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## RECREATIONAL COUNSELLING: A NEW AND NECESSARY COUNSELLOR FUNCTION

More and more we hear about the approaching twenty or thirty-hour work week. There are a great many implications for the counsellor developing out of the shorter work week. One such implication which is not receiving sufficient concern and investigation is the counsellor's role (if any) in working with his counsellees on how they might make use of their extra leisure time in the most personally rewarding and socially useful way. One must wonder whether the long-standing educational goal of "worthy use of leisure time" may not become more and more of a pressing reality for the schools.

It might prove useful to pose and then discuss a few questions relevant to the counsellor's possible role in the area of leisure time use.

*What kind of a role might it be?* Historically, the counsellor has always played a major role in occupational and educational planning. Why could he not play a *similar* role in "recreational planning"? Why could he not integrate the three types of planning? In fact, when one considers the growing importance of recreation even today, one must wonder whether the counsellor, if he is considering the "whole" person, can in fact ignore recreational planning any longer.

*How might such a role be implemented?* Here we have several intriguing possibilities:

a. Why not develop a "recreational file," much like the occupational file, except that the major divisions, subdivisions, and the contents would all relate to recreational and leisure-time activities? Such files could be perused, checked out, and updated in much the same way as are occupational files today.

b. Could we develop and utilize some type of a specific "recreational inventory" which might be used by the counsellor and counsellee in further investigating and refining the counsellee's recreational interests? Such an inventory might be developed along the lines of occupational inventories and, in fact, may even be integrated with such inventories. Occupational inventories in use now do give some insights (usually indirect) into recreational and leisure-time interests. Inventories which include direct or indirect references to use of leisure time should (1) be expanded to include *more* areas and (2) be developed with the consideration in mind that in the future one's leisure time will far outstrip in *time* and possibly even in *importance* one's time spent in gainful employment.

c. Personality factors of the counsellee would need to be investigated in recreational planning just as much as in occupational planning.

d. When considering how to implement such a role it might be wise to investigate into the methods and techniques utilized by rehabilitation personnel, in particular the occupational, physical, and recreational therapists.

*How might such a role be integrated into the overall school curriculum?* Here the counsellor might:

a. Encourage the development of in-school or after-school classes or activities that are directly related to leisure-time activities (i.e., reading appreciation, hobby training, physical conditioning, travel, creative art, and music appreciation).

b. Where new courses or activities cannot be instituted, work with subject teachers to develop ways that units in leisure-time activities related to the subject might be included in the subject areas (i.e., integrating travel information and techniques into history or geography classes). Such a plan sounds similar to occupational units in subject matter areas.

Many other such questions might be posed. One thing is for certain: the counsellor of tomorrow will play different roles than today's counterpart. Past experience has shown us that as the counsellor's role has evolved it has become more complex, not less; it has expanded to include the new elements that typically evolve with a changing society, rather than ignoring those elements. It has been the purpose of this article to suggest that the counsellor of today must be vitally aware of the growing importance that leisure-time and recreational activities will play in the life of tomorrow's counsellor. It was further suggested that tomorrow's counsellor might integrate into his guidance program an organized program of recreational counselling, either distinct from or coordinated with the occupational counselling program.

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## DEATH OF THE COUNSELOR

Until recently, speculation about the future of the counselling and guidance profession has been a pleasant, if not exciting pastime. Gilbert Wrenn's *The Counselor in a Changing World* (1962) reflected a note of considerable optimism for the future of the profession. For those who comprehended its import, Wrenn's views constituted a tremendous challenge. Conspicuously absent in the book, however, was the admonition that to remain vital, the profession eventually would have to leave "Easy Street." It is becoming blatantly obvious that the survival of the profession is contingent upon facing and coping with present realities and future probabilities. In other words, the profession may be no longer blessed with the prospects of continued growth and expansion, but instead may be facing a non-glorious extinction.