



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
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THE ROLE OF CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS IN A MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM IN TIMES OF DISASTER

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The purpose of this paper is to present **the role of child and youth care workers** as an integral partner in the **multi-sectoral approach** to working with young people affected by and vulnerable to disasters and trauma. These unanticipated incidents do significant harm to communities and have a negative impact on the wellness of children, families and communities. Thus, purporting a **multi-sectoral approach** is critical to helping **vulnerable young people**.

THE CONTEXT

INCREASE IN NATURAL DISASTERS

according to the Society for Research in Child Development

Globally

every year, 175 million children are expected to be affected by natural disasters. (SDRC; 2020).

In South Africa

In 2022 , over 440 people have tragically lost their lives, including 57 school children. more than 600 schools have been affected, with 124 being seriously damaged and 101 completely inaccessible and more than 320,000 pupils affected.

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED

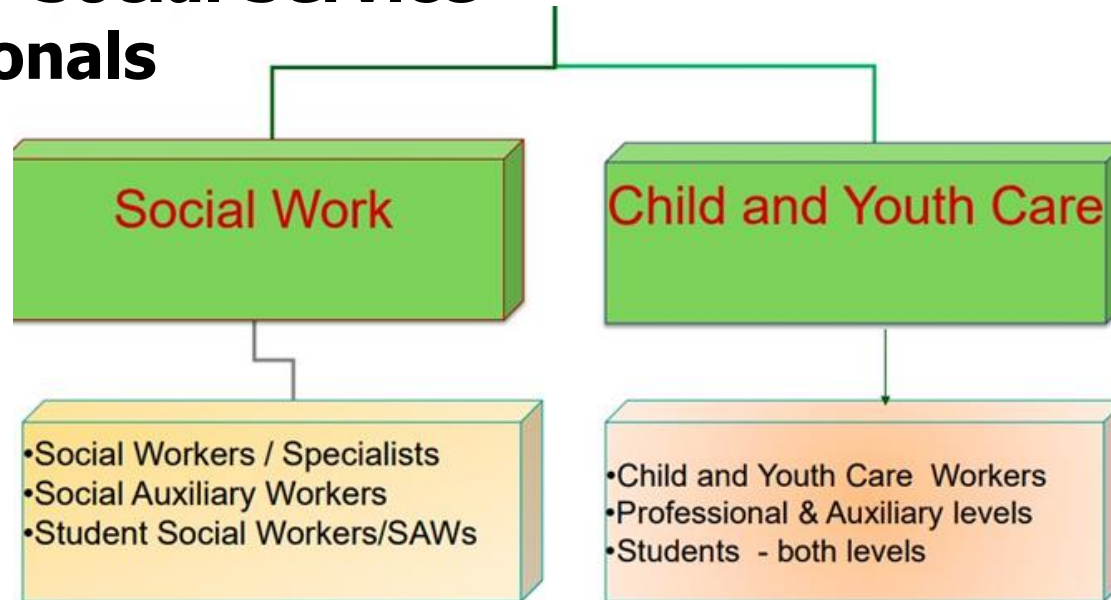
- At risk
- Education is interrupted.
- Lack of shelter.
- Parents/ siblings sick or dye
- Lack of shelter due to displacement



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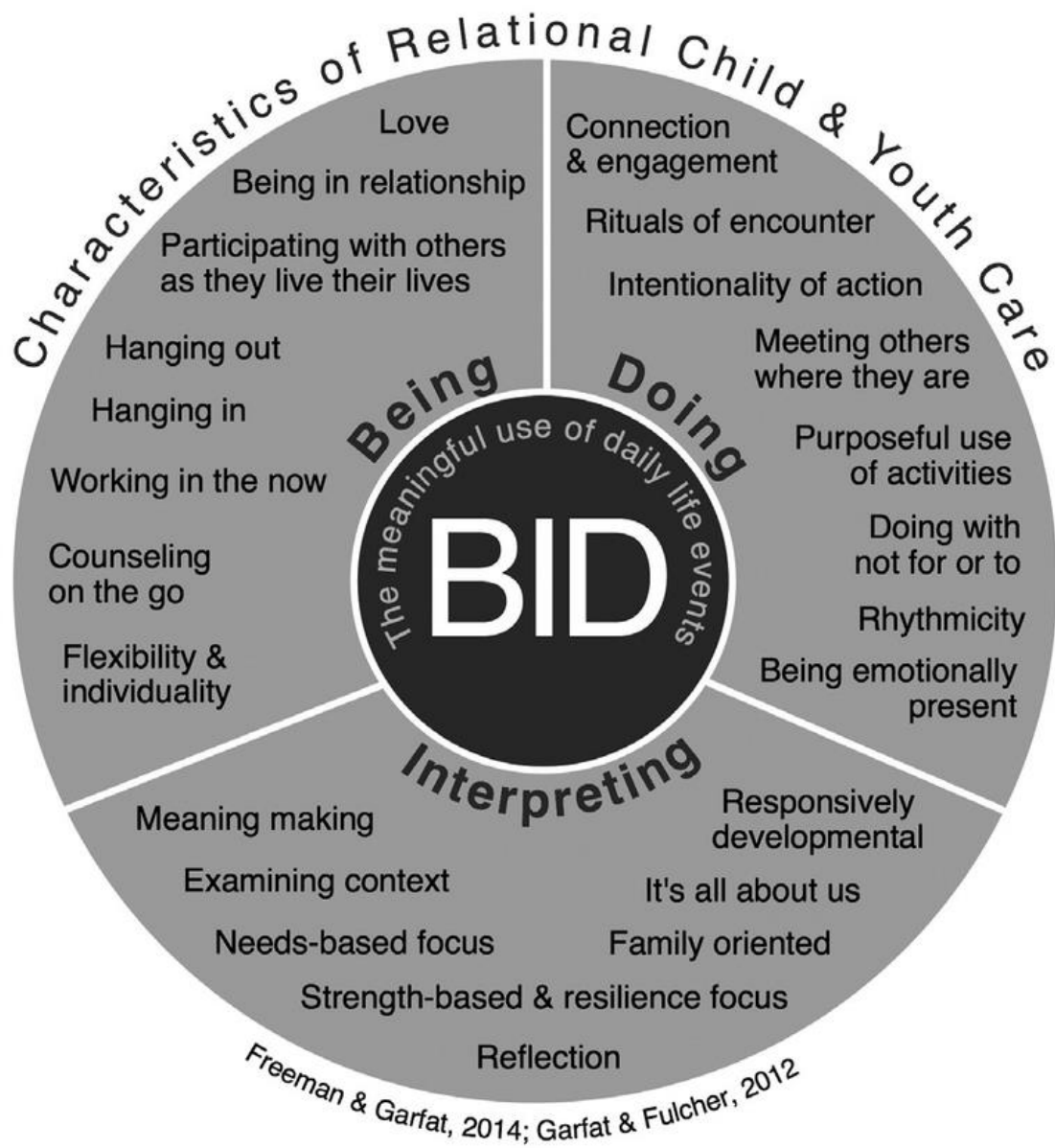
WHO ARE THE CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS

CYCWs – Social Service Professionals



WHO ARE THE CHILD AND YOUTH CARE WORKERS (CYCWs) and what do they do ?

- Child and youth care involved **direct day-to-day work** with children and youth in their environment.
- Work in the **in “the lifespace”** , “the other 23 hours” – Trieschman, Whittaker and Brendtro, 1969.
- Child and youth care involves the development of **therapeutic relationships** (“relational practice”) with children and their families (and strong relationships with other informal and formal helpers).
- Unlike many other professions, child and youth care practitioners do not operate in a single setting or on an **interview or session-oriented basis**.



LIFE SPACE WORK AS THE METHODOLOGY

Working in the here and now.

During the response phase

- At the coal-face.
- Therapy **on the hoof** (Fritz Reddle).
- The other **23 hours** – When other MDT professionals have knocked off.
- Responding to the **immediate needs** of youth people – respond to the immediate basic needs (“Emotional First Aid)
- The work demands - Immediacy – Being conscious of a multiple occurrences and being able to hold the complexity together.
- Observe, report to the MDT
- Based on sound CYC theory and knowledge-base

Proactive work

Working with the MDT to **prepare children**, youth and families for future

PLANNING WITH THE MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM

- **Observing** what happen in the life space and report to the Multidisciplinary Team.
- **Report should** indicate knowledge and skill of the CYCW.
- **Collaboration** with other **multidisciplinary team** members consisting of professionals such as Social Workers, Doctors, Psychologists, Nurses, police, fire Department.
- Ensuring roles and **responsibilities are understood**
- Actively engage as a member of the multi-sectoral team such **as emergency-management agencies**, community organisations, faith- based organisations.
- **Actively participate** in the comprehensive approach to disaster planning.
- **Preparing children**, youth and families for future disasters.

COUNSELLING ON THE GO

THE CYCW IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FOLLOWING:-

- Working in the here and now
- Act as caring , trusted adult to young people and their families.
- Listen, comforts and answer questions.
- Reassures young people and their families that all will be well.
- Teach youth mechanisms of coping with disaster.

BEING EMOTIONALLY PRESENT

- Creating **safe parks** for children and youth to play.
 - Meeting **peers**
 - **Assess needs** of young people and families in the life-space.
 - **Design life-space programs** with young people
- A consistent daily schedule and step-by-step **routines** supported and initiated by CYCWs provides the following to young people and their families:-
- A **predictable** day.
 - Feeling **safe, secure** and in control of their environment.
 - Minimize **uncertainty**.

NEEDS-BASED FOCUS

- Responding to both **long-term and short-term** needs of children, youth and families
- CYC practitioners, the task is to help young people and families to **identify their needs** and to find more satisfying ways of meeting them.
- Every behaviour is an attempt to meet needs.

RELATIONAL PRACTICE

- CYCWs build relationships with children and youth using daily life events.
- The context of **relational safety**.
- Building relationships using daily life events.

SELF CARE IS IMPORTANT

Self-care is important for all helping professionals including CYCWs so they can have the **strength to work in disasters**.

CYCW also **model self-care** to young people and their families.

It is crucial so that they **can continue to serve** their respective clients with maximum effectiveness.

THANK
YOU

