"Discovering who I am- Exploring the Optimal Conditions for Positive Identity Formation in Residential Child Care

Discovering Who I am- Exploring the Optimal Conditions for Identity Formation in Residential Child Care

Gerry Marshall- Queen’s University Belfast
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An initial thought

You drained me of my identity and injected self doubt into my veins
Left me questioning my own sanity
Walking around aimlessly
At war with my own body every day
Trying to scrub your heavy words off my skin
My mental state has been shaken to its core
I don't know who I am anymore

e.s.
Identity formation

- My PhD research - children’s homes and quality care with reference to identity formation
- Identity formation is an inter-subjective process - relationships with other people are critical to how I see myself and how I value myself
- Primary psychological task of adolescence
- One notable exception (Levy, 1993).
Honneth - Recognition Theory

Identity Formation

Experience of human rights
Self -Respect

Experience of love/care
Self Confidence

Experience of participation and belonging
Self -Esteem

- 1 core theme: systemic congruence in the service of the best interests of children
- 3 psycho-social processes:
  - Pain based – behaviour
  - Extra familial living environment
  - Sense of normality
- 11 interactional dynamics as a means by which to evaluate the quality of care
ANGLIN/HONNETH MAPPING EXERCISE (1)

Anglin

Struggle for congruence

Honneth

Struggle for recognition

Incongruence (in care provision)

Misrecognition (of self-worth)

Inhibited identity formation
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11 interactional dynamics</th>
<th>Anglin</th>
<th>Honneth</th>
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<th>Houston</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition through love, care and stability</td>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Recognition through rights and justice and legal/social/moral entitlements</td>
<td>Self-respect</td>
<td>Recognition through participation and belonging in the community</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening and responding with respect</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Self-belief</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Communicating a framework for understanding</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td>yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Building rapport and relationship</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establishing structure routine and expectations</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inspiring commitment</td>
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<td>ANGLIN/HONNETH MAPPING EXERCISE (3)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Staff attributes</strong></td>
<td>Therapeutic Milieu</td>
<td>Physical environment</td>
<td>Rights, Justice, legal entitlements &amp; citizenship</td>
<td>Care/love/stability (quality of relationships with staff/family/friends)</td>
<td>Systemic congruence</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Extra familial living environment</strong></td>
<td>Listening and responding with respect</td>
<td>Providing resources</td>
<td>Sense of normality</td>
<td>Establishing structure, routine and expectations</td>
<td>Providing resources</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Listening and responding with respect</strong></td>
<td>Emotional &amp; developmental Support</td>
<td>Extra familial living environment</td>
<td>Challenging thinking and action</td>
<td>Establishing structure, routine and expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing power and decision making</strong></td>
<td>Respecting personal space and time</td>
<td>Sense of normality</td>
<td>Sharing power and decision making</td>
<td>Framework of understanding</td>
<td>Extra familial living environment</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Core philosophy of the person</strong></td>
<td>Pain based behaviour</td>
<td>Challenging thinking and action</td>
<td>Emotional &amp; developmental Support</td>
<td>Emotional &amp; developmental Support</td>
<td>Extra familial living environment</td>
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<td><strong>Relationship building and sustaining skills</strong></td>
<td>Building rapport &amp; relationship</td>
<td>Extra familial living environment</td>
<td>Anti-oppressive practice</td>
<td>Respecting personal space and time</td>
<td>Holistic provision of care</td>
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<td><strong>Level of personal commitment</strong></td>
<td>Challenging thinking and action</td>
<td>Extra familial living environment</td>
<td>Power in institutions—adult centered care</td>
<td>Extra familial living environment</td>
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<td><strong>Authenticity</strong></td>
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REFERENCES


Ferguson, L. (2016): *Could an Increased Focus on Identity Development in the Provision of Children’s Services Help Shape Positive Outcomes for Care Leavers?* *Child Care in Practice*


