There is not a single child protection system in the world that is working...

There have been Systems for a time which did some things better or achieved periods of relative stability however these periods of improvement have been temporary.

Child Protection Agencies, both public and private (NGOs) around the world deliver a form of casework and legal practice referred to by some researchers as "casework as usual." This is despite more than 25 years of efforts and large investments by agencies and governments to seek what are described as emerging, best or evidenced informed methodologies.

In other words, no best practice or evidence informed model has gone to scale anywhere in the world and achieved the expected impact for any lasting period of time. What endures is casework as usual. To understand why this might be we must remember our history.
OUR HISTORY MATTERS

Child Protection Traditions are based on a DOMINANT THEORY OF CHANGE focused on solving the problem of the poor.

The Theory Has Been “Moving children from bad people and places to better people and places”

These EXCLUSIONARY PRACTICES perpetuate ‘Casework, Lawyering and Judging As Usual’ Practices which are based in government power

SAFE vs UNSAFE, GOOD vs BAD, AFFLUENT vs POOR, HEALTHY vs DYSFUNCTIONAL, THRIVING vs FAILING

The complexity of this history and the competing interests between those involved amplify the importance of judicial oversight and action in protecting the rights of vulnerable persons.

More than 400 years of policy, practice and tradition in the Western World based on beliefs and policies about who holds the agency for the problems of poor and social problems: the church, individuals, government or the helping industry?

A brief history of the “Modern Welfare State” and the evolution of “Casework As Usual”
THE PENDULUM SWING IN SOCIAL CARE

The Elizabethan Poor Laws

Elizabethan Poor Laws of 1601
- An organized merging of England’s earlier social welfare legislation
- Three driving principles:
  1. The primary responsibility for provision lay with one’s family
  2. Poor relief should be handled at the local level
  3. Individuals should not be allowed to move to a new community if unable to provide for themselves financially
- Indoor and Outdoor relief
- Served as foundation for social legislation in colonial America

Lord William Beverage and THE 5 GIANTS: Want, Ignorance, Disease, Squalor, Idleness
21st Century Science MEETS Child Welfare

THE UNIQUE VULNERABILITY of CHILDREN in AMERICA’S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM
A “PILE UP” OF ADVERSITY
ALLOSTATIC OVERLOAD
RESILIENCE BUILDING
EXTENDED SOCIAL and CULTURAL QUARENTINE

Adversities are Both Cumulative and Compositional

THE CAUSES OF THE CAUSES

IF YOU FEEL LONELY, YOU ARE...
HEALTH AND MENTAL HEALTH RISKS THE RESULT OF A PILE UP OF ADVERSITIES

TOXIC STRESS
- Healthy Stress
- Tolerable Stress
- Toxic Stress

Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Maltreatment
- Household Dysfunction
- Environmental Factors

COMPLEX Developmental TRAUMA
- Repeated and prolonged trauma
- Harm and abandonment by caregiver
- Uneven power dynamic in interpersonal relationships

ALLOSTATIC OVERLOAD: Preventable wear and tear on the body resulting in health and mental health problems across the life course, including shortened lifespan for some

PHYSICAL ADAPTATION
A STRESS SYSTEM PERMANENTLY SET ON HIGH

BRAIN ARCHITECTURE
IRREVERSIBLE CHANGES IN STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION
What Helps Can Hurt...
Out of Home Care Placements of Children Function as a Social/Cultural Quarantine, Extended Quarantine Harms Health and Development

Justice Doing: Just Listening; Just Questions; Just Caring; Just Serving

Justice is what LOVE looks like in public.
- Dr. Cornel West
Dignity Giving: Re-membering People; Re-membering Families, Re-membering Culture

“Colonization dismembered our culture, our people, and our families. Our job is Re-membering”

Theta Newbreast
Blackfeet

Family Seeing: Seeing the human being; Seeing the Context of their lives; Inviting Complexity
Family Finding Truths

Every child has a family and they can be found if we try

Every child has/had a father and paternal family

As children grow older and access the community non relative adults will learn to care about them

Every child and person will encounter human beings in their future who can radically change their lives in enriching ways

Services and Programs alone can interrupt and curtail human relationships and liberty with grave consequences across the lifespan

We must be intolerant of some things

We expect child protection/mental health and legal professionals to become effective in practices which lead to meaningful relationships for isolated children

Networks are at the center of all planning, practice and decision making

If there is no Network, get one

If a Caseworker, mental health or legal professional feels they cannot work with families and children to get a Network help them find other work

Foster and congregate care must become rare, brief and work within and in support of networks

It is unacceptable to deny children meaningful access to human relationships based on resource complaints or as a sanction for the child's behavior

The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.

-Bruce D. Perry
“Safety is temporary without healing, healing happens in the network or group”

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