

The Training of Child Psychotherapists at the Institute of Child Psychology

Development 1928—39

The Institute of Child Psychology was founded in 1928, under the name of the Children's Clinic, at 10 Telford Road, London, W.10. Its purpose was to provide out-patient treatment for children suffering from disturbances of their emotional, educational or physical development, or from social maladjustment. In 1929 the Children's Clinic was recognised by the education authorities, and the usual machinery of a voluntary hospital was created. By the summer of 1931 a many-sided children's out-patient clinic had been developed at Browning House, London, W2. This included, as a pioneer venture, a combined gynaecological and psychological department for mothers. The world financial slump of late 1931 brought this clinic, together with many other voluntary enterprises, to an end. During the years 1931-37 the work was rebuilt on a minimal financial basis, with the structure of a friendly society and with the name "Institute of Child Psychology". Experiments continued in observation, therapy and training, and in 1937 the present freehold premises at 6 Pembridge Villas, London, W.11. were presented to the Management Committee by the Yapp Trust.

The War Years

The declaration of war *occurred* during the summer holiday closure of the I.C.P. and the immediate evacuation of children from London made the reopening of the Institute impossible. The building was taken over by the L.C.C. Fire Service and the staff and students dispersed. A small nucleus of the work was re-established as the Children's Clinic at Berkhamsted, Herts, where it continued to function in a modest manner until 1946, when 6 Pembridge Villas was handed back to the Management Committee in need of considerable repair.

1948-55

In July, 1948, at the time of the International Congress on Mental Health, a successful international conference was held at the I.C.P., out of which several contemporary European developments have grown. In the same year the structure of the I.C.P. was changed from that of a friendly society to that of a non-profit limited company. Following the introduction of the Health Act, a contractual arrangement was entered into between the I.C.P. and the North West Metropolitan Regional Hospital Board, by which

that Board agreed to take financial responsibility for the treatment of children referred by responsible officials and physicians and accepted by the Board.

Organisation and Basis of the Clinical Work

The general organisation of the clinical work of the institute follows the same general pattern as other children's psychological departments in that children coming to it are studied from the point of view of the individual, the family, the social and educational backgrounds and all information duly recorded. Unusual features are the Department for Physical Activity, the Consultant Paediatrician and the Parents' Physician, who is a psychiatrist with experience of adult and of child psychotherapeutic treatment; but it is on the direct work with children that the emphasis is laid. The following are the principles of this work:

(1) The provision of a technically designed setting in which it is possible for children to find ways of presenting their inner experience and their reaction to present-day circumstances; and the organisation of the therapeutic work in such a manner that direct observation of it is possible and that methods of training similar to those used in the training of students in medicine can be introduced. This aspect of the work is carried out on a separate floor of the building consisting of six playrooms, each differently equipped, to which no adults other than those concerned with therapy are admitted. Children of all ages move freely about these rooms, each with his individual therapist. It has been the experience of the I.C.P. that, provided there is adequate space and variety of opportunity for expression, the presence of other children under treatment in the rooms at the same time does not hinder the treatment of individual children. Indeed it has in some respects, a positive value; for example, children who are older in years can often successfully work through earlier stages of their development by spontaneously joining in with the activities of younger children.

On two afternoons in the week there take place what are known as Corporate Sessions, which are an important aspect of teaching. During Corporate Sessions, three sets of children attend for a period of one hour each, and each of the children is allotted, at a seminar held before each session, to one member of staff or student in training for that period.

This mode of working gives each student the experience of working with his own child, and at the same time observing the interaction between his child and others. The fact that senior members of the staff are at work with children in the same room has the double advantage that students have the opportunity of observing their seniors at work, while the seniors can supervise the work of the students, immediately after the

session every student is required to write a full report of what the children have done with him. These reports are made available for perusal by the whole group. Every student is required to have read all the current reports by the early afternoon of the next session, when members of staff and students meet for discussion.

(2) The designing of technical tools which make possible very varied types of expression, and the recording and study of the children's use of them. This aim has been realised by the designing of the Lowenfeld Mosaic Test, a text-book on which appeared in 1954; the Lowenfeld World Technique, a text-book on which, with the help of the Bollingen Foundation, is in course of preparation; the Kaleidoblocs, Badger Bricks and a number of other techniques.

(3) The designing of a form of case record which automatically provides a basis for research.

The theory underlying the teaching and practice of psychotherapy in the I.C.P. has been derived from the study, over many years, of the use made by disturbed children of these and other modes of expression. Careful consideration is, at the same time, given to the standard schools of psychiatric and psychotherapeutic thought. It is the endeavour of all the members of the staff of the I.C.P. to check theory by evidence directly obtained from the children and also to maintain contact, personally and through reading, with the work of other schools. A conviction has arisen out of this twenty years' work that disturbances in childhood arise from a number of sources other than interpersonal relationships. Very often and very importantly they are derived from misconceptions of the nature of the outside world, of themselves and of the meaning of their experience formed in the years before language and interior speech become the main vehicle of thought. It is felt that emphasis on verbal and interpersonal techniques of treatment has made difficult the manifestation and, therefore, the study of this important aspect of human personality and experience.

Training of Non-medical Child Psychotherapists

In September 1931, after a successful one-day conference in July, a three-year training course for non-medical child psychotherapists was organised. This was the only course in child psychotherapy for non-medical persons that had been attempted, and it remained the single experiment in this direction until the inauguration of training at the Hampstead Child Therapy Clinic and Tavistock Clinic after the war. Six students entered for the course and it was a great grief to all concerned when the national financial crisis compelled the termination of the course. One student of that year later completed her training and, after the war, rejoined the staff as Clinical Secretary. In 1933 training was

resumed and in 1935 a Diploma in Child Psychotherapy was awarded to four voluntary workers on the grounds of their clinical experience gained during many years' work with the I.C.P. Immediately following this a formal examination for a diploma was established and six women obtained the diploma before the outbreak of war.

*At the same time the experiment was made of instituting a one-year course to give experience in the general handling of disturbed children to men and women engaged in social and educational work with children. This course was terminated by an examination and a certificate was awarded to successful candidates. During the six years it continued, the certificate was gained by thirteen women and one man. Although each student gave an undertaking not to engage in psychotherapy, the experience of the war years showed that in practical conditions the undertaking could not be maintained. The certificate course was therefore discontinued.

The general direction and control of the courses were in the hands of an Academic Committee, of which Dr. Chodak Gregory was Chairman and a member of the permanent staff of the M.R.C. and a lecturer in psychology in a London college were members. While the Tavistock Clinic carried a one-year training course for playroom supervisors, no other course in psychotherapy for non-medical men and women had as yet been organised.

During the war, experience with evacuated children led to a widespread realisation of the need for psychotherapy. In response to this need, many men and women found themselves involved in the practice of psychotherapy and from these the Association of Child Psychotherapists (Non-Medical) came into being, past and present members of the staff of the I.C.P. taking an active part in its formation. In 1952 the Training Council of the Association was formed and in 1955 the three-year training course of the I.C.P. was recognised as one of the three training courses of the Association.

Selection of Students

The pre-qualifications are those laid down by the Association. They are:

(a) an honours degree in psychology or its recognised equivalent; or

(b) a university degree not covered in (a) in subjects which include a basic training in psychology or the scientific study of human relations and which the Training Council shall approve; or

(c) a university degree and either a postgraduate Diploma in Psychology approved by the Training Council, or the Certificate in Mental Health, or such further training in the psychological field as the Training Council shall approve.

Candidates are instructed to apply to the Secretary, giving full information regarding qualifications and three references. If these are satisfactory, candidates are asked to take part in Corporate Sessions for two weeks. Reports of members of staff, together with all material concerning the candidate, are then considered by the Academic Committee. If accepted by this Committee, the application is then put before the Selection Subcommittee of the Training Council of the Association of Child Psycho-therapists (Non-Medical) for approval.

General Principles of I.C.P. Training

The aim of the course is:

- (1) to train men and women in the observation, understanding and treatment of children;
- (2) to give students a wide clinical experience of children of varied ages and types of complaint;
- (3) to provide experience of the intimate structure of case-work, knowledge of the laws affecting children, of the structure of the British educational system and of the nature and handling of delinquency in children and young persons;
- (4) to give students understanding and skill in the use of the specialised clinical instruments mentioned above;
- (5) to give students an understanding of the psychopathological theory underlying treatment at the I.C.P. and to enable them to relate it to other schools of psychopathological thought;
- (6) to provide practice in the writing of reports to authorities and in the organisation of clinic work.

General Organisation of Training

The training is carried out, for the most part, within the I.C.P., but students also attend case conferences at the Tavistock Clinic and outside lectures. Students are encouraged to take advantage of all opportunities to become familiar with other schools of thought. The course involves both clinical and theoretical aspects. Every student is required to undergo a personal analysis which must be conducted by an approved analyst belonging to any school of thought other than Psycho-analysis. This will involve two or three sessions a week and may extend over the full period of training. Students are

required to attend lectures and seminars given by specialists in various fields, as follows: child development; children's expressive activity and its comparison with myth, ritual and folk-lore; anatomy and physiology in relation to the child's physical structure, development and the use of his body; clinical syndromes; comparative study of schools of psychopathology; elementary study of systematic psychiatry; parent-child relationship; the law as it relates to children; nature and handling of delinquency. Students participate, throughout training, in Corporate Sessions and the conduct of psychotherapeutic treatment of individual children under supervision. All children under treatment are seen at least twice weekly and the number taken individually by each student varies according to the time he is able to give, but is never less than seven. Students in their third year assist the psychiatrist in diagnostic interviews. It is important that students should see their cases in the context of home and school, and this is achieved through co-operation with the Social Department and the Educational Psychologist. During the first year the suitability of each student for training is reconsidered, in consultation with his analyst. At the end of eighteen months an assessment is made of the general ability and progress of the student through consideration of his clinical insight and skill and through the writing of papers. If at any point the student is found unsuitable, his training can be terminated without explanation by a decision of the Academic Committee. On the other hand, a student may be permitted to continue the course with the proviso that it will be necessary to extend his training for a fourth year. During their third year students are required to prepare a thesis upon some aspect of their personal therapeutic experience. This forms part of the material of the final examination which is conducted by external and internal examiners. Students are required to write a paper on various aspects of the work and viva-voce examinations are held on theory and practice. The decision to award or withhold a diploma is based on the results of these examinations, together with an evaluation of the student's work during the three years.

Among the posts filled by holders of the diploma have been those of child psychotherapist at Brambling House Children's Centre, Chesterfield; Hostels Committee of the Oxfordshire County Council; Scarborough Education Authority; Bedfordshire Education Authority; Alder Hey Children's Hospital, Liverpool; Middlesex County Council schools for maladjusted children: and Edmonton Child Guidance Clinic.

Finance

The fee for the course is £50 a year, payable in advance. Every endeavour is made by the Academic Committee to arrange the time-table of each student so as to free essential time for earning. If necessary, the course can be extended for an additional year for those students who are unable to give adequate time during the first three years.

Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, 6 Pembridge Villas. London, W.1
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MARGARET LOWENFELD.