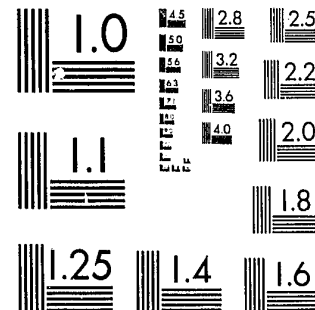


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DIVISION OF PROGRAM PLANNING, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH
FRANK TRACY DIRECTOR

A SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EVALUATIONAL STUDY
OF THE DEPARTMENT'S YOUTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

In view of the continuing controversy surrounding the exposure of predelinquent and delinquent youth to inmate programs aimed at preventing and deterring youth from further involvement in delinquent activities, the purpose of this report was to examine current issues surrounding the operations of youth assistance programs within the Department.

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A SYNOPSIS OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EVALUATIONAL STUDY
OF THE DEPARTMENT'S YOUTH ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

This report provides a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the evaluational study undertaken by this Unit on the Juvenile Awareness Programs offered at the Fishkill, Ossining and Queensboro Correctional Facilities of this Department. These programs operate under Administrative Directive #4770, entitled "Youth Assistance Programs" (1/11/79). During this study period, the Queensboro program was inoperative and a new program developed into its initial planning stage at Attica.

Inmate programs developed during the 1970's, as adjuncts to community-based delinquency prevention/deterrence programs, were intended to convey the "message" to juveniles in trouble with the juvenile justice system (law) within their own communities about the realities which imprisonment holds for those incarcerated in our society. The objectives of all such programs include motivating juveniles to practice more a) conventional life styles, b) rational problem-solving stances toward their current situations, c) insightful attitudes toward self and others and d) law-abiding behavior. The assumption behind such interventions seems to be that a "jarring" stimulus is required to activate those self-reflective processes "necessitated" to alter the juvenile's current attitudinal/behavioral stances. In the public's eye, the prototype of such programs is the Rahway Lifer's Project - "Scared Straight."

The "Scared Straight" program uses excessive intimidation tactics to produce a fear-invoking experience as the "jarring" stimulus for activating the reflective process. Despite claims that the Rahway Program graduates "get the message" and stay out of trouble at the 80 to 90 percent level, a recent quasi-experimental study of Rahway participants revealed that those exposed to the program stayed straight at the success rate of 58 percent; whereas, the controls stayed out of trouble at the 89 percent rate. Controlling the differences between

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the experimentals and their controls for individual differences on prior delinquency record did not alter the findings. The results of this study pose serious reservations for all juvenile awareness programs within which intimidation operates as the "jarring" stimulus for effective activation of the reflective process.

Utilizing social and behavioral science findings, four possible explanations for the Rahway Study's findings were explored in an effort to delineate possible program policy issues. The first possible explanation involves the application of communications theory. A major contingency effecting a message's plausibility is the client's belief that the reward for his compliance behavior depends either a) upon his own behavior or attributes or b) upon forces operating independently of his own actions. When a client believes the former, he is said to exhibit internal control; whereas belief in the latter implies external control. Whenever a client believes in external control, message-blockage tends to occur because the "message" is perceived as implausible or unbelievable. As such, the reflective processes would not be activated. In the Rahway Study, more experimentals than controls may have been high on external control. Delinquents, in general, have greater proportions of "external controls" than does the general youth population.

The second possible explanation stems from a special condition of learning theory and again involves the message's believability. Whenever fear is used as the reward (punishment) under conditions of negative reinforcement for the purpose of creating response extinction, avoidance learning takes place in a special way. Less avoidance learning takes place under low than moderate levels of fear, but the least amount takes place under conditions of high levels of fear. Thus, levels of unwanted behavior are highest under intense levels of fear. This is known as the "boomerang effect". Since the Rahway Program used excessive levels of intimidation, the nearly 30 percentage point difference in the opposite direction from that expected could be the "boomerang effect" in operation. The theoretical interpretation would be that the program's message was blocked as unbelievable and the excessive fear produced an excess of the unwanted behavior among the experimentals. The precise amount of the excess remains in question; however, because negative reinforcement in learning theory would also lead to such a general prediction for the experimentals under conditions of a "single-shot" exposure. Whenever the negative reinforcement is removed, the response rate of the unwanted response returns to expected pre-negative reinforcement levels. Observers of this phenomenon contend it is as if there were a stored reservoir of unwanted responses which had been held in abeyance. Once the avoidance learning is no longer appropriate because the punishment is no longer presented, the unwanted behavior returns at a very rapid rate. In the collective case, this could account for the Rahway study's findings.

The third possible explanation stems from social psychological theories of personality identity-formation. Exposure to juvenile awareness programs, especially under conditions where participation was based upon forced-choice, could be a delinquency status-confirming experience which served to label participants as delinquent, both in their own and other's eyes. Such an event would initiate a self-fulfilling prophecy wherein those exposed to the program would act to fulfill their own and others expectations as being delinquent.

The fourth, and last possible explanation considered rests upon the principle that single events, even when traumatic, seldomly produce lasting personality or behavioral changes. Thus, without systematically applied follow-up work, the exposure to the Rahway Program was ineffective to begin with, i.e. regarding prospects for long-term personality and behavioral change. When combined with the other three possible explanations, it adds to their plausibility as explanations.

These four possible explanations focus policy-relevant considerations on four, or possibly five, critical program issues.

- a) What must be done to select, screen and place youth appropriately within the program?
- b) What must be done to design, effect and control juvenile awareness program presentations which are clearly differentiated by the levels of hard/soft-sell messages?
- c) What must be done to ensure 1) effective levels and schedules of negative reinforcement, 2) interpretive integration of the program experience into the youth's belief structure, and 3) the availability and application of positive secondary reinforcement regarding compliance with expectations for non-delinquent behavior?
- d) What must be done to adequately test for the occurrence of possible program outcomes to ensure the Department's public accountability?

(Note: Number c, 3 above could be considered as a separate program issue.)

The issue of public accountability looms large on the horizon for the Department, especially given the present availability of negative findings from the Rahway Study. Present program advantages of a) satisfied community referral agents, b) inmate program participation-derived satisfactions, and c) improved disciplinary behavior could be lost in the criticism of the Department's association with a program which possibly violated juvenile rights, used psychological abuse and incited or produced additional delinquency among those exposed to it. To date, over 6,000 youth have been exposed to those programs under the Department of Correctional Services' auspices.

Certain limitations of this study must be admitted. Because of resource and time limitations, only a descriptive study could be undertaken by this Unit. Only data based upon testimony and field observation could be gathered and compared with a review of relevant literature. The systematic gathering of quantitative data in an adequate research design permitting testing of propositions about program operations and outcomes was not possible. Whereas these conditions limit the quality of conclusions possible, nevertheless, the descriptive data gathered does permit identifying possible issues of administrative and managerial concern.

FINDINGS

Field observations of the Fishkill and Ossining Programs were taken by Unit Staff. Since the Queensboro Program was inoperative during the study period because its severe intimidation practices were undergoing review and alteration, it could not be observed. Each of these programs were scrutinized regarding their organization, sponsorship, administrative and inmate involvement, objectives and managerial procedures. Except for the use of severe intimidation in the Queensboro Program and the Ossining Program's use of extended efforts to gather client program-relevant information prior to exposure, the programs were evaluated as essentially equivalent. Therefore, in presenting the findings, the information gathered on the Fishkill Program was more fully utilized. It has a longer history of operations; and therefore, greater and richer information about its operations was available. When we are aware of significant differences, mention will be made of them. This approach has been utilized for the sake of simplicity and clarity. Thus, much of what is reported will apply most precisely to Fishkill, but remains indicative of the other programs.

In January, 1977, a group of inmates became concerned over the "juvenile delinquency" problem. Under the auspices of a sponsoring organization (The L.D. Barkley Memorial Jaycees), they examined the problem from the standpoint of what inmates could do to aid community-based juvenile delinquency deterrence/prevention programs. Their interests centered upon aiding in a) the deterrence of further delinquency among youth already identified as delinquent, b) the prevention of delinquency among those youth identified as pre-delinquent, and c) the re-inforcement of non-delinquent behavior among non-delinquent youth (awareness seminars). Later, awareness sessions for community groups and parents would become an additional programming target area of interest. The service role which they recognized was one in which they could aid community referral agents by using their present status and conditions as inmate felons to convey to youth the meaning and consequences of imprisonment in our society. They believed themselves uniquely qualified to convey this message, based upon their personal knowledge and experience about the origins of criminal behavior. Initially, they identified several "techniques" by which the message

could be conveyed, i.e. a) inmate "testimonials", b) guest lectures, c) skit-plays dramatizing the causes and consequences of such behavior, d) films and, e) intense "rap-sessions". Presentations were prepared and piloted on two groups, viz. a) a group of urban delinquents and b) a group of rural delinquents. The intensity of the "jolting" message was varied by altering the amount of verbal intimidation. Evaluative feedback information from these two exposed groups proved positive. The Department approved the program's operations, consequently. By January, 1978, five hundred youths had been exposed to it. By November, 1979, two thousand youths had been exposed.

Project Objectives: The goals of Project YAP have remained relatively constant since its inception. There are eight of them. Each of these attempts to communicate a "message" by giving to the youths a) the opportunity to meet inmates in a prison setting, b) the prisoners' outlook on prison life, c) "real life" stories of crime and how incarceration solidifies deviant life styles into criminal patterns, d) an explanation of how life styles involving pimping, hustling and dealing are unheroic images used to compensate for failure, e) assurances that someone cares for them concerning feelings of usefulness, belongingness and competence in themselves, f) an historical perspective on drug abuse in their current setting by relating inmate experiences with withdrawal, overdose, impotence, etc., g) a perspective on youth gang participation as actions stemming from personal insecurity and the inability to think for themselves, resulting in having to deal in the imprisonment alone and in desperation, and h) an "expression" of the feelings of incarceration regarding its effect on oneself, family, and friends through intensive "rap sessions".

The means of communicating these "messages" are purposefully varied and have altered over time in response to contingencies. Originally, the prevention/deterrence seminars were varied on the degree of intimidation utilized, whereas, the awareness seminars were strictly "educational". When the negative publicity and findings from the Rahway Study surfaced, the program attempted to shift its overall emphasis from utilizing intimidation to restricting its activities to education. The Program's new slogan became "We educate, not intimidate". Nevertheless, some degree of intimidation is still present by the prison setting within which the sessions take place and the purposefulness of "off-color" language which now differentiates the kinds of programs presented. An additional audience has been added to the overall Program's operations. Adult awareness seminars have been developed to educate parents about crime and prisons, in an attempt to elicit more positive responses from the parents and adult communities to youth's anti-social behavior.

Selection, Training and Monitoring of Inmate Participants: Inmate YAP applicants must a) have more than six months to serve on their current sentence(s) before they meet their next parole - release board hearing, b) be a fully paid member of the facility's Jaycee Chapter, c) undergo screening as to motivation, potential, sex crimes and hostile behavior history and institutional adjustment and, d) agree to take mandatory training courses in the Juvenile Justice System/Law, "Speak Up" (method of presenting one's self) and Personal Dynamics (sensitivity training). Those courses are offered by the Jaycees. Occasionally, inmates with

a sex crime history are admitted when their potential contribution would seem to warrant it. Associate program members are those who have met all the qualifications except for the training component. They are permitted to observe, but not participate in, the team presentations to juvenile groups.

A screening committee of three members reviews written applications submitted on pre-designed forms and following interviews with the applicant makes recommendations to the Project's Chairman. If the Chairman concurs in the recommendation, the applicant is either accepted or rejected. Differences of opinion are resolved by discussion and unanimous decision. This procedure varies slightly from the one described in the Project's original application for Departmental inmate program approval. The selection process is consciously manipulated to achieve a "balance" in project membership in order to provide inmates with contrasting backgrounds, crimes of conviction, ages, and ethnic origins to "match" with the youth/adults attending the seminars. The training courses require approximately 1 1/2 months to complete. Only upon completion of the training courses are inmates permitted to become active in the process. The training courses are presented by a civilian volunteer. YAP's full complement of members is usually maintained at about twenty-four, with attempts to recruit teenagers being emphasized mostly to provide less of an age-gap between clients and presenters.

All members are monitored by an eleven member YAP Executive Board consisting of inmates. Their general behavior within the facility and their effectiveness in their YAP roles are observed. Deficiencies result in a board member's advising a project member to refresh his training or to take appropriate corrective action.

Dismissal from YAP can occur when any inmate's behavior is deemed detrimental or inappropriate, as judged by the eleven member Executive Committee. When such a decision is reached, the screening committee delivers the message to the member and effects the dismissal. Only three dismissals have occurred in the three years of the Project's activities. Causes for dismissal include a) any attempt to establish personal contact with a program visitor, b) serious or frequent disciplinary infractions within the facility and c) ineffectiveness or insincerity in program presentation.

Selection and Screening of Youthful Clients: The actual selection and screening processes by which youthful clients are recruited and accepted into the program remain in the control of the referral agencies. Police departments, youth agencies, courts, schools, probation departments and the State's Division for Youth (DFY) constitute the most frequent users of the YAP Project. The homogeneity of seminar groups is supposedly maintained by the referral source's designation of the type of youth they are sending. To be accepted into the actual sessions, all youth participants must have either parental consent or authorization from the referral agency and be accompanied by their teachers, counselors or other referral agency personnel. The type of program presented then

depends upon the type of youth indicated as contained within the group, upon the observations made on the spot by YAP inmate participants and the interactional mixture of the characteristics of the actual program presenters selected for that seminar's session.

Program Objectives: Currently, YAP presentations at Fishkill and Ossining are not modeled after the Rahway Program. The presentations attempt neither to capitalize upon nor heighten the levels of natural intimidation already present within the Program's setting, viz., a) the prison, itself, b) the client's situation of having to confront serious offenders and c) the presence of crude language and aggressive gestures being used as "vehicles of emphasis". YAP team members strive to keep the level of intimidation present at "natural" levels, foregoing either menace or artificial constraints. In order to heighten message reception, attempts are made to match team member characteristics with those of the clients, e.g., age, ethnicity, up/downstate origins. It is believed this promotes identification.

A Program presentation requires a full day's activities. When the youth arrive for the presentation, inmate team members introduce themselves by name, crime and sentence. They relate their own stories of turning to violence, drugs, greed, eschewing education and skill acquisition and becoming involved with (and used by) pimps, hustlers and dealers. As inmates, they relate what prison life is really like, telling what it means to "die in prison". They stress the necessity and advantages of "thinking for oneself", of "not being influenced by your peers" and what they have done to their family, friends and themselves. In making these presentations, they accept responsibility for their past criminal behavior. Most of all, they take apart "bad attitude".

Following a lunch provided by the YAP team members, the clients and their referral agents break up into smaller discussion groups to hold personalized "rap sessions". The youth disclose their fears, past deeds, lies they have told themselves and other secrets. The YAP Team members rotate among the groups discussing problems, indicating what could be done about them and suggesting that others really care about both the youth and his problems. There follows a "feedback" session in which problems discussed in the separate groups are shared with the entire group and leaflets are distributed on such subjects as drugs and juvenile laws. Then the youth leave and the team members return to the routine of prison life.

These sessions are usually held twice weekly.

Program Effects: There are four areas where effects stemming from the program's operations may be expected. The first such area involves those effects which might be expected among inmates, themselves. Inmates could be expected to benefit from the Jaycee Training Courses required for their participation in the program. The lessons learned in routinizing "the performance" and working cooperatively as a team member to achieve group-oriented goals will be useful upon release as personal

and social skills in group living and working situations. The inmate may be expected to experience enhanced self-esteem, the approbation of his fellow team members and heightened social status among other inmates and facility staff for his participation in the Program.

The second area where effects may be expected is for the facility. Disciplinary problems may be expected to be lower for both the participating team members and within the facility in general, since the program accepts and retains inmates on the basis of "good" disciplinary record. Thus, the program re-inforces good disciplinary behavior for its members and promotes exemplary role model behavior within the facility, i.e. promotes the maintenance of the rules.

The third area of expected benefits is those accruing to the community. The community benefits by obtaining a program resource to which to refer its delinquency-problematic youth. The availability of an immediate first hand experience confirming the realities to be faced for delinquency reinforces the realities of the sanctions available to the community. Additionally, to the extent that the community responds positively, surplus benefits accumulate for the inmates and the facility. Inmates are seen as making positive and meaningful contributions to the community, not just having taken from their communities. The facility is seen as being cooperative and useful toward preventing the many problems they are charged with finally controlling, rather than just being a threat to the local community's safety and a blight on local real estate values.

Finally, the fourth area of potential benefit is to the youth exposed to the program. Youth exposed to the program are expected to benefit from the "reality therapy" afforded to them through program exposure. Avoidance learning is expected to result in lessening the frequency and seriousness of future delinquent behavior among those exposed to the program.

Regarding possible outcomes for youth exposed to YAP, no independent research could be undertaken. However, a preliminary descriptive evaluation of YAP's effects among 24 DFY youths has been reported (DFY in-house document). The following observations and conclusions seem relevant:

1. All DFY's youth reported a sense of being "scared". The extent of being "scared" depended upon background factors such as previous exposure and penetration of the offender into the Juvenile Justice System and general upstate/downstate origins.
2. There was one severe reaction to YAP exposure among the DFY youths, e.g. crying, bed-wetting, nightmares. Some of the less physically strong indicated they might consider suicide, if they were to be incarcerated in a prison, after their exposure to YAP.
3. DFY youths, as well as several Green Haven ex-offenders, who were queried indicated the need for and recommended pre-program

selectiveness in two senses: 1) the program should be tailored for individual needs and 2) "kids with head problems" should not go.

4. There was some indication that identification with inmates could be counter-productive. Some DFY kids identified positively with YAP team members who were strong, tough and their own man. They had no use for those inmates who admitted that they had been used. (insecurity protective needs?)
5. The kids received and retained the message of the realities involved in harsh imprisonment, but some felt it was too harsh and contained too much profanity, perceiving the experience as a "put-down" and demeaning to their "self-respect".

From the consumer's point of view, the evaluational task for YAP is whether the "message" reaches its audience and, if so, in what form. The test becomes whether the "message" is lasting, becoming imprinted for a considerable period of time without doing harm. In answer to this DFY Report's question, the DFY Report concludes, "This message may not answer the question of whether the kids may be prevented from further criminal activity, but is simply a moment of truth (italics added); what prison is all about and how you get there."

Further communication with the DFY Report's author produced two potentially profitable observations. First, the inmate's program presentations can be viewed as role-playing in a dramatization. Second, clients can be viewed as an audience more or less involved in observing that dramatization. Under these conditions, the purposive control and manipulation of the communication is of primary usefulness to the actors communicating the message. Such controlled, rationalized message-sending bears only a probable relationship to the message received by the audience's members. Thus, it matters that the message-sender's actions are wittingly controlled if, and only if, it is presumed that the wittingly sent messages do produce the message sender's intended effect upon the audience's members. Independent of such matters, the effect observed among the audience's members will occur regardless of the message sender's wittingly manipulated intended actions. The effect observed depends upon the message received; and, therefore, any connectedness between audience effect and the message sent is subject to additional conditions. For self-reflecting actors, whether on the stage or in the streets-of-life, the audience's reaction is always problematic. It is never a given confined to the bounds of his intentions. "Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder"..., as does many things.

As a point of illustration relevant to YAP, the DFY report contains an observation regarding one of the carefully dramatized objectives of the program. In attempting to "debunk" the hero image of the hustler, pimp and dealer, one inmate presenter portrays how he was used by them, ultimately receiving his present consequence of imprisonment. The witting objective of this message was to explain that the heroes of street culture are really failures with respect to conventional

society and become "successful" only by hurting those with whom they live and work (as users). The message received was far different. Within the situation of the YAP drama where inmates were presenting their life-histories, this YAP team member's message became, "I was/am dumb; I was used; I am a street-punk who now knows better and am trying to head for a better life". This message the DFY youth couldn't handle. They have no respect for someone who allows himself to be used. Instead, in terms of the characters in the drama, they identified with the toughest, viz., those who resist dissolution of their development toward independence (adulthood). They dismissed the message which the "used" had to communicate. This seemed to have occurred because they could not handle what would happen to them, if they were to be "used" similarly (heightened anxiety and dissolution?). So it seems that avoidance learning did not take place, at least with respect to this objective in this audience.

Program Expansion: There are two basic directions in which the expansion of services can be undertaken. The first involves incrementing the kinds of services offered within the program. The second involves extending the program to additional facilities where it is not offered, presently. These two program possibilities are not mutually exclusive alternatives, since each can be undertaken either independently or in conjunction with the other. Certainly the extent to which the first alternative is pursued impacts the conditions required to pursue the second alternative, whenever the second might be undertaken.

As far as inmate involvement is concerned, the premises underlying the first alternative are that they are a) best qualified to offer new services because of their past association with criminal activities (experience) and b) most suited because of their dedication to getting the job done, due to their conversion experiences. Their claims for involvement in the second alternative rest upon a basis similar in kind. Inmates premise their claims upon having had the qualifying experiences of having selected, trained, and monitored new recruits and of knowing what works. They have demonstrated their dedication through their prior involvement.

Each of these arguments help inmates to lay claim to a license to practice, just as they do for any occupation. And just as they do (in form) for any occupation, they imply a hegemony over proper motivation, training and experience to get the job done properly. Nevertheless, the issue of license must be examined within the structures of reasonable review of just where the claims are justified with respect to such current and proposed activity. The Department is ultimately in control of honoring the license, since it controls the terms of access for effecting a mandate to provide services. The following are some of the incremented services which inmates have suggested as appropriate tasks for them to undertake in expanding the program:

1. Provide one-to-one counseling of youth as an aside to the rap sessions - including community referrals where appropriate.

2. With the aid of a liaison person on the outside, preferably an ex-offender, make contacts for youth to attend the program.
3. Make the facility a training ground for inmates to learn youth counseling as an occupational route for post-prison employment.
4. Offer feedback to parents as a result of seminars, e.g. advice on services, approaches to reaching their children, etc.
5. Offer feedback to probation officers, youth counselors, etc. on insights into particular youths who have attended programs.
6. Learn from and evaluate post-program responses of youth by video-taping past-sessions or review sessions for inmate review and analysis. (Program corrective feedback mechanism.)
7. Act as community crisis center.
8. Work with specific community's gangs and troubled youth through established community organizations (provide future jobs for ex-offender youth counselors.)

Although these inmate suggestions for program expansion are neither exhaustive nor necessarily totally representative, they indicate the directions of which the suggestions are indicative.

- a) Promote program participation through pro-active recruitment efforts.
- b) Provide specific services to clients, referral agents, family.
- c) Establish in-service training to improve skills and keep up on techniques.
- d) Provide for follow-up services to clients.
- e) Establish preventative services.
- f) Contribute community/public services.
- g) Create self-corrective feedback mechanisms to improve service delivery.
- h) Promote employment of those "licensed" throughout the range of natural settings within which the "problem" occurs.

Thus, these inmate suggestions constitute a "program" approaching the establishment of a new para-professional occupation, perhaps to be known as the "delinquency-prevention community aide". Basic to this claim for license and subsequent mandate are the issues of knowledge, training, experience and probable effectiveness.

There is a difference between the qualifications for being a

diagnostician and an interventionist. To intervene effectively presupposes being able to discern the correct condition requiring intervention; however, to perceive the condition does not guarantee the selection of the appropriate intervention. Correct diagnosis is only necessary to effective intervention because each activity requires separate skills and experiences. Inmates, as a matter of experience, may qualify to some degree as diagnosticians, i.e. if only through reflective empathy. They fail to qualify as interventionists. They can only propose a program to qualify themselves to that end; and even then, it must be confined to the boundaries of the traditionally available resources of community social work, clinical psychology, counseling, etc., i.e. qualifications for intervention which they can not be said to reasonably possess. Can the person who knows the tell-tale signs of his problem and who subsequently is confronted with others exhibiting similar signs be permitted to intervene in the course of the other's problem? Prudence would dictate caution in affirming such claims and action-courses.

The dispersion of the program to other DOCS facilities, performing services roughly equivalent to those currently performed in YAP, is the second expansion option. Both the inmates and the Fishkill administration believe that, if this option is exercised, then the YAP team should be involved. The YAP team has acquired useful experience in screening, selecting and training inmates for the YAP Project. If it is acknowledged that such experience is relevant to their being able to appraise the inmates' appropriateness for the program, then it follows that they could make important contributions to establishing new teams elsewhere, in other facilities. Both the inmates and the Fishkill administration seem to believe that the program's effectiveness is largely dependent upon the fact that it is an inmate-run project. It is guided and assisted by administrative authority, not controlled by it. As such, it requires support as well as protection from those program and security staff who feel threatened by it. Therefore, if the program is to be dispersed into other DOCS facilities, administrative support, both by the Department and at the facility-level, will be required in its incipient stages of development to help each site solve funding problems (e.g. postage, staff time, lunches, etc.) and minimize hostilities. Care must be taken to screen out those inmates who would use the program for self-aggrandizement purposes, a tendency both YAP team members and the Fishkill administrative staff agree lessens program effectiveness and interferes with a YAP team member's ability to deal with his own problems.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Program Admission and Screening: Efforts to camouflage the intimidation contained in the "message" conveyed to youth exposed to the program are unconvincing, i.e., to a significant degree it remains a "fear-provoking" message. Therefore, according to the special conditional law of negative reinforcement operative when fear is used as the reward (punishment) to produce response-extinction, message-blockage together with increased unwanted behavior may be expected. When the fear induced is extreme, the occurrence of the unwanted behavior is subject to a "boomerang effect" wherein its occurrence is greatly increased. When the population exposed to such events suffers from emotional problems, trauma may occur. Without adequate screening procedures to filter out those susceptible to trauma, adverse consequences to program exposure may be expected as a certain probability (at least one such case has been observed). Current procedures do not require community referral agents to inform parents/guardians and others from whom permission is requested for program admission about the experimental and possibly harmful effects to youth stemming from the psychological abuse present in the message conveyed.

With respect to securing consent for program admission based upon informed advise, it is recommended that positive steps be taken to require community referral agents to provide such informed advise to parents, guardians and others regarding both the experimental nature and possibly harmful effects attendant to program exposure. Also, advice of counsel is recommended.

With respect to ensuring that those youth with emotional problems be identified and excluded on the grounds of preventing unnecessary trauma, two possible procedures are identified, viz., The Mental Status Examination and the self-administered Psychiatric Symptom List (SCL-90R, Leonard Derogatis, 1976). Further exploration of available procedures would undoubtedly uncover additional ones. It is recommended that referral agents be encouraged to exercise more than their "professional judgement" in doubtful cases. The availability of community mental health centers to act as screening agents is suggested as a resource for referral agents. It is suggested that the Department review its responsibilities in this area, both legal and programmatic.

With respect to preventing additional delinquent behavior which could be produced as a consequence of exposing youth to the program, specific recommendations are made (below) in the sections on program placement and post-exposure reinforcement and alternatives.

Program Placement: Current program procedures which attempt to match aggregate youth characteristics on delinquency background and upstate/downstate residential origins with variations in the "jolting-potential" of the message (i.e., the degree and intensity of intimidation to which youth are exposed) are crude in the precision with which they permit the message communicated to match the individuated problems present within the youth program-audience. These program procedures assume that each group exposed is homogeneous with respect to (a) message receptivity, (b) susceptibility to negative reinforcement, (c) behavioral problems and (d) other important problematic dimensions, e.g., offense, life style, etc.

Appropriate program placement requires that more information relevant to the youth-client become available prior to exposure. The client's status on factors relevant to message-receptivity is information basic to the placement problem. Indicators of message blockage and persuasibility should be gathered. For example, the youth's belief in internal versus external control and susceptibility to fear reaction are important to message blockage. Likewise, self-rating scores on personal adjustment dimensions such as (a) neurotic anxiety (low), (b) obsessional symptoms (low), (c) social inadequacy (high), (d) inhibition of aggression (high), and (e) depressive affect (high) are all positively associated with persuasibility. The direction and degree of self-esteem of youth is another important variable in this equation. Unless the message is both received and subjects are in a condition to be persuaded, the delivery of the message and any consequences are dubious. It is recommended that basic communications theory be utilized to improve the message impact potential and place youth-clients accordingly. Where blockage is likely and persuasibility doubtful, screening procedures for either exclusion or exposure to soft sell, high-density information programs should be considered.

Appropriate program placement presupposes the program itself has been designed in such a way that it is compatible with the salient life cycle and subcultural conditions effective within each youth audience. When this is not the case, messages delivered by team members whose identity and style represent points of negative identification may be missed. Also, the message itself may be counter to the values operative within the audience. Instances of the effect of negative identification and value blockage have been observed among youth exposed to the program. This suggests the advisability of "nesting" those messages considered most important to the individual problems of the audience in the presentation of those dramatis personae with whom the audience is most likely to identify positively and whose value orientations are least likely to produce message interference.

Emphasis on varying the degree and intensity of intimidation as the major method by which types of program presentations are differentiated becomes counter-productive for discounting claims that these programs are little more than "freaks presenting horror-like side-shows". "Jolting-power" should be supplanted by "help-messages" designed to (a) follow the dramatic-plot line of the presentations, (b) provide a basis for follow-up themes in the rap sessions and (c) aid counseling efforts by the referral agents following program exposure. These alternative "help-messages" could be targeted to meet the individuated needs of audience members, if those needs could be identified prior to the youth-client's visit. The cooperation of referral agents should be gained in this respect. It is recommended that this programming possibility be explored with user committees.

Proper program placement as a problem for improving message reception and impact should not exclude the problem of the proper use of team members in that presentation. Likewise, the potential for aiding the inmate in his own habilitation through the presentation's use as a socio/psycho drama exercise should not be overlooked. Resources may be required to implement this potential benefit.

Post-Exposure Reinforcement and Alternatives This is an area about which little seems to be known. Kinds, completeness and the organization of post-exposure program follow-up efforts are at issue. Under the postulate that single events, even when traumatic, are seldom effective in producing long term personality and behavior change, such programs are important in three areas, viz., (a) the type and schedule of negative reinforcement applied, (b) the requirement for interpreting and integrating the meaning of the program exposure into the client's belief structure and (c) the apparent advantage of utilizing positive secondary reinforcement as substitute rewards for successful avoidance behavior.

Additional negative reinforcement should be applied in the post-exposure period, while avoiding great intensity and consistency in its application. Efforts to elicit any awareness of the program's memory images as negative stimuli should be done on a lapsed, variable-scheduled time basis. Care must be taken to avoid activating provoked defense mechanisms by not associating such negative recall-imagery with current instances of delinquent behavior or other problematic behavior. They should be dealt with on their own merits.

Integration of the meaning of the program exposure into the client's belief structure should emphasize its relevance to effective choice points (e.g., situations, associates, etc.) associated with delinquency. Remedial work on the client's beliefs concerning the locus of effective control, self-esteem

and other such conditions may become important. It is the referral agent's responsibility to direct the reflective processes appropriately. Role playing and reality-testing should be emphasized in these efforts. Confrontation counseling seems appropriate.

Positive rewards must be found and delivered as secondary reinforcements, substituting for the negative reinforcements associated with unwanted behavioral responses. They should be supplied as rewards for the desired behavioral responses. These should match the life-cycle, needs and growth potentials of the client.

These broad requirements for post-exposure follow-up efforts should be referred to user committees.

Determining Program Effectiveness

The (a) information required for program selection, screening and placement, the (b) content, delivery, and articulation of the program presentations, and the (c) follow-up work performed by referral agents are all problematic regarding client-outcome. A limited program of evaluational research must be undertaken to identify effective interventions for specific populations and problems. The problem of differentiated program messages tailored to individual client-needs should be addressed, together with post-exposure intervention strategies employed as conditions of continued treatment exposure. This program of evaluational research could take several forms. More user information is required before alternative designs can be developed. Relevant feedback for developing the dramatic presentations and opportunities for rap session interventions should be provided to promote program enrichment and corrective program-control/redesign efforts.

The evaluational research effort on outcome and relevant conditions should be undertaken by a research operation independent of both the Department and the community referral agents. Both of these parties must recognize their responsibility to cooperate and invest in this research effort as a condition of continuing program availability. Without "hard" evidence on outcome and the contingencies affecting it, the credibility of each party's public accountability will suffer.

Ancillary Conditions and Recommendations

- 1) As the youth assistance program within a facility grows in participation and importance, it should be separated from its sponsoring inmate organization and given equal and independent status as an inmate organization. The size, complexity and specificity of this program results in problems developing for both the sponsoring organization and the program, e.g., organizational goal conflict and resource drainage. When undertaking the separation, care

must be exercised to transfer adequate personnel and resources to the youth assistance program without damaging the parent program. The transition should be planned and negotiated with both parties.

- 2) The Department must avoid honoring the para-professional occupational claims of the inmate team members to become juvenile delinquency intervention specialists. Their desire to provide themselves with counselor-training programs and become detached delinquency prevention specialists within community prevention agencies and programs rest upon exaggerated claims to expertise based upon their criminal/delinquency backgrounds in the streets and their sense of assuming a "calling" to the work. Such recognition would produce a goal displacement problem in the program wherein approximate occupational goals would be substituted for the present program's community service goals. This would, in return, result in a diversion of available program means. Eventually, it could result in the subversion of community-based programs, as has occurred in California.

Specifically, the roles of team members should avoid present suggestions for assuming one-to-one counseling, providing clients with referral services to community agencies, contacting parents with feed-back information about their child's problems, acting as a community-crisis resource center and working directly with community organizations on delinquency prevention tasks within the community. Their youth assistance program roles should be confined to effective dramatic presentations, including negative role modeling and "helpful-message" communications, as followed-up in their rap sessions.

- 3) If program expansion is entertained as a viable option, then the incremented program services model represented by the inmates' para-professional claims should not become the basis of that expansion. The expansion should be restricted to developing programs in additional facilities for offering within institutional services to community referral agents, only. The program emphasis used should, in turn, be restricted to those services required to provide a controlled and targeted, one-shot exposure for follow-up through the community agent's further interventions during the post-program exposure period. However, every effort should be made to enrich the screening, placement, message targeting capabilities, post-exposure interventions and further evaluational research endeavors. Such additional facility expansion should be based upon determined consumer demand, in order not to produce so many programs that they become sources of idle-time activities and discouragement for the inmates.

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