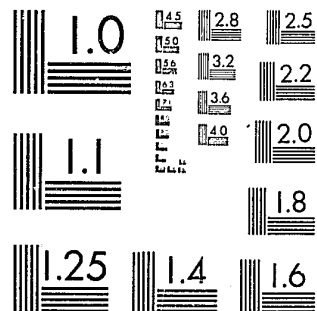


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NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
ADULT PROBATION AND PAROLE

831 W. Morgan Street Raleigh, N. C. 27603 (919) 733-7333

W. CHARLES COHOON
Director

JAMES B. HUNT, JR.
Governor
AMOS E. REED
Secretary

NCJRS

SEP 18 1980

THE COMMUNITY ADJUSTMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

THE SENSIBLE ALTERNATIVE

ACQUISITIONS

Daily, young immature offenders, as well as older immature offenders, are before the Court charged with a sundry of offenses arising primarily from their inability to cope with life situations. Many of these offenders are not a serious threat to society; yet if treatment is not provided to these offenders, significant increases in criminal behavior will ensue.

By addressing the onset of criminal behavior (before severe criminal patterns are developed and criminal records achieved) and with the intersession of a treatment model such as the C.A.T. Program, it has been demonstrated that the natural progression through the criminal justice process is more likely terminated at a time when the offender is more subject to behavioral change.

The absence of timely (early) intervention would only serve to ignore the existing problem and invite a continuation of the type of behavior which is characterized by repeated offenses, each one often more severe and intense than the other, until such time as a dominant and permanent pattern of criminal behavior has been unalterably established.

MISSION

The Community Adjustment Training Program as it now exists with respect to the courts and The Division of Adult Probation and Parole is a community based group training and/or counseling program designed to serve primarily as a diversion from active sentencing, and secondarily as a complement to Probation/Parole Supervision.

The program has specific inherent objectives which are accomplished through the utilization of group dynamics. The group and individual training emphasizes the importance of communication and attitude in coping with life situations. By using community resources, self-awareness exercises, communication exercises and counseling sessions, we can demonstrate a "cause and effect" relationship between an individual's behavior and his problems. Through an understanding of the interrelationships between attitude, behavior, and consequence; program participants may understand and better appreciate the need for improved behavior.

FOCAL POINTS

The program structure focuses on certain global areas that apply to all Community Adjustment Training clients. These include: 1. Development and constructive maintenance of positive self-images 2. Improving inter-personal communication skills 3. Developing increased self-awareness and responsibility for self and 4. Developing new behavioral patterns designed to fulfill personal needs through socially acceptable channels. We attempt to select those individuals who can benefit from self-insight and alternative methods of handling everyday problems for participation in Community Adjustment Training.

ATTENDANCE

In order to satisfy the preceding objectives, attendance is mandatory for each session of the program. The sessions are scheduled for two nights a week for six weeks. The sessions are held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

REFERRALS FROM THE COURTS

Judges that have worked with the Community Adjustment Training Program in the past, as well as those with whom we are presently involved, view the program as a much needed resource that is beneficial to the courts in dealing with the offender. Generally, all youth and adult offenders, male or female are eligible for participation in the program. Participation in all twelve (12) sessions is essential as the sequential presentation of information and exercises is important for maximum benefit from the program. Since the program is not designed to work with individuals who have learning difficulties or physical handicaps, individuals referred should be mentally and physically able to benefit from the training. As a rule of thumb, we specify a minimum I.Q. of 80. Due to the nature of the training, juvenile offenders and habitual abusers of drugs or alcohol are excluded from the training. By this exclusion we attempt to screen out the offender who has no control over his drug or alcohol problem and is therefore unlikely to alter his behavior. We do not, however, exclude the offender whose drug or alcohol abuse is symptomatic of an inability to cope with life's everyday problems. The presiding judge decides whether the individual is to return to court to show compliance. A written report is submitted to the clerk of court on each individual in addition to the oral reports that are made on those individuals who return to court to show compliance.

The program is versatile in that the judges utilize it in numerous ways. In relatively minor offenses, a judge can enter a verdict of "Prayer for Judgment Continued" with the case being dismissed upon the completion of the Community Adjustment Training Program. For more serious offenses, The Community Adjustment Training Program can be used as part of a suspended sentence or a condition of probation. Of utmost importance is the understanding that individuals who attend The Community Adjustment Training Program are those that could have received an active sentence; therefore, the primary purpose of the program as a deterring agent is fulfilled. Transportation to the sessions is not provided and it is the responsibility of the individual to develop such.

REFERRALS FROM THE DIVISION OF ADULT PROBATION AND PAROLE

Adult Probation and Parole Field Officers utilize The Community Adjustment Training Program as a resource that compliments the efforts of Probation and Parole Supervision. The Community Adjustment Training Program does not purport to be a "cure all" but rather a resource for probationers or parolees who need assistance in the areas of developing interviewing skills, interpersonal relationships, goal setting, problem solving, building self-esteem, and other areas that may require individual assistance.

As with the court referrals, Community Adjustment Training participants should be those individuals who identify with and portray "difficult" self-images. Because of their

identification with this type of self-image, their ability to function appropriately and responsibly within the community is hindered. As opposed to incarceration, individuals with this type of problem have needs that can best be served through a training program designed to increase their self-awareness and responsibility for self. Observable behaviors and past behavioral patterns indicative of this type of individual are as follows:

- (1) Program participants should be those individuals who by their lack of communication skills, verbal and non-verbal, present a poor image of themselves;
- (2) Program participants should be those individuals who account of the crime and general demeanor in court indicate a lack of good decision making rather than a lack of intelligence;
- (3) Program participants should be those individuals who appear to be mentally capable of grasping simple concepts;
- (4) Program participants should be those individuals who do not have a pattern of chronic debilitating drug and/or alcohol dependence;
- (5) Program participants should be those individuals who are not potentially threatening to those around them.

The Community Adjustment Training staff attempts to be both supportive and complementary to the supervising Probation or Parole Officer. A written report is submitted to the supervising officer on all clients who attend Community Adjustment Training either as a condition of Probation/Parole or as a result of the officer referring the client.

PROGRAM CONTENT

The Community Adjustment Training Program has evolved from an abbreviated version of the 4½ week Motivational Training Component of the Pre-Release and Aftercare Services Program to its present unique status as described in the preceding pages. The Pre-Release and Aftercare's Motivational Training Component in the Greensboro, N. C. area has as its clientele prison inmates who are eligible to be considered and/or released on a Re-entry Parole for a maximum of thirteen (13) months. The clients of that program compose a rather homogenous group. Except for the Raleigh Pre-Release and Aftercare Motivational Training all clients are male. All Pre-Release training clients share certain common characteristics. These include: incarceration, eligibility for parole, the need for development of a release plan, and pressing concerns affecting the possibility of parole.

The rubber stamp adaptation of that program to a heterogeneous group such as clients of The Community Adjustment Training Program proved to be lacking in many areas. The clients of The Community Adjustment Training Program have different present concerns that apply to some group members and not others. Recognizing the differences in group structures (i.e. homogenous vs. heterogeneous) led to modifications in The Community Adjustment Training Program resulting in its present state as will be described below. Primary areas of concern being the promotion of positive self-image, the improvement of interpersonal communication, and the increased realization of responsibility for self:

A typical outline of the program's structure is not possible in that groups differ and certain adaptations must be made to compensate for these differences. Certain areas however are stressed to all participants regardless of the session in which they are enrolled. General objectives for each of the twelve nights are listed below:

First Session: To provide a general orientation to the six weeks of Community

Adjustment Training, to have all clients participate in the signing of the Community Adjustment Training Contractual Agreement, to expose clients to structured experiences (group activities) that they will be involved in for the next six weeks, and to have group members introduced to each other.

Second Session: To have all clients establish concrete program expectations, to discuss the relationship between group cooperation and productivity, to promote group cohesiveness through small group activities, and to have group members disclose their reasons for being ordered to Community Adjustment Training.

Third Session: To discuss the relationship between one's attitude and behavior, to discuss what being responsible means, to have each individual disclose significant persons and events that influenced their development and to promote feelings of self-worth and personal identity.

Fourth Session: To discuss the development of self-esteem, internal and external influences on the self image, and to create self disclosure through small group activities.

Fifth Session: To discuss social concerns, behavioral alternatives and questions relating to the criminal justice system.

Sixth Session: To discuss responsibility for and selection of behavioral patterns, the role of fear in behavior selection, The Self-fulfilling Prophecy, and Personal/Social concerns.

Seventh Session: To promote self-disclosure, personal self awareness and evaluation of one's behavior.

Eight - Eleventh Session(s): Arranged by the staff based on the group's needs.

Twelfth Session: To summarize key points made during the previous eleven meetings, to have each participant evaluate the program, to summarize return to court procedures and to remind clients that the services of Community Adjustment Training are still available and to present graduation certificates.

A second example for a different geographical area is found below:

First Session: To provide a general orientation to the six weeks of Community Adjustment Training; to have all clients participate in the signing of the C.A.T. Contractual Agreement; to expose clients to structured experiences (group activities) in which they will be involved for the next six weeks; to have group members introduced to each other.

Second Session: To have all clients establish concrete program expectations; to have the opportunity through structured experiences to learn more about each other and to learn each other's names; to learn the relationship between group cooperation and productivity; to focus on the importance of communication; to promote group cohesiveness through small group activities.

Third Session: To discuss what being responsible means; to have group members disclose their reasons for being ordered to Community Adjustment Training; to continue to emphasize importance of good communication and group interaction.

Fourth Session: To discuss the development of self-esteem; to promote the feeling of self-worth.

Fifth Session: To promote self-disclosure, personal self awareness; to continue to promote positive self image; to discuss positive and negative influences on the self.

Sixth Session: To promote self disclosure and self awareness.

Seventh Session: To discuss social concerns, behavioral alternatives and questions relating to the criminal justice system. To focus on taking responsibility for behavior.

Eighth Session: To continue to focus on responsibility; responsibility to a group, responsibility to society, responsibility to self.

Ninth Session: To discuss acceptable, non-defeating behavior patterns; focus on verbal and non-verbal behavior; actions speak. . . !

Tenth Session: To discuss responsibility for and selection of behavioral patterns, the role of fear in behavior selection, the self-fulfilling prophecy, and personal or social concerns.

Eleventh Session: To encourage group members to express their perceptions of other persons in the group. To encourage group members to compare their self-image to their projected image as others perceive them. To promote positive expectations for personal behavior.

Twelfth Session: To summarize key points made during the previous eleven sessions; to have each participant evaluate the program; to summarize return to court procedures and to remind clients that the services of Community Adjustment Training are still available. To present graduation certificates.

In order for the group to be an effective medium for communication and change each member must believe his participation to be important. With a sense of belonging and problem relevancy, values, attitudes and behavior are more amenable to change. The Community Adjustment Training Program's Contractual Agreement has been instrumental in fulfilling this objective. By having all members sign the agreement after it has been read and explained, the participants have specific rules and guidelines governing their participation in the program. Areas such as attendance and involvement in program activities have been greatly improved since the implementation of the Contractual Agreement.

USE OF VOLUNTEERS

The Community Adjustment Training Program presently uses both community resources volunteers and student interns on a somewhat limited scale.

Although we take advantage of this resource, we envision their increased usage for the benefit of our clients. The community resource volunteers are called upon to deliver presentations to the group, drawing upon their particular area of expertise. These presentations include question and answer sessions and sometimes role-plays. Presently we use volunteers associated with the criminal justice system, such as; attorneys, district attorneys, judges, and policemen. Volunteers after becoming acquainted with the Community Adjustment Training Program serve the two fold purpose of both recommending clients to the appropriate referral sources and also assisting clients in complying with the courts orders.

Student interns assist in many phases of program implementation, including; 1) taking referral information on a client when a staff member is not in court, 2) concept presentations to group members, 3) researching new "structured experience" exercises and, 4) returning to court with certain clients (accompanied by a staff member).

CLIENT EVALUATIONS

In an attempt to insure that Community Adjustment Training remains both timely and relevant, group participants are requested to evaluate the training after having completed the program. Below you will find comments relating to participant's likes and dislikes of Community Adjustment Training.

- I. "I thought the program was a challenging one because it made me take a look at myself instead of blaming the other person for my actions."
- II. "The things I like are the program benefited me as an individual. It helped me find my mistakes and its helping me find my way in life."
- III. "I liked being able to be myself and say what I feel. I also enjoyed being kind of close to everyone here. I just wish more people could benefit from the program, not just people from the court."
- IV. "I enjoyed talking about communication and things about ourselves. I learned a lot from it. For example: when we talked about life positions. I had never really thought much about it until we discussed it. It was just so much better to be able to discuss these things."

Client's are not diverse in their criticisms of the program. Several suggestions re-occur quite frequently. Some of these are:

- I. The hours are inconvenient.
- II. The program should last for more than four weeks. (Originally the program lasted four weeks, modifications have been made extending the program to a six week cycle).

It is projected that Pre-Release and Aftercare facilities will be utilized at night for this program. It is projected that 20 to 25 offenders would participate at each of the expanded program sites. We project a minimum of 100 to 125 offender participants during each six week C.A.T. cycle. It is further projected that 5 cycles during the first year would be offered.

The project calls for one overall Project Director as well as the addition of two Assistant Training Coordinators at each of five Pre-Release and Aftercare Centers. The project would be operational within 90 days of the implementation date. All personnel would be trained, equipment brought on site within 180 days with the first cycle to begin at the 180 day mark.

The Project Director will be employed as early as possible in order to allow him/her to participate in the formative stages of planning and program development. It is the Project Director who will supervise the implementation of the stated project activities as well as the ongoing project activities within each Center.

The Project Director will develop a Statewide system for receiving and maintaining data and for monitoring the C.A.T. operation in each Center. This individual will have line authority for supervising the five C.A.T. Coordinators. The Project Director will report directly to the Assistant Director of Pre-Release and Aftercare. The C.A.T. Coordinators within each Center will report on program matters to the Project Director. In Center operational matters the C.A.T. Coordinators will report to the Center Director. Each C.A.T. Coordinator will maintain open communication with other members of the local Center Pre-Release and Aftercare staff and will keep the Center Director informed of program matters which relate to the Pre-Release Program or to the daily Center operation.

Of the two C.A.T. Coordinators in each Center, one will be designated as the Lead Coordinator.

C.A.T. would serve as an alternative to the courts prior to sentencing as well as a treatment referral alternative for Probation/Parole Officers. It is believed that such intercession will make an impact in the area of positive behavioral change at a time when the offender is most amendable to change.

Social maturity is an essential ingredient for positive behavior. We know from experience that judges will use such a program on a direct referral and return basis or in conjunction with probation supervision. Judges, Probation Officers, and Lawyers have all expressed interest and support of a C.A.T. Program. It is apparent from an experimental project of like design that the support of a C.A.T. Program is filling a void in the criminal justice system. This void is addressed by dealing with the real problem, an offender's self-image, rather than treating a symptom (his crime) of this poor self-image. Obviously, the C.A.T. Program cannot be appropriate for all offenders. However, if it is possible to reduce the incidence of crime and terminate the offender's natural progression through the criminal justice process by diverting from further contact with the Department of Correction 35% of those completing the program, then we feel this program shall have met its goal.

SUMMARY AND PROGRAM PROJECTIONS.

As outlined above, the Community Adjustment Training Program is attempting to provide offenders with an opportunity for behavioral change before severe criminal patterns are developed or criminal records achieved. Behavioral change is attempted by the demonstration that a more positive self-image creates a more positive attitude which produces more socially acceptable behavior effecting more favorable consequences. Demonstration of this principle through group process is facilitated by role plays, discussions, and immediate reinforcement by group members of positive and negative behavior. While the individual recognizes and reveals problems and behaviors, the interdependence with others in the group triggers the development of individual responsibility and respect for others. This social maturity is an essential ingredient for positive behavior.

To date, The Community Adjustment Training Program has gained a great deal of support from the courts and its officers. It has been used by the Judges on a direct "referral and return" basis or in conjunction with probation supervision. Judges, probation officers and lawyers have all expressed interest and support for the Community Adjustment Training Program. It is apparent from their support that Community Adjustment Training is filling a void in the Criminal Justice System. This void is addressed by dealing with the real problem, an offender's self-image, rather than treating a symptom (his crime) of this poor self-image. Obviously Community Adjustment Training is not appropriate for all offenders, and our endeavors are merely a beginning of real diversion from incarceration; but dealing with people where their real problems are, is essential if their behavior is to be improved.

END