hopelessness.

French and Swain (2000) later introduced the affirmation model of disability as a critical alternative to the social model. The affirmation model rejects the tragic view of disability, which can lead to pity and disempowerment, and instead makes the claim that rather than feeling a desire to be 'normal', people with disability view themselves in celebration as opposed to tragedy. French and Swain argue that the social model of disability did not go far enough to empower people with impairments and that there are in fact benefits to having an impairment. These include building one's identity outside of the pressures faced by non-disabled people and the perceived freedom from society's expectations regarding relationships (Cameron 2008; French & Swain 2000).

Tregaskis (2004) describes the way in which service providers continue to hold stereotyped and belittling attitudes towards people with disability which influence their words and behaviours. Cameron (2008) disagrees with the notion that the social model of disability has become outdated. He suggests that both the affirmation model and the social model of disability attempt to address the disadvantage and structural inequality that people with disability face. In addition, providing an alternative narrative to the traditional and medical models of disability assists in removing the barriers for people with disability to being active members of the community.

Questions for reflection and action

- Consider a youth work context that you are familiar with – do the policies and procedures of the organisation reflect the medical model of disability or the social model of disability?
- How might you advocate for change in this area?

Legislation and policy in Australia

People with disability experience violations of their human rights on a regular basis all around the world. These violations continue to occur despite numerous pieces of federal legislation and international frameworks put in place that are designed to have a positive impact on the lives of people with disability in Australia.

These pieces of legislation and frameworks include:

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRoC), 1990

The CRoC is the most widely ratified international agreement throughout history and makes a commitment to ensuring that the rights of children (including young people up to the age of 18 years) are upheld. The guiding principles of the charter include: the best interest of the child driving all actions related to that child; non-discrimination; a child's inherent right to life; a government's responsibility to ensure the survival and development of the child (as much as possible); and the right of the child to express their views and have those views considered in decision-making processes.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

This is an Australian piece of national legislation which aims to protect all individuals with disability across Australia from when direct and indirect discrimination occurs. Direct discrimination occurs when an individual is singled out and treated less favourably because of their disability or impairment. Indirect discrimination occurs when a rule or policy designed to cover everyone equally instead means that an individual with disability or impairment is excluded or treated less favourably.

Disability Standards for Education, 2005

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 were formulated out of the Disability Discrimination Act of 1992. The initial intention of the Disability Standards for Education was to ensure that students with disability have access to participate in all education and training opportunities alongside their peers, from foundational learning in kindergarten all the way through to tertiary education at university and TAFE. The Standards outline the responsibilities of the education provider to ensure that the learning environment and activities are accessible through a series of 'accommodations' and 'reasonable adjustments'.

UN Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006

Australia was one of the first countries to ratify the CRPD. Ratifying is the process of a country confirming and giving formal consent through signing an agreement to follow a convention. This Convention has a global purpose to promote the rights and opportunities for people with disability to have choice and decision-making power in their own lives, as well as eliminating barriers to participation in all areas of political, social and community life.

***National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Act* 2013**

The NDIS Act is an Australian piece of legislation that covers all of the states and territories of Australia. The NDIS Act outlines the role of the National Disability Insurance Agency and establishes the funding scheme that supports people with disability in everyday life. This legislation outlines eligibility criteria for a person with disability to become a recipient of the fund, the process of establishing support plans and the role of the support agencies.

National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS), 2014

The National Standards for Disability Services were adopted by the Australian Government in 2014 and these Standards apply to all disability service providers to ensure that the rights of people with disability are upheld when they access a community service. The six Standards are: Rights; Participation and inclusion; Individual outcomes; Feedback and complaints; Service access; and Service management.

National Disability Strategy 2010–2020

The National Disability Strategy is an Australia-wide plan that looks at practical ways to implement the CRPD. The National Disability Strategy covers six outcome areas: Inclusive and accessible communities; Rights protection; Justice and legislation; Economic security; Personal and community support, learning and skills; and Health and wellbeing.

The Disability Discrimination Commissioner and the Australian Human Rights Commission work together to address complaints and work with organisations, businesses and the wider community to ensure compliance with all of the pieces of legislation outlined above and that the rights of young people with disability are upheld.

Questions for reflection and action

Scenario:

A young person with disability approaches their youth worker and says that they are not receiving shifts at work since they asked for the lightbulbs that had been flickering in the staffroom to be replaced (flickering light can be a trigger for a seizure) and complained about a joke email that was sent to all staff making fun of a person with disability.

- Are these examples of direct or indirect discrimination?
- What process should the youth worker follow to best support this young person?

Barriers to access in the community

Despite the current Australian legislation and international conventions, there are many additional barriers that young people with disability continue to face when attempting to live everyday life in the community. Some of the common barriers are listed below:

- **Access to information** – Young people need to be able to access information in a variety of formats including Easy English, braille, closed captions on videos and TV, and written materials with accessible fonts.
- **Access to communication** – Young people need a range of communication tools that assist in decision-making and ensure their voices are heard. These communication tools facilitate and complement verbal speech. Augmentative and alternative means for communication include sign language (Auslan and Makaton), speech-generating devices and PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System).
- **Physical access to spaces** – Young people need to be able to enter buildings and facilities to access services using the same entrance spaces as others. Young people should be able to occupy and enjoy public spaces without encountering physical barriers such as steps and narrow doorways. Venues cannot deny access to a young person with a guide dog wanting to participate in an activity. Section 23 of the Disability Discrimination Act covers access to premises.
- **Access to education** – Young people have the right to access public education in their local community. Segregated, specialised education should not be the first and only option for children and young people with disability. More than 1 in 10 students with disability are currently being refused enrolment at their school of choice and over a third of students with disability are being excluded from school activities and events. Restraint and seclusion continue to be practised in Australian schools, which further restricts a student's access to education.

- **Access to justice** – Young people continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system and people with disability have been incarcerated for extended periods of time without being found guilty of any crime. Young people with disability face barriers when attempting to report a crime and accessing justice as a victim of crime. Education is limited for law enforcement officers and assumptions are made based on young people's appearance and behaviour without taking into account any impairment that may exist.
- **Access to employment** – Young people have a right to employment alongside their peers and workplaces are mandated to provide 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that employees' needs are met.
- **Access to voting** – The right to vote is considered to be one of the most important rights in a democratic nation. Currently, there is a provision in the Australian *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918* s93(8) that can exclude people from voting based on being of 'unsound mind'. This is an unclear and archaic term that appears to be referring to people with an intellectual or psychosocial disability. This provision is enshrined in medical model of disability thinking, as it allows a medical practitioner to make a determination of a person's inability to understand the voting process without requiring reasoning for making that determination.

Questions for reflection and action

- What steps should be taken to ensure that a young person's voice is heard in a group setting if the young person uses other forms of communication than speech?

Ableism and attitudinal barriers

Ableism is a pervasive barrier to inclusion in our society. The term 'ableism' can be defined as a prejudice against people with disability based on the false belief that people without disability have more value and are superior. Ableism can be displayed in subtle ways through a lack of empathy or ignorance towards young people with disability, through to overt examples of abuse and neglect experienced by young people with disability. In the media, we see examples of actors without disability inaccurately portraying characters with disability. These portrayals continue to perpetuate ableist attitudes and stereotypes of young people with disability. While physical, communication and information barriers can be challenged and addressed with tangible outcomes such as ramps, railings, alternative formats and communication devices, attitudinal barriers can be more difficult to call out and challenge. Youth workers have a responsibility to critically analyse their own beliefs and values towards young people with disability in order to eliminate their own attitudinal barriers, and to encourage others to do the same.

Questions for reflection and action

Scenario:

Rosie has been sent to the youth worker at her high school by the English teacher, who has referred to Rosie as being 'at risk'. Teachers have said: 'Rosie is non-compliant, she refuses to do any work, she won't speak in class, won't use eye contact, and this is disrespectful to the teachers'. 'She is not very smart and she has Down syndrome, so she probably won't finish high school anyway'. As a result, the youth worker has been asked to work with Rosie, as the teachers are frustrated at having her in the classroom.

- Are the teachers using the medical model of disability approach or the social model of disability approach with Rosie?
- What rights should be upheld when working with Rosie?

Universal instructional design

Universal instructional design (UID) principles are a practical example, originating from universal design in architectural design, where physical spaces are designed from the outset to be used by everyone and thus promote inclusivity, rather than making adaptions or modifications for individuals or groups after the space has been created. The universal design principles have then been adapted to education and learning environments with UID. Universal design principles benefit everyone in the community while still promoting the rights of people with disability to occupy and utilise community spaces. The UID principles are:

1. **Equitable use** – Learning materials and activities should be accessible and fair.
2. **Flexible in use** – Learning materials and activities should provide flexibility in use, participation and presentation.
3. **Simple and intuitive** – Learning materials and activities should be straightforward and consistent.
4. **Perceptible information** – Learning materials and activities should be explicitly presented and readily perceived.
5. **Tolerance for error** – Learning materials and activities should provide a supportive learning environment.
6. **Low physical effort** – Learning materials and activities should minimise unnecessary physical effort and requirements.
7. **Size and space for approach and use** – Learning materials and activities should ensure a learning space that accommodates both students and instructional methods.

Source: University of Guelph (2016)

What is inclusion?

Often the terms 'access' and 'inclusion' are seen as synonymous and therefore used interchangeably. These terms, in fact, although interconnected, have important distinctions. This chapter outlines the importance of access for young people with disability in our community. Inclusion, however, is more than the ability to enter a premises or receive information in an alternative format. Inclusion begins with a sense of belonging and being part of the group or community, and the group seeing the young person's contribution as valid and valued within that group. Inclusion benefits the whole group, not just the young person with disability, as young people without disability learn how to appreciate and celebrate diversity and everyone's contribution is accepted.

There is both a broad and a narrow understanding of the term 'inclusive education'. The narrow understanding of inclusive education looks at the extent to which a specific individual or group is currently accessing education; their level of active participation in educational activities is also aligned with this term. In contrast, the broad understanding of inclusive education refers to 'education for all'. This broader understanding brings together all members of an educational community and the role that each member of the community plays in the educational process. Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou (2011:31) explain that 'Inclusion can be descriptive and prescriptive – meaning how inclusion is put into practice vs how it should happen'. Each member of the educational community is able to contribute to the development and implementation of inclusive teaching and learning practices.

Questions for reflection and action

Scenario:

Jeff is a part of the afterschool homework club. The homework tutors are complaining that Jeff cannot sit still and is disrupting the other young people, as he always wants to talk about the Richmond Football Club. The tutors have said: 'Jeff is full of useless information, he is hyper and can't concentrate, Jeff is obsessed with football and doesn't belong in this homework club because he is only doing VCAL and won't be doing exams, so he shouldn't be in the homework club'. The youth worker has been asked to work one on one with Jeff, who is autistic and has ADHD.

- What are Jeff's strengths?
- What strategies could be used to work effectively with Jeff?

Codes of practice as underpinning frameworks for inclusive practice

A youth work code of practice is a necessary tool that is used to underpin the work and should align with the beliefs and values of the youth worker. In order for a young person to be fully included in their community, they must be supported by a youth worker who has a fundamental belief in the human rights of all young people and is willing to advocate with and for that young person.

The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) Code of Ethical Practice is underpinned by human rights frameworks and it outlines the principles and practice responsibilities of a youth worker and other people working with young people in community settings. This framework can be aligned with other pieces of legislation such as the UNDHR and the CRoC. Although young people with disability are not specifically mentioned in the YacVic Code of Ethical Practice, this framework relates to work with all young people. In terms of the barriers and exclusion that young people with disability continue to experience in society, the principles and practice responsibilities of empowerment, participation, social justice and anti-opressive practice are particularly relevant for the youth worker here. The challenge with any framework of practice is to keep the document from sitting on a shelf and not being implemented in youth work practice. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all youth workers to be involved in critical conversations with colleagues, to analyse and unpack workplace ethical dilemmas, to undertake evaluation processes for change and to participate in ongoing individual and collective reflective practices to ensure that the Code of Ethical Practice remains a living document embedded in youth work practice.

Questions for reflection and action

- How does a youth work code of ethics promote the rights of young people with disability?
- Do you have a youth work code of ethics in your community? If yes, is this document implemented well in youth work practice? If no, what can youth workers do to promote the rights of young people with disability?

Role of youth worker

The defined roles of a youth worker in the community are varied; however, the central focus of every youth worker role is the young person. A young person with disability has the right to actively participate in all areas of life. The youth worker can proactively work with individuals and groups of young people in their own social contexts to promote and uphold the rights of young people with disability. The youth worker will also work collaboratively with other practitioners and professionals in the community who also work with young people, for example, social workers, allied health workers, teachers and housing workers. These practitioners may have competing priorities and limitations to their job roles, so the youth worker must always ensure that the young person remains the primary focus and consideration.

Advocacy is a process of 'walking beside' that a youth worker can use to create meaningful and longlasting change in the community. Advocacy can take many forms. These can include:

- **self-advocacy** – where the young person speaks for themselves
- **individual advocacy** – where the youth worker works alongside a young person and speaks on behalf of the young person, and their interests are at the forefront
- **family advocacy** – where a family member acts on the behalf of the young person
- **group advocacy** – where the youth worker supports the interests of a whole group of young people who have experienced the same discrimination or barriers to participation
- **systemic advocacy** – where the youth worker campaigns to change the structures, policies and systems that disadvantage young people with disability

Advocates ensure that the voices of the young people with disability are heard and central to any campaign that is undertaken. Self-advocacy is an important skill for all young people to learn. The ability to communicate your needs as an individual is not only empowering, but also builds a strong sense of self-worth. A youth worker can utilise several models of advocacy at the same time, for example, individual advocacy to support a young person and ensure their rights are upheld and their needs are met, and systemic advocacy to promote changes in a systemic structure that may have contributed to the discrimination faced by the individual young person.

It is essential for young people to be actively involved in every stage of decision-making and service delivery. Until that happens, young people with disability will continue to face discrimination and exclusion. Youth workers play an essential role in dismantling the barriers created by the community. All young people have the right to participate in all areas of social and political life.

Conclusion

The role of a youth worker is strategically placed for them to be active contributors to the ongoing campaign with young people with disability for an inclusive community. There have been significant progressive moves forward with the development of key legislation and international conventions that dictate the elimination of discrimination and recognise the importance of protecting all human rights. However, a truly inclusive community where every young person's contribution is recognised and valued is still not today's reality, but it is the tomorrow that we wish to see.

References

Armstrong, D., Armstrong, A.C., & Spandagou, I. (2011). Inclusion: By choice or by chance? *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 15(1), 29–39.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2018). *Survey of Disability ageing and carers*, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra, viewed 7 July 2020. <abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf Latestproducts/4430.0Main%20 Features12015?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4430.0&issue=2015& num=view=>.

Blaska, J. (1993). The power of language: Speak and write using 'person first'. *Perspectives on disability*, pp. 25–32.

Braddock, D., & Parish, S. (2001). An institutional history of disability. In G.L. Albrecht, K.D. Selman & M. Bury (Eds), *Handbook of disability studies* (pp. 11–21). CA: Sage.

Cameron, C. (2008). Further towards an affirmation model. In C. Barnes & G. Mercer (Eds), *Disability studies: Emerging insights and perspectives* (pp. 20–36). London: Disability Press.

Collier, R. (2012). Person-first language: Noble intent but to what effect? *CMAJ*, 184(18), 1977–1978.

Deane, K. (2009). *Shut out: The experience of people with disabilities and their families in Australia*. CanPrint Communications, Flagstaff Print and Mail.

French, S., & Swain, J. (2000). Towards an affirmation model of disability. *Disability and Society*, 15(4), 569–582.

Kiernan, C. (1999). Participation in research by people with learning disability: Origins and issues. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 27, 43–47.

Michalko, R. (2002). *The difference that disability makes*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Oliver, M. (1996). Defining impairment and disability. In C. Barnes & G. Mercer (Eds), *Exploring the divide: Illness and disability* (pp. 29–54). London: Disability Press.

Patterson, D., & Costa, A. (2005). Down syndrome and genetics – A case of linked histories. *Nat Rev Genet* 6, 137–147.

Shakespeare, T. (2010). The social model of disability. In L.J. Davis (Ed.), *The disability studies reader* (pp. 266–273). NY: Routledge.

Siminski, P. (2003). Patterns of disability and norms of participation through the life course: Empirical support for a social model of disability. *Disability & Society*, 18(6), 707–718.

Tregaskis, C. (2004). *Constructions of disability: Researching the interface between disabled and non-disabled people*. London: Routledge.

University of Guelph. (2016). *Universal instructional design*. University of Guelph, viewed 7 July 2020. <https://opened.uoguelph.ca/student-resources/Universal-Instructional-Design>.

CHAPTER 4

YOUTH WORK IS AN EDUCATIVE PRACTICE

Robyn Broadbent

Abstract

Youth workers have not always seen their role as educators. As our understanding of non-formal learning grows, we have become better at conceptualising the pivotal role youth workers have as non-formal educators. This chapter originally formed the basis of a literature review for the evaluation of an alternative education program, with the aim to engage with youth workers working in a classroom setting so that they could better understand their role. Undertaking youth work in a classroom can be difficult because there is often a tension between the principle of voluntary youth participation and that of formal compulsory school attendance. There is a nuance to this practice that is best understood using a non-formal education framework. This chapter outlines a framework of non-formal education practice for youth work, particularly in educative environments. The role of youth worker as non-formal educator is to build the personal agency of young people through providing access to community support, information, access and learning and other helping professionals, co-facilitating a journey with young people that will assist in successful transition to adulthood.

The professional skills of youth workers

This chapter formed the basis of a literature review for an evaluation of a flexible learning program in Victoria. The project started with a question about the educational impact of having a youth worker in a classroom alongside teaching staff. To provide some context, a literature review was undertaken that focused on understanding the practice of youth work and how this could be linked to the research question. A central source of information was the work of Jeffs and Smith (1987), who provide youth work with a professional identity and framework. They discuss education and welfare as key settings for youth work, citing multiple examples of youth workers seeking to educate young people about themselves, their identity, careers, employment and their community. Jeffs and Smith (1987) argue that youth workers can be friendly, accessible and responsive while still acting with integrity. Youth workers who have faith in young people provide safe spaces in which young people can improve their personal and social development.

A 2013 report by Cooper et al. also referred to the range of skills and knowledge important to youth work practice, including the educative role, whether that be through informal or non-formal learning. Youth workers in flexible learning programs assist young people to learn about themselves, as well as their wellbeing, life skills, problem-solving, working with others, communication skills and presentations skills, among other important areas of focus.

Youth workers have a role that is both educative and supportive. A focus on 'clearing for learning' (Te Riele, cited in McGregor et al. 2017) means that youth workers join the young person's learning journey and help them to remove any barriers in the way of them being academically successful. This may involve helping them to stabilise their mental health, their housing or their family relationships, or to address such issues as outstanding fines or legal matters, and much more.

The importance of education interventions

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2020) young people who are not in education, employment or training (often referred to as NEETs) are disengaged from work and study. The OECD data reports that 17% of young Australians aged 15–24 years – nearly a million young people – are in this category. Low educational attainment and poor literacy and numeracy skills increase a young person's risk of being NEET. The relationship with retention rates in secondary education of 84% (ABS 2020) cannot be ignored and suggests a direct correlation to those in the NEET category. There is a strong correlation between low educational attainment and struggles in entering the workforce.

The Mitchell Institute (Lamb 2017) in its report *Counting the costs of lost opportunity in Australian education* refers to this cohort as 'early leavers' and 'disengaged'. These young people experience challenges during their time in education, then grow up to share many similar life and economic circumstances. Few will gain much work experience and even fewer will be economically independent. The Mitchell Institute, using a unique methodology, outlines the costs of this cohort to themselves in lost income and to the community in lost tax revenue, the cost of crime, welfare dependency and the cost to the health system. The result is most of these costs run into the hundreds of millions, with the cost of welfare dependency at $5.8 billion.

Youth workers in classrooms

More than 900 flexible learning programs educate more than 70,000 young people in Australia (Te Riele 2015). It would be fair to say that six years on, that figure will have grown. These programs are characterised by a shared vision of offering inclusive educational pathways for young people who, for varied reasons, are disengaged by mainstream schooling (Te Riele 2015). Without those programs, these young people would be unlikely to complete school, leading to substantial individual and societal costs due to reduced earnings and productivity, increased unemployment, health, crime and welfare costs, and diminished social cohesion (Lamb 2017).

The Pavilion School is one example; based in Victoria, it has a 'wraparound' model using youth workers in classrooms. The Pavilion School provides an educational option for young people who are disengaged from education and training or have been excluded by schools or education providers. Students present with a complex range of risk factors, behaviours and life situations. The program works in partnership with local family and welfare agencies and youth services, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Victoria. Student cohorts are culturally and educationally diverse, with about 20% Indigenous students.

Flexible learning centres are part of Edmund Rice Education Australia's national initiative, Youth+, responding to the needs of young people in our communities. These centres provide young people with an opportunity to re-engage in education in a flexible, supported learning environment. Each flexible learning centre operates classrooms with a teacher and a youth worker. There are 19 flexible learning centres around Australia, with

two in Victoria. The young people who attend the schools have typically experienced one or more significant and complex educational, social, developmental, psychological, health, legal or familial situations, which demands unique responses. Such interventions are embedded within an educational framework but also typically involve medical, multidisciplinary, legal and/or social support personnel and network systems.

It is evident from the Te Riele (2015) numbers and the growing popularity of alternative education settings and flexible learning programs that many young people need alternative settings to support their re-engagement in education. Their experiences highlight the inability of many mainstream schools to deal with young people who are experiencing mental health issues and anxiety, as well as transgender young people, young people with learning difficulties and those on the autism spectrum.

The practice of youth work

The Commonwealth *Youth development index* (Commonwealth Youth Program 2016:10) defines youth development as:

> enhancing the status of young people, empowering them to build on their competencies and capabilities for life. It will enable them to contribute and benefit from a politically stable, economically viable and legally supportive environment, ensuring their full participation as active citizens in their countries.

In Australia, the peak youth affairs body Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC 2014) defines youth work as:

> a practice that places young people and their interests first. Youth work is a relational practice, where the youth worker operates alongside the young person in their context. Youth work is an empowering practice that advocates for and facilitates a young person's independence, participation in society, connectedness and realisation of their rights.

A key ethical standard that underpins youth work, according to Banks (2010:3), is the:

> promotion of social justice for young people and in society generally. Most youth work takes place in the context of social injustice, often with young people and others who are on the margins, excluded by a number of personal, cultural and structural barriers.

According to the Victorian Code of Ethical Practice for Youth Work, youth workers use human rights as the basis for their framework of practice (YACVic 2007). This practice is unique because it focuses on young people as the primary consideration. Youth work, as a distinct body of knowledge and practice, recognises that young people are disempowered simply by being young and many are disadvantaged because of the range of structural barriers they face (Corney 2014). This can be because of poverty, geography, gender, race or disability. For many young people, the barrier of poverty ensures that their life chances and choices are very different to those of others (Lamb 2017). Youth workers are committed to closing the gap and empowering young people to take control of their own lives and participate in the decisions of a civic life (YACVic 2007).

The UK National Youth Agency (2012:4) is one of the most established associations setting minimum youth work standards and developing accredited courses that operate across the service sector. Here is how this organisation defines youth work practice:

> The practice of youth work helps young people learn about themselves, others and society, through informal educational activities which combine enjoyment, challenge and learning. Youth workers work primarily with young people aged between 12 and 25. Youth work seeks to promote young people's personal and social development and enable them to have a voice, influence and place in their communities and society as a whole. Youth work partners with young people because they are young people, not because they have been labelled or are considered deviant; starting with young people's view of the world; helping young people develop stronger relationships and collective identities; respecting and valuing differences; and promoting the voice of young people (National Youth Agency 2012:4).

Jeff and Smiths (2005) note that:

> Youth work requires the capacity to make good judgements, to design and engage in complex and often diverse social interventions. It is multi-faceted, dynamic, often messy, unpredictable work that requires expertise that cannot be rote learned by following rules or formulaic recipes.

Youth work cannot successfully be divided up into distinct subsets of prescriptive behaviours or discrete competencies (Davies & Durkin, cited in Cooper 1992). While it is critical for practitioners to be able to perform certain specified skills, such as building relationships, informal counselling and making referrals, good professional practice depends upon the ability to make complex judgements (Jeffs & Smith 2005). This demands that youth workers develop wisdom rather than conditioned responses.

Widely regarded as being responsible for providing youth work with an identity and professional framework, Jeffs and Smith (1999) developed a set of principles to define youth work. These have been adopted by others and are summarised as follows:

- **Voluntary participation:** Young people have traditionally been able to freely enter into relationships with youth workers and to end those relationships when they want.
- **Education and welfare:** Contemporary examples include support groups, counselling, careers advice and information services relating to sexual health and housing. However, learning about being a part of a group remains a key element. Informal education (Brew 1947, cited in Jeffs & Smith 1999), social education (most notably Davis & Gibson 1967, cited in Jeffs & Smith 1999), experiential learning (Kolb 1976, cited in Jeffs & Smith 1999) and more recently social pedagogy all relate to youth work as an educative practice.
- **Association, relationship and community:** Building relationships has been central to both the rhetoric and practice of youth work. Relationships are seen as a fundamental source of learning and happiness. The aim is to work with young people in the community so that they might better relate to themselves, others and the world.

- **Being friendly, accessible and responsive while acting with integrity:** Youth workers should be all of the above, have faith in people and seek to live good lives. This identifies that the settings workers help to build should be convivial, the relationships they form should be honest and the programs they are involved in should be flexible.
- **Sanctuary:** Creating a safe space away from the daily surveillance and pressures of families, schooling and street life is one of the fundamental elements of successful youth work practice.
- **Personal and social development:** Youth work promotes the personal and social development of young people. Youth workers start where young people are starting and then seek to motivate and support them to go beyond these starting points into new experiences and learning.

The only significant gap in the list of principles above relates to recent research on trauma-informed practice. Knight (2015) refers to this practice as an understanding of the impact that childhood trauma can have on a young person. Such trauma will frame both certain youth behaviours as well as the youth worker's response and the way they rebuild the personal agency of the young person.

Youth workers in flexible learning programs give priority to the interests of young people and work towards the transformation of the young person in their social context. Critical to their practice is supporting young people to remove whatever educational barriers they face, whether that relates to housing, health and wellbeing, income, family and/or employment.

Youth work is an educational practice

Youth work in flexible learning programs, as in other contexts of youth work, is an education practice. Here, in either a non-formal or informal way, youth workers assist young people to learn about themselves, their wellbeing, life skills, problem-solving, working with others, and communication and presentations skills, to name just a few. While supporting the educator in the formal classroom role, youth workers offer informal learning in and outside of the classroom, providing young people with the confidence to engage with their formal learning.

According to Stuart and Maynard (2015), non-formal learning is learning outside the formal school, vocational training or university system. It takes place through youth work activities in which young people participate. It is called non-formal learning because its planning and facilitation include distinct goals and timelines, so it is similar to formal learning but it happens outside of a classroom. Devlin and Gunning (2009a) agree that non-formal learning is structured and based on learning objectives.

Stuart and Maynard (2015), building on Devlin and Gunning (2009b), contrast this with informal learning. This is learning that is unstructured; it happens in conversations, through recreational activities, through a restorative justice process or by resolving conflict. Informal learning has intrinsic value because it builds a young person's

capacity through engagement in activities. So informal learning refers to skills acquired unintentionally through life and work experience, and skills not gained in a planned or deliberate manner. Building opportunities for informal learning is central to good youth work practice.

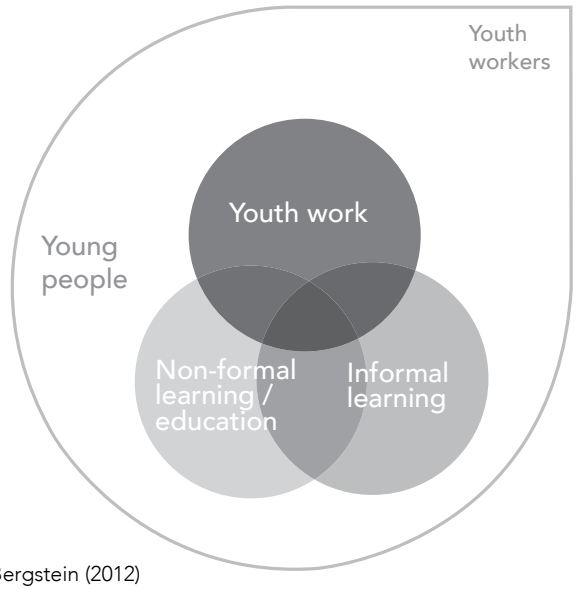
Flexible learning programs create opportunities for both informal and non-formal learning. Programs delivered may involve students organising an event, having a regular guest speaker or having a set nutrition, life skills or health and wellbeing program.

Devlin and Gunning (2009a) undertook a research project in Ireland to define the benefits of youth work. As their starting point, they used the definition of youth work that was enshrined in legislation in the 2001 Irish Youth Work Act. According to the Act, youth work is a planned program of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation. The Act also identifies youth work as complementary to young people's formal, academic and vocational education and training. The research itself revealed that youth workers universally agreed on one thing: the key purpose of youth work is primarily educational and developmental.

Reporting on youth work in schools in Northern Ireland, Morgan et al. (2008) cited the country's Department of Education vision declaring that youth work plays a key role in connecting formal and informal learning. This includes the building of coherent pathways for learning for all young people. A project by Lifelong Learning UK (2008) explored the difference between voluntary participation in youth work activities and youth work in schools where young people were not attending voluntarily. The study concluded that youth work and informal education can make distinct and positive contributions to the personal and social development of young people. Youth work practitioners encourage and enable young people to 'influence the environment in which they live' and, through the use of educative processes, seek to move young people from a position of limited power to one where they can exercise influence and make decisions for themselves. This resonates in flexible learning programs, with youth workers and educators working together dynamically in classrooms through a combined framework of non-formal and informal learning.

The figure on the following page outlines the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and youth work activities and experiences.

Recognition in the field of youth



Source: Bergstein (2012)

Using this diagram, the work of Kezaite-Jakniuniene and Taylor (2018) highlights that everyday youth work practice helps young people learn about themselves and others, as well as improving their personal agency and understanding of how to manage in a society that has often accepted their marginalisation.

Woods (2011) states that among the myriad roles they play and the contexts in which they act as informal educators, youth workers are primarily educators in both informal and non-formal settings. They use activities and conversations to contribute to the personal and social development of young people. Their core skill is in using informal education, an open approach to starting from where young people are at and enabling them to move forwards and think laterally. What separates youth workers from other professionals engaged in welfare work with young people is this distinct commitment to education and learning. This, along with the focus on the young person themselves, is a cornerstone of the professional identity of the youth worker. Without it, the professional contribution will at best be muddied or at worst be completely lost.

Woods (2011) goes on to say youth workers build and sustain open and trusting relationships in order to create conditions for learning. Their aim, wherever possible, is to see young people choose to engage in the learning relationship. Informal education is distinguished from other types of educational practice by its values and methods. The approach relies on starting where young people are at, instead of using predetermined learning outcomes and didactic teaching methods. It is primarily concerned with young people's personal and social development. This means improving their personal agency

to make well-informed decisions and building their relationship skills and conflict-resolution skills. It means building on their strengths and supporting new learning around building a successful future. Youth workers *purposefully* intervene in young people's lives, creating opportunities, activities and conversations that aim to enable young people to think, feel and act differently towards their social world.

Commonwealth education ministers agree. At the 20th meeting of Commonwealth education ministers in Nadi, Fiji in 2018, the final communique of outcomes stated:

> Ministers noted with deep concern that youth in many Commonwealth Member States are vulnerable to drugs, gang violence and street crime and in certain societies extremism. Concerted efforts are required to impart global citizenship by inculcating universal and humanistic values through peace education, creating better understanding of social rights and responsibilities, and respecting cultural and religious diversity through formal and informal education and training. Ministers acknowledged the contribution of non-formal and informal learning in building the resilience of young people *and the role of youth and community workers* in delivering non-formal and informal education (emphasis added).

Youth work has always been an educational practice. Historically, according to the seminal work by Maunders (1984), youth work did not develop simply to 'keep people off the streets' or to provide amusement. Most of the early youth clubs grew out of wanting to provide young working class men and women with the opportunity to learn new skills. The sole focus of the YWCA was to provide courses and education for young women while considering their broader welfare needs. It was the same for institutions such as the YMCA and the Newsboys Club in Victoria (Maunders 1984). Training courses and programs, classes, discussions, libraries and various opportunities to expand and deepen experience have been an essential element of the work since its beginnings. This interest in learning, often of the most informal kind, is augmented by a concern for the general welfare of young people.

Batsleer (2008) suggests that youth workers deliver a range of educational programs designed to promote the personal and social development of young people. In many alternative education settings, this can mean delivering complementary programs on issues such as health and wellbeing, providing parenting information for young mums and supporting young people with specific issues. Through creative and engaging methods of working, youth workers expand a young person's life lens and promote confidence, helping in the acquisition of new skills. This contributes to a young person's personal and academic agency.

Youth workers are part of a young person's learning network

In Europe, the role of youth work as part of the learning network of a young person's life has been understood for some time. A study by the European Commission in 2014 identified a focus on young people, personal development and voluntary participation as key components of a successful transition to adulthood and building strong civic and citizenship values. Quality youth work involves a combination of behaviours, attitudes and methods. The close relationship between the youth worker and the young person

can mean active outreach to young people in need of help and support, or developing new learning opportunities, assisting with personal goal setting or recognising their achievements. The safe and supportive environments that youth workers provide enable young people to experience important life learning, such as making mistakes and participating with their peers in enjoyable and fun settings. Youth workers encourage the autonomy of young people, driving them to be experts in their own development and to create partnerships and collaborate with other actors, for example in formal education.

A 2011 Council of Europe working paper (in Deloitte Access Economics 2012) on pathways to employment for young people reported that the informal learning opportunities created by engaging in activities run by youth workers means that young people learn while simply being active. The report referred to the social, cultural and building of a young person's personal agency, often called 'soft' skills. Soft skills, according to Deloitte (2012), consist of communication, teamwork and problem-solving, as well as emotional judgement or emotional intelligence, professional ethics and global citizenship.

All learning in the youth work field enables young people to acquire essential skills and competencies, and contributes to their personal development, to social inclusion and to active citizenship. These are all important employability skills gained in non-formal or informal learning programs.

Youth workers 'clear for learning'

Kitty Te Riele (cited in McGregor et al. 2017) coined the term 'clear for learning' in her evaluation of flexible learning centres, meaning that for them to be able to engage in learning, we must remove the barriers that young people face. Mills et al. (2016) argue that at the sites they studied, many young people who attended schools regularly confronted severe economic marginalisation. For example, Te Riele notes, it was not uncommon to meet young people who were homeless, could not afford regular meals and struggled to get by from day to day. Some of these young people were connected to their families and others were not. Some were very perceptive in their negotiations with the state and various bureaucracies, but many more were not. In order to ensure that economic circumstances were not a barrier to learning, the sites studied by Mills et al. sought to provide the basic needs of food and shelter, help students afford transport to attend school and ensure they were receiving their full financial entitlements from government and had access to a range of other services.

Recognising the importance of meeting young people's basic needs, Mills et al. highlight that while there is always a focus on learning alongside 'academic' lessons, in the centre that Mills et al. studied was a great deal of learning designed to fill important voids in young people's life experiences and general knowledge. This included travelling independently, applying for jobs, looking after themselves (e.g. health, actions in public places, safe risk-taking) and knowing how to conduct themselves when meeting new people. This social learning is seen as crucial to progression in school and the wider community, reducing the likelihood of further educational and social exclusion (Mills et al. 2016).

With similar findings, McGregor and Mills (2010) report that flexible learning sites in Queensland catered for more than just the academic needs of young people. These centres also often provided counselling and assistance with finding accommodation and financial resources, as well as help with childcare and personal advocacy. These centres strongly resembled what have been termed 'full-service schools'.

According to De St Croix (2016), youth workers work professionally with young people to create and claim spaces for conversation, fun, challenge, relationships and collective learning. In their study, flexible learning education providers shared some core values, including: safety and care; a focus on positive relationships; choice and autonomy: a holistic view; advocacy and justice; and partnership and sharing. Quality flexible learning providers built these values into their staff selection, training and performance management systems. De St Croix (2016) adds that key practices in flexible learning education focus on: staff–student relationships and interactions; relevant and engaging curriculum and pedagogy; agency and independence; attention to health and welfare; and skilful staff. In addition, high-quality, flexible learning education provision relied on common practices as listed below:

- Positive regard for the young person
- Flexibility in programming
- Carefully planned transitions
- Regularly monitored progress
- Relationships a learning goal in their own right
- Attention to space and place
- Safety and security paramount

Bowie (2002) suggests that youth work practice, in contrast to social or welfare work in schools, has less to do with individual focus, deficit or victim blaming and more in common with a community development approach. He advocates a set of principles that focuses on the empowerment and human rights of young people both within school and in the wider community. Wyn and White (1998) suggest that the remedy to many policy solutions that see young people as the problem lies in youth workers using a community development view that focuses on a whole-school and whole-community approach. This sort of practice takes broader social justice and discrimination issues into account, and resources communities to develop strategies and solutions that relate to their own circumstances. Their work culminated in 1999 with the Federal Government funding a national full-service school pilot.

Plows and Baker (2017), in their work on flexible learning programs, note the importance of the youth worker's 'clearing for learning' role. According to them, the intersection of social, economic and educational disadvantage was starkly apparent in the lives of young people attending these flexible learning education programs.

Some were homeless, 'couch surfing' or living in out-of-home care. Many had been suspended from their previous schools because of their behaviour. Their complex lives included substance misuse, self-harm and poor mental health.

The relationship remains central to youth work practice

Mills et al. (2016) state that when asked to outline the strengths of their current schools, many of the young people in their study focused on the relationships that mattered; they felt that the educators and youth workers cared for them. In the case of marginalised students, care and support are likely to involve solidarity expressed through curriculum and pedagogy that values, respects and builds upon their knowledge and cultural backgrounds. This should also support their capacity to engage with the kinds of learning that will contribute to success at school and beyond. This is a challenge faced by educators in both flexible learning and mainstream settings. However, for the former, educators need to find ways to engage young people in learning that do not involve repeating or reinforcing students' prior experiences of failure and, more importantly, can be effective despite, or in the face of, those prior experiences.

Zolkoski et al. (2015) argue that one extremely important element for participants in their study was having educators and youth workers who cared about them. Each participant gave examples of how their flexible learning school educators and youth workers showed they cared about their students. Participants felt their educators believed in them, were supportive and wanted them to succeed. Moreover, the participants' ideal educator was one who was helpful, understanding and patient, and showed students they cared.

In their study, McGregor and Mills (2010) found that students frequently used adjectives such as 'caring', 'small', 'community', 'family', 'respectful', 'equal', 'supportive', 'non-judgemental' and 'mutual responsibility' when discussing their flexible school/centre. The relationships that were part of the broader environment in the school/centre were also reflected in the teaching/learning relationship within the various curricula offered at the sites. These relationships were identified by young people and workers alike as being central to the young people's ongoing engagement in the learning processes at the sites.

Baroutsis et al. (2016) argue that inclusive school practices which promote ownership and engagement, and evidence a respect for the views of young people, are the most successful. Rainer and Matthews (2002) go further, arguing for the importance of enabling young people to become active in their own learning and experts in their own lives. Gardner and Crockwell (2006) suggest that a student's choice, voice and shared authority in their learning are critical elements in most definitions of ownership. They join Rainer and Matthews (2002, cited in McGregor et al. 2017) to discuss how young people experience and value relationships with staff. In particular, they value those who: listen; are patient; are less formal; are fair and kind, but also firm about rules; are prepared to negotiate; have clear, high and achievable expectations; and see them as 'teachable' rather than as a problem.

Devlin and Gunning (2009a), in their *Purpose and outcomes* report for the Irish government, found that youth work rests on the simultaneous operation of multiple types and levels of relationships. One is the relationship of young people with adult workers,

who may be the only adults outside their own families with whom they consistently engage in constructive and positive interactions. Youth work also facilitates the development of positive relationships between young people themselves.

The importance of being aspirational for individual students

Ansong et al. (2019) highlight the importance of personal agency among students. This has a direct impact on their aspirations and goal-setting around their learning. Ansong et al. (2019) also discuss the wide range of research globally focused on the notion that student belief in reaching an academic goal can be a primary determinant of their interest in a task or goal and, ultimately, task performance and goal attainment. People have little incentive to aim high or persevere in the face of difficulty unless they believe they can produce the desired outcomes through their actions.[1] Ansong et al.'s (2019) research set out to understand how self-efficacy influences students' educational aspirations, their motivation to achieve goals and their choice of, and commitment to, activities and behaviours needed to achieve their goals.

Youth workers play a critical role in establishing the goals and aspirations of every student, improving the personal agency of each one. Personal agency, according to Woods (2015), means building confidence and trust in your own capacity to make decisions, set a life course and believe you understand the steps to get there. It is the confidence to believe you can do it. This is what youth workers in classrooms do every day and, according to Jeffs and Smith (1987), they build personal agency and aspirations by believing in the young people they are working alongside.

As early as 1999, Schneider and Stevenson found that family and community social capital are important for raising educational aspirations, encouraging student belief in their ability to realise their aspirations and eventually reach their goals. Khattab (2015) found that aspirations can arguably help students improve their achievement, but they will be much more influential if these are also connected to high expectations. Homel and Ryan (2014), in their study for the National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER) on educational outcomes, found that aspirations have a significantly positive impact on educational outcomes. Numerous studies agree with the idea that aspirations are a cornerstone of success in education, including our own national Longitudinal Study of Australian Youth (LSAY) data.[2] Homel and Ryan (2014) add an important dimension to this discussion, reporting that this aspirational context in an education setting tends to have a similar impact on outcomes across individuals regardless of their demographic background.

Sikora and Saha (2011), in their work for LSAY, found that ambitious occupational plans formed in adolescence are consequential to young adults' attainment, particularly for an early entry into high-status employment. While a student's socioeconomic background facilitates the formation of ambitious goals, which helps attainment, the effect of adolescent plans is independent of parental background.

[1] Other studies that concur include two by the same set of authors, Pastorelli, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Rola, Rozsa and Bandura (2001).

[2] These studies include those of Homel and Ryan (2014), Khoo and Ainley (2005), Marks, McMillan and Hillman (2001) and a series of studies by Marjoribanks (2005).

In conclusion

This chapter has aimed to provide some guiding principles for the educational practice of youth workers in schools. There are three fundamental scaffolds to support good practice and, more importantly, to understand why having youth workers in schools works so well. The first is that youth work is an educative practice. For decades, through the use of non-formal and informal learning, youth work has built personal, social, civic, employment and academic agency in young people. Youth work's own history was concern for both the skilling of young people in the context of their broader welfare.

Secondly, youth workers clear the young person's journey for learning or, as Te Riele says, youth workers simply 'clear for learning'. In essence, youth workers take a holistic approach that focuses on removing barriers to attending and engaging in school. Those barriers range from mental health to financial support, safe housing, family violence and much more. It is the youth worker's role to support the young person so that they are safe, healthy and able to learn.

Thirdly, youth work is a relational pedagogy. Positive relationships that are aspirational are fundamental to the successful transitions of young people in education. The research identifies a focus on the building and maintaining of relationships as a key component of youth work practice.

This literature review began by identifying the numbers of young people who are not completing Year 12. There are large numbers of young people who, in the absence of school completion, are at serious economic risk of being long-term NEETs or occupying low-paid and quickly disappearing jobs. This may doom many to a lifetime of precarious economic stability, with all of the negative factors that go with living near, on or below the poverty line. It places this work as an important piece of civic responsibility to young people so that they can be provided with every opportunity to succeed, achieve and share in the wealth of this country.

References

Ansong, D., Eisensmith, S.R., Okumu, M., & Chowa, G.A. (2019). The importance of self-efficacy and educational aspirations for academic achievement in resource-limited countries: Evidence from Ghana. *Journal of Adolescence*, 70, 13–23.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2020). Statistics young people in education, viewed February 2021. <www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/education/schools/latest-release>.

Australian Youth Affairs Coalition. (2014). *Definition of youth work in Australia.* Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, viewed October 2020. <https://ayac.org.au/uploads/131219%20Youth%20Work%20Definition%20FINAL.pdf>.

Banks, S., (2010) Interprofessional ethics: A developing field? Notes from the Ethics & Social Welfare Conference, Sheffield, UK, May 2010. *Ethics and Social Welfare*, 4(3), 280–294. doi:10.1080/17496535.2010.516116

Batsleer, J. (2008). *Informal learning in youth work*. London: Sage.

Bergstein, R. (2012). *Recognition of non-formal and informal learning and youth work activities and experiences.* Paris: SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre.

Bowie, V. (2002). *Youth work in educational settings.* Sydney, NSW: University of Western Sydney.

Chouhan, J. (2009). Anti-oppressive practice work with young people. In J. Wood & J. Hine (Eds), *Work with young people* (pp. 35–50). London: Sage.

Commonwealth Youth Program. (2016). *Youth development index*. England: Commonwealth Youth Program.

Cooper, T. (1992). Qualified for the job: The new vocationalism. *Education Links*, 42.

Cooper, T. (2012). Models of youth work: A framework for positive sceptical reflection. *Youth and Policy*, 1(109), 98–117.

Cooper T., Bessant, J., Broadbent, R., Couch, J., & Edwards, K. (2013). Australian youth work education: Curriculum renewal and a model for sustainability for niche professions. Perth, WA: Edith Cowan University.

Cooper, T., & White, R. (1994). Models of youth work practice. *Youth Studies Australia*, 13(4), 30–35.

Corney, T. (2014). *Professional youth work: An Australian perspective*. TAS: Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

Davies, B. (2005). Youth work: A manifesto for our times. *Youth and Policy*, 88, 1–23.

De St Croix, T. (2016). Reclaiming and reimagining youth work. In *Grassroots youth work*. University of Bristol: Policy Press.

Deloitte Access Economics. (2012). *Soft skills for business success*, viewed 20 May 2019. <www2.deloitte.com/au/en/pages/economics/articles/soft-skills-business-success.html>.

Devlin, M., & Gunning, A. (2009a). *Purpose and outcomes of youth work*. Republic of Ireland: Irish Youth Centre.

Devlin, M., & Gunning, A. (2009b). The benefits of youth work: Young people's and youth workers' perspectives. *Youth Studies Ireland*, 4(2), 40–55. ISSN 1649-8747.

European Commission. (2014). *Youth work and non-formal learning in Europe's education landscape*. Brussels: European Commission.

Gardner, M., & Crockwell, A. (2006). Engaging democracy and social justice in creating educational alternatives: An account of voice and agency for marginalized youth and the community. *The Public Sector Innovation Journal*, 11(3), 1–19.

Homel, J., & Ryan, C. (2014). *Research educational outcomes: The impact of aspirations and the role of student background characteristics*. Adelaide, SA: NCVER.

Irish Youth Workers' Association. (2015). *Definition of youth work*. Republic of Ireland: Irish Youth Workers' Association.

Jeffs, T., & Smith, M.K. (1999). *Informal education: Conversation, democracy and learning*. London: Education Now.

Jeffs, T., & Smith, M.K. (2005). What is informal education? *The encyclopaedia of pedagogy and informal education*, viewed 22 Sept 2020. <https://infed.org/mobi/what-is-informal-education>.

Jeffs, T., & Smith, M.K. (Eds). (1987). *Youth work practice*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kezaite-Jakniuniene, M., & Taylor, M. (2018). *One to one: Supporting learning face to face*. European Youthpass Salto.

Khattab, N. (2015). Students' aspirations, expectations and school achievement: What really matters? *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(5), 731–748. doi:10.1002/berj.3171

Khoo, S., & Ainley, J. (2005). Attitudes, intentions and participation. <https://research.acer.edu.au/lsay_research/45>.

Knight, C. (2015). Trauma-informed social work practice: Practice considerations and challenges. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 43(1), 25–37.

Lamb, S. (2017). *Counting the costs of lost opportunity in Australian education*. Melbourne, VIC: Mitchell Institute.

Lifelong Learning UK. (2008). *National occupational standards for youth work*. London: Lifelong Learning UK.

Maunders, D. (1984). *Keeping them off the streets: A history of voluntary youth organizations in Australia, 1850–1980*. Phillip Institute of Technology. Coburg, VIC: Centre for Youth and Community Studies.

McGregor, G., & Mills, M. (2010). Reengaging students in education. QLD: Youth Affairs Network.

McGregor, G., Mills, M., Te Riele, K., Hayes, D., Baroutsis, A., & Mills, D. (2017). *Reimagining education schooling for education*. London: Palgrave.

Marjoribanks, K. (2005). Family background, academic achievement, and educational aspirations as predictors of Australian young adults' educational attainment. *Psychological Reports*, 96(3), 751–754. <https://doi.org/10.2466/PR0.96.3.751-754>.

Marks, G., McMillan, J., & Hillman, K. (2001). Tertiary entrance performance: The role of student background and school factors. *LSAY Research Reports*, 11, 1–92.

Morgan, T., Morgan P., & O'Kelly, B. (2008). *Youth work in schools: An investigation of youth work as a process of informal learning, in formal settings*. Department of Education, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

Mills, M., McGregor, G., Baroutsis, A., Te Riele, K., & Hayes, D. (2016). Alternative education and social justice: Considering issues of affective and contributive justice. *Critical Studies in Education*, 57(1), 100<en dash>115. doi:10.1080/17508487.2016.1087413

National Youth Agency. (2012). *Definition of youth work*. UK: National Youth Agency.

OECD. (2020). Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) (indicator), viewed 22 September 2020. doi:10.1787/72d1033a-en

Pastorelli, C., Caprara, G.V., Barbaranelli, C., Rola, J., Rozsa, S., & Bandura, A. (2001). The structure of children's perceived self-efficacy: A cross-national study. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 17(2), 87–97.

Plows, V., & Baker, A. (2017). On the edge? Counter practice in flexible learning centres. In V. Plows & B. Whitburn (Eds), *Inclusive education: Making sense of everyday practice* (pp. 45–70). Sense Publishers.

Rainer, J.D., & Mathews, M.W. (2002). Ownership of learning in teacher education. *Action in Teacher Education*, 24, 22–30.

Schneider, B., & Stevenson, D. (1999). *The ambitious generation: America's teenagers, motivated but directionless*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Sikora, J., & Saha, L.J. (2011). *Lost talent? The occupational ambitions and attainments of young Australians*. Canberra: Longitudinal Studies of Australian Youth.

Stuart, K., & Maynard, L. (2015). Non-formal youth development and its impact on young people's lives: Case study – Brathay Trust, UK. *Italian Journal of Sociology of Education*, 7(1), 231–262.

Te Riele, K. (2015). Education policy 'at risk'. In H. Proctor, P. Brownlee & P. Freebody (Eds), *Controversies in education: Orthodoxy and heresy in policy and practice* (pp. 149–156). Dordrecht: Springer.

Venables, E. (1971). *Educators and youth workers: A study of their roles*. London: Evans/Methuen.

Wood, J. (2011), Youth work and research. *Youth and Policy*, 167. <www.youthandpolicy.org>.

Wood, J. (2015). *Youth work: Preparation for practice*. Florence: Taylor and Francis.

Wyn, J., & White, R. (1998). Young people, social problems and Australian youth studies. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1(1), 23–38.

Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic). (2007). Victorian Youth Sector Code of Ethical Practice, viewed October 2020. <www.yacvic.org.au/training-and-resources/code-of-ethical-practice>.

Zolkoski, S.M., Bullock, L.M., & Gable, R.A. (2015). Factors associated with student resilience: Perspectives of graduates of flexible learning education programs, preventing school failure. *Flexible Learning Education for Children and Youth*, 60(3), 231–243.

CHAPTER 5

YOUNG ADULTS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE: A TIME FOR REFORM

Dr Karen Hart

Abstract

This chapter focuses specifically on young adults' involvement in the criminal justice system from both national and international perspectives. A growing body of literature in the last decade has unveiled the unique circumstances experienced by young adults in general and more specifically in relation to how they are responded to from a criminal justice perspective. The discussion outlines young adults' developmental challenges in terms of risk and protection, and explores the impacts of identity, maturity and compliance as they transition towards independence as law-abiding and adjusted adults, including how this is perceived through the lens of social capital. The period of young adulthood, typically accepted as the ages between 18 and 25 years, heralds the combined challenges of independent life. Arguably, it is one of the most significant transitional periods in the lifespan, when our childhood and family experiences are manifested, either providing us with the appropriate scaffolding and insurance necessary for adjusted life in adulthood and further into old age, or not. It is now generally accepted that young adults experience a distinct transitional period that is differentiated demographically and subjectively in their development, identity exploration and formation, and motivations and life expectations. The contemporary global landscape for young adults is underpinned by the shifting currents of economies, politics, legislation and cultures. The period of late youth in the human lifespan is therefore dynamically diverse, culturally contextual and relatively fleeting. Nevertheless, ample opportunity exists to expose the confluence of factors and causes that lead to contemporary offending by this age group and to determine appropriate responses to prevent this. Finally, the discussion focuses on examples of research across the globe that share patterns and concerns about young adults' involvement in the justice system, about police response and about how interventions can be incorporated within adult justice systems to cater for their distinctive developmental needs as they pursue the accepted markers of adulthood.

Introduction

This chapter focuses on young adults' involvement in the criminal justice system and outlines the challenges they face when negotiating the primary domains of housing, employment, relationships and health as they navigate their way towards adulthood. It discusses how deficits in those areas can drive young adults' offending behaviour and subsequent involvement in the criminal justice system, leading to further marginalisation and exclusion.

A growing body of literature in the last decade has unveiled the unique circumstances experienced by young adults in general, and more specifically in relation to how they are responded to from a criminal justice perspective. These distinct developmental and transitional needs of young adults can be viewed through the lens of social capital in terms of how they 'get in' (engage and participate), 'get by' (capacity to cope with daily tasks) and 'get on' (plan for the future, aspire and build value and assets, both personal and material, into their lives).

Finally, the key elements in the case-management process with young adults are discussed, with specific reference to the importance of relationships between case

managers and young adults in the change process towards desistance of offending, highlighting how linking social capital in particular can give prominence to protective factors and assets that counter risk, increase personal and prosocial identity, enhance motivation to change and recalibrate towards functional independence.

The dawning of an age

The defining period between 'youth-hood' and adulthood has attracted much attention from a range of disciplines and within a diverse range of organisations, agencies and government departments over the last 15 years across the Westernised world. This relatively new way of conceptualising the development of young people as they transition from the late teens to the mid-20s therefore recognises this as a distinct time in a person's life, particularly in Westernised jurisdictions, and as Arnett (2006:1) states:

> exists only in cultures that allow young people a prolonged period of independent role exploration during the late teens and twenties.

Devitt, Knighton and Lowe (2009:1) pose a persistent question by asking:

> When do we become an adult? At 16, when you can legally have sex, or maybe at 18 because you can vote? Or is it when you get a job or get your own place to live?

Random definitions, variations and contradictions in attempting to categorise the life stage referred to as young adulthood continue to exist at a structural level between sectors, institutions, industries, popular culture and politics, and within everyday civic society. This presents challenges at both policy and operational levels, in the health, criminal justice, housing, drug and alcohol services, education and employment sectors, and at a cultural level between ethnic groups within and outside the boundaries of their countries and cultural heritage.

A Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance report from the UK entitled *A new start: Young adults in the criminal justice system* focuses on young adults aged between 18 and 24 years, qualifying this by acknowledging that it is a period of life that is difficult to define and is dependent on individual maturity and not simply on physical or numerical age, making it 'blurry round the edges' (Helyar-Cardwell 2009a:12). Greeson (2009:41) further outlines the dilemma when he states:

> Currently, there is no single definition for the age range that captures the emerging adulthood stage and some variability exists with the upper limit. For example, Furstenberg, Kennedy, McLoyd, Rumbaut, and Settersten (2004) consider the upper limit to be 24–26 years, while the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood's definition spans from 18 to 29 years.

The period of 'youth' moving to 'young adulthood' therefore implies a process that is mercurial and fluid, which in and of itself may go some way to explain why a consensus on the age band has yet to be reached (Boeck 2011). Arnett (2000) refers to this period as 'emerging adulthood', which he claims is:

> a framework for recognising that the transition to adulthood was now long enough that it constituted not merely a transition but a separate period of the life course (Arnett 2000, cited in Losel et al. 2012:3).

Within an Australian context and more specifically within the youth services sector, 'young adulthood' and 'young adults' are defined within the broader youth age band of 12–25 years and as between the ages of 18 and 25 years, respectively.

Arguably, young adulthood is one of the most significant transitional periods in the lifespan, where our childhood and family experiences are manifested, either providing us with the appropriate scaffolding and insurance necessary for adjusted life in adulthood and further into old age, or not. It is now generally accepted that young adults experience a distinct transitional period that is differentiated demographically and subjectively in their development, identity exploration and formation, and motivations and life expectations. The perspectives, research insights and evidence on the peculiarities pertaining to young adulthood continue to flourish and indicate that young adults are largely motivated to progress positively through to adulthood and, while not a linear process, it is straightforward for many, if not most, young adults.

Consequently, there is an acceptance that this period in the human lifespan deserves tailored policy and practice responses across a range of disciplines, particularly in the fields of criminology, sociology, psychology and human biology and, more recently, neuroscience (Garside 2009). A growing body of evidence indicates that the brain is not fully developed and mature until the mid-20s and that executive functioning – responsible for controlling urges and impulses, interpreting and regulating emotions, and making decisions informed by moral reasoning and consequential thinking – is not yet fully formed and can therefore provide an explanation for risky and offending behaviours.

As with any age, due consideration must also be given to the nuanced cultural, social, legal, economic and political influences that dictate the norms and values of communities and societies where young adults live, while also factoring in the contexts of class, gender and ethnicity (France 2007, cited in Devitt et al. 2009:1) to fully appreciate the multiple barriers stacked against young adults in the criminal justice system.

Young adults are unique

The notion that there is a unique and distinct set of behaviours, motivations and struggles specific to the transitional life period between youth-hood and adulthood has manifested in abundant theorising, supported by irrefutable evidence that now galvanises this view. In the past 20 years or so, an improved understanding has developed of the complex, rapidly changing and arguably intractable social environment that young adults are expected to negotiate today (Losel et al. 2012). It is accepted that young adults in Western society face a mass of simultaneously colliding pressures and challenges, across a range of psychosocial development areas, and that attempts to moderate, rationalise and standardise this period in the lifespan have become increasingly difficult (Vinum & Nissen 2006).

This period in the human lifespan is the most experimental and inventive phase, and is often used to define the most salient parts of contemporary Western culture, evidenced throughout every era on a macro scale (Barry 2006). Conversely, the behaviours and attitudes of young adults during this period are also often used to measure levels of unrest and chaos within communities as they experiment, act out and work out what defines them as adults (Cohen 2002). A focus on young adults as a catalyst for deviant and risk-taking behaviour is a common feature in the media and, as a result, inflates the public perception that young adults have the power to rouse and influence the cultural climate in at times catastrophic ways.

When the behaviour of young adults is identified as negative and destructive, this seems to create a 'moral panic' as parents, politicians, police and the public react to safeguard the elements of social control that have been implemented to keep young adults in their place. These are the periods when there is a public outcry for something to be done about the 'epidemic' levels of violence, drug taking, crime and other forms of perceived anarchy in the youth population (Zill 2012). By the time this panic has been translated into a meaningful strategy or policy to address the problems at hand, and to mitigate the occurrence of similar future incidents, the young adults have too often been subjected to law enforcement responses, not least the overuse of remand, that claim to prevent further disruption to the social order.

The complexity of the transition to adulthood, therefore, indicates a journey already fraught with barriers and challenges regardless of whether or not a young adult grows up in a disadvantaged neighbourhood. However, a lack of close family ties makes this process even more difficult, as vulnerable young adults can find themselves with little support financially, socially and/or emotionally. For most young adults involved in the criminal justice system, this period is characterised by a lack of adequate financial, psychological, educational and social resources to help them make a smooth transition, and a range of socio-economic and family disadvantages are prominent for this cohort (Barry 2006; Bourn & Brown 2011).

Cauffman and Steinberg (2012) highlight that psychosocial developmental markers of maturity, involving consequential thinking, the ability to resist peer influence and pressure, delayed gratification, avoidance of thrill-seeking and risky behaviour, and impulsivity control, are still forming for this group until their middle to late 20s. We know that young adults in the criminal justice system, particularly those who have been subject to trauma, disadvantage, neglect and abuse, if unresolved and/or compounded by substance abuse, mental ill-health, conduct disorders, homelessness or housing instability, or lack of education or employment, can find it very difficult to cope and adjust as they transition to adulthood, and that this inability to cope is manifested through antisocial and criminal activity.

Linking the causes of offending behaviour by this age group to these transitions is a complex and multifaceted exercise (Helyar-Cardwell 2009a); however, this is necessary if we are to work effectively with young adults in order to reduce their offending behaviour.

Young adults and criminal justice in Victoria

We know that the prevention of crime requires vision by theorists, scholars, policymakers and practitioners. Research over the past five years in Victoria highlights that young adults are a distinct group with needs that are different from those of both children under 18 and adults older than 25, and proffers a strong case for a distinct approach to this cohort of young adults in the criminal justice system (Hart 2016; JSS 2018; Sentencing Advisory Council of Victoria (SAC) 2019). We also know that effective interventions for young adults need to be based on the ability to project the deleterious consequences of certain contemporary risk behaviours into an understanding of what is required to prevent those behaviours from recurring. Much of this research, however, has been conducted from a retrospective standpoint, on how and why young adults become criminally involved, and significantly fewer examples of research exist on how to translate this into operative solutions that can adequately predict and prevent further offending behaviour for this cohort (Murray & Farrington 2008). More needs to be done in this space.

A recent spate of reports highlighting the longstanding failures of government in achieving positive outcomes for justice-involved young people inform our understanding of the systemic deficits and exorbitant costs of prison in Victoria. The situation for young adults also remains far from satisfactory, despite the mounting case to have their distinct needs considered both inside and outside of prison. Current adult and youth justice policy and legislation define adulthood as commencing at age 18, with some parts of the criminal justice system in Victoria adopting different approaches to young adults up to the age of 20, namely, by mobilising the dual track system where 18-to-20-year-olds who are deemed to be vulnerable and immature can be detained in a youth facility. While a small provision of 35 beds is offered in a youth-specific unit at Port Phillip Prison in Victoria for those aged 18–25 years, the majority of young adults are sent to mainstream adult prison for both remand and sentenced purposes.

Evidence indicates that many young adults, once trapped in the system, return within a matter of months to prison and particularly to remand, which accounts for almost 50% of young adults detained in Victoria. Those serving community corrections orders (CCOs) also have extremely high reoffending rates and in particular high breach rates of their orders due to non-compliance, which sits at over 50%. This has prompted the Sentencing Advisory Council of Victoria to state in favour of a reform to current statutory responses:

> further consideration of a community order specific to young offenders in the adult jurisdiction may be warranted. Alternatively, the findings suggest the need for differential responses in the management of young adult offenders serving CCOs (SAC 2019:78).

There is also mounting evidence about the characteristics of the lives of young adults in the criminal justice system, including the damaging effects of unemployment, family breakdown and violence, illegal substance use, unstable housing and mental ill-health, including many with learning disabilities and acquired and traumatic brain injury (Ericson & Vinson 2010). Moreover, what is also widely accepted is that the great majority of young

people, including young adults, are the group most likely, with the right intervention and support, to desist from offending (Sturrock 2012:5). There is strong indication that opportunities can be provided to reset behaviours and to help change the trajectory of young adults towards a prosocial, if not fulfilling, adult life (Hart 2016; Losel et al. 2012).

While evidence of young adults' specific psychosocial developmental needs is critical to our understanding of how to assist them to make successful transitions to a crime-free adulthood, this also needs to be translated into criminal justice policy if we are to make a genuine impact on the prevention of crime for this age group.

Youth service responses for young adults

The youth sector in Victoria agrees that the age range of young adulthood is 18–25 years. Despite this broad consensus, in reality there is great variation within the Victorian youth services sector from an operational perspective in what appears to be arbitrary cut-off points within specific organisations, commonly dictated by funding criteria for certain types of program responses for young adults. For instance, headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation works with young people up to the age of 25 years, specifically until their 25th birthday, which means that many 25-year-olds who require youth-centred clinical interventions and treatment miss out. Many youth services have an age limit up to 24 years, again excluding young adults who are aged 25 years, which may have much to do with how the federal, state and local governments define young people for funding purposes as those aged 12–24 years.

This variability makes it challenging to evaluate the benefits of programs and prevents us from gaining consensus on a precise framework by which to measure the needs of and responses to this population, often across single-issue disciplines such as justice, employment, housing and health, which results in misaligned policies, inaccessible statistics, ad hoc funding criteria and, ultimately, gaps and cracks in youth service provision for young adults.

As a result, eligibility and suitability criteria for services can often exclude certain age groups of young adults at points when they most need them. The reality, therefore, is that service responses for young adults by both government and the not-for-profit youth sector tend to be piecemeal and overly reliant on spasmodic and short-lived funding. Consequently, young adults do not receive the services they need up to age 25 and they age out of the supportive youth service system into the adult system, which is ill-equipped to attend to their unique developmental and transitional needs. In many respects, as highlighted by Osgood et al. (2010:15):

> Many of these systems still function as if youth become independent adults overnight, and they are at odds with the longer period of semi-autonomy that characterizes young adulthood today.

It is imperative for the youth sector in Victoria to reach a consensus on the definition of age, so that all young adults are included in appropriate youth service responses while enabling greater advocacy for justice policy reform for this cohort.

The markers of adulthood

The MacArthur Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy (2005) in the US refers to the 'coming-of-age schedule' and points to 'key markers of adulthood' or core transitions during the maturation process to adulthood. These are manifested in: family creation and formation (cohabitation, marriage, children); education and employment leading to socio-economic progress (housing, regular income, owning a car); physical and mental health and wellbeing (biopsychosocial measures of adjustment for adulthood, including reduction of risk and increase in prosocial behaviour); and identity formation (a sense of belonging and connectedness) (Berlin, Furstenberg & Waters 2010:20). Some writers prioritise employment as a key marker for this age group on the basis that having a stable income allows young adults to attain the other markers of adulthood (Arnett 2000) by emphasising that:

> a young adult's ability to work steadily and become economically self-sufficient is a primary, if not the most important, marker of a successful transition to adulthood (Danziger & Ratner 2010:134).

These markers are arguably the foundational components of an effective case-management framework for young adults and, equally important, the focus of training for youth workers who specialise as case managers working with young adults. Also, closely aligned with this framework is the consideration of enhancing prosocial capital for young adults within the case-management process as an antidote to offending (Hart 2016).

Social capital and young adults

Social capital is a nebulous and slippery concept. Relative to social capital research on adults and children, very little research has been carried out on the formation and utilisation of social capital in relation to young adults. The concept of social capital has broad acceptance across disciplines as an appropriate theory to explain human support structures in a young person's life, with this most prominently exemplified in the disciplines of health and education. Writers suggest that:

> it is the accumulation of human and social capital during late adolescence that makes the successful transition to young adulthood, and desistance from antisocial activity, possible (Mulvey et al. 2004:226).

Recent research indicates that social capital, therefore, can not only provide a useful theory for investigating and explaining the processes required for young adults to build beneficial resources that enable them to 'get by' and 'get on' in life (Billett 2011), but is also useful for articulating how young adults 'get in' to access helpful people and services in the first place.

The sources of social capital are said to be found in relationships and networks that engender value and create benefits between people. In order for social capital to manifest and be helpful for young adults, these relationships need to have relevance, meaning and purpose for them. In this sense, it relates specifically to advantageous connections and linkages to services and youth workers that are able to assist young adults to build their capacity and become independent, and to the function and value of the case manager

and young adult relationship in being able to generate linking social-capital opportunities that prevent further offending and incarceration. The dynamics within this single relationship between the case manager and the young adult can be viewed as part of a larger remediating, compensatory and restorative network of resources with the capacity to promote the necessary linking social-capital opportunities for young adults.

Linking social capital illuminates how the role of the case manager in the lives of young adults can increase network connectivity and service linkages through the process of removing barriers, in often very practical ways, within the critical domains of housing, employment, substance reduction, mental health and relationships. The clear objective is for case managers to encourage young adults to take greater responsibility and to make decisions that create positive change in these areas of their lives, so that greater value, worth and importance are placed on their immediate and long-term benefits, along with reducing the barriers that hinder their progress and productivity.

Acknowledging that these practical components are interrelated and associated has the potential to develop the biopsychosocial, cultural and economic environment for young adults, in order to foster and mobilise linking social capital and to create sustainable benefits that prevent further offending. Barry (2006) highlights the notion of creating weight in these productive and protective shields for young adults to ward off the potential for risk exposure and risk engagement. Furthermore, the components of linking social capital, including social networks, sociability, trust, reciprocity, resource acquisition and norms, insofar as they can be role-modelled within an intensive case manager–client relationship, have the ability to restore potential and create aspiration for a better, if not a good, adult life (Ward 2002).

Not only can this offer a greater depth of understanding of the key social relationships and networks required to produce resources that offer protection against risk factors for crime, but it can also improve the level of academic debate surrounding social capital as it relates to young adults.

The case for tailored case management of young adults

Effective service responses for young adults indicate that support and mentoring should be individualised and bespoke, given the distinct presenting issues, behaviours and attitudes of this cohort. Arguably, any program that responds to the needs of young adults should be well-coordinated, holistic and comprehensive in nature. Put simply, it should rely on a case-management framework that has been adapted specifically to their needs. Weil, Karls and Associates (1985:18) define case management as:

> a set of logical steps and a process of interaction within a service network which ensures that a client receives the necessary services in a supportive, effective, efficient and cost-effective manner.

While there is a variety of case-management models, writers state that case management is essentially a subjective experience. Trotter (1999:25) outlines that an effective case manager has:

> interpersonal skills, such as empathy and reflective listening, self-disclosure, use of humour and optimism.

This indicates that the impact of any program response for young adults is as much about the qualifications, characteristics and expertise of the case managers intervening in the lives of the young adults as it is about the young adults themselves. It is also argued by writers that the case-management process is changing and that:

> there is an evolving model of 'case management' which gives greater attention to the concepts of social connectedness, social capital and community development. These new models are founded on 'strengths-based', 'relationship-based' and 'place-based' approaches (Moore 2009:5).

Implicit in the job title, a case manager's job is to manage, coordinate and facilitate the case-management process. Simply put, the role of a case manager is to manage the entire case relating to the young adult, which entails coordinating and following up on other parties, keeping lines of communication open, attending meetings and essentially being the source of information and the primary advocate for the young adult. It is important to note, however, that the case manager does not 'manage' the young adult and, while a power differential is acknowledged, the case manager's role is that of primary interactant for the purpose of achieving positive results that are mutually negotiated with, agreed and consented to by the young adult (Hart 2016:8).

In a study of 300 young adults, Hart (2016) carried out in-depth interviews with four case managers who were all qualified youth workers. The primary tasks of the case managers in their interventions with young adults were to:

- engage with the young adult through the initial psychosocial assessment with respect and understanding
- explore the circumstances in which the young adult's offences occurred and assess what was going on in the young adult's life at the time through the domains of housing, education, family history, health, substance use, behavioural issues, employment, finances and personal relationships
- devise an action plan with agreed goals in such a way that they were flexible for the young adult, but demanding enough to closely monitor and supervise their day-to-day progress
- collect information from a range of sources including the young adult, other professionals, family members (when appropriate), the courts and lawyers to construct a full picture of the young adult's circumstances
- set up a range of appointments by linking with the necessary services and programs to address highlighted needs simultaneously
- share information with others based on consent provided by the young adult and only in the best interests of the young adult

- identify risk and protective factors to inform intervention and action plans to guide the young adult in highlighting their own needs and understanding what they needed to do to address those needs
- reflect on the information provided by the young adult and others to understand the young adult's behaviour
- provide offence-focused counselling to determine remorse for and understanding of their offence/s, while applying equal measures of positive reinforcement and disapproval in order to introduce positive norms
- record information clearly and consistently to enable a comprehensive overview of the young adult's progress, effort and upcoming appointments; and
- present conclusions and recommendations to the Magistrates' Court, based on the overall analysis of the young adult's circumstances, which would be beneficial for the sentencing process.

It was shown that effective execution of these tasks led to a strengthening of the case manager and young adult relationship and, over a period of 6–12 months, produced beneficial outcomes in the key areas of employment, health, housing and family to develop and grow their social capital.

In addition to their qualifications and experience in youth work, psychology and criminal justice, the case managers had undertaken professional development in various techniques. For example, they had been trained to engage in motivational interviewing techniques in order to carry out offence-focused counselling. This encompasses a style of questioning used to encourage the young adult to think about behavioural change. McNeill and Weaver (2010:8) state that:

> the techniques and methods associated with motivational interviewing (MI) are likely to be useful, particularly in exploring and developing cognitive dissonance (where short-term behaviours are out of kilter with long-term goals), and in assessing readiness for change. MI is also helpful in its stress on the relational qualities of motivation; i.e. locating motivation as something that emerges in and from relationships rather than as a simple attribute of the individual.

Based on Miller and Rollnick's (2002) five principles of motivational interviewing, it was found that case managers in the program were skilled in:

- the ability to express empathy for the young adult, where the case manager established rapport through reflective listening, rephrasing the young adult's statements and using a problem-solving or solutions-focused approach
- the ability to develop discrepancy where change was motivated or encouraged by highlighting the difference between present circumstances and behaviour and future goals, and by looking at current consequences and what the young adult wanted to achieve

- avoiding argumentation with the young adult, which is counterproductive and indicates resistance on the part of the young adult
- using this resistance to assist the young adult to explore, within their resources, a new perspective and solution to their problems, as attempting to impose rather than enabling the young adult to canvas the range of options for themselves may prove to be counterproductive and detrimental to the relationship; and
- supporting the young adult's self-efficacy, which is their belief in the potential for change, their readiness and willingness, and which acts as a motivator, by encouraging the young adult to choose from their options, enabling them to feel that choice at this level could be translated into action and produce positive outcomes for them.

Conclusion

The criminal justice system in Victoria does not consistently acknowledge the specific vulnerabilities and distinct characteristics of young adults, and the majority of young adults who are incarcerated are serving remand periods or sentences in mainstream adult prisons across Victoria. Non-compliance with CCOs is alarmingly high and evidence indicates that the nature of such orders is having little to no positive impact on preventing further criminal activity for this cohort. Much more needs to be done at the front end of the criminal justice system to prevent young adults from entering it in the first instance, particularly for low-level offences, as this only serves to increase their opportunity for antisocial behaviour and does nothing to assist in their rehabilitative efforts. We know that the experience of prison generates further reoffending and more serious reoffending.

This presents an opportunity for the not-for-profit sector to work collectively and collaboratively towards reform, not only from a justice policy perspective in how young adults are responded to within the criminal justice system, but also to reform the actual lives of young adults through effective case management and coordination of services specific to young adults.

References

Arnett, J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469–480.

Arnett, J.J. (2006). The case for emerging adulthood in Europe: A response to Brutmer. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9, 111–123.

Barry, M. (2006). *Youth offending in transition: The search for social recognition*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Berlin, G., Furstenberg, F.F., & Waters, M.C. (2010). *Transition to adulthood* (vol. 20, no. 1). Princeton-Brookings: The Future of Children.

Billett, P. (2011). *Youth social capital: Getting on and getting ahead in life* (PhD thesis, Media and Communications, School of Social Sciences, University of Wollongong). <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/3533>.

Boeck, T., & Fleming, J. (2011). The role of social capital and resources in resilience to risk. In H. Kemshall & B. Wilkinson (Eds), *Good practice in assessing risk: Current knowledge, issues and approaches* (pp. 48–65). London: Jessica Kingsley.

Bourn, D., & Brown, K. (2011). *Young people and international development*. Research Paper No. 2. Development Education Research Centre.

Cauffman, E., & Steinberg, L. (2000). (Im)maturity of judgment in adolescence: Why adolescents may be less culpable than adults. *Behavioural Sciences and the Law*.

Cohen, S. (2002). *Folk devils and moral panics: The creation of the mods and rockers* (3rd edn). Oxford: Martin Robertson (first published 1972). <www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-11/Rethinking_Sentencing_for_Young_Adult_Offenders.pdf>.

Danziger, S., & Ratner, D. (2010). *Labor market outcomes and the transition to adulthood*. <www.futureofchildren.org>.

Department of Justice and Community Safety. (2019). *Malmsbury Youth Justice Precinct*. <www.justice.vic.gov.au/malmsbury-precinct>.

Devitt, K., Knighton, L., & Lowe, K. (2009). *Young adults today: Key data on 16–25 year olds, transitions, disadvantage and crime*. London.

Ericson, M., & Vinson, T. (2010). *Young people on remand in Victoria: Guilty yet to be determined – Balancing individual and community interests*. Richmond, VIC: Jesuit Social Services (JSS).

Garside, R. (2009). *Risky people or risky societies? Rethinking interventions for young adults in transition*. Transition to Adulthood (no. 1). London: Centre for Crime and Justice Studies.

Greeson, J. (2009). Natural mentor relationships among young adults with foster care experience: Pathways to emerging adulthood outcomes. *Journal of Public Child Welfare*.

Hart, K. (2016). *The efficacy of community justice intervention services to increase social capital and reduce incarceration for young adults* (PhD thesis, Victoria University). <http://vuir.vu.edu.au/33219/1/HART%20Karen%20-%20THESIS.pdf>.

Helyar-Cardwell, V. (2009a). *A new start: Young adults in the criminal justice system*. Transition to Adulthood (T2A) Alliance. London: Barrow Cadbury Trust. <https://barrowcadbury.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/T2A-A-New-Start-Young-Adults-in-the-Criminal-Justice-System-2009.pdf>.

Jesuit Social Services (JSS). (2018). *All alone: Young adults in the Victorian justice system*. <http://jss.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/All-alone-Young-adults-in-the-Victorian-justice-system-FINAL-1.pdf>.

Losel, F., Bottoms, A., & Farrington, D. (2012). *Young adult offenders: Lost in transition?* London & New York: Routledge.

MacArthur Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy. (2005). *Adolescence and the transition to adulthood: Rethinking public policy for a new century*.

McNeill, F., & Weaver, B. (2010). *Changing lives? Desistance research and offender management. Glasgow: Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research*. <www.sccjr.ac.uk/documents/Report%202010%2003%20-%20Changing%20Lives.pdf>.

Miller, W.R., & Rollnick, S. (2002). *Motivational interviewing: Preparing people for change* (2nd edn). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Moore, E. (2009). *Case management for community practice*. OUP.

Mulvey, E.P., Steinberg, L., Fagan, J., Cauffman, E., Piquero, A.R., Chassin, L., Knight, G.P., Brame, R., Schubert, C.A., Hecker, T., & Losoya, S.H. (2004). Theory and research on desistance from anti-social activity among adolescent serious offenders. *Youth Violence and Juvenile Justice*, 2(3), 213–236. doi:10.1177/1541204004265864

Murray, J., & Farrington, D.P. (2008). The effects of parental imprisonment on children. In M. Tonry (Ed.), *Crime and justice: A review of research* (vol. 37) (pp. 133–206). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Osgood, D.W., Foster, E.M., & Courtney, M.E. (2010). Vulnerable populations and the transition to adulthood. *Transition to Adulthood*, 20(1).

Sentencing Advisory Council (SAC). (2017). *Contravention of community correction orders, Victoria*. <www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-08/Contravention_of_Community_Correction_Orders.pdf>.

Sentencing Advisory Council (SAC). (2019) *Rethinking sentencing for young adult offenders, Victoria*. <www.sentencingcouncil.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-11/Rethinking_Sentencing_for_Young_Adult_Offenders.pdf>.

Sturrock, R. (2012). *Supporting transitions: A summative evaluation of the transition to adulthood pilots*. Catch 22 Research Report.

Trotter, C. (1999). *Working with involuntary clients: A guide to practice*. Sage.

Vinum, C., & Nissen, M. (2006). Street level society: Social interventions into young people's drug taking in Copenhagen. *Critical Social Work*, 7(2).

Ward, T. (2002). The management of risk and the design of good lives. *Australian Psychologist*, 37(3), 172–179.

Weil, M., Karls, J.M., & Associates. (1985). *Case management in human service practice: A systematic approach to mobilizing resources for clients* (Jossey Bass Social and Behavioral Science Series). Jossey-Bass.

Zill, Z. (2012). Dimensions of the global youth revolt. *International Socialist Review* (online), 81.

CHAPTER 6

TIME TO SHARE THE POWER: FRAMEWORK FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH COUNCILS

Martti Martinson

Abstract

At a time of rapid change in the political involvement of young people, the creation of structures to facilitate their participation in decision-making processes has been on the rise globally. In academic literature as well as in political discourse, youth participation is mostly associated with the involvement of young people in decision-making processes at various levels of governance and within organisations. Youth councils are often created with the aim of representing the interests of young people in the community through advocacy, lobbying and provision of advice to decision-making bodies. At the same time the landscape of youth councils, particularly at a local government level, is varied and often lacking evidence of best practice, an enabling environment and coordination. This chapter provides an overview of the findings from a mixed-methods comparative case study of local-level youth councils – the experiences of former and current members of youth councils and the professionals who support their work – in the Australian state of Victoria and in Estonia. Semi-structured interviews and an online survey across the two countries and in two languages were employed to map the experiences and identify youth councils' successes, gaps and potential for improvement. The results reveal that local-level youth councils in Victoria and Estonia share many similarities, particularly in their aims, commonly undertaken activities and aspirations; however, there are also noticeable differences, which can largely be attributed to the relevant legislative framework, policies, coordination mechanisms and resourcing for youth councils that exist in Estonia but not in Victoria. As a result of the research, a framework for an enabling environment for youth councils is identified and conceptualised using the Enabling Environment Index (EEI) developed by CIVICUS, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation, as a guide. This framework, which uses the three dimensions from the EEI and introduces nine new sub-dimensions, is presented and discussed in this chapter

Youth participation: What are we actually talking about?

In academic literature as well as in political discourse, youth participation is mostly associated with the involvement of young people in decision-making processes at various levels of governance and within organisations. The original focus of the concept was on young people having representation in political processes and decision-making (Fleming 2013; Lentin & Ohana 2008). Farthing (2012:73) defines youth participation as 'a process where young people, as active citizens, take part in, express views on, and have decision-making power about issues that affect them'. This definition links participation with democratic society and the concept and desire of young people to be 'active citizens'. It also outlines three important conditions which need to be met in youth participation processes – the opportunities for young people to take part in a process, to have their views heard and also to have some level of power (or a desire to have it) over decisions that are made.

It is widely agreed that young people are powerless compared to adults and that this stems from their social, economic and political marginalisation – most young people are disenfranchised from mainstream society and are not treated equally by virtue of their age (Corney 2014). Farrow (2018) notes that youth participation in decision-

making is always about the sharing and distribution of power – from and between those who typically control the process towards those they seek to engage; however, these elements are frequently absent from both research and practice (Manning & Edwards 2014). A process where no power (such as the power to make or influence decisions) is being sought, transferred or shared should not be labelled 'youth participation'.

In recent decades, definitions of youth participation that emphasise the process of participation and the importance of structures have dominated the academic literature (Corney et al. 2020). However, the tendency to interpret youth participation as the involvement of young people through a structured and formalised mechanism has also been met with some criticism, for example, as being seen to privilege a relatively small group of well-educated, already empowered young people and often overlooking the needs of disadvantaged and disenfranchised young people, and replicating failed adult structures of representative politics (Cairns 2006; Comrie 2010; Yamashita & Davies, cited in Percy-Smith & Thomas 2010).

The concept of youth participation is closely linked with the principles of democratic governance. In his seminal essay, Hart (1992) notes that a nation is democratic to the extent that its citizens are involved, particularly at the community level, and for this reason there should be gradually increasing opportunities for children and young people to participate in any aspiring democracy, particularly in nations already convinced that they are democratic. Yakovlev (2003) widens the discourse somewhat and argues that the treatment of its children is a litmus test of any government, however it may describe itself.

The importance of including young people in political process has also been demonstrated to the world through examples such as the #MarchForOurLives movement, which 'responded to a wave of events and outrage in the USA over high school shootings' (Farrow 2018:20), the Indignados Movement in Spain, the #BlackLivesMatter in the USA (Farrow 2018) and the #SchoolStrikeforClimate around the world, as well as through the 2011–2012 Arab states' popular uprisings and various Occupy movements. Bruter and Harrison (2014) agree that the participation of young people can also be identified as a distinct characteristic of many demonstrations and movements such as the Georgian and Ukrainian revolutions in the early years of the 21st century and even the demonstrations leading to the collapse of the Eastern Bloc in 1989–1990.

At the global level, a number of high-profile youth events have taken place in the last decade and formal participation structures such as the Commonwealth Youth Council have been created (Farrow 2015). Nevertheless, it is the involvement of young people in decision-making processes at a local level that tends to dominate the academic debate, predominantly because this is seen as improving service delivery and outcomes, contributing to a 'social justice' agenda and fostering a democratic environment (Brodie et al. 2009; Farrow 2015).

On the local level, student councils and youth councils are prominent structured mechanisms for participation (Perry-Hazan & Nir 2016). They are seen as essential to providing opportunities for young people to get involved in public decision-making.

Local youth council models of operation can vary significantly, as they depend on regulatory frameworks, institutional and organisational structures, and demography, politics and local traditions (Collins et al., cited in Perry-Hazan & Nir 2016).

While traditional youth participatory structures that replicate adult structures, such as youth and student councils, have been in existence for decades, there are a number of trends that influence youth participation today, for example, the increasingly loud calls for youth participatory structures and processes to be more inclusive of all young people, not just a selected few, the use and influence of technology which demands greater importance and emphasis to be given to online participation, as well as the rising popularity of methods such as co-management and co-design.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach as a comparative case study (Yin 2003) in which both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used (Stake 1995, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie 2003). The core assumption of this type of enquiry is that the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a more complete understanding of the research problem than either approach alone. The research process involved data collection through first conducting semi-structured interviews in order to inform the design of the survey. The qualitative data collection aimed to capture the voices of all stakeholders – young people as members or former members of youth councils and adults who had been connected with a youth council in a professional capacity.

An opportunistic approach was used to determine the number and availability of youth council participants, and semi-structured interviews were held with a total of 15 participants associated with the work of three local-level youth councils – two youth councils from Estonia and one from Australia. The aim of the interviews was to examine the local context and environment for the key people associated with these youth councils, as well as the organisational structures, activities, challenges and other factors impacting on their outcomes, in detail so as to produce case studies.

The quantitative data collection was done through a de-identified anonymous online survey which was conducted in order to identify the environments in which local-level youth councils operate in the Australian state of Victoria and in Estonia. The total sample size for the survey was 114 participants, of whom 62 were from Estonia and 52 from Australia. In total, 28 youth councils/local government areas from Estonia were represented in the survey and 23 from Australia (all from the state of Victoria).

In analysing the data, sequential mixed data analysis, which includes two separate processes – analysis of qualitative data using thematic analysis and analysis of quantitative data using descriptive statistics (Tashakkori & Teddlie 2009) – was employed. The results from qualitative and quantitative data were combined through comparing in-depth interviews with the results of the survey to determine where the data supported, challenged or expanded understandings about the environments in which youth councils are enacted.

Differences and similarities between youth councils in Estonia and Australia

The data collected enabled in-depth insight into various aspects of the work of local-level youth councils in Estonia and Australia. This data in combination with a review of the literature provided a basis for the development of a youth council–specific framework for an enabling environment which is presented later in this chapter.

The findings from both the Estonian and Australian data reveal relatively small differences in aims, objectives, activities and challenges – particularly in aims and objectives, which appear to be very similar in both countries. The most notable differences between the data from Australia and from Estonia in this category relate to Estonian respondents identifying activities and events that aimed to achieve policy change and tangible results resulting in long-term change – this was generally not present in the Australian data.

In the category of governance of youth councils, respondents across both countries employed similar processes for recruiting members and had similar key partners. Australian participants identified their main three partners as internal to the council, whereas for Estonian respondents the top three partners were all external to local government. Estonian respondents were also more likely than their Australian counterparts to have involvement in or control over the work of the youth council and the recruitment process of new members, as well as acknowledging the existence of a democratic process for the selection of new members.

In the realm of outputs, outcomes and aspirations of youth councils, respondents across the two countries identified lack of funding and funding security as the common challenges for the work of their youth councils. In comparison with the Australian data, in Estonia there was more importance placed on developing youth councils as structures, as well as influencing political processes. In Australia, connecting with the community appeared to be more important than in Estonia.

Table 1: Similarities and differences between Australian and Estonian data in the category of aims, objectives, activities and challenges of youth councils

Domain	Similarities	Differences	
1. Aims, objectives, activities and challenges		Australia	Estonia
Aims and objectives	Representing young people's views and concerns to the local council was seen as the primary purpose of youth councils in both countries. The role of youth councils was viewed as provision of advice to decision-makers, particularly local councillors.	Australian youth councils emphasised more philosophical aims, such as 'getting the youth voice heard' and 'making young people more visible in the community'.	Estonian youth councils emphasised the importance of achieving tangible outcomes resulting in long-term change (e.g. new infrastructure, services or policies).
Commonly undertaken activities	Organising events was the most common category of activities undertaken, followed by representing young people in dealings with government and other organisations. Participating in committees of the local council or other organisations was the least popular category in both countries.	Events and activities organised by the youth council in Australia tended to be more focused on campaigning/ raising awareness for a particular social issue (e.g. bullying, domestic violence, mental health, the environment).	Events organised by youth councils in Estonia were more diverse and ranged from world cafés with politicians to celebration of cultural traditions. They also often had a theme or a specific purpose such as fundraising.
Challenges	The main challenge that was common across the two countries was making the youth council more visible in the community. Lack of rights and the relationship between the youth council and elected council were other challenges at similar levels in both countries.	Insufficient funding and getting youth initiatives supported by local councils were considerably more prevalent in Australia than in Estonia.	Finding new members and motivating and retaining existing members were among the most common challenges in Estonia – much more so than in Australia.

Table 2: Similarities and differences between Australian and Estonian data in the category of governance of youth councils

Domain	Similarities	Differences	
2. Governance of youth councils		Australia	Estonia
Recruitment of members	The most popular method of recruiting new members for youth councils in both countries involved submitting an expression of interest or application. The decision-making/ selection process most commonly involved the existing/outgoing members and youth worker working together.	More than one-third of respondents indicated that a youth worker alone chose the members of the youth council. Very few youth councils in Australia had a democratic process in place for recruiting new members.	A majority of Estonian respondents indicated that their youth council had a democratic process in place for recruiting new members. Young people were always involved in the decision-making process relating to new members of youth councils.
Level of youth participation in governance of youth councils	Most respondents from both countries disagreed with the statement that an adult/ youth worker alone drove the work of the youth council. The vast majority of participants indicated the frequency of youth council meetings to be at least monthly.	Half of the respondents indicated that the membership of their youth council consisted of young people and adults who were not young people. Nearly a third of respondents indicated that the meetings of their youth councils were chaired by an adult.	Most respondents in Estonia indicated that their youth councils had only young people as members. Almost all respondents agreed that meetings of their youth council were chaired by a young person. Estonians were also more likely to claim that the full control of the work of the council lay in young people.
Main partners for youth councils	Schools, youth workers, elected councils, council departments and youth organisations were among the main partners of youth councils in both countries. State/county/ national governments were among the least important.	The three most important key partners identified were all internal: elected councillors, youth workers and other council departments.	An overwhelming majority of respondents identified the three key partners for their youth council to be external (as opposed to partners connected to local government apparatus). The most important key partner in Estonia's case was the peak body for youth councils; such a body does not exist in Australia.

Table 3: Similarities and differences between Australian and Estonian data in the category of outputs, outcomes and aspirations of youth councils

Domain	Similarities	Differences	
3. Outputs, outcomes and aspirations of youth councils		Australia	Estonia
Connecting with the community	An overwhelming majority of respondents in both countries outlined some event that the youth council had organised either on its own or in partnership with other organisations as its main achievement. Events with a recreational focus such as award ceremonies, movie nights, festivals, youth weeks etc. appeared to be the most prevalent category of events.	Among Australian respondents, the importance of a youth council's connectedness to the community was stressed more frequently.	Estonian respondents mentioned specific reasons for organising community events such as fundraising and celebration of cultural traditions which were not prevalent among Australian participants.
Influencing decision-making and political processes	In both countries, this category emerged in the discussion of outcomes and outputs of youth councils.	Achievements in this category of outcomes were less prevalent in Australian respondents' answers compared to Estonian respondents. Examples included influencing and consequently changing public transport timetables, concessions or route planning, development of a youth charter and providing input to the youth strategic plan.	Among Estonian respondents, this category was very prevalent. Some participants indicated that holding events such as a 'participation café' where young people and leaders of the council, community and sometimes members of parliament come together has become a tradition. Others outlined specific achievements related to successful advocacy: a youth councillor being successfully elected to the local council; and having a representative on the regional or national youth council.

Development of skills and youth councils as a structure	In both countries, this category emerged in the responses.	Strengthening of the relationship between the youth council and elected councillors emerged as a theme, but was not mentioned frequently. This suggests that it is not very important to emphasise youth councils as an independent and standalone structure in Australia.	Achievements related to the development of youth councils as a structure were frequently highlighted by respondents. In Estonia, there is considerable emphasis on youth councils as independent structures and on how they operate and organise their work.
Additional resources youth councils need to be effective in their work	Funding was the main category identified in both countries as currently being insufficient and requiring additional resources. In addition, funding security and having an independent budget emerged as important themes across both countries.	A number of respondents from rural municipalities indicated the lack of public transport or the distance between different parts of a municipality as a resource that was currently lacking. There was also the importance of having greater recognition and clearer expectations from the elected council.	Members, and in particular motivated members, emerged as a dominant category of resources that youth councils currently lacked in Estonia.
Dreams and aspirations	Respondents in both countries identified dreams and aspirations that related to improving/ strengthening the role, work or status of youth councils in the community and within the local council itself.	Some Australian respondents highlighted ambitious changes in society as their dreams, such as to eradicate bullying.	Almost all Estonian respondents were focused on developing and strengthening youth councils as structures, including specific propositions such as for the youth council to give opinions on every draft council motion and by-law, and to be represented on all official council committees.

A framework for an enabling environment for youth councils

The use of the term 'enabling environment' has gained momentum in multiple fields and sectors. Whereas there are numerous definitions of what constitutes an enabling environment in different fields, there is little research into enabling environments in the context of youth participation and particularly youth participatory structures.

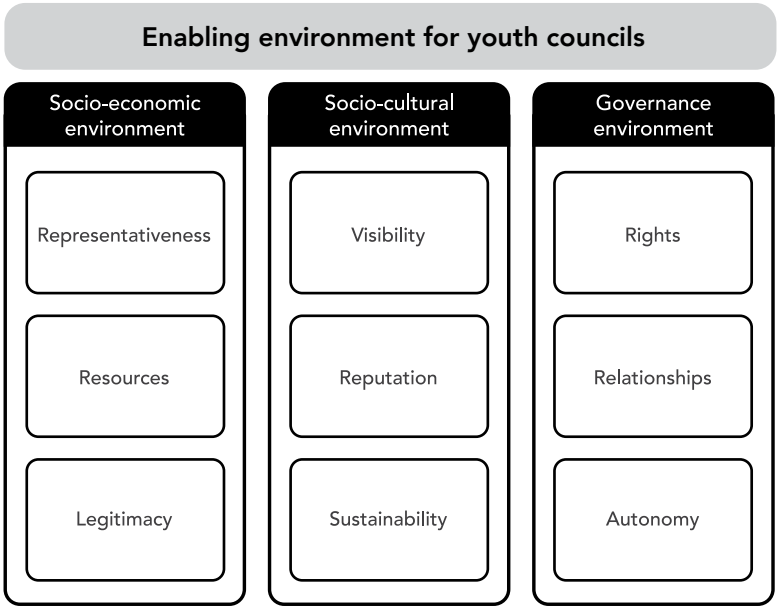
Youth participatory structures, such as youth councils, share many similarities with civil society organisations: they are usually based on voluntary participation; they aim to empower a group in society through better advocacy and representation in decision-making processes; they usually follow the principles of democracy in their work and in determining their membership; and they encourage and rely on the concept of active citizenship – that is, the will of members to contribute for the betterment of others.

There are, however, also some notable differences between independent civil society organisations and local-level youth councils, which in most cases are affiliated with or incorporated into the structures of local government authorities. This usually means that they are not fully independent bodies, unlike civil society organisations. CIVICUS, the World Alliance for Citizen Participation – a global alliance of civil society organisations – in 2013 developed and launched an Enabling Environment Index (EEI) which aims to assess the key conditions that shape the way civil society operates. The EEI is made up of three domains and 17 sub-dimensions that together describe the aspects of an enabling environment in the context of civil society.

There have been numerous attempts to define and identify enabling environments in various disciplines, but only a few documented cases in areas relating to children or youth participation. In order to better contextualise the enabling environment for youth councils, the following working definition has been constructed by the author: *an enabling environment for youth councils means the fulfilment of a set of conditions that allow them to be independent, youth-led and participatory structures so that they can represent the interests of young people through advocacy and give advice to decision-makers on matters impacting on young people.*

Based on the example of the EEI, a framework for an enabling environment for youth councils is here proposed. This framework can be broadly categorised into three domains: socio-economic, socio-cultural and governance. Under these dimensions, the framework has nine sub-dimensions that each represent a set of conditions required in order to create an enabling environment for local-level youth councils.

The proposed framework does not offer any weighting of the three domains or individual sub-dimensions – each sub-dimension needs to be equally present in the enabling environment for youth councils. The framework is intended as a guide in the creation process for new youth councils and in evaluating and reorganising the work of existing youth councils. It can also be used as a reference point in creating policies, programs, regulations and rights affirming legislative frameworks for youth councils. It is not intended as a tool for guiding the operational aspects and everyday decisions of individual youth councils.



Framework for an enabling environment for youth councils

First dimension: Socio-economic environment for youth councils

The CIVICUS EEI describes the socio-economic environment dimension as one that 'provides a series of assessments of factors such as education, equity, gender equality and, quite importantly to support civic participation in the age of the digital revolution, the development of communication technologies' (Fioramonti & Kononykhina 2013:5). The following new sub-dimensions emerged from the interview and survey data across Australia and Estonia.

Representativeness: having a diverse membership of the youth council. Diversity in this context can encompass equal or near-equal representation of all genders, various cultural backgrounds, subcultures and identities, age brackets, geographical coverage of the municipality and schools.

Resourcing: stability, sufficiency and independence of funding. Resourcing encompasses the availability and guarantees of: financial resources such as a dedicated youth council budget; human resources, often in the form of training, administrative or mentoring support through administrative assistants, youth workers, lawyers and other advisers; free access to facilities such as rooms to hold meetings or events in; equipment such as computers, phones and access to databases and the internet; and transportation needed for fulfilment of the aims and tasks of the youth council.

Legitimacy: having a mandate to represent other young people. A mandate in this context is to be approached very broadly: in the simplest terms, it means having a democratic and open process in place to select members for the youth council. Democratic can mean organised elections where young people vote for their representatives, but most often it means either an open application process where all

young people have the right to express their interest and apply to become a member and the process of selection is transparent and youth-led, or a process through which youth organisations or student councils delegate their representatives to become members of youth councils, or a combination of all of the above.

Second dimension: Socio-cultural environment for youth councils

The CIVICUS EEI describes the socio-cultural environment as one that 'examines cultural factors reinforcing the capacity of citizens to get involved in the civil society arena, such as inter-personal trust and tolerance, inclination to join collective action and solidarity' (Fioramonti & Kononykhina 2013:5). The following new sub-dimensions emerged when combining the interview and survey data across both countries with the literature.

Visibility: of the work of the youth council in the community. Visibility in this context means the provision of resources and mediums such as official websites, social media and local newspapers, but also events and advertising channels through which the work of the youth council can be made visible to the entire community.

Reputation: supportive attitudes of adults and young people towards the youth council that understand and acknowledge the role of the youth council as equally important to that of any other committee or advisory council of a similar purpose comprised of adults.

Sustainability: motivating new and existing members of the youth council. Sustainability means ensuring that members are motivated and that there is sufficient interest generated and maintained within the youth population of the local community so more candidates are interested in becoming members of the youth council than there are places. Competition also strengthens the representativeness and legitimacy of a youth council.

Third dimension: Governance environment for youth councils

The CIVICUS EEI describes the governance environment as one that:

> includes fundamental capabilities that create the minimum preconditions, or lack thereof, for social and political engagement. These include the overall state effectiveness, rule of law, policy dialogue, corruption, associational rights and political liberties. It also covers a series of personal rights, guarantees against unduly interference from state agencies or private actors, freedom of speech, media freedom and, importantly, it assesses the regulatory frameworks for NGOs (Fioramonti & Kononykhina 2013:5).

The following sub-dimensions emerged as a result of combining the interview and survey data across both countries with the literature.

Rights: having an official status and rights that are enshrined in statutes. Rights in this context relate to rights endorsed in legislation, constitutions, and terms of reference or equivalent documents of official standing. These rights can relate to the right to self-govern and for young people to be able to drive the work of the youth council, to be provided with sufficient resources, support and information, to be represented on other bodies that make decisions impacting on young people, and to give advice and make suggestions.

Relationships: with the elected council and council departments. Relationships mean ongoing, professional, equal and mutually respectful relationships that enable the youth council to seek information, gain support and regularly communicate with elected councillors and council departments and officials in order to best fulfil the aims of the youth council.

Autonomy: to drive and lead the work of the youth council. Autonomy means having a mandate and measures to reduce the inherent power imbalance that exists between young people and adults, for example, through the transfer of some adult power to young people in order for the youth council to be youth-led, fully self-governing and empowered to drive its own work and take responsibility for its actions.

Conclusion

The traditional methods, structures and processes for implementing youth participation are changing, with advancements in technology and young people's disappointment with traditional democratic structures and old power values providing the greatest impetus. Having a voice is not an end in itself but, rather, a tool for achieving change in policy, processes, service delivery and even attitudes. It means shifting the power imbalance from those who have power (usually institutions and adults) in favour of those who do not (in this instance, young people). While young people are not a homogenous group with identical needs and aspirations, they do share many things in common due to their position and status in society and also their similar experiences and circumstances.

Youth councils, being representative and participatory, are seen as structures that bring forward the opinions of young people, but they also need to be wary of not monopolising youth voices. Adults and the power structures (e.g. local councils) they operate within need to address the question of power and how much they are willing to share with or delegate to young people if they are serious about empowerment and creating an enabling environment for youth councils.

Many existing models and frameworks for youth participation lack a focus on established structures and instead concentrate on the roles of individuals or groups of young people in the participation process. The framework presented in this chapter focuses on the importance of youth councils as structures and emphasises dimensions that are particularly relevant in the context of youth councils. It can serve as a guide to understand and evaluate the work and needs of youth councils as collective structures – whether to strengthen an existing or create a new youth council, or to plan, develop or evaluate policy measures that can better support the work of these structures.

References

Badham, B., & Wade, H. (2010). *Hear by right: Standards framework for the participation of children and young people*. London: The National Youth Agency.

Brodie, E., Cowling, E., Nissen, N., Paine, A.E., Jochum, V., & Warburton, D. (2009). *Understanding participation: A literature review*. Pathways through Participation, UK, viewed 13 July 2015.<http://pathwaysthroughparticipation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Pathways-literature-review-final-version.pdf>.

Bruter, M., & Harrison, S. (2014). Memory, emotions and ergonomics: The electoral psychology of voters in perspective. *LSE for the ECREP Workshop Series*, London, March 2014.

Cairns, L. (2006). Participation with purpose. In E.K.M. Tisdall, J. Davis, M. Hill & A. Prout (Eds), *Children, young people and social inclusion: Participation for what?* Bristol: The Policy Press.

Comrie, G. (2010). *Where are you going with that?: Maximising young people's impact on organisational & public policy*. Australian Youth Affairs Coalition, Sydney, viewed 14 June 2015. <www.ayac.org.au/wp-content/Where-are-you-going-with-that-Australian-Youth-Affairs-Coalition.pdf>.

Corney, T. (2014). The human rights of young people: A catalyst for the professionalisation of youth work through the development of codes of practice. In T. Corney (Ed.), *Professional youth work: An Australian perspective*. Melbourne: The Centre for Social Research & Youth Studies.

Corney, T., Williamson, H., Holdsworth, R., Broadbent, R., Ellis, K., Shier, H., & Cooper, T. (2020). *Approaches to youth participation in youth and community work practice: A critical dialogue*. Youth Workers' Association.

Farrow, A. (2015). *Global Young Researcher's Lab: Research brief*. Youth Policy Labs, Berlin.

Farrow, A. (2018). *Salto Think Tank On Youth Participation: Closer to the edge of participation and activism*. SALTO-YOUTH Participation & Information Resource Centre, Tallinn, viewed 10 January 2020. <www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3830/Raport_210x210mm_sm.pdf>.

Farthing, R. (2012). Why youth participation? Some justifications and critiques of youth participation using New Labour's youth policies as a case study. *Youth & Policy*, 109, 71–97, viewed 1 August 2017. <www.youthandpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/farthing_why_youth_participation.pdf>.

Fioramonti, L., & Kononykhina, O. (2013). *Methodological note on CIVICUS' Civil Society Enabling Environment Index* (EE Index), accessed 22 August 2015. <http://civicus.org/eei/downloads/Methodological%20note%20on%20the%20CIVICUS%20Civil%20Society%20 Enabling%20 Environment%20Index.doc>.

Fleming, J. (2013). Young people's participation – Where next? *Children & Society*, 27, 484–95.

Hart, R. (1992). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*. UNICEF International Child Development Centre, Florence, viewed 10 August 2016. <www.unicefirc.org/publications/pdf/childrens_participation.pdf>.

Lentin, A., & Ohana, Y. (2008). All different – never equal? On the intolerance of tolerance. In *Born in Flensburg, Europe: Journeys with Peter Lauritzen*. Demokratie & Dialog e.V., Germany.

Manning, N., & Edwards, K. (2014). Why has civic education failed to increase young people's political participation? *Sociological Research Online*, 19(1), viewed 10 February 2020. <www.socresonline.org.uk/19/1/5.html>.

Percy-Smith, B., & Thomas, N. (Eds) (2010). *A handbook of children and young people's participation: Perspectives from theory and practice*. UK: Routledge.

Perry-Hazan, L., & Nir, T. (2016). The framed right to participate in municipal youth councils and its educational impact. *Children and Youth Services Review*, accepted manuscript, viewed 10 December 2016. <www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0190740916302286>.

Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stake, R.E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (Eds) (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yakovlev, A. (2003). *A century of violence in the Soviet Union*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Yin, R.K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd edn). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

CHAPTER 7

CREATING A TRAUMA-INFORMED CLASSROOM: 10 STRATEGIES THAT ALLOW YOUNG PEOPLE TO THRIVE

Perri Broadbent-Hogan

Abstract

Engagement in education has long been noted as a significant protective factor for young people exposed to trauma. To best capture and enhance this protective factor, it is vital to create biologically respectful classroom environments that allow young people impacted by trauma to thrive. It is important to acknowledge that for young people exposed to trauma, their brains have prioritised the skills required for survival through over-activation of the stress response system. Similarly, there has been a de-emphasis of development competencies less relevant to survival such as learning, self-regulating, problem-solving, anticipating consequence and actively making decisions. As educators, it is essential for us to remember that young people exposed to trauma have simply not had the same opportunities to develop the skills required to actively engage in education due to their impeded development caused by traumatic events. This certainly does not mean they are less capable of academic achievement. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the literature around trauma-informed practice and integration in education in order to provide educators with a toolkit of strategies to enhance student engagement. It provides the theory behind each strategy, coupled with practice examples that can be easily implemented into the learning environment. The chapter explores the importance of building authentic relationships, supporting young people to feel in control, creating clear and consistent classroom rhythms, setting high expectations, using process praise, evidencing progression, celebrating vulnerability, using negotiation, providing opportunities to contribute and understanding the vital nature of play.

The impact of trauma on the brain

Before diving into the strategies that support thriving and inclusive classroom environments, it is crucial to understand the impact that trauma can have on the brain and, more specifically, the developing brain in a child. It is first and foremost important to acknowledge that the impact of trauma is far-reaching and an awareness of this is vital when considering the supports that can be put in place to support development and learning.

When a child is impacted by trauma, this significantly affects brain development and, more specifically, the child's ability to learn, develop socially and emotionally, and grow physically (Dods 2013; Green & Myrick 2014; Lynch & Simpson 2010; Perry & Szalavitz 2006; Stone & Bray 2015; Szalavitz & Perry 2010). Trauma over-activates the body's stress response system, causing a considerably higher resting heart rate and a shifted baseline that is not an emotionally regulated state (Perry & Szalavitz 2006; Szalavitz & Perry 2010). Furthermore, trauma subsequently results in the prioritisation of skills required imminently for survival and the de-prioritisation of skills not required imminently for survival. For young people exposed to trauma, the skills required for survival are repeated and therefore become more efficient, resulting in a heightened awareness of danger, rapid mobilisation in the face of threat and very well-refined self-protective behaviours (Blaustein 2013; Hertel & Johnson 2020). This also means that the identification of threat can be rapid and inaccurate, and it can simply be the suggestion of threat (real or perceived) that triggers an uncontrollable chain reaction leading to a heightened state (Blaustein 2013; Hertel & Johnson 2020).

Alongside the prioritisation of survival skills is the de-prioritisation of skills not required imminently for survival, as the brain inhibits the development of executive functioning and the skills required for learning (Hertel & Johnson 2020). These are the skills required to exert control over actions by delaying responses, anticipating consequences, evaluating outcomes and actively making decisions (Blaustein 2013; Hertel & Johnson 2020). The traumatised brain has prioritised rapid response and the need for survival over well-planned and thoughtful decisions. The flow-on effect for young people is decreased capacity for learning, reduced memory, dysfunctional and dysregulated socio-emotional functioning, inhibited ability to regulate behaviour, reduced ability to form and maintain meaningful relationships and inability to manage stress (Dods 2013; Gil 2010; Green & Myrick 2014; Lynch & Simpson 2010; Perry & Szalvitz 2006; Stone & Bray 2015; Szalavitz & Perry 2010).

It is important to note that most young people suffering from trauma will not show physical signs; more often than not, the trauma is represented through social and emotional behaviours that are categorised as antisocial (Dods 2013; Stone & Bray 2015). The speed at which young people enter a heightened state is due to the already heightened equilibrium their body is pre-programmed for. This means that even the smallest trigger can set off a chain reaction of events that often leads to hypervigilance, impulsivity and/or anxiety (Perry & Szalavitz 2006; Szalavitz & Perry 2010). Triggers are relational interactions such as eye contact, specific music, scents, phrases, words, voice tones or specific people; the behaviours that result from such triggers are often seen as erratic and unreasonable, but the reality for the young person is that they are often involuntary and uncontrollable (Perry & Szalavitz 2006; Szalavitz & Perry 2010). The mobilisation of the survival mode response can occur in an instant, without the young person even being aware what is happening. It is also not unlikely that the young person is unaware of the trigger and, while the resulting behaviours can be overt, they can also be internalised and can leave the young person feeling confused about their current emotional state.

One of the critical pieces of information to support your practice when working with young people exposed to trauma is that trauma can be ingrained in the brain, without the young person even knowing. While the young person may not even consciously remember the trauma, their body has not forgotten and will continue to respond in a way that can be uncontrollable and irrational, without perhaps being able to identify a cause. Often the most damaging impact is before the age of four, before children start recalling their first childhood memories (Perry & Szalavitz 2006; Szalavitz & Perry 2010). When young people respond in a way that seems irrational or antisocial, remember that all behaviour is functional and meaningful, it has a purpose and young people are trying to evidence an underlying need (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019). Always look for the underlying need and support a young person to identify this, as it will enhance the professional relationship and improve their capacity for reflection and regulation.

Lastly, it is important to recognise that due to the impeded brain development and the de-prioritisation of skills required for learning, young people exposed to trauma often need additional support through their educational journey. For many young people exposed to trauma, the experience of educational achievement has been rare; school and the classroom

can be a triggering environment where young people quickly become dysregulated (Downey 2007). All learning involves a small amount of stress as it is exposure to something new and for young people exposed to trauma this is heightened as their stress response system is already more highly aroused than for their more regulated peers (Perry & Szalavitz 2006). If we add a lack of educational achievement, the classroom can certainly be a very dysregulating experience.

It is the responsibility of schools to shift the narrative and create an environment that allows young people to thrive. Educators must acknowledge the impeded development and create appropriate adjustments to the learning experience that build the required skills and competencies which provide opportunities for young people exposed to trauma to participate in learning and experience success in the same way as their peers.

Strategies that allow young people to thrive

Invest in the relationship

It is evident through research that the development of secure, positive, interpersonal relationships in a non-threatening and safe environment is essential for young people exposed to trauma (Dods 2013; Gil 2010; Green & Myrick 2014; Ludy-Dobson & Perry 2010; Lynch & Simpson 2010; Perry & Szalavitz 2006; Stone & Bray 2015; Szalavitz & Perry 2010). In fact, a prosocial relationship with a positive adult is the most significant protective factor for a young person following exposure to trauma (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger 2011; Elias et al. 2015; Evans, Scourfield & Murphy 2015; Hidalgo, Maravic, Milet & Beck 2016; Ludy-Dobson & Perry 2010; Perry & Szalavitz 2006; Szalavitz & Perry 2010). Development of positive teacher relationships has been shown to increase school engagement, decrease at-risk behaviour, enhance school retention, improve social-emotional competence and increase self-esteem (Corney & du Plesis 2011; Dods 2013; KPMG 2009; McLeod 2010). It is important to note that all young people want to belong and feel connected to others, as relational experiences and connections are how many human needs are met (Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019). However, young people exposed to trauma may not have learned to build positive relationships in a mutually respectful manner (Perry & Szalavitz 2006). In addition, young people exposed to trauma have learned that connection leads to vulnerability and risk, therefore leading them to disconnect so as to increase feelings of safety (Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019). The flipside is young people who respond to this by desperately seeking connection and therefore increase their risk of exploitation (Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019). It is essential that professionals role-model healthy relationships and boundaries alongside young people, remembering that all young people are keen observers and are continually looking at the ways professionals interact with each other and the world around them (Hertel & Johnson 2020). It is vital to reflect on interactions with young people and continually role-model healthy relationships.

It is important to highlight that healthy relationships involve conflict that is resolved respectfully (Hertel & Johnson 2020). Professionals are often scared of conflict with young people, feeling that this will damage the relationship. It is important to see the processes

of rupture and repair as vital in the relationship journey, as this is often when the most productive and positive professional relationships are formed. Young people often initiate conflict (consciously or subconsciously) with professionals when they feel the connection growing, in response to their understanding that relational interactions lead to vulnerability and risk (Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019). They often expect the professional to respond in a similar manner to other adults in their life, by confirming that the young person is not worthy of the relationship and that adults should not be trusted. The unpredictable response is that of repair, showcasing to the young person their value and the importance of healthy connection. The strongest relationships with young people are those formed through processes of rupture and repair where a young person can collaboratively resolve the conflict in a way that reaffirms their value while simultaneously reflecting that the behaviour demonstrated was not respectful. It is vital that professionals always acknowledge their own mistakes and apologise where this is warranted, again highlighting for the young person that no person is above making mistakes and the importance of mutual respect.

Positive relationships can be incredibly regulating for young people; as they learn to trust professionals and feel safe with them, their stress response will begin to regulate. It is essential that professionals are always calm and regulated around young people, as this behaviour is mirrored (Perry & Szalavitz 2006). An important aspect within this is for professionals to be mindful of their own triggers and ensure they present in a way as physically unthreatening as possible. When working with young people exposed to trauma, professionals should maintain regulated breathing, open body language, positive voice tone and language that is not provocative or inflammatory. This is especially important if the young person is heightening or presenting in an already escalated state.

It is important to highlight that building positive relationships extends to parents/guardians also. The quality of the parent–teacher relationship is actually a better predictor of educational outcomes for a young person than the frequency of parent–teacher contact (Froiland & Davison 2014). An investment in the relationship with families, through ongoing positive communication, is an incredibly powerful tool. Research has shown that this positive communication can improve academic results for young people, increase educational engagement for young people, improve motivation for young people, enhance parental involvement in learning goals, increase positive behaviour at school and increase the willingness of parents to discuss concerns or challenges with the school (Froiland & Davison 2014; Harris & Goodall 2008; Lendrum, Barlow & Humphrey 2015; Olender, Elias & Mastroleo 2010; Watt 2016).

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when developing an authentic and positive relationship with a young person:

- Set clear boundaries up front, ensure the young person is aware of what is appropriate and what is not, and wherever possible outline the natural consequences of operating in a way that is not appropriate. Ensure that as a professional you are consistent, every single time. Consistency is invaluable when developing relationships with young people exposed to trauma.

- Always maintain commitments made to young people. The most eroding experience for trust is letting down a young person when a commitment has been made; the professional is simply playing into the notion that adults are not trustworthy or reliable.
- Sit side by side. Eye contact can be very confronting for young people and often inhibits natural conversation. Sitting side by side while engaging in an activity (art, games, Lego, puzzles and so on) can often be the initiator of organic and authentic conversation. Another great strategy is going for a walk or engaging in sport (such as basketball or kicking a football).
- Individualise. Take the time to write the young person's name into an individualised task. Remember important facts and then ask about these. For example, remember when it is their birthday or when they have a particular event or activity on the weekend.
- Prioritise relationships with parents/guardians. Contact parents to provide positive information and share the achievements of the young person. Identify ways to increase engagement in their young person's learning.

Support young people to feel in control

Often teachers feel they need to have control in order to manage the classroom, but it is the development of shared control that often elicits the most productive learning environments. Ironically, educators often attempt to maintain control when working with young people displaying challenging behaviours, which is exactly when shared control is most vital. Young people exposed to trauma have had control removed from them, not only through the trauma itself but through the consequent over-activation of the stress response system. The continual activation of the stress response system means that it becomes easily triggered and the rapid onset of this state is an uncontrollable and involuntary experience (Blaustein 2013; Hertel & Johnson 2020; Perry & Szalavitz 2006; Szalavitz & Perry 2010). Young people exposed to trauma exert control to attempt to regain safety and feel secure, and if they are not provided with healthy strategies for doing so then this may be displayed through antisocial behaviours (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020; Wiebler 2013). The opportunity to exercise control and choice is essential for young people exposed to trauma; not only will it support their stress response system to regulate, but it also enhances affect-regulation skills and allows young people to regain some self-agency (Hedges et al. 2013; Howe 2016; Lynch & Simpson 2010; Poynton 2012; Ramstetter, Murray & Garner 2010; Stone & Bray 2015).

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when supporting young people to feel in control in the learning environment:

- Offer two to three learning options. This allows young people to feel in control of their learning. It is important not to provide more than three options as this can become overwhelming.
- Set very clear boundaries and expectations for young people. This allows them to feel in control as they know what is expected and what they need to do to succeed. This allows achievement to be more attainable as the expectations around this are very clear.

- Provide responsibility in the learning environment; young people can be allocated projects that provide appropriate and healthy control. This can include taking care of classroom plants, overseeing a classroom project (such as an excursion), being a buddy for a younger or new student, writing the classroom newsletter article and so on.
- If possible, implement individual daily timetables. A daily timetable can simply use the timetable already in place for the classroom, whereby young people can choose their learning activity for each of the learning sessions. For example, if English is scheduled for session 1, allow young people to choose from two English activities and note this on their timetable. Using this strategy will allow young people to feel in control of their learning environment.

Create a clear and consistent classroom rhythm

Creating a consistent and predictable environment for young people is absolutely vital to successful engagement in education. Trauma is often associated with unpredictability. In fact, unpredictable yet infrequent trauma is more damaging to the human brain than frequent yet predictable trauma (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020). Professionals who are predictable and consistent in their interactions will allow the stress response reaction to slowly shift; when young people observe particular triggers in the learning environment (such as voice tone or facial expression), they will know what is about to happen, therefore preventing the uncontrollable and involuntary stress response from initiating (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020). As young people identify professionals as safe, this will act as a protective factor against external and unpredictable triggers that are natural in every schooling environment such as announcements and alarms. This is because young people can rely on you as the safe adult to respond to the unknown trigger and keep them safe from harm (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020). When the learning environment is unpredictable, the stress response system remains vigilant as there are new experiences all around and is therefore continually assessing the environment for danger (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020; Perry & Szalavitz 2006). It is important to remember that a heightened awareness of danger and rapid mobilisation in the face of threat are both skills that are particularly developed in the brain of a young person exposed to trauma. It is also important to note that all learning involves a small dose of stress as it is exposure to something new and that for young people exposed to trauma, this response will be heightened due to their hyper-aroused stress response system (Perry & Szalavitz 2006). Providing an environment that is predictable will allow young people to spend less energy on being vigilant to potential threat and more energy on positive developmental tasks such as learning.

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when creating a consistent and predictable environment:

- Ensure the daily structure of the classroom is maintained. Every lesson should run with a consistent structure and be predictable for young people. For example, start every day with a check-in, proceed into a learning block, take a brain break,

continue the learning block and conclude the lesson. It is important to embed consistent rituals at the beginning and end of each lesson/day.

- ◊ It is important to quickly touch on morning check-ins, as this is a very useful strategy for young people exposed to trauma. Young people exposed to trauma often have a limited ability to identify emotions as they have not had a caregiver system that promotes reflection on emotional state and the development of emotional literacy. Furthermore, the body has not prioritised the development of these skills as they are not essential for survival. Asking young people how they are each day allows them to repeatedly practise emotional identification, which in turn enhances their capacity to regulate (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019).

- Maintain a consistent physical environment; always display the timetable, display the date and display a brief sentence describing the content of the lesson. The whiteboard should be presented in the same way and the desk arrangement should be consistent. If there is going to be a change, young people should be warned in advance.
- Reduce any impromptu decisions or activities. New activities or a change to routine will be incredibly dysregulating for a young person exposed to trauma. These should be absolutely minimised or, as much as possible, non-existent. This does not mean that new activities or changes cannot occur, it just means they must be pre-planned and young people should be provided with ample notice and information.

Set high expectations

High expectations are a crucial element in any classroom space. It is important to show young people what they are capable of achieving and to support them to get there. High expectations are especially important for young people exposed to trauma (Hertel & Johnson 2020; KPMG 2009; Rothman & Hillman 2008). If professionals do not maintain high expectations for young people, this sends the message that this is the best they can be, that they are not as capable of succeeding (Hertel & Johnson 2020). One study found that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds exceeded expectations when continually pushed to reach their potential (Preiss 2013). High expectations not only increase educational engagement and achievement, but also encourage young people to break intergenerational cycles and reduce risk factors in further generations (Rothman & Hillman 2008; Watt 2016). Furthermore, research has shown that one of the top ten characteristics of effective teachers is their ability to hold positive attitudes, beliefs and expectations that all young people can succeed regardless of level or behaviour (Clinton, Aston & Koelle 2018). As you continually set high expectations for young people, please remember that these must be coupled with high levels of support, as young people need to know what they are capable of and then be supported to achieve this.

The following key strategies can be drawn upon setting and maintaining high expectations for young people:

- Always, always, always encourage young people to participate in learning. If they aren't ready, that's okay, negotiate with them to have a five-minute break, but never stop encouraging them to learn.
- Negotiate up! If a young person communicates that they can participate in 15 minutes of their mathematics learning task, ask them to complete 20 minutes. The important elements of this are to provide the appropriate support, scaffold the task if needed and sit with them to get started.
- Allow young people an opportunity to resubmit. If young people submit assessments or learning tasks that are not up to standard, communicate this and explain where they can improve. Most importantly, tell them that you believe they can achieve better and support them to reach this expectation.

Use process praise

Process praise is an incredibly useful tool for educators, not simply for those working with young people exposed to trauma but for educators working with all learners. Praise is vital in all classroom environments, as it encourages young people and evidences their achievement, it shows young people that we have faith in their ability and it highlights their strengths and progress (Dweck 2007). Process praise is unique in that it praises the effort, perseverance and strategies utilised through the learning process, as opposed to praising the person (Dweck 2007). Person praise is when you praise the student by saying 'you did a great job, well done!'; however, process praise is highly specific, such as 'you did a great job at completing all ten of the mathematics questions, well done on that fantastic effort!' (Dweck 2007). When using person-centred praise, young people can rebut the content, as the educator has not provided specific examples of what exactly was done well (Dweck 2007). Process praise empowers young people with control, as it showcases the exact skill/action that went well, allowing them to replicate this and feel in control of their learning and academic outcomes (Dweck 2007). As previously discussed, any strategies for promoting healthy control for young people exposed to trauma is incredibly beneficial to their regulation and learning. Process praise also encourages and motivates the young person; when they know what they have done well, they are likely to continue doing so in the future to ensure ongoing achievement (Dweck 2007). Lastly, process praise celebrates vulnerability, an important aspect in a classroom, especially when working with young people exposed to trauma (which is discussed later in the chapter).

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when utilising process praise with young people:

- Find the specific area of strength and praise this in the feedback. This evidences to young people the exact area they can replicate to achieve in the future.
- For young people exposed to trauma, it is important to acknowledge them when they walk through the door. As discussed, the courage it takes to enter a learning environment when the stress response system is already hyper-aroused is enormous and

it is important to recognise this. When young people enter the classroom, you should have a consistent rhythm to your welcome; for example, 'Welcome, Emma, thank you for coming to learn today!' or 'Hi, Emma, thank you for making the choice to participate in school today'. Find something that works for your style as an educator and stick with this.

- Always praise the effort, as opposed to making broader comments about the young person as a whole. For example, try and avoid 'you are so kind' or 'you are so smart' and instead use praise such as 'you did such a good job helping that new student find a desk' or 'you worked really hard on completing that entire book review, fantastic effort!'

Evidence progression and celebrate achievement

Evidencing progression and celebrating achievement are natural parts of every classroom; however, it is important to think intentionally about how this is done with young people exposed to trauma. Young people being able to observe their progress and receive tangible rewards for their success is an important catalyst for further academic success and increased self-worth (Hertel & Johnson 2020). Educators should ensure young people are provided with at least one activity every day in which they can experience success, as this in turn will increase motivation (Hertel & Johnson 2020). This success can be a variety of learning activities and must be differentiated to the level of the young person to ensure success is genuine. Evidencing progression and celebrating achievement are also important in providing the young person with control over their learning; if they are aware of the clear progression points and what they need to achieve to reach these, they will feel in control of their learning. This in turn will support improved self-regulation and capacity for learning. This is also where clear expectations are essential, as young people need to know what is required of them in order to successfully achieve in learning. If the expectations are not clear, young people will not know what they need to achieve in order to receive praise and to progress through their learning.

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when evidencing progression and celebrating achievement:

- Consider individual reward systems for young people exposed to trauma, perhaps an individual star chart or a way of tracking their success each day in achievable daily goals. If young people can observe daily progression and achievement, they are far more likely to engage actively in learning activities and improve their own confidence in their learning capacity.
- Celebrate the learning process. If the learning journey is celebrated, young people will feel more in control of their capacity to be celebrated in this way. If only the outcome is celebrated, young people may feel they are not capable of achieving this.
- Ensure young people are provided with opportunities to set goals and then reflect on these. The process of achieving the goal is far more important than the goal itself, as this again highlights the areas of control that lead to a desirable outcome. These can be small daily or even lesson goals, or longer term goals such as for the semester.

- Organise regular meetings with the young person and their parents/guardians/carers to showcase the areas where they have grown and their learning achievements. This is recommended as a minimum once a term. This is also an excellent opportunity to set new goals for the upcoming term and include these in the individual learning plan.

Celebrate vulnerability

Vulnerability is certainly one of the most challenging areas for both professionals and young people, and yet essential for both educators and young people in the learning journey. It is important to recall that learning itself is a vulnerable experience, as it involves a small dose of stress as it is exposure to something new (Perry & Szalavitz 2006). Furthermore, young people exposed to trauma often have reduced experience of academic achievement, therefore increasing the vulnerability they feel when engaging in a learning experience (Downey 2007). Research has shown that vulnerability is a key indicator of people who live full and happy lives, people who accept themselves as they are and know this is okay (Brown 2010). Vulnerability is an essential aspect of feeling authentic connection and belonging (Brown 2010). It is therefore vital that educators create spaces that not only support vulnerability but celebrate vulnerability. In order to support young people to showcase their own vulnerability, educators must be willing to do the same. Educators should role-model vulnerability wherever possible, highlighting for young people that making mistakes is natural and having a go is valued.

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when supporting vulnerability within the classroom:

- Ask young people for support. Asking for assistance is an excellent strategy for building trust, an essential element of supporting young people to be vulnerable. If you need help taking things to the classroom or collecting something from the office, ask a young person. When there is support needed in the learning space, draw on young people to assist.
- Draw on the knowledge of young people. Provide learning opportunities that allow them to showcase their own knowledge and teach you information.
- Give new things a go alongside young people. If they are participating in sport, have a go with them (even if this is not your strength). If young people want to play a game, participate in this with them. Always work alongside young people and participate in activities that highlight the value of just having a go.

Be open to negotiation

Negotiation is an important skill for young people to develop. Not only is negotiation itself useful, the many skills learned within this are vital for young people exposed to trauma. Negotiations allow young people to develop their capacity to evaluate outcomes, actively make decisions and anticipate consequences, all skills that are controlled by the prefrontal cortex, the development of which is impeded by the experience of trauma (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020). The prioritisation of rapid response and survival over well-thought-out and

planned decisions is often why young people exposed to trauma make immediate decisions and then feel remorse later; in the moment, they are unable to make decisions that consider consequence and longer term impact (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020). Negotiations also allow young people to feel in control and provide educators with additional opportunities to set expectations and support young people to reach these.

When utilising negotiation with young people exposed to trauma, it is essential to first discuss natural consequences and to reflect on the outcome. When negotiating, the natural consequence of negating the negotiation must be clearly articulated, given that young people exposed to trauma have an impeded capacity to anticipate consequences (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020). Secondly, when the negotiation has been completed (all actions have been taken), it is important to reflect on the negotiation and evaluate the outcomes, and to discuss alternative decisions if young people were not able to stick to the negotiation. This will further enhance their capacity to utilise executive functioning skills (Blaustein 2013; Blaustein & Kinniburgh 2019; Hertel & Johnson 2020). It is always important to brainstorm negotiations/solutions to challenges, as this will enable young people to build the skills required to actively make positive choices in the future (Fisher & Ury 1999).

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when negotiating with young people:

- Always acknowledge the need or emotion, as it is important that young people feel heard and valued. If you do not know what the need or emotion is, enquire.
- Always brainstorm multiple options/outcomes before agreeing on one, as this allows for development of decision-making skills.
- Always attempt to negotiate up! If young people set a baseline, try and set a higher expectation. This is very much in line with maintaining high expectations for young people and also continually expands on the first option that young people identify.

Allow students to contribute

Opportunities to contribute to the community and support others have been shown to strengthen individual resilience as well as increasing feelings of engagement, connectedness and self-worth (Hertel & Johnson 2020; Ma 2003). Being able to contribute is also an essential aspect of developing a true sense of school belonging, a particularly important factor when creating positive schooling outcomes for young people at risk of disengagement (Finn & Zimmer 2012; Ma 2003; OECD 2017). Importantly, the other two key factors in the development of school belonging are being able to connect and being able to feel capable, factors that have been covered above through strategies such as building relationships, academic progression and the use of process praise (Albert 1991; Ma 2003).

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when supporting young people to contribute:

- Support the development of community projects, both internally and externally to the school environment, that allow young people to take a leading role. This could be the development of a school garden, a community day event, sporting events, social events (such as formals), fundraising events for local charities and so on.
- Support young people to volunteer for the school community or local community; consider organising class excursions that centre on contribution in the local community.

Create opportunities for play

Decades of research highlights the positive relationship between play and social-emotional competence, physical development, learning and academic achievements (Gregorc & Mesko 2016; Honeyford & Boyd 2015; Howe 2016; Nicholson, Bauer & Woolley 2016; Ramstetter et al. 2010). Play has been shown to increase motivation, perseverance, high-level thinking, communication skills, problem-solving ability, affect regulation, formation of trust, positive interaction with peers and empathy (Gil 2010; Green & Myrick 2014; Hedges et al. 2013; Howe 2016; Lynch & Simpson 2010; Nicholson et al. 2016). Furthermore, evidence has shown that a reduction in play leads to increased behavioural problems (often associated with low social-emotional competence) and restricted development of social relationships (Barblett, Knaus & Barratt-Pugh 2016; Howe 2016). Research has also shown that play can be very therapeutic for young people exposed to trauma. Young people exposed to early trauma need experiences that are appropriate to the age at which trauma was suffered (Perry & Szalavitz 2006). The consistent replay of such experiences allows young people to develop the social-emotional skills that should have been developed at that age (Perry & Szalavitz 2006). Opportunities for free play also allow young people to exercise control and choice, a factor discussed earlier in the chapter as vital for young people exposed to trauma (Lynch & Simpson 2010; Poynton 2012; Stone & Bray 2015).

It is lastly important to note that when exposed to trauma, the brain produces adrenaline and cortisol, which is fantastic when they are used to survive, but overexposure can damage the brain and impede normal development (Hertel & Johnson 2020). When engaging in any form of physical exercise including play, the brain produces a protein that mitigates the amount of damaging hormones released into the brain (Hertel & Johnson 2020).

The following key strategies can be drawn upon when creating play opportunities for young people:

- Include games in the learning space. Games themselves have been described as being able to calm the traumatised brain, with the pressure removed due to their predictability and stability (Springer, Colorado & Misurell 2015; Stone & Bray 2015). Games can include card games, puzzles and trivia. These games have also been shown to develop teamwork, social skills and emotional regulation (Springer et al. 2015). Wherever possible, units of learning should incorporate play-based learning through the use of games.

- Include self-soothing activities in the classroom such as Lego, electronic kits (for building) and visual arts activities (such as mandalas). If young people are experiencing hyper-arousal, this is especially useful as these activities can be self-selected (allowing young people to feel in control) and support the development of self-regulation (Gil 2010; Green & Myrick 2014; Stone & Bray 2015).
- Choose games that are centred on routine and are predictable. This will allow the stress response to regulate. This is why card games (such as Uno – young people love Uno!) are quite calming.
- Be mindful that competitive games can increase stress for young people.

Conclusion

Great educators can make an enormous difference in the lives of young people and recognising the privilege held in walking alongside young people through their educational journey is crucial. Teachers have such a powerful and unique opportunity to support young people to change the trajectory of their lives, and optimising the capacity of young people to thrive in their learning environment is the basis of a great teacher. This chapter has articulated first and foremost the impact that trauma can have on the developing brain, followed by clear and concise strategies that support young people to thrive in their learning environment. The goal is to empower educators with tools that will support classrooms which support all students, acknowledging that education is a right for all and it is the job of educators to provide environments that facilitate engagement, growth and achievement. Above all else, it takes an enormous amount of courage when a young person walks into a classroom, so it is the role of teachers to respect this courage, uphold the young person's dignity and provide learning opportunities that allow every young person to achieve.

References

Albert, L. (1991). *Cooperative discipline*. Circle Pines, MN: American Guidance Service.

Barblett, L., Knaus, M., & Barratt-Pugh, C. (2016). The pushes and pulls of pedagogy in the early years: Competing knowledges ad the erosion of play-based learning. *Australian Journal of Early Childhood*, 41(4), 36–43.

Blaustein, M. (2013). Childhood trauma and a framework for intervention. In E. Rossen & R. Hull (Eds), *Supporting and educating traumatized students: A guide for school-based professionals* (pp. 3–21). New York, NY: OUP.

Blaustein, M.E., & Kinniburgh, K.M. (2019). *Treating traumatic stress in children and adolescents: How to foster resilience through attachment, self-regulation and competency* (2nd edn). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Brown, B. (2010, June). *The power of vulnerability* [video]. <www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_the_power_of_vulnerability/up-next>.

Clinton, J.M., Aston, R., & Koelle, M. (2018). *Investigating the key determinants of effective teaching: A systematic review.* Report prepared for the Australian Government Department of Education and Training. <https://docs.education.gov.au/node/51641>.

Corney, T., & du Plessis, K. (2011). Apprentices' mentoring relationships. In T. Corney & K. du

Plessis (Eds), *Apprentices – Young people in transition* (pp. 17–32). VIC: Incolink & Australian Clearinghouse for Youth Studies.

Dods, J. (2013). Enhancing understanding of the nature of supportive school-based relationships for youth who have experienced trauma. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 36(1), 71–95.

Downey, L. (2007). *Calmer classrooms: A guide to working with traumatised children*. Melbourne, VIC: State of Victoria, Child Safety Commissioner.

Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K.B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child Development*, 82(1), 405–32.

Dweck, C.S. (2007). The perils and promises of praise. *Educational Leadership*, 65(2), 34–9.

Elias, M.J., Leverett, L., Duffell, J.C., Humphrey, N., Stepney, C., & Ferrito, J. (2015). Integrating SEL with related prevention and youth development approaches. In J.A. Durlak, C.E. Domitrovich, R.P. Weissberg & T.P. Gullotta (Eds), *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice* (pp. 33–49). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Evans, R., Scourfield, J., & Murphy, S. (2015). The unintended consequences of targeting: Young people's lived experiences of social and emotional learning interventions. *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(3), 381–97.

Finn, J.D., & Zimmer, K.S. (2012). Student engagement: What is it? Why does it matter? In S. Christenson, A. Reschly & C. Wylie (Eds), *Handbook of research on student engagement* (pp. 97–131). Boston, MA: Springer.

Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1999). *Getting to yes: Negotiating and agreement without giving in*. London: Random House.

Froiland, J. M., & Davison, M. L. (2014). Parental expectations and school relationships as contributors to adolescents' positive outcomes. *Social Psychology of Education*, 17(1), 1–17.

Gil, E. (2010). Children's self-initiated gradual exposure: The wonders of posttraumatic play and behavioral reenactments. In E. Gil (Ed.), *Working with children to heal interpersonal trauma: The power of play* (pp. 44–66). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Green, E.J., & Myrick, A.C. (2014). Treating complex trauma in adolescents: A phase-based, integrative approach for play therapists. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 23(3), 131–45.

Gregorc, J., & Mesko, M. (2016). The concept 'play–physical activity–development' as a response to the contemporary teaching methods in preschool education. *Research in Kinesiology*, 44(1), 19–25.

Harris, A., & Goodall, J. (2008). Do parents know they matter? Engaging all parents in learning. *Educational Research*, 50(3), 277–89.

Hedges, J.H., Adolph, K.E., Amso, D., Bavelier, D., Fiez, J.A., Krubitzer, L., … Ghajar, J. (2013). Play, attention, and learning: How do play and timing shape the development of attention and influence classroom learning? *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1292(1), 1–20.

Hertel, R., & Johnson, M.M. (2020). How the traumatic experiences of students manifest in school settings. In E. Rossen (Ed.), *Supporting and educating traumatized students: A guide for school-based professionals* (pp. 27–44). New York, NY: OUP.

Hidalgo, J., Maravic, M.C., Milet, R.C., & Beck, J.B. (2016). Promoting collaborative relationships in residential care of vulnerable and traumatized youth: A playfulness approach integrated with trauma systems therapy. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 9(1), 17–28.

Honeyford, M.A., & Boyd, K. (2015). Learning through play: Portraits, photoshop, and visual literacy practices. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 59(1), 63–73.

Howe, S. (2016). What play means to us: Exploring children's perspectives on play in an English Year 1 classroom. *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal*, 24(5), 748–59.

KPMG. (2009). *Re-engaging our kids report: A framework for education provision to children and young people at risk of disengaging or disengaged from school*. Report to the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD).

Lendrum, A., Barlow, A., & Humphrey, N. (2015). Developing positive school–home relationships through structured conversations with parents of learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, 15(2), 87–96.

Ludy-Dobson, C., & Perry, B. (2010). The role of healthy relational interactions in buffering the impact of childhood trauma. In E. Gil (Ed.), *Working with children to heal interpersonal trauma: The power of play* (pp. 26–43). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Lynch, S.A., & Simpson, C.G. (2010). Social skills: Laying the foundation for success. *Dimensions of Early Childhood*, 38(2), 3–12.

Ma, X. (2003). Sense of belonging to school: Can schools make a difference? *The Journal of Educational Research*, 96(6), 340–9.

McLeod, G. (2010). Advising and mentoring. In T. Jeffs & M.K. Smith (Eds), *Youth work practice* (pp. 101–10). Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Nicholson, J., Bauer, A., & Woolley, R. (2016). Inserting child-initiated play into an American urban school district after a decade of scripted curricula: Complexities and progress. *American Journal of Play*, 8(2), 228–71.

OECD. (2017). *PISA 2015 Results (Volume III): Students' well-being*. <www.oecd.org/education/pisa-2015-results-volume-iii-9789264273856-en.htm>.

Olender, R., Elias, J., & Mastroleo, R.D. (2010). *The school–home connection: Forging positive relationships with parents*. New York, NY: Corwin Publishing.

Perry, B.D., & Szalavitz, M. (2006). *The boy who was raised as a dog and other stories from a child psychiatrist's notebook: What traumatized children can teach us about loss, love, and healing*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Poynton, M. (2012). 'We should be playing, not talking': Play, self-agency and moving towards depressive moments. *Journal of Child Psychotherapy*, 38(2), 185–98.

Preiss, B. (2013). Disadvantaged students thrive when the academic bar is high. *The Age*. <www.theage.com.au/national/education/disadvantaged-students-thrive-when-the-academic-bar-is-high-20130820-2s9fk.html>.

Ramstetter, C.L., Murray, R., & Garner, A.S. (2010). The crucial role of recess in schools. *Journal of School Health*, 80(11), 517–26.

Rothman, S., & Hillman, K. (2008). *Career advice in Australian secondary schools: Use and usefulness*. Melbourne, VIC: Australian Council for Educational Research.

Springer, C.I., Colorado, G., & Misurell, J.R. (2015). Structured therapeutic games for nonoffending caregivers of children who have experienced sexual abuse. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 24(4), 412–28.

Stone, J., & Bray, S. (2015). Trauma and young children: How the problem plays out. *Advances in Early Education and Day Care*, 19, 177–211.

Szalavitz, M., & Perry, B.D. (2010). *Born for love: Why empathy is essential – and endangered*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Watt, L. (2016). Engaging hard to reach families: Learning from five 'outstanding' schools. *International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education*, 44(1), 32–43.

Wiebler, L.R. (2013). Developmental difference in response to trauma. In E. Rossen & R. Hull (Eds), *Supporting and educating traumatized students: A guide for school-based professionals* (pp. 37–47). New York, NY: OUP.

CHAPTER 8

THERE'LL BE CONSEQUENCES FOR THAT! TRAUMA-INFORMED STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE TEACHER PRACTICE

Grace Langton

Abstract

Educators are often looking for ways to manage and respond to students who display adverse behaviours. Given the compulsory nature of education, we need to provide opportunities for learning to all young people, including those who find the classroom to be a difficult environment or present with challenging behaviours. This chapter looks at the historical patterns of responding to adverse behaviour and explores emerging paradigms from trauma-aware practice. The chapter draws on the youth work and disability sectors and in particular youth work and disability frames of practice, including rights-based practices. The chapter is intended to add to a body of knowledge that aims to assist schools to reach and teach all young people.

Inclusive education

Education has been recognised as a human right since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. In Australia, young people with disabilities have the same rights to education as any other young people. They have the right to attend mainstream government, independent or Catholic schools, and these rights are protected by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the Disability Standards for Education (2005). The Disability Standards for Education (Department of Education, Skills and Employment n.d.) aim to give students all the same educational opportunities and choices.

It is unlikely that any school in Australia would describe itself as non-inclusive, yet for such a widely held and legally mandated principle, the term 'inclusive' has been difficult to define, in terms of both academic literature and practical implementation. Florian (2014) defines inclusive pedagogy as 'an approach to teaching and learning that supports teachers to respond to individual differences between learners but avoids the marginalisation that can occur when some students are treated differently'. According to Boyle and Anderson (2020), 'Inclusive education in its absolute form requires that all students, irrespective of ability, are educated in their local school through the provision of appropriate practices, pedagogies, and resources'.

However, the reality of many so-called inclusive practices is that they fit more cleanly into the definition of integration, where adjustments are made for individual students so that they can be educated within mainstream settings:

> When a student on the autism spectrum is 'included' in a busy and visually overwhelming mainstream classroom by issuing them with a pair of noise-cancelling headphones and a teacher aide to deal with the inevitable meltdowns, this is integration. Integration is business as usual with add-ons (Graham 2020).

The vast majority (89%) of students with disabilities attend mainstream schools and 71% of those students only attend 'regular' classes (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare n.d.). Inclusion, therefore, is the business of all educators. However, the classroom is acknowledged as a fundamentally difficult environment for some students, including many students with disabilities (Garnett 1996; Picard 2015). Education is compulsory and schools must provide opportunities for learning to all young people, including those young people who find school challenging or present with challenging behaviours. Most teachers would not ask a student with vision impairment to 'try and see better' but young people whose disability impacts on their executive functioning are asked to 'calm down', 'focus' or 'not get distracted'. Asking students to act like they do not have their disability is not inclusion and may do significant harm.

This chapter explores inclusive practice in four areas: strategies to support all students, including students with neurodevelopmental disabilities (NDD); whole-school approaches to student behaviour; youth work; and trauma-informed pedagogies. It explores the 'how' of inclusion; and the goal of creating learning environments that allow all students to feel safe and secure and to develop academically, socially and emotionally. Students who have NDD are a specific focus because too often these students find mainstream school environments challenging places to learn within and their teachers, despite the best of efforts and intentions, are also struggling to achieve inclusion goals. NDD are 'chronic disorders that affect the central nervous system during the developmental period in the domains of motor skills, cognition, communication, and/or behaviour' (Ismail & Shapiro 2019).

The term 'struggle' is used in this chapter to refer to students who may be 'well-behaved' but struggle silently because they find learning in classroom environment difficult, as well as students whose behaviour draws attention to their needs because they 'act out'. I believe that most students who present with challenging behaviours do want to succeed and be accepted at school, but they are struggling because the school system is not meeting their needs for safety, security and learning. There is much diversity to the student experience. Some young people who present with challenging behaviours at school do not have a medical diagnosis, while many students with diagnosed disabilities do not engage in challenging behaviours. We also know that students who have experienced trauma often struggle at school, yet do not get the individualised support they require:

> Challenging behaviour is defined in the social science and medical literature as behaviour that causes harm to the self or others, or interferes with a person's participation in public life … behaviour is 'challenging' when a society cannot

tolerate it and it results in public exclusion. Thus, 'challenging' behaviour is not only measured by biological characteristics but by what is deemed socially unacceptable (O'Connell 2017).

It is the belief of this author, supported by an ever-growing body of research, that the goals of inclusive education can be better realised through a trauma-informed approach (Ayre 2017; Nordhoff 2019). A trauma-informed approach has an emphasis on understanding and soothing the stress response and a robust social and emotional curriculum that is delivered via purposeful, relational work characterised by consistent and unrelenting, unconditional positive regard (Brunzell et al. 2019). Informed by a neuroscientific approach and drawing from the research around wellbeing, trauma-informed educators use a suite of practical, school- and classroom-specific strategies to 'reach and teach all young people' (Brunzell et al. 2015). When this occurs throughout the whole of a school or, even better, across school systems, we can move closer to the goal of inclusion.

The impact of disability on behaviour at school

The literature around the behaviour of young people in schools acknowledges that young people with disabilities are more likely than their non-disabled peers to present with challenging behaviours at school (Lory et al. 2020; Nicholls et al. 2019). Challenging behaviour is thought to be caused by a multiplicity of factors including biological, psychological, social and environmental features (National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (UK) 2015). Young people with disabilities are more likely to be described as impulsive, non-compliant, explosive or argumentative. These young people are also more at risk of developing psychosocial problems such as low self-esteem, depression and/or anxiety (Amerongenm & Mishna 2004).

Challenging behaviour presents a considerable barrier to the goal of inclusion (Crosland & Dunlap 2012; Roffey 2010). Students with disabilities are twice as likely to face school exclusion as compared to students without disabilities and there is mounting evidence that exclusionary discipline practices contribute to negative outcomes both in school and in adult life (Civil Rights Project at UCLA 2014). When not adequately supported, students with disabilities who engage in problematic behaviour are at significant risk of

educational disengagement. They are overrepresented in the juvenile and adult justice systems and experience higher unemployment and suicide rates (Australian Disability Clearinghouse for Education and Training n.d.).

Young people who display challenging behaviours in the classroom may irritate, annoy or frustrate their teachers and this can damage the quality of the student–teacher relationship (Ewe 2019). The student–teacher relationship is critical to the learning experience but students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), for example, generally feel less close to their teachers than other students and this aligns with their teachers' perceptions of them. Ewe (2019) found that teachers tend to define hyperactivity together with inattention as the most challenging student behaviour, causing teachers to 'experience less emotional closeness, less co-operation and more conflicts in their relations with their students with ADHD'. If we accept that young people are not being deliberately difficult or defiant, then the onus is on us as educators to create learning environments that better meet the needs of students with disabilities.

In order to explore how we may best meet the needs of all young people in schools, it is important to first understand historical and current approaches to student behaviour.

Approaches to student behaviour

Historically, the dominant approach to education in Australia has emphasised adult authority and the control of young people. Schools in Australia were expected to teach conformity and to keep the working class off the streets (Campbell 2014). Society, and schools as a microcosm of society, believed that bad behaviour could be punished away, that naming and shaming effectively discouraged poor behaviour and encouraged good behaviour because people would take the punishment of others as a warning to themselves. In Australia, there has been a gradual but significant shift away from punitive approaches to behaviour and towards more supportive approaches, reflecting societal shifts around the human and civil rights of those in society who are less powerful. There is also a significant body of evidence showing that punishment

is ineffective at preventing or responding to challenging behaviour (see e.g. Bryer & Beamish 2019; Deakin & Kupchik 2018). The use of punishments, particularly suspensions and exclusions, is linked to increases in challenging behaviour and even criticised as contributing to a 'school-to-prison pipeline' where students who are exposed to highly punitive environments are more likely to have interactions with the justice system post school (Mallett 2016).

Students who present with challenging behaviours are not being naughty, disrespectful or disobedient for no good reason (Shanker & Hopkins 2019). Challenging behaviour, rather, is a manifestation of complexities or difficulties those students are experiencing in life generally, and sometimes specifically, in response to the school environment (Michail 2011). When we know this, we understand that the only appropriate responses to challenging behaviour are ones characterised by support and care, not shame or punishment.

However, schools today still grapple with questions of how to manage behaviour and create fair and just discipline systems. Educators debate what rules and/or expectations are fair and they are challenged as to how to consistently enforce those rules. It is difficult to arrive at a consensus around how to deal with challenging behaviour. Some educators believe that a zero-tolerance, strict and punitive approach is best for young people. Others believe that schools should never give up supporting the young people they work with, and in between we find many shades of grey. School leaders are faced with making decisions as to what beliefs and practices must be adopted universally across their school and what are matters of personal preference and teaching style. Teachers who collaborate must navigate each other's approaches to students who present with challenging behaviours and it is important to note that these debates are not intellectual or abstract, but reflect strongly held ethical and moral beliefs of the people involved. The outcomes of interventions around challenging behaviour are also high stakes; these decisions impact on the lives of young people, sometimes significantly.

Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

In the last few decades, there has been an increasing focus on whole-of-school approaches that are designed around the PBIS framework. In Australia, there has been an increasing uptake of PBIS; however, the nomenclature for the approach varies. In NSW and QLD it is known as PBL (Positive Behaviours for Learning) and in Victoria it is known as SWPBS (School-Wide Positive Behaviour Support). With its origins in the science of behaviour analysis, PBIS holds that behaviour is not random, but a logical response of an individual to its environment (Carr et al. 2002).

PBIS was designed with the intention to remove a moral lens in addressing challenging behaviour. Behaviour is thought to be communication and, when students present with challenging behaviour, the goal should be to assess what unmet need the behaviour is communicating. Instead of thinking of behaviour as 'bad', PBIS asserts that all behaviour has a purpose and serves a function, and therefore the student is always behaving logically. If we can decode the logic, we can support the student to find other ways to behave that are better for them as well as for the people around them (Carr et al. 2002).

PBIS is not a curriculum or program – it is an approach – which means there are considerable differences in how it is understood and implemented (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports n.d.). The Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports defines PBIS as 'an evidence-based three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day' (Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports n.d.). PBIS focuses on the whole school as the unit of intervention and evidence-based interventions are tied to three tiers of support intensity. Tier 1 supports are universal and for every student in the school. If a student does not respond to these universal interventions, they receive increased supports (Tier 2) and if the student is still not responding, they receive Tier 3 interventions, which usually include intensive, targeted supports delivered by professionals who specialise in therapeutic work with young people with complex needs.

PBIS holds that the environment is a significant cause of challenging behaviour. Rather than centring the blame for the behaviour in the child, the approach looks to shape the environment to encourage and reinforce positive behaviours. Excellent teaching and learning environments should explicitly teach students prosocial skills, monitor the use of these social skills and provide students with opportunities to practise these skills in safe and supportive environments (Center on Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports n.d.). There is also an emphasis on giving students regular encouragement to reinforce the use of these positive behaviours in the form of praise and/or token economies, awards etc. (Scheuermann et al. 2018).

A core tenet of PBIS is that decisions are made with data to support them. Tier 2 and 3 interventions are guided by a functional behaviour analysis (FBA). An FBA is a structured process that gathers qualitative and quantitative data around a student's behaviour to identify the where, when and why of the behaviour of concern. Data analysis includes direct data, where the student's behaviour is observed over several periods in several settings, and indirect data, such as school records, teacher and caregiver interviews, questionnaires etc. A suite of tools has been developed to support this process including antecedent–behaviour–consequence charts (ABC charts), scatterplots and problem-behaviour questionnaires (Gable 2005).

The goal of the FBA is to arrive at a clear picture of the function of the student's behaviour. The function of the behaviour is usually to 'get something' (e.g. peer attention and approval) or to 'get away from something' (e.g. to avoid schoolwork). The function of the behaviour is considered more important than the form of behaviour because it is the function that drives the behaviour (Carr & Durand 1985). If we are seeking to change the behaviour, then we must find means for the student to meet their functional needs that are prosocial and contextually appropriate. Challenging behaviour rarely occurs in every setting a student interacts with, so the FBA should highlight the precipitating events (what happens before the behaviour occurs) and the settings that are most likely to see the behaviour occur (Gable 2005).

The FBA is then used to inform the design of a behaviour support plan (BSP) which has a focus on proactive and preventative strategies, reflecting research indicating these are the more effective ways to create behavioural change that is long-lasting and generalisable to all settings in a student's life (Gable 2005). An FBA should not be a one-off; data gathering is iterative and there should be ongoing monitoring of student responsiveness to the intervention to assess whether the intervention has led to decreases in problematic behaviour and increases in positive behaviour. If not, the process is revisited on the assumption that the FBA either did not correctly identify the function of the behaviour or did not result in a BSP that provided the student with ways to meet their functional needs without resorting to problematic behaviour. 'An FBA is not complete until an effective strategy is in place' (Eber 2003).

Critiques of PBIS

There is a growing chorus of voices, however, that are critical of the PBIS model. PBIS is described as a purely behaviouralist approach that does not give enough consideration to all the various factors that influence student behaviour or the factors that influence our (socially conditioned) responses to student behaviour.

PBIS is criticised for rewarding compliance in students to meet the needs of the school rather than the needs of the students (Bornstein 2015; Shindler 2018). Order is a necessary component of any effective school system, but compliance is not the higher goal – learning is – and many 'well-behaved' students have sat quietly in their classrooms without learning. This area of critique is particularly concerned with the use of rewards and reinforcements to encourage behaviours that are considered 'good' in a school or classroom but may not be 'good' for the student's personal development (Elias 2016). A child who is stressed, sad or worried and who is effectively rewarded for keeping their distress to themselves may be learning damaging lessons about behaviour, which may impede their wellbeing. Help-seeking behaviours, for example, are consistently associated with wellbeing (Wilson et al. 2011). When we reward compliance, we may risk discouraging students from communicating their needs.

Rewards such as stickers, tokens and behaviour charts are also criticised as extrinsic motivators that do little to encourage intrinsic motivation (Kohn & Company 1999). Teacher praise has attracted similar concerns; however, the literature around praise shows that it is a consistent feature of most strong teacher–student relationships (Morin n.d.). Landrum and Sweigart (2014) found that 'the evidence for providing praise or positive teacher attention to increase desirable behaviour is overwhelming'.

A significant critique of PBIS is that it is 'culturally neutral' which contributes to disproportionately poor outcomes for students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Bornstein 2015). Research in various international contexts, including Australia, shows that young people who are marginalised or disadvantaged – including young people with disabilities, Indigenous young people and young people in out-of-home care – are significantly overrepresented in both suspensions and repeat suspensions (Graham 2018). Many proponents of PBIS are working to build culturally responsive work into the PBIS approach. The US Department of Education's *PBIS implementation blueprint* states that:

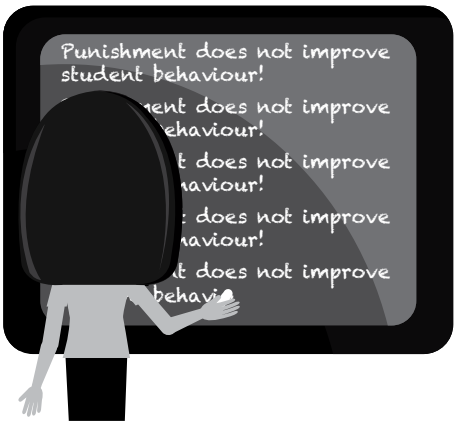
> Behavior support strategies should reflect the cultural learning history of students, staff, and family and community members … Systems that are tailored to the needs and preferences of the local students, families, and community are more likely to be effective than those that are implemented in a generic format (Lewis et al. 2016).

Culturally responsive positive behaviour support responds to these critiques and is a welcome advance on the model (Leverson et al. 2016). However, PBIS is associated with specific practices (such as FBAs and BSPs) and tools (such as ABC charts). Having viewed many examples of these, I am yet to see any that prompt those in charge of behavioural interventions to consider cultural responsiveness as a critical element of their practice. Furthermore, detractors of the approach highlight the need for schools and educators to critically examine their own behaviours. School rules, expectations and behaviour plans reflect the norms and practices of the dominant culture and therefore may maintain the privileges enjoyed by the powerful while continuing to marginalise the vulnerable. Racial disparities in how young people are disciplined have been shown to happen even when students behave in the same manner (Okonofua & Eberhardt 2015). It is unclear how the PBIS approach helps address the implicit biases of adults who work in schools.

Another criticism of PBIS concerns the use of aversive techniques designed to discourage certain behaviours and whether the use of these techniques respects the human rights and dignity of the student, for example, ignoring a student in distress because they are attention-seeking and staff do not want to reinforce that behaviour or withholding and/or giving food as a reinforcement of 'good' behaviour. Restraint and seclusion practices (including time-out rooms) can breach fundamental human rights including autonomy, bodily integrity and liberty. These practices should only happen in absolute last-resort situations because they risk psychological and physical harm and they are degrading to the student. Australian schools are required to reduce, and wherever possible eliminate, practices of restraint and seclusion, but there is evidence that they are used and not only

in last-resort situations, and that students with disabilities are the group most impacted (Poed et al. 2020). Aversive practices are vehemently opposed in the literature concerning PBIS (Carr et al. 2002). However, there are questions as to whether or not a PBIS approach does enough to prevent these practices occurring in schools. Jarmolowicz and Tetreault (2015) found that punishment is used in schools 'more frequently than expected'. They also found that aversive control is underexplored in the literature, which indicates a need for more research into its use or otherwise.

Consequences – code for punishment?



Coercive or punitive strategies based on control are unlikely to result in lasting behaviour change across settings (Wills et al. 2019). Punishments may have immediate impacts but they do not last, and if they suppress student behaviours rather than replacing them with more appropriate behaviours, students will often attempt to meet their needs in other, usually problematic ways (Gable et al. 2000). It is not unusual to hear educators say something along the lines of 'There needs to be consequences for these behaviours'. As neutral as this statement sounds, they are never talking about good consequences for good behaviour, they are referring to bad consequences for bad behaviour. In effect, the word 'consequences' is being used here as code for punishment.

All behaviours have consequences and those consequences can be positive or negative. If I threaten another student, I may be removed from the school for the day to keep myself and others safe, but equally, if I smile at my teacher, she may spend a little more time helping me with a task. Conversations with students about the consequences of their behaviours can play an important part in supporting behavioural change, but the word should not be used to justify using punitive responses to challenging behaviour which we know to be ineffective. Using the term in this way may even weaken the efforts of educators who do use the term appropriately. Consequences can also inadvertently reinforce challenging behaviours. A common example of this in schools is that students act up to avoid work. If they are exited from the classroom, that behaviour has worked and is likely to continue.

PBIS is an improvement to the traditionally punitive and one-size-fits-all approach to student behaviour, but there is much variance in the understanding of and implementation of the PBIS approach. It is difficult to draw clear conclusions about its effectiveness, particularly

when looking for evidence of academic improvement rather than purely the prevention of problematic behaviour (James et al. 2019). The critiques of PBIS raise important questions for schools to consider as they build whole-school approaches to challenging student behaviour. The next section of this chapter considers how key principles and practices from the youth work and disability sectors, as well as from the field of trauma-informed education, can support and improve whole-of-school approaches to student behaviour.

Youth work

In youth work, the young person is the primary consideration (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) 2007). Youth workers should always be guided by the best interests of the young people they work with (Corney 2014). This means that a young person should be supported to have their wellbeing needs met, rather than made to be compliant purely for the benefit of others. Young people are also viewed as being of value for who they are and where they are right now, not just for their value as potential adults. Youth work principles have a focus on the social context of young people and strive to engage in intentionally anti-oppressive practices that respond to and try to improve the social conditions that young people experience. Another core principle of youth work is the notion of meaningful participation: that young people should have a say in the decision-making that affects them (YACVic 2007).

Disability work

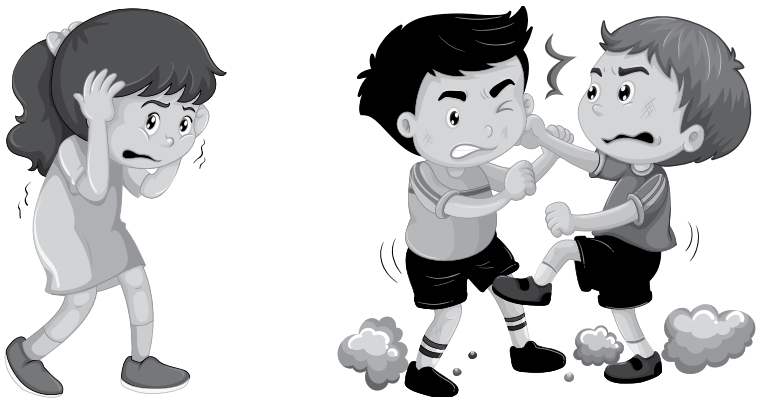
The National Standards for Disability Services
1. Rights: The service promotes individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination and decision-making and actively prevents abuse, harm, neglect and violence.
2. Participation and Inclusion: The service works with individuals and families, friends and carers to promote opportunities for meaningful participation and active inclusion in society.
3. Individual Outcomes: Services and supports are assessed, planned, delivered and reviewed to build on individual strengths and enable individuals to reach their goals.

Source: Dinneen (n.d.)

The National Standards for Disability Services also focus on the rights of the individual, their meaningful participation and active inclusion, and the importance of self-determination. Self-determination as a principle states that people with disabilities should be able to self-advocate, set their own goals and be involved in making their own life decisions (Center for Excellence in Disabilities n.d.). Self-determination is correlated to positive outcomes in in education and overall improved quality of life (Wehmeyer 2003).

Youth work and disability pedagogies are both guided by a commitment to strengths-based practice, where people are viewed holistically as opposed to taking a deficit approach that focuses solely on the challenges a person faces. Whole-school approaches to wellbeing and behaviour would benefit from ensuring that students who present with challenging behaviours are planned for in ways that accord with these frameworks. Approaches to student behaviour should not be guided by what is good for the school and other students if this conflicts with the best interests of the young person who is being targeted by an intervention. The needs of the school and other students are important, but it is not a zero-sum game; the goal should always be to serve the best interests of the young person in ways that also respond appropriately to the needs of others in the school community.

Neurodevelopmental disability



Source: Misbehaviour or stress behaviour, Shanker & Hopkins (2019)

Increasing attention is being directed to the sensory needs of young people with NDD (Dellapiazza et al. 2020; Ohta et al. 2020; Parks et al. 2020). Little et al. (2017) found that young people with NDD respond differently to sensory stimuli than neurotypical young people and highlight that sensory processing differences can affect the capacity of a young person to learn. Research on the commonalities between key behavioural symptoms of both autism and ADHD may indicate shared neural mechanisms for both conditions. Both autism and ADHD are also associated with impaired executive functioning (Miranda et al. 2017) and both groups are at increased risk of academic underachievement (Mayes et al. 2020).

A meta-analysis of 74 interventions for students with ADHD found that many interventions target educational achievement, but the focus of the intervention is behavioural control. It found that there is a commonly held but false belief that improvement in behaviour leads to improvement in educational attainment (Purdie et al. 2002). This report concludes that educational success for students with ADHD requires the use of strategies that directly address academic difficulties, rather than focusing only on behaviour. Educational interventions should focus on classroom management and the learning environment using strategies such as reduced noise levels, structured classroom environments, frequent breaks from learning, social skills instruction, cooperative learning and peer tutoring (Purdie et al. 2002).

There is limited research on the implementation of school-based interventions designed specifically for students with autism or other NDD; however, the literature reinforces the need for schools to engage young people and to try to understand their perspectives and to use that information to plan more effective supports (Tesfaye et al. 2019). This finding accords with the position of the youth and disability sectors that meaningful participation is a critical aspect of any effective program or intervention.

Before schools attempt to change a behaviour, they should understand what the behaviour may provide to that young person's sensory system. Stimming, wriggling, fidgeting, ritualised behaviours and an intense focus on special interests are all behaviours associated with autism and/or ADHD that are increasingly being understood as coping mechanisms which support self-regulation (Delahooke 2020). We should consider whose best interests are served by asking students to stop engaging in behaviours that self-soothe. Rather than correcting them for distracting others, we should ask ourselves: Why are these coping mechanisms presenting? What is upsetting this student's nervous system and what can I do to help them feel safe? (Burgess 2018). Again, this links to key principles from the youth work and disability sectors. If the young person is our primary consideration, we will not seek to shut down behaviours purely for the benefit of others, especially if this has the potential to cause harm to the young person.

Trauma-informed practice

Source: Shanker & Hopkins (2019)

Trauma-informed education acknowledges that many students encounter daily challenges which impact on their ability to learn and that schools need to provide specialised strategies to meaningfully support those students (Brunzell et al. 2015). Trauma-informed education responds to the neurological, biological, psychological and social effects of trauma and adversity of students. Trauma-informed educators respond to their students holistically, with consideration of their life experiences and their home and school environments. Trauma-informed educators understand that behaviours may be adaptations to trauma (National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health n.d.). Like the PBIS model, trauma-informed approaches target the whole-school environment but provide increased levels of support to students whose needs are not being met by those universal interventions.

Brunzell, Stokes and Waters (2015) found that trauma-informed education is focused on two main themes: (1) strengthening regulatory abilities and repairing dysregulated stress responses; and (2) rebuilding relational capacities through the nurturing of strong student–teacher relationships. These goals are achieved through the creation of safe, secure and supportive learning environments and the provision of activities designed to build capacity for both physical and emotional regulation:

> Physical regulation activities seek to align the body through sensory integration and rely heavily on rhythm, repetition, and routine. Emotional regulation activities aim to help the young person to identify, acknowledge, label, understand, and work with difficult feelings … acquire and practise strategies for de-escalating emotions; and learn how to return to a comfortable state after arousal (Stokes et al. 2016).

The relationship with the teacher is critical; to self-regulate, we must have ample opportunities to learn from adults who help us regulate. The term 'co-regulate' is used to describe how adults use their social skills to support the regulation of a young person. Butler and Randal (2012) define co-regulation as 'a bidirectional linkage of oscillating emotional channels between partners, which contributes to emotional stability for both partners'. Teachers who are experts in co-regulation help students through difficult moments in ways that build their capacity to manage independently in the future.

Also fundamental to a trauma-informed approach is the notion of unconditional positive regard. No one ever changed for someone who didn't like them. Meaningful, lasting and generalisable change is only achieved when people themselves want to behave differently and are supported to do so by people who care about them. Carl Rodgers, who coined the term 'unconditional positive regard', is quoted as saying:

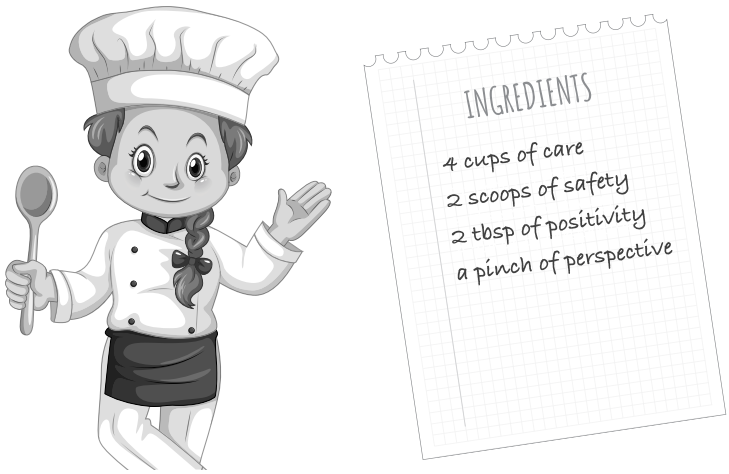
> In my early professional years, I was asking the question: How can I treat, or cure, or change this person? Now I would phrase the question in this way: How can I provide a relationship which this person may use for his [sic] own personal growth? (Gregory 2018).

Unconditional positive regard separates the student from their behaviour. We may not tolerate racism in our classrooms, but we do not call a young person a racist. The goal is to create relationships and environments that encourage positive behaviours and to do this we must see a young person as having inherent value and as being capable of growth and development.

A neuroscientific understanding of the impact of trauma on the brain has added significant insights to our understanding of behaviour. Critical neurodevelopmental pathways are negatively impacted on by trauma and these developmental effects can significantly compromise a young person's ability to learn (Brunzell et al. 2016). Young people who are trauma-affected show decreased cognitive facilities and reduced executive functioning skills and often struggle to form long-lasting positive relationships with peers and adults (Brunzell et al. 2015).

Executive functioning skills are the attention-regulation skills that allow students to maintain focus and attention, retain information, control impulsivity, cope with feelings of frustration, understand the impact of their behaviour, self-reflect on their behaviour and plan. Executive functioning skills are considered central to student success and achievement at school (Zelazo et al. n.d.). Stephen Porges writes about the negative impact of faulty neuroception, which he defines as 'an inability to detect accurately whether the environment is safe, or another person is trustworthy' (2004). Faulty neuroception can make daily experiences a challenge. Porges emphasises the critical importance of understanding what nervous systems need to feel safe. He describes safety as an essential prerequisite for prosocial behaviour and for accessing the higher brain structures that enable learning (Porges 2015).

A trauma-informed approach to inclusion



There are commonalities between the needs of students who have experienced trauma and students with NDD. Trauma changes the way the brain develops. Trauma-affected young people can be described as having acquired neurodivergence, whereas students who are diagnosed with NDD are born neurodivergent (Chapman 2020). Living with a disability can also be traumatic for young people for many reasons including the stigmatisation they face and having to interact with systems that are not designed for their needs and preferences. Students with NDD and students who have experienced trauma will benefit from similar approaches to teaching and learning.

The literature clarifies that it is hard to identify and compare the various factors at play around behaviour interventions and their effectiveness, but Lory et al. (2020) found that significantly stronger effects were found in interventions that used natural intervention agents such as teachers and staff in the school. They also found that interventions incorporating visual prompts and participant preferences generated significant reductions in challenging behaviour. Whole-school approaches to behaviour can be improved by adopting a trauma-informed approach characterised by a focus on universal strategies to create a safe and positive learning environment where students

are taught by teachers who care about them and who deliver explicit teaching around emotional literacy, self-regulation and behaviour. The relationship with the teacher and other staff in the school is critical. Students should feel accepted and valued, even (and perhaps especially) when they engage in challenging behaviour. Schools should be routine-rich, predictable and safe environments that are attentive to meeting the sensory needs of students and soothing the stress responses of students in moments of difficulty (Brunzell et al. 2015; Taylor 2020).

A trauma-informed approach to inclusion also challenges what is referred to in psychological research as *fundamental attribution error*. Students who have experienced trauma often find that people around them attribute their difficulties in functioning and wellbeing to inherent flaws in their personality, instead of understanding that these characteristics are developed in response to their environment and the experience of trauma. Orsati and Causton-Theoharis (2013) found that teachers can label students problematic or challenging themselves, rather than as students who engage in challenging behaviours, and when this happens they are more likely to exclude students than support them.

Recent research on executive functions suggests students with learning disabilities often have deficits in their working memory systems and executive functions. They are more likely to have difficulty planning, self-regulating and self-monitoring (Matheson & MacCormack 2015). Creating environments that support people to develop more positive ways of behaving must start with due consideration of the impacts of trauma, disability or structural disadvantage on that person. The following table highlights some specific ways that we can reframe our understandings of student behaviour to better respond to the needs of the young person.

Behaviour	What we may think	Take the disability into consideration
Not obeying us	• Doing it purposely • Attention seeking • Stubborn	• Struggles with translating directions into actions • Doesn't understand
Repeating mistakes	• Not trying • Manipulative	• Doesn't understand cause & effect • Difficulty generalising from one event to another
Not paying attention	• Lazy, unmotivated • Doesn't care • Seeking attention • Bothering others	• Wrong learning style • Exhausted or tired of failing • Neurologically based need to move
Poor social interactions	• Poor parenting • May have experienced trauma	• Not able to interpret social cues • Does not know what to do in social settings
Overly physical	• Violent • Doing it to bother other people • Deviancy	• Hyper or hypo sensitive to touch • Does not understand boundaries
Not completing a task	• Intentionally ignoring instructions • Undisciplined • Lazy	• Difficulty transitioning between tasks • Struggles with organising mental tasks • Memory impairments
Not responding	• Ignoring questions or directions • Being disrespectful • Has a bad attitude	• Slow processing speed • Issues with verbal comprehension • Hearing impairments
Meltdowns	• Inappropriate • Immature • Disobedient	• Sensory overload • Overwhelmed • Poor fit between environment and their needs

Source: Center for Psychological and Educational Assessment Atlanta/Marietta

When we understand the impact that NDD and/or trauma can have on the central nervous system and, resultingly, on a young person's executive functioning, then we can see better ways to support students who find the classroom or school environment a challenging place to be. Effective learning and prosocial behaviour can only occur when students feel safe and secure. Our priority is to soothe the young person's nervous system and this is best achieved by making changes to the behaviour of people around the student and to their environment (Delahooke 2020; Shanker & Hopkins 2019).

Whose voices are we listening to?

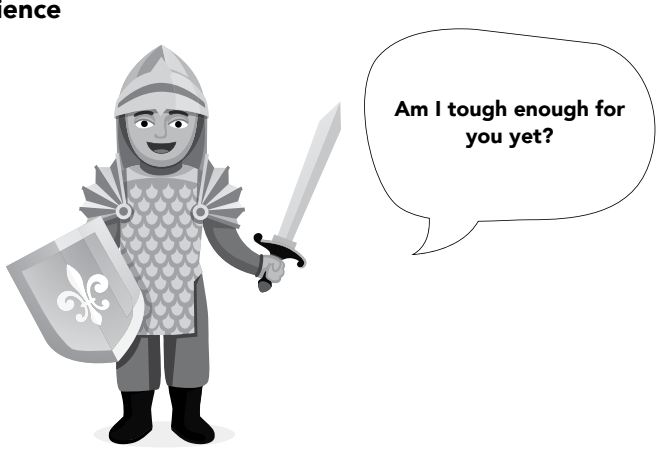
If we wish to meet the needs of neurodivergent students, then we must listen to those students and we must listen to adults who can reflect on the ways that their school experiences helped or harmed them. While we must be guided by the best evidence that is available to us, this evidence should not exclusively come from peer-reviewed research. The core principle of meaningful participation that is espoused by the youth work and disability sectors tells us that the voices of the young people we work with in schools are critically important to the design of whole-of-school approaches. It is also important to listen to the perspectives of adults on the impact that behavioural interventions had on them and their lives. I have learned a lot by listening to the voices of autistic adults. I have been greatly moved by the stories of people who were taught to mask their instinctual behaviours, who were discouraged from embracing their special interests, who were constantly told to 'act normal' to not get in the way of other people's learning, who were explicitly taught how to engage with neurotypical students, but never sat in a classroom with neurotypical students who had been taught how to engage appropriately with them. These practices are not fair, they are not inclusive and they do not appropriately embrace the diversity of the human experience. The term 'neurodiversity' is increasingly being used to encompass all students, both neurotypical and neurodivergent, and therefore offers a new and more sophisticated way to understand inclusion:

> The neurodiversity movement reframes neurologically based conditions as forms of diversity that can afford benefits to society rather than as medical conditions to cure or eradicate. It recognizes that neurological variations can provide richness to society, just as biodiversity provides variety to the natural world (Gobbo & Shmulsky n.d.).

Some rules should be revolted against

The book *Troublemakers: Lessons in freedom from young children at school* flips the standard narrative and asks what we can learn from students who have traditionally been thought of as troublemakers (Shalaby 2017). She highlights that the non-compliance some students display contains truths about problems in our school environments. If we reward compliance above all other behaviours, then we risk shutting down important messages we should be responding to. We should value our truth-tellers. If all the student leaders in our schools are the academically successful and well-behaved students, then we are missing opportunities to learn from the diverse mix of students who attend our schools. Schools that speak of valuing diversity and inclusion on their websites or in their strategic planning documents should think it incumbent on themselves to meaningfully consult with neurodivergent young people as well as other young people who find school a difficult place to be.

A note on resilience



I want to briefly draw attention to how often young people with disabilities are asked to be resilient and how often their parents are asked to consider the struggles of their children as 'opportunities to build resilience'. To quote my favourite podcast:

> My kids have been resilient from the moment they were born. My family doesn't have to learn this, there's other kids here that haven't sniffed any resilience, mine have to be resilient every single day! (Too Peas in a Podcast – A Podcast by Mandy Hose & Kate Jones, n.d.).

It is not fair to constantly demand resilience from our most vulnerable students. Resilience is important for all young people, but young people who struggle at school don't need to toughen up. What they need is to belong to communities of support that care enough to remove at least some of their 'opportunities to build resilience'.

Consistency – an impossible ask and task. Or is it?

Definition of *consistency* noun

con·sis·ten·cy | \kən-ˈsi-stən(t)-sē\
plural consistencies

- agreement or harmony of parts or features to one another or a whole
- harmony of conduct or practice

Source: Mirriam-Webster (n.d.)

Schools are often searching for perfect systems around behaviour that they can apply with rigorous consistency and fairness, but this is an impossible goal. We should always strive to be fair but when we work with the diversity of students who exist within the school system, but absolute consistency can never be fair. There are always compelling reasons to treat a student differently. No sooner is an absolute rule arrived at, than a reasonable exemption is identified. In the USA a school with a zero-tolerance policy around knives at school suspended a young student with no history of violence or aggression whose mother had put a small paring knife in their lunchbox to cut up an apple (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force 2008). I highlight this because if rules around knives at school are hard to be completely consistent on, no wonder it is so difficult to arrive at consistent approaches to school uniforms or homework or attendance issues.

We need to ask ourselves, is student compliance our goal or do we want young people to be happy, and healthy, enjoy learning and treat other people with kindness and compassion? Critics of the latter dismiss this goal by saying it is utopian, unrealistic and unachievable, but so is complete compliance. What can and should be consistent in a school is a shared understanding of values. These values should drive every decision made by an adult in the school. These values should be taught explicitly to students and wherever possible students should understand why adults make the decisions that they do. We can also be consistent in our application of unconditional positive regard for all students. Unconditional positive regard is the minimum acceptable standard; every young person we work with should know and feel that we value them and care about their wellbeing.

> No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship (James Comer 1995, cited by Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development n.d.).

This chapter has attempted to clarify some ideas about how to implement whole-of-school approaches in order to more effectively meet the needs of all young people including trauma-affected and neurodivergent young people. It is my opinion that these principles can be incorporated into the PBIS approach. Alternatively, if a school does not

align with PBIS, then there are features of PBIS that should be included in any approach to student behaviour: gathering robust data to support interventions, considering what function might be driving behaviour and focusing on universal supports but increasing the level of support as necessary to help the students who are most in need. Increasingly, however, I find myself in agreement with Fonagy et al. (2014), who argue that 'an eclectic approach, consisting of different interventions, based on a careful analysis of a particular individual's needs, is most likely to provide the flexibility that is needed to personalise appropriate support for a young person's education'.

Finally, just in case there is any doubt about my position: behaviour is our job as teachers! The students who are hardest to teach need us the most and stand to benefit the most from our work when it is done well. When inclusion is done well, we can effect significant and potentially life-changing differences for vulnerable young people. The benefit of a trauma-informed approach to behaviour is not just for students who are trauma-affected or have NDD. A trauma-informed approach that encompasses core features of youth and disability pedagogies can create a safe, caring and supportive school environment which is optimal for all students. The work may not always be easy, but it is possible, and our world can only be a better place when diversity is recognised and embraced, and all young people can learn, grow and thrive in their schools.

***A note on language:** After much consideration, person-first language has been used in this chapter, reflecting the following advice from People with Disability Australia (PWDA):

> PWDA, other Disabled People's Organisations, governments, government and non-government institutions predominantly use 'person-first' language when referring to people with disability. Generally, this is on the basis that a person's disability should not be *unnecessarily* focused on. Both person-first and identity-first language are used in Australia to refer to people with disability, or disabled people. People with disability often have very strong preferences for either identity-first, or person-first language. Non-disabled people need to be led by, respect and affirm each individual person with disability's choice of language they use about themselves (PWDA n.d.).

References

American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force. (2008). Are zero tolerance policies effective in the schools? An evidentiary review and recommendations. *American Psychologist*, 63(9), 852–862. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.63.9.852>.

Amerongenm, M., & Mishna, F. (2004). Learning disabilities and behavior problems. *Psychoanalytic Social Work*, 11, 33–53. <https://doi.org/10.1300/J032v11n02_03>.

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. (n.d.). Nine powerful practices – Educational leadership. Viewed 18 January 2021. <www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr08/vol65/num07/Nine-Powerful-Practices.aspx>.

Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET). (n.d.) *The impact of a specific learning disability in education*. ADCET Home. (n.d.). ADCET. Viewed 21 December 2020. <www.adcet.edu.au>.

Ayre, D.K. (2017). Child trauma and the challenge of inclusive education. ACES in Education. <www.acesconnection.com/g/aces-in-education/blog/child-trauma-and-the-challenge-of-inclusive-education>.

Bornstein, J. (2015). 'If they're on Tier 1, there are really no concerns that we can see': PBIS medicalizes compliant behavior. *Journal of Ethnographic & Qualitative Research*, 22(9), 247–267.

Boyle, C., & Anderson, J. (2020). The justification for inclusive education in Australia. *Prospects*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-020-09494-x>.

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2016). Trauma-informed flexible learning: Classrooms that strengthen regulatory abilities. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 7, 218. <https://doi.org/10.18357/ijcyfs72201615719>.

Brunzell, T., Stokes, H., & Waters, L. (2019). Shifting teacher practice in trauma-affected classrooms: Practice pedagogy strategies within a trauma-informed positive education model. *School Mental Health*, 11(3), 600–614. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-018-09308-8>.

Brunzell, T., Waters, L., & Stokes, H. (2015). Teaching with strengths in trauma-affected students: A new approach to healing and growth in the classroom. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 85(1), 3–9. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ort0000048>.

Bryer, F., & Beamish, W. (2019). Western perspectives on teaching, learning, and behaviour. *Behavioural Support for Students with Special Educational Needs*, 3–23. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-7177-6_1>.

Burgess, C.C. (2018). Reframing autism spectrum disorder: ASD through a neuropsychological lens. *Self Regulation Institute*, 2(1). <https://selfregulationinstitute.org/journal/current_issue/volume-2-issue-1>.

Butler, E.A., & Randall, A.K. (2012). Emotional coregulation in close relationships: Emotion review. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1754073912451630>.

Campbell, C. (2014). Adolescence and the school. DEHANZ. <https://dehanz.net.au/entries/adolescence-school>.

Carr, E.G., Dunlap, G., Horner, R.H., Koegel, R.L., Turnbull, A.P., Sailor, W., Anderson, J.L., Albin, R.W., Koegel, L.K., & Fox, L. (2002). Positive behavior support: Evolution of an applied science. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 4(1), 4–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10983007020040010 2>.

Carr, E.G., & Durand, M.V. (1985). Reducing behavior problems through functional communication training. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 18(2), 111–126. <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1307999/>.

Center for Excellence in Disabilities. (n.d.). Self-determination. Viewed 26 January 2021. <http://cedwvu.org/resources/self-determination>.

Center for Psychological & Educational Assessment Atlanta. (n.d.). Home. Viewed 26 January 2021. <www.atlantachildpsych.com>.

Chapman, R. (2020). *Defining neurodiversity for research and practice* (pp. 218–220). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429322297-21>.

Civil Rights Project at UCLA. (n.d.). Are we closing the school discipline gap? Viewed 26 January 2021. <www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/resources/projects/center-for-civil-rights-remedies/school-to-prison-folder/federal-reports/are-we-closing-the-school-discipline-gap/AreWeClosingTheSchoolDisciplineGap_FINAL221.pdf>.

Crosland, K., & Dunlap, G. (2012). Effective strategies for the inclusion of children with autism in general education classrooms: Behavior modification. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0145445512442682>.

Deakin, J., & Kupchik, A. (2018). Managing behaviour: From exclusion to restorative practices. In J. Deakin, E. Taylor & A. Kupchik (Eds), *The Palgrave International handbook of school discipline, surveillance, and social control* (pp. 511–527). Springer International. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71559-9_26>.

Delahooke, M. (2020). *Beyond behaviours: Using Brain science and compassion to understand and solve children's behavioural challenges*. Hachette UK.

Dellapiazza, F., Michelon, C., Vernhet, C., Muratori, F., Blanc, N., Picot, M.-C., & Baghdadli, A. (2020). Sensory processing related to attention in children with ASD, ADHD, or typical development: Results from the ELENA cohort. *European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01516-5>.

Department of Education, Skills and Employment. (n.d.). The Disability Standards for Education 2005. Viewed 26 January 2021. <www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005>.

Dinneen, F. (n.d.). National Standards for Disability Services. 23.

Eber, L. (2003). The art & science of wraparound. Forum on Education at Indian University. <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=FNw7OAAACAAJ>.

Elias, M. J. (2016). Student autonomy, compliance, and intrinsic motivation. Edutopia. <www.edutopia.org/blog/student-autonomy-compliance-and-intrinsic-motivation-maurice-elias>.

Ewe, L.P. (2019). ADHD symptoms and the teacher–student relationship: A systematic literature review. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*. <www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13632752.2019.1597562>.

Florian, L. (2014). What counts as evidence of inclusive education? *European Journal of Special Needs Education*. <www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08856257.2014.933551>.

Fonagy, P., Cottrell, D., Phillips, J., Bevington, D., Glaser, D., & Allison, E. (2014). *What works for whom? A critical review of treatments for children and adolescents* (2nd edn). Guilford Publications.

Gable, R.A. (2005). Functional assessment of classroom behavior problems. *Impact*, 18(2), 16–17. <https://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/182/over8.html>.

Gable, R.A., & Hendrickson, J.M. (2000). Strategies for maintaining positive behavior change stemming from functional behavioral assessment in schools. *Education & Treatment of Children*, 23(3), 286–297. <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.newcastle.edu.au/docview/202663601?accountid=10499>.

Garnett, K. (1996). Thinking about inclusion and learning disabilities: A teacher's guide. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED396486>.

Gobbo, K., & Shmulsky, S. (2019). Should neurodiversity culture influence how instructors teach? *Academic Exchange Quarterly*, 23(4), 7.

Graham, L.J. (2018). Questioning the impacts of legislative change on the use of exclusionary discipline in the context of broader system reforms: A Queensland case-study. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. <www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2018.1540668>.

Graham, L.J. (2020). Inclusive education for the 21st century: Theory, policy and practice. </z-wcorg>.

Gregory, E. (2018). Carl Rogers' 'techniques' for daily life. *Psychology Today*. <www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-secular-shepherd/201804/carl-rogers-techniques-daily-life>.

Ismail, F.Y., & Shapiro, B.K. (2019). What are neurodevelopmental disorders? *Current Opinion in Neurology,* 32(4), 611–616. <https://doi.org/10.1097/WCO.0000000000000710>.

James, A.G., Noltemeyer, A., Ritchie, R., Palmer, K., & University, M. (2019). Longitudinal disciplinary and achievement outcomes associated with school-wide PBIS implementation level. *Psychology in the Schools*, 56(9), 1512–1521. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22282>.

Jarmolowicz, D.P., & Tetreault, A.S. (2015). Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support as behavior analysis in practice: Why is this even controversial? *Behavior Analysis in Practice*, 8(1), 86. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40617-015-0056-1>.

Kohn, A., & Company, H.M. (1999). Punished by rewards: The trouble with gold stars. Incentive Plans, A's, Praise, and Other Bribes. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/summary?doi=10.1.1.606.7632>.

Landrum, T.J., & Sweigart, C.A. (2014). Simple, evidence-based interventions for classic problems of emotional and behavioral disorders. *Beyond Behavior*, 23(3), 3–9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/107429561402300302>.

Lewis, T.J., Barrett, S., Sugai, G., Horner, R.H., Mitchell, B.S., & Starkey, D. (2016). National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. 53.

Lory, C., Mason, R.A., Davis, J.L., Wang, D., Kim, S.Y., Gregori, E., & David, M. (2020). A meta-analysis of challenging behavior interventions for students with developmental disabilities in inclusive school settings. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders,* 50(4), 1221–1237. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-019-04329-x>.

Mallett, C.A. (2016). The school-to-prison pipeline: From school punishment to rehabilitative inclusion. *Preventing school failure: Alternative education for children and youth*. <www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1045988X.2016.1144554>.

Matheson, I., & MacCormack, J. (2015). Understanding executive function and learning disabilities. LD@school. <www.ldatschool.ca/understanding-ef-and-lds>.

Mayes, S.D., Waschbusch, D.A., Calhoun, S.L., & Mattison, R.E. (2020). How common are academic overachievement and underachievement in children with autism or ADHD? *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 32(5), 775–783. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10882-019-09719-8>.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Definition of consistency. Viewed 22 December 2020. <www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consistency>.

Michail, S. (2011). Understanding school responses to students' challenging behaviour: A review of literature. *Improving Schools*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480211407764>.

Miranda, A., Berenguer, C., Roselló, B., Baixauli, I., & Colomer, C. (2017). Social cognition in children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder: Associations with executive functions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01035>.

Morin, A. (n.d.). The power of effective praise: A guide for teachers. Viewed 21 December 2020. <www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/classroom-management/the-power-of-effective-praise-a-guide-for-teachers>.

National Collaborating Centre for Mental Health (UK). (2015). Challenging behaviour and learning disabilities: Prevention and interventions for people with learning disabilities whose behaviour challenges. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (UK). <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK305019>.

National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health (n.d.). Trauma-informed care. *Emerging Minds*. Viewed 19 December 2020. <https://emergingminds.com.au/our-work/guiding-principles/trauma>.

Nicholls, G., Hastings, R.P., & Grindle, C. (2019). Prevalence and correlates of challenging behaviour in children and young people in a special school setting. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*. <www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08856257.2019.1607659>.

Nordhoff, K. (2019). Introduction to trauma-informed classrooms: Inclusive learning strategies for educators. Center for Education Equity (MAEC).

O'Connell, K. (2017). Should we take the 'disability' out of discrimination laws? Students with challenging behaviour and the definition of disability. *Law in Context: A Socio-Legal Journal*, 35(2), 108–128. <https://doi.org/10.26826/law-in-context.v35i2.20>.

Ohta, H., Aoki, Y.Y., Itahashi, T., Kanai, C., Fujino, J., Nakamura, M., Kato, N., & Hashimoto, R. (2020). White matter alterations in autism spectrum disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder in relation to sensory profile. *Molecular Autism*, 11(1), 77. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13229-020-00379-6>.

Okonofua, J.A., & Eberhardt, J.L. (2015). Two strikes: Race and the disciplining of young students. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797615570365>.

Orsati, F.T., & Causton-Theoharis, J. (2013). Challenging control: Inclusive teachers' and teaching assistants' discourse on students with challenging behaviour. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. <www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2012.689016>.

Parks, K.M.A., Schulz, S., McDonnell, C.G., Anagnostou, E., Nicolson, R., Kelley, E., Georgiades, S., Crosbie, J., Schachar, R., Liu, X., & Stevenson, R.A. (2020). Sensory processing in ASD and ADHD: A confirmatory factor analysis [preprint]. *PsyArXiv*. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/myjbq>.

People with disability in Australia. (n.d.). Engagement in education. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Viewed 26 January 2021. <www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/education-and-skills/engagement-in-education>.

People with Disability Australia. (n.d.). Identity-first vs person-first language. Viewed 18 January 2021. <https://pwd.org.au/resources/disability-info/language-guide/identity-vs-person>.

Picard, D. (2015). Teaching students with disabilities. Vanderbilt University. <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/disabilities>.

Poed, S., Cologon, K., & Jackson, R. (2020). Gatekeeping and restrictive practices by Australian mainstream schools: Results of a national survey. International *Journal of Inclusive Education*. <www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13603116.2020.1726512>.

Porges, S. (2004). Neuroception: A subconscious system for detecting threats and safety. *Zero to Three*, 24, 19–24.

Porges, S.W. (2015). Making the world safe for our children: Down-regulating defence and up-regulating social engagement to 'optimise' the human experience. *Children Australia*, 40(2), 114–123. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cha.2015.12>.

Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports (PBIS). (n.d.). Home. Viewed 21 December 2020. <www.pbis.org>.

Purdie, N., Hattie, J., & Carroll, A. (2002). A review of the research on interventions for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder: What works best? *Review of Educational Research*, 72(1), 61–99. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072001061>.

Roffey, S. (2010). Classroom support for including students with challenging behaviour. In *Confronting obstacles to inclusion: International Responses to developing inclusive education* (pp. 279–292). <https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws%3A10311>.

Scheuermann, B., Hall, J., Sprick, R., Knight, J., Reinke, W., McKale, T., Brophy, J., & Good, T. (2018). Chapter 8: Effective classroom practices. (p. 56).]

Shalaby, C. (2017). Troublemakers: Lessons in freedom from young children at school. </z-wcorg>.

Shanker, S., & Hopkins, S. (2019). *Self-reg schools: A handbook for educators*. Pearson Education Australia. <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=npX6ygEACAAJ>.

Shindler, J. (n.d.). Procrustes, 'positive interventions' and the limiting influence of using PBIS strategies on the growth of students and schools. 17.

Stokes, H., Turnbull, M.J., University of Melbourne & Youth Research Centre. (2016). Evaluation of the Berry Street education model: Trauma-informed positive education enacted in mainstream schools. Youth Research Centre, University of Melbourne.

Taylor, L.L. (2020). Self-regulation rooms within the school: The impact on behavioral referrals and self-regulating emotions (St. Cloud State University). <https://repository.stcloudstate.edu/ed_etds/43>.

Tesfaye, R., Courchesne, V., Yusuf, A., Savion-Lemieux, T., Singh, I., Shikako-Thomas, K., Mirenda, P., Waddell, C., Smith, I.M., Nicholas, D., Szatmari, P., Bennett, T., Duku, E., Georgiades, S., Kerns, C., Vaillancourt, T., Zaidman-Zait, A., Zwaigenbaum, L., & Elsabbagh, M. (2019). Assuming ability of youth with autism: Synthesis of methods capturing the first-person perspectives of children and youth with disabilities. *Autism*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361319831487>.

Too Peas in a Podcast – A Podcast by Mandy Hose and Kate Jones. (n.d.). Viewed 18 December 2020. <https://toopeasinapodcast.com.au>.

Wehmeyer, M.L. (Ed.). (2003). *Theory in self-determination: Foundations for educational practice*. C.C. Thomas. Viewed 26 January 2021. <http://mys1cloud.com/cct/ebooks/9780398073695.pdf>.

Wills, H.P., Caldarella, P., Mason, B.A., Lappin, A., & Anderson, D.H. (2019). Improving student behavior in middle schools: Results of a classroom management intervention. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 21(4), 213–227. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1098300719857185>.

Wilson, C.J., Bushnell, J.A., & Caputi, P. (2011). Early access and help seeking: Practice implications and new initiatives. *Early Intervention in Psychiatry*, 5, 34–39. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-7893.2010.00238.x>.

Youth Affairs Council of Victoria. (2007). The Code of Ethical Practice. <www.yacvic.org.au/assets/Uploads/The-Code-of-Ethical-Practice.pdf>.

Zelazo, P.D., Blair, C.B., & Willoughby, M.T. (n.d.). Executive function: Implications for education. 148.

CHAPTER 9

IDENTIFYING ARTISTRY IN YOUTH RESIDENTIAL WORKERS: FACT OR FICTION?

Glenys Bristow

The intuitive mind is a sacred gift, and the rational mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift. — Albert Einstein

Abstract

This study investigated the characteristics of therapeutic residential care workers working with high-risk young people – understanding the types of knowledge that exceptional residential workers bring with them to the field, predominantly artistry, knowing, intuition, and essence and gut feelings. The thoughts of 14 experienced residential youth workers were researched in order to understand their: life journey, characteristics, ethics, values; whether the multiplicities of theories and artistry they demonstrated were due to life development and learning, experience, gut feelings and/or intuition; and whether formal education/training is the most effective way of informing conscious residential work practice. Drawing on creative methodologies using narratives to understand the interconnection of workers' life journeys, four types of knowledge were identified, confirming the existence of artistry, spirituality, gut feelings and intuition. Further analysis married science with artistry utilising a consilience of knowledge including neurobiology, biological and polyvagal theories and praxis to develop a proven theory of artistry and creativity in explaining gut reactions in residential youth work.

Introduction

Have you ever watched a therapeutic youth/residential worker (TRW) 'being with' a group of young people in a residential home who just seems to effortlessly engage them? Have you ever interviewed someone and quite quickly thought they would be great working with young people? Have you ever watched a worker walk into a room and immediately calm a difficult and dangerous situation? They just seem to have a certain 'something', often explained as 'they have it' – a type of presence, artistry or intuition which is very hard to describe. What is it? How do we identify the multiplicity of skills they bring and their ability to learn and apply theories to practice in this complex, often difficult, heartbreaking and sometimes exhilarating relationship-based long-term care and nurturing? Have you ever asked an experienced TRW how they manage extremely difficult situations, often alone, at nights/weekends and they just answer (while looking at you a little quizzically) 'we just did it – that's what we do!'

Nationally and internationally, there is a paucity of research to explain the complexity of the many possible types of knowledge inherent in informing a multidisciplinary approach to (therapeutic) youth residential care. This includes understanding and celebrating artistry, creativity, tacit and age-old wisdom (mother wit), intuition and gut feelings as an equal discipline, and necessitates researching literature across a broad spectrum. The difficulties inherent in explaining this work or artistry within established or scientific theories is that they do not allow for the many creative responses required – how do you draw a multiplicity or consilience of theories into one coherent framework?

There is a percentage of the skills and knowledge required of residential youth workers (RYWs) which has remained unexplained. Competency-based training and education teach the tasks, competencies and knowledge required by this industry. They do not, however, look at gut feelings, sixth sense or the creation of intuition, which is extremely difficult to articulate. However, if we see science as the creation of new knowledge, as a framework for explaining the creative concepts between people that have been mastered over centuries since the beginning of time, then we should be able to explain these often intuitive practices in a way that can be understood, replicated and/or mentored.

After many years of residential youth work watching absolutely amazing RYWs with young people in pain, I undertook my doctoral research to identify these characteristics of RYWs with high-risk young people in residential work. In my study *Identifying artistry in youth residential workers: Fact or fiction?* I interviewed 15 TRWs who had been in the residential youth field for a minimum of ten years and were seen by their colleagues as coaches/mentors. The early response is that there is such a concept as artistry in residential youth work which, if creatively analysed, forms a theory of artistry.

In wanting to better understand and integrate the age-old concepts of mother wit, gut instinct and gut knowledge, I have tried to align them with current scientific thinking and practice wisdom using a consilience of knowledge to understand and clarify 'tacit', 'unconscious,' 'sixth sense', 'essence of a person' and 'intuitive knowledge'. This is part of the artistry or spiritual/soul knowledge that we see in exceptional youth residential workers. Artistry in all its forms is fact – it is just difficult to describe. A research partner in my study, in answer to my question about what artistry is, responded with:

> I think it is that thing or essence of some description – and I have often wondered if it's not something that people have learnt experientially, maybe assimilated in a totally different way to what we normally learn. I mean maybe by people who care deeply about them. It's something extra, it's almost intrinsic to them. It's creative! You can see the similarities in people in resi, but it is still intrinsic to the individual [worker]. They are warm and humorous, and I believe real humour comes from the heart and the spirit. They respond to someone with that essence almost despite themselves – immediately. It's that simple or complex and hard to describe, but it is something that is obvious when you see it in someone. It can happen in a few words or even looking at each other – it's a deep knowing (Research partner interview: Bristow 2019).

Garfat and Fulcher (2012:1) feel this is 'a way of being in the world'. It is more than a set of techniques, more than a label attached to practitioners, or a way of thinking about working with children, young people and families. It is, rather, about 'how one chooses to be in the world with others'. We see artistry, then, as a focused, creative, timely, practical and above all immediately responsive form of helping which uses 'applied learning and daily uses of knowledge to inform responsive daily encounters with children and young people' (Fulcher 2004:34). It is immediate and focuses on the moment when it is occurring. It allows for RYWs to learn and practise new thoughts,

feelings and actions in the most important areas of their lives – daily life as they are living it with the young people. Workers develop a theory of work as they are doing it – what is in front of them at a particular time. These theories are difficult to articulate, thus making the transfer of these skills only possible through mentoring and coaching (Bristow 2019; Clark 2000).

The greatest outcome of my doctoral studies was showing that these exceptional residential workers demonstrated this essence or creative intuitive artistry together with a range of other developmental, social and formal learning skills in their commitment and love for residential work and young people. The highest groups of character strengths emerged as:

- Wisdom: creativity, curiosity, (non)judgement, love of learning and perspective
- Courage: bravery, persistence, honesty and zest
- Humanity: love, kindness, social intelligence
- Transcendence: appreciation of beauty, gratitude, hope, humour and spirituality
- Justice: forgiveness, modesty, prudence and self-control
- Moderation: forgiveness, modesty, prudence and self-control
- Prudence: which is part of the VIA temperance group (and 'strengths that protect against') (Peterson & Seligman 2004).

This chapter informs and delivers a theory of artistry connected to the practice of the RYW. By identifying and bringing together the many different concepts inherent in the types of knowledge and skills demonstrated by RYWs, I creatively explain the complexity of what is involved. This needs a new way of thinking to integrate these concepts into a believable and coherent theory of artistry. Researchers, practitioners and policymakers need to understand the work that we are asking these people to do.

Therapeutic residential care

How do we explain what we do? The National Therapeutic Residential Care Alliance (NTRCA) provides the following formal definition of the work:

> Therapeutic residential care [in Australia] is an intensive intervention for children and young people, which, in Australia, is a part of the out-of-home care system. It is a purposefully constructed living environment which creates a therapeutic milieu that is the basis of positive, safe, healing relationships and experiences designed to address complex needs arising from the impacts of abuse, neglect, adversity and separation from family, community and culture (NTRCA 2014).

Young people in care live in houses in the community with rostered youth residential workers who prioritise providing developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed care. They build close, trusting and nurturing relationships with young people to promote their psychosocial healing and development in order to assist them to move more

safely towards adulthood. Residential therapeutic care is informed by established and constantly emerging understandings of neurobiology, resilience, trauma, attachment, socialisation and child development, which are translated into practice and embedded in therapeutic practice (NTRCA 2016).

Anyone who works in or around residential care knows it is an incredibly important job – TRWs don't just have an hourly appointment once a week with a young person to 'fix' one small part of their life journey. They must be strong enough to keep young people safe through their whole-of-life journey. They must pick up the pieces and hold the pain while the young person is making sense of it. They must hold fast for safety while nurturing, guiding and rebuilding a life that others have betrayed. They must know and firmly believe these children and young people are not sick, they are not broken; they have just been betrayed, often over long periods of time, by the very people who were supposed to keep them safe (Maier 1979; Trieschman, Whittaker & Brendtro 1969). Researchers, service designers and agencies need to understand that this work takes a great deal of love, creativity, skill, knowledge, strength, courage and 'artistry or gut feelings' from workers who understand the privilege of sharing the lifespace with these young people. Sharing and withstanding their experience of these pain-based behaviours are paramount (Anglin 2002; Redl 1957; Redl & Wineman 1957).

Young people in residential care are usually aged between 12 and 18 years and have a long history of abuse and neglect resulting in trauma and disrupted developmental and attachment issues. They experience a range of emotional, social, spiritual and educational difficulties, and complex, extreme, pain-based (Anglin 2012), high-risk behaviours that challenge workers, communities, agencies and government. For example:

> Stefan was 16, described as 'odd and volatile'. He was exceptional at breaking down placements through 'strange behaviours' like eating schoolbooks and having conversations with a room full of people who were not there and threatening horrendous violence. He scared people. Our relationship formed because I was always picking him up from his latest placement breakdown and spending time with him until we found the next one. We eventually ran out of options. It was 1 am on a Saturday night / Sunday morning and I had been out managing his behaviours for six of the last seven nights. I took him home with me where I already had two sons, a stepson and one of their friends living. On the way to my home, he told me his behaviours had always worked to keep people away from him. The boys were great and welcomed him. Stefan lived with us for five months. During this time, we found his family, worked with them and he went home to them (Bristow: narrative from my researcher practice history).

Residential youth workers and artistry

So, who are these workers and what are we looking for that can manage behaviours like Stefan's – behaviours that challenge? How can we tell if they will be good at the work even though we think we know within minutes of meeting them? Considerable

international and national research has been undertaken to identify these effective 'qualities' or 'characteristics' (Anglin 1992, 2001; Downey 2013; Garfat 2001; Garfat & Fulcher 2012; Krueger, Laureman, Graham & Powell 1986; NACCW 1992; Ricks 1989; Webb & Lowther 1993) required of youth and child care workers.

The following characteristics of residential workers together with excerpts from the research partners in my study (Bristow 2019) were identified in a meta-analysis:

- Youth workers 'twinkle' – they are alive – especially in their eyes, which invite mine; tense, eager (Baizerman 1999).
- The spark – this personality trait is critical when dealing with youth. It is easy to determine who has the spark. I often hire from the spark then see what training is required (Bradley 2005).
- They are intuitive, creative and spiritual (Bradley 2005).
- They have spiritual depth (Research partner 2016).
- They just have it! (Nightingale 2000).
- You just know when you see it – feel it (Research partner 2016).
- Artistry – you can't totally explain (Research partner 2016).
- They know their territory (Bristow 2017).
- Playful (without frivolity). It is how youth workers express their twinkle, their joy, their bounciness and their focused intensity. Makes it hard to walk away (Nightingale 2000).
- they have it – but you can't explain it (Baizerman 1999).
- You know immediately when you see it but it's hard to explain (Research partner 2015).
- You know – that gut feeling – the knowing – you just know when you see it (Research partner 2015).

What does this list actually tell us? Does it help us define artistry? A youth worker trying to identify what artistry looks and feels like stated:

> It's also about who these people are. It's about their amazing spirit. They love kids and come with an open heart. We look for authenticity, but it's also a sense of – I see flags pop up. I see – something happens and is it just a feeling or is it my assessment experience kicking in? I have made assessments increasingly on the run for so long, and I think I have templates in my brain I have developed over the years. But somehow it's more than that (Research partner 2014).

In my capacity as one of the expert practitioners in Robin Clark's (2000) research was one of the first times I have seen artistry as a concept or theory discussed in relation to residential youth work. The research was undertaken by Clark (2000); 'It has to be more than a job'. Clark interviewed ten Victorian 'expert practitioners' working with high-risk young people. All were women considered well-read, charismatic and described as

'artists' in the way they related to children, young people and their families. The focus of Clark's research was to identify and articulate this artistry and to understand how to teach it to others. Clark (2000) joined with the practitioners to retell their stories and to subject their practice to 'critical scrutiny' that subsequently 'reflected on reflective practice in action' (Schöon 1983:91; see also Clark 2000). Clark (2000) felt these expert practitioners went about making sense of situations as they experienced them and although the practitioners could not recall where they had learned a particular skill or the knowledge of what to do in particular situations or even the relevant theories, they performed in the role in a way which assumed prior knowledge and experience.

Clark (2000) concludes that this 'demonstrated artistry' made it impossible for these skills to be learned in the classroom. She felt workers needed to be initiated by the 'right sort of telling' through mentoring and coaching. While Clark's (2000) research covers the recognised artistry of exceptional workers, it did not identify their characteristics, life journey or experience prior to or at the time of starting their residential care journey, as did my research. Clark (2000) also found Schön's reflective practice framework useful to analyse RYWs' practice and states that many times workers discussed 'reflection in action – and on action' (Schön, cited in Clark 2000; Kolb & Fry 1975). Furthermore, she states that Schön (1983:50) describes this approach as 'reflecting on the phenomena, serving to generate both a new understanding of the phenomena and a change in the situation'. Clark (2000) felt that translating this practice to the university classroom or competency-based training was impossible. This is endorsed by one of the research participants, who asked:

> Reflection – will my idea make it better or worse? [You need to be] constantly self-reflective and encouraging or even allowing others to be reflective back to you. There is no other way to know this stuff – you have to see it done. You need to be a part of it – you need to feel it in your heart and gut (Research partner interview 2014).

Clark (2000) concludes that there did not seem to be one single profession or qualification which can combine the required skills, content knowledge, values and ethics that would ready practitioners to work in the residential care field. Clark's (2000) research also identifies that many of the underpinning theories and approaches of established, more traditional welfare and social work qualifications 'were at odds' with what is required to effectively work in the residential youth work field. She felt this outcome also increased the responsibility of experienced workers in the field and their home organisation to initiate newer workers into the field. Clark places a great deal of emphasis on how reflective practitioners inform the work of RYWs.

Schön (2011) in *The reflective practitioner* discusses what he sees as a 'special type' of knowledge which seems intuitive as we go about many tasks of residential care in a normal day – over a 24-hour period. He feels practitioners at this level find it extremely difficult to explain not only what we do, but how and why we do it. Schön (2011) calls this tacit or unconscious knowledge 'knowing in action':

> Robert was 17. He was labelled as extremely violent. He managed to keep people away from him with his violence, threatening and obscene language. He took great joy in yelling horrendous expressions watching multi-disciplinary workers responses or what was their inability to respond – causing fear. He came into residential care as 'high risk', 'impossible to engage', 'inability to attach', violent, dangerous, and suicidal. We built a relationship, worked with his family, and found a tough, vulnerable, sometimes warm, loyal, funny, and clever kid. We were scared for him and tried to engage many adult services. He stayed with us until after he was 18. He visited for meals and just for a chat regularly after he left our care. At 19 he rode his motorbike into a semi-trailer and died. We were too late – we didn't have time to help, and we were all shattered (Bristow: Practice reflection from 1987).

What skills and knowledge did RYWs use to engage with this man? How do these reflections on artistry help us to understand this young man's pain and what else could have been done? When discussing the development of a theory of artistry with a much-respected colleague, he assured me that 'rather than being a mystical process, it is simply how our brains use our experience to inform our judgement' (Mcnamara 2020). A research partner's response to what they believed constitutes artistry was:

> I am a caring and nurturing sort of person. I'm genuine and I think that goes a long way to being able to form relationships with at risk kids. I think they are so attuned to being able to pick up when people are not real and attuned to them, they can see it, feel it, from a mile away. We now know that comes from all sorts of reasons. From a neurobiological perspective, I am now aware of where it comes from, but I think when I first started in the field, I didn't know that – I just knew if you were not real the kids knew and weren't safe. If you weren't together yourself the kids knew and went for broke. I think I have a thirst for learning. I don't think you can ever be an expert on everything. I don't think you can ever know too much or enough, and I think that thirst drives me to find out more to understand who I am and what I do or even how it relates to what I do (Research partner interview 2014).

Does neurobiology have a place in the theory of artistry? According to Perry (2006) and Brendtro and Mitchell (2015), neurobiology is a science that helps us understand how the brain develops from the bottom up, from the survival or reptilian brain to the higher functioning areas of feeling and thinking (Perry 2006; Rose & Philpot 2005, 2012, 2017). Starting at conception, Perry (2006) believes everything we experience is filtered through our five senses to the different areas of the developing brain. Neural systems mediate emotional, social and cognitive functioning, and make memories (good and bad), and their functional capacity is determined by a combination of genetic potential and environmental experience. Trauma and other negative and positive life experiences can impact on the development of brain functions throughout life, beginning in utero. This often sets templates for how we see and respond to life in early childhood (and all the life stages) both consciously and unconsciously (Perry 2006, 2010; Perry et al. 1995;

Rose & Philpot 2005; Siegel 2007).

We need to better understand the impact of our life journeys; experiential learning, socialisation, trauma and possible disrupted attachment in brain development balanced with resilience suggest the importance of reflecting on subsequent adult functioning. We need to understand how this relates to a residential worker's life journey and the development of resilience (or not) (Fuller 1998, 2007, 2011; Gilligan 2001; Resnick 1993; Rutter 1985; Siebert 2005, 2007; Van Breda 2001).

Could residential workers' ability and artistry stem from their prior knowledge or experience? Is it possible these workers, due to their own life journeys, do not reach the fear and terror states until much later during an incident, enabling them to build a higher threshold for managing often dangerous situations and young people themselves by recalling and utilising past experiences unconsciously?

In light of these questions, let's look at Emma, who was a 14-year-old young woman residing in residential care. She had been in and out of care since she was first notified to child protection for alleged neglect and abuse when she was two. This was Emma's 52nd placement in 12 years without counting numerous family returns home as placements:

> Emma also lived with her grandmother when she was younger and when being returned home from care, due to her mother's mental health. Emma tells us that many of her grandmother's boyfriends sexually abused her. Her family has refused to believe her. All seven children in her family live in various forms of care, assessed as not being safe at home or with extended family. Emma's family has an extensive child protection history and there is a long history of intergenerational trauma. Emma has been exposed to family domestic violence, substance misuse, mental health, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and possibly sex working. At 13, Emma was diagnosed with an 'emerging' mental health condition and medicated. Emma was also self-medicating with illicit drugs to manage her pain.
>
> She became extremely verbally and physically violent, with 11 serious staff assaults in a week being recorded. Emma spent time alone talking to herself and imaginary others and threatened suicide many times, culminating in an emergency hospital stay. This gave workers the opportunity to 'be with her' for 24 hours a day. After two days, the restraints were removed though mental health [workers] could not manage Emma's associated behaviours and felt unsafe.
>
> Emma was referred to a therapeutic residential unit where the workers who had been with her worked on shift. These two workers, one of whom she had assaulted, had volunteered to work with Emma knowing her recent history but firmly believed it was what had happened to her – not what she had done. Emma was told everyone was with her 'for the long haul; no matter what' (Case study reflection from practice, Bristow 2016).

How did staff manage the everyday violence and assaults from Emma vis à vis the

concept of artistry? For example, Perry et al. (1995) see sensitisation as a negative state or trait, but what if 'sensitisation' was not negative pattern intensity and the frequency of neuronal activity alerted residential workers to a complex situation much earlier than most? Do these RYWs internalise managing under a particular 'state' that is to be called upon to keep them safe when required? Do some workers when subjected to violence and develop a specific state to manage the situation then suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder while others manage well? What is the difference? (Perry et al. 2005). Is this a balance between resilience and fear, and if it is, how is it formed? Does this explain how artistry moves from a state (temporary behaviour or feelings that depend on a person's situation or time) to a trait (more consistent, stable and long lasting)?

A research partner in my doctoral study, when responding to the question 'Have you ever been frightened in this work?', illustrated their ability to manage under differing states and demonstrated a thorough understanding of the differences between resilience and fear:

> No – I couldn't say I have ever been frightened working in this field. I have been apprehensive and wary around firearms and syringes and wary when going into those situations. I've never feared kids, but I am wary when I go into a place and I get that sixth sense of awareness as I approach. You just know and immediately you are tinglingly adapting to the environment – moving, knowing, assessing, watching, smiling … I'm pretty resilient (Research partner interview 2015).

Resilience, according to many researchers, is this ability to bounce back from difficult experiences (Brendtro 2015) or, as Fuller (2000) states, 'the ability to bungee jump through the pitfalls of life'. Initially it was believed that resilience was a personality trait of invulnerable children and adults; however, further research identified that 'both risk and resilience are human universally' (Masten, as cited in Brendtro 2015:125). The development of resilience is generally believed to relate to the positive social ecology of families, systems and cultures as evidenced in Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model (2005). Developed resilience traits usually include internal strengths, self- and co-regulation ability, positive self-esteem, spirituality and a sense of purpose or mastery.

Masten, however, (as cited in Brendtro 2015:124) believes 'resilience is not some rare and special quality possessed by a few, but rather ordinary magic built into the brains, bodies and minds of children'. We know through Brendtro (2015), Seibert (2005) and Bronfenbrenner (2005) that the brain and its ecology play integral parts in the positive development of resilience. To relate or integrate resilience into the artistic theory and praxis of residential workers as adults, we need to understand that adults learn all their lives and know a lot more than they think they know, which summarises the importance of the building of resilience through the journey towards social and emotional intelligence (Goleman 2005). The building of resilience over life's journey can also be discussed as experiential learning explained by Kolb's (1984, 2007) theory of experiential learning. The adult learning model identifies the importance of life's concrete experiences, reflective observations, abstract conceptualisations and active

experimentation, or the importance of feeling, watching, thinking and doing. Kolb (1984, 2007) understood that adults know a great deal from their different life experiences and growth, and stressed the importance of being able to tap into and learn from each adult's intrinsic learning journey, as they are not always able to explain it:

> Hard one to explain! Though I can say quite clearly my mother's influence on me – also my father's [negative] influence. My brother [who died of an overdose] and my good or bad school life all taught me a lot right through life. A lot of these experiences could have robbed me of those qualities I mentioned and sometimes I'm amazed that they didn't. So, I can only explain they were there somehow. They were there somehow, and it could very well be how my brain operates – that balance of abuse and resilience. My sense is it is something other than that as well, but it is really hard to nail scientifically – never been able to put my finger on it – it's somehow involved with how I see and present myself (Research partner interview 2015).

Geller and Porges (2014) discuss this as *therapeutic presence* – being able to be fully in the moment on several concurring dimensions, including physical, emotional, cognitive and relational (Dunn, Callahan, Swift & Ivanovic 2013; Geller 2009, 2013a, 2013b; Geller & Greenberg 2012; Geller et al. 2010; Geller, Pos & Colosimo 2012; McCollum & Gerhart 2010, cited in Geller & Porges 2014). Therapeutic presence involves RYWs using their whole selves to be both fully engaged and receptively attuned in the moment with and for the young person (Geller & Porges 2014; Mcnamara 2020):

> Someone else could come in and say the same words and get a totally different response from the kid. They are picking up on something else other than what's coming out of the mouth and so it's even about the voice, its levels or tone … and there has been research on that too. The voice is important because I feel the essence of someone or whatever it is, we can't explain, yet makes the person they are come out in their voice as well. You know if you talk about someone you love your voice takes on a very different timbre to if you are talking about something clinically (Research partner interview 2015).

Geller and Porges (2014:179) believe by being grounded, immersed, aware and in the space and moment, with the intention of being with and for the other, the RYW is able to invite the young person into a deeper and shared trusting relational state and environment of relational therapeutic presence (Mcnamara 2020) – commonly called 'being with' (Garfat & Fulcher 2012). RYWs are required to respond for eight to ten hours. Remaining grounded, open and immersed for a whole shift requires an incredibly high level of tolerance, skill and knowledge of the self, the other and the environment. Being in harmony with another involves a great deal of intuition – just knowing!

Intuition

Intuition occurs when RYWs draw upon their experience to recognise cues in a situation, spot patterns and build a narrative about what is going on. They are using intuitive thinking when they observe a young person's body posture and can identify their mood within a few seconds. Clark (2000) feels intuition takes huge amounts of data, often harvesting our entire life experience, and filters it through the human brain. This actually equates types of knowledge and artistry with intuition, not just through lifelong learning, but also confirming that some skills can only be learned by watching others. One of my research partners (2014) explained it as:

> I'll have to go with love – I think that is something we don't yet understand the complexities of. It has its own energy and healing powers and its own abilities, and because to me in my experiences that the good things stayed with me almost had an intuition and energy of their own. Because why is it some people come through certain experiences and others don't? It's just there – science and research can tell me it's not, but it is – it just hasn't been identified yet.

As intuition is somewhat internalised, this makes research difficult, as existing research has not been able to provide evidence that intuition can be externalised; however, I think we have begun the journey for residential youth practitioners to externalise their unique knowledge in the creative context of artistry. Unfortunately, residential workers' voices are often lauded in research. Often they are requested to speak or provide heartrending stories of young people's pain and achievement to 'sell the industry for funding'. However, the same trust and respect do not apply to respecting residential workers' praxis knowledge in relation to the development of theories, professional respect, reports, service design etc.

Intuition does, however, improve as the RYW builds a larger repertoire of experience to draw upon. The more experienced practitioners become, the more they pick up on subtleties, with the most experienced able to read situations in a highly sophisticated way using well-honed observation skills to get below the surface (Mcnamara 2020). My own and anecdotal experience explains how we feel a sixth sense or gut feeling even walking up the path to the house. We immediately become aware of the 'state of play' and adjust our body language, other senses and watchfulness accordingly. A young person was fascinated by my seeming ability to see and hear through walls and tell the future – which was not always a good thing according to them.

Consider polyvagal theory (Porges 2011) in relation to artistry. It is essential to keep in mind that the nervous system is essentially concerned with survival. Friedland-Kays and Dana (2017) concisely describe the theory, which uses a 'three-part hierarchical model' to show how the vagus nerve connecting the brain, heart and viscera (viscera: relating to deep inward feelings rather than the intellect – could it be gut feelings?) relates to the perception of safety and individuals' ability to communicate with one another. Of particular interest to RYWs is that polyvagal theory, when applied therapeutically in residential care work, serves as a guide to identify and explain how specific features of

therapeutic presence such as facial expressions, gestures and prosodic vocalisations (rhythmic and intonational aspects of language) trigger within both the young person's and the RYW's neurophysiological states, within which they both experience a sense of safety and calm (Geller & Porges 2011; Mcnamara 2020). An excerpt from a research partner (2014) identified this as:

> They are picking up on something else other than what's coming out of the mouth and so it's even about the voice and there has been research on that too [but not definitive in this field]. The voice is important because I feel the essence of someone or whatever makes the person they are come out in the voice as well. You know if you talk about someone you love your voice takes on a very different timbre to if you are talking about something clinically. And as we know just physically every part of us is giving off a message of some sort.

The term 'neuroception' was coined by Porges (2011) as referring to our innate unconscious awareness through the autonomic nervous system of influences in the body, in the environment and in interactions between people. In other words, we detect danger before we have time to think about it. Do you think the head, heart and viscera of polyvagal theory also help explain feelings in the heart and gut and butterflies in the stomach that alert good workers to possible environmental and psychosocial events and impacts?

Polyvagal theory proposes that our response to threat is organised in a hierarchical manner, with the 'higher' components inhibiting those lower down. Depending upon our neuroception of safety, the highest level of response is social engagement. The most important aspect of polyvagal theory for all RYWs to understand is that the state of one's nervous system and one's assessment of safety or danger render one receptive to social connection (or completely incapable of social interaction or connection.) Thus, the polyvagal-informed RYW may be better equipped to identify and navigate the physiological states of the young people in their care and to assist in bringing them into a state that will foster greater therapeutic or relational gains (Mcnamara 2020).

Mcnamara (2020) feels that perhaps then the artistry in residential work is the ability of an experienced RYW to remain in a physiologically calm state while at the same time conveying cues of safety to a young person in a dysregulated state and being fully in the moment – physically, emotionally, cognitively and relationally – combined with being able to access their practice wisdom and make use of their life experiences in that same moment.

What contributes to them being able to sustain the social engagement state for such long periods of time?

> I had some awful experiences with the Catholic Brothers so learnt early on re keeping the antenna up. [How to] recognise eye flicks, muscle flicks, body movement and speech patterns/approaches, grooming behaviours from afar. The things you learn unconsciously as a child – the hypervigilance – how to

keep safe. I still keep the antenna up but it's part of me – it's good. Like at a funeral I watch people crying for themselves and I think while I've lost that person, I will treasure what I loved and valued about the person – as I said looking in, not out. My mother supported me all through this – she loved me (Research partner 2015).

Conclusion

The significance of the identification and acknowledgement in my study and subsequent development of a framework of artistry celebrates the creativity, intuition, sixth sense, gut feelings and unconscious or tacit knowledge of exceptional youth/residential workers together with more established, scientifically proven knowledge. In this chapter I have endeavoured to draw a portrait of what this looks like in residential youth work. This should resonate with all residential and community youth workers and managers, adding value to and respecting the workers, who surely need recognition of their exceptional skills, knowledge, life experience and resilience prior to and following formal training.

I suggest these outcomes of my doctoral studies, if operationalised, will in the longer term provide a better continuous relational service to young people and their families and:

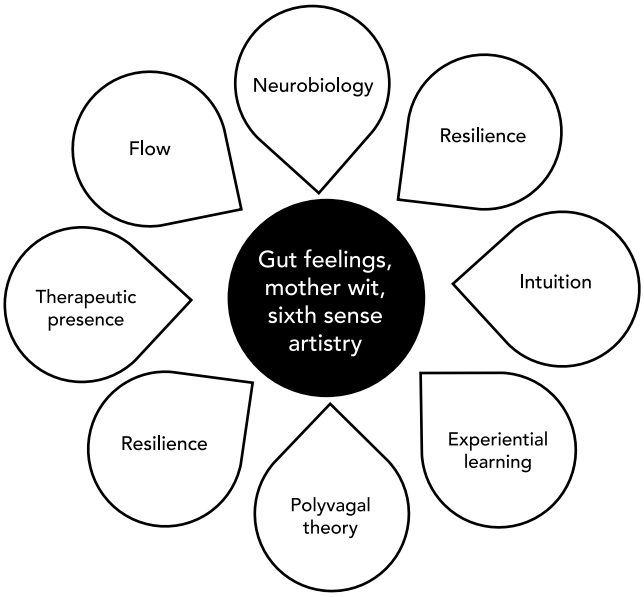
- save employers' investment dollars by providing the right people for the work, thus limiting sickness and WorkCover costs related to employing the wrong people
- facilitate more specialised recruitment practices to explore the life stories of prospective youth residential workers utilising current frameworks for recruiting and training foster carers.

My view is that the artistry of RYWs is still seen in human services as somewhat mysterious and in need of articulation, and will continue to be. However, residential youth work needs to stop borrowing theories from other disciplines that do not fit. I think we have identified the complexity and begun to articulate the theory of artistry celebrating our gut feelings, sixth sense, mother wit and, I believe, its formation and usefulness as a theory – where science meets artistry.

In this chapter I have also attempted to explain an understanding of artistry by bringing together and unpacking discipline learning and situated experience within an interdisciplinary model. The importance of this unity of knowledge can best be described as consilience, linking findings from the fields of psychology, neuroscience, social biology, sociology, psychiatry, pedagogy and spirituality together with a rich tradition of values and practice expertise or praxis confirming a theory of artistry (Brendtro, Mitchell & McCall 2009:viii; Wilson 1999:11).

This consilience of artistry, as depicted in the graphic following, deeply acknowledges and celebrates gut feelings, mother wit, sixth sense and artistry as the core of the theory, together with a multidisciplinary understanding of the theories, skills and knowledge needed to undertake residential youth work creatively and well.

Consilience model of artistry



Source: Bristow (2020) drawn from Mcnamara (2020)

Listen carefully to what country people call mother wit. In those homely sayings are couched the collective wisdom of generations. — Maya Angelou

---

References

Anglin, J. (2001). Child and youth care: A unique profession. *CYC Online: eJournal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)*, Issue 35. <www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-1201-anglin.html>.

Anglin, J. (2002a). How staff develop. *FICE Bulletin*, 6, 18–24.

Anglin, J. (2002b). *Pain, normality and the struggle for congruence*. London: Haworth Press.

Baizerman, M. (1999). How can you recognize a youth worker? *CYC Online: eJournal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)*, Issue 11. <cyc-net.org>.

Bradley, J. (2005). Towards a unified vision of child and youth services. *Relational Child & Youth Care Practice*, 18(3), 47.

Brendtro, L., & Mitchell, M. (2015). *Deep brain learning: Evidence-based essentials in education, treatment, and youth development*. Albion, MI: Starr Commonwealth.

Bristow, G. (2017). *Residential care in Victoria: A new model*. Commissioned unpublished report.

Bristow, G. (2019). *What are the types of knowledge residential workers with high risk young people bring to the field. Artistry: Fact or fiction?* Published thesis, Victoria University.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). *Making human beings human: Biological perspectives on human development*. Thousand Oaks; London: Sage.

Clark, R. (2000). *'It has to be more than a job': A search for exceptional practice with troubled adolescents*. Deakin Human Services Australia.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. Harper Perennial Modern Classics.

Dana, D. (2018). *The polyvagal theory in therapy*. NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

Downey, L. (2013). *Residential care matters: A resource for residential workers, supervisors and managers caring for young people*. Melbourne, VIC: Victorian Commission for Children and Young People, Victorian State Government.

Dunn, R., Callahan, J., Swift, J., & Ivanovic, M. (2013). Effects of pre-session centering for therapists on session presence and effectiveness. *Psychother Res*. 23(1), 78–85.

Friedland-Kays, E. & Dana, D. (2017) *Being polyvagal: The polyvagal theory explained*. Windhorse Integrative Health.

Fuller, A. (1998). *From surviving to thriving: Promoting mental health for young people*. ACER Press.

Fuller, A. (2007). *Tricky kids: Transforming conflict and freeing their potential*. Sydney, NSW: Finch.

Garfat, T. (2001). Developmental stages of child and youth care workers: An interactional perspective. *CYC Online: eJournal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)*, Issue 24. <cyc-net.org>.

Garfat, T., & Fulcher, L. (2012a). Applications of a child and youth care approach. *Relational Youth and Child Care Practice*, 24(1), 1 2.

Garfat, T., & Fulcher, L. (2012b). Characteristics of a youth and child care approach. *Child and Youth Care Approaches*. <http://cycnetpress.cyc-net.org>.

Geller, S.M., & Porges, S.W. (2014). Therapeutic presence: Neurophysiological mechanisms mediating feeling safe in therapeutic relationships. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 24(3), 178–92.

Gilligan, R. (2000). Promoting resilience in child and family social work: Issues for social work practice, education and policy. *Social Work Education*, 23(1). <www.tandfonline.com>.

Goleman, D. (2005). *Emotional intelligence: The 10th anniversary edition*. NY: Bantam Dell.

Hunter, R.G., Gray, J.D., & McEwen, B.S (2018). The neuroscience of resilience. *Journal of the Society for Social Work and Research*, 9(2).

JBS International & National Technical Assistance Center for Children's Mental Health. (2014). *Trauma-informed care: Perspectives and resources*. <TraumainformedCare_postcard.pdf>.

Kezelman, C., Hossack, N., Stavropoulos, P., & Burley, P. (2015). *The cost of unresolved childhood trauma and abuse in adults in Australia: Adults surviving child abuse and trauma*. Sydney, NSW: Pegasus Economics.

Kolb, D., & Fry, R. (1975). Toward an applied theory of experiential learning. In C. Cooper (Ed.), *Theories of group processes*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.

Krueger, M., Lauerman, R., Graham, M., & Powell, N. (1986). Characteristics and organisational commitment of child and youth care workers. *Child Care Quarterly*, 15(1), 60–72.

Maier, H. (1979). The core of care: Essential ingredients for the development of children at home and away from home. *Child and Youth Care Forum*, 8(3).

Mcnamara, N. (2020). *Presence, intuition & polyvagal theory*. Unpublished paper.

National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW). (1992). *Creating circles of care*. NACCW. <naccw.org.za>.

Nightingale, E. (2000). Qualities of a child and youth care worker. *CYC Online: eJournal of the International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)*, Issue 16. <cyc-net.org>.

Patoine, B. (2019). *The resilient brain – Psychological resilience is an active, distinctive neurological process*. Dana Foundation. <https://dana.org/article/the-neurobiology-of-resilience>.

Perry, B., Pollard Blakely, T., Baker, W., & Vigilante, D. (1995). Childhood trauma, the neurobiology of adaption and use-dependent development of the brain – How states become traits. *Infant Mental Health Journal*. <www.traum-pages.com/a/perry96.php>.

Perry, B., & Szalavitz, M. (2006). *The boy who was raised as a dog, and other stories from a child psychiatrist's notebook*. NY: Basic Books.

Perry, B., & Szalavitz, M. (2010). *Born for love: Why empathy is essential – and endangered*. William Morrow.

Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. NY: OUP.

Porges, S.W. (2011). *The polyvagal theory*. New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company.

Porges, S.W. (2017). *The pocket guide to the polyvagal theory: The transformative power of feeling safe*. NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

Redl, F., & Wineman, D. (1952). *Controls from within: Techniques for the treatment of the aggressive child*. Glencoe: Free Press. (Note: This is the second and companion volume to *Children who hate* (1951). Both books were combined and issued as *The aggressive child* (1957).)

Resnick, M. (1993). The impact of caring and connectedness on adolescent health and wellbeing. *Paediatric Child Health*, *29*, Suppl. 1: S3–9.

Rose, R. (2012). *Life story work with traumatized children: A model for practice*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Rose, R. (2017). *Innovative therapeutic life story work: Developing trauma informed practice for working with children, adolescents and young adults*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Rose, R., & Philpot, T. (2005). *The child's own story: Life story work with traumatized children*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Rutter, M. (1985). Resilience in the face of adversity: Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorders. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 147, 598–611.

Schön, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. NY: Basic Books.

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organisation*. Random House.

Siebert, A. (2005). *The resiliency advantage: Master change, thrive under pressure, and bounce back from setbacks*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

Siebert, A. (2007). *The survivor personality: Why some people have a better chance of surviving when survival is necessary*. <www.resiencycenter.com>.

Siegal, D. (2007). *The mindful brain: Reflection and attunement in the cultivation of wellbeing*. NY: W.W. Norton.

Smith, M. (2009). *Rethinking residential care: Positive perspectives*. University of Bristol: Policy Press.

Smith, M., Fulcher, L., & Doran, P. (2013). *Rethinking residential child care in practice: Making a difference*. <www.researchgate.net/publication/320538351_Residential_child_care_in_practice_Making_a_difference>.

Smith, M.K. (2001). David A. Kolb on experiential learning. *Encyclopedia of informal education*. <www.infed.org/b-explrn.htm>.

Trieschman, A., Whittaker, J., & Brendtro, L. (1969). *The other 23 hours: Child care work with emotionally disturbed children in a therapeutic milieu*. Foreword by D. Wineman. NY: Aldine De Gruyter.

Van Breda, A. (2001). *Resilience theory: A literature review*. South African Military Health Service, Military Psychological Institute, Social Work Research and Development.

Van der Kolk, B.A. (2015). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma* (pp. 105–61). NY: Penguin.

Webb, N., & Lowther, M. (1993). Organisational commitment of child care providers employed in centre facilities. *Journal of Child and Youth Care*, 8(3), 1–16.

Wilson, E. (1999). *Consilience: The unity of knowledge*. NY: Vintage Books.

Wilson, T. (2002). *Strangers to ourselves: Discovering the adaptive unconscious*. Cambridge, UK: Belknap Press.

CHAPTER 10

‘TOUGHEN UP’: THE HARDENING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

John Martino

Please note, a version of this chapter will be published in: Martino, J. (2021). Drumbeat: New media and the radicalization and militarization of young people. *Routledge Sociology*.

Abstract

We are seeing change in the level of violence being enacted by young people at a young age. This is a cultural process that has evolved and which I describe as the 'hardening' of youth. It is the consequence of a cultural shift which has desensitised young people, and more broadly the average citizen, to violence and cruelty through exposure within various forms of media and the internet. This has led to a general hardening of attitudes in the broader society, workplaces and other social settings. Professor Broadbent believes this chapter, which links violence on the street to the militarisation of young people through violent games and media, is pivotal to our understanding of this escalation. Lack of humanity in the form of the degrading of any form of social safety net and the expendability of individuals, groups and entire segments of Western society – as indicated by trenchant mass unemployment and inequality – is reflective of this general hardening. The emergence of neoliberalism as an economic, political and social force has underpinned this evolution in social attitudes. The dismantling of the welfare state, the abolition of well-paying and long-term employment, the celebration of the individual and a societal commitment to putting the economic advancement of the individual at the forefront of social, economic and political decision-making have been the driving forces behind this. This chapter examines how young people are being educated in a culture where the celebration of violence and cruelty has become embedded in everyday life. It is no longer even a point of contention – just like warfare, it is normalised. The consequences of this process are yet to fully emerge.

Spilling blood

In his masterful work on the notion of fear, Corey Robin asks an important rhetorical question: 'What exactly, we must ask ourselves, is missing from our world that we should require spilled blood and incinerated flesh, and the fear such havoc and loss create, to feel alive?' He is referring to our cultural obsession with violence, crime and cruelty – particularly, I would argue, in the domain of media and culture. That is a question which has informed my thinking and is a theme within this chapter follows. I also discuss how crime and its allure have become key components in some forms of youth culture.

The American sociologist Jack Katz, writing in his classic book *Seductions of crime* (1988), develops an interesting argument concerning why crime and also particular acts of evil occur. Katz argues that these acts embody what he calls the 'pleasures of evil'. Criminal and violent acts, according to him, embody a form of sensuality and seductiveness. For Katz, crime enables perpetrators to act out evil – to do things that in the normal state of affairs would not be countenanced. But when acting in a criminal manner, violence, cruelty and evil become options. They become avenues through which perpetrators can experience evil as a form of pleasure. It is my contention that we have, over the past few decades, witnessed the gradual colonisation of our social, political, economic and cultural landscapes by these 'pleasures of evil'. Since the publication of this insightful study into the allure of criminality, we have experienced the emergence of an obsession with depictions of violence and crime as a staple of popular culture and the bread and butter of all forms of sensationalist news coverage.

It is argued in the pages that follow that there is an obsession with violence and cruelty in contemporary Western culture. This is not to deny that our culture is rich with examples of violence in both history and fiction. The real and the imagined have always had a strong tinge of violence. What I think is different to the literary description of violence and the historical analysis of war and revolution is the access to simulated and real depictions of violence and cruelty that new forms of technology now afford us. We can think of this easy access to the depiction of violence and cruelty as part of a process of what I refer to as the hardening of Western culture and society. This is reflected in a range of cultural forms, and social and political processes that act to reinforce the 'toughening up' of the population in general and of young people in particular.

The focus of this chapter is an examination of how this process of hardening, and the embracing of the pleasures of evil, has emerged. While it would be possible simply to examine these developments from the perspective of society as a whole, I intend meshing this broader view with insights into how young people fit within this set of emergent social, political and cultural processes. I now elaborate on these statements.

New forms of media and the 'hardening' of youth

New forms of media such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter and the explosion in video on demand (VOD) streaming technologies have added to the cultural landscape upon which images and forms of popular culture depicting violence and cruelty are acted out. Exposure to images and video depictions of violence, both simulated and in the real world, has become much more accessible and normalised (Hall 2013; Malhara 2017). Since the advent of these new platforms and modes of delivery and consumption, the ability of individuals and groups to create and disseminate still images, video and memes depicting violence and acts of cruelty and degradation has become in a sense 'democratised'. As Deleuze and Guattari (1986) argue, it defeats the purpose of these acts of violence to spill large amounts of blood; new forms of digital technology enable the application of an 'economy of violence'. Platforms such as Facebook and YouTube, for example, have created digital spaces within which violent and extreme acts can be created with very low-cost technology and played out for a global audience in real time. State actors are no longer the sole purveyors of propaganda and fear – this is what I mean by the democratisation of digital forms of cruelty and terror.

'Toughened up'

The easy access to violent videos produced by groups such as the Islamic State and more recently the live streaming of a violent attack on two mosques in New Zealand should be seen within a broader context of the normalisation of violence and cruelty as cultural commodities. These commodities are available for consumption 24/7 through the conduit of high-speed, high-definition media and information technologies. This is an evolution of what has been a part of the seedy undercurrent of Western culture for decades: the enactment and depiction of violent acts for the voyeuristic and titillating consumption of individuals and groups.

For example, since the late 1990s a voyeuristic subculture of video fights depicting people being pitted against each other and forced to fight – often homeless people or prisoners are used – has existed. These fights are filmed for distribution; initially in the last century this was done on videocassette or later CD/DVD, but now in the 21st century they are distributed through the internet. As Salter and Tomsen (2011) argue, the web has enabled this:

> sadistic and voyeuristic interests that were previously sublimated in cultural life are now more openly nurtured in online representations of violence. A quick internet search can find many amateur films of 'underground' fight matches and conflicts in bars, on the streets or in schools. The phenomenon of 'happy-slapping' in the form of physical assaults between young people that are planned with the intention of distributing the digital recording online has emerged with the advent of mobile phone cameras (Salter & Tomsen 2011:308–9).

Since the period when Salter and Tomsen (2011) were writing, we have seen the expansion of what is tolerated in the everyday consumption of violence. The mass executions, beheadings and slaughter documented and distributed through the internet by extremist groups such as the Islamic State have taken this form of cultural debasement to new depths. The violent internet propaganda of groups such as the Islamic State is oriented specifically towards the recruitment of young men (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler 2017). Young people are both the subjects and key consumers of these forms of cultural product. Young men and women are also readily enculturated into a violent culture of cruelty through the internet and social media (Schils & Pauwels 2014).

Young men and women are being toughened up or hardened in a range of ways, some explicit and others more or less subliminal. This hardening occurs through the engagement of young people in violence both in real life and virtually through affordances offered by new forms of media. It is argued this acculturation to violence occurs through the exposure of young people to mediatised forms of violence by means of videogames such as the first-person shooter *Call of duty* (Martino 2015) and easy access to violence-themed videos through YouTube and series such as *Game of thrones* through Netflix and similar platforms (Elwood 2018; Ferreday 2015; Gierzynski 2015; Malhara 2017). Another source of this culture of hardening is the proliferation and popularity of forms of mixed martial arts (MMA) now easily accessible for viewing through the internet, phone apps and traditional cable television. The mediatisation of violence and thus its ready accessibility in a variety of forms (and consequently its normalisation) can be understood within a broader frame, a frame that encapsulates the notion of a growing culture of cruelty and the conscious hardening of youth.

Parallel to the emergence of this culture of cruelty has also been a hardening of attitudes towards the young – this is most clearly in evidence when we hear the public mantra of the need for 'boot camps' (Mills & Pini 2015) and more discipline in order to deal with entrenched social problems such as intergenerational unemployment and juvenile crime (Gascón & Roussell 2018; Williams 2016). This attitude towards the young is underpinned by the notion that there are growing sections of the population that are

'disposable'(Giroux, Di Leo, McClennen & Saltman 2012). The disposable populations can be the young, the unemployed or the dispossessed. As the American sociologist Henry Giroux points out, for decades American society, and I would add those nations within the Anglosphere such as the United Kingdom and Australia, has embraced the creation of what he calls the 'punishing state'. This is particularly the case for young people, as:

> more and more … [of them] … are caught in the punishing circuits of surveillance, containment, repression, and disposability. As a result of what can be called the war on youth, young people no longer are seen as part of the social contract and appear to have been banished from the everyday social investments, imagination, and future that once characterized the American dream (Giroux et al. 2012).

While at the same time as many young people are being marginalised and left out of the 'the American dream', it is my contention that the cultural landscape of contemporary society has evolved to promote particular spaces where young people are welcomed and, in a sense, directed towards. Here I am referring to digital spaces that provide a virtual location within which young people are exposed to particular cultural forms and messages (Martino 2015). These digital spaces are comprised of online forums, YouTube channels, Discord channels (a gaming-dedicated form of social media which combines text and voice) and a variety of Twitch channels (and its alternatives). Within spaces such as Twitch, Twitter and Facebook – and the various other social media platforms – young people are able to explore their identities, to act out particular roles and to communicate in ways that make meaning for themselves and other young people. It is in these digital 'safe spaces' (enabled through their smart devices) – the internet, social media and gaming culture – that young people are exposed to the violent cultural messages now sanctioned within contemporary advanced societies, but also to the political and cultural messages of non-state agents (Almohammad 2018; Danner 2015; Horgan, Taylor, Bloom & Winter 2017; Winter 2015).

These digital spaces and the social cultural and political messages that permeate them can be seen within the broader context of the societal process known as militarisation, which involves the conditioning and positioning of society for the application of violence as a normalised reaction to conflict (Geyer 1989). From the perpetual war in various theatres of operation both 'kinetic' and 'digital' to the creation of militarised forms of schooling and the expanded use of young people in conflicts to the celebration of unbridled cruelty and individualism in the media and in the economy – the hardening of youth and of the broader culture and society has gained pace. It is my assertion that these processes, practices and cultural forms have at their core the celebration of cruelty and violence. These dominant social and cultural practices have helped to engender what I refer to as the hardening of youth and the privileging of violence, toughness and cruelty. This idea should also be considered within the context of the ongoing process of militarisation, the privileging of military action and military expenditure, and the celebration of war (Geyer 1989; Martino 2015; Shadiack 2012; Torres & Gurevich 2018). In this context, young people are positioned as both 'material' – to be drawn upon and utilised in preparation for new forms of war – and as the audience for emergent forms of media and propaganda designed to promote the process of hardening.

It is to state the obvious to say that some of the major consumers of popular culture are young people. That is not to assume that it is young people alone who are the target audience for the forms of cultural production that I have described briefly so far. It is, though, young people who are significant targets for the consumption of these products and also often the central protagonists within some forms of popular content with a narrative structure. The gratuitous violence embedded in particular genres such as 'slasher' and other horror-themed movies and streaming media is marketed towards young people and these often focus on the violent and gruesome demise of groups of young people (Pearson 2017; Tamborini, Weber, Bowman, Eden & Skalski 2013). Films such as *Halloween* and *Friday the 13th* have become cultural icons and have evolved through their various sequels to have an intergenerational appeal (Alford & Scheibler 2018; Hitchcock 2016).

Violence-themed media products such as the slasher genre of movies and streaming series are distinguished by their graphic depiction of violence (González 2018; Jones 2018). The unrelenting attempt to shock the audience through ever more elaborate forms of murder and mayhem is now a mainstay of popular culture. As well as this fictional depiction of violence, we have witnessed the growth in popularity of the transmission (through cable and pay-per-view) of real violence in the form of MMA, specifically the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) – the premier broadcast MMA competition. This differs from the tradition of broadcasting on television of contact sports such as boxing; in a boxing match, blood is minimised and not the prime focus of the contest. In the UFC, the spilling of blood is a central aspect of the entertainment appeal of the event and the sport of MMA (Green 2016; Jensen, Roman, Shaft & Wrisberg 2013; Mayeda 2011).

Augmenting the growing accessibility of formalised blood sports such as the MMA style of fighting is the advent of internet-delivered streaming video. The advent of YouTube and Facebook has enabled easy access to depictions of horrific violence by terror groups and individuals. In 2019 we achieved 'peak digital violence' with the New Zealand live streaming of a lone-wolf terror attack. Coupled with this has been the emergence this century of entertainment being delivered via the internet as a digital stream. These new forms of delivery sit alongside traditional forms of media such as broadcast television and cable channels.

Violence, fear and spectacle

The emerging discourse concerning the need to discipline and toughen up young people is characteristic of a broader cultural phenomenon, one that is an outcome of the growing ascendancy of violence as a cultural form. Political violence and the drift into perpetual war appear to be the dominant features of daily life in the 21st century (Kohn 2009; Shadiack 2012). It often seems that, as in ancient Rome, our 'bread and circuses' are heavily tinged with both real and simulated violence. Cruelty has emerged as a key aspect of daily life, as illustrated by an obsession with millenarian 'end of times' religious and media tropes. This is evidenced by the prevalence of dystopian and savage cultural images, concepts and political movements both within neoliberal societies and more broadly at a global level (Jones & Smith 2014; Phillips 2014).

In her classic work written at the time of the Nazi occupation of France, the eminent European literary figure Simone Weil describes the relationship between force and violence depicted in Homer's *The Iliad*. In her essay, Weil writes about one of the most iconic descriptions of violence as spectacle in Western culture. She emphasises the impact of the concentrated application of force through violence on an individual. As Weil argues, if we seek to:

> define force – it is that x that turns anybody who is subjected to it into a thing. Exercised to the limit, it turns man into a thing in the most literal sense: it makes a corpse out of him. Somebody was here, and the next minute there is nobody here at all; this is a spectacle *The Iliad* never wearies of showing us (Weil & McCarthy 1965).

To make her point, Weil quotes a passage from Homer's text:

> the horses Rattled the empty chariots through the files of battle, Longing for their noble drivers. But they on the ground Lay, dearer to the vultures than to their wives. The hero becomes a thing dragged behind a chariot in the dust: All around, his black hair Was spread; in the dust his whole head lay, That once-charming head; now Zeus had let his enemies Defile it on his native soil (Weil & McCarthy 1965:6).

The concept of spectacle links both the real world and the events depicted within the domain of contemporary popular culture and the 24-hour news cycle, social media and the internet. In the 1960s Guy Debord and the Situationists singled out the crucial role spectacle had come to play in advanced capitalist society (Debord 1992; Wollen 1989). At the core of spectacle in modern society is the commodification of everyday life. The subsumption of everyday life into the form of a commodity has become the fundamental constant in capitalism. As Debord argues:

> spectacle is the moment when the commodity has attained the total occupation of social life. The relation to the commodity is not only visible, but one no longer sees anything but it: the world one sees is its world. Modern economic production extends its dictatorship extensively and intensively (Debord 1992).

The mechanism that helps facilitate this process in contemporary society is the cloud of digitally disseminated and amplified cultural forms that envelop us and which are sustained through the creation of fear.

As Virilio (2012) points out in his book *The administration of fear*, our media-drenched society presents us with a succession of fear-inducing images of events and catastrophes. Richard (2012), writing in the preface to the Virilio book, argues that 'Climate chaos, stock market panics, food scares, pandemic threats, economic crashes, congenital anxiety, existential dread ... Fear and fears: individual and collective, combining and reinforcing each other (the dynamic of fear itself), are charging through our world. Infiltrating it, jolting it, deranging it' (Virilio & Richard 2012) – and all delivered to our smartphones via social media or the streaming platforms.

During the past decade, we have also witnessed the concerted efforts of non-state agents engaged in terror activities and warfare to add to this climate of fear by producing graphic depictions of their treatment of opponents and non-combatants disseminated through social media platforms such as YouTube and Twitter (Koch 2018; Winter 2015). In a sense the violent extremists of the Islamic State took the American idea of 'shock and awe' – introduced during Gulf War I – to the next logical level: they delivered live cinematically produced, politically motivated acts of brutality designed to both horrify and appeal to the prurience inherent in some of the online forms of digital culture that have emerged in the past decades. Much of the spectacle that we witness through the myriad of screens that now infest our daily lives helps compose a distinct form of culture – what Doueihi (2011) describes as comprising a form of 'digital culture'. Digital culture has been characterised as a set of 'discursive practices, with their own conventions and norms that tend to fragilize and disturb well-established categories and values' (Doueihi 2011).

Streaming media such as the HBO series *Game of thrones* (Benioff 2011–2019) reach an unparalleled global audience through the graphic depiction of sex, violence and sexual violence. From beheadings to massacres and rapes, violence and in particular sexual violence was a key element in this series from its inception (Elwood 2018; Ferreday 2015; Malhara 2017). As Elwood, writing about the series from a legal perspective, points out, 'There is a tremendous amount of sexual violence in the show, and the portrayal of such violence is uniformly and hyperbolically disturbing, if controversial. Viewers voyeuristically witness these disturbing scenes of sexual violence as entertainment' (Elwood 2018).

A similar commitment to representing increasingly graphic images of violence can be traced back to the action movie genre – specifically to Sam Peckinpah's *The wild bunch* (1969), which was perhaps the first mass-audience production which portrayed and, it could be argued, celebrated gratuitous violence and the realistic depiction of cinematic blood in slow motion and widescreen (Bani-Khair, Alshboul, Al-Khawaldeh, Al-Khawaldeh & Ababneh, 2017; Rødje 2016). The film can be read as a response to the social, cultural and political context in which it was made. America was at war in Vietnam, a war which saw the dropping of more bombs on that small country than had been dropped in the entire European theatre of operations in World War 2.

Examples of this enduring cultural obsession with violence can also be found in contemporary military-themed or -oriented video and computer games (slow-motion headshots, kill points and the gamification of simulated killing), X-sports and the new violent forms of competitive hand-to-hand combat sports such as UFC and other combat sports or MMA (Jensen et al. 2013; Mayeda 2011; Weaving 2014). These new forms of 'sport' can be viewed as examples of the growth of a 'culture of cruelty' or the emergence of a process of 'de-civilizing' (García & Malcolm 2010; see also Wouters 1986) and part of the toughening up of Western society and in particular of young men.

The aim of UFC, for example, is the pinning to the mat, or KOing (knocking out) of one's opponent in an octagon-shaped ring using a variety of martial arts, boxing and wrestling techniques to achieve this. UFC is a very popular 'sporting' event which has

drawn heavily on social media, streaming and pay-per-view technologies to grow its fan base. It is a unique amalgam of East and West in that it draws on martial and contact sport traditions from Asia as well from Europe and North America. The spilling of blood in UFC/MMA contests is an acceptable and celebrated aspect of a match – unlike wrestling and boxing, this is not usually a cause for the match to halt. In fact, it is part of the ritual of the fight and adds – literally – to the colour of the contest.

It is informative to briefly examine one event run by UFC – UFC 247 – a fight card comprising the main event between Jon Jones and Dominck Reyes that took place on 8 February 2020 at the Toyota Center in Houston, Texas, United States. The UFC event featured male and female combatants and a series of MMA matches. As a footnote before going into detail, I have been observing UFC for a number of years, but have not completed a detailed sociological study of the franchise or the broadcast events. This is my interpretation of a specific match I watched live on the day of its broadcast. The level of violence and cruelty which was displayed would in any of the traditional sporting codes elicit a ban and perhaps even the intervention of law enforcement. During each of the matches leading up to the main event broadcast live to a global audience, the spilling of blood was cheered on and, as one match ended and another began, the volume, colour and pattern of blood splattered on the floor of the Octagon took on an ever-darker shade of red.

But this is the whole point of the UFC and the broader MMA movement and the events which it holds – the spilling of blood is central to the enjoyment of the audience and the goal of physically dominating one's opponent is central to the sport. As a respondent in a 2013 study of MMA fighting states, the entire focus of the match was 'imposing your will … on the opponent' (Jensen et al. 2013). Central to this form of sport is physical domination of one's opponent – the assumption of the dominant position is achieved, as illustrated above, through a violent exchange that leaves the loser battered and bruised, a quintessential example of being hard, of winning through the application of brutality. As another unnamed fighter in Jensen's study talking about the feeling of being in the Octagon puts it:

> I've been in there enough to where I've just been getting the crap beat out of me. But something in your body doesn't let you quit, you know, rather it's your heart or if it's just your will to win, your competitive side. You just keep coming and coming and coming and coming. And eventually, you know, you'll break the guy's will (Jensen et al. 2013).

In many ways UFC is the embodiment of the cruelty that is central to the culture of neoliberal societies. The hardening of society – despite the spontaneous outpouring of anger and grief at the killing of Black men in America – is a pattern that has consistently been exposed. The panic and catastasis demonstrated during the pandemic of 2020 overshadowed the days of rage that spread across America and beyond. Without the media dissemination of the series of police deaths, I am convinced the selfishness and lack of empathy that was demonstrated during the panic surrounding lockdowns would have continued unabated (Ling & Ho 2020).

The mediatisation of violence

The dissemination of this content is made possible through the advent of a new array of technologies that afford easy access to paid and unpaid content. This form of media content is part of the broader developments within the domain of new media – the cable and internet streaming of television content, much of which is delivered by emergent streaming platforms that have embraced programing which differs considerably from traditional network broadcasting. This new technology is an important element within the broader cultural transformation that has taken place since the turn of the century.

Popular culture in the form of new types of serial and episodic television drama (streamed through services such as Netflix) is riddled with examples of this culture of cruelty. Episodic television dramas such as *Breaking bad*, *The walking dead* and *Game of thrones* make no effort to sanitise the most bestial forms of human behaviour (Gierzynski 2015; González 2018; Malhara 2017). 'Accident porn' such as the MTV program *Ridiculousness* and the plethora of YouTube videos depicting stupid and often dangerous behaviours (e.g. planking) floods the internet and cable networks.

What binds these new forms of media together is their non-sanitised depictions of cruelty and violence. There is no hesitation – often no sense of moralising or the questioning of violence. It simply happens. The reader might pause here and ask the questions: But isn't that what happens in real life? Doesn't violence often strike in an unannounced and often unprovoked form? In short, the answer to these questions is yes. Violence in real life can occur in an unexpected way, one can just be in the wrong place at the wrong time. But here I am wanting us to think through what the readiness to depict violence – especially in forms readily accessible to young people – tells us both about the culture within which these products are consumed and about the values we willingly transmit to those young people. It is my assertion that the mediatisation of violence embodies what Katz (1988) so eloquently describes as the celebration of the 'pleasures of evil'.

At the same time, it is necessary to put the prevalence of violence in the daily media diet of the consumers of popular culture within the context of real and profound horrors. During the past decade, we have been witness to visceral images of extreme violence that occurred in Iraq and the Levant in the period leading up to and following on from the emergence of the Islamic State in the mid-2010s. Here I am specifically referring to the Islamic State's policy of using extreme violence – and documenting it online to engender fear and to spread its propaganda messages. The Islamic State was perhaps the first political terror organisation to effectively make use of emergent digital and online tools to both construct and project its message. The 24/7 news cycle and the advent of YouTube and social media platforms presented such groups with the tools and spaces to project carnage to a global audience.

The hunger for fresh content to fill the 24/7 news cycle also played into the media strategy of the Islamic State, as Barr and Hefroy-Mischler argue:

> Imperatives within the global media to provide coverage of major or 'newsworthy' events creates a threshold which terrorist groups seek to cross by engaging in acts of graphic violence and brutality (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler 2017).

The ability to generate content has been, as I point to above, facilitated by the advances in digital technologies that have democratised the ability to both produce and also disseminate content. The creation of violent videos – the beheadings, burnings and drownings as well as mass shootings of captives – is breathlessly reported on in the Western media. In creating their videos, groups such as the Islamic State 'are able to bridge the gap between professional and amateur media production, between objective coverage of an event and purposeful staging, as well as between actions undertaken for civic purposes and violence directed at creating and perpetuating a psychology of fear' (Barr & Herfroy-Mischler 2017).

Fear of the other and fear of the imminent collapse of society as we know it have become powerful social, cultural and political factors in contemporary life (Berardi 2017; Featherstone 2016; Karouny 2014; Riedl 2014). A key mechanism in creating this sense of fear and an enduring perception that we are on the cusp of the apocalypse is the process of mediatisation. For the purpose of this chapter, the term 'mediatisation' refers to the:

> transformation of everyday life, culture and society in the context of the transformation of the media — which, in the long run, organizes all symbolic operations of a society and culture (Krotz 2017).

Media through digital technology such as computer networks, the internet, social media, smartphones and tablets have had the effect of altering our perceptions of what is normal and what is acceptable. These technologies and cultural forms have helped to reconfigure our perceptions of the 'symbolic operations' and nature of our everyday life. These digital mechanisms and artefacts have helped reshape our understanding of society, culture and the motivations of fellow citizens. The rise of Trump, the Alt-Right and the Islamic State are, it can be argued, products of the emergence of new forms of technology and the process of mediatisation. The manipulation of new technology and cultural forms for political purposes is part of a broader corrosive cultural turn within advanced capitalist societies.

This corrosive cultural turn, I argue, is underpinned by the ready access to and consumption of images and videos of violence in a digital form. The explosion of violent spectacle, both simulated and real, onto screens of all sizes has been enabled through innovations in the delivery mechanisms – the internet, streaming services and new technology. But at its core has been a growing acceptance of the depiction of violence and the manipulation of hatred, both cultural and political, through new forms of media and advanced technologies.

Violence, danger and the fear of the other

Violence has been a part of human existence since there were humans. However, in advanced societies there has been a steady reduction in levels of crime and violence. Despite the decline of crime and violence as social and cultural aspects of everyday life, the popular perception in societies such as the United States is the opposite – there is a general fear and perception that crime and violence are growing phenomena (Callanan & Rosenberger 2015). Since at least the 1960s political rhetoric in the United States and elsewhere has been peppered with assertions that crime and violence are out of control.

This has often been articulated within a racialised public discourse which has had dire consequence for particular ethnic minorities, the poor and other marginalised groups (Anderson & Enberg 1995; Gopnik 2012; Scott, Gibson, Alomaja, Minter & Davis 2017). Life in pre-modern society was best described by the English philosopher Hobbes as 'Nasty, brutish, and short' – it was not the idyllic communitarian vision many people like to imagine.

Studies undertaken in the first part of this century have found that, rather than contemporary society being a place where violence has grown or is even very common, our societies and in fact life in general are safer, less violent and in many ways more convivial. This argument, of course, runs counter to the narrative expounded by the Alt-Right and conservative political critics, who portray contemporary society as a very dangerous, jungle-like environment. The political ideology of the contemporary Right even before the emergence of the extremist Alt-Right relied on the creation of a sense of danger and a fear of the other – people of colour, refugees, strangers, the unemployed and the homeless (Anderson & Enberg 1995; Scott et al. 2017). Contemporary multicultural societies such as the United States, Australia and Britain have been sites of open race baiting and the manipulation of public opinion to support increasing levels of policing, incarceration and a militarised approach towards civilian populations and crises (Graham 2011, 2012; Hall, Critcher, Jefferson, Clarke & Roberts 2013; Schlosser 1998). However, the reality of declining crime rates and in particular a consistent reduction in murder rates in the developed world – these facts have been conveniently ignored in much of the political debate (Knepper 2015; Weiss, Santos, Testa & Kumar 2016). As Steven Pinker (2011) points out, humans are not more violent today than they were in the past. As the accounts I refer to above and the work of Pinker (2011, 2018) and others (e.g. Gat 2008) have highlighted, humans are not becoming more violent.

According to Pinker (2011, 2018) and Gat (2008), human society has over time progressed to become a safer, less violent, more harmonious place to live. Pinker (2011, 2018) argues persuasively that critics of contemporary society and in particular those who hold a romanticised view of what human society was like in the past base their arguments on a misreading of the past. Pinker argues in his classic account *The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined* that:

> nostalgia for a peaceable past is … [a] … delusion … We now know that native peoples, whose lives are so romanticized in today's children's books, had rates of death from warfare that were even greater than those of our world wars. The romantic visions of medieval Europe omit the exquisitely crafted instruments of torture and are innocent of the thirtyfold greater risk of murder in those times. The centuries for which people are nostalgic were times in which the wife of an adulterer could have her nose cut off, children as young as eight could be hanged for property crimes, a prisoner's family could be charged for easement of irons, a witch could be sawn in half, and a sailor could be flogged to a pulp (Pinker 2011).

The mantra that in the past humans lived in a peaceable, pastoral world where violence and conflict were restrained by the bonds of family and community is a powerful idea – it forms the bedrock of many forms of philosophy and religion. In particular, it feeds the 'cultural

pessimism' that permeates contemporary Western society (Stern 1974). This view also informs the nostalgia-imbued ideology of many social and political conservatives and, when coupled with the contemporary fear of terrorism – a quite negligible threat when we look at the statistics (Pinker 2018) – has become part of the dominant militarised, liberal-capitalist political form. At the heart of the current political form is a deep sense of cultural despair – a despair that is deeply rooted in Western culture and society.

'Cultural pessimism'

Grappling with the horrors of the Nazi era and its failed global empire – the Third Reich – Fritz Stern tried to contextualise how such an important nation in the family of European nations could create this true apocalypse. Stern argues that the Nazi Party was able to tap into an underlying sense of 'cultural pessimism' that was embedded within the German culture and the German character in order to achieve its political ends. In later years Stern applied his thinking to the United States and concluded that America also shares a deep-seated sense of cultural despair. According to Stern:

> Cultural pessimism has a strong appeal in America today. As political conditions appear stable at home or irremediable abroad, American intellectuals have become concerned with the cultural problems of our society and have substituted sociological or cultural analyses for political criticism … There is a discontent in the Western world that does not stem from economic want or from the threat of war; rather it springs from dissatisfaction with life in an urban and industrialized culture (Stern 1974).

The sense of cultural despair Stern is talking about is at the core of the growth in media and political discourses – the violent cultural themes and products that now dominate are an outgrowth of this deep-seated sense of foreboding and cultural despair. Fear of the apocalypse or the violent other – local or foreign – is a pattern that is repeated over and over in the media, in popular culture and in the fevered outpourings of the dominant political class.

Despite the evidence that violence and war are not statistically more common than in the past, our culture projects images and messages that the reverse is true, that we are on the cusp of societal collapse (Virilio & Richard 2012). This is a dominant media trope and haunts much of the explosion in media content on the emergent streaming platforms. Concurrently, not only does virtual violence saturate popular culture, but the fear of a violent world bleeds into our everyday existence. What makes the inhabitants of peaceful, well-organised and rich societies act as though hordes of barbarians are attacking? It is not overly simplistic to argue that the cultural artefacts described above have contributed to generating a sense of impending collapse and the notion that a dystopian future is just beyond the horizon.

'Get hard'

The process of hardening is both subtle and at times an explicit component of our everyday experience of life. The process of hardening and the culture of violence can be experienced or rehearsed by young people through games and simulations, and through militarised activities such as particular martial sports like MMA and boot camps

both educational and sporting (De Avila 2008). Taken as a whole, these technologies and practices act as a form of pedagogy – they educate populations in both direct and indirect ways. The process of hardening takes place within a broad societal form of pedagogical work. The hardening of society has at its core the promotion of what has been described as militarisation – and forms the kernel of a 'soft approach' to preparing modern societies for the state of perpetual war and conflict we find ourselves inhabiting.

The hardening of young people and of society in general can be thought of as a key factor in a broader development – the militarisation of Western society (Geyer 1989). Militarisation is not simple or straightforward, it is in effect quite subtle in both its penetration of everyday life and also its application through various technologies, forms of media and propaganda. It is dependent on facilitating and maintaining this cultural shift towards a cultural form which facilitates and normalises violence, preparation for conflict and maintenance of a perpetual state of war. This is accomplished, I argue, through the constant project of hardening society and hardening youth through social discipline and the various cultural forms and media technologies that project violence, fear and spectacle.

On being tough

Before I conclude, I need to flesh out in a little more detail what these mechanisms – social discipline and militarisation – have helped to create: a hardened subject population which is inured to the cost of war and the application of violence for political purposes. I have danced around this simple (and perhaps, as my critics will assert, simplistic) statement about the state of everyday life in advanced capitalist society – being tough and enjoying the visual representation of violence and cruelty in our culture as represented in our daily media consumption of video streams, social media feeds and other tools for the production and consumption of images, ideas and popular culture.

Before continuing with this train of thought, let me draw on one of the best explications of the notion of toughness – although it is from a position of how this applies to criminal youth gangs. I still think it helps us to understand where we are now as a culture and as a society. Katz, in his classic book *Seductions of crime* (1988) referred to earlier in this chapter, argues that in criminal gangs and certain youth subcultures:

> The person who would be tough must cultivate in others the perception that they cannot reach his sensibilities. Adolescents who would achieve a foreign and hostile presence in interactions must go further and participate in a collective project to produce an alien aesthetic. But the shaping of a tough image and the practice of an alien sensibility are insufficient to ensure that one will be 'bad'. Those who would be bad are always pursued by powerful spiritual enemies who soften tough posture and upset the carefully balanced cultures of alienation, making them appear silly, puerile, and banal and thus undermining their potential for intimidation. To survive unwanted imitators, you must show that unlike the kids, you're not kidding; unlike the gays, you're not playing; unlike the fashionable middle class, you understand fully and embrace the evil of your style. You must show that you mean it (Katz 1988:99).

Elsewhere in his book, Katz talks about how evil acts as a seductive attractor to join and participate in the acts of violence and crime of youth gangs and criminal gangs in general. It has been the aim of this chapter to try and untangle how the seduction of crime and the lure of evil as a cultural and personal style statement have become strong elements in our wider society and culture. The antihero of the 1960s and 1970s as portrayed through the character of the Man in Black in *Westworld* or *Star wars'* Darth Vader – a planet-destroying militarist – are emblematic of this shift in the dominant cultural form. The 'hero's journey' that Joseph Campbell wrote about no longer speaks to the identarian and militarised culture that capitalism has engendered. The point that I make here is controversial: I see no difference between the 'me-first' nature of identity politics and the production of a hardened militarised subject in Western society – both are products of the dominant neoliberal political form. One is openly contested and the other in fact shapes and constructs the consciousness of the subject population. Both, however, flourish under the conditions of the neoliberal political form.

Contemporary culture is littered with examples of individuals not travelling the hero's path to redemption, but in fact the opposite. The role of the individual in contemporary society has in most cases come to be symbolised by a materialistic, digital nomad who seeks meaning through material possessions or meaningless posturing around food consumption and international travel – all to be captured for a selfie and Instagram likes. This is validated and rewarded both by and through the capitalist economic system, but also by and through the dominant capitalist social, cultural and political form.

Conclusion

The creation of a cultural and political form that is predisposed towards engagement in armed conflict in a relatively unquestioned manner is the dominant characteristic of contemporary society. Young people, but the broader society as well, have been subjected to a conditioning process which builds on more than two centuries of social disciplining, first to prepare the subject population of Western society for the demands of capitalist accumulation and now to defend a globe-spanning empire founded on a neoliberal capitalist political form. The processes briefly discussed in this chapter have the effect of producing a mentally compliant and hardened young person. The forces at work to construct consensus and an unquestioned commitment to political violence are rarely exposed. They are not magical, nor is this the outcome of a global conspiracy – it is in fact the inescapable logic of a political form that has been constructed to project and protect economic and political power which has at its core the militarisation of society in defence of the neoliberal capitalist state. It is not possible to maintain one without the other.

References

Alford, A., & Scheibler, S. (2018). *Societal shifts and the horror genre*. Loyola Marymount University.

Almohammad, A. (2018). *ISIS child soldiers in Syria: The structural and predatory recruitment, enlistment, pre-training indoctrination, training, and deployment*. International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Hague, 8.

Anderson, D.C., & Enberg, C. (1995). Crime and the politics of hysteria: How the Willie Horton story changed American justice. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 11(4), 298–300.

Bani-Khair, B., Alshboul, N.M., Al-Khawaldeh, N., Al-Khawaldeh, I., & Ababneh, M. (2017). Violence patterns in Peckinpah's *The wild bunch* (1969): Critical reading. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 6(3), 210–14.

Barr, A., & Herfroy-Mischler, A. (2017). ISIL's execution videos: Audience segmentation and terrorist communication in the digital age. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 1–22.

Benioff, D.W. (2011–2019). *Game of thrones* [TV series]: HBO.

Berardi, F. (2017). *Futurability: The age of impotence and the horizon of possibility*. London, Brooklyn: Verso.

Callanan, V., & Rosenberger, J.S. (2015). Media, gender, and fear of crime. *Criminal Justice Review*, 40(3), 322–39.

Danner, C. (2015). How ISIS abducts, recruits, and trains children to become jihadists. *Intelligencer*. <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2015/07/how-isis-abducts-recruits-and-trains-children.html?gtm=top&gtm=top>.

De Avila, J. (28 July 2008). War games: Army lures civilians by letting them play soldier. Recruiters bring lifelike videogame to amusement parks, and kids love it. *Wall Street Journal*. <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB121721198768289035>.

Debord, G. (1992). *The society of the spectacle*. 1967. Paris: Les Éditions Gallimard.

Deleuze, G., Guattari, F., & Massumi, B. (1986). *Nomadology: The war machine*. New York, NY: Semiotext(e).

Doueihi, M. (2011). *Digital cultures*. Harvard University Press.

Elwood, R. L. (2018). Frame of thrones: Portrayals of rape in HBO's *Game of thrones*. *Ohio State Law Journal Furthermore*, 79, 113.

Featherstone, M. (2016). Chaosmic spasm: Guattari, Stiegler, Berardi, and the digital apocalypse. *CM: Communication and Media*, 11(38), 243–68. doi:10.5937/comman12-11501

Ferreday, D. (2015). Game of thrones, rape culture and feminist fandom. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 30(83), 21–36.

García, R.S., & Malcolm, D. (2010). Decivilizing, civilizing or informalizing? The international development of mixed martial arts. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 45(1), 39–58.

Gascón, L.D., & Roussell, A. (2018). An exercise in failure: Punishing 'at-risk' youth and families in a South Los Angeles boot camp program. *Race and Justice*, 8(3), 270–97.

Gat, A. (2008). *War in human civilization*. Oxford: OUP.

Geyer, M. (1989). The militarization of the Western world. In J.R. Gillis (Ed.), *The militarization of the Western world* (pp. 65–102). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Gierzynski, A. (2015). Game of thrones, House of cards *and the belief in a just world*. Paper presented at Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

Giroux, H.A., Di Leo, J.R., McClennen, S.A., & Saltman, K.J. (2012). *Neoliberalism, education, and terrorism: Contemporary dialogues*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

González, A.E. (2018). *Horror without end: Narratives of fear under modern capitalism*. Oberlin College.

Gopnik, A. (2012). The caging of America. *The New Yorker*, 30.

Graham, S. (2011). *Cities under siege: The new military urbanism*. London, New York: Verso.

Graham, S. (2012). When life itself is war: On the urbanization of military and security doctrine. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36(1), 136–55.

Green, K. (2016). Tales from the mat: Narrating men and meaning making in the mixed martial arts gym. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 45(4), 419–50.

Hall, A.L. (2013). Torture and television in the United States. *The Muslim World*, 103(2), 267–86.

Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J., & Roberts, B. (2013). *Policing the crisis: Mugging, the state and law and order*. Macmillan International Higher Education.

Hitchcock, S.J. (2016). *The veneer of fear: Understanding movie horror*. UK: University of Southampton.

Horgan, J.G., Taylor, M., Bloom, M., & Winter, C. (2017). From cubs to lions: A six-stage model of child socialization into the Islamic State. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 40(7), 645–64.

Jensen, P., Roman, J., Shaft, B., & Wrisberg, C. (2013). In the cage: MMA fighters' experience of competition. *The Sport Psychologist*, 27(1), 1–12.

Jones, S. (2018). Sex and horror. In F. Attwood, C. Smith & B. McNair (Eds), *The Routledge companion to media, sex and sexuality*. Routledge.

Karouny, M. (2014). *Apocalyptic prophecies drive both sides to Syrian battle for end of time*. Reuters.

Katz, J. (1988). *Seductions of crime: Moral and sensual attractions in doing evil*. Basic Books.

Knepper, P. (2015). Falling crime rates: What happened last time. *Theoretical Criminology*, 19(1), 59–76.

Koch, A. (2018). Jihadi beheading videos and their non-jihadi echoes. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 12(3), 24–34.

Ling, G.H.T., & Ho, C.M.C. (2020). Effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on social behaviours: From a social dilemma perspective. *Technium Social Sciences Journal*, 7(1), 312–20.

Malhara, T. (2017). Conceptual analysis of *Game of thrones*. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced Studies*, 4(3), 263–8.

Martino, J. (2015). *War/play: Video games and the militarization of society*. New York, NY: Peter Lang.

Mayeda, D. (2011). The sociology of MMA: Hegemonic masculinity unleashed. *Sociology In Focus*. <http://sociologyinfocus.com/2011/12/the-sociology-of-mma-hegemonic-masculinity-unleashed>.

Mills, M., & Pini, B. (2015). Punishing kids: The rise of the 'boot camp'. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 19(3), 270–84. doi:10.1080/13603116.2014.929748

Pearson, T. (2017). *The media and teenage violence: How much is too much when it comes to adolescent aggression?* Butler University.

Pinker, S. (2011). *The better angels of our nature: Why violence has declined*. New York, NY: Viking.

Pinker, S. (2018). *Enlightenment now: The case for reason, science, humanism, and progress*. Penguin.

Riedl, M. (2014). *Apocalyptic politics – On the permanence and transformations of a symbolic complex*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Rødje, K. (2016). *Images of blood in American cinema: The tingler to* The wild bunch. Routledge.

Salter, M., & Tomsen, S. (2011). Violence and carceral masculinities in felony fights. *British Journal of Criminology*, 52(2), 309–23.

Schils, N., & Pauwels, L. (2014). Explaining violent extremism for subgroups by gender and immigrant background, using SAT as a framework. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 7(3), 27–47.

Schlosser, E. (1998). The prison-industrial complex. *Atlantic Monthly* (10727825), 282(6), 51–72. <http://0-search.ebscohost.com.library.vu.edu.au/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=1340640&site=ehost-live>.

Scott, J., Gibson, C., Alomaja, L., Minter, A., & Davis, L. (2017). When perceptions are deadly: Policing, given the summer in Ferguson, Missouri and other similar stories, before and since. *Ralph Bunche Journal of Public Affairs*, 6(1), 4.

Shadiack, A. (2012). *The militarization of everyday life*. ABITUS, 43.

Stern, F. (1974). *The politics of cultural despair: A study in the rise of the Germanic ideology*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Tamborini, R., Weber, R., Bowman, N.D., Eden, A., & Skalski, P. (2013). 'Violence is a many-splintered thing': The importance of realism, justification, and graphicness in understanding perceptions of and preferences for violent films and video games. *Projections: the Journal of Movies and Mind*, 7(1), 100–118.

Torres, N., & Gurevich, A. (2018). Introduction: Militarization of consciousness. *Anthropology of Consciousness*, 29(2), 137–44. doi:10.1111/anoc.12101

Virilio, P., & Richard, B. (2012). *The administration of fear* (vol. 10). London: Semiotext(e).

Weaving, C. (2014). Cage fighting like a girl: Exploring gender constructions in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 41(1), 129–42.

Weiss, D.B., Santos, M.R., Testa, A., & Kumar, S. (2016). The 1990s homicide decline: A Western world or international phenomenon? A research note. *Homicide Studies*, 20(4), 321–34.

Williams, G. T. (2016). *The effectiveness of juvenile boot camps and their impact on minority youth*. National Louis University.

Winter, C. (2015). Documenting the virtual 'caliphate'. *Quilliam Foundation*, 33, 1–50.

Wollen, P. (1989). The Situationist International. *New Left Review*, 174(1), 1.

Wouters, C. (1986). Formalization and informalization: Changing tension balances in civilizing processes. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 3(2), 1–18.