

STATEMENT OF DR. JACOB FISHMAN, DIRECTOR, HOWARD UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, ON PARTICIPATION OF SUBPROFESSIONAL AIDES IN REHABILITATION TREATMENT PROGRAMS

In several years of experimentation with such training programs at the Howard University Institute for Youth Studies and in other research centers in various parts of the country, it has been found that this approach is highly successful. Two brief examples of this kind of program follow:

1. A group of 125 youths, ages 17 to 21, who were school dropouts or unemployed, with multi-problem backgrounds, were trained and employed in the human services, including mental health, education, welfare and child care. During training, students were assisted in working toward high school equivalency and increasing their general knowledge and skills. Eighty-seven percent of the trainees finished the training program and were subsequently employed. A study done from one to two years after employment began showed that 52 percent were still in the same jobs in human services and each job change had been accompanied by an increase in salary.

2. A program was developed at Cardozo High School in Washington, D.C., for similar students which combined human service training with the regular curriculum leading toward both a diploma and a certificate of training. Part of the day was spent in classroom work, part of the day in supervised on-the-job training in local human service agencies. The trainees received stipends for the latter. Students were selected from the bottom of the class. On graduation, these students filled jobs in the agencies in which they were trained. A few went on to higher education such as community college or college. Half of these students spent their on-the-job training as classroom aides in elementary schools and half as health aides in local health facilities.

There are several programs in Washington, D.C., which have demonstrated success in the use of ex-addicts and ex-alcoholics in treatment centers. The D.C. Public Health Department has a Drug Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Center in Northwest Washington. Over half the staff are ex-addicts who have been trained at the center to work with addicts. There are five Drug Addiction Counselors, at the GS-5 level and five Mental Health Aides at GS-4. These subprofessionals assist the other staff in such areas as determining which of the patients are sincerely motivated in the direction of breaking the habit, and which are trying to "work the system," as well as tasks such as screening, intake records, and therapeutic techniques.

At the Rehabilitation Center for Alcoholics (RCA) at Occoquan, Va., another D.C. Health Department facility, 65 subprofessionals are employed as alcoholic counselors. A large proportion of the counselors are or have been alcoholics, themselves, and are currently members of Alcoholics Anonymous. They were trained at RCA and are rated at the GS-7 level. Their duties include security, training, control and counseling. Each counselor acts as "house father" for a group of eight patients which he follows throughout their stay at Occoquan. The counselor orients the patient to the program at RCA, teaches good work habits, conducts the Alcoholics Anonymous program, refers the patient to professional staff members for medical or other services when necessary and in general observes, evaluates and advises. The close relationship developed between the counselor and the patient enhances the therapeutic aspects of rehabilitation.

The use of local community residents as subprofessionals in alcoholic and narcotic addict rehabilitation centers has been proven successful in various programs throughout the country. The subprofessional increases the effectiveness of services in these programs because his background and familiarity with the community from which he comes enables him to provide the important link between the client and professional, where it possibly would not otherwise exist. The important therapeutic effect on the subprofessional, his family and his community cannot be overlooked. Significant and lasting behavioral change has been found in these people, through training and employment for nonprofessional careers in mental health and other human services. The concept of helping oneself through helping others is an aspect of this effect. The local resident now undertakes to deliver the services of which heretofore he was only the dependent recipient.

In addition, this is a most significant answer to the critical problem of training effective manpower which is now confronting alcoholism, addiction and other mental health programs. New Careers training can provide a meaningful em-