

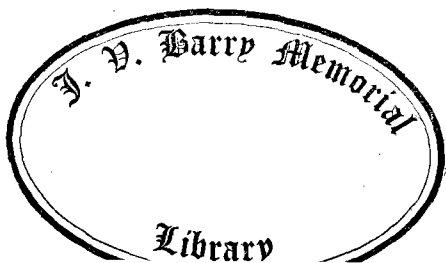
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REPORT ON TRAINING PROJECT No. 62/5

JUVENILE RESIDENTIAL CARE

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INTRODUCTION

The philosophical frames of reference relating to juveniles within the various Australian judicial jurisdictions and their application in practice are of considerable interest to the Training Division of the Australian Institute of Criminology. Seminars have addressed the police role in juvenile delinquency; issues related to youth and social control, juvenile justice, legal and law related studies in secondary schools and violence by and against children. The initial idea for the workshop that comprised the subject of this report - Juvenile Residential Care - was mooted by Mr Roger Pryke, an officer of the New South Wales Department of Youth and Community Services, and developed as a result of his representations to Institute staff. The seminar drew together a total of 18 participants who were involved in either the making, or practical implementation, of policies concerning institutional care of juvenile offenders, or in providing probation and other non-residential services to young people brought before the courts. During the three-day meeting, discussion encompassed a broad range of issues fundamental to the problems faced by administrators and supervisors involved in child welfare throughout the country. The role of institutions in the current climate of 'deinstitutionalisation' of services, the factors involved in staff selection and training, and the evaluation of residential institutions and programmes were central themes of the discussions. Several important issues were suggested by participants as desirable subjects for future workshop consideration.

OPENING ADDRESS

Mr W. Clifford

In extending the Institute's welcome to the seminar participants, Mr Clifford stressed the importance of soundly-based, well planned programmes for the management of juvenile offenders as a means of preventing their deeper involvement in the criminal justice system later in life. In outlining the Institute's more frequent attention to adult services and facilities within the corrections field, he expressed the hope that this initial meeting of administrators of juvenile institutions would result in a national interchange of philosophies, practices and problem resolution that would lead to further meetings and the furtherance of common goals.

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

Maureen Kingshott

In determining the format for the workshop - style seminar, primary consideration was given to the need for flexibility to allow participants sufficient time to consider and debate the rationale of residential care for juvenile offenders. This was stressed during the explanatory session which followed the seminar's official opening. Similarly, the films screened during the seminar were selected to promote an attitude of self-examination and critical enquiry as to the aims and objectives of the departments and institutions represented at the seminar as well as the means by which these aims have generally been pursued.

During this outline of the seminar's objectives, seven areas of major concern to Canadian professional workers in juvenile training schools in the 1960s⁽¹⁾ were suggested as being extremely relevant to the participants' deliberations, viz:-

- '1. Notwithstanding the benevolent impulses and sincere intentions guiding the activities of training school professionals, their clients tended to perceive the institutional experience as one of confinement and punishment. Accordingly they were typically unresponsive to treatment initiatives. This perception was undoubtedly reinforced by regular recourse to solitary confinement as a punishment measure....
2. The belief that individualised treatment could be effective in institutions confining large numbers of inmates was found to be an illusion. It overlooked the prevalence and potency of an inmate sub-culture which both resisted the values of the staff and was a vehicle for reinforcing anti-social behaviour. Moreover, American experience tended to confirm that strong deviant pressures would exist even in the most modern juvenile treatment institutions.

(1) MacDonald, J.A., 'Juvenile Training Schools and Juvenile Justice Policy in British Columbia', in *Canadian Journal of Criminology* Vol.20, 1978 p.418-436.

3. Experience demonstrated that prolonged confinement in training schools could seriously damage or disturb the normal personality development of many children. Thus by confining relationships of inmates to persons of their own sex at the time of adolescence, institutions encouraged the development of homosexual orientations. The mixing of children of different ages also made inevitable the exploitation and victimisation of younger children by older inmates.
4. Many of the inmates of training schools undoubtedly perceived their committal as unfair, given the fact that they were committed for behaviour which would not be an offence in case of adults. Surprising numbers were also committed after a first appearance in juvenile court without being afforded the opportunity to demonstrate responsiveness to a probation disposition...
5. the location of the institution at a considerable distance from large urban centres and remote interior villages, inevitably impeded visitation by friends and relatives. This also served to impede the re-integration of many boys into their home communities on discharge.
6. Although judges and other professionals may have regarded confinement in training schools as a relatively benign experience, they tended to overlook the strong stigma attached to institutional confinement by the average citizen. Thus the shame attached to being an inmate of a training school was a further factor impeding the community reintegration of former inmates.
7. While accurate statistics on recidivism were not tabulated covering British Columbia Training Schools, the annual reports of the Superintendent at Brannan Lake School revealed re-admission rates of from 20 to 30 per cent during the decade of the 1960s. In addition, a substantial, although unrecorded, number of former training school inmates were later admitted to adult correctional facilities. In general it appeared that the more modern, treatment oriented institutions were no more successful in rehabilitating their clients than had been the earlier industrial schools.' (2)

(2) *ibid.* at pages 426-427.

The world-wide movement towards non-residential methods of dealing with young offenders was reported, as was the dislike expressed by most writers for the concept of 'treatment,' which suggests manipulation of the child in care rather than the provision of assistance for his/her self-help.

PLANNING FOR, AND PHILOSOPHY OF, JUVENILE RESIDENTIAL CARE

Mr Vernon Dalton

This session began with an exposition of the New South Wales Department of Youth and Community Services' policy on residential services by the officer-in-charge of these services. Residential care is seen in that Department's 'corporate plan' as comprising part of a continuum involving integration, cooperation and coordination with other departmental services non-statutory agencies, the family and the community. In New South Wales the traditional management techniques were described as authoritarian and lacking in firm policy guidelines and as a consequence resulting in ambivalence and confusion among staff and clients. Since the instigation of the new corporate plan, specific policies have been formulated and specific objectives budgeted for. Basically the plan involves a regionalised, community-based scheme allowing the Department to trade off obsolete resources (e.g. by selling antiquated buildings) in return for funding voluntary organisations or purchasing community services to support young people with a network of reasonably integrated services best adapted to suit their needs. Within this network, Mr Dalton suggested that residential care is an expensive, disruptive system which requires special justification regardless of whether it is used for the purposes of short term assessment or for longer term care or control. In this new, corporate plan, specific evaluation of programmes is a requirement to be given high priority. This is particularly welcomed as the present philosophical attitude has fostered the view that 70% of institutionalised children and young people could be cared for more effectively within the community.

Alternate systems such as community youth projects; attendance centres; special services for Aborigines (who constitute approximately 14% of young people in care); methods for converting inappropriately designed facilities in isolated places to more appropriate, non-residential services, were considered by Mr Dalton. Discussion ensuing from his exposition foreshadowed the issues relating to the final day's deliberations on staffing. The need to apprise staff of innovations in philosophy and practice and to provide relevant training for them was suggested to alleviate or eradicate demoralisation of staff during the change from secure institutional control to community treatment.

The fact that most young offenders who are now controlled within a maximum security system may respond in more positive ways to supervision in less secure situations, has only recently been recognised by administrators of child care services, and has not yet been internalised by staff members schooled in more traditional, authoritarian attitudes. It was suggested that recognition and acceptance of the responsibility of determining who

who should be brought into the residential system and who would benefit more by remaining within the community once outside services have been bolstered financially, should be communicated to all levels of departmental personnel.

Professional foster parent schemes were discussed at length and much interest was expressed in South Australia's intended replication of the 'Kent Family Care Project'.

Mr Dalton's session closed with the proposition that residential care, especially secure care, remains a necessary component in the continuum of services which must be made available so that young people are afforded the differing forms of support and control that they may need at different periods of their development.

FILM SESSION

Mr Roger Pryke

Four films about birth were shown to participants to detail as graphically as possible the differences between impersonal, institutional approaches to 'the birth process' and the warmth, simplicity and humanity of home births. The films shown were:-

'Gentle Birth' and 'Birth' which illustrated Le Boyer's method of delivering a baby as quietly and gently, with as little trauma as possible in a dimly lit room;

'Birth at Home' and 'The Chicago Maternity Story' which demonstrated an approach involving the entire, happy family - either nuclear or extended - depending on the parents' wishes.

In each case the modes of birth shown contrasted sharply with the usual clinical, sterile methods by which most members of our culture are introduced to the world outside the womb. The many parallel issues of how juveniles in residential institutions in Australia are maintained - with care and patience or indifferent toleration - were discussed at length by participants within the context of community and personal values. The attitudes, values and interpersonal skills of staff employed in institutional facilities also received considerable attention. 'The Chicago Maternity Story' emphasised the subtlety and apparent innocence involved in the means by which powerful members of our society gain control of 'alternative' groups and how ultimately these groups - or the methods they use - are forced to conform to the powerbrokers' philosophies and practices. The implications of issues such as these for bureaucratic, hierarchical establishments and organisations did not go unnoticed by participants and formed a foundation for following discussions concerning the role of institutions and child welfare departments and the evaluation of programmes and innovations.

THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF INSTITUTIONS IN CHILD CARE

Mr Robert Leahy

During this session the major recommendations of the Royal Commission into the Administration of the Juvenile Courts Act 1971-1974⁽³⁾ and the Community Welfare Advisory Committee For Youth Assessment and Training Centres in South Australia⁽⁴⁾ were detailed. The latter stressed the following matters related to residential services:-

' the immediate appointment of a professional standing committee to develop a master plan and related guiding principles for youth assessment and treatment, to oversee its implementation, and to develop and maintain an on-going monitoring of youth assessment and treatment programmes.

..... that urgent and immediate steps be taken by the Professional Standing Committee (Recommendation No.1) to determine strategies and a time scale to remove residential assessment units from the existing Centres at the earliest possible time.

..... that as a matter of high priority the residential assessment procedure be de-institutionalised, that it be removed from treatment facilities, and that the whole assessment procedure be re-constituted as a specialised professional service, a Youth Assessment Service, within the Department for Community Welfare.

..... that as a matter of high priority the treatment facilities be de-institutionalised with alternative treatment frame works available on a family-style cottage basis (this recommendation excepts the few hard-core cases who need a maximum security situation).

..... that the three Centres, Vaughan House, Brookway Park, and McNally, be closed down as soon as possible.

..... development of a strong support base for residential care staff that would adequately cover number of staff, rostering procedures, study release, staff development, stability within the unit team, open expression and participation in administrative procedures, participation in residential care staff selection, stability in work relationships with other staff outside the unit team, a climate of trust and confidence, a clear understanding of responsibilities and expectations, and provision for a variety of job maintenance factors.

(3) Known as the MOHR Commission

(4) The Nies Report.

..... that pursuit of an external studies qualification by residential care workers be separated as much as possible from full time residential care work, that the time needed to achieve that qualification be shortened to a minimum.

..... that the concept of residential care worker be refined not only in terms of skill and knowledge base requirements but also in terms of distinctiveness vis a vis community welfare workers.

..... that the matter of assault within the residential care setting be given urgent attention in the best interests of the youths and of residential care staff.' (5)

Mr Leahy reported that consistent with these recommendations, current South Australian thinking favours non-judicial intervention for offenders between the ages of 10 and 18 by means of a screening panel directing the offender either to a Juvenile Aid Panel or to the Juvenile Court, with concomitant treatment services led by District Officers organised on a regional basis. Similarly, secure units remain theoretically only for the 'hard core' offender and both the Mohr and the Nies Reports specify the importance of distinguishing between young people requiring care and protection and those needing care and control.

Four major recent developments in South Australia were listed as follows:

- Of the three former secure, closed units, only McNally Centre remains as a Treatment Centre;
- an 'Intensive Neighbourhood Care Scheme' with payment of \$12.00 per day for short term (maximum 28 days) remand care, and \$15.00 per day for longer term care (maximum 6 months);
- development of decentralised Project Centres;
- rationalisation of a network of Family Group Homes consisting of 20 units dealing with young offenders (instead of the dependent young wards previously so accommodated but who will now go to private homes).

The discussion prompted by Mr Leahy's examination of institutional responsibility elicited comments concerning uninformed public and media criticism of young offenders remaining within the community rather than being incarcerated; the dangers inherent in seeing the residual, 'hard-core', residential population as necessarily bad, dangerous, violent, etc. Participants described some of the programmes operating within their own States, these varying from maintenance of the system to trade and social skills training and differing methods of classification and assessment.

(5) Nies, op.cit. pp. 32-34.

The Australian Capital Territory representatives - one of whom was an architect - sought guidance from those from other States concerning the construction of a new training or treatment unit in Canberra. The consensus of opinion was that New South Wales institutional facilities should continue to be used for the small number of Australian Capital Territory offenders who are considered to require incarceration. At the same time, participants strongly urged that a range of alternatives to institutionalisation such as project centres with part-time residence facilities; professional foster care; attendance centres to bolster probation orders; be developed within the Australian Capital Territory.

STAFFING THE INSTITUTIONS

Mr Bruce Anderson

The formal paper delivered at the beginning of this session concentrated on issues central to the recruitment and selection of staff for residential institutional care. Mr Anderson emphasised the following points:

'Recruitment can only start when we have laid down -

- (a) Our philosophy, our objectives, the way in which we intend to exercise our caring roles.
- (b) From a divisional point of view the most crucial element in recruiting line staff is the selection of the person who will eventually head our facilities. Assistant superintendents, supervisors!
- (c) Each unit, if our selection has been appropriate, should be given sufficient autonomy to develop appropriate programmes - suited to its clients, but independent from other facilities. In this way we build in alternatives for placements of kids.
- (d) If minimum standards for recruitments of line staff are to be laid down - there must be a more honest approach than I see currently taken. That is, testing will receive the attention it deserves to make it effective and appropriate. Funds will be needed!
- (e) Appropriate recruitment of line staff depends on appropriate classification of kids and the recruitment of staff to match the needs of kids for therapeutic relationships.'

He also made the point that 'when we have finished with the planning and developed our philosophies - we must work with the people we have, but at the same time recruit the people who will take us that one step on from where we are now.' Other issues relating to staff selection were the use of personality tests by several States; temporary employment to assess suitability; individual and group selection interviews; educational qualifications; minimum standards set by departments, divisions or superintendents of individual institutions. Discussion also covered staff career structure; the relationship between 'custodial' staff and professional staff; the value of an advocacy network or access to an ombudsman or tribunal for young people in departmental care.

Much interest was expressed in the training programme available to staff at the Westbrook Training Centre, Queensland. In a document supplied after the conclusion of the seminar by the Superintendent of the Centre

Mr Alex Lobban, the training programme is explained thus:

' ... The primary aim of the training course was to supply information and concepts relating to the adolescent offender, helping services, personal growth and development and the process of change in the delivery of helping services. Our underlying motive was to encourage staff to be active in the process of change within the institution.

A number of assumptions underlie the structure and delivery of our training course:

- (1) Almost every staff member is capable of providing some support or therapeutic role in the reintegration of young offenders.
- (2) Academic training is not the most important aspect of role change when compared with improving feedback on skills, progress of clients and discussion of institution problems and programmes.
- (3) Staff are more comfortable within their own style using their own words and incorporating new ideas into their own conceptual framework.
- (4) Training should take place in an atmosphere where theory and skill development can be tested in a 'real' situation i.e. within the work environment.

- (5) Growth within the client is related to growth within staff members and to this end staff training can promote and bolster changes in the social climate of the institution.

At present the program is a three-year course involving two to three hours per week for a period of 34 weeks each year. This involves the staff in a minimum total training of 204 hours and a maximum of 306 hours. More than half of this is attended in their own time. Over two-thirds of our staff have either completed or are enrolled in the course.

The style of presentation is low key and involves the usual trappings of staff development courses i.e. films, video, group discussions, printed notes and some lecturing-style delivery. The main thrust however is to encourage as much group discussion and involvement as possible. To this end the course content and structure has been kept very flexible.

The course is presented by the staff psychologist with regular participation by the Superintendent. In the next year we plan to include more of the staff who have completed the course, in its presentation.'

'..... The staff training programme has proved to be a stimulating and profitable exercise for all people involved and our assessment of it is such that we plan to expand it to offer on-going training for those staff who express the need for particular skills or information.

A secondary effect of this course is that it has established the credibility and limitations of professional staff in the minds of residential workers and it has encouraged them to assess their own skills and motives. This in turn has placed senior and professional staff in a situation where they have to perform efficiently and honestly to maintain credibility with baseline staff who see themselves as being within reach of offering a real contribution to the reintegration of young offenders in their care.'

Discussion also focused on the principle of matching staff and residents as propounded by Mr Anderson -

'... If for example we are recruiting people to work with the rule breaking, peer group oriented, adult rejecting, middle maturity order, offender or non-offender - we need people who understand the need to break rules, to gather together in groups, to reject adults. More often than not they will have come from the same background.

If we want people to work with the anxious or immature conformist, who self destructs at the thought of conflict - we will need people who can empathise with the gnawing loneliness, the social alienation, the fear of being ignored or overlooked, and the crippling fear of failure.'

This session concluded with discussion of Mr Anderson's concept of each person's own maturation through a series of 'time spans' and the need to accommodate this individuality of staff through suitable job rotation procedures and hierarchical structures within the system of residential care.

EVALUATION OF RESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS AND PROGRAMMES

Mr Roger Pryke, Ms Shirley Castley and Mr Ben Marris

This session of the seminar, attended by Mr David Biles (Assistant Director (Research) of the Australian Institute of Criminology), concentrated on the following issues concerning evaluation:

- what should be the subject of evaluation;
- why evaluation programmes need to be carried out;
- who should conduct evaluation - either staff members of the institutions concerned, professional research workers or other 'outside' organisations;
- when evaluation should be begun - either built-in from the inception of the programme, or 'tacked-on' once the programme concerned is underway;
- how evaluation should be conducted.

Mr Biles strongly recommended that comparable evaluation tools be used in each of the different political jurisdictions to allow meaningful discussion of results and implications of research on an interstate basis. He also suggested that evaluation be conducted by departmental officers to monitor the effects of particular programmes at specific institutions, but that more experimental research should be left to independent research workers who may produce new insights.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

During the final discussion period participants suggested a wide range of topics for further, detailed consideration at future seminars. Western Australia's representatives - Messrs David Greenhill and Don Andrew - covered the majority of these suggestions in their written submission of suggested topics for future institutional services meetings. These include:

1. The role of institutional services within child welfare departments and as part of a continuum of child care services - i.e. within a total system involving prevention, residential accommodation, behaviour management and community support.
2. The objectives and aims of institutional services - including an examination of the limits of departmental mandates and responsibilities and current philosophies and rationale of institutional facilities for change, rehabilitation and/or punishment.
3. Issues related to institutional programmes compared with child-centred programmes - rehabilitation versus child minding. Related to this topic is the question of what residential care programmes 'do' to children and young people and with what purpose in mind.
4. Interstate exchange of information concerning research, monitoring and evaluation of programmes, performance and measures taken at the various institutions throughout each State.
5. The use and misuse of maximum security facilities, involving an analysis of the different and conflicting requirements of, and constraints upon, the child and his circumstances, the courts, welfare departments and the community at large. Detailed suggestions should be considered concerning the criteria for the imposition of maximum security, the length of time allowable and the determinants for terminating secure care.
6. Methods of staff recruitment, training and assessment, taking into account adequate feed back to the staff involved.
7. The feasibility of providing training courses for senior, administrative staff involved in residential care, and of determining specific plans and content for such courses.
8. The feasibility of standardising terms and definitions nation-wide and of establishing a common body of knowledge by use of comparable evaluation methods.

9. Elucidation of the problems involved in the physical management of children and young people including the legal, industrial and Departmental ramifications of alleged assaults and physical punishments inflicted by staff.

One further suggestion made by participants was that the feasibility of preparing a set of minimum standard guidelines for Australian juvenile residential institutions be investigated without delay. It was hoped that a document such as the guidelines published in January 1979 by the Australian Institute of Criminology relating to Australian prison conditions would eventuate during 1979 - the International Year of the Child.

At the conclusion of the seminar participants expressed enthusiasm for continuing the exchange of information and discussion of common problems. Answers to a questionnaire sent by the Training Division to all seminar participants during the latter half of 1979 indicate that this enthusiasm has not waned. Continuing seminars or workshops for policy-makers, administrators and residential, institutional staff were requested to be conducted at least once each year to maintain a national perspective, reduce isolation and provide an exchange of information and resolution of problems common to all States.

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