

# Reviews

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*Carolyn Davies and Harriet Ward*

**Safeguarding Children Across Services: Messages from Research**

Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2011

ISBN 978 1 84905 237 5

£19.99 (pbk) or free download

pp. 224

William McGovern

*SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN Across Services* brings together findings from 15 research studies and discusses the identification of abuse and neglect, methods of prevention, and interventions for families with additional or complex needs. The authors argue that the book offers a critical account of policy, systems and practice and is essential in providing guidance in relation to safeguarding children for policy makers, social workers, professionals in health care and the family justice system as well as others working with children.

This is a good book, which I found easy to read. It left me with no doubt that it will be included as an essential reading text in a number of undergraduate module handbooks in Substance Use, Safeguarding, Early Years, Social Work and Youth Work. The content is interesting, informative and free from jargon, and the subsections of the text allow the reader to meander through, gleaning a general understanding of the content with little difficulty. The book is well presented and each of the chapters has a synopsis of what the following section covers and ends with a text box of key findings.

Chapter one has sub sections summarising the research studies which were used to inform the content of the book, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the approach used, and listing training manuals which have been developed from the evidence collated. This approach and the book layout presents the reader, be they undergraduate student or practitioner, with the opportunity to follow and explore their interests, take responsibility for their own learning and take theoretical guidance when needed.

Like many others I am often drawn to the sections of publications which focus on cause and effect, identification and initial response, on this occasion to safeguarding concerns. Given the strong methodological approach of peer review used to conclude and collate findings from the research review, I worry that the authors may have leaned towards problematising certain aspects

of behaviour which are often associated with safeguarding issues. The sections on substance use and domestic abuse in Chapter two are well written, focused and referenced; however, these sections only contain a list of risk factors and catalogue of adverse facts that surround the concept of safeguarding, substance use or violence. It would have been more insightful with reference to substance use to have had a small review of the literature and evidence base which suggests that becoming pregnant, having a child or seeking to avoid the ultimate nadirs associated with the removal of children can be viewed as resilience factors in their own right and are associated with the cessation of substance use (Finfeld, 2000).

There is a section in Chapter Five, Specific Interventions for Children and Families, which discusses the engagement of families; this too is flagged up in the maltreatment of children section. This section could also be strengthened by a short synopsis of the work undertaken to promote strength based self-help approaches and new directions in welfare policy (Folgheraiter and Pasini, 2009). In discussing the issue of domestic violence the authors correctly drive us to develop an understanding of the concept as multi-faceted and that further research is needed to develop an evidence base for work with violent perpetrators. I agree this is the case but struggle with the fact that despite referencing from systematic reviews the theoretical concepts of perpetrators interventions such as psycho-educational, cognitive behavioural and therapeutic groups (Babcock et al, 2004) have not been included. Given the spirit of the publication it would have been great to have been signposted to further work and theoretical concepts which would allow for further learning.

The points raised above should not detract anyone from considering reading this book. The reading list and citation of work including the appendices of research findings provide an excellent resource. In building a model for 'Services Around the Child' or 'Services Around the Family' even the most experienced practitioner would benefit from reading the key messages whilst considering the subsections on leading, management and the role of finance in safeguarding. Finally, the authors bring our attention to a number of key concluding issues. However, it is not the findings that bring new knowledge to the field, although a more in depth look at the role of GPs in safeguarding would be welcomed. Putting my own areas of academic interest to one side for a moment I would suggest that it is the process by which the authors have come to these conclusions which are the strengths of this publication and the way in which they present their views and findings which will benefit those with the sense to read it.

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### *Feminist Webs*

## **The Exciting Life of Being a Woman: A Handbook for Women and Girls**

Hammeron Press 2012

ISBN: 978-0-9564507-2-2

£10 (pbk)

pp. 251

Tania de St Croix

OVER THE LAST few years I have been excited to hear on occasion about the work of Feminist Webs, the collective or movement (or web?) of young women, youth workers and academics based mainly in North-West England. These girls and women have reminded us that young women's work is as valuable as ever, and that being feminist and politically engaged is an important aspect of being a youth worker that should not be hidden. In the recent past Feminist Webs has been creative in its production of original and interesting posters and postcards as well as web-based resources which I have often used when planning girls' work activities, chuckling at one of their slogans, 'Done hair and nails: now what?' Bearing in mind the proud history of feminist publishing (and my own old-fashioned preferences) I was delighted to find out that Feminist Webs have now published a 'proper' full-length book!

This attractive book has a zine-like presentation, with a mixture of cartoons, material from the historical archive and from Feminist Webs events, longer pieces of writing, poems, illustrations, activity ideas and spaces for the reader to do their own writing or art work. Inspired and partly funded by a heritage project it includes contributors' narratives of personal histories, from involvement at Greenham Common to starting a girls group or becoming a feminist. More recent histories or her-stories are included from the younger women involved. The historical aspects are accessible and relevant, and there are also less obviously heritage-related sections such as self defence and 'how to repair a bike puncture'.

Having been involved in a small way in less ambitious collective writing projects with fellow

youth workers and young people, I can imagine how much work must have been involved in putting this impressive book together. At times the layout is a little rough around the edges and there are a few places where words seem to have fallen off the page, but this does not detract in any way. In fact I liked the slightly home-made quality, as an antidote to over-produced reports that look nice but don't say anything new. More importantly, the book is inspiring and impressive in its ability to make political and historical ideas palatable and accessible without dodging their complexity. Where there are debates and disagreements within feminism, these tend to be discussed and explored rather than glossed over. This openness and honesty strengthens rather than diminishes its impact.

Running throughout the book are examples of women 'whose resilience inspires us', with useful information and lovely hand-drawn illustrations celebrating a diverse array of women from a variety of cultures and parts of the world, challenging the idea of feminism as predominantly white and middle-class. These 'spirit women' are held up as inspirations, which is perhaps why they seem to be described in wholly positive terms. There is clearly a value to celebrating the achievements of women who have so often been left out of the stories of history, arts and politics, but I would have liked to see a discussion on the pros and cons of the uncritical celebration of certain individuals. I should also admit to some cynicism over the word resilience which seems to crop up too often as a buzzword in recent policy; however, like all of the concepts in this book the word 'resilience' is used here with a more radical edge.

I haven't yet had a chance to share this book with friends, colleagues and young women, and it will be interesting to hear how it is received by people who have not previously come into contact with feminist ideas. I can particularly imagine it being loved by bookish young women, and by youth workers who find academic books difficult to relate to practice but 'activity tool kits' too formulaic and uncritical. The format, illustrations and activity ideas make it easy to dip in and out of, but I found reading it from cover to cover was also rewarding. It is easy to read without being simplistic and I read it word for word, enjoying, learning and contemplating.

As pointed out in the book, we can all be part of Feminist Webs: 'You don't need to "join". Just set yourself up and go for it!' (p.8). This book will support and inspire anyone who already works with young women or wants to; any young woman who is looking for an alternative to 'girly' magazines and 'chick lit'; and anyone who is even vaguely interested in finding out more about feminism. It is available from the independent publisher Hammeron (or from Amazon, if you must). *The Exciting Life of Being a Woman* would make a great present for any young woman or youth worker, and should be in every library and youth centre.

**Tania de St Croix is a part-time youth worker with Voice of Youth and a PhD student at Kings College London.**

Carolyn Jackson, Carrie Paetcher and Emma Renold (eds.)

**Girls in Education 3-16: Continuing Concerns, New Agendas**

Open University Press 2010

ISBN: 9780335235629

£24.99 (pbk)

pp. 256

Ali Hanbury

THIS COLLECTION offers teachers, school staff and informal/community educators fifteen chapters split into three helpful sections: 'Girls and academic achievement'; 'Girls' experiences in the schooling system'; and, 'Relationships between girls' out-of-school experiences and school life'. Published in 2010 it provides a snap-shot in time and place at a retrospectively important juncture in British politics being closely followed by a change from a Labour Government to a Conservative-led coalition Government.

Perhaps it was a conscious political decision from the editors and / or perhaps it is a reflection of the gendered nature of educators and researcher positions of women within this 'caring profession' that resulted in a collection of female-only contributors. Whichever, the editors open this book by setting a political context and they emphasise the importance of political awareness and engagement from education professionals as critical practitioners. Using a wealth of empirical work they highlight the problematic position of girls and young women in the education system today; caught between being represented in large-scale data sets as achieving higher G.C.S.E. results than boys and young men which has resulted in a 'poor boy discourse' and being sexually and racially 'Othered'.

As a youth and community worker I was pleased to see the space afforded to out-of-school experiences and found Fin Cullen's chapter 'I was kinda paralytic': pleasure, peril and teenage girls' drinking stories' a positive nod in the direction of multi-disciplinarity. I would recommend taking the time to read Fin's section of the contributors' descriptions for an honest and playful insight into her personal-professional trajectory!

Having been rallied by the political rhetoric in the opening chapter I was left to feel down-hearted and pessimistic with some of the insights offered in much of the book with stark revelation into, for example, ways in which girls and young women are utilised as functional aids to help increase boys and young men's achievement and temper their troublesome behaviour, highlighted by Jannette Elwood in Chapter two.

We are also provided with examples of the social, cultural and sexual terrain negotiated by young women and the problematising and politicising of their experiences and behaviour. For example

Shain's chapter 'Refusing to integrate? Asian girls, achievement and the experience of schooling' highlights stereotyping and homogeneity as Othering practices within school settings, used by Asian girls as well as non-Asian girls and school staff.

Jessica Ringrose's chapter 'Sluts, whores, fat slags and playboy bunnies: Teen girls' negotiations of "sexy" on social networking sites and at school' develops from these problematic subject positions and shows how social networking is an important feature of young people's lives. This creates a difficult area for school staff and other young people's professionals in addressing 'pornified' culture in the 'virtual' world which affects every-day school relations and sexual power play between young people.

I was pleased to see space given to exploring the myriad of social, cultural and classed positions which prove to be significant areas of struggle, consciousness and often invisible areas of analysis in the wider agendas of education policy which focuses upon league tables and attainment rates. More examples and 'stories from the field' of gender equity schemes-of-work and links to resources would have added to this book, becoming a practical aid as well as a politically and research focussed insight. This is something which many time-strapped and curriculum-dependent educators would welcome.

There are tensions explored here between the neo-liberal discourses used in the education system which promote hard work, individual grades and targets with academic achievement and the homogeneity of policies and curriculum which view grades C and above as the one-size-fits-all results that all students should be aiming for to open up choices for further study.

Once again, this collection reminds readers of the highly political role we have as educators be that in early years, statutory education, further and higher education or indeed youth and community/informal education settings. It gave me an opportunity to reflect and question some of the targets placed upon youth and community workers to reach specific accredited outcomes regardless of the individual needs of the children and young people we work with.

Let us not forget that despite girls and young women achieving academically higher levels than boys and young men (which Becky Francis helpfully challenges and unpacks) this trend is not the case for all girls and young women, shedding light on a classed and 'raced' educational system. And let us remember that these gendered trends of achievement are not converted into representation in the workplace and in rates of pay in adult life.

**Ali Hanbury is a youth and community practitioner and a PhD candidate at the Centre for Gender and Women's Studies, Lancaster University.**

Blair McPherson

**People Management in a Harsh Financial Climate**

Russell House Publishing Ltd 2010

ISBN 978-1-905541-63-8

£25.00 (pbk)

pp. 86

Lesley Buckland

THIS BOOK FOCUSES on finding cost effective ways to develop managers, many of whom will be facing job insecurity, so that they can increase ‘output’ and still pursue ‘high standards’ whilst under increased pressure (p. v). That in itself is an ambitious task: how do you keep people motivated and interested in what they are doing when they are being squeezed from all sides? This manual appears to be designed as an alternative to sending managers on training courses or further professional development routes whilst equipping them with the skills the organisation requires in this current climate. Clearly there are great financial incentives to using this approach. The format is accessible for the manager who may not have much time, comprising of a number of activities and questions to consider preceded by an introductory statement or theory on the issue.

The book was one of the usual spiral bound Russell House manuals, and quickly fell apart with pages falling out. I wondered whether they were trying to cut costs too! At £25.00 I would not consider this good value for money (the pdf is £229.13, including VAT and can be used across an organisation). There were no real ground breaking ideas on people management that the social worker, youth worker or housing worker wouldn’t have gleaned in their training and professional development. This author seemed to merely echo his experience in the current field and amplify the current political rhetoric.

Although the title of this book suggests that it is all about developing people, I felt it started from a very negative perspective. The introduction ‘Using this manual’ starts from the premise that people are difficult and troublesome to manage. Staff development doesn’t appear until number 6 on the list of issues, way behind such things as ‘tackling absenteeism’ and ‘challenging poor standards of work’. Is this what the author truly believes modern management is all about? Several assumptions were made about the reader, primarily that they would be male. For example, when advising on how you may wish to ‘look the part’ for interviews references to ‘sharp suits and shiny shoes’ and ‘penalty shoot outs’ were abundant (p.xviii). This felt like a retrograde step in putting the ‘man’ back into manager.

The book claimed to be for ‘Anyone involved in developing aspiring managers, supporting new managers or mentoring ambitious managers in the public, voluntary and not-for profit organisations ... principally ... in the people services, including children’s services, adult services, social work,

education, housing, community and justice services' (p. vii). However, it seemed to drift between managers in the public sector and managers in the private sector. McPherson seems to approach this manual from an assumed and unquestioned position that the business model of management is better. (Wasn't it the business model of management that generated this harsh financial climate that we currently find ourselves in?) He suggests that 'doing things differently' would make managers think about how to be a 'corporate manager' (p. xix).

I am not convinced that many of these ideas are grounded in concrete experience or supported by any underpinning philosophy or approach. For example, I couldn't really get a grasp on how McPherson's suggested approach of dipping in and out of training 'when time and opportunity permits' could really work. In a climate where there are evidently increasing pressures to deliver more for less, when are these new managers going to get the time to read this manual, let alone deliver or take part in some of the suggested activities?

After stating from the outset that this manual aimed to equip managers with the skills to be able to deliver 'high standards' in the current financial climate, there was also the suggestion that 'good enough' would have to do. Maybe in the private sector this is acceptable but in children's services, social work and education will 'good enough' really do? When it comes to working with vulnerable people it will not; the public expect and deserve more. The Munro report (HMSO, 2011) emphasizes this consistently with reference to the inquiry into the death of 'Baby P'. The lack of supervision, management support or professional development opportunity allowing critical exploration of practice were all considered to be factors in providing a service that could not work to 'high standards'.

To evidence his assertion that 'good enough' is acceptable, McPherson uses the analogy of the space race, in which Russia being on a very restricted budget opted to put a pencil into space as opposed to the USA which put a man on the moon. Is there this option in public services? What impact will reducing resources for social workers have on their ability to support the most vulnerable? Working with people is a very different context to putting something into space.

There were some interesting aspects to this book. Section Two offered thoughts to consider if as a manager you have to face difficult decisions about making redundancies: should it be a last in, first out approach or should consideration be given to other factors? He also raises noteworthy points in Section Nine with reference to equal opportunities. The most thought-provoking parts for me posed questions around doing more with less, home working, and the end of the traditional team meeting.

I have to question McPherson's conclusion that 'A leader does not bring about change by stating that targets are unrealistic, timescales unreasonable or objectives unachievable. A leader says "yes



we can”” (p. 25). I would argue that a ‘good’ leader also needs to be reflective, paying attention to the current environment, their resources and their expertise. Are the senior management team always right? Have they always got their fingers on the pulse? Do their ideas not deserve critical analysis? Surely, especially in today’s current climate there is a need to do a bit of research first before just agreeing to meet unrealistic demands for example that may prove to be costly as well as ineffective.

Shackleton is widely recognised as one of the greatest leaders of all time, recognised internationally by businesses and world leaders alike (Morrell & Capparell, 2002). Here was a leader who did reflect, research and propose alternatives and still maintain a cohesive and predominantly happy team. He didn’t reach his initial goal, the South Pole, unlike his main competitor, Scott. He changed his goal as he understood the environment he was working in, and as a result he and his team lived to tell the tale. His philosophy is still inspiring managers and leaders across the globe, whereas we all know what happened to Scott’s team. Do we really need a leader to be a ‘yes man’?

This book is fundamentally a series of statements to promote discussion, as an aid to developing managers to be used in individual studies, group sessions, supervision or mentoring. In this capacity it could be of value. In place of professional or academic training as McPherson suggests it might have the potential to be dangerous. As the old saying suggests, ‘A little knowledge is a dangerous thing’. In this harsh financial climate, is this book better than nothing? Possibly, but only if facilitated by an experienced and competent manager rather than as a stand-alone developmental tool. McPherson has some interesting ideas to offer, but these need to be grounded with concrete examples of where they had been used and reports on whether they had worked or not (or at least what the outcomes were). Some case studies would really have illuminated his ideas.

## References

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**Lesley Buckland, YMCA George Williams College, London.**

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*Judith Milner and Jackie Bateman*

### **Working with Children and Teenagers Using Solution Focused Approaches**

Jessica Kingsley 2011

ISBN: 978 1 84905 082 1

£18.99 (pbk)

pp. 176

Claire Crawte

*WORKING WITH CHILDREN And Teenagers Using Solution Focused Approaches* is both an interesting and practical read, taking the reader through each element of a solution focused intervention in detail. In each chapter there are examples of how Milner and Bateman have used their theory in practice including times where things didn't go so well, which make their ideas all the more real for the practitioner. The book describes how the solution focused method can fit into a variety of situations youth workers may find themselves in. Examples range from working with younger children around such issues as soiling themselves, to teenagers keeping themselves safe, cannabis misuse, and eating disorders.

The authors take us through the main elements of the theory, and use examples to show how they would work in real situations. For example, 'the miracle question' was devised by De Shazer (1988:5) as a useful way of developing goals towards solving problems and is a key element of solution focussed theory. Milner and Bateman add their own slant and recommend using words like 'something wonderful' rather than 'miracle' due to the client group they tend to work with. They take us through follow-up questions that could be used and variations on the miracle question as well as a group example which could be used in youth work settings.

Each chapter gives several case studies to highlight the subject, along with a 'practice activity'. This enables the reader unused to using a solution focussed way of working to experiment with the idea, which I found a really useful tool. Also included are practical and easy-to-use ideas for games. The techniques offered are informed, practical and accessible.

The issues of safeguarding and using solution focussed therapy are referred to throughout the book. It is clear the authors use the method in a variety of settings, and clear examples are given as to how it could be usefully employed throughout the book with some particularly useful worksheets. Also included is a useful risk assessment for young people and children with suicidal thoughts, taken from the set of questions devised by John Hendon (2005).

The chapter on 'Discovering Children's Strengths' continues to deal with the theme that runs throughout solution focused work: the identification and use of the individual's strengths and abilities to deal with the issues they are facing, and how to employ those abilities. The feature of scaling is clearly described, again with plenty of case studies, practical activities and creative applications. Scaling questions are an easy to use, practical and flexible method of enabling people to 'feel' where they are in relation to a variety of issues that may be affecting them.

It was refreshing to have the authors continually asking us to keep in mind that the ‘client’ or young person is the expert in their own lives, that they have the solutions to the issues they face: ‘The expertise of a solution focused worker is in structuring conversations to enable children and their families to locate any knowledge, strengths, skills and abilities which will support them in achieving their hopes and wishes’. For youth workers this concept and way of working is not new. For example, the Federation for Detached Youth Work (FDYW) describes detached youth work as ‘being underpinned by mutual trust and respect and responds to the needs of young people’ (FDYW, 2007). The methods described here seem to marry up with traditional methods of youth work. For youth workers working with young people experiencing personal difficulties this book would be a useful addition to their tool box of resources.

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**Claire Crawte has been a detached youth worker since 1994 and is an executive member of the Federation for Detached Youth Work.**

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*Jon Ord* (ed)

### **Critical Issues in Youth Work Management**

Taylor and Francis, 2012

ISBN: 0415594340, 9780415594349

£80 (hbk), £21.99 (pbk)

pp. 188

Ian McGimpsey

THE RISE OF ‘managerialism’ in UK public services has long been the subject of important critique and argument, particularly during New Labour’s time in office. *Critical Issues in Youth Work Management*, an edited collection aimed at practising managers and students, has therefore been published in interesting times. The Coalition Government, on the one hand, seems to represent the continuation of a neoliberal policy regime, diversifying supply and enhancing competition in the sector. On the other hand, following the financial crisis and arguably the commitments of economic liberals in both parties of the Coalition, the current Government has stated its intention to move away from a culture of centrally mandated, target-led service delivery. This book explores

the subject of youth work management drawing on literatures of youth work, of public service management more generally, and of critical sociology, and embeds this in a series of critically minded discussions of current issues of policy and practice.

To this end the book is divided into three sections. The first section sets the historical and conceptual ground for the discussion, beginning with a convincing account of the rise of state regulation of youth work culminating in the forms of New Public Management currently deployed in youth work. The following two chapters provide a conceptual framing for the book, first setting out the relationship between a neoliberal policy context and the management of youth work, and second giving an overview of concepts within youth work management itself. This section provides a rich set of resources for the more applied discussions in the remainder of the book, and complex concepts are clearly and accessibly explained.

It is in the use made of these resources in the rest of the book that some limitations become clear, however. In the chapter 'Theories' of youth work management, a key move is made to contrast 'rationalist' conceptions of management with a 'postmodern' perspective. This move is central because, as its authors Roger Harrison and Jon Ord point out, it shifts the frame of the discussion from a rationalist concern for what management practices are most effective, to a concern with 'how has a discourse of management emerged and what are the effects' on youth work provision. This move into 'postmodern' conceptual territory is, I would argue, welcome in that it opens up important critical perspectives and methodological approaches developed in other fields to interrogate neoliberal policy and its effects. Unfortunately, it is a conceptual shift that is only inconsistently worked through in the analysis of particular youth work management issues in the subsequent two sections.

The second, and largest, section of the book deals with a series of particular 'critical issues' within youth work management: the impact of institutional structures and cultures; leadership; planning; evaluation; supervision; centre-based youth work; and detached youth work. The chapters in this section define the particular issue of concern, and provide a useful overview of how it has been thought from multiple perspectives within the youth work literature or other related literatures. They then typically locate the issue within the context of neoliberal policy making, and then attempt to argue for ideas of management practice which are more consistent with youth work values and practices, in some cases offering a sense of how alternatives might be enacted by managers. The combination in these chapters of clearly written conceptual overviews and descriptions of possible alternatives is something its audience are likely to find valuable. Further, these chapters provide a compelling case for the importance of the book itself, repeatedly demonstrating the necessity of critical analysis of youth work management practices with clear reference to a context of neoliberal policy making.

The final section of the book offers accounts of the management of youth work within different sectors of provision, including integrated services, the voluntary sector and faith based provision. This is a section that feels particularly welcome at a time of widespread reform of youth work provision. It also highlights the methodological variety of the chapters in the book. For example, the chapter on integrated services by Davies and Merton draws on their empirical research in local authorities, and is directly followed by a chapter on faith-based provision offering a more philosophically-oriented ethical reflection (though its author draws on personal practical experience). Across the book such variety tends to be a strength, though there are occasions when claims are made by authors without their basis being immediately apparent to the reader.

This is a useful book on an undoubtedly important and timely topic. As political contexts and modes of public service provision change, we might expect management as a technology of regulation and control to change too. In producing analyses of these technologies and their effects, this book makes a vital move to utilise well-developed critical perspectives including postmodern perspectives. Nevertheless, the inconsistency of their application hampers the analyses. My concern is not that the various authors in an edited collection should be conceptually purist; it is that such concepts seem to flicker in and out of the analysis, instead of developing and taking more solid shape. As a result, difficult political questions go unaddressed in the analysis of practice issues. Is it adequate any longer to suggest management styles be developed that are more in line with youth work practice, while leaving alone questions of how disciplinary power within institutions might be productive of youth work manager (youth worker, young person...) subjects and practices? What politics might be effective in such a micropolitical terrain? This valuable book opens up this conceptual territory, and does much else besides. However, there is room to explore more fully the problems that it raises.

**Ian McGimpsey, Institute of Education**

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*Jo Broadwood and Nick Fine*

**From Violence to Resilience – Positive Transformative Programmes to Grow Young Leaders**

Jessica Kingsley Press 2011

ISBN: 978-1-84905-183-5

£29.99 (pbk)

pp. 192

Anna Spencer

THIS TOOLKIT BUILDS on the depth of experience of the organisation LEAP Confronting Conflict, providing both the principles and practical stages for developing a transformative

programme as well as offering four different action plans for delivery. The programme emphasises the mutual learning journey of both workers and young people through connecting choices and consequences. Concerned with progression and sustainability, the toolkit presents a holistic, multi-agency approach to embedding support, supervision and evaluation. The toolkit can be used as a full programme or activities in isolation.

Broadwood and Fine believe that some young people ‘need to “turn toward” something else’ and suggest leadership training as an alternative to destructive behaviour. Relationships are presented as key to the success of the work; however a seemingly institutionalised approach to engaging with the participants seems contradictory.

In seeking to be comprehensive the toolkit uses numerous bullet points which lack cohesion at times, and would benefit from a more streamlined and systematic approach. The principles are based on widely accepted good youth work practice with little evidence of innovation. The activities draw extensively on theatre, and are a collection of familiar exercises. The toolkit has relevance for all levels of service delivery, but would be most useful to those who deliver work with young people.

**Anna Spencer is a student at Durham University, Project Officer at RYWU NE, and volunteer youth worker within the local community.**

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*Vanessa Rogers*

### **Games and Activities for Exploring Feelings With Children**

Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2011

ISBN: 978 1 84905 222 1

£15.99 (pbk)

pp. 128

Anna McTiernan

THIS IS A PRACTICAL toolkit guide aimed at professionals who work with children aged between seven and thirteen years in an informal education setting. This is really a beginner’s step-by-step guide, with the first chapter dealing with basic practices and procedures such as consent forms, anti-oppressive practice and group agreements.

The book includes a mixture of individual and group work activities dealing with a range of issues such as identity, moral obligation, consequences of actions, peer pressure, confidence and decision making. This is a very usable and accessible guide that shows awareness of the barriers sometimes felt by children in learning and expressing themselves and offers useful worksheets and exercises

to explore these issues.

**Anna McTiernan is a Community Development Worker in Co. Leitrim, Ireland.**

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