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Eugene Simkovich

May 28, 1926

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ADOLESCENT GROUP COUNSELING IN MONTANA
DISTRICT YOUTH GUIDANCE AND AFTERCARE HOMES

by

CARLENE ANN CRNKOVICH

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

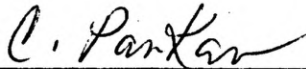
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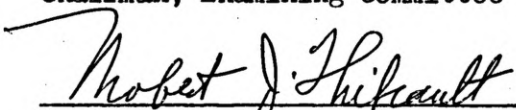
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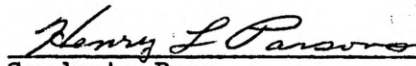
Approved:



Chairman, Examining Committee



Head, Major Department



Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was twofold: 1) to determine the perceptions of the effectiveness of the counseling received by residents in Montana District Youth Guidance and Aftercare homes; 2) to compare the perceptions of those receiving both group and individual counseling to those receiving only individual counseling. The study was conducted in the Spring Quarter of 1976. A Likert scale was designed to assess attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the areas of behavioral change, emotional growth, self understanding, and group living. This instrument was administered through the mail to the entire population of youths that resided in the group homes at the time of the study. Forty-three questionnaires were examined and the results computed. This represented 92 percent of the population. The data received from the questionnaire was then statistically analyzed by chi square test of independence at the .05 level of significance.

The statistical results were compiled in table form. Table I showed a percentage comparison description of the population. The second table presented the medians of the scores taken from the instruments and the bivariate frequency tables for the chi square tests of independence. The chi square values that were calculated exceeded the critical value of 3.84 in the areas of behavioral change, emotional growth, and self understanding. In all four areas, the trend of the data was supportive of group counseling.

The results indicate that group counseling is an effective addition to an individual counseling program. These results were in agreement with prior studies that were reviewed in the literature available. Recommendations by the researcher include further research in this area and exploration by the Department of Institutions into implementing group counseling programs in all of the District Youth Guidance and Aftercare Homes.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Institutions or foster homes are not always the most desirable places for delinquent adolescents or those who need supervision. Many of these youth are better cared for in a community facility where they are able to live in a home atmosphere, attend schools, avail themselves to community support and services, and are provided with care and guidance from group home parents. The 42nd Legislative Assembly passed the bill creating group homes to meet these needs for Montana (DYGH Manual, 1975).

In order for the reader to understand the setting for this study, some background information about group homes is warranted. There are two types of group homes in the state, differentiated basically by source of funding. The Aftercare homes are funded entirely from the state and are under the administration of the Aftercare Bureau of the Department of Institutions. The District Youth Guidance Homes are supported 25% by the community and 75% by the state. They have local boards and are relatively autonomous within some guidelines (Lithander, 1976).

In order to be admitted into one of the twelve homes, the youth must be referred by the Division of Aftercare, Social and Rehabilitation Services, Probation Departments, or any other child-care agency. While he is residing at the home, the youth's living needs are taken care of by the house parents with the assistance of certain community services. Some of the services which must be available are physical and medical care, mental and emotional health care, education, social services, and recreational

activities. Professional counseling must be available to the youths and parents but there are no guidelines to describe the service (DYGH Manual, 1975).

According to the manual, there is a biannual evaluation of each group home conducted by the Aftercare Bureau. The only evaluation of the counseling services provided to the residents is a determination of the existence or nonexistence of these services. This neglect of the counseling program evaluation provided the basis for the problem of this study.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was twofold: 1) to determine the perceptions of the effectiveness of the counseling received by residents in Montana District Youth Guidance and Aftercare homes; 2) to compare the perceptions of those receiving both group and individual counseling to those receiving only individual counseling.

Need or Purpose of the Study

This study should be of value to the Department of Institutions in assessing the existing counseling programs in the group homes. It may point out some areas of need for the programs. Since the study showed by the criteria examined that group counseling is an effective addition to individual counseling it may provide impetus for adjustments in the programs. The ultimate beneficiaries of these improvements will be the adolescents who receive counseling. Since these are government projects, research of this type can be utilized for maintaining or increasing funding.

Secondly, the results of the study may be beneficial to the group home counselors by giving them some insight into the outcomes of their work. Although the results were not treated individually by homes, the research should be generally informative to them.

This study is only one approach to one of the facets of the counseling in Montana institutions. Even if there are no changes implemented because of this study, it may serve the purpose of stimulating other research in this area. That would expand the knowledge necessary for the betterment of these programs to rehabilitate incarcerated persons.

General Questions to be Answered

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1) Do the adolescents in the group homes perceive their counseling as instrumental in improving:

- a) behavioral change?
- b) emotional growth?
- c) self understanding?

2) Do the adolescents perceive their counseling as an aid to adjustment in their group living situation?

3) Are there significant differences in the perceptions of those receiving group and individual counseling and those receiving only individual counseling?

The categories of behavioral change, emotional growth, and self understanding were chosen as the general gains expected in any counseling

situation (Corsini, 1971). Group living creates interpersonal problems that go beyond the realm of individual difficulties. Effective counseling can be helpful to the youths in adjusting to life in the group home. So the first two questions identified the goals of counseling in this situation and their answers provided some measurement of their attainment. The third question was asked to determine which is the more effective type of counseling.

General Procedure

A questionnaire was designed that provided some answers to the first two questions previously stated. Because of the manageable size, the researcher administered this questionnaire to the entire population of adolescents living in the group homes at the time of the survey. A comparison of the results was made between those involved in group counseling and those involved only in individual counseling.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was limited by the lack of control the researcher had over many of the variables. There are deviations in the type and quality of the counseling in the various homes. Some homes provide a designated counselor and a specific program, while others make use of community resources as the need arises. There may be differences in the types of teenagers in different locations. Homes in the larger towns such as Great Falls may serve youths with backgrounds that differ from those of youths in more rural areas like Shelby. The variations in the atmospheres of

the homes is another crucial factor that is uncontrollable and may have influenced the results.

The mobility of the adolescents in group homes was another limitation. They are admitted and then leave at different periods of time which forms an unstable population. Also because the programs are ongoing, the researcher was unable to use any pre-test method.

The delimitations involved using only Montana group homes in 1976 as examples of adolescent group counseling. The results have no implications for other states or other adolescent situations. The questionnaire was only administered to the juveniles who have lived in a teen home for a minimum of one month.

Definitions of Terms

The term group counseling was used in this study as counseling involving three or more clients facilitated by a trained counselor. It does not refer to informal "rap" groups or house meetings.

Summary

The youth home concept is valuable in teaching youth to be responsible to themselves and others. Counseling can be helpful in attaining this goal, although presently there is little emphasis on evaluating the counseling available to the residents of the youth homes. This study was an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the counseling as the adolescents involved perceived it. The value of group counseling in this population was particularly explored. It was hoped that the results of

this research would provide information that may in some way improve the counseling programs in the Montana District Youth Guidance and Aftercare homes.

Chapter 2

A REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Different institutions are involved with the educating and re-educating of youth, and are to some extent involved with the development of human relationships. Improved functioning is attained through individual and social change. Group counseling is one process for evolving that change (MacLennan, 1968).

Group counseling with adolescents derives its power from three sources. The first is the power of peers. Peer groups are extremely important to adolescents. They offer status and a sense of belonging as well as security. Counseling groups can offer a new reference group as a change agent (MacLennan, 1968). "The peer group has the strongest influence over the values, attitudes, and behavior of most youth (Vorrath, 1974: 8)."

The second source involves the rewards of giving. Traditionally in their approaches to the problems of youth, adults monopolize the giving of help. But group counseling demands that young people assume the work of helping one another. "Being helpful usually has an enhancing effect on one's self concept; needing help and being dependent on others often worsens the erosion of what may already be a weak self concept (Vorrath, 1974: 10)."

The final source of power in group counseling is utilizing the strength of the reformed. The rebellious youth who is beginning to get a grasp on his own problems becomes adept at working with other

youth of similar backgrounds.

Group counseling is a potentially powerful tool for effectively dealing with a myriad of adolescent problems. In this chapter, groups are examined as instrumental in facilitating change in four areas. The first is behavioral change, the final product being more appropriate or more competent behavior. The second facet is emotional in nature, where clients acquire more positive feeling about themselves. Intellectual gain is the third type, with emphasis on better self understanding or insight. The final category is interpersonal relationships. The researcher has attempted to categorize the material in this way realizing that many overlaps in content do exist.

GROUP COUNSELING WITH EMPHASIS ON BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

Counseling with a primary focus on behavioral change is concentrated in the school setting. One of the major areas of change is truancy and social adjustment. Other studies deal with improving scholastic achievement.

Truancy and Social Adjustment

Group counseling with high school boys was initiated by Marcia Shaffer (1969) to keep them out of trouble and keep them from dropping out of school. She met with success on the second goal, as ten out of fourteen graduated the first year and all eight graduated the

second year. She tried unsuccessfully to measure attitudinal and behavioral changes, but could not find a satisfactory method of measuring outcomes. A peer counseling program was developed at Patrick Henry High School, San Diego, California for similar goals. This program was more carefully evaluated by subjective measurement, participant observation, written instruments, and staff observation. It was beneficial in reducing truancy and aiding social adjustment as well as expanding guidance services. Student involvement was important to the success of the program (Dunlap, 1973).

David L. Redfering (1973) studied the durability of effects of group counseling with institutionalized delinquent girls. He used an experimental group of eighteen girls and an equal control group from an Indiana girl's school. The experimental group received group counseling and exhibited more socially desirable behaviors a year later. Factors such as probation, attending school, holding jobs and returning to the school were used as criteria for behavior. The other area of behavioral change is scholastic achievement.

Scholastic Achievement

Attendance and scholastic achievement were significantly improved by group and individual counseling with 486 high school students identified as underachievers and truants. Group counseling was considered a more efficient method. Attendance, scholastic averages, and reports from teachers and students were used as measurement (Gaetz, 1972).

A similar study by Robert D. Myrick (1972: 115) with 429 high school students assigned to group counseling, individual counseling, and control groups, found group counseling to be equally effective as individual counseling. "Individual counseling with underachievers is costly in time and personnel." Although there were no significant changes in grades or attendance, teacher's evaluations were significantly better for those receiving counseling. They reported students in group counseling "more often than not indicated improved work habits, greater self-confidence, reduced tension, and more positive attitudes toward school (Myrick, 1972: 120)."

Learning counseling is a type of small group counseling for underachievers in Pittsburgh high schools. Three years of work with 819 students have indicated some increase in achievement and enthusiastic approval of the program by students and teachers. "It increases positive attitudes to school, reduces fear and anxiety of evaluation, and produces a behavioral change in the student which facilitates instructional learning (Reynolds, 1971: 9)." Results were established using a twelve item Learning Behavior Inventory, a semantic differential attitude measure, a Fear Survey Inventory, and standardized achievement tests.

A small study was conducted by S. Theodore Woal (1964) with six junior high students with poor grades and high truancy. Group counseling was initiated to reduce failures, improve work habits, improve behavior, and reduce tension. It was held as a club once a week for

twenty-eight weeks. Report cards were used as measures of adjustment and failures on subjects were reduced from thirteen to three, while failures in work habits were cut down from sixteen to four.

Group counseling has been shown to be effective and efficient as a change agent in behavior. It is a useful tool for dealing with truancy, social adjustment, and scholastic achievement. The next area of study will be emotional growth.

GROUP COUNSELING WITH EMPHASIS ON EMOTIONAL GROWTH

There are two categories that are important components of emotional growth. The first is understanding feelings and attitudes. Self esteem is the other facet. Although measurement of these phenomenon is difficult, some efforts to quantify these ideas have been made.

Feelings and Attitudes

Attitudes, feelings, and thoughts about achievement can be affected through group counseling. Cognitive teaching and in-group experiencing with thirty twelfth grade students improved motivation level as measured on pre- and post-test scores. "Results of this investigation support the experimentation, development, and implementation of a curriculum that focuses on personal growth (Smith, 1975: 503)."

Another facet of Redfering's study (1973) with delinquent girls showed that the girls that received group counseling responded more favorably toward the concepts of "Mother", "Father", "Self", and "Peers".

A semantic differential scale statistically analyzed by a two-tailed t-test showed a significant difference in attitudes between those receiving group counseling and the control group.

Self-Esteem

Non-college bound students have poor self images. They feel stuck in a role with less dignity and limited in their choices. Group counseling was found informally to help them act undefensively. It offered the vocational students at Randolph High School in Morris County, New Jersey acceptance and recognition. They found many feelings in common and had opportunity for self-evaluation (Woodhull, 1968). The goals of improving self-esteem, enhancing educational experiences, and accepting functional societal values were established for group counseling with unemployed school dropouts in Springfield, Massachusetts. One hundred-one youths received group counseling and eighty-three were in a control group for nine months. Data was quantified within the youth's framework using amount of involvement in the program, type of termination, and increased involvement of minority groups, as comparison indices. Group counseling was found to offer support during time of stress and increase self-esteem. Peer intervention seemed to be more acceptable to these clients than authoritative counseling. Group counseling has merit for disadvantaged and alienated youth (Winder, 1970).

Feelings, attitudes, and self-esteem can be positively affected by group counseling as shown by the previous studies. The next general

area is self-understanding.

GROUP COUNSELING WITH EMPHASIS ON SELF-UNDERSTANDING

The topics of self concept and awareness, self-actualization, and value clarification fit into this area. They all involve some intellectual gains or learning that result from counseling.

Self Concept and Awareness

Juvenile delinquents generally have traits of impulsiveness, inability to interpret and evaluate self and others correctly, and negative self concepts. Eckstein (1973) used the Tennessee Self Concept Scale to measure the changes in self concept of those receiving group counseling and control groups. Of the thirty boys in the study seventy-one percent of those with the most positive self concept changes were in group counseling. Peer group counseling was established in Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida to increase awareness of self and others. It was designed to complement the existing counseling program. It was deemed beneficial in seeing the world more realistically, knowing that problems aren't unique, and promoting open communication.

Another informal article about group work with six high school girls found it to be appropriate for adolescents because of the strength of peer acceptance. Adolescents want to discover their worth and needs and group counseling can help in that endeavor (Ainsworth, 1972).

Self-Actualization

Self-actualization differs from self-awareness in that it involves

a conscious effort to improve. It is "an individual's need to fulfill his human potential. . . his striving to become (Streich, 1974: 1)." Streich identified five variables which intertwine in self-actualization. They are self concept, creativity, value system integration, receptivity to experience, and growth orientation. He used eighty-five gifted students, half in group counseling and half in control groups over a year's time. He tested them with the Tennessee Self Concept Scale, Torrance Test of Creativity, Pupil Control Ideology Scale, Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, and the Ohio Occupational Aspiration Scale before and after the experiment. Group counseling was found to be effective in increasing self-actualization.

The goals for Trueblood's Human Potential Seminar (1970: 2) include "increase in self-affirmation, self-determination, self-motivation, and regard for one's fellow man." He used the Personal Orientation Inventory as a pre- and post-test to measure change in self-actualization in his counseling and control groups. Positive growth was well spread over the population of those receiving group counseling. They were significantly higher than the control group in self-regard and inner directedness. The program was felt to help participants discover and clarify values, learn to direct their own lives, and develop more positive attitudes toward others.

Value Clarification and Decision Making

Developmental counseling is widely recognized as a desirable alternative to therapy oriented counseling. Group counseling is a

"promising way for helping large numbers of youth learn to cope with developmental tasks and problems that all must face (Prediger, 1970: 527)." This research was done in a vocational school setting with thirty groups of six to eight participants each. Student reaction to the program was very favorable although no concrete evidence was offered.

Gilman and Gorlich (1968) found that group counseling is an effective means of reaching difficult youth. The goals that were set for the group counseling included providing opportunities for testing new ideas, developing inner controls and understanding, finding different methods of resolving problems, and gaining new perceptions and competence. Group counseling was found to have several advantages. It is easier to talk in group than in individual counseling. Respect from peers is important to the adolescent, and in a group he learns from and contributes to others. Correction from members is more acceptable than from authority. It is also a less inhibiting atmosphere for expression of differences. Evaluation was done on changes in behavior, changes in knowledge and attitudes, and changes in staff knowledge.

Group counseling has many applications in the areas of self concept and awareness, self-actualization, value clarification and decision making. The final area of study is interpersonal relationships.

GROUP COUNSELING WITH EMPHASIS ON INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Immediate effects rather than lasting ones were studied by McDavid (1964) to measure response to social reinforcement as effected

by group counseling. He used eighty-nine institutionalized males in his experimental group and an identical control group. Analysis of variance and Cochran-Cox tests were used to reveal that the group counseled subjects scored significantly higher than the control group on the Social Reinforcement Interpretation Test. Controlled social interaction under the right conditions may offer helpful experience in discovering the worth of social reinforcers.

Groups were established at San Andreas High School in Larkspur, California to increase interpersonal communication, share personal problems, experience human commitments, have responsibility to self and others, and build an atmosphere of acceptance. They were held once a week and were made up of ten students, four staff, and one leader. The students reported the personal importance of the group. The staff reported significant changes in the students such as increased academic commitment, increased class competency and participation, better behavior, and an increased school identity. Parents saw behavior changes at home (Peterson, 1971). Aids to interpersonal relationships are implied in all the studies mentioned, but they seem to be a beneficial side effect rather than the main goal of counseling.

SUMMARY

This chapter has investigated current literature in the area of adolescent group counseling. It has probed the effectiveness of group counseling in the categories of behavioral change, emotional growth,

self-understanding, and interpersonal relationships. Research has shown group counseling to be beneficial in working with adolescents. It is unfortunate that many of the studies must be viewed with some skepticism due to inadequate controls and questionable research methodology. It is difficult to determine if the successful outcomes are a result of the counseling programs or the result of weak procedures. In spite of these faults, group counseling seems to be a powerful and efficient vehicle in meeting the demands of working with large case-loads of young people with a wide range of counseling needs.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

The attitudes of the youths in Montana Teen Homes towards the effectiveness of counseling was the focus of this investigation. A comparison of the perceptions of those receiving group and individual counseling and those receiving only individual counseling in the areas of behavioral change, emotional growth, self understanding, and group living was made. This chapter provides a brief description of the population, the method of collecting and organizing data, the operational hypotheses, and the statistical procedures that were used in this study.

Description of the Population

The population of this study was the adolescents living in the Montana District Youth Guidance and Aftercare Homes during April 1976. A District Youth Guidance Home was defined as a "family-oriented residence established in a judicial district of the State of Montana as an alternative to existing state institutions, the function of which is to provide a home and guidance through adult supervision for delinquent youths and youths in need of supervision (DYGH, Manual, 1975: A1)."

Each of the twelve homes is licensed to house from six to ten youths and they are not all filled to capacity. Because of the manageable size, the entire population was studied. Any person who is still within the jurisdiction of the youth court may apply to reside in a youth home. The typical age range was from thirteen to eighteen years old.

It is an extremely mobile population. Some youths may only reside in a home for a few weeks while others may stay for a year or more. The study was limited to those who have lived in a home for at least one month.

The population was divided into two categories: those who receive group counseling as previously defined in addition to individual counseling and those who receive only individual counseling.

Categories of the Study

The attitudes that were assessed from the questionnaire fell into four categories. They are: behavioral change, emotional growth, self understanding, and group living. The first three are applicable to most counseling situations and the last one applies to the particular situation of those that were involved in the study. A brief explanation of each of the categories is given below.

Behavioral change. In behavioral change the desired outcome is more appropriate or competent behavior.(Corsini, 1970). Items in this category are observable and measurable. Although many things can be determined behaviorally, the researcher was concerned with overt behaviors. The questionnaire focused on such behaviors as school attendance, grade changes, and discipline problems.

Emotional growth. These items involve the feeling and self-esteem of each subject. It may be thought of as the affective domain. "Human emotions are vital factors of human behavior, and as such, are considered to be important components in the counseling process. Helping clients to more fully understand their feelings about important experiences and

situations is frequently considered an essential process goal for many clients (Delaney, 1972: 89)." Particularly important emotions in counseling are "anxiety or some sort of fear, anger, hostility, hate, some form of aggression, depression, sadness, or some form of misery, guilt, and happiness or joy (Delaney, 1972: 89)."

Self understanding. This category involves the intellectual gains or insights that a person may acquire about himself. Carl Rogers gives the following definition of self-concept.

The self-concept, or self-structure, may be thought of as an organized configuration of perceptions of the self which are admissible to awareness. It is composed of such elements as the perceptions of one's characteristics and abilities; the percepts and concepts of the self in relation to others and the environment; the value qualities which are perceived as associated with experiences and objects; and goals and ideals which are perceived as having positive and negative valence. (1951: 136)

This study was concerned with any changes that the subject may be aware of in his own understanding of self.

Group living. Interpersonal relationships within the home fall into this section. According to Delaney, a great deal of human behavior is interpersonal in nature. He states a variety of dimensions to describe interpersonal behaviors. They include trust versus mistrust, honesty versus facade, introverted versus extroverted, and tense versus relaxed (1972). The adjustments that a subject made to the other people in the home was explored in this category.

The perceived influence of counseling on all four areas was the direction of approach for this study.

Controls of the Variables

The researcher had no control over such possibly contaminating variables as differences in counseling, home atmospheres, and the individual members of the population. An effort was made to collect data on the age, sex, and background of the subjects. The background information that was deemed important was the length of time that a youth has resided in the home, the number of homes that a youth has lived in, and whether or not a youth has been previously institutionalized. This information was used to determine the nature of the population and whether or not differences are randomly distributed. This offered some statistical control over the contaminating variables. This was done through a comparison of percentages described in Chapter 4.

Data Collection

A questionnaire was designed to assess the attitudes of the adolescents about the effectiveness of the counseling they have received through the group homes. The mailing instrument was a twenty-four question Likert scale directed toward the areas of behavioral change, emotional growth, self understanding, and group living as affected by counseling. The scale consisted of statements to which the subject responded strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree. The responses were rated on a scale from one to five, where one corresponds with strongly disagree and five corresponds with strongly agree. Negative statements were scored in reverse. Thus a high score showed a positive attitude

toward counseling and a low score was indicative of a negative attitude.

The questionnaire was administered to a similar group of adolescents receiving counseling at the Gallatin Council on Health and Drugs. This was done as a field sample to check the validity of the instrument. Face validity was established by a panel of professionals from the Montana State University Counseling Department.

This questionnaire was mailed to the adolescents in the group homes. It was designed to take less than one half hour to complete. A cover letter and self-addressed stamped envelope accompanied the instrument. Explicit instructions for proper completion were included in the questionnaire.

Informal questionnaires to gain information about the number of youths in each home and brief descriptions of the counseling services that were available to the youths were personally distributed to the house-parents of each home. The results of these questionnaires were used to gain background information and were not treated statistically.

Data Organization

Tables were used to compare the perceptions of each counseling category for each of the instrument's four areas. The tables used in the statistical analysis were also included. A written analysis of the investigation pointed out any important findings.

Statistical Hypotheses

Three general questions were posed in chapter one. They will all

be restated at this point, but only the last one was statistically checked.

1) Do the adolescents in the group homes perceive their counseling as instrumental in improving:

- a) behavioral change?
- b) emotional growth?
- c) self understanding?

2) Do the adolescents perceive their counseling as an aid to adjustment in their group living situation?

3) Are there significant differences in the perceptions of those receiving group and individual counseling and those receiving only individual counseling?

The last question lends itself to four statistical hypotheses.

Null Hypothesis 1. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of behavioral change are independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

Alternative Hypothesis 1. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of behavioral change are not independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

Null Hypothesis 2. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of emotional growth are independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

Alternative Hypothesis 2. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of emotional growth are not independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

Null Hypothesis 3. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of self understanding are independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

Alternative Hypothesis 3. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of self understanding are not independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

Null Hypothesis 4. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of group living are independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

Alternative Hypothesis 4. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of group living are not independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

Analysis of Data

Four chi square tests of independence were used to analyze the perceptions of the two counseling categories in each of the areas. A bivariate frequency table was constructed for each of the subtests. Each table was 2 x 2 where individual and group counseling provided one dichotomy and high and low questionnaire scores dichotomized about the median provided the other. Then the chi square test of independence with Yate's correction for continuity was used to determine if the difference in perceptions between the two groups were due to chance.

The .05 level of significance was used in each case. This level was selected to guard against both types of error. A possible consequence

of the Type I error would be initiating new programs and making unnecessary changes in the counseling services available to the adolescents. The possible consequence of a Type II error is that a more effective method of counseling may exist and be overlooked if no significant difference is found. It is the researcher's opinion that both types of error could have detrimental consequences and should be taken into consideration.

Precautions Taken for Accuracy

The data received from the questionnaire was compiled by hand. These calculations were rechecked to insure accuracy. The chi square tests were done with a calculator and rechecked to eliminate mathematical errors.

Summary

This chapter has designated the procedures that were carried out to answer the questions raised by the statement of the problem. The population of youths in Montana District Youth Guidance and Aftercare Homes were described. Data collection and organization were explained. Statistical hypotheses tested were outlined and the methods of data analysis were presented.

Chapter 4

RESULTS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to determine if the attitudes of the youth in the group homes was independent of the type of counseling that they received. A chi square test of independence was calculated for each of the four areas of the study. In order to guard against both alpha and beta error, a significance level of .05 was chosen.

In essence, the null hypotheses stated that the attitudes towards counseling effectiveness were independent of the type of counseling received. In the next section, each null hypothesis is statistically analyzed and then restated as accepted or rejected at the .05 level of significance. An interpretation of the decision is included for each hypothesis.

Table I shows a percentage description of the population. The second table presents the medians of the scores taken from the returned instruments and the bivariate frequency tables for the chi square tests of independence. There were forty-three questionnaires returned from adolescents that had lived in their present group home for at least one month at the time of the study. This represents approximately 92% of the population. Nineteen of the forty-three respondents were involved in group counseling and twenty-four received only individual counseling.

TABLE I

DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION

Descriptive information	Group Counseled (Percentages)	Individually Counseled (Percentages)
AGE		
under 13 years	5.3	0.0
13 years	10.5	4.2
14 years	5.3	8.3
15 years	21.0	37.5
16 years	21.0	29.2
17 years	36.8	16.7
18 years	0.0	4.2
SEX—		
male	26.3	58.3
female	73.7	41.7
NUMBER OF GROUP HOMES THAT THEY HAVE LIVED IN		
1 home	68.4	66.7
2 homes	26.3	25.0
3 homes	5.3	0.0
more than 3 homes	0.0	8.3
NUMBER OF MONTHS OF RESIDENCE IN PRESENT HOME		
1 month	10.5	4.2
2 months	0.0	4.2
3 months	10.5	12.5
more than 3 months	78.9	79.2
PREVIOUSLY RESIDED IN CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION		
yes	36.8	50.0
no	63.2	50.0

TABLE II

BIVARIATE FREQUENCY TABLES FOR THE CHI SQUARE TESTS OF INDEPENDENCE

1. BEHAVIORAL CHANGE

	Group	Individual
High	9.5	12.0
	15.5	6.0
Low	9.5	12.0
	3.5	18.0

Median = 21.25

 $\chi^2 = 11.41^*$

2. EMOTIONAL GROWTH

	Group	Individual
High	9.5	12.0
	14.5	7.0
Low	9.5	12.0
	4.5	17.0

Median = 18.25

 $\chi^2 = 7.64^*$

3. SELF UNDERSTANDING

	Group	Individual
High	9.5	12.0
	14.1	7.4
Low	9.5	12.0
	4.9	16.6

Median = 18.80

 $\chi^2 = 6.34^*$

4. GROUP LIVING

	Group	Individual
High	9.5	12.0
	13.0	8.4
Low	9.5	12.0
	6.0	15.6

Median = 18.29

 $\chi^2 = 3.50$

*df = 1, critical value of $\chi^2 = 3.84$ at .05 level of significance.

The populations were similar in most respects except the group counseling recipients were predominately female (73.7% compared to 41.7%). There was also a lower incidence of having lived in a correctional institution with the group counseled subjects (36.8% compared to 50.0%).

Null Hypothesis 1. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of behavioral change are independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

The chi square value calculated for the area of behavioral change was 11.41. This exceeded the critical value of 3.84, so the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis that stated the attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of behavioral change are not independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling, was accepted. The appearance of the data indicates that positive attitudes toward counseling are associated with group counseling and negative attitudes are associated with individual counseling.

Null Hypothesis 2. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of emotional growth are independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

The chi square value calculated for the area of emotional growth was 7.64. This exceeded the critical value of 3.84, so the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis that stated the attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of emotional growth are not independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling, was accepted. The trend of this data was supportive of group counseling.

Null Hypothesis 3. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of self understanding are independent of whether or not a subject receives group counseling.

The chi square value calculated for the area of self understanding was 6.34. This exceeded the critical value of 3.84, so the null hypothesis was rejected. The alternative hypothesis that stated the attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of self understanding are not independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling, was accepted. Again, the appearance of the data indicated that positive attitudes were associated with group counseling.

Null Hypothesis 4. The attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of group living are independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling.

The chi square value calculated for the area of group living was 3.50. This did not exceed the critical value, so the null hypothesis was accepted.

Summary

The data obtained from the questionnaire was analyzed by chi square tests of independence in the four main areas of study. Comparisons in the areas of behavioral change, emotional growth, and self understanding, were found to be significant at the .05 level of significance.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The problem of this study was twofold: 1) to determine the perceptions of the effectiveness of the counseling received by residents of Montana District Youth Guidance and Aftercare homes; 2) to compare the perceptions of those receiving both group and individual counseling to those receiving only individual counseling.

A Likert scale was designed to assess attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the areas of behavioral change, emotional growth, self understanding, and group living. This instrument was administered through the mail to the entire population of youths that resided in the group homes at the time of the study.

The data received from the questionnaire was then statistically analyzed by chi square tests of independence. The .05 level of significance was used in analyzing the results. Significant findings in support of group counseling were found on three of the four tests.

Conclusions

The null hypothesis that stated the attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the areas of behavioral change, emotional growth, and self understanding are independent of whether or not the subjects receive group counseling were rejected. In each case the alternative hypothesis that the attitudes are not independent of the type of counseling received

was accepted and the directional trend of the data was highly supportive of group counseling.

The null hypothesis that stated the attitudes toward counseling effectiveness in the area of group living were independent of whether or not the subject receives group counseling, was accepted. However, the trend of the data showed somewhat more positive attitudes associated with those who received group counseling.

The literature cited in chapter two has shown group counseling to be effective and efficient as a behavioral change agent. It was used in dealing with truancy, social adjustment, and scholastic achievement. The particular items on the instrument used in this study in the behavioral change section dealt with these same issues. The results of this section coincided with those of prior studies. Studies with emphasis on emotional growth found that group counseling can positively effect feelings, attitudes, and self-esteem. The results of this study were in agreement with the literature. Group counseling has previously been found to have many applications in self concept and awareness, self actualization, value clarification, and decision making. Again the results of the items involved in self understanding on this study complemented prior research. Surprisingly, there were no significant findings in the area of group living and interpersonal relationships. The theory of interpersonal learning as a curative factor peculiar to group counseling would predict a large difference in that area that did not appear in the study results (Yalom, 1970). It is possible that if the differences do exist, the items on that part of the

questionnaire were not as sensitive to subtle differences as they needed to be.

This study indicated strongly that the youths receiving group counseling as well as individual counseling had more positive attitudes toward counseling effectiveness than those who received only individual counseling. This may imply that their own situations may be effected by the type of counseling they receive. Perhaps their more positive attitudes toward counseling effectiveness were generated by actual changes in their lives due to counseling. Operating from this assumption, it would be valuable to ascertain if the adolescents receiving group counseling actually have experienced positive behavioral change, emotional growth, and increased self understanding to a higher degree than their individually counseled counterparts.

Assessment of counseling effectiveness can be measured by the client, the therapist, or an outside observer (Thompson, 1970). The researcher has taken the stance that the attitudes of the clients toward counseling effectiveness are important criteria for success. From this position it can be concluded that group counseling was an effective means for facilitating positive change in the adolescents in the group homes.

The findings in this study appear to build a case in favor of implementing group counseling programs in the group homes. However, because of the limitations of this study, some restraint should be used. The two populations were not exactly matched. There was a high proportion of females and a lower proportion of previously institutionalized youths

in the group counseled population. These factors may have had significant bearing on the results. The questionnaire has not been previously administered to a sizable group, so it may have weaknesses that are beyond the awareness of the researcher. If the results can indeed be attributed to the type of counseling and not some other variable, it can be concluded that group counseling is a beneficial addition to the counseling programs in the group homes.

Recommendations

The recommendations for application and further research are given below:

1. The researcher recommends that the State Department of Institutions explore the possibility of implementing group counseling programs in all of the District Youth Guidance and Aftercare Homes.
2. Extend the research to include adolescents in other counseling situations such as drug programs or correctional institutions.
3. Utilize a different test instrument to measure the attitudes of the adolescents toward counseling effectiveness.
4. Gain more information on the existing counseling programs to determine if there is a need for revisions.
5. Compare factors other than counseling with the attitudes of the adolescents to determine if other variables are responsible for the results found by this study. This would further check the validity of this study.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

ADOLESCENT COUNSELING ATTITUDE SCALE

SECTION I

Directions: Please circle the correct response for each question.

1. What is your present age in years?
under 13 13 14 15 16 17 18 over 18
2. What is your sex? male female
3. How many group homes have you lived in, counting your present home?
1 2 3 more than 3
4. How many months have you lived at your present home?
less than 1 1 2 3 more than 3
5. Have you ever lived in a correctional institution? yes no
6. What is the name of your present home? _____
7. What town is it located in? _____

SECTION II

Directions: This scale has been prepared so that you can indicate how you feel about the counseling you receive through your group home. Please circle the letter(s) on the left indicating how you feel about each statement. (SA strongly agree, A agree, U undecided, D disagree, SD strongly disagree.)

- SA A U D SD 1. Counseling has helped me develop better study habits.
- SA A U D SD 2. Because of counseling, I don't "show off" as often.
- SA A U D SD 3. My grades at school have gone down since I've received counseling.

- SA A U D SD 4. I get in less trouble since I've received counseling.
- SA A U D SD 5. I miss more school since I started counseling.
- SA A U D SD 6. Counseling has helped me to act more maturely.
- SA A U D SD 7. Due to counseling, I enjoy life more.
- SA A U D SD 8. Due to counseling, I get angry less often.
- SA A U D SD 9. Counseling has shown me how to be happier.
- SA A U D SD 10. Counseling has made me feel like an awful person.
- SA A U D SD 11. Counseling has helped me to handle my feelings.
- SA A U D SD 12. Counseling has helped my self confidence.
- SA A U D SD 13. Counseling has helped me learn my strengths.
- SA A U D SD 14. Counseling just seems to get me confused.
- SA A U D SD 15. I understand myself better since I've been counseled.
- SA A U D SD 16. I have discovered new values due to counseling.
- SA A U D SD 17. Counseling has taught me how to make decisions.
- SA A U D SD 18. Counseling has made me more aware of what I want.
- SA A U D SD 19. Due to counseling, I've been more relaxed at home.
- SA A U D SD 20. Counseling makes it easier for me to talk to my house-
parents.
- SA A U D SD 21. Counseling shows me how to get along with the other
people in the home.
- SA A U D SD 22. Counseling has brought the people in our home closer
together.
- SA A U D SD 23. When I have a problem at home, counseling helps me to
talk about it with the other people there.
- SA A U D SD 24. Counseling has not shown me how to get along with anyone
in the home.

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