

“It Takes a Village...”

Creating Connections at the Children’s Focusing Conference

In March, we held our Children & Focusing conference, “It Takes a Village... Creating Connections.” The conference was wonderful and inspiring, with about 150 participants from 30 different countries. Together we met, shared, and deepened our experience around Children and Focusing and as an advisory team, want to take this opportunity to give our reflection on this unique event.

Our goal for the conference was to highlight the diversity and creativity in our Children's Focusing Community by exploring the many ways we can support children and each other through Focusing and connections.

Our topic for the conference was inspired by the saying, “It takes a village to raise a child.” Children are unique in many ways and have their own special ways of showing their emotions and expressing themselves. Often, we rely on our family, friends, and colleagues to share the joy and difficulties we encounter on our journey as a parent or professional in our relationship with a child. Throughout this conference, we wanted to show and explore the diversity and many ways to connect with children.

Often, we talk about Children’s Focusing as a community. And just as we can’t raise a child on our own, we can’t go on our Children’s Focusing way on our own. It could be difficult and lonely to go at it yourself. So, we hope this conference gave an opportunity for people to feel connected and create connections with others, and build relationships in our Children’s Focusing community.



The various workshops over the three-day conference covered many inspiring topics, including:

- Everybody's Welcome - Inclusion and Focusing
- Growing Up with Focusing: A Child’s Perspective
- The Feelings Room
- Play for Time
- Implementation of Focusing in a (school) System and Social and Emotional Learning Curricula
- Clearing a space with expressive arts
- Creating attuned and helpful responses with children’s emotion states
- BioSpirituality and Children
- Where to go with sorrow and worries
- KOL-BE Body Mapping and FOT: Teaching Children the Language of Self-Healing
- Getting to Know Our Inner Parts: Adapting Inner Relationship Focusing
- Discovering the “Felt sense” of YOUR ‘Big SELF
- Exploring Nightmares with Children
- The Essence of Presence - The unfolding of the WONDERING space
- Unreconciled Child: The Adolescent Link Between Sensible Immaturity and Mature Silliness
- Family Sessions
- I have feelings about that!” Creating attuned and helpful responses with children’s emotion states



During each workshop, we were invited to play, feel, crawl, dance, run, climb, laugh, cry, watch, discover, talk, sing, jump, and live with each other, bringing in vitality, aliveness and a sparkling energy of Focusing and Children. This enriching conference was an invitation to participate in activities that offered direct experience of the tools, techniques, and the inherently gentle, playful approach of Experiential Focusing. It brought an explicit new and fresh depth!

Some of the participants graciously offered their thoughts and feedback from the conference, which is shared below.

- “YES, it gave me a sense of community, also based on sincere interest on what might come out, other than the pleasure of being together. And their presentations represented and manifested their enthusiasm for CF.”
- “Be brave to reach out and ‘When you let go, it has space to arrive.’”
- “It is a beautiful thing to me when people open up about something very personal in front of a large group of mostly strangers. I love the rawness of it and the honesty. It always brings out connections in the moment.”
- “I learned that adults often need playful ways to connect with their inner beings just like children do. Programs/projects done with children can also be done with adults.”
- “The power of less and going slow.”
- “I did get a sense that we were ‘all in this together’ and that regardless of the locality of the participants or their native tongue, that there was a Great Good that we are all working towards - the welfare of our collective children around the globe.”
- “The presentations how to implement Focusing at schools were in very different ways rich and inspiring for me and gave me new ideas and orientation about what to do and how to do it.”
- “How essential my relationship, my being with myself is for my relationship/ my being with others/ my clients. And how complex and challenging it is, to do innovative work.”
- “I have gained skills or ideas today which I can carry forward into my life and work. It was heartwarming to hear back many of the things I have been teaching for the past 35 years. I am happy to know the seeds once planted are sprouting.”
- “Such a fantastic, varied collection of presenters and experiences and it open the door to all. Include everyone's little stories in some way like shadow theater. Make space for listening. Presence in a very simple way, just a few invitations. Reminder: we do not have to fix anything, just make time for kids to be with what is troubling them. And especially make room for play, silliness, and failure on the way to learning. Those of you who told simple stories or kept us engaged in activities held our attention wonderfully.”
- “I was able to experience a sense of community in the online format today.”
- “I got to meet with people who I may never have had a chance to meet in another way. Wonderful, colorful community.”
- “So much heart and soul and spaciousness. I feel nurtured, nourished and so grateful to be in communion with the Focusing Community. How precious it is to have the opportunity for continuous learning with Focusers around the globe; the experience feels like a prayer of peace.”
- “I like the authenticity and the deep understanding.”
- “Nice to see a variety of ways to help children with their inner process.”
- “The genuine and generous sharing of the others also made the whole experience beautiful.”

Participants also expressed so much value for TIFI and their voluntary staff:

- “What a wonderful team! Thank you so much for your incredible work all through the conference! Thank you! the ideas how to introduce children to felt sense, how to use drawings. All 3 days were very inspiring.”
- “The organizing team is so well-prepared and have gone the extra mile. Nothing is too much trouble.”
- “Articulation and sensing and resonating with bodily felt sense for all of us across so many time zones! A big, big job to monitor each presenter’s flow of speaking and to have immediate speech translated. It is so impressive to see the simultaneous translation being offered.”



For those who weren't able to join us for the conference, you can still register for the online post-conference for access to recordings of all the presentations until end of August. For an overview and info visit <https://focusing.org/event/it-takes-village-creating-connections-online-children-focusing-conference>.

As we reflect on this year's event, we are inspired with ideas to keep the connection alive. We are planning next year's online Children & Focusing conference for February 10-12, 2023. More details to come!

In the meantime, there are two upcoming Children & Focusing Roundtable events scheduled: Tuesday, May 24, 2022 and September 27, 2022. Visit the TIFI site for further details and to register.

We invite you to share your thoughts and ideas and welcome them anytime at children&focusing@focusing.org.