

TRAINING THE COURT VOLUNTEER: ONE MODEL

by

James D. Jorgensen, Associate Professor
University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work

INTRODUCTION

The training course described below has been designed specifically for trainees preparing to become volunteer counselors at the juvenile court level. It has relevance, however, for volunteers who may be preparing to serve in juvenile institutional programs. With certain modifications it may lend itself for use in training people to work in adult courts.

Any training course eventually must address itself to certain training objectives. These objectives are based on certain assumptions on the part of the training designers regarding the training needs of the people to be trained.

The assumptions on which this training course is designed are "working assumptions." They are tentative and subject to change. They are based on observations gleaned from training approximately 2,000 volunteers preparing to serve courts dealing with juvenile and young adult offenders.

ASSUMPTION I

Volunteers entering court service for the most part do not understand the life styles of delinquent youth and are deficient in understanding the systems which produce delinquency and delinquents.

Volunteers do not come from high delinquency neighborhoods or schools. They generally come from middle and upper class echelons of the socio-economic strata. They recognize that delinquents are problems to society, but they see solutions in changing delinquents to the exclusion of addressing a "problem system." The lack of understanding in this area can be remedied in training which systematically exposes the trainee to a delinquency producing system. The trainee could then see delinquency as a social problem and the delinquent as a victim or "carrier" of the problem.

ASSUMPTION II

The volunteer is deficient in his understanding of how the problem of juvenile delinquency is managed within our correctional system, and how the delinquent is dealt with by society.

The citizen participant or lay volunteer although reflecting success, professional and educational achievement, and concern has not in most cases been exposed to the process of handling delinquents. He

has probably not seen juvenile courts in operation, detention homes, jails, training schools, etc. If he has been exposed to any of the above, it has probably been an isolated experience and not in relation to understanding a process of problem management.

ASSUMPTION III

The volunteer has not thought extensively about delinquency being a means of meeting human needs. Because delinquency seems bizarre, self-defeating, and alien to the norms and values of the non-delinquent, any attempts to understand it as purposeful behavior have been met with resistance or at best selective listening on the part of the layman. The citizen who views or hears about deviant behavior out of context and makes judgments on this basis is being reinforced in fragmented approaches to understanding the delinquent.

ASSUMPTION IV

The trainee does not have adequate perception of learning as a process and delinquent behavior as learned behavior.

Many theories of delinquency are to be found among volunteers. They are often piecemeal and reflect a popular theme, a recent book, or public opinion. The "mental illness" model, "good-bad" model, and "if parents would shape up" model of explaining delinquents and delinquency are often expressed in some form by volunteers. However, to see all behavior, including delinquency, within the framework of learned behavior has not been the experience of most people in our psychiatrized society. On the contrary, we have gone to extremes in punishing people because they were bad or "treating" them because they were sick. Only recently have we begun to talk of re-educating people for living.

ASSUMPTION V

The trainee needs to be made more aware of his potential as a force for change in dealing with delinquency and delinquents.

The volunteer, being a successful person, is not failure-oriented. He may see the changing of delinquents' behavior in simplistic terms or he may go the other extreme of looking for things that are not really present. In short, the volunteer has certain fantasies about himself in relation to the delinquent. These fantasies must be dealt with in training in order that the trainee can use himself constructively to become a change agent.

Volunteers serving in juvenile courts will benefit from training which to them is real, as non-theoretical as possible, and relevant to increasing their understanding of delinquents and delinquency. The training outlined below is geared to enhance the role performance of volunteers and aid in establishing a distinct identity for this level of staff as an educator for living.

The training content and method will be directed toward dealing with five major objectives: (1) Preparing the trainee to see himself in relation to the court and the court within the total system, (2) Understanding basic human needs, (3) Becoming aware of learning as a process, (4) Appreciation of delinquency as learned behavior, and (5) Understanding the change process and methods of purposefully effective change.

In that each class of volunteers represents uniqueness in terms of levels of understanding, the training can be applied in a differential way to each class. Some material may be determined to have greater relevance to a particular class while some material may have little or no relevance at all. Grouping of trainees in classes will be an important consideration in terms of developing a level of training which has meaning for an entire class. Determining the level of sophistication of volunteers can be achieved by reviewing application forms, contacting personal references, and by conducting personal interviews. These interviews can be utilized for preparation for training and are important in terms of providing the trainee with a reality-based picture of his role in the correctional process and the problem of juvenile delinquency.

STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVE NO. 1

The major strategy for achieving objective No. 1 would be training in the form of selected pre-conditioning experiences which would acquaint the trainee with a problem flow which culminates in delinquent behavior.

The trainee would

1. Visit a high delinquency neighborhood.

This visit is intended to give the trainee insights into poverty, blight, and neglect. This visit may be to an urban ghetto, an Indian reservation, or to a rural poverty area. In any case, the purposes of such a visit would be:

- A. To provide cultural shock in terms of introduction to different value systems, and
- B. To provide opportunities for the trainee to encounter the various social systems affecting youth in high delinquency neighborhoods.

Visits with families of delinquents may be programmed. These visits may be arranged through the cooperation of welfare departments, OEO agencies, churches, private social agencies, probation and parole departments, and obviously through the voluntary consent of the families themselves.

Observation of juvenile officers in police departments, in the performance of their duties would, if made a part of this training program, provide an important dimension of in-training in terms

of making the trainee aware of the police as an element in the system of delinquency management. The results to be anticipated from such an experience would be:

- A. The trainee would develop a better appreciation for different values, life styles, and life forces under which delinquents operate, and
 - B. Feelings of neutrality toward the delinquent and his physical, social and psychological needs would be reduced.
- II. The trainee would attend one or more sessions of a juvenile court in order to observe the judicial process. Included in this visit would be a meeting with a juvenile judge and a visit to detention and jail facilities utilized for juveniles. The purposes inherent in such a visit would be to:
- A. Allow the trainee to observe the judicial process which diverts children into a confined status.
 - B. Learn about juvenile law; i.e., Gault decision and its implications for the juvenile court.
 - C. Develop an appreciation for necessary programming at this stage of the juvenile correctional process and relate the volunteer to his role at this stage of the process.

Anticipated results from this experience would be:

- A. The trainee will become sensitive to the legal nature of the problem.
 - B. He will become sensitive to the need for justice for delinquent children as well as adults, and further see himself as playing an integral role in the judicial disposition of children.
 - C. He will gain appreciation of the meaning of the initial experience of confinement to the juvenile.
- III. The trainee would visit one of the high delinquency junior high schools and/or senior high schools in the state (with school permission, of course).

Behind this strategy would be the goals of providing experience wherein trainees could:

- A. See first-hand the interaction of students with educators.
- B. Discuss with educators their perceptions of difficult-to-educate students.
- C. Discuss with students their perceptions of educators and the educational process. (Include unsuccessful as well as successful students, of course.)

The anticipated results from such an experience would be that:

- A. The trainee would become more sensitive to the need for education which engages the delinquent youth in creative thought and action, and,

- B. He would presumably be helped to see himself as a broker and advocate in providing experiences which are re-educational in nature.

This experience would:

- A. Highlight the secondary preventive role of the volunteer working in a court setting.
 - B. Allow the trainee to see an added dimension of the correctional process.
- IV. The trainee would visit a juvenile correctional institution or a jail or detention facility, where he could observe and interact with delinquents, institutional personnel and gain insights into institutionalization as a process in handling delinquent children.
- V. The trainee would undergo a session of de-briefing. It is assumed at this point that the trainee will wish to talk about what he has seen and heard during these visits. Although the trainees have each been viewing the same things, they will not necessarily have perceived the same things. The trainer who would have accompanied the trainees on their visits will lead this session for the purposes of:
- A. Providing an experience for the trainee to validate himself in relation to his experiences, and,
 - B. To integrate what he perceived with what other trainees have perceived.

The results to be anticipated from this would be that:

- A. The trainee would experience mixed feelings of enthusiasm and dissatisfaction.
- B. The trainee would retain a desire to pursue additional training sessions.

The above experiences would be considered pre-requisites for admission to further training. Trainees who have the benefit of these experiences would enter Phase II—Training in Understanding Human Needs.

STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVE NO. 2 TRAINING IN UNDERSTANDING HUMAN NEEDS

Group discussion would be the major tool utilized in teaching about basic human needs. Selected readings, tapes, games, movies, and role playing would be inserted into the training program, wherever applicable. The participation of juveniles presently on probation as well as ex-offenders as training aids would add a new dimension of concreteness and reality to the discussion sessions.

The class leader would personalize this content by directing the discussion into the area of the trainees' needs. They would identify

needs that they have, the means they have of satisfying their needs, how they sense the needs of those around them, how they satisfy the needs of those around them, etc. The goal in this procedure is that of identifying an on-going process of all people: meeting needs through individual resourcefulness or utilizing other human resources. The trainee must be helped to recognize that he is vital in need satisfactions of people with whom he interacts.

When the class leader is satisfied that the class has begun to personalize the concept of human needs, discussion is directed to another area with which he is less familiar—delinquent children. The class can be asked to contrast and compare the need satisfaction patterns they employ with those of the delinquent children they have seen. The discussion leader must at this point employ his skill in making the trainees aware of the process of need satisfaction.

The discussion then can be directed back to the trainees. They would discuss what they do when they fail to meet their needs or when they find other people unwilling to meet their needs. Their behavior is examined and related to and compared with the behavior of delinquent children who cannot find socially sanctioned ways of meeting their needs.

In the area of human needs, William Glasser's books *Reality Therapy* and *Schools Without Failure* provide rich material which would be relevant to the trainees' concerns. A tape by Dr. Glasser which was geared for counselors would also provide an excellent training aid.

The length of this session may vary from class to class but the training would not proceed further until the class leader is certain that the class has become sensitive to the fact that delinquent behavior is a means for a child to satisfy his needs.

Anticipated results from the above training would be:

1. The class would be sensitized to need satisfaction in themselves and each other.
2. This will provide linkage which will help them understand need satisfaction in delinquents, that delinquency satisfied a need in delinquents.
3. They will be responsive to the next part of training which is The Process of Learning.

STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVE NO. 3 TRAINING TO UNDERSTANDING THE LEARNING PROCESS

The basic strategy for achieving objective No. 3 would also utilize the group discussion method. Having become sensitive to seeing behavior as attempts to satisfy human needs, the class is now ready to move a

step toward seeing how people in the process of satisfying needs undergo a process of learning.

The class would be asked to personalize learning by discussing how they learn. The class leader may ask each trainee to list something in the performance of their jobs that they do particularly well as well as something they feel they do not do very well. The class may be broken into sub-groups and asked to struggle with how they learned to do something and how they failed to learn.

Having struggled with this, the class would be motivated for additional group discussion and information regarding the learning process. The group leader then might be in a good position to introduce some basic concepts from learning theory. He would particularly emphasize the role of significant others in facilitating or hindering the learning process.

The class, only after having spent adequate time in relating the process of learning to themselves, would move on to learning as it is experienced by delinquent children. This part of training would be facilitated by the discussion of a particular child or case material presented by the trainer. Being able to personalize the issue to a particular subject, the class could be assigned the task of understanding how this child learned to behave in his present manner. If possible, a delinquent child himself may be utilized as a training aid by participating in this part of the training.

The inmate or ex-offender would be an integral part of this training phase in that he could provide confirmation or denial regarding some of the trainees' pre-conceptions about learning. Such practices as punishment, rewards, etc., could be looked at within the learning framework.

Trainees may be asked to cite certain instances where they dealt with people in ways that facilitated learning and ways that did not. This technique would be implemented by the leadership of the group leader who would begin the process by relating a particular negative as well as a positive incident. The willingness of the group leader to be honest will serve to provide behavior which the class can emulate in honestly looking at their own deficiencies. Anticipated results from the above training would be:

1. The class would see learning as a process in which everyone is engaged.
2. The class would learn that situations can be such that learning can be hindered or facilitated.
3. The class would be prepared to look at delinquency within the learning frame of reference.
4. They will be motivated to understand behavioral differential in terms of learning.

STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVE NO. 4 UNDERSTANDING DELINQUENCY AS LEARNED BEHAVIOR

This part of training will encompass a substantial time period. The strategy must address itself to the tasks of creating or renewing the trainees' awareness of causal factors as they relate to the delinquent and thereby leading into focus on:

1. The types of delinquent youth.
2. The need for a system of identification or classification.
3. The need for differential re-educative methods and techniques keyed to the needs of specific types of delinquents.

In identifying types of delinquent youth, the class would be assigned the task of either buzz groups or by themselves categorizing in any way they chose, the kinds of delinquent children they have known. The purpose in this is to enable the trainees to identify or describe what they have observed regarding behavior differentials. It is felt to be important that the class come up with this material by themselves rather than having some typology superimposed by the training leader. The trainer can translate the class member's inputs into an understandable terminology of categories.

Once the class has come to some common agreement regarding types or categories of delinquents, they will be ready to think of examples of delinquents from their own communities which reflect this differential. The class leader will lead a discussion which may bring this material even more into focus as learned behavior. As trainees are cued to certain children's behavior, they will be more receptive to understanding the behavior as learned and as behavior which is an attempt to satisfy basic needs.

As the class moves from their own understanding to differences in delinquents, to understanding of differences in experiences which lead to differences in behavior, they can be introduced to an organizational frame of reference which leads to differential strategies in re-education. Such material may well be extracted from the Integration Level Classification Scheme as developed by Marguerite Warren and the Community Treatment Staff, Community Treatment Project of the California Youth Authority or the Differential Treatment Program which is presently in operation at the Robert F. Kennedy Youth Center in Morgantown, West Virginia.

The material in either of these systems would lend itself well to presenting delinquent behavior as learned. Again, children under the court's jurisdiction who are representative of these different delinquent types may be utilized as training aids to illustrate development and learning. Anticipated results of this experience:

1. Trainees would be given some authentication regarding their own

- precepts regarding delinquency.
2. They would have an organizational framework to facilitate understanding of delinquency.
 3. They would be motivated to learn more about systems of intervention and re-education.

STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING OBJECTIVE NO. 5 UNDERSTANDING THE CHANGE PROCESS

The theory and principles of change underlie the training course. Basic to the five elements in training is that people change in the process of meeting their own needs as well as the needs of others. They change as they learn. They change as they fail to learn. We are interested in the kind of change related to becoming a socialized human being who is achieving his self-actualization. Training is geared to providing knowledge and skills which allow the cottage personnel to use themselves in ways which facilitate change of this type.

Discussion is the primary vehicle for understanding change. The class is involved in the task of understanding changes for better or for worse in their own lives. They would through discussion identify changes that they would like to see in themselves as re-educators of delinquent children. Identifying and discussing opportunities for changes would also be a part of this phase of training.

The concept must be developed that we generally are dissatisfied with our own ability or potential for change. This dissatisfaction keeps us continually striving for change within ourselves and changes in the outside world. If we cannot find the opportunity to change and become frustrated as a result, we will transfer this frustration to the children whom we are supposed to change.

The class will through discussion come to some agreement about what behavior needs change and what can realistically be changed.

The discussion can then be focused on examples of delinquents or other people known to the trainees who illustrate change both for the better and for the worse. These examples can be examined for the process of change in each instance. The focus of discussion must be on the factors that produced the change.

The class having come this far and having been oriented to I-level concepts and differential treatment categories, can then be exposed to change strategies as depicted in this material.

It is recognized, however, that the class will need more than general change strategies. They will want and need to develop skills wherein they can become change agents within change strategies. Role playing, discussion, and laboratory experiences will be utilized to

provide these skills. Basic principles of counseling will be emphasized.

Training aids in the form of tapes prepared by the Berkshire Farm Institute for Training and Research can be obtained for use in promoting discussion in any of the following areas:

1. The Child Care Worker
2. Working with the Aggressive Youngster
3. Working with Passive and Withdrawn Youngsters
4. Working with the Group
5. Cottage Programming and Activities
6. Discipline and Punishment
7. Child Care Worker and Supervisor
8. Child Care Worker and Visiting Parent
9. Working with Prejudice
10. Working with Sex Problems in the Institution
11. Child Care Worker and Professional Staff

PLEASE NOTE: During the year the National Court Volunteer Project will be issuing directories of tapes, films, readings, and other training aids suitable for court volunteers.

Role playing with "staged" incidents can be utilized to achieve maximum involvement. An example of this might be to stage a particular problem which occurs on probation such as being expelled from school. The problem for the class would be that of creating out of this incident a learning experience.

Group discussion leading as a technique to create change will be taught by the example of the trainer. Class members at this stage of training may be enlisted to lead the group discussion of trainees. They would be critiqued by other trainees. This may provide a pool for potential training.

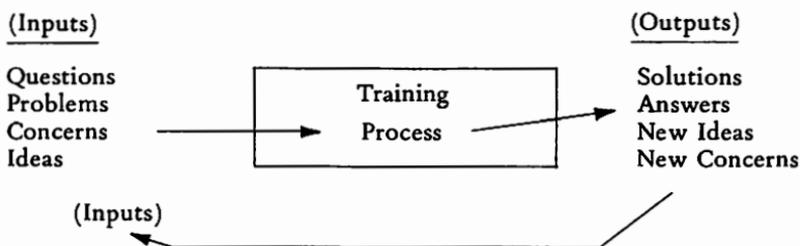
Laboratory sessions where trainees lead group problem discussion meetings as depicted by Dr. Glasser would also be a part of training. Other trainees would monitor these sessions and offer feedback. Every trainee should have a laboratory experience of some type prior to the end of training.

At this juncture of training, the trainers along with the class, must decide how and in what areas training will continue. Options might be that new areas are outlined and additional training is planned—or the training leader may find himself in a complementary, consultant, or back-up role for potential trainers that have emerged out of the class. An open-ended, fluid arrangement must exist to insure that training continues and is self-perpetuating. (One track for continued training, in some courts, would be to move beyond what every volunteer should

know, to concentrate on the trainees' "specialty area" in volunteer work, e.g., tutor, foster parent, lay group discussion leader, etc.)

Whatever its content, a model for ongoing training may be based on the continual inputs of class members in the form of questions, concerns, problems, observations, ideas, etc. These inputs are "processed" by the training class which comes up with outputs in the form of solutions, answers, new ideas, new concerns, etc. These outputs become inputs in the form of a feedback loop which continually directs the level and content of training.

DIAGRAM



To facilitate the group discussion technique, class size becomes an important consideration. Every trainer may have a number in mind when he thinks of the ideal class size for discussion. Fifteen to 25 people provide a range wherein a group is large enough to warrant the time of a trainer yet small enough to facilitate good discussion. For purposes of inservice training, a group should be large enough to accommodate the usual attrition, yet lend itself to group identity of its members.