Behavioral changes during case work treatment of children of neglecting mothers and fathers

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BEHAVIORAL CHANGES DURING CASE WORK TREATMENT
OF CHILDREN OF
NEGLECTING MOTHERS AND FATHERS

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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DEDICATION

To My Husband
And
My Parents
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

There are many children in the United States who are classified by the courts and by social agencies as "neglected children." Parental neglect may have a permanent and profound detrimental effect on the psycho-social development of children.

A child consistently neglected—in the sense that his physical or emotional needs are not met—may be very much loved and wanted by his parents. They, however, may be unable through poor economic circumstances to provide for him as they wish. Lack of knowledge, too, may cause them to starve him of love, or upset his sense of security, simply because they are not aware how vitally important such things are.¹

In some instances, parents are immature themselves and consequently, they are rejecting of the responsibility of caring for children.

We should not delude ourselves into thinking that the majority of parents have children because they love them, or that the main goal in life as parents is to help the oncoming generation to adapt and to enrich society generally. We are aiming for this goal, but we are farther from it than we realize. Children impose a great deal of responsibilities

on parents. They take a great deal of their parents' time, interest, energies and money. Thus, the parents' basic ambivalence is increased by circumstances of being a parent. These feelings in the parents are bound to be sensed by the child and the child develops a corresponding feeling.¹

Some children have been neglected because they were unwanted.

He may be unwanted in the sense that his conception was accidental, undesired and resented by both mother and father. In that case, he will find the world an unfriendly place from the first.²

However, both wanted and unwanted children may be neglected. Other circumstances in the lives of the parents are also determining factors. Having been neglected may ultimately cause children to become emotionally upset or to have either pre-delinquent or delinquent tendencies. Further neglect may be the basis for behavioral disorders resulting from continuing unmet needs during the various stages of the psycho-social development.

The field of social work considers the neglect of children a problem deserving of further research. Social workers are both concerned and interested in this problem. The emphasis which child welfare workers give to the problem is their contribution to preventing the neglect from causing more serious effects.

The field of social work is interested in the evaluation of the role of the case worker in rehabilitating neglected children.


²Eustace Chesser, op. cit., p. 36.
Child Welfare Workers are specifically concerned with the children who might benefit from case work treatment.

The researcher became attentive to this problem as a result of observing an eight-year-old boy who had been assigned to a special class for the mentally retarded. The researcher was the teacher of this class. She felt that the child might have adjusted better psychologically had case work therapy been available to him, the grandmother, great grandmother and particularly to the father.

The eight-year-old boy had as a younger child been placed in several foster homes and had never lived with his natural mother as she had not wanted him. The reason for his not being wanted was that his mother was married but the child was an out-of-wedlock child.

In cases of children who have been placed in foster or adoptive homes, case work methods are designed for the purpose of personality adjustment. These methods are "directed toward the engagement of the child's own parents, his foster parents and the child himself in the solution of the child's problems."^1

The Bureau for Child Care functions to alleviate behavioral problems resulting from neglect. Cases similar to the boy in the class for the mentally retarded may have been helped in terms of palliative measures or alleviation of problem behavior. Palliative

measures and possible alleviation of problems are aided by foster home placement, both long and short term. Also, the shelter at the Bureau for Child Care is utilized for this purpose.

Because of her interest in the problem of neglect, the writer felt that a study of movement or behavioral changes would be appropriate, based on her experience and upon records which were on file at the Bureau for Child Care.

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to ascertain the results of case work treatment in the sample. This was done through a description of changes in:

1. Adaptive efficiency
2. Disabling habits and conditions
3. Verbalized attitudes and understanding
4. Environmental circumstances.¹

Method of Procedure

The method chosen for use in this study was the Case Study Method. The procedural steps are listed below:

1. The six cases were selected from the files of the Bureau for Child Care.

Criteria for the selection were:

a. Cases of children admitted between March 1, 1953 and February 28, 1955

(These dates were chosen in order that the data would be recent.)

b. Cases in which treatment was given for a minimum of 10 interviews.

c. Cases involving members of both sexes were used because there was no particular interest in one sex.

d. Cases involved children between eight and twelve years of age.

e. All cases were "open" cases at the termination of the gathering of the data.

2. Criteria for judging were Hunt's "The Common Core of Movement Criteria" (four categories). See appendix.

3. The cases were studied on the basis of the criteria.

4. The findings were illustrated, analyzed and summarized.

5. Conclusions were reported on the basis of the findings.

Scope and Limitations
The extent of the investigation was limited to the study of six cases on record at the agency. The six cases were considered the sample, which was limited to children of neglecting parents.
The universe was all neglected children under foster home supervision at the agency at the time of the study.

During the time of the study, the agency was in a process of change in regard to the case load per worker. Cases were being transferred in order to reduce the average case load per worker. In addition, transfer of cases was necessary as each worker was being given a new district. In many instances, this situation was responsible for the frequent change of case workers.
CHAPTER II

THE SETTING OF THE STUDY INCLUDING
HISTORY AND FUNCTION

Because of a need, this agency was begun by a group of prudent and well-meaning citizens. These citizens, with Mrs. Syrene E. Benjamin, dedicated their time, energy and ideas to overcome a problem which had its beginning in "change" and "growth." This venture was a challenge to help youth in whose hands would be vested the future of Philadelphia and ultimately the world community. On March 23, 1927, services of Mrs. Benjamin and "public spirited" citizens were offered to help in providing placement opportunities.

In November, 1929, the Bureau for Colored Children was incorporated and received its Charter under the laws of Pennsylvania. John C. Asbury, Esquire, was the first president of the Board of Directors.

The purchasing of the 98 acre farm at Pomeroy, Pennsylvania was negotiated by the Bureau in 1936. This farm was purchased to be used as a "farm and vocational school for maladjusted adolescent boys." This tract of now dedicated land had once been known as the McManus Estate.

In 1943, the Bureau for Colored Children was admitted by the Community Chest with the Chest subsidizing the Bureau's
"earned income" ... In 1944, the (Allderice School) Western Home for Children, its furnishings and equipment was given to the agency. This building was later occupied and used as its headquarters and shelter.

In 1945, the project was expanded and further developed at Pomeroy, with the addition of facilities, namely, a dormitory and recreational building.

1952 brought a request from the Board of Directors with the plan that a "searching study" be made. This study was to include the operations of the agency and was conducted by one Dr. Phillip Klein, a research professor at the New York School of Social Work, Columbia University, New York City, New York; with Mrs. Alvin J. Martin as resident consultant. Since the care of children in Philadelphia had become a more serious problem and there seemed to be more broken homes, it seemed that possibly there was a lack of beneficial facilities and resources. Recommendations made were to bring about improvement by securing a better professionally trained staff. This is at present being done on an inter-racial basis.

June 1, 1955, the name of the Bureau for Colored Children was changed to the Bureau for Child Care so that all children could be served and for the purpose of giving the Negro child an opportunity of feeling more secure.

In 1927, Mrs. Benjamin, the first executive secretary,
had two persons who aided her in undertaking a tremendous task. One of these persons was Mrs. Ada B. Carter who was appointed director. Later, Mrs. Carter became Mrs. Ada B. Harris who was the director of the Bureau for Child Care at the time of this study.¹

"Purpose for which the corporation is formed is for the care, protection and to provide for the welfare of needy children, to provide a shelter and place them in suitable foster homes."²

The Bureau is presently giving care to 947 children, who for various reasons need care away from their own parents, either for temporary or longer periods. Referrals for consideration and study are accepted from many sources, including parents, the Department of Public Welfare and Juvenile Court.

The majority of our children live in foster homes, where as members of a family group, on a boarding basis, they are helped to grow and develop with foster parents who give them love and a feeling of belonging.

The social case workers play an important role in the services offered by the agency in studying and selecting foster homes, as well as supervising the children during placement. Help is given foster parents and child when problems arise. Work with own parents is continuous, around plans for their child's future.³


²An announcement printed by the Board of Directors of the Bureau for Child Care, June 1, 1954.

³Bureau for Colored Children (staff publication), p. 2.
CHAPTER III

CASE ILLUSTRATIONS AND ANALYSES OF BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

In giving therapy, case workers should remember that each child is primarily a human being, with a distinct personality of his own and a set up which is individual to him. These must be the chief factors guiding the formulation of any plans for his welfare.

Focus should be on the child as he actually is and not as we wish him to be. In order to help him, it is necessary to realize his capacity for growth and development. One should be aware also, of the child's feelings about the people with whom he has lived, and the effect they have had on him.

Many children have been exposed to destructive influences for a long period of time; they often have had very little stability in their environment; and they have frequently known physical and emotional privation. The process of rebuilding and re-educating can at best, be slow and more than the ordinary amount of time, understanding, knowledge and skill are required to effect changes in these children.¹

Therapy could possibly enable the client to change in adaptive capacity. It may lessen or abolish the problem behavior which the client showed prior to receiving therapy.

The cases which are illustrated and analyzed here are cases in which the clients presented overt problem and/or symptomatic behavior. These types of behavior were probably resultant of insecurity, which was a by product of parental inadequacy, irresponsibility and neglect.

The dynamics of the personality pattern, environmental circumstances, plus the constitutional factors influence the amount of treatment in these cases. With a fluid diagnosis, coupled with purposeful planning and a focus which is well adhered to, the client may obtain a feeling of security, out of which may grow a feeling of adequacy and an assurance of the client's worth and dignity. In these cases, the case worker played a supportive and understanding role. In addition, she played the role of a non-punishing super ego figure. This type of therapy proves useful in many cases in which the client is passively dependent. The case worker, in administering planned therapy, sets up realistic goals in terms of trying to get the client to see that what he was doing was harmful to himself.

With the administering of properly focused therapy, it is possible for the client to gain reassurance and it is also possible that his ego strength may be reinforced. Either definite, partial or no improvement may be shown.

Further, it is advantageous to the case worker, for therapeutic purposes to remember that,
As the research into the dynamics of human behavior reveals more about the complexity of the human psychological structure, the problem of therapy also becomes progressively more complex. Knowledge of what motivates behavior has no value other than academic, until knowledge is translated into a useful tool for correcting and preventing distortions that express themselves in asocial behavior or an uneconomical use of emotional energy. It is in the fields of Clinical Psychiatry and Psychology, Social Work and Education that the theories must ultimately be applied.¹

Case work treatment with a child presenting such problems as were seen in the following case could alleviate overt hostility and insecurity shown by the symptomatic behavior (stealing, destructiveness, name calling, pulling out of hair, having bowel movements on the gate and in the window sill).

Elva

Case Illustration

Elva, aged eleven, was the second youngest in a family of four children who were accepted for placement. Placement was requested because of parental inadequacy and neglect.

Father was elderly, also physically incapacitated; however, he was more amenable, "helpless" and dependent than Mother. Both parents had low mentality. Mother was both "paranoid and reclusive." Clothing given her by school teachers was often "not used." Family lived in "trailer abode not considered fit for human habitation." Mother, when threatened, became abusive and threatened others.

Elva appeared to be emotionally disturbed, insecure, hostile and seemingly felt rejected. Further,

Elva verbalized her fearfulness of losing status in her foster home.

There were many evidences of problem behavior, among which were destruction (of her clothing, the furniture, etc.,), selfishness, possible masochistic tendencies (she pulled her hair out). Elva called other children "names" and was known to be a "habitual fabricator." She appeared threatened and jealous when five other children were placed in the foster home. Later she would sneak upstairs and remove the boys' clothing as they slept.

The case worker gave reassurance, acceptance and sympathetic understanding to Elva through all the indications of overt problem behavior. In regard to Elva's foster mother, clarifying with her the apparent background reasons for the overt problem behavior.

Elva's symptoms of not seeing, and her statement, "I cannot see" possibly grew out of her being excluded from an activity at home in which her foster sisters and brothers were included while Elva was left on another floor of the house to "do a chore." Later, the school counselor informed the case worker that Elva was having difficulty with her vision. When examined, it was found that there was no physical basis for Elva's alleged "difficulty" in vision. The case worker, after being informed by the foster mother of the details of Elva's first complaint of faulty vision, gave clarification to the school counselor. This information gave the school counselor and the teacher insight into the possible emotional basis for the complaint. Both were then better prepared to give more understanding to Elva's "slowness" in Spelling and her stealing "articles" and "name calling" at school.

Elva possibly had a great deal of insecurity. Substantiation of this was her statement when other children were to be placed in the foster home, "no one will take Elva's place, will they?" The case worker picked up on this expression and interpreted it as an apparent expression of insecurity. The case worker, with the use of her interviewing techniques, skillfully attempted to make Elva feel that she had "a place" in this foster home, though five other children would be placed there. One of Elva's younger brothers was among the five.
As was evidenced when the foster mother wondered why she was not previously informed of Elva's enuretic tendencies, the case worker said "Sometimes enuresis occurs when the child is moved to a new place." Thus, the case worker gave the foster mother clarification which in turn brought about insight as to the cause of this regression. The foster mother therefore, became more understanding of the necessity to be patient, loving and understanding with Elva because of her psychological need, which was apparently resultant from her traumatic experience of separation from her parents and siblings.

Case Analysis

Adaptive Efficiency:

Improvement was shown in Elva's emotional tone. She was able to make better adjustment at school and seemed to relate better to her peers. Her spelling and behavior at school improved. Her foster mother indicated that she had more of a positive relationship with her foster siblings.

At the outset, Elva seemed to feel "threatened" by the thought of possibly losing her status in the foster home. However, further incidents which might indicate that Elva was jealous of these children's sharing her foster home were not apparent.

Disabling Habits and Conditions:

Fewer incidents of stealing were reported. For a period of six months, there was only one incident of stealing. Though the regression, in terms of her toilet habits, was not mentioned specifically, a statement was made in the running record that her general adjustment in the foster home was a better one. Elva did not continue to complain about her eyes, neither was she as destructive as she had been. No mention was made of her "habitual fabrication" as such, in terms of change. Elva did not seem to be as nervous, nor to show evidences of feeling inferior. She did not give the impression of being as sensitive about her personal appearance as she had previously. There was not as much evidence of her fear of rejection by her foster mother. Complaints of faulty vision decreased.

Verbalized Attitudes and Understanding:

Earlier in the period of therapy, Elva stated, "I
know I have been bad," adding that she expected the case worker to "take her away." There were no evidences of her expressing similar feelings during the last interviews.

On being informed that five other children were to be placed in her foster home, Elva stated, "No one will take Elva's place, will they?" Though, she did not verbalize around this area at the end of the ten interviews, there were other indications that Elva did not appear as apprehensive around displacement by her foster and natural siblings.

Environmental Circumstances:

There were no evidences of change other than the fact that the foster mother and teacher became more conscious of causal factors of Elva's behavior. Further, they were more understanding of her.

The following case is one of a child described as hostile, unhappy, reticent and bitter. Case work therapy in such cases could help the child to verbally express his or her feelings of hostility, bitterness and unhappiness. In so doing, without being made to feel guilty about having such feelings, the child may be able to change from a reticent child to a child who can more easily adjust to life situations.

Paula

Case Illustration

Paula, twelve years old, was the illegitimate, only child of a paramour relationship; her three brothers, all older, had different putative fathers. The whereabouts of Paula's father was "unknown". The Board of Compulsory Education filed petition for Paula and two of her brothers to be placed. Mother, while under the influence of liquor, told of Paula's having been raped, but this was not substantiated.

At one time, Paula and Mother lived with Mother's friend. Mother later deserted. Friend requested placement after Paula spent a night away from home.
While in shelter, Paula "got lost" on return from school, due to her refusal to let peers show her the way.

School record revealed Paula's attendance at about twelve schools during one semester. School counselor stated she was defiant and disobedient.

Court report described Paula, as, unhappy, reticent, bitter, hostile. Court Diagnosis: Behavior Problem - Normal Intelligence. The court stated, "if she continues to be a problem, she may be a candidate for" a training institution.

Paula was defiant and disobedient at school. Her academic work was fair; her achievement in the language arts was on the second grade level, though she was in Grade Five.

There was conflict resultant from her feeling that others did not like her. She did not succeed in getting along with her classmates and playmates. The case worker gave Paula clarification as to how she could be liked, pointing out that name calling and taking the property of others would cause others to dislike her.

When tested by the psychologist, he stated that Paula "prefers to talk and think as though little were disturbing her or that there was little in her past experience to warrant being disturbed emotionally."

During the therapeutic transition, the case worker played a supportive role when stealing and regression in toilet habits occurred. The case worker allowed abreaction and encouraged a ventilation of her feelings about her situation, (specifically, her feeling of hostility and shame concerning her mother.)

According to her psychological evaluation, Paula had ambivalent feelings toward her mother. The psychologist reported that she felt ashamed of her mother, but also desired to be with her. Seemingly, because she felt ashamed of her mother, she indicated that somehow, she felt that others were judgmental and not accepting of her as an individual.

Case Analysis

Adaptive Efficiency:

Before the interim of therapy, the psychologist,
in his report, stated that Paula preferred to talk and think as though there were little in her past experience to disturb her emotionally.

He stated that these defenses made her difficult to reach, though he did find her able to relate in "a close manner." There was some definite improvement in this area as Paula expressed herself freely to the case worker regarding her past relationship with her mother.

There was upward movement shown in regard to Paula's defiance and disobedience in school.

She showed progress in her language arts subjects, after the case worker clarified with her foster mother that undue pressure around her school progress may defeat the purpose of the pressures.

The latter of the ten interviews did not point up as many expressions of hostility, doubt and shame, toward her mother. This was possibly resultant of the case worker's allowing her to verbalize these feelings (in the earlier interviews), without making her feel guilty.

Further, the feeling that she was not accepted, seemingly decreased her reluctance to assert herself with her peers and her inability to protect herself. Her adjustment at school was greatly improved.

**Disabling Habits and Conditions:**

Prior to the ten interviews, Paula was given to "name calling," taking the property of others. (She took money from her foster mother and from the sister of her foster mother in order to purchase an expensive perfume for her teacher.) She would give away anything she had in order to gain favor with her peers. This feeling, which had apparently been caused by the crystallization of emotional conflict, seemingly showed definite improvement.

Her habit of whining and her extreme nervous condition showed definite upward movement. The psychologist had stated that "gross anxiety" had reduced her functioning.

The truancy and denial of truancy stopped. She did not wander about the streets with no apparent destination forming "spur of the moment" relationships with any person as she had done previously.
This was a very pertinent improvement since, according to the psychological summary, Paula may have been "easily influenced". The report pointed up that she was somewhat compulsive in her emotional reactions.

There was no evidence of enuresis at the close of the interviews. Her temper tantrums had lessened in degree.

Verbalized Attitudes and Understanding:

At the beginning of the ten interviews, Paula verbalized her feelings around preferring to live with her foster mother rather than with her own mother. She stated that her mother "might have to move again as soon as we get used to being together". She also verbalized her fear that her mother loved her brother more than she did her. She mentioned her feeling of shame in regard to her mother, and her desire to be with her. Expressions similar to these lessened toward the end of the ten interviews.

Paula asked the case worker to place another child in her foster home for company for herself. The case worker interpreted this as an indication that she felt secure in her present home and was not expecting the parental rejection which she apparently had feared.

Environmental Circumstances:

The only evidence of change in this area was that the foster mother became more understanding of the causal factors of Paula's behavior, consequently, she gave more love, patience and understanding in their relationship. The record showed implications of the foster mother's accepting the fact that using pressure in regard to Paula's academic work could be detrimental rather than helpful.

In cases similar to this in which a child is apparently seeking to assure himself that he is loved and accepted, therapy can be focused on giving support and reassurance. Also, the case worker could act as a non-punishing super-ego figure when there are evidences of overt problem behavior or when the client is
overly aggressive as a result of emotional conflict. Further, therapy which may alleviate the problem or symptomatic behavior, (such as tattling, stealing, fighting and begging, fears, nervousness, infringement), may be given to the foster mother. This comprises an indirect way of helping the child. In regard to the sibling rivalry seen in the case, the brother could be treated also.

Richard

Case Illustration

Richard, aged eight, was the youngest of three children, all of whom were born out of wedlock and of different fathers. His mother was alleged to be a chronic alcoholic who had moved her children from place to place. The mother had been known to be away from the home for three-week periods. According to her medical history, she had had an abscessed lung.

After home placement, Richard's adjustment was "very good." His foster mother had expressed the desire to keep him, seemingly preferring him to his brother. Richard "darted about in a restless manner" and seemed anxious to read for the case worker. He apparently was anxious to impress the case worker with his "good behavior" and he pointed up his nine-year-old brother's misconduct.

When the case worker inquired if his behavior was all "good," he ignored this and persisted in talking about his brother.

Richard was mischievous at school and at one period, made less demands of the teacher's attention than previously. The teacher noticed that he talked continuously about his foster mother in a fond manner. After he had been placed for a period, he did not get along well with the children in the neighborhood. Richard took his brother's homework from his brief case, causing his brother to be punished at school. The case worker pointed out to him that he was the cause of his brother's punishment.
According to his brother, Richard destroyed some of his brother's toys.

As Richard's brother ceased to be protective of him, the brother tended to have a more negative relationship with him. It seems that the foster mother, by pointing up Richard's brother's behavior was causing a wedge between the two boys. The psychological report indicated that Richard "sees the world as an insecure and threatening place." He seemingly had vivid and intense fears of an undetermined origin (on several occasions, he was so badly frightened, he was practically inarticulate.) The case worker played a supportive role trying to give him a feeling of security and gave clarification, pointing out that such acts as urinating on the wall paper would cause him to be undesirable to have around. She attempted to show him how a better relationship with his brother would be advantageous.

Case Analysis

Adaptive Efficiency:

Positive movement was seen in the demands for attention which Richard made on his teacher, however, toward the close of the ten interviews, Richard had reverted to his michievousness at school and his attempts to get attention. Some of this seemed to have been related to a preference which the foster mother had for Richard. This seemingly caused conflict between the two brothers. There was no follow-up appraisal of his ability to get along with the children in the neighborhood and fighting other children at school. Toward the close of the ten interviews there was a general statement indicating his regression in attention getting which had previously included trying to get his brother to protect him.

Disabling Habits and Conditions:

At the outset of the period of study, Richard had nervous mannerisms and was destructive of his brother's property. Implications here were that he did this to get his brother's attention when his brother withdrew his protective attitude toward him. There was no mention of the destructiveness as such at the termination of the ten interviews.
It was noted that he reverted to his old habit of attention getting, his nervousness and insecurity.

No specific change was pointed up in the matter of his stealing money from his brother and foster sister. However, no other evidences of stealing was mentioned. Neither were there other incidents reported of such behavior as urinating on the wall. Positive movement was seen here. There was no specific mention made of changes in his habit of begging. At the outset, Richard's brother had been protective of him. Later Richard became upset when his brother withdrew his protectiveness. Seemingly, this withdrawal of sibling protectiveness was due to rivalry between the two brothers. This rivalry was heightened by the emotional conflict caused by the foster mother's very obviously preferring Richard to his brother.

**Verbalized Attitudes and Understanding:**

There is no certainty as to the positive movement in the following area. Early in the period of study, Richard pointed out his brother's overt problem behavior when his own was discussed. Toward the termination of the study, there were no verbalizations which the researcher could use to judge.

Possible positive movement was shown in this category. Richard admitted taking his brother's homework from his brief case. No evidence was noted of similar repetitive acts toward the close of the period of study.

**Environmental Circumstances:**

There was evidence of positive movement as the foster mother became aware of what she was doing to enhance the emotional conflict.

The next case is a description of a boy who was shy, uncooperative at school and had a speech impediment which caused him to feel resentful when asked to repeat. Case work treatment could cause the client to be more accepting of his defect which may
in turn eradicate some of the emotional conflict which may be a causative factor in his inarticulateness.

Therapy could allow him the opportunity to express his feelings of resentment without accompanying guilt; thereby relieving possible anxiety which could be resultant from the guilt. This anxiety may give rise to feelings of hostility.

Sydney

Case Illustration

Sydney, a boy of eight, was the second born of twins. Sydney's birth was a breech birth. In addition to his twin sister, he had an older brother. When he was three months old, his unemployed, unwed mother filed a dependency request through the Juvenile Court. She was unemployed as were her sisters with whom she shared a three-room apartment.

During infancy, he lived in a children's shelter. Early examination by a neuro-psychiatrist revealed evidences of mental deficiency. Subsequent testing showed mental retardation instead. As a result, Sydney was placed in a foster home for exceptional children, and later placed in a foster home with normal children.

The case worker had only one contact with Sydney's mother at which time it was her feeling that adoption would be the only plan for him since her husband did not seem to be happy with an older child in their home. An adoption plan had previously been consummated for Sydney's twin sister. His older brother was placed in a private foster home, at which time his mother was said to be "quite burdened financially."

During the period of the ten interviews, Sydney was living in his third "home," which was the one with normal children." His foster mother reported that she had received notes from his school teacher stating that Sydney was not cooperating in school
and was inattentive. Sydney had a speech impediment and showed resentment when asked to repeat what he had said. He was also shy, indicating passivity, and was given to daydreaming in school.

There was question around the stealing of money in which Sydney may have been involved. He was non-responsive and "played with his hat." The case worker did not feel that Sydney stole the money and that his "freezing up," when questioned, was due to his desire to be loyal to the group involved. Sydney had received poor grades in spelling also.

The case worker played a supportive and reassuring role and took every advantage of the opportunity to compliment Sydney on his successful achievements, thereby attempting to keep his "positives" in the forefront. She carefully avoided asking him to repeat his statements as he seemingly resented this. His foster mother had informed the case worker that Sydney would, if asked to repeat, ask if his "listener can hear well."

It was known that Sydney was not at all willing to cooperate when he was informed of getting a new case worker. Consequently, she did not probe and moved very slowly and cautiously in establishing a positive relationship with him.

Case Analysis

Adaptive Efficiency:

Positive movement was shown in Sydney's behavior and performance at school. He did not seem to show any definite evidence of upward movement in communicating with the case worker. His response at the end of the ten interviews and at the termination of her relationship with him was void of any overt emotional reaction. Whether he showed further resentment around having to repeat in order to be understood was not stated. His home adjustment denoted upward movement.

Disabling Habits and Conditions:

During the ten interviews, there was no specific indication of change in Sydney's articulation. It was noted that he glanced at his foster mother for possible verification before responding to the case worker's questioning. In regard to daydreaming,
the record did not indicate either definite, partial or complete movement. There was a general statement that his adjustment at school had improved greatly.

**Verbalized Attitudes and Understandings:**

Sydney stated that he did not want a new case worker. He added that he would cooperate with one before his worker started therapy with him. Though no definite verbalization was made to substantiate a change in attitude, he was relating rather well with his case worker. He did not, however, show any overt aggressive behavior in this area. In reply to the case worker's question, Sydney stated that he would be glad to return to school after the holidays because he had enjoyed going to school.

**Environmental Circumstances:**

No change in evidence, however, an adoption plan was recommended so that Sydney could be assured of a more permanent home.

The possible effect of pressures from the immediate environment or anxieties around possible future change in relation to speech impediment was pointed up in these cases which follow.

**Deborah and Dora**

**Case Illustration**

Deborah and Dora, eight-year-old twins, were conceived out of wedlock. Their mother, an adolescent, was sexually attacked by a 52 year old "friend of the family" while baby-sitting. Two years later, the twins' mother gave birth to another illegitimate baby whose father was a young man she had loved and had expected to marry. Learning many derogatory things about him, on his release from prison, she decided not to marry him.

The twins were known to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children when they were two months old. The twins' mother seemingly had feelings
of rejection and inferiority resulting from her mother's feelings that she was an inadequate parent. It seems that the mother of the twins always felt that her deceased sister was the preferred child in her family.

Dora and Deborah's mother preferred the younger sister to them, expressing a desire to care for the younger sister while requesting placement for the twins. When placed in their present foster home, Dora and Deborah were extremely nervous, undernourished and seemingly were unintentionally destructive.

During the ten interviews, the case worker followed a continuous treatment plan focusing on the possible background reason for the lack of improvement in the speech impediment. The case worker wondered about the seemingly compulsive and perfectionistic tendencies of the foster mother. She considered the fact that the pressures therefrom may have been a causative factor in Dora and Deborah's speech defect. As a result, follow-up psychological testing was arranged. Deborah was rated in the dull normal range of intelligence. The report suggested that she had an unusual "interest in the affairs of older people and an "over concern" with sex material.

The psychologist reported that with Dora, there is "question of feeling toward the foster mother." However, "there is essential adjustment to this," as it is "good" if Dora can be the "frightening person" through play.

Deborah and Dora's Christmas dolls which they had had for a year remained in the high chairs which came with them. This seemingly had caused feelings of resentment. Further, the children indicated that they had only been allowed to pull their two-year-old foster brother around "in the house" in his new wagon. They appeared to be somewhat resentful of this. The case worker gave sympathetic understanding and played a supportive role. In addition, she explained that possibly if the foster mother thought it safe, they might be allowed at a later time to push their two-year-old foster brother in his wagon outdoors. The twins showed unhappiness and resentment from disappointment around not reciting on a scheduled program. The case worker let them express their feelings and complimented them for desiring to appear publicly.
Case Analysis for Deborah

Adaptive Efficiency:

Prior to the ten interviews, there was some minor problem at school. This problem situation subsided. Toward the close of the ten interviews, the psychologist reported there is a problem possibly around the father figure. He stated that there is a good bit of aggressiveness. The psychologist stated, "adjustment ... better."

Disabling Habits and Conditions:

At the beginning of the ten interviews, there was a marked speech difficulty. Very little or no improvement was discernable.

Verbalized Attitudes and Understanding:

During the interim of therapy, positive movement was seen in regard to the feeling tone of the following statement, "Oh Mommie, please don't show her that." This plea was made when the foster mother mentioned showing the case worker a picture which was made when Deborah's appearance was evidently not pleasing to her. No further statements indicating self-consciousness were in evidence.

No positive movement was indicated in the "choral type" verbal responses of Deborah and her two sisters. Choral type refers to a pattern of togetherness in speaking which possibly could be taken as an indication that they had been rehearsed to give the same answer.

Environmental Circumstances:

There was no evidence of change with an exception of possibly more willingness on the part of her natural mother and her maternal grandmother to accept some responsibility for her material needs.

Case Analysis for Dora

Adaptive Efficiency:

No definite upward movement was noted in regard to Dora's seeming feelings around the possible
pressures which the foster mother put on her. (To-
ward the end of the ten interviews, the agency psy-
chologist reported that there was some question
around Dora's feeling that the foster mother was
harsh.) He added that he observed "essential ad-
justment" to this.

Disabling Habits and Conditions:

No definite improvement seen in Dora's speech
impediment. The psychologist suggested further that
there was some anxiety on the part of Dora, around
the possibility of being taken home to live with her
natural mother or maternal grandmother.

Verbalized Attitudes and Understanding:

Toward the end of the interview period, Dora ver-
balized bringing out her feelings around not being
allowed to play with her year-old-doll and not being
allowed to pull her foster brother about in his new
wagon (with the exception of indoors.) There was
no change noticed in this attitude before the period
was terminated. There was partial positive change
noted in her concert or choral type of speaking with
her sisters toward the close of the ten interviews.

Environmental Circumstances:

There was no evidence of change with an exception
of possibly more willingness on the part of her na-
tural mother and her maternal grandmother, to accept
some responsibility for her material needs.

If treatment which points up the "cause and effect"
sequence is planned, the child has a very good opportunity to
experience positive movement in his personality adjustment.

Leontine Young states,

In case work we are concerned primarily
with social and psychological objectives and
facts, that will enable us to help a particular
person with the problems that are burdening his
life.¹

¹Leontine Young, "Diagnosis As a Creative Process,"
If case work is given and if the results are good, the foster parents are helped to accept rather than reject "foster or boarding children" who are under the care and supervision of placement agencies, such as the Bureau for Child Care.

If the child is amenable to therapy, there is a possibility of positive adjustment. It is necessary for the environmental circumstances to be conducive to positive movement. If so, the symptomatic problem behavior which is an outgrowth of the child's emotional or feeling tone may be partially or definitely eradicated. In some cases, however, there is no positive or upward movement.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Immature, irresponsible and inadequate parents often neglect their children. In many instances, inevitably, these children have to be cared for by protective agencies. Separation from the natural parents, plus getting adjusted to new home situations often causes problem behavior or behavior which may be the symptom of an emotional maladjustment.

Case work therapy can possibly result in improvement in the ability of these children to make adequate adjustments. Some factors which influence the amount of therapy which may be given are the personality pattern, environmental circumstances, and the constitutional factors.

Well planned treatment can be beneficial to the child. It can be given directly (to the child) or indirectly (to the members of the child's foster and natural families).

This study attempted to describe the behavioral changes of six children who comprised the sample. Four categories for judging were used; adaptive efficiency, disabling habits and conditions, verbalized attitudes and understanding, and environmental circumstances.
The cases described in the study were cases of children who were wards of the Bureau for Child Care, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They had been admitted between March, 1953 and February, 1955. Therapy had been given during a minimum of ten interviews. The sample included four girls and two boys.

Since its beginning in 1927, the Bureau for Child Care has been concerned with growth and change. Its purpose is to care for, protect, and provide for the welfare of needy children.

The cases described in the study included children in whom there were indications of hostility, insecurity, resentment, fear and nervousness. Also, the cases included clients with speech defects and who were showing a lack of progress in their academic work. Some of the symptomatic behavior shown was destructiveness, stealing, fighting, name calling and regression in toilet habits.

In five of the cases, there were positive behavioral changes in the adaptive efficiency of the clients. These changes occurred at school in academic work, and in the ability of the children to relate to the teacher and to their classmates. In the case of one child there was at first possible upward movement, while later, he showed regression in his behavior.

The second category, disabling habits and conditions, included the speech impediment. Of the six cases, three had speech difficulties. No definite positive change was seen in the articulation. Specifically, in two of the cases, no reaction was indicated as to school adjustment, other than these speech defects.
General improvement was seen in two cases. This improvement included the alleviation of overt behavior symptoms, such as name calling and inattentiveness. In one case, where the foster mother’s attitude seemed to have contributed to the problem, the child showed positive movement at one period and regression later.

In the area of verbalized attitudes and understandings, positive movement was seen in three cases. Partial improvement was indicated in one case, and there was no evidence of change in two cases. Under this category, there was definite improvement shown in one of the cases, in regard to the client-case worker relationship.

The criteria for judging which included the category of environmental circumstances, showed improvement in three cases. This improvement was specifically concerned with the foster mother’s arriving at a better and a more understanding attitude concerning the reactions of the child. One case indicated no change with the exception of a recommendation for adoption. Regarding two cases, there was a possible indication of more interest having been shown on the part of the natural mother and maternal grandmother.

The writer concluded that case work services were valuable in helping to rehabilitate the children who had been placed in foster homes. A general conclusion was that children who have been neglected often show some problem behavior or some type of physical or emotional reaction.
This study conclusively points up positive improvement in the home and school adjustment of five of the clients. The improvement was manifested by the client's experiencing decidedly more positive relationships with other individuals. There were sharp indications of the change or upward movement shown in the cases of two of the clients who had shown the largest number of symptoms of potentially "serious problem behavior". Further, the researcher concluded that in the case where regression was noted, there was a good prognosis, as the foster mother in that particular case had begun to see how her attitude might be affecting the child.

In addition, it was felt that the three children who had the speech impediment and the one who indicated general regression in behavior should by all means have the benefit of continuing, long term case work therapy.

The writer concluded that further study of behavioral changes could be of service to the Bureau for Child Care, as it might serve as a yardstick for judging the value and quality of it's case work services to the children who are under it's supervision. Information from such studies could be used in the interpretation of the value of case work treatment to the many "publics" of social work.
SCHEDULE

NAME ________________________________

AGE ______

SEX ______

I  Siblings

II  Parental background
    Why the child was indicating neglect?

III  Physical condition of the child

IV  What are the dynamics of the child's personality pattern?

V  What overt problem or symptomatic behavior was the child presenting?

A. Adaptive efficiency

1. Relationships with peers (at home, at school and in the community)

2. Relationships with adults (at home, at school and in the community)

B. Disabling habits and conditions

1. Physical

2. Psychological

3. Social

C. Verbalized attitudes and understanding

1. What was said?

2. How was it said?

3. What seemingly prompted this verbalization?

VI  What changes occurred in A, B, and C above and in D as follows?

D. Environmental circumstances

1. Was there any physical change in the child's environment?

2. Was there any change in the attitude of individuals in regard to the child?
The Common Core of Movement Criteria

1. Adaptive Efficiency. Evidence from social behavior that the level of efficiency at which the client is functioning has changed from near helplessness or nearly complete ineffectiveness to achieving about what is typically expected of individuals of the client's age, sex, and social class.

2. Disabling Habits and Conditions. Evidence from social behavior that the client has changed from a person with severe and obvious disabling habits and conditions at opening to one in whom disabling habits and conditions are no longer affecting his life at closing.

3. Verbalized Attitudes and Understanding. Evidence from verbal sources that the client has changed from a person relatively blind to the needs and traits of others, to the disturbing and conflictful motives within himself, and to the realities of his situation, to one who can recognize both personal and situational realities and can use this understanding in planning; that he has learned to recognize some of the relationships between his own disabling habits and factors in his life history; and that he has learned to recognize when personal problems are beyond his own resources and how and where to seek expert help within the resources of the community. In the case of children, of course, an abstract grasp of motives and their relations is not
to be expected, and the verbal evidence need consist only of a marked change in the way that the child looks at his situation as seen from his verbalizations or inferred from his behavior.

4. **Environmental Circumstances.** Evidence of marked improvement in such aspects of a client's situation as his social relations, physical environment, and economic circumstances. This category includes changes in the behavior of other people toward the client and gains to a client from improvements in the adaptive efficiency, the disabling factors or the understanding of other members of his family. Such changes constitute one of the important ways in which members of a family gain indirectly from the treatment of the principal client(s) in a family case. The evidence for such gains should be clear. Moreover, since this scale is concerned with change as such, improvements in circumstances which are not attributable to casework must also be considered in making the judgment of movement.\(^1\)

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

According to the Department of Welfare of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the words "neglected child" include:

1. A child who is abandoned by his or her parent, guardian, custodian or legal representative.

2. A child who lacks proper parental care by reason of the fault or habits of his or her parent, guardian, custodian or legal representative.

3. A child whose parent, guardian, custodian, or legal representative neglects or refuses to provide proper or necessary subsistence, education, medical or surgical care, or other care necessary for his or her health, morals or well being.

4. A child whose parent, guardian, custodian or legal representative neglects or refuses to provide the special care made necessary by his or her mental condition.

5. A child who is found in a disreputable place or associates with vagrant, vicious or immoral persons.
6. A child who engages in an occupation, or in a situation, dangerous to life or limb, or injurious to the health or morals of himself, herself, or others.¹

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