An Internship Experience at the Family Divorce Counseling Service

Metcalfe
AN INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE
AT THE
FAMILY DIVORCE COUNSELING SERVICE

by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>THE PROBLEM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rationale for the Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internship Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Methods of Achieving Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effects of Divorce on Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Effects of Divorce on Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marriage and Conciliation Counseling in Family and Conciliation Courts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>FAMILY DIVORCE COUNSELING SERVICE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Background History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circuit Court Consultation Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Family Divorce Counseling Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>LOG OF EXPERIENCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Group Experience, March 24 to May 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Group Experience, June 2 to July 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Individual Counseling Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of June 14 to 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of June 21 to 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Week of June 28 to July 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

The purpose and intent of this Project Report is to present in detail an account of my internship experience at the Family Divorce Counseling Service, and how the experience directly relates to and influences my professional and personal growth as a counselor. The internship experience is a minimum of 300 hour work program at the Family Divorce Counseling Service. The time period of this program spans from March to July 1976.

Rationale for the Experience

My professional background has been in schools and school counseling. I was a health and physical education teacher from 1964 to 1966. In 1968, I graduated from Western Michigan University with a Master's Degree in School Counseling and Personnel Work. My first counseling job was at a junior-senior high school where I served as a counselor from 1968 to December of 1972. In January 1972, I accepted the position of counselor for the middle school at Mattawan Consolidated Schools at Mattawan, Michigan.

My role as a counselor in the middle school can be described as unique as it must be adapted to provide services best suited to the needs of that unique age - early adolescence. Guidance services are not limited to students in the middle school. They are extended
to teachers and parents as well. These services include consultation assistance in developing communication links where communication gaps have arisen between parents and their children, between teachers and students, and between teachers and parents; and helping parents and children who frequently appear bewildered and confused, if not lost, in their inter-personal relationships. The magnitude of the counseling job in the middle school demands broadened knowledge of community agencies and their services.

It is for this reason that I elected to serve my internship at the Family Divorce Counseling Service. This internship could offer me a comprehensive overview and first hand experience in dealing with family dynamics, particularly the dynamics between single parent-child, stepparent-child and divorced parent-child relationships.

The family is the major social unit where the child evolves. The family structure is different for each child, thus each child brings to school psychological sets, attitudes and behaviors which are reflective of his family life and experiences.

Internship Goals

It is necessary to establish goals in order to guide the direction of any professional field experience. The following is a list of goals which were set up for my internship program.

1. To gain knowledge of the role and functions of a community service agency.

2. To gain counseling experiences in a community mental health agency.
3. To acquire a better understanding and new insights about family dynamics as it relates to the emotional and adjustment difficulties children may have as a result of separation or divorce in the family.

4. To acquire more knowledge about the group process and group dynamics as a participator and as co-therapist.

5. To develop competencies in counseling adults who are going through the trauma of separation and divorce.

6. To develop competencies in counseling children of divorce, children of single parents, and children with stepparents.

7. To gain a better understanding of the divorce laws, child custody laws, and other legal statutes of Michigan and other states.

Methods of Achieving Goals

Specific methods have to be defined for any set of goals if they are to be met successfully. Through the following methods, the above goals are intended to be achieved:

1. Active participation in group counseling sessions.

2. Working as co-therapist with the other professionals in the agency in both individual and group counseling.

3. Participating in community workshops offered by the agency to their clientele.

4. Working on assigned individual cases from intake interviews to completion of the case.

5. Conferring with Dr. Lowe, my supervisor, during specified times to assess my personal and professional growth.
6. Reviewing materials pertaining to divorce, divorce laws, marriage and conciliation counseling, legal procedures related to the divorce process, and the role and function of divorce agencies.

In the following chapter, selected literature relevant to the effects of divorce, and what have been done to minimize its consequences is reviewed and discussed. Chapter Three reports on the Family Divorce Counseling Service. Chapter Four deals with the detailed account of my log of experiences and is followed by Chapter Five, which is a summary and evaluation of my field experience.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

What is to be done when a married couple can't stand each other? Although most societies make some provision for divorce, some make it very difficult. The social and family structure of many societies make divorce a fairly painless and harmless operation. Where there is no great emphasis upon romantic love and no intense individual love attachments, divorce entails no great heartbreak. Where consanguine family surrounds the child with protective clan or kin, the loss of the father is hardly noticed. The meaning of divorce depends upon how it relates to other aspects of the institution of the family. In our society, with its conjugal family unit, a divorce is likely to mean the collapse of the emotional world for both the child and adult.

Divorce is the object of much agonized dismay by Americans who cannot accept divorce as an integral part of modern American family system. According to Horton and Hunt (1964), a society can secure a very low rate of divorce in at least four ways. First, it can deemphasize love. In many societies marriage is a working partnership, not a romantic adventure. If less is expected of marriage, more will be successful. Secondly, it can separate love from marriage. A number of societies have series of men's clubs which allow men a wide freedom to prowl in search of sex adventure. Here again, less is demanded in marriage. Thirdly, the society can socialize its members to be much alike in personality and expectation that
practically all marriage will work out successfully. The stable, well-integrated society generally succeeds in accomplishing this leveling. Finally, divorce can be made so difficult that unhappily married couples are unable or unwilling to seek divorce as a solution.

Horton and Hunt (1964) indicated that our society has done none of these things. It socializes people so that they differ more and more greatly in personality and expectations. It gives them values which lead them to expect a great deal of marriage and to demand a high level of love and satisfaction in marriage and provides no approved outlet for their marital needs when they fail.

All this results in a fairly high rate of marital failure and makes divorce an inescapable part of the modern family structure. "From being a rare example of moral disgrace, divorce has become a fairly common, more-or-less respectable way of dealing with an intolerable marriage. ..." (Horton and Hunt, 1964 p. 250).

Effects of Divorce on Children

It is the general impression by most people that children of divorce numbered greatly in any group of disturbed children. Despert (1962), a child psychiatrist, found far fewer of these children than are found proportionally among the general population of his clients, which includes both well adjusted children and children in difficulties. There was trouble between the parents of every one of the children, but few of them had been divorced. Despert (1962) found that it was not divorce, but the emotional situation in the home with or without divorce that is the determining factor in a child's
adjustment. A child is very disturbed when the relationship between his parents is very disturbed.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) studied the effects of parental divorce on pre-school children. The children and their parents were studied intensively at two points in the family life experience: shortly after the initial separation of parents and a year later. Prior to the family disruption, all of the children were considered by their parents to be within expectable range of development. The major goal of the study was to explore the differential responses of children at various ages to divorce-related family change. The methods used were: (a) sorting out the intricate patterning of defensive, restitutive, and coping mechanisms employed successfully and unsuccessfully in response to family separation; (b) observation and recording of main experiences of these children and their parents; and, (c) understanding of the psychological, familial and more broadly social factors in the child-family interaction which can be related to their altered condition.

Thirty-four pre-school children were studied. They were divided into three groups: (a) the youngest group (2 1/2 - 3 1/2 years old), (b) the middle group (3 3/4 - 4 3/4 years old), and (c) the oldest group (5 - 6 years old). The results were reported under three categories which will be summarized below: response patterns, sex differences, and parental conflict and change of relationships during divorce.

1. **Response patterns.** (a) The youngest group. The youngest group form a small cluster of four boys and five girls. All of
these children responded to family disruption with observable and significant behavioral changes which include acute regression in toilet training, acute separation anxieties, various sleeping problems, cognitive confusion, increased autocrotic activities, and escalation in aggressive behavior and tantrums. The extent and duration of each child's distress varied, but regressive behavior occurred in all with no sex differences noted. This group of children possessed very few mechanisms for relieving their sufferings. Their play was burdened, constricted and joyless. Recurrent playroom themes were those of aimless, mournful searching.

By the time of follow-up, regression, aggression, fearfulness and possessive behavior disappeared, but still evident and otherwise improved was a general neediness in relationships. There was no relationship between the acuteness of initial regression or the absolute number of symptoms and the psychological health or developmental progress of the child. Nor was there a connection between the child's developmental agenda and the mother's full-time employment. These children seemed to tolerate substitute caretakers who are consistent in the child's life and endowed with loving qualities.

Three children, however, did show limited progress. These children were living in families in which the intensity of divorce discord remained relatively undiminished. The mothers were preoccupied with their own hurt, humiliation, and unremitting fury at the husband. These mothers appeared to their children as powerful and terrifying in their potential for destruction.
(b) The middle group. The middle pre-school group included 11 children, five boys and six girls. In this group, there were no open struggles of parents over their children. In these children, regression was not a favored initial response to parental separation. Many of them did become irritable, whiny and tearful. Aggressive behavior and fear of aggression increased. Separation anxieties seemed expressive phobic ideation and specific conflict. They seemed painfully bewildered by the loss of one parent and anxiously attempted to comprehend the present and future changes of their relationship with both parents. They voiced a desperate desire for a father. Generally, they were frightened, confused and sad. Oedipal fantasy began to assume prominence. These children were unable to master their anxiety and depression even through play. Their play and language reflected self-blame in response to their father's departure. These self-accusations were found to be highly resistive to educational interventions by parents and therapists.

At the time of follow-up, all but one appeared to be more troubled. Seven of the eleven children (five girls and two boys) were observed to be in worse clinical condition. The children have moved toward increased inhibition and constriction in play, fantasy or behavior; diminished self-esteem, greater sadness and neediness; and a variety of symptomatic behaviors reflecting the intensity of specific neurotic conflicts.

(c) The oldest group. There were 14 (nine boys and five girls) children in this group. Like the younger children, this group experienced heightened anxiety and aggression manifested in rest-
lessness, increased whininess, and temper tantrums at the time of parental separation. They, however, seemed to have reasonable understanding of the divorce related changes. Their response pattern was more diverse at the outset. They were able to express their sadness, longing for fathers, and their intense wish to restore the broken family. There was greater consistency between the clinical picture at the outset and at the time of follow-up. This indicated the greater predictive value for early intervention and referral.

2. **Sex differences.** At the time of parental separation, no discernible patterns of differential response distinguished the boys from the girls. Strong differences however, emerged in the follow-up data. Of the 16 girls, 63% were in significantly worse psychological condition at the time of follow-up. Of the 18 boys, 27% moved into the troubled group. This difference was most apparent in the middle pre-school group.

3. **Parental conflict and change of relationships during divorce.** There was no evidence of initial relationship between the initial turmoil surrounding the divorce and the condition of the child a year later, except in those cases where the turmoil continued during the intervening period.

A reversal of pattern was observed in parent-child relationships after divorce. Twice as many fathers and mothers significantly modified the dominant cast of their attitude and interaction with their child. Many of the anxious, conflicted or actively rejecting parents became freer, happier and closer to their children. The direction of father-child relationship is toward the richer and more
gratifying relationship, whereas, for the mothers, the changes are more in the direction of deterioration over a period of time.

The researchers concluded that:

1. Family disruption triggered regression, fretfulness, cognitive bewilderment, heightened aggression and neediness in the youngest children. The symptoms were temporary where continuity of physical and loving care was restored or maintained. The acuteness of the regression or other behavioral change seemed unrelated to the outcome.

2. Divorce appeared to correlate with early super-ego development, specifically to the late third and late four year old child's self-esteem and self-image. His view of the dependability and predictability of the relationship with his parents was threatened; his sense of order regarding the world disrupted.

3. It became possible for the five and six year olds to experience family turbulence and divorce without breaking developmental stride. These children were able to place some psychological distance between self and the parents.

4. Changes in parent-child relationships in the year following separation was substantial. In particular, there was a diminution in the quality of the mother-child relationship. This was found to be associated with the deterioration of the psychological condition of the child. Father-child relationship tended to improve but this did not prevent psychological deterioration in children.

Hertherington (1973) studied the impact of divorce and death on girls. His findings showed that father absence shows up in a girl's
behavior at adolescence. If it is death, she may be scared of men. If it is divorce, she may be clumsily erotic with men.

Thirty six girls participated in the study. They were adolescent girls, between the ages of 13 to 17, who regularly attended a recreation center at Marin County in California. These girls were first-born daughters of lower or lower-middle class families. One third of them came from families in which the parents lived together; one third came from families in which the parents were divorced and the children had minimal contact with the father; and the other third came from families in which the fathers had died. None of the girls had brothers. The mothers of the second and third group remained unmarried and there were no males living in their household.

There were five phases of the study: Phase 1 involved an initial neutral interview with the subjects. Phase 2 recorded the observations in the recreation center. Phase 3 subjected the girls into structured interview. Phase 4 involved an interview with the mothers of the girls under study. Phase 5 subjected the mothers and daughters to a battery of tests. The findings are briefly summarized below.

During the first phase of the study, it was observed that the girls who had grown up without fathers repeatedly displayed inappropriate patterns of behavior in relating to males. Girls whose fathers had died exhibited severe sexual anxiety, shyness and discomfort around males. Girls whose fathers were absent because of divorce exhibited tension and inappropriate assertive, seductive or sometimes promiscuous behavior with male peers and adults. Girls
whose fathers had died talked significantly less with male interviewers and were more silent than any other group. The girls from divorced homes talked more, tended to assume an open, sometimes sprawling posture, to lean forward, to look more often into the male interviewer's eyes, and smiled more often.

Two female observers recorded the frequency with which 21 kinds of sex-typed behavior occurred during the girls' activities at the recreation center as part of the second phase of the study. The observers found no disruption in sex-role typing among girls without fathers. However, they showed more dependency than did girls from intact homes in seeking instruction, guidance and attention from adults in the center. The observed deviations in the behavior of the fatherless girls related mainly to interaction with males. Girls from divorced homes sought more attention from male adults than girls from the other groups.

The fatherless girls were further subdivided into two groups: those who lost their father before the age of five and those who lost their father at a later age. It was found that early separation from father had a greater effect on the daughter's behavior than did later separation. Girls whose parents had been divorced early showed significantly more prosocial aggression than girls whose parents had been divorced later or girls whose fathers had died before the girls reached the age of five.

The third phase of the study was a structured interview with each girl. The interviews were taped and presented to two judges who rated them on a seven point scale which focused on femininity,
relationships with males and females, and attitudes and relationships with their parents. Findings showed many of the girls who were separated early from their fathers were unable to respond to items about fathers. Girls who had grown up without fathers showed the greatest deviance on measures that dealt with feelings and interactions with males. There was no difference in feminine interest, attitudes toward the feminine role or similarity to mother and father. There were also no difference in relationships with females including mothers. The only exception was that girls whose parents were divorced reported more conflict with their mothers.

Both groups of fatherless girls felt insecure and apprehensive around male peers and adults but showed their insecurity in different ways. Girls from divorced homes reported more heterosexual activity than the other group. They dated earlier and more frequently and were more likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse. Girls whose fathers had died seemed to be sexually inhibited.

Girls whose parents were divorced had the lowest self-esteem. They harbored more adverse feelings toward their fathers. They reported negative attitudes toward them and more conflict with them. They regarded their fathers as incompetent.

In the fourth phase of the study each mother was interviewed regarding her child rearing practices and her attitude toward her daughter, herself and her husband to determine whether or not mother's behavior was a consequence of the daughter's adolescent behavior. The interview revealed that divorced mothers had negative attitudes toward their husband, themselves and life in general. Their lives

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and marriages had not been gratifying and they were concerned about their inadequacy as mothers. They had positive relationships with their daughters and showed the same patterns of affection and discipline as the widowed and married mothers. Mothers from broken homes tended to be over-protective and solicitous of their pre-adolescent daughters. Divorced mothers reported conflict with their husbands before separation and their daughters after adolescence. They were more punitive toward their daughters for their sexual activity and that they became inconsistent in discipline only after the girls reached adolescence.

The final phase of the study subjected the mothers and daughters to a battery of tests: Draw-A-Person, California Personality Inventory (CPI), Rotter Internal-External Scale and the Manifest Anxiety Scale. The findings revealed that all members drew a female figure, which indicated that the subjects identified with a female role. The CPI also indicated that all had adopted normal female sex roles and interests. The scores on the items that deal with feelings of mastery over one's life on the Rotter Internal-External Scale showed that both divorced and widowed mothers and their daughters felt externally controlled more than did mothers and daughters from intact families. Finally, the Manifest Anxiety Scale indicated that both groups of fatherless girls are more anxious than girls whose fathers were home. Divorcees were the most anxious mother group.

The researcher concluded that the effects of father absence in daughters appear during adolescence and manifest themselves mainly as inability to interact appropriately with males rather than in other deviations from appropriate sex typing or in interactions with
females. It was also found that a lack of opportunity for constructive interaction with a loving, attentive father has resulted in apprehension and inadequate skills in relating to males. Also, the negative attitudes of the divorcee toward her marriage, her ex-husband and her life in general had contributed to her daughter's attitude toward the father. It was also concluded that while the daughters of divorced parents were precocious and provocative in their relationships with men, their coping mechanisms were not effective.

The effects of father's absence on boys have been studied by psychologists for more than 20 years (Hertherington, 1973; Gardner, 1971; Horton and Hunt, 1964). World War II with its widespread paternal absence precipitated the first wave of research on the problem. The earliest research found that pre-school boys raised without fathers tended to be more feminine, less aggressive, more dependent and had more feminine patterns of interest and play than boys who were reared under normal situations (Hertherington, 1973). Later studies revealed that boys who were six or older when their fathers left did not differ significantly from boys from intact homes in behavior. In addition, feminine behavior seemed to decrease with age as boys began to respond to pressure outside the home to adopt culturally appropriate masculine behavior. These studies supported the theory that a young male child models his own personality on a masculine figure of his father (Hertherington, 1973; Gardner, 1971; McDermott, 1968; Freud and Burlingham, 1943).

The reactions of children to divorce were recorded by Gardner (1971). He noted that if a child has to choose between an unhappy
marriage with all its problems and a divorce with all its loneliness, most children would choose the unhappy marriage. His recordings indicated that after divorce children expressed varied feelings. The majority of the children were very sad right after divorce. They lost interest in play and in schoolwork. They spent much time moping, thinking of all the things they once did with their fathers. Most kept wishing that their parents would get married again. Some cried a lot and were even ashamed because they cried. Some children thought that their parents had gotten a divorce because they were bad. These children try very hard to be good so their parents will remarry. Most children developed mixed and confused feelings about love, loyalty and affection toward their parents.

Many children of divorced parents wish their mothers to marry again, which usually upsets the mother because this makes her feel bad about the divorce. Other children are, however, the opposite. They are frightened of each new date their mothers have. Then there is the visitation. It is looked upon with dread by some and as a holiday by many, since their fathers will allow them freedom which otherwise they are not allowed at home.


**Effects of Divorce on Parents**

Is divorce harder on men or women? In one sense this question is meaningless since divorce strikes at the emotion and in their
emotions, men and women are the same. Many of the problems that a
divorced woman faces are like those of her former husband — the
problems related to loneliness, depression, anger, guilt, fear and
shock. There are, however, specific problems which are unique for
both.

Specific problems of women. Problems unique to women adjusting
to divorce were identified by Hardy and Cull (1974) and Hirsch (1973).
She is more ego-involved in her marriage and making the marriage
work. It is often the whole reason for her existence. Therefore, the
impact of divorce is much greater on a woman than on a man.

The way a woman adjusts to divorce depends upon her age, background,
habits, personality and her current attitude toward divorce. The
initial period is especially difficult and frustrating because she is
required to make important decisions at a time when she may not be in
the proper frame of mind to do so. As her judgment is apt to be poor
at this time, each woman needs to be protected from the harmful effects
of her own particular emotional reactions no matter what it may be.

Many women suffer untold agonies before they are able to tell
their friends, acquaintances and even their children's teachers that
they have been divorced. It is because the stigma of divorce has
clung more to the woman than to the man no matter what the precip­
itating circumstances.

Coping with the ex-husband is a general difficulty (Hardy and Cull, 1974).
It is almost impossible for the relationship with a husband
to be cut off instantly, clearly, and with complete lack of pain as
soon as divorce takes place because of business matters, division of
property, and especially care of children and arrangements for visitation which require communication.

According to Hirsch (1973), a newly divorced woman will need assistance in coping with the following types of ex-husbands. There is the ex-husband who refuses to consider himself divorced, at least where his wife is concerned. There is the ex-husband who has a need to complete unfinished business, who is compelled to continue arguments, to attempt to settle issues, win verbal battles, or to perpetuate with his ex-wife the disturbed relationship which led to the divorce in the first place. There is still the ex-husband whose feelings of guilt is so strong that he must continually work at assigning blame for failure of the marriage to the ex-wife. Of all the difficult relationships with the ex-husband, none are so painful as those pertaining to the children. Difficulties may revolve around misunderstanding or selfishness over discipline or whatever else the mother sees in the behavior of her ex-husband which she considers harmful or as taking advantage of her.

Drastic changes in life style often accompany divorce (Hardy and Cull, 1974). With women, more often than with men, these changes occur in almost every area of life and reach staggering proportions. A whole new life often emerges in the housewife who is forced to become involved with other people at a new job and feels more a part of the world outside of her house. The housewife who has been preoccupied with her own care may be forced to become more useful and thus become a more interesting person to herself and to others. The rigid self-righteous woman who has been jolted from her smug is now in a
position to be more accepting and understanding of other peoples' problems, thus stretching her capacity for empathy for others.

The divorced woman whose children are grown up has problems which are somewhat different. If she is employed, the change in her life which might bother her most is dealing with the quietness of a house when she comes home from work. Her problems are equally agonizing if she has never been employed and who has already suffered depression and a feeling of uselessness since her children had left home.

Another problem unique to a divorced woman is related to difficulties in relating to men as reactions to or extensions of difficulties with the man she just divorced. According to Hardy and Cull (1974), some common reactions to a relationship which are considered unhealthy include: (1) bitterness - men are perceived as selfish and treated in an impersonal, cold, and distant way; (2) over-reacting to freedom - the divorced woman is hunting most desperately for what is proper; (3) fear of rejection - the divorcee is really unable to be close to anyone for fear that she will be hurt again; (4) hurting men as she has been hurt; (5) rebellion - she is proving her worth by competing fiercely with men; (6) dependency - she is so dependent on every man she meets and never could develop a mature relationship with any one of them; and (7) propping up a sagging ego - she constantly seeks for any man who can give her care.

Special problems of men. Most often the crisis reaction of men to divorce carries a special sting of personal failure. It is probable that men encounter loneliness after the initial separation, but what each will do to ease loneliness will vary as widely as their basic
personalities and experiences. One may feel such a relief at being free of the oppressive climate of marriage that loneliness may never return to loneliness. Another who is chronically unsure of himself and uncertain of his decisions will proceed to spend hours calling friends to strip himself bare emotionally. In these examples, one man's failure is another man's opportunity.

Hardy and Cull (1974) noted certain observations that statistically point to generalizations about men after divorce. Younger men under 25 years of age, who marry early and divorce soon, encounter a widely different post divorce life than men who are over 34. For the younger man, divorce comes easy. A quick return to dating nurtures the illusion that little of serious consequence has occurred. The young man's view of his world is self-centered, which is a function of a society that spares its young from too early exposure to the tasks of marriage and family responsibility.

The content of crisis-anxiety of divorce for the older man is more intense. His marriage produced children. He was witness to their problems and experiences from infancy into active young people. Clearly, the casualties of failure felt in the divorce of the older man are in reality the products of having lived as a father with children, whose very lives were shaped by his presence among them.

The special problem of the divorced men should be viewed on how men are socialized in our culture, i.e., man in his family and man at his work (Hardy and Cull, 1974). They are encouraged from childhood to suppress their feelings, lest they appear weak before their peers. When they grow up to manhood, they are encouraged to
idealize work posture. This makes men in our culture very poorly prepared for the loving intimacy of marriage and family. This neglect often looms formidably above them after they find themselves divorced.

One central problem following the end of marriage among men is uncertainty of the next steps (Krantzler, 1973). Although there is the customary areas of loneliness, sexual adventuring, separation from children, bachelor living and a host of stark realities that follow divorce, what next steps to make often present problems. For a man whose reason for divorce existed in an extra-marital relationship and stepped out of marriage to step into another will not be plagued by the uncertainty of the next steps. He, however, might not have corrected his problem. As the saying goes, "He who does not learn from experience is bound to repeat it."

On the other hand, the man who chooses to view his divorce as an opportunity earns a long overdue breathing space between two time periods of his life. He can use the time for mental house-cleaning and for serious examination of goals to pursue, thus permitting himself to move into new experiences without crippling preconceptions and without ulterior motives.

According to Kessler (1975) and Krantzler (1973), men differ in their ways of exploring their new life as divorced men. Some enter life vigorously rushing to crowd appointment books with all manners of activity, while others hang back passively for a time fearful of testing water. In each case, both will be compelled to pause and look upon their varied experiences and to understand life and new experiences in far different terms than they had settled for in
earlier times. Each will be beset by the endless question of knowing the real from the unreal. He who rushes into activity after activity will inevitably sense that awaiting him is the responsibility to distinguish between a way of life that vainly leads to activity piled on activity, and a way of life that will guide him from the long overdue search of himself. If he avoids this responsibility, then the doors of meaningful experiences must remain closed to him.

According to Hardy and Cull (1974), the essential problem of men after divorce rises from a neglectful need to understand one's self, to understand one's past, and to understand past idealizations, other goals and values. This is a universal problem, yet more essentially, a problem to men than to women based on two grounds.

...In most instances, women after divorce continue to live in the same pattern as they did in their marriage. The woman's anxiety derives largely from fear that she may fail at the task of continuing the patterns of home making and child rearing alone. This problem is different from the problem of the man whose difficulty centers in his anxious feelings of personal failure. ... (p. 65).

...The male ego, influenced and shaped by the culture that sharply divides life's goals differently between sexes is burdened with a special set of expectations. Great emphasis is placed upon success. ...If his marriage was a promise and a pledge he made to himself it was for him a special relationship in which he would demonstrate qualities which have been lauded by untold generation. ...If divorce befalls his marriage, then divorce falls upon him as a shattering instance of personal failure. ... (p. 66).

Another problem which besets a divorced man, but which is not especially a problem for the woman, was identified by Epstein (1974) and Rheinstein (1972). Neither our folk culture nor the new legal culture expect the divorced man to remain as head of the family which
his marriage created. He is removed from the life flow rhythm he once lived in as husband and father. He is compelled to live elsewhere where he is spared the familiar preoccupations of keeping house and home together. Because of these extra consequences of divorce, his new and strange role of being without role leaves him confused and emptied.

Summary

Marriages, at least for most of them, are still intended for life. Even when the time-honored Christian marriage ritual of "We take each other to love and to cherish in sickness and health, for better, for worse until death do us part", is not used, the parties expect or hope that their marriages will last. But not all marriages last. Some of them collapse. The review of literature on divorce clearly pointed to the fact that when marriage fails, problems arise for the spouses, the children and the community. Hopes vanished. A home is destroyed and with it the economic basis of the family.

Marriage and Conciliation Counseling in Family and Conciliation Courts

"The American divorce law is an absolutely, ghastly, dreadful, deplorable messy situation. We need to reform and humanize the divorce system."

There has been a growing concern in the nation and the world since the 50's for a more dynamic approach to the application of more effective family laws, due to the alarming incidence of divorce which has continually escalated and its often tragic consequences.

The great alarm at what appears to be a complete breakdown of the family as an institution in our society led to a careful study of literature by MacFaden (1968). He concluded that the breakdown of the family is more apparent than real. While the total number of divorces had increased, the rate had not shown any significant increase. The true extent of family breakdown can only be determined and evaluated on the basis of rate of divorce per 1000 population, not the number of divorce.

Kahn (1972) gave the following reasons as to why there are more families divorcing. (1) The population is constantly increasing as well as the number of people ages 25 and under. This means more marriages and, therefore, potential for divorce is greater in numbers. (2) There is an increase in number of teenage marriages. The number of teenage marriages ending in divorce is at least twice that of marriages taking place at later years. (3) The decisions to marry because of war and drafts result in many hasty and ill-advised marriages thus increasing the number of subsequent divorces.

Other causes which Kahn (1972) cited include the striving of women to establish a democratic relationship with men; the confused role of women and the concomitant confusion of men and their role; increased mobility; changing sexual values; the availability of education and work for women with the resultant lessening of the wife's dependency upon her husband; the stresses and strains of the age we live in (a pleasure oriented society with the value to enjoy life today); the unrealistic expectations people have about marriages; and the increased number of children from divorced homes and the
increased chances of divorce in those marriages.

The concerns for increased incidence of divorce have created Family and Conciliation Courts all over the country. In 1970, the American Bar Foundation published the pamphlet *Marriage Counseling and Conciliation Court-Connected Services With Summaries of Statutes and a Bibliography* by Lorinczi. Lorinczi (1970) made a survey of all conciliation courts available and what specific functions they perform. The survey showed that there were 154 marriage counseling services which have a formal connection to courts exercising divorce jurisdictions. The 154 services exist in 24 states (thirteen of these states have services which were not operative) and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Michigan in 1918 and Wisconsin in 1933 preceded California in legislation providing for the conciliation process. The Circuit Court of Wayne County, Michigan has had a Friend of the Court since 1918. It was the task of the Friend of the Court to investigate petitions claiming changed circumstances on maintenance and custody cases. The Friend of the Court Officer prepares the case for the child. He acts as a fact finder, neutral observer and an aide to the Court (Despert, 1962).

California ranked as the state with the most operative number of marriage counseling and conciliation courts. Since 1954, the Los Angeles Conciliation Court has achieved national and international recognition. In 1966 Governor E.G. Brown of California convoked a commission to initiate a concerted effort throughout the state to combat the high incidence of divorce and its tragic consequences. He
stated in his message to the committee that "...divorce produces not only broken homes but broken lives. ..." (Rheinstein, 1972, p.5).

**Purpose of the Conciliation Court.** The conciliation court is a special department of the Family Law Department which includes adoption, family law matters including dissolution, annulment, paternity proceedings and other related matters. In California (Elkin, 1970), the Conciliation Court Law Section 1730 states, "The purposes of this chapter are to protect the rights of children and to promote the public welfare by preserving, promoting and protecting family life and institution of matrimony, and to provide means for the reconciliation of spouses and amicable settlements of domestic and family controversy. ..." (p. 18).

The goals of a conciliation service were outlined by Elkin (1970): (1) to attempt to maintain the intactness of marriages whenever possible; (2) to facilitate and smooth divorce if needed; (3) the development of means to handle the legal and social problems affecting the children of divorce; (4) to develop and organize means to carry out intensive public education about the nature of marriage.

There is no other conciliation court in the United States that functions exactly as does the Conciliation Court of Los Angeles County in California. It is the marriage counseling function of this court that will be reviewed in the next following pages. Some of the functions are similar to the activities and charge of the Family Divorce Counseling Service where I am serving my internship. The first performs counseling services which are connected to courts exercising divorce jurisdictions; the latter is a community mental
health agency, which helps people during pre and post divorce periods. It specifically aims to prevent and minimize the emotional stress of children and families undergoing divorce.

Olson (1970) described the marriage counseling function of the Conciliation Court of Los Angeles County. Marriage counseling services are performed by the Conciliation Court of Los Angeles County. Marriage counseling is performed by 14 trained counselors, one of whom has direct supervision of counseling procedures with the title of Supervising Conciliation Counselor. A minimum of a Master's Degree in one of the behavioral sciences and at least five years of prior clinical counseling is required before coming with the court.

Because of limited personnel, it is impossible for the Conciliation Court to engage in extended counseling. It is essential that the counselor be an expert and experienced with diagnostic and treatment skills in order to effectuate a reconciliation or determination of the case in an average of one or two conferences. A counselor is limited to no more than four cases per day to maintain counselor effectiveness. The counselor group include social workers, psychologists and other trained personnel in counseling and guidance. Each counselor relates himself to the family unit as a basic frame of reference for their counseling.

The marriage counselor helps people examine alternative solutions which could include trying to change things so that each can feel more secure and comfortable in the marriage with more gratification from it. To achieve this goal, the counselor creates an atmosphere in which the parties (spouses) are free to talk about themselves, to
bring out their hurt feelings and disappointments, their expectations of each other, and to give recognition to achievements, aspirations and assets in their marriage.

Referrals, also called petitioners, come from all walks of life representing every age level, race, religion, and socio-economic group in the community. They must be residents of Los Angeles County. A petition may be filed prior to or after a petition for dissolution of marriage has been filed. It is not necessary that the petitioners have children. There is no fee for filing a petition and all records are kept confidential.

Petitioners are referred by lawyers, judges and commissioners of the Superior Court, clergymen, Family Service Agencies, Probation Department, and other public or private agencies. Conciliation and marriage counseling is voluntary.

In making referrals or filing a petition, the clients complete the Conciliation Courts Application Form which is a Petition for Conciliation. Then the clients are instructed to appear in person for preliminary conference with a marriage counselor. At times the clients become reluctant to appear for a conference. When this happens, the counselor may ask the judge for subpoena orders or proceedings may be terminated. The marriage counselor, however, often insists that the reluctant client appear.

The court retains jurisdiction after a petition has been filed for no more than 30 days, unless both parties mutually consent to a continuance. Within the 30 day period all attempts to preserve the marriage and at reconciliation will be made.
The court counseling is short-contact counseling, here-and-now, reality oriented, crisis counseling. If long term counseling is needed, the conciliation court refers the case to the Family Casework Agencies in the Los Angeles County or to another public or private agency.

**General procedures in conducting conferences.** Each day one or more counselors are made available for the purpose of conducting preliminary interviews, either with the party interested in reconciliation or with both parties. The preliminary conference accomplishes two desired results. They permit estranged couples to have an immediate consultation with an experienced counselor and, it eliminates the filing of sometimes many useless and fruitless petitions.

Regular conferences occurred after the Petition for Conciliation has been filed. A counselor is then assigned to the case and a hearing date set. Each party is interviewed individually. Then the counselor has a final conference with both parties. In many instances, one such session results in a conciliation and the signing of a marriage agreement which is also signed by the judge thereby making it a court order.

A marriage agreement is a unique document. It is approximately 25 pages and covers practically every facet of married life and common marital problems. The agreement serves as a blueprint for restoring the marriage. Either party, however, at any future time may request the court to terminate the agreement. If this occurs, the case is reactivated. The 30-day court jurisdiction is again in effect.
Helpful information a referring person often gives the court's marriage counselor that helps them expedite preliminary interviews and effectuate counseling are: if separated, the length of separation; the client's motivation to restore marriage; the motivation of the other marital partner to become involved in counseling; the date of any pending court appearance; number of children; the length of marriage, and any information which the referring person feels might be helpful.

The importance of having conciliation and counseling services in a family court has been demonstrated by the follow-up check made by the Conciliation Court each year and over the years. According to the 1971 record of the Conciliation Court (Elkin, 1971) during the past 16 years, nearly 70,000 conciliation petitions were filed. More than 18,000 families were reconciled through the help provided and these families involved 35,000 children. The follow-up check also showed that 75% of these families remained reconciled. The high reconciliation rate of all couples seen was attributed to the non-compulsory nature of conciliation counseling under the California Law. This voluntary concept of seeking conciliation counseling was retained by the Family Law Act of California.

Reconciliation of families, however, is not the sole test for the effectiveness of a conciliation service. Even if a couple is unable to reconcile, conciliation counseling has a goal of assisting the parties in ending the marriage with a maximum sense of dignity, and minimum hurt for themselves and the children.
Elkin (1971) has the following to say about the Conciliation Court of the Los Angeles County:

...The Conciliation Court of Los Angeles County has been a pioneer in the development of short-contact marital counseling service for couples in the verge of separation or divorce. The Court is a testament to the capacity of the law to offer an enabling service to families that contributes to the strengthening of family life and to the welfare of the community's children. Its reconciliation service has proved that a divorce court can make the legal aspects of divorce secondary to the socio-psychological aspects that are causative factors in family fall-out. ... (p. 13).
CHAPTER III

FAMILY DIVORCE COUNSELING SERVICE

The movement to protect and to meet the special needs of children of divorce during the sixties was nation-wide. Kalamazoo was among the counties in Michigan which spearheaded the creation of a protective service agency and a divorce consultation service to insure that the needs of children of divorce are met adequately and realistically.

Background history. Judge Raymond Fox of the Circuit Court of Kalamazoo together with Dr. Ray Creager, Director of the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic were first to see the need to provide protection to children from divorced homes. Both agreed that the community must show active concern for children of divorce. They identified the needs of these children as special because they are often under stress as they go through serious adjustments to the uncertainties of the legal battles between their parents. Together, Dr. Creager and Judge Fox communicated the need for a service agency to the community, which the community eventually supported.

Judge Fox summarized the only existing provisions for children of divorce before the Community Service Committee in 1968, which also provided the rationale for the need to look after the special needs of children of divorce.

"...The chief function of the Friend of the Court has been to collect support money and to see to it that this money is actually used for children...The investigation of the home preceding divorce is limited to bare description of housing and statement collected from both husband and wife. There
is no social study involved at all. The Court has no personnel trained in social work. ... The Court has little knowledge of the home climate or situation unless the school or other agencies sent in a report. As far as the Court supervision is concerned, there was no consolidation of authority and provisions for trained personnel to handle problems as they arise. So it was advisable to transfer children from the jurisdiction of the Divorce Court to that of the Juvenile Court. ... A marriage counseling bill is in the legislature, but such a service will be expensive involving salaries of highly trained people. However, if every man or woman would undergo counseling prior to application for a divorce, the result would undoubtedly include more realistic view of what is involved in divorce, particularly for children and possibly a chance for conciliation. ..." (Minutes of June 4, 1968 meeting, Community Service Committee).

Judge Fox would like to see counseling undertaken before a case ever comes to Court.

The active concern communicated to the community by Dr. Creager and Judge Fox lead to the creation of the Circuit Court Consultation Service and eventually to the organization of the Family Divorce Counseling Service.

In June 1968, the Community Service Committee was created under the auspices of the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic and the Community Mental Health Boards, with support from the Circuit Court. The Committee was charged with the responsibility of exploring the needs and resources of the community for adequate protection to the mental health of children during the pre and post phases of divorce of their parents. In the initial phase of the project, the committee was charged to review the problem in the Kalamazoo area with a view toward development of intervention measures if needed, legally, procedurally, or in development of preventive, or corrective services, style or location of service delivery. (Community Service Committee.
Minutes of Meeting, June, 1968). The Committee worked continually until December, 1969, when a finalized proposal for a divorce consultation and conciliation service was approved.

The initial report of the Committee showed that there was an average of 375 divorces per year where children were involved. Recommendations were made to employ a counselor to work in the Friend of the Court's Office, to institute mandatory counseling for parents at the start of or sometime during the six month waiting period for the divorce decree to be granted, and to draft a proposal for a program of consultation services to be approved by the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic and the Community Mental Health Board of Trustees.

The proposal should consist of two processes. (a) A formal statement of planning for the rights of children must be formulated, agreed upon by the divorcing couples, and presented to the court as soon as possible after filing the initial complaint. Both parents will be ordered by the judge to meet with a counselor to prepare this statement. (b) A worker to administer the program should be employed by the consultation center or other sponsoring agency, and assigned to the Friend of the Court. Other aspects of the proposal considered of foremost importance were (1) the extent of counseling to parents beyond initial interviews involving the setting up of a basic plan for the children, (2) the necessity of coordination with other agencies with whom the parents have had previous contact, (3) the extent to which the plan set up with the worker is binding and the means by which it can be enforced by law, (4) the need for specific focus on the child and of definitive supportive aid to him, (5) the
possibility that the program be approached as phase 1 of a three-phase plan program, eventually involving five counties, and (6) funding, which should occur through the Community Mental Health Board with possible sources being various foundations, federal, state, or county funds and other sources.

By June 1969, a proposal outlining what is to be the Circuit Court Consultation Service, was adopted. Administrative arrangements placed the program under the supervision of the Friend of the Court's Office and the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic. Salaries and disbursements were paid by the Clinic from funds channeled through its treasury. An advisory committee, appointed by the President of the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic Board, was created to advise as to the details of the operation of the program and other matters.

The Circuit Court Consultation Service. The Circuit Court Consultation Service was a three year pilot program which began its operation in June of 1970. The program was designed as a mental health resource to protect children from damaging stress due to parental separation. Its primary objective was to prevent or ameliorate those emotional and adjustment difficulties of children which are a consequence of divorce. The service to parents and children was described by the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic Program Plan as a part of the "first line of defense against emotional and mental disorders. ..." (Community Service Committee, Minutes of Meeting June, 1969). The program worked to maintain and strengthen those positive and healthy parent-child relationships which exist and can continue even when the family structure has been disrupted.
The Circuit Court Consultation Service was headed and staffed by Mrs. Lilian Harris, a clinical psychologist. The overall clinical work was supervised by Dr. Ray Creager, Director of the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic.

The working philosophy of the service was based on the premise that parents do not desire to hurt their children, but are often trapped into doing so by circumstances and their own emotions. In its first year the program had served 202 families and 214 children. About 80 children were seen periodically. Parents were also given appointments. Reports indicated that about 10 per cent of the families involved were reconciled (Kalamazoo Gazette, June 27, 1971).

Initially, all parents involved in divorce litigation were directed to the service by the Circuit Judges. This was because of the nature of the program in its first year of operation. The service could not accept referrals from attorneys or other community sources. Beginning 1972 however, the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic Board set up the policy of selective referral, whenever the interest of the children are involved. This encouraged parents to work out problems within voluntary counseling.

The techniques used and the kinds of help provided by the service varied greatly with the individual needs of the families involved - always focusing on the psychological needs of children during the divorce-crisis period. When parents first come to the Service they were interviewed separately and then together in an effort to reach voluntary agreement concerning the needs of the
children. All children older than three were also interviewed, and
remarks they made were noted.

Besides forging agreements between parents the Circuit Court
Consultation Service also offered other help. The *Kalamazoo Gazette*,
(June 27, 1971) outlined the following services:

1. Suggesting how parents can tell children about divorce
   in appropriate truthful ways that lessen the child's guilt,
   anger and confusion.

2. Counseling with parents together to lessen hostility
   between them in the handling of the children.

3. Showing parents that children need a good image of both
   parents to gain self-confidence.

4. Allowing each parent and child to express feelings in a
   non-courtroom atmosphere.

5. Holding a short series of interviews to help parents and
   children with specific problems related to divorce.

6. Referring children or parents to other community agencies
   for additional help.

7. Consultation work with teachers, school counselors, school
   social workers and Friend of the Court investigators.

8. Group sessions with small groups of teen-agers and parents.

In its first two years of operation the service saw 610 children
and 590 parents. At the completion of the three-year pilot program,
research follow-up data hoped to provide additional knowledge such
as correlation of counseling during divorce with personality adjustment
of children and the effectiveness of a contract-type agreement between
parents. To date, this information has been gathered but not yet
subjected to evaluative study.

In summing up the services of the pilot program, Circuit Court
Judge Raymond Fox told the Service Advisory Board:
"...In the 24 years I have been on the Circuit Court bench, I have become increasingly aware of our total inadequacy in protecting children whose parents are involved in divorce litigation. In many instances, children had become pawns. Until some better way is found to handle matters of custody and support of children during the divorce, the Circuit Court Consultation Service is of tremendous help and hopefully can be expanded. ..." (Portage Herald, June 29, 1972).

After the three year pilot project, the Circuit Court Consultation Service proved to be most successful. In 1974, the Family Divorce Counseling Service was organized, to assume similar functions.

**Family Divorce Counseling Service**

The Family Divorce Counseling Service is an agency, the primary purpose of which is to prevent or minimize the emotional stress of children and families undergoing divorce. Help is offered to children and parents who reside in Kalamazoo County at the time of parental separation.

**Sponsorship.** Family Divorce Counseling Service is a subsidiary of the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic, and as such, is corporately connected with it.

**Administrative Structure.** Under the guidelines of the Family Divorce Counseling Service, the clinical staff are responsible to the Director of the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic. The Director of the Family Divorce Counseling Service has program, in addition to supervisory responsibilities for one half-time staff psychologist, full time secretary and graduate students.

An advisory committee to the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic functions in the capacity of policy and program monitoring for the
Family Divorce Counseling Service. This advisory committee must clear its policy statements with the Executive Committee of the Board of the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic.

Program and methods. Family Divorce Counseling Service offers individual counseling services to assist children and parents through the emotional stress of divorce in such problem areas as:

1. Helping parents resolve visitation disputes.
2. Helping children and parents cope with their acute reactions to divorce and the changes which occur in their life style.
3. Helping parents discuss divorce with their children.
4. Helping children understand problems which arise in visitation.
5. Helping stepparents understand and cope with their complex roles.
7. Evaluation and referral of problems not within the realm of agency purpose.

In order to provide information and help parents cope with a new way of life during the initial phases of divorce Family Divorce Counseling Service offers three types of groups. One group is three weeks in duration and is lecture-discussion oriented with such topics as "How Children React to Divorce", "Parent-Child Relationships", and "Concerns About Visitation and Custody". The second group is an eight-week interactional group geared to helping parents cope with post-divorce problems. The third group is geared toward an understanding of the stepparent role.
An aggressive program of enlistment for these group members is carried out. Names of all those divorcing who have children are obtained from the Friend of the Court. A letter explaining the agency program together with the agency brochure is mailed. All one needs to do to become a member of either group is to sign a list and attend. A media campaign is conducted to enlist people for the stepparent group. A client rating form is now being used to gather feedback on group benefits.

A policy has been established whereby Family Divorce Counseling Service will conduct evaluations in custody and visitation disputes if attorneys for both plaintiff and defendant agree, in advance. Family Divorce Counseling Service staff share their recommendation prior to the court trial which in some cases enhances out-of-court settlement of the dispute.

Other program activities now operational or in the planning phase, which are geared toward the purpose of the agency include:

1. Development of a handbook on divorce to be distributed to all divorcing people and aimed at reducing stress due to the lack of information. This handbook will include sections on criteria for visitation agreements, children's reactions to divorce, legal questions, Friend of the Court functions, court functions, community resources for divorcing people, etc.

2. Information to the divorcing or divorced population through public speaking, television, newspaper, radio.

3. Informal consultation to Friend of the Court.

4. Presentations to teacher-training classes at Western Michigan University.

5. Graduate training of Social Work and Counseling and Personnel interns.
Eligibility procedures and referrals. Anyone may call for an appointment, although a great many are referred by the Friend of the Court, attorneys, schools and social agencies.

If it is determined that short-term counseling related to divorce is not what is needed, then referrals are made to appropriate services. An example of this would include an emotionally disturbed child who would require moderate to long-term treatment or for which a psychological evaluation is needed would be referred to the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic. The important point to consider in determining eligibility is a situation related to divorce and children that is short-term in nature. Referrals are also made to agencies while the Family Divorce Counseling Service conducts counseling sessions.

To become involved in any of the previously mentioned groups, an individual only has to attend at the stated times for the groups. All those who seek individual or family counseling fill out an information sheet at the first visit. This sheet includes demographic data and specific questions about marriage, divorce, visitation and custody. At the time of first visit, a brochure on client rights as guaranteed by Michigan's Mental Health Code is handed to each potential client. After the clients have read and understood the brochure, they sign to this effect on the information sheet.

Administratively, all bookkeeping and bill paying is handled for Family Divorce Counseling Service through the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic.
CHAPTER IV

LOG OF EXPERIENCES

Introduction

In January, I started planning for the last phase of my Specialist Degree Program. Several meetings were held with Dr. Betz, my advisor, between the months of January and March, where we discussed and planned for my professional field experience and my specialist project. We explored several possibilities for my internship, which included counseling in an agency. My career, thus far, has been in educational settings. I felt that counseling in a community agency would provide me with a broader concept of the total counseling spectrum.

On March 16, 1976, I met with Dr. Christine Lowe, whom I called the week before, to see if I could work under her supervision as an intern at the Family Divorce Counseling Service.

We talked about the operation of the agency and she explained how she worked in the agency as a counselor. We also discussed what my goals were for my professional field experience.

Of the things she mentioned, the ones that impressed me were that the agency does not only deal with the topic of divorce itself. Many other services are involved within the agency. She said that people who seek out the services of Family Divorce Counseling Service are looking for help in becoming better parents to their children, either after divorce as a single parent or after re-marriage.
as a stepparent. Some of the people seek the service of the agency to help them resolve visitation or custody difficulties they may be experiencing with their ex-spouse. Some of the people come in to get counseling services for themselves and/or their children. Dr. Lowe mentioned that primarily, the agency is a child-advocate operated agency; it is a prevention-oriented counseling agency to help parents and their children minimize the emotional stress of divorce.

We both agreed that I could learn many new insights by serving my internship at the agency. I was still employed full time and I could not begin a full term internship until June 14. Dr. Lowe, however, mentioned that she was starting two new groups on March 24th and that I was welcome to join them. I welcomed the idea and, thus, this was the beginning of my professional field experience at the Family Divorce Counseling Service.

The Group Experience—March 24 to May 21

Dr. Lowe called me before March 24, to inform me that the group for people in the process of divorce would not be starting on the 24th, because there were not enough people; however, we would be meeting at 7:30 for the stepparenting group.

The stepparenting group grew out of a need that was identified by the personnel of the agency in working with parents on an individual basis. That need was that parents who had similar needs and problems should be able to get together to give help and support to each other. Dr. Lowe has organized groups for custodial parents, visiting parents, stepparents, and single parents since 1974, when
she became the Director of the Outreach Program within the agency. The Outreach Program is designed to publicize the services of the agency to the community. This has been done by mailing brochures and pamphlets to public offices located throughout the county, publicity done through the newspaper media, broadcasting media, and, also, by word of mouth. Dr. Lowe also made many appearances before community, civic, and professional groups located around the county.

The first stepparenting group meeting consisted of introductions by everyone present. Dr. Lowe explained the function of the group process. She handed out a list of topics that members of the group could feel free to discuss with each other. The topics were arranged so that each member knew in advance what was going to be discussed from week to week. The list of topics is presented below:

I. Introductions - Stepparenting
   a) What it means
   b) Limitations
   c) Becoming comfortable
   d) Negative set to role
   e) Financial problems

II. Understanding the Stepchild
   a) Confused loyalty
   b) Value and behavior differences
   c) Different expectations
   d) Adjusting to differences

III. Difficult to be Parent - More Tenuous to be Stepparent
   a) Competing with natural parents' relationship
   b) Discipline - (ghosts)

IV. Effects of Stepparenting on Spouse Relationship
   a) Visiting time
   b) "Love me, love my kids"
V. Day-to-Day Stepparenting
   a) Feeling of responsibility
   b) Competition between stepparent and child
   c) Accepting

VI. Competing with First Husband/Wife
   a) Resolving jealousy for past
   b) Being super-parent to win approval
   c) Fitting into extended family

VII. Relationships and Communication
   a) Inter-family
   b) Natural child vs. stepchild
   c) Child-Parent

VIII. Open to Group Needs

This particular stepparenting group was designed to be a discussion and problem solving group aimed at becoming aware of the problems stepparents might have and how to cope with them. The goal of the group sessions is preventive mental health. The group process differed in some respects from the group for people in the divorce process. First, it was discussion group aimed at obtaining knowledge about being a stepparent. Secondly, the discussion centered around the issues and problems of being a stepparent rather than on focusing on personal dynamics going on in the people within the group.

There were nine people who were all stepparents or about to become stepparents, Dr. Lowe and myself in the stepparent's group. The following is some information concerning the status of each member in the group:

Couple 1 have been married since August, 1973. The husband is stepparent to her three children, ages 16, 15 and 10; the wife is stepparent to his four children, ages 20, 19, 17, and 16.
Couple 2 have been married since June, 1969. The husband is stepparent to her two children, ages 6 and 4; the wife is stepparent to his three children, ages 15, 13, and 10.

Couple 3 have been married since June, 1973. The husband is stepparent to her one child, age 5; the wife is stepparent to his three children, ages 11, 8, and 7.

Couple 4 will soon be married. He will become stepparent to her two children, ages 12 and 7; she will become stepparent to his three children, ages 17, 14, and 11.

Couple 5 have been married since April, 1970. They have a child, one year old. The wife is stepparent to his two children, ages 13 and 11. Because of his work schedule, he could not attend our group sessions; but his wife took advantage of attending.

The group provided each other with knowledge, support, and helpful suggestions on how to be a better stepparent. It was a tremendous learning experience for me in that it was my first time to learn the frustration, anxieties, trials and tribulations, problems and joys of being a stepparent. At first, I was overwhelmed at the amount of information I was getting from these people about being a stepparent. I found myself listening intently to the content of the discussion that I almost forgot about the group process that was going on. Another thing I found myself doing was relating what was being discussed by the group to the parents and children I have come into contact with in my school setting. There was so much to learn from these people.

It was my observation that the biggest problem stepparents are confronted with is in the area of discipline: learning how to be consistent in disciplining one's own children and stepchildren, learning how to communicate with the spouse about discipline, learning how to trust the spouse in the area of disciplining his/her children.
and their own. Another topic of great concern that came out of our stepparenting group was the fact that children can manipulate their real parent against their stepparent. In looking at the stepchild's point of view, I could see where it can become overwhelming to be a stepchild, especially with extended family relationships involved. The loyalties of a stepchild can be very confusing and this in itself, can be the cause of many conflicts.

The divorce counseling group was started on March 31. During the weeks between March 31 and May 19, Dr. Lowe and I worked with two groups - the stepparent group and the divorce counseling group. The counseling group met from 5:30 to 7:00 o'clock and our stepparent group met from 7:30 to 9:00 o'clock every Wednesday evening for those weeks. The stepparent group finished up during the week of May 12 and the counseling group finished up during the week of May 19.

The first meeting of the counseling group was spent with introductions and laying down the ground rules. Dr. Lowe introduced herself and asked everyone to do likewise. After the introductions were made, Dr. Lowe did some structuring for the group. She went over the time limits, confidentiality, availability of coffee and restrooms, and the monitoring of self in the time allotments allowed for everyone. She indicated that it was the group member's responsibility to ask for help if they wanted it from other members in the group. Each member of the group was allotted one tenth of group participation so that when homework was assigned, it was the members responsibility to share as they wish to.
The first meeting of the counseling group involved ten members, Dr. Lowe and myself. Some of the members were already coming in to see either Dr. Lowe or Mr. Adams on an individual basis and had been referred to be in the group; others had heard of the group by word of mouth or had read the article that had been in the Kalamazoo Gazette the week before. The following is a short introduction of each group member and why he/she felt the need to have this kind of group experience:

1. Male—31 years old. He has been married for 12 years and has three children, ages 10, 5 and 3. He and his wife have been separated for three weeks; the divorce was filed by the wife in February. "I wanted help in starting to think as a single person and how to be a weekend father. I didn't want the divorce; I met my wife when I was fourteen years old, so I have been married practically all my life. I have lost confidence in myself since this happened."

2. Male—28 years old. Married for 6 years and has one child, age 3. He and his wife have been separated for seven months; the divorce was filed by the wife in August, 1975. "I will graduate in April from college. My divorce isn't unique, other people are going through this thing. My wife is going out with other men, I don't know why she wants a divorce."

3. Male—34 years old. Married for almost 11 years and has two children, ages 8 and 6. He and his wife have been separated almost one month; the divorce was filed by the wife in February, 1976. "I don't want a divorce. I am getting over the sick feeling within me. Why doesn't she love me? Why fight it? I want to learn how to live as a single person, even though I have been thrown into it and don't want it."

4. Female—28 years old. Married for 11 years and has one child, age 9, but legally separated one and one half years; the divorce was filed by the wife in September, 1974 and is final today. "I feel like a villain. I wanted the divorce. I want to learn how to relate to other people that are single."
5. Female—43 years old. Married for 22 years and has two children, ages 19 and 15. She and her husband have been separated almost eight months; she filed for the divorce in August, 1975. "I need moral support and it is a struggle financially. I am working part time."

6. Female—37 years old. Married at 18 for eight years and then divorced. She married again, but left her husband after 10 years. The divorce has not yet been filed. There are two children involved, ages 17 and 16. "I love what my husband could be, but he has a drinking problem and I can't put up with it. I am mixed up; I don't want a divorce, but I decided to separate. I am more hopeful being separated, but there are times when I'm sad about the separation. I start a new job on Monday. I want to learn more about the process of divorce and being single again."

7. Female—40 years old. Married for 13 years and has two children, ages 8 and 6. The divorce was filed by the husband in July, 1975. "I am not fighting it. I am learning how to be single again. I want to know how to approach the children."

8. Female—25 years old. Married for almost 4 years and has no children. The divorce is final and was filed by her in October, 1975. "I want to find out how I've adjusted by comparison to others in the process. I have been in Kalamazoo for four weeks; I moved from Iowa and have no relatives here."

9. Female—46 years old. Married for 23 years, and has five children, ages 20, 15, 13, 9, and 8. "I am not in the divorce process; I started to file four or five years ago, but cancelled because of the death of my Mother and Father. Divorce scares me. I lack the courage and insight. Divorce has to be better for all of us. I have feelings of failure and I can't accept it. My husband has a drinking problem. I am tired of trying to convince myself that I should get a divorce and I don't have the courage. I love life and I love people."

10. Female—47 years old. Married for almost 16 years and has one child, age 13. She filed the divorce in March, 1976. "This is my second divorce. My first one was 18 years ago and I have three children by that marriage. I don't know what I want out of the group. I am not working; unemployed for the last year and I can't find a job."
The above information about the group participants pointed out some interesting observations: 1) seven of the women and only one man filed for divorce; 2) the decision to separate was made by the wife; 3) only one participant was not in the divorce process at the present time; 4) all, with the exception of one, have children; and 5) each presented varying needs to be met—financial, moral support, lack of confidence, learning how to be a visiting parent, how to be single again, how to relate to people, and how to get over the "sick" feelings associated with divorce.

I noticed that some of the people who came the first night dropped out after the first session. I asked Dr. Lowe about these people. She reported that people will make up their own minds as to whether the group is going to meet their needs or not. This will determine whether or not they choose to stay for the entire eight weeks.

Unlike the stepparenting group, the topics or homework assigned from week to week was not set down to the group the first night. Dr. Lowe ended each counseling session with an assignment for everyone to work on for the next week. She did this by simply assigning the group members to work on something about the divorce process that pertained to everyone going through divorce. The assignment could have come about as a result of the direction the group was moving in. Listed below are the topics that were discussed by this particular group:

March 31. Introductions and ground rules.

April 7. "Guilt and Rejection." "How do you see yourself reacting to one or the other of those two emotions?"
April 14. "What in particular about the relationship are you having difficulty with in letting go of the relationship?"

April 21. "How are your children being used in the divorce?"

April 28. "How are you reacting to the other parent?" "What are your feelings about the visiting parent? What are your feelings about being a single parent?"

May 5. "What responsibility do you share in the marriage falling apart? How did you behave to make it not work?"

May 19. "Write a marriage contract for you and your next spouse."

Dr. Lowe’s style of leading groups was quite informal and very relaxing. This leads to the acceptance and trust of group members for each other and also this gave, as I viewed it, each group member the freedom to be himself. Dr. Lowe and I talked about the group in between sessions. She asked me to be aware not only of the content of what was being discussed, but also to look for the process going on when the group is at work. She asked me to observe: Who was doing the most talking; who was most silent; who was talking to whom; who were the agreers and disagreers; who was trying to influence, if any, others in the group; were there any sub-groups being formed; how were group members behaving towards the group leader; and how defenses were being handled by group members.

The group members were asked to fill out an evaluation questionnaire at their last session together. Dr. Lowe does this with all groups that she handles to get feedback as to how she can better improve her program. Listed below are the questions and responses of the five members of this particular group:
1. In general, how satisfied were you with the group experience at Family Divorce Counseling Service?

   Highly Satisfied (2) Satisfied (3) Dissatisfied Highly Dissatisfied

2. Would you recommend the group experience at Family Divorce Counseling Service to a friend who is involved in the divorce process?

   Highly Recommend (4) Generally Recommend Recommend with Reservation Would not Recommend

3. As you look back, how would you compare your feelings about your present situation with your feeling of the situation at the time you began coming to Family Divorce Counseling Service?

   Substantially Better (3) Generally Better Somewhat Worse Much Worse

4. If, in the future, you or your family experience some difficulty relative to the divorce, would you feel comfortable about contacting Family Divorce Counseling Service?

   Very Comfortable (4) Comfortable (1) Uncomfortable Very Uncomfortable

5. In general, how helpful would you say the group experience at Family Divorce Counseling Service was in providing you with assistance to deal with your situation?

   Very Helpful (2) Generally Helpful (1) Not Helpful

6. What suggestions can you make to the staff at Family Divorce Counseling Service for improvement of the group experience?

   1. More direct information on how to handle problems.
   2. Although most things were helpful in making me think through my feelings, I felt it was definitely aimed at a younger age group.
   3. None.

7. What did you like most about the group experience?

   1. Knowing that you are not alone.
   2. Informality, I felt comfortable.
   3. The interaction with people with similar problems and the counsel provided by these people and the group leader.
4. The counselor was very helpful in putting us at ease; making it comfortable to discuss our situations and feeding back what she was hearing.

8. What did you like least about the group experience?
   1. Nothing—very fair.
   2. It's unfortunate that some are unable to follow through with the whole program.
   3. The way people would drop out.

9. To what extent do you feel the staff at Family Divorce Counseling Service is interested in you and the situation you faced?
   1. Very interested.
   2. As much as possible in a group type situation of "Counseling".
   3. Very interested—sympathetic to our needs.
   4. They have good interest and have been extremely helpful in getting me through some very difficult times.

10. Is there anything different now about yourself or your situation which, in your opinion, represents a change which resulted from your group experience at Family Divorce Counseling Service?
    1. More aware of what I am doing and why.
    2. Not much.
    3. No. I believe it just takes time to let you feel like a person again.
    4. Yes, I am able to look at myself and my feelings with more honesty and insight and feel comfortable about it.
    5. Yes, my entire outlook on the situation is much more healthy; still living one day at a time, but much of the sick feeling is gone.

11. What suggestions can you make to the staff of the Family Divorce Counseling Service which might improve services for other group participants whose situations are much like your own?
    1. More direction on how to cope with situations, might try to bring out the quiet participants more.
    2. It was very helpful to me to hear others speak of their problems and see how they were facing them. It actually put me in better perspective with my own situation.
The second group experience I had was from June 2 to July 21. I will not go into full detail about this group experience, because it will be repetitive. Much of the format was the same, even though the members were different. Originally there were two groups: the stepparenting group and the divorce counseling group.

There were six parents in the stepparenting group. Because of a lack of participation and interest shown by the members, Dr. Lowe decided to cancel the group meetings until September.

The divorce counseling group did continue to meet until July 21. There were eight members. With the exception of one, all were in the process of divorce or divorced already. The topics discussed included: handling the feelings of guilt and rejection, being a single parent, and writing the marriage contract.

The primary goal of the divorce counseling group is to aid group members through the transition from being married to being single. Some of these people were having great difficulties adjusting to their new role, but found much support from each other during the eight weeks.

The group process moved very rapidly from "I want your support and acceptance" theme into an atmosphere of trust and cohesiveness. The happening came so fast. It was in the fourth session when the group members were already experiencing separation anxiety as they thought of the ending of their sessions being in sight.
The freedom to express oneself was very evident in the group. The group discussion became quite emotional several times, especially during the fifth and sixth sessions. I told Dr. Lowe about my observations. She agreed with me and said that in some groups, it happens this way. Even if the group leader were to structure the group process differently, the emerging leadership among members in the group would swing the direction back to where they wanted it to be in their discussion of their problems and concerns. Members of this group quickly accepted ownership and responsibility for their problems. They also tried to integrate their awareness and understanding of new knowledge, feelings and behaviors into themselves.

My awareness of the group dynamics in this group was enhanced by the behavior of one of the members whom I was counseling on an individual basis. I had more knowledge of her situation and I was able to observe her apply new knowledge and experiences in the group sessions. For example, on the seventh meeting, she came in and announced that the divorce was final as of a few days ago. She told the group that she had no choice but to accept reality, think of herself as a single person and plan for the future. The group members complemented her for her new found courage. I was aware, however, that she could not have fully felt and believed everything she told the group members, but the fact that she had mustered the courage to risk this new behavior with the group indicated that growth from within was taking place.

I could not help but feel close and care for each of the group members. Since my first group experience, I found myself much more
aware of the group process and dynamics of group interaction. I was more aware of the struggle for personal growth, the progress and personality changes the group members were achieving from week to week.

With this group, I felt comfortable and free to express myself. Even when leading the group, I felt competent as a group leader.

Individual Counseling and Other Experiences

Week of June 14 to 18

On June 14, at 8:00 o'clock in the morning, I met Dr. Lowe in front of the Lawyer's Building in Kalamazoo. We drove to Camp Amigo, outside of Sturgis, Michigan. Dr. Lowe had been called previously in May by the Edison Center Staff to conduct a two-day workshop on the role of the single parent. The participants were all single women, ages 30-45 years old, who were on ADC and who are single parents. Their backgrounds varied: two were never married, some were separated or divorced, and a couple were widowed. The Edison Center had arranged for these single mothers and their children to spend the week at camp. The purpose of the week long family growth experience was to facilitate constructive parent-child relationships and to promote unity, support, and acceptance among single parent families.

The week before, Dr. Lowe shared the information with me so that I was aware of what was happening. On the way to camp, we shared ideas on how to conduct the two-hour session that morning. We decided that our goal would be to facilitate and lead the group in
a discussion of the single parent role and ways of coping with it.
The total group was comprised of 14 single mothers, 2 social workers, from the Edison Center, Dr. Lowe and myself.

After a brief discussion led by Dave Gardiner, the Director of the Edison Center, Dr. Lowe introduced herself. She suggested that all of the women do likewise, introduce themselves and tell the group a little bit about themselves. The group discussion centered around the role of the single parent and how the participants were trying to cope with that role. The discussion lasted for about two hours. As it was nearing 12:00 o'clock, Dr. Lowe began to summarize the group discussion for the day and gave the parents a homework assignment to think about for the next day: "How do I deal with anger--within myself and with my children?"

The next morning, we arrived at the camp at 9:00 o'clock. By 9:30, the group was together again discussing the topic of the day--anger. Much of the discussion also centered around discipline and child management techniques. We had to leave at 11:00 o'clock. The group was really beginning to move as we had to say good-by. However, on Thursday and Friday, there was another resource person coming in to talk about child management techniques.

On Monday afternoon, June 14, Dr. Lowe asked me to co-counsel with her on a case regarding child custody. For two hours, we worked with four children, all girls--a twelve year old, a nine year old, and two twins, age five. Their parents, who were in the process of getting a divorce were battling over custody of the girls. This case had been
referred by the Friend of the Court's Office and was scheduled to come before the Judge in September.

In Dr. Lowe's office, she has toys for small children to play with. The girls each took their turns and came in. To see how smaller children use play things to express their emotions with was a new learning experience for me. When one of the five year old twins was playing with the doll house, I learned how she projected her feelings toward mother and father while she was playing in the doll house with small dolls.

On Wednesday, I was invited to lunch with the Director, Mr. Dick Adams and Dr. Lowe. Mr. Adams had been in court the day before in a child custody hearing and he was explaining to us what occured during the hearing.

I learned that when the court asks the Family Divorce Counseling Service to do a custody examination, both parents and all children involved have to be seen for a minimum of three times each. Also, any people who are in the child's life (relatives, teachers, adult friends, etc.) may be called in for an appointment if the need warrants. Such a need may arise when both parents are so angry and hostile towards each other that there is a great amount of discrepancy in the things they described and said about their children. After the appointments are met with the family, the counselor makes a report with his/her recommendations as to who should have custody. Both parents are asked to come in and read the finished report of custody recommendations. Any comments they may have at that time are also included in the report.
The report is then sent over to the Friend of the Court's Office. When the hearing is held, the counselor may be subpoenaed to testify in court.

The rest of the week was spent in the office doing some readings. Dr. Lowe gave me some periodicals that had articles about divorce. She gave me some papers on the history of the Family Divorce Counseling Service and the Support Specialist Training Manual which explains all about the Divorce Laws of Michigan.

I had my first supervision with Dr. Lowe on Friday morning, June, 18. We discussed the role of the counselor working in the agency. The counselor has to be knowledgeable about all laws of Michigan and know how the legal system works in Kalamazoo County. We discussed roles of counseling in an agency. Personal counseling is not all that is involved. The counselor wears many hats in the agency - counseling, serving as referee between disputing parents, settling visitation disputes, handling custody disputes, and handling referrals from outside of the agency. Much of referring goes on to other agencies such as the Child Guidance Clinic, Catholic Social Services of Kalamazoo, Delano Clinic, Family and Children's Services, Westside Family Mental Health Clinic, and Kalamazoo Consultation Center. Dr. Lowe and I discussed my goals and what I hoped to achieve in my internship program at the agency. Dr. Lowe commented that the observations and comments I shared with her during my first week at the agency were valuable and interesting.

After my first full week of working in the agency, my experiences have included co-counseling in the groups that met on Wednesday night,
the parent workshop for single parents at Camp Amigo, and the play therapy with the four children involved in the custody case that Dr. Lowe was conducting.

Week of June 21 to 25

This week, there was to be more activity for me as I was to do more co-counseling with Dr. Lowe. Monday morning, we worked with the four girls involved in the custody case mentioned previously. We met with their mother for the first hour and then each of the girls came in separately. Dr. Lowe has been trying to impress upon the girls that while they might have a preference as to who they wanted to live with, it was the judge who made the final decision. All conversations Dr. Lowe has with people involved in a custody case were recorded, then typed so that when the time comes to sit down and write the final custody recommendations, she has all the materials to refer to.

Monday afternoon, we met with a woman (who will be referred to as Woman A later on in the log) who, in her forties, was being divorced by her husband of 25 years. She was also in our counseling group which met on Wednesday night. Dr. Lowe had met with her once before on an individual basis, and asked me to come in for this second session since I was familiar with her situation already. Woman A is going through the process of divorce with great personal difficulties which Krantzler (1973) in his book Creative Divorce termed as having a very difficult time of it. I could see that even after the divorce was final, Woman A would still need plenty of support and direction in her new role of being single again. When I asked Dr. Lowe about this
matter later on in the week, she mentioned that usually what happens is that she refers the client to some other agency, after Dr. Lowe's services are no longer warranted for the special needs of divorce counseling.

Another appointment we had with a woman did not materialize Monday afternoon, because she did not show up. This was a first interview for this woman. Dr. Lowe commented that usually first interviews are those in which the therapist finds out what services the client is asking for. The secretary who handles all incoming calls and makes appointments usually asks for some information so that the therapist will know a little background about the person and what he is asking for before the first meeting occurs. The woman who did not show for her appointment was having trouble with the visitation agreement set for her and her ex-husband by the Court.

On Wednesday, Dr. Lowe met with another intern and I concerning the groups. Dr. Lowe's philosophy of working with groups is to structure and facilitate the group process. We talked about the various techniques involved when working with groups. This was most beneficial to me because this has been my first experience in working with adult groups outside of my training program at Western Michigan University. In my own situation, I have worked with pre-adolescents in groups before, but I could see how there are many differences and also, similarities between the two groups. The students are not used to being so verbal about themselves and it is hard for them to use the word "I". They are still very much externally oriented and directed, in that the problems are outside of themselves. In the
adult groups, I have observed that it is not so difficult to use the word "I" but the problems may still be difficult to internalize.

The one similarity between the two age groups is the difficulty or hesitancy in the psychological ownership of the problem. Another similarity that I have noticed is that no matter whether we know the people or not, it is very threatening to talk about the self until that trust and cohesiveness of the group is defined and operating. The students for the most part, know each other, but still have difficulty and concerns about sharing themselves with the other members. The adults in our counseling group, even though they didn't know each other, found it difficult to open up for the first few meetings.

This week, I consulted with Mr. Adams about the history of the counseling service and how it compared with other agencies offering similar service for divorced people. I discovered that Family Divorce Counseling Service is very unique in that it is financed through the Kalamazoo Child Guidance Clinic and the Kalamazoo County Mental Health Boards. Also, the agency is under the Prevention Bureau of the Department of Mental Health in Michigan. Most other divorce counseling services are operated by the court system which may or may not be through the Friend of the Court's Office.

During the week, I did some readings and was able to review literature on divorce. Much of the literature is geared to the needs of women. I suppose this is because of the Women's Liberation Movement and because for the most part, women still gain custody of the children after divorce takes place. There is not much written
about the role of the stepparent or single parent that I could find in
the literature. There was nothing written about agencies like the
Family Divorce Counseling Service.

Friday morning, Dr. Lowe and I met to discuss my progress so
far. The week before, she had told me that she sensed that I felt
pretty comfortable with clients and I agreed with her. Today, she
told me that I would be working with all new intakes starting Monday,
June 28, and that this met with the approval of Mr. Adams.

She was sure that I could be comfortable with a man or woman
going through the divorce process, with stepparents, single parents and
children.

We talked about techniques of counseling, when to listen and
when to react. Also, the theme development of a client in counseling—
his/her personal dynamics, defense mechanisms, coping behaviors,
problem areas present and working through resistance in the counseling
process.

I feel that I need some polishing in my counseling techniques
with adults. Since I have entered the school situation, my relation­
ships with adults, teachers and parents, has mostly been on a consul­
tative basis. Now, while co-counseling with Dr. Lowe, I have felt
that I still need help in structuring and integrating more useful
techniques of counseling with adult clients.
Week of June 28 to July 2

This week, I was to start having clients by myself. Dr. Lowe had told me the previous Friday that I was to take all new clients that called in for an appointment. The Family Divorce Counseling Service has three offices plus a reception area. I was given the third office to occupy while in session with my clients.

Monday morning, Dr. Lowe and I had an intake interview with a woman who had called in the week before for an appointment. This woman had been divorced for two years, and had custody of the children, but now, she was experiencing some unpleasant feelings about herself and her children. She heard from one of her older children that her youngest daughter was calling her ex-husband's girlfriend "Mommy". She was also experiencing some guilt, because as she put it, "If it hadn't been for me, I could still have been married to him". At the end of our session, Dr. Lowe said that she was all tied up until the 19th of July and she was assigning the case to me. I scheduled my first appointment with the client on Wednesday, July 7. She will be referred to as Woman B.

In the afternoon, Dr. Lowe and I met with Woman A. The pains of the divorce process are hitting her hard, but she also refuses to give up her past and to look at her future. Woman A scheduled to come in again on Tuesday, July 6.

Later on in the afternoon, Dr. Lowe was to have met with the father of the four girls involved in the custody examination. She requested me to listen to the tape later on in the week, because even...
though I was not involved in co-counseling with the father, I would be involved in writing up the recommendations for the examination with Dr. Lowe. Besides, I was meeting with the four girls and their mother and Dr. Lowe wanted me to hear the father's side of the story.

On Tuesday, I had an appointment with one of our stapparents, (Man A) who was in our stepparent group on Wednesday night. He arrived at 9:00 o'clock for our appointment. He and his wife are having discipline problems with their four children. Both man and wife have been married once before and now they have four children, two by his first marriage, and two from her first marriage. It had gotten to the point where they had decided on a separation because the problem had become so bad, and they could not seem to resolve it. When our session was finished, we agreed to meet during the next week on Tuesday. The man was determined not to give up on this marriage, even though he said that his wife made the decision to separate and would not seek anymore help (they had been in previously to seek help together from Dr. Lowe). During this week, his wife called (much to my surprise, but elation) to make an appointment with Dr. Lowe for both her and Man A. So they are coming in on Thursday July 8th to see Dr. Lowe.

On Wednesday, I had an intake interview with a woman (Woman C) in her late twenties, who was confused and didn't know what to do about her situation. She was about eight months pregnant; her husband had no employment since January, was drinking heavily, and they had financial burdens piling up on them very fast. She came in for help, because she did not know where to turn next. After our
first session, Woman C agreed to come in again next week, Wednesday, July 7. When my client left, I discussed her case with Dr. Lowe. Dr. Lowe commented that she was not supposed to come here for services because she had no children, however, since I had seen her already and since she was going to have the baby in July, I could continue to see her. This coincided with what Dr. Lowe and I had discussed earlier in my internship: (1) The counselor never quite knows for sure what services are being asked for in an initial interview, and (2) referral to other agencies is a necessity to meet the needs of our clients after their immediate needs are met by the Service. The Family Divorce Counseling Service is not geared to long term therapeutic counseling. I will continue to work with Woman C until after her baby is born. Then she will have to decide the direction and course of action she will take.

On Thursday, I was to meet with a man who was referred for our services by the Consultation Center. However, he did not show for his appointment. At 2:00 p.m., I had an appointment with Steve Moulton, who is the Officer of the Friend of the Court of Kalamazoo. I walked over to the courthouse and downstairs to his office. Mr. Moulton was very kind to accept me. He showed me into his office and on his desk were pamphlets, journals and books. Some unofficial quotes he had to share with me were that the number of divorces were greater than the number of marriages in this country, and that in Chicago, the divorce rate was running 10 to one over marriages. The caseload of the office is running close to 7000 and will hit 8000 cases by the end of this year. Mr. Moulton expected that they will handle 1200
new cases of divorce where children are involved in Kalamazoo County. The office is collecting $6 million dollars annually for child support at the present time. There is 9.1% increase in divorces with children involved over what it was last year. This figure doesn't count legal separation, separate maintenance, or any paternity actions that have taken place through this office; and the figure is not accurate, because there are so many marriages that fail and are not even reported to the office. Mr. Moulton also gave me information about the court conciliation services that are operating in other states. This has been reviewed in Chapter II. Mr. Moulton mentioned in our discussion that Family Divorce Counseling Service is unique in that it is not a court related counseling agency, but is supervised under the direction of the Child Guidance Clinic and the Kalamazoo County Mental Health Board. The Friend of the Court's Office could not get along without the services of the agency because of its caseload and because of lack of training within the investigation staff.

Friday morning, I met with Dr. Lowe for supervision. We listened to some tapes of counseling sessions I had with clients the past week. Dr. Lowe said that she noticed that I felt very comfortable with techniques of reflecting and clarifying, but that I would have to begin to zero in more by asking more questions, structuring, and becoming more assertive in my approach. She said that in future supervision sessions, she would teach me some new techniques of counseling with adults. Also, she said that I have to learn how to be more open and honest with my thoughts when counseling.
Dr. Lowe has been very helpful to me from the onset of my internship. She was supportive and accepting of techniques that I felt comfortable with. I feel that her philosophy has helped to give me the room and freedom to grow.

Week of July 5 to 9

Monday, July 5, the agency was closed because of Independence Day Holiday.

Tuesday, July 6, Man A and I had an appointment for 8:00. When he did not show up, I assumed that it was because he and his wife would be meeting with Dr. Lowe on Thursday. Man A and his wife must have decided to try and work out their differences with the help of Dr. Lowe.

At 9:00 o'clock Dr. Lowe and I met with the mother of the four girls involved in the child custody case. This was her third and last time to come in. As our session drew to a close, Dr. Lowe informed her that she would call both her and her husband to come in when the custody recommendations were written up and completed. Dr. Lowe asked me to sit down with her on July 23 to write up the report after our supervision session.

At 10:00 o'clock, Dr. Lowe and I had an intake interview with a woman (I shall refer to her as Woman D) who was referred by the Friend of the Court. She needed someone to talk to concerning what was happening between her daughter and her ex-husband. The daughter, 11 years old, was quite upset over the behavior and actions of her father and paternal grandparents. They could not understand why the girl
didn't want to come and visit them. The girl gets upset and feels guilty when she gets phone calls or letters from them. She had seen her father taking drugs and sleeping with other women. Woman D explained that her child was experiencing some conflicts, guilt and anxiety and that she appeared to be more and more upset.

The investigator from the Friend of the Court wanted some feedback from the agency so they could take steps in handling the case. It was possible that the case would go through a court hearing, because Woman D said that her husband would fight for his visitation rights with his daughter. Dr. Lowe scheduled another appointment for Woman D and her daughter on July 21 at 10:00 o'clock. Woman D was asked to sign a release of information form so that Dr. Lowe could confer with the investigator at the Friend of the Court Office.

Woman A had a scheduled appointment with Dr. Lowe and me at 11:00 o'clock, but she did not make it. At 12:45 while I was conferring with Dr. Lowe in her office, Woman A came in. She told the secretary that she thought her appointment was for 1:00 p.m. Dr. Lowe had another client scheduled for that time so she asked me to work with Woman A alone. After a few minutes, when Woman A started talking about her problems, she focused on how much she had been taken for granted by her husband and her children. We talked about how she was trapped into giving too much of herself in her marriage, but it seems that her sacrifices were never appreciated for what they were worth. In giving so much of herself, she realized how much she denied herself in many ways. She was having a very difficult time handling
the rejection she felt as a result of this divorce. Woman A was scheduled for another appointment for Friday, July 9.

Wednesday, an appointment I had with Woman C was cancelled. She called in to re-schedule another appointment for Thursday, July 8 at 1:00 o'clock.

Woman B came in at 4:45 Wednesday afternoon. She wanted to talk about her guilt feelings after two years of divorce. At the time of divorce, she indicated that she thought she did not love her ex-husband although he still loved her. Now, with feelings of loneliness, with the knowledge that her ex-husband is seeing another woman, and the onset of insecurity feelings, she is finding it difficult to accept that her marriage is over. She was in the office until 5:30 o'clock. She did not see the need for her children to come in for counseling. She indicated that she was the one who needed the most help. She felt that if she could begin to see things more clearly, this in itself would help her children. Another appointment was scheduled for July 12.

Thursday morning I met with Dr. Lowe at the Kalamazoo County Building in Circuit Courtroom C. There was a custody hearing involving a family that Dr. Lowe had been working with for the last two years. Dr. Lowe had been subpoenaed by both lawyers. In this case the parents were having difficulties in settling their custody disputes regarding the youngest child, a seven year old son. The father had custody of the three older children.

Observing the courtroom procedures was a new and a very interesting experience for me. This was also Dr. Lowe's first time to testify
about a case she was handling. She was asked questions quite extensively by both lawyers while on the stand. After she came away from the witness stand, she had to leave because of other commitments for the day. I stayed until 12:00 noon when the Court recessed for lunch. It was at 3:30 that afternoon when the child's teacher, who also testified on the case, came to the office to see Dr. Lowe, who unfortunately had already left for the day. From her, I learned that the judge ruled for the child to stay with his mother. The judge agreed with Dr. Lowe's statement that emotional stress experienced by the boy could be minimized by staying with his father. He said, however, that a child has to learn to live with pressure which is a part of modern living. The judge also mentioned that he wished he could knock the heads of both parents together, because their inability to get along together results in the boy's sufferings.

At 1:00 o'clock Woman C arrived. We talked more about her situation of being pregnant and her feelings toward her husband. She was quite helpless in making any decision. Her husband so far has not made any attempts to look for a job. If it was not for her anxiety about financial worries, she felt that she could tolerate her situation longer.

At 3:00 o'clock, Man B came in. He discussed how he was having trouble with visitation rights with his ex-wife. He has custody of their two children. The mother can see the girls anytime that was agreed upon by both parents. According to Man B, his ex-wife is abusing her visitation rights. She does not take care of the girls well and she was always late in returning the children home. Man B
does not want to go to Court about this issue, but he does not want
the visitation rights to be abused either. I told him that I would
like to visit with his girls next time we meet and possibly call in
his ex-wife for an appointment later. Our appointment was scheduled
for Wednesday, July 14.

Friday at 10:00, Woman A came in. This time she was concerned
about a new problem. Her former husband has a new woman. Her
feelings of rejection and hurt were very strong. She was very
threatened by this woman's relationship with her children, all of whom
are already adults - ages 23, 21 and 18. She felt that her children
all approved of their father's new life style. Woman A was so depressed
and was even scared of meeting anyone at this time. Many new realities
of life are hitting home real hard.

Since Dr. Lowe started her vacation on Friday, July 10, I
missed the opportunity for supervision this week. In making a self-
assessment of my experiences and growth during the week, I have felt
more comfortable in my counseling with adult clients. I have felt
that my clients have made progress in their own personal struggles
and have begun to look at and even accept the realities of their
unique situations. I felt more open and honest in communicating to
the client what I perceived was going on. I was more active in my
approach and have felt comfortable with it.

Week of July 12 to 16

Dr. Lowe was on vacation this week. Monday, July 12, I arrived
at the office at 9:00 o'clock. While working on some reports, I
received a phone call from Woman D. She seemed very upset and anxious about a letter that was addressed to her daughter from her paternal grandmother. Woman D did not show the letter to her daughter for fear of what her reactions would be. It seems that grandmother had hurt her daughter's feelings and was now apologizing in her letter. Woman D felt that both her ex-husband and her ex-mother-in-law were playing on the girl's emotions which were causing the girl to be emotionally upset. Woman D needs direction as to what and when would the opportune time be to give the letter to her daughter so that her negative emotions would be minimized. After about 20 minutes of conversation, and because of the anxiety I sensed in Woman D, we made an appointment for her to come in with her daughter on Wednesday, the 14th.

At 10:00 o'clock, Woman B arrived for her appointment. This was her third session. Today she was very depressed. Her ex-husband had the children for the weekend and she was home by herself, very lonely. He brought the children home on Sunday with his girlfriend. Woman B was glad to see her children, but she also took note of the other woman - young, beautiful, shapely and single. Woman B became aware of the many negative feelings that began to surface - jealousy, rejection, competitiveness, anger, loss of control over her ex-husband and insecurity. She had problems coping with rejection and resentment; as she put it, here was her ex-husband, free and carefree and with somebody new to care for. On the other hand, here she was, lonely, saddled with the responsibilities of the home, raising the children and having to work. Woman B had difficulties understanding why she
felt this way now, because she and her ex-husband had been divorced for the past two years already. Another appointment was scheduled with her for Monday, the 19th.

At 4:00, I had an intake interview with Woman E, who was referred by her lawyer. Her husband filed for a divorce last July and Woman E needed to talk with someone. She was experiencing the thoughts and feelings about what other people would say, the other woman involved, and her feelings of rejection, hurt and failure. After the hour, another appointment was made for Thursday, July 15.

Tuesday, July 13, Woman F came in for an intake interview. She was referred by a Friend of the Court investigator, who wants some input from the agency regarding her case. Woman F was concerned about the relationship between her ex-husband and her son. Her son was starting to experience rejection feelings from his father. Apparently, the father would tell his son that he would pick him up at certain times but would not show up at all. This happened many times, and had caused much confusion in the boy. Now the boy refuses to go with his father whenever he comes over to pick him up. Woman F felt guilty about what was happening to her son. She said that if she had stayed with her ex-husband, maybe her son would have a better relationship with his father. When asked if the marriage would have worked if she had stayed with him, her response was, "No". Woman F signed a release of information form giving me the permission to talk to the investigator of the Friend of the Court. An appointment was made for her and her son for July 20, at 10:00 o'clock in the morning.
Later, I had the opportunity to consult with Mr. Adams regarding the case of Woman F. This was my first case on visitation rights and I felt a little insecure about it. Mr. Adams approved of the way I handled the case. During our consultation, Mr. Adams gave me some insights about visitation and custody disputes. Examples are, one of the ex-spouses may be jealous of the other for having custody of the children; or, if there is another person involved, the ex-spouse who has custody may make visitation by the other party difficult. In either of these cases, the counselor has to clarify with the client what he wants that would be best for the child.

Woman A came in at 2:00 o'clock. She received her divorce papers the day before and reality was difficult for her to face. Now, she is a single woman after 25 years of being married. She was depressed, helpless, rejected. She kept wishing she had her marriage back. Having to cope with the present realities and the future was very threatening to her. It was evident that she would need plenty of help. She has many emotional blocks, which would not permit her to move forward to acceptance of reality. She was scheduled to come in again on July, 19.

Woman D and her daughter came in at 11:00 Wednesday morning. I talked with both of them at first and then separately. It was easy to develop rapport with the girl. She was experiencing guilt because she felt she had always to prove to her father that she loves him. This made her feel rejected. Also, while visiting with him, she found out that he was on dope and has another woman. The girl had difficulties accepting these. She gets very anxious when time to
visit him comes yet, she felt she should go with him. When Woman D came in to join us, she gave her the letter from her grandmother to read. The girl read it and said she did not believe that her grandmother was telling the truth about not hurting her feelings anymore. The session had to be cut short, but another appointment was made for both mother and child to see Dr. Lowe and myself on July 21.

Wednesday afternoon, Man B called in to cancel his appointment. He was supposed to have brought with him his two girls. His appointment was re-scheduled for July 20.

Since Dr. Lowe was not in the office this week, I would not have supervision. For the rest of the afternoon I listened to the tapes of my counseling sessions, and wrote up progress noted with each client. After going through all my counseling tapes, I was really very pleased with the progress I have made with each one of them. The awareness that I was more confident and self-assured with adult clients made me feel good. At 5:30, I led the counseling group by myself for the first time. I felt initially insecure, but our session went well.

Thursday, I met with Woman C. She told me that her baby is due anytime this week. She talked at length about her frustrations and anger at her husband's lack of responsibility and uncaring attitude. We discussed both the positive and negative aspects of their marriage. Woman C still does care for her husband a great deal. She became aware that the difficulty in their relationship comes from lack of communication. She had not communicated to her husband her love for him, physically and emotionally because of her physical condition and
poor emotional state. I helped her see that she was the one who created the psychological and emotional distance between her husband and herself. With this added insight, and Woman C's willingness to work on her marriage, I felt that the marriage could be saved.

At 4:00 o'clock, Woman E came in. The initial shock and impact of divorce have settled somewhat since we talked last. It was still evident, however, that she was still hurting and especially frightened about her future. Woman E will need supportive, not therapeutic counseling at this time.

Friday I had an intake interview with Man C who was referred by the Friend of the Court. This case involved a visitation rights dispute. Man C related to me that he felt bitter and resentful about being divorced by his wife and then the limitation of his visitation rights with their children. He felt it was unfair that his wife got the custody of their children and that the Friend of the Court limited his visitation rights to every other Saturday between 9:00 and 5:00 o'clock. I told him that I would be seeing his wife next week, who was also referred by the Friend of the Court.

This week I missed having supervision from Dr. Lowe again. However, I made my own personal assessment of the personal and professional growth experiences I have had. Since I became involved with adult clients, I noticed the internal changes that have taken place within me. The feelings of trust, openness, security with adult clientele, self-confidence and acceptance of my own assets and limitations are assuming prominence and becoming more and more integrated within me. Developing rapport with clients came much
more easily. I also felt that I am more able to facilitate a positive working relationship with the clients, which made them achieve their goals realistically.

Week of July 19 to 23

Monday morning, after I arrived at the office, Dr. Lowe and I took the opportunity to sit down together before our first client arrived. We discussed the clients I had seen in the past week and how many clients were assigned to me. I told her that I had done intake interviews with three new clients; I had counseling sessions with four clients and one client had cancelled his appointment. I was scheduled to have three intake interviews with new clients this week. She said that I should be in the process of closing or transferring my cases next week. She also called the secretary and informed her not to schedule any more new clients for me. We went to see Mr. Adams and let him know about the plans that Dr. Lowe had for me.

Since Dr. Lowe works only half-time for the agency, her schedule was very busy. She is booked for appointments for two weeks in advance and even more at times. Dr. Lowe is very dedicated and quite involved in her work. Mr. Adams is also very busy seeing clients and administering the program. Dr. Lowe mentioned once before that the maximum load of clients to see in an agency setting is six per day so that the counselor has time for the paper work. But this is not always the case.
At 1:00 o'clock, Woman B came in. We talked more about her insecurity. Outwardly, she wanted people to think of her as independent, relaxed and attractive. Inwardly, however, she felt very insecure. She felt older and unattractive. She came to realize that she was trying to convince herself more than anyone else. Emotionally, she felt very scared at the idea of spending the rest of her life unmarried. Deep down, she admitted that she wanted to be married, to be settled and to be content. I supported her on the idea of wanting to get married again and be settled. This does not mean that contentment will be the outcome. Contentment is something an individual has to work on wholeheartedly and it is a feeling that comes from within. She came to realize that she was continuously blaming herself for the failure of her marriage. Now, she could appreciate the relationship she had with her ex-husband. But her ex-husband had terminated that relationship when he filed for a divorce. Rejection was a feeling that seemed ever present in her relationships with men. She had not been able to develop more than just a casual relationship with them. She felt the need to control so she would end up dropping a man first before he could drop her. We explored why her affairs with any one man never did last. Rejection was one aspect of it. She also compared every man she met with her ex-husband. She came to understand how she had placed her husband on a pedestal. To her, he was perfect. She refused to see that he was a human being with both good and bad attributes.

Since we started working, Woman B has made much progress in understanding herself. However, she needs to put new understandings
to work if they are to help her. I think she will, in time, because of her motivation and drive, settle down and remarry.

Our next session was set for Friday, July 23, at 8:00 o'clock. I informed her that her case will be transferred to another counselor. She did not appreciate it and interpreted it as being rejected again. I told her that we would discuss this more on Friday.

Woman A was on time for her appointment at 1:00 o'clock. It is difficult for her not to dwell on her past. I explained to her what she was doing and how in turn was using this as an excuse for not moving or making any gains toward her future. Woman A's resistance to change was very strong; her defenses were very much at work. It was the first time that I became so aware of resistance and defense mechanisms working in another person. Six weeks ago, I could not have handled it. Today, I took the risk to work through it. Woman A would need more intensive counseling to overcome her defenses and resistance. At the end of our session, I made an appointment for her to see Dr. Lowe on Monday, August 2.

At 4:00 o'clock, I held an intake interview with Woman G. I explained to her before we began that I was leaving the agency soon and that Mr. Adams would continue to see her after today. She mentioned that she just needed someone to talk to. She was referred by the Friend of the Court because she was so confused about her situation. She filed for a divorce, but now, she doesn't know whether she really wants the divorce or her husband. I was familiar with the theme of her problem: uncertainty, threatened by the present and future situation, confused and feeling lost. We explored
these emotions during the entire session. She left with the awareness that she really did not want her husband but was vacillating back and forth between divorce and her husband because of her confusion and fear of the unknown. I felt that she gained enough insight about herself and that we accomplished her initial goal of agency assistance. Her next appointment was set for 4:00 o'clock Friday, July 23 with Mr. Adams.

Tuesday, I called in sick. I asked the secretary to reschedule the appointments I had with Woman F and Man B.

Wednesday, I was supposed to have met with Woman B at 10:00 o'clock. However, the preceding Sunday, she gave birth to a baby boy. She had called from the hospital to tell me the good news and thanked me for my help. She felt that counseling had helped her to set up some new goals and directions with which to make her marriage work.

At 11:00 o'clock Dr. Lowe and I met with Woman D and her eleven year old daughter. I had talked with both of them the week before about the letter that was received from the grandmother. The mother did talk a lot at the beginning of the session. Then Dr. Lowe and I turned our attention to the girl to hear what she had to say. We tried to help her understand that she was making herself unhappy and guilty. While her father and her grandmother were having their problems, it didn't mean that she had to carry their burdens for them too. Dr. Lowe mentioned that she could only wish that they would change. She is the one who needs to change from within in feelings and attitude. This was very scary for the girl to think about because she didn't know how she could change. I mentioned that Dr. Lowe and
her mother would help her make those changes so she could be happy again. Dr. Lowe made another appointment for Woman D and the girl on August 3. The girl wanted to know if I would come too. I told her that I was leaving the agency this week but that I would write down my address so she could write to me if she wanted to. She said she would.

The intake interview I was to have had with Woman H was cancelled. It was rescheduled for Thursday at 8:00 o'clock. I took the opportunity to call the investigator at the Friend of the Court, who had referred Woman H and her husband, Man C to the agency. I asked the investigator what services she wanted. She informed me that Woman H had filed for divorce. However, since there were so many inconsistencies in what both parties were telling, she wanted counseling for both of them. Also, there was a dispute over visitation rights. Mother had custody of the children; Father wanted to have more time with them. She wanted the children to come in for counseling also. I told her that I would be seeing both of them on Thursday but the case would be transferred to Mr. Adams.

Thursday morning at 8:00 o'clock, I met with Woman H. I had already seen her husband, so I had some idea to what he was experiencing. Woman H was quite nervous at first, but after a few minutes, she started talking freely about the marriage, divorce and the children. We talked for about forty-five minutes and I introduced her to Mr. Adams, who will work with her beginning Monday, August 9.

At 10:00 o'clock, Man C arrived for his appointment. He continued to talk about the marriage to Woman H and how he was facing
the reality of divorce. He said that he did not want it; he wanted to reconcile with his wife. We talked about the personal and emotional aspects of the marriage and also explored some of his feelings. He said that he appears to be tough on the outside, especially when he is hurt or feeling rejected. He worked through that and how he was using this defense to his disadvantage—he is afraid of being honest and open to the one he loves. We had to stop the session, but I made another appointment for him with Mr. Adams on Monday, August 9. I also told him that I would recommend to Mr. Adams to see both him and his wife together and see if reconciliation was a possibility.

In this marriage, it seems that both parties cared for each other, but they were giving each other misleading information. The direct and honest communication between them was missing. Also, they were both unfaithful to each other during their marriage and this caused a great deal of mistrust in their relationship. The element of respect, which is a key ingredient in any type of relationship was amiss.

During the two sessions, I was very much aware of confidentiality and my objectivity as I listened to what each party had to say.

The secretary told me later on in the afternoon that she finally contacted Man B after trying from last Tuesday. She told him that she had to schedule him for an appointment with Dr. Lowe since I would soon be leaving the agency. He thought that would be all right since he and wife had met with Dr. Lowe two years ago.

At 4:00 o'clock, Woman E came in. She discussed how she had gotten an apartment and was to move in the first of August. She
discussed how she was facing her situation of being newly divorced. She said that she felt better since more people knew about it and knew also that she was not all to blame for the failure of her marriage. We defined "failure" and discussed it in relation to her marriage. She became more aware that the divorce was not all her fault. She said that she needed more time to adjust to being single again and did not feel that she needed to come in again. I assured her that she could always call again if she wanted some service from the agency.

On Friday, Woman B called to apologize for not coming in for her appointment. She did want another appointment with me before I left the agency. We scheduled one for Monday, July 26 at 11:00 o'clock.

I had supervision with Dr. Lowe for one and one-half hours. We listened to several tapes of my counseling sessions. She has been most satisfied with my progress thus far. She said that I was quite perceptive of what was going on within the client. However, I still have to practice on zeroing in more aggressively on what the client says and feels. She gave some samples of new techniques to practice on. She indicated that I can develop good rapport with clients, but I have to guard against losing my objectivity.

Dr. Lowe reflected on the changes that she had observed in me: awareness of my own personal dynamics, awareness of the dynamics of client behavior and awareness of the dynamics in a counseling relationship. This level of awareness of self as an instrument of growth is one aspect that I need to work on continually.
The custody case which Dr. Lowe and I were supposed to work on today did not materialize.

Week of July 26 to 30

No log of experiences will be reported for this week, since most of my activities will involve closure or transfer of cases and writing reports.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

My internship at the Family Divorce Counseling Center started officially on June 14. However, actually I began working with Dr. Lowe, my supervisor for the internship experience, on March 24. The initial experience involved an eight week counseling with two groups of adults - a group of divorced individuals who are learning to cope with living as single people again, and a group of stepparents who are adjusting to their new roles as stepparents. The groups met every Wednesday evening from 5:00 to 9:00.

The internship program which started in June was more involved. Two new groups were organized. I had clients for individual counseling. There was the opportunity to observe courtroom procedures in child custody disputes. I participated with Dr. Lowe in a two day workshop in camp with single parents who are all clients of the Edison Agency. Then, there was the opportunity to learn the functional operation of the Family Divorce Counseling Service.

Short-term counseling is offered by the Family Divorce Counseling Service to parents during the pre and post divorce periods, to stepparents who are having difficulties adjusting to their new roles as stepparents, and to divorced individuals who are having difficulties with child custody and visitation rights. Most clients are referred by attorneys, the Friend of the Court and other agencies. Some of them are walk-ins. They have learned about the Service...
through friends or through the media. Clients who need long-term counseling are referred to other services or agencies in the community.

My experiences contributed greatly to my personal and professional growth. Professionally, I feel more competent in my counseling relationship with adult clients. This experience hopefully can be carried over into my job as a school counselor in a middle school, where a good portion of my time is spent working with teachers and parents, aside from dealing directly with students who have specific problems. The personal growth comes with the added knowledge I gained from my readings, interaction with the staff of the Family Divorce Counseling Service, and all other experiences I was exposed to during the internship. I feel that I am now more knowledgeable about divorce and its consequences - its effects on children, spouses, and the community as a whole. It is a very involved process. I could see also where an agency like the Family Divorce Counseling Service should be a must for every community.
REFERENCES


89


