

Creating a Culture Of Care

Sharing our strategies and successes



Spring 2015

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Creating a Culture of Care is an initiative to minimize restraint, seclusion, and other treatment practices that may re-traumatize vulnerable youth in our care.



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TNOYS
TEXAS NETWORK OF
YOUTH SERVICES

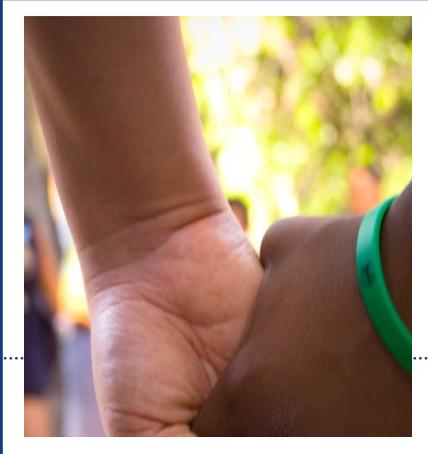
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A note from

TNOYS
TEXAS NETWORK OF
YOUTH SERVICES



Dear RTC Partners and Supporters,

Thank you for your support over the past 3 years of the Creating a Culture of Care initiative! This is our last newsletter of the series, but don't think that we'll stop promoting trauma-informed care and the reduction of restraint and seclusion. Are you wondering what a difference this work has made? Along with some great, practical articles, we have included some of our early evaluation findings in this newsletter. Participating RTCs will receive individualized data. You will also be able to read more about our evaluation work as we continue to publish it on our website (<http://tnoys.org/?p=241>) throughout the spring and summer.

You can stay involved with TNOYS! We are always happy to brainstorm or discuss a project with your team. We'd love it if you'd send your success stories (or your challenges) to us for our blog! We coordinate the statewide Seclusion and Restraint Reduction Leadership Group – offering meetings, trainings, resources, tools, and chances to continue to lead the way. To get involved, email or call Lara at: LOToole@tnoys.org or 512-815-3079.

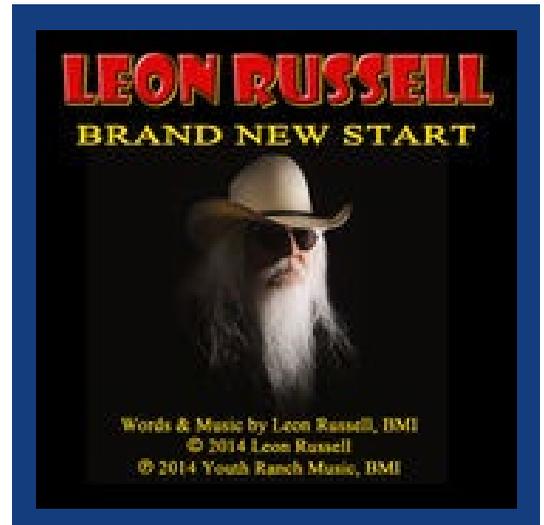
We know you're working hard on the front lines, and we're always looking for ways to have you back.

Until our paths cross again soon,
-Lara, Jack, and the TNOYS team

Brand New Start for HCYR

Unfortunately, the Arts Center at Hill Country Youth Ranch (HCYR) caught fire on November 14th. Thanks to their loving community's donations and additional support, HCYR has weathered the storm and are now looking to shine even more brilliantly. One way everyone can help HCYR rebuild the Arts Center is by buying a song. All proceeds of sales go to the ranch.

The title of the song is Brand New Start by Leon Russell. Leon donated the song to support the ranch so all proceeds go directly to a HCYR savings account for the Arts Center Restoration. You can buy the song for \$.99 on iTunes or Amazon, or you can Google "Leon Russell Brand New Start". You might have to download iTunes to preview the song. It has wonderful lyrics by a songwriting master.



Making Changes on the Residential Unit:

The Role of Active Supervision

A number of the strategies for implementing the Culture of Care to reduce restraint and seclusion require us to change procedures on the residential unit. We all know that change is difficult for most people and youth-workers and direct care staff are no exception. As supervisors, it is important for us to plan as carefully for implementing the changes as we do for planning the actual change. First off, we need to ensure that change is necessary and that it is important to the improvement of the program. Once we know that our change is necessary and important we need to champion it (or find a champion for it) and announce (market) that we are planning for change to those who will be impacted by it; including youth-workers, direct care staff, support staff, and even the youth.

One of the lessons I learned from a colleague was to involve staff whenever possible when implementing a change that will make their job more difficult or will bite into the busy schedule. For example, in a project that necessitated staff completing some new assessment forms with youth and families, we included the line staff in the planning and implementation from the very beginning. Involving staff leads to their thinking about how the change will impact them before they actually have to change their behavior. Many times staff generate better ideas for the change, about planning the change, or about how to make the change easier on themselves and youth alike. Involving staff in the process usually leads to smoother change that is more fully supported. When possible, including some of the young people who are residents of the program (youth leaders or peer leaders) can also make for more seamless change.

Another important strategy that supports making procedural or policy change is finding ways to encourage staff's integration of the change. "Positive feedback when staff follow new procedures is essential, as is guidance and direction when they revert back to previous practice. It takes time for new habits to be formed and become norms." We need to be realistic in our goals for change and plan for successive approximations of the change when it is a major departure from business as usual. Supervisors must notice the staff practicing small parts of the change and take every opportunity to reinforce staff for developing new habits related to the change. Positive feedback is usually more productive than criticism.

Franklin, C., Nowicki, J., Trapp, J., et.al. (1993) A computerized assessment system for brief, crisis-oriented youth services. *Families in Society* 74(10), p. 605.

Stein, J. (2005) 10 Principles of Management. CYC Online. Retrieved 11/13/14 from CYC Net, <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0305-principles.html>



Supervisor's Corner

Jack Nowicki

Jack has been with TNOYS for 14 years providing training and consultation services for youth services. He is also a lecturer at the UT School of Social Work. He has more than 35 years of experience working with youth and families.

10 CYC Hacks to Maximize Your Impact

by James Freeman*

This article presents ten foundational and straightforward strategies for child and youth care practitioners to integrate into their practice with children and families.

Child and youth care is one of the most important fields in our world today. Being a part of such a vital practice is both a privilege and a responsibility. Each of us, no matter how long we have been in this work or how extensive our preparation, can benefit from an occasional examination of how we can do what we do in better, more effective ways.

This list (which is neither exclusive nor exhaustive) reviews ten basic hacks that have the potential to improve our daily practice. Hacks are simply new ways of doing things, skills, or strategies to increase efficiency. Some might call them shortcuts because of the pain and frustration that result when we forget to use them.

So, join me in committing (or recommitting) to some foundational and cherished practices in our field. Maybe along the way we will feel refreshed and rejuvenated in the difficult and deep work that we do together.

1. Show up

Good care happens when we make ourselves present. You might be in your present role or position with a view to move on to something different or simply dealing with the numerous demands of our daily world. That's not a bad thing, but don't let it distract you from the moments that are placed in front of you. It's also important to be there with our whole being. Find ways to put the distractions aside and communicate to those you're working with that they've got your full attention.

2. Keep learning

Your preparation for a career in child and youth care doesn't end with your formal schooling or practicum. It's your responsibility to search out and find ongoing training that exposes you to new ways of thinking, challenges you, and continues your learning experience. Don't wait until someone invites you or an employer sends you to a conference or training. Take the lead for your own learning and get engaged. If there's nothing close to where you live and work, there are wonderful resources online and through your own colleagues.

3. Listen

Too much of the world is talking at us. Each young person, family member, and colleague needs and wants to be heard. Someone recently explained to me that the most important tool we have in our work is the ability to keep our mouth closed.

Someone else recently shared that they use the acronym w.a.i.t. to remind them to ask the question: Why am I talking? Let's listen more to what is being said (and what's not) and we will learn a lot about those we want to help.

4. Get comfortable with silence

This is related to the concept of listening, but distinct enough to consider on its own. Sometimes silence comes in the form of a young person or family member who seemingly refuses to talk with us.

Don't worry and don't rush them. It's possible that the silence is actually part of the process of building trust. Let it happen. Other times silence comes in the form of being together and being comfortable enough that the moment doesn't have to be filled with words. Those moments are important. Don't lose them by feeding the pressure to talk.

5. Make self care a priority

No one else is positioned to take care of you better than yourself. Care work is work for the long haul. Sure, there are days when we spend every last drop of energy we have, but caring for yourself is essential. The physical, mental, and spiritual drains of this work will take a toll on you if left unchecked. Make sure you find a rhythm that works for you. For some it's hitting the gym or taking a run every day.

For others it's being with a group of people and others making time alone. It may involve making sure there's a dependable cycle of engagement and withdraw from the action. Whatever it is that keeps you healthy and sane, make a plan and do it.

6. Be yourself

We each have our own style and personality. We are different and diverse and that's exactly what the world needs from us. Of course, we should be noticing the characteristics that draw us to others, learning and assimilating new ways of being into our lives and work.

But don't trick yourself into thinking that if you could just be like that other person that you would be more effective. Use the style, voice and personality that you've been given and use it well.

7. Make the present meaningful

Later. Someday. Maybe another time. How often do we find ourselves deferring to the future what we could do in the present. Of course there are reasons and timing to plan for the future, but there's also a trap of putting off all good things, failing to enjoy and find meaning in what's around us in the moment. It may be taking a few moments to shoot hoops in the driveway during a family visit, getting grandparents to play a game with a grand-child, or taking a hike across town to get an ice cream. Yes, plan for the future, but don't let the future go by in a way that you will regret later.

8. Get the right supports around you

Child and youth care involves a certain lifestyle. It's a way of giving of yourself to others. This kind of work requires that you have the right supports and people around you. A supportive friend, spouse or partner, a caring supervisor, dependable co-workers, a mentor or two that you can reach out to when needed. It's up to you to make sure this happens. Don't sit around waiting for the right people to land in your life. Seek them out.

9. Enjoy your work

We are all in this work for a reason and, very likely, something specific brought you into this field. Don't forget what that reason is. Hold on to it and keep it close for reflection. The day that child and youth care become regular and routine to you is the day you might need to consider other work. There are things in every role that aren't enjoyable, but overall we should enjoy our practice. If you don't, take a day off to rethink why and discover what you need to change to make it right.

10. Contribute to the bigger game

You are not alone. We are each a part of a larger system. Whether it's constructive feedback to a colleague, financial support to an important project, or facilitating a training or small group discussion for colleagues we can all support the development of our field together. Don't just be a user of our field, be a contributor. You are part of something big. Some call it a movement. Some think it's powerful enough to change the world. You have a role to play and we can only achieve our purpose together.

What CYC hacks have you found work for you? You might even make your own list and share it with your colleagues. Which of those listed here are you willing to commit to trying out or refocus on in your practice? They are both foundational and straight-forward and will set you on a path for success. Use them to think about what's next for you in your own development and make it happen.

*James Freeman lives and works in southern California. Send your thoughts or responses to jfreeman@casapacifica.org

*Freeman, J. (2015) Ten CYC hacks to maximize your impact. CYC Online Journal of the International Child & Youthcare Network. Retrieved January 18 from <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/jan2015.pdf>

The Greatest Success of All

Youth Care Success Story

Contributed by a Youth worker at HHH

I have been employed at Helping Hand Home (HHH) for Children for two and a half years and I have undoubtedly experienced significant personal growth from the interactions with each and every child I have had the opportunity to serve. I am certainly not the same person I was before April 2012, when I took my first steps in the halls of HHH and proudly began my career in the direct care profession.

I have become who I am today because the children trusted me to care for them and show them the world can be a beautiful place in spite of the horrors they experienced.



Helping Hand
Home for Children



My best success story is not limited to one specific event or incident. Instead, I measure success by the number of times a day a child runs up to me and asks me for a hug; the distance from me a child is when they spot me and call my name to say hello, or the volume of their laughter as they delight in any positive experience I can provide. Success is also about the amount of artwork or letters of thanks that I receive in my mailbox from children who have learned the value of cultivating positive relationships and the size of the smiles on their faces when I remind them that they are precious.

When the children come to us they have survived nightmares and personal trauma that no one can truly understand because only they alone have lived through it. And it is my duty (and my colleagues' duty) to provide a safe, nurturing, and loving environment where they can thrive, learn how to trust again, and continue to love, laugh and be joyful in spite of the sadness they've had. Having the opportunity to witness a child love and conquer fear is the greatest success of all.

Project Evaluation: Measuring your impact

We have been working hard to evaluate Creating a Culture of Care and document how each participating RTC used trauma-informed care practices to reduce or eliminate seclusion and restraint. You might have taken our survey, shared your thoughts in a focus group, or been interviewed by the TNOYS evaluation team. We are drafting some interesting reports and fact sheets to share this spring and summer. In the meantime, we offer here some highlights.

Highlights include:

- Restraints/EBIs are becoming a “last resort” instead of a “go-to” strategy. Of the programs that reduced EBI numbers and kept them down, there was an impressive 65% average reduction in restraints. Other programs saw some ups and downs in their numbers.
- Across all nine participating RTCs, there was an average reduction in restraint or emergency behavioral interventions (EBIs) of 25% between 2011 and 2014. Some 2014 data is still coming in.
- Program leaders paved the way by being educated and excited about making these changes; directly involved; flexible; and invested in their staff development.



Left to Right: Hill Country Youth Ranch, Athletes for Change, Children’s Hope Residential Services

Project Evaluation: Measuring your impact

Feedback from RTC Staff:

“[The youth] trust us more, they can open up to us, they don't feel like they're institutionalized.”

“It's not just a job, we get more personal in their life. Makes it easier to talk to them, make a connection, they know that you care.”

“The project came at a time when we really needed it, and the journey has been great.”

“Youth feel safer, and we are more strengths-based now.”

“We have had major progress in a total paradigm shift, and it has decreased runaways and increased staff morale.”

“Our staff turnover rate has significantly improved. Staff are happier.”

“Staff have gotten more actively involved with the youth – and have lost weight!”



Top: Gym at Meridell Achievement Center, Activities Wall at Helping Hand Home for Children, and Garden at Autism Treatment Center