

Editorial

Welcome to the Scottish Journal for Residential Child Care. When I was in direct practice, I had the nagging feeling that I never knew enough. In the earliest days of my career, I was never able to find much to read that addressed what I was seeing in my practice. Now I have the opposite problem; there is so much more being written that it is impossible to read everything, and difficult to know where to start or how to prioritise! To help this situation, the journal has been offering reviews of books relevant to our field. Having an introduction through the eyes of someone else can help you to decide whether a book might be useful.

Building upon this, we have decided to include young people in our book reviews. There are a number of reasons for this, and as a way of explaining I will again reflect back on my own practice. In each of the places I have worked, one of the most enjoyable parts of the day was reading to children and young people at bedtime. This became an important ritual with some young people; it provided predictability where quality time could be shared without being framed as 'key work' or 'one-to-one time'; it was just something we did, like any other child who did not live in residential care. We know how important a sense of normality is to young people in residential care. Reading offers other important benefits, too. For one young man, it was the only time he accepted adult/child nurturing. The shared experiences of scary passages, cliff-hangers at the end of chapters or tear-jerkers can enhance or even be part of the foundation of building relationships. It can provide a time for exploring values or issues, when it is often easier to speak about what the character should or should not

have done than to talk about oneself. So if young people get a kick out of reading books, why not encourage them to review books as well?

In this edition of the journal, Angus Norquay has provided the first of what we hope to be many book reviews written by young people in residential child care. Angus has reviewed *Autobiography of my dead brother* by Walter Dean Myer, offering a summary that quickly captures interest. Angus also includes his own insights as to the relevance of the book for a young Scottish person.

We hope that reviews from the perspectives of young people in residential care will help to inform those in practice to identify books they want to make available in their units. We also hope the experience of writing a review and having that review published will be of benefit to our young reviewers. We are interested in hearing from other young people who would like to do a book review. Guidance will be provided, and they can keep the book which they review. For further information, please contact me. My details are at the back of this journal. By the same token, we are always interested in hearing from practitioners who may be interested in doing a book review on a particular area of interest to them. Writing a review can be a good way to start getting your views printed and your voice heard. So if you have thoughts or ideas about either one (adult or young people's reviews), please get in touch.

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