

## ***Psychotherapy services outside the National Health Service \****

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**SUMMARY.** With the help of an Upjohn Travelling Fellowship, I visited 15 units providing services for people under stress. There were nine residential units and six non-residential units, all were Christian charitable organisations and in all there was close co-operation with the medical profession.

All these organisations accept referrals from general practitioners and deserve to be more widely known.

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### **Introduction**

As a family doctor, working in an urban group practice, I have had a special interest in the external stress factors which contribute to the genesis of psychiatric illness. In recent years, the number of patients suffering external stress has increased, and the comprehensive psychiatric services available in our locality have been so overburdened that they have only been able to care for those patients who are already so ill that they are unable to function effectively in their own social environments. I began to look for services outside the National Health Service, where patients under stress could go before they 'broke down', as well as afterwards. I found that the kind of preventive, curative and aftercare services I was looking for were available through some charitable organisations, and, with the help of an Upjohn Travelling Fellowship, I was able to visit nine residential units and six non-residential units in 1974.

### **Aim**

My aim was to study psychotherapy services provided by Christian organisations in co-operation with the medical profession outside the National Health Service with particular reference to facilities for alcohol and drug dependent patients and for long-term supportive psychotherapy.

### **Results**

I visited only those units where there was close co-operation between members of the medical profession and charitable organisations. It happened that all the charities came under the auspices of Christian organisations. The staff of all the units were dedicated to their work, and many received considerably less financial reward for their work than they could have done in the National Health Service. Some of the units were partly paid from the NHS, but all had to find extra financial support to keep their work going.

Proseletysing was not a feature of any of the units, and although people with some religious faith might feel more at home than others, no unit refused help to anyone on religious grounds. Fees were payable, but all the units had bursary funds and made drastic reductions according to the needs and means of the patients. These units deserve to be more widely known and understood among the medical profession than they appear to be at present. They all accept family-doctor referrals and the main principles of the units are described below:

### **Residential units**

#### ***(1) Spellthorne St Mary's, 55, Milton Road, Harpenden, Herts***

This is for women alcoholics who need long-term help. They can stay as long as a year if necessary. They are linked with the Alcoholics Anonymous organisation, and use a progressive programme of rehabilitation. The unit is run by trained Anglican nuns. It can accommodate 20 patients in a suburban setting. Fees are £20 a week. Many patients are subsidised by local authorities.

\*An edited version of a 1973 Upjohn Travelling Fellowship report.

(2) *Salvation Army Alcoholics Unit, Gloucester House, 6, High Street, Highworth, Near Swindon, Wilts*

This is for male alcoholics. They normally stay three to six months, and are usually recommended by the Salvation Army Alcoholic Assessment Unit, Booth House, Whitechapel, London, E.1. They have workshops and some group therapy, and much friendly support is given to the men, as well as some religious encouragement, along Salvationist lines. The unit is in the high street of a country town, and can accommodate 15 men. Many patients are subsidised, but those who can are expected to give some money for their upkeep.

(3) *Coke Hole Trust, 4, Church Close, Andover, Herts*

This is an independent venture started by Mrs Barbara Henry, and it caters for intelligent young drug addicts who are 'off' drugs, and need rehabilitation. There are two houses, one which can take eight girls, and the other, nine young men, between the ages of 15-30. The setting is rural. The young people work, and can study, Individual psychotherapy is available on an informal basis. The Trust is registered under the Mental Health Act, and depends greatly on self-help principles. The cost of a week's stay is £25.00 and local authority support is usual.

(4) *Holyrood, South Leigh, Witney, Oxon.*

This is a unit which is in the charge of medical psychotherapists. It is housed in a rural setting, and takes up to 30 men and women, for individual and small group psychotherapy. There is a chapel for those who care to use it. There are excellent facilities for art and relaxation therapy. It is a registered nursing home, linked with British United Provident Association and the Private Patients' Plan. Fees are according to means. There is no local authority support. The unit is specially interested in patients who have anorexia nervosa.

(5) *Cheshire Homes, Miraflores, 152, Worple Road, London, S.W.19*

This is the only long-term rehabilitation residential home, specifically run for patients who come out of psychiatric hospitals, and who need hostel rehabilitation, presently under the auspices of the Cheshire foundation. It takes up to 40 patients, of either sex, provided that they are fit enough to work. Gradual rehabilitation, is the aim, and may take from 6-36 months to achieve; patients are usually able to return to the community fully. Patients contribute to their upkeep, though subsidy by a local authority is usual. Some patients are psychotic, some severely disabled by neuroses.

(6) *Burswood Home of Healing, Burswood, Groombridge, Near Tunbridge Wells, Kent*

This is a registered nursing home, with a resident doctor, an Anglican chaplain, and nursing staff. It caters for physical illness as well as psychoneurotic illness, and religious healing services are an integral part of the work. It can take up to 40 men and women, and fees range from £35-77.00 a week. They are linked to BUPA and PPP. It is specially attractive to orthodox Christians who would benefit from a period in the country, surrounded by care, attention, and superb countryside.

(7) *Green Pastures Home of Healing, 17, Burton Road, Branscombe Park, Bournemouth, BH13 6BT*

This 'rest' home has a direct link with the Westminster Pastoral Foundation, and takes patients in need of rest, relaxation, and counselling along individual non-directive lines. The Director is a Minister of Religion, and he uses a technique which he calls deep prayer therapy. Healing services are held. It can accommodate up to 32 patients of either sex. Fees are £18.00 a week. This is a place of refuge for the less overtly ill patient.

(8) *Divine Healing Mission, Crowhurst, Sussex*

This unit caters for people needing relatively short periods of rest and relaxation after physical or psychiatric illness. There is no resident doctor, but an Anglican clergyman is the warden and he works closely with local doctors. The Mission can take 29 patients of either sex. There is a chapel, and regular healing services are held. It is registered under the Mental Health Act. Fees are £20.00 a week. The house is in the country, and is visited by about 700 people every year. Divine healing is stressed.

*(9) St Michael's Home of Healing, Undercliffe, Cleadon, Sunderland*

This unit is set in a small village, and is a large house, which at present can only take 16 patients of either sex. The Warden is an Anglican clergyman. The emphasis is on divine healing, rest and loving care. There is a visiting psychiatrist. Fees are £25.00 a week.

**Non-residential units***(1) Westminster Pastoral Foundation, Westminster Central Hall, London, S.W.1*

This is a large unit which trains counsellors, and provides therapy, as well. The unit specialises in supportive counselling, co-counselling and family counselling, and all personnel are trained staff, supervised by psychotherapists. Therapy is largely on an individual basis, though some small groups do exist. Fees of £5.00 an hour are charged to those who can afford it. It receives Government grants. There are about 300 new patients a year.

*(2) The Dymna Centre, 24, Blandford Street, London, W.1.H 3WA*

This centre is oriented along Gestalt therapy lines, and is directed by a Roman Catholic priest who is also a psychiatric social worker, Fr Louis Marteau. It fulfils a specific need for Roman Catholics, but also caters for non-Roman Catholics. Clients contract with the counsellor about fees and length of treatment, usually the fees being equivalent to one hour's earnings. There are 178 new patients a year.

*(3) Clinical Theology Association, Lingdale, Mount Hooton Road, Nottingham, NG7 4BA*

This is headed by Dr Frank Lake, and is essentially a training centre for counsellors. Family doctors may benefit indirectly from this centre, because the number of counsellors trained by now is very considerable, and so trained counsellors may be locally available for patients who need individual or group therapy.

*(4) St Columba Centre, 35a St Andrew Street, Cambridge, Cambs*

This centre is eight years old and is directly linked to Fulbourne Hospital. It offers individual and group help to patients newly discharged from hospital, house-bound mothers, married couples and also offers a 'walk in' service to Cambridge residents. It is central, and has close links with the local NHS psychiatric services. It looks after about 35 patients on a daily basis.

*(5) Newcastle and District Counselling Centre, 6, West Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle on Tyne, NH3 4ES*

This centre is run by a retired consultant psychiatrist with local volunteers and clergy help. It operates on an individual psychotherapeutic basis, and looks after people suffering from a variety of neurotic conditions, of which the majority are depression. They see about 100 new patients a year. Fees are not charged, but patients are encouraged to contribute donations as they can.

*(6) Guild of Health, Edward Wilson House, 26, Queen Anne Street, London W1M 9LB*

The Guild runs training courses for counsellors and a number of people are seen on an individual basis by trained counsellors, who are mainly clergy. Fees are charged on an individual basis.

**Addendum**

The fees reported were those at the time of Dr Kroll's visits in 1974

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