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Evaluation

Topic: Alternatives to Prison

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Grant Title and Number: (DA-082-71A and DS-203-71A)

Yokecrest - An Alternative to
Prison - Evaluation Report

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Objectives: To provide multiple services in an attempt
to prevent anti-social behavior and to respond
to individual youth problems.

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Yoke Crest Evaluation

DA-082-71
DS-203-71A

Post Office Box 532
Durham, New Hampshire 03824

October 5, 1972

Mr. John Gordon
President, Board of Directors
Yoke Crest Inc.,
1820 Mulberry Street,
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17104

Dear Mr. Gordon:

I am enclosing our report on Yoke Crest covering the period of our evaluation, July 25-29. We have not included any information based on conversations with the Executive Director and his staff since that time.

I know I speak for my colleagues in thanking you and your fellow-directors, as well as the entire community at Yoke Crest for the opportunity to experience an alternative to prison. We were profoundly moved by our experience - so much so that we have begun to explore the possibility for similar community-based correctional communities for our State.

We sincerely hope that the enclosed evaluation will be of constructive help in making Yoke Crest a true alternative to prison. I wish to emphasize that our central concern throughout has been to examine the goals of Yoke Crest vis-a-vis its functioning as an alternative prison.

We welcome your feedback. Please do not hesitate to let us know if we can be of further assistance.

With very best wishes,

Hubert A. Hardy
Hubert A. Hardy, Ph.D.
For the Evaluation Team

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EVALUATION OF YOKE CREST

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INTRODUCTION

"Don't mess us up. This is the best thing we have ever had."

Thus, on the second morning of our five day stay at Yoke Crest, did one brother view us. That statement raised for us all of the issues that we were faced with in evaluating Yoke Crest as an alternative prison. The brother who made this confrontation to a member of our team had spent a good deal of his life in conflict with the law, serving time in juvenile and adult institutions (the last incarceration was 44 months), his life a shambles as he viewed it. He is determined to succeed at Yoke Crest because, as he neatly summarized it, "I see this as my last chance."

By comparison to his previous life style and the context of his public and personal ghetto, Yoke Crest offers hope. The kind of caring he experiences by both dedicated staff and fellow-brothers is something very new and very precious to him. He was afraid, as we suspect many of the staff and brothers were, that somehow we, as evaluators, would do something that would threaten his new world. We fully appreciate his fear. We see no reason why he should have viewed us otherwise.

We think we have a good idea of where he came from, and a pretty good idea of where he is (the Yoke Crest concept). We are concerned about where he will go.

We were all very impressed with some of the things we experienced at Yoke Crest. Few relationships are as honest as that demonstrated between brothers. There is a sense of family, something many of the men had never before experienced. The recognition by the men that they are responsible for their behavior is very real and was continuously demonstrated to us. The staff is vitally interested in the brothers to the point of overwork and sheer exhaustion. We hated to leave. The "spirit" of Yoke Crest is intoxicating.

We take seriously the brother's plea that this experience be his last in "prison". It is for this reason that our overriding thought in evaluating Yoke Crest is the focus on WHERE HE WILL GO i.e., do we think that the Yoke Crest philosophy and practice, as it is implemented in its program, realistically rehabilitates men for leading fulfilling and law abiding lives outside of Yoke Crest? Do we think the Yoke Crest model will work as an alternative to present day prisons?

Our staff is totally in agreement with the notion that an alternative to present-day prison must be found. We offer the following evaluation with the hope that we are helping to bring the quoted brother's dream to a reality.

I. METHOD AND LIMITATION

A. Method of Evaluation

The evaluation team accomplished the evaluation by the participant-observer method in the following manner:

1. We spent 5 full days at Yoke Crest between July 25-29.
2. All members of the team spoke individually with every resident and staff member, excepting a few residents in re-entry who were at work and/or at the summer camp.
3. For the first few days the team followed Yoke Crest's program, with the time spent largely in observing and talking to the residents. On the third day we devoted time to observing the staff in one of their staff meetings. We discussed with staff some of our observations to date.
4. Two of us observed an interview at the prison for a prospective Yoke Crest resident.
5. Two of us interviewed four former Yoke Crest residents who had returned to prison.
6. Two of us met with several members of the Board of Directors.
7. We spent one afternoon observing and participating in a group meeting with the brothers without the staff present.
8. We observed and participated in a therapy session which was held at our request.
9. Our final meeting was a group meeting with the residents and a few members of the staff.
10. Two of us interviewed a former member of the Board of Directors.

We received excellent cooperation from the staff and residents in terms of scheduling, statistical data, test results and many other questions that came to mind. We feel that all those with whom we spoke were genuinely interested in the evaluation and cooperated with us fully in our task.

B. Limitations of the Evaluation

1. Recidivism data. This was of course unavailable since the program has been in operation for too brief a period of time and there have been no "graduates" yet. This information will be crucial in assessing the program since the data can then be compared with that available in the State Department of Corrections. Whatever the merits of the program, it will largely be judged (validly or not) by the recidivism data.

2. We spent a very brief time at Yoke Crest. We had to decide whether one or two evaluators observing the program in a longer period was better than four in a

5 day period. We felt that a team approach, with each member contributing separate ideas, feelings and analyses was best since it brought to evaluation very different but related skills and experiences. It is a statement to note that our discussions were lively.

II. THE THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM

The success or failure of Yoke Crest, as an alternative to prison, depends ultimately on the effectiveness of its therapeutic program in bringing about changes in a resident's life which will result in his leading a productive, fulfilling and law-abiding life once he returns to the community.

We have focused a great deal on the "workings" of the program and our recommendations are interlaced with our analysis of its present functioning. In no way do we consider these comments final - the process of growth ("renewal") is a never-ending one. We have centered our comments on those aspects of the program that appear to us crucial in meeting the objectives as set forth in the Yoke Crest statement of objectives and in the staff's specific request for our judgment on what they are attempting to do.

The Yoke Crest Model

The Yoke Crest therapeutic model is very similar to that at Gaudenzia which in turn relies heavily on the "parent" model developed at Synanon. Its essential goals are:

1. That each individual accept responsibility for his own behavior.
2. That each individual learn to handle stress without resort to impulsive behavior that is often damaging to self and others.
3. That the community is an interdependent one which requires a commitment by each member to all other members.
4. That each member earns what he gets.
5. That the focus be on the here-and-now behavior as opposed to "blaming" the past, parents, authority figures, etc.

II. THE THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM

A. Communication

Much of the analysis that follows hinges on the kinds of communication that we observed at Yoke Crest. The philosophy of Yoke Crest, as it is spelled out in the monograph provided us, must at some point be implemented in a program that consistently follows from the philosophy. If that communication is unclear, if the messages are mixed then it will follow that the residents will be leary of the stated philosophy. If on the other hand the communications are spelled out clearly the residents can at least see the connection between what the ideal (philosophy) is and what they must do (control) to live up to it.

Our observation is that a good deal of what is done by the therapeutic program is contradictory. The kinds of communication do not specifically deal with the actual behavioral expectations to be achieved at Yoke Crest.

It is important that residents understand what is expected. We are well aware that communication that is clear is not an easy task. We will attempt in this section to help clarify the issues regarding communication.

All kinds of communications occur at Yoke Crest. Some are structured e.g., the encountering techniques which residents learn. Some are unstructured e.g., informal rap sessions. For purposes of clarification we delineate the various kinds of communication as follows:

1. Typical Encountering-(Structured Therapeutic Communication)
2. Group Process Communication (Therapy Groups)
3. Unstructured Communication

1. Typical Encountering- Structured Therapeutic Communication

We are concerned here with the most frequent specified technique of communication. These are the most frequent types of encounters, viz., the pullups, haircuts, and learning experiences. We include learning experiences here not in terms of its frequency- they are much less frequent than the pullups or haircuts, but in terms of the duration of that encounter, some lasting weeks (e.g., shaving a man's head--its effects last until the hair grows to average length and the person no longer stands out). Everyone at Yoke Crest learns the techniques and employs them continuously. It is through these encounters that the goals of Yoke Crest are clearly brought to the attention of the residents i.e., the resident is reminded through encounters that he must be responsible for his behavior, his work assignments, be considerate of others. He also learns to handle stress without impulsively "acting off his feelings".

In the five days we spent at Yoke Crest we observed only negative typical encounters. We did not observe a single positive pullup, a single positive haircut, a single positive learning experience. The communication then is that in the typical encountering situation the resident learns to be considerate, responsible and caring and tolerating of stress solely through a negative context.

We do not question that negative encountering produces learning. Indeed the men do become sensitive to others and their own responsibilities. We suspect, however, that they learn also to ritualize these encounters and the learning becomes minimal as time goes by e.g., yelling at one another becomes routine. Positive encounters would not only break the monotony (ritual) but more importantly they would help men differentiate between behaviors that produce positive feelings and those that produce negative reactions. Both are present in life. Once they leave Yoke Crest they must make the differentiation.

We view many of these men as people who are very much used to negative encounters. They have poor self-concepts. Negative encounters serve only to reinforce these poor feelings of self. It would appear to us that they need to learn to handle the stress of receiving positive encounters far more than the negative ones which is habit to them.

We also observed that in many typical encounters the brothers get more than they deserve. If the philosophy is that one earns everything one gets then the encounters should be behavior-specific. Pullups are generally behavior-specific. That is, a man is confronted for his failure to perform a specific task properly. That is not the case with haircuts and learning experiences. When a man is booked for a haircut for specific infractions the brothers who impose the haircut stray far beyond the infraction. The man is "dumped on" for many other infractions. In many cases he has already been admonished for past deeds, therefore the only learning he obtains from such an experience is that he will forever be haunted by misdeeds because they will be thrown up to him again and again at negative haircut time. We recommend, therefore, that the encounter focus on the deed that earns the encounter---positive and negative---not on everything that is "bad" about him.

In terms of learning experiences the exaggerated behavior to be carried out could be made more effective in the following way: Rather than the symbolic gesture of attaching some symbol for a length of time to the offender, it would be better to attack the offense behaviorally and immediately. For example, if a brother is undergoing a learning experience for destruction of some property, he should be made to reverse the behavior immediately by a counter action of replacement repair or the like. This concentrates the effort on a new way of behavior which is far more direct and in terms of a "learning" experience far more appropriate.

Carrying out the learning experience symbolically adds too many dimensions (degrading, humility etc.) i.e., focusing on the symbol rather than behavior or on the action. If the counter-behavior is employed immediately and duly reinforced and the result of the new behavior displayed, internalization is far more likely to occur.

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In sum, then, we acknowledge the potency of the typical encounter as means of implementing the goals of Yoke Crest. We suggest ways in which its use be more clearly related to the goals of Yoke Crest by making the encounters behavior-specific, introducing positive encounters as frequently if not more frequently than negative encounters, dropping the symbolic aspects of learning experiences and replacing them with counter-behavior that more effectively results in "learning". As it now occurs the typical encounter appears to us to focus on the negative which is contrary to Yoke Crest's "humanizing" goals.

2. Group Process Communication (therapy groups)

Group interaction is the primary therapeutic focus at Yoke Crest and we appreciate the staff's willingness to hold groups whenever the need arises in addition to regularly scheduled group time; this takes a great deal of energy and we acknowledge this fully.

Following are some observations and suggestions which could possibly make the group experience more potent:

a. Leadership

The leaders are too directive and controlling in the groups. If a member raises an issue that perhaps seems off-target to the leader, it would possibly be more helpful to allow the group to flounder and discover this fact, which will allow the group to be more involved in its own process. The group tends to look to its leaders for control and direction and often directs issues to them, rather than toward other members. This can often result in avoidance of real or sub rosa issues which the group neatly ignores because they are not evolving their own process.

The leaders also impose a kind of formality in group by compartmentalizing the ventilation of hostility. On the one hand, this must be dealt with, but on the other, ritualizing the expression of hostility prevents its emergence through process i.e., when a member is asked to recite his hostile feelings toward another, the recipient can almost relax, because of his awareness of the formula. Anger, already intellectualized has left the feeling level; when allowed to flow freely, people are not robbed of experiencing their anger. Experiencing anger as it comes is far more threatening and potent and ritualizing expression of anger neatly stops this impact and is really in the long run a protective device, making the entire process dishonest. In other words, let the garbage be thrown without control and let the group deal with cleaning it up. (this ventilating process for hostility is already taken care of in the haircut process, so why not let the group be more free-flowing). The same allowance for more interaction among members will also bring out more positive feelings. Again, the staff needs further training in group skills to learn to be less defensive and comfortable with a greater range of skill and style.

b. Selection

Members who have issues with one another often submit slips stating this and request groups to deal with these feelings. We have heard that in many instances,

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those requests to deal directly with the people involved in particular issues have not been fulfilled, and since it is a stated rule that issues of conflict be dealt with in group, it is a direct and useless infringement upon that rule, not to honor such requests and the result is that further tension and conflicts arise, rather than resolution of these conflicts through group.

A Rationale for Clear Communication

Thoughts in this section spring from the bias we have that feelings toward others are conditional, that what we feel towards people is reactive to their behavior. It is important for people struggling for growth and identity to be sharply aware in a strongly specific way, of how they are seen and perceived by others. People must learn to be aware of what behaviors lead to positive or negative feelings and reactions in others.

We feel that within the house the conditions of behavior leading to either positive feedback or negative encounter must be more specifically and consistently spelled out. If positive rewards are not specifically given and total overall acceptance is substituted, then relationships tend to become forced and dishonest, and, consequently, people are not accountable for their actions. It is important to relate negatively or positively to identifiable behaviors, so the recipient of the feedback has real material to deal with.

In general, there needs to be more positive feedback in the house conditional to desired behaviors. For some brothers this would be stressful, and their reaction to it might be inappropriate, e.g. the reaction might be one of being conned. This would occur as a consequence of having a past history of receiving phony positive feedback or consistently negative feedback. Such a brother would need much experience with real positive feedback.

An example of unreal positive feelings might be when a brother first comes to the house and is told that he is "loved". Brothers reported feeling this as phony, i.e., "who are you kidding, you don't even know me". Yet later these same brothers felt that their "new" honest behaviors or their gains were not appreciated enough.

At present, all of the specific confrontation procedures are negative, though they do rightfully occur as a consequence of specific actions, but they must be appropriate to the behavior, rather than always having the same intensity of harshness.

Any of the specific negative confrontation procedures could be adapted to the positive e.g., positive as well as negative haircuts, pullups, learning experience.

Being controlled always has had negative connotations and thus having control is sometimes difficult for us to acknowledge or accept. Sometimes when we really have control we attempt in various ways to deny that we have this control. We feel that this problem exists to some extent at Yoke Crest. Consistent behavioral control is the underlying key to Yoke Crest's program and any denial of this puts both residents and staff in a less effectual light, i.e., it should not be intimated that behavioral freedom exists in a situation where it does not. Giving a brother the feeling that he has a choice in a situation where in actuality he does not have a choice places him in a double bind and confuses him, i.e., what is expected.

For example, a brother is not always free to express whatever feelings he has (there are specific appropriate times), and this should be fully acknowledged. Sometimes there is confusion on this point, the consequence of which is a feeling on the part of the brother of "damned if you do, and damned if you don't".

The attempt to influence must not be denied. "I am pleased or displeased", "you are not doing what I want or you are doing what I want", tells people where they are with your standards. We are again saying in the above two paragraphs that it should be openly admitted that acceptance is conditional and the expectations should always be clearly stated. It is necessary to be quite definite about desired and non-desired behaviors and to reinforce such accordingly.

If a brother gets into a double-bind pattern despite more clarity, one way of breaking such deadlocks would be to give him very directive specific tasks to accomplish for a given period of time (these tasks and their accomplishment afford a way of relating to the brotherhood). These tasks should be designed to guarantee success and as they are executed the brother should be positively reinforced. This should help the brother to get his head together, and give him something to keep him in contact rather than alienated. It's a cooling off and grounding technique.

New behaviors are at first parroted or parodied like a role in a play, but as the staff and brothers reinforce, consistently that which they are attempting to change, these new behaviors become internalized. This may seem to be a rather mechanistic approach at first view, however, it can also be looked upon as communication. If the "therapist" consistently reinforces the desired behavior, then the recipient has proof of his effectiveness, is not in a vacuum and knows exactly where he is because of a direct and consistent and unambiguous message.

3. Unstructured Communication.

We observed that the level of unstructured rapping which took place at Yoke Crest expressed much perception, depth and concern. The brothers talked most frequently with or about another brother who was experiencing difficulties. We would like to see this free-flow rapping encouraged so that it happens more often and is more inclusive of the entire community i.e., younger brothers, staff and the person who is the focus of concern. This kind of communication, important for all residents and staff, is especially helpful to new residents for whom the community is a very novel situation.

II. THE THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM

B. Development of Responsibility

We feel that changes need to be made in the direction of giving the brothers increased responsibilities--and thus more practice in taking responsibility. Internalization of self control can develop only in the context of having direct experience with making decisions. Dependence is increased when brothers are protected from having to initiate and take actions not dictated by a firm set of rules. Again, the goal must be re-entry and unless brothers are to take independent actions, they will fail when the Yoke Crest structure is absent.

We would like to make a number of specific suggestions as to how the program might change in a direction that would further the development of responsibility.

1. Writing Contracts

One technique would be to require the brother to take responsibility for partial making of a contract upon entering Yoke Crest, and perhaps at several points thereafter. Such contracts should deal with all issues connected with his therapeutic program. This process would encourage the brother to take a more active role in making and keeping commitments.

a. Upon entry into the community, it should be explained to the new brother that within a few days, he, an older brother, and a staff member will draw up a contract stating specifically what is expected from him at Yoke Crest. He may also state his goals (insofar as he can articulate them at this initial point).

b. He is to learn and understand that contract (which clearly should state just where Yoke Crest is in control) over a period of time, so that he cannot fall back on saying he was unaware that thus and such was expected.

c. As the brother or sister develops and feels more articulate about his own goals, he may describe them and write them into his contract by:

1. defining them
2. discussing them with peers for feedback about whether they are realistic
3. negotiate with a peer and staff member to renegotiate his contract re goals

The above suggestions are primarily to assume that he understands what Yoke Crest expects of him and vice-versa.

Self evaluation--When a brother feels a need for extended privileges and responsibility within the context of Yoke Crest's expectations, he could follow this procedure:

a. Write what he is requesting with the parameters of:

1. Why he has the particular need

2. What makes him feel ready

3. How he intends to implement added privilege

4. What his personal learning goals are through extended privilege or responsibility.

Peer Evaluation

After completing the above task, he could then ask that four or five of his peers give him feedback about whether or not they feel his requests are reasonable or not and why---thus giving him more data to renegotiate after his peers have evaluated his requests.

Staff Evaluation

After having spent considerable time and effort on both self and peer evaluation, he is far better prepared to negotiate with staff. He comes prepared with thought-out data and specific plans to renegotiate with, thus giving staff better perspective on how, what and why he is thinking.

Staff can then:

- a. reasonably say yes or no to request
- b. have an opportunity to provide their evaluation
- c. If renegotiation follows-up, they have better leverage for insisting that the brother takes responsibility in very specific areas
- d. terms of the contract are understood by all involved

Another model of evaluation which could prove effective in some instances i.e., an older brother, could be:

- a. the steps described for self-evaluation
- b. then a meeting with a staff member and a peer to renegotiate

Result

If these very specific procedures were to be followed, communication would be clear on all counts. People would know clearly why they are rewarded, or, if the case would be, why not. Responsibility would be shared between the staff and brothers and the issue of why certain privileges, and the process of evaluation would be shared and clear to the individual as well as the community.

2. Brothers' Participation in Designing the Therapeutic Program

The brothers ought to be required to do some tough thinking and hard work cooperatively to suggest ways in which Yoke Crest would be more realistically challenging to their own therapy program. This would require more responsibility on their end. There is clearly a difference between punching holes for a motive of escape, and the carefully thought out process of constructive criticism. We feel

there must be an avenue through which this process can take place. Not only would this process allow for growth of the individual, but it would also benefit the program as a whole.

It is not a question of brothers overriding or taking over but of allowing the process to be open and not doing for but doing with. We view this as not a softening process, but a toughening one.

It was our observation that there is among the staff at Yoke Crest a fear of loss of control over the therapeutic program which leads to controlling in areas where it is not necessary. This tendency appears in defensive behavior on the part of the staff, when brothers attempt to suggest options to the way in which things are handled. This is true even of the older brothers. It is ironic that the very thing that the staff feels is not present, i.e., individual responsibility, is the very thing that the brothers demonstrated to us when given the opportunity.

If the brothers and the staff together work on some of the problematic procedures, the staff will have more control in putting responsibility into the community, and the contract or agreement will be clearer and less ambiguous.

3. The Reduction of Rules Regarding Interpersonal Relationships

With fewer rules regarding the development of interpersonal relationships, brothers would have to take more responsibility for their personal interactions. Two specific examples where such changes could be made are with a) the open house practices and b) the rules regarding rapping with younger brothers and their reality.

We feel that the open house concept could be a valuable learning tool in the development of interpersonal skills. As it is now utilized it does not seem to meet these needs. We would suggest several alternations:

a. Forget the buddy system, and leave it up to the brothers to help one another. It would be of far greater value if, for example, a younger brother finding himself unable to answer a question or deal with a situation, were able to express honestly his difficulty and ask openly for assistance from another brother. Learning follows from having to face one's own inabilities, but not if one is protected by a hovering, older brother. Guests would respect an honest admission of lack of knowledge. We all have awkward moments.

b. Allow a brother to tip out, that is develop relationships with guests of more depth. This is more meaningful than striking up a series of superficial, highly structured conversations. Brothers would have to learn to focus on sustaining their end of conversations and to really listen to others outside of the house. If the conversation is tense, brothers must learn how to handle that. Time restrictions on how long a brother spends with a particular guest should be left up to the brother and the other person he is relating to. If his motives for not spreading his actions are devious and self-protecting, it will be discovered and can later be dealt with appropriately. On the other hand, if he is really learning to relate and losing some of his anxieties in doing so, this effort should be rewarded.

c. Require that brothers not band together if possible, with the exception of asking for help.

d. Use a rotating work squad to deal with hosting necessities. Each week five brothers, for example, could act as hosts, serving, emptying ashtrays, hanging coats, etc.

Upon entry into Yoke Crest the new brother's ability to perceive and absorb what is going on is really limited, and if an older brother is too "revealing" re his issues, the younger brother may very well not be able to constructively deal with it. Here the burden of communication is certainly on the older brother. However, as time progresses, both older and younger brothers need to ascertain in what ways they can give and receive help from each other. This is true in all human relationships. Again, when rules govern this process, the persons involved take less responsibility toward understanding the other's difficulties and sensitivities. The younger brother can learn about the process of dealing with problems, that may be coming later, by being involved with the older brother's struggle.

If the younger brother could be rapped with on a sharing level (without great expectations on him that he can solve an issue), his own growth might be more rapid, and the older brother can by relating more honestly, feel less angry and lonely. The burden of authority can be faced more openly and the resentment about being an authority (and vice-versa) lessened. Relating to and understanding authority is one more of those necessary realities of the outside world. Another plus in terms of not making rules regarding relating, but making it a personal responsibility, can be that if the older brother feels less restrained in sharing some of his feelings on the level they can be handled by the younger brother, less guilt and resentment about peer relating will be felt.

4. Standard of Evaluation

There appears to be a considerable amount of confused and angry feelings about standards of evaluation procedures at Yoke Crest; that there is no consistent method for determining increase of privilege and responsibility, therefore, too much is laid on the particular response of a staff member for extending privileges and evaluation of progress.

We feel that greater clarity is needed with regard to why brothers are where they are vis a vis their function levels. Several brothers felt that they had successfully worked hard for and earned a promotion, where such was not forthcoming. (In one case, the reason given was that there was not a position available.) We feel that immediate advancement as a reward for demonstrating responsibility needs to be taken very seriously. When responsibility is demonstrated it must be noticed and rewarded and the brother must be given new freedom so that he can work toward the next level of internalized responsibility.

II. THE THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM

C. Education

It is given that the largest imprisoned number of adult offenders come from the most impoverished segments of society. For the most part, the residents of Yoke Crest are no exception. A large number have no marketable skills; achievement score data available suggests poor educational background resulting in low levels of educational functioning. Only a few, and those in re-entry, are currently involved in an educational program outside the house. This is one of the most serious deficiencies of the program in terms of assuring long range success.

A brother may learn to accept stress with coolness, respect the rights of others, work cooperatively with them, and generally grow in his acceptance of himself at Yoke Crest, but once he leaves he may well find himself with as few options open to him regarding work and economic opportunities as when he entered Yoke Crest. It appears to us that the focus on "therapy", good as far as it goes, ignores the realities of the competitive society that a man must face when he leaves. Indeed, as it is now structured, the program prepares the brothers best for work as therapists/staff members of similar programs. This is grossly unrealistic.

The residents need as much help in dealing with issues of vocation, education--- in a very broad way on "life planning" issues---as they need help on emotional issues. Increasing the options for each individual should be the most important goal of Yoke Crest; options not only in inter- and intrapersonal skills but in educational and vocational skills.

We are well aware that only a limited amount of education can go on at Yoke Crest itself. But there are a host of resources and opportunities present in the larger community and these should be fully exploited.

We recommend the addition of a full time member to the staff. This staff member should be well acquainted with the community resources and have the skills to help each individual design and implement career/life planning goals. The consultant should be available for planning with a resident at the earliest feasible time after entry into the program. We would envision the resident progressing from planning (testing, availability of programs, how realistic for that resident in terms of his abilities and capabilities) to implementation so that by the time he is in re-entry he has already begun to move in definite directions and is prepared to cope outside of Yoke Crest with realistic and familiar options.

At Yoke Crest itself the seminar program provides an opportunity for the residents themselves, with assistance from the life planning staff member, to educate one another in realistic issues that these men face in society e.g., handling money, dealing with reputable financial institutions, the question of credit and indebtedness, consumer education, health care, family planning, nutrition, sharing of each other's goals and what is being actually done to reach them, co-op plans (credit, food, health, etc.) and the myriad day-to-day issues of living that these men are so desperately ignorant of; In sum, provide the opportunities and learnings to give them power over their own lives.

II. THE THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM

D. Re-Entry

Re-entry is a very important part of the program and something that was on the minds of everyone at Yoke Crest. It is also an area of great confusion since it is at present not clearly specified what a man must do to earn re-entry. It appears that, for the most part, the decision is somewhat arbitrary with time in the program being the clearest variable determining whether a man will be allowed to go into this phase of the program.

The men in re-entry themselves also raised many issues with us, e.g., dependency, the question of vocational and educational goals.

Our feeling is that re-entry is too little and too late. It is too late in the sense that men are somewhat unprepared to make the transition from a closely-knit family unit divorced largely from the realities of adjusting to the "outside" largely because it is too late in starting. We are quite convinced, after listening to the residents individually and as a group, that some could easily have entered into a full re-entry phase very early in their stay--even 1 or 2 months--while others felt they were unprepared to do so until much later.

The family model of Yoke Crest is one of its most redeeming aspects since it provides structure and maintenance for individuals who may never have known such a support system. However, as in any strong family structure, the issue of separation from the family is one which must be addressed by all members of the community.

It was our observation that this issue has not been responsibly faced, although great concern was evidenced by the staff. Indeed, we felt that the intense fostering of dependency, while quite appropriate initially for any new resident, was encouraged to such a point that the opportunity for independence and growth was hampered for older residents. We feel that this in part is due to the current rigidity of programming which operates at Yoke Crest. We have made prior recommendations (see Education; Responsibility) which could be of assistance to the staff in altering this situation.

More specifically we offer the following alternatives and modifications to the current last phase re-entry plan (keeping in mind our central notion that re-entry must begin with entry into the program and should be geared to the specific individual):

1. The Program Director, Life Planning Director, and each resident should design a program which allows for a steady progression of opportunities and responsibilities (See Contracts, Education, and Responsibility). Prior to moving outside the house the resident should have had many opportunities to meet people and family within the community, through speaking engagements, educational and/or vocational programs, volunteer work etc. The opportunity for testing out new behavior, the taking of risks, the experience of failure must begin while the resident has the support of the general Yoke Crest community. Again and again we heard younger residents asking for this experiencing while at the same time hearing older residents in re-entry discussing their inadequacies in adjusting to a world outside of Yoke Crest. As one man put it: "Let me have a chance to try it out a little. If I fall, let me fall now while I'm here."

2. The design for living outside the general community should be made by the staff, the resident and several of his peers (Cf. Contracts).

3. Living outside Yoke Crest: We think the present living arrangement too narrow. We especially feel that once in final re-entry phase the resident should no longer be living at Yoke Crest. We offer the following alternatives:

- a. Half-way house for re-entry. Many residents may not be able to tolerate the stress of an apartment with a few residents and would need the support of a larger community. It should not be the main house since the new responsibilities are different than the old as well as the stresses.

- b. Apartments. Two or three residents may choose to live together and this would be a good opportunity for more independence and responsibility. Several of them could come together with a re-entry staff member, not in-residence at Yoke Crest, who would coordinate all re-entry therapy, provide assistance with educational, work programs etc.

- c. Restrictions should be clearly set about when these residents can participate in the general Yoke Crest community. We agree that these men are good models for Yoke Crest in-house residents and some relationship between the two groups would be helpful to new men. But the primary concern should be their own success in re-entry in the outside community. We note that some men feel guilty about leaving the community, or cannot handle trying to relate to the general community while in re-entry. They are forced at present to be botwixt-and-between.

4. Residents should contribute toward their own support while in re-entry with the goal of completely being self supporting during the final phase of the program.

A full time re-entry staff member should be assigned to work specifically with outside Yoke Crest re-entry residents. His task would be to keep in close contact with all re-entry residents, aiding them in adjusting to the newer problems of dealing with the community. He would be expected to help with vocational problems, lead therapy sessions, coordinate relationship with the Yoke Crest community. He should be paid at the same level as the resident director of Yoke Crest. He should not be involved with in-house programs other than to consult with the in-house staff and coordinate how, and when re-entry members are to deal with the in-house community, as helpers and models for younger residents. It will be the re-entry staff member's responsibility to handle liason with parole/probation agents when this is necessary. He would be responsible for a limited number of re-entry people (in a halfway house, or in smaller apartments). (about 10)

III. STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Possibly one of the most moving aspects of Yoko Crest is the timeless devotion of the staff to the program. However, this is not always most productive in keeping energy high, cool, and just a shade detached. We see the staff having the following needs:

- a. Additional staff member for house (cf. Education)
- b. Additional staff member to handle re-entry (cf. Re-Entry)
- c. More clearly delineated tasks (to have a program like Yoko Crest's work, all staff must be in touch with all aspects, but too much overlapping is an energy drain, keeping people from really developing strengths in their own areas) so each staff member can concentrate more upon their competency.
- d. Keeping staff energy together---staff must have a source of refueling and keeping in touch with their own needs, both individually and collectively. They need to examine themselves and their goals and how effectively they are reaching them. We feel that periodically they should have groups for themselves to look at their own progress as a staff, led by someone not involved in Yoko Crest's program but who would serve as impartial helper in getting staff to isolate issues on how they relate to one another and the process they are involved with.
- e. Funding for staff enrichment---staff should be provided with time and money to get further training in skills etc. for personal and professional growth. They should be able to spend time in encounter groups, Gestalt labs, etc. or whatever they determine to be fulfilling re their growth needs.

Basically, the staff needs more time for themselves, the fatigue level is not good and as a result, staff begins to see themselves as ineffectual and bogged down.

IV. STAFF RECRUITMENT

A. Staff Interns: The practice of appointing a resident to a staff position provides an excellent incentive for those persons who have shown considerable skill and potential in facilitation of growth in others. The danger, however, is that such a man must not be allowed to stay longer than a prescribed period of time (e.g., six months) lest he become dependent on the community and avoid experiencing other social systems and alternative life styles. (This can be clarified by stating that this is an internship, for x amount of time only.)

B. Former Inmates: We are in total agreement with the practice of hiring former inmates who are qualified by training, and more important, by experience, to be full members of the staff. They provide perspective that no "outsider" can and thus bring enrichment to the program. Again, however, we recommend that former inmates recruited for the staff not come from Yoko Crest or from the same kind of concept.

C. Professional Staff: The specialty of the degree should not be the primary consideration for hiring professional staff. Rather experience, training and a high level of interest in community-based corrections should be weighed equally in determining choice.

The range of skills and areas in which a considered staff member possesses and intends to acquire further training in should be an important factor in selection. The skill range and style of the present staff members are too similar, limiting really getting into different therapeutic approaches, which could accelerate progress in many instances. Since most of the therapy is behaviorally oriented, it would be most appropriate to have a really good behavioral therapist (familiar with all techniques) as a staff member in future planning.

V. PROGRAM EVALUATION

In any experimental therapeutic program ways and means for evaluating the overall outcome or success of the program must be developed. The criteria used should be varied and must obviously be related meaningfully to the stated goals of the program.

Beyond the usual measures of recidivism which give a broad indication of outcome or success, there may be other measures which would give a more detailed description of change.

At present, all members take the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule shortly after entering the program, and there have been several repeat testing on the MMPI after residents have been at Yoke Crest for several months. The Beta IQ test (a paper-and-pencil measure of intellectual functioning--non-verbal) is also given. Some residents have also taken the Sentence Completion Test and the Rorschach Projective Test. Residents are encouraged to take the General Educational Development Test, a high school equivalency test.

While psychological measures currently being used such as the MMPI and EPPS are easily adaptable and usable as pre and post treatment measures, the measures obtained from them are fairly abstracted from the stated goals of the program and thus give less useful information to those who will ultimately evaluate the effectiveness of Yoke Crest.

The MMPI is a complex test that requires considerable skill in interpreting. It is of very minimal benefit in assessing an individual's personality and even more limited in predictive capability. The resident who takes the test learns little about himself while taking it that is very useful and the feedback he may get on his performance is very broad and couched in negative, pathological terms. This may have negative effects on the examinee and leave him very much in the dark. We noted that a large number of the residents taking this inventory presented bizarre picture of themselves that the results might be considered invalid (high F score on the validity scales). In summary, it is relatively useless to residents and staff, though it may have some usefulness as a more esoteric research instrument.

The Sentence Completion Test, used with some of the residents, does seem to provide useful data to both staff and residents on ways in which an individual perceives himself and others. We would also recommend the use of "behavioral rating scales" as measures. Carefully designed self description forms might also be useful. Behavioral samples could be used in the decision process re admittance into the program e.g., observation of a two week period at Yoke Crest before formal acceptance. Such measures are less abstract than inventories such as the MMPI, and can be more easily related to the stated goals of the program. Also, the information can be more meaningfully used by the residents.

The Beta IQ, a non-verbal measure of intellectual functioning is a useful tool. It is not the only measure of intelligence but certainly provides a good indication of the level of the individual's functioning. We recommend its continuance but suggest that when any score falls below 90-95 that an individual test be administered; for example, the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale with special attention paid non-verbal subtest scores.

VI. WHO IS YOKE CREST FOR?

As it is now seen, Yoke Crest is designed for only a small minority of offenders. While the work done with this group is commendable, we feel that if Yoke Crest is to in any way serve as an alternative to prison in the broader sense, then it must be able to work with a wider variety of offenders.

An important question which must be faced at this point is whether Yoke Crest will take responsibility of teaching residents at all levels of competence how to take stress, and also the responsibility of instilling motivation for success or will Yoke Crest simply assume these attributes as requirements for success in the program i.e., can a wide variety of offenders be helped or is success mostly determined and assured by a very narrow selection process.

At the present time Yoke Crest is facing a crisis with regard to residents leaving (40% at the time of evaluation). This problem could be dealt with by:

1. Devising a more fool-proof selection process (e.g., subject prospective residents to a month of the program before acceptance to see if the "fit" or equivalency test.
2. By moving toward individualization of the program and thereby meeting a greater number of residents at their own level.

We feel that it would be valuable to work toward making Yoke Crest a true alternative to prison, and this will mean the modification and individualization of the program. As in any therapy process there must be a sense of how rapidly a person can go. Some at Yoke Crest could go faster (and are frustrated by not being given more responsibility); others, however, drop out because they can not take it. We observed considerable differences in the residents. Some could have been out in re-entry in a month, others only after several months, and the residents themselves are remarkably aware of this.

Our bias and the recommendations contained throughout relate to the modifications we propose to enhance the individualization of the program i.e., involving the residents in their own process of growth determined by specific contractual relationship between resident and staff. (Cf. particularly sections on Responsibility, Education, Re-Entry.)

Finally, our impression of the present Yoke Crest model is that it is geared largely toward (and incidentally grew out of experience with) the addictive person. It is a "make it or break" model which has proven successful with this group i.e., the group that was able to "take it." It is too narrow a program for broader classes of offenders. We also feel that the dependency it fosters, while very helpful for some, needs to be continued outside the house and even with the present program no provision is made for those who will probably always need a community like Yoke Crest to relate to. (Note, e.g., the success of Synanon with those who stay.) It is, however, largely self supporting and not an attempt to address itself to a wider range of persons.

VII. ADMINISTRATION

A. Board of Directors

The Board, consisting of some 30 members, appears to us to be rather unwieldy. However, at our meeting with several members of the Board it became apparent that each member has his or her particular contribution to make at Yoke Crest and is important to its functioning. The committee structure provides an opportunity for maximum utilization of members and their individual interests and time available for meetings. It should be fully exploited.

It is very important that Board members realize the limitations of knowing "what goes on" at Yoke Crest if they have not experienced it firsthand. There needs to be some closeness between the Board and the program and we would recommend that Board members avail themselves of opportunities to observe the program and preferably different aspects of the program over a period of time. One can easily get a negative impression observing a single example of the program, e.g., a negative haircut, if that is the only experience one has of the program. The staff welcomes this interaction and this speaks highly of them.

There should be close and candid interaction between the Board and the Executive Director on all problems, plans, staff recruitment plans, and fiscal operations of Yoke Crest. A strong executive committee should be empowered to make decisions on minor budgetary matters without waiting for consultation with the full Board.

There is inadequate representation of women and minorities (e.g., the poor and blacks) on the Board of Directors. Their potential contribution is in our judgement indispensable.

B. Finances

An analysis of the cost of the program is outside our area of expertise and we did not devote much time to this. However, we asked about the overall cost and were advised that the cost was essentially the same as that for other penal institutions. While it is important that this cost not be very much higher since it obviously is impractical in terms of acceptance by society, we do feel that a therapeutic approach to rehabilitation of offenders will cost somewhat more than average costs.

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

The following are random thoughts that might help make Yoke Crest a little easier to live with.

1. A quiet place in the house is badly needed. A place where residents could read in peace and also serve as a sanctuary from the continuous goings-on of the community. Perhaps the basement of the present residence could be converted for this purpose.
2. We doubt if Yoke Crest could provide the maximum in therapeutic effectiveness with a population of in-house residents larger than 25. We feel that a larger group - regardless of staff or residence size - would be counterproductive to the kind of community that Yoke Crest tries to build.
3. Staff meetings should occasionally be held away from the main house. It appears that it is almost impossible for the staff to meet for any extended period without constant interruption. This is most disturbing to its own process.
4. We were advised that some thought was being given to lowering the age to 16 for prospective residents. This would raise a host of developmental issues that are not congruent with the therapeutic program and the ages of the present residents. We recommend against a change in age requirements for admission.

SUMMARY

We have attempted to evaluate the Yoke Crest program in terms of its philosophy and practice with the overriding issue of its being a viable alternative to prison.

We were tremendously impressed and moved by the honest, direct and caring relationships among staff and residents. We feel, however, that the Yoke Crest model is far too homogeneous to serve as an alternative to prison since it addresses itself largely to a narrow group who "fit" in and this may very well be the main reason for the large drop-out rate. Equally important is the relatively unrealistic preparation of residents for re-entry and eventual complete separation from the Yoke Crest community.

To meet the needs of a broader group of offenders, preparing them more realistically to adapt to the outside community we recommend:

1. A full time Life Planning Director, payed on the same level as the in-house Program Director;
2. A full time Re-Entry Director, payed on the same level as the Resident Director to handle the final outside Yoke Crest phase of the program;
3. Funds for staff development and training to provide exposure to other models and therapeutic techniques;
4. A part time consultant, trained in group dynamics, to work directly with the staff in their processes but not otherwise involved with the program.

Our recommendations have centered on the individualization of the program with the active participation of both residents and staff. We strongly feel that there is more than adequate responsibility and good will in the entire Yoke Crest community to bring about the successful achievement of the Yoke Crest goals.

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