

Exploring Children's Rights

A participative exercise to introduce the issues around children's rights in England and Wales.

Peter Jenkins. Pavilion, 2003, £75. ISBN 1841961108

The author of this resource has been running training workshops on children's rights for 10 years and is especially interested in the rights of children and young people in confidential counselling. However, notes to accompany the pack suggest that it is relevant to any professionals working with children and young people, particularly in the fields of education, health and social work.

The pack itself is very well presented. It consists of 80 laminated 'rights cards' on which the exercise is based, and an informative A5 booklet giving details of how to use the resource, background information, and a reference list. As the facilitator for this review, what would have been really helpful would have been some of the text of the book put onto CD-ROM. This could have been used in presentations at the beginning of the exercise (on acetates or Powerpoint) and would have been more efficient and professional than the writing up on flip charts.

The pack was reviewed by a team of 10 qualified school-based counsellors, and facilitated by the coordinator of the team. To make the best use of the pack, consideration must be given to allowing a reasonable amount of preparation time on the resource for the facilitator. The first time we used the pack the exercise planned took 90 minutes, which included some time at the beginning of the session going over some of the history of children's rights; this helpfully put the tasks that followed in context. The resource was used a second time using the case studies but, due to other demands on time, only 30 minutes was given to the exercise.

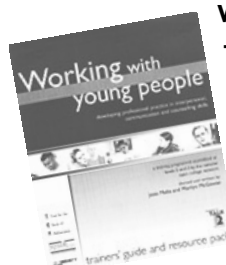
The team found both exercises very useful and highly relevant to their work with this client group and their dealings with parents and other agencies. The rights cards stimulated lively, and sometimes heated, debate about many of the issues in this complex and often confusing field. The participatory nature of the resource made for interesting discussion and the persuading and negotiating with colleagues was successful in revealing differing perceptions and interpretations of many of the rights.

Although only 30 minutes was allocated to the case study exercise, this was felt to be a more enjoyable

and informative way of using the pack. Certainly there was a lot of learning and discussion, even though the time was short. The team have opted to use the pack again to further our knowledge and understanding of this field, and as facilitator I believe there are various creative interpretations of its use to keep the tasks interesting.

In short, this is an aesthetically pleasing, informative resource that allows for challenge and discussion – one that is relevant for counsellors and that could be utilised creatively and flexibly to respond to training needs.

Karen Cromarty
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Working with young people – a trainer's guide and resource pack. Josie Melia and Marilyn McGowan.

Trust for the Study of Adolescence, 2002, £56. ISBN 1871504430

What a great way to spend a snowy day when school was

closed! This is a comprehensive and extremely well thought out 350 page resource drawing together the best of good practice in working with young people, primarily adolescents in a variety of youth settings. Produced jointly by The Trust for the Study of Adolescence and Youth Access, the manual offers a structured training programme validated by the National College Open Network for Working with Young People. Divided into discrete training units, the text handsomely addresses the following:

- adolescent development
- interpersonal counselling and communication skills
- work-related professional and ethical issues
- need for multicultural awareness
- importance of a systemic perspective
- different learning styles and sensory preferences
- importance of high levels of self-awareness and personal support.

But it is far more than a training text – it is a rich and flexible resource for professionals working with young people employing interpersonal, communication and counselling skills. It models respectful and inclusive jargon-free language that is so helpful in inter-agency work. I liked it because it brought together the best of successful ways of working with young people and added in essential information from the latest

research about 'teenage issues'. While the ethos is person-centred, fully inclusive and accessible by a range of front-line workers, it includes well-structured, creative worksheets and information from solution-focused, CBT, emotional literacy and creative visualisation sources aimed at helping young people to feel heard, understood and empowered.

Who would use this book? Clearly, people following the course with the Open College. At just over £50 it is an expensive text. Where this resource provokes some anxiety in me is the price and the fact that with a limited budget as a school counsellor, I might make my £50 stretch to paper versions of some fundamental texts for working with young people such as Geldard and Geldard *Counselling Adolescents* and Sunderland's *Drawing on Emotions*. If money weren't a major issue, I would rate this a 'must have' book for professionals using counselling skills across a wide spectrum of work with adolescents.

Sarah Catchpole
Counsellor working in secondary school and an anorexic unit



Listening in colour. Creating a meeting place with young people

An interactive resource for counsellors and trainers.
Sue Lee, Foluke Taylor Muhammad, Robert Downes.
Trust for the Study of Adolescence and Youth Access, 2002, £45.
ISBN 1871504449


I was delighted when I received this book. I have attended a number of TSA training events, which have all been excellent, and have briefly met the authors, so was keen to read more of their work.

This is an excellent pack. It offers a breadth of ideas rather than a detailed analysis of a single subject and jumps from one topic to another. As such, it is perhaps more useful for experienced counsellors rather than trainees. I found it full of new ideas with a welcome lively tone. It is a folder to dip into rather than to read cover to cover. I particularly liked the emphasis on learning from our own experiences. My initial response when I saw the 'Elder' section was – have I got the right folder? But of course, in working with adolescents we are often reminded that we are 'old'! To reframe this as elderhood is positive and enables us to access our wisdom. I enjoyed the creative story ideas and have already used the tree imagery – teenagers are often already familiar with visualisation techniques and one told me 'not more f*****g seagulls!'

Some sections are particularly relevant to the context of a school counsellor. In the chapter 'The Meeting Place' the authors look at how the young person comes into counselling. The referral route in a school can have a significant impact on the therapeutic alliance. I was particularly pleased to see a (brief) mention of disability and able-ism. The counselling world has been too slow to appreciate the oppression of people with impairments and to try to understand the meaning of this for us all.

I liked the many quotes of Some, although I struggled to get past what for me felt an unreal pseudoanalysis – certainly not a world the young people I work with would recognise. The appendix is a compilation of data and includes a quiz that would perhaps be more useful for non-counselling school staff. The patterns of referral will bring a wry smile to many school counsellors. A valuable – though quite expensive – pack for trainers, it could be shared to justify the investment. I plan to use the exercises on supervision with trainees here as I have become more aware of how varied their college supervision experiences are.

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