



Children and adolescents at risk in Israel

Overview of the field and core issues

Editors

Emmanuel Grupper, PhD

Shlomo Romi, PhD



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The voice of Young People and Issues Faced by Child and Youth Care Workers

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ילדים ומתבגרים במצבי סיכון בישראל

כרך א:
תמונת מצב של התחום ותוכני ליבה

עורכים:
עמנואל גרופר ושלמה רומי



לייל
מרכז המידע לילדים ונוער
מכון
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Children and adolescents at risk in Israel

Vol. I: Overview of the field and core issues

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Abstract

Children and Adolescents at Risk in Israel offer an updated, systematic description of issues pertaining to children and adolescents at risk in Israel. We embarked on this challenging adventure to provide scholars, teachers, students, professionals, and the many people interested in these issues, with a structured collection of research articles, addressing the many aspects of youth at risk. We also wanted to introduce readers to the current work being done in Israel with these adolescents.

The two editors, as well as the editorial coordinator who helped with editing the articles, have succeeded in combining fieldwork with research and academic teaching. This combination provides immediate, first-hand acquaintance with the adolescents who are at the core of this special realm, with exposure to the most recent theoretical innovations. Working with youth at risk is a valuable and much-needed resource that adds a unique dimension to our work.

As editors, we realized that defining the discipline of empowering children and youth at risk, worldwide and in Israel, had to be a precursor of the call for papers. We began by defining the parts of the book we had in mind, and doing so helped us focus on the principles that characterize work with children and youth in distress and at risk. The feeling we had was that we could do so only because of our many year of field experience and research. This feeling is also indicative of the developmental stage of the professional discipline of child and youth care work. Several organizational principles guided us in structuring the book:

First, this is an eclectic field, with knowledge derived from many disciplines. No single discipline, with its own set of concepts and theories, would suffice to explain the many aspects of children and youth at risk. Encompassing the body of knowledge – and establishing methods of training, professional facilitating, and research – requires working in a great variety of disciplines. Among these are developmental and social psychology, education, social work, sociology, anthropology, criminology, law, and economic – with the latter playing a major role in contemporary work.

This organizing principle has theoretical and applied implications, foremost among them planning the professional training of workers who will require resources that one discipline alone – as taught in colleges and universities – cannot provide. Planning such training requires

interdisciplinary knowledge, even if the actual training is done within a single track of studies. The complexity of training child and youth care workers is evident in the many specialized programs worldwide that are devoted to this issue: In France this training is within the schools of special education, in Italy – law, and in Chile child and youth care is part of psychology studies. Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Scandinavia, and other countries established specialized academic colleges (formerly called *Fachhochschule*, and now known as UAS – University for Applied Science) to teach this multifaceted subject. In Israel training is done in academic teacher education colleges, although they are often something of “step children” in a family of courses mainly directed at formal education. The only place, in which this subject has an independent, specific school, is British Columbia, Canada where the School for Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria has an interdisciplinary program that grants first, second, and third degrees in Child and Youth Care.

Recognizing that this area is eclectic means that we recognize its great complexity, and this recognition includes the realization that there is no order to this complexity, nor is it necessarily accepted by all practitioners. At times the complexity develops simultaneously in several disciplines without proper interfacing. This wayward development could be attributed to competition or to over-professionalization in some disciplines (especially the more established and prestigious ones), “usurping” more generalized disciplines. Child and youth care work is a relatively young discipline, and the confusion around duties and definitions are part of its growing pains. An outcome of this situation is the lack of an accepted setting for certification of child and youth care workers in Israel, and therefore, a lack of a legal standard for such professionals.

Another manifestation of these growing pains and complexity is the lack of an accepted definition of youth at risk. Distress and risk situations are broadly defined – both in theory and in practice – and consensus is elusive. At the same time, there is a great degree of agreement between researchers and practitioners. In *Children and Adolescents at Risk in Israel* this agreement may appear as some repetitiveness among chapters. The complexity and vastness of the topic mean that there are areas of overlap, and such repetition is unavoidable.

The second organizing principle is the unique arena in which most child- and youth care activities take place – nonformal education. While the gap between formal and nonformal

education is narrowing, there are differences in their characteristics, and echoes of these differences will resonate in the chapters that survey the formal arena and the nonformal dimensions of child and youth care. The nonformal dimension demands pedagogical insights that differ from those in formal education, especially regarding the difference between relationships of residents with care workers in the former, and teacher-student relationships in the latter. Furthermore, child and youth care involves voluntary activity, with the volunteers being both the young people themselves and some of the workers. In addition, child and youth care involves creating an educational environment that will allow the young people a proper moratorium – “time out” for establishing their identity. These attributes will be discussed in various chapters throughout the book.

The third organizing principle was integrating “education” and “therapy,” an integration best seen in the interaction between the concept of therapy and the actual care work. In psychology, psychiatry and social work, therapy refers to looking into the client’s situation, being committed to specific ways of work, and a requirement to be licensed to do so. These elements are all part of the work of caring for children and youth, and by the very nature, of this work, these interventions are more eclectic and “softer” than the approach taken by social workers and psychologists. The Hebrew word *tipul*, the term used for “therapy,” created ambivalence, as it also means “caregiving” and “taking care of.” English differentiates between *treatment*, *therapy*, and *care*, with the latter referring to overall care or supportive care, essentially as in “parental care.” The educational-therapeutic interventions characteristic of programs for children and youth in distress and at risk include aspects focusing on education, together with techniques and interventions from the therapeutic professions. While several chapters are specifically devoted to the integration of education and therapy as an attribute of child and youth care, this special element is a major motif throughout.

Our call for papers brought in a large number of high-quality articles, and to accommodate them we decided to publish *Children and Adolescents at Risk in Israel* as a double volume. The first volume is *Overview of the Field and Core of Issues*. The three parts of Volume I are: (1) Development and vision of educational-therapeutic work with children and youth at risk in Israel and worldwide, (2) Characteristics of populations of youth at risk, and (3) Core issues in educational-therapeutic work with adolescents in distress and at risk. Volume II is *The voice of Young People and Issues faced by Child and Youth care Workers*. This volume, too, has three

parts: (4) In the eyes of the beholder: Adolescents describe situations of risk and distress, (5) Educational-therapeutic interventions with children and youth at risk, and interaction with other professionals, and (6) Child and youth care workers: Training, identity, and professional practice.

Despite the division into two volumes – done for technical reasons – we view both volumes as a single unit. Therefore, the Introduction and Table of Contents appear in both volumes and are related to both. However, the vast material necessitated some editorial decisions, in addition to the two-volume format. Hence, to make the text more accessible, the introductory chapter is a collection of the abstracts of all the articles in the two volumes, so that the introductory chapter provides an overall view of the book as well of each of the parts, and readers can refer to this chapter as they read or study. The list of contributors is alphabetical, by volume.

In addition to articles by scholars and practitioners, some unique work has been added to this book. The first chapter, written by the editors, is our attempt to provide a comprehensive, integrative survey of educational-therapeutic definitions, developments, and interventions. We wanted to include the voices of people who made a unique contribution to the discipline, and therefore interviewed Professor Haim Adler, who was awarded the Israel Prize in 2006, and wrote an article based on the interview. Another unique article (Chapter 3) is a Hebrew version of paper written by one of Germany's leading educational philosophers, Professor Michael Winkler, about the philosophical origins of social pedagogy. Finally, Volume II, Part 6, addresses the issue of professional training for child and youth care workers. We maintain that it is important that the voice of practitioners be heard, and therefore convened a meeting of experts and representatives of agencies that train workers for work with youth at risk. The essence of this special encounter is described in Chapter 14.

In both volumes, we attempted to present systematic, updated research, presenting the various facets of the activity and work with adolescents at risk in Israel in the twenty-first century. This broad survey is our foundation for looking at the future, and trying to gather cues as to the work ahead. Some studies have already made initial link between present and future – the expanding activity through online social networks has created a new arena for adolescents at risk. Young people stepping onto this unchartered arena face new risks, but also the potential for new types of support.

Much work remains to be done with children and adolescents at risk. Many questions still loom unanswered. Answering these questions is the challenge facing theoreticians and practitioners. It is our hope that we will all be equal to this challenge, and that these volumes will help guide us, in the future, toward proper answers.

Emmanuel Grupper

Shlomo Romi

Editors

The Editors

Professor Emmanuel Grupper is Head of School for Education and Social Studies at the Ono Academic College, and a Senior Lecturer in the Child and Youth Care Department at Beit Berl Academic College. Grupper began his professional career as a youth-care worker in a residential youth village for adolescents, and continued to head a residential school and then residential-schools supervisor. His most recent position was Head of the Division of Education and Guidance in Residential Schools in the Ministry of Education. His research approach is based on educational anthropology, and his topics are various aspects of residential education for youth at risk, especially adolescent immigrants. Grupper studies the training and professional identity of youth-care workers who work with these adolescents, and examines their professional ethics. He is internationally active in these areas, and has been elected Vice President of FICE, the International Federation of Educative Communities.

Professor Shlomo Romi was Head of the School of Education and now the Head of the Institute for Education and Community Research at Bar-Ilan University, and Lecturer in the Child and Youth Care Department at Beit Berl Academic College. An expert in educational psychology, Romi began his work as counsellor for child and youth care. This was followed by work as an educational psychologist which led to academic teaching and research. His main areas of research are the characteristics of youth at risk and nonformal education (attributes and relationship to formal education). Romi is engaged in research in educational psychology, focusing on classroom management and inclusion of children and adolescents with special needs in normative setting. He is internationally active in these fields, and is a Board Member of

EUSARF, the European Scientific Association on Residential and Family Care for Children and Adolescents.

Dr. Merav Salkovsky, Editorial Coordinator, is a recent graduate of the Doctoral Program of the School of Education at Bar-Ilan University. Salkovsky's expertise is youth at risk, an area to which she brings her personal experience. At age 14, Salkovsky immigrated to Israel with her mother and brother, and life in her new country was a first-hand encounter with the life of youth at risk. She completed her high-school studies without matriculating, yet went on to receive her BA and MA, both *cum laude*. Salkovsky was the Coordinator of the Institute for Education and Community Research at Bar-Ilan University and a lecturer at the Kibbutzim College of Education in Tel Aviv. She facilitates groups of youth at risk. Her areas of interest are adolescence, children and youth at risk, measures of positive growth, empowerment, and building resilience.

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ילדים ומתבגרים במצבי סיכון בישראל

כרך ב:
קולם של בני הנוער וסוגיות מעולמם
של עובדים בשדה החינוכי-טיפולי

עורכים:
עמנואל גרופר ושלמה רומי



Children and adolescents at risk in Israel

Vol. II: The voice of Young People and Issues Faced by Child and Youth

Care Workers

Editors

Emmanuel Grupper, PhD

Shlomo Romi, PhD

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Abstract

The two-volume *Children and Adolescents at Risk in Israel* is an updated, systematic presentation of all its title describes. In Volume II we focused on *Adolescents' voice and the world of staff in the field of child and youth care*. We embarked on this challenging adventure to provide scholars, teachers, students, professionals, and the many people interested in these issues, with a structured collection of research articles, addressing the many aspects of youth at risk. We also wanted to introduce readers to the current work being done in Israel with these adolescents.

As editors, together with the editorial coordinator, we sought to combine fieldwork with research and academic teaching. This combination provides immediate, first-hand acquaintance with the adolescents who are at the core of this special realm, with exposure to the most recent theoretical innovations. Working with youth at risk is a valuable and much-needed resource that adds a unique dimension to our work.

Our call for papers brought in a large number of high-quality articles, and to accommodate them we decided to publish *Children and Adolescents at Risk in Israel* as a double volume. This is the second volume entitled: *Children and Adolescents at Risk in Israel: The Voice of Young People and Issues Faced by Child and Youth Care Workers*. This volume has three parts: (4) In the eyes of the beholder: Adolescents describe situations of risk and distress, (5) Educational-therapeutic interventions with children and youth at risk, and interaction with other professionals, and (6) Child and youth care workers: Training, identity, and professional practice. The volume ends with concluding remarks of the two volumes— Looking back and examining the present to build a better future.

Part IV – In the eyes of the beholder: Adolescents describe situations of risk and distress. The writers of the articles in this part aimed to find and express the perspective of young people in distress and at risk situations. The first chapter examines the process of transition from extra-familial family support whatsoever. The second chapter deals with children placed in emergency shelters, addressing the influence of child-parent relationships on the children's adaptation skills. In the third chapter, the willingness of adolescents in distress and at risk situations to seek professional help and how do they perceive this help is examined. The fourth chapter describes the social skills of youth at risk from their own point of view. Fifth and last chapter in this part uses Communication Mediated Computer (CMC) logs to examine the ways adolescents at risk seek social and inter-personal support.

Part V –Educational-therapeutic interventions with children and youth at risk, and interaction with other professionals

The first two chapters deal with the special features of difficulties experienced by immigrant youth from the CIS and Ethiopia. The first is an analysis of the impact of group work with parents who immigrated to Israel from the CIS, on reducing their Israeli-born children's dropping out of school. The second deals with immigrants from Ethiopia, and evaluates the influence of a program to teach youth of Ethiopian origins about their cultural heritage, and how this participation shaped their behavior and mostly their feelings of belonging to their new homeland. The third chapter is a theoretical study proposing integration between two theoretical frameworks – existential and intersubjective –in order to define an effective model for practice of educational-therapeutic care givers. The fourth chapter presents an original application of guided

imagery to develop a model of art therapy for working with youth at risk. The fifth Chapter focuses on role playing in families, and the challenge of applying the concept of role play for gaining better insights into adolescents' pain and distress and planning effective interactions for distress situations. The sixth chapter raises the fundamental issue theories of nonformal education and their capacity to be effective for planning interventions for working with youth at risk. The last chapter in the second part focuses on toddlers in risk situations, where an evaluation of a program designed to support mothers and prevent development gaps of their toddlers paved the way for specific recommendations. Following these recommendations, the next step should be developing models that would enhance the work of care givers working with young children at risk.

Part VI – Child and youth care workers: Training, identity, and professional practice

This part focuses on workers whose specialization is the education and care of youth at risk, and the various chapters discuss their professional identity, their training, and their daily practice.

The first chapter deals with the complex issue of training educational-therapeutic care workers, and the interrelation between training programs and the workers' professional identity. Another issue is the interrelations with other professionals with whom they collaborate in the multi-disciplinary team.

The second chapter is a rather special one. We maintain that it is important that the voice of practitioners be heard, and therefore convened a meeting of experts and representatives of agencies that train workers for work with youth at risk. The essence of this special encounter is described in this chapter (Chapter 14). The third chapter further elaborates the complex issue of the professional identity of this emerging, new profession, which combines education and therapy (care), a duality also reflected in the practitioners' professional. The fourth chapter is

concerned with the cultural origin of the workers, an issue of special significance when working with immigrant adolescents who are trying to overcome cultural gap. Research findings indicate the advantages of including workers of the same cultural background as the youth with whom they work. The fifth chapter presents the results of a research focusing on the interrelations between the kind of atmosphere in the workplace and workers' sense of competence in their work with youth at risk. The sixth chapter addresses another cultural aspect – the Arab school system. In Israel, Arab children attend schools where Arabic is the official language and the relationships teacher-student are different from those in Jewish schools. This chapter was written by two Israeli-Arab scholars who searched for the cognitive and behavioral reaction of Arab teachers toward students who experience distress and crisis situations. The last chapter describes an original initiative in which adolescent girls who had experienced distress and at risk situations were trained to be mentors for other youth at risk. The research results showed that both mentors and mentees benefitted from these interventions, with the young mentors gaining of sense of empowerment by helping other young people.

Concluding remarks: looking back, studying the present in order to build a better future

In both volumes, we attempted to present systematic, updated research, illustrating the multifaceted activity and work with adolescents at risk in Israel in the beginning of the twenty-first century. This broad survey is our foundation for looking at the future, gathering cues as to the work ahead. Some studies have already made an initial link between present and future – the expanding activity through online social networks has created a new arena for adolescents at risk. Young people stepping onto this unchartered arena face new risks, but also the potential for new types of support.

Much work remains to be done with children and adolescents at risk. Many questions still loom unanswered. Answering these questions is the challenge facing theoreticians and practitioners. It is our hope that we will all be equal to this challenge, and that these volumes will help guide us toward proper answers.

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Editors

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Concluding remarks: Looking back and examining the present to build a better future, Shlomo Romi, Emmanuel Grupper, and Merav Salkovsky