

Young Women in Residential Care: The Interplay between Dominant Narratives and Personal Stories

Authors : M. A. Marlow, R. Sørly, H. K. Kaatrakoski

Abstract : Social work practice produces and circulates dominant narratives of young women in residential care. These stories are characterised by negative descriptions and hopelessness while dismissing the capabilities of narrative practice. This paper gives an account of how young women with histories in residential care can resist the dominant narratives. The analysis is based on a study of five young women aged 17 to 26 years old with different backgrounds and experiences with Norwegian residential care. The meaning of the context is analysed based on two interviews that were completed and one that was cancelled in the field. The contextual narrative analysis was oriented around the understanding of stories as performances and provided insight into a possible future storytelling practice in social work. The first author's field notes are included as part of the data material in the analysis and provide a picture of important knowledge development related to stories and the value of being able to tell one's own experiences. Faced with the dominant narratives that define young women with negative experiences with residential care, we provide a more contextualised understanding of storytelling as a possibility for positive change. To allow young women to create new stories from their lives, we, as both social workers and researchers, must be aware of what kinds of stories we relate to our own practices.

Keywords : context analysis, narrative research, rejection, residential care, social work practice

Conference Title : ICSW 2023 : International Conference on Social Work

Conference Location : Tokyo, Japan

Conference Dates : September 04-05, 2023