

65-515-EdC
stat list - Fairbairn

September 14, 1965

LeRoy Larson, Ph.D.
Professor of Special Education
Northern State College
Aberdeen, South Dakota

Dear Doctor Larson:

We have completed and are returning herewith the questionnaire received with your letter of August 11th. However, for proper interpretation of the questionnaire I want to emphasize that our mentally retarded patients are of all types and degrees of mental retardation, except for the educables considered for admission to the Owatonna State School. I am not describing their program as I assume that you sent them a questionnaire similar to the one we received.

I regret that I shall not be attending the Winnipeg meeting, however, several of our staff will be present and I am hoping that the meeting will be a highly successful one and I am sure there will be a great deal of interest in your presentation.

Sincerely,

E. J. Engberg, M.D.
Superintendent

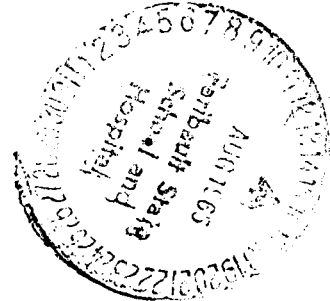
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circulated in other
departments*

Northern State College
Department of Special Education
Division of Education & Psychology

ABERDEEN, SOUTH DAKOTA

August 11, 1965



E. J. Engberg, Superintendent
Faribault State School & Hospital
Faribault, Minnesota

Dear Sir:

I am presenting a portion of the program as a part of the Annual Conference of the North Central Region of the American Association of Mental Deficiency to be held at Winnipeg the middle of October.

I am going to discuss "Changing Practices in Programming for the Mentally Retarded as They Relate to Interaction of the Sexes".

It seems that changes are taking place in institutions as well as with the public generally concerning attitudes towards heterosexual relationships amongst the mentally retarded.

It is generally recognized that the second decade in the life of an individual is heightened by interest in social and romantic relations with the opposite sex. With normal people this interest may reach its peak with marriage and the accompanying physical acts of love.

It is recognized that normal sexual desires can exist amongst retardates that are blessed with physical abilities and interests of a sexual nature.

A most difficult question then arises as to the best way to handle situations and events that arise because of these desires. It is my understanding, at least, that we want retardates to live as normally as possible in institutional or non-institutional society.

In order to come to some sort of terms with the issue, I am asking you to answer the following questions. Rest assured that all information will remain anonymous and no signature or means of identification is requested.

I would appreciate any comments you would care to make and have allowed space under each question for this. You may criticize or clarify a point. I would greatly appreciate any approach you care to make.

Very truly yours,

LeRoy Larson
LeRoy Larson, Ph.D.
Professor of Special Education

LL/pc

*circulate
all comments to
And
OK
JS
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RW*

These questions concern, primarily, the retarded in their adolescent or adult years and concern the more capable individual.

Questions 1 through 21 concern patients confined to institutions for the mentally retarded.

YES NO

- ☒ ☐ 1. Are your classrooms coeducational?
Comments: Some classes
- ☒ ☐ 2. Are ward buildings or cottages for men set apart from those of women on a geographical basis?
Comments: As programming and needs of pts. change geographical separation in some areas may become less important.
- ☐ ☒ 3. Does your institution provide common dining areas for both sexes?
Comments: _____
- ☐ ☒ 4. Does your institution provide coeducational dormitory facilities or wards where common lounge areas and/or dining facilities are provided for both sexes?
Comments: _____
- ☐ ☒ 5. Do you provide common lounge areas for men and women?
Comments: Proposed snack bar would provide an area for men and women to meet.
- ☐ ☐ 6. If the answer to the above question is yes, are they used a great deal by the inmates?
Comments: _____
- ☐ ☐ 7. Are these lounge areas strictly supervised?
Comments: _____
- ☒ ☐ 8. Are recreation activities, including dancing, heterosexual in nature?
Comments: For most adult activities and some of the activities of the children
- ☒ ☐ 9. May individuals voluntarily select their partners for dancing or other social activities at least a good share of the time?
Comments: Certain controls are exercised - always choosing the same partner is discouraged.

- ✓ 10. Are romances bud at such social events, are they allowed to develop?
Comments: it is inevitable - some boyfriend-girlfriend relationships are encouraged by employee attitude.
- ✓ 11. Are men and women allowed to integrate socially on the grounds or campus during daytime leisure hours?
Comments: on a limited basis - those with grounds privileges may mix in an area designated for both males and females.
- ✓ 12. Are men and women allowed to integrate socially on grounds or campus during evening hours?
Comments: limited - same as above
- ✓ 13. Is dating allowed at your institution, that is, does a boy (man) take a girl (woman) to the movies or to a dance, etc.?
Comments: Under supervision this may be a good idea for selected patients.
- ✓ 14. Do they go to and from such social events under supervision?
Comments: Not together - many go to and from social event unsupervised but males take one route, females another.
- ✗ 15. Do they go to and from such social events without supervision?
Comments: see above
16. Are couples that date, if this is done, allowed to stroll about the campus or institutional grounds in the evenings?
Comments:
17. If they do, is there a time when the people concerned must be in their wards or dormitories?
Comments:
18. Do you feel that couples that are patients in an institution should be allowed to become well enough acquainted to fall in love?
Comments: allowed or not, it happens
19. If they do fall in love should their romance be allowed to blossom?
Comments: The institutional setting is too artificial to help pts develop "normal" romances, courtships and pre-marital relationships on any realistic basis.

✓ 20. Are couples permitted a type of supervised privacy that would allow for what is termed generally, acceptable romantic gestures and activities?
Comments: see #19

✓ 21. Is there permitted privacy which might allow for quite intimate romantic acts, i.e., sexual intercourse?
Comments:

The following are questions of opinion, not directly relative to institutional practice.

✓ 22. Should mentally retarded individuals be allowed to marry inside the institution?
Comments: see #19 If patient are competent enough to marry they should be placed in the community. Institutional marriage would seem to lead to considerable role confusion on the part of the marriage partners and the staff.

✓ 23. Should they be allowed to have children?
Comments: not within the institutional setting

✓ 24. Do you feel that the normal inclinations of adequate patients in regard to sexual desires might be such that sexual intercourse could be accepted providing proper safeguards are maintained?
Comments: primarily an ethical question which the institution could not condone

✓ 25. Do you believe that sex education would be helpful for a mentally retarded individual in an institutional setting?
Comments: For selected individuals this would be desirable - could correct a lot of misinformation.

26. Do you believe in laws providing for or demanding sterilization of the mentally retarded?
Comments: Difficult to have laws about sterilization under proper controls. Consent of patient and relatives should be mandatory is essential.

✓ 27. Do you feel that sex education would be important to the mentally retarded individual outside the institution?
Comments: also premarital counseling

28. Do you believe that regardless of the impact of the sex drive in many mentally retarded people, that this drive should still be controlled by law and that these people should not be allowed to express their desires through normal expenditure of sexual energy with an appropriate companion of the opposite sex?
 Comments:

✓ 29. Do you believe in laws preventing the marriage of mentally retarded individuals?
 Comments: *Current law not particularly effective. Raises question of whether the civil rights of individuals are being infringed upon.*

30. If not, do you feel they should be permitted to have children?
 Comments: *2*

Please return your questionnaire to:

Dr. LaRoy Larson
 Post Office Box 649
 Northern State College
 Aberdeen, South Dakota 57401

And thank you for your cooperation and your time.