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Focus on Tomorrow: A Community Based Diversionary Program for Juvenile Delinquents

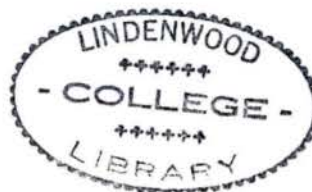
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Focus On Tomorrow
A Community Based Diversionary Program
For Juvenile Delinquents
Mary Louise Hannegan
The Lindenwood Colleges



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Abstract

This paper is a presentation of "Focus on Tomorrow," a community based diversionary program designed to impact predelinquent juveniles at the junior high school level. The program is a collaborative effort of the YMCA, The Lindenwood Colleges, the St. Charles School District, and the St. Charles County Juvenile Court. The purpose is to indentify high-risk juveniles within the school system and provide resources to the juveniles and their families to help them complete school and avoid referral to court. Resources include tutoring, stress/challenge outings, family counseling, and YMCA memberships. Included in the paper is a justification for the need of the program and a discussion of the principles used in its development.

Focus on Tomorrow
A Community Based Diversionary Program
For Juvenile Delinquents

The fact that almost all languages in the world now include some term to designate juvenile delinquency is testimony of the near universality of societal concern with youthful offenders (Reckless and Dinitz, 1972). Crime has become a youthful preoccupation in America. Based on 1975 Uniform Crime Reports, Coleman (1975) found arrests of persons under 18 years of age for serious crimes increased more than 100% between 1968 and 1975, some four times faster than the increase in population for this age group. Almost half of all serious crimes in the United States are committed by juveniles (Uniform Crime Reports, 1976). According to present trends, one child in nine will find himself in court before age 18 (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). The Missouri Action Plan for Public Safety (1976) states that perhaps the most shocking incidents of violence occur in the nation's school systems. In April, 1975, the United States Senate Subcommittee to investigate Juvenile Delinquency reported that there were 70,000 serious assaults against teachers in 1973, up 77.4% from 1970; that 100

students were murdered in schools during 1973; that school vandalism costs the schools \$500,000,000 each year, the total amount spent for school textbooks in 1972; and that each year there are hundreds of thousands of assaults against students by other students.

A recent series of articles published by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (March 26-31, 1978) indicate that violence and vandalism are serious problems in the St. Louis area public schools. Based on interviews of more than 80 persons in 25 different schools the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (March 26, 1978) published the following conclusions: (1) Many schools are disrupted at least occasionally by a pattern of student behavior ranging from infrequent shootings to widespread truancy. (2) The most frequent offenders are students in grades 8 through 10. Many have had a pattern of behavioral or academic problems in elementary schools and often drop out of school at age 16. (3) Administrators and teachers find themselves caught in the middle of conflicting opinions concerning discipline. (4) The severity of discipline varies from school to school. (5) Disagreement over who is to blame is perceived as standing in the way of effective solutions.

Violence, vandalism and disciplinary problems can be

costly in both human and economic terms. Vandalism alone costs the St. Louis system more than \$100,000 a year. Security measures cost up to \$1 million. The Normandy School District lost state aid totaling more than \$80,000 in the last three years because of days missed by children suspended for disciplinary reasons.

The evidence indicates that schools must be prepared to deal with the problems of delinquents.

The following official 1977 statistics provided by the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Juvenile Division indicate that St. Charles County schools are no exception.

<u>Delinquency:</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter.....			
Manslaughter by negligence.....	1		1
Forcible rape.....	5		5
Child molestation.....		2	2
Robbery.....	7	1	8
Stealing from a person.....			
Assault.....	34	10	44
Burglary.....	89	5	94
Arson.....			
Bombing.....	1		1

<u>Delinquency:</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Weapons: discharging, flourish- ing, carrying.....	9		9
Drugs: sale of controlled substance.....	2	1	3
Drugs: possession of controlled substance.....	31	8	39
Unauthorized use of automobile....	28	4	32
Tampering with motor vehicle.....	14	4	18
Forgery and fraud.....	8	2	10
Larceny: in conjunction with burglary.....	57	2	59
Larceny: shoplifting.....	17	24	41
Larceny: all other.....	93	27	120
Harrassment by phone.....	1		1
Destruction of property.....	52	4	56
Disorderly conduct.....	27	5	32
Trespassing.....	40	9	49
Drunkenness.....	15		15
Other: adult-type offenses.....	40	2	42
	<u>571</u>	<u>110</u>	<u>681</u>

<u>Status:</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Runaway: in-state.....	41	18	59
Runaway: out-of-state.....	4	9	13
Truancy.....	12	1	13
Violation of curfew.....	67	14	81
Ungovernable behavior.....	14	1	15
Possession of alcohol.....	<u>41</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>55</u>
	<u>179</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>236</u>
Traffic:			
Driving while intoxicated.....	10		10
Leaving scene of accident.....	6	2	8
Careless and imprudent driving....	80	7	87
Driving without a license.....	27	2	29
Underage operator.....	62	10	72
Speeding, stop sign violations, etc	192	45	237
Non-moving violations.....	<u>109</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>119</u>
	<u>486</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>562</u>
Child welfare:			
Neglect.....	2	3	5
Abuse.....			
Termination of parental rights....	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>11</u>
	<u>7</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>16</u>
Referrals:	1243	252	1495
Juveniles:	870	219	1089

On July 17-18, 1972, the Honorable Warren E. Hearnes convened the first Governor's Conference for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency. The Conference was sponsored by the Missouri Law Enforcement Assistance Council and held at the University of Missouri in Columbia.

Perhaps the most widely agreed upon recommendation coming from the Conference was that the school must become more involved in delinquency prevention efforts. The Conference concluded that the school is often the only place where an early detection of behavioral problems can occur and where specialized programs and professional assistance can be developed to deal with the child's problems. It was a recommendation of the Conference to utilize the "School Without Failure" approach to delinquency prevention, developed by Dr. William Glasser (A Report of the Task Force on Juvenile Delinquency, 1972).

The Missouri Action Plan for Public Safety (1976) again stressed the role of the school in the prevention of juvenile delinquency: "Schools should be a primary focus of community based prevention efforts. Alternatives to traditional teaching techniques should be developed and emphasis placed on identifying, referring, and counseling the child at risk."

Based on the foregoing evidence, three facts are clearly established: juvenile delinquency is a serious nationwide problem; the schools must somehow develop resources for more adequately dealing with this problem; and Missouri schools have a clear mandate from the state to become actively involved in the prevention and control of delinquency.

One of the first basic problems faced by the schools in any juvenile delinquency program would be that of identification. With regard to identification, several factors must be considered: Are there central and characteristic tendencies of the delinquents which distinguish them from the nondelinquents? Are actual and potential delinquents identifiable through the school system? Are there inherent dangers in identification? This paper will consider these questions through a review of the literature.

A review of the literature indicates the most definitive treatment of the identification of delinquents is found in the compiled writings of Sheldon and the late Eleanor Glueck, a husband and wife research team from Harvard University. Their research into the causes, treatment, and prevention of delinquency and criminality has covered a span of more than 40 years. The Gluecks (1972) are

convinced that "predictability is the most fruitful concept to have emerged in the history of Criminology."

In Unraveling Juvenile Delinquency, Glueck and Glueck (1950) presented the results of a multidisciplinary research based on a sample of 500 delinquents and 500 nondelinquents. (True delinquents are defined by the Gluecks as children who may be expected to commit repeated acts of a kind which, if committed by persons beyond the statutory juvenile court age of 16, would be punishable as crimes.) The delinquents and the control group were matched, case by case, in terms of age, global intelligence, ethnic derivation, and residence in economically and culturally underprivileged areas of Boston. Detailed investigations of the two groups and their families were then made by a specially trained staff consisting of a physician-psychiatrist, two physical anthropologists, eight psychologists, and ten social investigators. Certain characteristics which distinguished delinquents from nondelinquents evolved from this study.

According to the Gluecks (1950) delinquents as a group can be distinguished from nondelinquents:

The delinquents as a group are distinguishable from the nondelinquents: (1) physically, in being essentially mesomorphis in constitution

(solid, closely knit, muscular); (2) temperamentally, in being restlessly energetic, impulsive, extroverted, aggressive, destructive (often sadistic) - traits which may be related more or less to the erratic growth pattern and its physiologic correlates or consequences; (3) in attitude, by being hostile, defiant, resentful, suspicious, stubborn, socially assertive, adventurous, unconventional, non-submissive to authority; (4) psychologically, in tending to direct, rather than symbolic, intellectual expression, and in being less methodical in their approach to problems; (5) socio-culturally, in having been reared to a far greater extent than the control group in homes of little understanding, affection, stability, or moral fibre by parents usually unfit to be effective guides and protectors or, according to psychoanalytic theory, desirable sources for emulation and the construction of a consistent, well-balanced, and socially normal superego during the early stages of character development. While in individual cases the stresses contributed by any one of the

above pressure areas of dissocial behavior tendency may adequately account for persistence in delinquency, in general the high probability of delinquency is dependent upon the interplay of the conditions and forces from all of these areas.

The evidence is convincing that family breakdown and pathology are significantly related to juvenile delinquency. Reckless and Dinitz (1972) point out the consistent and impressive results of the Gluecks and of other researchers are beyond refutation. Coleman (1975) indicates that a number of investigators have found a high incidence of broken homes and homes torn by parental conflict and dissension in the background of delinquent youth. Cervantes (1965) found that the dropout, like the delinquent, typically comes from a family which has less solidarity, less primary relatedness, and less paternal influence than the family of the non-dropout. Gagné (1977) in an excellent review of the literature cites numerous additional studies which further indicate that family breakdown and pathology are significantly related to juvenile delinquency. This information has a double significance in developing a program for predelinquents: (1) certain family charac-

teristics are found in the backgrounds of delinquents which can be used for identification purposes; (2) any program to be effective must include the family as well as the child.

Having considered the family background of the delinquent, this paper will now consider the school experience of the delinquent. In a number of studies the relationship between academic achievement and juvenile delinquency has been documented. These studies indicate the delinquent is characterized by academic deficiencies, particularly in reading (Cervantes, 1965; Frease, 1972; Segal, 1972; Polk, Frease and Richardson, 1974; Fakouri and Jerse, 1976).

Haskell and Yablonsky (1970) state, "The fact that almost every delinquent has a record of poor achievement, truancy, or both suggests a serious failure of the school to meet his needs."

Glueck and Glueck (1968) found that forcing certain types of children into the traditional educational mold results in tension, frustration, revolt, and delinquency. They suggest a greater flexibility in school curricula and a variety of school programs and experiences be devised for pupils of different temperamental types.

Failure in school appears to be a primary contributor

to delinquency. Various authorities (Elliott, Voss, and Wendling, 1970) have suggested that when youth are unable to succeed in school, this blockage of an important goal leads them to seek success in other less socially acceptable ways. Thus, failure to achieve success in school can represent an important stumbling block on the way to viewing oneself as a successful person capable of attaining goals.

According to Glasser (1969) the main problem in the schools is failure. Through his books and lectures, Glasser is working to change the philosophy inherent in much of our education, that if you fail a child, it will cause him to buckle down and work hard. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. Glasser teaches that all you learn from failing is how to fail. And our schools are teaching many, many children how to fail. People who feel they are failures have a failure identity and they behave as failures. They follow failure pathways that solidify their failure identity. Glasser (1971) writes:

The students with whom you are having difficulty, the ones who act out in your schools are doing this because of their basic identity of themselves. And you cannot stop this unless you

can help them toward a successful identification. As long as they feel failure, anything that you try to do with them or to them or for them will be futile. They will continue to follow the pathway of delinquency or the pathway of withdrawal, which is the other route. Many children do not wish to be delinquent. They don't want to hassle you or anybody else. They say, "I'll just quietly check out of this situation." And they withdraw....

So we have two pathways--the pathway of delinquency and the pathway of withdrawal--that confirm the failure identity. And you say to yourself, "Why is this? Why do people go this way?"

Glasser believes there is one basic psychological difference between children who succeed and those who don't. It is a very important difference, and it operates in school and everywhere else. The problem is they are lonely. Glasser points out that lonely is a gut word, and "lonely" can happen to you or me. So we don't like to use this word, and we substitute others like alienated or culturally deprived. But his basic problem, according to Glasser (1971), is that he is lonely and needs to gain a relationship with

somebody else. Basic then to the whole process of education is effecting human involvement as a major part of the educational procedure. We have to be concerned with the fact that children past a certain age no longer feel humanly and warmly involved in school, and we have to develop techniques to keep the warmth and humanness.

Following is a summary of the seven basic steps that Glasser suggests "to get kids involved, keep them involved, and keep them away from failure."

The first step is involvement with students by being warm and personal and friendly. It is necessary to be emotionally involved with those whom you teach. Emotional involvement does not mean entanglement. It is the feeling that I care for you and you care for me. It is critical for teachers to care for children and to show that they care.

The second step is to deal only in the present. Disregard the past. By ignoring past failure we encourage the child to change his present behavior. If a child misbehaves, the teacher should say to the child, "What are you doing?" That's all you need to say--nothing else. This leads directly to the next step.

The third step is getting the student to make a value judgment. Don't moralize or preach; don't make a value

judgment for the child. Get him to do it. Say to the child, "Is what you are doing helping you?" Ask him if he is willing to do something about it. If at this point, he is unwilling to cooperate, it is suggested he be removed from the group until he is willing.

The fourth step is working out a plan with the child to change his behavior. Some kind of plan has to be made. You can't just go back to what was before, because that wasn't working. It is usually necessary for the teacher to suggest some alternatives and thus help the child plan a better course of behavior. The child usually needs help to figure out a better way.

Step five is the child's commitment to follow the plan. Get it in writing. Get a contract made out that says what he is going to do, and let him sign it. You keep a copy. You can't emphasize this too much; kids love these commitments. Commitment is what makes the whole thing really viable. Commitment is what seals the involvement.

Step six is to be tough and accept no excuses for a broken commitment. The child has already made a value judgment that his behavior was not good for him or anyone else, and you have to be careful not to accept any excuses

whatsoever for his continuing that behavior. If the child said he was going to behave in certain ways, you just ask, "What did you do? What's your judgment now? What's your plan now?" Go through the whole procedure again if you need to, but don't accept any excuses.

Step seven is not to use any punishment. Glasser defines punishment as being punitive--that is, causing children physical or mental pain for certain acts of behavior. In punishment, pain follows an act that someone else disapproves of, and the someone else usually provides the pain; with discipline, in contrast, the pain is a natural and realistic consequence of a person's behavior. Rather than punishment, the teacher keeps dealing positively with the student and his problem behavior until change comes about, "never," in Glasser's words, "running out of alternatives."

The literature indicates the educational experience for high-risk children should be flexible and success-oriented. Thus, the philosophy and techniques of Glasser provide a valuable tool for fostering a positive self-concept in the child at risk. Workshops at the National Youth Workers Conference (June, 1978) held in Washington, D.C. indicate widespread employment of the Reality Therapy

principles of Glasser as a successful counseling technique in youth service work.

Since the enactment of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act in 1974, many states have relied increasingly on community based programs as an alternative to the institutionalization of status offenders. This paper now presents a community based diversionary program for juvenile delinquents based on information and principles obtained through a review of the literature contained herein.

Focus on Tomorrow

Focus on Tomorrow is a unique collaborative approach program designed to impact pre-delinquent juveniles at the junior high school level. Specifically, the program seeks to identify potential dropouts and provide these students with the resources necessary for attaining a successful school experience, thus keeping them in the educational mainstream.

Focus on Tomorrow is a community project directed by the St. Charles County YMCA in collaboration with the St. Charles Public School System with the support of The Lindenwood Colleges and the Eleventh Judicial Circuit Juvenile Division.

Program Goals and Objectives

Goals

1. To foster a positive self-image.
2. To provide the resources for attaining a successful school experience.
 - a. Remaining in school--graduation from high school.
 - b. Attaining a level of academic achievement commensurate with the student's intellectual ability.
 - c. A sense of identification with the school by engaging in at least one extra-curricular activity.
3. To strengthen family units by teaching communication skills and methods of conflict resolution.
4. To promote a sense of "belonging;" that is, a sense of identification with the schools and the community through school activities and YMCA programs.

Objectives

1. To provide one semester of tutoring with a minimum of three hours per week by a tutor-advisor who also accompanies the youth on two adventure education (stress/challenge) weekends.
2. To give the referred juveniles two 48 hour weekend stress/challenge outings.

3. To serve the youth in groups of eight to ten which meet at least four times during the basic program session to plan and process outings.

4. To offer a year of YMCA activities to juveniles enrolled in the Focus on Tomorrow program.

5. To involve the parents and family of each juvenile in at least five family sessions.

6. To increase the juvenile's sense of personal worth and self-confidence.

7. To increase the juvenile's sense of personal direction, interest, and goals.

8. To foster the development of successful peer relationships.

9. To improve the juvenile's reading ability.

10. To develop one extra-curricular skill.

Eligibility

Eligible juveniles are males and females attending junior high school in the St. Charles Public School District who are diagnosed as high-risk, potential dropouts by the school counselor.

Focus on Tomorrow is designed for the student with average (or above) intelligence who is in some way educationally handicapped--culturally, psychologically, learning

disabled, etc. Particular attention will be given to those students who are, in fact, already status offenders.

In determining which juveniles can best be served by Focus on Tomorrow, the following criteria has been used:

1. Recommendation of the school.
2. Normal (or above) intelligence as measured by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children Revised (WISC-R) or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale.
3. Prior history of the juvenile.
4. Attitude of the juvenile
5. Attitude of the family.

The commitment of the juvenile and the family must exist.

Screening and Acceptance Procedures

1. The student is identified as a candidate for the Focus on Tomorrow program by the teacher and/or counselor.
2. These recommendations are reviewed by the Advisory Board which includes the director of the Focus on Tomorrow program and a representative from each of the participating agencies. If the Board concurs with these recommendations, step three would be taken.
3. The school counselor presents the Focus on Tomorrow concept to the student. If the student expresses

interest in pursuing the program, the parents would be notified and the program explained to them. If the family is interested, the next step would be taken.

4. Focus on Tomorrow staff (director and tutor-advisors) would show the juvenile and family the Focus on Tomorrow film and discuss the program and all its components--tutorial, family counseling, and stress/challenge.

5. Intake interview - Focus on Tomorrow director and the tutor-advisor meet with the juvenile and the family. At this meeting, the youth signs a contract with the YMCA stating specific behaviors he or she would like to change.

Program Description

Focus on Tomorrow is a closely interwoven program containing three major components: tutoring, family counseling, and adventure education. The program is staffed by Lindenwood College graduate and undergraduate students completing degree requirements. The Lindenwood students function as tutors, accompany the youth on two stress/challenge outings, and act as advisors in the family counseling program. In-service training is provided.

Internship in the Focus on Tomorrow program requires a minimum of 160 hours of direct contact with the juvenile:

Tutoring.....	44 hours
Stress/challenge outings.....	96 hours
Family counseling sessions.....	<u>20 hours</u>
	160 hours

Selection process for internship in the Focus on Tomorrow program:

1. Recommendation by the director of the appropriate department of the Lindenwood Colleges.
2. Interview with the Focus on Tomorrow director.
3. Approval of the Advisory Board.

Tutorial Guidelines

1. One semester of tutoring with a minimum of three hours per week by a tutor-advisor who also accompanies the youth on two stress/challenge outings.
2. All tutors work under the guidance of the classroom teacher, resource room teacher, or teacher designated by the school.
3. All educational materials provided by the school.
4. Tutoring is to take place in the school building during school time, if possible.
5. Unless counter-indicated, tutor sessions are designed to improve the juvenile's reading ability and increase communication skills.

6. In order to foster successful peer relationships and derive other group benefits, tutoring is done on a 1 to 3 staff-to-youth ratio.

7. The student's progress will be periodically evaluated and documented by the tutor-advisor and reviewed by the director.

Family Counseling and Adventure Education

Schedule for the first month of the program:

Week	Family Counseling (Sunday)	Group Meeting With Youth (Wednesday)	48 Hour Outing (Saturday)
1	X	X	X
2		X	
3	X	X	X
4		X	
5	X		

As the preceding chart shows, Family Counseling takes place on Sunday evenings with all the families, with separate workers, meeting for sessions simultaneously in the YMCA building. The intake interview serves as the first family counseling session. During the week, a preparatory group meeting takes place where the youth plan their outing, food they will take, etc. Then on the weekend, the two-day outing takes place.

After the outing, in the middle of the week, another group session is held to process what took place. The next Sunday night, the family is brought together again, this time, to view slides of the youth and their accomplishments and to process changes. This process is then repeated with new dimensions a second time.

The family unit meets once a month for two more months to work at maintaining family progress. The youth will be involved in a positive, long-term relationship with on-going YMCA programs.

Evaluation will be written by YMCA Special Projects Staff with content analyzed by an evaluation panel of community leaders. Records will be kept of each client's progress and updated periodically after termination.

The Focus on Tomorrow Program has been approved by the St. Charles Board of Education. A pilot program consisting of nine students will be initiated in the first semester of the 1978 academic year.

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