Strength Based Community Youth Work

Values, Relationship and Practice

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Community Youth Work – Trauma Management – Therapeutic – MBSR/MBCT
The gross national product does not allow for the health of our children...their education, or the joy of their play.

It does not include the beauty of our poetry or the strength of our marriages; the intelligence of our public debate or the integrity of our public officials.

It measures neither wit nor courage; neither our wisdom nor our teaching; neither our compassion nor our devotion to our country.

It measures everything, in short, except that which makes life worthwhile.
Outline

• Deficit to Strength
• Positive Psychology
• Strengths Based Approaches
• The Taken for granted - Normal!
• Adversity and Developmental Insults
• What Works
• Process
• Outcomes
Strength Based Approach

www.menti.com
68 36 65
Ole Gunnar Solskjaer
To replace neurotic misery with ordinary unhappiness: Freud

Models in physics/natural sciences rather than life sciences

Normal NOT average RATHER what is well-functioning

Psychology aimed at (Seligman):
- Curing mental illness
- Making the lives of all people more fulfilling
- Identifying and nurturing high talent
We became a victimology. Human beings were seen as passive foci: Stimuli came on and elicited “responses” or external “reinforcements” weakened or strengthened “responses”, or conflicts from childhood pushed the human being around.

Viewing the human being as essentially passive, psychologists treated mental illness within a theoretical framework of repairing damaged habits, damaged drives, damaged childhoods and damaged brains.

Medical model of personal weakness

Pathologizing does not move closer to prevention
Toward a Positive Psychology

Strengthen and Virtue
- Amplify strength rather than focus on weakness
- Fostering strengths and achievements

Scientific principles
- Choice – Preference – strong – potential
- Resilience

Research
- Neurobiology
- Physiology
Terms

Social Constructions: The perspective or definition that is agreed upon by many people to constitute reality (rather than some objectively defined “truth” that resides in objects, situations and people)

Reality Negotiations: The ongoing processes by which people arrive at agreed upon world views or definitions

Positive psychology: The science and applications related to the study of psychological strengths and positive emotions
What knowledge, skills and qualities are needed to work to a strengths based approach in Community Youth Work?
Approach

• Present moment
• Mind the Gap
• Managing the Busy Mind
• Aversion Script
• Learned Habits and Pattern
Resilience

A class of phenomena characterised by patterns of positive adaptation in context of significant adversity or risk. (Masten, Cutilli, Herbers and Reed: 2009)

Inferential concept

Judgement that individuals are doing ok!

Set of expected behaviours

Exposure to risk/adversity

Criteria for measuring positive adaptation and/or development

Past or current presence of conditions that disrupt positive adaptation or can harm development
Masten et al. (2009)

- Rutter (1985)
- Werner & Smith (1982)
- Protective factors
- D’Imperio, Dubow and Ippolito (2000) identified protective factors failed to distinguish young people who cope with adversity

- Most persistent factors:
  - Culture
  - Past experience of adversity
  - A caring adult
Resilience Resources: In the child

- Talents valued by self/others
- Problem-solving skills
- Self-regulation skills and self-control of attention, arousal and impulses
- Positive self perception; self-efficacy
- Talents valued by self/others
- Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, and Reed (2009)
Circle of Courage Definitions - The ABCD of Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity

Brendtro, Brokenleg, & Van Brockern (1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mastery</th>
<th>Belonging</th>
<th>Generosity</th>
<th>Independence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Achieving your goals</td>
<td>Being a respectful part of a group</td>
<td>Contributing positively to others</td>
<td>Demonstrating personal responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creative, Persistent, Competent, Self-motivated Problem solver, Accepts challenges</td>
<td>Friendly, Caring, Cooperative, Trusting, Respectful, Healthy relationships</td>
<td>Sharing, Caring, Supportive, Helpful, Compassionate, Social concerns</td>
<td>Assertive, Confident, Leadership, Empowered, Self-control, Problem solver, Disciplined</td>
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<td>Resilient achievements</td>
<td>Pain based problems</td>
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<td>Strong self worth</td>
<td>Poor self worth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respects self</td>
<td>Disrespect self</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Respects others</td>
<td>Disrespect others</td>
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Brendtro and Larson
Resilience resources: Family – Community-Organisations

- Positive attachment
- Close competent pro-social adults
- High warmth, structured monitoring parenting
- Positive home climate
- Organised home
- Parents/caregivers with protective qualities
- Interest in education
- Socio-economic advantage

- Effective schools
- Ties to pro-social organisations – Youth sectors
- Collective efficacy in neighbourhood
- High level public safety
- Effective emergency social services
- High level public health care availability
Intensity and Giftedness

- Emotional intensity
  - Stimulated by what’s around and what moves from within
- Misunderstood
  - Excited v excessive
- Persistent v nagging
  - Questioning v undermining
- Emotion and sensitivity v immaturity
  - Self-directedness v oppositional
What is normal

• Outside the normal
• Exceptional
• Viewed as abnormal
• Annoying or bad ...
• Statistics-average constitutes norm (wage, intelligence)
• Convention
• Statistical norm is a poor guide to what is good
Optimal functioning
What we strive for
Healthy
Normal = well-functioning but NOT necessarily average
Optimal = well-developed through training and/or by having higher natural endowment
The Greater the gap between self-image and ideal-self
The lower the self esteem  Depression

Coopersmith (1967)

Depressed person
Excessively self-critical
Low self-efficacy

Social Learning Theorist
Bandura (1977)

Combines two issues
Self-Concept
And
Self-control

Feature of Bandura’s method
of cognitive Behaviour Therapy

A matter that becomes clear ceases to concern us:  Friedrich Nietzsche
Maslow’s theory of Self-Actualisation (1954)

Hierarchy of Needs

- Physiological Needs
- Safety Needs
- Belonging & Love Needs
- Esteem Needs
- Self-actualisation

Five Classes of Basic Needs

Cognitive Needs

Aesthetic Needs
Robust psychological health

Average represented stunted norm

Average is a full human being whose powers and capacities have been somehow dampened or inhibited

Self actualising is ordinary people with nothing taken away thus able to reach full-potential
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Maslow - Fully Human</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>More Accurate Perception of Reality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greater Acceptance of Self and Others</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Greater Spontaneity and Self-Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greater Problem Centering</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Greater Need for Privacy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greater Autonomy and resistance to Enculturation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Greater Freshness of Appreciation and Richness of Emotional Response</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greater Social Interest</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Deeper, More Loving Interpersonal Relationships</strong></td>
<td><strong>Greater Creativity</strong></td>
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<td><strong>More Unusual Sense of Humour</strong></td>
<td><strong>More Democratic Character Structure</strong></td>
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Kazimierz Dabrowski (1902-1980)

The emotional experience and development of gifted young people

Struck by intensity, sensitivity and tendency toward emotional extremes

Part of talented and creative self

Intensified experiencing, feeling, imagining and thinking potential for growth

Also intensified pain, overstimulation, conflict
Theory of Positive Disintegration

Dismantling as a prelude to construction

Creation at a higher level

Self is many parts working together

Out of loss, grief, despair and inner fragmentation

Positive inner growth

Emotional development

Inner seeking

Figuring

Anguish

Questioning human existence

Elements that comprise the striving for optimal human development
Overexcitabilities

- **Psychomotor** – movement, restless, driven, augmented capacity for being active
- **Sensual** – enhanced refinement and aliveness of sensual experience
- **Intellectual** – thirst for knowledge, discovery, questioning, love of ideas, search for truth, analysis
- **Imaginational** – vividness of imagery, richness of association, facility for dreams, fantasies and invention, preference for unusual and unique,
- **Emotional** – great depth and intensity of emotional life expressed in a wide range of feelings, great happiness, profound sadness, compassion, responsibility, self-examination
Children exposed to consistent, predictable, nurturing, and enriched experiences develop neurobiological capabilities that increase their chance for health, happiness, productivity, and creativity.

Children exposed to neglectful, chaotic, and terrorizing environments have an increased risk of significant problems in all domains of functioning.

Dysfunctional symptoms and functional assets in children are both related to the nature, timing, pattern, and duration of their developmental experiences.

In a child who has experienced chronic threats, the result is a brain that exists in a persisting state of fear.

Question: Methodology – Measurement - Outcomes
Where the young person has been – brain, nurturing

Where the young person is – relational history, developmental insults, trauma and neglect

Where the young person should go – developmentally appropriate interventions

Question: validity and methods
As we are

- Me/we Balance
- https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=471580900041083
In Practice
I meet ...

• Very critical perception of own value/s
• Dissatisfaction with self (angry)
• Inferiority and frustrated with own inadequacy
• Disquiet with self – agitated and fearful
• Shame and embarrassed by ones deficiencies
• Guilt and anguish over moral failures
• Positive maladaptation and antagonism and protest against violations of ethical/social principles
Ord (2007) states that behavioural change can be supported by recognising that a curriculum based approach based on specific objectives can lead to change and learning for young people.

“The process approach does not therefore start with the end product - what is to be learnt, rather its starting point is how this learning is best facilitated.”
Purposeful Use of Self

Relationship in CYW practice

Your understanding about "use of self"

How important is self-awareness and what does it mean?

How to cultivate effective and purposeful use of self?

Resilience and its meaning

Transforming pedagogy and terms: "risk"?
Essential Elements - Self

- Characteristics impact client
- Contribution to relationship rivals that of person
- Disciplined Use of Genuine Self - remarkable and satisfying results
- Growth in young person
- Emanuel Tropp necessary components - compassion, mutuality, empathy, humility, respect, and openness
- Rogers (1961)
- Fundamental component of mental life is the self concept
- An entity that develops under the influence of conditional and unconditional positive regard
Essential Components

Reflective Practice

Key Concepts in Strengths Based
- Relationship
- Attachment Theory

Skills and Interventions
- Enhance Practice
- Language
- Models and Application (PCP, Maslow, SFBT, DASIE)
Components

- Reflexivity in Practice through
  - Advanced Self-awareness
  - Process and Experiential - MBCT
- Professional Self Care
- CPD
- Supervision
- Boundaries
The Interventive Relationship

Outcomes: How the work makes a difference

QUALITATIVE
- Protective Factors
- Resiliency
- Self Esteem
- Family + Social Relationships
- Autonomy
- Problem Solving Skills
- Social Competence

QUANTITATIVE
- Increased Parenting Capacity
- Greater Social Inclusion
- School Attendance
- Safer Children
- Offending Rates
- Increased Community Involvement
- Emotional Wellbeing

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We must challenge the deficit approach, the myth of the “normal” the CYW Practice must see beyond traditional approaches to strive for opportunities that aim toward optimal well-being.

Turning toward purposeful use of self and appreciation of excellence in applying Strengths Based Approaches in CYW.
Perfectionism...

- Mis-diagnosis
- Missed diagnosis
- Integration
- Multi-level
- Multifacetted
Turning Toward Self

- Appreciating
- Reframing
- Deconstructing
- Reconstructing
- Allowing...
- Training
Bibliography


