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CORRECTIONAL PSYCHOLOGY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

J. G. CAUGHLEY

The author is Chief Psychologist with the Department of Justice, New Zealand, and has had wide experience in clinical psychology in various government departments. In 1952 he was sent to India by UNESCO to establish child guidance centers in that country. He describes in this his second article in our Journal a unique program of psychology training for law enforcement officers which was recently undertaken under his direction.—EDITOR.

At first sight it might not seem possible to provide a course in practical psychology for police officers in twelve sessions of one hour (i.e. 45 minute lecture plus 15 minutes discussion). A final examination with examiners' answers (Appendix 3) held at the end of the course indicated, however, that the syllabus was reasonably successful.

Most of the Constables examined were young men over the age of nineteen with a secondary school background plus some experience in other fields of work. Preliminary selection was based on general personality with an emphasis on maturity and intelligence. Before they came to the residential recruit course some of the trainees had no police experience at all, while others may have had as much as twelve months. The fairly concentrated recruit course was spread over thirteen weeks. After this period the recruits then went "on the beat" for a period of fifteen to eighteen months. While engaged in this work they also took a correspondence course which consisted of fifteen assignments, each of which was to be returned for correction at the end of three weeks. The officers then returned to the Police School to undergo another four-week course. Part of this final training course was revision of the recruit and correspondence courses with new subject matter introduced into the curriculum.

It was at this stage that the course in practical psychology (Appendix 1) was initiated. An earlier experimental course, mainly psychiatric in content, did not prove very practical or useful. As stated before, the course consisted of twelve lectures, a cyclostyled summary (Appendix 2) being given to each class member at the end of every session. Jargon was reduced to a minimum and the psychological terms which inevitably arose were explained clearly and concisely. The last session took the form of discussing problems passed in anonymously by each member of the

group. A sample of these questions can be found in Appendix 4.

APPENDIX 1

Scope of the Course

(Lesson numbers are indicated by numerals in parentheses along left margin.)

I. *Practical Psychology*

(1) A. What is it?

II. *Practical Psychology*

(2) A. How psychology can assist us:

1. in understanding ourselves
2. in understanding others
3. in improving human relationships

III. *Mental Health*

(3) A. What is mental health?

(4) B. The emotional make up of the individual

IV. *The People we Meet*

(5) A. Those who are mentally ill

(6) B. The mental defective, the neurotic, and the psychotic

(7) C. The psychopath

(8) D. The juvenile and the adolescent

(9) E. The alcoholic

F. The sex offender:

- (10) 1. Some theories as to the origin of sexual deviations
- (11) 2. Types of sexual offenders—recognition and treatment
- (12) G. Some practical problems in your daily work

APPENDIX 2.

Crime and Emotional Disorder

A criminal is a person who has committed an act, usually of a serious nature and which is punishable by law. The three main types of offences are those which involve the state (e.g. treason), other persons (e.g. assault), or property (e.g. theft). It is impossible in a few lines to say

why people commit crimes. The reasons are numerous, and very few cases can be narrowed down to one particular cause. In most cases a multiplicity of causes can be found. At one time we were inclined to think that criminals were born, not made, but to a large degree this theory has now been discounted. There are, of course, certain types of people who succumb more easily to temptation than their stronger brethren. The modern theory is that especially in our earlier years, the people and conditions that we encounter determine to a large degree our ultimate pattern of social behavior. We are like our parents because we imitate their behaviour, not because we are born like them. Environment is just as, if not more, important than heredity. Our social behaviour results mostly from the pattern of those around us and begins in the home, extending to the school, the working groups, and eventually the community itself. In addition to our associations there are other influences such as the effect of poverty, wealth, adjustment to employment, religion, literature, the press, the cinema, alcohol, and gambling, to mention just a few. The moral tempo, the strains and stresses of the period through which we are living, as well as our personal difficulties and situations must also have some bearing on our ethical standards. In the main, however, we tend to follow the pattern of the group to which we are most closely associated. Most criminals have never really belonged, or have broken away from their groups and are either isolated units or lone wolves.

The third and most common type of abnormal behavior that is mentioned earlier is the person who is emotionally unbalanced, and because of that deprivation or super-abundance is unable to adjust himself to other individuals. As plants require food, warmth, light, and moisture in order to grow, so man has similar physical needs and requirements. In addition man, has "feelings", attachments, or emotions as well as his physical needs. His emotional needs are just as necessary as his physical needs if he is to live harmoniously with his fellows.

These emotional needs are:

1. The need to be wanted or accepted by some person or group of persons. He must have some feeling of individual worth. The feeling that he is necessary; of "belonging"; of priority; and that life has some purpose and meaning for him. When he ceases to have this feeling of "belonging" there is little left for him in life. A person who feels that

he is an outcast and beyond the "pale" could become depressed and suicidal or soured and antisocial. Naturally he feels no obligation to a society to which he feels he does not belong. There is also the natural converse to this. In addition to being loved, wanted, required, or respected there must be some person, object, or group of persons which the individual himself loves, admires, and protects. It is a two-way feeling.

2. The second emotional need is environmental stability. The individual must feel that tomorrow is going to be reasonably similar to today. There must be a certain amount of smoothness; ebb and flow. Just as one cannot subject the physical body to sudden changes of temperature, so emotionally one must not be exposed to extremes without gradual initiation and slow approaches. There must not be sudden upheavals and disruptions, lack of order, routine, and discipline; sudden outbursts of temper followed by periods of calm. Our environment must be reasonably predictable. It is said that practically all problem children, and adults too for that matter, are the products of broken homes. This may be true in so far that broken homes are rarely placid, quiet, and peaceful. There is little stability in their make-up due to the general "atmosphere" and clash of temperaments, either overt or concealed. The same can be said where there are alcoholic or invalid parents, and where there are financial problems, or even those of bad housekeeping, untidiness, and disorder. This psychological theory then postulates that serenity and some feeling of continuity and stability are necessary for a healthy emotional development. Psychologists do not hold that there should be no restrictions and frustration. They believe, however, that man should be taught how to meet, overcome, adjust to, or circumvent these contrary forces. Indeed that is the only way that personalities progress and develop.

3. The third emotional need required for good development and maturity is the opportunity to express oneself at the right age in movement, speech, and recreation. This would seem to be so obvious that it does not require elaboration. Again the individual must be taught to express himself in a manner that is socially acceptable. Self-expression does not mean complete license and undisciplined behaviour. In his expression one individual must not infringe on the rights of another. That is anti-social behaviour. A man may drink heavily and go on his homeward way singing and re-

joining. That is his mode of self-expression, but should he become abusive and aggressive in attempting to prevent others from passing along the footpath he has passed beyond the bounds of self-expression and has become a nuisance who may be dealt with legally as such. It does not follow, therefore, that all means of self-expression are good or desirable, but it is necessary that individuals should be afforded the opportunity for their particular mode of self-expression whether it be in their work, speech, mobility, sport, or creation.

The three inhibiting or preventing factors for personality development are fear, guilt, and inferiority. They all contain the element of anxiety in our relationships with other people or objects. An anxious person can never be a happy person, and good emotional adjustment means one who is healthy, happy, and useful. Inferiority can take many forms. It may be physical, intellectual, social, or moral.

It does not necessarily follow that if an individual lacks the three requirements listed above (that is the feeling of being accepted, of continuity, and the opportunity for self-expression) that he will be a maladjusted or unhappy person. Many individuals overcome initial handicaps and compensate in one field for lack in another. It is fairly safe to say, however, that where there is a strong element of unhappiness, maladjustment, or instability it can usually be traced back to one of the above sources. This maladjustment can be treated by counselling or psychotherapy.

APPENDIX 3

Examination Questions and Typical Answers

Question

1. You see a distracted-looking woman who may be contemplating suicide leaning over a bridge. How would you handle this situation?

Answer

A. "I would talk to her quietly and attempt to ascertain whether she was mentally deranged or just depressed. I would attempt to persuade her to accompany me to a doctor or a trained psychiatric worker. I would try to find out the cause of her depression and find out if she had any close friends in whom she may confide. The police have power of arrest for attempted suicide if necessary, and if there is any doubt in the mind of the Constable, it should be exercised for the person's own good, as she can then receive treatment and supervision

under trained care. The woman police officers would be able to assist in this matter."

B. "5. Endeavour to ascertain whether or not she was at the bridge for the purpose of committing suicide.

6. Quietly talk her into going to her home with me.

7. Get her home to her relatives if possible and endeavour to ascertain what is mentally wrong with the woman.

8. If she is in need of treatment, I would explain to the relatives the procedure for having the woman committed.

9. If not, I would advise the relatives to have the woman consult a doctor or a psychiatrist.

10. When dealing with the distressed woman herself, I would use tact, understanding, and patience.

11. If I was of the opinion the woman needed psychiatric treatment and she had no relatives, I would endeavour to have her committed to a mental institution myself."

Question

Describe briefly some of the most common sexual offences.

Answer

C. "The more obvious type of sexual offender is the more common conception of a "Queer", and he is the effeminate male person. In his sexual activities he is usually the passive party to the act. There is also the masculine pervert, who in real life is a real he-man. This type of person is hard to detect. The person who usually confines his activities to revealing himself to women or children, you will usually find is a man who is dominated by his mother. He feels the need to assert his vitality, and this is the way he does it. He is a foolish man because he gives no thought to the consequences and will go to the same place at the same time and do the same act at regular intervals. The man who offends against children, usually in his childhood, has misbehaved himself with other children. In his adult life, when confronted with an emotional disturbance he will revert to the age in which he sexually misbehaved and try to repeat it. If his first offence as a child was with a girl of 5 years, when he reverts as an adult he will sort out a child of the same age. These men may regret these incidents afterwards, but state that they cannot help themselves. Some schools of thought say that perverts are born that way. I do not agree with this. I think that they are made

through some great emotional disturbance they have suffered. I think that if these persons cooperate they may be treated and cured."

D. "The main type of sexual offender is the homosexual. There are two types of homosexual—passive and active. The passive homosexual or "Queen", as he is sometimes referred to, is not one who causes much worry to the police (or to psychologists), but the active homosexual is the person who needs to be watched. He is usually the aggressive, sporting type, and it is usually very difficult to detect his homosexual activities. Both the passive and the active types of homosexual are usually quite intelligent—in fact above the normal intelligence.

The worst type of sexual offender is the homosexual who interferes with children. Quite often his intelligence is below normal, and he is an extremely dangerous type of individual.

Another type of sexual offender is the transvestite. For the transvestite, symbols stimulate his erotic desire and possessing these satisfies his sexual desire.

Exhibitionists are common and usually stupid in the offences they commit. They are unable to control themselves and will repeat the same offence in the same place in the same way even if they know they have been detected and are being watched.

The sexual offences of rape and indecent assault, on females of a reasonable age, are not abnormal offences.

Homosexuality may be cured if the psychologist is able to begin treatment while the offender is under the age of about 25 years. Few people are born with homosexual tendencies—it is usually acquired. In some cases it may be treated medically, but usually it is a matter of going back through the person's life to try to find the cause of the abnormality. If the cause, which has nearly always been repressed, can be found, treatment can be started from there."

Question

How would you deal with a group of 'teddy boys' (10) with two girls who are on the verge of creating a disturbance outside a theatre?

Answer

E. "A Teddy Boy is usually of a group which are known as adolescents. Adolescents may be from about 14 years of age and carry on till their early 20's. It is the time of life between childhood and

adulthood. They dislike adults and do things by which they draw attention to themselves. The modern trend of adolescents call themselves 'Teddy Boys', they let their hair grow long and wear colourful clothes, stove-pipe pants, etc. This is just to draw attention. They usually gather in gangs, with quite a number of males and perhaps one or two girls amongst them. They dislike authority, and try to act as an adult; and although they are not prepared to take responsibilities that go with adulthood, they desire to get the pleasures that are part of it. They quite often indulge in sex orgies, drink alcohol, and carry on in rebellious way against grown up society.

With this particular case, of a group outside a theatre likely to cause a disturbance, I would try to get the girls away from the group. The boys are more than likely just trying to show off in front of the girls. Just trying to show them how grownup and tough they are. In cases like this they are only brave in groups. When you get them by themselves they are easy to manage, but in a group there is not much that can be done.

After getting the girls away from the boys they should be easily dispersed. Keep them moving along, do not let them get into groups on street corners.

If you see them be friendly, talk to them, try to induce them to join sports clubs or some other society to keep them off the streets.

They are not really bad in the sense of the word, just not properly grown up. A few tips from a policeman could do a lot for some of them to help put them on the straight and narrow path.

The main thing therefore is to break up the group, and in this case taking the girls away from the group would be my first plan of action."

F. "These 'teddy boys' are in the adolescent class and have reached the stage where they wish all the privileges of adulthood with none of the responsibility. They are mostly in the 14 to 20 year old group and have a great dislike for discipline. Therefore, it is no use trying to attack them in an arrogant manner. If possible observe the scene for some moments taking mental note of the maturer types and the younger types among them and also note the actions of the parties towards the girls. After noting these then act, approach them, speaking quietly and without malice, directing your conversation to the more mature persons explaining the disorder they are causing. The maturer of them who are starting to realize

that they must fit in with the adult world may take notice of your conversation.

The adolescent has reached the age where he is beginning to feel his sex drive and resorts to exhibitionism in front of the opposite sex to draw attention to himself and his virility. Therefore if it is possible, it is advisable to speak quietly to the girls and have them move away. This does not mean arresting them or taking them home to their parents. Most adolescents although beginning to feel their way in an adult world still have some sort of respect for their parents, and so a quiet word about how their parents would feel if they got into trouble may assist you. This applies to the younger members of the gang and the girls.

Above all do not attack them physically or verbally. This will only make them more against you and will make your work much harder. These 'teddy boys' have a great dislike for discipline of any sort and so have a grievance against any person in a uniform. Argument will do no good, but if these people are treated as equals, they will learn to respect you, and the job will be much easier. This type of incidents cannot be handled in any specific manner but must be handled according to the circumstances, but the main points to remember are: (1) They are just feeling their way in an adult world. (2) They dislike authority. (3) They are just feeling their sex drive—exhibitionism. (4) Treat as equals. (5) Don't antagonise. (6) Do not argue with them."

G. "In handling a situation of this sort one must use a great deal of tact. What may at first be just a display put on for the benefit of the girls could easily be made more serious through lack of understanding and tact.

Approach the problem with the object of dispersing the group with as little display of force as possible. The two girls who are quite probably the cause of this disturbance should be moved from the scene as soon as possible. A police woman would be most helpful in this. Once having moved the girls you have removed the most likely cause

of the trouble. The youths will then have no cause to put on an act to impress.

In removing the girls you have not finished with the problem by any means. You must now disperse the group of youths. In doing so you must try not to present any one of them with a situation where he would be forced to lose face before his friends, or to give any opportunity to the stronger personality in the group to openly defy you. Deal with the group as a whole. Do not behave as if the matter were too serious: try to be firm and friendly and not dictatorial. In playing down the importance of the disturbance you attract less attention to it. Every exhibition will fail if it has no audience or the exhibition is in itself trivial.

The quickest way to attract a crowd in a situation like this is for the constable to treat it seriously and to bluster and command.

Use tolerance and tact, and the problem will die and solve itself without much help."

APPENDIX 4

Sample Questions Proposed by the Group

1. Are there any obvious signs by which you can tell psychotics who might otherwise pass as normal?
2. What is the cause of people walking in their sleep?
3. If a person is homosexually inclined in a small degree, is it true that he will, especially in this job, persecute other homosexuals?
4. Is it the person's background that makes him turn to crime? (Upbringing, family life, etc.)
5. Can persons who have a disorder that makes them do things that they know are wrong (e.g. lighting fires, willfully destroying other persons' articles) be cured?
6. Can homosexuals be cured permanently?
7. What is the best way to stop the sexual offenders from committing offences?
8. Does a person's intelligence grow after reaching the age of 14 years?