

Kibble/CYC-Net  
Webinar Series

# The Practice of Nurturing Touch in Care Settings

## “Reflections and Perspectives on Touch in Current Practice”

James Freeman

# Presentation Abstract

## Webinar 1

### Reflections and Perspectives on Touch in Current Practice

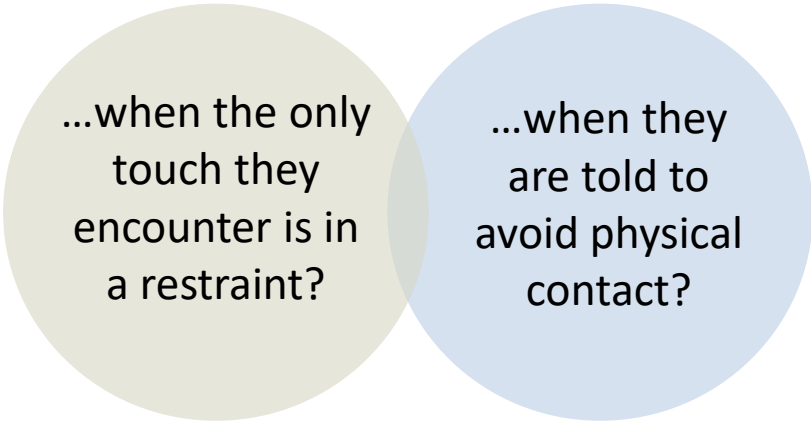


In this session we will:

- 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

Abuse furthered  
by poorly  
addressing a  
basic human  
need

Fear of abuse  
places 'protection'  
above care

Adults left  
unsure &  
without  
guidance

## Prior Training Experiences



**Your  
Previous  
Training**

## A Vital Developmental Need



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

Burns, M. (1993). *Time In: A handbook for child and youth care professionals*. Burns-Johnston Publishing.

## A Vital Developmental Need



“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.”

Burns, M. (1993). *Time In: A handbook for child and youth care professionals*. Burns-Johnston Publishing.

7

## A Vital Developmental Need



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

Burns, M. (1993). Time In: A handbook for child and youth care professionals. Burns-Johnston Publishing.

8





## Reflections & Perspectives

## Mindfulness & Reflection on Touch



## Reflections & Perspectives



## Reflections & Perspectives



12



## Reflections & Perspectives



13

## Reflections & Perspectives



## Reflections & Perspectives



## Mindfulness & Reflection on Touch



16



## Reflections & Perspectives



17

## Reflections & Perspectives



18

## Mindfulness & Reflection on Touch



19



**Your response to viewing the images?**

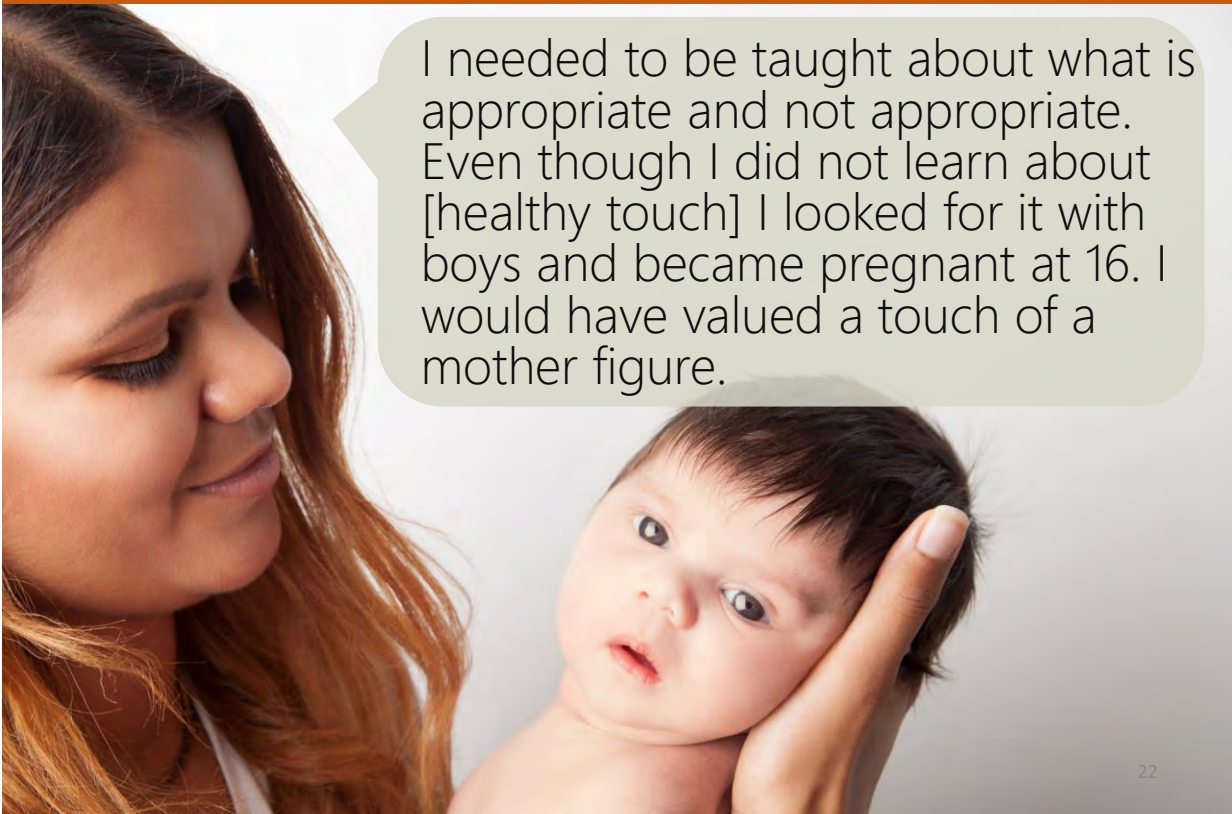


## Reflections & Perspectives

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.

21

## Reflections & Perspectives

A photograph of a woman with long, wavy brown hair looking down at a baby. The woman is on the left side of the frame, and the baby is on the right. The baby is looking up at the camera. A speech bubble is overlaid on the image, containing text.

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.

22

## 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.



23



## Reflections & Perspectives

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.



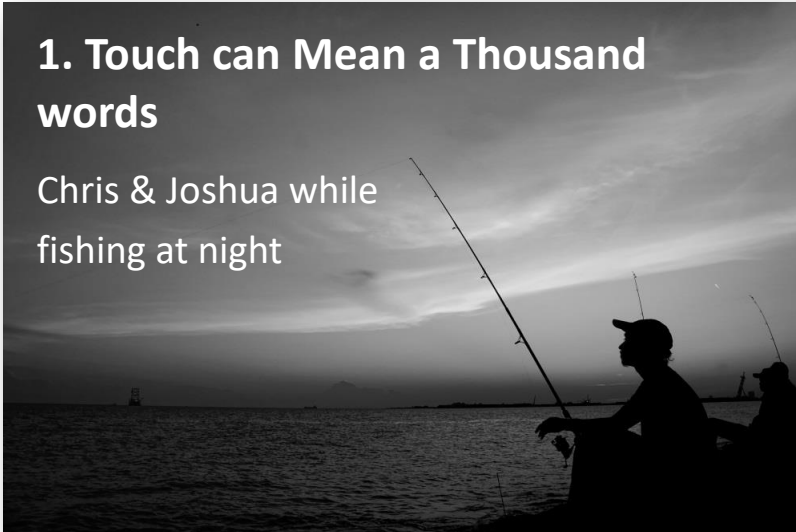


# Reflections & Perspectives

## Field notes on adult-youth experiences

### 1. Touch can Mean a Thousand words

Chris & Joshua while fishing at night



Reference Source for Field Note Slides: Warwick, L. (2017). *Touching matters: An ethnographic study of adult-child relationships and the use of touch in residential child care*. (Doctoral thesis). University of Nottingham.

25

## 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



27

# Presentation Summary

## Webinar 1

### Reflections and Perspectives on Touch in Current Practice



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

- Brentro, L. (2017). Touch: The foundation of belonging. *Thriving*, 1(8), 2-9. Retrieved from <http://growingedgetraining.com/thriving>
- Burns, M. (1993). Time In: A handbook for child and youth care professionals. Burns-Johnston Publishing. Retrieved from <http://www.cyc-net.org/quote/quote-86.html>
- Fewster, G. (2004). Just between you and me: Personal boundaries in professional relationships. *Relational Child and Youth Care Practice*, 17(4), 8-18.
- Garfat, T. (1998). On the fear of contact, the need for touch, and creating youth care contexts where touching is okay. *Journal of Child and Youth Care*, 12(3). Retrieved from <http://www.cyc-net.org/journals/jcyc/jcyc12-3.html>

## References & Research Base

Heslin, R. (1974). *Steps toward a taxonomy of touching*. (Conference paper). Chicago, IL: Midwestern Psychological Association.

Steckley, L. (2012). Touch, physical restraint and therapeutic containment in residential child care. *British Journal of Social Work*, 42(3), 537-555.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcr069>

Warwick, L. (2017). *Touching matters: An ethnographic study of adult-child relationships and the use of touch in residential child care*. (Doctoral thesis). University of Nottingham. Retrieved from  
<http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/41495>

Kibble/CYC-Net  
Webinar Series

# 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/>

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