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www.beac.st/DeptID=10177



“The Children and Youth At Risk in the Barents region” (CYAR 2008 - 2012) is a co-operation programme within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. It has been developed as a result of growing concern regarding marginalized youth and children in the region. The CYAR programme is run by a Steering committee composed by all Barents partners.

The CYAR programme emphasizes that all efforts should aim to strengthen the public services and their ability to adequately assist and support children and youth on the individual level. The programme aims to improve life conditions for the youth and children at risk through cooperative actions in general (creating frameworks for exchange of information) and project activities in particular (building partnerships between public institutions at all levels and non-governmental organizations in the Barents region with responsibility for the well-being of youth and children).

In the work of the CYAR programme, *family* is the key word. All efforts should promote the sustainment, strengthening, recreation, or – as a last resort – substitution of the family. The following fields of competence will therefore receive special attention

- Strengthening of parental resources
- Development of foster care services
- Social skill training for children and youth
- Monitoring of the rights of the child

CYAR Project

In order to fulfil the objectives of the CYAR Programme, the Steering committee has elaborated a “CYAR Programme Support Project 2010-2012”. Under the direct management of the Steering committee, several activities will take place throughout the period, involving all Barents partners.

The CYAR Project contains four main activities:

- I. Developing a situation overview of CYAR in the Barents region – creating an updated situation overview by means of regular reports from the Barents partners
- II. Exchange of expert knowledge – by means of arranging an annual expert conference on selected topics in accordance with the CYAR programme profile.

- III. Competence sharing on selected methods/programmes – by means of dissemination of four methods with documented results throughout the Barents region
- IV. Information and network building – by means of establishing a functional and systematically updated web-site for the CYAR programme and all the relevant partners.

The project’s core activity is part III: dissemination of the four research-based methods/programmes, which are presented below.

CYAR Project Part III - Competence sharing

The four methods selected for dissemination purposes in the Barents region are

1. The Incredible Years Programme
2. Aggression Replacement Training – ART and Family-ART
3. Family Group Conferences
4. Restorative Justice – Juvenile mediation and Mediation boards

These have the following characteristics in common;

- They are directed at prioritized CYAR target groups
- They are knowledge-based, i.e. their effect is documented by research
- There are positive results from both Nordic and North-West Russian regions
- Dissemination of these positive results is requested by the Barents partners

This booklet briefly presents these methods, their main characteristics and how they were applied in the world in general and in North-West Russia in particular. It contains contact information and usable links for those interested in more detailed information.

The SC invites organizations who would like to learn more about the programmes and participate in the dissemination activities to contact their regional representative in the committee for further information.

Pål Christian Bergstrøm
Chairman of the CYAR Steering Committee

The **CYAR** Steering Committee

Norway
Mr. Pål Christian Bergstrøm
Chairman of the Steering Committee
Director General, Regional Office for children, youth and family affairs,
Northern Norway (Bufetat)
P.O.Box 919, 9259 Tromsø, Norway
Tel +47 466 15 502
Fax +47 776 80 795
E-mail: pal.christian.bergstrom@bufetat.no

Russia
The Murmansk Region
Mrs. Elena Krasovskaya
Deputy Chair
Advisor, the Department for Cooperation with the law enforcement agency
of the Government of the Murmansk region. Vice-head of the Regional Commission on
juvenile matters and protection of their rights
The Government of the Murmansk region
Murmansk
Tel: +7 8152 486 476
Mob.: +7 921 172 61 33
E-mail: okdn@gov-murman.ru

Finland
Mrs. Vappu Sunnari
A university lecturer in equality/gender issues
University of Oulu
Mob: +358 40 552 92 40
Fax: +358 8 553 744
E-mail: vappu.sunnari@oulu.fi

Sweden
Mrs. Ingrid Löfstrand
Project co-ordinator, Licentate of Arts, Research and Development department
Co-ordinator and supervisor of research and development projects relating to children
and youths in the Social Services field of Local Authorities in Norrbotten
Box 947 SE-971 28
Luleå
Tel:+46 920 20 54 47
Mob: +46 70 577 54 47
Fax: +46 920 942 49
E-mail: ingrid.lofstrand@bd.komforb.se

Russia
The Republic of Karelia
Mrs. Svetlana Antohina
Deputy Minister of Health and Social development
Petrozavodsk
Tel: +7 8142 79 29 04
E-mail: antohina@social.onego.ru

Russia
The Arkhangelsk Region
Mrs. Elena Dunaeva
Advisor of the vice-governor of the Arkhangelsk region for social issues
Arkhangelsk
Tel.: +7 8182 288 317
E-mail: dunaeva@dvinaland.ru

Russia
The Komi Republic
Mr. Ilya Semyashkin
Director
Agency of the Republic of Komi for Social development
Syktyvkar
Tel +7 8212 24 15 01
Fax +7 8212 24 24 84
E-mail: social_rk@rkomi.ru, social_rk_family@rkomi.ru

Russia
Working Group on Indigenous Peoples
Mrs. Alexandra Artieva
E-mail: bipo.barents@gmail.com
Mobile: +7 911 305 00 88

The Secretariat of the Steering Committee for the "Children and Youth At Risk" programme:
Regional Agency for Children, Youth and Family Affairs (Bufetat) Northern Norway
Department for international cooperation in the Barents region (Tromsø)

Mr. Roman Kuposov
Project leader
Mob.: +47 466 15 315 (Norway), +7 921 720 16 78 (Russia)
E-mail: roman.kuposov@uit.no

Ms. Marina Zyryanova
Senior executive officer
Mob.: +47 466 15 739 (Norway), +7 911 334 86 87 (Russia)
E-mail: marina.zyryanova@bufetat.no





The Incredible Years programme

About

Caroline Webster-Stratton started to develop “The Incredible Years” 30 years ago as a parent training, teacher training, and child social skill training programme. The programme has been recommended as a well-established treatment for children with conduct problems.

Mission and goal

“We act on the belief – that a child is the most precious of all human beings, and the ability to withstand the emotional and social challenges as a teenager, clearly rests upon a caring relationship between parent, teacher and child.

Our mission is to advance the social and emotional behaviour of children of all ethnic groups, through a series of interlocking teaching programmes supported by more than twenty-five years of clinically proven worldwide research.

Our goal is to deliver teaching programmes and materials that develop positive parent-teacher-child relationships and assist in recognizing and treating aggressive behaviour before a child becomes an adult.”⁽¹⁾

Founded 1987

The Incredible Years: Parents, Teachers, and Children Training Series is a comprehensive set of curricula designed to promote social competence and prevent, reduce, and treat aggression and related conduct problems in babies, toddlers, young children, and school-aged children. Young children with high rates of aggressive behaviour problems have been shown to be at greatest risk for continuing on the trajectory to deviant peer groups, school drop out, delinquency, substance abuse, and violence. Ultimately the aim of the teacher, parent and child training programmes is to prevent and to reduce the occurrence of aggressive and oppositional behaviour, thus reducing the chance of developing later delinquent behaviours and preventing juvenile delinquency, drug abuse, and violence.

Each of the programmes in the Incredible Years Series seeks to alter the quality of relationships between parents and children, teachers and children, teachers and parents, and children with their peers.

The short-term goals of the series are to:

1. Strengthen children’s social skills and appropriate play skills (turn taking, waiting, asking, sharing, helping, complimenting).
2. Promote children’s use of self-control strategies such as effective problem solving steps.
3. Increase emotional awareness by labelling feelings, recognizing the differing views of oneself and others and enhancing perspective taking.
4. Boost academic success, reading and school readiness.
5. Reduce defiance, aggressive behavior, and related conduct problems such as noncompliance, peer aggression and rejection, bullying, stealing and lying.
6. Decrease children’s negative cognitive attributions and conflict management approaches.
7. Increase self-esteem and self-confidence.

The long-term goals of these early prevention programmes are to:

1. Reduce violence, drug abuse and delinquency in later years.
2. These short- and long-term goals are accomplished by promoting parent, teacher and child competencies.

(1) <http://www.incredibleyears.com/download/mission-statement.pdf> – accessed on 22.10.2009

Promote teacher competencies and strengthen home-school connections:

1. Strengthen teachers' effective classroom management skills, including proactive teaching approaches.
2. Increase teachers' use of effective discipline strategies.
3. Increase teachers' collaborative efforts with parents and promotion of parents' school involvement.
4. Increase teachers' ability to teach social skills, anger management, and problem-solving skills in the classroom.
5. Decrease levels of classroom aggression.

Promote parent competencies and strengthen families:

1. Increase positive and nurturing parenting.
2. Reduce critical and violent discipline approaches by replacing spanking with positive strategies such as ignoring, using logical and natural consequences, redirecting, adequate monitoring, and problem-solving.
3. Improve parents' problem-solving skills, anger management, and communication skills.
4. Increase family support networks and school involvement.
5. Help parents and teachers work collaboratively to ensure consistency across settings.
6. Increase parents' involvement in children's academic-related activities at home.

Target groups

- Children in the age of 0 -12 years
- Parents with children in this age
- Teachers and assistants in nurseries, schools, kindergardens

Structure

The programme is divided into three sub-programmes according to their target groups, which in their turn are divided into several sub-programmes for different age groups.

1) PARENT PROGRAMME:

For parents with babies and toddlers (0 - 3)

Parents of children in the age of 0 – 12 months attend eight weekly meetings, where they learn how parents can observe and interpret the child's signals, how they can provide the child with psychological, tactile and visual stimulation and what role such stimulation plays in the development of the brain.

For parents with children between 1(0) – 3 years, twelve weekly meetings are held, and different parenting skills are developed at these meetings, for example how one can build up the child's self-esteem by means of encouragement and praise, or how one can create routines for meals, getting dressed, going to bed, treating a pet, etc. Parents learn how to control themselves through self-instruction and other strategies that help one to calm down.

Parents with young children (3 – 6 years)

The programme consists of 18-20 weekly meetings and has as a goal to strengthen parenting skills. The programme deals with such problems as how one can develop the child's social competence, emotional regulation and academic skills. Parents learn how to use praise as a form of encouraging cooperation, and how to use positive upbringing strategies as rules, routines and effective limitation in order to prevent problem behaviour.

"Basic" programme (for parents with children 4 – 8 years)

The programme consists of 12 – 14 weekly meetings and aims at strengthening the family by increasing parents' awareness of children of this age group, thereby reducing and preventing problem behaviour.

The BASIC programme starts with building positive relations between children and parents using a game as an arena for practice. It is in the game's nature that the child should be able to use imagination, to take initiative and to control the game. When parents participate in the child's game, on his/her arena and terms, it gives them an opportunity to interact positively with the child and gradually turn the negative development into positive relations based on trust.

Parents with school-aged children (6 – 12 years)

The programme consists of 12 – 16 weekly meetings, and its goal is to promote the child's positive behaviour, to reduce inappropriate behaviour and to support the development of the academic skills.

“Advanced” programme (for parents with children 4 – 12 years)

The programme consists of 8 – 10 weekly meetings and is offered as a continuation of the “Basic” programme. Parents are instructed in effective communication with children, how to solve problems in upbringing and daily life, and how parents can teach their children effective strategies for solving problems.

2) CHILD PROGRAMME “THE DINOSAUR SCHOOL”

In small groups - (treatment) aimed at children in the age of 3 – 8 years

In this programme, children learn to recognize and understand feelings for themselves and others, develop their skills in conflict resolution and problem solving as well as anger management and self-control. They also practise their social skills, such as to listen and to wait, to agree, to ask questions, to wait for their turn, to help, to cooperate, to share and to give each other compliments.

The programme consists of 18 – 22 group meetings, two hours per meeting. There are six children in the group. The meetings take place simultaneously with the parent meetings and follow the same programme, so that the topics for parents and children are adjusted each other. Children also receive home tasks that they do together with their parents.

In the classroom/kindergarden - training/intervention aimed at children in the age of 3 – 8 years

The child programme is also offered as a preventive programme in the class room or in the kindergarden. The certified group leader together with the teacher / kindergarden assistant conducts a 1- or 2-hour-meeting twice a week for a year. The goal is that the teacher / kindergarden assistant takes over after having been trained and having practised the method in the class / group.

3) PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOL/KINDERGARDEN

This sub-programme is developed for kindergartens, elementary and lower secondary schools. The aim is to develop the competence of school and kindergarden specialists within prevention and handling behaviour problems as well as strengthening the cooperation between school and home. The following questions are discussed:

- the use of praise in a positive and appropriate manner
- motivation
- pro-active learning approaches
- class / group management

This sub-programme can be combined with the Dinosaur School in the classroom.

The Incredible Years in Russia

The project “The Incredible Years in Russia” is a result of the collaboration between Norway and Russia in the Barents Region. So far, only the Basic programme for parents is implemented in Russia. The programme aims at parents with children in the age of 4 – 8 years. The programme was first applied in Russia in 2005 to children with behaviour problems. The Republican centre of Social care for families and children “SAMPO” in Petrozavodsk has become the start for implementing the programme in the Republic of Karelia and the North-West Russia. As a part of the international project “New forms of correction work with families and children” in the Department of Social service, a training course in parent guidance has been arranged for a group of specialists (psychologists, social pedagogues). The course was conducted by Professor Willy-Tore Mørch, the University of Tromsø (Norway).

Since November 2005, the centre has been carrying on group work with parents of children between 3 and 8 years old with behaviour problems, who experience difficulties in communicating with children (The Parent Training Series). The feedbacks from the parents-participants of this programme evidence that the use of the knowledge acquired through the parent training changes the children’s behaviour and helps the parents to cope with problems that earlier seemed to be unsolvable. The State Pedagogical University of Karelia has been conducting scientific-methodical support of the programme.

The experience acquired in Petrozavodsk facilitated the dissemination of “The Incredible Years” programme in other regions of Karelia and North-West Russia. In 2008, three more cities were added: Kostamuksha and Segezha in Karelia and Murmansk city. In 2009, two new towns in the Murmansk region were added: Uмба and Lovozero. As of 2009, approximately 400 families with children with conduct disorders completed the programme.

Effect

A number of studies have been carried out in order to evaluate the effect of the “Incredible Years” programme (Reid, Webster-Stratton & Hammond 2003; Larsson, Fossum, Clifford, Drugli, Handegård & Mørch 2008; Vorobjova, Kolesnikov & Merch 2008). According to the results in Reid et al. (2003), around 65% of children whose parents took part in the Incredible Years programme for parents lost their diagnosis and showed considerable improvement in behaviour.

Another study has been carried out in Norway. According to the results presented by Willy-Tore Mørch at the CYAR seminar in Arkhangelsk on the 13th of November 2009, as much as 65% of the children who underwent training in the programme display considerable changes and show reduction in deviant behaviour compared to those who did not participate in the programme. The parents display less harsh parenting and the stress level has become lower. 2/3 of the children were free of ODD / CD⁽²⁾ 5-6 years after the intervention. These results support earlier studies of “The Incredible Years”.

In Vorobjova et al. (2008), the results from the implementation of the method in the social-rehabilitation centre “Sampo” (Petrozavodsk, Russia) are presented. The research results are based on the data that have been registered during the training and the diagnostics in the beginning and in the end of the programme, which was carried out using the Eyberg questionnaire ⁽³⁾. The following results were obtained. 91 families took part in the training (112 children). In the beginning of the programme, 37 (33%) children were assigned to the correction group, 46 (41%) – the risk group, 29 (26%) – the norm. 64 participants (57%) revealed a high stress level.

In the end of the programme, the risk group comprised only 20 children (18%), while 87 children (78%) showed normal parameters after testing. Only 5 children (4%) placed in the correction group in the beginning of the programme remained there. Changes in the stress level have also been observed; in the end of the programme, only 17% (19) showed heightened, or high stress level (compared to 57% in the beginning). These results are similar to the Norwegian study and clearly indicate the positive effect the programme has on its participants; the stress level gets lower, the behaviour improves.

(2) oppositional defiant disorder/conduct disorder

(3) Воробьева Е.Н., Колесников В.Н., Мерк В.-Т. (2008) Программа родительских тренингов «Невероятные годы». - Журнал «Психолог в детском саду», № 3, М., С.42-64
(E.Vorobjova, V. Kolesnikov, W.-T. Merch. (2008) The programme «Incredible Years» in Karelia - “Psychologist in the Kindergarten”. №3, 2008).

Contact information

Elena Vorobieva
Mentor in training in the programme «Incredible Years»
Supervisor of the Republican centre for social help to children and families “SAMPO”
Petrozavodsk, the Republic of Karelia, Russia
E-mail: vorobiev@onego.ru
Mob.: +7 911 411 07 01
Tlf.: +7 8142 56 26 50

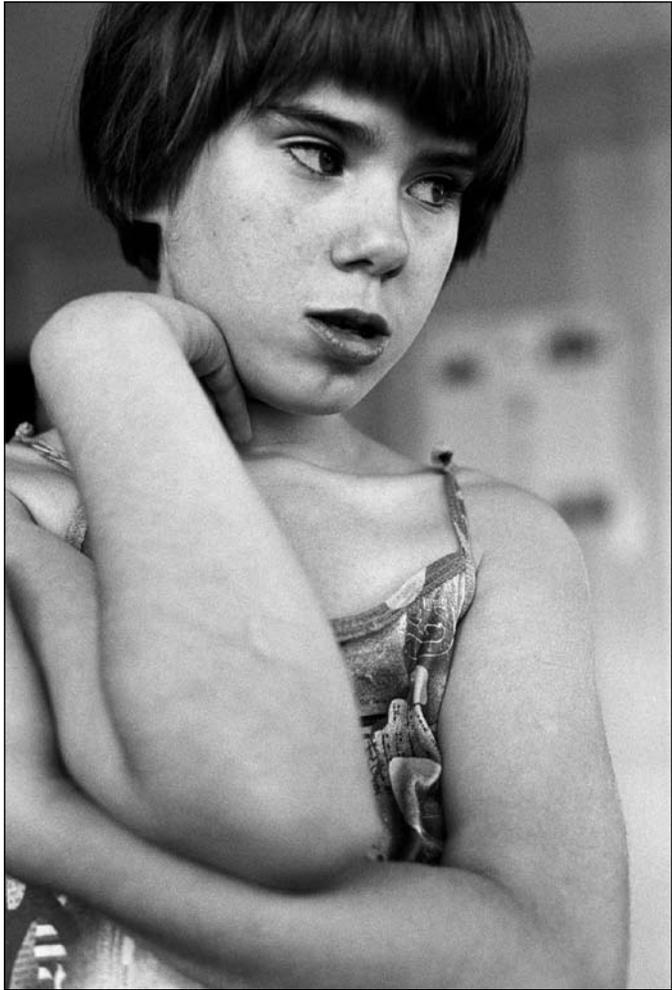
Willy-Tore Mørch
Professor, RKBU Northern Norway
The University of Tromsø, Norway
E-mail: willy-tore.morch@uit.no
Tlf.: +47 776 45 854

Vadim Kolesnikov
Associate Professor
Department of General psychology
Karelian State pedagogic academy
Petrozavodsk, Russia
E-mail: copp@kspu.karelia.ru

Useful links

iy.kspu.karelia.ru – «The Incredible Years» in Karelia, the web-site of Karelian State pedagogical academy
www.incredibleyears.com - the web-site of the original programme “The Incredible Years” of C. Webster-Stratton





Aggression Replacement Training – ART and Family ART

About

Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a cognitive behavioral intervention focused on adolescents, training them to cope with their aggressive and violent behaviours. ART was designed by Arnold P. Goldstein and Barry Glick in the 1980s (Goldstein & Glick, 1988; Goldstein, Glick and Gibbs 1998/2000). It is a multimodal program and has three components; Social skills, Anger Control Training and Moral Reasoning.

Each of the three components focuses on different aspects of social functioning and uses a process to insure youth learn the skills in class and transfer such skills to new situations outside of the group. The model also focuses on the concept of peer learning by Jean Piaget. It has been shown that youth learn best from other youth.

The Family ART programme has been developed by Robert Calame and Kim Parker at Batshaw Youth and Family Centre in Quebec, Canada. The programme has been processed and developed in cooperation with the ART centre at Djakonhjemmet University College and Lindøy-centre for children and youth in Stavanger (Norway). The Family ART's structure is very similar to the ART programme.

Goal

The goal of the training is to improve the ability of the participants to function socially and to reduce anger. The training focuses on finding action alternatives which are effective for everyone through a role play. The purpose of the Family ART programme is to increase the probability of new behaviour generalized at home. The programme is based on group work with four-eight families training together through family discussions, role play and constructive feedback.

Target Groups

The programme is aimed mostly at children and youth who are in danger of developing problem behaviour (primary prevention) and persons that have already developed behaviour problems (secondary prevention of further negative development). However, persons with adequate behaviour also benefit from this programme.

Methods

ART is a 10 week programme, meeting three times a week for one hour for each of the components. To have the best results it is facilitated and co-facilitated by trained group facilitators. Room set up, introduction of materials, the number of participants, and the participants' history are all issues that work towards having a profitable group. Goldstein, Glick and Gibbs (1998) recommend a group of 6 – 8 participants, but smaller groups, especially in the beginning of the programme, can be necessary and desired if the participants have serious behaviour problems. If the group is too small, the training might lose its dynamics and structure as some role plays require a large number of participants, and there will be less feedback from other participants.

SOCIAL SKILLS

Many youths have difficulties controlling their anger and/or lack social skills. The ART intervention focuses on the following social skills that are particular to reducing aggressive behaviour:

- *Making a complaint*
- *Dealing with someone else's anger*
- *Keeping out of fights*
- *Dealing with an accusation*
- *Expressing affection to others*
- *Understanding the feelings of others*
- *Getting ready for a difficult conversation*
- *Dealing with group pressure*
- *Helping Others*
- *Responding to failure*

These social skills are broken down into various steps (both thinking and action steps). The facilitator discusses the day's skill, bringing out relevant examples. Then the facilitator demonstrates a situation to give the youth a picture of how to perform the skill. The youth are asked to point out each of the steps. Then each of the youths is asked to use a relevant situation that they have recently had using the skill. Again, the other youths go through and discuss each of the steps each time.

ANGER CONTROL TRAINING

Anger control training is the affective component of ART. This moves from the teaching of social skills to losing anti-social skills and replacing them with pro-social skills. The anger control training uses the anger control chain. This is a process taught to the youth to deal with situations that cause them to get angry. Once again, one segment of the anger control chain is taught each week, the both the facilitators and the youth practise the new skills with relevant life activities. The anger control chain is as follows;

- Triggers (external and internal) – The situation that starts the slide into anger and the self talk that perpetuates it
- Cues – physical signs of becoming angry
- Anger reducers – three (deep breathing, counting backwards, and pleasant imagery) to help reduce or take our mind off of the situation
- Reminders – short positive statements that we say to ourselves to further reduce the angry impulses
- Thinking ahead – Identifying the consequences of our behaviors
- Social Skill – Implementing a pro-social skill into the situation
- Evaluation – Looking back over the use of the anger control chain and evaluating how was implemented

MORAL REASONING

Moral reasoning is the cognitive component of ART. This component provides adolescents with opportunities to take perspectives other than their own, thereby, learning to view their world in a more fair and equitable way. Group facilitators also identify four thinking errors to facilitate perspective taking and remediate moral developmental delay. The thinking errors that are identified are:

- Self-centered thinking – “It’s all about me”
- Assuming the worst – “It would happen anyways”, or “They would do it to me”
- Blaming others – “It’s their fault”
- Mislabeled / minimizing – “it’s not stealing, I’m only borrowing it...”, or “Everybody else does it”

ART in the world

ART has been thoroughly evaluated in several states in the USA (among others Washington), Sweden, recently in Great Britain and Norway.

ICART is an association of specialists and institutions in North America (USA and Canada) and Europe that practise ART, or its variation. The association was founded by Arnold P. Goldstein, and consists of the specialists who, in Goldstein’s opinion, are able to continue spreading and developing ART. Researchers at colleges and universities, correctional services, child welfare (public and private), health care, and school sector are represented in the association. The association gives advice on ART and distributes contact information of the relevant organizations.

ART in Norway

In Norway, this method is applied in kindergartens, elementary and secondary schools, child welfare agencies, within psychiatry and in work with people with Asperger syndrome.

The Diakonhjemmet University College in Rogaland is the academic centre for the ART method in Norway. In 1999, after the meeting with Arnold P. Goldstein, a continuing education course (60 study points) in social competence training was started there, with special focus on the ART-method.

Nowadays, there are ART groups across the country with around 2000 instructors. Norwegian academic ART environment has become one of the leading ones in the world. The “Youth Alternative” in Sweden, Knut Gundersen, Børge Strømgren and Luke Moynahan get a large part of the credit for this. The ART centre at the Diakonhjemmet University College in Rogaland functions as a junction for the ART activity in Norway and has produced a number of interesting research articles based on the effect studies on ART in Norway.

Effect

The research group appointed by the Directorate of Education and the Directorate of Health and Social Issues in Norway made the following conclusion about ART:

«The Programme is considered to belong to category 3: Programme with documented results. The research group recommends ART for use at lower secondary school in groups where behaviour problems have already developed, or are likely to develop. Used as a primary prevention, the programme should be supplemented with school-wide measures.»

The experience shows that the family’s interaction patterns change considerably, the children’s pro-social skills and behaviour have improved after the ART training, and the relapse into earlier destructive behaviour is reduced.



ART in Russia

The ART project in Russia is a bilateral cooperation project between Norway and the Republic of Karelia and started in 2006. One of the objectives was for 3 Russian and 2 Norwegian institutions to collaborate on the implementation and quality assurance of the ART groups consisting of youth with conduct problems.

At the moment of creating this booklet, information about three centres practising ART and Family ART in North-West Russia was available. All of them are situated in Petrozavodsk (the Republic of Karelia). In the period 2009 -2010 the social-rehabilitation centre "Nadezhda" ("Hope") has been working with eight groups of children in the age between 7 – 17 years old. The average number of participants per group is 6 – 7. Altogether, there are 57 children undergoing ART training. There is also a Family ART group where six families are participating. In the other social-rehabilitation centre "Vozrozhdenije" ("Re-birth"), 57 children underwent ART-training in 2009; 37 of them were teenagers divided in 5 groups with 7 – 8 participants in each and 20 children of pre-school age (3 groups with 6 – 7 participants in each). The center has also conducted Family-ART in 2 groups with 14 families totally.

School # 8 is the third institution implementing ART in North-West Russia. At the moment they have 23 children undergoing training in this programme. The specialists at School # 8 have pointed out several potential problems for the implementation of the programme, such as lack of interest among children, difficulties with combining a teacher's "primary" tasks and using ART (time, salary), as well as it takes a lot of time to organize working groups and start implementing ART. However, they also express their satisfaction and willingness to work further with the ART method, as it brings them to closer cooperation with their colleagues, helps them to understand children and themselves better, and to develop their professional skills. Possible problems can be overcome by being patient and systematic, working in small groups, providing full training for the personnel, encouraging children's participation in the programme. This method suits well in their institution because it teaches to control anger and be more tolerant towards others. The method has a clear structure and is based on the child's need for understanding and a role play, which altogether brings good results.

All the centres point out that children benefit from this training programme by acquiring new constructive ways of social interaction with others, also in difficult situations and conflicts. The children also learn to realize the meaning of their behaviour and feelings, and to control their emotions. Even though this programme is based on behaviourism and does not consider other approaches, for the specialists working with this method, it is a possibility to practise group work, to use their imagination and develop effective ways of working with each component of the programme. The specialist always has to consider many different factors planning the meeting, such as age, sex, etc, which is challenging and interesting.

The research of the effectiveness of this method is in progress, and preliminary results from ART groups with larger number of participants are expected in 2010. Based on the qualitative feedbacks from the participants in this programme, the regional authorities are set to disseminate the ART method throughout the republic.

Contact information

Knut Gundersen
Associate Professor
The Diakonhjemmet University College of Rogaland, Norway
Tlf: +47 519 72 262,
E-mail: knut.gundersen@diakonhjemmet.no

Roman Kopusov
RKBU Northern Norway
The Faculty of Medicine, The University of Tromsø, Norway
Tlf: +47 776 45 880
E-mail: roman.kopusov@uit.no







Family Group Conferences - FGC

About

"Family Group Conference" (FGC) is an innovative method for working with children and families in crisis situations. This method appeared in New Zealand in 1989. Its appearance was caused, on the one hand by the crisis in social work during this period in the country, on the other hand by the Maori traditions. Maori believe that the closest network plays an important role in the life of a child. The family consisting of several generations knows their children better than any specialist; the family is the best place to raise a child, here children will receive necessary care. The family's responsibility for the upbringing of the younger generation can not be transferred onto the shoulders of social services. These principles were not taken into consideration in the 1970 - 80-ies, when the children of the Maori were placed into care of non-Maori families or in institutions of social protection.

In 1989, a law "On Children, Youth and Family" was passed, which emphasized the importance of family and cultural heritage in the upbringing of children. According to this law, responsibility for education rests with the family, and professionals should involve the closest network in the process of decision-making when the child is in a problem situation.

New Zealand's bold experiment to transfer authority and responsibility for their own children to the family influenced the philosophical outlook and practice of professionals working with the family around the world. Use of "Family Group Conference" is enshrined in law in countries such as New Zealand, in some states of Australia (South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland), in the Republic of Ireland. Family group conferences are designated as international best practice in the UK, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, many states in the United States of America, in Israel. The method is actively used in Spain, Slovakia, Poland, South Africa and other countries on all continents⁽⁴⁾. It is based on the development of the child's abilities to overcome the crisis through interaction with the nearest environment, i.e. family.

Goals and target groups

The goal of the method is the prevention of marital distress, social orphanhood, neglect and juvenile delinquency, as well as support for families and children in difficult situations.

(4) Doolan M. Family Group Conferences: a partnership method. // Riepl B., Wilk L. & Berman Y., Policies and Services for Children at Risk. Vienna: European Centre, 2002. – P.107

Method

FGC is a sort of family council, a meeting of all family members to discuss the situation and make their own decisions. This method is used in various crisis situations, such as family conflicts, adolescent drug use, juvenile delinquency, lack of understanding between parents and children, as well as in cases of domestic violence. FGC can be easily adapted to different areas, such as conflict resolution at work, at school, at home.

Family Group Conference is a meeting of family members in a broad sense of the word. It is more correct to say that it is a meeting of the family with friends and relatives. The concept of "family" is considered broader than the biological connection. The idea of family group conference is associated with a desire to strengthen the family's right to self-determination in matters of concern for their own children. Family group conference depends to a large extent on the cultural traditions than on scientific theory. Application of this method is closely related to the ethical principle, which states that individual responsibility is the most important responsibility. The method underlines, above all, the need to respect the central role of individuals in solving their problems, which have been identified and defined. The people themselves cope with their problems; you must give them the opportunity to propose solutions. This is the meaning of a new method of decision-making.

THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE METHOD

Rob van Paage points out four main characteristics inherent in family group conferences⁽⁵⁾:

1. This is an innovative method of decision-making based on the strength and capabilities of the family itself.
2. The full and sole owner of the meeting is the family and close associates (family members determine the time and place of meetings, organizes tea party, develops its plan, doing everything according to its prevailing culture and traditions).
3. The conference is conducted by an independent leader, a neutral person who is not related to this family and does not affect the adoption of family decisions and the development plan
4. The family shall be entitled to obtain information, necessary personal time, the unconditional acceptance of the plan, if it is safe.

(5) Pagee R. Van. *Family Group Conferencing. Manual for Independent Coordinators*. Eigen Kracht – Center for Restorative Action: Zwolle, the Netherlands, 2006. – p.10

According to the Norwegian researchers S. Horverak, C. Omre and L. Schjelderup these are five key principles of the method ⁽⁶⁾.

1. The conference leader is an independent person.
2. The family, its relatives and close associates gather their forces and resources.
3. Experts and specialists are positive towards the family and their plan.
4. The family and the closest environment should get private time necessary for discussion and writing of the plan; the experts should not be present at this stage of the family council.
5. Children take part in a family group conference.

The first four principles are the basic principles of the method of Family Group Conferences. The fifth principle of child participation in the meeting is desirable, but if the child is absent for one reason or another, the family group conference does not lose its essence and its value if the first four principles are observed.

Family Group Conference in Russia

The project "FGC" in Russia has been implemented by the Representative office of the humani-tarian organization "SOS – Children's Villages Norway" in the Russian Federation. Since 2000, the activity of the Representative office in the Murmansk region has emphasized strengthening the family as its goal by means of new strategies in family support and child upbringing in a difficult life situation. The Russian-Norwegian FGC project was introduced in 2004 for the first time. Initially the project was implemented only in the Murmansk region, but in 2006 it became a basis for enhanced cooperation between authorities, institutions, civil society and individuals in St. Petersburg, Leningrad and Pskov regions, the Republic of Karelia. Introducing new technologies contributes to broader personal horizons, changing public opinion. Undoubtedly, new knowledge positively affected the lives of the participants in the project.

The project co-ordinator in Russia, Svetlana Konopleva (Chobanu) points out in her article that despite the positive reaction of families participating in the program in Murmansk⁽⁷⁾, and in other cities, certain difficulties arise on the way of the successful application of the method. For example, when a decision is taken by the family, experts have expressed their concern about the safety of the child, because in such situations, they lose control. This method requires a belief in the power and possibilities of the family and its closest environment.

(6) Horverak S., Omre S., Schjelderup L. *Familieraadslag – Demokrati og beslutninger i norsk barnevern.* – Bergen, 2001. – p.55

(7) *Деятельность гуманитарной организации «СОС – детские деревни Норвегия» в Российской Федерации.* Сборник материалов о российско-норвежских проектах на Северо-Западе России. 2008 г. – стр.51 - 61

The Representative office systematically analyzes the strengths and weaknesses of the project in order to overcome the difficulties in time. Thus, it is necessary to implement this method as "Family Group Conferences" put the family in the center of decision-making. This is the right of the family and an effective method of work used and respected throughout the world.

Contact information

Nikolay Slabzhanin
Executive Director
Russian Committee of the "Children's SOS-villages"
Russia, Moscow, 117292, ul. Kedrova, 5, building 1,
tel. + 7 495 7189918
fax. +7 499 1257622
e-mail: nikolay.slabzhanin@sos-dd.org

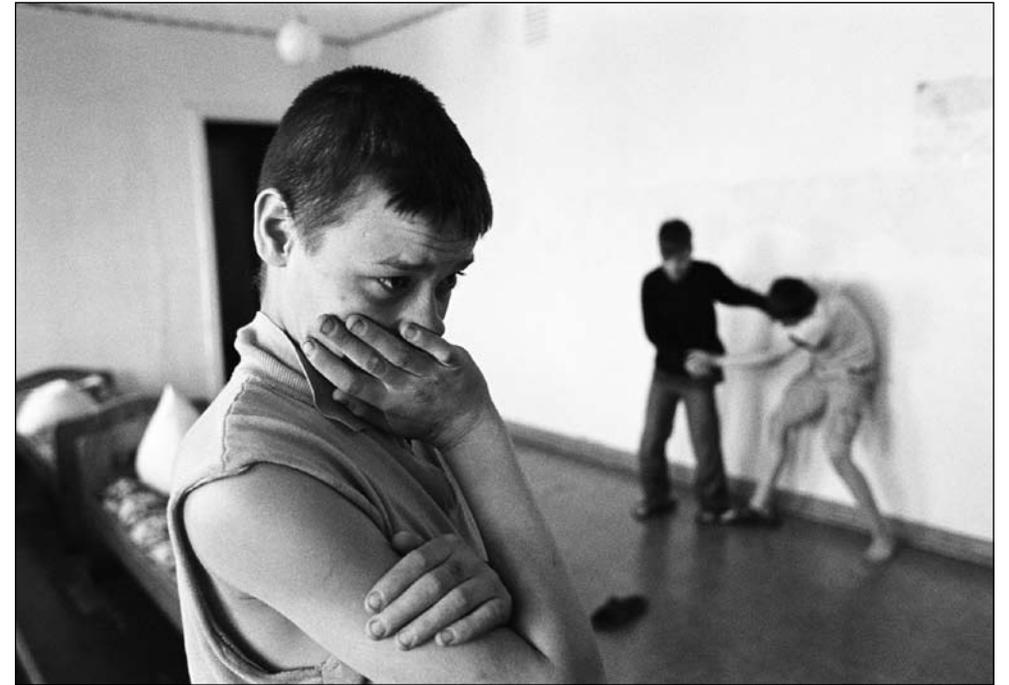
Zilia Malysheva
Director NOU "Development Center of Family Hosting for Children"
Russia, 183025 Murmansk, ul. Polar Zory, 31 building 1
tel. Fax (815 2) 44 11 31
mob. + 7 921 513 52 54
e-mail: fsco@mail.ru
ddsos-centre-murmansk@sos-dd.org

Irina Hanasyuk
Project Coordinator, "Family Group Conference"
tel. 815 2 683167
mob. + 7 911 331 6983
e-mail: irina_hanasyuk@mail.ru

Useful links

www.sos-norway.ru







Restorative Justice – Juvenile Mediation and Mediation Boards

About

Mediation is usually a face-to-face meeting, in the presence of a trained mediator, between the victim of a crime and the person who committed that crime. This system originated in Canada, where it formed part of an alternative court sanction in a case involving two accused vandals who met face-to-face with their many victims. ⁽⁸⁾

Target group and goal

Mediation as a method is a part of the term “Restorative justice”, which aims at a single offender in order to prevent the development of criminal behaviour, especially among children and youth.

Method

The mediation is based on the idea that, with a mediator present, the criminal and the victim can find a solution through an active dialogue. Usually, the mediation takes place between two persons, the criminal/offender and the victim. It is also possible to involve the immediate network from both sides (family, friends, teachers, neighbours and so on), so that more practical and emotional consequences of the conflict are revealed. The network can cooperate with the parties in order to find a lasting solution to the conflict. Mobilizing networks and support persons in recovery and reconciliation process has proved to be an advantage.

Mediation in Norway

All municipalities in Norway offer mediation in the mediation boards in accordance with the law on Mediation Boards of 1991. There are currently 22 mediation boards and about 700 local mediators. The mediation in a mediation board is free of charge for the parties involved. All cases require consent of both parties before mediation can take place. Mediation boards deal both with civil and criminal cases. Most of the cases transferred to the boards deal with minors.

(8) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Restorative_justice#Victim-Offender_Mediation – accessed on 28.11.2009

Mediation can be used as an alternative, or as a part, of the punishment, as well as a condition for suspended sentence. It is prosecutors who transfer criminal cases to a mediation board. The Attorney General has instructed prosecutors to increase the use of this scheme, and the transfer of cases to the mediation boards has increased in recent years. There has also been established a pilot project with a follow-up team within the mediation boards which will follow up on some young offenders. The follow-up team consists of police, child welfare, specialists in narkology, health care, school system, correctional services and the Central mediation board. Follow-up teams expand the current mediation system to include coordination of individual-oriented follow-up of young offenders in addition to the cases that are transferred to the mediation board as a part of a criminal case. All who are affected by a crime can participate in a process where they decide in cooperation and jointly how to deal with the effect of the offense and its consequences for the future. The goal is to stop the criminal “career”.

Effect

The experience with mediation services in Norway has been very positive. As a result of mediation, in 9 of 10 cases, the parties reach an agreement, and a year later, most agreements are maintained. This illustrates that mediation is a particularly valuable approach in cases where youth are involved. Surveys indicate that mediation has a positive effect when it comes to prevention of new crimes. Only 20 percent of minor offenders commit new crimes after a case of mediation. In contrast, 80% of those who met traditional punishment, such as detention, or prison sentence, commit a new crime within one year after the punishment.

Therefore, greater focus on “restorative justice” and increased use of mediation is an important priority for the prevention of new crime among young offenders. In this work, the need to mobilize a broad and inter-agency network around the offender is emphasized. Mediation service plays a key role as facilitator for a coordinated effort from the support system around.

Several mediation centres have particularly good experience with large meetings. A large meeting involves a systematic group process that can lead to conflict transformation and conflict resolution. The intention is that participants will be able to take responsibility for the conflict. The meeting normally has from 10 to 30 participants and has as its aim that the participants will talk about what has happened, how it has affected them and what can be done to restore the damage and bring about a better future. Support persons from relevant agencies participate in the large meeting. To sum it up, in crime prevention, the mediation service plays a central role. The emphasis is on expanding the use of mediation and at the same time ensuring the comprehensive follow-up of the individual offender.

Mediation in Russia

The head of the Mediation Service in Trondheim (Norway), Iren Sørkjordmo, has been involved in the Pomor cooperation (Arkhangelsk region) since 2000.

During the period of 2000 – 2005 a series of seminars, training programmes, courses for among others specialists from correction services, orphanages, have been held in Arkhangelsk as a part of the activities at the Norwegian-Pomor University Centre (the Pomor State University, Arkhangelsk Russia). One of the topics for these events was prevention work on criminality and mediation.

A decision to run a training course has been made in cooperation with Mediation Board in Trondheim (Norway), the heads of the Child Welfare services and the Commission on juvenile matters and protection of their rights. The course had the same structure and content as training courses arranged in Norway. The training course included 4 sessions, 3 days each. The participants were instructed in mediation through group work, role play, and theoretical lectures. The necessary material was translated into Russian. Since then, about 20 Russian officers of social services from Arkhangelsk have got Norwegian diplomas as mediators.

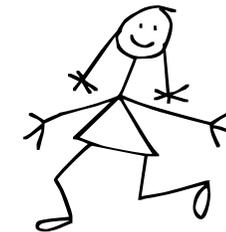
Mediation in the Arkhangelsk region has been implemented within the framework of the Ministry of Education. The centre of psychological, pedagogical, medical and social help for children and youth "Leda" has been working with school mediation at schools of the region since 2004. The method of mediation has been used at resolving conflicts in such situations as threats, verbal abuse, running away from home, skipping school, petty thefts, vandalism, causing some material damage.

In October 2009, the municipal Department for Education in Arkhangelsk has requested the organization of the municipal mediation council and mediation commissions at schools, where the centre "Leda" will provide the methodological support. Both the specialists and the participants of the programme underline that mediation has proved to be useful and essential for Russian environment where social situation cannot be called a stable one, and where courts are overloaded by administrative offences.

Contact information

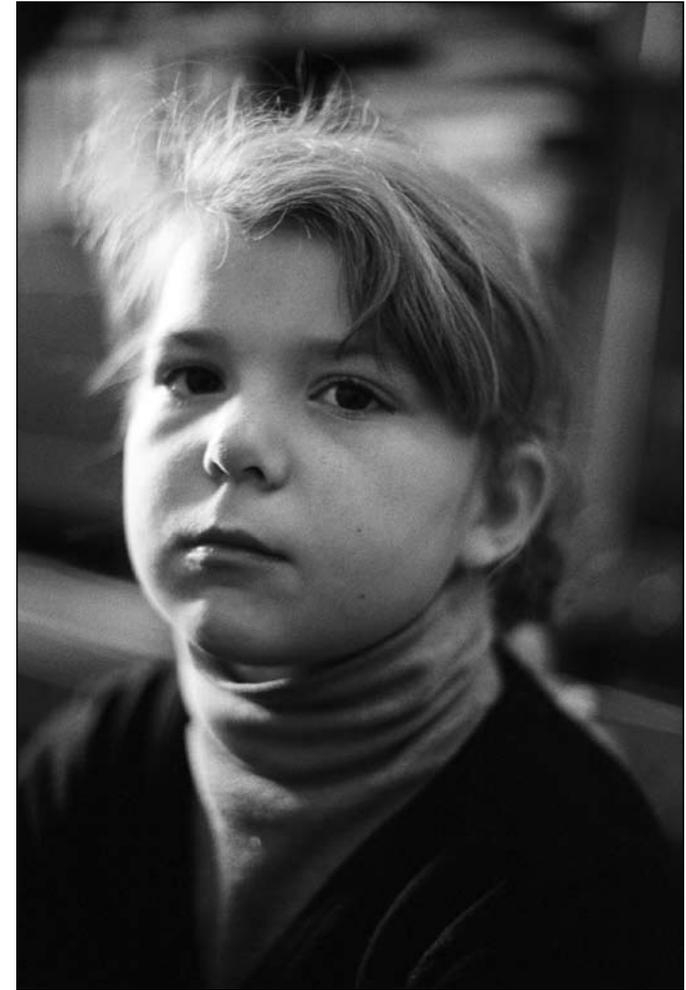
Iren Sørkjordmo
The Mediation Service of South Trondelag
Trondheim, Norway
Tlf.: +47 22032570
E-mail: iren.sorkjordmo@konfliktraadet.no

Elena Ilyina
Social-rehabilitation centre "LEDA"
Arkhangelsk, Russia
E-mail: elena.ilyana@mail.ru
Tlf.: +7 8182 285693









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ART and Family-ART

The information has been kindly provided by Knut Gundersen, V.Kolesnikov, the social-rehabilitation centres "Nadezhda" and "Vozrozhdenije", Special school # 8 (organizations-participants in Petrozavodsk, the Republic of Karelia, Russia), and by the contact person for the ART programme in Russia Roman Kopusov.

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