THE MAPLES:

THE EVOLUTION OF A THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY:

A CASE STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

Emotional disturbance among youth is an ever increasing problem in our society, and every year society has to expend increasing amounts of resources for dealing with the problem. The purpose of this thesis is to study the initiation phase, that is, the first twelve months, of a treatment centre for emotionally disturbed adolescents. The paper is a case study of the Residential Unit of the British Columbia Youth Development Centre--The Maples.

This subject matter was chosen for a number of diverse reasons:

(a) The author had an opportunity while employed as a Child Care Counsellor in the Residential Unit to gain first hand experience, as well as to act as a participant observer of the process under discussion.

(b) The radical "treatment" and "educational" approach that was adopted and implemented by the Director of the Residential Unit warranted a study not only for the valuable human experience it provided within the Maples, but also for the possibility of its implementation in other educational settings.

(c) The obvious identity crisis and loss of meaning that an increasing number of youth are experiencing demands that new approaches to education and living situations be developed. Since the Maples could be viewed as a "role model" for such new approaches, this study has a potential practical function.

The material presented in the study was researched through:

(a) personal interviews,

(b) participant observation,

(c) use of the Maples files, and

(d) readings in related material

The main focus of the study is on the internal process that the staff and the young people in treatment experienced. Since the study deals with the first twelve months of the Maples, a period of time which is the most fluid, creative and dynamic part in the history of an institution, it was impossible to apply a set structural analysis to the subject. Instead, to arrive at a proper understanding of this initial phase, the whole experience was viewed as a dynamic, constantly changing process. Much of the thesis is therefore a description of the process, although analysis is also presented.

The study is in three parts. The first part deals with the orientation of the counsellors. Essentially, it presents the philosophical, psychological and the sociological bases of the "therapeutic community" at the Maples. The second part deals with the actual development of the "therapeutic community" through a discussion of the interactions between the staff and the youth. It presents an overview of the treatment process from the point of view of the group and the individual. The third part offers a criticism of the Maples setting, and presents an alternate proposal for the treatment of emotionally disturbed youth.

To The Maples Gang

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INTRODUCTION

The British Columbia Youth Development Centre consisted of three units:

(a) Residential Adolescent Unit

(b) Psychological Education Clinic

(c) Child and Family Treatment Unit

This study, however, focuses only on the initiation phase of the Residential Unit--henceforth referred to as the Maples. The Maples complex consisted of three cottages, an administration building, a pool and gymnasium, and an arts and crafts centre. It was located behind the Burnaby Mental Health complex.

The main concern of this thesis is to look at how a "therapeutic community" evolved in the Residential Unit of the Maples. In the study, Maxwell Jones' formulation of a "therapeutic community" is adopted. In his book Social Psychiatry in Practice: The Idea of the Therapeutic Community, Jones offers a description of the major ingredients of such a community. Jones writes:

> ...What distinguishes a therapeutic community from other comparable treatment centres is the way in which the institution's total resources, staff, patients, and their relatives, are self-consciously pooled in furthering treatment. This implies, above all, a change in the usual status of patients. In collaboration with the staff, they now become active participants in their own therapy and that of other patients and in many aspects of the unit's general activities. This is in marked contrast to their relatively more passive, recipient role in conventional treatment regimes.... The extent to which this is practicable or desirable of course depends on many things, for example, the attitude of the leader and the other staff, the type of patients being treated, and the sanctions afforded by higher authority. The emphasis on free communication both within and between staff and patient groups and on permissive attitudes which encourage free expression of feeling implies a democratic, egalitarian rather than a traditional hierarchical social organization.

> ...The over-all culture in a ward or psychiatric unit represents the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns which have gradually been built up through time and are common to a large part of the unit. The tendency is for these cultural patterns to be most clearly established in the more stable and permanent members of the community, that is, the staff. When we use the term "therapeutic culture" we are referring to attempts to modify these patterns to meet the treatment needs of the patient.
>
> The sorts of attitude which contribute to a therapeutic culture would be essentially an emphasis on active rehabilitation, as against "custodialism" and segregation; "democratization" in contrast to the old hierarchies and formalities of status differentiation; "permissiveness" rather than the customarily limited ideas of what may be said and done; and "communalism" as opposed to an emphasis upon the original and specialized therapeutic role of the doctor.
>
> ...If one is fortunate enough to be able to plan and build up from scratch the sort of therapeutic community we have described, then inevitably one will end up with a hospital organization markedly different from the usual pattern which is essentially staff-centred and grounded in traditions from the past which have little relevance to current treatment practices.[1]

Peter Lavelle, who was the founding Director of the Residential Unit, based much of his orientation on Jones' work. The above quotes from Jones aptly describe the type of community and attitudes that Peter and the staff worked towards. In the thesis, therefore, the following major problems are discussed:

(a) How a group of people who have been accustomed to participating in hierarchial relationships can develop an egalitarian community.

(b) What is the true nature of education and the social structure in a creative learning setting such as the Maples.

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1. Maxwell Jones, Social Psychiatry in Practice: The Idea of the Therapeutic Community, (England: C. Nicholls & Company Ltd., 1968), pp. 86-101

(c) What is the process by which a "therapeutic culture" evolves.

The problems are approached both from a "sociological" and a "therapeutic" perspective. In other words, how an individual or a group of people felt during a certain experience is considered to be relevant to the total social structure of the community. Conversely, the social structure at any given time is seen as pertinent to the emotional disposition of the individual and the group. The two factors, therefore, are inseparable, as they form together to constitute the total community.

Regarding the text of this thesis, the use of the colloquialism "kids" should be explained. Since this case study is an attempt to record faithfully the interactions that took place in the Maples setting, the appropiate vocabulary has been used throughout. The problem of what to call the young people undergoing treatment arose very early in the history of the centre. In order to reduce the institutional stigma, the staff felt it inadvisable to use terms such as "patients" or "inmates". Other terms, such as "boys and girls", "youth", and "adolescents", were also rejected as totally inconsistent with the vernacular of young people. However, "kids" was commonly acceptable. Since this term appears so frequently in the direct quotations and body of the thesis, it was felt that continually putting it inside quotation marks would tend to interrupt the reader's flow of thought.

CHAPTER ONE: THE STAFF

The Director and His Staff

Dr. Peter Lavelle was hired by the British Columbia Civil Service to be the Administrative and Treatment Director of the Residential Treatment Unit of the British Columbia Youth Development Centre. Before Peter was hired, the Civil Service looked specifically for a doctor who had a definite treatment philosophy. His task was to set up the operation of a forty-five bed, residential treatment centre for deeply neurotic and psychotic adolescents. Since the Civil Service did not have any past experience in the establishment of this type of unit, nor any preference for a specific approach to treatment, Peter was given the freedom to implement his own approach. Peter's approach was based on his past experiences in the establishment of residential units for children in England, and his understanding of the necessary processes involved in the creation of a treatment milieu. Most of what happened at the Maples as presented in this study was a direct outgrowth of Peter's personal orientation, and, therefore, it would be redundant to present Peter's philosophy separate from the main text of the study.

Peter began interviews for prospective staff, child care counsellors, and supervisors in February, 1969. Although the positions were advertised in major newspapers across Canada, the United States, and Britain, most of

the applicants heard about the Maples by word of mouth from a friend or an agency. There were over 450 applications and 147 people interviewed for the original thirty positions that were available. Most of the applicants came from British Columbia. The applicants were given open house tours of the Maples setting, followed by a discussion with Peter on his plans for the Unit and the staff Orientation Program.

According to Peter, as well as the counsellors who were interviewed for this study, there were four criteria upon which prospective staff was chosen to work at the Maples.

The first criterion was whether or not Peter personally liked the applicant during the interview. When he was unsure about an applicant after the interview, the applicant was asked to come back for a second meeting. This criterion is obviously present whenever a director or employer interviews a prospective employee.

The second criterion was whether or not Peter thought that the applicant's personality, skills, and background would help in the establishment of a "therapeutic community" . Here, Peter looked for people with open, warm, giving, and enthusiastic personalities; people who would be able to relate to the kids and have the kids relate to them; people who had some skills of interest to offer the kids. Furthermore, since one of the original goals of the Maples was to train child care counsellors, a process which--as will be seen--has to include the personal growth and development of the individual staff member, Peter took into account whether or not the job would be conducive for the emotional growth of the applicant. He also considered whether or not the applicant was ready, psychologically and emotionally, for such growth. Some applicants,

whom Peter liked but did not think were ready for personal growth, were asked to undergo some form of psycho-therapy and then reapply at the Maples. In some cases these people were hired at a later time.

Another consideration, at this point, was the applicant's personal identification with the prevalent adolescent youth culture in the general society. Since most of the kids who would be coming to the Maples were from that culture, it was important that a sufficient number of counsellors should be able to identify with the kids' experiences in society. On the other hand, it would also be easier for the kids to relate and identify with people who were closer to their own cultural background, with similar tastes in music, clothes, appearance, life styles, folk heroes, and jargon. Approximately one-third of the applicants who were hired identified, in one way or another, with the adolescent "drug", "psychedelic", "rock", "hip", or "counter" culture. Peter's contention was that any group of people working together will function at the lowest common denominator in emotional development. The immaturity of some members of the group will bring down the maturity of the total group. Consequently, the "hip" group of counsellors, with its post-adolescent orientation, was to help bring down the general level of the staff--closer to the level of the kids. In terms of the group dynamics among the counsellors, the function of the "hip" group was to be anti-authority, anti-establishment, anti-task oriented and undermining. It was to infuse some adolescent-like irresponsibility, excitement, "far-out" and "turned-on" ideas, creativity, wildness and exuberance into the whole staff. Once the "hip" group brought down the general level of the total group of counsellors, Peter planned to allow the whole staff to go through the difficulties,

problems, and conflicts of maturing together. This was important so that the whole staff would gain, through its own experience, a perspective of the problems faced by adolescents.

Another one-third of the applicants who were hired came from the "straight" culture. They were hired for their goal and task orientation as a counter balance to the "hip" group. Most of these people were ready to accept authority above them, to handle responsibility, and to carry out directions. While the "hip" group was to bring the total group of counsellors closer to adolescence, the "straight" group was to ensure that the staff could handle necessary tasks. It must be pointed out that neither the "straight" group nor the "hip" group necessarily reflected the emotional development of the individual counsellors that belonged to either sub-culture. As the late Fritz Perls pointed out, often adults are not really mature, they merely act "adult". The terms, therefore, "maturity" and "immaturity" in describing the "hip" and the "straight" groups are merely in relation to the values of "adult" society. Those people in our society who easily conform to the standard work ethics of "carrying through with the job" and being goal oriented are often considered to be "mature" while others who take time to question the goals and the means are often viewed to be "immature". Thus, in such terms, the members of the "hip" group were "immature" and those of the "straight" group were "mature". In terms of the rest of this study, however, "maturity" refers to the individual's "transcendence from environmental support to self-support".[1] It cannot be said that those in the "straight" group were more "self-supportive"

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1. Frederick S. Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, (Lafayette, California: Real People Press, 1969) p. 28.

than those in the "hip" group. This formulation of "maturity" applies to a group as well as the individual.

The rest of the applicants who were hired were in-between the "hip" and the "straight" groups. They can be viewed, for the lack of better terminology, as the "liberal" group. Figuratively, the "liberals" could smoke pot with the "hip" group and drink cocktails with the "straight" group. This group was intended and, in fact, served as a buffer and liason between the other two groups of counsellors.

Most of the successful applicants were inexperienced in the line of child care counselling. This was due mainly to the general shortage of experienced child care counsellors in British Columbia as well as to Peter's preference for starting with an inexperienced staff.[2] The general inexperience of the staff equalized the relationships among the counsellors, so that no one staff member had predetermined authority by virtue of his past experience. Also, the inexperience of the staff forced the counsellors to tackle and work out problems together, instead of depending on the experience of others to come up with all the answers. An inexperienced staff, while lacking the security of past experience, has the potential to be more creative, as it is not limited by institutionalized ways of thinking and doing things.

The majority of the counsellors were physically handsome, good-looking people. By the standards of the general culture, especially the "youth culture", they were sexually attractive; they had "sex appeal". According to Peter, this was one of his considerations when he chose the

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2. One of Peter's contentions was that non-professionals can be trained to be qualified Child Care Counsellors, and that after sufficient experience, they can be entrusted with the treatment program and therapy. Most residential treatment units, e.g. Bruno Bettleheim's school, share the same philosophy, while most "medical model" units reject this idea.

staff, as it is easier for the adolescents to relate to people for whom they feel a physical or sexual attraction. In fact, interviews with prospective staff were conducted by Peter and a female supervisor so that the sexual appeals of both the male and the female applicants were considered. In the female counsellors Peter looked for women who met his fantasies of feminine warmth and sexuality, while the female supervisor looked for men who met her fantasies of male sexuality.

The third criterion for hiring was the applicant's past experience in this line of work or working with people in general. As indicated above, however, very few of the counsellors had any real experience, so this criterion played an unimportant role in the choosing of the original staff. Of the thirty successful candidates only five had former experience working with children.

The fourth criterion, especially for inexperienced staff, was a university diploma. While this was mainly a Civil Service requirement, Peter endorsed it, as he hoped to bring child care counselling up to professional status. In terms of the Training Program for child care counsellors that Peter hoped to institute within the Maples, a university degree was, to an extent, a measure of the applicant's intelligence.[3] The university degree need not have been in the Social Sciences; in fact, Peter preferred a conglomeration of people with varied backgrounds. Part of Peter's plans was to establish a type of "free school" setting within the Maples where people with varied backgrounds could serve as resource people in a variety of subjects. As will be seen, there was an attempt

3. Peter's plans for the Training Program have not yet materialized. He spent a considerable amount of time trying to get the B.C. Government to act on its original plans to make the Maples a training centre for child care counsellors. He also made contacts with the University of British Columbia, University of Victoria, and British Columbia Institute of Technology concerning the matter.

to offer certain subjects to the kids, although not in a formal teaching setting.

The Counsellors' Motivations for Choosing to Work at the Maples

As mentioned earlier, after the open house tours for applicants, Peter had discussions with the prospective staff members. During these discussions he outlined his plans for the Unit as well as the Staff Orientation Program which was to precede the opening of the Unit for the kids. In his discussion of the orientation period, Peter emphasized the personal development aspects of the program. Many of the counsellors interviewed for this study made their choice to work at the Maples on the basis of a conscious--at least intellectual--awareness of their own needs for the type of personal growth the Orientation Program and the Maples job setting had to offer. In many cases the counsellors had had a choice between the personal commitment and involvement setting at the Maples, and taking an impersonal, alienating type of job elsewhere.

Not only were these counsellors conscious of their own personal needs for growth through working with children, but also many of them could relate their needs to their own family backgrounds. The following examples from staff interviews illustrate the thought processes of many of the staff when they made the choice to work at the Maples.

Staff Interviewee 1

> I took this job because it was the hardest thing for me to do--that is, working with people and relating to people. I have found it hard being myself when I am with people. I just seem to withdraw totally into myself. Peter said that during the orientation we will go back through the whole process of childhood and adolescence, and I really wanted to see myself through that process.

I consciously wanted to work things out about myself because I did not want to end up like my parents; like the way I see my father relating to other people. I did not want to end up being fifty years old, not having found myself and unable to communicate.

I had a choice to go to University of British Columbia to study systems analysis or to come here. I chose the Maples for the personal development, not for the salary. For me, this is a job with a built-in meaning.

Staff Interviewee 2

My own family background denied me being a kid; it denied me my childhood. I had to be responsible for my kid sister. The family was always fighting and splitting up; both parents were working, so I made myself feel responsible for keeping the family going. I took care of cooking and looking after the house. Consequently, I have never developed many skills that other children develop in their childhood. This kind of work allows me to gain back my lost childhood--that is I have to learn new skills, e.g. piano, swimming, art, handicraft, kite building, weaving, in order to teach the kids. Thus, I develop myself.

The reason I entered this field was that I felt comfortable working with kids; I could give a lot. I may have this need to care as a carryover from my family where I was the one who always cared. I cared for my sister, then my mother, then my father--always for someone else, not myself. Now I am more into self-awareness, caring for myself, discovering myself; and the Maples setting allows this to happen.

I had a choice in working for the Maples or other child care agencies. I chose the Maples because it was a new place, without red tape, nothing established, wide open for new ideas.

Staff Interviewee 3

When I decided to work here, working with kids was not a prime factor for me. In fact, I had fears of relating to kids. My primary consideration was personal development and working with other staff members.

I had been sick with colitis--a partly psychosomatic

> problem--and I hoped that this place will provide some answers. I felt that the Maples would help me rise above or change whatever my family made me. I started to move away from the country club background of my family at the university, and taking the job here was a continuation of that process. I see my father as a lazy simpleton, mentally and emotionally. My father seems to me like an empty slot with no clear expectations. He never met my image of what a father should be. I never knew what was expected of me. Now as a child care counsellor, I can be firm, authoritarian, and flexible when needed; and, therefore, I can fill my image of what a father should be better than my father. I have become more aware than my father.
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> I had a choice of going to university or working here, but the former would have meant further dependence on my parents and I did not want that.

The above examples, as well as other interviews with staff, show that many of the staff recognized their own personal needs in working within a setting like the Maples. This recognition, as will be seen, was important not only for the personal development of the counsellors, but also for the staff's performance with kids.

Not all of the counsellors were aware of their own personal needs to work with adolescents. Some of them came to the Maples out of an "altruistic" desire to "help"; not to be "helped". For some counsellors the development of personal skills, and the mere excitement of a new, valuable experience--not the awareness of a need for emotional growth--was the primary factor in accepting the job. Often this awareness came after a few months of working at the Maples. By the time of the interviews[4], all of the interviewed staff had, one way or another, taken on the task of developing greater self-awareness and self-

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4. The interviews were taken ten months after the beginning of the Orientation Program, i.e. March and April, 1970.

integration through the opportunity offered to them by the Maples environment. Many of the staff who have left the Maples, either voluntarily or upon Peter's request, were not able to get seriously involved in the essential personal growth process.

CHAPTER TWO: STAFF ORIENTATION: PART ONE

Officially, the initial Orientation and Assessment Program of the successful applicants lasted three months: May, June, and July of 1969. Since, however, the counsellors also considered their August "holiday camp" experience with the first group of boys as part of their "training program", this part of the study deals with the counsellors' experiences during the four months period.

Philosophy of the Orientation Program

Peter's approach to and philosophy of the Orientation Program was based on two hypotheses regarding the nature of the educational process and the social structure of a "treatment centre". The first hypothesis was that in a treatment centre, as in any other educational setting, the cultural milieu is determined to a large extent by the orientation of the staff as a whole, and the personal disposition of the individual members of the staff. Consequently, the social structure in any given educational setting will be determined by such factors as the strengths and weaknesses, the securities and insecurities, the trusts and distrusts, and the openness and closeness of the staff. The social structure is determined by and reflects the emotional make-up of the adults in charge of the setting more than by the patients' dispositions. When these basic feelings and emotions of the adults in charge of a given setting are not consciously expressed and remain unrecognized, they still surface through the social structure, i.e. in the social interactions between those who wield power and authority and those who do not.[1]

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1. For further discussion see: Neil Postman & Charles Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1970) p. 33.

The second hypothesis was that "maturing"--that is growing to be "self-supportive"--is a learning process based on the freedom of an individual or a group to discover and experience new phenomena. According to this hypothesis, learning involves experiencing, and experiencing is learning. An individual as a group has to have freedom for discovery and experiencing; and when such freedom is denied, learning and maturing is limited.

Based on the above hypotheses, the Orientation Program was to serve the following interrelated functions:[2]

First, the program was to develop a group feeling among the staff. It was to bind the staff together through an intensive, three months long group experience. The group experience was to include exposure to sensitivity training, encounter, awareness, communications, and various forms of psycho-therapy groups as well as personal skills development, theory seminars, and various group activities.

Second, the Orientation Program was to open communications among the counsellors, to develop a level of trust and honesty among them, and to help them overcome their fears of self-exposure. Through the group experience the individual was to develop greater awareness of others as well as awareness of his own self, needs, and feelings.

A third function was to give the staff an opportunity to experience the "freedom" which is essential for learning and self-growth. Through a great degree of personal freedom of choice and autonomy from direction from above, the individual counsellor as well as the staff on the whole

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2. Each of these functions are further elaborated upon in the discussion on the actual orientation program.

was to learn "to take responsibility for his life within the Maples". Every individual was to learn to become personally responsible for the Orientation Program, even when the other staff failed to do so. Of course, the ultimate aim of the program was to enable the counsellors to become more "self-supportive", more mature.

In short, the Orientation Program was to be, as much as possible, a rehearsal for the establishment of a "therapeutic community". It was to be an opportunity for the counsellors to gain a partial understanding, through their own experience, of what constitutes the ingredients of such a community. The Program was to begin many of the activities and processes which were to become part of the "therapeutic community" at the Maples. All of these activities and processes were to be continued and more fully developed as the community evolved. It was to be an "orientation" period for the counsellors to help them see what they could expect and what was expected of them. Although the new skills they were to develop and the new experiences they were to undergo were to have further practical applications once the kids arrived at the Maples, the Orientation Program was not meant to be a "training" program as most of the counsellors preferred to refer to it. It was to be a "learning" program.

From the beginning of the Orientation Program there existed a misunderstanding between Peter and the rest of the staff as to the nature of the Program. While the counsellors referred to the Program as "training", Peter maintained that it was impossible to train people for this kind of work in three months, especially without the reality of the kids being present. As Peter stated, "The staff, because of the counsellors' insecurities, just couldn't accept the fact that the program

could only be for orientation, and not to train them to work with kids." Not until after their initial experiences with the kids could the counsellors accept that the Orientation Program was only an "orientation", and that their real training had to be through actual working with the kids in residence.

The Development of Personal Skills

Since the counsellors were preparing themselves to relate to adolescents, Peter encouraged the staff to partake and enjoy the type of activities engaged in by adolescents. The counsellors were to increase their skills and interests in many varied activities so that the kids would be attracted to relate to them as "resource people".

Throughout the three months the counsellors participated in a program of physical development. They played team games such as baseball, basketball, floor-hockey, football, volleyball, badminton; and they made frequent use of the gymnasium, the ropes, and the trampolines. They also participated in an intensive swimming program, and many of them eventually received their Life Saving Certificates. Initially, the counsellors' skills in sports were often the only basis for relationships between the staff and the kids.

The physical development program had a number of purposes. Since most of the counsellors were former university students, at the post-adolescence phase of development, they no longer participated in the type of physical activities that most teenagers pursue. Through the conditioning of their university education, they were accustomed to utilizing their energies mainly through passive, intellectual pursuits such as thinking and talking. The physical development program was to

help the counsellors redirect their energies to their bodies, to re-awaken their bodies to physical exercise. Such body reawakening was important not only for getting the counsellors "in shape", to prepare them for the excessive energy of the kids, but also for the personal growth therapy of the individual counsellor. It helped them to get more "in touch" with their basic organismic feelings.

The physical development program also exposed the staff to "body contact". Peter encouraged the counsellors to experience contact through hugging, sports, and wrestling, in order to alleviate their fears of intimate as well as aggressive body contact with the kids. Despite Peter's encouragements, most of the counsellors avoided having aggressive body contacts with each other during the orientation period. Consequently, when the first group of boys arrived, many of the counsellors experienced fear and enxiety over the boys' constant quest for aggressive physical contact. While most people past adolescence do not engage in aggressive physical contact, such contact is important for adolescents. It is a way of releasing pent-up anger, tension, and anxiety; a way of experiencing energy; and a way of testing one's physical strengths, weaknesses, controls, and durability. It was, therefore, important that the counsellors become aware of the kids' needs for body contact, and, furthermore, from the point of view of the counsellors' personal growth, it was important that the counsellors "get in touch" with their own anger and aggression through such contacts. In most cases, this awareness did not develop among the staff until a few months after the kids came to the Maples.

One of the highlights of the personal development program early in the Orientation Program was a sailing course in which most of the counsellors participated. As Peter wrote, the sailing program was "a useful assessment situation, where almost all of the counsellors were learning a new skill from the beginning. Various attitudes became clear, e.g. aggressive drive, leadership, persistence, self-confidence, dependency, teamwork and cooperation, will-to-fail. Many people discovered unsuspected talent in themselves. The group also developed a strong solidarity reinforced by a party on the beach after work on the last day of the course."[3] The sailing course, as all the other aspects of the program, was to show the counsellors the importance of taking initiative in programming. It was important that they learn to take the initiative to start, plan, and execute various programs; and through their initiative to get others involved.

As part of their orientation, the counsellors took part in a few "arts and crafts" activities. Many of the interviewed staff stated that they had great difficulties in seriously involving themselves in arts and crafts.

Staff Interviewee 8

> Arts and crafts, during the training months, just didn't have too much meaning for me. I tried to avoid it as much as possible. Somehow, from my summer camp boyhood days and my elementary school experiences, I developed negative connotations with arts and crafts. Arts and crafts is for girls; arts and crafts is boring; arts and crafts is "sissy". I see now how mistaken I was, and I could see during

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3. Peter Lavelle, Residential Unit Report, July 1969, Report to Director of Mental Health Services: on file at the Maples.

> the training months that creativity had to be part of a "therapeutic community". I just couldn't get myself involved. I would rather talk about creativity than be creative.

The above excerpt from staff interviews illustrates well the experiences of many of the other counsellors. The problem that these counsellors faced was that they were not accustomed to expressing themselves non-verbally, through their hands. The counsellors, like most middle-class people in North American society, were conditioned to abdicate their manual creative abilities through the abstract, intellectual nature of their high school and university education. Our formal education system over-emphasizes intellectual expression, at the expense of other forms of expression. This conditioning is furthered by our society's profit orientation to "work". Unfortunately, in our commercialized economy the profit motivation for working has, for most people, replaced the creative, self-expressive potentials of manual labor. The counsellors were, therefore, alienated from the creative use of their hands. They never developed that creative aspect of their human potentialities. The arts and crafts program was to help them redirect their creative energies from their heads into their hands. It was to help them "re-own" their hands, to get them excited about their creative potentials. Although during the Orientation Program most of the counsellors would rather "talk about creativity than actually be creative", arts and crafts eventually became an important aspect of the personal growth process for the counsellors as well as for the kids.

By developing the skills of the individual counsellors, the Orientation Program raised the general level of the whole staff. Furthermore, by developing their personal skills, the counsellors gained more self-

confidence in relating to the kids. They began to feel that they really had something to offer. These skills became a fundamental part of the kids' therapy and, as indicated earlier, the initial basis for relationships between the kids and the staff.

The activities centered around physical development and arts and crafts also enhanced staff cohesion and togetherness by providing the counsellors opportunities for interaction and mutual experiences.

Staff Interviewee 5

> A great feeling of strength and power developed within the staff. There was a great degree of cohesion and a very idealistic feeling of how the place was going to work. We had great expectations. We envisaged as our ideal a dynamic, on-going community among the staff with the kids joining us in our multiple activities.

The Furthering of Individual and Group Growth and Awareness

Peter's first hypothesis which stated that the social structure and the social interactions in any given educational setting are often determined by, and reflect the emotional make-up of the people with authority in charge of the setting has great implications for the staff of a treatment centre intent upon building a "therapeutic community". One of the fundamental bases of a "therapeutic community" is "honesty in relationships" between all members of the community . "Honesty in relationships" simply means that people openly communicate with each other their feelings about themselves and their feelings towards those around them. Within a "therapeutic community" the counsellors, therefore, would have to be ready to expose themselves to the kids by openly

expressing their innermost feelings.[4] The Orientation Program was to help them become more honest, and to communicate more openly.

To facilitate open communications among the staff, the counsellors frequently participated in various psycho-therapy groups which were to help break down the psychological and emotional barriers among them. The groups varied in nature, often according to the orientation of the group leaders. The counsellors were first exposed to sensitivity and awareness groups. Later, once a level of trust developed among them, they participated in more intense encounter and self-revelatory groups. In these groups the counsellors opened themselves up by trying to honestly share with each other their personal fears, anxieties, "hang-ups", insecurities, egotisms, weaknesses, as well as their abilities and strengths. The groups also encouraged them to give each other feedback, to tell each other how they saw one another, and to express their feelings of competition, jealousies, inferiority and superiority, likes and dislikes, resentments and appreciations, anger, trusts and mistrusts, and so forth. As Petter stated, "Once the counsellors were able to accept their weaknesses in public, they were already growing; they could only go up."

Most of the counsellors, as would most people in our society, at first found the groups very threatening. They experienced great difficulties and anxieties at expressing themselves openly and honestly and to hear and accept other people's opinions and feelings towards them.

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4. According to Peter, many professionals who work with children are really afraid of genuine emotional contact with them. This fear among many social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, and counsellors is primarily an adolescent fear of self-exposure. By avoiding such exposure, professionals often create a communications barrier between themselves and the kids.

They found it threatening to forfeit many of the "phoney" roles and manipulative"games" that they had developed during their lifetime. They also found it threatening to "see through" many of the self-deceiving "self-images" that they tried to project to the world. As Peter stated, "all the counsellors tried to live under the 'beautiful people syndrome'". The self-image that they tried to create was that of the "ever-loving, beautiful person" who never experiences feelings of anger, resentment, jealousy or competition. It was hard for many of the counsellors to accept and to admit to the others that they also experienced these "negative" feelings.

This type of communication on an honest, open, and personal level was alien to most of the counsellors' life experiences. Our society offers few rewards for real honesty in relationships, and, in fact, conditions people to be dishonest by making dishonesty rather profitable. In order to survive in our society, the individual learns at an early age to be dishonest with those around him, and in the same process, to be dishonest with himself.[8] The defences that he deploys to protect himself from the outside world eventually serve to alienate the individual from his "true self". He learns to exchange his "true self" for a "self-image". He exchanges his "genuine" responses to others for "manipulative" reactions. He learns to respond calculatively, as how he imagines he "should" respond. Eventually, he learns to identify with his "should responses", often in violation of his genuine feelings. His calculated "should responses" become part of his self-image, and through his self-image he is able to

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5. The term "dishonest" is not used here in any moral sense, but rather from an existential point of view.

compete for the valued goals of our society. In other words, most people, including many successful businessmen, do not think of themselves as basically "dishonest"; the split between their artificial self-image and their potential genuine selves is too great to make them aware of how they are betraying their own selves. Nevertheless, the basic dishonesty expressed through various neurotic manifestations still remains.[6] It remains below the awareness level of the individual. Only by remaining unaware of his dishonesty can the individual continue to relate dishonestly to his parents, lovers, spouses, children, bosses, and friends, and still maintain his "congruity" and prevent "dissonance".

Therefore, the counsellors, in their quest for honesty in relationships, had to learn to drop many of their personal defences. They had to become more aware of, i.e."get in touch with", their genuine organismic feelings, to take the risks in expressing these feelings, and to listen to each other's feedback. Through this process, they had to begin to change their self-images. This was a painful process, and, as mentioned above, the counsellors found it very threatening.

Of course, none of the counsellors experienced a total psychological "death" and "rebirth" in the three months duration of the Orientation Program. They still held on to their manipulative games, roles, and self-images. They did not suddenly transform into--as many of them would have liked to believe--genuinely expressive, mature individuals. Such profound changes in personality do not occur overnight. It is

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6. "Neurosis" is considered in this study according to the late Fritz Perls' formulation as "growth disorder". It is treated as an educational instead of a medical problem. The main problem, therefore, is how a person prevents his own maturity; how people, in the process of getting older, prevent themselves from growing up emotionally. Perls, Op. Cit., p.28

impossible for an individual to unlearn in a few months the neurotic, defensive mechanisms that he has developed over his lifetime.

The encounter and self-revelatory groups during the Orientation Program could at best make the counsellors aware of the fact that they, too, play manipulative games, that they, too, act out "phoney" roles, and that they, too, are dishonest with themselves and with others. Such an awareness is a primary step towards personal growth and "self-actualization". Once this awareness is reached, the individual can either continue his painful quest for "self-realization" or develop new games, new roles, new ways of remaining dishonest. Most of the counsellors at first adopted new techniques in avoiding their "neuroses", as do most people first involved in psycho-therapy. Upon their initiation to the concept of "honesty in relationship", they often continued their dishonesty under the self-deception of being "honest". The fact is that until the individual "knows himself", he cannot really know when he is being "honest". Therefore, real honesty could not develop among the counsellors until they got further involved in their own personal growth therapy. This did not happen until many months later.

The Realization of Staff Adolescence and the Importance of Personal Growth

In terms of the evolution of a "therapeutic community", the encounter and self-revelatory groups were essential for a number of reasons: First, through these groups the counsellors got more "in touch" with their own personal needs and problems. Many of them recognized their own "adoles-

cence" in emotional development.[7] They recognized that they were still involved in a serious search for self-identity, self-confidence, a break with the emotional control of their parents, and the setting of self-expectations. This recognition of their own adolescent problems eventually helped the counsellors to better understand, identify, and empathize with the problems of the kids. In turn, it helped the kids in relating to the counsellors, and, consequently, in understanding themselves better. The staff and the kids had a common ground; they shared similar problems to varying degrees.

The recognition by both the staff and the kids of the fact that the counsellors also had certain needs and problems was important for the evolution of a community spirit in the cottage. By being more "in touch" with their own needs, the counsellors were more in a position to understand what was really happening in the cottage community . In other words, they could become more aware of when their demands on the kids was for the "real" interests of the kids, or, in fact, to meet their own personal needs. They could also become more aware of why certain activities were successful while others failed. Thus, for example, on one Training Day the staff complained about the "inactivity" and "lethargy" of the kids, until it was realized that the counsellors were just as "inactive" , and that they were "scapegoating" the kids. Once the counsellors recognized the "space" that they were in, they were more able to move out of it and effect change.

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7. In this study Edgar Z. Friedenberg's definition of "adolescence" is adopted. According to Friedenberg, the central task of adolescence is "self-definition". "Adolescence is the period during which a young person learns who he is and what he really feels. It is the time during which he differentiates himself from his culture, though on the culture's terms. It is the age at which, by becoming a person in his own right, he becomes capable of deeply felt relationships to other individuals perceived clearly as such." Edgar Z. Friedenberg, The Vanishing Adolescent, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1968) p. 9.

Once they recognized their own "inactivity" and its effect on the kids, they could become more involved and more active. By being "in touch" with themselves the counsellors could account more accurately for the changing moods in the cottage. Furthermore, it was necessary for the staff to meet their own needs in order to conserve themselves. They needed such emotional recharging. Until they could meet their own needs they could not sufficiently meet the needs of the kids.

It was also important that the counsellors get involved in their personal growth since they were to be "role models" for the kids. As "role models" they had to be involved in their own growth before they could encourage the kids to confront their problems. The kids were to be encouraged to work on their problems, to develop themselves by the example of the counsellors. Furthermore, it was important that the counsellors get involved with their own personal growth so that they would not overwhelm and threaten the kids by presenting themselves as a group of talented and seemingly "problem-free" people. Often in our society, the youth are presented with an inaccurate and dishonest image of the adult world. While the image of the problem-free adult who knows "all the answers" is propagated by many parents, teachers, social workers, psychologists, policemen and family television shows, it does not measure up to reality. The reality is that adults in our society have merely learned to cope with their problems, while youth, especially adolescents, are still trying to "learn to cope". The result of the adult world's dishonesty is that the youth in our society never feel "competent enough" in comparison with adults, and, consequently, they never feel competent enough to "take responsibility for their own lives". The prime focus of

the "therapeutic community" at the Maples was to offer an opportunity for both the staff and the kids to take responsibility for their lives.

The Need for Expression of "Negative Feelings"

A second function that the encounter and self-revelatory groups served was that of exposing the counsellors to "conflict situations" in interpersonal relationships. The counsellors, as most people in our culture, have been conditioned by their life experiences to avoid conflict situations. By our cultural standards such feelings and forms of expression as anger, hostility, hurt, sadness, resentments, disgust, and screaming are defined as "negative". Children are conditioned at an early age to control, that is suppress , their genuine, "negative" feelings. The vocabulary of many parents and teachers is abundant with such phrases as: "Good boys don't fight", "Good little girls don't get angry", "Big boys don't cry", "Good children don't hate". Little children soon learn that the way to get rewards is by smiling and "being cute and nice", while expressed anger and hostility bring only reprimands and rejection. The common attitude is that "negative" feelings are not supposed to be expressed; they are supposed to "just go away".[8] These feelings, however, do not "just go away". The research of such people as Wilhelm Reich, Fritz Perls, Alexander Lowen, Arthur Janov, and Ida Rolf indicates that whenever these feelings are unexpressed, they remain

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8. In therapy groups the following situation often arises: One of the participants states that he feels angry. The therapist will then ask him to express his anger, verbally or non-verbally, towards the person to whom he feels angry. At this point the angry participant often backs down and claims that he is not angry anymore. When asked what happened to his anger, the participant often shrugs his shoulders and says, "It just went away". When asked where "it" went, he usually has no answers and remains dumbfounded.

within the individual's organism as emotionally "unfinished situations" and physically as muscle tensions. The individual carries with him hundreds of "unfinished situations" that he has collected throughout his life. These "unfinished situations" continuously affect the individual's psyche, emotional make-up, and physiology. It is possible in psychotherapy to "close" or "finish" these "unfinished situations" by reliving the original situations and re-experiencing and expressing those previously unexpressed "negative" feelings. The trend in modern psychotherapy, for example, Gestalt and Primal Scream Therapy, is towards getting the "patient" to "get in touch" with his supressed feelings and to express them. Many of these feelings can be reached by re-enacting past situations and through intense body manipulations. Reich's "Organ therapy", Lowen's "Bio-energetics", and Ida Rolf's "Rolfing" techniques, for example, are aimed at releasing suppressed emotions that have become embedded in the "muscular armour" of the individual.

The following excerpt from a staff interview illustrates the suppression of negative emotions:

Staff Interviewee 9

> All my life I have had a hard time relating to people who I made into "authority figures". Through numerous Gestalt sessions I got in touch with how my parents, especially my mother, hurt me. I remembered scenes from my childhood when I desperately wanted her attention, and her attention was not forthcoming. Often she just ignored me. I also remembered how I withheld myself from shouting at her. I turned my hurt feelings into anger, but I can't remember ever expressing my anger. Once I did get in touch with my anger, I was able to express it by shouting, smashing a pillow, and expressing my resentments to my parents. Since then I find that I am less belligerent towards people above me; I am able to trust them more. Especially with Peter I find that I can relate to him. I see him more clearly,

> and I am not afraid to be friends with him. I think that the Rolfing sessions that I took also helped me get more "in touch" with my feelings.

The point that the above excerpt aptly illustrates is that unexpressed "negative" feelings often prevent the expression of more "positive" feelings of trust, love, warmth, and affection from emerging. In fact, unexpressed anger inevitably finds a form of expression,and when channeled in the wrong direction, it can be very anti-therapeutic. In this counsellor's experience by expressing his anger for his parents, he was able to partly alleviate his need to find alternative "pseudo-targets" for his angry feelings. Consequently, he learned to see others more clearly and to make more genuine contacts. Many of the kids who came to the Maples had similar life experiences.

Through the encounter and self-revelatory groups, therefore, the counsellors learned to see the healthy sides of expressing "negative" feelings. They also learned to accept new forms of expressions that they had previously avoided. Thus they learned to appreciate the important "therapeutic value" of openly expressed anger, resentments, and hurts as well as such forms of expression as screaming, fighting, crying, pounding a pillow, smashing a chair, or throwing a temper tantrum.

In fact, from an "existentialist" therapeutic point of view, there are no "negative" feelings or forms of expression. All feelings are considered within a therapeutic setting as part of the human organism, and, therefore, valid and important in their own right. The term "negative" is a socially determined value judgement. When the individual views certain feelings and emotions as "negative", he in-

hibits their expression. In order for the individual to become a "full", "wholly integrated" human being, he has to be "in touch" with the full spectrum of his human emotions. By denying or suppressing any of his natural emotions, the individual denies parts of himself. Only by being aware of all of his feelings can he fully and honestly express himself. Only then can he relate honestly to himself and to others around him.

The expression of "negative" feelings was also essential for the development of staff cohesion. Whenever people interact intensively and in close quarters over an extended peiod of time, resentments and other "negative" feelings arise. When these feelings remain unexpressed, they often get in the way of the achievement of group goals. Since the counsellors were to be interacting intensively as a whole unit as well as smaller, more intimate "shift teams", it was important that they recognize this. So long as they continued to harbor any unexpressed resentments towards each other, they would not be able to work as an effective, cohesive team. Their resentments would get in their way of seeing each other clearly. They would not be able to hear one another; they would ignore each other's ideas; they would remain as isolated individuals. Consequently, they would not be able to offer one another the necessary emotional support in their interactions with the kids. Furthermore, the counsellors had to learn to express these feelings not only in the encounter groups, but rather "on the spot" whenever the feelings arose in their everyday interactions. At first, most of the counsellors preferred to "save up" their resentments until the "next" encounter group. Later, however, they got used to expressing their feelings "on the spot". Such on-going confrontations served as a way of "detensioning" in day to day cottage life.

The Need for Expression of Positive Feelings

At the same time as exposing the counsellors to the healthy sides of "conflict situations", the encounter and self-revelatory groups also served the third function of exposing the counsellors to "giving" and "accepting" emotional support from each other. Just as most counsellors found it difficult to express and accept "negative" feelings, they also found it threatening to express and receive "positive" feelings. In fact, many counsellors stated that they could accept "negative" feedback more easily than "positive" feedback.

Not being able to accept or to give genuine feelings of warmth, trust, care, love, just as not being able to give and receive "negative" feelings was a natural outgrowth of the counsellors' life experiences in our society. As discussed earlier, at a certain time in his life, the individual abdicates his honest, genuine feelings for manipulative "should" responses. By adopting these "should responses" the individual not only learns to be dishonest, but, also, he cuts the only human bond that can give him genuine, emotional contact with others. In other words, only by honestly expressing and accepting both "negative" and "positive" feelings can the individual create the necessary bond between him and other people. Therefore, the embedded dishonesty in our society conditions the individual to avoid genuine contacts so that he just "slides by" other people in his interactions. An individual who "just slides by", who does not really experience himself is more suitable for the needs of our competitive, technocratic culture than a genuinely expressive individual. He is more able to fit into the "slots" that society requires fulfilled, and he is more able to "act out" required roles. The individual's inability

to make genuine contact with others, his inability to establish strong human bonds keeps him isolated, lonely, afraid, insecure, and, in turn, "dependent". Since he is not "in touch" with his "true self", he relies on others to define himself, to prescribe his roles, to determine his "worth". He thus abdicates his responsibility for his life and expects his parents, teachers, bosses, wife (often wives), to tell him how or who he "should" be and what he should do. He remains "alienated" or "foreign" to his life experience.

The following excerpt from a staff interview not only demonstrates the fears that many of the counsellors expressed, but also gives testimony to the above discussion:

Staff Interviewee 7

> During the first few months at the Maples, whenever I got some "positive" feedback in the encounter groups, whenever somebody said that they liked me, I wouldn't accept that someone had warm feelings for me. I just dismissed it. I was more prepared to hear "negative" feedback.
>
> I got scared when somebody felt close to me. Somehow I have always had a fear of feeling close to people. I have always associated being close, especially being close to my parents, with commitment and further expectations. I have always been afraid to "trust" others, and to commit part of myself to them.
>
> Also, I have always felt that I had to "earn" others' love, that I had to perform or somehow "pay back" their love and affection for me. I was always scared that I would have nothing to offer in return, not even my own feelings. I was afraid of others feeling close to me, and me feeling close to them. The risk of feeling close was always too great. I would always anticipate rejection or separation from people that I liked, and instead of suffering the incurring pain, I cut off my feelings.
>
> At those times when I did experience strong "positive" feelings for somebody, I was usually too embarrassed to express myself. Often I didn't even know how to express warmth, affection, and support to somebody.

Besides furthering the personal growth of the counsellors, learning to give emotional support through the expression of "positive" feelings was also essential for the development of staff cohesion. In the encounter groups the counsellors learned to give each other support verbally, as well as, non-verbally. Non-verbal support was extended by hugging, by touching, by holding someone's hands, or just by being "there" and thus letting the person know that someone cared. Such support was usually offered after the person asked for it . It was the person's responsibility to reach out for the support. Being able to offer this type of support to another person was imperative for the counsellors' relationships with the kids. By learning to express their "positive" and "negative" feelings openly, the counsellors learned to make stronger contacts within their own peer group, and eventually, with the kids in the cottage.

Developing Awareness of Group Dynamics and Interpersonal Relations

A fourth function of the encounter and self-revelatory groups was to introduce the counsellors to the problems and intricacies of interpersonal relations and group dynamics. The counsellors had to become aware of the type of interpersonal relationships that existed among them as well as to recognize the dynamics that existed within their own peer group. Through their experiences in their own groups, they became aware of many of the processes that occur in all groups where people are interacting on an intense level. This was important since eventually the counsellors were to participate in similar groups and interactions with the kids. In order to benefit the kids, to help the kids help themselves in becoming more aware, the counsellors had to first reach a certain level of awareness of their own. They had to learn to be able to say, for example, when

somebody was "projecting", when somebody was "feeding into" somebody else, when somebody was being "scapegoated", when somebody was playing "top dog" or "under dog", when somebody was "setting up" the group or another individual, and so forth.

In the process of becoming aware of their own group dynamics, the counsellors developed among themselves a "common vocabulary". The vocabulary was necessary not only for improving and furthering communications between the counsellors, but also for increasing their ability to perceive recurring patterns in their groups. In other words, just as every trade has its own terminology, so too the counsellors needed a common nomenclature. For examples, such terms as "projection", "setting up", "feeding into", "top dog", "under dog", "playing games", "put down", "scapegoating", "here and now", "confluence", "retroflection", "introjection" became part of the everyday language of the counsellors. The vocabulary helped the counsellors maintain the right perspective and orientation. Eventually, many of these terms were also picked up by the kids. By learning to understand their own vocabulary, the staff learned to communicate more effectively, to express their feelings and awarenesses more directly and specifically. Ironically, while the vocabulary initially helped the counsellors to communicate, occasionally it also hindered communications. Some of the phrases, especially the trilogy "I resent...I demand...I appreciate", became a form of "ritualized jargon". Whenever anyone wished to express certain feelings, there often existed a ritualistic expectation from the rest of the group to use the accepted jargon. Many of the phrases lost their genuine meanings by being overused, and the vocabulary sometimes interfered with the natural flow of

emotions. Consequently, there was a definite effort to drop the jargon and some of it was eliminated.

In summary, the encounter and self-revelatory groups during the Orientation Program served the following purposes:

(a) They got the counsellors more "in touch" with their own needs and problems;

(b) they exposed the staff to the importance of "personal growth" within a therapeutic community;

(c) they showed the counsellors the healthy sides of "conflict situations";

(d) they exposed the counsellors to the importance of "giving" and "accepting" emotional support;

(e) they introduced the staff to the problems of interpersonal relations and group dynamics.

The groups eventually became an integral basis of the therapy and growth process of the staff and the kids. The functions they served became the fundamental bases of the "therapeutic community" at the Maples.

Increasing the Counsellors' Theoretical Background

In line with Peter's second hypothesis regarding the necessary nature of "education" within a treatment centre, the counsellors gained the main body of their theoretical knowledge through their own subjective experiences during the Orientation Program . In other words, their theoretical background was not based primarily on lectures and theory seminars, but rather on the process of "experiencing" and "discovery". Based on their personal experiences they discovered much of the theory and philosophy that was necessary for the establishment of a "therapeutic community". In short,

their medium on the whole became their message.

From the beginning of the Orientation Program, Peter told the counsellors that he believed the "experience" had to precede "theory". As Peter explained in an interview:

> People only hear what they want to hear, what they are ready to hear. They only see what they want to see, and they only understand what they want to understand. There was no way that the counsellors wanted to listen to lectures at the beginning of the Orientation Program. They resisted all lectures, all theory. Once they got freedom from having to listen, as they had to in schools and university, they quit listening. They had to first experience "freedom" and group process before they could understand it in theory. Whenever I did present some theory, I could see the counsellors "tuning out", turning a "deaf ear" to what I had to say.

The counsellors, therefore, derived the main body of their theoretical background from their own experiences. To facilitate these experiences, Peter minimized his role as an "authoritarian father figure", and he encouraged the peer group dynamics to freely develop among the staff. Thus instead of merely talking about the "nature of peer groups", the counsellors experienced being part of one. The medium of experiencing became the message. Since most of the counsellors never had previous experience in belonging to a community of peers they had never experienced the group dynamics involved in the formation of a community based on the principle of equality among its members. The counsellors found themselves, through Peter's refusal to constantly play the "authoritarian" role, in a situation that was quite different from their previous life experiences. Until they came to the Maples the counsellors were, like most people in Western society, in situations in which they were participants in hierarchical relationships. Within these relationships, i.e. in the family, in school, in university, and in previous employment they always had their goals and expectations "laid down" from above by their parents, teachers,

professors, and bosses. Consequently, they were never given the opportunity to take full responsibility for their lives. They never fully developed their ability to set and live up to "self-expectations".

The number of imposed expectations that the counsellors had to live up to were greatly reduced by Peter's understanding of the necessary processes involved in the development of a "mature" staff, comprised of mature individuals. A mature staff, as a mature individual, is one that can create and live up to its own realistic expectations. Just as an individual needs freedom to develop towards maturity, so too the staff needed freedom from excess direction from above to become self-reliant. Peter stated on a number of occasions that so long as he would lay down all the expectations from above, he would cheat the counsellors from a learning experience. By denying them the opportunity to take responsibility for their lives within the Maples, he would rob them of an opportunity to develop towards maturity.

Thus, Peter gave the counsellors much of the responsibility for planning and implementing the Orientation Program. How the counsellors learned thereby became just as important as what they learned. In fact, how they learned became, essentially, what they learned. This way, instead of merely discussing the concept of "freedom and responsibility" and its relationship to "maturity" and "growth", the staff experienced the process. The medium of "freedom with responsibility" became the message. Experiencing such freedom and responsibility, and recognizing their importance for education, were essential for the counsellors' understanding of a "therapeutic community", and this understanding played an important role in the staff's relationships with the kids. Similarly, experiencing freely their own peer group dynamics helped the counsellors to understand better the peer group

dynamics of the kids.

Of course, the counsellors did not have "total" freedom to do as they wished. Their freedom was limited by the realities of their employment, i.e. they were Civil Service employees, they were paid by the Government, they had to abide by the rules and regulations of the Civil Service, and they had the specific task of preparing themselves for becoming child care counsellors. These realities often created frustrations for the whole staff, including Peter, by placing limitations on what they wanted to do. For example, during the Orientation Program many of the counsellors preferred to walk about the complex barefoot, whereas going barefoot was against Civil Service regulations. In this case, Peter, who was the official laison between the staff and the Civil Service, had to pass down an edict forbidding bare feet. He had to remind the counsellors of the reality of their situation. In an other example, Peter and the counsellors planned to go camping for a week as part of the Orientation, but the camping experience had to be cancelled because of Civil Service limitations from above. In such incidences Peter was just as frustrated as the rest of the staff. The conflict between the counsellors' ideals and these realities continued even after the Orientation Program. Although the counsellors resented the Civil Service for imposing limitations, and in turn scapegoated Peter whenever he had to remind them of their realities, such reminders served as learning experiences for the staff. Through these experiences the counsellors learned that freedom is always bound by limits and realities. Recognizing their own realities during the Orientation Program eventually helped the counsellors to help the kids become more aware of the realities in their lives.

Part of the reality of the Orientation Program was that the counsellors had to participate in specific activities that were designed to directly enhance their theoretical background. These activities included visits to other social institutions that dealt with adolescents, theory seminars, and a week long "live-in" experience at the Maples. Through visits to a Correctional Institute, a School for Delinquent Girls, and a Mental Hospital, the counsellors had an opportunity to compare their conceptions of a "therapeutic setting" to the realities of these established institutions. Most of the counsellors found these visits to be rather depressing, and in turn, the visits reinforced their idealism towards the approach they were beginning to adopt. A feeling of righteousness (i.e. "our approach is better than theirs", "we are better than them") developed among the staff during these months, and it remained quite explicit even afterwards. The self-righteousness of the counsellors contributed greatly to the staff's cohesion.

The theory seminars were planned by the counsellors. Some of the seminars were researched and presented by various staff members, and others were given by guest speakers. The subjects of the seminars included: the nature of education, family dynamics, child psychology, psychopathology, drugs, sex, religion, and Gestalt Therapy. While these topics were related directly to child care counselling, the seminars, with few exceptions, were not successful. Many of the seminars got sidetracked into becoming informal encounter groups. The staff was more interested in continuing with group experiences through the encounter and self-revelatory groups than in continuing theoretical discussions. Consequently, the attention of the group often swayed from the subject under discussion to working out some inter-personal problems.

One of the highlights of the Orientation Program was the week long "live-in" experience in the middle of July. This experience was designed for two purposes: (a) to offer the counsellors an intensive experience at being together and thus to further staff growth, interaction, and staff cohesion; and (b) to give the counsellors an opportunity to experience living in the cottages so that they would be able to empathize more fully with the situation of the kids. The "live-in" experience also introduced the counsellors to working in shifts. During the week everyone had an opportunity to act out the role of a "kid", and that of a "counsellor". While half the staff were "kids", the other half were "counsellors". In the middle of the week the roles were reversed. Through the role reversals the counsellors gained a clearer insight into the problems that they and the kids were to be facing once the Maples opened for residence. They also became more aware of the physical surroundings, and how a person might feel living in those surroundings for twenty-four hours a day. According to the interviewed staff, the whole "live-in" experience was like a "microcosm" of future cottage life. The following summary of a diary that one of the counsellors kept during the "live-in" helps to illustrate the experience of the staff on the whole:

> At the beginning most of us felt some excitement about the coming week. We had been talking about the "live-in" for quite a while, and most of us were looking forward to the experience. However, after the first few hours in the cottage our excitement turned to anxiety, and later to boredom and depression. We had trouble finding creative channels for our excitement, so we turned it into anxiety and worrying about the future. Each one of us was worried about how well he will perform within the group, and how well he will be accepted by the others.
>
> Once we passed through this anxiety we became quite bored and depressed. There we were, twenty-seven of us, and we didn't know how to occupy ourselves. We felt like we

> were prisoners in the cottage. I was a "child" during the first three days and the counsellors did not pick-up on my initial depression. The depression of the "kids" semmed to overlap to the "counsellors". At the end of the first day we had some T-group sessions, and they helped to break our depression.
>
> By the second and third day we accepted our situation, and once this acceptance came the group feeling began to develop. By the time we were to reverse roles there was a feeling of togetherness both among the "kids" and the "counsellors". Towards the end of the week the group feeling became very strong, and people felt warm towards each other. At the very end, when the "live-in" experience was over, there was regret about leaving, and the dissolving of the group. [9]

Through the experience of the "live-in" the counsellors gained a preview of what the kids would be experiencing in the cottages. The experience of the kids although extended over a much longer period of time corresponded, as will be seen, to the experience of the counsellors during the "live-in". The process that the counsellors experienced during the "live-in" is, according to Peter, the natural process for all groups. In other words, every group will go through similar phases in development. These phases are: (a) initial excitement, (b) anxiety and testing, (c) depression, (d) acceptance coupled with strong feelings of togetherness and creative activity, and (e) dissolution and regret. The "live-in" was a "microcosm" of a larger experience insofar that while the duration of the experience was limited, the counsellors experienced all the five phases of development. The time element usually serves to speed up or to extend the natural group process. Of course, during the "live-in" the group process was speeded up. While the counsellors experienced the process in the duration of a week, most of the kids experienced it in the duration of seven to nine months.

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9. Allan Cohen, Diary of the "Live-In", (Unpublished: July 1969).

After the "live-in" one of the counsellors decided to quit the Maples. He was unable to get involved with the group during the "live-in", and the total Maples experience required more of a personal commitment than he was ready or able to offer. The intensity of the "live-in" experience helped him to realize this.

CHAPTER THREE: STAFF ORIENTATION: PART TWO

The Development of Staff Cohesion, Peer Group, and Ideology

As mentioned earlier, one of the main functions of the Orientation Program was to bind the counsellors together into a close group. From the beginning, staff cohesion was enhanced and stimulated by the counsellors' awareness of their task to develop a "therapeutic growth community". Sharing a common goal not only provided a raison d'etre for togetherness, but, also, it demanded a basic level of cooperation from all the counsellors. Once the will to achieve the goal was shared by the whole group, the group could proceed with the methodology.

Staff cohesion manifested itself through the evolution of the post-adolescent peer group among the counsellors. Through Peter's democratic approach, authority and responsibility in the group was shared by the whole group, and decisions concerning intra-group matters were made on a group basis. Consequently, the counsellors felt that they had power over decisions that affected their lives within the Maples, and this feeling of collective power brought them closer together. In many instances, how the decisions came about was much more important, from the point of view of staff maturity and staff cohesion, than the actual decisions.

Eventually, the counsellors' peer group developed its own symbols, terminology, way of relating, and ideology. To varying degrees, every member of the peer group identified with some part of the collective, and all of the members agreed that they were part of a unique experience at the Maples. This feeling of uniqueness, combined with their common identifications, made the whole group feel apart from the rest of our

general society, and certainly apart from the rest of the established "mental health" services in the Province. A self-righteous attitude permeated the whole group. In essence, the group was saying, "We are unique. We are turned on. We are more with it." While this attitude was a form of self-assurance against a considerable amount of misunderstanding and criticism from other social agencies,[1] it helped to develop a more cohesive unit among the counsellors. The counsellors quickly discovered what they had in common with each other and how they were collectively different from the others. In other words, they became very sensitive to who was their "friend", who was supportive and sympathetic to their experience at the Maples; and who was their "enemy", who was jealous, hostile, and antagonistic to them. Eventually, many of the counsellors identified so much with their peer group and the group's philosophy and activities, that when the Maples was criticized by "outsiders", they felt personally attacked.

The defensive, self-righteous attitude of the counsellors was reinforced by their immediate surroundings within the Burnaby Mental Health Complex as well as by certain "negative" attitudes that were expressed by political representatives of the Government. When the counsellors first came to the Burnaby Mental Health Complex, many of them were quite different than the other people who worked there. Many of the counsellors were "hippy" looking; they had beards and long hair; occasionally they walked around barefoot; and they were not careful about the language they used. They were clearly anti-authority, and, as

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1. The whole Maples complex, espeically the Residential Unit, received much political backlash from various sources. This study only deals with these external factors as they directly related to the human experience within the Residential Unit.

a collective, they were younger (median age 25). The other employees of the Mental Health Centre, on the other hand, came mainly from the "straight" culture, and they found the "hippy" traits of the counsellors offensive and intrusive. They were afraid that the general appearance and way of being of the counsellors would reflect upon the whole Centre, and, clearly, they did not wish to be part of the "hippy" syndrome. They expressed their disapproval verbally and non-verbally, and the counsellors reacted by setting themselves further apart and clinging more strongly to their self-righteous attitudes.

The conflict between the Maples Residential Unit and the rest of the Burnaby Mental Health Complex had deeper roots than just the outward appearances and attitudes of the counsellors. While the counsellors' post-adolescent attitudes to life, to drugs and sex, and so forth was threatening to the more "adult-like" employees of the Complex, the main conflict was between the "professionalism" of the rest of the people (psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, teachers), and the "non-professionalism" of the counsellors. As mentioned earlier, Peter did not hire the counsellors for their previous training, for the type of degrees they held, but rather for their potential, for what the counsellors were going to grow into. The counsellors, therefore, were not professionals, and it was threatening for the professionals to think that non-professionals could do the job of "professionals".

This conflict had one more dimension: that of philosophy or approach to treatment. While the Burnaby Mental Health Centre functioned mainly on the "medical model" to treatment, the Residential Unit, i.e.

Peter and the counsellors, adopted the "educational" or "democratic learning model". Essentially, the difference between the two models is in the relationship between the "doctor" (be it a psychiatrist, psychologist, psycho-therapist, social worker, teacher, parent, or counsellor) and the "patient". Under the "medical model" the "doctor" assumes that he knows what is best for the "patient", and he prescribes a certain course for cure that the "patient" is compelled to follow. The relationship between the "doctor" and the "patient" remains very similar to that of a "parent-child" relationship. According to Peter, this type of a transference relationship is anti-therapeutic for disturbed adolescents, since their problems are usually based on their inability to take responsibility for themselves because of their relationships to their parents. In other words, under the "medical model" the "patient" is still not allowed to be himself, to accept himself for who he is, and he still has to live up to someone else's expectations.

Under the "democratic learning model", on the other hand, the emphasis is not based on the relationship between the "doctor" and the "patient", but, rather, on the interactions of the "patient" with people in his own peer group. In such interactions the "patient" experiences equal, reciprocal, adult relationships. He is able to take more responsibility for himself for he has more power, and consequently he is able to accept himself and develop when he is ready, at his own rate. The function of the "doctor" in the "learning" model is to facilitate the peer group dynamics and to oversee the overall therapy process. By maintaining a distance from the group, he can see clearly where the

group is at, where it is going, and he can facilitate the process by offering appropriate "feedback". Essentially, he has the role of a "participant observer". Occasionally the "doctor" has to present himself as a "benevolent parent" to set limits, but he does not impose himself on the group unnecessarily. The group may use the "doctor" as a "scapegoat" for the group's problems, or as a "source of inspiration", but on the whole most major decisions are made by the participants in the group.[2]

The difference between these two approaches and the other differences between the counsellors and the rest of the employees of the Burnaby Mental Health Centre accentuated the conflict between the counsellors and the others, and, in turn, it reinforced the counsellors' self-righteous attitudes and added to staff cohesion.

As mentioned earlier, certain "negative" attitudes that were expressed by various Government representatives also added to the insecurity of the staff. Before the Maples opened, and even afterwards, rumors kept sifting down to the counsellors that the Maples would be closed and turned into "something other" than an "open unit treatment centre for emotionally disturbed adolescents". Many of the counsellors believed that for the Government the Maples was mainly a "political showplace", and that the Government was not committed to any particular approach to treatment. As a showplace, the Government spent millions of dollars on building modern facilities, but it never made clear what the facilities were going to be used for. This uncertainty surrounding

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2. For further discussion see Maxwell Jones, Social Psychiatry in Practice, "The Idea of the Therapeutic Community", (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968) p.40.

the future of the Maples created a great degree of uncertainty among the counsellors whose jobs depended on the continuation of the Unit along the approach adopted by Peter. Consequently, whenever a Government representative visited the Maples during the Orientation Program and made critical comments as to what he saw, the counsellors felt very much threatened. Most of what was happening at the Maples was foreign to Government officials so that it was easy for them to be critical. Although Peter served as an effective buffer between the counsellors and the Government, the staff still felt very vulnerable and powerless in the face of official opposition. For example, on one occasion, a cabinet minister dropped in on a sensitivity session that the counsellors were having. Peter had just talked to the counsellors about the importance of physical contact in treatment, and he emphasized that they must know their own reactions to such contact before being embraced by teenagers. To experience such contact, he had the counsellors hug each other first heterosexually and then homosexually. The minister happened to walk in on the session just as the counsellors were joking and laughing with embarrassment over their homosexual embrace, and when he witnessed this interaction, he became very upset. As a result of the minister's ignorance of what was happening, Peter received a considerable amount of negative feedback from above. That particular minister remained quite antagonistic and uncooperative for a long time. This incident in particular and similar ones in general further increased the counsellors' distrust of the Government.

In addition to the Government's indecision and ignorance about the

Maples, other social agencies eyed the Maples facilities with jealousy, and they exerted pressure on the Government to convert the Maples to different use. At one time, for example, the word passed around that the Maples was going to become a closed unit detention centre for juvenile delinquents. In this incident, a government minister came to the Maples without prior notice "to see how the Unit could be converted". The counsellors' reactions to such incidences were invariably one of frustration, insecurity, and then defensively self-righteous. The more the counsellors became aware of antagonism towards their Unit, the stronger the bonds grew within their peer group. Like most "adolescent" peer groups, the staff felt like "it was them against us", and this feeling provided the group with cohesion and internal strength.

Social Activities and Relationships Among the Staff

As the peer group developed, the social activities and relationships among the counsellors increased. Most of the counsellors experienced from the initial days of the Orientation Program, a "pull" towards the Maples away from "outside" activities and relationships. The personal involvement and commitment that the Maples demanded affected the personalities and the personal lives of the counsellors to a much greater degree than would have, for example, a regular nine to five office job. According to the interviewed staff, the job made an immediate impact upon their lives. This impact was mainly in the way the job affected their relationships with people outside the Maples setting, i.e. their wives, husbands, girlfriends, boyfriends, parents, and other relatives, and friends. The job also gave the counsellors an oppor-

tunity to gain greater self-awareness, and such awareness invariably served to change their lives. The following excerpts from the staff interviews give testimony to the above discussion:

Staff Interviewee 3

The job greatly affected my outside relationships with people. Being in this milieu of expressing feelings honestly was very exciting and stimulating for me. I wanted to continue relating like that at home. This put me into a different space than my girlfriend and my other friends. My girlfriend felt threatened; she didn't know or understand what was going on at the Maples.

I developed a kind of a superiority attitude which wasn't beneficial to all my friends. It was like I knew something that they didn't know. Often in the past I felt like a scapegoat in life, and having this knowledge gave me power. It gave me power to know where my friends were at, where I was at, what kind of games were being played, and, most important, to know that most of the time I scapegoat myself; I *am* the one who puts me down the most. Also, my interests changed, and I didn't have to deal with my former friends.

Staff Interviewee 6

The job has certainly influenced my personality and, consequently, my life a number of ways. First, I feel more able to chose who I am and how I relate to society. I feel independent from the North American "rat race". This work trains people how to become mature adults, while other jobs teach people how to stay with the job, how to fall into line and conform to pressures. This job teaches us when to act and when to react. I feel more self-confident because of the job.

Secondly, my marriage is better. We are able to be more honest with each other and to fight and love more honestly. During the Orientation days my wife felt jealous and insecure because I was so close to many people at the Maples. I also felt guilty for being so close to others. At first I would lie to her about how I felt towards other girls at work, and again I felt guilty and resentful. Work has taught me not to

> be afraid of being honest, and through honesty we have worked things through to a less neurotic level. Both of us now understand each other's rights and needs to be with other people. I found that communication within marriage became very important to me after I started working at the Maples. Communication is essential for mutual growth.
>
> Thirdly, I look at my parents more objectively. I try to live in the present, in the here and now, with them, and not in the past. I don't program myself as much as I used to before I see them. I accept them more, and I just let things happen between us.

At the beginning of the Orientation Program, Peter warned the counsellors that their personalities and consequently their relationships outside the Maples would undoubtedly change under the influence of the Maples environment. This was a natural process for as the counsellors began to change and to grow, their former relationships also had to change. Peter suggested that the counsellors during the Orientation Program arrange to have sensitivity and encounter groups with their husbands, wives, boyfriends, and girlfriends participating so that those people would be able to share in part what the counsellors were experiencing at work. Peter's suggestion was not taken up by the counsellors until a year and a half later. Consequently, at one time during the Orientation, just about every counsellor who had an intimate outside relationship temporarily severed that relationship with his or her partner. In some cases the severed relationships were never healed, while in other cases the counsellors proceeded, after the cooling off period, to build more meaningful relationships with their mates.

The breaking up of intimate relationships outside the Maples was

enhanced by the development of overt and covert male and female relationships among the counsellors. Such intimate and sexual relationships among the counsellors was stimulated by the whole Maples setting, i.e. the sensitivity and encounter groups, the shared activities, the common ideology, the shift teams, as well as the attractiveness of the people chosen. Often, at first, the counsellors were communicating more with other colleagues than with their outside mates. They were also spending more time together and giving more of themselves to one another. Often after work days, the counsellors would do something together, most frequently going to the pub, so that interaction among the staff was not limited only to job time. Rather, such interaction was greatly increased by extra activities which usually excluded outside partners. Occasionally, when the counsellors brought their mates to staff parties, most of the conversation and interaction still centered around the Maples so that the outsiders still did not feel included. A number of these "outsiders" expressed, at a later time, that they felt very threatened by whatever was happening at the Maples; that they did not really understand what went on; and that they felt excluded, even at the staff parties, from the Maples group.

This pull away from outside relationships towards new intimate relationships within the Maples was furthered by the fact that often the initial stage towards self-awareness involves a great degree of introspection and fantasizing. In this initial stage, many old adolescent conflicts which were surpassed but never fully resolved are reopened. Many of the counsellors were not able to handle this process without breaking their outside ties temporarily and attempting

to "live out" their fantasies. For many counsellors, this reawakening of adolescent conflicts and fantasizing further increased once the kids came to the Maples. Sexual attraction and fantasizing also occurred between individual counsellors and kids. As one of the male counsellors described his relationship with one of the girls:

Staff Interviewee 7

> I was really attracted to her. There was a lot of physical contact between us; we hugged and kissed each other every night under the pretext of saying good night. Once when I was on night shift we "necked" in the living room. Much of it was sexual teasing for both of us. I went through a lot of fantasies at this time. At one time, I saw myself running off to South America with her. I was pretty well out of touch with reality, and I couldn't communicate with my wife. I was an adolescent again. Not until Peter asked me when will I come down to earth again did I wake up.
>
> Both she and I tried to deal with the situation by bringing our games and teasing up to a conscious awareness level. Over and over we confronted the reality of our relationship and the games that we were playing. We realized that our situation prevented us from sleeping together or carrying on any kind of a romantic relationship outside of the Maples. Reviewing our reality and being aware of our games did not prevent the physical attraction that we had for each other, but it did help us in dealing with the situation.

The sexual and emotional relationships that grew up among the staff during the Orientation Program and afterwards affected, in turn, their support or lack of support for one another at work. One male counsellor recalled the following incident that helps to illustrate the above statement:

Staff Interviewee 11

> I remember when the possibility of Janet (fictitious)

> being fired came up, and we had an encounter group about it. Peter asked me for my opinion of her performance in the cottage. My personal assessment at the time wasn't really that good; I felt that she was quite weak in a number of areas and that she really needed to improve a lot, to come a lot more outside of herself. However, I gave off a different message to Peter. At this time Janet and I were having a lot of personal, sexual, and emotional things happening between us, and, although I did think that she should be given a further chance, the extent of my support was based more on a feeling of moral obligation to her. I really wracked my head to come out with something positive, convincing, and acceptable. I did not lie, but I shyed away from any negative comments. I see now that I was afraid of her rejecting me on a personal basis, and that I wasn't very honest or professional in this instance.

Such relationships also affected how the counsellors organized themselves and how they performed in the cottages once the kids came to the Maples. Naturally, counsellors who felt closest to each other, who felt intimate and secure with one another, preferred to be on the same "shift team" together. They enjoyed working together; they could extend support to one another more easily, and, consequently, they could bring a more relaxed and happier mood to the cottage. In most cases, these sexual relationships were rather sporadic and short-lived, although four counsellors did end up marrying each other after divorcing their former mates.

A number of the staff expressed that when they first started working at the Maples, they viewed their jobs as their "own thing", their own private matter. Consequently, they communicated very little of what they were experiencing to their outside mates and friends. Other staff members, however, stated that at first they had a great need and desire to talk about the Maples to "outsiders". They were overwhelmed by the exciting, stimulating environment, and they had a need to express their

excitement. In a number of cases, their desire to express themselves, to communicate "Maples style", brought about reprimands from their mates and friends who were not used to that kind of interaction. One of the counsellors recalled that a friend told him that every time he was around, he felt like he was visiting a psychiatrist. This was an obvious dilemma for many of the counsellors. They had difficulty realizing when honesty in relationships was appropriate and when "playing games" was in fact necessary. It was difficult for them to stop relating to people outside the Maples in a similar manner as they perceived and communicated with each other. As one of the counsellors expressed it:

Staff Interviewee 9

> My former friends invite me to parties. I go with them and their conversation bores me to death. In the past I used to enjoy superficial discussions, role playing, acting out the single, bachelor, man-about-town role. I can't take it any longer; I just make excuses and leave.
>
> They keep telling me that I have changed. The other day I had a confrontation with my best friend. We just decided that we are in different spaces, and that it doesn't help to deny it.

Many of the staff reinforced their ties to each other by moving into communal homes together. At one time, close to fifty per cent of the counsellors were sharing accomodations in three separate houses. The staff who moved in together were mainly from the "hip" sub-culture at the Maples. Moving in communally was not a drastic change for most of them, as they already shared similar life styles. Living in communal houses further met their need to continue their peer group experience from work. One of the counsellors who lived in one of the communal houses explained, "We work with our peer group at the Maples; we em-

phasize the value of relating in peer groups for adolescents; and we parallel the Maples by forming our own peer group homes, communally."

Living communally influenced the staff's interactions and performance at work. Occasionally, there existed a natural separation between those people who lived together and those who did not. There was naturally more interaction and familiarity among those who lived communally, and, consequently, there was more communication among them at work. Similarly, conflicts which may have arisen at home were occasionally continued in the cottage, especially if the counsellors involved happened to work on the same shift. In such cases, communications were temporarily disrupted and cottage life was certainly affected. One example of this happening was two female counsellors' jealous rivalry over a man who lived in the same communal house with them.

In summary, therefore, staff cohesion developed as a result of:

(a) the shared experiences of the Orientation Program,

(b) the existence of a common task and goals,

(c) the development of a peer group among the counsellors and the establishment of a common identity (confluence) and strong bonds among the members of the peer group,

(d) the evolution of a common ideology and philosophy based on common experiences, and

(e) social activities and relationships among the staff.

The various processes that contributed to staff cohesion during the Orientation Program continued after the kids came to the Maples so that new counsellors who joined the Maples after the Orientation also ex-

perienced the pull towards the Maples and away from outside relationships. The strong feeling of cohesion that developed during the Orientation, however, was never fully recaptured by the entire group. The realities of the Maples setting never allowed all the counsellors to be together for a sustained period of time.

CHAPTER FOUR: STAFF ORIENTATION: PART THREE

Conflicts Between Peter and the Counsellors

Although the Orientation Program seemed to have built a cohesive unit--at least temporarily--among the counsellors, the staff went through many conflict situations during the Orientation, as well as afterwards. In fact, the staff's ability to "work through" conflicts, to confront openly whatever was "happening", eventually added to staff cohesion. One constant source of conflict and anxiety among the staff was the counsellors' relation to Peter. As discussed earlier, Peter adopted a democratic approach to the Orientation Program as well as to the general running of the Residential Unit. Essentially, he cast himself into the role of the "benevolent parent" who grants his children a lot of freedom, even the freedom to make mistakes, but stays around to be there when he is really needed. Many of the counsellors at first found Peter's approach rather confusing and threatening. They found it confusing because Peter did not hand down clear cut directions from above, and they felt threatened because they did not yet feel confident or secure enough to initiate their own standards and plans. Although intellectually they understood what Peter wanted to do, emotionally they were not ready for the freedom and the responsibility that Peter granted them. Nevertheless, the counsellors did accept Peter's approach in principle and tried to implement it.

Occasionally, when the staff failed in its objectives, i.e. when a certain activity or experience seemed negative, Peter became a target for scapegoating for not having provided enough leadership. Peter was

also scapegoated whenever he had to pass down edicts to remind the counsellors of the realities of their jobs at the Maples. In such occasions Peter ceased to be the "benevolent parent" figure to the counsellors, and, instead, he became a "ruthless dictator", a "Civil Service bureaucrat". Of course, this process also worked the other way around. That is, when Peter felt insecure about his position with regards to the staff, when he did not feel accepted by the rest of the staff, or when his needs to be in complete control were intensified by pressures from the Government, he reacted by passing down authoritarian edicts. While most of these edicts were based on Civil Service regulations, the manner in which Peter chose to implement the regulations often depended on how good the communication between him and the staff was. As the "benevolent parent" who has had more experience than his "children", Peter often had the frustrating task of waiting for the counsellors to mature as a group. On the one hand, he was responsible to the Government for opening the Residential Unit within a set period of time; on the other hand, he understood that the unit could not be opened until the staff was sufficiently ready, and that it took a certain minimal amount of time for the staff to mature. Knowing where the staff had to get to, and seeing where the staff was at at any given moment, constantly presented Peter with the problem of finding the proper balance between "imposing" and "guiding".

Whenever Peter passed down an edict which, from the counsellors' point of view, violated the democratic principle, the counsellors felt betrayed, frustrated, powerless and angry. At these times, certain coun-

sellors, mostly from the "hip" group, took it upon themselves to act as spokesmen for the rest of the staff in confronting Peter on specific issues. Such confrontations served the function of uniting the staff, releasing some tension, clarifying the issues, and most important, infusing some new energies into the whole group. Through these confrontations the staff would own up to some of its power, and take more responsibility for what was happening in the Orientation Program. The sharing of responsibility and power greatly fluctuated between Peter and the counsellors during the orientation period and its immediate aftermath. The conflict between Peter and the staff reached a climax in October, two months after the end of the Orientation, when the staff felt a necessity to organize itself into a form of "union". The union was organized outside the Maples setting. It was called the mispocha (a Yiddish word for "family" or "extended family"), and its unclear purpose was to be to counter Peter's administrative powers, and to gain back some of the power the counsellors felt they had lost. The mispocha elected one counsellor to participate in administrative meetings and to report back to the counsellors. This arrangement was acceptable to Peter, who, in fact, pointed out that the counsellors did not have to go outside the Maples to organize themselves for that was what he wanted them to do inside. Consequently, the staff did no longer feel the need to continue with the mispocha, and the mispocha never met again. Eventually, even the elected counsellor stopped attending the administrative meetings for they were "too boring". Peter took the formation of the mispocha as a sign of increasing staff willingness to take on more responsibility. As Peter explained: "The counsellors felt that they had to organize them-

selves outside the Maples framework, but I wanted them to have the power for which they were searching. The power was there for them to take; they gave it up by default.".

Thus, the taking of power seesawed between Peter and the counsellors. Initially, Peter had, by virtue of his position as Director, all the power; he relinquished much of this power to the counsellors, who then hesitantly proceeded to work with it. When Peter saw that the counsellors were not able to handle the responsibility he had given them, he took back some of the power he previously relinquished, and he proceeded to make his own decisions and pass down edicts. The staff then reacted by demanding the implementation of the democratic principle, and Peter willingly handed back the power to the staff. This tug-of-war was essentially the product of reality, i.e. an inexperienced staff with an often insecure director. If Peter had a longer period of time to open the unit, he could have waited more patiently while the counsellors worked through their impasses as a group. The conflicts were basically the staff's "birth pangs" and, of course, the staff's growth towards maturity. This pattern was not broken until approximately ten months after the Maples opened. By that time Peter and the staff became mutually more trusting of each other. The staff had matured and had gained experience and confidence, and Peter felt more secure once the counsellors were able to create and live up to their own standards.

The conflict between Peter and the counsellors occasionally manifested itself in a form of lethargy. At these times, almost a conscious group pressure was exerted upon individuals not to take an active, participating or leadership role. The group norm became to reject the efforts of any

individual, including Peter, who might have tried to make things happen. The group would become collectively "spiteful", like children are spiteful with their parents. People would just refuse to participate in any event planned by an active person. Of course, this lethargic attitude was not shared by all at the same time, but it was certainly significant enough to inhibit people from becoming active. Many of the counsellors later admitted that their attitudes were very closely tied in with feelings of jealousy towards the people who may have had the initiative to take action. As one counsellor stated: "Anyone who planned something was immediately undermined by an anti-authoritarian, undermining sub-culture; and a good way to become popular was by being an underminer.".

Conflicts Among the Counsellors

Another major source of conflict among the staff was the varying life orientation of the counsellors. These differences manifested themselves at the Maples by the division of the staff into two camps: the "structuralists" or "authoritarians", and the "non-structuralists" or "anti-authoritarians". The structuralists favoured at first the rigid, scheduled approach to treatment and education; while the non-structuralists adopted a "Summerhill-like", "let it happen" attitude. According to the non-structuralists, structure should arise organically from situations and not be imposed from above. The structuralists, on the other hand, believed that kids need a rigid structure for the security that enables them to function. Of course, both camps were merely reflecting their own orientation to life. In other words, the structuralists were not only ready to impose a structure on others, but, also, they were ready

to accept a structure and Peter's authority over themselves. Similarly, the non-structuralists were not ready to accept a structure or authority over themselves, and ideologically they did not wish to impose a structure on others. Both of these points of view and orientations to life, when taken to extremes, or adhered to rigidly, constitute an "authority hang-up". Groups and individuals manifest such a "hang-up" when they feel insecure about their ability to respond genuinely and spontaneously to situations. It is possible to be rigid and authoritarian about being non-structuralist, just as it is possible to have chaos and no structure within an authoritarian setting. The conflict between these two camps was expressed mainly through ideological discussions, overt power struggles for influence within the group, small group gossip during coffee breaks, car pool gossip, and through staff encounter groups. Although the conflict between the structuralists and the non-structuralists was never fully resolved, it did eventually decrease. According to Peter, this decrease came about as the "straight" people came down to the level of the non-structuralists. As Peter explained: "Since the maturity of any group will fall to the lowest common denominator, a group less structured within a larger group will bring the other closer to its orientation. Also, the need for control among the structuralists was reduced once they gained experience.". Of course, the converse was also true. Once the kids came to the Maples, the reality of the kids made the non-structuralists realize that they too needed some structure in order to feel secure with the kids. This way a compromise solution was reached, whereby the initial rigid structure in the cottages became more and more flexible as the needs of the evolving "community" were perceived.

A covert source of conflict, jealousy, and politicking among the counsellors during the Orientation months concerned the impending appointments and elections of Cottage and Shift Heads. As a natural continuation of the democratic approach, Peter wanted the counsellors to take part in deciding who should fill the various positions in the Civil Service hierarchy. The election of Cottage and Shift Heads, however, was not completely through the democratic process. Peter encouraged the taking of a "popularity vote", but he reserved the power to veto the appointment of any counsellor that he felt was not yet qualified for a given position. He was also ready to use his veto power if he felt that the position was not conducive for the emotional growth of the counsellor. One of the counsellors who competed for the position of Shift Head recognized his motivations as follows:

> Staff Interviewee 4
>
> I found it very important to become Shift Head. In many ways it was an egotistical drive; that is being voted in by the staff would have showed my popularity, and being accepted by Peter would have given me confidence in my competence. It would have shown me my worth. I was testing and fishing for approval. The higher salary range also appealed to me, but I think that I was more concerned with the prestige and the influence that the Shift Head position could offer me.

Immediately before and after the elections, many of the counsellors exeperienced strong feelings of jealousy and competitiveness. A couple of the more experienced staff threatened to quit if they weren't chosen as Cottage Heads. Nevertheless, most of the interviewed staff thought that the competition was not overtly bitter, and, in fact, politicking

and jealousies were rather limited. Peter, on the other hand, viewed the absence of overt competition and conflict as a sign of the immaturity of the staff. As he stated, "The staff suppressed their feelings of wanting to be Shift Heads. They just wouldn't allow the jealousy and competition to show, and even denied that it was there."

Status, popularity, and influence among the counsellors, during the Orientation Program, was not based on former experiences in the field of counselling or on age differences, but rather on how well the individual manipulated himself and others within the counsellors' peer group. Like in most adolescent peer groups, certain personality traits were more popular among the counsellors than others. Those individuals who could best manipulate the group to accept their personality traits as the group's norm became the most popular. From the statements of the interviewed staff, it seems that most of the popular norms of the group were those associated with the "hip" group of counsellors. Consequently, the most popular members of the group were those who were most anti-authority, undermining, and identified with the "hip" culture. Another source of popularity was how well one could present his or her self-image under the "beautiful people syndrome". Whoever could best fill the role of the "turned on, jet age, flower child" received a lot of credit from the group. Of course, these forms of popularity were based on "images" that the individuals would have liked to believe about themselves, and, in turn, "images" that they wanted others to accept. One other source of popularity at this time was how well one performed in the encounter and self-revelatory groups. While this criterion was not true for every-

body who opened themselves up in these groups, some people did gain status by catching on to the "encounter game" quickly. Ironically, there often existed a form of competition among the counsellors with regards to who has had the most experience in therapy. One counsellor, for example, frequently boasted about the number of hours he had spent in therapy groups. He felt that he was ahead of the others in the "therapy game"--which he did not realize could also be a "game"-- and that was a source of "power" and "prestige" for him.

Interestingly enough, while popularity during the orientation months was based upon the above considerations, once the election of Cottage and Shift Heads came about, staff inexperience and insecurity demanded that those people with former experiences be elected into leadership positions. Thus the "hip" criteria for popularity was dropped, and only those people with former experiences were elected for the positions.

The August Summer Camp Experience

Peter was instructed by the Minister of Health to open the first cottage for the kids on Monday, August 4, 1969. The Government placed pressure on Peter to open quickly because of the impending provincial elections. At this time, ten boys were admitted. The boys were sent by various Social Agencies who had problems in placing them elsewhere and wanted them "assessed". Peter advised the Agencies that because of the inexperience of the counsellors the boys would only receive a "holiday camp" experience, without actual "therapy".

Although the Orientation Program was officially over, the counsellors viewed the "holiday camp" experience as the practical part of their orientation. The August summer camp was the first real experience the staff

had in working and being with kids. On the one hand, the summer camp was a relaxing experience for the staff, with a program of "summer time", "fun" activities, such as picknicking, hiking, swimming, going to the beach, playing sports, and so forth. On the other hand, the August experience was also the first dividing up of the staff on a permanent basis for the implementation of the shift system. During this month, everybody on rotation acted as Shift Head, and shift teams were made up arbitrarily. There were two shift groups, each group consisting of a morning and an afternoon shift team, and each group working in four day stretches. According to the interviewed staff, a definite split existed between the two groups. There was some rivalry as to which group was doing better with the kids, which group had better programs. There was a minimum amount of communication between the groups, as well as between the shift teams. The various shift teams began to feel isolated from the rest of the staff and from the other shift teams. There was a dissolution of the strong cohesive unit that the staff developed during the three months of Orientation, and the "family" feeling among the counsellors began to break down.

Peter encouraged the counsellors to use the "trial and error" method in their relationships with the kids during the August holiday camp. Many of the counsellors experienced a feeling of bewilderment and intimidation when they first encountered the boys. The boys were between the ages fourteen to sixteen, and the counsellors were just not ready for the aggressive acting out that these boys exhibited. While the kids kept testing the counsellors for limits and controls, the staff was reluctant

to set the limits. As Peter explained:

> The counsellors were in fact very anxious and insecure about the use of controls, and I allowed them to suffer through this. Letting them feel the frustrations of not knowing the answers forced them to find their own answers. And where none were forthcoming, they had to rely on their chosen leaders and discover the use of the supervisory hierarchy.[1]

This way, through the continuation of the process of "experiencing and discovery", the counsellors had to find out for themselves their own fears and strengths in relating to the kids. Only by experiencing their frustrations and overcoming those frustrations could they develop into self-reliant Child Care Counsellors.

One of the learning experiences of the August camp program was the untimely death of one of the boys. Although the boy died from an "unrecognized adrenal insufficiency" on the same day that he was admitted to the Maples, the counsellors and the kids did not know the cause of his death until after the autopsy. Consequently, his death initially produced a lot of guilt feelings in both the staff and the kids. This was the first "crisis" situation that the staff had to handle, and the counsellors handled it well, despite inwardly feeling acute anxiety. The guilt feelings were allayed through various therapy groups, and, ultimately, by the autopsy report. From this experience the counsellors learned to expect the unexpected in working with the kids. Furthermore, they became more aware of the extent of their responsibilities when they are responsible for whatever happens in the cottage. They learned to be ready for crisis situations at all times.

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1. Peter Lavelle, Residential Unit Report for September, 1969, Monthly Report to Director of Mental Health Servies: on file at the Maples.

The End of the Orientation Program

The major criticism of the Orientation Program by the interviewed staff was that it did not prepare the counsellors for working with aggressive, emotionally disturbed kids. Specifically, the counsellors did not receive physical fight training; they did not have any exposure to kids in general and to the type of kids they would be dealing with in particular; and they had very little conception of what the everyday problems would be with the kids. Although the "live-in" was an attempt at giving some exposure to the kinds of problems the staff would be facing, because of obvious reasons, it really did not provide an adequate, full picture for the counsellors. Although the three months of May, June, and July were for "orientation" and not "training", the counsellors would not accept this fact, and felt critical of Peter for not training them. In fact, it would be impossible to train people for this type of a job without the actual experience of being with the kids. Also, it would be impossible to predict all the everyday problems that can arise within a treatment setting. Although general advice regarding some emergency situations and some recurring patterns could be passed on, the only effective learning process for counsellors could be the actual experience.

At the beginning of the August "holiday camp" experience, the reality was that most of the staff did not feel adequately prepared for their task at hand. The absence of reality in the Orientation Program plus the naive idealism of an inexperienced staff resulted in the counsellors setting their expectations of themselves too high. Consequently, once the first group of boys came, reality came as a shock to many of the staff. In other words, the absence of reality in the Orientation Program accentuated

the anxiety of the staff when the reality of the kids was introduced. According to Peter, the anxiety of the staff was also accentuated by the fact that the counsellors did not really want the kids. As Peter stated, "A lot of staff were saying that they wanted the kids, but they really didn't. The kids were necessary for the place, but the counsellors really wanted to continue as a unit in their own personal growth program."

After the summer camp, the boys left the Maples for a week during which time the counsellors had a week of discussion, planning, and reflections on the "holiday camp" experience. One of the counsellors who did not participate in the Orientation Program but joined the staff during the week of discussions had the following impressions of the staff at that time:

Staff Interviewee 13

> Because I did not go through training, I felt out of the group and very weak. I felt the cohesion of the group; I felt excluded and intimidated to a certain degree. At the same time, I had the benefit of observing more objectively what was going on.
>
> I came in during the week of discussion so I didn't enter a working situation. Most of the discussion at this time was on the previous month with the kids. Most of it was on vague abstractions of philosophy and child psychology. I found it very frustrating. I was frustrated with the scene of a group of people sitting around confused, trying to reshape their concepts. I felt the place was chaotic, and I didn't feel that the Orientation Program had prepared them for dealing with kids--mainly because they were removed from the kids.

The end of the summer camp marked, symbolically for many counsellors, the end of their family life of "fun and frolic". The week of discussion was a rude awakening for many of the staff. They ex-

perienced, at this time, feelings of sadness at the end of their "family" life, anxiety about the future, and inadequacy about their capabilities. The conflict between Peter and the staff also came to the foreground at this time. Peter had very definite ideas as to what he wanted accomplished. He took over as chairman, the staff lost power, they would not understand what Peter wanted, and people were angry, frustrated, disillusioned, and sapped of confidence in themselves as well as in Peter. There was not any concrete planning as to what to do with the kids once they returned, and staff insecurity was very high.

Although the Orientation Program ended on a "sour note", this note was sounded by the counsellors' initial encounter with the kids. Eventually, the staff learned to accept that their training was really just beginning with the coming of the kids. Once they passed through their initial shock, they were able to appreciate and apply their experiences from the Orientation Program to the building of a "therapeutic community".[2]

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2. Following the Orientation Program the counsellors participated in a Training Day on a rotation basis, once every two weeks. These Training Days gave the counsellors a break from cottage life and enabled them to discuss among themselves what they were experiencing in the cottage. The Training Days were also utilized to offer the staff more therapy groups and skill developing activities. After a few months the counsellors also received an ongoing In-Service-Training Program, which was designed to increase their skills and qualifications in many varied areas.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE EVOLUTION OF A THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY

The Maples Residential Unit consisted of two residential cottages (Cottage One and Cottage Two) where the kids lived full time in residence, and a Day Centre (Cottage Three) that was only attended in the day time by kids who lived at home or in group homes outside the Maples. Since Cottage One was considered as the experimental, pilot cottage, however, this study concentrates primarily on the evolution of the "therapeutic community" in Cottage One.[1] The period of time under consideration is approximately ten months (September, 1969 to June, 1970), although references will be made to happenings that occurred later. This ten month period can be divided into two distinct phases. The first phase, from September to April, can be considered as the "testing", "breaking in", or "bedding down" phase; and the second phase, from April to June, can be viewed as the "acceptance" or "community" phase.

The Testing Phase

The first group of nine boys moved into residence in Cottage One on September 8, 1969. Most of the boys had participated in the August "holiday camp" experience. Although the cottages were to be co-ed eventually, only boys were admitted at first. This was done for the following reasons:

(a) Because adolescent boys in our society "group together" easier than adolescent girls, Petter thought that it would be easier for an inexperienced staff to work initially with a group of boys.

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1. For a definition of "therapeutic community" see the Introduction.

(b) Since many of the facilities, e.g. the arts and crafts area, the swimming pool, the beauty parlor, the music room, were not yet ready, much of the programming at this time had to depend on outside activities. It was felt that it would be easier to stimulate boys than girls with these types of activities.

(c) Peter did not think that the staff was ready to handle all the complexities of a mixed group of kids.

(d) The Social Agencies that were making recommendations referred only boys to the Maples at that time.

From the beginning, the relationship between the counsellors and the boys was a "testing" one. While the kids kept testing the counsellors for limits, to see how far they could push the staff, the counsellors tested the kids and themselves for their ability to maintain control in the cottage. Of course, much of the boys' testing was based on their needs to find out who they were, what their strengths and weaknesses were, and how they were different from the counsellors in particular, and the rest of the world in general. Consequently, the boys developed their own "juvenile" peer group culture very quickly, and this culture clearly excluded the counsellors. While chronologically the boys were between fourteen and sixteen years of age--well into adolescence--the emotional level of the group and of most of the kids was at the "juvenile" level of development. Edgar Friedenberg's discussion of juveniles and juvenile gangs is quoted here in parts to help describe the type of culture that the kids developed when they first came to the Maples.

> The juvenile era begins when social institutions oblige the child to deal as an individual with the problems of his relationship to strangers, with the culmulative difficulties that arise from the difference between what he sees in himself and what they see in him, what he needs and what they have to give, what he gives and what they can accept...He is the youngest person whose fate depends on his ability to communicate with people who have little share in his life, and who are more interested in themselves than what he is trying to tell them about himself.
>
> Groups of juveniles are not friendly; and strongly felt friendships do not commonly form among them, though there is often constant association between members of juvenile cliques. They are not there to be friendly; they are there to work out a crude social system and to learn the ropes from one another. To some extent they behave like the gang in an office, jockeying for position within a superficially amiable social group...
>
> But precisely because of its crudity, the juvenile experience contributes greatly to the increased mental cogency, accelerating the processes begun in childhood. It is frank. Juvenile appraisals of other juveniles make up in clarity what they lack in charity; those not too sensitive can learn a great deal about themselves which they would never have learned at home...
>
> The juvenile era provides the solid earth of life; the security of having stood up for yourself in a tough and tricky situation; the comparative immunity of knowing for yourself just exactly how the actions that must not be mentioned feel; the safety of knowing the exact margin by which adults are stronger, smarter, or trickier than you; the calm, gained from having survived among comrades, that makes one ready to have friends.[2]

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2. Edgar Z. Friedenberg, The Vanishing Adolescent, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1968) p.18-22.

Friedenberg bases much of his discussion on the psychoanalytical school of Harry Stack Sullivan. I have drawn at length from Friedenberg's discussion since his description of juveniles and juvenile gangs aptly describes the type of group that first developed among the boys in Cottage One. According to Sullivan's terminology there are five stages in development: infancy, childhood, the juvenile era, adolescence, and adulthood. For Friedenberg's definition of adolescence see footnote 7, chapter 2, p. 23.

In their "juvenile gang", the boys at the Maples found security of sameness with their peers in contrast to the counsellors and the rest of the world as well as individuality in contrast to each other. Within their peer group, the kids developed their own "pecking" order, and eventually each one of them found his own way of relating to the total group. The group developed its own frame of reference, its own vocabulary, its accepted norms of relating, its own value system. On the whole, the culture of the kids was alien to that of the counsellors. While the culture of the counsellors could be best described as a hip, middle class, post-adolescent culture, the culture of the kids was a juvenile, "street corner" culture. Thus, for example, while the counsellors were accustomed to relating "politely", "tactfully", "non-aggressively", the kids were accustomed to relating in an "aggressive", "rude", "abrupt", "crude", and "tactless" manner. While constant cheating, lying, deceiving, and stealing was a way of life for the kids, it was alien as a way of life for most of the counsellors. The staff found it difficult to relate to the values of the kids without being critical, and the kids did not attempt to simulate the values of the staff.

This situation, coupled with the insecurities of both the staff and the kids, resulted in a total split in the cottage. The counsellors wanted to impose their communal standards on the cottage, and the kids were interested in continuing with their accustomed way of life. Ironically, by trying to force their standards on the kids, the counsellors were actually working against their own communal goals. The kids resisted any infringement by the counsellors on their peer group. In

other words, the staff tried to play out the role of the "topdog" by attempting to set down rules and regulations and telling the kids how they "should" or "should not" be. On the other hand, the kids played out the role of the "underdog" by effectively undermining all the rules and expectations of the counsellors.[3] Thus, while all the formal authority was in the hands of the counsellors, most of the active power in the cottage was in the hands of the kids. The kids were essentially free to act as they wished; they had the "run of the place". Meanwhile, the staff spent most of its energies trying unsuccessfully trying to control the kids.

During this period, the counsellors felt quite confused and frustrated. On the one hand, they saw their jobs as being "care oriented", i.e. gratifying the kids by giving them caring, warmth, support, attention, friendship and acceptance. These were things that the kids were deprived of in their previous life experiences. The counsellors were also aware that the kids were "disturbed", and, therefore, bent over backwards to accomodate them. On the other hand, the staff had a need to set down limits and rules and to see that the kids got involved in some program. They did not, however, know how to offer "caring" and at the same time "set down limits".

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3. The terms "topdog" and "underdog" are borrowed from Fritz Perls. Perls uses the terms to identify the "controlling" and the "controlled" parts of the individual. Perls writes: "The person is fragmented into controller and controlled. This inner conflict, the struggle between the topdog and the underdog, is never complete, because topdog as well as underdog fight for their lives.... The topdog usually is righteous and authoritarian; he knows best. He is sometimes right, but always righteous. The topdog is a bully, and works with "You should" and "You should not".... The underdog manipulates with being defensive, apologetic, wheedling, playing the cry-baby, and such.... So the topdog and underdog strive for control. Like every parent and child, they strive with each other for control...." Frederick S. Perls, Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, (Lafayette, California: Real People Press, 1969) p.18

While they had authority, they were timid in using their power. They were unsure, insecure, and inexperienced in their jobs, and they allowed themselves to be intimidated by the kids. They wanted to impose controls over the kids, but they were afraid of being rejected by them. It was important for the counsellors to get along well with the kids, and often the kids were able to exploit the counsellors' needs for their friendship. This need of the staff to establish "good" relationships with the kids was amplified by a certain amount of competition, i.e. sibling rivalry, among the counsellors as to who had the best rapport with the kids. At first, the counsellors found it very difficult to express themselves honestly with the kids. They were afraid to show their anger, their disgust, their frustrations, in fear of being looked upon as "non-caring". While the staff wanted to trust the kids, and often pretended to trust them, in actuality, there was little trusting going in either direction. The counsellors felt insecure about sharing the responsibility of running the cottage with the kids, and, consequently, the kids felt no responsibility for the cottage, to each other, or to the counsellors.

Staff frustrations were not viewed by Peter as entirely negative. On the contrary, he believed that when the counsellors became frustrated, they had to take some initiative to overcome their frustrations. Thus, they were stimulated to take some action. This was an important part of the staff's growth process. Many of the counsellors shared similar frustrations. The following recollections from the staff interviews aptly illustrate the frustrations of most of the counsellors:

Staff Interviewee 3

I've been frustrated a number of times. For example, I found it really frustrating when I thought that I had been successful in establishing communication with the kids, only to find out that they were still testing, still playing games and could not be trusted.

Usually my frustrations came when I set my expectations of people too high, and they didn't live up to my standards. I suppose with the kids I projected my wishes on them, so that I thought that they wished for the same type of relationship as I did. I then got disillusioned and frustrated when I found out that it was only my own projections. I handled this frustration through emotional depressions, accepting where things were at, and by sometimes getting angry at the kids and expressing my anger to them.

My expectations of the staff also resulted in frustrations. I was often upset about the lack of communications among some of the staff. In a different setting I don't think that I would have found it so frustrating. I just could not rely on some of the staff, and I haven't handled this frustration too well. I have shyed away from confronting other staff; I let things ride.

Another source of frustration has been the lack of an educational program during the first five months. I was frustrated with not having an overview of the program philosophy. I didn't see where we were heading. I see now that the staff had to experience first, before they could understand or implement a philosophy. It used to bother me that the kids were laying around doing nothing. I talked about this to other counsellors but I didn't do anything concrete about it. I didn't feel competent about the educational needs of the kids, about how to set up a program structure. At the same time I felt that I was doing enough in other areas.

Staff Interviewee 1

I remember that being on shift during the first few months was very frustrating for me and other female counsellors. At that time we only had boys here, a juvenile delinquent sub culture. It was hard for a girl counsellor because they related very aggressively and were very abusive verbally. Also, their activities were far more physical than anything I have been used to. It took a long time to adjust. Consequently, the girls got relegated to the kitchen, to preparing meals. It was really frustrating.

Staff Interviewee 2

As Cottage Head many of my frustrations are to do with running the cottage. I feel frustrated with the staff. My expectations are too high. I don't feel that the staff is taking enough responsibility for the cottage when I am not here. I feel that the burden of the upkeep of the cottage is on me. The staff also fails to take enough responsibility in treatment, in therapy, in confronting the kids. The staff is just not moving fast enough, but I guess it takes time. I also feel frustrated with the kids, that is seeing them not take advantage of the opportunity available to them at the Maples. I guess I am setting my expectations too high.

I feel frustration with not being able to run the cottage completely autonomously, separate from the central kitchen, Public Works, Civil Service, requisition forms for clothes, article and food supplies.

Staff Interviewee 6

I have had a real fear of physical aggression from the kids. I have been scared of physically confronting them. This has added to my feelings of inadequacy and frustration. I have handled this by accepting that I am physically capable of taking care of myself, and that the kids don't want to win in a physical encounter. The kids merely want to explode, to show their anger, but not to hurt anyone or wipe anyone out. Peter has often told us this, but I have never believed him until I saw some new counsellors and Peter take the kids on.

During this period, i.e. the first four to five months, the tendency often arose among the kids to "bag" all the counsellors as "staff" and to use this impersonal conglomeration as a scapegoat for all the problems that may have been at the forefront at any given time. Peter, as the "all powerful father figure" was also scapegoated by the kids. This mistake of "bagging" was also committed by the counsellors. They would refer to the kids as "you kids" and then proceed with some generalization about what the kids did. They failed to look at the individuality of each of the kids. The extent to which this kind of "bagging", "generalizing", and "stereotyping" existed was illustrated by a "role reversal"

day in the cottage. On this day, the kids acted out the roles of the counsellors, and the counsellors became the kids. After the role reversals, both the kids and the staff saw that they all acted out the worst sides of each other. The counsellors acted out the role of the kids as a "bunch of yelling, manipulating brats", while the kids imitated the counsellors as a "bunch of bossy people". Although this was obviously an exaggerated form of perception, it was still indicative of how the kids and the counsellors stereotyped one another, and, in fact, related to each other as "images".

One of the problems that most acutely faced the staff until a communal feeling developed in the cottage was the existence of the "shift system". In a report to Peter, this writer had the following impression of the shift system and cottage life in general, during the opening months.

> One of the primary purposes of the Maples is to try to create an honest, sincere atmosphere (a home like environment) which is conducive for honest, trustworthy relationships; and, furthermore, to create with the kids and the counsellors a community in which each participant develops a sense of social responsibility.
>
> However, for a community to develop along communal lines--which I presume is the best way to describe the type of community most conducive to our goals--communal norms must prevail. This can only be achieved if the norms are set by people who have already developed a communal consciousness. Obviously, at the Maples only the counsellors could possibly have, at this time, such consciousness. The consciousness of the kids--due to their experience in life--is if anything anti-social, individualistic, self-seeking. The norms of the community at the Maples should therefore be set by the counsellors, and the kids should be encouraged through the program and the total environment to adjust to these norms.
>
> Because of the given circumstances, i.e. residential treatment with shift workers, it seems as if the dominant norms

> are set by the kids, not by the counsellors. This is understandable since the only real community in existence at the Maples is that of the kids; the staff doesn't seem to be part of that community. The counsellors are more like outside overseers, who constantly attempt to penetrate the kids' community in order to break down the already established norms. Norms, however are not established or broken down through eight hour intervals. The relationships between the counsellors and the boys are very sporadic. The relationships established by one counsellor and the kids on one shift cannot be continued by another counsellor on an other shift. Thus, there is little consistancy, and it seems to me that the counsellors are at a great disadvantage. They almost appear as if they were walking around looking for relationships with the kids, and I think that the kids sense and exploit the situation. They exploit it by making various demands to which the counsellors, in their quest for interaction, adhere.
>
> The only constant norms and relationships are amongst the kids. This is not only so because the kids spend three times as much time with each other than with any individual counsellor--eight hours compared to twenty-four--but also, because while the kids form somewhat of a living community, the counsellors do not. The counsellors cannot create a real counter community which could offer to the kids an alternative set of norms, because they are not living constantly together, and, consequently, their interactions are limited in time, scope, and nature.
>
> Right now all the formal power in the cottage is in the hands of the counsellors. The flow of directions is one way, from the counsellors to the kids. Although the kids usually get their way through manipulations, they always have to ask for "permission" from the counsellors. The counsellors only have power in appearance; in actuality, the kids have power and the staff has authority. This situation is, of course, alien to the "community" concept, and, in fact, works against it.[4]

Eventually, as will be seen, the development of the community changed the above situation drastically. To present a more accurate description

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4. John Mate, First Impressions, (November, 1969: Report submitted to the Director of the Residential Unit: on file at the Maples).

of life in the cottage during the opening months, this writer's report on a "live-in" experience is included in full at this point. The write-up illustrates the type of relationships and interactions that existed between the staff and the kids. It also illustrates the type of programming that the kids received at this time. Finally, this writer's experience during that one week can be considered as a "microcosm" of the process that most of the counsellors experienced over a longer period of time. Thus, many of the realizations that this writer arrived at through the experience were also realized by other staff members at a later stage. Living in residence with the kids, at a time when relationships between the kids and the counsellors were polarized merely intensified the process, and, consequently, forced the writer to drop many of his preconceived prejudices and images of the kids sooner.

MY STAY IN RESIDENCE AT THE MAPLES[5]

The following is a partial report and analysis of my week long stay in residence at the Maples. It is partial for it is difficult to transpose a subjective experience into words.

During my first month of work at the Maples, I constantly felt a sense of frustration with the progress that I was making in relating to the kids. I suspected that there were a number of related causes for my frustration--a feeling which I think I shared in common with many of my colleagues--but prior to my stay in residence I was not able to clearly identify these causes. One of the factors that often concerned me, however, was the

5. John Mate, My Stay in Residence at the Maples, (December, 1969: Report submitted to the Director of the Residential Unit: on file at the Maples).

whole concept of the eight hour shift system. Rationally I could not see how continous relationships could result from sporadic interaction. Thus, I think that my first conscious motivation for moving into residence was to combat this time handicap. Once the idea of moving into the residence was formulated I saw two other reasons for following through:

(a) To see what kind of relationships are developed between the kids and I over a continuous period of interaction.

(b) To experience what the kids experienced, i.e. their feelings and frustrations, in the building.

Peter pointed out another dimension to my motivation; he considered my own needs for commitment and belonging as my primary motive.

First Day

The first day that I moved into residence I was kind of a novelty to the boys.[6] They came on very friendly; the idea of someone staying with them for a week seemed to appeal to them. There was an immediate change in their attitudes towards me. I soon felt more acceptance from them. While initially I felt quite excited, I also felt rather apprehensive and anxious on the first day. I didn't know what to expect. Early in the day I defined my position to the kids as that of "half counsellor" and "half kid". This meant that I imposed upon myself the same restrictions, rules and

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6. I moved into residence on Monday, November 24, 1969. This was the first time that a counsellor stayed with the kids over an extended period of time. As the community developed, however, many of the counsellors went through similar experiences.

regulations that the kids had to follow, but at the same time I was still responsible for my conduct as a counsellor. I also told them at that time that I should be excluded from any "illegal" activities that they may want me to participate in. They seemed to understand my situation.

During the day I took the kids to Lynn Valley for an outing, and in the afternoon I taught some of them to play shesh besh (an Arabic version of "backgammon"). Gordy caught on to the game faster than anybody I have ever seen, and that impressed me very much. I later made a point of telling him this, and the game helped in developing our friendship.

By the evening of the first day I felt more relaxed than I had ever felt on a straight shift. Somehow I felt no pressure to pursue relationships. I didn't feel that I had to establish forced communications with the kids. I was still insecure about the way I should handle myself, but I knew that I had time. I could let things happen. I remember reminding myself occasionally that I was now living in the place. This seemed to make me feel more at ease, even if I did not yet understand what my relaxed feelings were all about.

At night I was awakened by some water splashing on my face and a door slamming. Guessing the identity of the culprits, I warned the two Gordies that I would get very upset if anyone disturbed me again. Sure enough, five minutes later the door opened and a glass of water came flying through. Unfortunately for Michael, this time I was ready; I had moved my bedding and was waiting for him. I was quite annoyed and my temper ran short.

I grabbed Mike, bounced him around a couple of times and threw him into his room. I recall this incident not for its entertainment value, but for the learning experience that it contained for me. At first I was rather upset about having reacted physically to Michael, and I think that Michael was even more upset. However, after about ten minutes I was more surprised than upset. I was surprised not only because I bounced Michael and got angry, but also because I felt good about it.

The incident was almost a "liberating" experience. When I finally understood this sensation I realized that my reaction to the situation was the first genuine, honest, human reaction that I had experienced at the Maples. It was the first time that I allowed any kind of spontaneous feeling within me to express itself outwardly. I responded the way any other human being--any of the kids--would have responded under similar circumstances. It seemed to me that until then all my responses at the Maples had been one second too late. During that second I had always applied the brakes to regain control of myself as a "counsellor". Control is, of course, necessary; we excercise it in almost all our interactions. When, however, it becomes non-genuine control so that we respond only in the role of "counsellors", telling ourselves, "These kids are disturbed, therefore be careful how you react.", or "You are a counsellor, you can't react that way.", then the feeling that is projected may be diluted. When we offer the kids controlled and calculated responses then we are cheating them of an opportunity of receiving some genuine feelings. In turn, we

are working against our own goals of creating an honest, open environment. Such responses are therefore anti-therapeutic. So, I felt quite good about the incident, and after a while I also managed to rationalize to myself how Michael and the other boys benefited from the experience. The message was simple: if you push anybody too far, they will attempt to bite your head off. I think that the kids indeed got this message because the rest of my nights at the Maples went uninterrupted.

I should mention that I reacted very calmly to the first glass of water. I took it as a childish, and, in fact, friendly gesture on behalf of Gordy. Furthermore, I would have been disappointed had nothing happened. This showed me that my presence in the building had been acknowledged.

Next morning, my understanding of the incident was confirmed. I apologized to Michael for hitting him and he said that he had it coming to him. In fact, I felt that a new dimension had been added to my relationship with the kids; they found out that I was human in the real sense. I thought that as it transpired the incident was a positive experience for all of us.

Second Day

When I was woken up, I took a shower, had a cup of coffee, and sat around until the morning meeting began. The meeting was a disappointment. I did not feel that anything worthwhile or meaningful transpired. Aside from getting everyone together the meeting was a waste of time. Certainly, I wasn't overly impressed

with the program that was offered to us. I remember feeling the unreality of the proposed program for the day. There was nothing challenging in it; nothing concrete. This feeling arose in me every day. It just seemed so absurd to me to be presented with a new program each day; as if all that these people were interested in was occupying my time.

During the day, I was consulted by Barry (Cottage Head and Supervisor) about the water incident from the night before. My opinion was that the incident was a learning experience in itself, and that the kids should not suffer any consequences. Barry disagreed with me, and, consequently, Gordy and Michael were not allowed to go to the movies that night. I disagreed with the consequences that Barry laid down. I didn't think that every little incident needs to have consequences, especially when the incident already contains its own consequences or learning experience. Nobody could function if every time we did something "wrong" somebody would bash us over the head. The kids need freedom to be spontaneous even when their spontanuity leads them to break the "rules" sometimes.

I spent my second evening playing "shesh-besh" and pool with Gordie, and during that time a new relationship germinated between us. Gordie became more than just another human being to me. For a while he became like a little brother, and I really got to like him. Only twice have I seen him in that kind of mood; he was happy, giggly, friendly. That night when we went to bed Gordie came in to say good night, and I felt very good about that.

It may have been that I was reading more into his act of friendship than there really was, or that I was projecting my feelings on to Gordie, but the fact still remained that at that time I felt very close to him. I felt that I had a closer relationship with him than I had with any of the staff. That night, as I reflected upon the day that passed, I began to feel that my stay in residence was successful.

Third Day

In terms of understanding the process that I was going through, the third day was quite crucial. By this time I had gotten used to my life in residence and I was quite comfortable.[7]

In the morning the kids went hiking. My reaction to this program was more positive than to the preceeding ones, but I still had the feeling that it was just another way of occupying time in the absence of something more worthwhile. I didn't feel like going on the hike, so I stayed behind to do some pottery. The real significance of this choice I did not comprehend until half way through the day. The significance of my choice was that I decided to stay behind to do pottery because that was what I really felt like doing. I felt free in making that choice because I was no longer just a "counsellor"; I became myself again and it was a kind of "rebirth". I gained back my self-respect, my personality. On this day I realized that up till the day I

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7. As Peter pointed out, the third day is usually the settling down time for new kids when they come to the cottage. This was also true of the counsellors' "live in" experience (cf. pp. 38-39 supra).

had moved into residence, I had, for most of the time, subordinated myself to the whims and desires of the kids. I placed their needs above my needs. This I did because until that day I was not relating to people, but to "objects of therapy". As I made the kids into "objects of therapy", I became an "object that does therapy". Sure enough, intellectually I was dealing with human beings, but emotionally, from the gut, I was trying to relate to "emotionally disturbed children". Wanting to prove to others and to myself how well I could relate to these "difficult cases", I wanted to maintain a friendly relationship with the kids, and thus went along with most of their moods and demands even when I desired something else.

One of the main sources of my frustrations during the first month was precisely the fact that I ceased being myself once I stepped through the cottage doors. In the cottage I became an entertainer, a time occupier, a relationship pursuer, or at worst, a benevolent warden. However, once I lived with the kids, I consolidated my position in the cottage as another human being who is part of the community that exists at the Maples. It was no longer just the "kids' community" but "our community"; no longer just "their home", but at least temporarily, "our home". From here on my position as a counsellor no longer depended on my institutionally prescribed status, but upon the natural distinctions (e.g. age, experience, knowledge, skills, talents) between the kids and myself. From here on, I was no longer just an employee at the Maples, I was living there, it had become a real part of my life.

That evening, Terry (psychologist and sensitivity group leader) had his weekly session with us, and I participated with greater zeal than ever before. Somehow, the conversation got around to the subject of trust between the counsellors and the kids. Suddenly it occurred to me that I didn't like to be referred to as a "counsellor", that I didn't appreciate being categorized as "you counsellors", and that I didn't desire to relate to the kids as "you kids". Counsellors and kids are not two separate groups of people. Instead, I am John; he is Gordie; there is Peter; here sits Pierre, and so forth. We are all individuals within a community. I realized that both the counsellors and the kids had been making this mistake of bunching everyone into two opposite camps. Suddenly, I also realized that I resented being called a "cunt" or a "stupid prick" every five minutes. Although I had conditioned myself not to feel hurt or disgusted when the kids related to me like that, I realized that such terms do offend me, and I expressed myself quite emphatically about the subject.

That night Gordy suggested that he would sneak into my room after bedtime, and we'd "shoot the bull" all night long. The idea really appealed to me, but not wanting to undermine the cottage regulations and being quite tired, I rejected the proposal.

About ten minutes after bedtime, after all the kids closed the doors to their rooms, I heard a meek, desperate voice screaming, "Let me out of here!" Recognizing the owner and the source of the voice, I dashed into the chamber of the two Gordies, where

I chanced upon the whole gang (with the exception of Danny, Louie, and Billy) having a great time. Michael was locked into one of the closets and he wanted to get out. As I attempted to free him from his dungeon, his jailers jumped on me; and before I knew what had happened, I found myself in a huge free-for-all, armed to the teeth with pillows and arms. It was great fun, and I felt like part of the gang. The fact that it was a bit after bedtime did not restrain me. The whole thing was a prank, a game, and it added to the communal "fun" experience. The best part of it was that it was spontaneous.

Finally, the forces of "good" liberated Michael and were in the midst of cooling things down, when it was brought to my attention that Dennis (child care counsellor) was having a physical confrontation with Billy in the basement. I went down and helped Dennis contain Billy who was having an angry temper tantrum. I remained very calm about the whole thing, and it seemed just as natural for me to be down in the basement talking and hassling seriously with Billy, as it was rolling around with the other boys two minutes earlier. Billy's screaming "freaked out" the other kids, and it wasn't till an hour later that they finally settled down--with the exception of Danny and Louie. During that hour we sat in the office talking, and it was very easy for me to remain part of the conversation.

Meanwhile, Danny and Louie were outside, trying to get away from the madness inside. When they returned, about the time that the others were going to sleep, we had a long discussion about

what was happening at the Maples, but mostly about Danny's and Louie's reflections about what was happening. This was the first time that I heard kids talk intelligently and abstractly about the Maples. Many of the feelings they expressed I identified with, rationally as well as subjectively. The following is a brief summary of the conversation in point form:

(a) Things were moving too slowly. The community was taking too long to develop.

(b) Counsellors should have more trust in the kids. The kids should have more responsibilities in the cottage.

(c) Counsellors should give less orders and encourage self-discipline among the kids. Thus, for example, the counsellors should not be waking up the kids in the morning; and the kids should take turns waking up each other. Counsellors should not hassle the kids to clean up their rooms, but allow the kids to do it for themselves. It's their room.

(d) The kids know when the counsellors are not sincere in their emotions. Counsellors need not be in a good mood all the time, or laugh at every stupid little joke that the kids make, even if laughter is an easier way of relating.

(e) Counsellors also make mistakes, and both the staff and the kids should accept this.

I recall this evening in detail because I felt very confident

in every situation as to how I should handle myself during the whole evening. This confidence came to me because I could read the mood of the kids, I identified with their mood, and I wasn't a "newcomer" to any of the situations. I could flow with whatever was happening. I believe that nothing could have happened that evening which would have been so alien to me that I couldn't have handled it. My accomplishment that evening was that I was in complete harmony with whatever occurred around me. I remember being kind of proud of myself in the aftermath of the whole evening, about 2:30 A.M. As I reflected back on the evening's happenings, I kept asking myself a very crucial question: "Would I have responded the same way under similar circumstances had I not been staying in residence?"

Fourth Day

Thursday morning I was extremely tired. I suggested to the evening staff--following the incident with Billy--that the kids should not be woken up at the regular time in the morning. The logic in the suggestion was that since there really wasn't a consistent day program, and since the kids would be very tired and therefore uncooperative from staying up, the sleep and the rest they would get from an extra hour and a half of sleep would be more beneficial for the rest of the day than sticking strictly to schedule. Of course, there is always a counter argument that the kids must get used to the reality of the schedule, and my suggestion wasn't accepted. Unfortunately, at least part of my logic proved to be correct. The kids woke up tired, they were presented

with the choice of going on a library tour or doing something in arts and crafts, and they became quite uncooperative. Quite frankly, when we were presented with that choice, I had a very negative reaction to it. I kind of reacted like, "Huh? What? A library tour? What has that got to do with anything? That's the last thing I feel like doing right now." Most of the kids had the same negative, resentful reaction. What came afterwards, however, was worse than the original proposal. Some of the counsellors were actually trying to sell the idea to us; they were trying to seduce us: "It will be very interesting. Who wants to go? Michael, are you going? Billy? Gordie? It really is educational. Have you ever been on a SPECIAL tour of the library? How many want to go?"

My whole point is not to criticize the people who plan the programs or the counsellors. The point is that the library tour may have been a worthwhile, educational experience that the kids may have enjoyed had it been part of a total, consistent program. As it was presented, the program was an affront to the kids' intelligence. This type of programming is not really developing the kids, and, therefore, it offers no satisfaction to them.

With all the above in the background, an incident arose between Pierre and Allain (child care counsellor) over the television set. Will Pierre be allowed to watch the football game now that he is not going to the library, or will Pierre not watch the football game? The incident led to a physical confrontation. Pierre wanted to watch the game and Allain was determined to stop him. Even though I was present the whole time, I stayed out of the con-

flict until the punching began. I realized that I wasn't supporting Allain as much as he expected me to, but I really was hesitant about the whole situation. Once the punching began, I stepped in to separate the two feuding sides, but I still remained neutral. I didn't feel that as a counsellor I had to support the other counsellors in all confrontations with the kids. In this incident there was equal amount of intimidation coming from both sides and I didn't think that either side was correct in the way the situation was handled. My fault was, as I realized later, that I didn't step in with this neutral, uncommitted position earlier. The main conclusion that I gained from this incident was that the counsellors need not present themselves as a monolithic group in all situations. Instead, we must handle ourselves in all situations honestly, using our own individual judgement before we act. Similarly, the kids must pick up the same message. After this incident, I asked myself again: "How would I have handled the situation had I not been staying in residence?"

The rest of Thursday somehow passed by. That evening we had great fun. Following roller skating, around 10:15 P.M., I challenged everyone to a pillow fight. Nearly everyone joined in, and the greatest part of it was again the fact that it was spontaneous. After the fight, I went into my room and in a few minutes to my pleasant surprise five of the guys joined me. There we were, sitting on my bed, on the floor, the desk, just "shooting the bull". I felt really happy. However, as always, time was running out, and, much to my disappointment, they were told to go to their own bed-

rooms by the other counsellors. About ten minutes later, I also encouraged them to leave, and after twenty minutes they settled down. I thought that it was unfortunate that we had to break it up because the whole experience of being together and talking spontaneously was very positive. Such sessions should be encouraged, even after bedtime.

At least three of the kids told me that they really enjoyed having me stay in residence, and I told them that I really got to like them and that I felt some regret about leaving. They then told me that I should come back again, and I said that I would like to. And so ended my last night in residence at the Maples, and I felt very satisfied.

It was at this time, as I lay on my bed reflecting upon the whole week that I understood what Peter meant on the first day. He had told me then that he considered my own needs for commitment and belonging as my primary motivation for moving in. In other words, I wasn't doing it for the kids, but for myself. Only by being committed to the community at the Maples could I make the Maples as much a part of my life as anything that I did outside the Maples. Until I felt that I belonged in that community, that I was accepted by the community, I couldn't be myself, and I remained frustrated. Also, until the kids felt my commitment, they had no reason for trusting me, for opening up to me. Until then it was easy for me to drop them and so betray any trust that they may have invested in me.

Last Day

Although during the week I occasionally missed the famili-

arity of my own apartment, I felt truly sentimental about leaving. I think that some of the kids felt something similar. When I left, I felt very gratified, and, at the same time, apprehensive about the future. I wondered if I would be able to recapture the same intimacy that I had established with some of the boys, when I returned to the Maples four days later.

Conclusions

Based on my "live-in" experience I would like to offer the following conclusions and recommendations:[8]

The Physical Environment and Human Relationships

It is a known fact that the physical environment greatly affects the psychology of people and the social relationships of a group that is to function within a given setting. During my stay in residence, I became aware, more than ever before, of the oppressive nature of the cottages and the rest of the buildings around the Maples. My main impression was that the Maples was indeed an "institution". The brick walls, the hallways, the square dining room, the office, the sterile living room, and the ceiling level lighting throughout the building certainly did not offer a "home like" atmosphere.

The institutionalized atmosphere in the cottage helps to create institutionalized relationships between the kids and the staff, among the kids, and among the counsellors. It often serves to uphold the artificial distinctions between the "staff" and the "patients". Even when we try to stray away from institutionalized relationships the building forces it on us. The cottage is really too big, too empty, and too neat. For

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8. These recommendations were part of the original report. They are included here in their original form to show the author's insights at that specific time, i.e. as a direct outgrowth of his stay in residence. They are, therefore, stated in the present and the future imperative tenses. Many of them, as will be seen, were later implemented.

example, the living room would be much warmer if the fastened benches around the sides were torn out and replaced by old armchairs and chesterfields. The fireplace should be fixed up, bookshelves need to be built, and the lighting ought to be brought down to eye level. Then it would appear as if people, not automatons, lived there.

A very important aspect of the physical environment is the relationship between the people and the environment itself. When people help to create their own environment they become much more a part of it than when the environment is created for them. This is, of course, also true of the embryonic community at the Maples. The kids and the counsellors should, therefore, be able to affect changes in the atmosphere of the cottage. The building should become an integral aspect of the daily program. Not only should the kids and the counsellors make decisions about the building, but they should also be responsible for taking care of it. The social value of working together is obvious. It would certainly bring reality closer to the kids' immediate existence. They would no longer be manipulated "objects" but would become "subjects" who consciously influence their own lives.

The Relationships Between the Kids and the Counsellors

It seemed to me, while I was staying in residence, that the counsellors were pretty well oblivious to the experience of the kids. The staff was primarily engaged in enforcing rules that they had imposed on the kids. There was very little communication between the kids and the staff from a common frame of reference . This situation could be changed by the establishment of a General Assembly in the cottage. The Assembly could then decide most of the rules and limits, and the total collective would then be responsible for making sure that the individual members of the community stayed within the set limits. The General Assembly could be the most powerful body in the cottage, and it could openly discuss all incidences and consequences.

The Educational Program

It is my opinion that the educational program has to be greatly improved. Presently, the program merely occupies time. A different approach, therefore, might be more feasible. For example, an individualized

> approach might be more successful in helping the kids to develop themselves than the present approach. This would mean that there would be certain areas of education offered by the counsellors. The kids would have choice in the various areas, and they would commit themselves to attend their particular areas regularly for a certain period of time. It would be their responsibility to partake in their areas, and the whole community could see to it that everybody was participating. The various areas could be limitless, for example, music, literature, mathematics, science, woodwork, car mechanics, folk dancing, photography, yoga, arts and crafts, etc. The point would be that the kids wouldn't be presented with a different program each day, and that there would be some consistency in their daily lives.

Although the above report was well received by the staff, most of the recommendations were not implemented until five months later, and the testing in the cottage continued. The testing during the opening months was especially intense due to the absence of a "therapeutic core culture" in the cottage. [9] Normally, once a therapeutic milieu is established in a Residential Unit, people join the established culture as "individuals". An established culture is usually able to cope with the testing of one or two new members. Then, the group as a whole is able to set and enforce its limits. Once the individual learns what the group's limits are, he no longer feels the need to continually keep testing. In Cottage One, however, there was no such culture to begin with because both the kids and the staff started as a group at the same time. The counsellors, at this time, were not yet strong enough to assert the limits; and there existed no combined group of kids and counsellors to set limits. In other words, there wasn't a community that

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9. For further discussion of the importance of a constant culture in a therapeutic environment see: Maxwell Jones, op. cit., p. 90.

could demand some conformity from individuals. Although relationships did form between individual counsellors and kids, people remained isolated from one another. There was no group to bind them all together. While there was a group among the kids, that group was not intended, nor was it stable enough, to set the necessary limits for individuals.

Due to a number of factors, the "testing" in the cottage reached its peak in December, and continued on this high level until March. During December most of the counsellors went into a state of depression, and, coupled with this depression, there was a large turn-over of staff. Again, because the counsellors started to work at the Maples at the same time, they reached their depression together. As Peter explained:

> It is a well known phenomenon that people who enter residential treatment work undergo a depression around the fourth month. I think this is due to a reactivation of adolescence when the staff finds that the children's problems mirror their own unresolved difficulties. In addition, they find that their best efforts to help the kids are met with failure, that they are not omnipotent, and that their desire to help is not a "cure all". They then have to come to terms with the inadequacy of their personalities and to accept this lack in themselves. Normally, a "going" unit will be able to carry such a person who will receive a lot of support from other staff that have been through the same experience. In our case, however, with all of the counsellors starting at the same time, the depression has hit most people during this month. In the absence of supervisory staff, there has been no one to offer support from above; and depressed counsellors naturally have been unable to offer each other much support.[10]

The counsellors' depression naturally affected the whole cottage. The staff were less able to relate to the kids, to give them attention, to pick up on their moods, to provide stimulus for programming, and to

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10. Peter Lavelle, Residential Unit Report for December, 1969, Monthly Report to Director of Mental Health Services: on file at the Maples.

uphold the limits.

In addition to the staff's depression, the kids also experienced much anxiety at this time. During the previous month, in November, the boys had to exercise much self-control as they acted as guides for numerous Open House Information Tours that the Maples held for people from other social agencies. While the kids cooperated with these tours and derived a sense of pride and satisfaction from "showing off" their living quarters and other facilities, they also resented having to "put up" with the tours. They felt that their "home" was invaded, that they had no power over who was allowed to come into their cottage, and they resented outsiders coming in to look around the complex as if their "home" was a "public zoo". As a reaction against this self-control, they went through a period of "acting out" and breaking all the cottage rules. The staff, being in the midst of its depression, was not strong enough to handle the situation adequately. Virtually the only control that remained in the cottage was Peter's coercive power to dismiss people, and he was reluctant to exercise that power. Instead of confronting the kids, the counsellors turned in on themselves; they blamed themselves for not coping; and they lost contact with their own peer support.

The coming of the Christmas season also affected the mood in the cottage adversely. With the emphasis in the general culture on warmth, togetherness, love, gift giving, the family, and so forth, the kids came face to face with the realities of their unsettled, disrupted lives. They missed their families, they became homesick, and they felt more anxious than usual about not having "proper" homes.

Another factor that added to the high level of testing and anxiety

during these months was the introduction of girls in the cottage. With the coming of the girls, the boys felt a threat to their "juvenile gang" culture. They feared that the girls would undermine their culture and establish a different, counter-culture. At the same time, they looked forward to the coming of the girls for sexual reasons. In fact, as soon as the girls arrived, they began to manipulate the boys, and the boys' "gang" did begin to fall apart. As Peter explained:

> Towards the end of December, in order to quickly fill the cottage and have it functioning as requested (by the government), we admitted three girls together. They immediately began to manipulate the boys. At first, the milieu held them within reasonable limits, and because of the novelty of the situation, the boys did not show their upset too much. When we then brought in four more girls early in January, however, the number of strangers within equalled those already belonging to the "in" group. The "in" group was then threatened with being overwhelmed, or, at the very least, considerably changed. The girls were a collection of individuals rather than a group, and their machinations played havoc with the boys' group solidarity. It took some time for the boys to realize that what they wanted was not girls, but sex; and that girls were people and had to be related to as such.[11]

The boys began to compete for the girls' affections--rather, bodies--and the girls were quite apt at "playing" one boy against another. As "boyfriend-girlfriend" relationships arose, the "juvenile gang" among the boys further dissolved. While some of the boys had sexual relationships with the girls, others were "left out in the cold". In short, the coming of the girls unsettled the established social relationships in the cottage. New alliances were formed, and a new "in" group was created. Consequently, there was a break down of the total

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11. Peter Lavelle, Residential Unit Report for January, 1970. Monthly Report to Director of Mental Health Services: on file at the Maples.

cottage milieu, and the testing for limits increased.

As a reaction to this upheaval in the cottage, and as a way of trying to hold their group together, the boys and a couple of the girls began to engage themselves in "juvenile delinquent" actions. Eventually, these kids formed a "juvenile delinquent" sub-culture. The difference between the "juvenile gang" of the boys and this "delinquent" sub-culture was essentially in the type of testing that the two groups pursued. While the "juvenile gang's" testing centered mainly around the cottage in the form of breaking of cottage rules and "hassles" with the counsellors, the testing by the delinquent sub-culture was in the form of destructive actions against society on the whole. The activities of this sub-culture included assaults on the cottage, breaking into other buildings on the complex, shoplifting, glue sniffing, and the stealing of cars. The sniffing of glue and nail polish remover became a major problem in the cottage as it became a "full time" activity for some of the kids. Interestingly enough, while the leader of the "delinquent" group was one of the boys, the main instigators in the group were the girls. In fact, the boys caught on to sniffing and shoplifting through the example of an older girl who was mistakenly admitted. Since the unit was an "open door" unit and not a "closed door" detention centre, the counsellors were unable to contain the activities of this sub-culture. The staff became further disillusioned and the kids increased their acting out. The juvenile delinquent sub-culture controlled the cottage, and the counsellors were still not ready to share authority and responsibility with the kids.

In February two additional factors added to the kids' anxiety and the upheaval in the cottage. First, Cottage Two was opened, and some of the

staff from Cottage One were moved to the second cottage. The removal of the counsellors with whom the kids had already established relationships had an extremely unsettling effect on the kids. It raised an old, recurring theme in most of their lives, that of separation from people to whom they felt close. Although a complete level of trust never developed between the first group of kids and the counsellors as a group, close relationships were formed between individual kids and staff. Consequently, when these counsellors left Cottage One many of the kids felt deserted. Their low self-esteem created in them feelings of unworthiness, and, as Peter pointed out, their sibling rivalry towards the new kids in Cottage Two created fears of rejection.[12] They were afraid that with the opening of Cottage Two they would be altogether neglected by Peter and the rest of the supervisory staff. To some extent, this feeling also permeated the counsellors who were left behind in Cottage One.

The kids reacted to this development with further acting out. They stole a car which they crashed; they disrupted the cottage program; there was an increase in physical violence in the cottage; and they broke into the Second Cottage and stole some goods.

The second factor that contributed to the kids' anxiety during this period was the introduction of a compulsory education program. The basis of the program was the commitment of each person to attend a certain area of education for two hours each day. The various areas were based on the kids' choices and the skills that the staff could offer. Although there was an initial interest and enthusiasm expressed for the program by both the kids and the counsellors, the program never really got off the ground.

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12. Peter Lavelle, Residential Unit Report for February, 1970. Monthly Report to Director of Mental Health Services: on file at the Maples.

After the initial enthusiasm the counsellors felt inadequate and insecure about what they had to offer, and the kids lost interest. Of course, the whole unsettled mood in the cottage also undermined the education program. Eventually, following the first few days, the counsellors spent more of their energies in "hassling" the kids to attend than in presenting the program. Peter attempted to introduce a point system which would have given a full record in graph form of everybody's participation, but the system was resented and ignored by the staff and kids alike.

To make some order out of the chaos in the cottage, Peter called a general meeting for the whole cottage in the middle of February. At this meeting he pointed out the aims and the objectives of the unit to the kids, and he explained to them how they were sabotaging their own treatment process. Following that meeting, he held individual interviews with each of the kids, and in these interviews he asked for a personal commitment from each one to stay and fully participate in the program. The individual interviews were then followed by a public commitment meeting. The commitment meetings became a weekly activity. In these meetings the kids were asked to further commit themselves to participating for the coming week. Unfortunately, none of these measures produced adequate results. While the kids went through the gestures of commiting themselves, their commitments were more for Peter's and the counsellors' sake than for their own. Consequently, the "cops and robbers" game continued between the kids and the staff.

Especially after the evolution of the "delinquent" sub-culture, the counsellors fell into the role of "overseers" in the cottage. They completely abandoned, at least temporarily, the idealism they had during the

Orientation Program. They kept "hassling" the kids about cottage rules, consequences, getting involved in the program; but the kids went about doing their "own thing". The staff tried, quite unsuccessfully, to stay on top of whatever was happening in the cottage, but the kids managed to undermine all of the counsellors' efforts. There was very little trust between the kids and the staff. While both the kids and the counsellors felt discouraged and threatened by the chaotic state of affairs in the cottage, they were unable to change them. The kids often expressed bewilderment about the "madness" that surrounded them, and yet they were unable to take responsibility for creating that "madness". The counsellors were disillusioned and occasionally tried to regain control by tightening their administrative procedures. Such attempts, however, usually proved to be futile. The basic problem in the cottage was not with the administrative procedures but with the lack of trust between the kids and the counsellors. The authoritarian administrative procedures that the staff adopted were only reflections of the "mistrust" that permeated the cottage.

This situation reached a climax during the first week of March. Reacting to the pressures of the education program, the individual interviews with Peter, the group commitment meetings, as well as to all the other factors that produced anxiety in them, the kids developed an elaborate but naive plan to form their own community outside of the Maples, in which they would not have to live up to expectations that were laid down from above. For a whole week they made plans in secret meetings, and stole food from the cottage kitchen for provisions. Although some of the counsellors found out about their plans and openly confronted them one evening, they denied having any knowledge of what the counsellors were talking about. The following day seven of them proceeded in a stolen car to their

hideaway on Black Tusk Mountain. The harmony among them, however, only lasted for a couple of hours and they all returned to the unit. From Peter's and the staff's point of view, this incident was the "straw that broke the camel's back". As Peter wrote:

> Since this occurrence--following their personal commitments to me--was a direct test of the firmness of my expectations, I took a serious look at the more delinquent members of the group with the intention of discharging them. They were mostly the older sixteen and seventeen year olds who had advanced far enough into teen age to realize that adults can no longer impose control. It was my intention to replace them with fourteen or fifteen year olds to secure a more manageable group.[13]

Once the decision to discharge the delinquent kids was made, it took another month before arrangements for their departure were finalized. During this month (March), the cottage milieu remained chaotic and unstable as the counsellors and the kids experienced mixed feelings over the prospective seperations. Many of the staff saw the above decision as a result of failure on their part. They questioned the value of the treatment that they were offering to the kids; they questioned their own worth; and once again they came face to face with the limitations of their personalities. They blamed themselves for the failure of their personal relationships to "hold" and "cure" the kids. In short, they became "confluent" with the kids, and made themselves feel responsible for the kids' delinquencies and lack of self-control. At the same time, however, they also felt some relief and excitement at the prospect of starting again with a new group of kids. During the month they kept themselves in "limbo". They eagerly were awaiting the departure of the delinquent sub-culture, yet, at the same time, they were feeling sad

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13. Lavelle, op. cit., January, 1970.

over separating from people in whom they had a high emotional investment. The counsellors were making plans for the future, but, at the same time, they were resigning themselves not to do anything until the boys were discharged. The kids also experienced something similar. The delinquent group of boys adopted a defensive "couldn't care less" attitude, and they continued with their acting out. The remaining kids felt both depressed at the prospect of losing their friends and excited about the future change in the cottage.

Although the original decision was to discharge the boys from the Maples, due to the lack of facilities in the city for placement, Peter decided to allow the boys to stay within the jurisdiction of the Maples in a wilderness camp setting. In this setting the boys received a clear message from Peter that they were expected to function responsibly or else get out. There was a clear demand on them to conform. A cabin was found near Alouette Lake, and the boys moved there with some of the counsellors taking shifts in staying with them. This arrangement proved to be satisfactory for the four delinquent boys as well as for the kids that stayed in the cottage. The outdoor camp was first opened on a trial basis, and, eventually, it was incorporated as a permanent, year round aspect of the Maples treatment program. As Peter wrote, "The camp proved to be very successful, and it supplied these boys with freedom and the responsibility of setting up their own program, the challenge of mastering the natural environment, and the intimacy of living with counsellors and each other in a small, closed group situation."[14] The wilderness setting offered to

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14. Peter Lavelle, Residential Unit Report for April, 1970. Monthly Report to Director of Mental Health Services: on file at the Maples.

these boys the challenge that the cottage program could not provide. Instead of finding excitement and testing themselves through delinquent actions, they were able to find excitement and test themselves through survival in nature. They made the campsite their "home". They explored the area, went fishing, built traps, climbed the mountains, went swimming in ice cold mountain streams, chopped wood, built fires, cooked their own meals, and maintained the upkeep of the cabin. In short, they became responsible, in a very real sense, for their own lives. In turn, the counsellors who stayed with them were not there to impose rules and regulations, but, rather, to take part in their community. The artificial roles that separated the kids and the counsellors in the cottage disappeared in the wilderness setting where everybody was regarded and accepted on their individual merits. Even the "pecking order" among the kids changed. For example, one of the kids who was considered to be a "sissy" in the cottage proved himself to be an apt outdoorsman. Consequently, he gained much respect from the other boys. Similarly, the counsellors who could best prove themselves as "resource people" in nature were immediately respected and listened to by the kids. The camp setting proved to be more "therapeutic" for these boys than the cottage. Through their experience in nature they gained self-respect, self-confidence; they learned to respect each other; and they learned the importance of self-control. Of course, the camp situation did not go without "acting out" incidents; nor did it bring about a total change in the kids. Nevertheless, because they were in a more real, survival situation, the boys were required to utilize more of their own resources; and, therefore, it was a learning experience for them.

The Community and Acceptance Phase

With the departure of the delinquent sub-culture at the beginning of April, there was an immediate change in the cottage. People looked forward to the "new beginning", and a spirit of "good will" permeated both the staff and the remaining kids. They all wanted to see the cottage work. The removal of the "delinquents" from the cottage milieu took the pressure off everyone so that both the kids and the staff could relax and reflect on the happenings of the previous months. This period, therefore, can be considered as the demarcation point between the "testing" and the "acceptance" phases. From this point on, there was a distinct change in the total cottage milieu.

After the delinquent boys left, the counsellors had a "training" week out of the cottage in order to reorient themselves. They evaluated their experiences with the kids during the preceding seven months, discussed once again the treatment philosophy and education program of the Residential Unit, discussed the various aspects of day to day cottage life, reviewed all the cottage rules and regulations, examined their relationships with the kids, and engaged in a number of encounter groups to express many personal resentments to each other. The week helped them to regain some of their idealism, although from a much more realistic perspective. Through their discussions, they were able to draw some abstractions from their initial experiences in the cottage. Looking back at the previous seven months, they once again realized that their love, involvement, and intent to help was not enough; different kinds of kids required different approaches at different times in the process of growing up; and the higher their expectations for the kids to improve were, the

greater were their depressions when the kids did not meet their expectations.[15] They also realized that they had to share more of the responsibility for the cottage with the kids in order for the community to develop.

During the counsellors' training week, the kids with a skeleton staff took over the responsibility of running the cottage programs. Thus while the counsellors were searching for ways of sharing responsibility with the kids, for the first time, through the temporary removal of the staff, the kids were actually given a chance to be responsible for themselves. They took on various staff roles, e.g. cottage head and shift head; they wrote the daily logs, kept the cottage clean, planned and implemented programs, and conducted their own meetings. The challenge of dealing with the responsibility brought them together. New channels of communications were opened, and they dealt with the situation as a group.[16]

Seeing the kids handle the total responsibility for the cottage proved to the counsellors that they could share responsibilities with the kids. It gave them the confidence to try a less authoritarian, more democratic approach. Towards the end of the training week, the staff and the kids got together in a "general assembly" and worked out a more flexible way of living together in the cottage. Many of the controls that had built up in various attempts to contain the acting out, delinquent sub-culture were dropped.[17] In turn, the kids accepted that they were personally responsible for their actions, and that they were accountable not only to the counsellors, but to the whole cottage community. Consequently, when

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15. Peter Lavelle, Residential Unit Report for April, 1970. Monthly Report to Director of Mental Health Services: on file at the Maples.

16. According to Peter, the kids were ready for this responsibility before the counsellors were ready to share it with them.

17. Lavelle, loc. cit.

the staff returned to the cottage after their training week, they did not feel the need to take back immediately all the responsibilities from the kids. The kids enjoyed this new confidence and trust on behalf of the counsellors, and the "community" concept grasped the imaginations of everyone in the cottage. The staff and the kids discovered that they could work out all cottage problems together as a community. They learned to listen to one another. Immediately, there were some specific changes that grew organically out of the whole group. The "shift change meetings", for example, which in the past had excluded the kids, were moved from the office to the living room so that all the kids could participate and be informed of everything that went on. Eventually, these meetings took on the new format of "community meetings".[18] The community meetings became a daily function that everyone--all the kids and the counsellors on the day and evening shifts--was expected to attend. Often these meetings lasted over two hours (3:30 - 5:30 p.m.) as they served a multipurpose function. Besides informing the evening staff of what had been happening in the cottage during the daytime, the community meetings became the main area for expression of the community's solidarity. All decisions affecting cottage life, e.g. future programs, cottage rules and regulations, consequences, changes in procedures, free time, bed-times, etc., were made in these meetings. Thus the kids began to take an active part in making decisions that directly affected their lives. The power structure in the cottage changed at this point from a staff

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18. For a discussion of the function of community meetings in a "therapeutic community", see Maxwell Jones, op. cit. p.88.

imposed, authoritarian structure to a self-imposed, self-regulated, democratic structure. Consequently, a high level of trust and communication evolved between the kids and the counsellors. The kids became responsible for their own bedtimes; they received much more unsupervised "free time" away from the cottage; most of the doors which were formerly locked were unlocked; and the keys, which in the past symbolically represented the counsellors' authority, freely passed back and forth between the staff and the kids. In turn, as the kids wanted to maintain the high level of trust in the cottage, the incidences of lying and stealing decreased.

The community meetings also became the arena for confrontations and working through of personal problems. Individuals--both kids and counsellors--who had resentments to express would do so at the meetings. The rest of the community was there to further communications between individuals or to give support when needed. Occasionally, the expression of "negative" feelings was overemphasized, and at these times a conscious attempt was made to express more positive appreciations. When an individual had personal problems, the group would listen and discuss the problem. First, only the problems of the kids were aired; eventually, however, the counsellors felt secure enough also to share their problems with the community. Similarly, at first all the confrontations were between the kids or between an individual counsellor and a kid; eventually, the staff began to confront each other in front of the whole group. Having the counsellors reveal themselves and confront each other in front of the kids further encouraged the kids to work on their own

problems; and, furthermore, it encouraged new counsellors who did not participate in the Orientation Program to get involved with their personal growth.

Through the above developments, the counsellors stopped viewing the kids only as "emotionally disturbed" and began to have normal expectations from them. They stopped bending backwards to meet with the kids' approval; and they started to assert their identities as people. Thus, they were able to maintain their integrity, their self-respect, gain self-satisfaction, and, in turn, gain the respect of the kids. Whereas previously the counsellors were not able to meet their own needs or the needs of the kids, with the development of the community, they found the balance for meeting both needs.

The community meetings were conducted democratically. At the beginning of each meeting an agenda was made. Anyone who had something to bring up could add to the agenda. Once the agenda was completed, the "cottage logs" were read aloud by one of the staff or the kids. The logs served the purpose of reviewing and summarizing what had happened in the cottage during the previous twenty-four hours. Whereas previously only the staff maintained the logs, with the advent of the community, anyone could write in them. Often the logs were humorous and people enjoyed listening to them. The kids and the counsellors enjoyed having their names mentioned in the logs; it gave them a feeling of involvement. Once the logs were read and everyone had a picture of the day's happenings, the various items on the agenda were discussed. The agenda usually included technical or administrative problems that had to be

ironed out, future programs, community problems, and individual concerns. Everyone participated in the meetings as individuals; counsellors often disagreed with each other; and the opinions of the staff did not carry any more official weight than that of the kids. Decisions were arrived at through democratic votes. Eventually, through the community meetings, the kids also participated in the evaluation of prospective staff who came to the cottage on a trial basis. They gave open feedback to these people as to how they saw them perform in the cottage. The kids' evaluations became an important factor in the hiring of new staff.

Another **important** area of change occurred in the writing of the "personal logs" and "monthly reports". Until the evolution of the community, the personal logs and the monthly reports were written only by the counsellors. Each of the kids had a personal log. In it were recorded, on a day to day basis, various aspects of the kid's life at the Maples--as the counsellors perceived them. The logs included such items as: special incidents in the kid's behaviour, e.g. fights, running away from the cottage, temper tantrums, stealing, glue sniffing, hyperactivity, insomnia, supportive actions for others, and so forth; his degree of participation in programs and the type of activities in which he mainly engaged; his progress or regression in emotional growth; his emotional moods and relationships with people in and out of the Maples; and the counsellors' feelings towards the kid. The monthly reports, which were regularly forwarded to all the other social agencies involved with the kid's life, were an overview based on the personal logs. With the advent of the community, the kids became active participants in the

writing of their personal logs and the monthly reports. Until then, they mistrusted the purpose of the logs, and, consequently, had less trust in the counsellors who wrote them. Once they started to add to the logs, the logs became more like diaries that enabled them to look back and see themselves over a long period of time. The monthly reports were no longer like "secret documents" or "police files" over which they had no influence. Instead, the reports became a summary of the past month in their lives, and many of the kids enjoyed comparing one month's report with another to see the changes in themselves. The importance of the kids' participation in the writing of the logs and the reports was in the fact that they ceased to be "objects" for impersonal files, and they became active "subjects" who had influence over every aspect of their lives.

Letting the kids become active participants in their own lives was further continued in "reality" and "case" conferences. Reality and case conferences were held with each one of the kids. The reality conferences included all the social workers that were involved with the kid's family, all the members of the family that consented to attend, the Cottage Head, one or two of the counsellors, and, of course, the person with whom the conference was concerned. Occasionally the kids asked some of the other kids to attend to give them support facing their families. During the reality conferences, the kid's family situation was reviewed, and usually a confrontation between the kid and his parents followed. Again, the kids were active subjects in the conferences. Unlike, for example, P.T.A. meetings, where parents discuss their child-

ren with the teachers, the kids were not talked "about" like "objects", but took an active part in conducting the conferences. The same principle held true in the cottage case conferences. The case conferences were an opportunity for each person to give a report of himself to the whole cottage community and to get **appropriate feedback from the members** of the community. During the case conferences, the attention of the entire community was given for a whole hour to that one person, and he could utilize that attention in any manner he wanted. Often the kids would ask people how they saw him or tell them how he saw them. At other times, a particular kid would conduct his conference by just sitting there without saying a word--much to the frustration of everyone else. Nevertheless, at all times the responsibility for the conference was with the kids, and when feedback was given by others, it was not in the form of talking "about" the person, but, rather, talking "to" him.

Of course, the development of the community spirit did not erase all the problems in the cottage. The testing and the "hassling" still continued; the kids still continued to act out; and they often forfeited many of their responsibilities. Had they not done so, they would have had no reason to stay at the Maples. Also, the counsellors could not completely drop their "emotionally disturbed patient" view of the kids. As one counsellor explained:

Staff Interviewee 10

> Even with the community feeling in the cottage, I see the kids on two levels. On the first level I see them as people, and my feelings constantly change as we interact. Some of them I like to be with, others I don't enjoy as much. On the second level, and this is hard to admit to myself, I see the kids as patients. In the community meetings I concentrate on the kids, not the staff. I often assume that the other

staff's position is correct.

As patients, I am less able to relate to them on a normal level. I have different expectations of them than of staff. I am not sure how I would relate to other kids, say in a normal camp setting. I realize that viewing the kids as patients makes them into objects of therapy, but I can't help it. The kids are here because they are screwed up. The staff is here because we work here and it's nice. When we went camping, my view of the kids as patients changed. In a camping situation we were all facing the same obstacles, the same circumstances. I don't think that it is possible to change this view completely, as long as we are here as paid Child Care Counsellers. I am always looking at them as an agent to help, and that is the primary purpose of us being here--not only from a personal point of view, but also from the Government's perspective.

I also realize that this patient view reduces my respect for their opinions. They are "disturbed", they wouldn't be here if they weren't, and we knew that before we met them. Therefore, we view them with with this foregone conclusion. We had expectations of what they would be like, and the way we saw them was and still is coloured by the label "emotionally disturbed". Sometimes I am really surprised by the intelligence of these kids.

I don't show pseudo-respect for the kids. I tell them the way I see the reality, that is, they have more problems than the staff. I haven't used the term "patient" in the cottage. I would hesitate to use that term because it evokes a negative perspective--even though it is hard to get away from it completely. Our awareness of the fact that they are patients is important in calling them on their "games". They manipulate more than other people. I like most of the kids, I care about them, but I don't know how long this concern will last after I leave the Maples. I care about the whole place because I am involved it it. However, I don't feel committed to any one of the kids as individuals. I feel committed to the place, the people in it, and I feel for the kids within the Maples context. I think that the kids like me.

The above excerpt is quoted at length for its honesty aptly illustrates the counsellors' view of the kids even after the community evolved. Although this view prevailed to varying degrees and many problems continued, by the end of May the community culture became strong enough to

handle adequately all situations. Whereas, until the community developed, everything was based on individual relationships with the counsellors making themselves responsible for upholding the cottage rules, with the advent of the community, the group process and individual responsibility was added to the cottage milieu. Both the group and the individual became responsible. The group cared about the individual, and the individual cared about the group. People felt more accepted, more accepting, more belonging, and, consequently, they were able to be more honest with one another. They were able to "hear" and "accept" each other's "positive" and "negative" feedback more easily. The individual felt responsible to the needs of the community, and the community was able to respond to the needs of the individual. The "therapeutic community" had been established.

CHAPTER SIX

THE KIDS' EXPERIENCE IN SOCIETY AND THE MAPLES TREATMENT PROCESS

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: (a) to present a brief discussion of the social dynamics that have influenced the kids' lives and a description of the "type" of kids that lived at the Maples; and (b) to present an "abstract" of the actual treatment process in the cottage.

The Dynamics of Social Alienation

The alienating social dynamics that helped to formulate the kids' personalities, their disposition to life, and eventually brought them to the Maples, are essentially similar to the social dynamics that most people in our society experience. The dynamics of the family, the education system, the commercialized economy, and the technocratic state have been extensively analyzed by numerous students of Western society. Marx, Freud, Marcuse, Wilhelm Reich, Erich Fromm, Paul Goodman, R.D. Laing, Fritz Perls, Edgar Friedenberg, Alexander Lowen, and Jules Henry, as well as many others, have all written in detail--from varying perspectives--on the effects of our mass oriented, technocratic society upon the individual's psychological and emotional well being.[1] The process of alienation of Western man from his "true" self, his fellow man, and his society is a central theme for all of the above mentioned writers. The kids at the Maples can be considered as the "end products" of that process in our society. The main difference between them and

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1. It is not in the scope of this thesis to dwell in detail on these writers' views. The reader is directed to the appropriate sources, as well as additional references in the Bibliography.

"normal" kids is, therefore, in the degree of their disturbance. As Erich Fromm writes:

> Today we come across a person who acts and feels like an automaton; who never experiences anything which is really his; who experiences himself entirely as the person he thinks he is supposed to be; whose artificial smile has replaced communicative speech; whose dulled despair has taken the place of genuine pain. Two statements can be made about this person. One is that he suffers from a defect of spontaneity and individuality which may seem incurable. At the same time, it may be said that he does not differ essentially from millions of others who are in the same position. For most of them, the culture provides patterns which enable them to live with a defect without becoming ill. It is as if each culture provided the remedy against the outbreak of manifest neurotic symptoms which would result from the defect produced by it.... If the opiate (e.g. movies, T.V., radio, concerts, sports events, newspapers) against the socially patterned defect were withdrawn, the manifest illness would make its appearance. For a minority, the pattern provided by the culture does not work. They are often those whose individual defect is more severe than that of the average person, so that the culturally offered remedies are not sufficient to prevent the outbreak of manifest illness.[2]

Fromm is quoted at length for his words aptly describe our culture, the type of kids that come to the Maples, and their situation in society. The kids at the Maples belong to the "minority" that Fromm writes about. They are less able than the "average" person to cope with the demands and the accompanying anxieties that our society places on the individual. Their emotional disturbances often lie in the fact that they handle their anxieties either through self-destructive ways, or ways unacceptable to society. Through their life experiences they have developed "individual character structures" that severely limit their experience in life, and "social character structures" that make them disfunctional

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2. Erich Fromm, The Sane Society, (New York: Fawcett Publications, 1967), pp. 24-25.

for society.[3] Their character structures are rigid, so that they are not able to respond spontaneously to new situations, or new relationships. Through their rigidity their choice of alternatives in everyday life is limited; they react in a few predictable and patterned manners. Consequently, they are not able to take the risks in life that are necessary for growth and development, and they rob themselves of the joys that diversity of life has to offer. Their responses in the present are usually not based on the reality of their current situation, but rather on fixed images and conditioning from the past. Even when there is no "danger" present, they perceive their environment as "attacking". Since they see the world as "attacking", they remain, through their rigid characters, on the "defensive". Not only are they afraid of taking risks that involve human relationships--for in most of their past relationships they have been hurt--but they are also afraid of such seemingly simple risks as, for example, tasting new foods, trying new skills, or getting involved in new creative activities. The risk of failure is too great, so they freeze or abuse their energies. At the same time that they are unable to take new risks which might enrich their lives, they reap very little real enjoyment from their existing way of life. This is demonstrated by their troubled, unhappy, lifeless faces as well as by their lack of excitement and commitment to anything around them. Usually when kids first come to the Maples they are not interested in sports or arts and crafts, they don't enjoy group games, they derive little pleasure out of movies, and while they watch T.V. they are not

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3. For discussions on "character" see references in Bibliography to Fromm, Reich, Perls and Marcuse.

discriminating about the programs they watch. They very rarely initiate activities which might bring them joy. Instead, they engage in activities which they feel they "should" enjoy (e.g. playing poker, sniffing glue, playing pool and so forth), or they do nothing. Many of them had experiences with drugs and delinquency prior to coming to the Maples. Both the drug taking and the delinquency can be seen as an attempt at inducing some form of excitement, some life, into an otherwise unhappy, meaningless, "plastic" existence; or, of course, as a form of escaping from that existence.[4]

As can be seen from the above description, the kids at the Maples have very little "play" in them. Their "play" element, which is essentially the creative "child" in people's personalities, is dormant. Since, of course, at one time in their lives--as babies and little children--the kids were naturally creative, they had to learn to give up that genuine, responsive "child" part of their egos. Through their experience in society, primarily in their families, they had learned to sacrifice their genuine selves in order to become someone that they imagined society--specifically their parents--wanted them to be.[5] Essentially, they learned to relate to the world and to themselves as the world related to them. Characteristic

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4. In Erich Fromm's terms, the kids are more "necrophilous" than "biophilous". A "biophilous" person, according to Fromm, is one that loves life, while a "necrophilous" person is one that is attracted to death. For further discussion see Erich Fromm, Summerhill For and Against, (New York: Hart Publishing Co., 1970) p. 254.

5. For further discussion see Arthur Janov, The Primal Scream, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1970) Chapter 2.

of their relationship to the world is non-genuine, manipulative, dishonest interactions, and the "objectification" of their social and physical surroundings. They relate to themselves and to others through images as "objects"--in a similar manner as their parents and other adults related to them. The following dialogue from one of the family conferences helps to illustratte the above discussion:

Therapist: Mrs. Brooks, (fictitious) can you tell your daughter how you feel towards her?

Mrs. Brooks: Well, let's see. How should a mother feel toward her child? Of course, I love her.

Therapist: Would you talk to her, not about her.

Mrs. Brooks: She knows that I love her.

Therapist: Would you tell Cathy that.

Mrs. Brooks: You know I love you, don't you Cathy? You know that, don't you? Of course you do. You should. Haven't I done everything for you? How else could I feel; how else could a mother feel towards her child, her baby? She knows I love her (turning to the therapist), don't you (turning to Cathy)?

Therapist: (turning to Cathy) Do you?

Mrs. Brooks: (before Cathy answers) Go ahead. Say what you feel. Don't be afraid to be honest. It's better to be honest than to keep it inside. This is the time to say what you feel. You know I love you, don't you?

Cathy: (hesitantly) Yes.

Therapist: Mrs. Brooks, can you tell Cathy what you appreciate about her?

Mrs. Brooks: What I appreciate? Well, let's see. What should a mother appreciate about her child? Let's see now. What I appreciate?

Therapist: Yes. Tell Cathy what you appreciate about her. Anything. Try to be precise.

Mrs. Brooks: Well, yes. I appreciate many things about her. I appreciate what she...

Therapist: (interrupting) Please talk to Cathy.

Mrs. Brooks: Well, Cathy. I appreciate the things that you do for me. What a good girl you are.

Therapist: Could you be more precise?

Mrs. Brooks: Yes. I appreciate that you don't take drugs, that you don't smoke marijuana or take L.S.D.

Therapist: Anything else that you appreciate about Cathy?

Mrs. Brooks: I appreciate that you don't sleep with boys and that you don't hang around with hippies.

Therapist: Is there anything that you appreciate about Cathy herself, not what she does?

Mrs. Brooks: (confusedly) I don't understand. I have said that I love Cathy. Every mother loves her child, doesn't she?

During most of this session Cathy sat quietly without expressing any real feelings. The feelings of anger, mistrust, fear and resentments that she had for her mother prior to the conference never surfaced. When Cathy was asked during the conference how she felt towards her mother, her answer was almost identical to that of Mrs. Brooks. After the conference, when Cathy was asked about her answer, she said that she did ask herself the question, "How should a child feel about her mother?", before she replied. Cathy felt bad that she could not express herself honestly to her mother. She also felt guilty during the conference; all the things that her mother appreciated about her were not true. She had taken drugs,and she had slept with boys.

During the conference Cathy became psychologically and emotionally "confluent" with her mother. She and her mother were the same; she

could not see herself clearly as a separate entity who had her own thoughts and feelings.[6] This was often true of the other kids as well. Many of them had internalized (introjected) their parents at an early age to such a degree that the "parent" part of their ego overshadowed the "child" part. Consequently, their spontaneous, creative selves were supressed. Furthermore, by indiscriminately introjecting large parts of their parents, the kids also internalized the attitudes and opinions that their parents had towards them.[7] Thus, kids who had extremely critical and non-accepting parents were also very critical and non-accepting of themselves and of others. Similarly, kids whose parents showed no love, trust, and affection had little self-confidence, could offer no love, and mistrusted most people. The point is that in many ways the kids have merely learned their toxic way of being in the world from their "mommies" and "daddies".[8]

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6. "A sensing and the object sensed, an intention and its realization, one person and another, are confluent when there is no appreciation of a boundary between them, when here is no discrimination of the points of difference or otherness that distinguish them." Frederick Perls, Ralph Hefferline, Paul Goodman, Gestalt Therapy, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1951) p. 118.

7. "An introject...consists of material--a way of acting, feeling, evaluating--which you have not assimilated in such fashion as to make it a genuine part of your organism. You took it in on the basis of a forced acceptance, a forced (and therefore pseudo) identification, so that, even though you will now resist its dislodgment as if it were something precious, it is actually a foreign body." Ibid., p. 189.

8. The psychiatric literature is extensive on the type of disturbances that the kids at the Maples manifested. It is not, however, in the scope of this study to dwell on that vast body of literature. For a detailed discussion of the various stages in child development and the corresponding emotional disturbances, the reader is directed to: J. Louise Despert, The Emotionally Disturbed Child, (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970) and Erik H. Erikson, Childhood and Society, (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1969) chapter 7.

The lack of genuine response as well as the extent of manipulations are obvious in the above encounter between Cathy and her mother. For the most part, the kids grew up in families where relationships were based on "rights" and "obligations" instead of "genuine responses". An extreme example of this was one of the boys whose father, being a former army sergeant, ran his family like an army unit. Since by the nature of the Western family the kids were always in the weakest position in the family hierarchy, they learned at an early age to manipulate their environment in order to have their needs met. They could not fulfill their needs--i.e. they were not accepted and loved--just by being themselves. Unfortunately, in the process of manipulating others they also learned to manipulate themselves. They learned to view themselves as "things" and "possessions" by having been related to as "objects", "extensions of their parents' egos", by their parents.[9]

Manipulating and being manipulated remained an integral part of the kids' life experience outside the family as well.[10] Many of the kids have experienced being an object or commodity even at the hands of those people who presented themselves as sincerely trying to "help" them. They have been viewed and treated as commodities by the various teachers, social workers, welfare agents, psychiatrists, therapists, psychologists, truant officers, and so forth who have entered their lives. The kids know that

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9. Jules Henry gives vivid testimony to this discussion of parental influence in his case studies of the families of psychotic children. Jules Henry, Culture Against Man, (New York: Random House, 1963), chapter 9.

10. For an in-depth discussion of our education system and how it manipulates children, the reader is referred to three studies: George B. Leonard, Education and Ecstasy, (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1968); Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner, Teaching as a Subversive Activity, (New York: Delacorte Press, 1970); and Jerry Farber, The Student as Nigger, (North Hollywood, California: Contact Books, 1969).

most of these professionals--by the nature of the professions--have mainly been interested in them only to the extent that their professional interests required. Often there is very little genuinely responsive interaction between the kids and the professionals who are paid to work with them. The interaction that does take place usually occurs within a contrived, "patient-helper" setting. Consequently, the kids often continue to relate to these professionals through "images". They do not see them as people who also have human problems and feelings, but rather as the "professional roles" that they act out. Similarly, when the professionals act out the "helping" role, the kids continue to act out the "helpless" role--which most of them know quite well.

Thus, through their experiences in society as in the family, the kids learned to view the world from a cold, toxic perspective. Once their relationships with their parents and other adults were based on "rights" and "obligations", the kids soon learned that they had "no rights" for they had "no power". From being "things" they learned to become "no-things". They learned to feel like "worthless nothings". They realized very early in life that they were at the mercy of the adult world for the adults had all the legal and physical power. They learned that their feelings and opinions were inconsequential, that they, as people, were unimportant. Consequently, when kids first come to the Maples, most of them have a very low self-esteem. Accompanying their feelings of worthlessness, the kids carry with them feelings of "guilt". Having grown up in an environment where they were always expected to live up to other people's expectations, they never learned to create and achieve their own goals. Since they rarely fulfilled the adult world's expectations satisfactorily, they were

constantly deprived of the self-satisfaction of having achieved something well, and of the satisfaction of being appreciated. Instead, they received criticism and blame; they were repeatedly told how "bad" they were and how everything they did was wrong. At one family conference, for example, one father stated quite openly, "eighty per cent of the things that my son does are wrong." The kids' delinquencies are often a form of "ego survival", a proof of competence in the face of this type of criticism. As one of the kids who had forty burglary charges against him said when asked why he does it, "It is what I know how to do best." Eventually, the kids internalize the attitudes of the parents and other adults around them, and they learn to view themselves in the same light as they were viewed by the adults. Their guilty feelings, therefore, arise not only out of what they do, but also from what they feel they are. Many of their manipulations and "acting out" are attempts at escaping those basic feelings of worthlessness, guilt, sadness, and incompetence. Their actions often reflect how they feel about themselves; their low self-esteem is behind all their activities, like a self-fulfilled prophecy.

The tragedy of the kids is that although they are the "end products" of the process of alienation in our society, as they become older, they also become the "victims" of that process. In other words, while they were young, society made allowances for their "acting out", but once they come of legal age, society demands of them to take full responsibility for their actions. When they are unable to take responsibility for their lives, society responds to them with violence and punishment. They are made to pay for the damage that the total culture perpetrated upon them. Although the whole culture is responsible, they as individuals are expected to take the "blame".

The Treatment Process

It is possible to look at both the "long range" and the "short range" aims of therapy at the Maples. The long range goal of the therapy process was to help the individual--both kids and staff--to develop towards "maturity".[11] This meant passing from total environmental support and dependency to increasing degrees of self-support and self-dependency; passing from dependency on external controls and regulations to self-control; and from constantly living up to other people's expectations to being able to create and achieve self-expectations. In other words, the aim was to help the individual take more responsibility for his life, to make him more "response-able", and to make him more of an active agent in his life. This was a reversal of the process that both the kids and the counsellors experienced in society. Instead of remaining the "victim" of the external forces and the internal drives that act upon the individual, through increasing "awareness" he was to become a freer subject. The short range goal, on the other hand, was simply to help the individual to like himself more, to enable him to draw more nourishment from his immediate environment, and to help him find more genuine and creative ways of relating to people and being in the world. In other words, it was to offer him a real "learning experience ".

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11. It is important to point out that "maturity" is not viewed here as a static goal. As Fritz Perls wrote, "...there is not such a thing as total integration. Integration is never completed; maturation is never completed. It's an ongoing process for ever and ever...There's always something to be integrated; always something to be learned. There's always a possibility of richer maturation--of taking more and more responsibility for yourself and for your life. Of course, taking responsibility for your life and being rich in experience and ability is identical." Perls, op. cit., p. 64-5.

Although Perls' Gestalt Therapy was the predominant frame of reference at the Maples, the treatment process could be best described as "growth therapy" through a "therapeutic community". The task at hand with every individual was twofold:

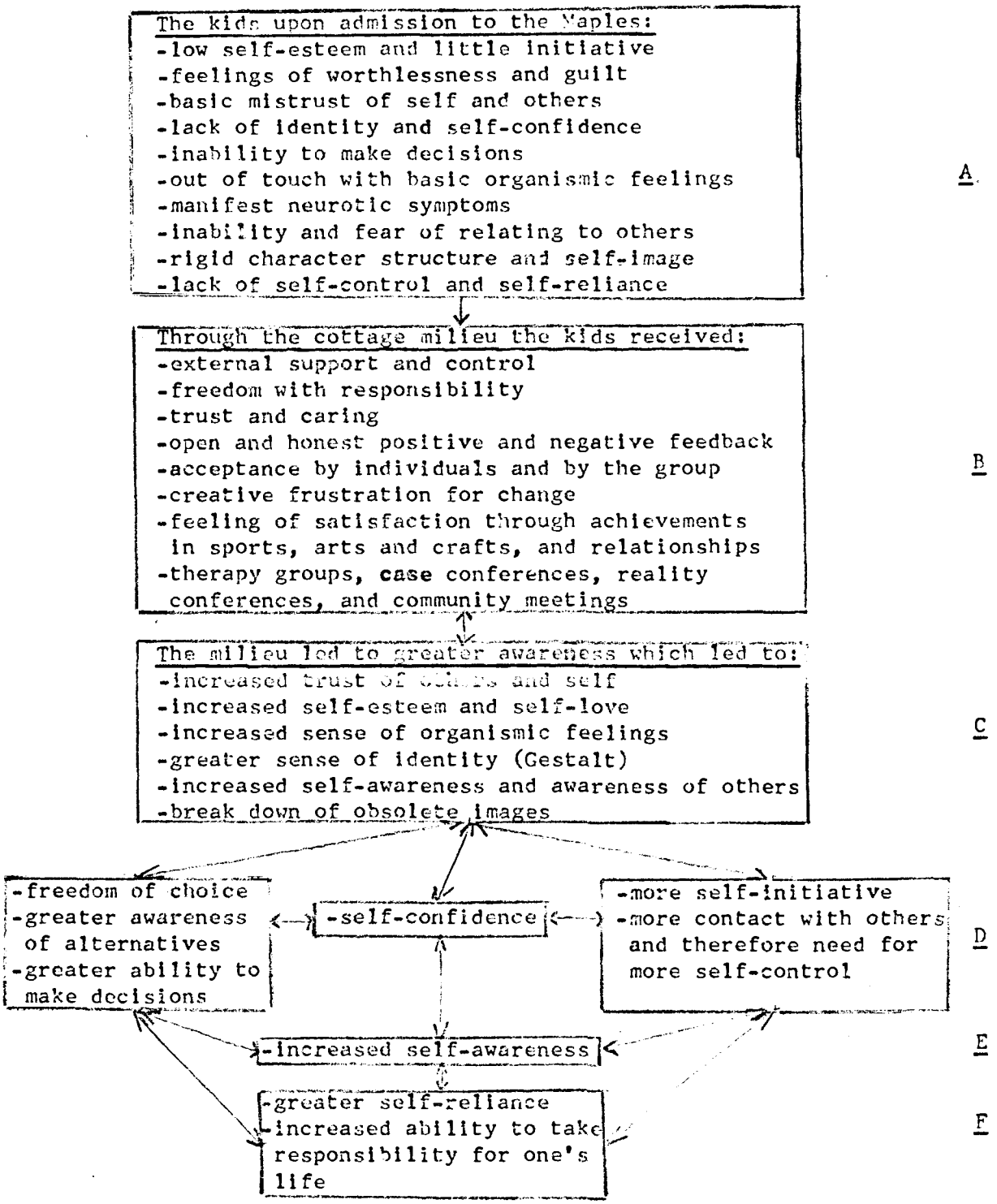
(a) to make him aware of how he was preventing his own "growth", and

(b) to provide for him the opportunity of new ways of experiencing his life by making him aware of new alternatives.

Thus, what was involved was the undoing of the rigid "images" by which the individual related to himself and to the world, reinforcing his strengths, and encouraging him to further develop his innate potentials by taking new risks. Through this process, the individual constantly gained greater awareness of himself, and through that awareness, he learned to take more responsibility for his life.

Since the treatment process occurred within a total milieu, all the various aspects of that milieu constituted the actual "therapy". One aspect of the individual's life in the cottage directly affected all the other aspects. Thus, for example, when a kid got involved with arts and crafts, he was not only developing his manual skills, but he was also gaining a sense of self-satisfaction by achieving something well, a sense of competence, a sense of self-worth, some genuine praise from others, a better self-esteem, greater self-confidence to take new risks, more self-initiative to try again, an increased awareness of his creative self, and, consequently, greater self-reliance. In turn, all these factors influenced how he related to others in the cottage and how those in the cottage

DIAGRAM OF THE TREATMENT PROCESS AT THE MAPLES



A= PRIOR STATE: B= STRUCTURE: C= PRIMARY OUTCOME: D, E, & F= SECONDARY OUTCOMES

The process is obviously cyclical. All the steps are interactive, and all of them lead into each other to form a whole. Each step has equal value and importance in the development of the individual towards increased "maturity".

related to him. They also influenced his confidence in looking at himself and his relationship with his family. This gave him a greater sense of his identity. The treatment process was therefore cyclical.[12] For the sake of illustration, it is possible to divide the process into three stages--keeping in mind that the individual could have experienced all the stages concurrently. The three stages are:

(a) initiation nd testing,

(b) inclusion and acceptance, and

(c) change and growth.

Each of these interrelated stages, as will be seen presently, was equally important for the therapy of the kids. Since the individual is a "microcosm" of the whole group, the phases in the individual's personal growth correspond to the phases in group development.

The Initiation and Testing Stage

Although the kids came to the Maples on a voluntary basis, at least verbally agreeing to the fact that they needed help, most often they did not really come to receive the help they needed.[13] For most of them--especially at the beginning of their stay in residence--the Maples was just a "neat" place, nicer than the previous one, in which to stay. Nevertheless, the simple decision of moving into residence, regardless of the kids' initial motivations, may be seen as the first step in the treatment

12. See page 130 for a diagram of the treatment process at the Maples.

13. Most of the kids that came to the Maples were referred by other social agencies. The kids first came to look at the cottage, to meet the kids and the counsellors, and then they voluntarily decided whether or not they wanted to move in.

process. In this step the kids made a conscious choice to change their environment, to reject whatever toxic situation they may have been in for something new and unknown. They were taking a risk even if at the time they were unaware of the risk. Eventually, through group and individual encounters, this step was brought to the kids' awareness. On the awareness level the kids realized that they did not just make another decision to move to another place, but, rather, they chose to come to the Maples because they needed and wanted "help". "Help" in the Maples' sense meant "help in helping yourself". Thus, the responsibility for being at the Maples was continuously placed on the individual. He was repeatedly confronted by the group--both kids and staff--with such questions as, "What are you doing here?", "What do you want from the group?", "What do you want to do for yourself at the Maples?", "How can we help you help yourself?". Through the frustration aroused by such confrontations, the kids became increasingly aware of the fact that the Maples was a "treatment centre" and that each individual was responsible for whatever he gained from the treatment process. An awareness of this fact implied greater acceptance and commitment on the part of the individual to his therapy.

Acceptance of the fact that they needed help, or at least open admittance of it, did not come with most of the kids until they had sufficient time to "test" the cottage community and felt "accepted" by the others. Before new kids felt secure enough to want to be accepted and included by the community, they had to find out what the group was all about. They needed to find out the goals and the limitations of the group. For their own security they needed to "test" the limits. The ways of testing

differed according to the manner of manipulations of each person. Some of the kids, for example, tested the limits by sitting back quietly and observing. Through their observations they saw what the "old timers" did or did not do, and they followed their example. Other kids tested the limits more actively. One way or another they set themselves up against the group only to have the group react against them. The group's reactions then clarified the limits for them. For example, in the afternoon "community meetings" some of the new kids would intentionally sit outside the group's circle so that they would be asked by the others to join the group. This way, they not only tested the group's expectations for the "community meetings", but also whether or not the others wanted them to join in. They not only gained the group's attention but also the group's invitation. Another area of testing was in taking care of the cottage and the needs of the community. For example, the kids and the counsellors took turns setting up and cleaning off the tables before and after the meals. Some of the new kids fell in line at the time of their arrival, while other kids often pretended to forget. They made other plans or just disappeared to avoid doing their chores. This way, they were again assured of some individual or group reaction, some more attention, and the further enforcement of the limitations. Testing occurred in various ways, by all the kids, in all aspects of cottage life. At one time or another, the limits of the community regarding such matters as getting up in the morning, using the kitchen, attending therapy groups and other programs, cleaning up the cottage, changing of linen, doing one's laundry, setting and clearing of tables, going for walks on free time, leaving the cottage, staying out on weekends, respecting other people's property, attending community

meetings, abiding by group set "quiet times" in the cottage, and so forth, were all tested. Such testing and the subsequent clarification of the limits was essential for the security of the individual as well as the maintenance of the group. Whenever the community's limits were tested by one of the new members of the community or by one of the "old timers", the whole group was threatened and in turn responded by re-examining its limits. Since there was a frequent influx of new people to the community, the limits were constantly re-examined and restated. This process helped to initiate the new members and brought the whole group--kids and counsellors--closer together. The individual gained security, and the group gained in strength. This strength came not only from having its purpose and limits clarified continuously, but also from having been strong enough to survive the testings of new people. As was seen in the previous chapter, until the community evolved,the cottage milieu was not strong enough to contain the testings of individuals.[14]

With most new kids, this testing stage only lasted on an intensive level for three to four weeks; although some of the kids never stopped testing throughout their stay in residence. Of course, all the kids continued their testing to varying degrees, but once they felt accepted by the group and in turn accepted the group this type of testing was no longer predominant in their cottage life. Their testing then became more sporadic; they then felt secure enough to proceed with other aspects of the treatment process more vigorously. During these times of testing, the kids also started to get involved with the various programs and

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14. Only when the community on the whole was strong enough to assert its limits could the individual feel secure enough to stop testing.

activities that went on at the Maples so that the line of demarcation between the "testing" and the "acceptance" stages was not abrupt. Rather, the kids "eased" into accepting the cottage community and their lives in the cottage.

The Inclusion and Acceptance Stage

Most of the kids, until they came to the Maples, were afraid to admit to themselves and to others that they had problems and needed help. Consequently, they were afraid and unable to reach out to their environment for the support and the nourishment that they needed. The point at which the kids were able to say, "I need help. I need you. You can help me help myself," must therefore be regarded as an important step in their therapy. By accepting that they needed help the kids began to take responsibility for their lives. By directly asking for help, they increased that responsibility (or their ability to respond to their needs). Being able to reach out for environmental support honestly and non-manipulatively is an initial move towards self-reliance. Admitting one's need for "help" and accepting one's weaknesses is a source of "strength". Only when the kids were strong enough to accept themselves as they were in the present could they then proceed to change.

This step in therapy could not be reached without two prerequisites: trust and acceptance. The kids had to have a basic sense of belonging to the group, a feeling of acceptance, and a feeling of trust before they were ready to open up to the group. Consequently, during the initial few weeks in residence, new kids were rarely confronted by the group. This period of time allowed the new person to test the group to see whether

or not he wished to become a part of it. It also allowed him to see what the others were experiencing, and he learned that it was O.K. to make demands, that it was O.K. to get angry, that it was O.K. to express resentments, that crying was not shameful, or that hugging another person was not "stupid" and, in fact, was pleasureable. After this period of time, once the individual had a chance to settle down, to test the group, and to get adjusted to the "hang of things", he was asked to reveal something about himself in a group, usually a "community meeting". Most often this happened spontaneously through some incident that occurred in the cottage. At this point the individual had to decide whether or not he felt accepted, whether or not he was ready to trust the group. When this basic level of trust was reached differed according to each person. Trusting the group involved a belief that the group or individuals in the group would not abuse whatever the person revealed about himself. Essentially, when a new kid decided to "open up", he was saying to the community: "I now feel a little more acceptance by the group. I want to belong to this group. I feel strong enough within the group to share a part of myself with others, even if I find that part of me ugly. I feel that some people in the group will give me support when I need it, and I feel secure that I won't be ridiculed or hurt by the people in this group with what I am ready to share with them. I also feel secure that I won't be rejected on the basis of what I have to share with the group." Often this realization was accompanied by many tears, since for most of the kids this type of trusting was a new experience in life. In most cases, by the time the individual decided that he was ready to trust the group, the group was ready to trust the indi-

vidual. The point of trust from the individual and inclusion by the group usually coincided. Once the individual felt accepted by the group, he was ready to accept himself more, and, therefore, he was ready for changing and growth. Of course, the mere fact that he was strong enough to take the risk of trusting the group indicated that he was already changing. It meant that his way of relating to others as "images" was beginning to break down, that he no longer saw a potential "enemy" in everyone around him.

Achieving this point of trust and acceptance was facilitated mainly by "caring" that every person--kids and counsellors--received from the total cottage community. For the individual, the message was clear from the total group. The group essentially said through its words and actions: "We care for you as you are right now in the present. We are concerned about you, about what is happening with you and what you are experiencing." This type of caring was intended to be unconditional, caring with "no strings attached". It was not meant to be **dependent** on how well the kids performed for the staff; nor to be contingent on the return of care from the new kids to the group. Often, especially when new kids first joined the community, the flow of caring was only one way. It involved a certain amount of patience, compassion, empathy, understanding, and respect for the other person on the part of the "old timers" and especially the counsellors. Although the caring came from the whole community to the individual, the counsellors were more often ready to offer this kind of caring than the kids. Nevertheless, the new person eventually realized that the caring was there if he chose to accept it. For most of the kids, this type of

care was a radical change from their previous life experiences. Having developed a "worthless nothing" self-image, they found it suprising that anyone could really care for them. Such caring was also frustrating for most of them, for it directly challenged the way they had been accustomed to relating to people around them. In other words, they were more apt at handling rejection and abuse than acceptance and caring. Once they accepted that the caring was genuine, they learned to return the caring, and in the process to care more for themselves.

The Change and Growth Stage

As mentioned above, change and growth was implicit in the kids' experience at the Maples from the first day that they joined the community in the cottage. It is possible, however, to consider the last three or four months of their stay in residence as the period of time when they changed the most. By that time they had availed themselves of the treatment process (see diagram on page 130), and they broke through many of their "impasses". Through the total cottage milieu they developed higher self-esteem, greater self-confidence, greater self-initiative and self-control, increased self-awareness and awareness of others, and, consequently, greater self-reliance. All the various aspects of the milieu contributed to their growth, the clarification of their self-identity.

The main part of their therapy in this stage was in intense Gestalt and sensitivity workshops. Many of the kids attended "marathon" groups, which often lasted for twelve to eighteen hours, in addition

to participating in daily Gestalt sessions.[15] In these sessions the kids gained greater insights into themselves and their relationships with their parents and siblings. Often, for example, the kids would project many of their feelings for their parents onto some of the staff, and their feelings for their siblings onto some of the other kids. When this occurred, the various roles that were involved were acted out by the group and the kids were given an opportunity to see themselves more clearly as they interacted with various members of their families. In the Gestalt sessions the kids could confront various aspects of their personalities by carrying on dialogues between the various opposing parts of themselves. They could also express their anger, love, hurt, resentment, etc., to people in their lives by placing them in a "make believe" form in front of them on a pillow and talking to them. Although at first most of the kids found this technique rather strange, eventually they accepted it and used it willingly. Occasionally, the kids got involved in physical fights in these groups and the fights were allowed to continue within safe controls. The fights were seen as important and effective ways for the kids to "get in touch with" and release their anger. In the fights the kids were usually not out to hurt one another but rather to test their own self-controls by exploding within the safe limits of the group. At times the video tape equipment was brought into the therapy groups and community meetings to give the participants instant feedback. The video captured the emotions, attitudes, and physical expressions of the participants most effectively. After the session the participants

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15. For an anthology and description of the various awareness exercises utilized in the marathon groups and the daily Gestalt sessions, see the Appendix.

watched themselves on the screen, often in utter surprise and disbelief.

Thus, through various techniques the kids got a greater sense of who they were. They could see more clearly the differences and similarities between them and their parents, and between them and other kids in the cottage. Furthermore, they could see what they were like when they first came to the Maples in contrast to what they were like in the present, as well as in contrast to the new kids in the cottage. They could look at the new skills that they had developed, the type of relationships they had formed, the new levels of communication that they explored with others, and, most important, they could look with greater creativity upon their alternatives in life.

Of course, the kids' experience at the Maples can only be looked upon as a beginning step towards further growth. The kids, just as the counsellors, did not change totally during their stay in residence. Nevertheless, the Maples did provide for them a new beginning, a new experience in being in the world, a new way of relating to themselves and to others. In short, the Maples was for them a new "learning experience" in the true sense of the term. By having become part of an environment where their old ways of relating and perceiving were no longer functional, the kids were frustrated into changing. This changing process continued after they had left the Maples. Once they had experienced "democracy" in the "microcosm" of the Maples, they could carry this experience with them into the outside world. Although the outside world is not as intimate and democratic as was their lives in the cottage, they were able to transpose their Maples' experience to the outside, and, therefore, adjust

better to society.[16]

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16. A follow-up study of sixty kids who have left the Maples after staying longer than a minimum three month period in residence. indicated that the treatment process was indeed successful. Eighty three percent of those kids showed an overall improvement, while fifteen percent showed no improvement. Barry Thomas, Post Discharge Survey of Adolescent Patients : Report on file at the Maples.

A word of reservation is necessary here. While these percentages are encouraging from the point of view of the kids' adjustments to society, they could be misleading. The above percentages show that the majority of those kids who stayed in residence learned to "cope" better with the world than they "coped" prior to coming to the Maples. This, however, does not mean that these kids became healthy, creative, self reliant , happy individuals who can act as free agents in their lives. For such a change to come about the individual must experience a total change in his toxic environment for a long period of time. As will be seen in the next chapter, the Maples could not provide such a stable atmosphere for the kids over an extended period of time, and, it can not, therefore, be considered as a viable solution for the effective treatment of emotionally disturbed youth. The Maples treatment process was successful, but it was limited in its success by the Maples setting.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CRITICISMS OF THE MAPLES SETTING AND AN ALTERNATE PROPOSAL

Having looked at the evolution of the "therapeutic community" at the Maples, the social dynamics that influenced the kids' lives, and the actual treatment process in the cottage, the purpose of this concluding chapter is to offer some criticism of the Maples setting, and to briefly outline a proposal for an alternate setting for the treatment of emotionally disturbed youth.

Criticism of the Maples Setting

According to most of the interviewed staff there were two major factors in the Maples setting that hindered the treatment process. These two interrelated factors were the physical environment, and the political context within which the therapy program was to be implemented. Of course, the political considerations also had economic repercussions. As discussed earlier, the physical environment at the Maples left much to be desired from the point of view of creating a "home like" atmosphere in the cottages. The design and the interiors of the brick cottages created an institutional atmosphere, and consequently reinforced the institutional relationships between the kids and the counsellors. This was antithetical to the "community" oriented goals of the treatment approach. The above criticism of the physical environment could be extended to the actual location of the Maples Residential Unit. In terms of "therapy" for "acting out" adolescents, the Maples was built in a very poor, unfavourable location. In the immediate neighbourhood of the cottages there were three other Government institutions: the Burnaby Mental Health Centre, the Willingdon School for Girls (a correctional institute),

and the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Although there was minimal interaction between the Residential Unit and these institutions, being located in their immediate vicinity often gave the kids and the counsellors the feeling that they were part of "just another institution" in a large cluster of institutions. This, of course, further reinforced their institutional image of the Maples.

Right next to the cottages ran a highway, which often encouraged the kids, by its sheer convenience, to "hitch" rides away from the cottages. On the other side of the highway was a Motor Hotel with huge neon signs that constantly flashed the luring values of "pub life" through the cottage windows. The kids were very much attracted to the life style that the Motor Hotel (fancy cars and "booze") represented to them. Nearby the whole complex was a shopping centre and numerous smaller stores, which the kids found quite convenient for shop lifting, or stealing glue and nail polish remover for sniffing. Also nearby was a used car lot, which the kids made use of whenever the urge came upon them to steal a car. At the adjacent intersection to the cottages were two gas stations which at times the kids frequented to sniff gasoline. In short, the location of the Maples worked against the treatment process by being right in the centre of the world that brought the kids to the Maples in the first place. What the kids needed, as witnessed by the success of the wilderness camp, was some form of isolation from their city culture. This was impossible in an "open door" unit that was so centrally located.

The second factor that worked against or hindered the treatment process was the B.C. Government's sponsorship and control of the Maples. Since the Maples Residential Unit was a part of a larger complex that was sponsored by the Government, all incidents which had possible poli-

tical repercussion had to be reported. Consequently, the kids and the counsellors were often left with the uncomfortable feeling that the eyes of "Big Brother" were watching over them. Occasionally, situations which from the counsellors' point of view were "therapeutic", were, from the Government's point of view, "unacceptable". For example, in one incident some of the counsellors took a few of the kids over to one of the counsellor's homes, and in the course of the evening everyone had a sip of wine. Since the B.C. liquor laws forbid anyone under eighteen years of age from consuming alcohol, in the eyes of the Government, the counsellors who allowed the kids to sip wine were very irresponsible. On the other hand, the counsellors felt that since nobody got intoxicated, the presence of the wine merely helped to bring them closer to the kids, and therefore was therapeutic. They felt that they were responding to the needs of the situation, and at the time it didn't occur to them that they would be reprimanded for it. The above incident created a great degree of anxiety among the staff, as Peter was compelled to demote one of the "shift heads" in order to placate the Government. In another incident, the kids and the counsellors went camping to the wilderness camp at Alouette Lake. On the camp site they built a steam bath, and the boys and girls went in nude together to take a bath. Again, while the staff felt that they were doing a "therapeutic" thing in letting the mixed bathing happen, from the Civil Service point of view they were "indiscreet". A similar situation existed with regard to sex among the kids in the cottage. While most of the counsellors agreed that the kids should have "sexual freedom" and that the girls should be given the "pill" and be provided with birth control information, for a long time--in fear of repercussions from the Government--nothing was done. In fact, the counsellors

often acted contrary to their own beliefs by policing the corridors to make sure that boys and girls were not spending too much time together in the bedrooms. This situation also existed concerning the use of drugs. At one time the Government passed down an edict that forbade all Civil Servants from discussing the subject of "drugs" with their clients. From the counsellors' point of view the Government's edict was absurd. Not only were drugs a great part of the kids' lives and therefore needed to be talked about, but also many of the staff resented being told what they could or could not talk about to the kids. Furthermore, even though they knew that marijuana was illegal, many of the counsellors expressed the view that they would have preferred to see the kids smoking "grass" than sniffing glue and gasoline.

Besides the above examples where the counsellors felt that the Government's hand interfered with the therapy process by limiting their freedom to make appropiate decisions, many of the counsellors agreed that the sheer fact that the Maples was owned and administered by the Government was a hindrance to treatment. Since the cottages and the surrounding grounds were owned by the Government, the kids and the counsellors were not free to affect their physical environment in any major fashion. Thus, for example, they were not free to engage in any "work type" projects--such as planting a vegetable garden or building a wooden shack--around the cottage. Furthermore, all matters concerning the upkeep of the cottage (e.g. major repairs, the building of new shelves, the changing of the furniture) had to be done by the Public Works Department. Consequently, it was difficult for the kids and the counsellors to develop a sense of pride and affection toward the cottage and its environment. It was difficult for them to make believe that the cottage was really their

home, that the cottage belonged to them. There couldn't be a real emotional bond between them and their physical surroundings since they rarely had the opportunity to invest their energies into their surroundings. There was no real relationship between them and their physical environment, and consequently an important aspect of reality that is part of every real community was missing from the community at the Maples. All of the above only served to further impress upon the kids and the counsellors that they were indeed in an institution; and, of course, all of it was antithetical to the concept of people taking responsibility for their own lives.

Another way that the counsellors felt hindered by the Government's sponsorship was in the administrative procedures they had to follow. While most of the procedures were necessary because of the nature of the whole setting, they often prevented spontaneity in the community's life. Since everything had to be prepared for and ordered well in advance, it was difficult for things to happen on the spur of the moment. Thus, for example, at one time the kids decided that they wanted to start cooking their own meals instead of always eating the meals that were sent over from the main kitchen of the Burnaby Mental Health Complex. From the point of view of "therapy", this was a very positive step. The kids were tired of always eating institutional food, and they wanted to take responsibility for their lives in a most profound manner by preparing the food that they ate. However, since the bureaucracy for ordering food was well established, the kids could not get the required food for cooking until a few weeks later, and by that time most of them had lost interest in the idea. Every aspect of cottage life that involved other offices had to be planned well in advance. In very few areas was the cottage independent. Thus, while the emphasis in the therapy of the individual was

on the experience of the present, the "here and now", the experience of the individual in the community was often one of having to plan for the future. While the kids had to accept planning for the future as a part of their reality, the extent to which such planning was necessary often added to the "unreality" of the cottage community. Of course, all the various administrative procedures further added to the institutional image that the kids and the counsellors had of the Maples. In a real "home like" setting, although such planning for the future is necessary, it is not a constant part of everyday life.

Underlying all of the above discussion--the criticism of the physical and the political setting--was the fact that the Maples could not provide a real "home" for the kids. As such, for many of the kids it was just another "stopover" in a long series of "stopovers" in their lives. After a certain period of time, usually around nine to ten months, the kids had to leave the Maples. Prior to coming to the Maples many of the kids had experienced moving from one institution to another, from foster home to foster home, from one juvenile detention hall to another, from one group home to another group home, etc.. None of these social institutions--including their families--had provided the kids the "home like" atmosphere that they required for growth and security. Without such an atmosphere the kids were left searching for that basic security that is a prerequisite to taking risks in life. This point was emphatically expressed by one of the girls who was about to depart from the cottage, when she said in the midst of tears, "I am sick of living in an institution, with institutional people; I am sick of being a yo-yo always moving from place to place; I want a real home." When the kids left the Maples, they were not only faced with having to get back on the "institutional merry-go-round", but also they were faced with the dilemma of not knowing how

to relate to people outside the Maples. In the Maples they became accustomed to relating in an open and honest manner, and for many of them it was difficult to continue relating in the same way in the outside world. Thus while the treatment process helped the kids to relate to their own lives in a more positive, nourishing and creative manner, it did not--and in fact, under the present Maples setting, could not--change their objective situation in society. In other words, after their stay in residence most of the kids still had to return to the toxic environments--or similar surroundings--from which they came.

In conclusion, therefore, while the Maples had the right philosophy and treatment approach, it was situated in the wrong setting, and had the wrong auspices. Consequently, the Maples cannot be considered as a feasible answer to the ever increasing problem of emotional disturbance and alienation among youth. This conclusion is supported not only by the above offered criticisms, but also by the economic realities surrounding the Maples. The original capital investement of the B.C. Government into the building of the Maples was approximately three million dollars.[1] The building of the facilities for the Residential Unit bore a significant part of that figure. In turn, the maximum number of kids that the cottages could accommodate at any one time was forty-five. It cost approximately forty-five dollars per day to house one child in residence under the Maples type setting. When we take into consideration the total number of kids in our society that need the type of treatment process that the Maples has to offer, it soon becomes apparent that society could not possibly afford to provide all the needed therapy under expensive settings like the Maples. According to the most recent study by the Canadian Government, there are

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1. While this was a rough estimate by Peter Lavelle, some estimates ran as high as four million dollars. The exact figure is not available.

presently approximately one million children (10% of the youth population) in Canada who need some form of help because of emotional and psychological disorders.[2] The financial costs to society of building, maintaining and staffing settings like the Maples, in order to meet the ever increasing demand, would be too astronomical to warrant the expenditures. The costs would outweigh the service and accommodations these types of settings could offer. It is therefore imperative that new approaches be found for dealing with the problem. The following outline for an alternate setting for the treatment of emotionally disturbed youth is an attempt at seeking out a new approach.

Proposal for an Alternate Setting

The following proposal for an alternate setting for the treatment of emotionally disturbed youth is essentially based on the same educational premises that the Maples Residential Unit adopted. The major contributions of this proposal therefore lie in the actual change of the basic political and physical setting within which the treatment process is to be implemented. The change is based on deductions from the Maples experience and it is built on the following premises: the first premise is that the kids who were at the Maples, as well as large segments of the alienated youth in our society, need, first and foremost, a "home". They need a place where they feel they belong, where they feel that their presence is appreciated and needed. They need to belong to a community where they feel that their words and actions have consequences, where they feel they are part of a total collective which they can influence, and where they

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2. National Study of Canadian Children with Emotional and Learning Disorders, One Million Children: The CELDIC Report, (Toronto: Leonard Crainford, Canadian Mental Health Association, 1970).

feel they have power over their own lives. It is difficult for kids growing up in our mass oriented, technocratic culture to develop an overview of the whole society, and to have a sense of belonging. It is difficult for them to feel that their existence has any meaning within the larger context of society, and of course, they are not able to derive existential meaning from their lives. Consequently, they remain lost, bewildered, alienated, and until their objective situation in society is drastically changed, therapy can benefit them very little. They therefore need a community that they can call their "own", which would provide them with a meaning to their existence outside of themselves. Once they had a sense of belonging to a community then they would be more ready to find existential meaning in their lives, and in turn, they would be more prepared to develop towards "maturity".

The second premise follows from the above discussion. In order for the kids to develop a real sense of belonging to a community, they would have to join a community on a "permanent" basis--at least with the knowledge that they won't automatically have to leave after a certain period of time. In other words, they would have to have the security of knowing that they could in time--if they wanted to and if they were accepted by the community--become permanent members of the community. This would be essential, for a real home has to imply the security of a permanent situation. This type of permanency could be best provided by an on-going community that was founded on its own political and economic realities. The Maples could only provide a temporary home for the kids because, due to its political and physical setting, the Maples community was essentially "unreal". The most fundamental aspects of reality--i.e. those concerning

the survival and the basic needs of man--were missing from the Maples community. All of its needs were serviced from the outside. The type of community that could best provide a permanent home for the kids would be one that was, as much as possible, politically and economically autonomous.

The third premise is that, for an individual who has grown up under the alienating influences of city life, living in a rural communal society that is based on man's direct relationship to the land and to his natural environment is in itself "therapeutic". It is "therapeutic" because in such a setting the individual becomes directly involved with the fundamental aspects of his existence--the production of the food that he eats, and the maintenance of the community that he lives in. He thus becomes responsible for his own life in the most profound manner. Furthermore, by working together with other people and sharing with them the struggle for existence on such a basic level, he develops a sense of social responsibility and belonging. The experience of the juvenile delinquent boys in the wilderness camp gives testimony to this premise. Living in a rural communal setting would therefore be therapeutic for the type of kids that were at the Maples, as well as for other alienated youth in our society.

Based on the above discussed premises, the proposal for an alternate setting for the treatment of emotionally disturbed youth essentially involves the creation of a kibbutz-like community.[3] Since many young

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3. The proposal is based on this writer's personal experiences at the Maples, and living on a kibbutz. This section is, therefore, highly speculative and is intended as an area for further research. Of course, if a real community was to be established that would incorporate some of these ideas it would have to be based primarily on the ideas of the actual members.

adults in our society are already searching for alternate life styles, such a project would have an immediate appeal to many people. The community could be started by twenty-five to forty people. Of course, the first group of people would have to be well prepared in manual skills and other personal resources in order to be able to create a viable community. They would also have to be involved with their own personal growth and experienced in therapy. Preferably, they would participate in an Orientation Program prior to starting the community. Once a "therapeutic" core culture was firmly established among the original participants, kids with emotional problems and alienated youth in general could join on a voluntary basis. Some of the members of the community would be trained specifically to work with emotionally disturbed kids, while the rest of the community would carry on with the regular tasks of a normal community. The type of culture that would be needed would be similar to the culture of the "therapeutic community" at the Maples. However, since the whole community would be based more on reality, the whole culture would be more reality oriented. In other words, since the needs of the community would be more concrete, more real, the demands that would be placed on the individual would also be more real. He would have to live up to his social responsibilities much more stringently than the kids had to at the Maples. The major form of social control would, of course, be "self-control" based on the fact that the individual would join the community voluntarily and he would need to conform to a certain degree in order to remain.[4] The purpose of such a community would be similar to that of the community at the Maples--i.e. the creation of an honest, homelike environment that would be conducive for the development of honest, trustworthy relationships and, therefore, would offer a new social experience for

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4. Having to conform to some community expectations can be considered as a form of social control, but since the individual would be conforming voluntarily it is referred to here as "self control".

the kids and other members of the community. A brief discussion of a few aspects of such a community follows.

Physical Setting and Facilities

As mentioned above, the proposed setting would be essentially similar to a kibbutz. It would have private houses for single people and for families. The houses could have private bathrooms and kitchens, but there could also be a communal dining hall, a communal kitchen, and communal bathrooms. Children could sleep with their parents or in children's houses. Surrounding the community could be farmland, grazing land, and orchards. The community could have its own small factory for domestic and commercial purposes, it could keep cows and chickens, and it could have its own garages and repair shops. It could, of course, have its own farm machinery. An important part of the community would be a cultural centre that could be the centre of leisure activity in the community. Of course, all of the above would depend on the tastes, desires, and imagination of the members of the community. The members of the community would have to play an important role in the planning and the building of the community's physical plant.

Social Organization

The role model for the community could again be the kibbutz, although the community would organically develop its own social organization. Theoretically, however, a General Assembly comprised of all "full" members could be the highest authority in the community. An individual could become a full member after he has lived in the community for one year and was voted in by a unanimous vote of all the members. The

General Assembly would consider all major matters that any member wanted deliberated. Of course, the Assembly would have smaller committees for specific tasks, as well as a Secretariat for day to day matters. All official positions would be on a rotating basis. Work would be an important area of social organization. Every branch of work would have an organizer, and a special work committee would be in charge of allocating enough workers to the various areas. The various branches could include the kitchen, the orchard, the barn, the chickens, gardening, plumbing, electricity, the factory, the fields, etc.

Since the emphasis in the community would be on closeness, honesty and togetherness, there would be no need for artificial discrepancies between people. The community would be egalitarian, and there would be no need for money within the collective. However, members of the community could have money deposited for them in private bank accounts which they could collect when they left the community permanently, or when they went on vacations. Otherwise, they would have no use for money since the community store would be operated on a point system, with everyone receiving an equal number of points.

Education

While the real education in the community would be provided by the total living experience, the community would have its own nurseries, preschools, free-schools, and possibly, university. The main social group of the individual would be his peers, so that peer groups would be the basic educational units. An important aspect of education in the community would be sensitivity, encounter, and self-revelatory groups. The emphasis would be on the development of the full potentialities of every

individual through the stimulating atmosphere of the total community. Of course, taking part in the work projects and the upkeep of the community would also be an important aspect of the individual's education. Essentially, every aspect of life within the community would constitute a part of the educational process, so that most of the individual's education would be based more on actual experience than theory. The goal of the education process would not be to produce an individual without senses, that can easily fit into a slot that the technocratic society needs filled, but rather, to help the individual know himself better and therefore relate to others in an open, genuine, and creative manner.

Communal Way of Life

The projected communal way of life could be best summed up as individual freedom with responsibility. This would mean that everyone in the community would be free to actively pursue his needs, so long as he remained responsive to the needs of others and the needs of the total collective. Thus, for example, children and adolescents, who would be living primarily in their peer groups, would have the same rights and freedoms in interpersonal relationships as the adult members of the community. Both children and adolescents would therefore be free to engage in sexual relationships, and provisions could be made for adolescent couples to live together. Furthermore, since individual freedom would be a basic criteria, experimental relationships could arise. For example, some people might experiment with various forms of group marriages or communal sexual experiences. The point is that morals and regulations would not be imposed from above, but rather would arise out of the needs of any given situation.

An individual's daily life would probably consist of a few hours

(possibly half a day) of work in his specific branch, some relaxation (possibly yoga classes if he wants), some form of creative activity (e.g. arts and craft, pottery, painting, sculpture, music, dance, drama, and so forth), some form of psycho-therapy or awareness group (e.g. Gestalt, Suffi class, Rolfing, etc.), and of course some form of communal activity. Each day would probably be somewhat different from the next. Everything that the individual member would get involved with would be on a voluntary basis, although, the limits of the community regarding work would have to be established and accepted by everyone as a necessary part of reality. In every other area the individual would be free to get involved or not to get involved. Eventually, with everyone having freedom with responsibility, people would learn to create and achieve their own goals and expectations. The community would then be comprised of exciting, stimulating and creative individuals. The type of individuality referred to here is "creative individualism" as opposed to the "rugged", "competitive", "alienating", "egotistic" and "conditioned" individualism that exists in our culture at the present. Just as alienated individuals in our society continue the dynamics of social alienation, the creative individuals of the community would produce dynamics of social creativity. In other words, only creative individuals can create a dynamic, creative community, which, in turn, will produce creative individuals.

Treatment Process

The fundamentals of the treatment process would be basically the same as at the Maples. When a new member would join the community, he would do so on a year's trial basis. During that year he would become a part of the community in its various activities, but he would not have the right to

vote in the General Assembly. Essentially, he would first join a smaller therapeutic community of his peers. This smaller community--somewhat similar to the cottage community at the Maples--would have very close ties with the total community but it would retain its separate entity for the sake of therapy until the end of the first year. The first year, or the "therapy year", would be quite similar to what the kids experienced at the Maples. It would involve on the part of the new members a few minimal commitments. These commitments would be mainly in the areas of work, sharing part of the communal responsibilities; inter-personal relations, respecting other people's personal possesions and individuality; and therapy, partaking in intensive therapy. Of course, provisions would have to be made for kids who could not make any type of commitments. The emphasis with those kids would initially be on the gratification of their emotional and material needs, and on intensive "one to one" therapeutic relationships. Personnel and special resources would, therefore, have to be allocated to meet their needs. The main part of the kids therapy would be provided, however, by the total milieu. They would gradually change by slowly easing themselves into the community's culture. It is foreseen that many different types of kids would be joining such a community. Consequently, it would be essential that a proper screening process be established, so that during the initial phase of his stay in the community the individual will be with the group of people he could adjust to most easily. The screening process would basically serve a placement function.

Political and Economic Realities

Although initially the community would have to be financed by the Government--both Federal and Provincial--such sponsorship would have to

be given free of political strings attached. As was seen with the Maples, political sponsorship hindered the treatment process. The community would have to have total autonomy regarding all internal matters that didn't conflict with the laws of the land. It would have to have the freedom to be totally responsible for its own physical and social setting. Furthermore, it would have to have total autonomy over the treatment program and the education it offered to the kids.

While initially the Government would have to invest a large sum of money, it would probably be less than what the Maples cost. Eventually, however, the community would be able to accommodate many more people, and in time it would have its own varied financial resources. The financial resources could be inumerable. They could include, for example, small manufacturing such as a toy factory, book publishing, free schools, summer camps, extended therapy sessions for outsiders, and so forth. Because of the proposed setting, it would be possible for a community comprised of fifty people to offer therapy for twice that number of kids. As the community grew it could increase its capacity for dealing with emotionally disturbed kids. From the point of view of society such a community would be a good investment considering the societal needs it would meet, and the present expenditures that don't deal adequately with the problem. Of course, a main benefit of such a community would be that after their "therapy year" the kids wouldn't automatically return to the "institutional merry-go-round" but many of them would stay within the community, which will have become their "home".

Of course, the above outline is brief and sketchy. However, it presents a general picture of what an alternate setting could be like. The minute details of such a community would have to be worked out by the people

who would be actually involved with the project. Eventually, it is projected, that there would be hundreds of similar communities across Canada--just as the kibbutzim swarm over Israel--in order to meet the acute need they are to fulfill.

In conclusion, therefore, such a rural communal setting would offer the participants of a "therapeutic community" more freedom, more opportunity to be responsible for their lives, and, of course, a greater sense of "reality" than the Maples setting offered. Furthermore, such a setting would be more economical for all of society, and it could offer a partial answer not only for the treatment of emotionally disturbed people, but also for the generally alienated segment of the population. Ultimately, however, the solution to "alienation" among the youth of our society lies in the upheaval of much of the existing values, structures, and institutions. Such "therapeutic communities" as described here would only be one step towards that necessary change.

APPENDIX

The following anthology of "awareness" and "sensitivity" exercises are included in order to describe some of the techniques that were applied in the various therapy groups and marathon sessions at the Maples. The purpose of the exercises was to enable the individual to gain more awareness of himself and of others. The effectiveness of these techniques varied according to each individual. An exercise which may have led to new awarenesses for one person may not have done so for another. Of course, the effectiveness of the exercises also depended on the skills of the therapist and the composition of the group. Only a few of these exercises were utilized in any one session. It is hoped that this anthology will be of value to people in other educational settings besides the Maples. For example, most of these exercises could be well utilized in our Public School System, and in our universities. A word of caution is needed. Any one of these exercises could lead to deeper emotional experiences. These experiences can be "therapeutic" or "harmful" depending on how they are handled. The presence of an experienced person is therefore advisable. Some of the exercises originated at the Maples, while others filtered in from the outside. The exercises are presented here from the point of view of the therapist, as if the therapist was talking. Essentially, they are presented as they were conducted by the various therapists at the Maples.

1. Free Talk: The "free talk" simply consists of a brief discussion of what the participants, including the therapist, want from the therapy group. Everybody states their expectations or lack of expectations. Essentially, it helps to bring the group a bit together by people sharing with each other their motivations for taking part. Through the discussion people start to find out about one another, and in some instances they may even start to give "feedback" to each other. Of course, not every group has to start in this manner.

2. Sense Relaxation: Follow the exercises outlined by Bernard Gunther in his book Sense Relaxation: Below Your Mind, (Macmillan Company, New York, 1970). Gunther's book is designed for body awakening. For example: (a) head tapping, head slapping, face slapping
(b) chest slapping, belly slapping, hip slapping
(c) leg slapping, arm slapping, buttocks slapping
(d) chest slapping and yelling
Follow Gunther's directions for each of these exercises.

3. Awareness Round: State what you are aware of in the "here and now". For example: Right now I am aware of tension in my throat, now I am aware of the light in this room, now I am aware of someone coughing, and so forth. This exercise is to bring people in the group closer to the "here and now" and to help them realize the difficulty they have in staying with the present. The exercise can lead into further Gestalt work. For further discussion see: Frederick S. Perls, Paul Hefferline, and Paul Goodman, Gestalt Therapy, (Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1951), Part One. Each person in the group does an awareness round for about a minute.

4. Non-Verbal Communication: Make noises and communicate to people in the room without talking. Communicate your feelings through the noises. Make body contacts to communicate. Communicate with your buttocks, your hands, your feet, your body, the top of your head, your nose, your back.

(a) Mill around. Find one person to communicate with non-verbally. Mill around again. Find another person to relate to. Are you aware of any changes within yourself? Find another person and be aware of your feelings. Express your feelings.

(b) Give feedback to your partner verbally. Give feedback to the group. What did you experience?

5. Partners: First become aware of how you picked your partner. Did you look around the room and picked the person you wanted to be with? Were you active or passive? Did you make the effort to move out of your corner of the room? Is there a message for you here about how you live your life?

(a) One partner closes his ears and watches the other talk. Pick up the non-verbal messages. The eyes do the perceiving. Give feedback to your partner. How involved did your partner seem in what he was talking about? What features came out? What feelings did he project? How did he project those feelings? What was his body language? How did you feel towards him when he spoke? Were you involved? Switch roles.

(b) Hug your partner for at least two minutes. Become aware of your feelings and your body. When do you feel close and comfortable? When do you feel like parting? How did you part? Who parted first? Did you wait for him to part? What parts of your body were not touching? What about your genitals? How do you feel now?

(c) Communicate with your partner through "gibberish".

(d) Communicate with your partner like dogs, then like cats. Any difference? Give feedback. When did you feel most aggressive or passive? Did you have difficulty in disrobing your human form? Did you feel liberated being a different creature? Try other animals: bear, rat, birds, horse, etc..

(e) Freeze in a comfortable position. Study your partners position carefully. Switch positions. Experience your partner's former position. Give feedback. Do you feel comfortable in his position? What do you imagine he feels like in your position?

(f) Pick a new partner. Again become aware of the process. Were you active or passive? Were you different than last time? How were you different?

(g) Study your partner. Imitate him. How do you feel imitating him? Reverse the process. Let him imitate you. How do you feel being imitated?

(h) Tell your partner how you are similar to him. Tell him how you are different. First concentrate only on similarities and then on differences. Which was easier? Can you appreciate both the differences and the similarities? Reverse the process.

Tell your partner how he is similar to or different from your father, mother, brothers, sisters. Pick another person in the group and do the same. What do you experience? Pick another person.

(i) Reverse complete roles with somebody in the group. Become him, his voice, his mannerism, his body. Try to feel like him. Relate to others as you imagine he relates. Give feedback to the person and to the group.

(j) Pick a partner. Become aware of the process. Get some string. Become a puppet and your partner a puppeteer. Tie the string to your hands and legs and move according to your partner's commands. Reverse the process. Give feedback. How did you feel being a puppet? How did you feel being the puppeteer? Really let yourself become a puppet. Puppeteer stand on a chair and speak for the puppet. Have you ever been a puppet in your real life?

(k) Look at your partner. Say what is obvious to you about him, and what you imagine about him. For example: It is obvious to me that you are wearing a red shirt, and I imagine that you think that you are "cool". Or, it is obvious to me that you are smoking a cigarette and I imagine that you are nervous. Take turns in "I

imagine" and "It is obvious to me". Become really aware of what is actually obvious and what do you actually imagine. Do you sometimes imagine things about other people and believe that what you imagined is real?

(l) Ask your partner: (a) Who are you?
(b) What's right with you?
(c) What's wrong with you?
(d) What is your weakness?
(e) What is your strength?
(f) Where are you going?
(g) How are you going?
(h) Why are you going?

One partner asks the same question repeatedly for three minutes. The other partner answers each time with one word, with whatever answer comes to mind. Try not to repeat your answers unless you feel strongly about it. Give feedback about how you felt, how you saw yourself, how you saw your partner. Switch roles before going on to another question. Give feedback to the group.

(m) Pick a partner. Become aware of the process. One partner closes his eyes. Lead your partner around to feel different textures, cracks in the wall, the doors, the windows, plants, etc.. Stand your partner on chairs, mattresses, stairs, etc.. Finish of by washing his hands carefully in a bowl of luke warm water. Wash each finger to the finger tip, pull on each finger separately, press the palm of the hand. Take a towel and dry your partner's hands. Now reverse the process. Give feedback. How did you experience this exercise. Did you trust your partner? Did you like leading him? Did you give much of yourself?

Get an icecube and rub it on your partner's face, neck, hands, fimgers, toes, chest. Reverse the process. Give feedback. How was it?

6. Sculpture: Place other people in the group into "characteristic" positions as you see them. Pretend that your subject is a piece of clay. Explain the poses that you create. Place two people into positions as you see their relationships. Explain your poses. Place yourself into a pose as you see yourself. Place yourself and someone else into a pose as you see your relationship. Give feedback.

7. Recognize: One person in the group is blindfolded. Feel different parts of other people's bodies and see if you can recognize them by their face, hands, stomachs, buttocks, and so forth.

8. Aloneness: Spend fifteen minutes alone in a totally dark room. Give feedback to the group. How was your experience? Did you want to make contact? Were you lonely?

9. Fantasies: For discussion of fantasy exercises see William C. Schutz, Joy: Expanding Human Awareness, (Grove Press, New York, 1967), p. 90.

(a) If you had all the money you wanted for three things, what would you do with it? Develop your fantasy aloud with your eyes closed. Act out your fantasy as if it was happening in the present.

(b) How old would you like to be? What would you do if you were that old? Act out how old you would like to be as if you were that old right now. How do you experience it? How young would you like to be?

(c) If you had a choice between being a male and a female which would you choose? Describe the advantages of being a boy, and of being a girl. Act out your opposite sex. Act out your fantasy of a "dream boy" and a "dream girl". What if you could be both male and female at the same time? What would you be like, what would your life be like if you were like your dream person.

(d) Are you happy with your name? What would you like to call yourself? Make up some other names for people in the group. Give feedback as to how you picked those specific names.

10. Masks: Make a mask for yourself. What message are you trying to convey with your mask? Put some action behind the mask. How do you experience being behind a mask? Do you feel safer? How do you experience having everyone around you wearing masks? Is there a message for you about your everyday life? Do you usually wear a mask? Describe your real mask.

11. Identity: Say "I", "I", "I", to a few people in the group. Become aware of your voice. How does your voice sound to you? Now say "I am", "I am", "I am". What do you experience? Again be aware of your voice, your assertion, your power, your weakness. Say it in different ways. Experiment a little. Say it loud, soft, harsh, brisk, slow. Become aware of changes in yourself. Try other phrases: "I have power", "I am power", "I exist", "I am alive", "I am life". Play around with "I have" and "I am". Do you feel the difference? Give feedback to the group.

12. Silent Meal: Have a non-verbal feast. Communicate at the table non-verbally. Feed each other. Use no utensils, use no hands, eat only with your tounge and mouth. Close your eyes. Taste the food. Eat very slowly. Taste the food. Chew your food well, destroy all of it. When you take a bite think of a person you would like to eat. Listen to noises around you. Experience your food. Look at your food carefully. See the rice, the peas, the potatoes--look at their uniqueness. Look into your soup. What pattern emerges for you. Eat just one thing at a time, one pea, one rice, one bean, one potatoe. Now, mix the food. Taste and drink. Taste the water. Use only your hands to eat. At the end of the feast give feedback of your experience to the group.

12. Ohmm: Sit in a circle and hold hands. Chant ohmm softly by taking deep breaths. Fill the room with your sound. Feel the energy in the room.

13. Art:

(a) Draw a picture of yourself naked. How much of the paper did you take up? What parts of your body did you forget? What parts of you are the most distorted, the most exaggerated?

(b) Draw a picture of yourself with your mother. What is the picture saying? Who is bigger in the picture? What parts of you and what parts of her have you left out? Are you touching each other? How old are you in the picture? What are you saying to each other?

Repeat the same with your father, brothers, sisters, girlfriends, boyfriends, husband, wife, etc..

(c) Lie on a large piece of paper and have someone draw an outline of your body. Decorate your outline in any way you like. Paint it, make designs, cover it with paper, etc.. What part did you black out? What part did you illuminate? Become the two parts and carry on a dialouge. Which is your favourite part?

(d) Pick a partner, being aware of the process. Draw a picture together with your partner. Were you communicating? Did you like his contributions? Did you resent them? Did you feel that he intruded on your project? Did you intrude on him? Who was more aggressive?

(e) Pick a partner. One person closes his eyes and the other guides his hand over a piece of paper with a pencil. Give feedback. Who had control? Did you let your partner lead your pencil or did you fight him? Reverse the process.

(f) Take a piece of clay and form it into any shape you want. Pour your feelings into the clay as you form it. Play God. You are putting form on to chaos. How do you experience this role? If you were God what would you really do, what would you be like? Act it out.

(g) Make a clay model of yourself in the nude. What parts have you left out? Now, destroy the model. How did you destroy it, e.g. slowly, bit by bit, one sudden smash ? Use any part of your body to destroy the model of yourself. Which part did you use? Is there a message for you there?

(h) Make a model of your family out of clay. How do you see the various relationships in the model? Now, pretend that you are one member of the family who is about to destroy the model. Which member of your family are you? How do you feel towards that member? Have a dialogue between the two of you. Who could save your model of the family? Make a model of your family as other members might see it. Make a model of your ideal family.

14. Rhythm and Communications:

(a) Beat drums. Try communicating with one person through rhythm. Try to communicate your feelings to him. Give feedback. Did you feel that you have communicated? Did you pick up on his feelings?

(b) Beat drums. Try to communicate with the whole group. Are you on the same beat with the others? Do your beats complement the others' or are they in conflict? Are you leading the group in setting the rhythm or do you wait for someone else to lead? Do you feel a part of the group or are you outside of it? Are you louder or softer than the others? Do you hear the others?

(c) Move around to the rhythm. Get a natural rhythm. Is the rhythm of the group your rhythm? See if you can dance to the rhythm with someone. Do you feel inhibited to experience your energy in this manner? Are you able to dance by yourself when nobody else is dancing?

(d) Pour your feelings into the drum: get angry, loving, gentle, rough, hating. Become aware of the pace of your rhythm: is it fast, slow, even, sporadic? Is there a message there for you about the space you are in at the present?

(e) Become aware of various parts of your body as you beat your drum. Where is your energy? Can you move your energy into your hands? Is there a change in your rhythm? Become aware of the rhythm in your body, your head, your arms, your legs. Is there any part of you that has no rhythm?

(f) As you beat your drum think of different people in your life. Do you notice any difference in your beat as you reflect upon these people? Try to recall old incidences from your life.

(g) Make some body contact with somebody in the group and keep your rhythm. How does his rhythm feel? Keep changing positions with your partner while maintaining your physical contact. Give feedback to the group after the drumming.

(h) Compose a piece of music for the group by simply drawing different lines for three parts: tenor, alto, and bass. Divide group into three parts and each part sings its respective lines.

15. Feedback Circle: Each person goes around the circle expressing to every individual what he resents, demands and appreciates about him.

16. Distance in Feeling: Get in touch with how far or close you feel to different people in the group. Show them by standing as close or far in physical proximity from them as you feel. Each person can take turns or the whole group can mill around and bump into each other accordingly. What position seems comfortable with each person? Is the way you greeted each other the way your relationship is in the present, or the way it was in the past, or the way you would like it to be?

(a) Get into threes, fours, eights, etc., and see if you can find your comfortable distances.

17. Machine

(a) Be a machine. Make noises. Go slowly. Go really slowly. Suddenly you are out of oil. Somebody oils you. Speed up. Faster. Slow Down. Die. Give feedback. How do experience yourself as a machine? Have you ever felt like that before?

(b) Get a partner. Become aware of the process. Make a a two wheeled machine. Slow down. Speed up. Did you communicate? Were you two parts of the same machine, or two different machines? What did you experience?

(c) Get into fours, eights, sixteens, and make more and more complicated machines.

18. Dream Fantasy: To music, make up your own dream and act it out. Get together with others and produce your own nightmare.

19. Movie Time: Get into partners. One partner closes his eyes and, while the other person makes noises, he makes up his own movie. each other and the group feedback.

20. Projection Check-out: In a circle each person thinks of what everyone else reminds him of, e.g. an object, an animal, a caricature, a profession, and so forth. Every person goes around and tells the others the images that came to him. Whatever flashes into people's minds is probably the most real image. After giving feedback to everyone, each person checks out if what he thought of for the others also "fit" for him. The purpose of this exercise is to see how much of what we see in others we can also see in ourselves.

21. Video Tape Unit: A video tape unit is the most effective feedback system available. It gives instant feedback to the participants, who get to see themselves through their own eyes instead of someone else's

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