FACTORS THAT IMPEDE THE ANTI-SOCIAL TEEN-AGE GANG. IN THE USE OF ORGANIZED COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

An Analysis of the East End Boys Project as an Attempt to Re-direct Anti-social Behaviour

by

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This thesis is a study of an experiment conducted by an experienced social group worker with a group of fifteen anti-social teen-age boys in the East End district of Vancouver. The writer's interest in this study has grown out of his concern for youngsters who come to neighbourhood houses and community centers and search in vain for companionship and enjoyable activity. In spite of their apparent desire they are unable to feel at home and take part in the program services offered. Many of the youngsters, who experience this difficulty, drift toward membership in anti-social groups in an effort to find some measure of satisfaction.

The anti-social teen-age group does not appear in a neighbourhood by chance but in response to the unmet social and personal needs of its members. These needs have not been met through community services because of certain attitudes and feelings on the part of the members, the nature of the gang organization they create to protect themselves, and the response of the community to the way in which they make their needs known.

The group records of the East End Boys Project show the search of a group of youngsters for satisfying personal and group experiences. The members in this group had not been able to find a constructive means of satisfying their need for security, status, recognition and meaning in life. The project demonstrates that, through the relationship with a social group worker, the factors that prevented some of these youngsters from using the opportunities for social experience provided by the community, can be isolated and overcome.

In the security of the informal club room with an accepting, understanding adult these youngsters are able to relax and seek the assistance they need. In this atmosphere the social worker can utilize group work skills and techniques and his understanding of human behaviour in the re-direction of anti-social attitudes and activities. Through the medium of the natural gang group the social worker is able to reach out and offer services to young people who otherwise could never be involved in the helping process.

The anti-social teen-age gang is a symptom of an unmet social need in the community. Social work in its concern for unmet needs wherever they appear, has recognized this symptom and moved toward the devising of methods of isolating and treating the underlying social ailment. Social group work has a real contribution to make in work with anti-social youngsters but such a contribution, to be effective, must be co-ordinated and integrated with a total program of youth services in the community.
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FACTORS THAT IMPEDE THE ANTI-SOCIAL
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CHAPTER 1.

THE ANTI-SOCIAL TEEN-AGE GROUP AS A SYMPTOM OF UNMET NEEDS.

One of the most valuable contributions that the profession of social work can make in the present-day world is in the area of its awareness of the process of change, and its implications in the modern community. With the increased security of a body of knowledge and technical skill, social workers have moved with growing responsibility to an application of this knowledge in the field of human relations. This has brought into sharp focus the process by which social workers assist individuals, groups and communities to move toward the kind of life that gives them the satisfactions they seek. It has also raised searching questions about those individuals and groups who, by their behaviour, indicate the need for assistance of a social work nature, but do not utilize the program of services available in the community. This has meant that there is a group of people in the community who do not receive services at the point where such help could be of greatest assistance to them.

The dual responsibility of social workers to this group of people and to the whole community has led to a more careful assessment of the means by which services are brought to the people who are in need of them. There is increased recognition that the provision of a program of services alone will not
guarantee its effective use in overcoming some of the social ailments that are prevalent. New and more adequate recreational facilities will not solve, for example, the problem of juvenile delinquency; nor will increased family counseling services cope with the problem of family breakdown. Social workers have considered the problem of resistance to change, and are aware of the implications involved in the giving up of traditional patterns of behaviour for those that appear new and strange, in spite of the assurance that they are more satisfactory. This resistance can be dealt with when it appears in the relationship between social workers and clients, groups or communities, and the process of help can be continued. When this resistance is expressed in a more diffuse way, and the anxiety that often accompanies unsatisfactory ways of adjustment is overcome through anti-social behaviour or psychological withdrawal, then a more challenging problem is presented.

Recognition of Problem

The problem of incomplete use of established services has received consideration in a number of communities, the best known of which are the New York Youth Board project (1) in New York and the Los Angeles Youth Project in Los Angeles (2). Both these experimental studies were motivated by community concern about anti-social teen-age gang activity, and the apparent inability of existing social and community services to meet the needs expressed by this delinquent behaviour. Both these projects were carried out on a comprehensive scale, including an attempt to evaluate the

(1) Furman, Sylvan, ed. Reaching the Unreached, New York, New York City Youth Board, 1952.
program offered by agencies, and the means by which services were brought to the people in need of help. One of the important general principles that emerged from these studies was the need to consider problems of this nature in relation to the specific community where the problem has arisen.

**Vancouver Scene**

In the Fall of 1951 the agencies serving the East End district of Vancouver became acutely concerned about a problem of teen-age group behaviour and requested assistance in understanding and providing a program for a particular problem group of teen-age young people.

Community planners in Vancouver have been aware for some time that the area bordering the downtown business section is one for special attention so far as an analysis is concerned of the indices of social disorganization (3). This is particularly true of the area which is bounded by Main Street on the West, Nanaimo Street on the East, the waterfront on the North and the Railway Yards and Terminal Avenue on the South.

This is a typical area of transition in which the forces that work toward constructive community life are minimized by those of community breakdown. The single family dwellings which still remain in some areas are interspersed with multiple family dwellings and rooming houses, and an increasing percentage of business and light industry. Demolished homes have been replaced with businesses or factories, rather than new homes or apartments.

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The assessed value of many lots exceeds that of the house and improvements, which acts as a deterrent to further improvement.

Industry has made advances along many of the main streets, including Main, Hastings, Georgia and Prior streets and along Clark, Vernon, Commercial and Victoria Drives. The district is full of machine shops, foundries, electrical shops, furniture and allied factories. Because its boundaries are set, there is no room for expansion in the area, with the present residential district caught between the water-front and the railway yards. In spite of the changes that have and are continuing to take place, it is still an area of family living.

This district meets the need in Vancouver for medium-priced family accommodation required by many families, where the breadwinner is engaged in seasonable work such as lumbering, fishing or construction, and must face the recurrent problem of winter unemployment. Job security to these families is indefinite, therefore limiting long-term planning. In addition many of the recent immigrants find temporary and sometimes permanent accommodation in this area. As most families live here by necessity rather than choice, mobility is high, with moves to more suitable districts whenever possible. There are small residential pockets within the area where various ethnic groups carry on the homeland pattern of living followed before coming to Canada. This heterogeneous mixture of cultural, racial and economic groups does not readily adapt itself to organization on a community basis.

Community Services

There are a number of social service and recreational agencies whose center of operation is located in this district, and
whose programs supplement those of agencies organized on a city-wide basis. Some of these are established on a cultural or ethnic basis, such as the Association of Ukraine Canadians or the Serbian Canadian National Home Society. Others are on a religious basis, such as the Catholic Sailors Club or First United Church Welfare Industries. Some operate on the basis of a special service such as the Vancouver Police Mutual Benefit Association; the Rehabilitation Centre for Alcoholics; or the Strathcona Day Nursery.

There are four recreational agencies that service this area; the Kiwassa Girls Club at Vernon and East Keefer, the Rufe Gibbs Boys Club at East Pender and Heatley, the Pender Y.W.C.A. at East Pender and Jackson and the Community Y.M.-Y.W. at Commercial and Venables. The four latter organizations limit their membership on a geographical basis, and so tend to serve this community more specifically than others whose offices are located in the district, but who service the larger community. In terms of number of organizations and representation by city-wide services, the East-of-Main area is fairly well covered. However, situations such as the teen-age gang problem which arose at the Kiwassa Girls Club indicate there may be gaps in community-wide coverage on a qualitative basis.

Basis for the Project

The specific problem of the anti-social gang at the Kiwassa Club was brought to the attention of the Social Planning Section of the Community Chest and Council, through the efforts of the group work professor at the School of Social Work at the
University of British Columbia. The agencies in the area had given consideration to the problem presented by this group and found that their respective facilities for program and leadership were inadequate to meet the particular needs of these youngsters. The members of this group were known to agencies' staff through their casual but disruptive participation in the respective programs operated. The group as it appeared in 1952 had many of the characteristics of the anti-social teen-age gang, and its reputation was well established in the neighbourhood.

In an effort to find a solution to the problem posed by this group and to alleviate the pressure on agency services, the directors approached the School of Social Work with the hope that a specialized program could be inaugurated. Concern of the social agencies aware of the problem in the area was focused and co-ordinated through the Social Planning Section, and details of the project were worked out as a cooperative plan to meet the problem presented by this group who at present were disrupting the program at the Kiwassa Club, breaking into the agency building and using it as a "hang out" in off hours. The group was attracted to the Kiwassa Club because of the position which the building and its program occupied in the community in the past, and continued to do in the current experience of the group members.

The building the Kiwassa Girls' Club now occupies has a long and varied history, but throughout the time of its operation there is a thread of consistency that is of particular significance to the group being described. The program has always been well rooted in the community and the members have had a feeling of belonging
The building is an old fire hall that was turned over to a group of local business men to operate as a boys' club under the charter of the old Junior G-Men's organization. The superintendent operated a program on a part-time voluntary basis with the community supplying the materials required for hobby and small sports activities. He practically lived in the building and knew the members personally and in this way met their need to have someone interested in them regardless of their status or behaviour. The present nostalgic feeling expressed by this teen-age group toward past experience in the agency is a sign of the positive support that has been given to this agency in the past.

The activities operated at this unit were incorporated into the expanding work of the Vancouver Boys' Club Association and, although leadership was stabilized and program facilities improved, it lost something because it no longer belonged exclusively to the local neighbourhood. The facilities proved inadequate and as soon as possible the Association moved to more suitable quarters for the type of program it offered. A former Jewish synagogue at Heatley and East Pender was renovated and operations were transferred to that center. It was much more difficult, however, to transfer the feelings of loyalty and belonging from the old building to this new facility and there is a continued evidence of this residue in the gravitation of this group of teen-age boys to the old fire hall under its present plan of operation.

After the Boys' Club program moved to its new quarters, the Kiwassa Club, the women's counterpart to the Kiwanis Club who
first started boys' club work in Vancouver, became interested in developing a program for girls in the area. It moved into the former fire hall as a base for offering such program. This formed a basis for the present program being offered by the Vancouver Girls' Club Association at the Kiwassa Girls' Club. There was a residue of feeling by boys in the neighbourhood, however, who found it more difficult to accept this change than desertion by the Boys' Club through its move to another part of the district. This feeling formed part of the basis for the appearance of the problem at the Kiwassa Club in the Fall of 1951 and later proved to be a valuable asset to the group worker, in establishing contact with the teen-age boys who were causing concern by their behaviour in the neighbourhood. Their positive feelings about past experiences in the agency acted as a backdrop of atmosphere that could be utilized in re-directing their behaviour to more acceptable channels.

In the loyalty to the experience which the neighbourhood had in the program, and the acceptance at the old fire hall at Vernon and Keefer Streets, can be seen one of the more subtle characteristics of this district. This loyalty and nostalgic feeling for the local neighbourhood, while generated through positive experience, acts in many ways as a barrier that isolates this community, and has prevented free movement out of the district to satisfy recreational and leisure time needs. Another factor that contributes to the tendency toward isolation, is the provision of employment in local industry, thereby further limiting the amount of mobility to outside communities.
This group, which lives and works in the area, forms the more stable element in the community. Nevertheless their interests are frequently limited to their own local neighbourhood. It is rather strange to find youngsters of twelve and thirteen years of age who have never been to Stanley Park or the city beaches. There are a number of families who spend the majority of their time right in this area, only moving outside when absolutely necessary. This feeling of isolation has tended to unify people in the area against outsiders, but it has not provided the positive bond needed for a community to pull together toward grass roots community organization (4). It has acted rather as a defence against the community feeling of difference and inadequacy because of limitations in housing, playgrounds, recreational facilities and other community services. This particular aspect of the community's attitude is particularly relevant in examining the factors that affected teen-age use of organized recreational program in the area.

Initiation of the Project.

In an effort to isolate and examine the problem presented by the teen-age group of boys at the Kiwassa Club and to re-direct their activities toward more acceptable goals, an experimental project was set up in the area. Leadership for this project was obtained through the School of Social Work at the University of British Columbia under the supervision of Mr. Harry Morrow, then Director of Alexandra Neighbourhood House and later assistant

(4) Ibid.
minister at First United Church, which is located in the area. The project was guided by an advisory committee, formed of representatives from the Community Chest and Council and from the social agencies in the area.

It was the function of this committee to give guidance and direction to the group worker employed on a part-time basis through funds approved by the Chest and Council. Through this experiment it was hoped that the immediate problem of the disturbance of program and entry into the Kiwassa Club would be alleviated; that the behaviour of the members in this group could be re-directed, and that through the experience provided in this program they could be assisted to reach out to other programs for their age group in the community.

To this end a plan was developed to introduce the social group worker to the members of this group through the director of the Kiwassa Club. This was achieved through a teen-age co-educational program which was being offered as a temporary program for this age group. As soon as contact was established, a separate evening of program was set up for this group of boys, with membership limited to fifteen members, and the facilities of the Kiwassa Club were made available for their use one evening each week. The facilities included a games room on the main floor large enough to play such active games as floor hockey or "one basket" basketball, and a lounge on the upper floor where cards could be played and small dances held. Basic equipment was also supplied in the form of cards, record player, basket and volley balls and ping pong equipment.
The ease with which the members made themselves at home in the agency was a clear indication of their need for this kind of facility, where they could relax and work out some of their basic problems in relationship with their peers, adults and the opposite sex. This, however, does not mean that there were no problems in setting limits for destructive behaviour, in gaining the acceptance and confidence of an essentially distrustful and suspicious group, in assisting individual members to gain enough confidence to try new skills, and in slowly helping those in the group to evaluate their standards and goals in the light of realistic consequences.

Description of Group.

Although the social worker initially felt the group involved in the experiment had many of the outward symptoms of the teen-age anti-social gang, the pattern of which is well known in most of the larger cities in North America, he later found as he gained acceptance by the members, that much of their behaviour was a camouflage for their real feelings. The members wore strides or drapes and let their hair grow long in the traditional manner; they had intense feelings of loyalty to their friends and were antagonistic to outside groups, adults and authority as symbolized by the police. Much of their time was spent in neighbourhood pool-halls, cafes and on street corners. A number of the members had a background of involvement in car theft, breaking and entering and assault charges through clashes with other groups, adults and the police.

However, as the worker gained their confidence he began to see behind the facade of their outward behaviour. It became
Increasingly obvious that one of the real reasons for the unity of the group was a self-protective need based on the insecurity of the members, and their desire to have some defence against the anxiety of their inadequacies in a community where they felt that everyone was against them. Independence and reluctance to accept assistance from an adult were often denial of deep underlying dependency needs. Their casual sophistication hid fears about their ability to compete in situations where physical or social skills were required. In the protective setting of their club night, in the company of an accepting adult who regarded them as individuals with strengths and weaknesses, these adolescent boys were able to relax, to verbalize their real feelings and to discuss the problems common to any teen-age group.

The underlying concerns of the boys in this group were essentially the same as those which any adolescent faces in growing up and establishing himself as a part of the modern community. They were concerned about emancipation from their families, about relationship with others their own age, about meeting and being comfortable with girls, about employment and about their respective places in the pattern of life of which they were part. The informal discussions in the lounge at the club were of utmost importance in helping the boys to gain confidence in expressing their opinions and in providing a framework through which they could air the problems that were of vital concern to them.

The security gained in this manner enabled some of the members to approach the worker on their own for further assistance. Some of the feelings members had about admitting the possibility they had problems with which they needed help, were overcome in these
sessions, and progress was made toward acceptance by the members of the responsibility for their own behaviour. The acceptance of this responsibility is essential in any program of re-directing anti-social behaviour, as the technique of projection is an inevitable part of delinquent behaviour. Recognition was given to the limited physical and social skills of the members, through the provision of activities on the level at which they could perform. This gave them increasing confidence to improve their abilities and to try out new activities. The confidence and self-assurance gained in the security of the club setting, was the key to opening the door for greater satisfaction in socially acceptable activity, and in enabling the members to examine with increasing understanding their total position in the community.

Progress of Project.

The special project at the Kiwassa Club was continued for a two and one-half year period, during which time encouraging progress was made in assisting the boys to adopt more satisfactory attitudes. There was a change in leadership during the project, and the smoothness of this change indicated the growing ability of the members to accept other adults in the role of group leaders. There were continued delinquencies, but these arose out of the activities of a sub-group within the membership, and had a limited effect on the group as a whole. The continual change in membership caused by the members leaving Vancouver for work, entering or returning from correctional institutions, and staying away for less concrete reasons, handicapped the development of a consistent approach to the group. This continual change resulted in frequent backtracking
by the worker to help the newer members accept the standards which had been achieved in their absence. During the last year, it was clear that members were holding on to an experience that had given them a real basis for security. It was also clear that the original need was no longer present, but the members were afraid of letting go because they were unsure of what the future held for them.

At the end of two and one-half years, a review of the group indicated that movement had been achieved in a number of the key problems that all adolescents face. Most of the boys had steady girl friends, some with girls from the original girls' group at the Kiwassa Club, and others with girls from the district. The social skill and security acquired through the small co-educational program, and the follow-up group discussions were largely responsible for this progress. Most of the members had moved toward steady employment or had modified their approach to work to the point where such employment was much more likely. There was evidence of a growing acceptance of responsibility for their own decisions and movement away from the former dependence on their families.

The majority of the members had matured beyond the point where the closely knit teen-age group is so important a factor in helping young people to move out and make decisions for themselves. A check of the present addresses of the members showed that most of the original group were no longer living in the area; that they were making sincere attempts to establish themselves in other communities. The project was terminated by the committee
when it became evident that the need for a specialized program was no longer present in the original group of boys which was a cause of concern in the neighbourhood. The committee felt that the majority of the members could now use other community facilities when the need arose, and at this point should be helped to terminate their experience in the project setting. At the same time the committee recognized that there was a smaller group which the project had not been able to serve, because of deeper disturbance and a lack of readily available treatment services.

**Basis for Study.**

The project undertaken at the Kiwassa Girls' Club raises a number of important issues which warrant more complete examination. One of the questions that arises, is whether the behaviour of this group of boys and the response they made to the kind of service provided, represents a gap in community services. There is a possibility that a similar problem may arise again because of the presence in the neighbourhood of a younger counterpart of the group involved in the project. Further, the committee's recognition that all members of the group were not helped through the re-directive process raises a question of more discrimination in the use and limitations of this particular approach toward the handling of delinquency problems. This recognition also suggests a more careful consideration of how present treatment services can be utilized or extended, to aid in the more complete use of the therapeutic relationship established by the social worker in a program of this nature.
These issues underline the importance of a careful assessment of the factors that prevent members of similar groups of youngsters from taking part in the program of services offered by the agencies in the area. It also indicates the need for a more detailed consideration of the remedial process whereby teen-age boys who show anti-social tendencies, are helped to redirect their interests and satisfactions, and to move out and establish themselves in the community.
CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENT OF THE GROUP APPROACH TO THE ANTI-SOCIAL GANG.

In the last decade there has been an increased awareness of, and interest in the process through which social group work assists individuals and groups to achieve the satisfactions that they seek. This interest has come with the realization that the provision of facilities and leadership alone will not guarantee the effective moulding or redirecting of behaviour. It has also come through a desire to be more scientific in the use of group process to obtain specific goals. No longer is it felt that groups are good for everyone or that group experience in itself will enable the majority of people to move toward more mature social relationships. The desire to be more specific and discriminating in the use of group process has led to experimentation in a variety of areas.

The Group Dynamics movement and the experimental use of group process in problem solving or conflict situations are some of the trends that have developed in this search for greater understanding of the intangibles of group living. This movement has grown out of the social psychologist's interest in process, and the continuous change that is part of the phenomenon of groups. Another facet lies in the growing interest through therapeutic use of group experience in the treatment of disturbed and psychotic individuals. The psychiatrist, in his desire to
treat individual disturbances, has found that the group is a valuable tool for diagnostic and treatment purposes. As social workers have moved toward a definition of their specific area of competence and a determination of the most effective use of the variety of skills and specializations, they have given consideration to the integration of case work and group work methods and their co-operative use in meeting the total needs of clients.

A further area for specific study has developed out of concern for those groups and individuals in the community who, for a variety of reasons, do not avail themselves of the program of services provided and yet, by their behaviour, indicate the presence of unmet social needs and a desire for assistance. A contributing factor to this concern has come through research in juvenile delinquency which indicates that, while some of the youngsters who appear in juvenile court are known to recreational or other social agencies, relatively few are actively involved in programs (5). A third influence lies in a reaction against a trend in social work toward what has been called "socialized psychotherapy or psychological counseling." (6).

There is some feeling that as social workers have become more accurate in their understanding of the process through which clients are helped and the client's part in that process, they have also become over-selective in only offering service to those

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(6) Furman, Reaching the Unreached, page 2
clients who take the initiative in seeking it, and who possess the necessary strengths to continue on a relatively intensive level. To some extent this has meant in group work that youngsters having difficulties in group relationships or in controlling their behaviour, are excluded from active participation in programs. These factors, combined with the knowledge that the early detection and treatment of behaviour problems is essential in any program of social work services, have led to a number of experiments. Attempts have been made to identify these unserved persons, then to devise programs through which some of the values of group living can be extended to them. A more detailed consideration of some of these experiments is of particular value when examining the factors that affect the use of organized community programs by anti-social teen-age persons.

Pilot Project - Toronto - 1943.

In 1943, the Big Brothers Movement in the city of Toronto (7) undertook a limited experiment in the area of the need for specialized services to "unattached gang groups" among the teen-age population. The rapid expansion of this urban community had resulted in a residue of unmet social needs for all people, but teen-age youngsters in particular. It was felt that wartime pressures of inadequate housing, limited parental supervision and inadequate recreational and leisure-time services, had precipitated a problem that could not be ignored. The most urgent symptom of this condition was the widespread teen-age delinquency

and anti-social gang behaviour, of which the public was becoming increasingly aware.

In an effort to gain greater understanding of this problem, the Big Brothers employed several specialized staff members whose responsibilities were to meet as many gangs as possible in order to find out how they spent their leisure time. It was also hoped that in the short duration of the project a preliminary estimate could be obtained of the kinds of program and leadership techniques most effective in meeting the needs and interests of these youngsters.

One of the first basic concepts that emerged in this research into teen-age recreational interests was the fact that much of their behaviour was an effort to provide for social needs that were not met elsewhere. These youngsters had turned to the street when their interests were not met in their homes or in the neighbourhood. As the workers in the project came to better know the children in these groups through attempting to interest them in programs already in operation, they found the attitude of the youngsters to the program, and of the organizations to many of the youngsters, did not facilitate such participation.

On further exploration, this attitude proved to be composed of a number of elements, the most important of which was a general feeling by many young people that they were not welcome in community programs. There had been experience in the past when they were rejected as prospective members, because they could not come up to the standards of behaviour required by membership. It also appeared that program planning did not take into full consideration the need for short-term, stimulating activities which would
interest restless youngsters seeking excitement.

A further element that emerged was the limitation in physical and social skills that existed in many of the youngsters contacted by the staff in the project. When this problem was discussed with local recreational personnel, there was an expressed desire to co-operate in a plan to bring more groups into established services but, at the same time, a provision made that they would have to join as individual members who would be treated the same as any other member in the program. This proved to be a stumbling-block because of the special need of many of the youngsters for an opportunity to develop more adequate skills and to experience an accepting, helpful relationship with an adult. When this short-term experiment was evaluated, this latter need proved to be fundamental in any program which sought to re-direct the behaviour of anti-social groups or individuals.

Findings in Toronto Project

The pilot project sponsored by the Big Brothers Movement in Toronto provided a basis in actual experience for the development of a variety of group programs and imaginative leadership, in order to partially meet the social needs of teen-age youngsters in that area. The primary concern in this case was for the individual youngster and his particular problem. The approach was generally described as that of "individual guidance through group work." Contact was established through natural community groupings where the socialization process was well advanced within the group, but broader socialization had not taken place, which
made inevitable continual conflict with the community.

**Los Angeles Youth Project**

At almost the same time in Los Angeles, a similar problem had developed, as wartime expansion and pressure precipitated a near crisis in certain areas of the city (8). In this case, the situation that prompted the public and youth serving organizations to definite action was the outbreak of riots between teenage youth and members of the armed forces and between members of racial minorities. This condition was utilized as a basis for introducing a comprehensive co-operative plan to service ten of the "less chance areas" of Los Angeles. Private organizations who were members of the Community Chest worked together to expand their present youth services, and to co-operate in meeting the obvious gaps in community services for this particular age group. This whole program was sponsored through a special drive for funds. It also received enthusiastic public support in the Community Chest annual drive for funds. Additional staff members were employed to extend present agency services and to staff the special services developed in the co-operative project.

The main purposes of the Youth Project, as it came to be known, were to bring regular recreational services to youth in the Project areas, and to carry out direct work with maladjusted youth as a means of preventing delinquency. The districts selected for service included those where delinquency rates were high, where housing conditions were detrimental to constructive

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family living and where general social conditions hindered positive solution of the problems of young people. These areas were described as "less chance areas." They served as a focus for concentration of experimental programs aimed at alleviation of some of the contributing causes of juvenile misbehaviour, and at re-directing the interests of teen-age youth toward more satisfactory channels of expression.

One of the most important aspects of the project, in terms of re-direction of behaviour, was the creation of the Special Service Unit. It facilitated work with groups of youth who could not participate in regular agency programs. It was the function of workers attached to this Unit to meet with teen-age gang groups in their natural setting, to gain their acceptance and, through the exploration of interests, help them move toward participation in regular youth services. In the work attempted by the Unit, as in the Toronto experiment, the key to effective operation lay in the relationship established between the group worker and the members of the group with whom he was working. Through this relationship an adult gained the opportunity to influence the attitudes and values of young people and to help them toward more acceptable methods of handling their problems.

Once a meaningful relationship was established with groups served by the Project, the workers found definite similarities that could be termed a common denominator in describing the problems and needs of youngsters who gravitated toward anti-social
teen-age groups. The members were basically insecure and had learned socially unacceptable ways of handling their problems. In their delinquencies and gang associations they were seeking security, status, and an outlet for their pent-up hostility. It was also clear that relationship was of primary importance in developing an effective program aimed at the re-direction of behaviour, that activities and the satisfactions gained through them were of secondary importance. The workers found that there was a strong feeling of loyalty among members, that this loyalty was readily adaptable to serve as a means of positive control once a constructive program had been initiated whose members looked forward to the successful completion of activities.

Findings in Los Angeles

The Los Angeles Youth Project has given valuable information about the kind of youngster who needs this specialized service, the type of leadership required and some indication of the auspices through which a program of services can be instituted. As a general rule the youth involved were easily frustrated, easily discouraged, had little self-control, were dependent on strong natural leaders and showed limited development of physical and social skills. The worker interested in programs designed to meet such needs must be a patient, accepting person who understands the significance of delinquent behaviour. At the same time the worker must maintain his position as representative of the standards of the community, and not contribute to the further delinquency of the group members by being unable to maintain limits
or through over-identification with their problem situations. The worker must have adequate and skilled supervision to prevent him from falling into the many pitfalls inherent in work with anti-social and disturbed children. The sponsors of such programs need to give staff freedom to move at the pace required by the group, and not on the basis of predetermined objectives. The worker should be under no pressure through fear of loss of the agency's reputation, community pressure, or possible loss of position. Work with anti-social children is an exacting and demanding task, the effectiveness of which is greatly influenced by the confidence of the leadership, and the far-sightedness and imagination of the sponsoring organization.

The reports of the Youth Project include general statements about some of the stumbling blocks in introducing anti-social groups to established programs. Most agencies were not in a position to handle aggressive acting-out behaviour, especially during the testing period when the preliminaries of relationship were being established. A general criticism was made that these youngsters had the wrong attitude, making it difficult for them to fit into total program. The Project workers felt that attitude was a two-way process, often being a reaction to what the youngsters experienced or expected to experience. There was also a tendency to demand respect. When this was not forthcoming, the all-too-frequent response was the withdrawal of the group. This left the members of the group with the feeling that they were not welcome, and the agency with the impression
that the group was not interested in the activities offered. The desire for members of anti-social groups to stay together as a group within the agency and the reluctance to make suggestions about possible program, strengthened the conclusion that there was no real interest present. Lack of patience and understanding led to a rushing of the process whereby young people could gradually be moved toward constructive behaviour. Agency staff members experienced difficulty in maintaining their own standards, and at the same time accepting the behaviour of the group members as an expression of their level of development. The aggressive, hostile feelings of the predelinquent or delinquent person gave rise to confusion on the part of staff members in the setting, and maintaining of limitations. Awareness and understanding of these difficulties were deemed essential in the development of a program aimed at the re-direction of anti-social behaviour.

**Evaluation of Approach**

In an interim evaluation of the work of the Special Unit phase of the Youth project, several main principles were established. Work of the nature undertaken by the staff in this Unit must be an integral part of an overall program of youth services. In the process whereby the anti-social group was re-directed toward constructive behaviour certain definite steps were indicated. The process divided itself into three phases: (1) locating the group and establishing a relationship, (2) re-directing the group's interests along more acceptable patterns, and (3) transferring these newly developed interests to established agency services.
third phase proved to be particularly difficult because the transfer involved a transfer of relationship from the Unit worker to the agency worker. It had to be very carefully handled in order to maintain the trust which had been developed between the group and the Unit worker, through the helping process.

In this interim evaluation, an assessment was made of the advantages of the Special Unit worker system. This worker was not attached to any building or standard program, and was therefore more free to assist the group members in the development of activities that coincided with their level of interest and ability. He represented no authority and was therefore in a more effective position to assist the group in accepting responsibility for its own behaviour, thereby developing its own authority. Where the worker had arranged facilities for the group, and the plan was not successful, he was free to move out with the group and to help them in learning from the experience. He was at liberty to move at the pace required by the group, because there were no pressures to show results in a specific period of time. The Unit worker had the real advantage of meeting teen-age youngsters in their own environment and learning about their families, friends, problems and total social situation.

The Los Angeles Youth Project was set up as a comprehensive co-operative program among agencies who were concerned about the evidence of lack of quantitative and qualitative programs available to a rather large proportion of young people. It was organized to expand present services, and to devise new kinds of services where it was necessary to involve youngsters unable
to, use the services of established agencies. The history and development of the project indicated anti-social behaviour to be often a symptom of unmet needs, which can be approached through imaginative and flexible use of understanding and accepting leadership.

New York Youth Board (9)

The New York Youth Board was established in 1947 as an agency for the prevention and control of juvenile delinquency. This public agency, authorized under the New York State Youth Commission, was designed to provide both financial aid and leadership in developing community services for youth. The Youth Board was composed of public agency representatives and lay persons appointed by the mayor of New York. The functions of the Board were:

- to co-ordinate the activities of public, private and religious agencies; to make studies and analyses of the problems of youth guidance and the prevention of juvenile delinquency; to seek to remove the causes of juvenile delinquency; to disseminate information on the prevention, treatment and causes of delinquency; and to approve the applications for financial aid to public and private agencies in the operation of recreation and youth service projects (10).

The work of the Board is based on a foundation of four principles:

1. The recognition of the need for sound objective data on the extent of the problems among children and their families and a knowledge of the services set up to meet those problems.

2. The recognition of the already existing services available for children, such as Child Guidance, Youth Counseling and Family services, and the need to expand these services to meet the known needs more adequately.

3. The recognition of the need to reach out and detect behaviour and personality problems of children and youth at the earliest possible time and to secure adequate treatment services for them in the incipient stages of their problems -- the time when they can best be helped.

4. The recognition of the value of widespread recreation in community programs in highly congested areas where neighbourhood conditions tend to endanger the physical and moral well-being of children and youth (11).

Philosophy

The main theme of the project lies in the opinion that, to effectively carry out a program of prevention of juvenile delinquency, social agencies must actively and aggressively go out to help children and parents who are either in, or approaching some kind of trouble. This concept runs through each level of organization devised by the Youth Board to carry out its work. In each of the eleven areas chosen for concentrated effort, referral units were set up to act as a detection and co-ordinating service, through which children with problems could be located and directed to the appropriate agency. To aid the work of these referral centers, borough field services were established and staffed by consultants, to facilitate the most effective co-ordination and use of available services for meeting the revealed needs of children.

In addition to these services aimed at the more effective use of agencies already in operation, the Youth Board initiated a number of special projects in cooperation with interested organizations. Included in these projects were a program called Casework Service for Families and Children; a special program with disturbed children known as the Group Therapy Project; and a

Council of Social and Athletic Clubs which co-ordinated the Board's work with street clubs or youth gangs. All of these programs were operated on a community-wide basis, but were integrated with the programs in each of the referral unit areas.

Approach to Teen-Age Gangs

The Council of Social and Athletic Clubs developed from experimental work of the Youth Board. It attempted to provide activities and leadership for unaffiliated and anti-social teen-age groups. The experimental work was undertaken in response to a need for action in counteracting the growth of teen-age gang conflict. In the organization of the Council an attempt was made to incorporate some of the findings of other experiments, and in this way to achieve a comprehensive attack on the problem presented by rising juvenile delinquency rates.

The work of the Council is based on an understanding of the importance of teen-age groups in the process of change from childhood to adulthood. The teen-age group provides the structure for group support in emancipation from the family, and movement toward acceptance of responsibility on a personal basis. It also gives the much-needed security to the adolescent through association with others his own age. In the security of this setting, the embryonic adult can work out the preliminaries in his relationship with the opposite sex, develop group loyalty, learn the value of co-operative effort and move toward an understanding of his place in the modern community. The satisfaction of these needs is an essential part of the growing-up process.

It is the opinion of the Council that the anti-social
Teen-age gang group is an association through which its members seek satisfaction of many of the normal adolescent needs for group experience. The intense need for group support combined with the revolt against authority that is characteristic of this age group, the inability of many youngsters to handle hostile negative feelings, can have a strong influence on the direction a teen-age group may take in its development. When these factors are further complicated by more fundamental influences such as family disorganization, economic insecurity, distortion of values and standards, and emotional maladjustments of leaders or members, there is an almost inevitable swing toward anti-social behaviour. These groups are accepted as legitimate attempts to find satisfaction of basic needs. Through the provision of understanding leadership, the Council works toward the re-evaluation of standards and values, and the re-direction of behaviour toward more acceptable goals.

The Youth Board followed a number of general principles in the organization of the Council of Social and Athletic Clubs which arose from a review of the work of previous projects and on preliminary experiments carried out by the Youth Board. The "area approach" which was first used by Clifford Shaw in the Chicago Area Projects (12), was selected as the most effective method in the re-direction of anti-social behaviour. This approach generally involves a program of community organization on a neighbourhood level where participation of local people is stressed, and attempts are made to use and strengthen indigenous leadership.

(12) McCarthy, James E. and Barbaro, Joseph S. "Re-directing Teen Age Gangs" in Furman, Sylman, Reaching the Unreached page 100.
In its application to teen-age gangs, the method followed a pattern similar to that already described in the Los Angeles Youth Project. Again the key to success in re-channeling behaviour lay in gaining the acceptance of the group, and using relationship in assisting the members to find more complete satisfaction through socially acceptable activities.

In some of the earlier experiments by private agencies in the use of workers detached from their own agencies, a further principle which emerged was the need for uniformity in application of approach, in order to provide adequate supervision and facilitate effective working relationships with other public and private agencies. On the basis of the problems arising in these experiments, a plan was devised whereby all work with teen-age gangs would be carried as direct services of the Youth Board through the Council of Social and Athletic Clubs. Similarly, from these experiments it was found that effective work was dependent on the application of services on a "saturation basis." In practice, this meant that all gangs in a local area had to be serviced simultaneously, in order to avoid a hindering of the efforts at re-direction through contact of the members with other unserved gangs, whose attitude could precipitate further delinquency.

A final consideration was the need to obtain qualified staff, upon whose personalities, skills and techniques depended the success of the project. The Council staff needed to have a fundamental appreciation of the environment from which these gangs came. They also had to have an understanding of group and
Individual behaviour, together with an ability to be flexible and imaginative in the use of their skills in both areas. Toward this end a training project was developed by the Board under the auspices of the Social Science Laboratory of the College of the City of New York. The project was focused on training undergraduates in the basic understanding of the approach to unaffiliated or pre-delinquent groups. It was found that this basic knowledge formed a valuable complement to the social work training desired by the Youth Board for workers active in the work with teen-age gang groups.

Implementation of Project Principles.

The structure through which the objectives of the Youth Board were carried out, consisted of the Council of Social and Athletic Clubs which coordinated the efforts of the staff, and a technical and advisory committee which developed the administrative policy. The advisory committee acted as a coordinator of the interests of community organizations, giving them a channel through which they could participate in the work of the Board with teen-age groups. There were four sub-committees: personnel, methods, locations, and research respectively. The sub-committee on methods was particularly helpful in working out the inter-relationship between the Council workers and the law-enforcing agencies. The personnel committee took early action in devising standards for staff training and in working out job analyses. It was also concerned with the provision of adequate supervision, to facilitate objectivity in the difficult task of sorting out and re-directing the interests and energies of adolescents. In
the organizational structure, the Board incorporated many of the findings of previous experiments in the hope that such planning would guarantee a full scale attack on the delinquency problem indicated by teen-age gang conflict.

The following goals were formulated as a basis for working out the actual work to be attempted by the Council of Social and Athletic Clubs:

1. Reduction of anti-social behaviour, particularly street fighting. 2. Friendly relationships with other street gangs. 3. Increased democratic participation within the gang. 4. Broadened social horizons. 5. Responsibility for self-direction. 6. Improved personal and social adjustment of the individual. 7. Improved community relations.(13)

These goals are the basis for program and are implemented through the establishment of a meaningful relationship between the Council workers, the gangs and their members. When the worker has moved through the process of locating the gang, establishing contact and gaining acceptance, he can then utilize the relationship for modifying the attitudes of the members and in re-directing their behaviour.

Findings of New York Project

Work with teen-age gangs in the manner undertaken by the Youth Board in New York is not put forth as a panacea for all teen-age gang problems. It does show evidence of being one of the most successful methods of re-directing anti-social behaviour. A study of the specific groups serviced by the Council, shows that progress has been made in attaining some of the goals outlined as the objectives for a program of this nature. This

approach can reduce gang conflict, and through the use of relationship, the workers can enable the gangs to function more positively. Through exposure to a more democratic group structure and process, there has been increased participation in the planning and implementation of group activities. Such programs have given an opportunity for increasing skills, demonstrating to the members the value of planned follow-through of socially acceptable activity.

Individual members have responded to the interest shown by the workers. They have used help in gaining understanding of their behaviour and in specific problems such as employment, emancipation and relation with girl friends. For the members who are in need of more intensive services, this method of service is of definite value in preparing the adolescent for such help and in selection of the appropriate service required. Much of the progress here described has been achieved through the use of supportative relationships and techniques that have assisted the youngster to move through the danger period of adolescence to the relative safety of young adulthood. This method will no longer be needed as a re-directive technique, when the groups now serviced either develop past the stage where the needs for group association are not so strong, or are transferred to the ongoing programs of community agencies. The long term success of this approach as a measure to prevent delinquent gang activity can only be determined by its effect on the overall neighbourhood pattern and attitude. Success can be further assured by the
acceptance of responsibility by youth-serving agencies for incorporating the basic principles of this method into their ongoing program of services, particularly in areas where gang problems exist; or where social conditions are such that teen-age youngsters may seek satisfaction of their needs through anti-social gang behaviour.

Conclusions From Projects

The experiments which have been discussed show the recognition of a social problem, the development of a method of approaching that problem, and the organization of a community structure to implement that method on a comprehensive basis to find solutions to the problem. The pilot project in Toronto developed to the stage where it indicated the need for specialized services to teen-aged youth who for various reasons were not taking part in community services of a recreational nature. The Los Angeles Youth Project shows the development of a method through the voluntary cooperation of private youth service agencies and the application of that method in the re-direction of anti-social teen-age groups toward established services. The New York Youth Board has developed a comprehensive publicly financed program, integrated with a widespread program of prevention aimed at reaching out to those in need of services who are unable to mobilize themselves to make application.

The motivating factors in the development of these projects have been a concern for the rising incidence of teen-age
gang conflict, anti-social activity, and a desire to develop a re-directive program. A further factor was the realization that teen-age gangs were not being serviced to an appreciable extent by agencies offering recreational and group work services to this age group. This fact is mentioned in each of the projects described and tentative reasons are given for this gap in services. Again, in each case the suggestion is made that agencies offering a program of youth service re-evaluate their services in order to consider the special needs of the youngster who gravitates toward the anti-social gang group. This evaluation would include consideration of the factors which affect individual or group use of program. An appreciation of these factors is especially valuable when youngsters in a community indicate by their behaviour that they are seeking satisfaction for needs in group experience that have not been met through community services which have been devised with the satisfaction of group needs as a prime objective.

Concepts from Other Studies

The concern shown in these projects for the youngster who does not use the group work and recreational programs in a community is further underlined in studies of delinquency and in consideration of some of the factors affecting membership in group programs. In the report on Casework-Groupwork at the National Conference on Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency in 1947, the following statements were made:

If persons are to be happy, adjusted, and attain full development, they must have opportunities for group experience and activity which are essential for a
satisfying life. Many children and youths are deprived of these opportunities and communities are beginning to see that provisions for constructive leisure-time activities represent an essential social service coordinate with health and education services. To invest in youth is to secure the future of our society through producing happy, resourceful individuals (14).

and that:

As the group-work method serves to help children to develop well-rounded personalities with strength to meet everyday problems it serves to prevent delinquency. It has been demonstrated that the group-work method which relies upon understanding a child's needs, interests, and powers, and connecting these with appropriate outside stimuli through the interpersonal relationships and activities in the group, can be effective with predelinquents and delinquents. However, it must be said that many agencies providing group-work service have their focus much more on providing leadership and facilities for the development of the so-called normal child than upon those whose life experiences head them toward delinquency. For this reason agencies seeking to serve those who need special help need to consider such questions as the following:

Can agencies accept children and youth as they are and establish a more permissive atmosphere, a more flexible program, a wider freedom of expression for release and control of emotional feeling?

Can they include more accepting and nonjudgmental workers among this staff?

Is it inevitable that the agency must be geared predominantly for the average child to whom it caters in the main without provision being made for those who are unsocialized, aggressive, and "always breaking rules?"

Can difficult children be fitted into the pattern of established groups?

Can special groups for those not ready for competitive group experience be established? (15)

In papers presented at the National Conference of Social Work in 1948, Hazel Osborn and Harriet Young discussed some of


(15) Ibid, page 27.
the factors of resistance which affect group participation (16)
In this discussion resistance is identified as it operates in
the group setting and ambivalence is shown to exist in spite
of voluntary membership. Resistance is normal in any situation
where change or interaction is involved. Unwillingness to par-
ticipate, a form in which resistance is expressed, may result
from factors arising from the personality of the member. The
attitude, philosophy and program structure of the agency may
form the basis for similar difficulties. The interaction bet-
ween the member and the agency staff may contribute a third
source for active expression of resistance. When resistance is
viewed as normal, a program that is designed to meet the needs
of delinquent or pre-delinquent children must be prepared for
a full-scale expression of this phenomenon in all its different
disguises.

The East End Boys' Project carried out at the Kiwassa
Girls' Club provides a basis for study of an anti-social group
in a community where there are recreational resources which the
members of the group have not been able to utilize. The group
records of this project form a basis for the analysis of the
factors that prevented this group of boys from taking an active
part in the acceptable activities in the neighbourhood. The
work of the project also demonstrates the process by which anti-
social youngsters can overcome some of their problems in social
relationships, and move out into community life with a feeling
of security and with a greater chance of social satisfaction.

16. Osborn, Hazel and Young, Harriet, "Some Factors of Resistance
Which Effect Group Participation" in
Sullivan, Dorothea, ed. Readings in-Group Work, New York,
Association Press, 1952.
CHAPTER 3

IMPEDEMENTS TO PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.

The Kiwassa Club experiment with the group of anti-social teen-age boys was undertaken to meet an immediate problem, and to gain further understanding of the basic problems presented by this group. This particular group was selected because of the disruption it caused in the program at the Kiwassa Girls' Club and because there were indications in the behaviour of the members of a desire for organized group activity. One of the objectives of the project was to experiment with the provision of leadership and selected program to a group that had not attached itself to any of the neighbourhood programs. It was hoped that in this way some influence would be made toward countering the trend in the group to a crystallized delinquent pattern. It was further hoped that the experiment would uncover the factors that prevented this group from using the facilities of the Community Y, the Pender Y.W.C.A. and the Rufe Gibbs Boys' Club, all of which are located in the neighbourhood. This experiment in re-directive group work was undertaken with an eye to the wider implications of work with anti-social groups in Vancouver.

The use of the group work approach to the problem of anti-social group behaviour is not new in Vancouver. Some of the more recent projects that have been undertaken include
Mrs. June Wanden's work at the Y.W.C.A. in 1946 (17),
Glen Hamilton's analysis of the work with a delinquent gang at
Alexandra Neighbourhood House in 1949 (18) and Miss Josephine
Spicer's survey of gang activities in Vancouver (19). Further
concern about this problem is shown through the creation of
the Youth Detail in the police force and the inauguration
of the Mayor's committee on Youth Activities. The efforts to
date have not been coordinated on a community-wide basis and
integrated with the on-going services of the community. One
of the wider objectives of the experiment was to involve the
community in a process of community organization that would
provide a basis for planning on a community-wide level.

GROUP IN COMMUNITY

Background on Members

One of the problems to consider in a study of anti-
social teen-age activity is the limitation of background
material on individual members. This limitation makes it
difficult in some cases to interpret behaviour or to validate
tentative conclusions. This problem is inherent in the situation

(17) Wanden, June, Eva, Working With Delinquents. M.S.W. Thesis
School of Social Work, University of British Columbia, 1947.

(18) Hamilton, Glen, The Teen Age Gang in the Community:
Study and Treatment of a Teen Age Gang with Implications
for Community Services and Recommendations for Social
Action. M.S.W. Thesis School of Social Work, University

(19) Spicer, Josephine, Summary Report on Gang Organization
in City of Vancouver, November 1950 - May 1951. Survey
prepared for partial fulfilment of field work requirements,
Alexandra Neighbourhood House, 1951.
because the anti-social teen-age group is a defensive device which protects its members from feelings of inadequacy, and supports them in their denial of dependency needs. The sophisticated, casual and independent gang member cannot admit even to himself that, beneath the surface, he is a puzzled youngster who is fearful of close relationships and unsure of his ability to handle his own inner drives. This defensive attitude contributes to the distrust and suspicion of adults that is common with youngsters who attempt to resolve their difficulties through identification with anti-social gang groups.

This situation means that the provision of activities on an informal basis at a level which the members can use, is of particular value in giving an opportunity to the worker with such a group to observe members in their day-to-day behaviour, and in providing a chance for a meaningful relationship to develop. The planned activities act as a medium through which the members come to know the worker, and the worker in turn obtains an understanding of the underlying personalities of the members. This understanding is supplemented by information obtained through talks with individual members. In many cases, however, certain assumptions have to be made on the basis of the use made of the group, other activities and the relationship to the adult worker. This is the case in the present study. When all the information on the individual members was compiled, there was still only a bare outline of the background and families of the members. An examination of the use made of, and the difficulties encountered by the boys' group at the Kiwassa
Club gives a picture of the impediments that affected its use of other community recreational programs.

**Attitude Toward Adults.**

One of the first areas of difficulty to appear lay in the attitude shown by the group toward the adult worker. This attitude was a combination of distrust, suspicion, defiance and denial of their need for adult assistance. This last factor continually reappeared throughout the project. It is one of the basic elements in the relationship between this group and adults in the community. The testing period, which is part of the first stage of a developing relationship, extended beyond that of most adolescent groups. This was to be expected because of ambivalence toward all adults, and the great need of most of the members to be certain of the adult in whom they confided.

During this period the members tested the worker's ability to set limitations, to keep confidences and to stand by his own convictions about standards and social values. One of the primary concerns of the members was the worker's relationship with the police. It was not until considerable time had elapsed, during which the worker repeatedly showed his concern and real interest for the members, that the worker received indications of acceptance from the group. There was a basic assumption by the youngsters in this group that their behaviour was disapproved of, and that adults would react with criticism, ridicule and restrictive measures. Much of the group's behaviour was aimed at proving this assumption, and there was evidence that they had some success in so doing.
Contact with Police

One of the areas where proof of the above assumption was most successful was in the group's contact with the police. The behaviour through which this group expressed its feelings toward authority and found satisfaction for hostile, aggressive feelings, brought the group into frequent clashes with the police. The continued presence of a teen-age gang in this neighbourhood was a threat to the police, in that it was a reflection on the effectiveness of the methods used to control anti-social activity. The measures used were repressive in nature and were motivated to some extent by the provocative attitude of the group and by pressure from the public.

These measures were regarded by the group members as proof of their feeling that adults were critical, rejecting people whose main idea was to break up their group. Because of the intense need of the youngsters in this group for group support and their fear of loneliness, this threat represented annihilation so far as the members were concerned. The protective function of the group was strengthened by this outside threat, and so was the solidarity and unity of the gang group. The failure to recognize the basis on which gang groups are often organized, has meant overlooking one of the strongest factors in the motivation of the behaviour of the group members. The police, by their actions, had proved the assumption made by the group, thus becoming a legitimate focus for hostile and
negative group feelings.

In the early work of the project it became clear that the police and other law-enforcing officials were on the defensive so far as the project was concerned; that there was not an adequate basis of understanding on which to build a cooperative working relationship. This hindered the progress of the project because of misunderstandings about the role of the worker, both by the members and by the police. It was difficult to establish that acceptance of behaviour did not mean condoning that behaviour; that the worker's efforts were aimed at the re-direction of the anti-social behaviour, through assisting the members to find satisfaction in acceptable activities.

Contact with Other Social Agencies.

A further evidence of the group's difficulty in relationships with adults and also with other youngsters of the same age, was to be seen in the limited contact the group members had with other youth-serving agencies. In this situation the problem was complicated by limitations in social and physical skill of the members. This made it even more difficult for them to feel at home because they could not compete in activities with any degree of success. There was a general feeling that there was too much "red tape" involved in becoming members of these agencies. They had difficulty accepting the rules and regulations inherent in programs involving more than one group and a variety of activities. They could not share facilities with
other groups and had little respect for the wishes of other agency members.

The members had difficulty facing competitive situations without the support of the rest of the group. This inevitably led to difficulties within the agency. The reaction of agency staff to these limitations on the part of the members, led them to believe that they were not wanted as prospective members. The problems that the members had in relationships with adults made it impossible for them to tackle and overcome the limitations outlined, so they looked elsewhere for satisfaction of their group and social needs. These agencies were not set up to provide a sufficient testing period, in order that the members could clarify their mixed feelings about adult staff members. Again, there was a presupposition by the members that they would be rejected as prospective members and much of their behaviour revolved around proving this assumption.

Difficulty in Search for Employment

A final indication of the problem of relationship with adults was seen in the difficulties that the members faced in their search for employment. Because of the limited training of most members, the only available jobs were of an unskilled nature, where competition was heavy. They were unable to use the National Employment Service because the procedure was frustrating and the complicated system of departments was overwhelming. Often when they did find employment, the period of stay on the job was shortened by their inability to compete with other employees,
and to function adequately under the critical supervision of employers. The group had developed an attitude that work was for "suckers" as a means of denying the problem that had been experienced in finding and holding jobs. Here again the worker found that the members had preconceived ideas about their acceptability by employers and this attitude acted as a further hindrance in finding suitable employment.

THE GROUP ITSELF

In each of the situations outlined where there was a problem in the members' relationship with adults, there was also a defensive attitude on the part of the members, based on a projection of their own feelings of being unacceptable. This defensiveness on the part of the members drew a critical response from adults in the community, thus completing the circle. As the relationship between the group and the worker became more meaningful, it was clear that the defensive attitude of the group members and much of their behaviour acted as a protection against a variety of feelings of rejection, inadequacy and unworthiness.

Group Structure

Another characteristic of the group that affected its participation in other recreational activities was the autocratic structure of the group. At the outset of the project, the leader in this group was a hostile aggressive youngster, possessing little ability to relate himself to adults or to other youngsters in the group. He functioned as an autocrat and demanded absolute loyalty by the group members. Group control was maintained
through a threat of expulsion from the group. The members accepted this leadership, because it gave them an opportunity to express their own negative and hostile feelings without too great a burden of guilt about their actions. The group code formulated by the group acted as a sub-society for the members and in this way met their need for security, status and limitations. Because of the intense need by the members for group support, their need for a channel to express pent-up feelings and their inability to face the loneliness and vulnerability which would follow expulsion, they accepted and conformed to the anti-social standards and values of the group.

Group Code

The anti-social gang group code imposes a strict loyalty that prevents relationships with other groups, or participation in activities not sanctioned by the group. "Scapegoating" was used as a technique to enforce loyalty and also to express feelings of frustration which had accumulated. This was accepted as part of the requirement for membership in the group. This whole pattern of leadership and group structure was not crystallized at the point that the project was introduced, but there was clear evidence of the fundamentals of such a development. There was also a healthy rebellion against some of the techniques and attitudes of the gang leader, which gave the worker a chance to assist the group members in moving toward democratic procedures and socially acceptable behaviour. In the security of the club-room setting, the gang pattern was relaxed and the group appeared
as a loosely knit collection of sub-groups. The unity of the group was undermined by conflict among the members for status in the group, and by individual members using the group setting for a place to express their disturbed feelings. However, when the gang met outside the club room, they presented a united front against the community that threatened them. This could be seen in the periodic conflict with other teen age groups and with adults in the neighbourhood.

Relief of Responsibility

As well as offering security to the member, the gang group also relieves the member of the responsibility for individual decisions or behaviour. This pattern is in direct contrast to the self-directing democratic group which encourages the development of responsibility within the group. The dependence on autocratic leadership that is characteristic of anti-social group members, acts as a barrier to the adult leader who works toward increased participation in group planning and decisions. The adult leader is a threat, therefore, to the natural gang leader who operates on the basis of the autocratic pattern of leadership. Where the gang leader is a disturbed or psychopathic youngster who cannot easily relate, it is difficult to develop satisfactions that will compensate for his loss of prestige and power when the pattern of leadership is changed.

Group Loyalty

The loyalty of members to their fellow-members, combined with an inability to think in terms of the whole group, hinders
the development of group responsibility and self-direction. In the case of the group at the Kiwassa Club, the group protected the member who broke the rules and conditions under which the group used the agency facilities. In spite of the threat to the whole group, the loyalty to group members made it difficult to conform to rules and regulations. At this point the worker became an outsider in spite of his relationship with the group and with individual members.

Dependence on Gang Leader

When the natural leader was removed from the community through incarceration, there was a lack of direction in the group and a reluctance on the part of the members to accept responsibility for planning. The former dependence on the gang leader was partially transferred to the adult worker during this period, which facilitated the re-direction of behaviour. The group's attitude toward the former leader when he returned to the neighbourhood indicated that there had been a change during his absence, as he was not accepted back in the group in his former capacity. He was unable to fit himself in on any other basis and remained on the edge of the group for the remainder of the project. The gang structure in this group developed in response to a need by the members for security, and for identification with a strong leader through whom they could find expression for their hostile aggressive feelings. This group offered the members status, prestige and protection, but also hindered the socialization process by the conditions of membership.
INDIVIDUAL PERSONALITY OF MEMBERS

After the project worker had known the members for some time and was accepted by them, he became aware of the basic underlying problem that motivated the anti-social behaviour of the members. This problem lay in the feelings of insecurity, inadequacy and unworthiness of the members. These feelings were only revealed to the worker in the security of the small informal group "bull sessions," but their existence had been indicated from the first by their uncertainty in the program developed at the Kiwassa Club.

Social Relationships

From the outset, it was clear that the members of the group were not primarily interested in activity as such, but rather in being with others of their own age and in sorting out some of the relationship problems that plague all adolescents. They were interested in those games which required a minimum of skill, competition and frustration. At the same time, they provided enough active participation to relieve restless energies. The members showed limited ability to follow the rules for more organized games, and a tendency to adapt the rules in their favour, when such a move was necessary to avoid loss of prestige. Losing in a game usually resulted in impulsive acting-out behaviour, through which the loser gave vent to his frustration and loss of status. The favourite activity consisted of a combined card game and informal discussion. Through this medium the worker had the best opportunity to know the
members as persons. Participation in these discussions varied from one member asking for information from the worker, to a full group argument where the worker was not directly involved. These sessions were gradually formalized to provide the planning structure for the group but, at first and for some time, program ideas were implemented directly from these informal sessions.

Relations with Opposite Sex

One of the recurrent subjects discussed during these informal talks was that of relationships with the opposite sex. The discussion varied from relating of sexual experiences to the discussion of plans for dances or parties. The ideas expressed showed a fantasy about social relationship with girls that far exceeded the actual ability of the members in this regard. It was difficult to help the members plan realistically for a kind of activity that would give them a real feeling of success and accomplishment. Their feeling about social events had undercurrents of fear of failure and also of fantasy about success, which made it difficult to work with them on a realistic basis.

The group was dependent for partners on a teen-age girls' group at the Kiwassa Club. These girls were younger and generally passive in their relationship with the boys' group. They took no active part in the planning of social events and accepted the boys' decisions on most matters. Occasional mention was made of the fact that the members should be able to find partners outside
this group. They did not do so until the project was almost completed. The boys resented their dependency on the girls, and, as a result, treated them in an offhand casual manner that denied the intense need which they had for them. In many ways the girls became an audience through which the members acquired status and some degree of social contact.

It was evident that the members in the group had acquired some sexual experience, either directly or by vicarious means through the exploits related by older boys in the community. These experiences were discussed freely in the informal meetings. From the ideas and attitudes revealed, it was clear that much of their talk and behaviour in the area of sex was beyond their level of emotional development. There was a mixture of adult experiences and romantic childlike wishes that resulted in a great variety of behaviour. The conflict in handling sexual feelings led to acting out behaviour, which would not have been accepted in larger teen-age programs where the structure was more formalized and a greater sublimation of sexual feelings was expected.

The problem of resolving the conflict around sacred and profane love, which is typical of adolescents, was accentuated in this situation by limited social skills through which the members could meet comfortably with the opposite sex. The absence of these skills was covered up by a sophistication which denied the insecurity of the members, but at the same time did not provide a basis for working out relationships. Social events
were inclined to deteriorate into relationships between couples who were primarily concerned about themselves, and not the social activity as a whole. The form that social activities generally followed showed the need for a place where members of the group could meet with their girl friends, play records, cards and in an informal way get to know each other as people. The difficulties in this area of relationship with girls were expressed in the security of the protected club room setting in company of an accepting adult. To the outside community the boys in this group presented an attitude of confidence, sophistication and worldliness which was in contrast to their real feelings or experience.

The members in the boys' group at the Kiwassa Club were attracted to co-educational programs in the community but did not participate to any extent. The reasons for this are shown in the small club program that was developed as part of the project. The members lacked the skills by which relationships are formed and participation is achieved. Further, they lacked security and confidence in their own ability to acquire the physical and social skills involved. The basic fact emerging from this project indicated these youngsters to be limited in their ability to relate themselves to people outside their immediate group; or to the larger community. This inability was handled through the creation of an anti-social gang which gave them security and status and protected them from the outside community. This organization offered protection to the insecure, inadequate youngster who was seeking some means to satisfy his need for social relationships, but
was hindered by his limited ability to relate himself to others. This group also attracted the disturbed youngster who was seeking a channel for the expression of his anxiety through hostile aggressive behaviour.

Relation of Individual to Gang

The anti-social gang as pictured by the group at the Kiwassa Club, has developed in response to the needs of a certain section of the teen-age population. A group of this nature is legitimate, insofar as it represents an attempt on the part of youngsters to find satisfactions in group experience that they have not been able to find elsewhere. This kind of group organization, however, tends to be self-destructive because of the negative basis of unity, the autocratic group structure, and the inability to relate itself to the wider community. The structure of the group and the pattern of leadership are aimed at maintaining the status quo, in terms of the relationships within the group and to other groups in the community. There is no flexibility in the group structure or provision for the development of the leadership potential of the members. Because of the negative aspects of the cohesive force in the anti-social group, the focus of activity tends to lie in the expression of negative feelings toward others, rather than in the development of the positive interests of the members.

These characteristics of the gang group do not appear as limitations to the individual group member. The only real demand made on the member is that of loyalty to the gang group. In return for this loyalty the member receives status, prestige,
a feeling of belonging and protection against the outside community and his inner feelings of inadequacy. In a group of this nature, physical and social skills are not important. Similarly, the ability to get along with other people is not a prerequisite to membership in the gang. The relationships between members of the group are casual and inclined to be superficial. There is little pressure toward intimate sharing relationships. This fact is important, in that many of the youngsters who move toward the gang group are limited in their ability to relate to others, on a mutual give-and-take basis, because of their fear of intimate friendships.

Gang membership is a fairly effective method of denying the need to depend on others. It also provides a feeling of almost omnipotence; a soothing balm to the basically lonely and frightened youngster. The code of the gang gives security to the members. At the same time, it relieves them of individual responsibility for actions carried out on behalf of the group. The group at the Kiwassa Club possessed most of the above characteristics, either in crystallized form or in the beginning stage.

AREAS OF IMPEDIMENT

The factors preventing youngsters in this specific group from using other community recreational programs revolve around three main areas. The first centers around the insecurity and inadequacy of the individual members. The feeling generated by the existence of these factors, and the method by which the members handled this feeling, acted as a barrier against free movement into neighbourhood programs. A second area that
gave rise to further impediment could be seen in the gang group structure, which developed in response to the specific needs of the members. The autocratic leadership and gang loyalty emphasized the self-sufficiency of the gang group, discouraging contact with other groups or any admission that the satisfaction of needs could be met outside the gang group. This structure is clearly seen as a protective device which denied the group members' need for acceptance by the larger community. A final group of impeding factors lay in the reaction of the community's adults to the behaviour of the youngsters in this teen-age group. This reaction was shared by some agency board and staff members of the organizations providing recreational programs for youngsters in this age group.

Some of the aspects of this final group of impediments have been indicated in the discussion of the group members' attitude toward the worker with the project and toward other adults in various positions in the neighbourhood. However, a further examination of the implications of this reaction of adults is important because a relationship with an adult holds the key to both an understanding of the anti-social behaviour and the re-directing of activities of a teen-age gang. The members in this specific group were suspicious of the adult worker. While their behaviour indicated a desire for assistance from an adult, they consistently denied this need on a verbal basis. In the same way they denied their need for outlets in sports and organized social activity. The techniques of denial and projection were used extensively by the group members to handle feelings which could not be
faced directly. Most of the members acted on the assumption that their behaviour would be unacceptable by adults, and therefore went out of their way to provoke a critical response through exaggeration of their behaviour. The critical response was used by the members to justify their negative feelings toward the community. One of the results of this technique was to isolate the group even further from others in the community.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

The adult community finds it hard to accept youngsters who show little or no guilt about their deviant behaviour, and who rebuff the attempts made by adults to guide them toward being better citizens. The 'righteous indignation' expressed against the behaviour of teen-age youngsters arises from a variety of feelings stirred up by the specific incident. These feelings, and the action arising from them, help to prevent an awareness that teen-age gang behaviour is symptomatic of underlying conflicts and unmet needs. Further, to the teen-age gang member, it proves his assumption about adults, justifies his negative attitude and keeps attention focused on his outward behaviour rather than on his own problems and inadequacies. Again, this preoccupation with symptomatic behaviour may result in an overlooking of the essential ambivalence of the adolescent as a means for explaining his apparently contradictory behaviour. In this regard, Miss Hazel Osborn has raised a number of pertinent questions about resistance and ambivalence in the group setting. (20)

(20) Osborn and Young, in Sullivan, ed. Readings in Group Work.
Resistance and Ambivalence in Initial Contact

Resistance and ambivalence are evident in a number of situations in the group setting, most apparent at the point where the prospective member comes in contact with the agency program. In applying these concepts to groups, Miss Osborn has pointed out that social workers have tended to assume that voluntary membership implies total acceptance of a program of services. In reality this is not the case, as members have mixed feelings about any given program. A "five to three feeling" about new experience is a more accurate description.

She suggests that

In order to gratify some of their desires they have to deny others. These other desires do not abdicate when they are outvoted but stay close by exercising the prerogatives of all minority groups (21).

Again, she shows how this misunderstanding about the basis of membership can lead to preconceived ideas about a member's acceptance of the purposes of program, as well as his own and agency staff's responsibility in its development. An awareness that most of the behaviour of youngsters, particularly in new situations, is characterized by both positive and negative expression of underlying feeling is essential in work with people and is especially true in work with youngsters, who cannot verbalize their feelings.

A further consideration pointed out in this article is the residue of community feeling which the prospective member brings with him toward the organization when he becomes a member. Added to this residue are his experiences in applying for membership

and being introduced to the program of services. In this regard, the mechanics involved in joining a club or center may become the focus for feelings of resistance. Miss Osborn points out that one of the factors that made Teen Canteens particularly successful in reaching recalcitrant youngsters, was the informal membership policy and flexibility of procedure in joining. For this reason there is value in keeping the structure in this area as closely geared to the needs of the particular group or individual as is possible, within the total organizational structure of the agency. In this way both positive and negative feelings can be taken into consideration, and handled in a manner that most effectively meets the total needs of the particular individual.

Staff Response

Miss Osborn also suggests that social workers have not resolved some of the basic problems in the handling of negative feelings and states that:

For the most part it has been difficult to give up our lay ways, to try to understand what negative behaviour means and to want to deal with it in some way other than through excluding youngsters or adults who have it to give to us, or who can only feel safe in places where they are free to be both good and bad. If we continue to hope that by keeping the price high (so to speak) we will help people to hoard their goodness until they can afford to come in, what then? (22)

Further she indicates that the handling of negative feelings in others is closely related to the social worker's preparation

in his own experience to accept the positive and negative in people's personalities. When negative feelings are combined with suspicion, defiance, denial of dependency needs and a strong desire to provoke a defensive or negative response, the resultant situation is one that requires careful and serious consideration by any agency or social worker.

Part of this consideration should, therefore, include an understanding of the motivations of social workers or organizations who attempt remedial programs with anti-social youngsters. Because of their need to be sure of the person in whom they confide, this group of people, perhaps more than most, thoroughly test the motives and convictions of the adult who works with them. Unsureness, inconsistency or other less tangible evidences of confused motivation, can have a serious influence on the results of a program of redirection. In a paper presented at the National Conference of Social Work in 1953, Donald A. Bloch included some comments on the emotional response to delinquents. (23)

He presented the concept of delinquency for consideration as an interpersonal integration, suggesting that delinquency should be considered as an interaction between people. (24) Dr. Bloch pointed out that, in the treatment situation, the therapist should be considered as the other half of the integration. For this reason he feels that a consideration of the reactions and motivations of the therapist is important in under-


standing some of the factors in the successful treatment of delinquents. Further, he underlines certain attitudes which he feels hinder work with the delinquent youngster who tends to be an aggressive, anti-authoritarian, acting-out person (25).

Worker Attitudes That Hinder Therapy

The first of these attitudes is the need to help, when this desire is influenced by a search for help on the part of the social worker or therapist. This desire may lead to an attempt to provide clients with what the worker feels he needs himself. Dr. Bloch states that:

This sort of vicarious gratification has some advantages in that it aids us in empathizing. It provides, however, very unsteady motivation for working with groups who are extremely resistant to thinking of themselves as needing help, whose own self-perceptions do not allow for weakness, or for accepting anything from another. Enforced intimacy may often cause the delinquent to panic. Moreover the therapist, in tedious and unrewarding work with quite resistant cases, may often have his need to help severely frustrated. (26)

A second hindrance in work with delinquents lies in apprehension which arises when the therapist is placed in a position of helplessness, and attempts to deal with his discomfort through falling back on words and theoretical explanations. Dr. Bloch feels that control can rarely be regained by this method. The person working with delinquents must have achieved an integration of theory and experience through which he can handle such situations without undue discomfort.


(26) Loc. Cit.
A third source of difficulty may arise from a tendency to use the delinquent for vicarious gratification of hostile, erotic or sadistic impulses (27). Dr. Bloch feels that social workers need to be aware of this tendency, because by nature they are people who handle problems by their intellectual processes, and therefore can be drawn to people who handle similar problems through outward behaviour.

A fourth hindrance sometimes arises from a difference in socio-economic backgrounds between social worker and clients. This is particularly evident in communication, where the same words may have different connotation or meaning. It can also lead to problems in the understanding of value systems, where the worker's knowledge tends to be intellectual rather than emotional.

A final area of difficulty lies in the worker's handling of authority, especially where he is still struggling with problems in his own relationship with authority. This may lead to repressive or overpermissive handling of situations where the use of authority is required. Dr. Bloch feels that these five general areas of motivation are important to a consideration of the treatment of delinquents, because they contribute to the atmosphere in which the delinquent lives.

The points Dr. Bloch has raised in the therapeutic situation follow along the general suggestions made by Miss Osborn in regard to a possible difficulty in the handling of negative behaviour by social workers, when their efforts are hindered by certain attitudes or unresolved problems. The material presented in these articles bears out the possibility that one of the general

(27) Loc. Cit.
areas of impediment to participation by the teen-age gang member in community programs, lies in the emotional response aroused in the board and staff of such community organizations by the behaviour of this group of youngsters.

The experimental project carried out at the Kiwassa Girls' Club provides material to form a fairly clear picture of an anti-social group in a neighbourhood where there are recreational resources of an organized nature. It also provides material from which an understanding can be obtained as to why these particular youngsters did not make use of the recreational resources that were available to them. Finally, this project outlines the remedial process through which the behaviour of anti-social teen-age youngsters could be re-directed toward more satisfying activities. A satisfactory re-direction of behaviour would result in the removal of the impediments that stand in the way of effective use of community services.
CHAPTER 4

REMEDIAL PROCESS

The work undertaken with the boys' group at the Kiwassa Girls' Club illustrates some of the basic considerations in the development of a program aimed at the re-direction of anti-social destructive behaviour toward more acceptable and satisfying interests, relationships and activities. A study of this group and the stages through which it passed demonstrates both the impact of the increased pace of change in present society on a group of insecure individuals and the result of undirected change on the development of group and individual personality. In "Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work" (28) the author, Miss Reynolds, suggests that:

Change is inevitable, but change for the better is not, unless we so understand the dynamics of growth that we who are working now, aid what is socially useful and try to inhibit forces that are destructive to human well-being.

Process of Change

Social workers have a special interest in understanding the process of growth and constructive change because this process is the core on which depends the effective use of the helping relationship. This process holds the key to success or failure in work with people. Social work has concerned itself with the factors

that assist or hinder the movement of individuals, groups or communities toward more satisfying adjustments. Daily practice has demonstrated the universal presence of resistance to change. It has also shown that change can only be achieved through the careful creation of an atmosphere that nurtures the positive and constructive, and represses the negative and destructive. Change cannot be accomplished on a permanent and sustained basis through coercion, force or external pressure. Such acts only strengthen the resistance and further hinder constructive harnessing of the growth process.

Constructive change is dependent on the establishment of a motive, through which a strange and uncertain method of adaptation can be substituted for one which up to that time has offered the only security the individual or group has been able to create. The alternative has to be feasible. It must offer some guarantee of the same or greater satisfaction than that derived from the present pattern of adjustment. It also has to be introduced by someone who is in a position of accept­ance, at a time when there is still flexibility in both group and personality structure, when different ideas still can be given consideration. The anti-social group member is not as he is by choice, but as a result of forces within his own make-up, in his environment, and in the interaction of these two groups of forces. He is as he is because he has no alter­native. He can only be helped to see the possibility of one, when his trust in himself and others is restored or established
when this trust can be utilized to provide a corrective or remedial experience.

The problem of motivating constructive change is one of the basic issues in planning for a remedial program with anti-social groups. The group has grown in response to the unmet needs of its members; through the need for protection against the hostile community, and against the inadequate feelings of the group members. This group assists the individual member to deny his unmet dependency and to bolster up his basically weak sense of personal worth. This denial acts as a barrier against the social worker who wishes to help the anti-social group and its members find more satisfying ways of adjustment. Further, the anti-social group can only be helped to give up its current basis of operation through experiencing the positive satisfactions of constructive group activity.

The worker who approaches such a group must be prepared to handle the hostility of the group members to adults, to cope with the inevitable resistance to new ideas, to establish himself as a person who is interested in the welfare of the members, but who at the same time is prepared to stand by his own convictions and standards of social values. He must be able to accept the confused feelings about authority, but not play into them by identifying with the members in their aggressive attacks on the hostile community. The social worker, through his relationship, offers the key to the successful operation of a program of re-direction aimed at helping socially maladjusted youth to find more satisfying outlets for their inner strivings. A step-by-step
study of the work carried out in the Kiwassa Club project shows the process by which an initial relationship is established, then utilized to assist the members in moving toward more satisfying experiences. It is established first in the shelter of the club program and then in the broader community.

**REMEDIAL PROCESS**

In the last ten years remedial work with anti-social groups has developed to the stage where a fairly clear picture of the steps in the process can be outlined. The work with the Kiwassa Club group follows in a general way the pattern already discussed in regard to the Los Angeles and New York experiments. The actual techniques applied within the process vary from group to group, and from worker to worker, but many of the underlying principles hold for all work of this nature. The approach is based on the general principle that the anti-social gang group is a legitimate group that can be assisted to modify its goals and standards, to be utilized as a medium through which its members can move toward more satisfying experiences. It is also understood that the members of such groups will, after the initial testing phase, accept an adult who represents the standards of the community. They will move with him through the tangle of confused feelings and patterns of behaviour toward happier personal lives and more constructive relationships with the general community.

**Locating the Group**

The primary step in such a program is the locating and establishing of contact with the group in its natural surroundings. With the Kiwassa group, the initial contact was facili-
tated by the interest of the members in the co-educational program being offered as part of the girls' club program. The building and physical facilities symbolized a positive experience the members had had in the past in their own community. The stage for a program was further set by the offer of facilities in the building for a club type of program on one night of the week. Again, a natural meeting with the group members was possible through the Girls' Club director, who already knew many of the gang members through their participation in the co-educational program. Through this contact there was an indication of a desire for a relationship with an accepting adult who understood their behaviour, and at the same time understood the needs thus expressed. These factors provided a backdrop for the smooth introduction of the worker and the establishing of a basis for continued program for the members.

**Basis for Relationship**

In the initial stage of contact the worker took careful steps to clarify with the members his basis of interest in them and his position as a representative of community standards. From the outset, members were suspicious of the worker's interest in them. They held back until they were clear where he stood in his relations with the police and other law enforcement officials. They did not respond to his interest by giving information about themselves or by giving any indication that they had need for him. Their reluctance to enter into
a close relationship where they might be prematurely exposed to their own shortcomings was very clear in the first group meetings. They also showed their need to test and re-test the worker to be sure both of his interest and his conviction in the standards he represented. The early steps taken to make clear to the members the basis of the worker's interest gave the members a sense of security in this relationship which enabled them to move with greater confidence into revealing their own problems and shortcomings.

During the initial meetings of this group, it was clear that the group members wanted assistance in setting and maintaining limits which would give them security in the handling of their impulses. On the basis of the members' interest in an informal games room program, the worker moved quickly toward the establishing of conditions under which this program would be possible. In doing so, he had to see beyond the casual sophistication of the members to the underlying need for an accepting relationship with an adult, who could help them establish for themselves a more satisfactory basis of relationship. The worker was able to accept the limited response of the members, and not to become anxious because of the appearance they gave of not needing his help. In this way he avoided thrusting a relationship on the members that was beyond their ability to use at this point.

Shortly after the worker was introduced to the group and the first meetings had been arranged, he had a further
to clear his position with the group so far as the police were concerned. At the same time he was able to point out his own position to the members in regard to delinquency. Part of the group was involved in a breaking and entering incident and had turned to the rest of the group for support. The worker was able to accept the delinquent act of the members, but at the same time make it clear to them that such acts involved them in difficulty in the neighbourhood, which, in the long run, did not give them the satisfaction they sought. The support the worker received in his action showed that the delinquent pattern in the group was not crystallized, and that there was a basis of support within the group to establish non-delinquent goals.

This incident also gave the worker a concrete chance to show the group that he was not an agent for the police. At the same time he would encourage anyone involved in delinquent acts to face the implications of such actions. This meant the basis for help to members could be clearly established at the beginning, in that it was the worker's responsibility to help the group members face reality, wherever this was possible. This was clearly established in spite of a misunderstanding on the part of the police, who tended to feel that the worker identified with the group members and protected them from police action. Unfortunately, this misunderstanding continued in spite of efforts to explain the basis of work with the group. However, so far as the group itself was concerned, they were able to accept the fact that the worker stood for certain stan-
standards of conduct. This was brought home when the worker joined the staff at the Boys' Industrial School after the first session, and yet continued to function as the project worker without any change in relationship.

Establishing Relationship

Once the basis for the development of both program and relationship was established, the worker moved into the second step of the process. This consisted of providing an atmosphere in which a growth of relationship with the worker could be nurtured, and a democratic group structure encouraged. The members of the group were not primarily interested in activities as such, because of the pre-occupation with feelings about themselves and concern for their relationships with others. However, activity provided the medium through which they could test out the relationship with both the worker and with other members in the group. Program planning was based on an understanding of the level of skill and ability of the group to accept frustration in competitive situations. Because there was little development of controls, and impulsive acting-out behaviour was common, the worker had to set and maintain definite limitations for the control of activity within the building. This action on the part of the worker gave members an area of security, in which they could acquire the beginnings of social skill and confidence in their own ability to control themselves.

At the same time as the worker initiated activity in the games room, he proposed a general structure for the formation of a definite club group. The worker took the initiative in
suggesting a limit on the number of members and a plan for the introduction of new members. This structure was set up through the medium of the informal "bull session", which later became the real key in the remedial work with the group. The members drifted to one spot toward the close of the evening and a very informal planning session was carried out. The group structure was autocratic at this point, control being maintained by the gang leader and his supporters. The group also used this session to test out the worker's acceptance, by telling vulgar stories and later by relating stories of their exploits. The worker was careful not to threaten the natural leader in the group. Every effort was made to form a relationship with him, through which he could be helped to modify the group structure to allow for consideration of the interests of the other members. This was a difficult task, because the recognized leader was a psychopath whose main interest lay in delinquent hostile attacks on the community.

During this period, the group still presented a united front to the community. However, within the security of the club-room setting, it was revealed that it was really a loosely knit group of individuals and sub-groups, drawn together through mutual need and outside pressure. It was also clear that there were continual shifts for position within the group, and that the natural leader only maintained his position because of the focus for feelings he provided for the members against the outside community. He appeared as a strong figure to the rest of the group, who were very dependent on him because he showed
No fear or guilt about the delinquencies in which he was involved. However, when the rigid structure broke down in the relaxed atmosphere of the club room, with no external pressures to maintain unity, the gang leader was revealed as an insecure, frightened boy who could withstand little frustration; had limited skill in games, and whose ideas were far from realistic.

Development of Democratic Structure and Process

As the worker gained acceptance in the group and was able to encourage other members of the group to take some responsibility for planning and decisions, there was a shift in the club sessions from dependence on the gang leader to dependence on the worker. This involved members' admission of their need for relationship with an adult, and of their desire to assume some responsibility for the planning of group activities. Initially they relied on the worker to act as an autocratic leader, but the worker was able to help the group develop its own leadership, and take increasing responsibility for both planning and limiting its membership.

The first election held by the group showed verbal acceptance of the democratic idea and its implied responsibility. At the same time, it did not indicate that the members of the group were prepared to make a stand against the gang leader. The gang leader refused nomination, but made it clear that his position in the group had not been changed by the election of a president. The member elected to office
had little status in the group but was very interested in developing constructive program ideas. The group supported their president in the open, but real control of the group remained with the gang leader and his supporters.

The election showed the presence of conflicting forces within the group. These same forces were indicated earlier in the support the worker received from part of the group, when he expressed his point of view on the delinquent acts committed by some of the members. These conflicting drives also were present within the individual members. The election symbolized their desire for an opportunity to show what they could do, if they were given a chance. The members of the group entered into the first planned activity with a great deal of enthusiasm and vigor, if not realistic planning. They took pride in the fact that they were putting on a party for the remainder of the group, and also for the girls who attended.

Testing of New Structure

The first party showed the group that they were able to plan and carry through a successful activity. They were very conscious of the fact that it had to be a success because they had so much at stake. The worker gave considerable support in helping the group to carry out the activity and in assuring them that the effort was a success. In the spirit of accomplishment and general optimism the group showed real ability to set its own limitations and to bring non-conforming members into line. This activity gave the members a taste of what was possible, firing their imagination for future programs. At the
same time it raised some realistic problems with regard to the social skills of the members, when they attempted to function on a non-gang group level.

Shortly after the election, the gang leader was involved in a gang fight and removed from the community. This incident caused a mixed reaction on the part of the remaining members. In group meetings previous to this incident, the worker had attempted to help the gang leader to see that a change in group structure did not mean a change in group leadership. However, he was unsuccessful, and the encouragement of an election represented a threat to the gang leader. He showed his uneasiness through irritability in the sessions, through bids for attention, and through attempts to form an alliance with the worker on a basis whereby his position as gang leader could be maintained. Before a real crisis arose, the gang leader was removed and the group was left to its own resources. The tentative structure of the group was ill prepared for this shift of responsibility. The elected officials showed their lack of confidence in their new roles in the group. There was a greater dependency on the worker for some time, who responded by giving support to the democratic structure and its elected officials.

The group members were confused in their loyalties at this point. The gang code demanded that they remain loyal to their leader, but the new experience they were achieving raised real doubts about his value to the group. The worker was careful not to express direct criticism of the gang leader, but rather helped the members to be realistic about the kind of leadership he
offered and, at the same time, encouraged them to use this opportunity to develop their own ideas. The worker also took a definite stand on the destructive influence of gang fights by pointing out that nothing was really achieved by them. At the same time he made every effort to assist the gang leader in his attempt to adjust himself to institutional living. In this action the worker showed his interest in the gang leader, but also showed that he was unable to accept his behaviour or the standards he represented to the group.

**Development of New Group Code**

The progress made at this time in helping the group members to sort out their feelings of loyalty to the gang leader, and the revised basis on which the club group was now operating, was put to a real test a short time later, when the gang leader escaped from the Boys' Industrial School and re-appeared in the community. He sought the support of the members in his attempt to avoid the police, and in an attempt to regain status in the group for his exploits. His presence in the community made the group members anxious, putting pressure on their feeling of responsibility to the club program. The worker received support in his effort to encourage the leader to give himself up and return to the Industrial School. The majority felt this to be the wisest course of action. At this time the group turned its back on acceptance of deliberate delinquent acts as part of the group code. This does not mean that there were no further delinquent acts, but rather it reflected the recognized standard to which the members directed
their efforts within the club structure.

At this phase in the remedial process, the worker had moved well into the second stage, that of acceptance by the group as an adult who accepted the members as they were and, at the same time, represented the socially acceptable standards of the larger community. Part of the process in gaining acceptance lay in helping the group achieve a measure of success in activity. Through this, its members would at least feel that positive experience was possible through their own initiative. The members felt that the worker understood their mixed loyalties to others in the group who became involved with the law. They also knew that the worker saw behind the sophisticated exterior to the frightened and insecure adolescents, who desperately needed his help in resolving the normal adolescent problems. Through the worker, the group had been able to recognize certain standards for behaviour of its members.

These standards were theoretical at this point. They needed to be re-affirmed in actual proof of their value in ongoing behaviour and relationships. The group had made a stand on anti-social behaviour. It had also recognized the value of the democratic group structure as a means of individual and group development. Further, the members realized that the basis of their relationship with others needed overhauling and evaluation, in light of the questionable premises on which previous behaviour was based. The progress made to this point was limited to an acceptance of principle that operated only within the protected setting of the club meeting. These ideas had to be tested and re-tested before they could be extended beyond the club meeting.
to the community. The worker was now able to move into the actual mechanics of re-direction, because he had the acceptance of the group and a basis for helping them to try out new activities and new forms of relationship.

Evaluation of Standards

This next phase of the remedial process was one in which the ideas and activities were tested, attitudes and standards evaluated, and the relationship of the group to the worker was exploited for obtaining information on almost every subject. The actual program differed not so much in content as in motivation. The members no longer needed a medium through which to test the worker. They could now use activities to test their own growing skills. Again, they did not need to deny their dependency on the worker, because he knew they were dependent on him. At the same time he had not used this fact to exploit the members for his own ends. They could now plan their own activities because of new-found confidence in doing things for themselves. With the worker's backing they could also accept responsibility for their own behaviour. The atmosphere for group and individual growth had been established, and many of the negatives which had previously hindered progress were brought into perspective where they exerted a minimum of influence.

In terms of the impediments discussed in the previous chapter, progress had been made in three general areas. The members had overcome their suspicion of one adult. They were willing to go along with him on the basis that, either he was an exception, or they might have been wrong in their previous
conclusions. The group no longer had a self-protective function within the club group setting. The members had moved toward admission of their inner feelings without loss of prestige, or retaliation on the part of the worker or other group members. The autocratic leadership structure had been partially replaced by a democratic one on a trial basis, and members of the group had made a start at accepting responsibility. A start had also been made at remedying the lack of social and physical skills, one of the main elements in the members' feeling of inadequacy in other community situations. They had also been able to accept the fact that an adult could be of help to them, without actual loss of their own independence.

Outside the club room setting this group still maintained the gang group attitude, although without leadership. In this state, the group was vulnerable while away from the agency and members were on the defensive. The attitude toward the police and other adults had not noticeably changed. Members were still unable to function adequately in other recreational settings. In some ways the problems of the members were increased. They now faced reality so far as their actual performance was concerned, where previously they avoided the facts of the real situation. However, the security of the experience at the agency stabilized the group to a degree that gradual progress could be made on the remaining impediments.

Re-Directing of Interests

From this point there was a shift in the role of the worker. He moved toward the "normal role" of the group worker
in a friendship or interest group, where the group is able to take some responsibility for planning its own program and setting its own limits. The worker moved closer to the position of consultant and adviser, but retained his former position, of responsible adult helping members to face reality. He also became a resource person for the group as the informal "bull sessions" moved into their own as a program technique. In this position he was free to discuss individual problems brought to him by group members. This was accomplished through the medium of the group relationship to the worker. Often, preliminary discussion in a "bull session" set the stage for follow-up discussion on an individual basis. In this way, help could be given to those in need, without a formalized interview which might involve greater demands of the individual who sought guidance. The help given in this way was based on the primary relationship of the social worker to the group rather than a casework relationship.

The "bull session," or informal group discussion, was a natural medium for this kind of group, both for the giving of information and the planning of activities. Employment possibilities and problems was one of the subjects discussed in some detail. In this setting the members were able to voice their fears of being unable to compete in the labour market and of rejection by prospective employers. They were also able to clarify their feelings about work as a means of support. Previously, the group code had been that "work was for suckers." Now, members were able to express their desire to find constructive
activity which would give them a feeling of satisfaction. The problem of job training for this type of youngster was underlined in these discussions. Most of the group prematurely had left school, because of problems in the school setting. They were now finding how poorly equipped they were to enter the labour market. They were not able to use the community employment resources because of the complexity and formal nature of the services offered. Further, such services were not able to go far enough in giving support to the youth who was very much on the defensive as he approached his prospective job. At this time the members expressed envy of those who had the support of probation officers in the rehabilitative program following involvement in delinquent behaviour.

Relationships with girls provided another area for general discussion. The group members had a great need to sort out the accumulated information they had gleaned from their own and others' experience. Most of the members had been precipitated into premature sexual experience in search of excitement, or in an effort to keep up the standards of performance required by their membership in the gang. Actually, few of the group members had moved toward stability in their masculine identity or established any real basis for heterosexual adjustment. They had romantic ideals of relationship which clashed with their actual experience. The discussion sessions and planned social program gave them a chance to regress to the level on which they actually wanted, and needed to function. In this way individuals were able to hold hands and be romantic,
where they previously felt they had to boast of their sexual prowess.

This group had been dependent on the girls at the Kiwassa Club for partners at parties and other co-educational functions. This dependence was not altogether by choice, which was reflected by the attitude of the members to respective girl friends. The security gained through discussion and more satisfactory performance in social events, helped them to move out beyond the Kiwassa group for selection of girl friends. It also helped some of the group to move out toward other co-ed programs in the community. In regard to this particular movement, it was soon evident that the members reverted to gang group behaviour when they were in a position of insecurity. The new pattern was not established to the point that it would give security beyond the immediate area of protected functioning.

Changing of Attitudes

The group discussions also provided an opportunity for consolidation of the new standards of behaviour which the group was attempting to establish with respect to delinquent acts. The discussions were combined with visits to the Boys' Industrial School, thus taking part of the glamour out of escapes from this institution. The worker repeatedly was able to point out the reality of situations to the members, and in this way, build on their tentative agreement that breaking the law held back their own development. This was done on the basis of helping the group members see what they were losing for the
little gained through impulsive behaviour. The worker continued in his acceptance of members who were involved in neighbourhood escapades. In this way he was able to help the rest of the group handle its feelings of loyalty. Also, he was able to help the members understand that some people acted irresponsibly without real concern for the welfare of others. Thus they were helped to distinguish between appropriate response to reality and exaggerated unrealistic behaviour.

This was particularly true in the discussion around the gang leader who previously gave focus to the group. When freedom was given for discussion by the worker, through raising of issues around impulsive action, the group expressed considerable criticism of their former leader because of his basically selfish motives in leadership. Part of this was a projection on the ousted leader, but part also was a realistic evaluation of him as a person on whom they felt they could not depend as a group leader. It underlined the worker’s impression of the previous group structure, and the maintenance of solidarity through scapegoating and intimidation. With the growth in self-confidence and new experience in self-government, the members in the group saw how the previous structure worked to their detriment.

The changing attitude and function of the group was reflected in the lowering of membership barriers to other boys in the community who had not been closely associated with the original group. Members in the group also showed greater freedom to come and go as their interest varied. Autocratic methods of control were dropped and more democratic ones substituted. The variety of interests of members in the group began to appear, and latent
talent developed without any real encouragement on the part of the worker. There also was increased ability to invite others to group functions despite their superior abilities and skills. The tone of the group now indicated considerable progress in giving individual members a real base of security in the club program. Through this security they were getting an opportunity to establish their own competence in some degree.

**Exploring of New Interests**

As the members gained more skill within the group setting, the worker gradually expanded activities to include outings into the community. At first these suggestions were met with apprehension, but later proved to be a very satisfactory phase of program. A trip up Mount Seymour, initiated by the worker, gave a fair indication of the gaps in the previous experience of the members. They responded to this outing like ten-year-olds, and the worker found that he had to place limits on their enthusiasm. Outings of this nature opened a new phase of programming, which also indicated the members' lack of knowledge of the ordinary social graces involved in public appearance. The worker moved into a more active role in supporting the members, helping them acquire the necessary social skills for this type of program. He also had to limit impulsive behaviour and help members extend controls to cover situations outside the club-room setting. Although these outings were initiated by the worker, the group took responsibility for the actual details of planning. In spite of the progress made in terms of group development, the group could not have moved out in this manner if the worker had not accompanied them.
During this later period there was further evidence of individual growth and ability to move out into the community in search of employment. The group discussions were used frequently to discuss job possibilities and to clear procedures. The majority of the group had trouble taking an aggressive approach to employment, finding it hard to sell themselves to employers. There was a greater need for the program offered this group during periods of unemployment, when money was scarce, spare time was plentiful, and spirits were low. The club acted as a home basis from which the members could move out and return as the need arose.

The rather surprising interest taken in the American presidential election showed growing awareness on the part of the members. There was a tendency toward pre-occupation with the possibility of war, if a military leader was elected. The group seemed acquainted with the issues and followed the election results carefully.

There were a number of incidents through which the group was challenged on the stand it had taken in regard to delinquent activity. The most important of these was the return of the gang leader to the neighbourhood. He made a strong bid for a position in the group but was not encouraged. He continued to come to group programs but remained on the edge of activities, a situation which he found very hard to tolerate because of the role of importance he previously carried.

Further tests came about when loyalties were torn through
police action against a former member, where the action taken seemed open to question. In the past the group would have jumped at a chance to show their loyalty and to express their feelings about police authority. This particular incident was discussed in considerable detail in the group meeting. The worker was able to give the former member support in facing possible court action on a contributing charge. This situation was rather precarious, because the involved individual acted as a champion for the group, both with the police and with other gang groups in the community. This particular member reached out with some conviction to the worker at this time for help in a recurrent problem that continually brought him into conflict with the police. The worker was also able to help the rest of the group be more realistic about risky behaviour, in terms of possible involvement with the police.

During the final portion of this phase, the actual program consisted of weekly use of the games room and lounge, with an informal discussion and planning session at the end of each meeting. The parties had their ups and downs, as members fluctuated in their ability to control their impulses. There were fairly frequent incidences of drinking and other infractions of club rules. These problems were aggravated by turn-over of the membership. Some members left the group to seek work and later returned, and others members spent periods in correctional institutions. Each addition of members meant a temporary testing of limits set by the group and backed up by the worker. At times the worker had to move in and take over, when a member moved beyond
the point where group control could be effective. The group was helped to accept responsibility for the action of individual members. The worker pointed out to them how the indiscreet behaviour of one member could jeopardize the whole program. An example was a neighbour's complaint about drinking outside the building during a party. The members were still not thinking in terms of the whole group primarily, but rather in terms of their own selfish interests. They were not able as yet to see that the interests of the individual members and the group were synonymous.

**Tentative Steps Out To Community**

The signs of the group's ability to move out on a tentative basis, plus the success of the group outings, led the worker to an organized attempt to help the members find other recreational interests in the neighbourhood. The members were showing some degree of independence as well as considerable confidence in their own ability. However, tentative explorations of the police gymnasium, the boys' club and the Pro-Rec program in the area, showed that the members were not able to move out on their own power. When in strange situations the group members became anxious and huddled together for security. They wanted to carry with them the atmosphere of acceptance and support which they had in their own protected club-room.

The real problem in this regard was the fact that the boys were not primarily interested in activities, but rather were pre-occupied with the finding of more comfortable relationships. They had discovered these with the worker and fellow
club members. Through those experiences they were able to move with increased confidence into other social contacts. This did not mean that they were able to give up dependency on this experience. It meant that the group had to move out with the worker as a unit and, through this bridge of relationship, into use of other services.

Limitation in Community Resources

As community exploration was extended, it was clear there were definite limits in present services, through which the process of transfer to a wider community program could be achieved. The agencies that offered such services, stressed activity rather than relationship, as the medium of assisting group members move into their respective programs. There was not enough personal contact and support offered, to help the members through the initial stages. Agencies in a position to offer a more sustaining relationship, were apprehensive about the effect this group would have on the on-going program of the agency. It was suggested that the members would be welcome to join on an individual basis. This was beyond the members who still needed the security of their fellow group-members. The absence of any compromise type of program prevented this group from any opportunity to gradually move into a greater awareness of the rights of other groups within the same agency setting. Either the group had to function as part of an integrated structure within an agency, or as an isolated unit in the community.

Change of Workers

As an alternative to movement toward another recreational
service in the community, an extended period of program was arranged. This was under the same sponsorship and with the same use of facilities as the original plan for service. It was continued because there was evidence of a lessening of interest and need in the original group which had been given service. It was hoped this extension would eliminate the need for further program to this particular group. Most of the members had matured beyond the point where intensive group program is so vital to personal development. At this time a change in the project's staff worker became necessary. The transfer of workers demonstrated the kind of process that was needed in helping such a group move smoothly into use of other programs in the community. It also showed the real progress which the group and its members had made, since the project was initiated.

There was careful preparation for the change in workers with the group, in order that a minimum of regression would occur as members adjusted themselves to a different staff person. The worker was factual in his approach to the reasons for leaving. In this way he avoided, or at least controlled, feelings of rejection which the members might have. The transfer took place over several meetings. In this way a bridge was made to the new worker. The group was helped to verbalize its feelings about losing the person on whom they had been dependent, and through whom they had been able to accomplish so much. This change of workers facilitated the growth of independence on the part of members. It showed, in a concrete situation, how they had moved to a point where they were able to make their own
decisions with confidence and conviction.

Progress during Project

At this time the group presented a picture of the normal, late teen-age friendship group. It was loosely knit and members' interests were varied. There was little barrier against new members coming to parties, or becoming part of the group if interested. The club was used as a meeting-place and planning medium for group programs. The new worker was accepted quite readily, although he was tested in the fashion that all groups test new staff. The members introduced themselves, shook hands, then continued the activity in which they were engaged when the worker appeared. The group readily accepted leadership from an adult once they were confident that he accepted them as individuals. The initial response was followed up in a spontaneous manner and interest was quickly shown in the new worker. The exploration at this stage was much freer, lacking the suspicion and wariness prevalent in the relationship with the first worker.

The democratic group structure was accepted as the most satisfactory means for giving everyone an opportunity to take part, also for gaining group support for program plans. Members' loyalty was clear-cut, because there were few undercurrents and conflicts existing in the group. There were still limitations within the group in imposing restrictions on what appeared to be the personal rights of the members, and where the act had no clear bearing on the interests of the group as a whole. There
continued to be fluctuations in the standards of behaviour of the members. Nevertheless the basic group consideration of acceptable behaviour was quite definite, and in a general way paralleled that expected by the community.

At the end of the year of extended program the group had almost dissolved. Members had moved out of the area, formed attachments in other directions or grown out of the need for group support in solving the problems of adolescence. The group was then helped to disband its own program, in this way freeing members to move on to young adult interests in the wider community.

This examination of the process through which an anti-social gang group was able to grow, broaden its interests, and modify its anti-social goals, has been limited to the process of re-direction within the group itself. In the previous chapter one of the areas of impediment discussed concerned the attitude of the community toward anti-social gang groups. This impediment still existed to a large degree at the end of the project.

The project was inaugurated in response to the concern of the social agencies servicing the project area. Representatives from these organizations were active in the original planning sessions and continued to express their interest through the meetings of the advisory committee of the project. However, the staff time allotted in the provision for staff was not sufficient to enable the worker to prepare the community agencies for transfer of the group, when its members were able to move out from the sheltered club program to take part in the on-going programs operating in the district. The project is a good demonstration
of the value of group work in remedial work with anti-social groups. The development of the project also demonstrates the essential need of co-ordination and integration of such re-directive programs, with a general program of community services.
CHAPTER 5
THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK TO THE ANTI-SOCIAL GROUP.

The East End Boys' Project, as the experiment is now known, was undertaken in response to the problem presented by the anti-social group that had attached itself to the Kiwassa Girls' Club. The purposes of this project were:

(1) to experiment with the provision of a group program in an effort to assess the group's ability to modify its attitudes and behaviour;

(2) to re-direct its interests toward more socially acceptable activities;

(3) to gain information on the factors which contributed to the group's development; and

(4) to test community response to a possible integration of the re-directive technique in the on-going program of youth service agencies in the area.

Evaluation of the Project

The project was successful in that it removed the pressure on the program offered by the Girls' Club. It has provided a real understanding of the behaviour of the group and the motivation of that behaviour, in terms of both environmental and personality influences. Further, definite remedial steps have been possible in helping some of the members of the group to overcome previous attitudes in moving toward more satisfactory adjustment. A smaller number of the members were not helped through the work of the project; some because they were involved
in delinquency early in the project and removed from the community, others because the nature of their disturbance was beyond the help that could be offered by the worker in this particular setting.

As the project developed beyond the initial stages to the point where the worker had exerted some influence on the attitudes and activities of the group, it was evident that the basis on which the project was organized was inadequate to provide the amount of direct and interpretive work required to follow the process through to its logical conclusion. The time available for staff work in the project was not sufficient to extend the worker's efforts beyond direct work with the group, except where such work was immediately necessary for the continued operation of the project.

The group could not be shifted from the Kiwassa Club, because there was no appropriate agency in the community to whom responsibility for the program could be transferred. This limited the effectiveness of the project to a demonstration of re-directive group work, with some involvement of the community through planning and advisory committees. This limitation does not alter the value of the work done with the group itself, but it imposes a limit on the use of the project as a means of gaining wider support and understanding, both of the problems of anti-social groups and the possibilities of work with them.

The selection of a base of operation for a program of work with anti-social, hostile, destructive youngsters poses a problem to project workers and community agencies alike. The
nature of the anti-social group is such that the project worker must move out and meet the group in its natural setting. The East End Boys' Project shows how this natural setting can be effectively used to provide the sheltered group experience, through which the members of the group can move toward some acceptance of responsibility for self-control and consideration of the rights of other groups in the community.

Where the natural contact comes through the established program of an agency, precautions must be devised to protect the members of the group from premature responsibility. At the same time the agency must protect the remainder of the program groups from the disruptive influence of the anti-social group. The precautions taken can only be effective where members of the group are able to accept the rules of the agency as part of the condition for use of facilities. This acceptance is based on the interest that can be aroused in the members for satisfaction in constructive activity.

The use of the natural setting of the group capitalizes on the unexpressed interest and positive feeling that drew the members to that particular place. This facilitates the establishment of a helping relationship. In the approach to an anti-social gang, the worker meets the group members where they are, at the level at which they can function. He moves with them toward a more complete use of community resources and thereby greater social satisfaction. In a program of co-ordinated services on a community-wide basis, the relationship between the particular needs of a specific group and the resources of the community could be maintained.
at a level where a smooth progression through the stages of the remedial process could be achieved.

The anti-social group based at the Kiwassa Club was ready to move away from the agency at the end of the first year of the project program. The comparatively rapid movement in the initial stages of the work with this group was a result of the timing of the project and the skilful use of early incidents of conflict between the group and the community. The worker could move with confidence and assurance of support in these early steps because of the positive feelings the members had in their association with the Kiwassa Club.

The project was initiated at a time when the group, by the behaviour shown at the Kiwassa Club, was still indicating a possible response to the acceptance and interest of a social worker. Further, the delinquent pattern in the group was not crystallized to the point where the worker would receive organized resistance to the introduction of new ideas. Again, the members in the group were still hoping to gain satisfaction from constructive activity, even though their expectations and goals were unrealistic. These "leanings" gave support to the worker's early efforts to shift the basis of the group's program interests.

In the handling of the instances of delinquency in which part of the group was involved, the worker was able to set the stage for his role as a representative of the community's accepted standards of behaviour. At this time the worker had already assured the members of his interest in them, and his continued acceptance of the members, even though they did become involved with
the police. This laid a solid basis for the future work of the project. This approach illustrates one of the basic principles of work with anti-social or delinquent groups.

The youngster that gravitates toward the anti-social group in the community is often insecure, puzzled, suspicious and disillusioned. He turns to the gang group for security, status, acceptance and purpose for his confused and uncertain life. The social worker who attempts work with such a youngster, must provide a basis of security and hope for him, through the worker's own conviction about the standards and values he represents. These convictions must withstand the challenge and tests to which they will inevitably be exposed. Acceptance of the youth who expresses hostile, destructive behaviour is possible without condoning such behaviour. The anti-social youngster is looking for an adult who can accept him in spite of his behaviour, but who, at the same time, does not add to his problems by acting as if no misbehaviour had been committed.

Value of Group Work Method

The East End Boys's Project demonstrates the appropriate nature of the group work approach to delinquent or pre-delinquent youths who have utilized the gang group method of seeking expression for their confused feelings and conflicts. In spite of the peculiar aspects of the structure and operation of the anti-social group, it is still a legitimate group through which its members attempt to find satisfaction for their need of group experience. This experience is of vital importance to the adolescent, in the transition from childhood to adult responsibility and relationships. The gang group provides a form of group experience to individuals who have not been able to obtain this experience elsewhere because of their
personal problems. These problems often result in inability to enter into close relationships that require intimate sharing, acceptance of a degree of frustration and subjugation of personal strivings for the interests of the group as a whole.

Acceptance of the anti-social group as a legitimate group provides the opportunity for work with individuals who might not otherwise be accessible because of the suspicion, distrust, and fear they have of the adult who wishes to be of help to them.

It is difficult to help this kind of youngster through probationary services because he will not let the probation officer help him. Further, the probation officer may see him as an individual distinct from the gang of which he is so much a part, and in this way never know him as he really functions. If a social worker can establish a relationship with the gang group, he has the best possible opportunity to gain an understanding of the anti-social individual. He will still obtain very limited information about the personal life of the member, but he will have at his finger tips the whole pattern of his adjustment to his peers, adults, the opposite sex and to the larger community.

As well as providing an opportunity to know the delinquent as he really functions, the group also offers a ready-made medium through which that individual can be helped to sort out his feelings and test them against reality. The group program serves as a channel for flow of relationship back and forth between the worker and the members of the group. Through the
program, inner drives are sublimated, and the individual freed from tension and anxiety. Further, these activities give him a chance to test out new skills and relationships in the security of a small group, before extending them to the outside community. The informal "bull session" is ideal for the giving of both information and acceptance and for re-evaluating values and standards.

The discussion in the informal group meetings often lays the groundwork for further individual interviews. These interviews should form the basis for eventual referral to the more specialized treatment agency. This is the medium through which feelings of dependency can be handled, the members being assisted to recognize them and their effect upon use of the services offered, first by the worker with the group and later by other agencies. The members can also, through the acceptance of the worker and in the safety of the club room with others who have the same essential difficulties, face their inner feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy. From this basis they may gradually build a concept of self which enables them to function with increased self-confidence.

The actual physical facilities for work with anti-social groups are not important as such, but rather in their contribution to the therapeutic atmosphere in which positive feelings can be nurtured and destructive impulses can be controlled. Members in anti-social groups are not interested in activities in themselves, but are primarily concerned about their inter-action with others in the group, including the worker. A small gym is necessary, where
active program can be carried on to give the group a chance to "work off steam" and to develop latent physical and sports skills. A lounge is essential, where informal meetings can be held. The atmosphere should be relaxed and comfortable. In this atmosphere the "real meat" of the re-directive work can be accomplished. A record player, card tables, games or magazines help to carry the lounge program by providing an ongoing activity which can be readily discontinued or just as easily picked up again when the need arises.

The unifying force in the anti-social group arises to a large extent from a desire for protection against the hostile community on the outside, and on the inside, the confused feelings of inadequacy, unworthiness and frustration in the personality of the individual members. When the need for protection against these influences is reduced by the acceptance of the worker in the security of the club-room, the apparently tightly knit group breaks down into a collection of individuals and sub-groups, who have limited ability to relate themselves to each other and to the worker. Through the use of the positive desire of the members for group experience, the worker is able to help the members build a group structure that enables them to accept responsibility for planning, and to set limits for their own behaviour. This aspect of the process of re-direction is really one of creation, because of the limited experience this kind of youngster has had in constructive group experience.

The group can grow when it is freed from the hindrances
of an autocratic leadership structure. Members can be helped to face responsibility for the results of their behaviour, rather than projecting responsibility on others. The group becomes a medium through which the developing standards of behaviour are crystallized and have meaning to the members. It becomes the backdrop against which the pattern of self-direction and acceptance of responsibility is gradually built.

Work with anti-social groups on this basis involves the application of a basic group work approach. There is a special interest in assisting members to develop satisfaction through constructive group experience. The key to effective work is the worker's relationship to the group, and through the group to the individual members. Successful work with anti-social groups cannot be accomplished in this type of project without careful development of the group as the medium through which anti-social values are re-assessed and constructive activity is initiated.

The East End Boys' Project at the Kiwassa Club is particularly suitable for a study of the factors impeding the use of community services. Members of the group served in the project had sampled the program offered by the recreational agencies in the community, but had not been able to use services. Both the behaviour of the group and the attachment to the Kiwassa Club were symbolic of unmet social needs. The relationship of the members to the director at the Kiwassa Club and the relative ease with which they accepted the project worker were indications of their ability to form a constructive relationship with an
adult, and to use that relationship to express their inner feelings and sort out their conflicts. The records of the group project clearly show why this group was not able to utilize the facilities and program of neighbourhood agencies.

Briefly these impediments fall into three main areas; in the personality of the members as influenced by their fear of close relationship, and feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy; in the group structure created to meet the unmet social needs and to protect the members; and in the reaction of the community to the behaviour of the members in their anti-social activities. These impediments were expressed in suspicion and distrust of adults and continual conflict with the police, in inability to compete successfully in the use of social and physical skills, and in avoidance of intimate relationship where insecurity might be revealed. The anti-social gang group was the only method through which the members of this group were able to achieve any satisfaction of their social needs.

The remedial process in helping the members in this particular group move toward a more complete and satisfactory meeting of their needs, is clearly presented in the worker's use of his relationship with the group at the Kiwassa Club. The key to this process lies in the relationship established by the worker, and the use of that relationship to help the group and its members gain confidence in an ability to derive satisfaction from constructive social activity. The process begins with the provision of an accepting relationship with an adult, who offers a core of convictions around which can
be built a structure that gives new meaning to the lives of these disillusioned youngsters.

Relationship and Remedial Work

The nature of the relationship required for remedial work with anti-social groups demands a high calibre of proficiency in the use of social work skills and an exacting use of professional self. In many ways work in this setting requires the ultimate in professional practice and personal maturity.

In this regard, Miss Wilson suggests that:

The worker who loves is able to limit without being judgmental or punishing, but he who does not love is incapable of setting constructive limitations. (29)

and further that:

In order to understand the chain reaction of members in groups the worker must be emotionally free to concentrate upon the members in the groups; he will not thus be free unless he is able to love them and accept them as persons needing help, and unless he has little concern over their reaction to him as a person, or their behaviour as a reflection on his competence. (30)

In work with youngsters who have denied their need for assistance from anyone, and who are apprehensive about relationship with others, it is particularly important that the worker be able to accept the casual and offhand manner with which the members regard him; that he be not concerned when they continually rebuff his offers of assistance. The worker can show professional interest on a straightforward basis, but must limit his need for


(30) Loc. Cit.
personal response from the members. Often the worker has to control the depth of relationship formed with the delinquent, because of the great need of the individual to resolve his unmet dependency needs. Of this Dr. Bloch states:

Delinquents are characterized by dependent anxiety. It follows that those working with them need to be aware of the amount of intimacy or distance possible without producing panic. Habitually in his home environment intimacy was reduced by punishment and rejection and in the community by red tape and segregation. It is the test of the therapeutic skill of the worker that he find non-damaging techniques for "cooling off" the relationship. The techniques devised should be distinguished by being ego-supportative and by not repeating earlier traumatic experiences.

The relationship with the worker in a project with anti-social youngsters provides a corrective experience with an adult, that helps the individual to see that he may have been wrong in his conclusions about adults in the community. At the same time, because this is the first hole in the wall of self-defence and denial, the youngster resists and tests and re-tests the sincerity of the worker and his conviction in the standards he represents. The acceptance of the worker as a person who accepts and understands, but does not fall into the pitfall of condoning the delinquent's behaviour, is the first step in helping the individual to evaluate his own behaviour on the basis of how it affects his relationships with others. This acceptance also forms a basis for the sorting out of the underlying needs, from the confused manifestations of those needs. The anti-social individual also needs to eventually

(31) Bloch, Dr. Donald, op. cit. page 55
understand his delinquent behaviour as a symptom of unhappiness, rather than as a true expression of his personality. The worker in the project may easily be the first person who has indicated that he likes the youngster as a person, even though he does not like what he does or the way in which he behaves. To refer to Miss Wilson again:

No social group worker ever lost the relationship of acceptance with a member of a group by using firmly and uncompromisingly his proper role of limiting of behaviour. Many a worker, however, has lost a group because he permitted his personal self to gain precedence, became angry and was unable to disapprove of the behaviour without rejecting the person or group as a whole. (32)

The use of the permissive atmosphere in the handling of disturbed youngsters has been the subject of considerable speculation. A discussion of its definition and use is of value in considering the re-directive relationship of the worker with the group in the project studied. The members in this group have not learned to control their impulses nor had they faced the responsibility for their own actions. A permissive atmosphere can be utilized in the development of self-control, provided there are very definite controls established, through which limits are set for impulsive, acting-out behaviour. The development of group responsibility on the basis of what the group can achieve through constructive use of program, is one of the strong methods of setting limits for the use of permissiveness. Mr. Cohen, in his study of institutional treatment of children, feels that:

Without the powerful force of group pressure, the permissive setting would be the maelstrom that many expect to find. Remove the fear of punishment from boys whose own controls are still undeveloped or shaky at best and they can be expected to run wild. The answer lies in the relationship of the individual to the group which taboos certain behaviour. Only a child so disturbed that his relationship is no longer a force for him lets go with destruction when the group tone is against him (33).

Further, in discussing permissiveness, Mr. Cohen suggests that permissiveness may be defined in the following terms:

The patient nonpunitive handling of children where the objective is the searching out and strengthening of the forces within the child that help him to control himself.

A strong society is made up of individuals whose control is based not on their feelings of weakness in the face of power but upon their feeling of strength in their power to control themselves. Permissiveness is aimed at building the individual's initiative.

It does not seek to impose conformity but to imply conformity, helping a child to achieve control through the limitations of his own action within the free use of his functions (34).

In the East End Boys' Project, the worker used his authority as the adult, through whom the members could have the use of program facilities, to set the limits for behaviour within the agency setting. He was aggressive in maintaining these limits and at the same time assisting the members to develop their own controls. This development was facilitated by the encouragement of group standards for behaviour within the agency. In setting limits for the members, the worker recognized their inability to set limits for themselves, and

at the same time their real desire for the security of such controls. The worker moved into programming for this group from a basis of definite rules and regulations, which were invaluable in helping the members make constructive use of both program and relationship in the club room setting.

Work with anti-social youngsters is demanding and exacting. It can only be successfully carried on by workers who have a basic understanding of the motivations of delinquent behaviour and a complete confidence in their own ability to assist the individuals move toward constructive activity. Such work has real challenge and appeal. It is not without its rewards, but it should only be undertaken by workers who have comfortably resolved their own feelings around rebellion against authority, who have established with considerable confidence their professional convictions, and whose personal maturity is such that they receive a maximum of satisfaction from their experiences outside of working hours.

One of the essentials in the planning of a project for work with anti-social youngsters lies in the provision of adequate and skilled supervision to the staff serving as workers with the groups involved. As has already been stated, work of this nature demands the exacting use of professional self, and further, that the relationship of the worker to the group is the key to success or failure in such undertakings. The development of an effective program of re-direction of
anti-social behaviour requires continual vigilance on the part of the worker. Each situation that arises can be a constructive step or a crisis, depending on the worker's sensitivity and skill in understanding and handling each step in the re-directive process. The worker must move with conviction and objectivity from a base of complete confidence in the techniques and methods of group work in this setting. The best assurance of this confidence lies in continued active support through supervisory discussion of the emotional responses, inevitable in work with youngsters who act out their conflicts, and who experience a great deal of ambivalence in their attitude toward the helping relationship of the group worker.

Integration with other Youth Services

If the program of re-direction is to be effectively integrated with the services of other agencies serving delinquents, an ongoing job of interpretation must be carried by the worker to ensure the understanding and cooperation essential for effective work in this area. This job may be time-consuming, frustrating, and at times try the patience of the project worker. Unless it can be done, there is real question of the lasting results of a re-directive program.

One of the groups of factors that prevent anti-social youngsters from using community program services is the reaction they provoke, by their attitude and behaviour, from the staff and boards of these agencies. The record of the work
carried out in the East End Boys' Project provides invaluable material for the understanding of the underlying needs of anti-social youngsters, and in understanding how those needs can be met through a program of services offered at a level which the individual or group can use. The approach used is not offered as a panacea for delinquency. Rather, it is suggested as a method of reaching youngsters who otherwise would not be involved in a helping process, at a time when they can use help, or in a manner that enables them to use the help to mobilize their own desires for satisfactory life experiences. The understanding obtained from this particular project could be used in the interpretive job that has to be undertaken with the community, through which adequate support must be gained for the wider program of integrated preventative services so badly needed in the whole area of behaviour problems of children.

The appearance of the group at the Kiwassa Club was not the first indication of the unmet needs of the youngsters involved in the project. They were known to the recreational agencies in the neighbourhood as casual members who had not moved into the ongoing program of the agency. Some were known to the probation department or were on probation at the time the project was initiated. The group as a gang had been well known to the police for some time. From the attitude expressed by the members toward authority, it can be assumed that at least a portion of the members would be fairly well known as disciplinary problems in the school system. In view of these earlier indications of difficulty, the question arises as to
how service can be offered as part of a program of prevention to youngsters identified as potential anti-social group members.

The basis for any program of prevention lies in the provision of an adequate program of services for all children. When such a program exists, the unhappy youngster who indicates by his actions that he is not progressing freely in his social relationships, can be more readily identified. Help can then be planned and offered to meet his particular need. Social workers and other professional persons can recognize the pre-delinquent youngster through an understanding of the contributing factors in the formulation of the anti-social or delinquent personality. There is an adequate body of factual material to give social workers confidence in stating their position in regard to the components of a program aimed at the prevention of anti-social behaviour. It is time that social workers moved on the basis of their convictions to state in definite terms the conditions under which a comprehensive program of prevention could be offered.

The East End Boys' project proves conclusively that group work methods can be utilized in the re-direction of anti-social behaviour. At the same time this project indicates the limitation of this particular variety of service to the youngster whose disturbance is beyond help in this setting. This limitation underlines the need for co-ordination of a remedial program with the more intensive treatment programs of case-work,
psychiatric services and institutional treatment. The project also pinpoints the need for co-ordination with services of other community agencies, whose program is designed to meet the normal needs of adolescent youngsters. This would include not only recreational agencies but also organizations offering employment training and placement, medical care and generalized counseling services. Unless re-directive group work is part of a comprehensive program of services offered on a community-wide basis, with adequate provision for qualified staff, both personally and professionally, then such programs do little beyond further proving to social workers that the profession has a contribution to make in the area of group work with anti-social groups.

Social Work and the Anti-Social Group

Social work has made progress in defining its specific area of competence and in moving with increased confidence into those areas where its unique contribution can be most effectively made. Re-directive work with anti-social youngsters through the use of the natural group setting is one of these areas. The project examined in this study underlines two of the major responsibilities of all social work practice; the improvement of standards of service to clients, and the widening of the basis of community support and understanding of those services. This project is another step in the gradual build-up of a body of knowledge, experience and development of a planning structure through which a program of community-wide youth services may eventually be introduced.
The process of developing community concern and support for provision of a program of youth services, is hindered by the general public's lack of awareness of the implications of teen-age anti-social gang behaviour. In most cases people are unable to see beyond the symptomatic behaviour of the destructive, hostile, gang member, to the frightened and confused youngster who has failed in his efforts to find a place in the socially acceptable satisfactions of the community. The anti-social individual creates the only kind of world he believes in, through provoking the critical and hostile attention of the community by his delinquent behaviour. Unless the community can see behind the act of delinquency to the unmet needs of the individual, then it is satisfied to rely on the repressive and punitive method of delinquency control.

The present program offered by the New York City Youth Board (35) was introduced in response to community concern about extensive teen-age gang conflict. The body of knowledge and experience for the implementation of this program had been accumulated over the years from experiments in New York and other areas. The crisis in the community aroused sufficient anxiety in the minds of the public and its officials to motivate provision of adequate funds for a comprehensive program of youth services.

This move meant that for the first time services could be offered to the anti-social gang with the assurance of adequate community support in terms of both finances and cooperative

(35) Furman, ed. Reaching the Unreached
planning for the future needs of the youngster whose interest in socially acceptable activity had been restored. Further, it meant that the offer of an accepting, understanding relationship with an adult, who could help the anti-social youngster find more complete satisfaction in acceptable activity, could be made with the assurance of a budget for staff salaries sufficient to attract the calibre of staff required for the skilled task of re-direction. Finally it meant that the anti-social group member could be helped to overcome his problems of social relationship through remedial group experience, with the assurance of community facilities for the expression of this newly acquired capacity.

Vancouver has not experienced a crisis of major proportions in the area of anti-social behaviour. However, there has been a growth in the awareness of the need for more adequate youth services. This awareness is expressed through the formation of a Youth Authority Committee by the Social Planning Section of the Community Chest and Council. It is further shown by the formation, in the spring of 1954, of the East End Inter-Agency Staff Committee as an intermediate step for co-ordinated services in the East End area. The experience in neighbourhood projects during the last ten years will serve as a basis for a confident answer to the demands of the community, whether they arise in response to a crisis or through a growing understanding of the needs of Vancouver youth.

Perhaps social workers in Vancouver are prepared to meet the anxiety of the community about delinquency, not with
reassurance and promises aimed at relieving that anxiety, but with assurance and self-confidence based on a professional conviction that social work can do the job, if the community is prepared to face its responsibility in meeting the cost of the services required.
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