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# Relational Child & Youth Care Practice

(formerly *The Journal of Child & Youth Care*, established 1982) is committed to promoting and supporting the profession of Child and Youth Care through disseminating the knowledge and experience of individuals involved in the day-to-day lives of young people.

This commitment is founded upon the belief that all human issues, including personal growth and development, are essentially "relational".

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# Declare to Care: A Professional Creed?

*Heather Snell*

Justice Louis Brandeis, delivering a commencement address at Brown University in 1912 defined “a profession [as] an occupation for which the necessary preliminary training is intellectual in character, involving knowledge and to some extent learning, as distinguished from mere skill; which is pursued largely for others, and not merely for one’s own self; and in which financial success is not the accepted measure of success.” Although one could argue that preliminary training in Child and Youth Care (CYC) is not limited to *intellectual* training alone, surely applying the words of Justice Brandeis qualifies CYC as a profession. Our work requires training, knowledge, and learning that goes beyond mere skill. We pursue our work for others and not merely for one’s self, and for many, CYC is a profession in which money is not the accepted measure of success.

Sadly, the concept of a profession has been defined in other ways - ways not so congruent with CYC practice. Roscoe Pound (1953) declared, “A profession is a group of men pursuing a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service ... [which] may incidentally be a means of livelihood.” Certainly, the word ‘profession’, and the history of professionalization are gendered, (Witz 1990), creating barriers that exist in many professions, including the governance, leadership and practice of CYC. Professionalization and professional status are frequently used as codified norms to close entry to the work and systemically exclude ‘outsiders.’ (Sullivan, 1995). Indeed,

many professional bodies function as gatekeepers - requiring that fledgling practitioners are invited by existing members only before passing through the narrow door leading to the hallowed hall of practice (Jacobs & Bosanac, 2006). Or as Eliot Friedson, (2001) writes “professionalism is a set of institutions which permit members of an occupation to make a living while controlling their own work.”

Very few professional organizations formally existed before the 19th century. As an ideology professionalism emerged rapidly in North America and Western Europe in response to the economization of knowledge, and the growing influence of academia. The result was the need to go to school to earn a credential rather than an education (Jacobs & Bosanac, 2006). The result diminished the value of apprenticeship, mentoring, or other models of embodied practice learning. In recent years most professions have elevated the level of credential needed to qualify for entry into their profession (Jackson, 2010). In 21<sup>st</sup> Century North America credentials for positions seem to be frequently upgraded, even though there is little evidence offered of skill changes making increases necessary. CYC is no exception. From in-service training, two to three-year diplomas, to honours degrees, graduate and post graduate degrees - CYC practice has become increasingly credentialed. While I am not arguing that CYC practitioners do not need to be thoroughly prepared for the challenges of practice, I do wonder if a growing reliance on credentials demonstrates relational practice, assures the quality of how we care, or is at all congruent with CYC pedagogy?

It would seem to be more fitting to prepare for CYC practice by practicing; engaging in the day to day turmoil of life in relationship with young people, and applying the wisdom gathered by ‘doing.’ It seems to be becoming increasingly more and more difficult to cross the border into the CYC profession using these pathways. Years ago, healers, mentors, spiritual and community leaders, builders, and the arbitrators of laws were Elders. In dominant North American culture, economics, litigation, and technological innovation have bred distrust for the wisdom of Elders - a trend most troubling in the professionalization of CYC. Of course, there is urgent need to assure the quality of CYC and yet our increasingly professionalized models seem less about care and more about ‘credentialing-up’, conforming to the norm, and reciting codes of ethics rather than demonstrating the ethics of care. As Cassuto, (2015) observes “professionalization is about conformity.”

It is essential that CYC practice be predictable and meet public expectations, but we who claim to know about the intersubjectivity of relational practice should be wary of

models of governance that are increasingly codified. The articles in this issue demonstrate the need for such critical reflection by making obvious the many selves and forms that is CYC practice. These authors illustrate the varying contexts and distinctive nature of each and every CYC relationship giving evidence of the need for less codified, more divergent approaches to professionalization, governance and education. CYC practitioners must be prepared and able to do more than one thing and to consciously act and react in more than one way. More and more, our profession must meet practitioners 'where they are at.' While I am not arguing for the demise of CYC education, credentials, or accreditation ... I wonder if it is time to press pause on the pied piper of professionalization.

Wynia, (2010) suggests "professionalism like other '-isms' (consumerism, humanism, egotism, and the like), is a *belief* system ...best be understood as an ideology." This sounds more like CYC ... a belief system. The word profession after all, originates from a Latin word referring to speak forth or "declare aloud or publicly" (OED, 2019). What if CYC education, practice, governance and accreditation embraced this as our professional model? If we embraced CYC professional identity as those who together choose to declare beliefs out loud; to speak out our vow to care publicly. What if our efforts to professionalize were less focused on increasing conformity through legislated privilege and more concerned about raising the volume of our public declaration to care for each other?

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has been involved in Child and Youth Care practice and education for over 30 years. From direct care in a variety of settings to CYC education Heather's practice and approach is often eclectic, drawing her to the 'in between's', merging disciplines, and supporting collaborations. After teaching and coordinating the CYC and BCYC programs at Humber College for many years, Heather is currently part time faculty with both the Ryerson University CYC undergraduate and graduate programs, and with the University of Strathclyde MSc in CYC. She is also a member of the Child and Youth Care Education Accreditation Board where she chairs the Research Committee.

# Relational Gaps in Toronto Police Services Youth Programs

*Sherene Whyte, Jaspreet Bal and Samantha Rampersad*

## Abstract

*Toronto Police Services (TPS) have an extensive history of offering programs for youth. These programs have been largely created without the consultation and input of either youth or professionals who work with them. As Child and Youth Care (CYC) practitioners, relational practice with young people informs every aspect of our work. From a rights-based perspective, the legally binding Canada United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) confirms that children have the right to participate. The study at hand, focused on youth ages 14 - 24, identifies the gaps in youth programs offered by the TPS. This study is a gap analysis based on publicly available information on six different programs offered by, or affiliated with, TPS. The criteria used for evaluating the programs was the UNCRC, specifically articles 2, 12, 13 and 15. The gaps demonstrate the following: there is a need for fewer limitations in programs offered to youth, and a need for more youth involvement in the planning and implementation of programs. TPS youth programs focus inward, with the needs and goals of the police at the centre of the programs, instead of being youth-focused; most TPS youth programs do not include youth as members on their boards and TPS programs are mainly geared for "youth at risk". The authors frame these gaps as a deficit in relational practice. In the discussion section, the authors propose the following recommendations: TPS need to consider UNCRC recommendations when implementing programs for youth; TPS also need to work collaboratively with other members of social and community services, specifically CYC practitioners, during the creation and implementation of programs. Core elements of CYC relational practice are explored as possible complementary elements to existing TPS programs.*

## Introduction

For many young people in the Greater Toronto Area, one of the most consequential relationships they will have is with the police. Due largely to the work of activists' groups like Black Lives Matter and Idle No More, the TPS has come under fire for their treatment of marginalized groups (Simpson, Walcott, & Coulthard, 2018). The uneven application of the law, on the basis of intersecting categories of oppression, has perpetuated cycles of violence instead of curbing them (Nichols & Braimoh, 2016). Community policing models, which cite relationships with the community at the center of their ideology, are criticised as being thinly veiled calls to assimilation and as pushing internalized racism on community members (Cefai, 2015).

In the past the TPS has used various initiatives to reach out to young people in Toronto. Despite the many resources being poured into these initiatives, research shows they do not provide meaningful relationships between youth and police (Chapman-Nyaho, Kwan-Lafond, & James, 2011). According to one student, cited in a study by York University, perceptions of the police "go both ways. You have no say. Even if they're wrong, they're still right, you have no say" (Chapman-Nyaho *et al*, 2011, p.99). Lekan Olawoye, Executive Director of For Youth Initiative Toronto, states, "There is an issue with trust". He further iterates that relationships must be built in order for authentic policing to be achieved (Rankin & Winsa, 2012). Participation in youth programs is typically aimed at youth age 14 and onwards, from low income and underserved communities.

An increase in emphasis on community policing necessitates that the police reevaluate their approaches to building relationships with members of the public, especially those youth deemed "at risk". As workers situated in relationships, CYC practitioners land at the intersection of youth and relationship; we are well positioned to assist in assessing gaps in knowledge and the reimagining of these relationships in turn. Given this, the research available sets to explore the following preliminary question: What are the gaps in the programs offered by Toronto Police Services to youth (14-24 years) in Toronto? Articles 2, 12, 13, and 15 of the UNCRC are used to assess the gap.

## Background

There are many concerns about procedural fairness in interactions between police and youth in Toronto communities. There are questions about individual rights and whether or not interactions between police and youth are actually voluntary (Rankin & Winsa, 2012). According to Rankin and Winsa (2012), many young people reported

having tense relationships with police. One report shows that 80% of black youth between the ages of 15-24 in Toronto had been stopped by police for “general investigation” from 2008 to 2013 (Meng, 2017). Youth of Middle Eastern descent also report also feeling alienated and labelled because of their ethnicity (Meng, 2017).

Racial profiling affects black people of all ages, but for young black males in Toronto, profiling at the hands of the police has become especially prolific; all this while the TPS continues to deny allegations of racial profiling (Meng, 2017). Compounding the problem, race-based data regarding racial biases in police stop and search activities is unavailable, as there is currently a ban in Canada on the gathering and distribution of all race-crime statistics (Meng, 2017). A lack of interest shown by the police to even participate in programs involving youth, has contributed to the local perception racialized youth have of the police and vice-versa (Chapman-Nyaho *et al*, 2011). For a relationship to be healthy, it must be reciprocal. There must be an engagement that is ongoing, sincere and honest (Saito & Sullivan, 2011). To begin this process, youth and police first have to “meet each other where they are at” (Garfat & Fulcher, 2012). This means the TPS must acknowledge the youth and accept their apprehension and uncertainty without demands or conditions.

Article 12 of The Convention of the Rights of the Child states that children and youth have the right to take part in any decision-making activity related to their lives, especially those regarding school and community (Checkoway, 2010). However, most police activity involving youth is framed in a discourse of protection. Taking the patronizing route of youth protection over youth participation can be equal parts damaging and intimidating. It can result in young people making spur of the moment decisions that can have lasting adverse effects (Ranahan, Blanchet-Cohen & Mann-Feder, 2015). Balancing the principles of protection and participation is necessary for ensuring that young individuals are not denied their fundamental rights.

In 2006, the TPS started a social development initiative called the Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI). This program was planned to last three years but was made permanent in 2009 with annual funding of \$585,000 from the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services (Saberri, 2017). The YIPI program was designed to help “at-risk” youth in Toronto build a relationship with police with the express goal of reducing gang activity. As Saberri (2017) states, the problematic use of the term “at-risk” affirms a race directed, traditionalist, stereotypical gendered view of black youth as “immigrants”, “troublemakers”, “athletes”, “underachievers” and “fatherless”. The term “youth-at-risk” is used within the very mandates of various community initiatives. This term resonates

through history with the connotation of youth being delinquent, deviant and disadvantaged. Kelly (2006) states,

*The questions of Youth, of what to do with them, of how to school them, or police them, or regulate them, or house them, or employ them, or prevent them from becoming involved in any number of risky/sexual, eating, drug (ab)using or peer cultural/practices are questions that have a substantial historical aspect. (pg. 25)*

At the turn of the twentieth century, liberal governments used the term “youth at-risk” as a political tool in debates amongst politicians, academics, government officials and religious groups (Swadener & Lubeck, 1995). This perpetuated the adult view of youth as being inherently inadequate and lacking the capacity to make any decisions in their own best interest. According to Checkoway (2010), “adulthood” originates from a belief that adults are superior to youth and hold the right to act on their behalf. This very adulthood is prevalent in the characteristics of each program that will be reviewed in this research. In areas of power and authority, there is consistently a lack of language that is sensitive to the social and geographical location of youth. According to Checkoway (2010), the fear of youth by adults in authority may erode how the general population participates with youth and further impact the flow of democracy, if there is no intervention. When working with youth, it is important that adult allies understand the past and present injustices that are happening with youth on account of adulthood (Ramey, Lawford & Vachon, 2017).

A formal evaluation of the Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI) demonstrated both fear and a lack of trust from youth towards police (Chapman-Nyaho *et al*, 2011). Participants spoke at length about their previous encounters with police as being ones of intimidation and power. However, after experiencing YIPI, some participants reported having positive feedback regarding the police. This feedback was based on the positive interpersonal relationship the youth thought they had built with the officers. Notably, however, the relationships formed during the YIPI were not sustained over time (Chapman-Nyaho *et al*, 2011). For police to be successful in creating sustainable programs with youth, officers will have to take actions to reduce any fear, suspicion or hostility that might exist. This will require building connections with youth from a relational lens (Longacre, n.d.).

Few studies look at the qualitative aspects of youth and police relationships in Toronto (Wortley, 2016). By examining the gaps that exist in the programs offered by TPS

to youth in Toronto this study is able to provide preliminary insight into what can be done to increase relational practice among youth and police. Specifically, the study at hand asks, what are the gaps in the programs offered by Toronto Police Services to youth (14-24 years) in Toronto?

### **Research Methodology**

The present research looked at Toronto Police Service (TPS) programs offered to youth in the Toronto area and used a gap analysis. Sarkis, Hernandez-Rivera, Hernandez (2014) state that: “a gap analysis is an effective and important method for uncovering the gaps...” (p.25). The programs evaluated in this gap analysis were the Youth in Policing Initiative, Empowered Student Partnership Program, The Toronto Opera Program, The Public Education and Crime Eradication (PEACE) Project, the Toronto Recreational Outreach Out Tripping Program (TROOP), and The Youth and Adult Corps Volunteer Program. Information was gathered from their respective websites and the following four central questions were asked:

1. What is the mandate of the program?
2. What are the eligibility requirements?
3. How are the youth actively involved in the decision-making process?
4. How are the programs funded?

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), was used as the criteria by which the gaps within each program were identified; specifically articles 2, 12, 13 and 15 (UNCRC, 1989). The Convention was signed and ratified in Canada, making it legally binding. Article 2 states that children have full access to rights without experiencing discrimination based on sex, race, sexuality, ability, gender expression etc. Article 12 states that children have the right to participate in decision-making processes relevant to their lives and to influence decisions taken in their regard, especially in schools or communities. It affirms that children are full-fledged persons who have the right to express their views in all matters affecting them and requires that those views be heard and given due weight. It recognizes the potential of children to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and actors of change. Article 13 states that children have the right to freedom of expression, including seeking, receiving, and sharing information. Article 15 states that children have the right to create and join associations and to

assemble peacefully. They are to have opportunities to express political opinions, engage in political processes and participate in decision-making (UNCRC, 1989).

### Data collection

The following charts demonstrate the data collected by the four central questions:

**Table 1. Program Mandate**

Programs	Program Mandate
<i>Youth in Policing Initiative (YIPI)</i>	<p>To promote youth participation in and exposure to the work environment through diverse, educational and productive work assignments.</p> <p>To enhance the link between the police and the neighbourhoods they serve by selecting youth reflecting our culturally diverse city.</p> <p>To provide a safe and positive employment opportunity.</p> <p>To promote the Toronto Police Service as an employer of choice.</p>
<i>Empowered Student Partnership Program (ESP)</i>	<p>To empower students to plan, organize and execute a yearlong safe schools initiative in their local schools and communities.</p>
<i>The Toronto Opera Program (TOP)</i>	<p>To encourage teamwork, self-expression, critical thinking and creativity among participants.</p> <p>Promote a healthy relationship between youth and police officers.</p> <p>Develop youth leadership and life skills.</p> <p>Increase young people's self-image and confidence.</p> <p>To identify skill sets and passions.</p> <p>Move youth from high-risk or at-risk to a lower-risk category.</p> <p>Expose youth to the diverse employment opportunities within the Toronto Police Service and the Arts and Culture sector.</p> <p>Create an opportunity for youth to express themselves in a new way.</p> <p>Open a gateway for making positive choices.</p>

# Information

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