

Education Programs

continued

TRAINING ADULTS FOR COMMUNITY LIVING* T.A.C.L.

A program written by Dr. Manny Sternlicht, Ph.D acting assistant director. The TACL program is an effort in student government. Males are separated from females in the adolescent age groupings. The program reaches 42 males and 34 females.

Skills are taught to the young adults (i.e. typing and home economics in conjunction with training requirements of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in Manhattan). To date 24 trainees completed the training and only three were placed in jobs. In addition 13 males are working in Willowbrook kitchens at a Grade 4, budget level with a starting salary of \$5,462.

A governing council was set up for the boys totaling 4 members one each from the four living groups totaling 40 males. Beginning in 1969, 2 Social Workers and 2 Psychologists were assigned to counsel and evaluate their progress. Every Tuesday night the groups would meet to discuss rules of living and discipline for infractions. The resident committee, under the direction of an attendant, would be allowed to make decisions on members who had violated any rules.

The female TACL group has ratings known as levels of achievement. These levels of achievement are balanced by a system known as "corresponding privileges." Girls are counseled on dating and if they are found off the grounds without escort they are referred to the TACL committee for disciplinary action. The first level works within the building at learning simple home skills. Girls in this group are not allowed to date or go off the grounds alone. The counselling sessions are directed toward a level of intimate dialogue.

Each TACL group is allowed to arrange their living quarters as they see fit. The indicated purpose is to allow the student to relate to the human and inhuman elements of his or her surroundings.

A committee oversees the male and female TACL groups. Dr. Sternlicht and Dr. Lou Siegel, acting head Psychologists, head a staff group from the different departments responsible for directing the program.

In addition to the Doctors there are: teachers, vocational trainers, social workers, psychologists, attendants and chaplains.

MOBILIZATION OF ABILITIES AND POTENTIALS:

(Editor's Note: From an article in the Mental Hygiene News, August 3, 1971.)

"Conceived by Dr. Manny Sternlicht, Chief Administrator of Habilitation Services, the MAP program uses positive reinforcement techniques in an attempt to enhance the social development, psychological functioning and educational attainment of a group of boys who presented discipline and management problems."

"The boys are given special attention, including extra recreation hours in the gym, art projects, and trips. They earn extra spending money by organizing car washes." In addition, weekly evening meetings with social worker John Quinn, assistant and chairman of the MAP committee, give the boys a chance to discuss their common and individual problems.

Approximately 40 adolescents are under the supervision of 2 counselors, 1 recreation director, 1 psychiatrist, 1 social worker, 5 ward personnel and 1 educational director in the program.

It is maintained by some staff and residents that the programs are a tool for the administration to discipline and control anyone whom they feel opposes them.

In an interview held with three past participants in the MAP and TACL programs they claimed that they "went through a lot of Hell."

Did you ever get together and report what was going on to the administration?

"Here, if a patient goes to building 1 they wouldn't do nothing about it. They would probably call the supervisor of the building and you would be locked up or put into the closet...stored away."

On Nov. 15th. an employee speaking to parents demonstrating made this statement: "Rebellious or individualistic patients are punished by isolation."

Dr. Sternlicht emphasizes that the TACL and MAP programs are geared to direct the participant through counseling and therapy. The Social Workers are closely involved with both programs and share with the attendant an important position if programs are to be successful. A Social Worker reveals that one girl in building 32, where the female TACL program operates, had been so heavily sedated by the doctor of that building, that she kept falling asleep while working. The building doctor, she adds, "has the last say and the ultimate power. Without the support of the doctor the programs will never work. In most cases the doctors view their position as one of power and do not wish to give any of it up."

When asked about their relationship to the Social Workers, the former TACL members answered:

Yes we have Social Workers. Well, if I was just to sit there they would let me sit there. But if I was to say, "I want to get out, they would deal into that more proficiently."

What did you do when you decided that you wanted to leave?

As the years went by and I got tired of just staying here I talked up and I told them, "If they weren't going to do anything I would leave on my own." They said, "Look we are going to try to help." Then they started jiving around, but I came down hard and serious and they got me out. They weren't doing anything before that.

When you say they were not doing anything what did you think that they should be doing?

They should be looking into my case, to see if I'm well or what. But they saw that I was well and capable of doing what any person on the outside could do and they should have dealt with that. They took their precious time.

The IUA has started a tutorial program with 17 of the boys, some of which are still at Willowbrook. The IUA and the S.I. Urban League office have raised money for teachers to bring the boys up to a level enabling them to get better jobs and to score higher grades on their tests for diplomas.

A social worker involved with the MAP program believes that the IUA has boycotted the program within the institution. He did not, however, say that he felt that this was so. There are 5 attendants assigned to work closely with the program. The boys talk about the attendants.

Were you treated as a juvenile or as a patient?

Well, it was half and half. One day the attendants would treat you as a juvenile, and the next as a patient. You know, the attendants have funny ways. They had their own mind when they came in.

Building 5 is classified as a bright building. This classification is based on the IQ rating of above 50. The boys in question are classified as delinquents because they come from broken families and are placed in the institution by the courts. They do not necessarily belong in a building with retardates. However, at Willowbrook they are.

Will you tell us what is going on with the patients in Building 5?

They are going through the same situation that we went through when we were small. Some attendants are fair with them but most of them see that they (residents) can't make it so they tell them, "ain't no sense in you trying. Why don't you stay here. Outside isn't for you." The brothers keep that in mind and that holds them back. They want to be taught so that when they get out they know how to deal with the problem. But nobody teaches them.

"Honor cards," which allow the recipient to go anywhere on the grounds at Willowbrook without supervision for two hours in the morning and afternoon and four hours on Saturday, are given to those boys whose behavior is rated satisfactory by the MAP committee.

The MAP committee functions as does the TACL committee. Staff personnel work and counsel the group members in their collective and individual problems. The MAP committee consists of recreation director, counselors, psychologists, social worker, ward personnel and educational director.

YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES

Statewide program sponsored by a \$1 1/2 million grant from the state, and supported by an additional \$400,000 from the Dept. of Labor. The department of Mental Hygiene has attempted to attract more people into state service and to help people of "low motivation" stay in school.

Under the direction of A. Fontaino and D. Setaro, 37 trainees are now enrolled at Willowbrook. They receive \$1.85 an hour for 20 hours a week. Students work in all areas of the school, with the hope that they will become interested in a career in mental hygiene.

Students are recommended from the community by homes, police and other counseling agencies. The program is in danger of being stopped due to budget cuts. To date there is an interest in keeping it alive because of the positive response from the students.

The Willowbrook census figures show that there are 2149 patients over 21. Willowbrook follows the law and removes anyone over 21 from school. In Building 7 there are 280 males who are ambulatory and classified from profound to severe. Only ten are in school, leaving the remaining 270 without a formal education program. 62 are attending the Occupational Therapy class in the building. The remaining residents participate in the S.C.A.D. program (stimulation, coordination, and development) under the direction of John LeFevre, psychiatric supervising attendant, and the ward service staff.

The program, begun in March 1971, is not supported by any additional funds and is operated by the staff allocated to the building.

It is broken into three areas: grooming, rhythm and song, exercising and games. The age range in one of the wards is 20 to 30 and most of them are toilet trained, self feeders and dress themselves. The program diagram states that they lacked motivation with which to improve their living habits and social development.

Through SCAD the men are able to learn to share and to participate with each other. One of the problems holding back the SCAD program is that attendants have to do all the cleaning and storing of laundry. This has seriously hampered their efforts, according to the information pamphlet on the program.