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A study of a case work project in a group work agency

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

A STUDY OF
A CASE WORK PROJECT
IN A GROUP WORK AGENCY

A Thesis

Submitted by

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(A.B., Brooklyn College, 1949)

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1951

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Purpose	1
	Method and Scope	2
	Values and Limitations of this Study	2
II	CASE WORK AND GROUP WORK IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE	4
	What Case Work Attempts	4
	What Group Work Attempts	4
	Common Aspects in Case Work and Group Work	5
	Case Work-Group Work Cooperation	7
III	PATTERNS OF CASE WORK SERVICES IN GROUP WORK SETTINGS	9
	Agency A	9
	Agency B	10
	Agency C	13
	Agency D	14
	Agency E	15
IV	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	17
	The Development of Hecht House as a Jewish Community Center	17
	Events Leading up to the Case Work Project	18
V	DESCRIPTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF DATA	24
	The Individuals Studied	24
	Reasons for Referral to the Case Worker	24
	Referring Agents	27
	Objectives of Referral to the Case Worker and Movement	28
	Kinds of Agencies Used for Further Referral	31
VI	ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PROJECT	33
	Attitudes of the Group Work Staff	33
	Attitudes of the Case Worker	35
VII	SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	39
	Summary	39
	Conclusions and Recommendations	41
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	44
	APPENDIX	46

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
I	Reasons for Referral of Children to the Case Worker, and Their Frequency	25
II	Reasons for Referral of Teen-Agers to the Case Worker, and Their Frequency	27
III	Referring Agents to the Case Worker in the Children's Group	29
IV	Referring Agents to the Case Worker in the Teen-Age Group	29
V	Objectives of Referral with Teen-Agers	30

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

In March of 1949, Hecht House, a group work agency, engaged the services of a professionally trained case worker. The purpose of this study has been to find the distinct contributions made by a case worker in this group work setting. Inquiry was also made concerning similar experiences in other group work agencies. An attempt has been made to answer the following questions:

- (1) What was the purpose of this project?
- (2) What were the functions of the case worker?
- (3) How did the agency initiate and interpret this project to the community, staff, and membership?
- (4) What kinds of problems were referred to the case worker?
- (5) What use did the case worker make of the group work staff at the agency in helping his clients?
- (6) What were the attitudes of the group staff to this project?
- (7) What was accomplished in terms of helping the individuals, who were referred to the case worker for help?
- (8) How was referral to the case worker made?
- (9) What social agencies did the case worker use for further referral?
- (10) How many people were served by this project? What age groups?
- (11) In what ways did the case worker make use of the informal atmosphere of the group work agency to help

his clients?

Method and Scope

The writer read all of the recorded material that the case worker wrote and selected all of the cases where there was sufficient material for study and analysis. The total number of such cases was thirty-three.

Further sources of data were:

- (1) Interviews with the executive director, the group work staff, and the case worker.
- (2) Correspondence with the former program director at the agency.
- (3) The periodic reports of the case worker to the agency on the progress of the project.

Values and Limitations of this Study

The generic concepts of group work give primary concern to the individual personality of each recipient of its services. Frequently, the work loads of group workers do not allow for sufficient time to do more intensive work with individuals needing help outside the group situation. The introduction of a case work consultant on the group work staff has been one of the ways to circumvent that problem. Most group work agencies are confronted with the problem of giving more individual attention to those members needing it. Methods of meeting this need are still in the stage of experimentation.

One of the primary limitations of this study has been the lack of detailed case recording. In several cases, there were no records at all. At best, the records have been of the sum-

mary type. Consequently, the writer had to be very cautious in seeking and choosing objective data for study and analysis.

Another limitation has been the absence of accurate statistical information. It should be borne in mind that this project was not set up for purposes of study and research. It was organized on the basis of a job to be done, and little time was left to the worker to do ample recording.

CHAPTER II

CASE WORK AND GROUP WORK IN THEORY AND IN PRACTICE

What Case Work Attempts

The primary focus in case work is on helping the individual in meeting his problems. Case work attempts to help the individual in his adjustment to his total environment, helping him to utilize strengths and deal with handicaps in himself, in his family relationships and in his community.

The case worker sets in motion the individual's capacity to change himself and his environment, but case work does not attempt to go beyond this individual capacity. The case worker always works on the level of the client.

The case worker tries to help the client in two ways. One is by discussing and clarifying the individual's problem with him through personal interviews. The other is by assisting him in the use of resources not only in the individual, but in the environment, to help meet his needs. An understanding of the dynamics of human behavior and a knowledge of the resources of the community are basic to case work service.

What Group Work Attempts

One purpose of group work is to help the group achieve socially significant goals within the framework of a democratic society. As one writer put it, the purpose of group work is "the development of the social adjustment of an individual through voluntary group associations and the use of this asso-

ciation as a means of furthering other desirable ends."¹

These purposes are implemented by recreation, study, social action, and other forms of activity which takes place in leisure time. Group work is a method of working with people. "The group provides limitations through which a person may function."² It offers valid interests, helps a person to adjust to social situations, develops skills, and relieves tensions. It provides opportunities for leadership and personality development. The group leader tries to guide the group process in order to make for the fullest development of the individuals in the group. The emphasis is on the individual and what values the activity offers him, rather than on the activity itself.

Common Aspects in Case Work and Group Work

Central concepts in both are:

that workers must have a deeply ingrained faith in the potentialities of every individual and a respect for his differences; that workers must be non-judgmental and objective in their relationships with individuals or groups; and, that they must believe in a "give and take process," a reciprocal relationship between client and worker, between leader and club, rather than in an authoritative approach."³

¹ Wilbur D. Newstetter, "What is Social Group Work?" National Conference of Social Work Proceedings, (University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. 291.

² Adelaide Dorn, "An Experiment in Case-Work-Group-Work Correlation," The Family, Vol. 20 (July, 1939), p. 161.

³ Clare B. Fisk, editor, "Cementing Case Work and Group Work Relationships," Ch. 1, p. 2 (1948-1949).

In both fields, the principle of relationship, whether it be a single client or a group, is basic. No effective work could begin without a positive client-worker relationship. The group leader or case worker does not coerce the individual or the group to make decisions. Common to both is the principle of self-determination.

To do effective social work, we must have an understanding of both the inner and outer factors that shape the personality of our client. Common to both fields is this desire to understand the psychological and social roots of the people with whom we are working. In both fields, we find a concern for the social relationships and their contribution to personality development.

Case work's "great concepts" have been said to involve "love of one's neighbor, sharing one another's burdens, and helping people to help themselves."⁴ To which we add that group work's concepts include a belief in democracy, personal development through group experience, and social development through group action. Interpreting the concepts of case work from a broad social point of view, we might suggest that love of one's neighbor is but an expression of belief in democracy, that sharing one another's burdens is a group experience, and that helping people to help themselves is social action. Thus, we might say that social work consists of a working relationship with people based on understanding their responses, and their action growing out of these responses.⁵

⁴ Gordon Hamilton, "Basic Concepts in Social Case Work," The Family, July, 1937, p. 147.

⁵ Gertrude Wilson, Group Work and Case Work, Their Relationship and Practice, Family Welfare Association of America, 1941, pp. 1 - 2.

Case Work-Group Work Cooperation

Although it is fairly in agreement that the concepts suggested above are common to both case work and group work, it is also true that until relatively recently, the two approaches were not on speaking terms with each other. The period which saw the development and formulation of a generic group work concept also saw the beginning of a movement for case work - group work cooperation. It was at this point that case workers and group workers started to focus on the need for a combined effort towards more effective service. They had come to realize that each method could supplement the other, and that it was the client or member who suffered from their lack of mutual understanding.

It was this desire to improve service which gave rise to the movement of case work - group work committees in the 1930's. Committees sprang up almost simultaneously in the major cities throughout the country, and a number of patterns developed. All of them started as study groups, which served the purpose of allowing each field to gain better insight and understanding of the other. Various methods were used, such as: the lecture method, open meetings, or round table discussions centered on case material.

Some committees remained on this level while others progressed to the planning stage. They marked out methods of cooperative practice and referral procedures. Still others went

on to the development of control experiments.

One of the major developments which grew out of this period of experimentation was the use of a case worker in a group work agency. The following chapter will deal with various patterns that developed out of such an arrangement.

CHAPTER III

PATTERNS OF CASE WORK SERVICES IN GROUP WORK SETTINGS

In a recent study, five group work agencies, who offered case work services, were studied.¹ These five experiences demonstrate some of the distinctive patterns which have evolved in the way coordination between the two fields functioned.

Agency A

Agency A was non-sectarian and in a low-income neighborhood. The functions of the case worker were:

- (1) to sensitize the group leaders to a better understanding of individual children, which would lead to a more effective meeting of the latter's needs, through group work channels.
- (2) to deal with the children whose individual needs were such that they could not be met by the usual group work methods.

Help was given to the latter group by making a referral to an appropriate case work agency or having a short contact treatment with the child within the group work agency, which was aimed towards enabling the individual to make better use of the group work services. The latter type of help was necessary for many of the clients who showed an inability to accept referral.

Problems were brought to the case worker by the group work supervisor or the group leader. A joint study of the child was

¹ Saul Scheidlinger, "Patterns of Case Work Services in Group Work Agencies," The Group, November, 1945, p. 2.

made, and specific plans for helping him were made, either through referral or through special handling in the group.

The case worker detected many children presenting potential difficulties in the course of her association with various groups in the building. The case worker was not known by any official title to the members. The children referred to her as the person who "helped the kids get jobs", or "talked to kids who were unhappy."

The case worker was a recognized member of the staff, attended meetings, and was consulted on any referral made to another agency. The case worker was used as a consultant in cases of disciplinary measures, as interviewer for a birth control clinic (which was located in the house), and as registrar for the summer camp.

The worker received dual supervision. Her family agency executive supervised the case work aspects of her work. In regard to administration and function, the case worker was responsible to the head worker of the settlement house. The worker had a forty-hour week at the agency, which included two full evenings. Everyone in Agency A agreed to the need of having such a worker on a full-time basis.

Agency B

Agency B was a large progressive settlement and community center. In December, 1942, a worker was secured at this agency through a special arrangement with a national federation of

group work agencies and a local child guidance clinic.

Each staff member received a memorandum, explaining the purpose and use of what was to be called, "Consultation Service." The case worker was known to the staff as "consultation worker," and to the membership as a "leader."

The worker's functions were at first defined in general terms, so as to make experimentation possible. Soon these functions were limited to observation and study of selected groups of children. Before visiting such a group, the case worker had a conference with the group work supervisor and the club leader, during the course of which problem children were discussed, and group records were read. The case worker also cleared with the Social Service Exchange and then visited the group several times to observe. Some groups and their leaders reacted unfavorably to the presence of the case worker. The head worker felt that the presence of the case worker was necessary because the group leaders were not sufficiently trained to detect problem children.

After the case worker visited the group several times, another conference was held, at which time the case worker presented written summaries on each child observed. At this conference, decisions were made as to which children could be helped through referral to an appropriate case work agency or a more sensitive treatment in the group situation. In some cases a change of group was suggested. No actual case work was done

at the agency.

Another function of the case worker was to act as liaison between her own agency and the settlement which made for effective treatment of cases carried cooperatively. The worker spent two half-days a week at the agency and worked with a small number of groups. The worker functioned as a member of the staff, attended most meetings, and contributed her knowledge of individual children.

Group workers were more apt to recognize as behavior problems those children who interfered with the group programs. Children who seemed to "adjust" superficially were often singled out only through the observation and study of the case worker. The latter placed most emphasis on developing a greater sensitivity in group work staff to behavior problems in children who were not especially troublesome and guided them in making better referrals.²

The problem of resistance to referral on the part of parents presented itself frequently. The case worker was responsible to her own supervisor at a child guidance clinic. The head worker was consulted in all matters pertaining to administration and house function.

In the evaluation of this program by the staff, it was agreed that the presence of the case worker made the group work staff more sensitive to the general matter of individual children in the groups. The case worker was also able to detect many potential behavior difficulties not previously recognized by the leaders. "The head worker stated that in every one of the clubs observed and studied, the group work process was

² Ibid., p. 3.

markedly improved as a result."³

Agency C

Agency C was a newly formed community center. The emphasis on programming was on special activities for children and adults, health services and personal service departments. The case worker here was a psychiatric case worker from a local child guidance clinic. The emphasis was on preventing the development of serious behavior difficulties in the center, rather than on actual personal pathology.

In order to avoid the threat of a connection with the clinic's interest in delinquency and abnormal behavior, the identity was here at first revealed to only a selected few. It was the head worker's plan that leaders and children should first learn to know the case worker as a friendly and sympathetic person before his purpose and affiliation was to be disclosed.⁴

In time, her identity did become known.

Problems came to the attention of the case worker through:

- (1) the case worker's own observation.
- (2) referral from group work supervisors and group leaders. (Here, plans were worked out jointly with the case worker.)
- (3) self-referral. (Some children came to him of their own accord, by virtue of the fact that he became known to the membership as "Children's Consultant.")

In making up a social history of a client, the case worker used the files of the personal service department of the agency, the social service exchange, and reports from staff members. There was hardly any direct contact between the group leaders

³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

and the case worker. The head worker felt that untrained group leaders might misuse the interpretations of the case worker.

Later on, the services of the case worker were used by the nursery school of the agency to interpret behavior of individual children. Plans were also made to utilize the case worker to help parents with the problems which they faced in the handling of their children in the home.

Agency D

This agency was a community "Y." Arrangements were made to procure the services of a case worker from a family social service organization. The case worker was placed at this agency for a period of three months. The functions of the case worker were:

- (1) to educate the group leaders in handling children with special difficulties.
- (2) to familiarize the group work staff with community resources for individual help.
- (3) to train the group work staff in making such referrals effectively.

Children needing individual study were brought to the attention of the case worker by the group work supervisor. At a conference, it was usually decided whether the referral of the child to a case work agency was indicated. Most referrals were made by the group work supervisor with the case worker acting as consultant. In selected cases, the case worker would handle the preparation for referral herself. In cases of children below the age of fourteen, the mothers were called to the

agency by the group work supervisor, and then she was introduced to the case worker. If parents refused to come, plans were made to help the youngster in the group situation.

Many older adolescents came to the case worker dissatisfied with their jobs, educational plans, or family pressures. The case worker did not visit any of the group meetings. When a referral was made, there was a follow-up conference with the outside agency, the group work supervisor, and the "Y" case worker.

The case worker's presence in the agency was made known to the membership by means of a special poster in the lobby. The case worker spent only one day a week at the agency. As a result, her activities were very limited.

Referrals from other agencies to the "Y" were handled by the case worker. She was primarily responsible to her own agency. In evaluating the project, both the case worker and group workers felt that this was fulfilling a permanent need. It was indicated that the agency could use a case worker on a full-time basis.

Agency E

This agency was a settlement house in a neighborhood with three cultural groups living within it. The agency hired two senior lounge leaders, who were practicing case work. Their responsibility was to work with problem boys in the lounge. This arrangement did not work out too well. There was much

resistance to referral.

Although these agencies were all in the New York City area similar experiments have been conducted in other major cities.^{5, 6, and 7}

5 Gertrude Wilson, op. cit., Ch. IV.

6 American Association of Group Workers, "Group Work-Case Work Cooperation, a Symposium," (New York: Association Press, 1946), pp. 36 - 49.

7 Elizabeth H. Baker, The Integration of Case Work and Group Work at Abraham Lincoln Centre (Chicago: Abraham Lincoln Centre, 1942).

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL BACKGROUNDThe Development of Hecht House as a Jewish Community Center

The Hecht Neighborhood House began as an industrial school for young immigrant girls in the year 1890. That was the year of the great migrations of Jews from Russia and Eastern Europe to this country. The Hebrew Industrial Home for Girls was founded by the late Mrs. Jacob H. Hecht. The purpose of the institution at that time was to help immigrant girls learn a trade, from which they could earn a livelihood, and to give them citizenship training. Later on, the agency developed a regular settlement house program of activities.

At that time, the agency was situated in the West End section of Greater Boston, since that was the area having the greatest concentration of Jewish people. With the steady movement of the Jewish people from the West End to the Dorchester-Roxbury-Mattapan areas, the West End building was closed down, and its activities were removed to the four-story brick structure on American Legion Highway. This building formerly served as the Home for Jewish Children. At the present time, the agency serves Dorchester and the adjacent parts of Roxbury and Mattapan; the neighborhood is predominantly lower middle-class and Jewish.

The full-time staff at the agency consists of an executive director, a program director, two program assistants, and a

nursery school director (assisted by her staff). The part-time staff includes specialists and group leaders, both paid and volunteer. The program director and program assistants supervise all of the leadership at the agency.

The most recent formulation of the purposes of the agency, as expressed in the amended by-laws, is as follows:

The purpose of this organization shall be to conduct a Jewish Community Center to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) To foster an appreciation of American ideals of democracy and citizenship.
- (2) To advance an understanding and appreciation of the principles and ideals of Judaism and to foster and implement those ideals and principles.
- (3) To provide and conduct a program for the moral, educational, cultural, and physical welfare of the community.
- (4) To promote better understanding among all groups in the community.

The agency tries to implement these purposes through the club programs and the various activities which it sponsors. The afternoon junior program for children offers play groups and special activities. The evening program for teen-agers, young adults, and adults offers varied activities through club groups and special activities, such as, gym, health club, arts and crafts, and woodwork shop. A newly formed group is the Golden Age Club, for people above the age of sixty-five.

Events Leading up to the Case Work Project

In a thesis done in 1941, there is a discussion of a project carried on by the Dorchester District of the Jewish

Family Service and Hecht House.¹ According to the thesis material, in 1940, a case worker was assigned to duty at Hecht House one morning each week. The job of the case worker was to improve the referral process from the group work agency and to define their conception of the case work function. All referrals were channelled through one worker at each end. After a prospective referral had been decided upon, the case worker met the client at the group work agency, and through this contact, the client was eventually assigned to a worker at the case work agency. The previously mentioned thesis² and another one done in 1947,³ discuss some of the case work - group work relationships which resulted.

The latter mentioned thesis gives the background information leading up to the decision to obtain a case worker at the agency itself.

At a recent meeting of the heads of several group work agencies, the need for a case worker for the centers was expressed. A member of the Associated Jewish Philanthropies attended the meeting. The Board of the Brookline Community Center has agreed to pay part of the salary of the case worker. This need has also been recognized and unanimously approved by the program committee of the Board of Hecht House.

1 Charles Zibbell, "Cooperative Service Between Case Work and Group Work Agencies," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Boston University School of Social Work, 1941, pp. 71 - 79.

2 Ibid.

3 Marilyn R. Cohen, "Case-Work-Group-Work Relationships: A Study of Agency Relationships with Reference to Forty-Three Children Attending the Two Hecht House Summer Day Camps," Unpublished Master's Thesis, Simmons College School of Social Work, 1947.

In drawing up a list of job analyses for the agency, the staff of Hecht House included one on a social case worker with the hope that this position would be considered in the near future. The following outline was made up on February 11, 1947, and concerned the function of a case worker under supervision of the Director of Activities at Hecht House. The function was to:

- (1) Offer guidance to individual members on how to make best use of the agency program to meet their individual needs.
- (2) Refer individuals to an appropriate community agency when their problems do not come within the function of the group work agency program.
- (3) Accept referrals from other agencies.
- (4) Act as liaison with community agencies in cooperative cases.
- (5) Gather information, take part in case conferences, and participate in joint treatment planning, both within the agency and with cooperating agencies.
- (6) Act as consultant to group workers on the problems of individuals and families.
- (7) Keep case records, and prepare for and participate in regular supervisory conferences.
- (8) Attend and participate in staff meetings and training conferences.
- (9) Act when necessary as intake worker for special services such as camp, nursery, etc.
- (10) Observe and lead groups as required by the needs of the agency.⁴

During the summer of 1948, Hecht House engaged the services of a professionally trained case worker, Mrs. Waldstein, to work with summer day camp. The functions of the case worker were as follows:

⁴ Ibid., pp. 28 - 29.

(1) Within the agency:

- a. To help leaders understand children's behavior, in general.
- b. To interpret the behavior of individuals who were causing concern to the leaders.

In her concluding report, the case worker made the following recommendations:

At the conclusion of my seven-week experiment on the staff of the Hecht House Day Camp, I feel that the services which the worker contributed in the camp setting, might well be extended to Hecht House as a whole. Just as she could help counselors gain an insight into the meaning of behavior and the methods of dealing with it, so she could be of similar service to group leaders. Her guidance would increase the leaders' ability to identify and help those individuals who most need group activity.

As in the Day Camp, she could act as a referral agent. She could direct any member of the group who needs further help than can be obtained through activity at Hecht House, to other sources in the community. Through her presence at Hecht House, she could maintain contact with the individuals requiring help, so that she would understand just what their needs were. Where children are involved, she would have an opportunity to establish a good relationship with their parents, so that she could prepare them to accept referral should the necessity for it arise.

In addition, a worker could be of assistance to the agencies who refer their clients for group activity, by helping these people make the most of their experience here and by keeping the agency informed of their progress. The fact that she would be in a position to observe an individual closely would give her an opportunity to obtain a first-hand picture of him. A worker in an agency would be unable to do this because she often has to rely not on her own observations but on subjective information supplied by another person whether he be a parent or the individual concerned....

Another important activity for a case worker at Hecht House might be the organization of discussion groups composed of parents whose children present problems at Hecht House. These groups could have therapeutic value for the parents. When this possibility was presented to a cross-

section of the community on Parents' Night, a large number of people expressed great interest and asked to be included, should such groups be formed.

In conclusion, a case worker's functions at Hecht House in the winter, may thus be similar to those performed at the Day Camp in summer. Moreover, the worker would doubtless find other avenues for constructive effort in special situations peculiar to the winter program.

In March, 1949, funds were finally made available for the hiring of a professionally trained case worker on a part-time basis (two evenings a week). The project was initiated because the staff felt that there was a definite need for having a case worker on the staff. There were many children who presented difficult behavior problems. The heavy work load of the staff made it necessary to have a specialist to whom such problems could be referred. The group work staff was told that the case worker would be available to interview children who displayed symptoms of maladjustment. He was at first presented to the staff as "group work specialist." In an article in the April, 1950, issue of the Hecht House Herald, he was referred to as "consultant." In correspondence, the case worker referred to himself as "a member of the club department" when writing to members, and as "social worker" when writing to parents.

The project began in March of 1949. It was discontinued during the summer of that year and was resumed in October of 1949 until June of 1950, at which time it was discontinued.

The primary function of the case worker was to help individuals who needed help to accept referral. In the case of

children below the teen-age group, his function was to assist the parents to accept referral of their children. Another function of the case worker was to serve as consultant to the staff in interpreting patterns of behavior of various individuals who were of concern to the staff. In certain cases, where the client was not ready for referral or showed resistance to referral, the case worker continued working with him. The case worker initiated and carried out all referrals after the full-time staff discussed the pending referral at a staff meeting.

CHAPTER V

DESCRIPTION AND CLASSIFICATION OF DATAThe Individuals Studied

The writer read all of the individual case records which the case worker wrote and selected all of those which had sufficient data for study and analysis. Such cases numbered thirty-two. (It was difficult to ascertain the total number of cases, since statistical records were not kept accurately. The approximate total number of cases was about sixty.)

The data has been divided into two major categories on the basis of the age of the clients. There are nineteen cases representing the teen-age category (thirteen to nineteen years of age). Thirteen cases represent the childrens' category (six to twelve years of age). In the childrens' category, the case worker never worked with the child directly, but with the parents. All records were written in summary style.

Reasons for Referral to the Case Worker

The reasons why children were referred to the case worker are divided into four categories:

- (1) Disruptive behavior
- (2) Destructive-aggressive behavior
- (3) Retardation
- (4) Difficulty in adjusting to age-mates

Disruptive behavior includes such patterns of behavior as being a disturbing influence at meetings, demanding too much

attention, being belligerent, disobedient, and unmanageable.

TABLE I
REASONS FOR REFERRAL OF CHILDREN TO
THE CASE WORKER, AND THEIR FREQUENCY

Behavior Problems	No. of Children
1. Disruptive Behavior	3
2. Destructive-Aggressive Behavior	6
3. Retarded Behavior	2
4. Difficulty in Adjusting to Age-Mates	<u>2</u>
Total	13

Destructive-aggressive behavior includes such patterns of behavior as: destroying agency property, being fresh, boastful, mischievous, playing destructive pranks, and molesting others. Retarded behavior includes: stammering, clinging dependent behavior, general emotional disturbance. Difficulty in adjusting to age-mates includes: being made fun of, inability to participate in games and activities, and general maladjustment to the group.

Out of the thirteen children studied, six presented problems related to destructive-aggressive behavior: three displayed disruptive behavior; two, retarded; and two, difficulty in adjusting to age-mates. (See Table I.)

In the teen-age division, there were a greater number of presenting problems. The categories of behavior patterns total

nine, but some of them are mixed types. They include:

- (1) Disruptive behavior
- (2) Difficulty in relating to the opposite sex
- (3) Need for vocational guidance
- (4) Destructive behavior
- (5) Family difficulties
- (6) Family difficulties and vocational guidance
- (7) Anti-social behavior
- (8) Retardation
- (9) Retardation and disruptive behavior

Disruptive behavior in this age category represents excessively argumentative and antagonistic behavior at meetings. Difficulty in adjusting to the opposite sex expressed itself in one of two ways in different individuals. In some, it expressed itself by fear and withdrawal; and in others, by overt hostility to the opposite sex. Vocational guidance represented the need for job counselling and educational planning. Destructive behavior includes actual destruction of agency property. Family difficulties expressed themselves as strong feelings of confusion and anxiety related to the home environment. Anti-social behavior expressed itself as excessive "horseplay", drunkenness, and fighting. The retarded individual was epileptic, and the retarded-disruptive individual was mentally deficient (low I.Q.).

There were four people presenting disruptive behavior, and

the same number presenting difficulty in adjusting to the opposite sex; three needed vocational guidance; two presented destructive behavior; one had family difficulties; and one had this same problem and also needed vocational guidance; two individuals presented anti-social behavior, and one individual was retarded and disruptive. (See Table II.)

TABLE II

REASONS FOR REFERRAL OF TEEN-AGERS TO
THE CASE WORKER, AND THEIR FREQUENCY

Behavior Problems	No. of Teen-Agers
1. Disruptive Behavior	4
2. Difficulty in Relationships with the Opposite Sex	4
3. Vocational Guidance	3
4. Destructive Behavior	2
5. Family Difficulties	1
6. Family Difficulties and Vocational Guidance	1
7. Anti-Social Behavior	2
8. Retardation	1
9. Retarded-Disruptive	<u>1</u>
Total	19

Referring Agents

In the children's group, five referrals were made by group work supervisors. Two of these referrals came about by

spotting the individuals in the group leaders' records of the club. Two referrals were made by a leader with extensive group work experience; and one, by the executive director. In five cases, the referring person was not mentioned in the records. (See Table III.)

In the teen-age group, two referrals were made by group work supervisors; four by canteen workers; two by mothers concerning their daughters; two by the field work student; one by the group work supervisor through the group leaders' records; two by the executive director; one was a self-referral; two by a group leader with extensive group work experience; and one case was a behavior problem, known to the staff as a whole. In two cases, the person who made the referral was not mentioned in the records. (See Table IV.)

Objectives of Referral to the Case Worker and Movement

In the children's group, the objectives for three individuals are unknown. For the other ten, the objective in each case was referral to an outside social service agency. In five cases this objective was reached. In the other five, the case worker had to deal with parents who were very resistant to help.

In the teen-age group, the objectives were more varied. In only four cases was the objective referral. In one case, the objective was to give the individual insight into his behavior. In another individual, it was to help relieve anxie-

TABLE III
REFERRING AGENTS TO THE CASE WORKER
IN THE CHILDREN'S GROUP

Referring Agents	No. of Referrals
1. Executive Director	1
2. Group Work Supervisor	3
3. Group Work Supervisor through Group Leaders' Records	2
4. Group Leader	<u>2</u>
Total	8

TABLE IV
REFERRING AGENTS TO THE CASE WORKER
IN THE TEEN-AGE GROUP

Referring Agents	No. of Referrals
1. Executive Director	2
2. Group Work Supervisor	2
3. Group Work Supervisor through Group Leaders' Records	1
4. Group Leader	2
5. Field Work Student	2
6. Canteen Workers	4
7. Mothers	2
8. Self-Referral	1
9. Behavior Known to Staff	<u>1</u>
Total	17

ties and ventilate feelings. In the case of two others, the objectives were the same as the last-mentioned case and vocational guidance. With two other individuals, the objective was to stop their destructive behavior. In one, the objective was to help the client find a meaningful experience in the agency. In all of these cases, the objectives were reached.

In eight cases, the investigator could not ascertain what the objectives were. It is important to note that where no objectives were reached, the case worker recommended that the individual be given a good group experience in the agency and/or that the case be followed-up in the future. (See Table V.)

TABLE V
OBJECTIVES OF REFERRAL WITH TEEN-AGERS

Objectives	No. of Teen-Agers
1. Referral	4
2. Give Client Insight into his Behavior	1
3. Help Relieve Anxieties and Attain Self-Confidence	1
4. Help Relieve Anxieties and Give Vocational Guidance	2
5. Stop Destructive Behavior	2
6. Help Client Find Meaningful Experience in Agency	<u>1</u>
Total	11

Kinds of Agencies Used for Further Referral

In the children's group, the case worker made four effective referrals to child guidance agencies and two to a summer treatment camp. In the teen-age division, five referrals were made to a vocational guidance agency, two to a family agency, and two to a family and children's agency.

The investigator found it difficult to ascertain from the records exactly how the case worker made use of the group work staff in working with his clients. He frequently made such recommendations as "follow-up in the Fall," or "give the client the best possible group experience." In interviews with the case worker, it was found that he had frequent informal contacts with leaders and group work supervisors for the purposes of diagnosis and consultation to give the staff insight into an individual's problem and general personality.

It was also difficult to get accurate information concerning the social climate of the home. Frequently, such observations could be made through the records. In many of the cases, the parents were very nervous and disturbed people, in others, the parents were very strict and inhibiting to their children. Some parents worked at irregular hours. In some, there was financial or emotional insecurity. Sibling rivalry was noted several times, too.

There were four major methods of referral to the case worker:

- (1) The group work supervisor would observe the individual having a problem, directly or through records, and referred him to the case worker.
- (2) The group work supervisor would tell the group work leader to urge the individual in his group needing help to see the case worker of his own volition. (This was the most frequently used method with teenagers.)
- (3) Referral by parents.
- (4) Self-referral by the individual seeking help.

The case worker contacted the individuals with whom he worked through the media of letters, phone calls, and/or informal contacts in the agency itself.

The number of interviews held was another item of information which was difficult to obtain from the records. In interviews with the case worker, it was noted that there were usually one or two interviews which were usually held with each client.

CHAPTER VI

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PROJECTAttitudes of the Group Work Staff

The group work staff who were interviewed included:

- (1) the executive director
- (2) the program director (through correspondence)
- (3) two program assistants
- (4) a group leader with extensive group work experience, who made several referrals to the case worker.

All of them agreed that the case worker's previous experience at the agency as a group leader had a very positive effect on his work in two different ways:

- (1) He knew and understood the agency and its functions.
- (2) He had a positive relationship with the staff and several clients.

The program director stated that "it was because of his previous experience at the agency and his excellent capacity as a case worker that he was selected for this position." He also pointed out that "he was able to see the group work problems, as well as the case work problems. He had a marked positive effect."

The others felt also that because of his unique position in having had previous experience at the agency as a club leader helped in establishing rapport and in understanding the agency's objectives.

The staff felt that he helped them gain great insight into

the behavior of many individuals who were causing difficulty to the agency and club leaders. He was able to give them concrete advice and help whenever they encountered such problems.

In regard to attitudes toward this project, the program director stated that "everyone concerned with this program was in favor of it, once it was defined." There was general agreement that here was a service to individuals that would not have been rendered otherwise. There were many people at the agency, who needed concrete help with their problems, who would not have availed themselves of outside resources in the community had not the case worker helped them overcome some of their resistance to such action.

This project thus served the purpose of breaking down some of the barriers which people have towards accepting help. Social workers must still cope with the fact that the larger segment of the public feels that only "abnormal" people are served by social agencies. Working with a social worker at the agency helped them to overcome some of these feelings, since they did not feel that they were amidst strangers in a strange environment. They were able to feel at home and relaxed.

There were two other reasons given for having a case worker on the agency staff. One was that most of the leaders at the agency were untrained and needed help in working with deep-rooted individual problems in their groups. The second

reason given was that the professional staff did not have sufficient time available to do intensive individualization because of their heavy work loads.

All agreed that here was a service that should definitely have been continued, not only on a part-time basis, but on a full-time basis.

There were certain limitations to such a project which were cited by the group work staff. They included:

- (1) limitations in regard to budget for such a service
- (2) the problem of the supervision of the case worker (Who is to do the supervision?)
- (3) the possibility that this project might make the agency so centered on the individual that they might lose sight of the group work aspects of the program (This was stated as a very minor possible limitation.)

The Attitudes of the Case Worker

The case worker wrote two reports on the progress of the project for the purposes of clarifying and explaining what the project was accomplishing. In these reports, the case worker often gave his attitudes toward the project. In his first report (March-May, 1949), the case worker stated:

There is definitely, in my mind, a need for a case work service within the agency. The main problem in making sound referrals to case work agencies and child guidance clinics is proper preparation of the client. Basically, this involves skillful and sensitive handling of the client's natural and understandable resistance towards recognizing his or her part in a problem and getting help. It inevitably follows, therefore, that frequently one interview is not sufficient. In fact, I feel that in most cases a series of perhaps from five to ten interviews would be indicated. The work of a case work staff member would

be tremendously improved if he were more available than a part-time evening person possibly could be. For example, in dealing with problems of children and in interviewing their parents, it would be very helpful if the caseworker had opportunity for direct observation in play and other group situations. Furthermore, a caseworker could be available to the parents at a time when they visit the agency. This would facilitate the establishment of contact with children and their disturbed parents and would make the initial interview much more spontaneous.

The case worker felt that some of the situations which were referred, particularly those of a disciplinary nature, could have been more appropriately handled by the leaders or staff people involved in the group with which the members are naturally associated. "In other words, as we strengthen the quality of our leadership, we will at the same time make more effective use of the services of a case worker."

It was his opinion that there is a distinct value in having a case worker who can consult with volunteer and staff leaders, so that there could be free interchange of ideas on common problems. He also suggested that certain staff meetings could be set aside for the purpose of discussing certain commonly known cases, so that the staff in general could have an understanding of these problems and could work out uniform methods of handling them.

The case worker continually made efforts to emphasize the need for having a "regularly available" case worker, employed on a regular basis and available for frequent consultation. It was his feeling that the job could not be done on a very

limited basis. In his final report (October, 1949-June, 1950), the case worker stated:

In general, I am tempted to repeat the conclusions and recommendations set forth in last year's summary. The part-time nature of my work (I have been at the agency on the average of five times a month) has necessarily limited the scope of my work. There have been some referrals that I could not discuss thoroughly with the staff concerned, because of time limitations. There was also a great deal of follow-up work that should have been done in a more comprehensive program, but, again, time limitations prevented my doing so.

Despite these limitations, the case worker showed real conviction about the value of having a case worker on the agency staff:

In view of the relative newness of this counseling service in Hecht House, I feel there has been excellent acceptance by staff and agency membership. Such acceptance must necessarily be based on actual needs within the agency. Having a caseworker has made possible early and sound referrals to outside agencies. Since the casework program this year was more extensive than that of last year, I have felt there has been more opportunity for interpretation of the service to general staff with the result that more referrals have been made and more benefits have been gained from these referrals.

The case worker felt that publicity in the form of articles in the House newspaper had a beneficial effect on the project, since several direct referrals resulted.

I feel that further publicity of this type should be continued. Emphasis in publicity has been on obtaining help with normal, everyday problems and a sort of pathological emphasis has been carefully avoided in publicity.

The case worker complimented the staff on the many thoughtful and well planned referrals which they made. He noted that the fine teamwork relationship which he had with club leaders and group work supervisors that made possible a friendly and

cooperative process of working together. On several occasions, he felt that premature referrals were made to him by club leaders. He also felt that some of the social work students were a bit inclined to be a little over-ambitious in making referrals.

The worker suggested the formation of a specialized group for certain disturbed children.

I feel that a case worker could be of great assistance in working closely with the club department in developing a specialized group for these children who do not fit into the regular groups because of personality difficulties and who cannot be referred to outside agencies because of parental resistance. Hecht House does have an opportunity to do some pioneering work in this field, and I feel that further studying this possibility would greatly strengthen agency programming.

He also recommended that a staff case worker could make appropriate summer camp referrals and work with special problems which arise in the nursery school. The three major purposes which he saw in having a case worker at the agency were:

- (1) The main purpose is to facilitate referrals to outside agencies at the earliest possible time.
- (2) To provide for consultation with club leaders and supervisors on special problems related to referral to outside agencies, or to referrals from outside agencies for the group work experience.
- (3) To provide individual counseling service to certain members for help with problems related directly to experience in the agency for which referral is not indicated.

In general, we may conclude that the staff and the case worker all felt very positively towards this project, as a means towards helping individuals, and were convinced that it should have been continued.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONSSummary

The purpose of this study has been to find some of the distinct contributions of having a case worker in a particular group work setting. Our investigation began with a treatment of the background of the problem in terms of its theoretical aspects, since it was felt that a demonstration of the generic concepts was prerequisite to a discussion of the function of the case worker in a group work agency.

We first focused on the basic concepts of case work and group work and by comparing them, we discovered that there was a general similarity in orientation. Both emphasized the importance of the individual personality. Programming to meet individual and group needs in group work paralleled treatment of the person rather than the problem in case work. Democracy underlies both in terms of client self-determination and self-government in clubs. Both are regarded as processes; both utilize the understanding of human behavior as an essential tool in doing effective work with people. Neither is judgmental and each starts at the level of the client or the group. Both function in the community and are limited by its potentialities.

Although these generic concepts are generally in agreement, we noted that it was not until relatively recently that cooperation and understanding between the two began to develop.

The various case work-group work committees which sprang up in the 'thirties' to bring about closer cooperation and understanding were cited.

We noted that one of the major developments which grew out of this period of experimentation was the use of the case worker in a group work setting. We then went on to cite some of the patterns of case work services in group work agencies that have developed over the years. We saw that the functions of such a case worker were generally to:

- (1) sensitize the group work staff to individual behavior mechanisms.
- (2) act as consultant in regard to the understanding and treatment of children and their behavior.
- (3) initiate referrals to other agencies, where necessary.
- (4) act as liaison between the group work and case work agencies.
- (5) consult with individual members on personal problems.

After this theoretical and background material was presented, we discussed the history of Hecht House and the events leading up to the hiring of a case worker. We noted that Hecht House began as an industrial training school for immigrant Jewish girls coming from Russia in the 1890's. We saw how the agency's function and location changed as the needs and location of its members changed. We examined various patterns of case work-group work relations which developed between this agency and other case work agencies and how these developments

found their climax in the hiring of the case worker to function in the group work agency itself.

We then studied the functions of the caseworker, the reasons for referral to the case worker, the referring agents, the objectives of the referrals, and their movement, the agencies to which the case worker made further referrals, some discussion on the social climate of the homes of individuals presenting problems, and the methods used to refer individuals to the case worker.

In examining the attitudes of the group work staff and the case worker toward this project, we noticed how positive was their attitude because of the invaluable service it was rendering to individuals in need of help.

Conclusions and Recommendations

We can make the conclusion that such a service is very essential to this group work agency. As cited previously, the heavy work loads of the staff members do not allow for sufficient time for extensive individualization. Another problem which makes such a service necessary is that most club leaders are untrained people and need much guidance in helping individuals in their groups.

However, the writer does not feel that such a service can be rendered only by a person who has been professionally trained as a case worker. At the present stage of social work development, we find that most recognized schools of social work give

their students a thorough generic training. This training may not qualify a case worker to function as a group worker, or vice versa; however; there are certain generic skills which are learned that help produce people who can function as social workers in any setting.

The services which are rendered by a case worker in a group setting, as described in this study, do not require more of the worker than to possess these generic skills. The primary function of the case worker was not to give case work service itself, but rather to assist the client to use outside resources in the community. This can best be described as "pre-referral" work.

The writer recommends that the job load of one of the professionally trained members of the group work staff include this function. He would be in a more advantageous position to work effectively with individuals because he would not be working in a strange environment; consequently, he would feel completely at home. Better relationships would be formed as a result of his acquaintance with the staff and membership. With adequate time to do the job, a group worker with a well-rounded social work education will be in a position to carry out these functions. In short, it will allow for the integration of this service with the total group work program.

This recommendation has implications for the total field of group work. Every group work agency is faced with the problem of helping meet the more serious needs of individuals. By

allocating part of the job load of a member of the group work staff to help meet these needs, a worthwhile contribution will be made to the field of social work, as a whole.

Approved:

Richard K. Conant

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Dean

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APPENDIX

SCHEDULE FOR CASE RECORDS

I. IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

A. The Client

Name: Grade:
Sex: Occupation:
Date of birth: Health

B. Worker-Client Relationship

- 1. When did the case worker begin contact with the client?
2. When did the case worker begin working with the client?
3. Number of interviews:
4. Number of informal contacts:
5. Where did informal contacts take place:
6. Date of close of working relationship:

C. The Parents of the Client

FATHER

MOTHER

Date of birth - - - - -
Place of birth - - - - -
Religion - - * - - - - -
Divorced - - - - -
Widowed - - - - -
Separated - - - - -
Other - - - - -

D. Siblings of the Client

AGE

AGE

- 1. 3.
2. 4.

E. Adjustments of the Client to Environment before Contact with Case Worker.

1. Agency:

2. Home

a. Social Climate of the Home:

b. Adjustment to Parents:

c. Adjustment to siblings:

d. Adjustment to Others (state):

3. School

4. Neighborhood

5. Other Environmental Factors

II. THE CLIENT'S PROBLEM

1. Why was the client referred to the case worker?

2.

2. Who made the referral?

3. How was the referral made? (method)

4. a. What was the client's attitude to the referral?

b. How did the client accept the referral?

5. What was the presenting problem?

6. What other problems became evident?

7. Was there any contact with or interpretation made to - -

- a. The Parents
- b. School
- c. Social Agencies
- d. Other

III. OBJECTIVES OF REFERRAL FOR:

1. Agency
2. Case Worker
3. Client
4. Parents
5. Others

IV. MOVEMENT

A. Helping the Client

1. Were the objectives reached?
2. a. Did the case worker contact the group worker during the process of working with the client?
b. If yes, how?
3. Did the case worker make use of the group worker's contact with the client for:
a. Diagnosis
b. Treatment
c. Other
4. a. Did the case worker make any recommendations to the group work agency concerning the client?
b. If yes, what?

B. New Adjustment to Environment.

1. Agency
2. Home
3. School
4. Neighborhood
5. Other

B. Referral to a Social Service Agency

1. a. Was any referral made
b. If yes, what kind of an Agency?

2. What was the case worker's recommendation to the Agency?

3. Was the group work staff consulted?

4. What was the client's reaction to referral? Did he accept referral?

5. What was the parents' reaction to referral? Did they accept referral?