



*Resetting The Foundation Stones of  
Relational Practice*

*November 11-12, 2024*

Bonnington Hotel, Dublin, Ireland

in association with





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## CONFERENCE THEME

# *Resetting The Foundation Stones of Relational Practice*

Relational Practice exists as a concept in many caring professions including Child & Youth Care / Social Care, Social Work, Education, Medicine / Nursing, Psychology/Psychotherapy and as an 'approach' Relational Practice is universally appreciated as one that is necessary to adopt, if we are to be of any assistance to the people we work with and serve. Yet, no single and universally accepted definition exists of what Relational Practice is, instead there are different (but related) interpretations.

It was noted at the UNITY23 conference by one of the speakers that, *Relational Practice is a bit like love or humour ... we mightn't be able to clearly define it, but we know it when we see it or feel it.*

Building on the success of the UNITY 2023 conference (*Refocusing the Trauma Lens*), UNITY 2024 will provide a space to meet with colleagues from around the world, listen to and engage in presentations and workshops, get involved in conversations and discussions, and generally get a chance to revisit the core of Relational Practice in the contexts of both learnings from the past and contemporary developments and understanding.

Speakers from around the globe will present across a spectrum of topics that can be viewed as the **foundation stones of Relational Practice**. Some of these topics might be considered 'values'; some 'traits of the effective practitioner'; some could be considered 'wisdoms' that need to be known, as well as 'approaches, techniques, and ways of thinking and doing'.

### *Registration*

Please visit <https://unityconference.org/conference-2024/> for conference registration details. There is a limit of **150 delegates** for this conference.

### *Late Breaking Information*

Please visit [www.unityconference.org](http://www.unityconference.org) for all late breaking information.

### *Auction*

Unity 2024 will be hosting an auction in support of the work of [CYC-Net](http://CYC-Net).

Visit our auction site at <https://32auctions.com/CYC2024>



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## Programme-at-a-Glance: Day 1

MAIN ROOM		DOWNSTAIRS 1		DOWNSTAIRS 2		UPSTAIRS	
MONDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2024							
8.30	Registration						
9.30	Opening						
9.45	Dr John M. Digney (Ireland) Relational Weaving						
10.30	Colin Maginn (UK) All children should be loved, therefore 'Children in public care should be loved'						
11.15	BREAK						
11.30	Stephanie Hunter (England) The Role of Empathy and Compassion as part of the delivery of Trauma Informed Models of Practice	Anup Arun Hiwale (India and USA) Contentment: The Relationship Builder		Andrea Christensen and Nicole Mizzi (Canada) Relentless Engagement: Educational Inclusion and Equity from a Canadian Perspective		Daniel Pectol and Dr Jess Linick (USA) Accelerating the Trauma Informed Care Learning Curve with the Modern Workforce: A Leadership Framework	
12.15	Dr Heather Modlin, Lesley Goodyear and Kerri Hayley (Canada) Relational Leadership: Back to the Basics						
13.00	LUNCH						
14.00	Caitlin-Anne Dow (England) On the receiving end: An exploration of relational practice from an autistic perspective	Deb Cockerton (Canada) Unlocking Relational Potential in the Digital Life Space: Navigating Virtual Connections in a Post-COVID World		Frank Delano and Noor Almaoui (USA) The Real "Money in the Bank": Building Relationships with Children		Michael Murray (USA) The Therapeutic Inclusion Program	
14.45	Dr Bethany Casarjiran and Dr Jessica Linick (Canada) More than a deep breath: How increasing our own self-regulation skills magnifies the impact of trauma-informed care						
15.30	BREAK						
15.45	Luke Carty (Canada) A Deep Dive into the theory of Relationship in Child and Youth Care	David Power (Ireland) Connection & Engagement through Memories Trip of a Life Time		Michelle Briegel (Canada) The Relational Practice Approach in Group Care: How High Staff Turnover is Creating a Relational Void, and What Can We Do About It		Samantha Rose and Melinda Gogerly (Canada) As leaders, how do you engage in relational practice to foster a culture of resilience based on a person-centered approach?	
16.30	END OF DAY 1						



## Programme-at-a-Glance: Day 2

MAIN ROOM		DOWNSTAIRS 1		DOWNSTAIRS 2		UPSTAIRS	
TUESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2024							
8.30	Registration						
9.30	Opening						
9.45	Wendy Gee (Canada) Building Resilience and Healing through Relational Practice: Supporting Sexually Exploited Youth with Hope, Guidance, Connection, and Engagement						
11.15	BREAK						
11.30	Tara M Collins (Canada) How Children's Rights are Relevant to Professional Practices with Children and Youth: A Proposal for a Relational Child Rights-Based Praxis	Ziigwanbinesii Charles (Canada) Exploring the Meaningful Impacts of Relational Interactions through Storytelling	Dr. Gerard Bellefeuille and Jenny McGrath (Canada) What Does Ontology Have to do with Relational-Centered Child and Youth Care Practice	Brian Hogan and Selena Reilly (Ireland) Relational Care in a Secure Environment: Art or Science?			
12.15	Dr Ronan Gibney, Charlotte Crudden and Carleen Cumisky (Ireland) Developing and implementing a relational model of therapeutic support in a children's residential care setting: Successes and Challenges						
13.00	LUNCH						
14.00	Jessica Williams, K. Larisa Hanssen, Robyn Kemp, Mia Schartau and Rachel Lum (Canada) The Spaces in-between: Student-instructor Relational Practice in Higher Education	Jenny McGrath and Christine Gaitens (Canada) Reconsidering Cobblestones: Pathways of Relational Child and Youth Care Practice	Kirsten Hargreaves and Jonathan Boudin (Canada) Pawsitive Partnerships and Healing Hooves	Natalie Dow and Dr Clive Acraman (England) Creating the Conditions for Relational Practice: Helping things go well			
14.45	Sebastian Monteux (Scotland) Mattering: from Individual Wellbeing to Relational Welfare						
15.30	BREAK						
15.45	Dr Mark Smith (Scotland) Upbringing as the Purpose of CYC relationships						
16.45	CONFERENCE CLOSING						



11 NOVEMBER 9.45-10.30 | MAIN ROOM

## Relational Weaving

JOHN M. DIGNEY

"The term 'Relational Practice' has been used by many caring and therapeutic professions over recent decades and it sometimes seems to be assumed that there is a single and universally accepted definition. This has not been the case, but this workshop brings us a few steps closer.

This presentation will begin by exploring recent history of relational practice and consider the work of some of the relational pioneers who have brought us to where we are, before looking at the many and varied roles the 'relational practitioner' is expected to take on. There after I will focus on some ESSENTIAL component that are necessary for the skilled practitioner to know and to deliver RELATIONAL PRACTICE.

### Key Messages and Learning Outcomes

- To explore some of the lessons from 'Relational Pioneers'
- To consider the variety of Relational Professions
- To examine some 'Roles of Effective Relational Practitioners'
- To review some of the ESSENTIAL Components of Relational Practice.

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**Dr John M Digney** has worked with 'troubled children' and families for over 30 years. He is involved with various international organisations associated with 'in care' and 'looked after' kids, including the ACRC, CYC-Net and Reclaiming Youth at Risk. He has professional qualifications in psychology, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, project management, education and learning and a PhD in the Therapeutic uses of Humour. He is currently the National Coordinator for Learning and Development with Tusla.



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11 NOVEMBER 10.30-11.15 | MAIN ROOM

## *All Children should be loved, therefore 'Children in public care should be loved'*

COLIN MAGINN

This presentation introduces 'Emotional Warmth Parenting', a relational approach to child care developed by Dr Seán Cameron and myself.

The words 'Emotional Warmth Parenting' tell the child what to expect from the adults in the parenting role, while spelling out to the adults, the basic principles of their work with children.

'Emotional Warmth Parenting' empowers those in the parenting role by using psychological theory and research such as:

- Diana Baumrind's Authoritative Parenting Style
- Patricia Crittenden's 'Dynamic-Maturational Model' of Attachment
- Alex Linley's realising and using Strengths
- Kate Cairns and Bruce Perry's work on Trauma, to develop strategies for each child.
- Building resilience with Self-management and using the ABCD+C to understand or redefine challenging behaviour.

Our holistic approach to children builds and uses their strengths, identifies priority parenting tasks, develops helpful social networks, and provides individual child-focused, trauma-informed support.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

We thrive when we are loved and share our love. Participants will:

- *Learn about the neurological and biological bases of Relational Practice common to all healthy human beings. Love!*
- *Learn how 'Emotional Warmth Parenting' can provide a holistic strength-based approach to working with children in public care.*
- *Discover the 'light at the end of the tunnel' offered by the 'Dynamic Maturational Model' of attachment for adults in the parenting role.*

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Colin Maginn has worked with children in residential care since he was 19. He co-authored two books with his friend and colleague Dr Seán Cameron: 'Achieving Positive Outcomes for Children in Care' (2009) and 'It's a privilege' (2021). Maginn is a guest lecturer at UCL and has written many sector press articles on his work with traumatised children. In 2019, he presented "Combining Quality with What Works" at the House of Lords, hosted by the Earl of Listowel. He has presented at conferences in Cork, Dublin, Berlin, Amsterdam, Atlanta USA, Copenhagen, London, Newcastle and other cities in England.

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11 NOVEMBER 11.30-12.15 | MAIN ROOM

## *The Role of Empathy and Compassion as part of the delivery of Trauma Informed Models of Practice*

STEPHANIE HUNTER

I set the scene considering the triad of lived experience, practice wisdom and academic knowledge.

Trauma informed practice requires bringing your “whole self” to work and considering this in terms of content and how much is needed to help develop services. I will refer to our work in relation to loss delivered in a recent conference in Malta which is part of a forthcoming publication and our current work in Liverpool’s Growing stronger project.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Increasing understanding of the role of compassion and empathy in delivering trauma informed care.*
- *Developing knowledge in relation to trauma informed practice*
- *Knowledge of the impact of relational poverty and the value of relationships which heal.*

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**Steph Hunter** has been a social worker since 1997. During her career, she has worked in Cafcass, children and families, and substance misuse. The main focus of her career has been children’s mental health and she managed a multi awarding winning mental health service for children and adopted children for over a decade. Steph is a therapist and trained in EMDR and trauma related therapies. This won three national awards and three regional NHS awards. From 2015 to 2019 Steph was a Senior Lecturer at Sunderland University. Steph is a qualified therapist, author, trainer. She has also worked as a Head of quality and practice and Principal Social Worker and Clinical Director for mental health services for children in foster care. She has published in relation to adoption, self-care and cared for children and trauma.



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11 NOVEMBER 12.15-13.00 | MAIN ROOM

## *Relational Leadership: Back to the Basics*

HEATHER MODLIN, LESLEY GOODYEAR AND KERRI HAYLEY

Leadership, like child and youth care practice, is complex. It is easy to get caught up in the challenges associated with the role and forget the basics – the need to establish safe and trusting relationships with those we lead. Without this, true leadership is not possible. In this workshop we will talk about the skills and behaviours necessary for effective leadership in child and youth care settings and share lessons learned.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

*At the end of this session participants will be able to:*

- *Identify basic leadership skills*
- *Articulate the importance of the relationship in effective leadership*
- *Describe ways to build safe and trusting relationships with those they lead.*

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**Dr. Heather Modlin** has worked in the field of child and youth care for over 35 years. She is currently CEO of Amal Youth and Family Centre, a non-profit organization providing a range of services to children, youth, families and adults across Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Heather has published numerous journal articles and book chapters and co-edited the book *Relational Child and Youth Care in Action*. She has served on several national and international boards and is currently Chair of the Board of Governors of CYC-Net and a board member of FICE Canada.

**Kerri Hayley** has worked in the field of child and youth care since 2006. Currently, she is Manager of Out of Home Care with Amal. Kerri is a certified Counsellor, a Psychological Health and Safety Advisor and a trainer for The Person Brain Model and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI). Kerri has worked as a Child and Youth Care instructor, and a classification officer with the Department of Justice. Kerri is a member of the Criminal Code Mental Disorder Review Board.

**Lesley Goodyear** has worked in the child and youth care field for almost 20 years. She is currently the Manager of Family Engagement with Amal. Lesley has worked in out of home care, family support, and out of home treatment, and provided family-based care to children in her own home. Lesley has an extensive background in teaching both Child and Youth Care and Psychology at the post-secondary level. She is a facilitator of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) training and the Person Brain model.



AMAL YOUTH AND FAMILY CENTRE

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11 NOVEMBER 11.30-13.00 | DOWNSTAIRS 1

## *Contentment: The Relationship Builder*

ANUP ARUN HIWALE

In any societal context, the dynamics of wealth and poverty profoundly influence the ethical underpinnings of relationships, both positively and negatively. Whether within the realms of romance, conflict, or kinship, relationships are ubiquitous. Nevertheless, the coherence within these bonds often faces strains, necessitating the attainment of contentment as a fundamental catalyst for reconciliation beyond the confines of material exigencies. This presentation delves into examining historical, spiritual, and social methodologies aimed at delineating foundational precepts conducive to cultivating contentment among individuals and heterogeneous communities.

The notion of contentment is intricately interwoven with economic discourse, particularly in the backdrop of industrialization, which engendered a fervent pursuit of profit-oriented paradigms in societal service. Consequently, erstwhile beneficiaries metamorphosed into mere consumers, while erstwhile benefactors assumed the mantle of arbiters of consumer demand. In this milieu, contentment became subsumed under the rubric of warranty, wherein assurance supplanted genuine satisfaction, ostensibly fostering a semblance of tranquillity within relationships contingent upon the guarantee of material fulfilment. Restoration of contentment and its true foundational principles will safeguard unity.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Contentment, as an emotional state, influences the inclination to maintain or terminate a relationship*
- *Engaging in selfless stewardship cultivates a sincere perspective prioritizing the welfare of others over personal interests*
- *Neither poverty nor wealth inherently fosters contentment; instead, it is the profound realization that human existence transcends individualism and is intrinsically interconnected with other beings and the natural world*
- *The attainment of contentment is enriched by a profound understanding of divine truth, particularly the theological distinction between creation and the creator, which underscores the essence of purity in contentment.*

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**Anup Arun Hiwale** – I am a theological teacher and a sociopolitical leader in India. I live in the USA and India. Married with three children, I travel for various mission assignments, and have achieved various awards for my services to the communities from State Government of Uttarakhand, social organizations in Mumbai, and Christian Reformed Missions agencies. I am a reformed Christian.



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11 NOVEMBER 11.30-13.00 | DOWNSTAIRS 2

## *Relentless Engagement: Educational Inclusion and Equity from a Canadian Perspective*

ANDREA CHRISTENSEN AND NICOLE MIZZI

This presentation explores the vital role of relational practice in creating inclusive and equitable learning environments and addresses the challenges and opportunities inherent in implementing relational wellness within post-secondary child and youth care classrooms.

Participants will explore the transformative potential of vulnerability in educational settings, challenging conventional academic models and embracing authentic, holistic approaches to student support.

Through interactive discussions and activities, attendees will gain insights into cultivating relational pillars such as authenticity, holistic student engagement, kindness, and intentional relationship-building strategies. Join us in reshaping child and youth care education through the lens of relational practice and equity.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Embrace authenticity and vulnerability as foundational elements of relational practice, fostering deeper connections and trust in the classroom.*
- *Recognize and honour students as whole individuals, valuing their diverse backgrounds, experiences, and learning styles to create inclusive learning environments.*
- *Lead with kindness and empathy, fostering a culture of care and support while maintaining academic rigor and professional boundaries.*
- *Intentionally embed relational practices into every aspect of teaching, from curriculum design to daily interactions, to cultivate meaningful relationships and foster student growth.*

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**Andrea Christensen** was born and raised on Treaty 7 Territory, in a small farming community. She is of settler heritage with her ancestors being Danish, English and Irish. Even after travelling the world, the prairies have always been home to Andrea. With over 15 years in Child and Youth Care, Andrea's career spans Canada's coasts and reaches Malaysia and Nepal. She holds a CYC degree from MacEwan University and an MSW from the University of Calgary, specializing in International and Community Development. Notably, Andrea's frontline work in youth residential settings, including Nunavut, deeply impacted her. Passionate about the outdoors, she pioneers wilderness programs, breaking barriers to access for young people. As an Instructor at Bow Valley College in Calgary, Andrea eagerly imparts her passion for policy, systems, and social justice, nurturing the next generation of Child and Youth Care Counsellors.

**Nicole Mizzi** is a resident of Treaty 7 (Calgary) and brings a wealth of experience in social work, child and youth care, and advocacy. Beginning her career in Ontario, she worked with street entrenched youth before moving to Calgary in 2002 to continue her frontline work with sexually exploited and marginally housed young people. Her dedication led her to pursue a degree in social work while simultaneously working and raising two children. Nicole's commitment to understanding systemic issues took her to the UK for an international practicum. For 15 years, she served with the Youth Criminal Defence Office, advocating for young people's rights. Transitioning from frontline work, she now educates future professionals at Bow Valley College and is pursuing a Master of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. Her research aims to amplify the voices of children and youth in conflict with the law, reflecting her enduring dedication to social justice and advocacy.

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# Relational Child & Youth Care Practice

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11 NOVEMBER 11.30-13.00 | UPSTAIRS

## *Accelerating the Trauma Informed Care Learning Curve with the Modern Workforce: A Leadership Framework*

DANIEL PECTOL AND JESS LINICK

In this interactive workshop, geared towards supervisors and administrators but applicable to all, we provide a structured roadmap to engage leadership in best practices in the provision of trauma-responsive supervision to direct care staff. While we use an “emotion coaching” intervention as a backdrop, the supervision principles we will explore can be applied to the delivery of a range of interventions or frameworks. We review key factors in effective supervision, including embodying the concepts we ask staff to use, equipping staff with the self-regulation skills necessary to do this work, and engaging staff in ways that build embedded cultures of support.

Attendees will be provided with a framework for supervision, including: 1) ways to assess their strengths and challenges as a supervisor; 2) strategies for assessing staff and team competencies and structuring supervision in high-stress environments; 3) methods for setting meaningful goals and realistic expectations; and 4) tips to establish the habits, systems, and rhythms in the agency that accelerate growth.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Deepen their understanding of the need for a trauma-responsive leadership framework that goes beyond TIC training*
- *Enhance awareness of their strengths and challenges as a supervisor*
- *Expand tools for assessing staff and team competencies and structuring supervision in a high-stress environment*
- *Strengthen methods for setting meaningful goals and realistic expectations*
- *Reinforce the steps to establish habits, systems, and rhythms in the agency that accelerate growth.*

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**Danny Pectol** started his child welfare career in May of 1996 and over the following 11 years he worked with high acuity clients through various roles at the Children’s Home of Lubbock and Texas Boys Ranch. In 2007 after completing his Masters in Social Work he became Director of the Emergency Shelter/Assessment Center. In 2016 Danny relocated to Fort Worth to work at ACH Child and Family Services as their Director of Training. While a natural trainer and speaker he soon returned to building treatment oriented programs becoming the Residential Director for ACH’s Wedgewood Campus.

**Jessica Linick, PhD., SEP**, has been the Senior Psychologist with the Bellevue/NYU Juvenile Justice Mental Health Service, Assistant Professor with NYU School of Medicine, and Clinical Supervisor at Rikers Island, New York City’s largest jail complex, serving adults with severe mental illness. She is an author, consultant, trainer, speaker, and teacher, presenting nationally and internationally on topics related to attachment, Trauma Informed Care, criminal justice reform, and the use of mindfulness as an intervention within residential and forensic settings. Jess is a Somatic Experiencing Practitioner (SEP) and is currently Director of Youth Services for the Lionheart Foundation.

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11 NOVEMBER 14.00-14.45 | MAIN ROOM

## *On the Receiving End: An Exploration of Relational Practice from an Autistic Perspective*

CAITLIN-ANNE DOW

Relationships are fundamental to making meaningful changes in the lives of young people, but as an autistic young person, knowing my help and support depended on relationships with practitioners was terrifying. Many of the practitioners I met had little to no understanding of what it means to be autistic, or how to build a relationship with me, so they unintentionally did more harm than good.

In this session I will cover common autistic traits that can influence relationship formation with practitioners, along with my experiences of practitioner relationships. Through exploring both when it worked and what went wrong when it didn't, I hope to cultivate a greater understanding of the nuances involved in building relationships with autistic young people and reinforce the importance of these relationships. Additionally, I aim to contextualise the necessity of vulnerability and resilience in practitioners, as well as the accidental damage caused when relationships are 'hollow'.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Develop an understanding of autistic traits (such as: masking, RSD, the faun response or black and white thinking) that can affect how relationships are formed*
- *Have an increased awareness of the nuances in building relationships with autistic young people*
- *Improve understanding of the importance of practitioner vulnerability and resilience for successful relationship building*
- *Know how to identify when relational practice is hollow and understand the impact this has on young people.*

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**Caitlin-Anne Dow** – I am an 18yr old neurodivergent student, studying SEND at Plymouth Marjon University. I'm passionate about improving the lived experiences of disabled young people by helping practitioners and organisations create informed, empathetic, and compassionate services and environments. I'm a qualified Youth MH First Aider, have sat on the Cornwall Youth Council SEND subcommittee and spoken on its behalf to the SEND board. I've delivered presentations to Cornwall Council, spoken at both online and in-person conferences as well as produced resources for young people including a children's e-book and an educational video series for a specialist paediatric OT service. Most importantly, I've supported SEND students both formally, as a personal chaperone, as well as informally as a student mentor and friend.



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11 NOVEMBER 14.45-15.30 | MAIN ROOM

## *More than a deep breath: How increasing our own self-regulation skills magnifies the impact of trauma-informed care*

BETHANY CASARJIAN AND JESSICA LINICK

Trauma-informed care depends on staffs' ability to develop positive and reparative relationships with youth, while also engaging in effective emotional co-regulation. Yet, research suggests that many staff have experienced significant adversity themselves, impacting their stress tolerance, vulnerability to STS, and relationship behaviors. EQ2 is a trauma-informed training for direct care staff which: 1) builds the fundamental self-awareness and self-regulation skills that underlie trauma-informed care; while 2) supporting staff with approaches shown to buffer them from secondary traumatic stress, burnout, and turnover. EQ2 is a comprehensive program conducted through Circles - a process that builds resilience by allowing staff to voice their experiences and concerns in a forum that promotes support and growth. In addition, all staff receive the EQ2 mobile health app which provides self-regulation instruction, mindfulness training, instructional videos, and self-care strategies. The presentation offers an introduction to EQ2, its theoretical underpinnings, and data from participating agencies.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Supporting staff, while building their self-awareness and self-regulation skills is critical to the delivery of trauma-informed care.*
- *Identify the role that staff self-regulation plays in the process of co-regulating with youth and building reparative relationships.*
- *Understand the link between early adversity and trauma, self-regulation, and secondary traumatic stress. Name three skills or practices that increase an individual's capacity to self-regulate.*

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**Dr. Bethany Casarjian** is the Co-Clinical Director of the Lionheart Foundation and co-author of three nationally utilized, trauma-informed programs designed to increase social and emotional regulation skills, reduce risk-taking behavior, and increase the well-being of youth and staff. Along with research partners at NYU and MIT she co-designed a four-year research project examining self-regulation with system-involved adolescent parents. Dr. Casarjian's work has been funded by the SAMHSA and the NIH. To date, her investigation of the Power Source Program on the adolescent unit of Rikers Island remains the largest US study examining the impact of mindfulness with incarcerated male youth.

**Dr. Jessica Linick** is the Co-Clinical Director of the Lionheart Foundation. She is the co-author of Lionheart's evidence-based youth program, Power Source. Prior to joining Lionheart, she was the Senior Supervising Psychologist with the Bellevue/NYU Juvenile Justice Mental Health Service and a Clinical Assistant Professor with NYU School of Medicine. Prior to that, she was a Clinical Supervisor at Rikers Island, New York City's largest jail complex. She has written and presented nationally and internationally on topics related to attachment, disruptive behavior disorders, Trauma Informed Care, criminal justice reform, and the use of meditation and mindfulness within residential settings.

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11 NOVEMBER 14.00-15.30 | DOWNSTAIRS 1

## *Unlocking Relational Potential in the Digital Life Space: Navigating Virtual Connections in a Post-COVID World*

DEB COCKERTON

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shutdowns, many CYC Practitioners found themselves faced with the challenge of transitioning their work to virtual platforms to maintain essential connections with children and youth. Some practitioners have opted to continue in this digital format, recognizing its potential for fostering meaningful relationships beyond physical boundaries.

This workshop is tailored to meet the evolving needs of CYCP's navigating virtual interactions with children and youth. Rooted in the recognition that the digital realm offers both challenges and opportunities for relational growth, this workshop provides an exploration of strategies and techniques for fostering authentic connections in virtual environments.

From effective communication strategies to creative approaches for engaging with young people online, this workshop informs practitioners with the tools they need to thrive in the digital life space.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Enhanced Virtual Life Space Communication Skills: Participants will be informed of key areas of effective online communication styles.*
- *Creative Engagement Strategies: Attendees will explore innovative approaches for engaging children and youth in virtual spaces.*
- *Building Trust and Rapport Online: Participants will gain insights into the unique challenges of building trust and rapport in virtual relationships and develop strategies for overcoming barriers to connection.*

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**Deb Cockerton BST, CYC**, has been a proud Child and Youth Care practitioner for 46 years and has been in private practice since 2015. She owns CYC Assets and is part owner of Otonabee Family Counselling Centre. Deb is a student at the University of Strathclyde in the MSc CYCS program. She currently works with children, youth, and families in both her Peterborough office and the virtual life space. Her years of experience include schools, group homes, community agencies and teaching CYC at Fleming College. She has developed the first CYC Professional Development Tracker App to assist practitioners to Remember. Save. Reflect. on their professional development in the CYC field.



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11 NOVEMBER 14.00-15.30 | DOWNSTAIRS 2

## *The Real ‘Money in the Bank’: Building Relationships with Children*

FRANK DELANO AND NOOR ALMAOUI

We must always respect “science”. But we must remember that while science is important and serves as a backdrop, working with children is essentially an “art”. It is primarily about healthy adult-child relationships, good professional boundaries, sound judgment, and that truly artistic thing called “genuine caring”. It is about putting “Money in the Bank” with a child. This “Money in the Bank” is the relationship money a Child and Youth Care worker “deposits” with a child in the continuous course of being with that child. The sense of safety and trust this “relationship money” builds may be drawn out in a crisis time to help a child compose themselves or simply stay with the child when they leave care and be used by the child many years later.

This highly interactive workshop using the Presenters’ unique conversational, coaching style of training will look at many ways we can deposit that relational money, and how it pays off in numerous ways for the young person in the present and well into the future.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Working with children is an art, not a science*
- *Much of the most impactful work with children happens in ‘key moments’ that build innate trust*
- *Relational ‘Money in the Bank’ can be key in you helping a child through a crisis and often is not ‘drawn out’ by the child until years later*
- *The ways ‘Money in the Bank’ is built is foundational through years, modalities, cultures, etc.*

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**Frank Delano, LMSW** worked for over 25 years in a large residential center for children near New York City. He began as a direct service Child Care Worker, and moved through a number of different roles before ultimately becoming a Senior Manager in the agency. He currently does training, consulting, and individual coaching, and is a current member of the Board of the Association of Child and Youth Care Practice. He served on the CWLA Committee that last revised the Standards of Excellence for Children in Residential Group Care in the United States. Frank places high value on practicing the art of “Cultural Appreciation”. He has presented at many national and international conferences, including at the Unity Conference six times.

**Noor Almaoui, LCSW** is the owner of Universal Ethos Inc. She is currently a clinical supervisor with Sycamore Child Family Services in Los Angeles. She has worked in many capacities with children including in Homeless Services, Child Welfare, Criminal Justice and Suicide Prevention. Noor is tri-lingual and places special emphasis on practicing “Cultural Appreciation”. She also sees children in private practice and facilitates numerous trainings. She has presented at several international conferences including three previous times at the Unity Conference.

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11 NOVEMBER 14.00-15.30 | UPSTAIRS

## *The Therapeutic Inclusion Program*

MICHAEL MURRAY

A therapeutic inclusion program describes the structure and philosophy for school inclusion for students with significant social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties. In the United States, many programs try to achieve this, but there is almost no inter-program professional discourse. In this session, we'll discuss our specific recommendations, trends in the United States, and discuss international trends in school inclusion for students with significant social, emotional, and behavioral challenges.

In the United States, students who could thrive in general education settings with appropriate support are often placed in separate programs or separate schools. Through a therapeutic inclusion program, these students and their home school communities mutually benefit from their inclusion.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Understand the structure of a therapeutic inclusion program.*
- *Discuss how a therapeutic inclusion program supports equity by reducing exclusionary and punitive measures that disproportionately impact marginalized groups.*
- *Reckon with the divide that has developed between mainstream best practices in mental health care and mental health care in schools.*
- *Describe and discuss the use of a recommended group counseling model for work in schools.*

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**Michael Murray** consults with school districts, is a therapist, and adjunct professor whose office is in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He is the co-author, with Laura Balogh, of *The Therapeutic Inclusion Program: Establishment and Maintenance in Public Schools* (2023). He has 23 years of experience working at the intersection of education and therapy.



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Our Ashdale community will care for, protect, support, empower, inspire and enthuse our young people and colleagues so that we can positively transform lives.

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11 NOVEMBER 15.45-16.30 | MAIN ROOM

## *A Deep Dive into the Theory of Relationship in Child and Youth Care*

LUKE CARTY

This presentation will examine some of the unexplored concepts of relational practice in Child and Youth Care. It will specifically explore how to, (or if we can), practice authenticity, establishing commitment and also balance the need for self-care with relationships. How authentic can our helping relationships be when it is part of our job evaluation or student goals (in a placement setting)?

Further, how can we engage in a relationship where there is no explicitly stated level of commitment from either party? A young person can be transferred or removed from a program with little notice, a helping professional can find a new job. In most cultures, there is explicitly stated levels of commitments in our most personal relationships, but this does not/cannot happen in our role as Child and Youth Care Practitioners.

This presentation will explore these questions and more in an attempt to challenge practitioners to critically reflect on their assumptions about relational practice.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Build empathy for young people and understand how disorienting it may be for them to meet a helping professional who wants to engage in relational practice*
- *Self-reflection – forming relationships in our personal lives takes a commitment from both parties, this isn't always the case in our professional relationships*
- *Understand in greater depth the differences between personal and professional relationships*
- *Understand why a young person may be reluctant to form a connection or relationship with a helping professional*
- *Compare and contrast a variety of relationships and their costs and benefits (eg. business, marital, healthy, toxic, etc).*

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**Luke Carty, MA (CYC)** is a Child and Youth Care Practitioner based in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. He has worked in a variety of settings, including home-based, classroom-based and community settings with children and youth. He is currently the Provincial Director at Bartimaeus Inc., which provides Behavioural Support Services across the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia. Luke holds a diploma in Child and Youth Care from Humber College and a Masters of Arts in CYC from Toronto Metropolitan University. He has taught as a professor in the Child and Youth Care programs at Humber College, Sheridan College and Toronto Metropolitan University.



11 NOVEMBER 15.45-16.30 | DOWNSTAIRS 1

## Connection and Engagement through Memories Trip of a Life Time

DAVID POWER

Smyly Trust have been provided memories and experiences for young people around their dreams and wishes. This opportunity to create childhood memories allows the young people to trust, build and connect with adults who care for them. These trips have taken my forms and many interesting stories from the past.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Every Child deserves to take childhood memories it adulthood*
- *Allowing Children to achieve a dream can provide resiliences*
- *Gifts which are unconditional may change lives*
- *Relationships through life experience.*

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**David Power** has a MA in Management, BA Hons Social Care, BA in Social Studies and a National Certificate in Vocational Rehabilitation and National Certificate Education & Equality. He was President of the Irish Association Social Care Workers and part of the founding members of Social Care Ireland. He has represented the profession on the Health Social Care Professional Council since 2005. With over 37 years' experience in social care which include The Children Detention Schools, The Crisis Interventions Service, Disability Services, Community Care HSE and now the Director of Smyly Trust Service.



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11 NOVEMBER 15.45-16.30 | DOWNSTAIRS 2

## *The Relational Practice Approach in Group Care: How High Staff Turnover is Creating a Relational Void, and What Can We Do About It*

MICHELLE BRIEGEL

In North America, group care is a standard child welfare placement option for children and youth in care. There are arguments in favour and against group care, both with some merit given the current state of group care. Given the concerns about group care it could be said that a restructure of the model is needed. One area of concern is the high rate of staff turnover in group care programs. When there is a shortage of qualified and caring adults for young people in group care, a relational practice approach is less likely to be used.

In this session, Michelle will share the results of a recent pilot research study that examined the experiences of group care practitioners and factors that may be contributing to high staff turnover. The session will provide the opportunity for discussion about staffing and relational practice, building on ideas about relational mentorship for staff, reflection on practice, and relational practice understanding.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Relational Mentorship and Supervision*
- *Relational Practice Understanding*
- *Group Care and the Relational Approach.*

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**Michelle Briegel** is an Associate Professor at Mount Royal University and a Certified Child and Youth Care Counsellor from Alberta, Canada. Michelle has an interest in relational practice in child and youth care, group care, and the development of child and youth care counsellor professionals.



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11 NOVEMBER 15.45-16.30 | UPSTAIRS

## *As Leaders, how do you engage in Relational Practice to Foster a Culture of Resilience based on Person-Centered Approach?*

SAMANTHA ROSE AND MELINDA GOGERLY

This topic is intended to highlight the use of the authentic self through leadership within all levels of a child and youth care organization. Having a deep understanding of oneself allows you to connect with the most honest and empathetic parts of the self. This allows for the development of genuine relationships and a culture shift from bureaucratic interactions to meaningful ones.

Relational practice extends beyond the relationship between child and worker, it needs to be immersed in every relationship and interaction within the organization. Only then is an organization truly engaging in relational practice. As leaders, knowledge, trust, and reliability must be established in relationships and this culture can then be fostered over time.

A self-reflective exercise will be completed to bring awareness to one's emotional intelligence and open opportunities to explore if their leadership style is created by them (authentic self) or conformed to meet bureaucratic expectations.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Leading from within through authenticity*
- *Using the self in your practice as a leader and/ or CYC practitioner*
- *Genuine relationships are the foundation of leadership as well as child and youth care*
- *Exploring and understanding the self provides a framework for a path forward in relationships, leadership as well as child and youth care.*

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**Samantha Rose** is the Director of Programming with Brightisle, responsible for clinical oversight of Brightisle's programming department which is inclusive of: consultation services in case management & behavioral health services, counseling services, and training. Samantha is a licensed clinical social worker with a BSW and MSW from Memorial University and is in the process completing her PhD in Social Work. Previously, Samantha served in child protection as well as various community agencies with roles aimed at pursuing social justice and advocating alongside persons served. Samantha continues her work as a clinical counselor, practicing a broad array of approaches to therapy.

**Melinda Gogerly** is the Director of Residential Services for Brightisle, with operational oversight for Blue Sky and Momentum, in addition to leading the Aurelia program. A passionate advocate for social justice, she continues to work towards addressing injustices and actioning lasting and meaningful change. With a strong background in organizational development, strategic planning, and project management across various sectors, Melinda believes in leading with her whole self and demonstrating vulnerability as a necessary component of leadership. She is dedicated to teams feeling valued, safe, healthy, and happy, meeting individuals where they are to support them in their work.

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12 NOVEMBER 9.45-11.15 | MAIN ROOM

## *Building Resilience and Healing through Relational Practice: Supporting Sexually Exploited Youth with Hope, Guidance, Connection, and Engagement*

WENDY GEE

This workshop centers on applying relational practice principles to support youth who have experienced sexual exploitation, emphasizing hope, guidance, connection, and engagement. Participants will explore practical strategies for establishing trust, fostering resilience, and facilitating healing journeys for exploited youth.

Through case studies, interactive activities, and expert insights, attendees will learn how to provide genuine hope, meaningful guidance, and authentic connections to empower youth on their paths to recovery.

By focusing on fostering engagement and building supportive relationships, this workshop aims to equip professionals with the tools they need to make a positive impact in the lives of sexually exploited youth, offering them a sense of hope, guidance, and connection on their journey towards healing and empowerment.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- **Enhanced Understanding:** Participants will gain a deeper comprehension of relational practice principles and their application in supporting sexually exploited youth, including the significance of hope, guidance, connection, and engagement in fostering healing and resilience.
- **Practical Skills:** Attendees will acquire practical strategies and techniques for establishing trusting relationships, providing meaningful guidance, and fostering authentic connections with sexually exploited youth, enabling them to effectively navigate complex situations and support recovery journeys.
- **Cultural Competence:** Participants will develop cultural sensitivity and awareness, recognizing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of sexually exploited youth, and learning how to tailor support approaches to meet individual needs within various cultural contexts.
- **Empowerment for Action:** Through interactive activities and discussions, attendees will be empowered to apply newfound knowledge and skills in their professional roles, actively contributing to the advancement of best practices and making tangible differences in the lives of sexually exploited youth by offering them hope, guidance, connection, and engagement on their paths to healing and empowerment.

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**Wendy Gee** - With over three decades of dedicated service, I have cultivated extensive expertise in supporting vulnerable youth and combating human trafficking. As a survivor of childhood trauma, I am deeply committed to transforming personal adversity into opportunities for empowerment. Grounded in feminist principles and a staunch belief in collective action for social justice, I have spearheaded the development and creation of notable not-for-profit initiatives across eastern Ontario. Executive Director at a restorative recovery home for youth exiting sex trafficking, concurrently serving as Chair of the Coalition to End Human Trafficking. Additionally, I play a pivotal role in shaping future practices as a member of the Child and Youth Counsellor Program Advisory Group at Algonquin College.

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12 NOVEMBER 11.30-12.15 | MAIN ROOM

## *How Children's Rights are Relevant to Professional Practices with Children and Youth: A Proposal for a Relational Child Rights-Based Praxis*

TARA M. COLLINS

How are children's rights relevant to relational practice? This plenary will explore how children's rights do not simply concern legal entitlements for children and youth and can inform relational practices in professional relationships with children and youth. Informed by a recently completed book, this session will first provide a brief overview of children's rights in professional contexts. Then, it will explore how they can support relational professional practices with children, youth, and their families through a Relational Child Rights-Based Praxis. It will describe several key conceptual and practical considerations to facilitate a pattern of work informed by children's rights that respects the context and the individual, groups and their families. Due to the critical roles that many professionals play in the lives of children, youth, and their families, it is concluded that it is important to appreciate, reflect upon, and advance children's rights in professional relationships with and influencing young people.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Children's rights are misinterpreted when understood only as legal and formal concerns of governments and lawyers*
- *Children's rights involve relational considerations that are relevant to professional practices.*
- *Misconceptions about children's rights should be avoided.*
- *A Relational Child Rights-Based Praxis can influence how we engage with children and youth and inform decision-making and respect of children and youth in professional practices.*

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**Tara M. Collins** is Professor in the School of Child & Youth Care at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) in Canada. She is Program Faculty with TMU's graduate programs on Immigration and Settlement Studies, Early Childhood Studies, and Policy Studies PhD. She has been an Honorary Associate Professor, Children's Institute, University of Cape Town, South Africa. She has a PhD. from the University of London and her professional experience includes: universities in Canada, South Africa, Brazil, and Ireland; the Canadian federal government, Parliament, and a national non-governmental organization. Research interests include children's rights, child and youth participation, and child protection. She is the Project Director for the International & Canadian Child Rights Partnership (ICCRP): <https://www.torontomu.ca/iccrp>

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12 NOVEMBER 12.15-13.00 | MAIN ROOM

## *Developing and Implementing a Relational Model of Therapeutic Support in a Residential Care Setting: Successes and Challenges*

RONAN GIBNEY, CHARLOTTE CRUDDEN AND CARLEEN CUMISKY

Obtaining good outcomes in children's residential care is very challenging. Among the factors that impact on the progress young people make when in care are: consistent sustainable, well-trained staff; complexity of the presenting issues; having access to appropriate supports; coordination of internal and external stakeholders; having a clearly articulated, effective, well-implemented model of care. Threading through these factors are the relationships, both internal and external, therapeutic and collegial, that underpin how care is actually provided in practice.

Ashdale Care has developed a bespoke Model of Therapeutic Support drawing from various bodies of knowledge/research including CARE/TCI (Cornell University), Developmental Trauma, Neurosequential Model and Positive Behaviour Support. In this session we outline our model of Therapeutic Support, how it is implemented and describe examples that highlight how relationships are the essential mechanism through which good outcomes can be achieved.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *A well-designed, evidence based model of Care/Therapeutic Support is essential for success*
- *Successful implementation requires an organisational approach*
- *Focusing on relationships, both internal and external, is the key to achieving meaning change and progress.*

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**Dr Ronan Gibney** is a Clinical Psychologist with over 20 years experience working with children and adults. He has worked as a clinical lead in both the public and private sectors and has developed and overseen the implementation of effective models of care and therapeutic support in a variety of community and residential settings.

**Charlotte Crudden** is a Behavioural Psychologist and a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst. Over the past decade she has worked for a number of Healthcare organisations in Ireland helping to assess complex presentations and implement effective, ethical support plans for young people to improve their overall functioning, health and quality of life.

**Carleen Cumisky** is a Forensic Psychologist in training. She has an extensive background in supporting young people and adults in both forensic and non-forensic residential and community settings, using her knowledge of developmental trauma and attachment-based approaches to improve outcomes.



12 NOVEMBER 11.30-13.00 | DOWNSTAIRS 1

## *Exploring the Meaningful Impacts of Relational Interactions through Storytelling*

ZIIGWANBINESII CHARLES

Participants in this session will explore the importance of a strength-based mindset. As practitioners, let's reflect how we can transform our daily interactions to respond relationally with children, youth, adults, and families. When we creatively and purposefully facilitate connective moments, opportunities to restore trauma unfold, often restating hope.

The facilitator will share examples from practice, review the importance of practitioner self-reflection, strength-based models that guide relational engagement and highlight the responsibility to advocate.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Using a relational approach to inspire, heal and transform*
- *Importance of listening*
- *The power of hope*
- *Responsibility to advocate.*

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**Ziigwanbinesii Charles** is mukwa ndoodem (bear clan) from Mnjikaning, Chippewas of Rama First Nation on Treaty 20 currently known as Ontario, Canada. Ziigwanbinesii is an active community helper, educator, adviser, and advocate. Ziigwanbinesii is a proud Child and Youth Care Practitioner who is passionate about strengthening identity, purpose, and community connections. Ziigwanbinesii uses love, kindness, authenticity, and reciprocity to guide their practice in Child and Youth Care. They have worked in a variety of roles with children, youth, adults, and families who are put at risk. Ziigwanbinesii is currently working in child welfare, supporting to redefine and reimagine equitable care and culturally informed practices with the ultimate goals being intergenerational healing, autonomy, self-governance, and healthier communities.

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12 NOVEMBER 11.30-13.00 | DOWNSTAIRS 2

## *What does Ontology have to do with Relational-Centered Child and Youth Care Practice*

GERARD BELLEFEUILLE AND JENNY MCGRATH

Understanding how we practice relationally from a relational ontological perspective is a fascinating journey that can reshape our understanding of ourselves and others. Relational ontological as the foundation philosophy of relational-centered child and youth care (CYC) education and practice will more than reset the Western constructed foundational stones of relational practice, it will fundamentally alter how we understand the “self” and the “other” resulting in a richer more collaborative, and authentic practice. Relational ontology views the self as being relationally constituted and as such, views the self not as an autonomous, independent being, but rather as a reflection of one’s lifelong relational experiences. In other words, our relationality with others is fundamental to our very being—without it, we cannot be. Embracing a relational ontological approach to CYC teaching and learning fundamentally seeks the broadest development of the entire student by focusing on the relationship between the head, heart, and soul.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- This workshop will showcase the relational ontological arts-based teaching and learning process at MacEwan University.
- Participants will be invited to actively take part in conversation and activities.

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**Dr. Gerard Bellefeuille** is a Professor of Child and Youth Care at MacEwan University. Gerard has an extensive record of scholarship and research as evidenced by the authorship of four books which include *Standing on the Precipice: Inquiry into the Creative Potential of Child and Youth Care Practice*, and *Relational Arts-Based Teaching and Learning: Engaging Mind, Body, and Soul*. In addition, Gerard has published over 60 peer review journal articles and has co-authored course-based research articles with over 140 CYC students. He has also given more than 75 invited lectures around the world. Along with his outstanding scholarship contributions, Gerard was the 2014 recipient of the MacEwan University Distinguished Teacher Award for his outstanding teaching and commitment to educational leadership within the department of Child and Youth Care.

**Jenny McGrath** is an Associate Professor in the Child and Youth Care Program at MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Her interests include CYC professionalization, practicum education, creative pedagogy, family support and activity-based interventions. Jenny is a doctoral student at the University of Victoria and is a Certified Child and Youth Care Worker in the province of Alberta.

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12 NOVEMBER 11.30-13.00 | UPSTAIRS

## *Relational Care in a Secure Environment: Art or Science?*

BRIAN HOGAN AND SELENA REILLY

Building on findings in a 'Centre for Effective Services' (2016) report, this session will explore the basics of relational care through the art of weaving relationships and touch on 'the one good adult', and how behind the walls and fences relationships can be forged, within the context of relational care with young people detained in a secure environment.

Literature suggests that there is an 'art and a science' to routine relationship building, with the science emanating from attention to research and other forms of evidence gathering. The art involves commitment, enthusiasm, and perseverance in the face of difficulties, courage in engaging in challenging but purposeful conversations, a willingness to be flexible, and the capacity to come up with creative solutions to what often appear to be intractable problems.

Relationship building can be best seen as a craft which needs to be taught, modelled and cultivated (as opposed to something simply acquired by following a manual of instructions). Routine relationship building is about engaging detained young people in purposeful activity on three inter-related levels.

Level 1 – Occurring during 'informal' face to face interactions between staff and kids, e.g. during meal times.

Level 2 – Involving kids and staff participating together in specific, planned, and structured activities.

Level 3 – Consists of participation in more specialised interventions.

The presentation will include practical examples and stories from young people and families' lives.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *To offer the participants and insight into secure care and open up a discussion on the importance of relational practice.*
- *Importance of reflective practice in the development of quality relationships.*
- *Facilitate discussion around the value of connection, rapport (including the use of humour), being comfortable with the silence and the investment of time.*

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**Selenna Reilly** is Programmes Manager in Oberstown Children Detention Campus, Lusk, Co Dublin with over 25 years experience in various roles including; Social Care Worker, Unit Manager and Head of Programmes. IN her current role her primary focus is to research, develop and ensure the delivery of a suite of evidenced based offending behaviour programmes and interventions. She holds a BA in Social Care Practice, a Leadership and Development Programme and has engaged in training in the Seven-Eyed Model of Supervision with Robin Shohet.

**Brian Hogan BA. (Theol), MBS (HR Strategies), PG Dip Assessment and Treatment of sex offenders.** Brian is Deputy Director (Operations) on the Oberstown Children's detention Campus and has experiences working with kids since 1989, including in Child Psychiatry, CEO of Don Bosco Care, and almost 30 years in various roles in Oberstown. He has presented at Unity on numerous occasions, including in 2023 on 'Trauma and prison transfers' (along with Selenna) and has guest lectured across the social care programs in Ireland and presented in the Tavistock London. He is currently a member of the Institute of Directors.

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12 NOVEMBER 14.00-14.45 | MAIN ROOM

## *The Spaces in Between: Student-Instructor Relational Practice in Higher Education*

JESSICA WILLIAMS, K. LARISA HANSSEN, ROBYN KEMP, MIA SCHARTAU AND  
RACHEL LUM

Child and Youth Care (CYC) programs in higher education (HE) centers relational practice between the CYC practitioner, young people and the families they work alongside. Yet, what consideration has been given to relational practice within the student-instructor relationship in HE? This paper is a collaboration between CYC students and instructors that highlights and discusses ideas critical to relational practices between students and instructors that moves beyond 'having a relationship'.

Experiences and current research related to teaching, learning, and applying relational practice are explored, as well as the challenges faced by students and instructors when attempting to engage relationally in the classroom. Particular attention is paid to reciprocity and safety in relational storytelling, power imbalances, disability, and the duality of relational versus therapeutic relationships. This paper discusses opportunities and future research for addressing existing barriers and hopes to encourage the broadening of horizons in relational approaches within HE.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *How students and instructors perceive/experience relational practice in Higher Education within a Canadian Child and Youth Care program*
- *Explore the barriers and opportunities in the student-instructor relational experience within Higher Education*
- *Areas for future research exploring student-instructor relational practice in Higher Education.*

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This presentation is a collaboration between students and instructors from the Child and Youth Care (CYC) program at Douglas College (British Columbia, Canada).

**Robyn Kemp** is a fourth year CYC student as well as an Indigenous Child and Youth Care Practitioner (within an educational setting) that supports families and youth navigating the complexities of trauma.

**Rachel Lum** is a third year CYC student who enjoys working with young people and their families in sports and recreation to support healthy development of the young person's agency and self-efficacy.

**Mia Schartau** is a Queer Deaf Disabled student who recently completed her degree in CYC. Mia is a co-founder of Autistics United Canada and participates in policy advocacy as well as provides educational opportunities to a variety of audiences.

**Jessica Williams** is a faculty member with the CYC program. She also works in private practice as a Registered Social Worker and as a Clinician in an outpatient psychiatric program for young people who are experiencing acute mental health crises.

**Larisa Hanssen** is a faculty member in the CYC program as well as a private consultant working with health authorities and nonprofit organizations in project development, staff training, and program evaluation.

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12 NOVEMBER 14.45-15.30 | MAIN ROOM

## *Mattering: from Individual Wellbeing to Relational Welfares*

SEBASTIAN MONTEUX

Although most would agree that relationships are central to caring professions, little discussion has taken place to explore the intrinsic value and purpose of these. The focus has tended to be on individual wellbeing whereby relationships are often reduced simply to drivers of positive behavioural change.

This session will explore how the concept of 'mattering' (feeling valued and adding value) can help to understand the importance of relationships within diverse care contexts and shift the focus away from individual wellbeing towards relational welfare. Mattering, rather than simply being an inherent quality, should be viewed as a set of practices through which we can become more aware about when and how to relationally engage.

This session will highlight the reciprocal nature of mattering and how the concept enables us to better understand the mutuality inherent in relational practice. As such, mattering incorporates both the need for individual wellbeing and sense of community, aspects that are often in tension with each other within dominant approaches to care practice.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *The value and purpose of relationships in care contexts*
- *The concept of 'mattering'*
- *Individual Wellbeing vs Relational Welfare*
- *Difficult Love.*

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**Sebastian Monteux** is a registered mental health nurse and lecturer in mental health nursing at Abertay University, Scotland. He has previously worked in Scotland and the Netherlands in the NHS, in the fields of local authority residential child care, adult social care and learning disability. Most recently, prior to lecturing, he worked in the North of Scotland Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Regional Inpatient Unit.



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12 NOVEMBER 14.00-15.30 | DOWNSTAIRS 1

## *Reconsidering Cobblestones: Pathways of Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*

JENNY MCGRATH AND CHRISTINE GAITENS

This workshop will consider relational practice over time. Many seminal ideas of today are linked to the past. Some pathways are clearly marked and familiar, so they are still well-travelled. Others are over-grown or forgotten. New pathways are blazed, some as off-shoots of the familiar, while others can appear isolated and intimidating. Let's reconsider the relational cobblestones of the past, present, and future. Together we will explore the links and synergies across time and look toward possible evolutions. The presentation will encourage participation and conversation and will introduce examples and artifacts of the field.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Explore the history of Relational CYC Practice*
- *Recognize intersections of Relational CYC Practice across time*
- *Consider future considerations.*

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**Jenny McGrath** is an Associate Professor in the Child and Youth Care Program at MacEwan University in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Her interests include CYC professionalization, practicum education, creative pedagogy, family support and activity-based interventions. Jenny is a doctoral student at the University of Victoria and is a Certified Child and Youth Care Worker in the province of Alberta.

**CHRISTINE GAITENS, MSC, CYC-P, RSW**, has been working in the field of Child and Youth Care for over 30 years with direct care and leadership experience in both Ottawa and Toronto, Canada. Christine is a Director of Transformative Relational Consultation and Training and a Manager with Kalon Services. She has supported children, youth, and their families through her work in group care, foster care, family preservation and education. Christine has also served on the board of the Ontario Association of Child and Youth Care as a Director of the Board and as the President. Christine is Co-Chair of CYC-Net Canada.



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12 NOVEMBER 14.00-15.30 | DOWNSTAIRS 2

## *Pawsitive Partnerships and Healing Hooves*

KIRSTEN HARGREAVES AND JONATHAN BOUDIN

As our shared world continues to emerge from the covid pandemic, so to does deeply concerning research on the mental health and wellness of young people around the world. Ethical and intentional partnerships with animals offer a unique and promising modality in relational practice. Fascinatingly, the significance of the human-animal relationship is rapidly evolving and for many young people replacing the significance of human – human relationships. This session will demonstrate how prioritizing the concepts of mutual benefit, choice and consent with animals translates to practitioners working with young people as well as the young people themselves in building strength-based resilience and skill in growing relationships with others.

This session will offer an accessible blend of recent neuroscience in working with animals connected to the experiential and deeply sensorial elements of this work. Case studies will be highlighted that emphasize the power of connection, common humanity and a hopeful orientation in a post covid world.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Identify the importance of the human-animal relationship as foundational to relational practice with children, youth and teens*
- *Identify concrete examples of how animals can build the capacity and resilience of young people and those who work with them*
- *Identify how animals can promote mental, physical, emotional and psychological wellness via case examples, brain states and current research.*

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**Kirsten Hargreaves** is an experienced animal assisted therapist with children and youth offering play therapy, nature-based therapy and canine assisted interventions along with her two golden retrievers. Kirsten is also an Assistant Professor in the Child, Youth and Family Studies degree program at the University of the Fraser Valley in British Columbia, Canada, an international presenter in the voice of the child and a Premier's Award recipient for Innovative Practice. Kirsten's Doctoral dissertation is in canine assisted therapy as relational practice and she is a certified canine assisted integration specialist through the University of Denver.

**Jonathan Boudin** is an experienced Mental Health and Clinical Counsellor who provided services that include equine interactions, as well as services in a traditional office setting. He holds a Master's Degree in Counselling Psychology from the University of British Columbia, a Post-Masters Graduate Certificate in Equine Assisted Mental Health from the University of Denver's Institute for Human-Animal Connection, and is board-certified through the Certification Board for Equine Interaction Professionals with a mental health designation. His own experiences growing up with horses and their relational characteristics significantly contributed to his career path in mental health and passion for working with youth.

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12 NOVEMBER 14.00-15.30 | UPSTAIRS

## *Creating the Conditions for Relational Practice: Helping Things Go Well*

NATALIE DOW AND CLIVE ACRAMAN

The benefits of relational practice are compelling with a strong evidence base of positive outcomes for children, young people and families. But what does it take to make it a reality? Our session aims not to explore what it means to be 'in-relation' with a young person, but to explore the conditions that enable those meaningful relationships and moments to occur.

We will explore three key areas we must attend to in order to create the conditions for relational practice: work on self, work in the moment and work on the system within which the relationship exists.

Drawing on our combined lived experience of directly working with children and young people, loving and raising young people helped and harmed by practitioner relationships, and being specialists in health and social care leadership, we will explore ideas and tools for actively creating the conditions that enable authentic relationships, in service of the children and young people who rely upon them.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *Increase awareness of factors that impact a practitioner's ability to practice 'relationally' and the importance of actively creating the conditions that enable it*
- *Deepen understanding of the important 'work on self' required for a practitioner to be able to live the ethos and intent of relational practice, for example with vulnerability and resilience*
- *Explore ways to create and maintain a relationship of mutuality in the moment with the child or youth*
- *Raise awareness of the importance of compassionate leadership for developing systems, services and cultures of care which create the conditions within which relational practice can occur.*
- *Highlight the importance and power of personal agency to drive systemic improvements for our children and young people.*

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**Dr Clive Acraman** - I have supported Children and their Families in a variety of settings including Residential Care, Domiciliary Care, Early Years and Child Protection Social Work since 1981. My practice is informed with a theoretical understanding gained from degrees in Social Work, Child Protection and a Doctorate through Action Research, which underpin my approach to Relational Practice, Appreciative Leadership, Organisational Learning and Person-Centred Practice. As a leader I enjoy taking people on a journey of personal and professional exploration. When organisations and their people have a shared vision and understand their purpose and roles, they can truly personalise the care and support they provide.

**Natalie Dow** – I am a Leadership Coach, Consultant and Facilitator with over 20 years experience specialising in health and social care and am a parent of two remarkable neurodivergent teenagers who have taught me invaluable lessons about relationships, leadership and compassion which inform my practice. With an academic background in psychology and a special interest in compassionate leadership, relationship building and lived experience, I support leaders across the sector to develop compassionate cultures and transform services for the benefit of the populations they serve. I run compassionate leadership programmes, facilitate multi-disciplinary events and provide 1x1 and team coaching for Executives, clinicians and practitioners.

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12 NOVEMBER 15.45-16.45 | MAIN ROOM

## *Upbringing as the Purpose of CYC Relationships*

MARK SMITH

We all likely agree that relationships are at the heart of CYC practice. But, if CYC is to see itself or to be viewed by others as involving a professional aspect, then these relationships must have a justifiable purpose. We all have relationships but not all these merit us getting paid to have them.

Drawing on some of the social pedagogical literature, I will make the case that the essence of the discipline is the upbringing of an individual and their integration into society. Children can only grow through human interaction; they must, therefore, be brought up as social beings. This social and societal dimension to relationships is underdeveloped in the CYC literature.

In this presentation, I will draw the work of the German social pedagogue, Klaus Mollenhauer, to emphasise the inter-generational aspect of upbringing relationships and to outline how these develop in lifeworld contexts.

### *Key Messages and Learning Outcomes*

- *CYC relationships need to be grounded in a purpose*
- *That purpose has social and cultural dimension; it involves a child's integration into society*
- *Social pedagogical ideas emphasise the social, cultural and the inter-generational aspects of relationships*
- *Outline the German social pedagogue, Klaus Mollenhauer's explication of upbringing relationships.*

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**Dr. Mark Smith** is Professor in Social Work at the University of Dundee, Scotland. He worked in residential child care settings for almost 20 years before moving to academia. He has written extensively on residential child care. His work on care and upbringing is influenced by social theory and he has a particular interest in European models of social pedagogy.



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