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"The turning point" worker's role in handling resistance in an adolescent group at Wharton Centre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Madeline Elizabeth Robinson

Atlanta University

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"THE TURNING POINT"

WORKER'S ROLE IN HANDLING RESISTANCE IN AN ADOLESCENT GROUP AT WHARTON CENTRE, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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

BY
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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Study

Modern Social Work is placing more emphasis upon the need for people to have satisfying relationships as they strive toward the achievement of personal and social goals. According to Charlotte Towles, the need for satisfying human relationships is basic to the physical, mental and spiritual well being of the individual.¹

Throughout life, man has to depend upon those around him in his struggle to survive. However, he seeks more than mere survival; for, he needs acceptance of himself as well as approval and affection from others in order to maintain emotional and physical security. Through satisfying relationships, man can be helped to live creatively and to achieve a maximum degree of growth and development; without such relationships, personal and social growth is retarded.

Resistance is one of the factors in the human personality which is capable of blocking personal and social growth. Within the past ten years, social work has recognized the need to know more about resistance and has drawn heavily on the findings of psychiatry, psychology and social science in attaining greater understanding of this phenomenon of human behavior. These findings point up the fact that resistance is a part of the ambivalent nature of the individual which wants and needs to depend upon and also be independent of other people. These positive and

negative feelings are constantly in conflict and in order for the individual to make satisfactory personal and social adjustments, this conflict has to be resolved.

Social Group Work, one of the major processes of Social Work, seeks to help individuals and groups to fulfill their need for satisfying relationships through the group experience. Many group work agencies assume that people who participate in their leisure time programs bring with them only positive feelings because they come voluntarily. According to Hazel Osborn, people bring both positive and negative feelings to these experiences despite the voluntary nature of the agency. It seems evident that the group worker must be able to recognize, accept and handle the ambivalent behavior of members of the group in order to really help them get the most out of their group experiences.

During adolescence, ambivalence becomes more pronounced and harder to handle than at any other period of life. The adolescent needs help from others during this great period of ambivalence and indecision and most often turns to the group work agency in his effort to find some constructive way of releasing his positive and negative feelings. While working with adolescent girls on block field work at Wharton Centre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, the writer became aware of the ambivalent behavior of members in her groups.

The writer's recognition of retarded movement within one of her groups challenged the writer to explore possible reasons for its impeded progress. She felt that the resistance factor in ambivalence was

one of the outstanding causes of this impeded progress. Since the writer was experiencing the problem of resistance in her group, she decided to study a sample adolescent group with a view toward attaining a clearer understanding of resistance and to find possible ways of handling it in order to help the group move closer to attaining their and the agency's goals.

Purpose of Study

The purposes of this study were (1) to describe an adolescent friendship group, its social setting and its program and (2) to cite evidences of resistances to authority and to peers and the worker's role in handling these resistances with a view toward indicating the need of adolescent groups to deal with their resistances in order to become groups that will enable their members to satisfy some of their needs more adequately.

Methods of Procedure

The material used for this study was obtained from face sheet material, group process records written by Mrs. Lillian Berditj, and other pertinent data on file at The Wharton Centre. These data were supplemented by interviews with the executive of the agency and by pertinent published and unpublished material.

Scope and Limitations

This study was limited to the selection of one adolescent friendship group as a sample. This group was composed of girls between the ages of thirteen and fifteen who met at The Wharton Centre, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania during the program year from October, 1951 to May, 1952. It was further limited to the worker's activity in recognizing and handling resistances to authority as represented by the worker and resistances to
peers in the first half of the program year which covered the period October, 1951 to January, 1952. The group worker who worked with this group was a second year student at the University of Pennsylvania and was being supervised by the program director of the agency.
CHAPTER II

AN ADOLESCENT GROUP

The Teenette Club, the selected sample group for this study, will be described in terms of, some of the normal needs of the adolescent, the social setting, identifying data and program of the sample group.

The Adolescent Girl

Adolescence is a stage of growth which cannot be avoided if the individual is to reach adulthood. The development of many physical, emotional and social changes cause a great deal of ambivalence and indecision in this stage of growth.

Physiological developments associated with sexual maturity take place during this period. The onset of these developments is usually referred to as puberty. Puberty in the female is marked by a rapid phase of growth and changes in the body proportions, widening of the hips, enlargement of the breasts, growth of pubic hair, and the onset of menstruation.\(^1\) The rapid physical changes taking place within adolescent girls cause them a great deal of concern because they want to feel that they are attractive and they want very much to be accepted by the opposite sex. They need knowledge and understanding of menstruation and of their ambivalent desires for sex gratification, which society as a whole frown upon at this time. Many of their ideas about sex conflict with those of the larger society.

The adolescent girl has several emotional needs for which she seeks

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gratification. Of primary importance is the need for independence and the need to establish herself as a person. The need for independence is a chief source of conflict in the adolescent, for she is striving to establish herself as an independent person and to emancipate herself from her parents and all figures which represent authority. Although she wants independence, the adult world is complicated and causes her to wish for the continued serenity of parental protection. The adolescent wants independence, but fears the responsibilities which are involved in becoming independent.

The social needs of the adolescent girl play an important role in her struggle to grow up. She needs to establish relationships with her peers, members of the opposite sex and to extend her social contacts within the larger community. "Her relationships with people are contradictory, for at one moment she may hate intensely and the next, she may love equally as intensely. Her relationship to her peer group, confused as it may be, is less emotionally charged than her relationship with older people."

It is during this period that she has to accept and learn a socially-approved adult feminine role. The deeper emotions must be shifted from parents and siblings to a member of the opposite sex. In this shift, the adolescent fears losing the love of her parents and also fears loss of acceptance from members of her peer group.

The peer group is of primary importance to adolescents; for in the peer group, they can talk over common interest and problems with others.

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of their own age. The group acts as a testing ground for their positive and negative feelings, it controls their thinking and behavior, which is often contrary to standards of their families and of society.

If a person successfully "recovers" from adolescence, he will emerge with new competence in several vital areas of life... If he has by the end of adolescence pulled up into himself, as it were, the experience of having succeeded reasonably as an infant, toddler, and juvenile, as pre-adolescent and adolescent, he can go ahead as a human being who has matured enough so that he can mature more.¹

The adolescent girl, who is confronted with many physical, emotional, and social changes at this stage of her development, becomes a challenge to any group leader who works with her. In order to help the adolescent girl to develop into a mature adult person, a group leader must be aware of the needs brought about by these changes and strive to provide opportunities which will help to satisfy these needs.

Social Setting

The social pressures to which individuals are exposed play an important part in their personality integration and social adjustment. Social pressures have special bearing on the adolescent in our society, for heavy demands are made upon him without providing him with ready-made behavior patterns to follow. This makes it difficult for him to make choices in this period of great indecision and confusion.

Neighborhood—The Teenettes lived in a sub-standard neighborhood in North Philadelphia "within eight city blocks between Eighteenth and Twenty-Sixth Streets and Diamond and Thompson Streets. Within these blocks reside approximately fifty thousand people, of whom approximately

¹Bonaro W. Overstreet, Understanding Fear In Ourselves and Others (New York, 1951), p. 56.
nine thousand are children between the ages of six and eighteen.\textsuperscript{1} This neighborhood is predominantly a residential section with a number of small commercial enterprises. Housing presents one of the most acute problems of the neighborhood; for forty-five percent of the houses are sub-standard. They are single-family dwellings which have been illegally converted into multiple dwellings, of which eighty percent are tenant-occupied. The health conditions are poor, and the mortality and morbidity rates are high. The families living within this area are mostly low-income people, forty percent making up to two hundred dollars per month.\textsuperscript{2}

The following description, which was given in Operation Street Corner\textsuperscript{3} a recent pamphlet of the agency, presents this picture of the neighborhood:

\begin{quote}
It is a hostile and suspicious atmosphere, where children are born and bred in ugly houses along trash-strewn streets. Home-owners look "down their noses" at renters. Thirty-five renters may occupy a house with facilities for one average family. Children are sent out to play and told, "Don't come home until I tell you." Every other street corner is marked by a drinking joint. Candy stores, beauty shops, or cleaners may be "fronts" for a racket. The gang fills the need for "belonging" and security that home gives most of us. The big sleek cars parked behind trash cans are owned by numbers bankers or racketeers. Fathers are often mere transients in their one-room homes. Switch-blade knives are worn as casually as wrist watches. A little boy is used to deliver dope or liquor and no one says a word in his defense when the police find it on his person. Gang life starts with "block life" in babyhood, when children eat, sleep, and play in the block, until they graduate to the street-corner gang.
\end{quote}


This densely populated area is characterized by family instability, poor health, and hazardous living conditions. It is an area of vice and crime, cluttered with taverns and joints, where teen-age gangs form in search for "a sense of belonging." This is a neighborhood where social pressures make it extremely difficult for personal and social adjustment. Paul Landis summarizes the predicament in which adolescents who live in such a disorganized community find themselves in the following statement:

Adolescents and youth coming to maturity in a setting of disorganization have difficulty in finding clear-cut norms for behavior which can be accepted as a basis for personality integration.³

The Agency—In 1931, Wharton Centre, a social settlement, was founded in the previously described neighborhood in order to give some constructive direction to the people living in this area where abundant energies had been channeled into crime, violence, and other actions deemed unsocial and illegal.²

The beginning programs of the agency were largely recreational; for at this time it was felt that the needs could be met through such a program. As the philosophy and practice of social group work began to place more emphasis upon meeting individual needs, the Agency set out to professionalize its staff and move toward rendering a greater service to individuals through the group.

The purpose of Wharton Centre is to "provide informal education,


recreation and cultural opportunities and services for people through the group experiences. It places emphasis upon using those mediums to help individuals use the group experience for growth and development and to create a sense of neighborhood by helping people to become aware of and work on specific neighborhood problems which affect them.

The staff at Wharton Centre is an inter-racial body of professional workers, students, volunteers, and specialists. All staff members are supervised by trained professional workers. Through supervision, the staff and volunteer workers continuously increase their sensitivity to what is happening to its members as they interact with one another in the group experience. Through supervision and creative staff meetings, there is continuous planning in an effort to keep abreast of the membership and community needs. The adolescent was given special attention in the agency's planning and the writer feels that the agency geared its teen-age program toward meeting the needs of adolescents of this particular neighborhood.

The teen-age program of Wharton Centre provided a meeting place and leadership for interest groups, mass activities, and friendship groups. Among the interest groups were Art, Ceramics, and Modern Dance. During 1951 mass activities were held weekly; however, at present they are held monthly. The weekly mass activity which was in operation during 1951 was called Keen-teen and was governed by a representative body of teenagers supported by agency workers.

There were more friendship groups in the Agency than any other. These groups are of primary importance to the emotional life of the

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adolescent and serve as stepping stones to wider participation in the agency and community.

The Group

The Teenette Club was a Friendship Group of Negro girls between the ages of thirteen and fifteen who were active participants in the teenage program at Wharton Centre during the program year October, 1951 through May, 1952. Although members of the Teenettes participated in other phases of the program, the Friendship Group seemed to have been of primary interest to them; for it was a means through which the members could work through many of their impending conflicts and continue to grow, develop and have fun together.

**Formation**—According to Grace Coyle the process of formation includes three elements; a bond or a purpose, selection of members, and a structure or organization.¹

The Teenettes had a common bond in that they were of the same sex and race, approximately the same ages, and led similar lives within the same neighborhood. They had no stated purpose for forming the group, but they did express a desire to have fun together. The worker expressed that one of the strongest ties which held the group together at the beginning of the year was "special boy friends" in the "Caps" an agency boy's club. This interest in the "Caps" served as an indication of their need to extend their relationship with members of the opposite sex.

Chart 1 shows that eleven girls came to the first meeting. Ten of these girls were members of the Teenette Club the previous year. Five additional girls joined the club as the year progressed, making the total

### CHART 1

**MEMBERS OF THE SAMPLE GROUP BY AGE, DATE ENROLLED OFFICE HELD AND AUTONOMOUS GROUP DURING THE PROGRAM YEAR 1951-52**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Date Enrolled</th>
<th>Office Held Oct-Jan</th>
<th>Office Held Jan-May</th>
<th>Autonomous Group Affiliation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alma</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elmira</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td>Assistant Chaplain</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Panchoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernice</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Tellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane**</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td></td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Panchoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dona</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assistant Treasurer</td>
<td>Tellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janice</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td>Bus.Man.</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Tellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadine</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td>Sgt. at Arms</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Panchoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Panchoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10-1-51</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Bus.Man.</td>
<td>Panchoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connie</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10-8-51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tellers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10-15-51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Panchoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerry</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10-29-51</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miriam**</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2-25-52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Panchoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty**</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2-29-52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tellers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Wharton Centre files.

**New Members.
enrollment sixteen. Of the five additional enrollees, two were new to the club. These two girls were invited to join in order to fill the vacancies that were created when two of the members left the club. Each girl was brought in by one or the other sub-group.

At the time of registration, three of the members were thirteen; eight were fourteen and five were fifteen; however, two of these five did not register until February, at which time several of the other members had become fifteen.

All except two of the girls were members of Autonomous or "gang" groups that met in the neighborhood. Autonomous groups were a part of the neighborhood pattern. Children in this neighborhood needed the support of each other out of their need for protection from other gangs.

Though there was rivalry between these two groups outside of the agency, they came together as one group in an effort to meet their need to associate with members of the opposite sex. By coming together as one group, they had enough members to form a club in the agency. For purposes of study, these autonomous groups were called the Panchoes and the Tellers. The Panchoes had nine members and the Tellers had five members.

Most groups create for themselves an organizational structure through which responsibilities may be delegated and controls set up. At the first meeting of the club year, the Teenettes elected officers. A president, vice president, secretary, treasurer, sergeant-at-arms, business manager and chaplain were elected. They did not have a Constitution or By-laws; however, they made rules as the need arose in the group.

At the beginning of the New Year, the group elected a second set of officers. Four members who held office during the first half of the year
were re-elected to an office in the second half of the year. Only one member held the same office throughout the year. During the second half of the year, none of the Tellers were elected or re-elected; all of the officers were from the Panchoes. (See Chart 1)

During the first half of the year, most of the officers did not perform their duties responsibly. In the early meetings, the president showed an inability to carry out her responsibilities and an inability to accept help from the worker. She was exceptionally loud and boisterous and often assumed the role of member. The chaplain was continuously late to each meeting. The vice-president and the secretary were the most responsible officers during this half of the year. The second set of officers seemed to have carried out their role more efficiently than the first. These officers assumed more responsibility for control of the group.

Interpersonal Relationships—-As members interact with one another and a worker in the group experience, there is an interplay between their positive and negative feelings. This interaction involves giving and taking in order to achieve a common goal. "The social forces within any group are caused by the interplay of the positive and negative feelings of the members toward each other, toward the program content and toward the worker."¹

The reciprocal relationships taking place within the group play an important part in determining the growth and development of individuals within the group and that of the group as a whole. Within any group,

there are patterns of relationships which are constantly changing. However, some of these patterns remain fairly constant and visible. In explaining these patterns scientifically, group workers have utilized sociological terminology. In the group situation, one member who tends to stay to himself is known as a monad or an isolate; two members who accept each other mutually are called a dyad; three members together in a group are called a triad. Another popular pattern within a large group is known as a sub-group. The members of the subgroup cluster around an indigenous or natural leader.\(^1\)

In the Teenette Club there were two dominant and distinct sub-groups which were apparently formed on the basis of their autonomous organizations which met outside the agency. These two groups were known as the Panchoes and the Tellers.

The Panchoes included nine girls, Jackie, Evelyn, Dona, Elmira, Nadine, Willie, Cynthia, Rosa and Marian. Jackie was the indigenous leader of this group even though she was one of the youngest members.

The closely knit members within this sub-group were Jackie, Evelyn, Nadine and Willie. Rosa was mutually attracted to Janet; however, her relationship with other members of the sub-group was not close. Elmira was accepted by all of the members of this group, but she seemed to have been strongly attached to Jackie and was accepted by her also. Dona was an isolate in this group though she was accepted by it. She seemed to have been seeking to be accepted by Jackie, however, in the beginning of the year, she was rejected by her.

The Tellers included five members, Bernice, Janice, Jane, Carol and

\(^1\)Grace Coyl, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 91-92.
Betty. Bernice seemed to have been the indigenous leader although both Janice and Jane were also strong vocal members. These three formed a triad within the group. Carol was not closely attached to any particular person. Betty came into the club during the second half of the year and seemed to have been closely attached to Janice.

There were two members in the Teenettes who did not belong to either sub-group; however, they were accepted by the group-as-a-whole. These two girls were Alma and Jerry. Though they belonged to neither sub-group, they tended to lean toward and support the Tellers. As long as they remained in the club, there tended to be a balance of power between the two sub-groups. The two sub-groups were in constant conflict with each other and with the worker.

During the first of the program year, there was continuous concealed conflict in the group. Significant examples of this conflict will be presented in Chapter III. When the Teenettes were able to share their positive and negative feelings with one another and the worker, the conflict was no longer concealed and it became easier to work with. It was not until the worker was successful in establishing a positive relationship with the group that she was able to strengthen and guide relationships toward the attainment of experiences which were more satisfying.

During the second half of the program year, it was clearly shown that the positive relationship that the worker had established with members of the group and the group-as-a-whole was sound enough to enable the group to plan and promote more meaningful program.

The Program

There is no set pattern for program in a friendship group; for, program evolves as the result of the interest and needs which the group
members express plus those which the worker becomes conscious of as she helps the group and its members to grow and develop.

The worker's awareness of the psychological and sociological needs of the Teenettes, enabled her to assist the club in planning, promoting and enjoying informal educational and recreational opportunities which satisfied many of these needs.

The program of the Teenette Club that evolved during the year indicated six of the areas of adolescent needs as formulated by Havighurst.\(^1\) Under each of these needs the writer will indicate the phase of program with provided an opportunity for satisfaction of that particular need.

The Need to Achieve New and Mature Relations with Age Mates of Both Sexes.

1. Parties and dances with other clubs in the agency and in other agencies outside the neighborhood.
2. Boosters for the "Caps" at their Basketball games.
3. Weekly participation in the Keen-Teen mass activity.

The Need to Achieve a Feminine Social Role.

1. Dancing after club meeting which contributed toward the improvement of their social skills and graces.
2. Discussions on appropriate dress and grooming for dating, parties and dances.
3. Planning and promoting for parties which included selection and instruction of hostesses, preparation and serving of refreshments; preparing guest lists, invitations and decorations.

\(^1\)Robert J. Havighurst, *Developmental Tasks and Education* (New York, 1953), pp. 33-71.
The Need for Accepting One's Physique and Using the Body Effectively.

1. Informal instructions on posture and carriage.
2. Swimming party.
3. Film and discussion of menstruation.

The Need for Achieving Emotional Independence of Parents and Other Adults.

1. Attended the Mental Hygiene Program sponsored by the agency. It was around the discussion regarding attending this program that the Teenettes clearly indicated that they did not want their parents to be present.


1. Election of officers.
2. Officer training.
3. Preparation of agenda.
4. Serving on committees.

The Need for Acquiring a Set of Values and an Ethical System as a Guide to Behavior.

1. Devotions at the beginning of each meeting.
2. Discussions on Sex Relations with consultant.

Some of these activities, which provided opportunities for growth and development of the Teenette club and its members, were consciously planned as part of the overall Agency program for teen-agers. The worker interpreted the overall Agency program to the members of the club and encouraged them to participate in these affairs. Other phases of the program of the Teenette club was planned by the group with the guidance and support of the worker who consciously directed program toward
satisfying both individual and group needs. In stimulating and developing program, the worker used the following "tools" of Social Group Work.

1. Marginal interviews
2. Resource materials and people in the community
3. Appropriate media of expression such as: the dance (social and creative), parties, trips, games, songs, and discussions.

During the first half of the year, the program content of the group was limited, the members had a Hallowe'en Party, a dance skit for the Keen-Teen talent show, and a Christmas Party. The group initiated very little planning for these affairs and the worker had to hold them firmly to their responsibilities. The writer believes that conflict in interpersonal relationships contributed to the inertia of the group. The writer further believes that resistance was the major factor of the conflict within the Teenette club which hindered the growth and development of the group and its members during the first half of the year.

Chapter III will point up resistances in the Teenette Club and the worker's activity in handling these resistances.
CHAPTER III

THE WORKER'S ACTIVITY IN HANDLING RESISTANCE TO RELATIONSHIPS

During adolescence, resistance becomes more intensified than in any other period of the life cycle. In working with adolescent groups, resistance is one of the major obstacles that must be dealt with in order to enable these groups to move toward the attainment of satisfying experiences. Although resistance becomes more pronounced in adolescence, it is experienced by all human beings as they face the problems of living. It is a part of the ambivalent nature of the human personality which is characterized by a desire to change on the one hand and a fear of change on the other. Resistance is vividly described by Gisela Konopka as being:

Part of the general psychological make-up of every human being. Our whole growing-up process is a constant adaptation to change during which time we resist it. The child really enjoys being weaned, but he resists giving up the comfort of the mother's breast. The adolescent wants to grow up, but he fears the responsibility of independence. We want to learn about new ideas, want to know new people and places, but we are afraid of them, we resist. Resistance is part of the basic ambivalence of our emotional make-up.1

Resistance is the negative factor in ambivalence and is influenced by sociological as well as psychological factors. It may be expressed directly or indirectly. Hazel Osborn describes direct resistance as responses which are expressed verbally or by being openly destructive.

such as swearing, fighting, breaking furniture et cet
era. Indirect res-
tistance is more subtle behavior such as forgetting, missing the point,
being late, postponement, evasion, compliance to rules while withdrawing
from any creative involvement in program et cet
era.¹

For the purposes of this study resistance was defined as the way in
which adolescent group members conceal their conflict of wanting and not
wanting to make decisions relative to participating in a new group ex-
p
erience.

After examining the needs of adolescents, the sample group, its
social setting and its program, the writer felt that resistance was one
of the major factors that hindered movement in the sample group. Re-
sistance in this group seemed to have been most clearly evident in the
area of relationships referring specifically to authority as represented
by the worker and to their peers.

It may be noted that when members are resistive they may curtail
their own happiness within the group as well as that of others. Knowing
that resistances occur in all phases of group life because of the nature
of the individual, the Social Group Worker has a responsibility to recog-
nize such resistances and handle them in such a way that members derive
some satisfactions through the group experience.

The way in which the Social Group Worker consciously uses herself and
program media plays an important part in the ebb and flow of growth and
development of a group and its members. The Social Group Worker must be
able to assess, understand and evaluate the psychological and socio-
logical factors inherent in the situation with which she is working and

¹Hazel Osborn, op. cit.
make conscious use of this knowledge in all of her planning and practice.

In this chapter, the writer will indicate some of the resistances to relationships in the sample group that occurred in the first half of the year and also the worker's role in handling these resistances. Resistance to authority and resistance to peer relationships will be separated for the purpose of this study; however, in the actual group experience these resistances and others take place simultaneously.

Resistance to Authority

The members of the Teenette club demonstrated an ambivalent attitude toward authority which is normal behavior for adolescents. At times they showed rejection to authority and at other times they seemed to demand control from the worker who represented authority to them. The rejection of authority seemed to have been part of their unconscious need to overthrow parental control. In addition, their ambivalent attitude may have been intensified by the values and norms of their disorganized community. Their attitude toward the police as an authority had been one of hostility because of the painful experiences which they may have had with the "Law" in the neighborhood. The teaching methods of the schools in the neighborhood tended to be rigid and authoritative as a means of controlling large numbers of pupils in the overcrowded classrooms. These were some of the factors which may have contributed to the ambivalent attitude of the group toward authority causing them to resist their new group worker.

Resistance is inherent in any new situation and a group worker meeting a new group may expect to meet some resistance in the initial meetings. The worker must be consciously aware of and seek to accept the fact that the members may feel both positively and negatively about her.
The way in which she uses herself at the initial meeting plays an important part in her ability to build and maintain a relationship in future meetings.

Excerpt I illustrates the first attempts of the worker to break through the intense resistance of the members in the Teenette club.

Excerpt I - 10/1/51

Half of the group was already assembled in the library when I entered the room; the others were in the process of being registered...When I entered, there was no stop in the noise; in fact, very few of the girls turned their heads to look at me. I smiled and exchanged greetings with those few I had met earlier and quietly proceeded to take the names and addresses of the girls. Although I stimulated conversation with the girls as I took down the names and addresses of the girls, they, for the most part, dismissed me from their attention after giving me the information which I needed and resumed their loud talk across the room discussions. When I had taken down the last name and address, I pulled up a chair in the "somewhat, of a circle" that already existed and attempted to get the groups attention. After several attempts at this and with the help of Bernice, I succeeded in quieting the group down to the point where I could be heard.

The group members ignored the worker's presence by talking loud and boisterously to one another. She made three attempts to break through their protective covering. She exchanged greetings with the members, attempted to stimulate conversation with individuals and attempted to move into the group physically. Despite the rejection of the group, the worker continued to extend herself to it until finally she was able to reach one member who was a strong indigenous leader whose help she accepted in getting the attention of the group.

As the meeting progressed, the worker seemed to have found it necessary to set controls after getting the group to listen to her.

Excerpt II - 10/1/51

Then I smiled and asked if I might give my little "lecture No. 1."
They giggled and said I could. I went on to say that I was to work with them this year and would, therefore, not work for them; a good year meant that they were going to have to put a lot of themselves into their group. I added that this was their group not mine and that I didn't give a damn what they decided they wanted to do as long as they didn't break any of the rules of the agency. I said that I hoped, however, that they were interested enough in their group to make it a good one so that we could all have a lot of fun together, but that it was up to them, not me.

The worker clarified her role with the group. She let the members know that they had a responsibility in seeing that their club year was successful, and that she was going to work with them and not for them. She seemed to have felt that it was necessary to forcefully get this across to the members which was suggested in her use of damn which also tended to imply the worker's resistance to the group. Despite this, the worker clarified her role and that of the group to an extent to which she was able to help the group to make some move toward determining their own course of action.

In this first meeting of the group, the worker was able to establish a working relationship with the group; however, in the meetings to follow the members continued to resist the worker subtly. She was no longer just a group worker, but an adult figure upon which to project their negative feelings toward authority. The next set of excerpts point up the way in which the worker tried to help the group to "come to grips" with authority.

Excerpt III - 10/8/51

Jane and Jackie asked me if they could go to the bathroom and when I said yes, the whole group got up to leave. I stopped them at the door saying that when the first two girls returned two more could go and added that we still had several things to discuss which we couldn't if they went to the bathroom. The girls seated themselves around the table once more and looked at me...I pointed out that they had done no planning for their next meeting. At this point Willie asked if the group could have a Hallowe'en Party. I said that it sounded like a fine idea and the girls excitedly began to discuss it.
The abrupt way in which all of the members were about to leave the meeting was another way of resisting the worker. She set a limit in letting only two members leave the meeting at one time. In placing this limit the worker also helped the group to see that they had responsibilities to assume which she was willing to help them carry out; however, they could only do this by remaining in the room. She was successful in stimulating the members to express an interest upon which she could help them build.

In an effort to create a free and relaxed atmosphere, the worker began the next meeting with a "Boyology Test." This was an attempt to build program on the interest which the members had in the opposite sex. The girls who arrived early took the test and seemed to have enjoyed taking it; however, when other members arrived, one of the girls who had taken the test resisted the worker by involving the group in loud talking.

Excerpt IV - 10/15/51

Jackie decided that she didn't want to take the test again and began talking loudly to the others. I attempted to explain the test to the new comers but the noise was so great that I couldn't make myself understood to those girls who were interested. I noticed that Jackie was the loudest at this point so I asked her to read the questions since she was not interested in taking the test over again. She said that she would be glad to, and proceeded to help me quiet them down to the point where I could quickly explain the rules of the test.

The worker gave ego support to Jackie in allowing her to give the test to the others. She helped Jackie to use her leadership more constructively and as a result, she let the group control itself through its structure which at this point was through indigenous leadership.

One of the most frequent ways in which the group resisted the worker was by coming to the agency on time; and coming late to their club
meeting. They usually went to the bathroom instead of coming to their meeting at the appointed time. The following Excerpts describe three different ways that the worker handled this problem.

Excerpt V - 10/29/51

Evelyn, Nadine, Willie, Jackie, Cynthia, Janice, Dona, Jane, Connie and Bernice all arrived a little after 7:00. I was sitting in the library waiting for them and could hear their voices in the lobby. I went out to the lobby to find them talking to some boys who came in for an activity too. When I suggested that they come into the library, several of them did while others ran upstairs to the bathroom, etc. I had brought in some "Teen-Topics" that contained lots of program ideas for their kind of group and had put them in the middle of the table so that they might get program ideas from them. Cynthia, Willie and Jackie seemed quite interested in them and both Nadine and Dona were questioning me about the flower that I was making. Once this group was seated, they appeared quite receptive and interested.

The worker made no further attempts to bring the members into the room who refused to act upon her suggestion. Instead she sought to use program to stimulate those who did come into the meeting so that when the other members did arrive the atmosphere would be stimulating enough to capture their interest.

Excerpt VI - 11/5/51

I called to the girls to come into the library but they all said that they had to go upstairs for a minute and with that there was a general exodus up to the bathroom... I was a little undecided as to whether I should follow them into the bathroom at this point for I didn't feel that the bathroom was a particularly good place to hold a discussion. I went back down the steps and waited for them; at 7:30, I went into the bathroom and found them all standing around talking and laughing. I reminded them quite firmly of the time and when they didn't budge, I stated that if they didn't feel like having a club period this evening I would go along with them and cancel the meeting, altogether. This statement told them that I meant business and they followed me back down the stairs and into the club room.

Although the worker set limits, she gave the members a choice. She left it up to them to decide whether they wanted to continue the meeting or go home. She left the decision up to the group; however, she
seemed to have conveyed her acceptance of them and her willingness to continue the meeting if they decided that they wanted to stay.

Excerpt VII - 11/12/51

Cynthia, Willie, Janice, Jane, Nadine, Jackie, Evelyn and Dona arrived as a group a little after 7:00. I was in the library hooking up the record player at that time. I finished about the time that Mrs. Massy finished checking them in and went out to the lobby. As soon as they saw me they started up the stairs. I commented that they certainly didn't all have to use the bathroom but they kept on going...I started up the stairs and half way up, Nadine stuck her head out of the door and then scurried back inside, evidently to warn the others. When I got to the bathroom, there wasn't a soul in sight but there must have been four girls in each small cubicle. I said something to the effect that they would all probably suffocate in there the way they were and they all loudly laughed and came out of their "hiding places" to follow me back down the stairs.

The worker used her sense of humor here. This made the atmosphere free enough for the girls to come back into the meeting without any verbal expression from the worker.

The group members had moved from the point of being late to meetings; however, they often withdrew from any active participation.

Excerpt VIII - 12/3/51

Alma, Janice, and Jane arrived at 7:00; I went into the library with them and we all took seats around the table. Alma and Jane immediately began to read magazines, while Jane sat looking off into space. I commented on the pictures and the articles in the magazines, but got no reaction from the girls. After 7:10...Since time was passing, I asked the girls what they would like to do this evening. I got no answer from them. I said that we had several matters to discuss and wondered if they wanted to start now or wait for the others. Again there was no response; I remarked jokingly that they were still suffering from the reactions of the talent show and they all responded with exclamations about what a fine job the Teenettes had done and what a good show it was.

The girls seemed listless and disinterested. At the beginning of this meeting the worker gave ego support to the girls when she stimulated conversation around the Talent Show which had been a satisfying experience for them.
Although the members resisted the worker as an authority, at times they asked for her control.

Excerpt IX - 12/17/51

I brought the matter up of their program for next week, pointing out that Jane and Jerry had not been by to see me and as a result we had not worked out a program. Janice said, "you do it, Mrs. B." I said that I was sure that they themselves had ideas that they would like to have carried out next week and that I would gladly help them carry out those ideas. Bernice asked, "like what?" I commented that perhaps, they would like to play things like "slide right;" Bernice asked how the game was played and I immediately demonstrated it. The girls responded whole heartedly to the game and played it for about 15 minutes; Eleanor came in during this time and slipped right into a chair to play along with the others.

The worker clarified her role as a "helping person" and gave the members support in determining their own course of action.

There were some individuals within the group who independently resisted the worker. Some of these individuals presented problems which required individual attention from the worker. The president, Evelyn, was one of the individuals to whom the worker gave special help. The worker seemed to have recognized that one of her major responsibilities was that of developing leadership within the Teenette club so that the group could feel secure in using its own structure to carry out its program.

Evelyn did not have the ability at this point to carry out her role as president successfully. She gave evidence of having strong feelings of inadequacy and insecurity which she tried to conceal from the group and the worker by her loud, boisterous behavior. She fought against accepting help from the worker by not coming or postponing appointments with her.
Excerpt X - 10/29/51

Before Evelyn left, I asked her to step into the office and made an appointment with her for Friday afternoon to discuss her responsibility as president. She was quite reluctant about this appointment but finally said that she would be around. I made this appointment with her because I am a bit concerned about her behavior in the group, which is one of loud, dis-jointed actions, and her real inability to handle the job of president.

Although Evelyn consented to this appointment with the worker, she didn't keep it. The worker recognized that Evelyn had feelings about meeting with her and sought to find other ways of helping which would let Evelyn know that she was genuinely interested in helping her to assume her role as president.

Excerpt XI - 11/5/51

I had also, by way of preparation, typed up a small reminder for Evelyn that she might use as an outline of things to discuss under the topic of new business. Evelyn had not kept our appointment Friday and I felt that she, realizing her own inadequacy around her presidential role, had a great deal of feeling in meeting me to discuss any factors pertaining to it. This little helpful agenda reminder was only part of my attempt to let Evelyn know that I wanted to help her assume her responsibility more fully.

The worker helped Evelyn to clarify her role as president by helping her to make use of an agenda. She continuously supported and encouraged Evelyn as she attempted to carry out her responsibilities within the club. As a result, Evelyn began to feel assured of the worker's genuine interest in wanting to help her. This was evident when Evelyn voluntarily came in to see the worker to talk over her responsibilities.

These selected incidents from the life of the Teenette club illustrate some of the ways that the Teenette members expressed their resistance to authority which was represented by the worker. In each incident, it can be noted that the worker continuously accepted the members despite their resistant behavior.
Resistance to Peer Relationships

A peer group is composed of individuals of approximately the same emotional level of development. During adolescence, the peer group is of primary importance; for, it offers security and support to its members. The thinking and behavior of the adolescent is strongly influenced and often dominated by his peers. The adolescent may belong to more than one peer group at a time and his loyalty will fluctuate between them.

He will use the standards of the particular group that is at the moment most compatible with his emotional state, swinging with little hesitation to another group as the rise or fall in his maturity level influences his needs and his capacities. ¹

Within the peer group, members can feel freer to release their hostilities and test out certain patterns and reactions on one another.

The Teenette club was only one of the peer groups to which its members belonged. It was noted that members of this club belonged to two rival groups outside of the agency.

Within the club there was rivalry and competition between individual members and between sub-groups. Although conflict existed between individual members and the group, the most common area of conflict was between the dominant sub-groups who were competing for control. The members of the club had great difficulty in sharing their ideas and feelings with each other and subtilely fought against doing so.

The following excerpts will give evidence of the resistance of members of the Teenette club toward each other and the way in which the worker handled these resistances.

¹Josselyn, Irene, op. cit., p. 39.
During the first two meetings of the group there was little evidence of sub-groups within the Teenette club; for, all of the members tended to "stick" together in an effort to fight against the worker. However, at the third meeting of the group, it became apparent that the Teenette club was composed of two nucleus groups from the outside.

Excerpt I - 10/15/51

I was about to get into the planning of program refreshments and decorations with the girls when Janet asked me the time again. When I told her it was a little after 8:00 she jumped up and said that she had to get over to the Panchoes meeting. She left immediately, taking all of the girls with her except Alma, Jane, Bernice, Janice and Connie (along). When I asked the remaining girls about this exodus, I was told that they were all members of "Pancho Club" out in the community. The remaining girls immediately asked for the records and since it was apparent that no more planning could be done this evening, I got the records and the machine for them. The group, dwindled down to five girls, made it easier for me to really establish a relationship with them. In short order, Jane was teaching me a dance step and asking me about Mr. Johnson with whom she had danced at the last Keen-Teen. I was able to speak to Alma, who says very little in the group meetings, and found out that she was interested in charm. When I told her that several of the groups would be participating in charm sessions, she said that she didn't feel that the other Teenettes were as interested as she in the subject. I suggested that she bring up such a program possibility at the next meeting, but she nodded her head to the effect that it wouldn't work. I went over to Connie and chatted with her about the things she would like to do in the club, she seemed shy and didn't have any suggestions at all to make about club program. She reacted positively to charm sessions when I mentioned them to her. The girls danced until 8:30 and then quietly left.

The worker made no effort to question the Panchoes about their leaving, but instead used this opportunity to strengthen the relationship ties between the remaining members and with her. She gave support to those members who had been somewhat isolated in the meetings and attempted to find out their interest so that she could help to incorporate some of their interest into the over-all planning of the group-as-a-whole.

The members of the "Pancho club continued to resist the other members
by leaving the meetings early; however, the worker set out to keep the girls working together toward a program which would be meaningful to all of them. The Hallowe'en party provided this opportunity.

Excerpt II - 10/22/51

I asked the girls if they wanted to move toward individual responsibilities such as shopping, preparing food, decorating, etc. They all eagerly volunteered for committees.

By getting the members to form committees, the worker was able to help members from various sub-groups to work together toward the achievement of a desired goal of the group as a whole.

It was not until the group became involved in presenting a skit in the Keen-Teen talent show, a project which had status value for all of the members, that the Teenette club became meaningful enough to the Panchoes to remain until the end of the meeting. After the group had decided to do a dance in the Keen-Teen talent show, the worker seized upon this opportunity to get the whole group involved in selecting a possible dance for it.

Excerpt III - 11/5/51

...I snapped on the record of the Malagena. Dona and Janice immediately reacted with a satirical version of a bull fight and the other girls looked on and laughed. I joined in the laughter and stated that it was funny enough to work into a dance for the entire group. When the dance ended, a Rhumba record went on and Dona immediately grabbed Jackie and started to dance; I went over to them and began to teach them the Rhumba steps. I demonstrated several times for the entire group and soon all of the girls with the exception of Madine, who sat apart holding her mouth and the side of her face covered, began to dance.

The worker was able to get all of the members involved by building on one of their expressed interests, the media of dance.

At the next meeting there was a split in the group as to the type of dance to do for the Keen-Teen talent show despite the fact that all
the members had agreed to do one dance at the previous meeting.

Excerpt IV - 11/12/51

Evelyn asked what kind of dance they wanted and Jackie said that they had selected the music last week. Janice said that she didn't like that kind of dance; I asked her what kind of dance she would like to see the group do and she said "Tap." There was an immediate split in the group as to what type of dance might be done with all of the girls yelling at one another, etc. I found it most impossible to break into the discussion here for the noise was overwhelming. When I was finally able to make myself heard, I said that we could really get no where with all of the shouting because no one was listening to any one else. The girls quieted down and Janice asked if the group could only do one dance. I said that the group would have only one spot on the show. Janice then asked if the club could do two dances during that one period. I said that I thought so but pointed out that there would be only three meetings, including this one, in which to practice and wondered how wise it would be to attempt two dances since we appeared to have difficulty even getting one started. Jackie stated that she thought two dances were possible for the girls might practice at each other's homes as well as at club. Jane agreed with her as did several others. I pointed out that I thought practicing two dances in one room would be difficult but would go along with them for this evening if they wanted to try. Evelyn said "Lets try it tonight like Mrs. Berdit said to see if it will work," and they agreed. I asked who the girls would be who would be in the tap dance and Jean, June and Nancy raised their hands. While I jotted the names down, Jean said to include Blanche in that dance too. I took down the names of the other girls who said that they would be in the creative dance and pointed out that they had an uneven number.

This was the first incident in which the sub-groups showed verbal disagreement with one another within the club. Although they openly disagreed with one another about the dances, they continued to conceal the fact that they did not want to work together as a unit.

When two dances were suggested, the worker tried to thwart such a plan so that the girls might have the experience of working together as a whole unit. When this seemed impossible, she supported the group in their decision; for, even though they would be doing two dances, all of them would be involved in presenting the dance skit as members of the Teenette club.
Although the members of each sub-group had decided to do a dance, the members of the Tellers refrained from actively participating or beginning to work on their dance. They seemed to show that they really had no intention of participating.

Excerpt V - 11/12/51

I asked Jane, Janice, Nadine and Bernice if they had selected their record and they admitted that they had not. They seemed a little taken back when I began to help them choose a record and devoted all of my attention to them. I was well aware that they had no intention of doing a dance but put in this predicament, they had nothing else to do but go along with me. Soon they had selected the "Sidewalks of New York" as their music and began to make up the steps; Nadine was the most earnest of all of them but soon the others began to become involved in their steps too. I helped them by commenting on their steps from time to time, telling them which I thought looked better than the others. When I turned my attention to the other group across the room, the tap group did not stop its practicing. I was amazed at the interest and the amount of work which the girls displayed.

The worker helped the members to choose a record for the dance and gave continuous support and encouragement to these girls until she felt that they could carry on by themselves. It may be noted here that Nadine was not a member of the Tellers; however, she seemed to have been drawn to this group in this situation by her enthusiasm and interest in tap dancing which seemed to have permeated to the others.

Even though the most common area of conflict was between the two sub-groups, conflict also occurred between individuals and the group-as-a-whole, and between individuals within sub-groups.

One member, arriving in a mood to give direct expression to his hostile feelings, may set the others off to such an extent that cooperative activity is made difficult, if not impossible. This contagion results not only from imitation, but also from the fact that all members have a similar need and welcome the chance which the group expression provides.¹

¹Wilson and Ryland, op. cit., p. 57.
At the second meeting of the Teenette club one member, Dona, arrived in a mood, refused to participate in the club activities and sat apart from the group; the worker supported Dona in her decision. The president asked Dona if she was in the meeting or out. Dona stated that she was in the meeting and Jackie urged the president in her command that Dona leave the room. Dona threatened the president to make her leave and the president took off her sweater to fight with the rest of the girls encouraging her.

Excerpt VI - 10/8/51

I stepped between the two girls and told them firmly to get back to their seats; the others returned to their chairs as did these two. I got up and said that I wondered how much could be accomplished by fighting, especially since none of the girls knew what the fight was really about. I pointed out that if a member preferred to stay out of a meeting, that she had a perfect right to, that we didn't always feel like being with a group. I ended by saying that perhaps, it might be a good idea to find out why Deanna preferred to stay out of the group, but that if she didn't want to say, it was up to her. Before sitting down, I went over to Deanna and said that I would be in my office if she wanted to talk to me about this incident after the meeting. She said that she would like to and then withdrew into herself.

The worker used firm handling to prevent the fight. Recognizing the principle of self-determination, the worker supported Dona in her decision to remain apart from the group. Then she proceeded to clarify her reason for supporting Dona. The worker also invited Dona to talk with her around the situation.

While practicing for the talent show, some of the members within the Panchoes tended to resist each other. This was especially true in the case of Evelyn whom Jackie felt was hindering the progress of the dance.
Excerpt VII - 11/26/51

The practice went along well but there was an unusual amount of criticism directed toward Evelyn's inability to follow the steps properly. Finally Janet told her to sit out and just watch for a while. Evelyn was hurt by this but sat down on the couch quietly. I said that I wondered if Evelyn's "sitting out" was a good idea because she might benefit more by staying in the dance and thus getting the practice. I went on to point out that not all of the girls knew their steps perfectly and that it only stood to reason that those who were not familiar with the steps needed to practice more than the others. The girls responded by pulling Evelyn back in the group. She offered a bit of resistance, but when it became obvious that the girls really wanted to have her back in the dance, she complied with their wishes. I commented once that Evelyn seemed to be doing the dance better and Jackie especially picked up on this type of criticism, offering encouragement to Evelyn from time to time.

Evelyn, feeling that she was not wanted, quietly submitted to the suggestion of Jackie that she sit on the side line. The worker noting this incident and realizing the negative effect that it might have upon Evelyn, encouraged the group to give her more consideration. Evelyn resisted their offer to have her back in the dance, at which point the worker gave Evelyn the support which she needed to enter the group again.

The preceeding excerpts have shown the way in which the worker attempted to strengthen and build relationships between members despite the resistance which they had to working with one another.

The Turning Point

The way in which the worker consciously used herself as an accepting, but limiting person led the members of the Teenette Club toward acceptance of her as a representative of authority and as a person. When a positive relationship had been established, the worker was able to help the members to bring their conflicts out in the open and reach a positive turning point in their development as a club. The worker made the following statement in evaluating her work with the club during the
first half of the year.

One of the major areas of difficulty with the group is their hostile feelings toward an adult. It was not until I was able to establish a relationship with them after Christmas that I was able to feel group movement. As a result of this relationship, which I feel exists on the parts of all of the active members, the group members began to express their feelings.

The following excerpts give indication of the freedom with which the girls were able to express themselves about the club, the worker, and each other.

12/26/51

...Bernice was especially annoyed by my statement in regard to officers and pointed out how she took minutes at every meeting; she went on to say how at one meeting she had to practically scream at the girls to get them to listen to her. June reminded her that she had done her share of yelling and whispering.

...Janice asked why the Teenettes could not go ahead and meet without the Panchoes; I asked if the group really wanted to do that or did Janice just feel that way.

...Willie said that officers weren't especially good this term, and added that Evelyn "stinks."

...I began with Willie who said that she wished I'd be firmer with the girls. Bernice said that she thought that I was "too nice."

The freedom of expression which existed at this meeting between the worker and the members and with the members toward one another marked the turning point in the development of the group. From this point on, the members became increasingly expressive of both their positive and negative feelings. Through constructive expression of their feelings, many of the blocks which were hindering the movement of the group were removed. The two sub-groups maintained their independence, but found it easier to combine to achieve common goals. Individual members began to show more self determination, and the Teenette Club, with continued guidance and support from the worker, moved forward toward attaining
increased satisfaction from this group experience.

In helping the group to handle its resistance and reach a positive turning point in its development, the Group Worker consciously used her knowledge of and skill in the use of some of the methods and techniques of Social Group Work. The worker's knowledge and understanding of the psychological and sociological needs of the members of the Teenette club gave impetus to her handling of resistance in the group. Her activity included the giving of ego support to members, clarifying roles and situations, setting limits and controls and continuously remaining an accepting person, recognizing the self-determination of each individual and the group.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Resistance which is the negative factor in the ambivalent nature of the human personality is capable of retarding personal and social growth. Within the past ten years, Social Work has recognized the need to know more about resistance and has drawn heavily on the findings of Psychiatry, Psychology and the Social Sciences in attaining greater understanding of this phenomenon of behavior. These findings point up the fact that resistance is part of the ambivalent nature of the human personality which wants and needs to depend upon and also be independent of other people. These positive and negative feelings are constantly in conflict with one another and in order for the individual to make satisfactory personal and social adjustments, this conflict has to be resolved.

During adolescence, ambivalence becomes more pronounced and harder to handle than at any other period of life. The following basic physical, emotional and social needs of adolescents cause them a great deal of ambivalence during this period.

1. The need to have an understanding of the physiological developments associated with sexual maturity.

2. The need to be independent of parents and to establish oneself as a person.

3. The need to establish relationships with peers, with members of the opposite sex, and to extend one's social contacts within the larger community.
The sample group of this study, the Teenette club, was described in terms of its social setting, identifying data, and program in order to show the psychological and sociological needs of the group and the degree to which these needs were met through participation in the program at the Wharton Centre. Wharton Centre, a social settlement in North Philadelphia, Pennsylvania was founded in a neighborhood which was characterized by family instability, poor health, and hazardous living conditions. It was an area where social pressures made it extremely difficult for people living within it to make healthy personal and social adjustments. The settlement was founded in this neighborhood in order to provide some constructive direction to the people. It placed emphasis upon using its program to help individuals to use the group experience for growth and development and to work on specific neighborhood problems which affected them.

The Teenette club was a friendship group of sixteen Negro girls who were active participants in the teen-age program at Wharton Centre during the program year, October, 1951 through May, 1952. All except two of the girls were members of autonomous or gang groups who met in the neighborhood. Although there was rivalry between these two groups outside of the agency, they came together as one group in order to have enough members to form a club in the Agency which would provide them with the opportunity to associate with members of the opposite sex. These two autonomous groups became sub-groups within the club and the members of each of them were in constant conflict with each other and with the worker.

It was found that the basic psychological and sociological needs of the Teenette club members were as follows:
1. The need to achieve new and mature relations with age mates of both sexes.
2. The need to achieve a feminine role.
3. The need for accepting one's physique and using the body effectively.
4. The need for achieving emotional independence of parents and other adults.
5. The need for developing intellectual skills and concepts necessary for civic competence.
6. The need for acquiring a set of values and ethical system as a guide to behavior.

Some of the activities which provided an opportunity for the recognition and satisfaction of the needs of the Teenette club were planned as part of the overall Agency program and others were planned by the group with the guidance and support of the worker.

The study revealed that the program of the group was more satisfying and meaningful to the members during the second half of the year than in the first half.

In developing program, the worker used her knowledge of and skill in the use of the following "tools" of Social Group Work.

1. Marginal interviews
2. Resource materials and people in the community
3. Appropriate media of expression such as: dance (social and creative), parties, trips, games, songs, and discussions.

After examining the needs of adolescents, the social setting, identifying data and program of the sample group, the writer felt that resistance was one of the major factors that hindered the movement of the group
in the first half of the year. Resistance in this group seemed to have been most clearly evident in the area of relationships referring specifically to authority as represented by the worker and to their peers.

The members of the Teenette club demonstrated an ambivalent attitude toward authority which is normal behavior for adolescents. In addition, their ambivalent attitude may have been intensified by the values and norms of their disorganized neighborhood. The members of the Teenette club resisted authority as represented by their worker by being loud and boisterous, by leaving meetings, by being late, by withdrawing from active participation in program, and by postponing appointments.

The Teenette club was only one of the peer groups to which its members belonged. It was noted that members of this club belonged to two rival groups outside of the Agency. Within the club, there was rivalry and competition between these two sub-groups. Even though the most common area of conflict was between the two sub-groups, conflict also occurred between individuals and the group-as-a-whole. The members of the group resisted each other by leaving the meeting, by verbally disagreeing with one another, by physically isolating from the group and by quietly submitting to suggestions.

When a positive relationship had been established, the worker was able to help the members bring their conflicts out in the open and reach a positive turning point in their development as a club.

This turning point was reached when the group members became expressive to one another and with the worker about both their positive and negative feelings. Following this point, the group was able to move forward toward attaining increased satisfaction from their experiences in the group.
In helping the group to handle its resistance and reach a positive turning point in its development, the Group Worker consciously used her knowledge of and skill in the use of some of the methods and techniques of Social Group Work. The worker's knowledge and understanding of the psychological and sociological needs of the members of the Teenette club gave impetus to her handling of resistance in the group. Her activity included giving ego support to members, clarifying roles and situations, setting limits and controls and continuously remaining an accepting person, recognizing the self-determination of each individual and the group. The following conclusions were drawn from this study:

1. Resistance, the negative factor inherent in the ambivalent nature of the human personality is capable of retarding the growth and development of an adolescent group and its members.

2. A Social Group Worker must be able to recognize, accept and handle ambivalent behavior of members of an adolescent group in order to help them to get the most out of their experiences.

3. In recognizing and handling resistances, the Social Group Worker must make use of her knowledge and understanding of the psychological and sociological needs of the group and its members.

4. The Group Worker's activity in the Teenette club indicated some of the ways in which resistance may be handled in order to help a group reach a positive turning point in its development and move toward satisfying some of the needs of its members more adequately.
APPENDIX
SCHEDULE

Identifying Data
1. Name of Club__________________________________________________________
2. Name of Leader________________________________________________________
3. Number of members enrolled____________________________________________
4. List the following information for each member:
   a. Name
   b. Age
   c. Date enrolled
5. Does the group have officers: Yes____ No____ if so, indicate the club member holding each office:
   a. President________________________
   b. Vice President_____________________
   c. Secretary_________________________
   d. Chaplain__________________________
   e. Other____________________________
6. Are there any sub-groups within the group? Yes____ No____ if so, indicate members of each below:
   a. Sub-group I___________________________________________________________
   b. Sub-group II___________________________________________________________

Program of the Group
1. Number of meetings held__________________
2. Indicate the following information for each meeting:
   a. Date of meeting
b. Activity

Resistance to Relationships at each Meeting from October 1, 1951 to January 7, 1952.

1. Indicate the following information on resistance to Authority:
   a. Check instances of resistance in each meeting.
      (1)
      (2)
   b. Give excerpts to support each selected instance.
      (1)
      (2)
   c. Indicate the Group Worker's activity in handling each selected instance of resistance.

2. Indicate the following information on peer relationships.
   a. Check instances of resistance in each meeting.
      (1)
      (2)
   b. Give excerpts to support each selected instance.
      (1)
      (2)
   c. Indicate the Group Worker's activity in handling each selected instance of resistance.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


Articles


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