Institute of Education

SPPA
Social Pedagogy
Professional Association

Doing Home in Residential Care

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Ambitions for residential care

- A home, a place to return to
- A place to grow, feel comfortable, at ease
- A busy place, where talents are nurtured

- Protection from harm, a place of safety and stability, where young people can flourish
- Meeting individual needs and improving outcomes
- Steering and supporting through formative stages of life

Children's guide to being in care

What is residential care?

If you are about to go into a residential unit, you may be feeling scared.

Everybody feels like this at the start so try not to worry. A residential unit is a place that has a number of young people living there. The young people who are placed there are usually unhappy with foster placements for a number of reasons.

- They are used to a big family.
- They prefer to be with lots of young people.
- They are very attached to their family and cannot settle in a new family.

A residential unit is very similar to a foster placement. Here's what's different.

- A residential unit is larger than a foster home.
- There are more adults in a residential Unit, who are professional staff. They do not live in the home but work there on shifts.
- In the home there is:
  - a big kitchen
  - a television room
  - a laundry room
  - your own bedroom.

Other things that you should know about residential units

Bed times

There may be set bed times, talk to your keyworker about this. They should give you a list of what is expected from you and what you can expect from them. It makes it nicer if you try to respect the home, the rules and the workers. In turn they will treat you with respect.

Family

If it is safe for you, you will still see your family as you would in a foster placement.

School

You will be supported to attend the same school. Staff should help out with things like books, uniforms and getting to school.

Could Margate be the next Rochdale?

Sending children in care to live in deprived parts of Kent is exposing them to gang violence and sexual exploitation

▲ 'Out-of-area placements are a particular issue in Kent. There are currently more than 1,300 looked-after children in the county who have been sent from another local authority.' Photograph: Martin Godwin for the Guardian

Child exploitation

Multi-agency working where children are placed in residential placements out of county, go missing and are at risk of child sexual exploitation

...llions of holidaymakers and day trippers from ...rther afield during the summer holidays, but away ...y beaches of Margate and Broadstairs there are fears ...Kent coastal towns could become the next Rochdale ...of local headteachers is so concerned about the risk ...ence and child sexual exploitation that last month it ...vernment that without ministerial direction, it ...ool places to looked-after children sent there by

...are a particular issue in Kent. There are more than

MOB KIDS CARE ALERT Troubled children are being driven to join gangs because the 'social care system concentrates on the most serious cases'

The Children's Commissioner for England has publis... findings today

Nottingham care home inquiry reveals 343 cases of child sexual abuse

A "rift" between social services and police led to a crisis in child protection and hundreds of survivors being let down.

Monday 01 O...

Four concepts

- Home

- Recognition

- Belonging

- Educators

We are the professional home for social pedagogy in the UK.

Ideas about home in residential care

- Normalisation: an appeal to 'homeliness' since late 1940s: 'as much like [that] other children [experience] as possible' (Kahan 2000)
- 1960s – 1970s Family group homes – led by married couple, live in staff, blending in to the 'ordinary'.
- 1980s on – a place of work, on smaller scale

- 'the sense of place as home became less dependent on domestic, familial imagery of two parents and long(er) term residents living together and more clearly characterized as a workplace for staff, a temporary home for residents and governed by externally and internally generated institutional rules' (Clark et al. 2013)

Official guidance

- 'have a **safe** home and a community which supports …wellbeing' (Social Care Wales, Core Aim no 6)
- 'essential to create a **homely**, warm, positive, friendly, non-clinical environment' (Social Care Wales)

- placements should 'encourage warm and caring relationships … that nurture attachment and create a sense of belonging so that the young person feels, **safe**, valued and protected'… (NICE 2010)
- environment should be 'comfortable and **homely**', 'well maintained and decorated', 'avoidable hazards are removed as is consistent with a domestic setting', and 'risk reduction does not lead to an institutional feel' … (DfE 2012)

Ideas about home

- Home as *identity*, formed through 'pathways of habit', slowly accrued over time, cemented through stories associated with objects on display that give meaning and anchor the self
- Home as *itinerant domesticity*, constructed and reconstructed with each temporal move, very present orientated
- Home as *homeliness*, characterised by informality, small scale, physical appearance that is often in tension with organisational and regulatory demands

Josephine Schneider House, Copenhagen

We try to make the house as "homelike" as possible and to let the days be characterized by continuity and predictability. ... Our task is to help the children to accept the routines of quite ordinary functions and duties of everyday life - such as getting up in the morning, getting breakfast, bringing lunch, going to school, doing your homework etc.

Every child is attached to two trained social workers (social pedagogues), ... responsible for the primary contact with the child's home, school, and case officer. It is the task of the social workers to establish the framework which gives the child the best opportunity to develop and to get on in the surrounding world.
We insist that the children assemble regularly: i.e. after school, for a fixed period for doing homework, and for dinner. This teaches the children that keeping agreements creates stability.
At the same time the children realize that we are adults who take an interest in them, and that the institution has scope for talks about everything

Helsinki SOS Children's Villages – a traditional 'village'

➢ A campus

➢ 4-6 children with SOS parents

➢ An ordinary upbringing in an ordinary community

➢ Specialist support on site
e.g, detective club

➢ Care leavers welcomed home

SOS Children's Villages in Berlin – A multi-generational house

- Meeting needs of diverse community - integration

- Café

- Family education

- Kindergarten

- Children's home + after care = upbringing

- Counselling/psychotherapy

- Neighbourhood engagement

- Volunteers as 'mediators'

Institutionalised home

'These lights are everywhere. The green light on the side is on all the time even the one in my room at night. I would really like the light in my room to be off at night as it is really bright when it is dark in the room. I do not know why this has to be on all the time.'

Practices of home

- 'The dinner table. Here we sit and have meals together. Sometimes we also just sit and talk.' (Adam)

- 'The kitchen and the lounge were purposely built to be the centre of the house. This is where almost everything happens. It is our meeting place. The large table is great when we sit here together with the young people. (Pat, staff)

Idealized home

'Having plants in the house is what you would have at your own home. We always have fruits and vegetables available for the young people.' Pat (staff)

Relating to others in residential care

Theory …

- 'everything was about attachment'
- 'not come across systemic theories'
- 'from what I could see, it went "I'm a parent, … so I know half of what to do"'
- 'without a framework, the staff judged the outside of the kids'

Attachment theory

- Overused and insufficient
- ¼ of us said to have attachment difficulties
- Supporting a primary relationship over all others does not reflect reality of lives

- Big gap!

Recognition (Honneth)

A world view based on autonomy, inter-dependence and self-realisation

3 spheres:

- Love – emotional recognition

- Rights – as a human being

- Solidarity – self esteem as part of a community

Belonging: a sense of ease

10 dimensions

- Personal and relational
- Social – group
- Cultural – how to interpret and act
- Spatial – home
- Temporal – connection to past, present, future

- Physical – affinity with environment
- Spiritual – connection to the sacred
- Moral/ethical obligation – a right to belong through sacrifice
- Political – rights/citizenship
- Legal - ownership

(Sumsion and Wong 2011)

Belonging in foster/residential care

Social/relational – the immediate here and now	Cultural/historical – familiarity from what one brings from the past and ways of being	Embodied/geographical – touch, surroundings, place
e.g., doing things together, talking about everyday matters, being there for the young person, express part of the family, trust, love	e.g., information prior to placement/How to make the child feel at home/ meeting them where they are at/attending to their individuality and cultural traditions/educational practices that are in tandem with interests and also challenge known knowledge	e.g., familiarity from own material things that travel from another place, acceptance of touch in acceptable ways, physical landscape that is familiar or comfortable

Belonging in residential care?

- Tensions of belonging
  - Place – is it my home? Are my ways of being recognised?
  - People – are they truly connected to me? Do they really know me, my past? Can I express myself as I wish and count on their response? Are my siblings with me?

- Social/relational belonging recognised but much less often the cultural/historical or the embodied/geographical

Educators

- **Experts in everyday life**
  - Rhythms and routines of the day
  - Individual residents, teams, resources

- **Self concept**
  - Three Ps – professional, private, personal

- **Scope of practice**
  - Head (theory), Hand (skills) and Heart (compassion)

Developing educators through Social Pedagogy

- More confident personal selves/interactions
- Emotional resilience
- Proactive, lateral, problem solving
- More dynamic key working that expands opportunities
- Critical reflection skills
- Joint exploration, reframing or new purposes
- Validity to having fun

Doing 'Home'

- Practices that characterise connections in a space
- Home: address tensions between home, workplace and institution
  - Unknown provenance of objects, brief placements
- Homeliness: beyond safety to pathways of habit, idealised markers, spaces for developing a shared vision
  - Table, adornment
- Create recognition: self-realisation, ethical relationships, forging opportunities
- Multi-dimensional belonging: past, present, culture
- Everyday educator: an expert in the terrain of home

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