

SOME ASPECTS OF THE CASE WORK-GROUP WORK PROCESS

ticipating in such a group. One patient remarked that it helped him a lot. Another exclaimed that "I certainly got things off my chest." D stated, "I wish I had this before." The authors observe that there is increased ability to differentiate on the part of the patients, one from the other. Things are neither total nor final; there is good and bad. A good deal depends on themselves. The ending permits a natural and gradual opportunity for leaving the setting.

Conclusion:

The discussion and illustration cited above seem to indicate that case workers and group workers may find more and more common ground in joining cooperatively to utilize the distinct but comparable methods each possesses. The possibilities of a case work-group work approach in working with people outside of military or hospital settings seem to me to be many and worth while. To coordinate both disciplines into a helping approach, a common philosophy of help should underline both methods of the case worker and the group worker. The kind of understanding that the case worker has in regard to his function, the

structure which surrounds his case work activity and purpose should also be defined by the group worker in respect to his own role and group work function.

Case workers as well as group workers are more helpful when they are concerned with more than what is going on, important as that is, as they ask themselves why are things going on, and what are their meanings. The case worker who recognizes the fundamental, character-building possibilities of group living and group work should feel more comfortable in working with trained group workers who have a definite psychological theory which they utilize to understand the process of helping characters develop and form.

Finally, it seems to me that as we accept and believe in the professional worker's essential role in the practice of either case work or group work, we need have no concern about the opportunities that lie ahead in developing and implementing even further coordination of case work and group work in dealing with the needs and problems of the individuals and group members whom we are pledged to serve.

MARITAL COUNSELLING AS THE MUTUAL CONCERN OF COURT AND FAMILY AGENCY*

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THE general topic of marital counselling is a very broad one that can and is being approached from more than one philosophic base and method. Today, with public concern over the future of the family so widespread, we find, not only social workers, but psychiatrists, psychologists, anthropologists, sociologists, and even radio entertainers, all engaged in grappling with some aspect of the problem of marital conflict. My own treatment of this subject will be, of course, that of a private family agency social worker, for that is what I represent. I also believe that today the private family agency offers the most satisfactory kind of general help for this problem available to the public at large.

The family agency has, of course, from its very beginning, been concerned about the problem of marital discord. However, even among social agencies, it has had no monopoly in this area of helping. Certainly, to name but one among a multitude of agencies and clinics, the Domestic Relations Court with its staff of social workers stands out as another place to which people bring this problem.

It is not accidental, therefore, that the probation workers of the Domestic Relations Courts of New York State have chosen to listen to, and to exchange information on this subject, at a State

Conference with a fellow social worker in an allied functional field of work. I think it is no accident, furthermore, that they have picked this particular time, because today, of all times, the maintenance of a normal and healthy family life seems to be facing its severest test. We are probably approaching the culminating point of one era and the beginning of another. During the past thirty-odd years, history has moved ahead at an accelerated pace. Wars, depressions, technological changes have occurred with bewildering and chaotic rapidity. These broad, historical changes have modified the purpose, values, and, to some extent, the very structure of the family, and have dealt it many a hard blow.

A period of crisis allows one to take nothing for granted. This is true of family life also. It has long been recognized that the family group is the basic environmental matrix of our culture, out of which social beings develop. Dr. Bronislaw Malinowski, for example, emphasizes, "the impossibility of envisaging any form of social organization without the family structure."

In the past, the family group carried almost complete responsibility for the physical, intellectual, and emotional well-being of its members. It has gradually relinquished total responsibility for some of these functions, sharing them with government authorities, clergy, educa-

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tors, doctors, etc., and to some extent, social workers. This is evidence that the family's job has changed in many ways in recent years. However, what is increasingly evident is that this change has been one of *kind*, and not of degree of importance. The one function that the family has not, and probably cannot successfully share, is the creation of an environment which enables individuals to grow and mature emotionally, and to carry out their respective roles in life with satisfaction.

In this paper, I shall, from the point of view of the social workers, try to show through the case material of one type of social agency, the New York Jewish Family Service, both a particular method of helping families confronted with marital discord, and also, some of the general difficulties that face any client and social worker in trying to resolve a marital conflict, be he attached to a Domestic Relations Court, a family agency or any other type of social agency. It is my hope that in this way I will bring something to workers who want to know more about the help offered by a growing number of family agencies. Perhaps, too, a consideration of this general problem from the private agency's point of view will provide further understanding of the whole problem.

A family agency, as a voluntary agency, is generally found to offer a service to a family in some early stage of its disorganization; that is, to couples who come wanting to improve their marriage. The court, representing, as it does, a far more complete and final community authority, supplies an almost final resource. Family members are more apt to come to the Domestic Relations Court when nothing but its authority remains between them and their break-up as a family unit. Ideally then, the family members should be found at an agency like the Jewish

Family Service before the family's strength has been destroyed through the long wear and tear of a deteriorating marital problem, and at the court, when separation and the support of dependents are all that remains. In reality, however, one finds that the problems brought to both agencies very often differ not at all, and many times, differ only in the degree of crisis felt by the individual in need of help.

The reasons for this are not hard to find. Social work, at least insofar as it is represented by a private voluntary agency like the Jewish Family Service, has only begun to make an impact on the consciousness of the whole community. And far more important, people do not choose the place to which they will apply for help on the basis of a logical nicety and distinction such as I have just made. Rather, while tending to bring their problems to the proper place, they often decide where they will go, more to satisfy their own purpose, than one that is to the family's interest as a whole.

I do not think I have to labor the point we all know so well in actual practice. A young woman, for example, will apply to the court for help with a marital problem, because she wants to use the court's power to punish her mate for the pain he has caused her, rather than because she is ready to leave him and needs support. Or an older person will come to the Jewish Family Service because she cannot face the break-up of her home and her marriage even though she knows in herself that her marriage is ended, and nothing remains for her and her children but application to the court for support.

The problem this creates for the case worker is generic to the field of social work. A considerable part of the skill and help offered by a social worker is related to helping an individual or a

family choose between the different types of service which are supplied by different agencies. Very often, the family's decision as to the type of service it needs comes only as a result of a great deal of time and help given it by a social worker. This may lead to as important and as fundamental a change as any that individual members may effect later on when they actually get to use the service most appropriate for solving their problems.

To relate this specifically to the subject of marital problems—it is the responsibility of the social worker in a family agency, when members of a family come for help with a marital problem, to aid them to find out for themselves whether there is enough positive value left in their marriage for it to be perpetuated. Until this is established, one cannot be sure that marital counselling will be even a potentially constructive service through the help it offers in consolidating and strengthening positive family values. It is equally the social worker's responsibility to help the members of the family discover when a marriage relationship has actually become so destructive that all it can provide is a bad emotional environment. Despite the great importance of holding a home together, we cannot assume that any home at all is better than a broken home. Some marriages, to take the extreme case, seem to be kept intact only to make it possible for the battle between husband and wife to continue. A purely negative marriage relationship, like any other struggle, has its own temporary cohesion that holds the disputing couple together, if only because they cannot be sure who will be the one to get in the last thrust.

In the social work setting provided by the Domestic Relations Court, to the extent that I know it from working with it on a day to day basis in Brooklyn,

similar problems and responsibilities exist. Because it supplies one of the very last chances individuals may have to obtain help in averting a family break-up, the Social Service Department of this court has a great and serious responsibility. The sharpness of the crises that probation workers have to meet makes it feel to me like even more challenging a spot from which to offer help than one finds in a family agency.

In marital problems, the probation worker's skill and ability can help family members realize the full significance of the step they contemplate, and the alternatives open to them. This can, at times, mean the difference between a sound home life for a family, or none at all. Such help does not run counter, in any true sense, to the function of the judge or the right of an individual to a court hearing. To the contrary, in my estimation, it increases that right and helps make clear the purpose of the Domestic Relations Court as a social institution—an instrument for the conservation, wherever possible, of human and social values in families facing possible dissolution. It is a breathtaking opportunity, in fact, to give help at the most crucial point of all; to provide aid to a family so that it can responsibly decide its own fate.

I realize that, important as it is, this service does not represent the alpha and omega of the court worker's job any more than marital counselling is the whole job of a worker of the Jewish Family Service. It is, rather, one of the points at which the services of the two agencies come closest together; where the problems of help and the service have common elements, and out of which referrals can professionally follow: from the Domestic Relations Court to the family agency, when the family decides it wants to make another attempt to main-

tain its unity; from family agency to Domestic Relations Court, when the family members decide either that family dissolution is the only solution which remains for them, or that the authority of the court is a necessary condition of help for them.

In the following illustrative material, the Brown Case,* we shall see some of the problems involved for both client and worker in the marital helping process in a setting provided by the Jewish Family Service. I think you will recognize in the first part of the Brown case points of similarity and difference from court or probation work. Although I have tried to give a picture of the counselling process as a whole in a typical case, I have purposely centered most of my attention on the first part of the process, since this part rather than the continued service can be shared most meaningfully and connected most closely with your own job as probation workers.

Mrs. Brown was referred to the Jewish Family Service by the probation worker of the Domestic Relations Court. She told our receptionist she was having marital difficulties and felt that if "someone talked to him," it would help. Her husband did not know about her being here. She asked for an appointment the same afternoon. The receptionist offered to find out about this, but had to tell her finally that no appointment was available until the next day.

In this brief contact we see that Mrs. Brown had already been to the court and had been referred by it to our agency. It is not too hard to imagine how, in going to the court, she had hoped to find someone with the authority of the Judge behind him who would lecture her husband, perhaps, not too differently from

* Case material by Lillian Goldstein, district supervisor, Jewish Family Service.

a disobedient child, to make him behave. Although we do not know what went into Mrs. Brown's contact with the court worker, it was evidently substantial enough for that worker to see that this was not a case for the court, not only because no support or separation was directly involved, but because this family wanted to remain together. She had, therefore, referred her to the Jewish Family Service. There are many situations in which the value of an early referral would be harder to know. The applicant's anger and despair may often be so intense as to make her demand a court hearing even when deep inside she knows that it provides no satisfactory solution to her. In the present case, I think, every probation worker will readily appreciate the value to Mrs. Brown of the worker's service in helping her realize and act on what she really wanted.

Two other facts in this brief contact can have meaning for us. It is generally true in marital problems, as in the Brown case, that the other marriage partner does not know of the first contact made with a social agency. We shall consider why this is apt to be so in more detail later on. Secondly, it is to be noted that the client in this case, as in many others, insists on an appointment for help the same day.

The Jewish Family Service does not believe in case work help that goes out of its way to make it hard for the client to get that help. We believe, however, that a client who brings a problem to us, no matter how it may be stated, is presenting us with a matter that is very important and serious to her. If we are to respond in an equally serious way, then we must be prepared to provide the client and ourselves with enough time to consider her problem fully. We have learned that it is only possible to do so if we can put aside approximately one

hour of time for each client with the shared knowledge that this interviewing time will be for her use exclusively. As a result, we find it necessary to see clients by appointment only, and it is a rare occasion when our application schedule is not filled in advance. This procedure is, of course, modified in the case of bona fide emergencies.

We have discovered too that the client's request for an immediate appointment often contains an urgency that is only partly related to her need to be relieved of her trouble at once. It requires courage on the client's part that is somewhat akin to desperation to take herself to a court or a social agency. The client comes with very mixed feelings. She feels, on the one hand, the strength and courage that has made it possible for her to decide that she cannot continue to live with her problems any longer without trying to make some change in it. But on the other hand, she cannot help having doubts about any change which may take place. She must submerge these doubts, at least temporarily, if she is actually to take action. The fear and uncertainty as to whether she will be able to sustain the course of action she has begun, as well as her pain and trouble, often make her insist, as in this instance, on being seen at once. If she has to wait she may falter and give up the idea of help for herself and her family. I should imagine that this is one explanation of why, in a court situation, people also insist on their case being heard at once, only at the last moment to change their minds and decide on some other solution besides a court hearing.

The next day, when Mrs. Brown arrived for her application interview with a social worker, we find that she has become unsure about her need for help. "Hers," she says, "is such a trivial matter. What must the worker be thinking of

her? Her husband and she are intelligent people and they can work things out alone." It was only through the worker's expressed awareness of Mrs. Brown's troubled feelings, not only about being here, but about the conflict between her husband and herself, that she could again admit that she and her husband had a serious problem—they quarreled bitterly all the time. In their most recent fight, Mr. Brown had become so uncontrollably angry that he had picked up a chair and smashed it on the floor. She was afraid that next time he might hit her. Smashing that chair felt to her like a symbol of the break-up of her marriage. When she was asked what caused their quarrels, she said that they all started because she became worn out and irritable at being tied down all day by the care of her two very young children. She needed to go out sometimes to get away from the daily grind of the household. To do so meant that her husband would have to stay home with the children on his day off. He refused to do this, and instead, would go off by himself, fishing. Another problem, she revealed, was a sexual one. She felt too tired and worn out to be able to respond to her husband sexually. When these and other facts were examined by her and the worker together, as to their meaning for this couple's marriage relationship, Mrs. Brown was able to see that she and her husband were both hurting each other, and that this took place because of the pain each felt in himself.

Having gained this much insight, Mrs. Brown was ready, by the end of the interview, to return for another appointment to discuss the matter further. The worker was ready to offer further help to her, but asked that her husband also have a part in working out some change in their marriage, since he seemed to have a part in creating the problem. Mrs.

Brown strongly doubted that he would want to come. In fact, it was very hard for her to think of a way of asking him. She finally decided that she could do so, but requested that the worker write to him at the same time. This the worker agreed to do.

In this application interview, which is only one day after Mrs. Brown's talk with the receptionist, several changes seem to be already in evidence. One day has been enough time to make Mrs. Brown question the seriousness of her problem. This does not mean that her problem is really not a troubling one. Rather, like the proverbial toothache, we all know about, that disappears as soon as we get into a dentist's office, Mrs. Brown's trouble begins to vanish as soon as she reaches the social worker's office. It would have been fatally easy for the worker to accept Mrs. Brown's change in feeling at face value, and to terminate the contact. Instead, as a responsible professional person, she tries to make sure just how real this change is, and in so doing, helps Mrs. Brown face again the fact that the situation between her husband and herself is really a bad one. In fact, it threatens their whole marriage.

The shift in feeling that takes place as one moves from thinking about making some change in one's life, to actually acting on it, is a psychological fact that recurs in almost every beginning helping process. Earlier, I referred to the doubts that Mrs. Brown repressed when she asked the receptionist for an appointment the same day. The passage of one day's time was long enough, we see, for these feelings to bob to the surface of consciousness again. The presence of these doubts did not represent a permanent change in feeling; they had always been there. They only reappeared because the client could not move ahead without a conscious struggle to overcome her

natural resistance to the change she contemplated.

There begins to emerge from this interview, too, a picture of the extent to which this family's relationship has degenerated. Mr. Brown disregards his wife's need for even a little freedom from household drudgery. She responds in what must be one of the few effective ways she knows—by sexual coldness. However, a worker cannot be certain she can evaluate the meaning of the relationship, even with evidence such as this, if she sees it through the eyes of one person only. To gain a sense of perspective and objectivity, she must look at it through the eyes of both people involved.

Besides this need for as much pertinent information as possible, there is the practical difficulty of trying to offer help in a relationship unless both parties will involve themselves equally. Experience has shown us that generally, as in the case of the Browns, it takes two to make a marital conflict, and it also takes help for both to resolve it. It does not even matter particularly who began the struggle. As a marital disagreement grows and deepens, both parties inevitably become involved in the fight, as they try to protect themselves from more pain, and as they strike back and hurt the other in retaliation for their own suffering.

For these reasons, it is a general policy of the Jewish Family Service, in offering marital service, to ask to see both partners to the dispute before deciding whether help should be given, or how it can be given successfully. This request, necessary as it may be, is not an easy one to make of an applicant, or a simple matter for the client to carry out.

You may recall that earlier, in speaking of the reception interview, I remarked on the fact that Mr. Brown did not know of his wife's coming to the

Jewish Family Service for help. When later Mrs. Brown hesitantly agreed to tell her husband, she needed the backing of a letter from the agency before she could speak to him herself. It seems to be a recurrent fact that a serious marital problem creates so high a wall between a husband and wife that they tend to lose touch with each other almost completely. It is, therefore, not at all surprising that Mrs. Brown did not tell her husband of the serious step she was contemplating when she went to the Domestic Relations Court. When it becomes a question of speaking to him about coming to the Jewish Family Service for help, she no longer is sure that she knows how, or that she can anticipate what his response will be. The effect of carrying out this policy, therefore, is again a manifold one. It is important as an aid in obtaining necessary information for an adequate diagnosis of the problem. Furthermore, it is important for the actual process of helping. It also provides the possibility of a couple's taking their first faltering step towards reunion. Agreement that they have a problem in common, and that they both need help with it, is not an insignificant bond between two people who have, up to that point, lost almost all connection with one another.

There are further implications for Mrs. Brown in the worker's request to see her husband. When she first went to the court, and then to the Jewish Family Service, her idea of help was for "someone to talk to him." She was seeking the simple solution of finding additional strength, or a new way of trying to change her husband, whom she considered the sole cause of the problem. When the worker suggested including her husband in the process, a new perspective began to open up for Mrs. Brown. She had to think of what her husband would say. In the effort, she

began to envision him as an actual person to whom something painful had been done. This represents psychological movement for, as a marital conflict deepens, the marriage partner increasingly loses his identity as a human being with feelings of his own. He becomes, instead, only an impersonal source of the pain he causes the other person—in this case Mrs. Brown. In her ability to think of her husband as a person, we have a diagnostic clue to successful helping in marital cases. Whether in one interview, as in this case, or through help over a number of interviews, the client must show some ability to see the other marriage partner as a person, and to include him once again in a relationship with her, if she is to obtain help for herself.

In the second interview, which took place with Mr. Brown a week later, we find that he is ill at ease at being in a social agency. It feels "funny" to him to be sitting and talking to a stranger about his family affairs. The worker said she thought it must feel like "two women had ganged up on him to get him in." He agreed, and expressed doubt that there could be any real help for his family from the outside. At the same time, he realized that their troubles seemed to grow out of the difference in their interests. He knew his wife was tied down, and that she wanted to get out, but he had his problems, too, which his wife did not understand. The worker remarked that it would be very hard for two people involved in a quarrel to be objective, and to be able to see what happened between them. Sometimes, when both discussed it with an outsider who was not embroiled, they could bring about some change. He reacted positively to the idea of the worker's seeing both of them about their problem. When his need for relaxation was recognized, he could move in feeling to begin to ap-

preciate the way in which his wife might have a similar need. At the end of the interview, he decided to talk the matter over with her and see if she wanted to continue with the Jewish Family Service. It was explained that the next step, if both wanted help, would be a joint interview to arrange for appointment times, etc. Following that, they would be seen separately during the course of the help given them.

In considering this interview, one sees that the introduction of the second marriage partner raises problems as well as solves some. When Mr. Brown came in to see the worker, he knew that his wife had already talked to her. Therefore, to the natural resistance he might have about coming to a stranger for help with a personal problem is added suspicion as to how fair a hearing he can expect for his own point of view. The worker meets this by, first, bringing his suspicion out into the open, and then showing her acceptance of him as an individual with equal needs and equal rights to her consideration. She shows him, too, that just as she has not been on his wife's side, so she will not be on his side either. I cannot stress strongly enough both the difficulty and the need for the social worker not to side with either party against the other. Unless the worker and her help can be really objective and uninvolved, it cannot be of maximum usefulness.

At the same time, there are few roles in social work that are harder to maintain than an impartial role in a marital problem. Both of the clients involved use every trick and device at their command to win the worker to their side so that they can force the other person to change while they remain untouched. However, since the problem in relationship is essentially one of a new balance, action by the worker on the side of one

against the other will never lead to a better permanent balance. It will, instead, distort the existing balance even more.

One week later, Mr. and Mrs. Brown came in by appointment to see the worker. The worker saw Mrs. Brown for a moment alone. As soon as she sat down, she said, "It's different. I don't know how or why, but it is different." When asked what the difference was, she was vague and unsure. She was also undecided about continuing. She put the decision up to the case worker and her husband. Did the worker think he wanted to continue? But even though she was unsure about continuing, it had a great deal of meaning for her that he was ready to give up some of his precious, free time, to come with her to the Jewish Family Service. She said that, "really, if he comes here, it's giving her some of his time, because it is for their marital difficulty."

When Mr. Brown joined them, his wife told him in a challenging way that she was willing to continue with the agency. He replied quietly that he was too. The worker then tried to plan with them regarding a regular weekly appointment for each. A new difficulty arose because of Mr. Brown's working hours. His day off shifted from week to week and he had to arrange, too, to stay at home with the children when his wife came to the agency. Mrs. Brown began to nag him saying, "see, maybe you don't want to come back." With some impatience he replied that he did want to continue; "did she?" After further argument, they finally worked out a time that would suit both of them.

There was also some discussion as to how long the contact with the agency would continue. When told by the worker that generally two or three

months was needed, Mrs. Brown seemed aghast that it should take so long.

One notes how the joint interview provides a living example of a couple, the Browns, in conflict trying to cooperate around arranging appointment times for help. The very fact that they had come in together had meaning for Mrs. Brown, as she lets us know. At the same time, in their fight with one another, we get a vivid picture of the way they probably relate to each other at home. Furthermore, we find that Mrs. Brown is upset at the idea of a contact with the agency that might last several months.

How are we to put these seemingly divergent facts together? They can be understood in part, only by taking into account the basic psychological factor, in which all psychological help is rooted. There are deep-lying wells of positive strength within every normal human being, which he calls on in his struggle for change and towards health. These feelings are covered by the negative emotions that overlay them after a period of personal conflict, such as a marital problem provides. When these negative emotions can be expressed and are thereby drained off, even momentarily, as they have been here, the positive feelings penetrate through to consciousness. The sense of sudden improvement that follows provides a danger point in the treatment process, however, for this improvement in relationship comes about, as in the Brown case, just as the client begins to become conscious of what she is letting herself in for by taking help from the agency. It is a moment when, if the client is not helped to stay, she often decides to leave well enough alone and terminates the helping process. It is apt to be a danger point for us, as workers, too. Just as for the client, this first evidence of movement and change points to an easy and com-

plete success, and often, after the strain and effort of getting started, the worker is all too ready to rest on her laurels and rejoice in a completed and successful case.

In the continued contact with Mr. and Mrs. Brown, Mr. Brown was helped to recognize increasingly the fact that his wife had her problems, also. He began to see that taking care of a household was a full time job from which one might need a change. As he said, it had been months since they had had a date together. He considered with the social worker various alternatives which would help his wife without having to give up his one free day a week. He thought of having a relative in to care for the children. He also thought of hiring a sitter to stay with the children. None of these solutions, however, satisfied him in themselves. Finally, after much inner struggle, he came to see that it wasn't altogether his wife's job to stay at home and raise the children. It hurt him to realize that what he had been doing made it seem as though his family was not important enough for him to give up some of his own time for them. Ultimately, he worked out a compromise by which he gave up his free day every other week, and arranged for his mother to take over the care of the children from time to time, so that Mrs. Brown and he could go out together.

This period was a difficult one for Mrs. Brown, for she was too insecure a person to be really patient. However, as she saw the efforts her husband was making to improve their marriage, the warm feeling she once had for him began to return. She also began to realize that his job was really a dangerous and a taxing one, and that he did need some time by himself for relaxation. The change in Mr. and Mrs. Brown's marriage then began to show itself in many

aspects of their life together. They stopped quarreling. Their sexual problem, which Mrs. Brown had mentioned in her first interview, not only disappeared entirely, but their sexual adjustment actually became more satisfactory than it had ever been before.

When, in the course of this helping process, Mr. and Mrs. Brown began to try, haltingly, to put their new understanding and feeling for each other into action, the worker accepted that the end of help for them was in sight. I cannot begin to describe the feeling of excitement and gratification that a couple like the Browns experience when the readiness of each to please the other is met, not by a rebuff, but by a positive response.

In their last interview, the thing that seemed to trouble Mrs. Brown was the fact that only she and her husband, and the worker, knew how much help they had received. She decided that she would write a letter to the person in charge of the office to let her know too. In the end, she and her husband decided to write to the worker and to the executive to express their thankfulness for the help they had received. I shall give you their letters in full, for they describe a personal conviction about the help this family received in a way that no technical explanation of mine could possibly begin to convey:

"Dear Mrs. G. Henry's hours have been changed and so I cannot keep my appointment with you on December 4th. It was to have been our last one for the present time; the next one a month or two later. I don't know how to thank you for all you have done, and you have done wonders for us. I shall miss these weekly conferences with you. Not only did they help, but I found them most interesting. I have known you but a few weeks, yet all my life I shall carry

the image of you with me. Your kindness and understanding are forever enduring. There are some people you can see over and over again daily—continually—and yet they leave no impression; they are quickly forgotten. But knowing you was like drinking from a well of knowledge and goodness, a well one seldom comes upon the road of life. A pity that one cannot pitch one's tent near such a well and drink daily. I have had but a few draughts, yet the taste will remain with me forever. You are a wonderful person. It is good to know that you do such humane work, because then many will know you and surely will profit by your kindness and understanding. You seek to find the good in them and thus, you destroy as much as possible the evil in their lives. Thank you for sharing your precious time and thoughts with us and for helping remove so many obstacles in our path of life. Thank you very much."

The following letter was sent to the agency's executive:

"I want to compliment your organization on the magnificent work it is doing. My husband and I have been conferring for the past few weeks or more, with Mrs. G. of A. district. Our marital troubles at the time seriously threatened our marriage. Today, it is proverbially as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar, and we put it all to the excellent work of Mrs. G. To go to outside help for the solving of marital problems is very difficult and, indeed, humiliating. You cannot imagine with what relief and utterly without repression one is able to converse with Mrs. G. She has done wonders for us and undoubtedly has for many others. We cannot be grateful enough and so we write to you to show our appreciation. We thank you for the wonderful direction with which you run this organization and the Jewish Family

Service itself, for the work it is doing in this field and no doubt in many others."

Thus we see how, out of prosaic day to day adjustments in living, fundamental changes in the marriage relationship of a normal couple can be brought about. Here, too, is illustrated how a solution to a marital conflict was achieved through the close cooperation of two agencies, the Domestic Relations Court and the Jewish Family Service. Individuals who were so alienated from their marriage partner previously that they could not discuss a common problem together have been helped to settle their marital differences in a more mature fashion. Out of the change in relationship achieved has come not only a sounder marriage, but possibly deep rooted changes in personality. The change carries with it, too, not only the healing of old wounds, but a hope of preventing new ones.

I do not wish to leave the impression, based on this material, that we are equally effective in helping all fam-

ilies. What is true is that we believe we are beginning to evolve a method for being increasingly helpful in such cases, and this we feel is significant and important. The problem of marital discord is, as I have indicated, an enormous one. Today, when one third of all marriages in the United States end in divorce, there can be no question of the amount of help needed. Social work, I realize, cannot take over and presume to solve the whole problem. Social work can play an important part, however. If it is to do so efficiently then each functional field within social work must strive to understand and define its role in relation to the others. I hope I have helped show the role of the private family agency in relation to one other type of social work—the probation worker in the Domestic Relations Court. I trust, too, I have helped you understand the particular method developed by the Jewish Family Service to meet the challenge presented by marital conflict.