

PSYCHOLOGY

Therapeutic Play Helps

Planned play sessions are being used in child psychiatric therapy and are proving helpful to both parent and child in understanding problems.

► PARENTS can help the treatment of their emotionally disturbed children by learning how to conduct therapeutic play sessions.

In a report to the annual meeting of the American Group Psychotherapy Association in San Francisco, four therapists described how these "do-it-yourself" sessions not only help the child, but also enable the parents to learn facts about themselves.

Parents spend the first ten weeks of the program mastering play technique in group sessions of six to eight persons. Later a standard group of new toys is purchased to be used only during the play periods.

Initially, each play session with the child lasts for a half an hour and is then increased to 45 minutes two or more times weekly.

The investigators have found that after these play periods the parents' perception of the child is more accurate because of the absence of normal daily pressures for this short span of time.

"Having been taught to respond in new ways to their children's behavior in the play periods leads to the loosening of consistent negative reaction patterns," the investigators reported.

Often, the parents will use these new positive responses outside the play sessions as well, according to Drs. Michael P. Andronico of the Hunterdon Medical Center, Flemington, N.J., Jay Fidler of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University, N.Y., Bernard Guerny Jr. of the Rutgers University Psychological Clinic, New Brunswick, N.J., and Louise Fisher Guerny, also of Rutgers.

Another type of group therapy for the child with normal intelligence who repeatedly fails in school was also outlined to the conference.

Drs. Arthur P. Burdon and James H. Neely, medical director and executive director, respectively, of the New Orleans Regional Mental Health Center, recommend a combination program of short term group psychotherapy for parents of chronic school failures and educational assistance and play therapy for the child.

This program is geared toward freeing the "learning block" the child has, which is often a reaction to parental reaction, so that he will be motivated to perform in school again, the investigators reported.

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PSYCHIATRY

Homosexuals Need Help

► SOCIETY should not be misled by propaganda efforts of organized homosexual groups trying to gain "acceptability" for homosexuality, a psychotherapist warns.

Dr. Samuel B. Hadden, who has been treating homosexuals successfully for the past ten years, told the 22nd Annual Conference of the American Group Psychotherapy Association in San Francisco that "these groups resent every suggestion that homosexuals are sick and they foster an education program designed to make homosexuality a socially acceptable pattern of behavior."

With the support of these organizations, the homosexual often sees himself as an "unfortunate individual," confined to his way of life because of a glandular imbalance or some other problem that he can do nothing about.

Therefore, Dr. Hadden said, he excuses himself from all efforts to alter his pattern of sexual preference.

"There is a growing body of evidence," the psychiatrist pointed out, "that the homosexual pattern of sexual adjustment is but a symptom and is associated with other neurotic and characterological disorders in a high percentage of cases."

Although he has treated homosexuals

since the 1930s, Dr. Hadden's most "gratifying" results have come in the last ten years when he began to use group psychotherapy with groups composed entirely of male homosexuals.

In almost every case of homosexuality, Dr. Hadden has found some type of disturbance in the boy's relationship with his mother.

Often, because of her over-dominance, the boy was deprived of the opportunity to make friends and play in groups early in his life.

Thirty different homosexual studies showed that the homosexual recognized himself as being maladjusted when he started school.

Group therapy sessions eliminate the unspoken hostility that often drives homosexuals from mixed groups, said Dr. Hadden.

Many homosexuals forced into treatment by their families or the courts will often rationalize their existence, he said.

However, older members of the therapy group attack these rationalizers in such a way that the homosexual soon admits that he hates his way of life and is ready to do anything to undergo change.

Dr. Hadden, associate professor of psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania

School of Medicine, Philadelphia, believes that depriving the homosexual of "the rationalization that he believes that he is happy in his homosexuality" is the most vital feature of group psychotherapy.

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Executive Strains Come From Within the Man

► A BOSS is surrounded by things that make him tense, but the main cause of his stresses is within himself, a conference in Washington, D.C. on "Living With Executive Tensions" was told.

The executive's most common enemy is loneliness, said Dr. Francis J. Braceland, psychiatrist-in-chief of the Institute of Living, Hartford, Conn., the country's largest private mental health organization.

Before the boss can overcome loneliness, he added, he must rid himself of "inordinate self-love" and hostility.

"Both make it impossible to communicate properly with people in the environment and render one unable to see or feel a real relationship with others," he said.

"The maladjusted executive rarely recognizes his problems himself. His emotional tensions may be expressed in compulsive drive or aggressiveness, causing a high employee turnover, as well as a high incidence of grievance talks."

Dr. Braceland, former president of the American Psychiatric Association, believes there is no invariable "executive type."

Each boss, he said, is different in his approach to his job and this is sometimes where psychological problems start. The approach is determined by the man's most cherished values—his ways of looking at himself and others, his expectations, his convictions and his prejudices.

"In this culture many feel that they must place first, whatever the handicap, and if they do not, they fear that they might be regarded as failures," he said. "This attitude can ruin good men, particularly if it makes them at all envious or bitter."

"Neurotic trends, neurotic ways of handling anxiety are not infrequent in key men and they are displayed in various ways—in hostility and aggression, excessive pessimism or over optimism, unrealistic independence or morbid dependence."

He said many highly intelligent and resourceful bosses are capable of making excellent plans but have no idea how to get others to carry them out.

"The well-functioning executive encourages the best in brains and skills among his employees," Dr. Braceland said. "The boss who is paranoid or even less morbidly insecure must have subordinates around him who will take punishment."

In general, he warned executives not to overwork nor neglect essential relaxation and peaceful contemplation.

The conference was sponsored by the Washington Chapter of the Society for the Advancement of Management under a grant from American Airlines.

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