

would like to suggest that the fundamental issue is the transition from utter dependence to complete independence. This intermediate stage of development in a human personality takes place largely within the family, where most of the tensions originate. Society and the community outside the family are affected by adolescent problems but do not themselves have a prominent or directional influence on the individual children. Hence our choice of a fellow family physician, I feel, will meet with your approval. Most of us in general practice see relatively little of children between the ages of 12 and 20. Statistically it is the most healthy period of their lives, and they never depend on our services in the sense that other sections of the community do. This independence from our services makes them a more difficult group to study, but Dr Doherty will illustrate how she has overcome this difficulty.

MARRIAGE GUIDANCE

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I do not think one can speak about marriage guidance without first of all saying something about who is to do it. In the Marriage Guidance Commission of the International Union of Family Organizations one meets many different kinds of people engaged in this work. In many countries it is mainly a medical concern, largely the work of psychiatrists who have increasingly in their practice concentrated upon marriage guidance. In some other countries, clergymen have been trained specially for this work; for instance, in the Roman Catholic archdiocese of Chicago about a dozen priests a year are put through a year's course in marriage counselling. But it is about the work of the laity, by which I mean both the non-clerical and the non-medical marriage guidance counsellors, that I wish to speak. I wish to speak of them first of all because it is their work with which I am most closely acquainted, and secondly because I think they have a very important contribution to make in this field. I was gratified to hear Dr Barnes in his introduction suggest that a marriage counselling centre was a desirable thing because I myself am convinced of this.

Marriage guidance counsellors are lay people of a considerable standard of education, of about university level or equivalent, care-

fully selected for this type of work. The process of selection usually involves a residential weekend conference in which they have private interviews with a psychiatrist, a clergyman in the case of denominational marriage guidance councils, and a marriage guidance counsellor of long experience. In between times they take part in discussion groups under the eye of a fourth selector, and as a result of this weekend, people are chosen who are felt to have the right qualities for this kind of work. Usually of the number of people who are suggested (and I should point out that people do not volunteer; they are recommended for this work either by clergy or by existing counsellors) some 45 per cent are selected. They then undergo a course of about a year's training, usually done in half-days once a fortnight, where they cover a large field of study.

What is the marriage guidance work they are going to do? Though one does not usually like to start in a negative fashion, there are so many misunderstandings about this that I think it would be desirable first to remove some false ideas and misapprehensions. Marriage guidance counsellors are not amateur psychiatrists; they are not the sort of people to whom you go because you cannot afford private fees or because the waiting lists at the hospitals are far too long, to get some form of cheap psychiatry. Marriage guidance counsellors are not attempting to carry out psychotherapy. Of course, in any relationship between two people, whether it is between the buyer and the seller in a shop or the passenger and conductor on a bus, there is bound to be a psychological interchange, but psychotherapy proper is not the work of the marriage guidance counsellor. Equally so, they are not social workers in the sense that they are bringing a social service involving material things. I know full well that social workers nowadays concentrate on what they call casework technique and the material aspect of their work becomes less and less important. But the marriage guidance counsellor is not concerned primarily with the introduction of material helps into the lives of the people who have come to see him.

The marriage guidance counsellor's activity really rests upon four points. The first point is the acceptance of the client by the counsellor as a person of worth, a person of dignity, a person of value, who is deserving of help, and this acceptance in itself is of enormous therapeutic value to the client. The most obvious field, of course, is in homosexuality, where a great deal of the problem of the homosexual is the knowledge that he is not accepted by the bulk of society. This acceptance of the client by the counsellor is fundamental to all work in marriage guidance. For the person who adheres to the Christian faith, acceptance is made easier (though, of course, it is not exclusive to him) because, recognizing the individual as a creature

for whom God felt it sufficiently worthwhile to die, the Christian should, if he really lives by and understands his Christian faith, have no difficulty in accepting a fellow human being.

Acceptance of the individual does not necessarily mean acceptance of his way of life, and here again one has a very good example in the New Testament story of the woman taken in adultery, who was brought by the Pharisees and accused of her adultery. Christ said: "Let the one who has no sin among you be the first to cast the stone," and one by one they went out. He said: "I will not condemn you either. Go now, and sin no more." In this very beautiful and short story one has an essential thing which so many modernists have lost sight of. Because in the past Christian people were prone to condemn the individual along with his way of life, the reaction against this has been to think that in accepting the individual you must of necessity accept his way of life. This is not so at all. One can full well believe that a person's way of life is not desirable, yet at the same time accept the person as a person of value and worth whom you are trying to help. This is fundamental to all types of counselling, and if one does nothing more than accept the person as a person of worth, one has already done a great deal for his self-esteem and to increase his own resources to deal with his problems.

The second function of the marriage guidance counsellor is to allow people to let off steam in an atmosphere without repercussions. Everyone knows how much emotional tension springs up as a result of frustrations that people are subjected to in their marriages and in daily life, and when they let off this tension within their family circle it so often provokes a reaction by other members in the circle. Yet this emotional release of tension in a controlled fashion is so helpful and essential, and to be able to do this in an atmosphere with somebody who understands and is sympathetic is of tremendous help and often clears the way for a more quiet and peaceful approach to problems. The third thing which the marriage guidance counsellor does through a series of discussions with clients is gradually to help them to introduce objectivity into their assessment of their own situation. This they do not do by telling people what to do. Simply allowing a person to talk about his problems gradually brings objectivity to his assessment of his state of life and the problems with which he is faced. One sees this only too well in a series of interviews. People who have not done this kind of work can never understand how one can achieve anything just by sitting there and being an interested, sympathetic listener and intervening very infrequently and very rarely. Yet it does happen. On the first occasion the woman is absolutely full of abuse of her husband, or his misdeeds, or his ill ways of life. At the second interview it may

be much the same but not quite so vehement. At the third interview she talks about the time he came home, perhaps smelling of drink, and what she said to him, and perhaps for the first time there creeps in this little note: "I know I should not have said that, but on the other hand he is so exasperating". For the first time she is beginning to realize that perhaps she did not do the best thing in the situation, and perhaps by the fourth interview she has gone a stage further and is beginning to say what she may be doing wrong as well as what he may be doing wrong. None of this has been pointed out to the person by the counsellor. There may come a stage, of course, at which it is necessary to point out other possibilities, but again this is not done by saying: "You ought to do this," or "This is the way of life you ought to pursue". It is done in question form: "Have you ever thought that possibly your attitude towards your husband may be a factor in the situation?" and so on.

The fourth point on which marriage guidance counselling rests is the point of trying to establish a dialogue between the two people. It is a fundamental rule of marriage counselling that when anyone comes along one always endeavours, with the permission of the first applicant, to persuade the spouse to come along, and it is interesting that in the vast majority of cases they do. Very often they come merely to make sure that the record is straight. She thinks that he will have told the counsellor a whole pack of lies about her and she is very anxious to go there and make sure that she gets the record straight, but, again, if she is accepted herself in the way that I mentioned, she changes from being a person who is coming merely to get the record straight to being a person who is prepared to collaborate in the situation. It is a very sad thing that human beings have great difficulty in communicating with one another, and especially on emotional and sexual problems. Indeed, the only form of communication many of them have is to hurl abuse at one another, and getting them to communicate in the presence of a third person in an atmosphere of peace and sobriety provides them with the first opportunity they have had for realizing that by interchanging information and ideas they are going to find some solution to their problem.

These are the four things which the marriage guidance counsellor endeavours to do: to accept the client as a person of worth, to give him the opportunity to relieve his tension and feelings simply by talking about his problems, gradually to help him to introduce some objectivity into his assessment of things, not by telling him what to do but simply through the opportunity. There is nothing more soul-destroying to oneself than to have to tell one's story to somebody else and realize that the story which sounded so good and

so coherent has so many gaps in it. Finally, the fourth objective is to introduce dialogue between the two people. You can see, therefore, that the lay counsellor who is doing this is not an amateur psychiatrist; he is not practising psychotherapy, and he is not trying to practise social work. He is doing this special form of marriage counselling which has grown up over the last 20 to 25 years, a service which does not therefore necessarily involve a professional-type approach but does involve selected, educated and trained people to do this kind of work.

If this is what they are doing, what sort of problems are they qualified to deal with? Quite clearly they are not qualified to deal with many of the problems which are going to be dealt with in this symposium, problems of homosexuality, frigidity and impotence and so on. It is for this reason, therefore, that a marriage guidance council centre which is going to be fully effective must involve a team of people. They must have their professional consultants (by consultant, I mean consultant to the council), who are mostly family doctors, but may be psychiatrists or other specialists. The way they work will depend on the organization of the society or country in which they live. Whether they are simply there to advise people about the nature of their problems and where best they can in the organization of medical services seek subsequent treatment, or whether they actually supply treatment themselves will depend on the particular organization, but it is essential if a marriage guidance service is to be comprehensive that it should be backed up by specialist consultants who will bring help to people with special technical problems.

These special technical problems, important though they are to us as doctors, form only a small percentage of problems. The vast majority of problems between married people are the problems of interpersonal relationships, the problems of getting along together. Unfortunately, in this day and age so many people think that happy marriages just happen. They do not realize that happy marriages do not happen but are made, that you cannot just go into a marriage in order to get something out of it; you have got to put something into it. Many of us who have matured over the years realize how important this is, but so many of the people starting out in marriage do not realize this and, of course, they have been encouraged not to realize this by the picture of marriage presented by the mass media of communication—pop songs, television, films and so on. They enter marriage thinking that they are going to get something out of it, not necessarily because they are selfish people, but this is what they have been led to believe, and they do not realize that if a marriage is going to be successful and the interpersonal relationships are going to develop in a healthy fashion, they have to put a lot into

it. Problems arise very often from lack of awareness of this point, and so when difficulties crop up they immediately think that something must have gone wrong outside themselves. They do not realize that lack of effort to construct their marriage together is probably responsible. This realization is something which the marriage guidance counsellor can help to supply.

Why is it that when marriages have been made for many, many centuries, it is only in this day and age that this idea of marriage guidance work has come to the fore? What is it in our society which has made this a necessity? Is it another of these many new-fangled but really unnecessary developments? I would suggest that there is a need, and the need arises out of several factors. The first is the change in the structure of our families. In the West we have never had the type of extended family that they have in the East, in which grandparents, the next generation and all the children live together in one household, but we did in the past have a type of extended family. The sons and daughters married but tended to live in the same town with their children, and the grandchildren and sons and daughters were all used to popping round to their granny's two or three times a week. The aunts and uncles were all in the community, as it were. When difficulties arose there was somebody to turn to for material help and when times were depressing there was somebody to turn to for comfort. This type of family structure has rapidly disappeared. In England, about which I can speak with best knowledge, the great migration from the north to the south-east has resulted in large numbers of young couples starting life completely divorced from their background and their family, and I believe that the same applies in Ireland to some extent; the movement from the rural areas to the town, but more important the movement from Ireland to England, presents young couples with this very same problem, and the appalling loneliness of some of these young couples, living in what in some cases are good material circumstances, is quite distressing. It is not so bad for the man as for the woman because there is a community into which he moves—the community of his work or his factory. It may not be a very encouraging community, but at least it is some form of community life. But for the girl who is left at home all day, especially if she has already had a young child and cannot go out to work, life in this situation can be extremely lonesome and extremely depressing. When, therefore, the husband comes home tired and worried and she is seeking this companionship which he does not feel ready to give or for which he does not see the need, the seeds of difficulty are sown. So many services which were supplied in the past by the western form of the extended family are no longer available to young couples, and this is one of the reasons why

marriage guidance has come to be a necessity.

The second reason is the change in attitude towards responsibility in life in general. The welfare state which is increasingly coming to pass in most of our western countries is a necessity because, with the increasing urbanization of life, social services can only be supplied on this basis. No one who has experienced these services would want to return to the days when they were completely lacking. Yet at the same time, though the material side of the welfare state has been well developed, the philosophy behind it has been greatly neglected, and many people therefore feel that everything must be provided by the impersonal 'they'. They do not think that there is anything they must endeavour to provide for themselves. This decreases the sense of responsibility and therefore when difficulties crop up in their marriage they immediately think that someone, somewhere must put it right. It is amazing how many people come along to a marriage guidance counsellor thinking that he will have an answer somewhere or other, little realizing that they themselves are going to have to do the work; a good deal of the initial time may be spent in trying to give them this point of view.

Finally, an important factor has been the change in the attitude towards sex. In 'Victorian' times, when sex was not discussed but was in some way considered to be evil, dirty or tainted, there is no doubt that there was an enormous amount of unhappiness, and the fact that there has been a movement to change this attitude is undoubtedly to be welcomed. Unfortunately this movement has not developed in a completely healthy way, and to many people sex is not the interpersonal relationship of two human beings, man and woman, who are differentiated not merely in their genital organs but in the whole of their personality, but nothing more than a physical exercise which gives physical pleasure. Again they have been led to look at sex and marriage in this way by the caricature presented by the mass media; this again has made them think that when they marry, sexual experience will be delightful and will not have to be learned. They think there is no art to it, it is merely a technical thing, and then when they find it is not so satisfying they become disillusioned and disappointed. In their disillusionment and disappointment they do not realize that they must go deeper to see something more of their personal relationships. They think it is just another matter of technique—they must learn a bit more about physical stimulation, a bit more about some position for intercourse, or something of this kind—and they have not seen that the sources of their difficulties lie in their whole attitude towards one another.

I think that these factors, namely, the change in family structure,

the diminished sense of personal responsibility and the unfortunate reduction of sex to its physical component as a physical pleasure, have made necessary the development of marriage guidance. To bring marriage guidance in purely at the stage of problems is a mistake, and no marriage guidance service is complete without courses for pre-marriage training, courses in which you will not just give information to people but again encourage them to start thinking for themselves about this state of life they are going to embrace. If one does this I think one is helping them to build a healthy and satisfactory marriage.

It has always been said that the health of a society depends upon the strength of its family life. Though the form of family life has differed in different societies from the polygamous to the monogamous, it is a sociological fact that the health of the family, whatever its form, is essential to the health of society. I would suggest without being a pessimist that there is a lot wrong with family life in western society at the present time, and that there is a need for us to do something positive to put things right. It is for this reason that I welcome this symposium and have been glad and honoured to be able to take part in it.

HOMOSEXUALITY

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Homosexuality is a sexual propensity in men and women for persons of their own sex. It may or may not be expressed in homosexual acts. When expressed in acts, it may take the form of mutual masturbation, the so-called full body technique, the production of orgasm by mouth, or anal penetration by the penis. There is, in fact, as much variety as in heterosexual relationships. The latter reminder may lower our temperature a bit in approaching this subject. It is hoped that in the next half hour we may be able to bring the same attitude of scientific detachment to a consideration of homosexuality as to other medical problems. This paper is intended to be a clinical commentary on homosexuality, with emphasis on the problems and decisions it may involve in general practice. Since I am what you might call a working-class psychiatrist, my own time is equally divided between general hospitals and private practice. Therefore, the clinical material on which this