

MINUTES OF SCIENTIFIC MEETING

August 7th, 1935

(961 So Manhattan Pl.)

Total attendance 24

Guests: Dr. Augusta Alpert
Mrs. Brunswick, Sr
Mrs. Rebekah Earle
Dr. Carolyn Fisher

Mr. & Mrs. Lachenbruch
Miss Pauner
Dr. Samson
Dr. Elizabeth Woods

Dr. Simmel presiding.

Speaker: Dr. Augusta Alpert, Psychologist at Ethical Culture School, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Subject: "Educational Group Therapy with a Psychoanalytical Background".

Dr. Alpert works as part-time psychologist with approximately 150 children, ranging in ages between $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $13\frac{1}{2}$ yrs.

In her three years contact with the School she found, that the relationship between the psychological and educational work became very intricate. The same problems came up among children in the same class room. Such problems would be handled through the teacher instead of the psychologist with definite directions from the latter.

Instance: Six $3\frac{1}{2}$ yr old thumbsuckers are in a group of children. The teacher leads a class discussion group along the following lines: "I suppose you know all babies suck their thumbs because they are hungry, or their gums hurt because they are getting teeth, or they are unhappy. When older children are able to talk, they give it up. But with some it has become a habit and such children need help". Methods are suggested to the child such as adhesive tape or bitter tasting things applied to the fingers. At the end of one week, 4 children out of 6 gave up thumbsucking. The youngest child refused; its mother had herself sucked her thumb up to age 17, and sent her child to school in diapers. -By the end of one month 5 children were "old enough" to give it up. The teacher gave a follow-up talk and the remaining problem child was urged to "try again". It stopped habit later on. The teacher was urged to look for substitute behavior or irregularities not seen before. Dr. Alpert feels that more work may need to be done later on with some of these children.

The steps that the speaker bases educational group therapy on are:

- 1) In trying to give child insight into causative factors of irregularity in behavior; universalize such behavior in words such as "most babies do it". Try to create resourceful attitude: "when mouth feels like thumbsucking, chew other things than fingers".

- 2) By identifying therapeutic approach with educational approach. Make it part of classroom work by associating therapy with growth "you feel old enough to do it".

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3) By facilitating sublimation. The set-up is brought more within reach of each child.

Group therapy has advantage of being cheaper and more expedient method of approach. It either replaces need for individual therapy or paves the way for such. Dr. Alpert does not think her findings are an accomplished fact. She considers them a mere beginning and open to criticism.

Discussion: T. Libbin, Levy, Wilson, Timme, Earle, Fisher, Brunswick, M. Libbin, Simmel.

The speaker was asked for illustrations about work with older children in the School. She has worked on problems of stealing but is not ready to report on the results.

Dr. Simmel pointed out that it was important to differentiate between what is therapy and what is education. That in cases of thumbsucking in the small child we are dealing with a fixation, whereas stealing in the older child is a regression. - That group therapy is important as a prophylaxis against future neuroses, the conflict in the child still being acute. If the school does not help in the adjustment, the home might undertake in dealing with the conflict unwisely and thus create traumatic effects. Through identification with the group the child has the possibility to make a good adjustment in its libido economy (libido- oekonomischer Ausgleich). It knows it can give up something together with others.- Prophylaxis is applicable from the psychoanalytical standpoint.

Adjournment.

M. Libbin, Secretary.

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Therapy is attention. If the group the child has the possibility
to make a good adjustment in the living economy (Lippitt - Tinsley -
Wilson - Tinsley). It means it can give up something together
with of group - Tinsley is applicable from the psychoanalytical
standpoint.

Dr. Lippitt, Secretary.