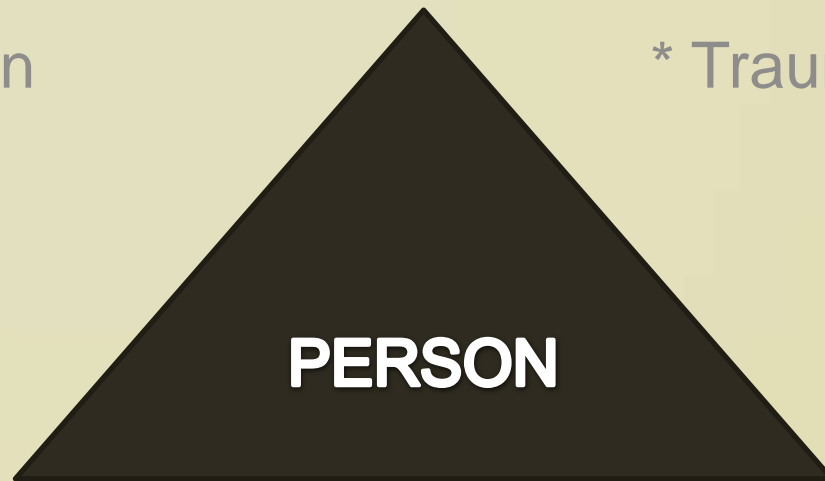


# The Social Context of Our Work

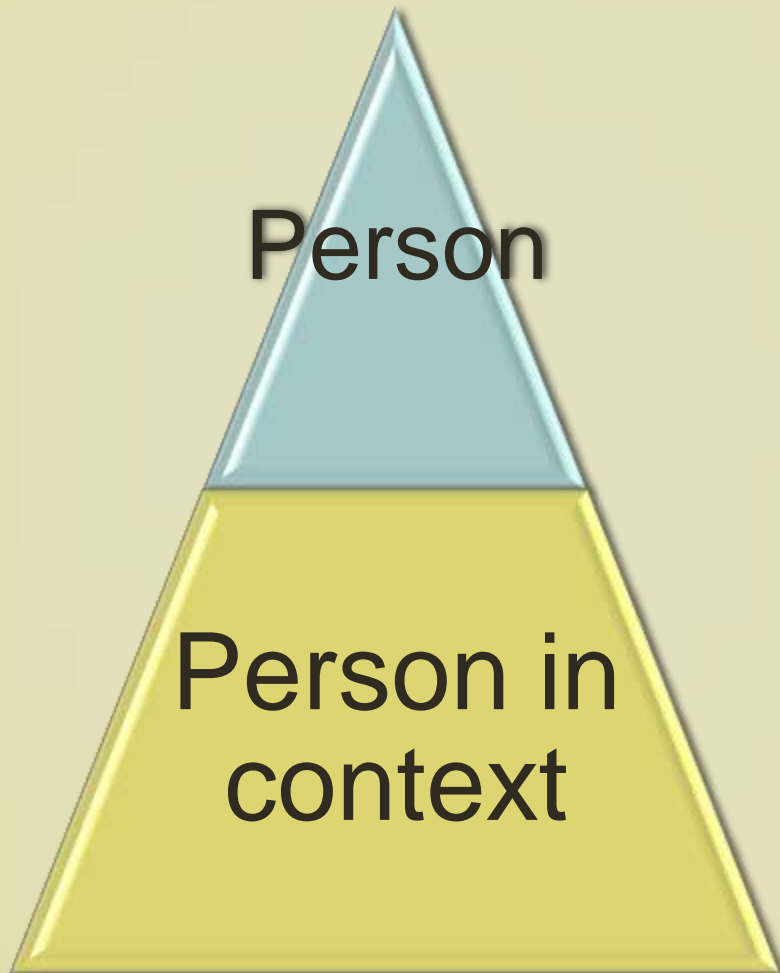
Conventional intervention usually focuses on the individual – and even then, only some aspects

- \* Mental health
- \* Education
- \* Gender
- \* Values
- \* Supports

- \* Attachment
- \* Trauma history
- \* Behaviour
- \* Literacy

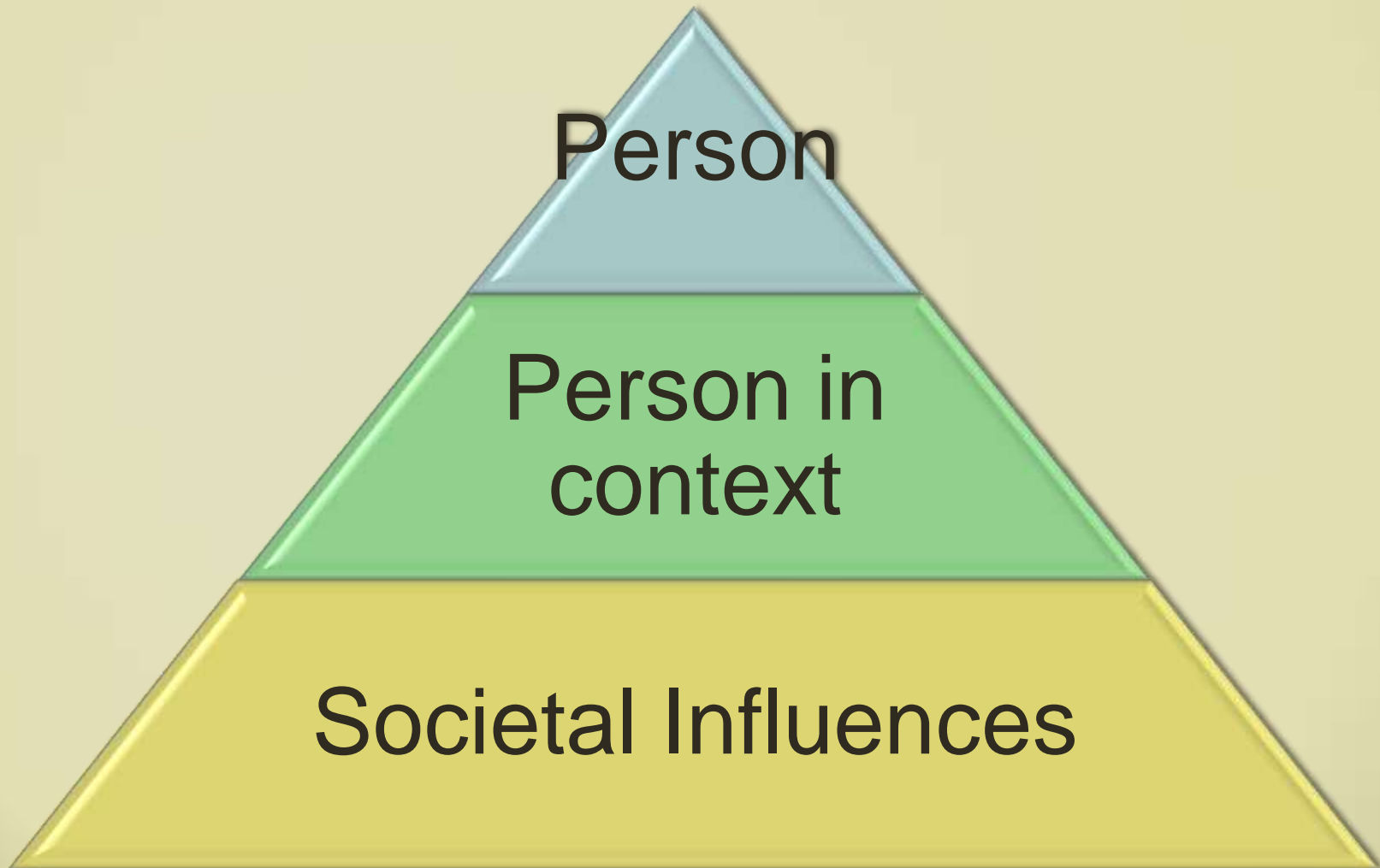


Sometimes, we may go as far as considering the impact of particular social issues.



Race  
Ability  
Sexual Orientation  
Income  
Employment  
Housing

But we need to locate ourselves and the people we work with in the society.



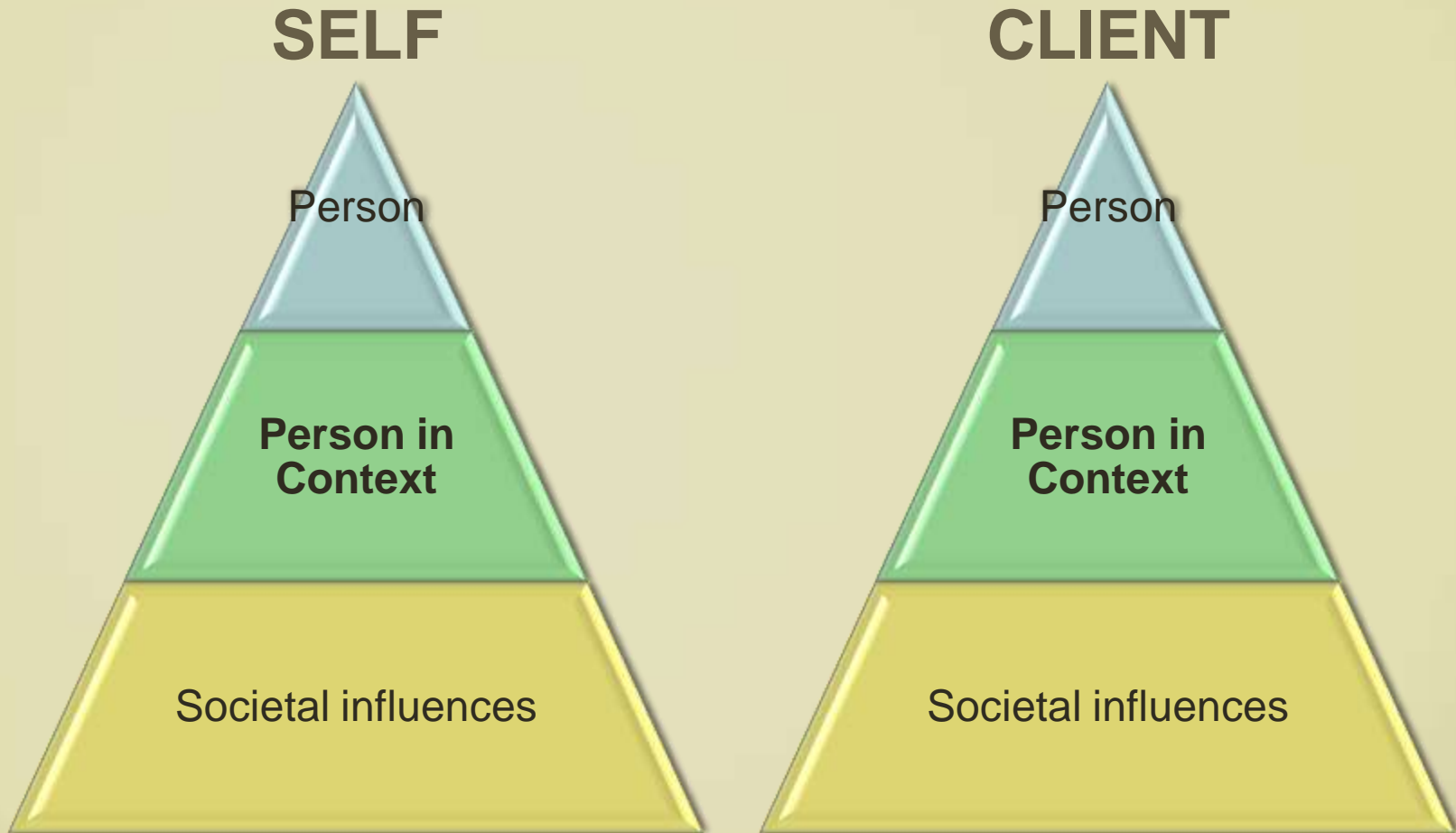


Person

Person in  
context

- \* Individualism and Narcissistic Society
- \* Socially Conservative and Competitive
  - \* Sexism, Racism and Homophobia
- \* Commodification, Materialism and Media Saturation
  - \* Medicalization and Sexualization
- \* Decreased Social Supports and Transience
- \* Decrease in Manual Labour Positions and Increased Gaps Between the Rich and the Poor
- \* War

# Self/Client Assessment: What is our Common Ground



# Conventional assumptions in helping professions... or what doesn't work or isn't necessarily true

- People we work with have different goals
- Equality
- Mutual respect

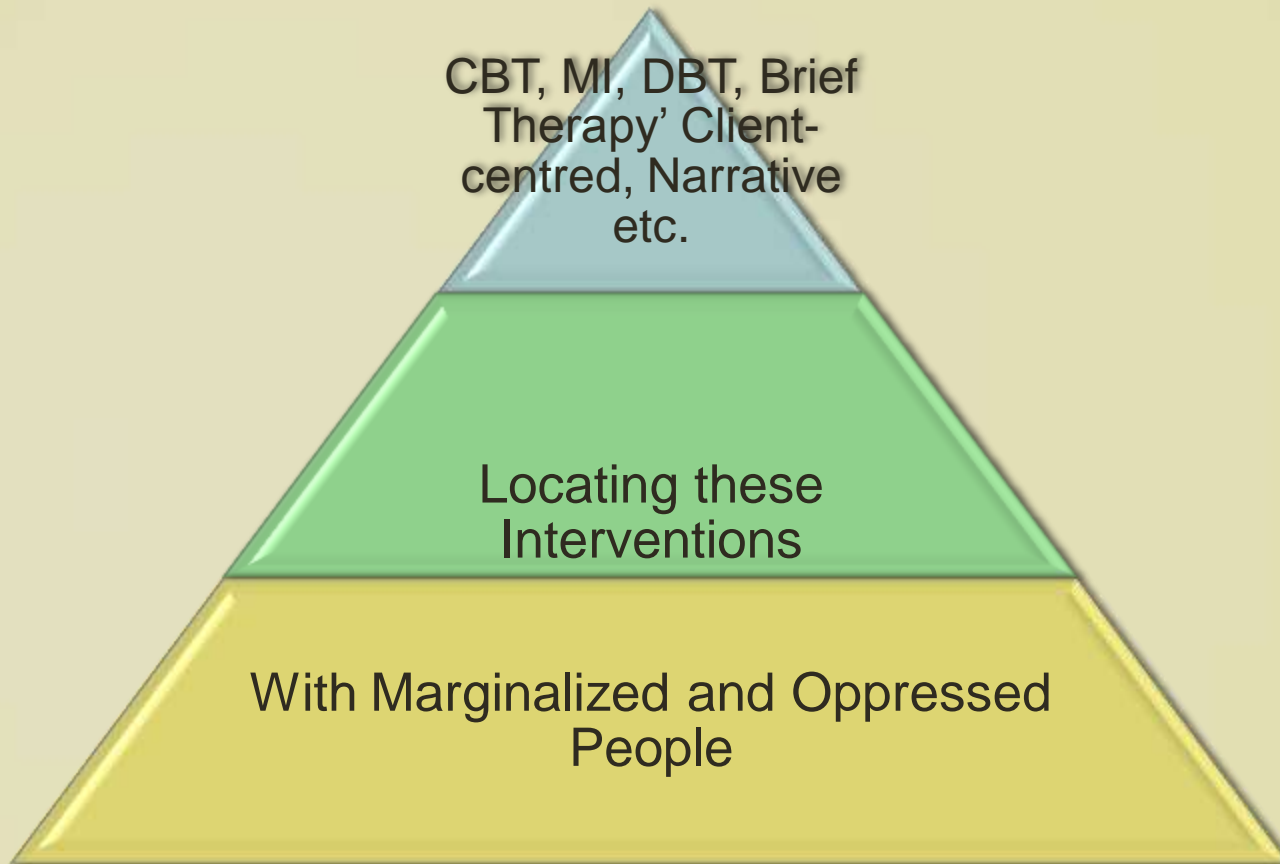
- Naïve over-identification is positive
- Minimizing the problem
- The problem is shared
- Medicalizing the problem

- Primacy of emotion
- Low education = low intellect
- Romanticizing culture of other
- Individualism  
(decontextualizing anyone)



# Validated and respected therapeutic methods:

- CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)
- MI (Motivational Interviewing)
- DBT (Dialectical Behaviour Therapy)
- Brief Therapy, Stages of Change



# Radical Caring and Truth Telling

- Solidarity vs equality
- Teaching and being taught
- Acknowledging what you know and don't know
- Knowing clients' experience of injustice

- Validating clients' experience of injustice
- Clarifying social context and individual decisions
- Clarifying different kinds of power and efficacy
- Don't keep secrets (naming what you say privately - publicly)

- Naming strengths without condescension
- Demystifying mental health
- Demedicalize if possible
- Destigmatize the right thing
- Share examination of social context and contemporary culture
- Discuss ideas and belief systems – everyone's – and impact on emotions

# Practical Applications of Adding the Social Context

- Negotiate limits of intervention with humility
- Set practical, achievable goals and time line

- Shared accountability
- Be actor and coach, not just a listener
- Discuss what is equal and not
- Outline victim and perpetrator experiences

- Anger: justified and unjustified
- Validate with solidarity; challenge with truth – telling
- Cultural and gender examples of passive, passive-aggressive and aggressive anger



- Use accurate concepts but explain them, including all mental health and psychological terms
- Assign and explain homework; use books for record of progress
- Accept, invite, model fair criticism

- You do the honest work of addressing difference (i.e., colour-blindness, gender issues, class, privilege etc.)
- Deal with confidentiality issues

# Understanding context of children of bi-racial parentage

- Family of origin, name, immediate and extended
- Colour – how do they look and what will it mean
- Skin care and hair care

- Racism – the feelings in the family about the experience of being born from parents of different races – positive and negative
- Relationship to black community – Close? Available? Distance?
- Child welfare experience – worker insight, knowledge

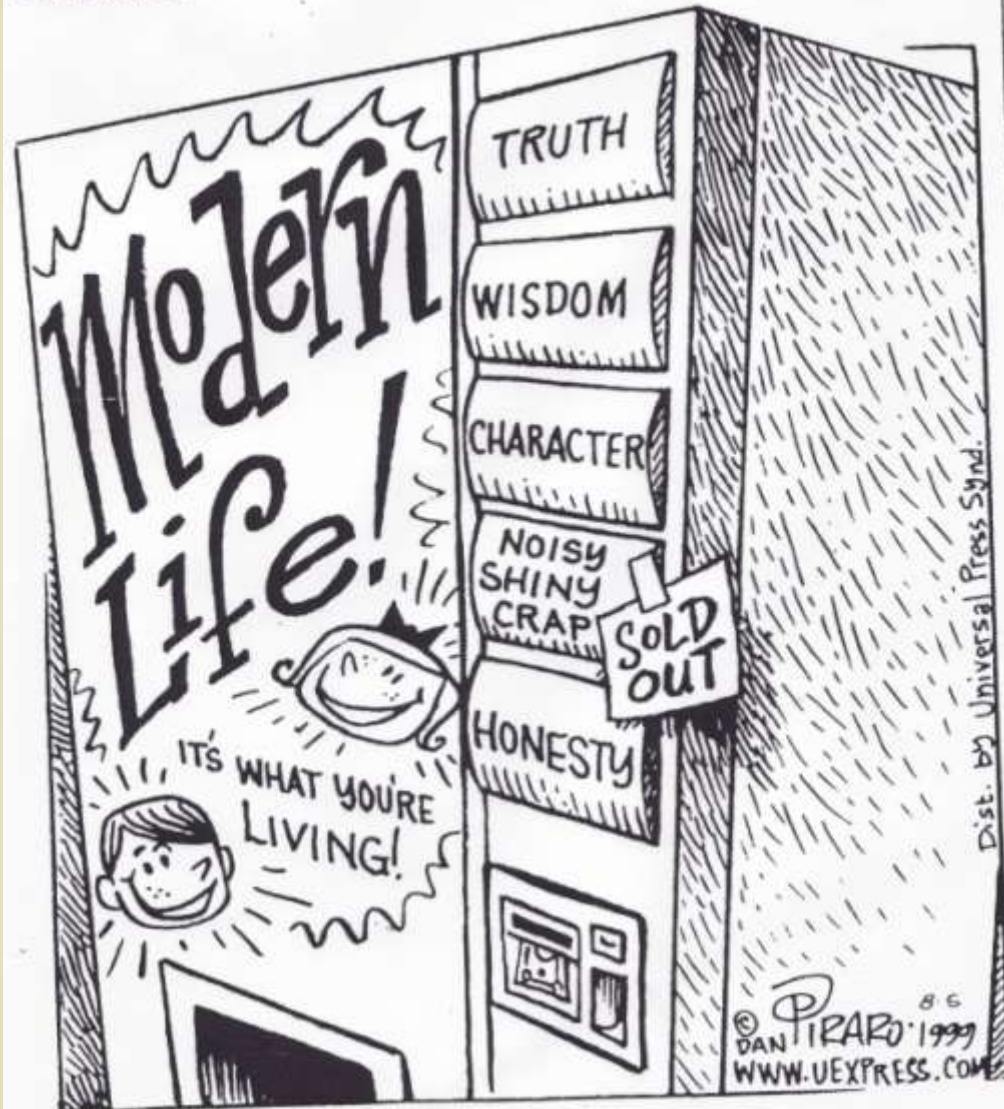
- Isolation – other black kids, who, where, their own identities
- Circumstances of birth parents, one time, marriage, hostility, confidence, relationship to others in community/family
- Not white enough? Not black enough?

- Race and culture (access to the latter?)
- Knowledge of history (by the caregivers – do they care?)
- Age of child (differences in racial identity development – Robert Wright's work)
- Speaking it - colour blindness (whose, comfort levels)

- Racism insight by whites with child
- Belonging - group identity – age of “choosing” – demands of peer group
- Discipline
- Popular culture’s portrayal of people of African descent

BIZARRO

By Dan Piraro





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## Diagnostic criteria for 313.81 Oppositional Defiant Disorder

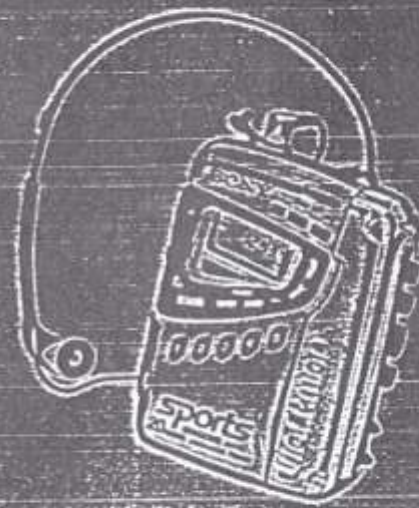
- A. A pattern of negativistic, hostile, and defiant behavior lasting at least 6 months, during which four (or more) of the following are present:
- (1) often loses temper
  - (2) often argues with adults
  - (3) often actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules
  - (4) often deliberately annoys people
  - (5) often blames others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
  - (6) is often touchy or easily annoyed by others
  - (7) is often angry and resentful
  - (8) is often spiteful or vindictive

**Note:** Consider a criterion met only if the behavior occurs more frequently than is typically observed in individuals of comparable age and developmental level.

- B. The disturbance in behavior causes clinically significant impairment in social, academic, or occupational functioning.
- C. The behaviors do not occur exclusively during the course of a Psychotic or Mood Disorder.
- D. Criteria are not met for Conduct Disorder, and, if the individual is age 18 years or older, criteria are not met for Antisocial Personality Disorder.
-

15

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CANADA'S WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE  
**Maclean's**

MARCH 22, 1999

# HOW TEENS GOT THE POWER

Gen Y has the cash,  
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**THE ALL-OUT MARKETING  
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HEART, MIND, AND WALLET**

PAGE K2



Internet: [www.businessweek.com](http://www.businessweek.com) America Online: Keyword: BW

## More old people

The number of people age 65 and older more than tripled over the past half century to a record 420 million worldwide, from 131 million in 1950.

In the 1990s, the increase was about 2 per cent each year.

The one-year increase of 9.5 million between 1999 and 2000 was unprecedented, according to a report from the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Institute on Aging.

## More adolescents



"Adolescence: You thought it was over at 18. Not so fast," writes Laura Stepp in The Washington Post. "The Society for Adolescent Medicine, a physicians' or-

ganization, now says on its Web site that it cares for persons '10 to 26 years' of age. A National Academy of Sciences committee, surveying programs for adolescents, discussed extending its review to age 30. . . . Powerful lobbies are at work to stretch adolescence as far into the third decade of life as they can. One of these groups is retail merchandisers. The number of adolescents in the United States is greater today than ever before, 60 million if you start at age 10 and continue to 24, 80 mil-



# SOCIAL STUDIES

A DAILY MISCELLANY OF INFORMATION BY MICHAEL KESTERTON

lion if you count all the way to 30. Or should we count higher? Once the different ages wore different styles. Now a 60-year-old can wear the casual clothes of a 20-year-old."

## More active adults

"As the first wave of boomers begin contemplating retirement, many communities are loading amenities designed to appeal to the generation's nonstop lifestyle," writes Hope Yen of The Associated Press.

"The new look includes more activities, ranging from rock-wall climbing to kayaking. His-and-her home offices with Internet access are also on the rise, as well as continuing education classes. . . . Indeed, many developers now avoid the term 'retirement' to describe these communities, referring to

them instead as 'active adult' or 'country club' properties."

## Word watch

■ **Bloggers:** Online diarists, who keep web logs ("blogs"). A U.S. survey has found that one in five teenagers between ages 12 and 17 maintain personal blogs that often attract audiences far wider than their circle of friends and relatives. Diarists can attract fans who buy them gifts from the wish lists linked to their websites. For instance, 18-year-old Mindy Gray of Greeley, Col., has collected more than \$500 (U.S.) in goodies from fans after her diary went online two years ago, reports The Denver Post.

"Both of Mindy's parents raised Cain when they saw the salty language their daughter used in her blog musings. 'Teenagers talk like



Parents across the country who plan to stick close to home this school holiday just might need a little help coping with all that free time

## March break survival guide

BY LASZLO BUNASZ, TRAVEL WRITER

While some lucky Canadian parents and children will make a March-break pilgrimage to warm destinations in the Caribbean or to the Florida and California theme parks, most will be looking for things to do closer to home. School break has come and gone in Quebec and New Brunswick, but most of the rest of Canada is still gearing up to cope with the upcoming free time.

Major cultural attractions and entertainment venues are happy to oblige with a blizzard of special programs, and many hotels are offering special family rates and tie-in packages with other community organizations such as zoos, museums and theatres.

In short, there is no shortage of things to do. To stimulate your search for spring-break fun, here are some family-friendly activities in and around Canada's major cities.

### Vancouver

There's nothing like a carnival to keep kids happily occupied. B.C. Place Stadium, the covered arena in the heart of downtown Vancouver's entertainment district, will be converted into Canada's largest indoor carnival March 15-20. "Play Dome" will feature more than 45 rides and attractions for kids of all ages. One-day passes are \$16; multi-day passes are \$35. For parents and those who just want to watch, guest passes are \$6. Tickets are available at the door only. Hours are 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

For more information, phone (604) 681-7373, or visit

The Vancouver Aquarium is home to a dizzying variety of fish and aquatic mammals in natural habitats. Kids can gape at the multicoloured life inside a tidal pool, and always popular are the toothy piranhas, scary insects and even a shark. The whale pool is a must, especially around feeding time when underwater windows provide a close-up view of the enormous creatures. In the Amazon Gallery, you can take an instant trip to faraway places, complete with exotic birds and plants and even a scheduled tropical thunderstorm.

As a special spring-break promotion March 15-30, 15 kids each day will be chosen at random to assist aquarium staff with their duties, including feeding and training the animals.

For more information, phone (604) 659-3400 or visit the Web site at [www.vanaqua.org](http://www.vanaqua.org).

There's no need to spend a lot of money to have a kid-friendly adventure in this city. Even getting around on public transit can offer the fun of a fairground ride for the price of a bus ticket.

For example, you can take the SeaBus commuter "cruise" to North Vancouver on one of two catamaran ferries that leave downtown Vancouver every 15 to 30 minutes. The trip across Burrard Inlet provides a great view of the harbour, Stanley Park and the Lions Gate Bridge with the mountains as a backdrop.

Or you can ride one of the automated yellow-and-blue SkyTrains out to Vancouver's eastern suburbs. Visitors usually stop at Westminster Quay, a 28-minute ride



A girl comes eye-to-eye with a large O

crossing of the Fraser River on its way to Surrey.

For more information, phone (604) 986-1501 for SeaBus and (604) 521-0400 for SkyTrain, or

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