

Journal of Adolescent Health & Welfare

VOLUME 5 No 1 - Spring 1992

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Youth Support emergency placement - Homeless and Runaway
For referral phone - 081 650 6296 -
Special service for boys or girls up to age 18yrs
Older girls considered if pregnant.
Details - 13 Crescent Road, London BR3 2NF

THE BRITISH "JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH AND WELFARE" is the journal of the Youth Support "Forum on Adolescent Health and Welfare".

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CHARITY NO 296080

Dear Colleagues,

You may have noticed a break in publication of the journal - the autumn and winter issues last year were missed while we have been reorganising the Forum.

This year we are planning more events and items of interest for forum members. You will have the opportunity to attend seminars and workshops at reduced price and to receive advice and professional help on our telephone help line.

I hope that this year the forum will become more alive for members and therefore encourage you all to renew your membership - a professional group can only be as good as it's individual members - so do join and participate!

Times have been hard for charities, voluntary groups and the 'helping professions' over the past year - budgets have been cut, morale has been low. In such times it is easy to slip into a state of inaction, a feeling that 'nothing I can do will make any difference' - but it WILL if we work together. This is the very time when those of us working with young people, with the abused and deprived, the forgotten sectors of society, need to strive even more energetically to keep services alive, to develop new ways of moving forward and to share our expertise.

So this is a plea to all of you who have become just names on the mailing list write in, phone and have a moan if you must, tell us what help you need, what are your local problems? Come to our training sessions and tell us what courses you need - participate! After all what we get out of any organisation or situation is directly proportional to what we put in - or as John Lennon put it 'The love you take - is equal to the love you make'.

Looking forward to hearing from you and seeing you all soon.

Best wishes,

Dr Diana Birch
Director Youth Support

I would like to join / renew my membership of the Youth Support Forum on Adolescent Health and Welfare.
I enclose annual fee of £20.

Cheques payable to **Youth Support** - charity no 296080
Youth Support House,
13 Crescent Road,
London BR3 2NF tel 081 650 6296

Name
Address.....Tel No
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Designation

**Youth Support Forum on Adolescent Health and Welfare
- 7th Annual meeting -**

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"Runaways and homeless youth - How do we tackle the problem?"

* * * * *

on Thursday 22nd October 1992 6-9pm

at the **Royal Society Of Medicine**
1, Wimpole Street
London WC1

Homeless youth constitute a problem throughout the world. Why is society not providing adequately for them? WHY do runaways leave home?

In societies as diverse as Siberia and Los Angeles young people leave home to escape abuse and may end up living on the street and practising 'survival sex' - with all the risks that entails - STDs, HIV, drug abuse and violence.

In South America children are being murdered on the streets - resulting in an outcry from the UK and amnesty International - rightly so, but are we doing much to provide for our own homeless youth?

This multidisciplinary meeting gives us the opportunity to share experiences and develop ideas for future work.

I would like to attend the Youth Support Forum meeting on Thursday 22nd October 1992

I am a forum member and will bring guests (free to members)

I would like to join the forum and enclose annual fee of £20 which entitles me to free entry to the meeting. I will bring guests.

I am not a member. I enclose £10 per person total

Cheques payable to **Youth Support** - charity no 296080
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Homeless and Runaway Youth

The streets of London have changed in recent years - in the sixties, seventies and eighties we knew where the meths drinkers hung out and where the 'down and outs' slept in their huddles of rags and newspaper. They were small numbers of old men and women who had lived that way for many years. But now the picture is different, the few older street people are outnumbered by a growing number of the young and very young. The streets are not paved with gold although they do attract modern day Whittingtons - young people destined not to become 'Lord Mayor of London' or Porsche driving city yuppies - but destined to sleep rough in 'cardboard' city, beg for small change in tube stations, wake up cold and stiff on a park bench or forced to have sex in public toilets to get money for the next meal.

Many have run from abuse, and become further abused. That is the sad reality in the way we handle - or fail to handle abused children. A child harmed or sexually exploited at home may be taken away from that abusing family - only to be placed with foster parents who do the same, or in a children's home where abuse may occur. Of course we hope that we select and vet staff of children's homes and foster parents - but even the most rigorous screening system will let some 'undesirables' through the net - we all know teachers, social workers, doctors and priests who have molested children.

The other side of the coin, which is often forgotten, is the fact that children who have been hurt, become 'victims' - victims who expect more abuse and often attract it. These children need to be worked with to help them to overcome their early traumata, to recover their self worth and to enable them to protect themselves.

Naturally, not all street youth have been abused - however 'survival sex' can soon become a way of life when other sources of money are not in evidence. Young people who have run away from home are very much at risk on the streets and need to be identified and helped before their life style becomes ingrained and before their self worth is irreparably damaged by their experiences.

At Youth Support in London, we are setting up a runaway and homeless youth project which will encompass two objectives - the first SERVICE will provide emergency accomodation for young people who will be able to stay up to one month in our unit receiving care, advice and help to get them established in a more permanent situation. The second side will be a research project to back this up, looking at the reasons for running away and attempting to identify preventive strategies.

At the same time our Youth Support project in the urals in the old Soviet Union will look at similar issues in a comparative study. A very exciting development here is the planning of a multicentre study collaborating with Dr Richard McKenzie of Los Angeles who sees the young runaways who head for the bright lights of Hollywood. We also hope to include information on the Rio children in the future.

International Conference on Street Youth - Rio de Janeiro

3,4,5th September 1992

Dr Lydia Bond - PAHO 525, Twenty Third Street, Washington DC

So what is it like for the runaways in Russia? Is life so different in societies thousands of miles apart? - Here are some extracts from one of our publications on the Russian children.

* * * * *

..... My heart went out to the children today ... words were just not enough to deal with the scene before me. The home for runaways in Ural region. Boys looking like concentration camp prisoners, shaved heads, faded blue grey institutionalised trousers and threadbare charity shirts. Asked to jump to attention and greet me, the television camera whirred on as we spoke.

"Hello, what's your name?"

"Alyosha."

"And how old are you Alyosha?"

"Thirteen"

"Just thirteen - it must be very difficult for you to talk to me in front of all these people but perhaps you won't mind telling me a bit about yourself. How do you like it here? Are you pleased you were found?"

"Yes, at first I thought this was a bad place, but now I think they're alright. I have to stay until my parents come"

"Do you want to see your parents? Why did you leave home?"

"I want to go home. I left because my friends were going and I wanted to be with them, to keep them company. My friend had been badly beaten at home. But I was found by the Militia and they ran off"

"Your friends must be frightened. Being beaten is something very hard to talk about sometimes. Are you worried about them?"

"Yes, I worry very much. They are still travelling. I don't know where they are and I don't know what will happen to them. ..."

"Thank you for talking to me, boys You have had a hard time of it lately and I hope things will get better for you now".

"What about a song for Dr Birch. Sasha, sing us a song ..." He sang like a little lark. A plaintive song about home and love, Sung with the expression that belonged to the song, but without the emotion, which he did not know.

"Why are the dormitories just a close row of beds? There are no tables, no chairs and no cupboards or anything for the children to put their things in"

"They have nothing. They come in the clothes they stand up in, dirty and lice ridden. We take their rags and shave their hair. They come with nothing and we have nothing to give

them except love. . . They have absolutely nothing to call their own"

At the official dinner later, the Militia man sang. A Soviet Pavarotti singing Neapolitan songs in Russian. An enigma of a man, the singing policeman with a heart of gold who patrolled round the stations checking for runaways.

* * * * *

"Why are there so many children in the psychiatric ward?" A row of rooms each not more than fifteen feet by ten held nine narrow beds, six sardine-like along one wall and three lengthwise opposite, just enough room to squeeze between the two rows but not enough to pass between the beds. Sixty bedraggled youngsters per ward.

"Well, they are here because there is nowhere else to put them. Some have emotional difficulties, some are from broken homes, alcoholic parents and are under stress."

"But surely it makes them worse being in here, imprisoned in such cramped, awful conditions, no real treatment, no space, no recreation no rehabilitation . . and ill treated children mixed with schizophrenics, acute cases mixed with chronic."

"Yes, of course it makes them worse, but there is nowhere else for them to be"

"No child should ever be in a place like that..."

* * * * *

Leaving Care Project - Contact Youth Support for details

Our leaving care project will begin in May 1992 at Crescent Road. Support, counselling, social events and practical help for those leaving care. Educational help also available and help with work placements.

Professional Training - workshop programme - courses

NEW NEW NEW - Are you interested in counselling training?

We are planning a day release course for Oct 92 - June 93

Write in for details - places allocated soon - limited numbers so apply early.

Working with Families - An Important Service

Children need families ... there is no adequate substitute for the love of your own mother and your own father.

Sometimes families run into problems. Young parents can lack the expertise and knowledge to meet their children's needs, especially if they lacked parental love and attention when they were young.

Unemployment, poverty and poor housing can put stresses on a family.

Family breakdown might follow child abuse or domestic violence, which might have been preventable.

Drinking, gambling or emotional and mental illness can make it impossible for a family to cope without help.

At youth Support we provide that help to families in crisis, families which have broken down and to parents and children whose lives are falling apart.

We are able to provide intensive residential assessment, treatment and rehabilitation for entire families. And our follow up programme ensures continued support.

For further information and referral procedure contact -
Youth Support - 13 Crescent Road London Br3 2NF
tel 081-650 6296 Fax 081 659 3309

INSIGHT AT YOUTH SUPPORT

What kinds of therapy can we offer?

- Individual psychodynamic psychotherapy
- Relaxation and stress management
- Focused group work - tranquilliser withdrawal and substance abuse, stop smoking, weight problems.
- On going group psychotherapy
- Family and couples oriented work
- Work related stresses and staff support
- Psychodrama and drama therapy
- Art and movement therapy

Residential Treatment Programme

Our residential programme deals with emotional problems, eating disorders or substance abuse.

A special residential treatment programme is offered for young people or mothers with children.

Youth Support Professional Training

Workshop Programme Summer Term 1992

The following workshops will all take place on Wednesday afternoons 2.30-4.30pm at Youth Support House.

Series 1 - Child abuse and Protection workshops

These workshops will cover recognition of abuse, differential diagnosis and pitfalls in assessment including difficulties in presentation of evidence in case conferences and court situation. The difficult issues of emotional abuse and developmental delay will be confronted and discussed in the light of current practices and legislation.

- 13th May - 1 - Physical issues - How do we recognise abuse?
- 3rd June - 2 - Sexual abuse - case histories and diagnosis.
- 17th June - 3 - Emotional abuse - The hidden scars.
- 1st July - 4 - Families, recurrent patterns and prevention.

Series 2 - Child development

These workshops are suitable for anyone working with young children but particularly nursery staff and health visitors.

- 27th May - 1 - Birth Prematurity and the early months.
- 10th June - 2 - Child development - The toddler years 1-5
- 24th June - 3 - Special senses - development and assessment of vision and hearing.
- 8th July - 4 - Emotional Development.

Course fees - £20 per session or £60 for set of four workshops.

Firm booking with remittance.

Apply to Youth Support, 13 Crescent Road BR3 2NF

Tel 081 650 6296 FAX 081 659 7931

I would like to attend the following workshops:-

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Name Designation

Address.....Tel No.....

.....

.....

I enclose £..... in payment (cheques payable to Youth Support Charity No 296080)

