
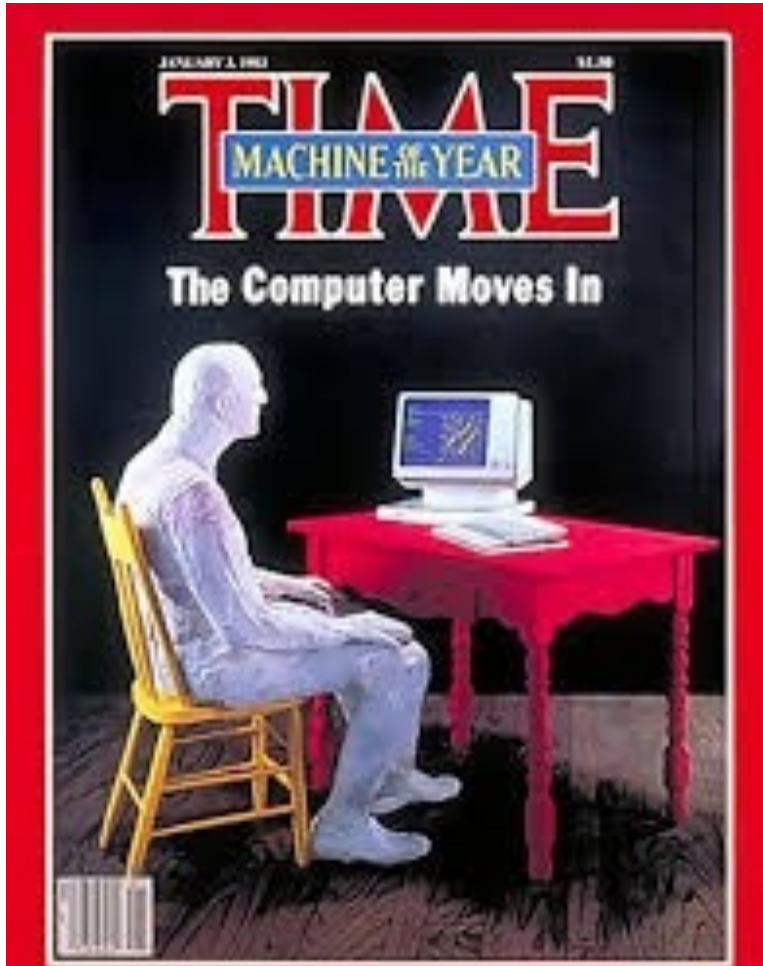




# **2023 International Transitions from Child Protection Symposium: Research Panel**

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## My trajectory

- 1976- Psychologist in Child Welfare
- 1982- Assigned to Transition Programs
- 1992- Academic appointment at Concordia
- 1994- First funded research on transitions
- 2017- Became Canada's representative on the Steering Committee of the International Network on Transitions to Adulthood from Care (INTRAC)



**REAL KID**



**FOSTER KID**

*Can you tell the difference?*

I grew up knowing of two types of kids...real kids and “foster kids”. I was a “foster kid”. Now that I am an adult, I’m not sure what I’m supposed to be! There’s no such thing as a “foster adult”. Am I a real adult?

From:

Foster Care Alumni  
of America ( 2011)

Postcards from the  
Soul.

# Themes

Movin' on:  
mourning and loss  
group interventions that go  
beyond life skills training

Emerging adulthood:  
comparing normative  
transitions and transitions  
from care. The importance  
of peers

International team research:  
where does Canada stand in  
relation to policy, practice  
and research?

# Lessons learned:

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The normative transition to adulthood involves losses and gains, which can evoke ambivalence and regression for everyone

The transition to adulthood from care is characterized by multiple losses compounded by the absence of adequate support and relational continuity

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Our systems of care are not developmentally informed and err on the side of risk management, which compromises healthy transitions to adulthood

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Friendships, a precious developmental asset, are not consistently supported in Child Welfare

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Most systems of care in Canada do not provide the safety net required for healthy transitions to adulthood

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Where  
Canada stands  
compared to  
other  
countries

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## Punchlines:

We have not progressed significantly since I started

- Without federal legislation , territorial injustices persist and baseline data remains unreliable
- Without universal entitlements well into the second decade of life (an adequate safety net) , youth growing up in care in Canada are blocked from reaching their potential
- Without research that shifts the discourse from individual deficits to systemic barriers, including inadequate training in the promotion of developmental assets, we perpetuate stigma and marginalization

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