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Referral of Juvenile Delinquents: A Guidepost for Social Workers and Probation Officers

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tional structure, staff-patient roles, personality dynamics, and societal stereotypes regarding criminals and insanity? What changes in the training course or what other form of intervention might prove more effective in constructively changing these intransigent attitudes?

LIMITATIONS

The authors wish to point out some of the limitations of the present exploratory study. As mentioned above, most of the aide characteristic variables chosen were based on available employee applicant testing data; additional instruments should be used particularly for assessment of selected personality dimensions. This also meant that there was an unavoidable time lag in the administration of some of the measures which may in some instances have influenced results. While the "CI" Attitude Scale as it stands was shown to have factorial validity, additional validation procedures would be desirable. Also, sample size was small, limited simply by the fact that *N* represented the total number of aides assigned to work with "CI" patients. Therefore,

prior to replication, generalization must be conditional.

SUMMARY

An instrument for assessing psychiatrically favorable-unfavorable attitudes toward "criminally insane" ("CI") patients was constructed. Relationships were studied between "CI" Attitude Scale scores and selected aide characteristics, *i.e.*, Age, Education, Length of Employment, Aide Status, Performance Ratings, Intelligence, Social Service Orientation, and Selected Personality Attributes. A factor analysis of the correlation matrix representing these interrelationships was completed in an attempt to identify "traits" underlying the relationships. Six Factors were described. "CI" attitudes were accounted for primarily by a unitary "trait" which was associated with Intelligence and to a lesser extent with Social Service Orientation. Relationships were explored between "CI" attitudes and the structure of certain peer perceptions, *e.g.*, "Best Aide," "Best Friend." Modifiability of "CI" attitudes was also investigated and results discussed.

REFERRAL OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS: A GUIDEPOST FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND PROBATION OFFICERS

RAY NAAR*

It is accepted today that an individual's performance during a psychological examination is determined by more than simply the device used by the examiner. Many other factors, environmental as well as inner determined, conscious as well as unconscious, play an important part in the subject's responses and have been discussed at length by a number of authors.¹

Extraneous factors reflected in a subject's performance acquire a unique aspect in authoritarian, non-psychiatric settings such as juvenile courts. The client does not consider himself in need of help, and the psychologist is, against his will, cast

into a punitive role. Furthermore, the client is often referred to the clinic as part of the pre-hearing investigation. Suspicion, hostility, and fear can therefore be expected from incarcerated subjects.

A survey recently conducted among a number of psychologists operating in juvenile courts indicated that the psychologists believed the test results were influenced to some extent by the status of the psychologist's office as part of the court machinery.² The survey was in the form of a questionnaire addressed to a large sample of court psychologists. The answers to the questionnaire were tabulated to determine, among other things, whether court psychologists consider the legal involvement a hindrance in their work and how they handle such interference.

In their interpretation of test records, psychologists conceive of various ways of accounting for such contaminating factors. Techniques to lessen

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¹ Gibby, *Examiner Influence on the Rorschach Inquiry*, 16 J. CONSULT. PSYCHOL. 449 (1952); Hutt, Gibby, Milton & Pottharst, *The Effect of Varied Experimental "Sets" Upon Rorschach Test Performance*, 14 J. PROJ. TECH. 181 (1950); SARASON, *THE CLINICAL INTERACTION* (N.Y.: Harper & Brothers 1954).

² Naar, *Testing in Juvenile Courts: A Survey*, 17 J. CLIN. PSYCHOL. 210 (1961).

unfavorable attitudes towards the testing procedure or the examiner have been advocated by Sears.³ Schachtel⁴ feels that the individual's reactions to a given situation are intimately related to his needs, wishes, and fears, and that these reactions offer an important source of insight into his personality.

In the above mentioned survey, however, only ten per cent of the participants unequivocally indicated that they were taking no steps to allay their patients' suspicions and fears because such attitudes in themselves helped gain insight into their patients' personality. The majority stated that they attempted to alleviate their patients' suspicions and fears of the court through the use of such devices as reassuring statements and the adoption of a genuinely interested and friendly attitude towards the client.

After four years of testing and interviewing juvenile delinquents, this author is skeptical of any quick attempts significantly to improve unfavorable attitudes and believes that the child should be prepared for the examination and some of his fears allayed prior to his entering the psychologist's office. The burden for explaining to the child the meaning and the necessity for a psychological examination would then fall upon the referring authority, *i.e.*, the probation officer.

In order to help probation officers and social workers in the ingrate task of preparing the child for a psychological examination, the following form, presently in use at the Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court of Richmond, Virginia, was drafted either to be read by or to the child or to be used by the referring authority as a guidepost.

To: Joe Doe

An appointment with the court psychologist has been arranged for you. Please study this sheet prior to your interview. Perhaps you will find its contents helpful and interesting.

What is a psychologist?

A psychologist is a professional man, especially trained in the study and understanding of people. Through the use of specific "tests" he attempts to determine some of the reasons for the things people do.

What is the purpose of a psychological examination?

³ Sears, *Motivational Factors in Aptitude Testing*, 13 AM. J. ORTHOPSYCHIAT. 468 (1943).

⁴ Schachtel, *Subjective Definitions of the Rorschach Test Situation and Their Effect on Test Performance: Contributions to an Understanding of the Rorschach Test*, 8 PSYCHIAT. 419 (1945).

In the early days of juvenile courts, young offenders were punished according to the law which provided specific punishments for specific offenses. Today, juvenile courts are more interested in helping than punishing children in trouble. Their purpose is not to fill jails and correctional schools, but to help the child in his problems, in his unhappiness, to make his life less miserable, to start him on the road to honesty, help him become a decent, useful citizen, proud of himself and an asset to the community.

How can the court help the child unless it knows him? How can the court do what is best unless it knows the problems of the child, the real reason for what he has done, the nature of his unhappiness, the kind of person that the child really is? These are some of the questions answered by the psychologist.

What specific information will a psychological examination reveal?

The psychologist will try to find out how much you have learned in school. He will try to determine the manner in which you reason and solve your problems. He will attempt to understand your personality, that is what type of person you are. Finally, he will try to determine, by talking them over with you, the reasons for the things that you have done.

Why were you selected for a psychological examination?

While we believe that all children in court should be afforded the privilege of a psychological examination, this is not possible because of the large number of children who get in trouble. You have been selected either because you were ahead in the waiting list or because your Probation Officer thought that you deserved more attention or both. Sometimes, you can be selected simply because the agency to which you will be referred requires a psychological report to better handle your case.

Can the results of a psychological examination be harmful?

DEFINITELY NOT. A psychological examination by providing more information on the real you can only help your case in court, but never harm it.

Can the court psychologist reveal what you told him under confidence?

NO. The psychologist prepares a report which he submits to the Court or to your Probation Officer. Secrets confided to him, however, can-