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Short-Term Training Institutes in Deafness and Mental Health

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SHORT-TERM TRAINING INSTITUTES IN DEAFNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

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The motto used in our short term training institutes embodies one of the basic concepts in Mental Health.

“It is not things that are important
It is not programs that are important
It is *people* that are important”

Training programs in deafness and mental health as conducted by the Mental Health Program for the Deaf at Saint Elizabeths Hospital, Washington, D.C. incorporate into their philosophy a human quality which says “you, the trainee, are first a person; you are here to learn about yourself and about other people; this learning should assist you in sharing yourself and your skills with others”.

It is believed that this type of approach in the training of professionals assists in diverting the focus of attention from the disability of deafness to the *individual*.

The Mental Health Program for the Deaf has conducted three short-term training institutes in deafness and mental health. These institutes are for rehabilitation counselors and other professionals interested in mental health and deafness.

The institutes were planned in cooperation with the Maryland State Department of Rehabilitation as part of their in-service training program. Mr. Edward Kilcullen, Maryland State Supervisor of Services for the Deaf, arranged for counselors to attend the institutes as part of their in-service training. Thus far, thirty Maryland rehabilitation counselors have participated in the training programs and it is anticipated that over a undesignated period of time counselors from every office in the Maryland State Department of Rehabilitation will attend the institutes and have general orientation to deafness and mental health.

Realizing that no one is going to become an “instant expert” in deafness or mental health in a two week training experience our goals focus on the terms “to acquaint” and “general introduction”.

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The goals of the training institutes are: to acquaint rehabilitation counselors and allied professionals with the general area of deafness accompanying educational, vocational and personal adjustment problems and to provide a general introduction to the care, treatment and rehabilitation of mentally ill deaf persons.

To acquaint trainees with the meaning of deafness as it relates to the total person involves lectures, observations, field trips and participation with deaf adults. Course offerings include:

1. The causes of deafness and their effects on behavior
2. Introduction to communication with the deaf
3. The social and educational implications of deafness
4. The role of the rehabilitation counselor
5. The rehabilitation of low achieving deaf persons
6. An introduction to audiology and speech pathology
7. Selective placement in Civil Service
8. Employers of persons who are deaf
9. Communication instruction (10 hours)
10. Special programs in rehabilitation, education and counseling for the deaf
11. Introduction to the National Association for the Deaf
12. Field trips to a pre-school for the deaf, Kendall School, the Model Secondary School for the Deaf, and Gallaudet College.
13. The role of the minister to the deaf

To provide a general introduction to the care, treatment and rehabilitation of the mentally ill deaf person involves lectures, and actual participation in various treatment processes used in the psychiatric setting. This part of the training includes:

1. A history and overview of the Mental Health Program for the Deaf
2. Introduction to mental illness
3. Ward visits and patient-trainee encounters
4. Introduction to art therapy
5. Psychodrama session and evaluation
6. Family therapy and deafness
7. The general aspects of mental illness
8. Individual counseling and therapy
9. Dance therapy and deafness
10. Recreational therapy
11. Religion in the hospital
12. Occupational therapy
13. Clinical case presentations
14. The role of nursing in the rehabilitation of the deaf person
15. Psychological testing and deafness
16. Group therapy and deafness
17. Social services and deafness

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In evaluating this program I would like to quote from two letters received from trainees.

“The very specialized program for the deaf has provided me with the fundamental insights needed in working with the deaf community. I feel certain that this experience and understanding will be of benefit in assisting with programs for the deaf citizens of Maryland.”

“I have attended no other workshop that has been more beneficial or more appreciative of the purposes of a workshop.”

The Mental Health Program for the Deaf comprehensive services will continue to provide manpower training and short-term training programs to interested professionals on a regular basis. Recently a short-term training program was conducted for the professional staff of the Mental Health Program for the Deaf, Dixmont State Hospital.

Future plans include a National Symposium on Mental Health and Training Programs for State Hospital Personnel Entering the Field of Deafness and Mental Health. In conclusion, mental health means people and we are in existence to serve and train people.