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ED 014 729 CG 000 060

THE SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL APPROACH--ILLUSTRATIONS AND ANALYSIS.

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EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.12 26P.

DESCRIPTORS- SOCIAL WORKERS, *SOCIAL WORK, CASEWORKER APPROACH, *SOCIALLY DEVIANT BEHAVIOR, *BEHAVIOR DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL ATTITUDES, BEHAVIOR THEORIES, SOCIALLY MALADJUSTED, BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES, OPERANT CONDITIONING, *BEHAVIORAL COUNSELING, *BEHAVIOR CHANGE, ESSEXFIELDS DEMONSTRATION PROJECT, BRITISH CIVIL RESETTLEMENT UNITS

THE PRACTICE OF SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL THEORY CONSISTS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL KNOWLEDGE (SBK) IN PROBLEMS INVOLVING THE CHANGE, STABILIZATION, OR CONTROL OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR, AND OF THE BEHAVIORAL SPECIFICATION OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HELPER. THE NATURE OF SBK IS DESCRIBED, AND INDIVIDUAL, GROUP, ORGANIZATIONAL, AND COMMUNAL MEANS OF ALTERING ASPECTS OF AN INDIVIDUAL'S BEHAVIOR ARE ILLUSTRATED BY FOUR STUDIES. SBK HAS THESE DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS--(1) IT MAINTAINS OR CHANGES BEHAVIOR, (2) EMPIRICAL CORROBORATION MAY BE SUPPLIED, AND (3) IT IS OPERATIONAL. THE MAJOR REQUISITES FOR SOCIO-BEHAVIORAL PRACTICE (SBP) ARE THAT IT IMPLEMENT SBK, AND THAT IT BE BEHAVIORALLY SPECIFIC IN FIVE AREAS. THESE AREAS ARE--(1) BEHAVIOR SPECIFICATION OF PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOR, (2) SPECIFIC CONTEMPORANEOUS, ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROLLING CONDITIONS, (3) DESIRED BEHAVIOR IN THE FORM OF A BEHAVIORAL CURRICULA, (4) IDENTIFICATION OF THE TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED TO ACHIEVE BEHAVIORAL MODIFICATION, AND (5) SPECIFIC CONSEQUENCES OF CHANGE. PRINCIPLE JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS APPROACH IS RESEARCH INDICATION THAT IT IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN TRADITIONAL TECHNIQUES. TWO ADVANTAGES OF SBP ARE THE APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE BASED UPON EMPIRICAL CORROBORATION, AND THE USE OF CONCRETE TECHNIQUES. (PR)

The Socio-behavioral Approach: Illustrations and Analysis

Edwin J. Thomas

Social work is a relatively new profession that has grown and matured remarkably during its brief history. Its objectives have become increasingly well formulated and it ha[illegible] great progress in establishing its legitimacy as one of the professions [illegible]ed to the improvement of human welfare. These and other achievements are especially noteworthy when one realizes that social work has labored to create its place in the division of professional endeavor during times of unusually rapid social change. The entire social surround -- the technology, knowledge, and values -- has been in flux during precisely the same period that the profession has been attempting to envolve its specialized competencies. Because of the significance of these changes for the knowledge, practices, and institutional forms of social work, the maturity of the profession depends as much upon how it adapts to new developments as it does upon the consolidation of its past and current endeavors.

There are at least two developments that are especially important in the current evolution of the socio-behavioral approach. The first is the enormous body of information about individual and social change produced during recent years in the diverse specialties of the behavioral sciences and in selected quarters of the helping professions. Because this information has not yet been fully attended to and assimilated in

the helping professions, there is now for many of us a large and rich backlog awaiting our perusal. The knowledge and practice of which I speak, when carefully examined, promises to make significant contributions to the activities of professional helping which directly involve behavioral stabilization and change in individuals, groups, or larger aggregates. Specifically, such information promises a social practice which is more firmly based upon empirically supported knowledge, which affords more concrete, determinate action, and which allows for action having more demonstrable effectiveness. Although these are ambitious promises, every practitioner would probably agree that they are desirable. Most practitioners would also concur that despite some instances in which current practice actually reflects these more ideal characteristics, it frequently falls short on one or more counts.

The second development of importance in this context is an emerging awareness in social work and in relating helping professions that the achievement of individual and social change is central among the activities of professional helping. It cannot be denied that much of what is called "treatment" in work with individuals and groups turns out, when fully denoted, to consist of specific behavior which is to be modified or maintained. And likewise, much of what is called "decision-making" and "action" when working with organizations and communities is revealed concretely to be the change or maintenance of given behavior by particular individuals, groups, or larger aggregates. The achievement of behavioral modification or stabilization is an identifiable objective of social work practice at all levels of intervention; and the stabilization or change in question may implicate single individuals, families, committees, or

peer groups, as well as some or all of the members of such large aggregates as agencies, associations, neighborhoods, institutions, and communities.

By asserting that behavioral maintenance or change is ultimately a central outcome of practice at all levels of intervention, I do not thereby wish to obscure important differences between and among practices at various levels of intervention. Thus, when working with groups or large aggregates it may be useful or even essential to conceptualize the objectives of change in terms of variables at the group, organizational, or community levels and to engage in intervention activities designed to change precisely these variables. Furthermore, the substantive knowledge of change and the details of the practice method will differ from one level of intervention to another.

I mention these two particular developments because they are among those that suggest strongly a relatively distinct type of knowledge and practice useful to social work. We identify this type of knowledge and practice as the socio-behavioral approach. More important than the name, however, are the essential characteristics of the approach and how they relate to the possibilities for increasing the effectiveness of efforts to achieve the change and stabilization of individuals and social systems. Not everything in this approach is new, of course, but altogether there is enough that is distinctive, if not unique, to merit its isolation and conceptualization.

My objective in this initial statement is to formulate what now appear to be the requisites of this type of knowledge and practice as these apply to problems of maintaining and changing behavior of individuals and social systems. The specific substantive knowledge (such as the psychological,

social psychological, or sociological propositions about change) which is illustrative of socio-behavioral knowledge at various levels of intervention is not developed here, nor are the concrete actions in practice which illustrate socio-behavioral practice with individuals, groups, organizations, or communities. As the socio-behavioral approach matures, however, there will necessarily have to be an explication of the particular substantive knowledge and concrete practices distinctive for every level of intervention.

The requisites of socio-behavioral knowledge and practice are really just now becoming apparent. As more attention is given to the specific knowledge and practice identified as socio-behavioral at all levels of human aggregation, the criteria proposed here are very likely to be refined and extended.

In this paper, I shall employ various illustrative studies as a means to describe the nature of socio-behavioral knowledge as that body of empirical generalizations which is addressed to the change and stabilization of human behavior, and which directs helpers toward determinate, concrete actions in practice. The practice of socio-behavioral theory will be discussed as consisting of the implementation of such knowledge for problems involving the change and stabilization of human behavior and of the behavioral specification of the relevant activities of the helper. In the papers to follow, the authors will discuss selected applications to various methods of social work (casework, group work, administration, and community organization) and some of the organizational requisites for a socio-behavioral technology.

Four Examples

Before discussing the distinguishing characteristics of socio-behavioral

theory, four examples will be presented. Individual, group, organizational, and communal means to alter aspects of individual behavior are illustrated in these cases.[1] Furthermore, each "case" illustrates research that contributes to socio-behavioral knowledge, and practice that, to some extent, is prototypic. The case studies are not all ideal examples of the socio-behavioral approach, however, for some are much more exemplary than others.

Tantrums and Extinction

The first case involves a twenty-one month old boy who engaged in tyrannical tantrum behavior.[2] The child would scream and fuss when put to bed and his parents couldn't leave the bedroom until he was asleep. The parents generally spent one-half to two hours simply waiting in the room before the boy went to sleep.

After determining that the tantrum behavior was sustained by the attention provided by the parents at bedtime, it was decided to institute a regimen of extinction. The treatment program was based upon research which indicates that by steadfastly withholding reinforcers that previously sustained the behavior, there will eventually be a diminution of the behavior in question. It was decided to put the child to bed in a leisurely and relaxed fashion. Then, following the usual pleasantries, the parent left and the door remained closed. On the first night, the child screamed for forty-five minutes; on the second, he did not fuss at all; on the third, he screamed for ten minutes; on the fourth, for six; on the fifth, for three; on the sixth, for two; and, finally, after seven sessions, there was no screaming at all. In a follow-up, there were no side- or after-effects and the child was found to be friendly, expressive, and outgoing.

Delinquency Reduction and Groups

The second case illustrates the use of the group as a means to alter many aspects of the behavior of delinquent boys. The case derives from the Essexfields Demonstration Project in which a group rehabilitation center was established to work with sixteen-and seventeen-year-old delinquent boys.[3] Intake was restricted to delinquents called the "gang type"; "lone wolf" types and those who were severely disturbed, homosexual, or who had had previous institutional experience were excluded.

The group consisted of twenty boys who met every day from 7:30 in the morning to 10 o'clock at night and who returned to their homes each evening. After arriving at the rehabilitation center, each boy worked on a productive job for which he received $1.00 per day. In addition to working together, the boys ate lunch and supper as a group, traveled jointly to and from the place of work, and engaged in recreation for two and one-half hours a day. In the evenings, following supper, there was a period of one hour and a half of group interaction guided by two trained therapists.

Because all of these boys were members of delinquent groups in the community, the objective of the project was to establish a social system in the rehabilitation center that would neutralize the effect of gang membership and, eventually, serve as a principal controlling force in the boys' lives. The boys and their therapists constituted a relatively self-contained social unit having its own norms, traditions, language, and conceptions of deviance. In each group there were always more "old" than new boys; the number of "old" boys employed to "seed" groups was at least ten and often fifteen. This partly assured the hegemony of prosocial

rather than antisocial group forces. Also, strong social pressures were placed upon the boys to adopt more conventional definitions of delinquency rather than gang definitions; and provision was made for much more freedom of choice concerning the boys' career alternatives. Throughout, there was leader guidance, especially in the group sessions employed to support pro-social rather than antisocial norms. The objective was clearly to transfer loyalty from the old gang to the new group.

In this new social system, desired behavior was defined as engaging in productive work, "telling one's story" about why one became delinquent, accepting a more conventional definition of deviance than that provided by the gang, acknowledging the group's new conception of the factors which led to the deviancy in the first place, and working to overcome one's problems.

The norms in this social system emphasized "going deep," by which was meant that one should try to understand the true roots of one's problem; not "cliquing," by which was meant that one should not withhold relevant information from the group, either singly or by banding together with others; not "playing a role," by which it was meant that boys should not try to hide one's true feelings; and allowing oneself to be helped.

The norms described above were sanctioned in many ways. "Checking" really involved a method by which boys monitored the behavior of their fellows. "Hours" were simply forms of work meted out as punishment for deviations from the norms. Being "on report" consisted of a loss of a day's pay. Being "kept back" consisted of not being allowed to go with the group to the place of work. And so on. The ultimate sanction for failure consisted of being returned to the court.

Following release from the program, boys were returned to school or were helped to get jobs, or both. Preliminary evaluation of the results revealed that of 246 boys entered into the program, 20 per cent were found unsuitable. Of the remaining 196 who successfully completed the program, only 12 per cent were committed to correctional institutions after release. This rough indication of recidivism contrasts favorably with general rates, which are reported to range from 50 to 75 per cent. The research on the evaluation of the outcome of the project is still in progress and control groups are being established for purposes of comparison.

The Token Economy

Moving now from the group to one aspect of an organizational level, we examine the token economy as one means by which a residential institution can alter the behavior of its members.[4] In this "case" study, one ward of a mental hospital containing 45 female mental patients was set aside for purposes of demonstration and research. Some or all of these patients were participants in a series of related studies.

All relevant activities on the ward were controlled to examine the effects of reinforcement, mediated by tokens, upon the jobs performed by patients. Six types of reinforcers could be made available for the tokens earned by the patients in the performance of various activities. The specific reinforcers available fell into the following categories: privacy (such as selection of a room, a personal chair); leave from the ward (such as a twenty minute walk on hospital grounds); social interaction with staff (such as a private audience with a social worker); devotional opportunities;

recreational opportunities; and commissary items (such as candy, coffee, sandwich, toilet articles). Token values by which these could be made available were established. For example, a patient could obtain a private audience with the ward psychologist with twenty tokens and a private audience with the social worker with one hundred tokens. The latter, incidentally, was about the most expensive item of all! Tokens could be exchanged for reinforcers three times a day.

In one set of experiments, a token economy was established for the performance of off-ward jobs (e.g., dietary, clerical, laboratory, or laundry work). In exchange for six hours of daily performance on any one of these jobs, 70 tokens were paid. It was found that performance on preferred as well as nonpreferred jobs was controlled entirely by the reinforcers dispensed. That is, patients would perform a nonpreferred job for tokens, and do so consistently for six hours a day, in preference to working on a preferred job without payment in tokens. Furthermore, when tokens were dispensed prior to working, it was found that patients would simply stop working.

In another inquiry, the effectiveness of tokens in controlling performance for work involving on-ward jobs was examined. It was found that the performance on such jobs as dietary assistant, waitress, sales clerk assistant, secretarial assistant, ward-cleaning assistant, assistant janitor, and self-care activities was almost completely controlled by the token reinforcers; when reinforcement was made contingent upon performance on these jobs, there was a high degree of successful performance and when reinforcement was not contingent upon performance, performance dropped off radically.

In still another study in this series, information was provided concerning the effectiveness of the tokens in the choice of jobs. When patients were given a choice between nonpreferred jobs reinforced by tokens and preferred jobs in which there were incidental, extraneous social reinforcements without the provision of tokens, it was found that the patients chose jobs paying tokens.

Altogether, these experiments reveal that patients can be aided to perform independently and effectively in the ways indicated. Although performance of diverse hospital jobs is pertinent for most patients in terms of increasing aspects of their social effectiveness, it is clear from these studies that token economies may be applied as well to behavior which more obviously relates to therapeutic objectives -- for example, working tokens to strengthen role behavior outside of the institution. Experiments along these and other lines are currently in progress in other institutions.[5]

Civil Resocialization

The last case study to be discussed illustrates the use of a "transitional community" to change the attitudes and behavior of prisoners of war being repatriated into civilian roles.[6] The experiment in question was undertaken in Britain in 1945 when large numbers of British prisoners of war had to be repatriated. Civil Resettlement Units were established in diverse localities in the country. Altogether, some 40,000 to 50,000 volunteers were involved. The men entered units closest to their homes, each unit containing some 240 men.

The problem of the former POW being repatriated into civil life was

analyzed as one involving "desocialization." This was viewed as consisting of failure to take proper social roles, failure to sustain social relationships, and most importantly, failure to assimilate the culture of one's social surrounding.

Men voluntarily entered the Resettlement Units for periods of four to five weeks, but this was extended to three months, if necessary. Activities in the Resettlement Units were ordered in phases, as follows: reception, settling in, orientation, and planning. At reception, which lasted three days, the man joined a section of 15 members, the section being one of four in a syndicate. Discipline was mainly by group means and there was rotating membership in all the groups such that at all times there was dominant the tradition characteristic of the unit. During this period the men made friends. Then, during the first week, the men attended workshops, were provided with information, had discussions, and could attend dances. During the second week there were voluntary visits to factories, shops, and training centers. And during the third and fourth weeks there were more individual assignments. Activities relating to employment were rehearsed and personal problems involving employment and the family were discussed with the repatriate and members of his family.

A limited follow-up study of this social experiment was undertaken in which it was found that men repatriated through the Resettlement Units, as compared with former POW's who did not elect to participate in such resocialization, displayed much more normative and supernormative behavior and less subnormative behavior.

As compared with the other examples given, this has some limitations, as will be pointed out shortly. This type of transitional resocialization,

nonetheless, is to some extent prototypic of many contemporary transitional agencies.

Requisites of Socio-Behavioral Knowledge

With the above examples in mind, let us now consider some of the main requisites of socio-behavioral knowledge. Common to all of the examples discussed are at least three significant characteristics that distinguish socio-behavioral knowledge from other types.

Relevance to Behavioral Maintenance and Change

Socio-behavioral knowledge is that which pertains directly to the maintenance or change of behavior. Problems of change can be specified more precisely as involving either the acquisition, strengthening, weakening, or elimination of behavior. Problems of maintenance involve sustaining behavior at a given level. To cover all of these phenomena, the words "behavioral control" or, simply, "control" qualify as well as any which the language provides. When I speak of behavioral control as the domain of inquiry for socio-behavioral knowledge, I do so in the ethically neutral sense. No implication of coercion or improper manipulation by others is intended.

The diverse features of behavioral maintenance and change are all illustrated in the examples. In the extinction of tantrums, the task was to eliminate the fussing and screaming when going to bed. In the Essex-fields demonstration, one of the objectives was to eliminate delinquent behavior, another, to reduce the control of the neighborhood gang. Here

we also have illustrated the establishment of behavior. Specifically, the therapists wished the delinquents to acquire proper habits associated with working, to acquire the behaviors associated with the role of the "helped person," and to increase prosocial behavioral options. Problems of acquisition and maintenance of behavior are highlighted in the studies involving the token economy where there was an endeavor to establish and maintain performance on various hospital jobs. In the British Civil Resettlement Units, one of the objectives was to reinstate dormant and little-used features of a prosocial role repertoire associated with diverse activities of civilian life.

Empirical Support

A related and equally significant feature of socio-behavioral knowledge is its empirical corroboration. The results of scientific research, evaluative studies and demonstrations, as well as of documented practical experience and naturalistic observation may all serve to provide necessary empirical corroboration of knowledge. Although not all knowledge about behavioral maintenance and change will necessarily possess the same scientific pedigree, it is clear that the more the empirical support for the knowledge, the more confidence we may have in its validity.

There is strong experimental support for the phenomenon of extinction, the procedure employed to eliminate the tantrum behavior. Likewise, the principles of reinforcement as employed in the token economies have been extensively studied. There is also corroboration from diverse sources for the potency of social systems in altering behavior. It was this knowledge

that was basic to the Essexfields experiment. The large scale experiment in social reconnection which employed Civil Resettlement Units as transitional social systems drew implicitly upon knowledge of continuities in role training, resocialization, and group and community systems to achieve changes. However, the nature of the knowledge and the status of its empirical support are least clearly apparent in this study as compared with the other three. But in each of the case studies selected, we find at least some empirically corroborated knowledge being implemented. And furthermore, each of the studies is a research contribution in its own right.

Operationality in Action

A third and essential characteristic of socio-behavioral knowledge pertains to its potentiality for affording concrete, determinate action. Such knowledge is referred to as being operational knowledge. There are two sets of criteria which, in my view, make knowledge operational.[7] Both sets of criteria pertain to the referents of the knowledge in question.

One set of criteria of operational knowledge pertains to its "engineerability." By this we mean that the indicators, in the world, which make the concepts of the knowledge operational, have the following characteristics; they are identifiable, accessible, and manipulatable. Consider reinforcement as an example of a concept the referents for which have engineerability. In the token economies, in which knowledge of reinforcement as it relates to operant behavior was implemented, a large number of reinforcing conditions was identified. These conditions were all activities already accessible, to varying degrees, in the lives of the

patients in the hospital. The reinforcing conditions were manipulated in the experiments by simply making them contingent upon the performance of hospital jobs.

A second set of criteria defining operationality becomes pertinent after the engineerability of the referents has been established. I am speaking now of the "practicality" of the operations. Practicality is defined by three distinct factors: the potency of the indicators, when manipulated; the ethical suitability of such manipulations; and the economy of their operation. Although all of the operations in the studies described possess practicality, as conceived here, consider again the study involving tantrums. The potency of the operation of eliminating the reinforcement for the tantrum behavior was clearly indicated by the rapidity with which the tantrum behavior diminished under extinction. The ethical suitability of the procedure consisted of obtaining the parents' permission and cooperation to withhold the reinforcing events which previously sustained the tantrum behavior. Furthermore, because the child had been under medical supervision for medical problems for most of the early months of his life, the physician's permission to engage in the extinction regimen was obtained. The ethical impunity of the extinction regimen was further affirmed by experimental and clinical knowledge that this procedure is not likely to have any long term or adverse side effects.[8] The economy of withholding reinforcement for tantrum behavior deserves little comment, for I can think of few activities that are less costly in time and effort.

Requisites of Socio-Behavioral Practice

In contrast to the knowledge, socio-behavioral practice consists of the characteristic activities of the helping person engaged in as he endeavors to achieve behavioral change or maintenance.

Implementation of Socio-Behavioral Knowledge

The first requisite of socio-behavioral practice is obviously the implementation of socio-behavioral knowledge. Deliberate, planful implementation of socio-behavioral knowledge helps assure that the operations engaged in to achieve change involve the proper manipulation of variables. Consider the difference between a naive attempt to extinguish tantrums and a theoretically informed one. A naive parent might try to ignore his child's tantrums once or perhaps twice and if the tantrums persisted, as they probably would after so few attempts to extinguish, the parent might give up and conclude that his technique was faulty. By "giving up," this parent would probably return to occasional reinforcement of the tantrums. The irony is that periodic reinforcement serves to sustain behavior very well rather than to eliminate it.[9] A theoretically informed parent, in contrast, would steadfastly withhold reinforcement for the tantrums until they were eliminated, and this might require many, many episodes of tantrums which were not reinforced.

The case studies cited differ importantly in terms of the implementation of socio-behavioral knowledge. Although it was explicit and clear that knowledge of extinction was employed in the case of tantrums, that principles of reinforcement were implemented in the token economy, and

that social systems theory was used in the Essexfields experiment, the relationship between the change operations and the knowledge being employed in the British social reconnection experiment was much less clear and, at best, only implicit.

Behavioral Specification

It is becoming increasingly clear that one of the significant hallmarks of socio-behavioral practice is the behavioral specification of the relevant activities of achieving stabilization and change. There appear to be at least five important occasions for being specific behaviorally.

The first has to do with behavioral specification of the problematic behavior. Such specification consists of the overtly identifiable aspects of the behavior defined as problematic as well as the behaviors of those who judge the behavior as problematic. The responses themselves are generally those that occur in surfeit or deficit or are otherwise inappropriate (e.g., are insufficiently controlled by common reinforcers or discriminative stimuli). Such responses may be defined as problematic by the person himself, by the professional helper, or by others. The behavior is itself not viewed as inherently psychopathological, deviant, or maladaptive. It is through social definition that all behavior comes to be construed as problematic or non-problematic. Thus, if the tantrums in the case example were not defined as problematic by the parents and the therapist, there would have been no basis for acting in the situation. In this view, tantrum behavior is not inherently psychopathological or deviant.

Of all the case studies presented here, the problematic behaviors were least well stipulated in the experiment involving social reconnection of former prisoners of war. Despite the diversity and complexity of such behaviors, however, they are amenable in principle to detailed and accurate stipulation.

A second occasion for being specific behaviorally concerns the identification of the controlling conditions for the problematic behavior. By this is not meant necessarily any deep-seated hypothetical, underlying, maladaptive state. Rather, the emphasis is upon contemporaneous environmental conditions which, at least for individual behavior, either reinforce, elicit, or serve as discriminative cues for the problematic behaviors in question. In the case of the tantrum, the tantrum behavior was revealed to be controlled by the reinforcing properties of the attention and physical presence of the parents; in the case of the Essexfields project, the delinquent behavior was partly controlled by membership in a gang having deviant traditions and norms, combined with an effective sanctioning system; in the token economies, the failure to perform given jobs was discovered to be controlled in large measure by the reinforcing contingencies of the hospital; in the social reconnection experiment, the controlling conditions were apparently not examined in detail although we may infer that the deprivation of the POW experience itself was operative along with the disuse of civilian role skills and, in some cases, the now new social environment which many faced after the war.

A third occasion for behavioral specificity involves the exact indication of the desired behavior. Behaviors specified as desirable include not only the terminal behaviors, but also the range of intermediate behaviors. This entire set of behaviors, when ordered from initial through the intermediate to the terminal, constitutes a "behavioral curriculum." The analogy to an educational curriculum is apt for it connotes the desirability of complete and ordered specification of all desired behaviors. In existing practice, intermediate and terminal behaviors are of course most often spoken of as treatment "goals." If there is a difference between the formulation of so-called treatment goals and a behavioral curriculum, it is that in the latter there is a greater degree of exact specification and a more complete ordering of desired behavior.

Behavioral curricula appear to occur in practice in at least two important forms. The "simple curriculum" consists of either problematic behavior ordered in terms of degree or desirable behavior ordered similarly. The behavioral curriculum implicit in the treatment of the child with tantrums involved no tantrum behavior as the desired terminal outcome, with progressively less and less of such behavior in the intermediate range. Increasing the amount of performance of the desired behavior is illustrated in the studies of the token economies in which performance for given periods of time was the desired terminal behavior, with decreasing amounts of performance indicating less of the desired behavior. When behaviors can be reckoned in terms of more or less of essentially the same thing, either when eliminating or establishing such behaviors, it is convenient to speak of a continuous, accretionary behavioral curriculum.

Another simple type of curriculum is the accretionary one in which there is a noncontinuous relationship between and among behaviors. For example, in one aspect of the Essexfields demonstration there was an endeavor to work on various behaviors each of which was separate, but each of which we presume to bear a sequential relationship to the others. Thus, in order for these boys to assume properly the role of the "helped person" we may infer that they first had to tell "their story," then to accept a new definition of their prior delinquent behavior, and finally to "work to overcome" the problems alleged to have generated the delinquent behavior.

The second type is the "multiple curriculum." By this I mean simply a "problem" which consists of diverse behavioral curricula. One recalls that the Essexfields project enjoined the boys to engage in productive work, this being one set of behaviors that may be ordered into a curriculum; a second involved the behaviors just mentioned having to do with the "helped role" (telling one's story, etc.); and a third required differentiating diverse behavioral options to delinquency. Unfortunately, the curricula in the social reconnection experiment were not described. Judging from the diversity and complexity of the entire program of services and the time when the experiment was done, however, we infer that detailed curricula here were not evolved for each man. If they were, such curricula would probably have been multiple indeed; they would undoubtedly have been most variegated, with each man having his own combination.

When desired behaviors are identified and arranged properly into behavioral curricula, they enable the practitioner to negotiate a behaviorally specific contract with the client and they provide for definition and

structuring of the helping relationship such that the helper knows what to do next and what progress has been made.

The fourth occasion for being specific behaviorally concerns identification of the techniques employed to achieve behavioral modification. Ideally, these techniques should be operationally concrete as well as functionally specific. For example, if one wishes to establish a token economy it is not enough to provide tokens for engaging in certain performances; it is also necessary to have the tokens serve as exchange, in properly calculated amounts, for activities varying in their reinforcing properties for the individuals in question.

The techniques of socio-behavioral practice are currently being isolated, conceptualized, and studied. The "simpler" socio-behavioral techniques would appear presently to involve basically two types of operation. The first is that of presenting a stimulus. This is illustrated in the experiments with the token economies in which performance was reinforced with the dispensing of tokens which could be exchanged for reinforcing activities. The other operation involves the termination or postponement of a stimulus. One particular variant of this is illustrated in the study of tantrums in which the procedure consisted of withholding reinforcement when problematic behavior was emitted, resulting eventually in the complete diminution of the problematic behavior in question. Operations of the sort discussed may occur contingently or noncontingently in relationship to given responses. Considering the many possible variations of operations and their contingentness with respect to given responses, one may define not only the simple technique of extinction

and positive reinforcement, as indicated above, but also negative reinforcement and punishment.[10]

The "complex" techniques, in contrast, generally involve at least more than one simple technique. Despite their complexity, however, such techniques are potentially as specifiable as the simpler ones. Thus, given adequate information, the behaviorally operative factors created in the social system in the Essexfields demonstration could be identified. In addition to the use of extinction, positive and negative reinforcement, as well as punishment, in diverse combinations, we infer from the description of that project that most relevant aspects of the entire group situation were structured. The group structuring apparently consisted of designation of particular group functions, goals, and structure and this structure was importantly related to the roles defined for the members. Indeed, the roles of the members were themselves structured and, when these are examined, we may identify specific features of a sanctioning system, a prescriptive system, and a performance system. On the basis of present information, it would appear that "group structuring" as well as "role structuring" are emerging as identifiable complex techniques of change. Eventually, distinct types of complex techniques of change may be identified for organizations, communities, and perhaps even for societies. Among other more common complex techniques of change currently being used in interpersonal helping I might mention coaching, shaping, satiation, negative practice, behavioral rehearsal, differential reinforcement, verbal instructions, counterconditioning, and model presentation. "Role structuring" and "group structuring" may soon be specifiable as complex techniques, as

may diverse features of "organizational structuring."

The fifth occasion for being behaviorally specific involves the outcomes of change. I am speaking of the short-term as well as the long-term consequences. There are two features here of interest in practice. One involves the extent to which the desired behaviors are in fact achieved and the other entails the extent to which other changes occur, either beneficial or adverse. The empirical determination of the outcome of change is illustrated in all the studies cited as case examples. The direct monitoring of outcome is best illustrated in the ongoing records kept on behavior in the studies of extinction and the token economy. The other two studies, in contrast, employed follow-up procedures not unlike those commonly employed in evaluative research on the effectiveness of services. Emphasis is placed upon the importance of behavioral specification of the outcomes in the context of practice because such determination serves greatly to eliminate uncertainty about the effectiveness of the change endeavor. If the change effort is successful and there are no adverse side effects, the practitioner can certify to the accomplishment of the service objectives; and analogously, if the change efforts are ineffective or if there are adverse concomitants, the practitioner has learned something about the techniques of his practice and precisely what problems of the client still require attention.

Postscript

The principal justification for advocating a socio-behavioral approach is that it promises to be a more effective way to accomplish professional objectives relating to the achievement of behavioral change and stabilization.

A surprisingly large amount of research on the effectiveness of various socio-behavioral techniques has already been conducted. Much of this has involved the behavioral therapies, but other socio-behavioral approaches have been examined as well. Although much more research is required, the available evidence reveals in general that socio-behavioral approaches are more effective than more traditional approaches or than doing nothing at all. The choice of technique, of course, must ultimately be decided by empirical evidence.

While we await more complete information, the socio-behavioral approach provides a viable and potentially durable framework within which to work. Contained within it are important empirical bases lacking in many more traditional approaches. One of these is the application of knowledge which is itself based upon empirical corroboration. The other is the use of concrete techniques in the context of a behaviorally specific practice which at least assures the practitioner that the degree of effectiveness of his efforts will be demonstrable. Knowing his specific successes and failures, he can then adapt his techniques accordingly and, more generally, inform the knowledge and practice of the approach within which he is working. A more thoroughly empirical social practice, which in a way is at the heart of the socio-behavioral approach, has the singular virtue of letting nature speak so that we can more clearly hear the call. In the long run, one cannot go far wrong if that call is heeded.

Footnotes

1. These examples are not meant to be exemplars of the socio-behavioral approach at all levels of intervention, especially at the organizational and community levels.

2. Taken from Carl D. Williams, "The Elimination of Tantrum Behavior By Extinction Procedures," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, Vol. 59(Sept. 1959), p. 269.

3. Taken from Saul Pilnick, Albert Elias, and Neal W. Clapp, "The Essex-fields Concept: A New Approach to the Social Treatment of Juvenile Delinquents," The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Winter, 1966), pp. 109-124.

4. Taken from T. Ayllon and N. H. Azrin, "The Measurement and Reinforcement of Behavior of Psychotics," Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, Vol. 8, No. 6 (November, 1965), pp. 357-385.

5. Ibid., p. 382.

6. Taken from A.T.M. Wilson, E. L. Trist, and Adam Curle, "Transitional Cpmmunities and Social Reconnection: A Study of the Civil Resettlement of British Prisoners of War," in Guy E. Swanson, Theodore M. Newcomb, and Eugene L. Hartley (eds.), Readings in Social Psychology (Revised Edition) (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952), pp. 561-582.

7. For a more detailed discussion of these "referent criteria," the reader is referred to Edwin J. Thomas, "Selecting Knowledge from Behavioral Science," in Building Social Work Knowledge: Report of a Conference (New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1964), pp. 38-48.

8. There may be a temporary increase of the behavior being extinguished at the beginning of the procedure and also some "emotional reactions", these generally being brief but sometimes strong.

9. Indeed, by trying to extinguish and then "giving up," our naive parent exacerbates the problem in perhaps the worst way.

10. For an explication of such a systematic framework, see Arthur J. Bachrach, "Some Applications of Operant Conditioning to Behavior Therapy," in Joseph Wolpe, Andrew Salter, and L. J. Reyna (eds.), The Conditioning Therapies: The Challenge in Psychotherapy (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964, pp. 62-81, especially pp. 64-68.