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Terénní a nízkoprahové programy 2022

Výsledky práce a výzvy

12.–13. 5. 2022

Na ulici se pracuje!



Konference je pořádána v rámci projektů:
Společně a odborně v Praze CZ.03.2.63/0.0/0.0/19_099/0015187
Společně a odborně CZ.03.2.63/0.0/0.0/19_098/0015188

Projekty jsou spolufinancovány Evropskou unií.

“Therapeutic Falafel” An innovative guardianship practice model for children deprived of parental care

SW. Avner Barkai



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The Residential care center/institution



Background

- Among the 10,000 children there are about 1000 who lack any family backing who lives in “Residential care centers”
- Most guardianship agencies limit themselves to the requirements of the Israeli Legal Competency and Guardianship Law (1962) - management of property, major decisions such as hospitalization, and occasional visits in the residential setting to make sure that the child is properly cared for.
- “Yeladim” developed a different guardianship model addressing the emotional and social needs of children who lack natural support systems.
- “Yeladim” employs social workers, who try to provide ongoing emotional support and advice, through a close relationship in any time and location. They meet 20 children and try to coordinate between the child’s family and therapy, education and medical care systems.





The meeting as a therapeutic scene

- During meetings a unique scene is created by the child certain interactions dynamic, which is usually based on his past interactions with his parents.
- This form of interactions restored in the way he is experiencing himself and as he treats others as he treats himself, sometimes causing them to treat him as he treats himself.
- A child that suffered a violent abuse and lost confidence in authoritative figures and in the social order as protective, just and fair, may develop sociopathic tendencies. Exploiting others immorally, lying, cheating and stealing without remorse are all expressions of this same inner conception of relationship with others.

- N', This 14 years old child, that went back and forth to the Falafel stall and took as much salads as he can, actually expressed that loss of confidence. N' concentrated in our “give and take” relationships. He always tried to convince me to give him more than I initially wanted or thought he deserves.
- He refused to reveal his deep vulnerability and converted it to direct aggression towards me. He actually threatened to kill me if I'll dare say the cosmetics salesperson that he doesn't have enough money to buy the expensive perfume she recommended. In another occasion, he threw stones at me when I came to visit him. He kept trying to undermine my professional ethics and challenge it relentlessly;

- looking to test where I'm not myself, not honest - "fake". He told stories of him hurting others; He stole a juice bottle while I was waiting to pay trying to examine how I will react.
- He always "planted" in me, his inner doubt at the social order and caused me to feel how it is when the social order does not protect you ☹️
- As soon as I was aware of his projection, I was able to let this inner storm **"to be"** in my heart and mind without feeling that my completely professional identity is collapsing. I understood that he needs me to play a role in his inner life drama and let myself be free from his grip, and becoming a new character who's enabling to challenge him as the abusive parent did.

Turning concrete to symbolic

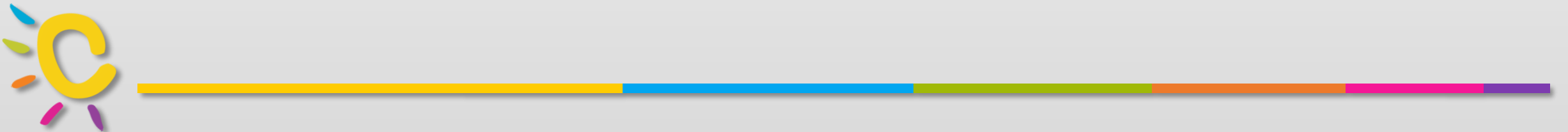
- Gradually N' was able to return the feeling of agency and autonomy, and not anymore be the threatened and haunted child he was. He is able to decide his destiny and that our partnership to his forbidden out-law secrets could wear symbolic dimensions and aspects instead of concrete.



How does the relationship with the guardian effects a child's well-being?

Evaluation research - Dr. Talia Schwartz-Tayri and Prof. Shimon Shpiro, Tel Aviv University School of Social Work

Main findings from the interviews with former wards and with social workers in residential settings



“if I didn’t get in trouble, it means she has done a good job”

- Generally, interviewees did not perceive the guardian to be staff, but a parent figure. Most of them referred to the guardian as a warm and accepting mentor.
- Legally guardianship expires at age 18, but all former wards, except one, were still in touch with the guardian at the time of the interview, and said they can count on him or her, and speak openly about “everything”.



Former wards

“she’s been there for me 24/7”

- Interviewees provided thick and constant descriptions of the times the guardian came to visit and took them out to have lunch, to the movies, bowling, buy them new clothes or other necessities, or something they have always wanted. Having fun and eating together creates unique space, shared by the child and guardian only.
- The main difficulty expressed by respondents was turnover among guardians, and the need to build a new trusting relationship.
- They all met once in 2-4 weeks with the guardian, and were in touch with him or her daily, including late hours.



“he is in touch with my sisters. When I wanted a driving license, he called the instructor. he helped me with my school teachers, and he’s still in touch with my commander in the army. Everybody likes him”

- The interviewees reported that the guardian is involved in all aspect of their lives. Few still enjoy his or her assistance, especially in the contact with officials and siblings.
- Interviewees stated that the guardian advocated for them, urging care staff to provide for their needs.
- The guardian sought to provide the child with things and experiences that affected their future, such as driving lessons, a smartphone, orthodontic treatment, etc.
- The response of the guardian to their unique needs and wishes enhanced their trust in the relationship, and created a feeling that “I know that when I am in trouble, I have someone to call on”.



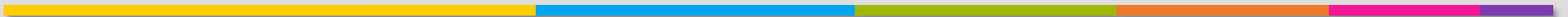
“we can speak authentically with him, and not according to strict regulations”

- In six of seven interviews with social workers of the residential homes, the guardian was described as a likable and sympathetic figure. It was stated that the warm personal and professional relationship with her or him enhanced the staff's ability to respond to the child's needs and behavior, and plan psychosocial interventions.
- Sometimes children with severe mental or behavioral problems were admitted to the residential care house under the condition that the council be their legal guardian. the guardians helped these children adapt and progress.
- The guardians and the social workers of the homes cooperate in promoting the child's well-being.
- The guardian, unlike the home's social worker, stays in touch with the child wherever he/she is. And after the end of official guardianship and after leaving residential care.



“Yeladim” guardians recruit extra resources for children with greater needs. The guardians represent an organization that is respected by residential care organizations”

- In addition to the close relationship with the child, the guardians maintain close professional relationships with child protection agencies, courts, care staff, school, and the child’s kin.
- Conditions for effective relationships between the home’s staff and the child’s guardian include shared-decision making, weekly updates, monthly informal meetings when visiting the child, and collaboration when responding to requests by child protection officers, extended family members and other figures in the child’s life.
- Thanks to their affiliation with the council, guardians successfully recruit resources and services for the child via other programs.





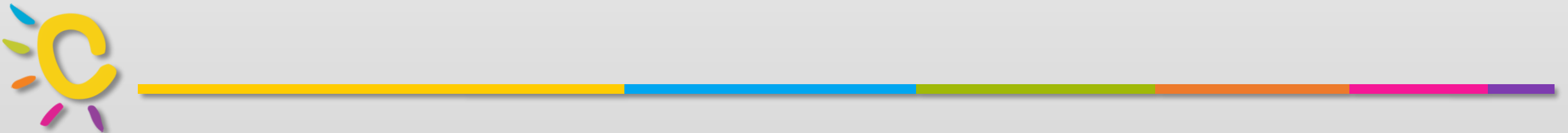
“he (the guardian) used to meet the child in the neighborhood, so he sensed the kind of risks that the child engaged in... he was connected to his life there”

As opposed to care and child protection agencies, guardians' position allows them to leap over bureaucratic boundaries, and generate close relationship with child older siblings and extended family members, mediate between them and official care providers, and encourage them to engage more actively in the child's life, and serve as future support system.



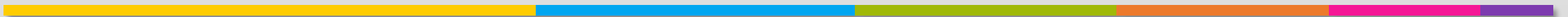
“This child grew up in such a chaotic family. It is amazing that he achieved stability. He needed someone he could count on, that would never desert him. When this child suffered breakdowns, the guardian had a great effect on his recovery”

All interviewees agreed, that for both the child and the social workers, the guardian played a parental role. A responsible, stable, consistent emotional and material care provider, that both child and staff turned to in need of advice and material resources.



“For the child, the guardian had no hidden agenda, it was a ‘clean’ relationship. Whenever they went to eat together, I would call it ‘Falafel therapy’, because it allowed things that would never happen in the therapy room”

- Interviewees provided thick descriptions of children’s experiences when taken out of the care setting to have lunch and fun with the guardian. They associated these experiences with the healing and recovery of children’s trust, and the graduate progress in the child’s behavior and adaptation to the home.
- Only one care coordinator objected to the informality which characterizes the child-guardian relationship, and reported that it might be used by the child for inappropriate manners. In her view, care staff should be the significant figures in the child’s life, not the guardian”



“When working with .. (another guardianship agency) I would call them when the child was scheduled to have surgery. They wouldn't understand why I even call them”

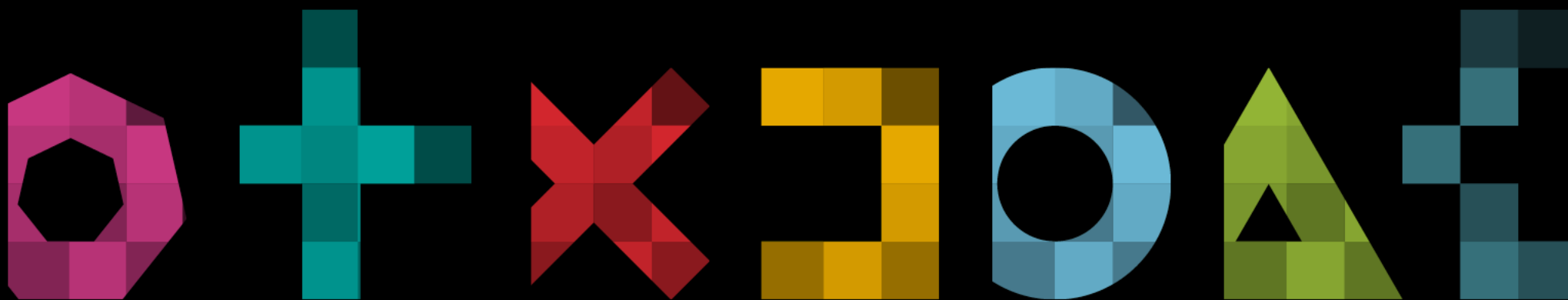
Drawing upon the interviews, we found five major differences between the council model and the practice undertaken by other guardianship agencies:

Council guardianship body	Other guardianship bodies
Continuous guardianship for 1-5 years	Constant turnover
Meetings with the child once in 2-4 weeks and daily phone contact	Meets with child twice a year
In touch directly with the child, and maintain a comprehensive collaboration with care and educational systems' representative	In touch mainly with child through care social workers
Official guardianship ends at 18. Connection gradually reduces only after the child becomes involved in another supportive program	Ends at 18
The council as guardian does not charge a fee, and recruits financial and material resources for the child, and helps maximize his or her social security benefits	Charges fees from the child's assets or income



Thank you!





1997–2022



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