

69-APD-MN16
State Inst Gen

October 16, 1969

Mr. Andreas S. Heath
Acting Superintendent
Caro State Home & Training School
Caro, Michigan 48723

Dear Mr. Heath:

Your letter of October 10, addressed to Dr. Vail, has been referred to me for reply.

Y s, our program, "Attack on the Problem of Dehumanization," did win the Bronze Achievement Award from the American Psychiatric Association at its annual meeting in the fall of 1967. In connection with it we developed our film, "Dehumanization and the Total Institution," and you might be interested to learn that the film received the Gold Medal from the New York International Film and TV Festival - as the best of its kind in training.

With regard to publications and methods used to stimulate the change, I would say that Erving Goffman's book "Asylums"; Dr. Russell Barton's book "Institutional Neurosis"; and Dr. David Vail's book "Dehumanization and the Institutional Career," have been extremely valuable.

Our training film, "Dehumanization and the Total Institution," we have found to be an effective tool for introducing the topic. The film is intended to do no more than that, and is accompanied by a discussion guide. In addition, we have as a handout a cartoon booklet entitled "Dehumanization vs. Dignity." This booklet is to stimulate ideas and provide the hospital personnel with something they can take back from the meeting -- as the booklet is handed out usually at the time we show the cartoon film.

The really significant thing about our program is that it has built into it a method for reviewing and assessing the areas of concern and for bringing about desirable changes. In order to do this we have recognized that we must use a problem identifying-problem solving approach, which means the involvement of staff and patients at all levels in order to insure that there is a flow of communication and a method for assessing whether or not problems are being identified and changes are occurring. The following are some of the techniques which we are using:

1. Establishment of a statewide Humane Practices Committee. This committee meets once a month and consists of a representative from each one of the state hospitals, (including maintenance, food service, psychiatric technicians, rehab departments, psychologists, social workers, etc.), plus Central Office personnel. A method has been provided which provides the statewide committee with guidelines for exploring and analyzing the various systems and practices which can and do occur in large institutions -- and which could adversely affect the dignity of patients.

2. Hospital Humane Practice Committees have been developed at each of the institutions. These committees use as a basis for their discussions the material which has come from the State Humane Practices Committee, it also makes recommendations to the State Committee of items which they would like to have them consider, and it discusses intra-hospital problems relating to humane practices.
3. The Research Section of the Medical Services Division has developed a series of evaluation scales, or questionnaires, which are used on each ward of our state institutions. These scales are then rated once a year through personal visits by the Medical Director and other interested persons in conference with the staff of the institution and representatives of the hospital Humane Practices Committee. The scales serve two purposes: 1) to measure progress and 2) to suggest by the nature of the questions on the questionnaire, certain practices or conditions which are desirable.
4. Each year a three-day Humane Practices Institute is held at which time the medical director, administrator, state Humane Practices Chairman, and one other person from each institution meet jointly with the Central Office staff, plus representatives from the Department of Administration, the State Architects Office, and other appropriate persons outside the Medical Services Division, to review the work of the Committee during the past year, to discuss serious problems which may need further consideration, and to plan and give direction for the coming year.
5. Through the development of the film, "Dehumanization and the Total Institution," and the combined efforts of the Mental Retardation Program Office, Research Section, Manpower Development section, and Humane Practices Committees, on-going methods and content are being built into the training program for staff of institutions.

Under separate cover I am sending you a packet of printed materials including The Problem of Dehumanization by David J. Vail, M.D.; the worksheet we used on Asylums, the book written by Erving Goffman; Rising and Bedtime; Seven Symptoms of Institutional Neurosis by Dr. Russell Barton; Segments of the Day's Experience; Restraint and Seclusion; Areas to be Considered Affecting Humane Practices; Ward Living Conditions Questionnaire; Annual Humane Practices Institute Minutes; a copy of Dehumanization vs. Dignity; and a flyer on our film "Dehumanization and the Total Institution."

I trust this will give you the information you are seeking -- and if you have any further questions, feel free to contact me again.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Miriam Karlins, Director
Education and Manpower Development
Medical Services Division