

April 1917

P S Y C H O P A T H I C H O S P I T A L
S O C I A L S E R V I C E

PROPOSAL FOR A LABORATORY OF SOCIAL RESEARCH IN
CONNECTION WITH THE PSYCHOPATHIC HOSPITAL SOCIAL SERVICE.

INTRODUCTION:

The Psychopathic Hospital is a fertile field for investigation of the social aspects of mental disease both in respect to material and facilities. Social problems of every kind are abundantly illustrated among the yearly admissions numbering 1900 in the House and 1485 in the Out Patient Department in the year 1916 - 1917. The Social Service Department offers a good foundation for research, with its present staff of a director, two regular assistants, six student internes and externes, and four special workers. It is proposed to undertake in the beginning a study of social case work and other lines of social research later on, as it may be possible to do so.

PLAN FOR THREE YEAR'S STUDY OF METHODS OF SOCIAL CASE WORK IN
RELATION TO MENTAL HYGIENE:

Introduction:

Mental hygiene for individuals requires the aid of social workers. Successful social service for psychopathic patients must be based upon good general methods of social case work. Good social work, therefore, is a fundamental part of a complete mental hygiene program. Social case work may be defined as the organization of personal and environmental forces to produce normal living in socially disordered individuals.

Methods are at present poorly understood and hardly at all defined. In special schools and in universities students are being trained for case work, but the present content of instruction is scanty; so that training of the student consists almost entirely in letting him gain his own experience. There is great need therefore 1) of a text book which shall sum up all knowledge of method available at present; 2) of experimentation for the purpose of defining new methods. Psychopathic cases afford the best material for study in the early stages of a science of case work because 1) both the conduct and the mental traits of the psychopathic individual are exaggerated forms of the normal, and therefore more conspicuous and more readily observed; 2) here ~~only~~ is available the close coöperation of the psychiatrist and psychologist, whose function is the study of character, which is probably the basic factor in social life.

It is proposed

1. To study the social records of the Psychopathic Hospital in order to define principles and methods now in use in social case work. This to be done during the first year.
2. To engage the most competent and experienced case worker to be found at a beginning salary of \$1300, to work on specially selected cases, free from routine. This work to be done according to a plan for history, observation, and treatment, prepared with the advice of psychiatrists and psychologists, and to continue for three years.

Still true
in 1941!

3. To study and analyze, in the third year, the results of the work of this special case worker. This material would include cases under treatment for one or two years, long enough to show some results.
4. During the second year to prepare reports on special subjects contained in the first year's study with fuller discussion than was then possible; also tentative reports on the material collected by the special case worker with a view to stimulating other social agencies to similar study.

Aims

1. To determine the best methods in social case work.
2. To clarify and direct the experience of practising social workers in all agencies.
3. To provide an outline of instruction in training schools.
4. To stimulate social research among social agencies.
5. To supplement with social data the study of character by psychiatrist and psychologist.
6. To define methods of social treatment for psychopathic cases.
7. To add to public knowledge of psychopathic conditions.

Estimate of cost for one year:

Chief of Social Service (Seven hours a week)	\$400.00
Special Investigator (Three fifths time)	1500.00
Special Case Worker	1300.00
Stenographer	720.00

Psychopathic Hospital to furnish overhead charges, stationery, printing, and travelling expenses.

ADDITIONAL STUDIES SUGGESTED:

1. The factors that prevent adequate treatment in early stages of syphilis. (Suggested by Dr. H. C. Solomon)
2. The percentage of congenital and conjugal syphilis that is recognized. (Suggested by Dr. H. C. Solomon)
3. Economic cost of syphilis in so far as it causes mental disease, including support of patients and dependents. (Suggested by Dr. H. C. Solomon)
4. The production of mental disease through syphilis in the ascendants. (Suggested by Dr. H. C. Solomon)
5. The percentage of syphilitics who are incapacitated through syphilitic mental disease. (Suggested by Dr. H. C. Solomon)
6. Possibilities of care of the insane in the community through out-patient supervision. (Suggested by Dr. A. W. Stearns)
7. Study of social adjustment as a therapeutic agent in psychoneurosis. (Suggested by Dr. A. W. Stearns)
8. The incidence of crime among psychopathic patients. (Suggested by Dr. A. W. Stearns)
9. The problem of the psychopathic individual in industry. (Already begun under the auspices of a private committee)
10. Possibilities of mental hygiene in public health nursing. (An experiment in which the Superintendent of the Instructive District Nursing Association has expressed a desire to cooperate)

W. A. Stearns

April 20, 1917