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## I. P. TECHNIQUES

Co-workers are invited to send brief reports of significant experiences to be published in this section of the Bulletin.

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### Work in a Settlement House

ELEANOR REDWIN

One of the largest settlement houses in Chicago opened its doors to Individual Psychology. For more than a year I worked as consulting psychologist, trying to help mothers, children, and staff members. This settlement house is located in the congested Stock Yards neighborhood. Mexican and Polish children from the age of two to fourteen, also young people from fourteen to eighteen spent their free time in the house. It has all the facilities that are needed. There is a department for boys and a department for girls. Each department is headed by a leader—a group worker—who has part-time helpers. The children participate in various activities and can choose the classes and games that they like best.

It is not surprising that there are many difficult children who do not integrate themselves in the group situation. My work started with the holding of staff meetings; the boy- and girl-workers have now learned to understand the problem of the disturbing child.

In many talks with individual workers, the most important and urgent problems were discussed. We also tried to help many mothers of the very young children who attended the nursery school of the settlement house. The director of the nursery school, who is well trained in Individual Psychology, referred the following case to me.

Mrs. H., mother of 3-year-old Raymond, was very much disturbed about her child. Her husband has been overseas for nearly two years. She works very hard in a defense plant. She brings Raymond to the nursery school very early and is already exhausted before she starts her job. Raymond does not want to get dressed. He refuses his breakfast, cries, and has temper tantrums early in the morning. The same procedure repeats itself in the evening when his mother gives him his dinner, and when she puts him to bed. He gets into mischief all the time. He breaks dishes, goes into the pantry to destroy food, and prevents his mother from cleaning the house. She punishes him all the time, without any result.

The very discouraged mother confides her troubles to me and tells me her story from her childhood on. The picture is that of a very unhappy person. At this point our work begins. I try to explain to Mrs. H. her own difficulties and her strong resentment toward Raymond. "How much easier my life would be without a child," says she in one of her outbursts. I try to make her realize that she can win her child and that he can become her helper. I also assure her that she will enjoy him much more if she will free herself of her fear and that in the meantime her confidence in herself will grow.

After a few talks with her, I find that she has learned to understand. She comes back one day and for the first time has a smile on her face. Her tension has lessened. Raymond has improved a great deal at nursery school, where the understanding teacher gives him new responsibilities; the mother punishes him less at home. After the summer vacation Raymond is a changed boy. Mother and child are happier together. This is just one of many cases which come up at the settlement house and in which we were able to help.

Two or three Mexican children who had great difficulties in their school work and who were even put into the ungraded room for children with low intelligence were encouraged by the group worker and improved their status as students in school.

Some of the young group workers who were still inexperienced became very discouraged at times with some of the behavior problems in their groups. We discovered quite often that they themselves had many difficulties. They had to understand themselves in order to handle some of the very difficult group situations. I would say that this part of my work at the settlement house was most gratifying. Quite a few new workers gained understanding. They became able to take new responsibilities, and lost their fears when it came to dealing with some of the children's problems.

I recall one staff meeting where most of the workers felt very strongly on the question of punishment. They argued that without it they were not able to handle severe behavior problems—that problem children should be excluded from the settlement house. I explained to them, and gradually they understood, the futility of that attitude. We discussed for many hours how the most disturbed children could be helped. In many cases we were able to ease certain tensions.

The relationship between the workers, who did not always accept each other, was improved, and the children benefited.

I am starting a new work year at the settlement. There are many new children and many new workers. Following the pattern we used last year, I am sure we will be able to accomplish a great deal. By helping many who are maladjusted, we also plan to give a training course in Individual Psychology to staff members.

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## Can the Teacher Help?

MABELLE BROOKS

Janice was transferred to my 4A class from another school. She seemed well prepared in all her subjects and was a very capable student. She knew her multiplication tables well (as far as her class had gone) and seemed to enjoy all types of arithmetic problems until we came to long division, which she was supposed to have had the preceding semester.

Long division was her Waterloo. She became so panicky that she couldn't do even the multiplication and subtraction involved in the problems. A curtain seemed to shut off her sensory perceptions from her thinking processes. Her hands were actually trembly and she showed all signs of physical panic.

Observing her difficulty, I asked her to stop her work and to visit with another girl merely to watch the process for the rest of the period.

At noon I called her to me and asked her if she could bring her lunch the next day so we could have an opportunity to look into her difficulties. She said she could, and after we had had a sociable meal together, sharing tidbits from each other's lunch, I said to Janice, "I've observed you closely since you came to this school. You are well prepared in your studies and you do good work. You know all the facts needed to do long division, and yet when you try to use them together in this new way you act scared to death. Being scared makes your mind stop working. Can you tell why you're so frightened?"

Janice said she couldn't understand long division and that her last teacher had made fun of her and called her "dumb."

I told her that we are all "dumb" when we first try something new and that she must get over the idea that it made any difference whether she got the problem right the first time or not; that she would not be scolded or laughed at; and that we had plenty of time to do it over and over so she didn't have to feel hurried.

Then we went to the blackboard and I did two problems slowly and clearly, saying aloud each step of the process as I did the work. I asked Janice if she felt ready to try one. She said that she'd like me to do another first. I did, and then she volunteered her readiness to try. She worked haltingly and needed to be prompted, but she worked and proved her problem. The second was easier and went faster. She worked four before the noon hour ended, and I gave her four to do that night so she wouldn't forget what she had learned.

Janice has had no signs of panic since and she proudly offered to help another pupil today. She told her, "Long division is fun."

This demonstrates how a teacher can help in a simple case of blockage due to ridicule. Fairly quick and satisfying results may be obtained. Unfortunately, in many cases where children have trouble in arithmetic, their trouble involves all arithmetical processes, and the cause lies back in the home treatment of the child during his very early years. Extreme pampering unfits him for tackling hard jobs, as his life style has led him to expect that all the difficult things will be done for him. In such cases the teacher can help only if she is able to reeducate the child so he will accept a truer picture of life. If he changes his view, then he can change his life style and come to know the joy that results from achievement; but in such case the teacher's task is not simple or easy.