UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre 8th Biennial International Conference

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

REDISCOVERING EMPATHY; VALUES, RELATIONSHIPS AND PRACTICE IN A CHANGING WORLD
**Thursday 8th June – Schedule**

**Parallel Sessions 3.00pm – 4.30pm**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 1: Developing Empathy in Children and Young People Using Restorative Practices</th>
<th>Policies programmes and practices that promote or develop empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing Empathy in Children and Young People Using Restorative Practices</td>
<td>Ms Claire Casey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostering Empathy in Programmes and Practice: The Barnardos Approach</td>
<td>Ms Kerri Smith and Ms Susan Nunez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Relationships and Empathy: developing a cognitive relational Theory of Change for an Evidence-Supported Programme Design</td>
<td>Mr Nick Haisman Smith and Ms Jess Tanner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Parallel Session 2: Building a culture of empathy in organisation and/or in the realm of interdisciplinary agency or collaborative working |
|---|---|
| Young Children’s Empathy and Froebelian Philosophy and Practice | Dr Lynn McNair and Dr John Davis |
| Systematically building trust with ‘the Other:” immigrants, refugees and host country families attend after-school multi-family support | Prof Lynn McDonald |
| Creating Positive Relationships for the Future of Our Community Through Meaningful Engagement Between Young People and An Garda | Ms Caroline Duignan |

| Parallel Session 3: Empathy in relationship based working |
|---|---|
| The presence approach: Reflections on the role of empathy and ‘being present’ in youth mentoring relationships | Ms Tereza Brumovska & Dr Bernadine Brady |
| ‘It’s all of our business ’ - Raising Awareness and Responding to the Needs of Bereaved Children | Ms Anne Marie Jones, Ms Orla Keegan & Ms Celine Deane |
| 'All the Stories are Different' | Ms Ciara Breen, Ms Marianne Joyce & Dr Anne O Kelly |

<p>| Parallel Session 4: Empathy, social values and social justice I |
|---|---|
| Empathy as Radical Action | Prof Mark Brennan, Dr John Davis and Prof Pat Dolan |
| Learning From History. The Glasgow Effect, Masculinity, Empathy and Benny Lynch | Ms Christina Milarvie Quarrell and Dr John Davis |
| Nationalism and Empathy | Dr Judith O Connell |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 5:</th>
<th>Empathy, social values and social justice II Childhood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting Empathy to Prevent Bullying: Working at the Chalk Face</td>
<td>Dr Bernie Collins &amp; Dr Seline Keating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of shared education in promoting empathy and positive intergroup relations in Northern Irish primary school children.</td>
<td>Ms Stephanie Burns, Ms Danielle Blaylock, Dr Caitlin Donnelly, &amp; Ms Joanne Hughes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 6:</th>
<th>Theorising or understanding empathy and relationship based practice I Children and youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mapping children’s relationships for improved permanence and stability for children in care</td>
<td>Dr Lisa Moran, Dr Carmel Devaney, Prof Caroline McGregor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Better Futures</td>
<td>Ms Helen Dunn, Prof Stan Houston &amp; Ms Lorna Montgomery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy as a motivator for maintaining birth relationships in open adoption from care</td>
<td>Dr Mandi MacDonald</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 7:</th>
<th>Theorising or understanding empathy and relationship based practice II Child Protection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The role of empathy in the relationship between Lead Practitioners and families in the Irish child protection and welfare context, specifically through the Meitheal model and Child and Family Support Networks (CFSN).</td>
<td>Dr Anne Cassidy, Dr Leonor Rodriguez &amp; Dr Carmel Devaney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Participation in Child Protection and Welfare: Towards empathy in relationship-based practice</td>
<td>Ms Marie Gibbons &amp; Dr Nuala Connolly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can we have too much empathy? Questions for relationship based practice with child to parent violence and abuse</td>
<td>Dr Declan Coogan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 8:</th>
<th>Empathy in action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Passive to Transformative Empathy</td>
<td>Ms Rebecca Nelems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be Like Water: Reflections on developing a cross-cultural program for women in water</td>
<td>Dr Easkey Britton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy Education for Inclusive Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (iPEPAS)</td>
<td>Ms Aisling Sugrue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 9:</th>
<th>Circle of Compassion and Empathy Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circle of Compassion and Empathy Workshop</td>
<td>McGuinness, M.; Walsh, A.; Brennan, S.; Flynn, E.; Mc Hugh, F.; Van Lente, E.; and Britton, E.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Session 1:</td>
<td>Policies programmes and practices that promote or develop empathy Models of Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team support - A Secure Base Model</td>
<td>Ms Laura Biggart, Ms Emma Ward &amp; Laura Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model of Attachment Practice</td>
<td>Mr Patrick Armstrong &amp; Mr Paul Harvey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 2:</th>
<th>Building a culture of empathy in organisation and/or in the realm of interdisciplinary agency or collaborative working</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Participatory Evaluation as a Way to Model and Practice Empathy</td>
<td>Ms Erica Odera, Prof Mark Brennan, Ms Kaila Thorn &amp; Mr Jamison Malcolm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 weeks Special Study Module on Mindfulness - an educational intervention to increase empathy</td>
<td>Dr. Eva Flynn, Dr. Sarah Brennan &amp; Gelong Thubten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 3:</th>
<th>Empathy in relationship based working Early Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sowing the seeds of empathy in early childhood education</td>
<td>Ms Rita Melia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open eyes and Critical Minds</td>
<td>Ms Colette Murray</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 4:</th>
<th>Empathy, social values and social justice Stigma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Values and Empathy: The Case of Lone Parents</td>
<td>Dr Rosemary Crosse &amp; Dr Michelle Millar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Empathy and Social Norms Influence Adolescents' Stigmatising Responses?</td>
<td>Dr Charlotte Silke, Dr Caroline Heary &amp; Dr Lorraine Swords</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 5:</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parallel Session 6:</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy Development Through Theatre Activities - An Experiential Workshop</td>
<td>Ms Jennifer Blackburn Miller</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Parallel Session 6: | Workshop |  |
|--------------------|----------|  |
| U lab Techniques | Ms Keira Oliver, Ms Lesley Fraser, Ms Marion Darling, Ms Rachel Cox |  |

| Parallel Session 7: | Workshop |  |
|--------------------|----------|  |
| Cultivating Hope for Brighter Futures: Restorative Engagement to Promote Empathy in Children and Young People. | Ms Emma Wheatley & Ms Karen Mooney |  |

| Parallel Session 8: | Workshop |  |
|--------------------|----------|  |
| Promoting Empathy in Children and Young People : A Mindfulness and Meditation Workshop for Adults | Dr Leonor Rodriguez |  |
Thursday 8th June – Abstracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 1: Policies programmes and practices that promote or develop empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Developing Empathy in Children and Young People Using Restorative Practices**

*Claire Casey, Restorative Practices Programme Coordinator, Childhood Development Initiative (CDI)*

This presentation aims to inform conference attendees about CDI’s Restorative Practices (RP) Programme and demonstrate how it develops empathy in and between children and young people.

RP is both a philosophy and a set of skills that have the core aim of building strong relationships and resolving conflict in a simple and emotionally healthy manner. The approach is fundamentally about prevention of conflicts. In the schools and youth services where RP has been adopted as a way of working, the approach works to develop emotional literacy, communication, problem-solving and interpersonal skills in children and young people.

CDI began introducing RP in 2010 as a way of working with children and young people because it was an evidence-informed approach to conflict prevention and resolution. The Tallaght West RP Programme supports children and young people, and the adults that have responsibility for their wellbeing, to work with each other in new and more productive ways.

Research in 2012 found that RP worked to strengthen the social and emotional learning and skills of the young people who have enthusiastically responded to and adopted this approach in Tallaght West. The RP Programme has made a substantial contribution to improving empathy between children and young people in Tallaght West.

**Fostering Empathy in Programmes and Practice: The Barnardos Approach**

*Ms Kerri Smith, Assistant Director of Children Services, Barnardos, Ms Susana Nunez, Project Leader of Roots of Empathy, Barnardos*

This presentation will explore the theory of empathy in the context of the developing child, the optimum conditions for the development of healthy social and emotional functioning in the child, and the risks associated with these conditions not being in place.

The presentation will illustrate the Barnardos approach to developing empathy, through providing a bundle of wraparound services at an individual, family and community level. We will present examples, using our programmes as case studies. These include Roots of Empathy, Tus Maith and Partnership with Parents (PwP).

Roots of Empathy is an evidence-based programme that has shown significant effect in reducing levels of aggression among school children by raising social/emotional competence and increasing empathy (Santos et al., 2011).
Tús Maith is an early years programme with an overall outcome of ensuring that children are ready for school. Social and emotional outcomes include that children are able to manage behaviour and demonstrate empathy for others.

PwP is an intensive, one-to-one programme for parents with multiple and complex needs, developed by Barnardos. A central aim of the programme is to improve the parent-child relationship and support the child’s social development.

By incorporating empathy as a core value in the programmes we develop and the work that we do, Barnardos demonstrates a commitment to innovative practice. Coupled with our dedication to research and advocacy work, Barnardos actively contributes to child and family policy.

**Family Relationships and Empathy: Developing a Cognitive-Relational Theory of Change for an Evidence-Supported Programme Design**

*Nick Haisman-Smith and Jessica Tanner, Family Links*

Putting empathy, warmth and positive relationships at the heart of family support is essential for ensuring long-term, sustained outcomes. This presentation will examine the theoretical framework for a widely delivered cognitive relational family support intervention (the Family Links 10-week Nurturing Programme) including a multi-year project with the Colebrooke Centre for Evidence and Implementation developing and refining a Theory of Change. It will examine the theoretical and research underpinnings of a cognitive-relational approach, which places empathy and positive relationships as core principles. This will include research on positive parenting styles, empathy, warmth and praise, which will be supported with case studies and examples of practical strategies. Cognitive-relational strategies for successful delivery and implementation will be considered, in addition to programme content and activities.

The research used a co-constructed methodology: Family Links, the Colebrooke Centre for Evidence and Implementation, and key stakeholders worked in collaboration to construct a Theory of Change, and then assumptions were validated against programme research, existing literature and “What Works” guidance.

Findings suggest that focusing on relationships, empathy and warmth, alongside boundaries and ‘authoritative’ approaches can have a significant impact on outcomes for families. Initial research also suggests that although parental warmth and empathy may have less of a short-term impact on child outcomes, it has a more significant impact on children’s longitudinal outcomes than effective behaviour management. These findings have implications for research, policy and practice, including the need for interventions which increase parental warmth, in addition to the importance of longitudinal research examining the impact of parenting support. Additionally, it highlights the need to offer a menu of provision to ensure that the specific needs of families are considered when deciding on appropriate interventions. Limitations and future directions will also be discussed.
Young Children’s Empathy and Froebelian Philosophy and Practice

Dr Lynn McNair and Dr John Davis, University of Edinburgh

This presentation will compare how different environments support children’s empathetic ways of being, e.g., the potentially liberating environment of the early years setting (Hart & Schwab, 1997; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Lester & Russell, 2008) with the more structured environments of the primary school. Children’s empathetic ways of being are contrasted with professionals techniques of power and control that adversely impact on parents and children. Deficit notions of w a ‘good’ or a ‘bad / naughty’ child/parent will be contrasted with empathic and strength-based ways of being (McNair, 2016).

The specific focus of this paper will be on how young children quickly become familiar with the disciplinary mechanisms used in places such as schools and that they can and do resist such approaches. In particular this article will explore how young children expressed concern for other children who were likely to suffer from the discipline mechanisms and how those who had experienced Frobian settings emerged as leaders of empathetic practice in schools.

Systematically building trust with ‘the Other:’ immigrants, refugees and host country families attend after-school multi-family support groups

Professor Lynn McDonald, Middlesex University, London

The aim is to share rigorous research showing positive social impacts of increased trusting relationships and shared expectations of a family support strategy which applies both micro and macro social work theories. Universal multi-family support groups for first graders in schools located in low-income communities with 73% refugees and immigrants were hosted for 8 weeks with 2 years of monthly follow-up. The goal was to systematically build empathic relationships across ‘fear of the other’ with families, schools and communities in order to protect the rights of all children to experience child well-being.

Offered a universal 8 week multi-family group to 6 year olds. A mixed methods study by sociologists studied impact in a large randomized controlled trial with 52 elementary schools serving low income communities with 73% Latina children in the southwest of US; 3000 first grade children and their families participated; 2 year follow-up data.

Significant results favoured schools assigned to FAST vs No FAST: a) refugee and immigrants parents got to know other parents and shared expectations for their children; and b) FAST increased child well-being and mental health outcomes and reduced behavior problems (SDQ).

Demonstrates that building relationships in divided communities over time with repeated positive personal encounters in a safe multi-family group held in a positive setting of a school, increased empathy across diverse families and schools and communities. This specific multi-systemic strategy applies macro and micro social work practices in one complex intervention offered universally in fearful ‘of the other’ communities.
Creating Positive Relationships for the future of our community through meaningful engagement between Young People and An Garda Siochana

Caroline Duignan, Children and Young People’s Services Committee Co-ordinator, Galway and Roscommon, Marie Feeney, Project Leader, FORUM Connemara, Sergeant Olivia Markham and Garda Greg Gander, Clifden Garda Station, Hazel Scullion, Young Person and Social Care Student & Sharon Ni Cheannabhan, School Completion programme

- To highlight the importance of using the Lundy Model for children and young people’s participation in decision making and the positive outcomes that arise
- To add to the body of knowledge relating to building participatory practice in a collaborative working context

This workshop will be presented by a young person, a Garda and partner agencies and will emphasise nurturing a culture of empathy and relationship building in a collaborative context. It will also emphasise the importance of early intervention and the positive effects this can have on all aspects of young people’s development, including educational development. The workshop will explore the impact of Lundy’s Model of Participation on giving young people a space and voice to raise issues that concern them relating to their local area. It will stress the importance of following up on consultations with children and young people by bringing issues raised by them forward to be addressed. It will include the findings of a relationship building programme between young people and An Garda Siochana in one of the largest policing districts in the Country by area, the outcome of which was an increased sense of empathy on both sides, and in the community overall. A DVD will be shown which outlines the events that have been part of the programme between the young people and local Gardai.

Parallel Session 3: Empathy in relationship based working

The presence approach: Reflections on the role of empathy and ‘being present’ in youth mentoring relationships

Ms Tereza Brumovska, Dr Bernadine Brady, UNESCO Child & Family Research Centre, School of Political Science & Sociology, NUI Galway

Relationships are widely acknowledged as being at the heart of practice and pivotal to positive outcomes in youth work and social care. However, relationships can often be deployed in an instrumental way and framed as an ‘intervention’, whereby a solution is sought in relation to a presenting issue. Baart (2002) highlights a different approach, which he calls the ‘presence approach’, whereby the worker or volunteer is ‘there for others’ without focusing directly on problem solving. According to Baart, presence practitioners take time to get to know the person and their environment deeply and strive to affirm the fundamental dignity of the person. While not being problem-focused, these approaches may lead to problem solving.

Formal mentoring programmes facilitate the development of a friendship or ‘match’ between an older volunteer and a young person, with the objective of supporting the young persons’ personal and social development. The aim of this paper is to draw on Baart’s theory, among others, and research findings to explore the concepts of empathy, ‘presence’ and ‘being there for others’ in youth mentoring relationships. Case studies of contrasting approaches by mentors in youth mentoring relationships are
used to illustrate the dynamics and outcomes associated with instrumental and presence approaches respectively.

This paper draws on the findings of a study of the BBBS youth mentoring programme in the Czech Republic (Brumovska, 2017). In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with participants three times over one year of their mentoring relationship. Interpretive phenomenological analysis was deployed to explore the experiences, values and attitudes of participants.

The paper highlights the importance of empathy and ‘being present’ as a mediator of quality in supportive mentoring relationships. The findings have implications for relationships in other aspects of youth work and social care.

‘It’s all of our business’ – Raising Awareness and Responding to the Needs of Bereaved Children

Anne Marie Jones, Orla Keegan, Celine Deane, On behalf of Irish Childhood Bereavement Network

This workshop will introduce the “Irish Childhood Bereavement Care Pyramid” and Draft “Standards for Providing Support to Children Bereaved in Ireland” as tools to understand, identify and address children’s bereavement needs.

By age 18, up to 5% of children have experienced the death of a parent and many more the death of a grandparent (28% at age 9) or other relative. Children’s grief has similarities to, but is different from, adult experience. Bereaved children need to be met with empathy and understanding; adults have a responsibility to inform themselves and respond. Smaller numbers of children develop more complex needs and require more formal supports – peer-based, voluntary groups or professional intervention. The ICBN Pyramid provides a framework to indicate responses to these needs.

The draft standards provide a framework for action on an individual, family, local community, service provider and national level. The standards ambitiously set out a vision for an Ireland where loss and grief are accommodated at each levels. Standard five calls for bereavement care to be integrated into national policy. Standard four outlines practice responsibilities for bereavement service providers. Standard three has implications for community development, education and compassionate community structures. Standard one and two directly focus on practice with children and families. Standards may be used to plan macro and micro bereavement care, to shape provision and to promote quality so that no bereaved child is isolated or at risk of poor outcome.

This paper aim to promote empathy with bereaved children by giving guidance to practitioners and general public to understanding and addressing their needs, and their families’ needs. This body of work has both practice and policy implications.

All the stories are different’ Developing Empathy through Participatory Research

Ciara Breen, Marianne Joyce & Ann O’Kelly, Legal Aid Board

The aim of this presentation is to discuss the role of participatory research in the development of empathy among a group of children and young people (CYP) who participated in research about their experiences of parental separation, divorce and subsequent changes in family life.

The participatory research methods were underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and the New Sociology of Childhood. A qualitative, narrative enquiry approach was taken
for data gathering and data analysis in order to explore the experiences of Children and Young People in Ireland of parental separation, divorce and family re-ordering. The findings from this research provided evidence that there is a minimisation and misrecognition of CYP’s experiences relating to parental separation at a number of levels across Irish Society – within families, in schools, within the family justice system and in broader society.

The participatory process which enabled participants to meet, discuss and develop a dissemination project, highlighted the ability of children and young people to empathically respond to the needs of vulnerable children and young people, their parents and national school educators. This was achieved through the production of two videos ‘It’s Ok’ and ‘Dear parents, Dear Friends’ with the stated aim of ‘helping other families in the future’

The research project provides a good example of relationship-based work, not only through the teamwork displayed by the research participants, but also through their interactions with the researcher and a team of youth workers and technical experts the community.

The involvement of CYP in decision making when parents separate in Ireland is low, both within the private sphere of the family and in the public sphere of family justice and family mediation services. The results of this research strongly indicate that with sufficient support CYP have the capacity to contribute to policy and practice in this area to enhance services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 4:</th>
<th>Empathy, social values and social justice I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Empathy as Radical Action**

Mark Brennan, Penn State University and UNESCO, John Davis, University of Edinburgh & Pat Dolan, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway

“In a time of universal deceit - telling the truth is a revolutionary act.” - George Orwell

“Empathy is the most radical of human emotions.” - Gloria Steinem

“To tell the truth is always revolutionary.” - Antonio Gramsci

We stand at a critical point in human history. Faced with a range of social, economic, and political, instability it is essential that communities and engaged citizens be proactive in ensuring social justice and civil societies. In this context youth are the critical component and essential agents of change. As has been widely documented, the demographic ‘youth bulge’ has emerged where half of the world’s population is under age 25, and a third is under age 15. While some see this population as vulnerable, we see them as transformational. Instead of susceptible to antisocial behaviour, violence and extremism recruitment, this population represents the seeds and foundations for peace, social justice, and advancement of the human condition. Their empathy, which in many ways can be seen as radical, is at the core of their potential.

In evaluating youth engagement we must consider the purpose, roles, and responsibilities of engaged youth. Engagement can be seen as a tool for system maintenance (regimented) which by its nature seeks public service that does not change or adapt our social system. Service, in this setting, is not designed to challenge untruths. Here, youth civic engagement is often viewed to be minimally important activities like service learning, random one-off altruistic ventures, or other activities in
traditional and regimented contexts (religious, military, and other hierarchical service activities) designed to achieve institutional outcomes.

Alternately, engagement can serve a more radical function and seek to facilitate adaptation and systems change in response to the dynamically changing social, cultural, and political needs. In this paper we argue that young people can provide an important counterpoint to hierarchical regimes by enabling radical thought, fostering opposition to established norms, instilling empathy and challenging the untruths, moral and ethical blind spots of our age. At the core of such dedication to social justice is the driving force of empathy. The ability of youth to relate to others, recognize injustice, empathize with those different from themselves, and independently choose to take action to support those being oppressed sets youth apart from others. As such, empathy is the most radical tool in our arsenal to facilitate social change.

Despite its importance, empathy and empathetic behaviour is often challenged. It is subtly suggested that empathy in the face of extreme social, economic, political and terrorist settings is not realistic or rational. More worrisome, it is often strongly suggested that those exhibiting empathy are a traitorous or an irrational idealist minority. Neither are true. Youth are more in touch with their empathy and actively driven by this to act. They are by all definitions “radicals”.

We argue that encouraging and empowering these ‘radicals’ thought education, program, and practice is among the most important things we can do to achieve peace, social justice, and move the human condition forward. It is clear that we cannot ignore, dismiss, or physically challenge the increasing environment where voices of hate and intolerance fuel divisions, conflict, and violence. What we can do is actively advance youth empathy, promote their radical ideas for achieving equality and social justice, and embrace their willingness to act.

Empathy, developed through a wide range of functions such as facilitated social interaction, intercultural dialogue, exchanges, and knowledge sharing presents the greatest opportunity for ending the chaos we are witnessing. Empathy, among many things, increases understanding, knowledge, tolerance, constructive decision making, innovation, and resilience. All are critical to individual and societal development advancement…..a truly radical idea.

**Moving From Deficit Models to Empathetic Working: Identifying Local Protect Factors, Challenging Stereo-types of Inequality in relation To The and Benny lynch’s Life**

*Christina Milarvie Quarrell and Dr John Davis, University of Edinburgh*

Benny Lynch was Scotland's first ever World Champion boxer. The ‘kid from the Gorbals’ who put his birth place ‘on the map’ and rose up to stand as an example of Glaswegian fortitude. Lynch (2nd of April 1913 - 6th of August 2046) lived during a time when Glasgow encountered scandalously high levels of health inequality, overcrowding, food poverty and environmental pollution. For example, illness such as typhoid, cholera and tuberculosis were rife in Glasgow up to the end of the 19th century; there was an outbreak of the plague that killed at least 900 in 1900; tuberculosis killed more than 200 people per 100,000 in 1910; and incidences of many diseases would peak during Benny Lynch’s life time – rates of measles (above 12,000 per 100k), whooping cough (almost 6000 per 100k), diphtheria (over 2000 per 100k) and scarlet fever (around 5000 per 100k) topped out in 1930. That Benny Lynch’s greatest contribution was to put a smile on the faces of his family, friends and neighbours who had had to endure so much. He acted as an example of the commitment, hope, humour, generosity, strength and resistance of the people of the Gorbals. However, the Benny lynch story that is often told in the media – tends to depict him as an Icarus type personality that rose and fell from the sun and attempt to shame his community as a rags – to riches – and back again,
environment. Christina Milarvie Quarrell will connect this deficit model to ideas of shame, stigma and control and draw from her poetry, journalistic articles and other writing to put forward a more considered narrative that will demonstrate to the listener empathetic practice, analyse the power relation inequalities of the 'Glasgow effect' and connect notions of empathy with strength-based thinking.

**Nationalism and Empathy**

*Dr Judith O'Connell, School of Political Science and Sociology, NUI Galway*

Empathy for others can sometimes extend to those outside our borders as can be observed by charitable donations at both a local and government level. Yet how does this empathy translate if those in need actually move into different nations. Whilst this paper is not an analysis of the treatment of refugees globally it is a look at the recent reception of 82 Syrian refugees in the small town of Ballaghaderreen in Roscommon. Some local residents directly compared the refugees’ plight with the past sufferings of the Irish.

Historically, nationalism is born through a process whereby populations are tied to territory which is bounded as a state. Homogeneity of language, customs and cultural mores need to be achieved for the cohesiveness and perpetuation of the nation. Nations may exhibit uniformity in terms of religious affiliation and ethnic identity, but the nation is assembled from a diversity that includes values, aspirations and ways of being. My own work maintains that nationalism is a socialised value imbued through compulsory education and a national curriculum, civil organisations and the mass media. The socialisation process creates a shared sense of belonging and empathy for the other members of the nation, generating what Benedict Anderson terms the ‘Imagined Community’. This community is reinforced over time enabling us to plan nationwide projects such as transport networks, hospitals and to support those in need.

Whilst Irish textbooks invariably relay the history of Ireland as one of emigration and poverty it seems a small leap for some to empathise to those in the same plight in modernity. Could it be possible that the retelling of historical struggles if framed in a global context can promote empathy for those outside of our national belonging, a global Imagined community?

**Promoting Empathy to Prevent Bullying: Working at the Chalkface**

*Dr. Bernie Collins and Dr. Seline Keating, Institute of Education, Dublin City University*

Recent research in Ireland (Higgins et al. 2016; Farrelly 2014) outlines the prevalence and effects of homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools. Responses from schools to such bullying can fall short of best practice for a variety of reasons. The DES Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools (2013) specifically mention the need to tackle homophobic and transphobic bullying, however many primary schools have struggled to implement these guidelines. Teachers and principals identify identity-based bullying (including LGBT) as sensitive for a range of reasons which can often result in a lack of action (proactive or reactive). Some teachers lack confidence and feel unskilled to deal with LGBT bullying.

This presentation will outline a pilot project (All Together Now!) to tackle homophobic and transphobic (LGBT) bullying in Irish primary schools which was undertaken in 2016 by a team from the
Institute of Education (DCU) and BeLonG To Youth Services. It was funded by the Department of Education and Skills (DES), and involved 27 primary school classes.

We found that focused training (for teachers and principals) and provision of age-appropriate materials are enablers of action at school level. Teachers are often surprised at the level of maturity and knowledge that children have about LGBT issues in general. In our pilot project parents were generally supportive of this work with children. However, in some cases Boards of Management (BOMs) were reluctant to introduce work with a focus on LGBT issues, and denominational schools can face additional challenges as witnessed during the pilot project.

All Together Now! classroom materials enable schools to implement key imperatives in the DES (2013) guidelines in a way that fosters equality, empathy and agency. During our presentation we will focus on the findings from the pilot project and give a flavour of the materials that were developed.

The role of shared education in promoting empathy and positive intergroup relations in Northern Ireland

Stephanie Burns, Danielle Blaylock, Caitlin Donnelly, & Joanne Hughes, Centre for Shared Education, Queen’s University Belfast

It is generally accepted that education has a significant role to play in societies transitioning from conflict. Indeed, the education system potentially represents the single most effective agent of social change with the capacity to bridge ethnic divisions in conflicted affected countries (Petroska-Beska & Najcevska, 2004). In Northern Ireland the education system is divided into two main sectors which reflect the major fracture within Northern Irish society, limiting the opportunity for young people to engage with members of the “other” community. Drawing from the theoretical insights of intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954) ‘shared education’ has been introduced as an innovative approach to facilitate intergroup reconciliation through the education system. The programme involves schools separated along ethnic or religious lines forming collaborative partnerships in which children and young people engage in shared, sustained learning experiences together. A corpus of research demonstrates the effectiveness of the shared education model in promoting harmonious intergroup relations (see Hughes, Lolliot, Hewstone, Schmid, & Carlisle, 2012); however, limited work has explored the model’s capacity to promote more empathetic responses towards members of the other community. This presentation will report the findings from two studies exploring pupil’s experiences of shared education and the subsequent impact on reported levels of empathy. The first, a five-year longitudinal study tracking pupils through their post-primary career and the second, surveys collected through the first two waves of the recently implemented shared education signature project. Findings are generally positive and provide evidence for shared education as a model for enhancing social cohesion (through the development of empathy) in societies marred by intergroup division and experiencing separate education systems.

Mapping the role of empathy in social work practice: evidence from a qualitative, biographical study of children in care in Counties Donegal and Galway
This paper focuses on the role of empathy in advancing outcomes for permanence and stability for children in long-term care in Ireland. Drawing on qualitative, biographical research from a participatory study conducted by the UCFRC and Tusla child protection social workers in Galway and Donegal in 2016/2017, we problematise the role of empathy in everyday ‘communicative encounters’ (Winter et al. 2016) between children and youth in care and adults in their social ecologies (Bronfenbrenner and Morris 2007) (e.g. parents of origin, social workers, foster carers). The importance of relationships between children in care, their families and social workers is widely documented in the international, Irish and UK literature on outcomes for permanence and stability (Moran et al. 2016a). However, the role of empathy in improving children’s feelings of ‘felt security’, the development of family identification and in building identity is little understood, both in Ireland or elsewhere.

The Building Better Futures pilot implementation: initial findings on practitioner empathy in parenting assessments.

Mandi MacDonald, Queens University Belfast; Helen Dunn, Health and Social Care Board Northern Ireland; Donna Dugan, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

The Building Better Futures framework is a model for the assessment and enhancement of parenting which aims to add rigour to professional judgements about parenting capacity and enhance formulations on risk in child protection. The model draws on several years of collaboration between social work academics and practitioners (Houston, 2014). It is currently in the first year of an evaluated implementation involving senior social work practitioners in each Health and Social Care Trust in Northern Ireland as part of an Early Intervention Transformation Programme. Alongside service delivery, research is ongoing involving in-depth, qualitative case studies, a series of ‘pre’ and ‘post’ evaluative measures, semi-structured interviews and a regular Learning Set for practitioners.

Building Better Futures is based on three key domains of knowledge in social work: facts, theory and practice wisdom. This paper will draw on this latter source of evidence and report on practitioner insights articulated in the course of the pilot phase of implementation. In particular, on the development of enhanced empathy as a key outcome of using the model in the practice.

Practitioners report that the detailed social histories and genograms that the model involves facilitate deeper understanding of family situations and a more holistic approach. This in turn leads to greater openness from families, enabling a clearer analysis of parenting capability and capacity to change. This paper will explore these themes and identify implications for practice including: the importance of reflective supervision to avoid over-identification with parents; the emotional demands on practitioners; and the potential for improved outcomes for children and families.

Empathy as a motivator for maintaining birth relationships in open adoption from care

Mandi MacDonald, Queens University Belfast

This paper will explore how adoptive parents’ empathy for their adopted child and their birth relatives acts as a motivator and enabler for sustained birth family contact after adoption from care.

The presentation will draw on the findings of two separate but related studies:
A study of adoptive parents’ experiences of post-adoption contact and their support needs conducted in 2016. This involved a CASI survey completed by 93 adoptive parents, and 4 focus groups attended by a total of 26 adoptive parents in Northern Ireland.

An Interpretative Qualitative Analysis of adoptive parents’ accounts of the experience of parenthood in the context of open adoption. This involved semi-structured interviews with 31 adoptive parents from 17 families and was completed in 2014.

Adoptive parents managed a variety of arrangements for contact with their children’s birth family. Acknowledgement of the losses experienced by birth relatives, and of children’s need for connection with their family of origin motivated adoptive parents to persevere with contact even when this was stressful or burdensome, and to find ways of making contact a positive experience. However, adoptive parents also prioritised their children’s wellbeing and contact often represented a challenge to this, leading to some adoptive parents feeling conflicted. Empathy was also associated with ideas of loss and gain which had implications for adopters’ sense of parenthood. These themes will be elaborated and some suggestions made for adoption practice.

Parallel Session 7: Theorising or understanding empathy and relationship based practice II Child Protection

The role of empathy in the relationship between Lead Practitioners and families in the Irish child protection and welfare context, specifically through the Meitheal model and Child and Family Support Networks (CFSN)

Dr Anne Cassidy, Dr Leonor Rodriguez, Dr Carmel Devaney, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway

Meitheal and CFSNs is an early intervention and prevention model focused on supporting children, young people and families to resolve unmet welfare needs. At its core is the relationship between the family and the LP who is tasked with supporting them through the process. The aim of this presentation is to explore the role of empathy in the relationship between Lead Practitioners (LPs) and families involved in the Meitheal process. The data will be drawn from qualitative interviews carried out as part of a longitudinal mixed methods study, currently underway, on the impact of Meitheal on outcomes for families as well as the process of implementation. These interviews will be subject to a secondary data analysis informed by Empathy theory. The findings will provide an understanding of the role of empathy in the establishment and continuation of relationships between Lead Practitioners and families accessing help through Meitheal. This presentation is connected to the theme of empathy in relationship based practice and will provide further insights into understanding the role of empathy in successful help provision for families in the Irish child protection and welfare system. Within the Meitheal process the quality of the relationship between families and LPs is potentially crucial to its success. Therefore, from a practice perspective it is important to explore the nature of this relationship, with particular interest in the role of empathy in the development and sustainability of successful practitioner and family relationships.

Parental participation represents a shift from viewing parents as passive beneficiaries to an emphasis on the capacity of service users to be active agents in shaping their lives (Slettebo, 2015). Yet parental participation remains a complex and multi-dimensional concept. Practice ranges from consultation to working in partnership, to coproduction with parents. Participation is dependent on a range of individual and system factors including willingness to engage, understanding of needs, power dynamics, relationships and compassion. Empathy has also been described as central to good social work communication (Forrester et al., 2007). This paper explores what parents want across the continuum of participation and how this might be realised, with an emphasis on fostering empathy in relationship-based practice.

The paper will explore practice wisdom emerging from research and literature in the field. In addition, primary data from a report on parental experiences of Child Protection Conferences in Counties Galway and Roscommon will be explored. This will include the findings of 14 qualitative interviews with parents who have attended Child Protection Conferences in Counties Galway and Roscommon, exploring their experiences of the process and the impact on their wellbeing and family lives. The primary research resulted in a range of recommendations and measures, including a protocol to be developed for parental preparation prior to parental attendance at child protection conferences, incorporating an acknowledgment of the emotional impact of the conference on parents, the importance of relationship-based practice and relationship-building, and emphasizing compassion and empathy as core to working with parents. The paper emphasises building a culture of empathy in child protection, as well as fostering empathy in relationship-based working.

**Can we have too much empathy? Questions for Relationship Based Practice with Child to Parent Violence and Abuse**

*Dr Declan Coogan, School of Political Science and Sociology, NUI Galway*

Empathy as a skill and as a quality lies at the heart of relationship-based practice in the health and social care professions. But can we have too much empathy? Can too much empathy for the person’s situation lead to paralysis in practice? Can we listen, accept and not see?

Child to parent violence and abuse (CPVA) involves parents who live in fear of their child under the age of 18 years. This interactive workshop uses case examples, research findings and group discussions to explore:

- Empathy in relationship-based practice with families where CPVA takes place;
- The potential for blurring the distinction between understanding and accepting violent/abusive behaviour
- Research findings from practitioners in Ireland who supported parents, using the Non-Violent-Resistance (NVR) model.

During this workshop, we explore answers to questions about empathy, relationship-based practice and CPVA. The distinctions between empathy and understanding/accepting violence are clarified. Mixed methods action research developed by the presenter and completed in 2016 found that
practitioners had a nuanced understanding of the problem, supported parents to respond to CPVA and that NVR training enhanced practitioners’ confidence & skill when working with CPVA.

The problem of CPVA is an emergent issue for practice/ policy/ research. This workshop enables participants to clarify ways of using empathy effectively to reduce/ end CPVA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 8:</th>
<th>Empathy in action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**From Passive to Transformative Empathy**

*Rebeccah Nelems, University of Victoria (UVic), and the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, Canada*

Given the consensus on the critical importance of empathy, it is vital we have greater clarity about just what empathy is. Efforts to foster empathy can be thwarted or diminished by vague conceptions of empathy. By exploring divergent conceptions and experiences of empathy, this presentation aims to show that how we define empathy in our schools, communities and societies has implications for social change.

Building on Mary Gordon’s view of empathy as a relational experience, this presentation examines distinctive educational experiences of empathy to show that there are different ways we relate to others and that this difference matters. This presentation draws on Megan Boler’s concepts of passive and transformative empathy to propose a new typology of empathy. Passive and transformative empathy are two qualitatively different ways of relating to an Other, which generate different possibilities for society and citizenship. Defined as an individualist-oriented orientation towards the other, passive empathy is found to be insufficient to address the types of local and global challenges that lie ahead. In contrast, transformative empathy emerges from an interdependent orientation towards the other, which generates the possibility of self-transformative and other-oriented empathic action.

This typology can offer insights into the documented decline of empathy, as well as sharpen dialogues around how to best foster empathy. The concepts and typology proposed offer critical lenses to support both the design and assessment of empathy-fostering efforts, holding relevance for policymakers, practitioners, theorists and researchers.

**Be Like Water**: Reflections on developing a nature-based, cross-cultural program for women in water

*Easkey Britton, Post-doctoral researcher, NEAR Health project, Whitaker Institute, NUI Galway*

This paper builds upon evidence and increasing interest in the therapeutic and restorative health benefits of water environments, or ‘blue space’, especially the sea. The author seeks to bridge the knowledge gap in understanding the socially connective properties of engaging with marine environments, and the specific aspects and mechanisms that promote a greater sense of connectedness (to self, others and nature). This paper presents an auto-ethnographic and case-study account of an outdoor development programme for women in Iran called ‘Be Like Water’ that explores the therapeutic and socially connective aspects of being in water. The case-study seeks to showcase how a more empathic process might be actualised in a cross-cultural and gendered context. Through the delivery of this initiative, surfing has become a sport started by women and a medium that both
challenges and connects across gender, class, ethnic and religious divides within the country. Alternative and transformative ways of learning and doing that challenge dominant identities and practices are discussed and highlighted. In particular, the findings emphasise the importance of empathic listening and how a more empathic process can be facilitated through exposure to nature. The findings have relevance for practitioners and policy makers with regard to health-and nature-based intervention design and delivery and for cross-cultural processes that foster understanding and connection.

**Empathy Education for iPEPAS (Inclusive Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport)**

*Aisling Sugrue, UNESCO Chair IT Tralee – ‘Transforming the lives of people with disabilities, their families and communities through physical activity, sport, recreation and fitness’*

Physical inactivity is now the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (WHO). The prevalence of physical inactivity is rising as economies develop, as are the associated costs on healthcare systems, which are predicted to be unsustainable by 2050 (OECD, 2015). Furthermore, one billion people have disabilities and these people are three times less active than people without disabilities, despite having more to gain from physical activity by means of reduction/prevention of secondary conditions, self-esteem and functional and wellbeing improvements and social integration. (Rimmer et al., 2010, Lakowski and Long, 2011, Hannon et al., 2006).

Quality physical education, physical activity and sport (PEPAS) are widely recognised as a solution to shift the health paradigm, enabling all members of society to take a more active role in their wellbeing across the full health spectrum (Figure 1.). Yet, the worldwide survey on physical education (UNESCO-NWCPEA, 2013) identified issues in PE provision, advocating for equal opportunity for all students to access a well-balanced and inclusive PE curriculum which relies on the initial and continued training of teachers, the provision of adapted equipment and carefully monitored lessons which are tailored to suit the needs of students.

![Figure 1 the Sustainable Health Spectrum, UNESCO Chair IT Tralee, 2016](image)

In relation to the inclusion of students with disabilities in PE, teacher’s attitudes is one of the main major barriers. A review of the literature found that physical education teacher’s perceived competence is the leading predictor of such positive attitudes (Tant and Watelain, 2016).

To bridge the policy-practice gap¹, the UNESCO Chair in Inclusive PE, Sport, Recreation and Fitness at IT Tralee is developing iPEPAS - inclusivizing Physical Education, Physical Activity & Sport. iPEPAS will be a practical, online training resource that aims to equip PEPAS teachers, practitioners and facilitators with competence and attributes that facilitate relationships in which participant’s experiences and barriers to inclusion are understood, while supportive facilitators to iPEPAS are co-created. Carl Roger’s core conditions for facilitative (counselling and educational) practice: empathy; unconditional positive regard (respect); and congruence (realness); and global citizenship education will be
embedded via transformative reflection and inclusive practice within the local community, serving as a catalyst for social change and sustainably healthy societies.

¹ UNCRPD (2006); UNCRC (1989); UNESCO’s International Charter for Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (2015); and UNESCO’s Quality Physical Education - policy package (2015); 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 9:</th>
<th>Circle of Compassion and Empathy Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Circle of Compassion and Empathy Workshop

McGuinness, M.; Walsh, A.; Brennan, S.; Flynn, E.; Mc Hugh, F.; Van Lente, E.; and Britton, E.

NUi Galway is embarking on a journey towards becoming a Mindful University where a culture of loving kindness and compassion is cultivated and nurtured. During the initial stage of this journey it has transpired that shared mindful practice, three times per week, is proving to be an effective way to attract and unite staff, students and members of the community who value this ideal. It is envisioned that continued shared mindful practice will in time contribute to our students graduating with an even stronger sense of empathy and compassion to bring into their family and work lives.

Practicing compassion-based mindfulness in unison creates a collective consciousness which embraces and optimises levels of empathy and compassion. In this Compassion and Empathy workshop, participants will be invited to come together to practice Mindful Empathy in a circle, as a symbol of their intention to consciously rediscover empathy in their values, relationships and practices in a meaningful way. It is hoped that this workshop will be a pilot for future events of shared mindful empathy practice by Mindful Way @ NUI Galway, acting as a step towards building a culture of loving kindness and compassion throughout the campus and serving as a model for other organisations.

Following a short sitting meditation and introduction to the practice of loving kindness meditation (adopted by Mindful Way @ NUI Galway as the first step towards developing a Mindful University) participants will be invited to form a circle of compassion and participate in an empathy-based mindfulness practice.
UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre 8th Biennial International Conference

Friday 9th June – Abstracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 1: Policies programmes and practices that promote or develop empathy Models of Empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Team support – A Secure Base Model

Laura Biggart, Emma Ward, Laura Cook, Gillian Schofield, University of East Anglia

We will provide an overview of research findings on the relevance of the Secure Base model (Schofield and Beek 2014) for developing supportive teams in child and family social work to help cope with the emotional demands of the work.

Research Methods: This research was part of an ESRC funded three year study on Emotional Intelligence in Social Work. The data for this presentation is from 52 phone interviews with child and family social workers across eight local authorities in the UK. Data was analysed using Theoretical Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Main Findings: The concept of the secure base comes from Attachment theory (Bowlby 1969) in which our relationships with significant others who are available, sensitive to our needs and reliable provide us with a safe haven to return to when life is stressful and provide us with comforting internal mental models when we are physically away from them. These secure attachments enable us to engage with the world, consider the internal world of others (empathy) and help us remain resilient when life is stressful. In the context of the emotional demands of social work, our data indicate that the supervisors and team often provide a work related secure base across five domains by behaving in ways which instil these beliefs:

‘People are there for me’- Availability

‘My feelings are manageable’ - Sensitivity

‘I don’t always have to be strong’- Acceptance

‘I can work with others to find a solution’ - Cooperation

‘I am valued and I belong’ - Team belonging

Implications for Practice, Policy or both:

The model is being developed for use by supervisors and team members to reflect on behaviours which can help promote a secure base for their team.

Model of Attachment Practice, MAP. Building an Attachment based system around the child, sharing learning form 10 years of development and implementation.

Mr Patrick Armstrong, Head of Service, Fostering and Adoption/ Mr Paul Harvey MAP Project Lead. Western Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland.
The Model of Attachment Practice (MAP) has been developed as a Therapeutic Model by the Western Trust, applied initially within Children’s Residential Services and has been jointly evaluated by Queens University Belfast, Bristol University, Bristol and the Social Care Institute of Excellence (UK) with positive review and findings. It is recognized as an approach which benefits and strengthens attachment based practice and increases the flexibility and responsiveness of caregivers and those who support them to the benefit of the child.

This model of practice helps workers understand children's behaviour in an attachment and trauma focused way. It also helps workers to understand family relationships and how behaviours are attachment based and formed, to acknowledge their own histories and how that influences their engagement with others. It acknowledges the importance and influence of positive working relationships in order to support and empower families with their respective challenges. At the core of this relational model is empathy and connection.

In strengthening the capacity of workers to be the therapeutic resource in working with children and families; it will positively enhance the empathic experience of service users and the quality and safety of the service provided to them. The Project objectives were to introduce and embed MAP as a core practitioner methodology in the delivery of child care services for Looked After Children. The primary purpose of MAP is to deliver qualitative outcomes for children and in particular their right to have emotional needs met.

| Parallel Session 2: | Building a culture of empathy in organisation and/or in the realm of interdisciplinary agency or collaborative working |

Youth participatory evaluation as a way to model and practice empathy: Benefits to youth, organizations, and communities

*Erica Odera, Mark Brennan, Kaila Thorn & Jamison Malcolm, The Pennsylvania State University*

Youth participatory evaluation (YPE) is an approach to program evaluation which heavily involves young people in the design, data collection, interpretation, and reporting of the programs in which they are involved. Its philosophical approach argues that young people are both able to and should be involved in the assessment of the programs and initiatives designed to influence or change their lives. YPE is a relational process, since young people work with one another, adult evaluators, and program staff or other community members. This relational learning process stretches and challenges youth to produce something together. Part of what youth learn during this process is how to work with and understand the perspectives of other youth in their program, program staff, and community members. Therefore, a key outcome of YPE is the development of empathy.

This paper will explore the way that youth participatory evaluation (YPE) can improve the empathetic relationship of youth with other youth, youth with program staff, and youth with community members. Studies which have used YPE were examined and key outcomes categorized based on the type of relational outcomes reported. For instance, YPE encourages empathy development in the following ways:

- YPE invites youth to critically reflect with others about experiences in a program
• Adults involved in the evaluation learn to listen to the perspectives of youth
• When youth analyse evaluation data, they witness the diversity of experiences that can take place within the same program

The key finding of this paper is that YPE should be common practice in the evaluation of youth programming. YPE has an ability to foster empathy among youth and strengthen relationships among youth with their youth organizations and community. This has benefits which further strengthen the goals of youth programs while also providing evaluative findings on the efficacy of youth programming.

8 weeks Special Study Module on Mindfulness - an educational intervention to increase empathy, compassion and resilience in a group of fourth year medical students from the Discipline of General Practice, National University of Ireland, Galway.

Dr. Eva Flynn, Dr. Sarah Brennan, Gelong Thubten. Discipline of General Practice, School of Medicine, National University of Ireland, Galway.

The aim of this presentation is to describe this novel educational module, show the experience and feedback of the medical students that undertook this module and the potential to embed this module in the medical curriculum for all medical students.

The research methods employed is retrospective qualitative feedback with the use of a questionnaire and focus group interviews from the medical student that took part in this module. Ethical approval has been applied for. The qualitative feedback is now being collected for analysis.

This research of this module relates inherently to the theme of this course. The module was designed to introduce and teach the medical student about compassion based mindfulness, which was led and directed by a mindfulness based practitioner. Compassion based mindfulness is shown to improve empathy, compassion and resilience. This module was created for the medical student to help build compassion for themselves as a trainee doctor and compassion and empathy for others, including their relationship with patients and colleagues. This presentation will show how effectively this module helped the student develop the practice of mindfulness.

This feedback of this pilot module will show how effective this educational intervention was at introducing and developing the practice of compassion based mindfulness and subsequently develop empathy in this group of medical students. It is hoped that the retrospective feedback will reveal the beneficial impact of this module for nurturing values of empathy and compassion in the young trainee doctor. In turn, this can improve the trainee doctor’s value for themselves, their colleagues and the patients they care for through compassion based mindfulness. Confirming the value of this module for this group, may then call for this module to be embedded into the medical curriculum and be of benefit to all medical students in their training for their future role of caring for others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 3:</th>
<th>Empathy in relationship based working Early Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Sowing the seeds of empathy in early childhood.

Ms Rita Melia, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway
Early childhood education and care settings in partnership with parents, families and the wider community provide the rich and fertile soil to show and nurture the seeds of empathy. Through play children explore their social, physical and imaginary worlds. These experiences support children to manage their feelings. Develop their thinking, communicate and collaborate with their peers (NCCA, 2009).

The aim of this paper is to identify the role of the early childhood education setting and the educators in supporting children’s social and emotional development. The paper considers how a play based curriculum supports children’s interaction and cooperation and explores how the quality of the educator / child relationships impact on children’s wellbeing and emotional literacy in seven preschool settings in two different cultural and geographical contexts.

This mixed methods comparative ethnographic study was conducted in four Irish preschools and three preschools in Boston as part of a Fulbright scholarship. Data collected for this aspect of the study was both quantitative and qualitative. On site observations were recorded using an observation tool; Assessment for Learning and Development in the Early Years using Observation Scales; Reflect Respect, Relate (Government of South Australia, 2008). One measurement of the tool is the quality of the educator /child relationship as a quality indicator this is correlated against children’s levels of wellbeing as a quality outcome.

The main findings of this element of the study identifies that preschool educators promote empathy by modelling empathy, being warm, sensitive, responsive and caring. Play offers children opportunities to practice the skills of identifying and expressing their emotions and taking the perspective of others. The important implications of this research is the recognition of the critical role that early childhood educators play in supporting young children’s social and emotional development.

Open eyes and critical minds: conscious noticing in the early childhood care and education setting

Colette Murray
Institute of Technology Blanchardstown

This paper explores the implications of implementing the Anti-bias Approach for the Irish Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) sector at policy and training levels. A recent initiative at policy level, the Better Start Access and Inclusion Model (www.aim.gov.ie), requires the ECCE sector to address diversity, equality, and inclusion in practice from an Anti-bias perspective. Supporting resources for AIM include the revised Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Charter and Guidelines (DCYA, 2016) and specific training (LINC). An exercise built on Anti-bias goals and principles – Equality-Proofing the physical environment undertaken with 3rd and 4th year undergraduate students from the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown will be outlined in the session. The students’ responses to the exercise along with their findings from interviews with practitioners and managers, and observations carried out through the Equality-proofing exercise in ECCE settings will be presented. The project found limited awareness and understanding in participating settings of concepts in relation to

- Diversity and equality
- Non-discriminatory practices
- Anti-bias educational approaches
- Importance of representation as key to children’s identity and belonging in ECCE settings

Taking part in this exercise supported students in developing understanding and awareness of critical issues of identity and belonging for young children. It significantly contributed to students’ developing empathy grounded in their critical awareness of diversity and equality. Results demonstrate that
meaningful diversity and equality training is necessary for both students and practitioners working in ECCE. At a systemic level, policies are needed that proactively support children’s identity and belonging, and the development of ‘critical empathy’ in educators. Implications for current and future policy development and pre-service and in-service training are highlighted and discussed.

### Parallel Session 4: Empathy, social values and social justice

#### Stigma

**Social Values and Empathy, The case of lone parents in Ireland**

*Dr Rosemary Crosse and Dr Michelle Millar, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, School of Political Science and Sociology, NUI Galway*

There is a gradual dawning of realisation that historical responses to the ‘problem of lone parents’ was a disaster of epic proportions. This paper, which is based on a number of research projects examines the problematisation of lone parents and highlights how a lack of empathy for this group evident in the past is still apparent in the present. Social policies are a reflection of society’s culture, values and norms at any given point in time. Examination of the development of lone parent policy in Ireland shows that whilst the issue of morality may have changed, with 34% all births in Ireland occurring outside of marriage (CSO, 2012), the stigmatised discourse surrounding the lone parents has certainly not disappeared and is experienced by the parents themselves (Millar et al, 2007; Crosse, 2015) as well as being the primary motivator in social welfare policy in relation to this group.

Kitty Holland wrote in the Irish Times that Irish society “reserves a particularly special disdain for single mothers” (Holland, 2014). The recent policy narrative of labour market activation of lone parents in Ireland is analysed to reveal that rather than being a panacea for poverty levels, which was the intended objective of the policy, the reform is about behavioural change grounded in a populist narrative of lone parents and welfare dependency. The narrative embodies themes of behavioural modification to end welfare dependency bound up in concepts of rights and responsibilities as opposed to social protection for a stigmatised group in Irish society.

**Can Empathy and Social Norms Influence Adolescents Stigmatising Responses?**

*Charlotte Silke, Caroline Heary, National University of Ireland, Galway & Lorraine Swords, Trinity College Dublin.*

Research has shown that adolescents who experience mental health difficulties are frequently stigmatised by their peers and, as a result, the development of effective anti-stigma strategies is now considered a major research priority. However, in order to design effective interventions, researchers must be informed by an understanding of the factors that influence the expression of stigma. Evidence suggests that empathy and social norms can have a considerable effect on adolescents’ social attitudes and behaviours. Research, however, has yet to examine whether these factors exert a significant effect on adolescents’ responses toward peers with mental health difficulties. This study attempts to address gaps in the literature, by examining how empathy and peer norms influence adolescents’ implicit and explicit stigmatising responses toward peers with mental health problems. **METHOD:** A total of 570 (221 male and 348 female; 1 non-specified) adolescents, aged between 13-18 years (M = 15.51, SD = 1.13), participated in this research. Adolescents read vignettes describing male/female depressed and ‘typically developing’ peers and answered questions assessing their stigmatising responses toward each target, as well as their empathic responding and normative perceptions. **RESULTS:**
Peer norms exerted strong significant effects on adolescents’ explicit stigmatising responses. However, empathy was found to exert more limited effects on adolescents’ stigma responses. Neither empathy nor social norms significantly influenced implicit responses among adolescents. CONCLUSIONS: Results suggest that peer norms can exert a significant strong effect on adolescents’ stigmatising responses toward their peers with depression and may be an important factor to target in future stigma reduction interventions. The lack of significant effects observed for empathy may indicate that other contextual variables moderate or influence the effects of dispositional empathy on responding.

Parallel Session 5: Workshop

Empathy Development Through Theatre Activities - An Experiential Workshop

Jennifer Blackburn Miller, Penn State University

This creative interactive workshop is open to anyone, no theatre experience is needed. The participants will engage in a hands-on workshop involving empathy development through theatre games and role-playing activities. The goal is to help participants connect with their vision of the ‘other’ in an empathetic fashion, allowing them to not only be more open-minded toward the ‘other’, but to be more compassionate as well. The ‘other’ will likely differ for each person, but some general examples will be utilised for the purposes of this workshop. The overarching goal is to encourage further exploration and engagement with this topic among conference participants and to provide information and activities for them to use in their empathy-related work.

Parallel Session 6: Workshop

u.lab: empowering transformational change for individuals and systems through empathy and co-creation

Keira Oliver – Scottish Government, Lesley Fraser – Mindful Monkeys, Marion Darling – West Lothian College, Rachel Cox – NOSCA, Inmaculada Navarro

Workshop Aim: Experience u.lab techniques, outline impact research and highlight case studies of how u.lab supported frontline workers developing programmes with children & young people, focused on strengthening our capacity to empathise with others.

u.lab is an action research technique to empower people to make changes in their lives and work. The workshop will be based on a qualitative research project of participants carried out in 2016.

- u.lab (MIT) prototyping different and creative ways of learning: accessing materials online: meeting in place or intention based “hubs” practising the tools and techniques.
- A central tenet of u.lab is improving the capacity to empathise with self and others to foster open minds, open heart and open will to support the letting go of fear, cynicism and prejudice and let come the changes that makes possible a hopeful future. Ulab supports participants to shift from ego (I) to eco (we) through deep listening and connection to promote benefits for the whole.
An immersive and interactive course engaging participatory approaches bringing real life issues to observe, reflect and act upon to develop prototypes. In the last two years, prototypes have been tested in numerous areas and systems in Scotland. For this workshop, we will focus on those involving children and young people.

An empowering and innovative way of working together, improving relationships and promoting a culture of celebration for transformational development with enormous potential for policy evolution.

The workshop will include:

- What is u.lab? What difference is it making in Scotland? Case studies from practitioners working with children and young people
- Introduction to the four levels of listening
- Experience some of the u.lab process e.g. undertaking a dialogue walk
- De-brief on how the process felt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 7:</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Cultivating Hope for Brighter Futures: Restorative Engagement to Promote Empathy in Children and Young People

*Emma Wheatley, Karen Mooney*

The North East Inner City Brighter Futures Initiative aims to provide opportunities for, and promote empathy in, children and young people — by supporting them to share feelings, build relationships and solve problems in healthy and creative way. The purpose of the presentation is to explore the concept of restorative practice and its capacity to build relationships, promote empathy, reduce conflict and foster social solidarity. By demonstrating the potential of restorative processes to provide a safe environment for children and young people to express and exchange emotion, this presentation will illustrate how this approach impacts on the development of emotional intelligence and empathy. Given the theme of this conference and the prevailing research showing that empathy in individuals is essential to healthy social and emotional functioning, this research will show that the relationship between emotional expressiveness, empathy and prosocial behaviours are important for both theoretical and practical reasons. This initiative has, to date, embraced 285 children and 110 young people from local afterschool and youth services in Dublin’s North East Inner City. Methodologies used during the implementation of this initiative include: talk and discussion, play-based activities, small group work, role-playing and peer learning. Initial findings demonstrate the power of restorative practices in creating an environment that consistently fosters awareness, empathy and responsibility in a way that is indicating improved outcomes for children and young people. Improvements in emotional intelligence and attitudes alongside growth in learning dispositions, learning skills and self-efficacy have also been identified. Participating young people show a deep attachment to their area and their community, as well as the people within it. We are seeing more conscious and consistent thinking about their communities and how their actions and the actions of others affect everyone.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Session 8:</th>
<th>Workshop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Promoting Empathy in Children and Young People: A Mindfulness and Meditation Workshop for Adults.**

*Dr. Leonor Rodriguez, UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway*

Empathy has been defined as a ‘vicarious emotional response that is identical or very similar to that of the other person’ (Einsenberg et al. 1994, p. 776). Children with higher levels of empathy tend to be more socially competent, prosocial, empathically aware, helpful, cooperative, generous, respond constructively to social difficulties, assist others in distress and are more aware of the negative consequences of their actions (Einsenberg et al. 1994; Warden & Mackinnon, 2003; Rumble, Lange & Parks, 2010). Research has identified mindfulness and meditation can cultivate and develop empathy in children and young people. Mindfulness based methods have successfully been used to develop individual capacity for empathy. Specifically, the non-judgmental and grounding in the presence moment principles of mindfulness can foster or maintain aspects of empathic responding (Block-Lerner, Adair, Plumb, Rhatigan & Orsillo, 2007; Shapiro et al., 1998). Shure, Christopher & Christopher (2008) found that teaching mindfulness to counselling students increased their capacity for empathy and compassion towards other people. Research has identified that mindfulness approaches can promote psychological health and well-being (Burke, 2010; Greenberg & Harris, 2012). Mindfulness can help children to achieve positive developmental outcomes by improving emotion management and attention sustainability (Harnett & Dawe, 2012; Greenberg & Harris, 2012).

In this Mindfulness and Meditation workshop, parents/educators/practitioners actively learn simple techniques for introducing mindfulness and meditation to children and young people of all ages. No experience with meditation is necessary. This workshop includes meditation methods including guided visualisations, relaxation techniques, meditations and artistic and creative methods (mandalas). This workshop is based on the 15 minute to Mindfulness and Mediation for Children from Mini Me Yoga®, which is an international programme specialised in yoga, mindfulness and meditation programmes for children and young people.