

# THE ENCOUNTERER

An Information Service for Group Psychotherapy Professionals

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REPORT: Psychiatric Nursing, Solano County Mental Health Service, Fairfield, California, by Betty Hovde, R.N.

Known by the term Day Treatment Center, the nursing service is involved in what we think is a unique program. The nursing staff, discarding name tags and uniforms, organize and enter into full day programs with patients, from playing checkers to involvement in Psychodrama--Role Playing and Group Therapy: composing songs and titling them, writing poetry, taking a fantasy trip on Paper or a visit to Fairy Tale Land through the medium of "acting," play and pretend.

Picture, if you can: swapping shoes, telling jokes, looking into a mirror and talking about yourself, writing a skit from an ad on a magazine page. Sound ridiculous? Painting "feelings" on canvas; showing anger, frustration and caring. Listening to "Folk, Bach or Soul" music followed by discussions and interpretations.

Revealing a painful dream, bartering for names, songs or fiction titles and having fun with it. Help can come in a sudden circle closing in or out on one's own painful archaic fears. We, the staff, aid our patients to become perceptive listeners; learning to be Parents, Adults, Children and to become better able to give and get okays. Tears and laughter, a picnic in the park on a warm spring day: This is therapy and it is our program. It may become painful and again it can be fun. Patients forget how glum they often choose to make their lives.

Eight hours a day, five days a week, this is my experience in psychiatric day nursing. Here in a mini-world, the patients live and relive life as it happens. The goal is to relieve immediate symptoms of profound emotional stresses in the many ways possible. Life becomes a reality at this multi-discipline Day Treatment Center as they who are participating discover - patient and staff alike.

EFFICIENCY IN GETTING-WELL: STATISTICS: A follow-up was done on 177 inmates treated with group psychotherapy at the California Medical Facility, Department of Corrections, Vacaville, CA; men treated by six different, experienced group therapists during 1959-1961 and subsequently released. (One of the therapists used transactional analysis -- "TA").

Four Criteria were used to measure success:

- 1) No arrests for 12 months after release -- 50.3% overall.
- 2) No arrests for 24 months after release -- 36.7% overall.
- 3) Not returned to prison for 12 months -- 77.4% overall.
- 4) Not returned to prison for 24 months -- 59.3% overall.

TA compared to other five:

- 1) No arrests -12 months, TA 65.4% (others combined: 47.7%).  
TA was 125% to 162% more efficient -- median 125%.
- 2) No arrests - 24 months, TA 57.7% (others combined: 33.2%).  
TA was 154% to 224% more efficient -- median 163%.

3) No prison -- 12 months, TA 76.9% (others combined: 77.5%).

TA was 82% to 113% as efficient -- median 102%.

4) No prison -- 24 months, TA 73.1% (others combined: 56.9%).

TA was 113% to 146% more efficient -- median 134%.

The therapists had among themselves about 40 years of group therapy experience, since completing training. This varied from three to twelve years, median six years; TA therapist -- six years. This data was drawn from the statistics of "The Murphy Sample"; the comparisons and the conclusions are the author's.

ENCOUNTER: A Preacher called the sheriff of his county to tell him that there was a dead donkey beside the road near his church and to ask if the sheriff would see that it was taken care of in the proper manner.

The Sheriff replied that he had always heard that it was a responsibility of the clergy to lay away the dead.

The Preacher responded by saying that while he had no disagreement with this conclusion, it was also the duty of the clergy to notify the next of kin.

MEETING: International Transactional Analysis Association 7th Annual Summer Conf. Aug 22-24, 1969, Mark Thomas Inn, Monterey, CA. Write: ITAA, PO Box 5747, Carmel, CA 93921. Tel 408/642-9213.

FORMULATION: THE GAME "TROUBLED COUPLE": This is the game of which "Courtroom" ("Games People Play," Berne) is one variety. The sequence of moves in this game (see THE E, 5/20/69, GAME MOVES UNRAVELED) follows:

HOOK: One of the couple (HURTER) makes an outrageous remark to and about the spouse (VEXED). This alerts (hooks) the audience into watching how this remark is taken.

MANEUVER: (Maneuvers of games have two or more aspects, i.e. the player is maneuvering, turning other people.)

Part 1a: Outrageous HURTER turns then to the audience as both spouses laugh. The "Troubled Couple" trade punches on each other, seemingly for the laughs, but turning each time to the audience, bringing the audience along. Once the audience is well engaged (hooked) and laughing and turning to them.

Part 1b: One of the partners, VEXED, cries "foul" and turns to the audience with gaze down. 1a - 1b is replayed 'til,

Part 2: In one of the semi-silences, a "peace-making" audience member (ALLY-A) intervenes to talk to one of THE COUPLE, usually the one who "caused" the last "hurt," while HURTER is commenting back to ALLY-A.

GIMMICK: VEXED impatiently interrupts HURTER as HURTER goes silent and turns from ALLY-A back to VEXED. THE COUPLE then repeat MANEUVER-GIMMICK sequence until in another silence between trading punches, VEXED will have recruited his

(her) own conversation initiating ALLY from the audience. Once ALLY-B has talked to VEXED and VEXED is in turn responding to ALLY-B.

(GIMMICK:) HURTER will, in turn, be much vexed and INTERRUPT. VEXED immediately goes silent and turns to focus on HURTER, then eyes down, turns away. This brings (Hurter and) audience along, i.e. again cluing audience into what next to do.

VEXED and HURTER thus establish talking priority of the more vexed of the couple. This is by breaking off talk to ALLY and instead attending to each others' troubled remarks, turning from ALLY as if out of "consideration," perhaps inferring that ALLY's comments were a reason for again being in trouble with spouse. If THEY were hurting each other, they would discontinue the hurting and embarrassing of each other. Instead, by establishing the seeming integrity of breaking off from the ally, going silent when interrupted by the partner and then turning away from ally and from vexed partner, the audience is tricked into going silent and into averting their gaze also.

PAY OFF: VEXED and HURTER gain command of as many silenced "I-don't-want-to-get-involved" people as are in the situation. There are the instances of other couples where one or

both have played ALLY. In the silences these latter couples are building up, for later use, "reasonable-points-to-discuss-later-with spouse."

TO NOTE:

1. Almost all "Troubled Couple" couples go to the same home that same night, not infrequently to cohabitate. The couples with "reasonable-points-to-discuss-later" regularly end-up on the outs with each other, do not cohabitate for at least one night.
2. This game is played in therapy group. "Courtroom," itself, is the specialized brand of "Troubled Couple" found in divorce and "reconciliation" arenas (eg, courtrooms) to later be resolved by that particular couple. Many, if not most divorced couples, have initiated divorce more than once before becoming effectively, in fact, finally divorced. In "contested" divorces, argued "before the bench" the judge will usually lower his eyes and give a few passes to "outbreaks" from the couple in court.
3. This game, as are most, is named after the gimmick. "Troubled" has talking priority.
4. Solution to this Game in groups, social or therapy, is for the onlookers to keep looking at, watching the two would-be social commanders.

The FOUNDATION for GROUP TREATMENT, INC., a non-profit organization was established for the purpose of providing clinicians of all schools and disciplines using group treatment methods with opportunities for increasing their effectiveness and efficiency toward the professional treatment objective of the patient getting well.

The Encounterer is the news service of the FOUNDATION. It will have notices of interest, current developments in this treatment field, and clinical reports.

Associations and Societies of group treatment professionals are invited to use THE ENCOUNTERER to notify others of their meetings and activities. As a service of the FOUNDATION, non-profit facilities and organizations involved with group treatment are invited to apply for THE ENCOUNTERER on a continuing basis.

This single sheet news service will include:

1. CLINICAL INFORMATION:
    - A. ENCOUNTERS, vignettes, applicable to treatment.
    - B. FORMULATIONS of theoretical and a practical nature.
    - C. "Rx for GETTING WELL."
    - D. OTHER sections as this publication evolves.
  2. NOTICES of coming talks, seminars, meetings for learning, teaching, training.
  3. REPORTS on events of interest to group treatment professionals.
- Individuals who want to receive THE ENCOUNTERER may do so by making a \$2.50 donation for which they will receive 20 issues of this periodical in a year.

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations Used in THE ENCOUNTERER

A	Adult, "level-head," objective, ego state	P-O	Pay-Off: Ulterior (latent) motive, reward. 5th move of a game.
C	Child, childhood, "the Kid" ego state	PSI	Pounds per square inch
CPM	Cycles per minute	<b>Rx</b>	Prescription, prescribed, therapeutic advice, treatment recommendation.
CPS	Cycles per second	SCRIPT	Life-Story: map of person's life, often resembling a fairy-tale.
E	THE ENCOUNTERER	SOBA	SOB Authority, Silly-Ole'- Boy-Authority
G	Gimmick: (trick, wrinkle) 4th move of a GAME.	SOBA-HUNTER:	Person with an "authority problem"; a Crusader; a revolutionary.
GAF	The DEVOLUTION Life Solution of <u>Get-Away From:</u> I-am-not-Ok-and-you-are-OK.	SUCCINCTISM:	Concise graphic formulation
GNW	The OBVOLUTION Life Solution of <u>Get-No-Where-With:</u> I-am-not-OK-and-you-are-not-OK.	TA	Transactional Analysis. Originated by Berne. It is: 1. A theory of (social) behavior 2. A theory of personality structure 3. A method of (group) psychotherapy treatment 4. An organization It embraces and is not contradictory to psychoanalytic theory and practice.
GOW	The EVOLUTION Life Solution of <u>Get-On-With</u> (It, life, living); I-am-OK-and-you-are-OK	THE E	THE ENCOUNTERER
GRO	The REVOLUTION Life Solution of <u>Get-Rid-Of:</u> I-am-OK-and-you-are-not-OK.	THWIT's	"To Hell With It's", Having a case of the ...
GW	Get-Winners, Get-Well, Getting-Well, usually synonymous with the GOW Life Solution.	VOL	Volume
H	Hook: (come-on, engagement) 1st move of a GAME.		
M	Maneuver: (angle, con) move of a GAME.		
No	Number		
P	Parent, Parent ego state; to be differentiated from Adult ego state.		