The Practice of Nurturing Touch in Care Settings

“Reflections and Perspectives on Touch in Current Practice”

James Freeman
Webinar 1
Reflections and Perspectives on Touch in Current Practice

In this session we will:
• Reflect on various perspectives on touch
• Examine existing professional thinking on touch
• Reflect on current practice using case studies
Opening Consideration

What message does an individual receive...

...when the only touch they encounter is in a restraint?  
...when they are told to avoid physical contact?
Fear-Driven Practice

Bad actions of few affect broader practice

Fear of abuse places ‘protection’ above care

Abuse furthered by poorly addressing a basic human need

Adults left unsure & without guidance
Prior Training Experiences

Your Previous Training
“Children need physical contact to learn and need to touch and be touched to understand.”

“So they benefit from the experience of touch, children need relationships where they are guided about appropriate and inappropriate ways of engaging in physical contact.”

"Children under stress require more physical contact than usual."

Reflections & Perspectives
Mindfulness & Reflection on Touch
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Mindfulness & Reflection on Touch
Your response to viewing the images?
I don't remember any physical contact with my birth mother. My first experiences were negative. There was physical and sexual abuse in the home that made being touched confusing.
I needed to be taught about what is appropriate and not appropriate. Even though I did not learn about [healthy touch] I looked for it with boys and became pregnant at 16. I would have valued a touch of a mother figure.
Reflections & Perspectives

I developed crushes with older men. I did not know much about boundaries and I saw staff as intimate because they took care of me.
I have thick, frizzy, crazy hair and one of my female staff made me feel special because she would straighten my hair every Sunday night while we listened to music and talked. I felt loved with this kind of touch.
Reflections & Perspectives

Field notes on adult-youth experiences

1. Touch can Mean a Thousand words

Chris & Joshua while fishing at night

Reflections & Perspectives

Field notes on adult-youth experiences

2. Children’s ‘Inappropriate’ Touch
Rebecca on uncomfortable contact
Reflections & Perspectives

Field notes on adult-youth experiences
3. Nurturing Touch

Patrick & Rachel on the couch
In this session we have

• Reflected on various perspectives on touch

• Examined existing professional thinking on touch

• Discussed current practice using case studies
References & Research Base


Kibble CYC-Net Webinar 2
“An Understanding of Touch & Strategies for Healthy Touch Environments”
James Freeman

https://www.kibble.org/kibble-cyc-net-webinar-series/