

The background of the cover is a vibrant watercolor wash in shades of green, yellow, and orange. Overlaid on this is a dark silhouette of a young child running away from the viewer on a light-colored path. The child's arms are slightly out to the sides, and their legs are in mid-stride. The overall mood is energetic and hopeful.

TIME IN

An Introduction to
Therapeutic Activity Programming
and Facilitation

BY MICHAEL BURNS

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Soon to be Released

FORWARD

The 25th anniversary of *Time In!* For many readers, the birth of this text in 1993 precedes their own birth. So, for those readers, and others who may not be familiar with the history of the profession, a little background is in order to appreciate the accomplishment this text on therapeutic activities represents.

Therapeutic activities, the use of carefully chosen, constructed, or adapted activities to achieve therapeutic results, has been a cornerstone of the child and youth care (CYC) profession since the beginning. It was central to the origins of the profession (psycho-educateur) in Europe in the 1940s and was a fundamental part of the profession in North America from its formal beginnings in the 1950s.

And though chapters and articles on therapeutic activities appeared regularly through the period from the 1950s to the 1980s, it wasn't until 1993, with the first printing of *Time In!*, that the subject was given its full due as a complete textbook. Part of what spurred Burns on to write the text is hinted at in the title. By the 1980s, a simplified (some would say crude) version of behaviour modification was popular in child-serving agencies throughout North America, and a particular technique based on this approach, "time out," was in use everywhere, including family homes.

Originally conceived of as a short time (2 to 5 minutes) for rest and reflection, time out quickly became a form of (albeit mild in many cases) punishment--"Do that again and you're going to get a time out." And to make things worse, these time outs could go on well past 5 minutes. Burns, as a seasoned child and youth care worker, was naturally opposed to a system that was basically punitive and took time away from positive, skill-building activities. What better way to indicate the CYC approach than in the title, *Time In!*

Since 1993, Burns has had the satisfaction of seeing most CYC training programs in Canada use the text, some throughout the 25-year history of the book. Burns should also be encouraged that "science" is now catching up with the child and youth care approach contained in *Time In!*. Those scientific findings are usually associated with the term neuroplasticity, popularized by another Canadian, psychiatrist Norman Doidge, in 2007. Essentially, this is the discovery that the brain has the ability to rewire itself (create new neural pathways), and that this can be done through carefully chosen activities, like those found in this text.

So, for those readers not content with "simply" providing positive, growth-enhancing experiences for young people, you can be assured that you are also creating or reinforcing positive neural pathways!

And for those readers who want to see when and how the behaviour modification approach mentioned above does fit into CYC practice, be sure to check out *A Question of Balance: Behavioural Interventions for Relationship Development* (2014). In that text, Michael Burns tackles another fundamental concept in child and youth care, relationship, showing how behaviour modification techniques can be used in the initial stage of building therapeutic relationships. Time will tell whether it goes on to become a classic like *Time In!*

Dennis E. McDermott, Harrowsmith, Ontario

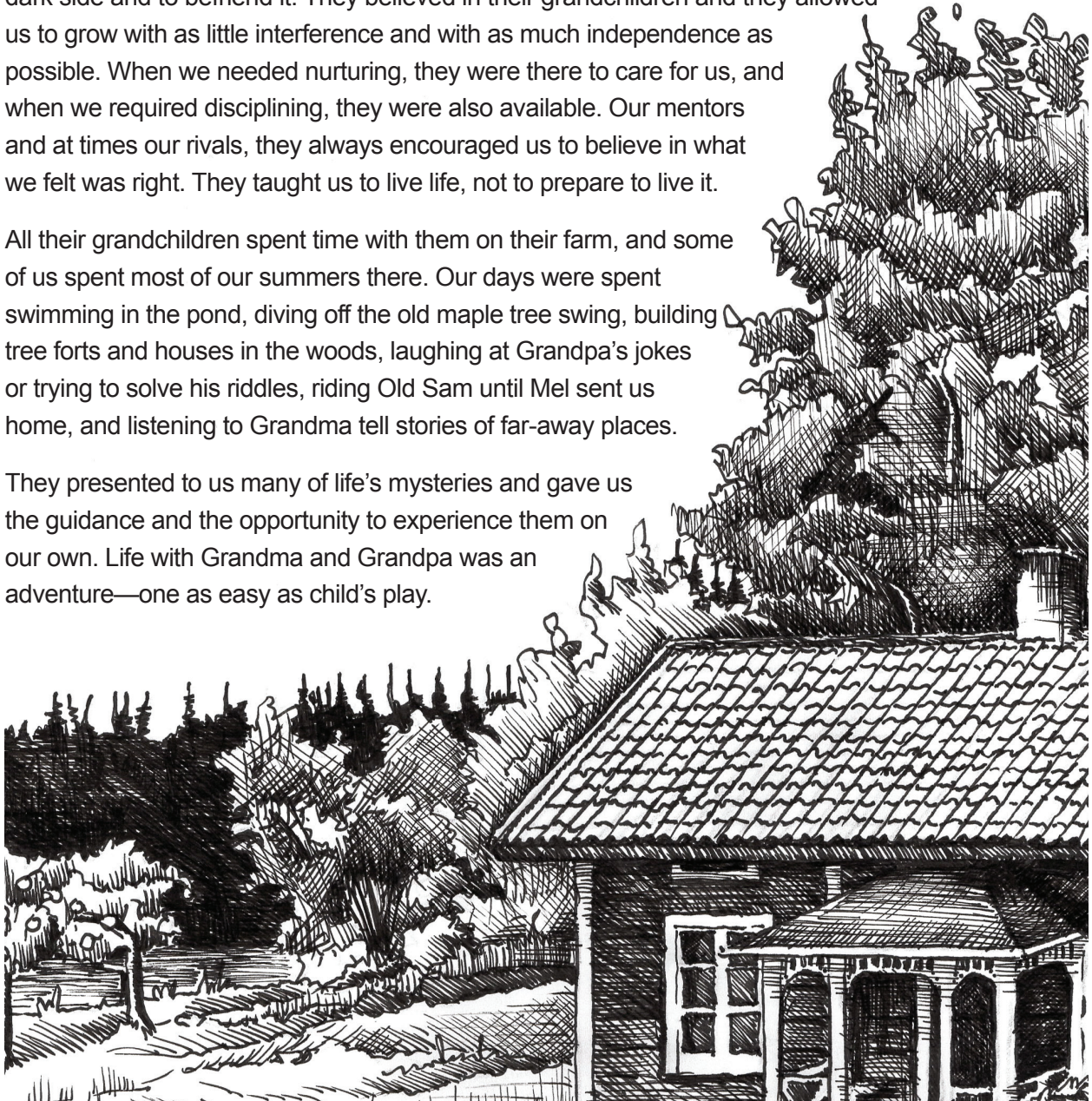
CHAPTER 1

Understanding Play As Therapy

My grandparents lived in a very scenic part of Southern Ontario where apple orchards and grape vineyards stretch across the countryside. They owned a tiny wood frame cottage on the edge of a small town. Their land was 12 acres of meadow, woods, pond, and barn. Grandpa was a seer, a gardener, and a musician. Grandma was a lover, a painter, and a seamstress. The gift they gave to us was the capacity to recognize the good and bad in everyone. They taught us to value our dark side and to befriend it. They believed in their grandchildren and they allowed us to grow with as little interference and with as much independence as possible. When we needed nurturing, they were there to care for us, and when we required disciplining, they were also available. Our mentors and at times our rivals, they always encouraged us to believe in what we felt was right. They taught us to live life, not to prepare to live it.

All their grandchildren spent time with them on their farm, and some of us spent most of our summers there. Our days were spent swimming in the pond, diving off the old maple tree swing, building tree forts and houses in the woods, laughing at Grandpa's jokes or trying to solve his riddles, riding Old Sam until Mel sent us home, and listening to Grandma tell stories of far-away places.

They presented to us many of life's mysteries and gave us the guidance and the opportunity to experience them on our own. Life with Grandma and Grandpa was an adventure—one as easy as child's play.



Personal Reflection – Your Play Experiences

1. List the play activities that you most enjoyed as a child.


2. Based on what you have read in this chapter, list the possible reasons as to why you enjoyed these activities.

3. List the play activities you enjoyed as an adolescent and pre-adolescent.

4. Why do you feel those activities were so meaningful—perhaps a need, want, or desire you feel these activities addressed?

5. List the play/leisure experiences that you enjoy in your life now.

6. Why do you feel those activities were so meaningful—perhaps a need, want, or desire you feel these activities addressed?



Feelings reflect a need, a loss, or satiation, and are a form of energy which can be used to help us act effectively to take care of ourselves.

– HENDRICKS & ROBERTS

We experience our lives in our bodies (sensations) and in the interpretation of our sensory experiences (emotions). Children need to be able to get to know their feelings, to express and to experience them, and to befriend them, as Uncle Mel did with Sentient Sam and us. Teaching and reinforcing emotional and sensory regulation is the heart of child and youth work—emotional and sensory experiences are the heart of us all. In many ways, feelings are the experience of the life force within us.

This chapter on feelings underscores the importance of feelings when working with children. It provides discussion on the appreciation of sensory experience as separate from, but connected with, emotion. The importance of emotional regulation will be stressed and techniques provided to assist the learner to facilitate ways in which children can learn to use their feelings to support and understand their thoughts and behaviours. This chapter discusses the use of feelings in group play experiences and provides strategies to initiate emotional expression and discussion in children's groups. Children have a much better appreciation of their feelings and have much more potential for using feelings as a means to attain homeostasis—balance. This chapter also provides the student and novice programmer and facilitator with 20 therapeutic interventions focussing specifically on assisting children to express and learn from their feelings. Chapter 16, "Special Programs" offers a six-week therapeutic play program focussed on the connection that exists among feelings, thoughts, and behaviours.

The Importance of Feelings

Sensory experiences are particularly important for children because they are the initial building blocks to learning. The child experiences the world through the five senses and interprets the sensations in a meaningful way. Therefore, encouraging sensory experiences in children, especially children who have deadened or numbed their senses, has considerable merit.

Feelings inform and guide children as to how to experience life (Artz, 1993; Rolls, 2005). Physical sensations let the child know whether the experience was pleasant or unpleasant.

Exercise 8:1

Select one of the above categories of atypical children (you may select the age) and, using the exercises in the intervention section, plan and develop a series of four sessions for a group of 8 participants—each session 60 minutes in length (see Chapter 3, “Designing Therapeutic Programs,” for assistance in program development). Provide a brief outline of each group session below listing topics of discussion and activities.

Session One

Session Two

Session Three

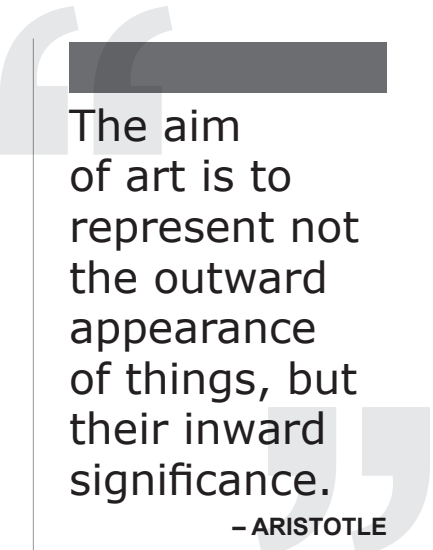
Session Four

Review

- Art forms such as drawing, sculpting, acting, and moving provide emotional outlets for children.
- The creative arts can be a form of self-expression, a means of providing insight, or can be used to set a mood.
- The expressive arts milieu needs to be designed for safety, comfort, and free expression.
- Facilitators of creative arts experiences usually take on a laissez-faire role.
- It is important for facilitators to honour the child's expression of Self though the various art mediums and not to judge or interpret it.
- Art mediums can assist children in integrating left and right hemispheric activity.

The following and concluding chapter in this text Chapter 16, "Special Programs," provides the learner with four detailed and successive therapeutic activity programs for children. These programs form a basis for further group development in therapeutic activities.

The following are a series of therapeutic interventions intended to act as resources for the student or novice practitioner who wishes to practice his/her skills in facilitating activities in the arts with children and youth.



The aim
of art is to
represent not
the outward
appearance
of things, but
their inward
significance.

– ARISTOTLE

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