
CENTER UPDATE

Newsletter of the 4-H Center for Youth Development
University of California, Davis

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Notes from the Director

Tackling Social Issues: Full Esteem Ahead?

—*Marc Braverman*

All right, I'll admit it. Sometimes I have a problem with self-esteem.

Wait—not *my* self-esteem. I feel OK about myself. I also have no problem with self-esteem as a research topic in child and adolescent development. My problem is with self-esteem as a *social force*, as a formula for reducing drug and alcohol use, sexual activity, and most of the other high risk behaviors that plague youth in our society. Focusing on youths' self-esteem is often portrayed as the key to addressing these problems. It has wide-ranging curative properties. It is the Michael Jordan of psychosocial variables.

This line of thought (minus the jokes) was elaborated very insightfully earlier this year in a paper by Joseph Kahne, of the University of Illinois at Chicago.¹ Kahne reviews some of the underlying theoretical conceptions and reflects on the role of self-esteem as a political and policy phenomenon, particularly on the creation and functioning of the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal and Social Responsibility. This Task Force, funded by the California legislature in the late 1980's was probably the most ambitious attempt thus far to integrate self-esteem into the policy arena. Kahne provides some sharply critical analyses of the process of translating research into sound public policy.

Problem one: What exactly is this concept? Some treat self-esteem as a byproduct of particular forms of competence, that is, one has self-esteem to the extent that one has high grades, athletic ability, special talents, good looks, and so on. Others see it as a fundamental sense of self-respect that everyone deserves for being who they are, regardless of achievement level or place in the pecking order. The educational implications of these varying definitions are not necessarily compatible. The first definition suggests a need for specific skill-building, while the second suggests a need to promote youths' self-acceptance and self-understanding. Thus, the concept may seem to enjoy widespread support, as long as we don't define it too carefully to see where we disagree.

Kahne notes that the Task Force faced a similar kind of split. The political support for addressing youths' self-esteem was based on the belief that this societal commitment has the potential to ameliorate six pressing social problems—welfare dependency, teenage pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, poor scholastic performance, child abuse, and criminal activity. Initially encountering resistance from Governor Deukmejian and conservatives in the state legislature, the initiative moved ahead when conservatives came to believe that the project's aims were, in fact, consistent with their own political goals: enabling people to thrive on their own without depending on the government. Yet this idea was not logically consistent with a more liberal perception held by other Task Force members that broad social restructuring—e.g., of our educational system—might need to occur in order to create conditions conducive for nurturing children's psychological health. Thus an inherent philosophical tension was created. Some feel that this tension eventually expressed itself in the tentative nature of the conclusions and recommendations that the Task Force produced.

Problem two: Self-esteem has, at times, been significantly oversold. Those educators who explicitly value self-esteem for its potential to achieve social benefits—as was probably the case for most supporters of the Task Force—must contend with a body of research evidence that is discouragingly weak. As Kahne (p. 12) notes: “...Cultural commitment leads to widespread support for self-esteem despite the consistent failure of sympathetic researchers to demonstrate a causal connection between it and various forms of prosocial behavior.” Furthermore, when particular studies do find modest relationships, it isn't clear whether high self-esteem is the cause of the positive outcomes or simply their result—which once again leaves open the question of how to achieve those desired outcomes in the first place. Despite these findings, public interest in self-esteem as a programming strategy appears to remain relatively high (pointing out the limited power of scientific research to affect public policy).

On the other hand, if your implicit or explicit premise is that self-esteem is a basic right of being a person—no strings attached—then your commitment to building self-esteem shouldn't depend on any subsequent outcomes you may wish to promote, such as academic success, a positive work ethic, self-control, and so on. In such a case it would be self-contradictory to assess contingent outcomes. (“You certainly don't need higher grades to respect and value yourself as a person. Hey, just for the heck of it, did your grades improve after you went through our program last year?”) However, from a policy viewpoint, disconnecting self-esteem from such outcomes removes the very aspects that make it attractive to policymakers and lawmakers.

So where does this analysis leave us? First, youth development staff and other educators need to be clear about how they are defining this potentially elusive concept. Second, I agree with the perspective that self-esteem should be valued for its own sake, as an important component of psychological health and well-being. Thus I don't believe that self-esteem should cease to be a focus of youth programs, but neither should it be seen as a means to some other end. For educators developing programs to promote positive youth development in a broad sense, the frustrating message is that we still don't have a magic bullet. As a final point, this case example reminds us that when the worlds of academic research and social policy intersect, things can sometimes get very interesting indeed.

¹Kahne, J. (1996). **The politics of self-esteem.** *American Educational Research Journal*, 33(1), 3-22.

Out and About Around the State...

—Ella R. Madsen

Discussion on Leader Screening Evaluation Project, UC Davis (9/19/96)

Ramona Carlos reported to the Program Policy Group on the progress of the Leaders Screening Evaluation. Currently she is developing the survey that will be used in this project.

Y.E.S. Project In-Service, Canterbury Inn, Sacramento (9/26/96)

Marc Braverman and Anna Otto represented the Center at this training conference. Among the presenters they heard were Kathleen Metz from UC Riverside and Amy Driscoll from Portland State University. Professor Metz has initiated an innovative and creative science program in Southern California where young children are encouraged to develop their own research questions and projects. Professor Driscoll discussed ways to use observation to encourage and support children in scientific thinking processes.

4-H Curriculum Committee Meeting, UC Davis (10/9-10/10/96)

As a member of the 4-H Curriculum Committee, Marc Braverman attended the quarterly meeting.

4-H Cooperative Curriculum System Presentation, UC Davis (10/9/96)

At the 4-H Curriculum Committee meeting Anna Otto and EllaMadsen shared information on the 4-H Cooperative Curriculum System (CCS). In July they had attended a curriculum development training sponsored by the CCS where they learned more about the organization and the plans for ongoing development, production and dissemination of juried curriculum on a national level. After discussing the information reported by the Center, a motion was made and carried that California would join the CCS.

Presentation to Freshman Agricultural Education Class, UC Davis (10/9/96)

Sally Stanley and Glen Gillmore gave an overview of the 4-H program. Emphasis was placed on the value of volunteering in the program in order to share knowledge and become familiar with career possibilities available through Cooperative Extension.

UC Links, Berkeley Marina Marriott, Berkeley (10/10/96)

Anna Otto represented the Center at a meeting for UC Links, a multi-campus initiative to join the university with schools and communities to provide computer-based activities designed to promote math and science literacy skills. Historically underserved populations of K-12 students in after-school activity programs are the target audience for the UC Links program. The program not only benefits the children and youth enrolled in the program, but also serves as a setting for undergraduate student field experience and for faculty research and evaluation.

1997 4-H State Leadership Conference Planning Committee, UC Davis (10/11/96)

Ella Madsen and Anna Otto will represent the Center on this year's committee. Anna attended the first planning meeting.

Hello!

—Sally Stanley

My first assignment in my new position as a Research Associate at the 4-H Center was the pleasurable experience of attending the 1996 4-H State Leadership Conference. It was really impressive to see the enthusiasm and interest expressed by both the youth participants and the adult leaders!

My own research interests involve the effects of childhood stressors on cognition and subsequent behaviors. I also do volunteer work with teens from alcoholic families. My master's degree is in Child Development and I am presently attempting

to complete my Ph.D. in Human Development at UC Davis.

Besides research, I am also interested in teaching. I have taught a class on families here at UC Davis and hope to have the opportunity to do more teaching in the future. My fun is my family. I have four adult children and three grandchildren who are the sunshine of my life. I had no idea that being a “grams” was going to be so much fun!

I am really delighted to be part of the California 4-H Program and have the opportunity to work to strengthen the program for youth. Although I have met some of you, I am looking forward to meeting and working with more of you as time goes on!

Change Your Directory, Please

—Sally Stanley

Depending on the source, you may have seen Anna referred to as Anna Sherlock, Anna Otto Sherlock, or now Anna Otto. Please note these are one and the same person and the current name is **Anna Otto**. Her new e-mail is amotto@ucdavis.edu. Her phone number is still (916) 754-8856.

When updating your directory, be sure to add **Sally Stanley**. Her phone number is (916) 754-8434 and her e-mail is smstanley@ucdavis.edu.

4-H Leader Trainings

—Anna Otto

The CYD’s 1996 Fall Leader Trainings have been completed! The training schedule was as follows:

- 9/28: Walnut (Southern Region)
- 10/5: Davis (North Central Region)
- 10/12: Red Bluff (Northern Region)
- 10/19: Parlier (South Central Region)

The 4-H CYD would like to thank the following individuals for their presentations at the 1996 4-H Leader Trainings.

- Judith Kingston, 4-H YD Advisor, LA County: **Diversity Awareness** (co-presented with Ellen Sandor)
- Jeanne George, 4-H YD Advisor, Tehama County: **Working with Teen Leaders**
- Steve Etter, 4-H YD Advisor, Placer/Nevada Counties: **Resolving Conflict in Community Clubs: How to be in 4-H and Live Happily**
- Marciel Klenk, 4-H YD Advisor, Napa County: **Parent Involvement**
- Steve Mendivil, 4-H Program Coordinator: **4-H Program Policy Issues**

Additional workshops were presented by staff at the CYD.

- Sally Stanley, Research Associate, **Experiential Learning: Ideas for Hands-On Teaching**
- Marc Braverman, Director, **Highlights of the CYD’s Adolescent Programming Evaluation**
- Anna Otto, Research Associate, **Leadership Exploration**

Lucrecia Farfan-Ramirez, UCCE County Director, Alameda County, was originally slated to present to the Southern region on **Developing Leadership in Community Organizations**, but due to an emergency, she was unable to attend the training. In the South Central region, Ann Brosnahan, 4-H YD Advisor, San Joaquin County, was unable to present her scheduled workshop, **A Case for Moral Education**, due to illness. We would like to thank both Lucrecia and Ann for the time and effort put into preparing the workshops. Substitute workshops were presented by Marc Braverman and Anna Otto.

Thanks to all of our presenters, the trainings were a big success. Look for a report follow-up in our next newsletter.

CALL FOR MANUSCRIPTS: Advances in Research and Innovative Programming on Youth Development Topics

—Ramona Carlos

As you are all (hopefully!) aware, the CYD is planning to publish a book of peer-reviewed articles on youth development research and programming in California. We are seeking contributions for chapters and would like to encourage Advisors, UCCE Specialists, and other UC Faculty who are involved in data-based research to consider submitting a manuscript for review. Originally, we had announced a deadline date of December 6, but that date has now been extended. **The deadline for receipt of manuscripts is now February 14, 1997.** We are excited about this book and think it will be a great outlet for publishing meaningful, broad-based work on youth programming in nonformal educational settings.

The manuscripts considered for publication will undergo a peer-review process, must be previously unpublished in their current form, and must be related to youth programming or theoretically oriented research that can enhance such programming.

4-H Center staff are contacting the 4-H coordinators from each DANR region to arrange for a CYD staff member to attend a regional staff meeting and discuss ways to encourage submissions. We are also putting together a short description of examples of projects which could be considered for potential topics for chapters, which we will make available to everyone. **We encourage everyone to send us your ideas, in any format, for a chapter. We are available to help you develop your ideas!**

Please feel free to contact any of the following CYD staff members if you have questions regarding this book:

Marc Braverman (916)752-7003
mtbraverman@ucdavis.edu

Sally Stanley (916)754-8434
smstanley@ucdavis.edu

Ramona Carlos (916)754-8435
rmcarlos@ucdavis.edu

Teen Leadership Curriculum Workgroup Update

—Anna Otto

A *listserv* has been established to facilitate communication between team members. All who attended the workgroup meeting at the 4-H CYD Spring Conference have been subscribed to the list, and should have received a welcome message. If you are not already subscribed and are interested in participating, just send the following message to listproc@ucdavis.edu:

Subscribe 4hteenleader firstname
lastname

(where firstname and lastname are your first and last names).

If you have any questions about the list, contact Anna Otto (amotto@ucdavis.edu). Also, remember that the 4-H Center has copies of various leadership curricula available. If you are interested in reviewing copies of any of these materials, contact either Ella Madsen or Anna Otto.

Preparing Adolescents for the World of Work Grant Receives DANR Funding

—Ella R. Madsen

In August, the 4-H Center was informed that the grant proposal, “*Preparing Adolescents for the World of Work*,” had been funded by the DANR Competitive Grants Program. We were elated, to say the least, that this project was one of the six chosen from

among the 53 proposals submitted in the area of human resources.

This research project will seek to identify and understand the factors that lead to productive career planning and decision making among older adolescents, and will develop program applications that will include recommendations for career education curricula as well as for formal academic career counseling programs and services. Marc Braverman is the Project PI. Collaborators include 4-H CYD staff, NCR Director Nicelma King, and 4-H Youth Development Advisors Linda Araujo-Wilson, Ann Brosnahan, Jane Chin-Young, Teresa McAllister, Susan Osaki, Carole Paterson and Isela Valdez.

At the first project team meeting on September 12, members of the group expressed interest in exploring a variety of issues, including the influences of SES and ethnicity on career and occupational choices, the impact of technology on career choices, children's perception of their parents as role models, the identification of successful career exploration and counseling programs, the best timing for career counseling programs, the relation of leadership to career achievement and motivation, and negative factors in youth employment. We feel we have a lot to do in a very short time but are excited by the challenge and potential of this project.

Leadership Exploration Workshop

—Anna Otto

Ella Madsen and Anna Otto presented their workshop "*Leadership Exploration*" twice on August 5 at the 1996 4-H State Leadership Conference. Following a Total Quality Management (TQM) approach, the workshop explored the area of leadership in a team context. Three major features of teams and leaders were examined: developing *trust*, creating a *common vision*, and defining *roles and responsibilities*. In

addition to activities focusing on these three areas, a set of "Additional Resources" was compiled with sections on trust building activities, group dynamics, and tips on leadership. Copies of all handouts and materials from the workshop are available by contacting either Ella or Anna.

***County Spotlight: San Luis Obispo
—A Nutritional Needs Assessment Survey
and the GOSEEK Project***

—Sally Stanley

A Needs Assessment Survey to assess the diet and fitness of low-income Latino youth, aged 10 to 14 years, was recently completed in San Luis Obispo County. Norma Wightman trained 7th and 8th grade Latino teens from Paso Robles to interview their peers on their diet and fitness habits. Although teens have sometimes collected data in science education programs, they have rarely been utilized as a resource into their own peer group and communities. Norma was delighted with her "teens as resources" approach but did have some problems with "pic sort" cards used by the teen interviewers. "Pic sort" cards depict an assortment of foods that the subject can sort according to eating frequency. Interviewers go through the cards with the subject after the initial sort. While the trained peer interviewers did an excellent job of collecting data on the research questions, the "pic sort" cards were rejected as unusable. It seems the teens were a bit silly with these and reported daily consumption of liver and huge quantities of vegetables. Another lesson learned in the world of research! The rest of the data showed that although more than 50% eat fast food 1-3 times per week, 85% of the sample of Paso Robles teens did eat breakfast. More than two-thirds of the sample help with food preparation and grocery shopping and 62% prepared their own breakfast. Norma was rightfully proud of her work training the teen interviewers.

It takes a team

Norma has also been overseeing the GOSEEK Project, recently funded by DANR through the competitive grants program. GOSEEK stands for “Girls’ Opportunity for Self Esteem, Empowerment and Knowledge.” The goal of this project is to take 80 “at risk” girls, aged 9 to 14 years and expose them to esteem building experiences. She is quick to give all the credit to Tess Harback. Tess, in turn, states she could never attempt anything like this without the guidance of Norma Wightman and Richard Enfield. Sounds like quite a bit of teamwork going on in San Luis Obispo.

It takes a village to raise a child

Putting this concept into action, Tess Harback was able to significantly reduce the cost of the GOSEEK program by encouraging local businesses and organizations to reduce their rates to support the project. For example, dance classes which would normally cost \$2,400 for 80 girls were reduced to \$800. Volunteers are also working with the girls in sports and public speaking workshops. Dancing, quilt making and self-defense classes are just some of the opportunities available for the girls because of volunteers and the reduced rates of the community participants. Participants are also sponsored throughout the program by a parent, guardian or adult friend. The sponsor must make a commitment to attend four adult education classes during the year.

Getting started

Tess informs us that the first step in a project like this is to establish a foundation of trust. Sending out flyers is not sufficient. In San Luis Obispo, talking, networking and learning more about the girls being recruited were crucial. Second, collaborate with government agencies to provide transportation. Third, find a facility or a place to meet that’s easily accessible for the population with which you are working. A community center would be ideal. Tess said

we need to realize “if the kids can’t get there it won’t happen.” Last but not least, if possible, dovetail off of a program that already exists. Tess is keeping a daily log of her interactions in the community and on the project, and is willing to share her experiences with others. Congratulations to San Luis Obispo for focusing on the positive and trying to build hope for the girls in Paso Robles. We wish you well.

A List of Potential Journals for Advisors’ Research Articles

—Ramona Carlos

Do you ever wonder which journal(s) would be most appropriate for publishing the articles you write about your work? Well, you are not alone! Finding an appropriate journal can be a significant undertaking, as there are hundreds of journals 'out there' which contain articles on similar topics to those in which YD Advisors are interested. The CYD was asked to investigate this area and to assemble a list of journals which might be most appropriate for publishing Advisors’ works. We have completed a package which includes the following information for 18 journals:

- Title
- Publisher
- Editorial Policy
- Instructions to Contributors
- Editor
- Journal's Publication Frequency
- Rejection Rate (if available)

In addition, for most of these journals, we have included a copy of the journal's specific instructions to authors, which may include additional guidelines than those outlined above. The objective in putting this together was to provide the most pertinent information in a manageable packet.

Many of the journals will probably be familiar to you, but it may still be useful to look up the actual journal before getting ready to submit an article. Reading through

a journal will give you a good feel for the journal's guiding philosophy and type of articles recently published.

We plan to send a copy of this packet to each 4-H YD Advisor. We will three-hole punch it and enclose a divider so that you can put it into your CYD white binder (which we know you have all been using!), along with the rest of the CYD publications you keep close to your heart! We expect to send this packet to you in the near future, so be sure to look for it! We hope you find it useful.

***A Successful Benefit
For 4-H in the Mother Lode!***

*—Marian Cohen,
California 4-H Foundation*

A family fun day emphasizing a country western theme was a big success for those guests who attended the Foundation's annual northern California benefit held on Sunday, September 8, in Murphys, a Calaveras County gold rush town. The event generated more than \$36,000, and will provide support to 4-H at both the state and local levels.

More than 350 guests enjoyed a beef and buffalo cookout, wagon rides, herding dog and fly casting demonstrations, and line

dancing lessons taught by country music star Shelly Streeter, the 1996 Country Music Association of America's Female Vocalist of the Year.

Chairman Lee Ruth stated that "with strong supporters and volunteers 4-H will continue to grow throughout the state." Sponsors included Bank of America, California Agricultural Production Consultants Association, California Farm Bureau Federation, California Forestry Association, Fleishman-Hillard, Inc., Pacific Bell, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Sanwa Bank, TENCO, UNOCAL Corporation, and Zeneca Ag Products.

A tremendous amount of in-kind support was received from John and Gail Kautz, California Chamber of Commerce, Harris Ranch, Star B Ranches, Nuffer, Smith, Tucker, Inc., Citadel Press, Alpha Graphics, Bonnell and Schantz Advertising Agency, and Monterey Bay Bouquets.

This year the Foundation encouraged 4-H leaders and members to sell tickets and receive 10% of the purchase price after the first 20 tickets sold. Many counties participated including Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Marin, Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Yolo.

➤ *We felt that this article was very timely, in light of this issue's Monograph. This section is reprinted from RespecTeen's Youth Update, a quarterly information resource from the Search Institute, a non-profit research organization.*

Nurturing Positive Values in Children and Adolescents

Values. Even the word makes some people uneasy. What values? Whose values? Too often, the term gets thrown around like a football in political and ideological scrimmages. Sometimes it seems easier to avoid the subject altogether.

But not talking about values is not a good option. Our values influence our world view, our behavior, and our choices. "Values" can be described as a set of ethical beliefs or commitments that undergird how we interact with others and the world. Search Institute's research has consistently found that young people's values have a great deal of influence on their behavior. When young people hold positive values, they are much more likely to make positive choices. Yet we rarely talk with young people about basic values such as honesty, caring, integrity, responsibility, equality, and self-control.

Many people focus on the role of parents in nurturing values. Indeed, parents are critical in shaping young people's values. But everyone-teachers, youth workers, neighbors, employers, friends-can help shape young people's values in positive ways. Here are some suggestions for helping youth figure out and live by their own values:

1 Be dear about your own values. To pass values on to young people, we adults need to know our own values. That requires talking with others about the things that are important to us-our beliefs, priorities, commitments. The more we talk about our values with adults, the more comfortable we will be discussing values with young people.

2 Model your values. Let young people see your values in action. This doesn't mean you need to be perfect. Rather, it is an opportunity to be a mentor, showing young people how real, imperfect people make decisions based on their values.

3 Be consistent in what you say and what you do. Sometimes we say we value one thing, and then let other values predominate in certain situations- For example, you may want young people to believe in cooperation, but only reward or honor them for winning competitions. The challenge is to be consistent with the values you say are important and the values that guide your actions.

4 Use stories, games, and role-playing. Structured activities can help bring issues and values to life in safe and non-threatening ways. Find stories that capture the essence of key values you want to address (see article on page 8). Use games, role-plays, and imaginary play to explore differing perspectives on values.

5 Provide opportunities to live values. Give young people opportunities to practice living out their values. Young people learn the value of responsibility by having responsibility. They learn the value of compassion by doing things for others.

6 Provide opportunities to reflect on values and experiences. Give young people a chance to ask tough questions and to talk about their life experiences (both positive and negative). Articulating their own questions and experiences helps young people sort through the mixed messages they receive and make their own decisions about what's important to them.

7 Reinforce expressions of positive values. Catch young people being and doing good. Acknowledge and celebrate times when a young person acts on her or his values, especially when there was pressure not to.

8 Set boundaries that reflect and reinforce values. Set rules and standards for behaviors that are consistent with your articulated values. This reinforces the values and makes it easier for young people to understand what it means to live by those values.

9 Teach social skills and competencies. Even when young people are clear about their values, it can be hard to always live by them-particularly when they feel pressure not to. It is

important to nurture in young people assertiveness, decision-making, and other social competencies so that they are confident and able to stand up for what they believe.

10 Involve young people in service, decision-making, and responsibility. Share responsibility with youth in ways that give them practice in making decisions and taking action based on their values and what they believe. Engage them in decision-making, leadership roles, service and other activities

that require them to act and make choices based on their values.

By Eugene C. Roehlkepartain



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