

CRCCP: BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

JUNE 21-24, 2016, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK

KEYNOTE – DR ANTHONY BURROW

Purpose in Life: Evidence of a Psychological Resource

The notion that people should have a purpose in life is commonplace, but little is still known about what makes having one beneficial. Anthony initially talked about some of the reading out there on sense of purpose including *The purpose driven life* by Rick Warren, *Lockdown* by

Walter Dean Myers and *The path to purpose* by William Damon. He discussed some of the advantages to being

purposeful such as being more likable, being more attractive, making more friends, having more hobbies (proactive) and having more transformative life events (reactive). Purposeful people live longer, are less

impulsive, have lower risk of disease and recover quicker from stress. So a core question is therefore how do we enable our children to be more purposeful in the things they do, how do we help them to feel safe enough to think about their future and to feel motivated and confident

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enough to try new things out. Being purposeful is different than having goals (which has actually

been shown to de-motivate depressed and anxious people). It is about knowing who you are and also about holding others in mind who motivate you to be purposeful on their behalf.

THOUGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS

This presentation made me think about how difficult it is for our young people to have a sense of purpose and be future orientated

when (i) they don't feel safe (ii) they don't understand their past (iii) carers have not been 'purposeful' in loving them.

HOW DO WE HELP OUR YOUNG PEOPLE BECOME MORE PURPOSEFUL??

- Establish safety first through stability, predictability, and connection.
- Support a better understanding of the past, via narrative work and strengthening family connections.
- Find the right opportunities for our young people that help build success, a sense of normality, and connections that they can hold onto – particularly when they leave care.

