

McGill University

TRAVELERS AID SERVICE TO RUNAWAY CHILDREN

by

Mary E. King

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment  
of the Requirements for the degree  
of  
Master of Social Work.

Montreal, August, 1951

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## PREFACE

This study of Travelers Aid work with runaway children was undertaken by the writer following a year of experience in the Travelers Aid Society of Wilmington, Delaware, U.S.A., where the writer is currently employed as a caseworker.

The writer wishes to express appreciation to Miss Elisabeth O. Johnston, Executive Director of the agency, not only for her co-operation in making agency files available to the writer, but especially for her sustained interest and encouragement.

To Miss Florence Christie, thesis adviser, and to Miss Eva R. Younge, Research Director of McGill University School of Social Work, go the writer's sincere thanks and appreciation for their valuable counsel and helpful direction.

Finally, the writer wishes to thank Mrs. Betty Blackwell who was responsible for typing this material.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is the role of Travelers Aid Society (1) in relation to the runaway child. Since it is not possible to evaluate any service to children without also considering them in relation to their environment, T.A. service to the families of runaways must be considered as an integral part of this study.

A juvenile runaway, as defined by T.A. practice, is a person under 18 years of age who is traveling without the consent of parents or guardian. This definition conforms with the legal definition for the state of Delaware, U.S.A., where this study is being undertaken, as stated in the Delaware Code. There is some variation in the fact that, legally, males under 17 years of age are considered to be minors. Females are considered to be minors until they reach the age of 18. This law varies from state to state, so that it is commonly accepted in T.A. that a person under 18 is a minor.

The purpose of this study is threefold. First, there appears to be a lack of material on work with runaways within the T.A. field, in so far as the writer has been able to ascertain. Secondly, the study, which has been undertaken with the consent and interest of the Travelers Aid Society of Wilmington, Delaware, may hopefully serve to clarify the convictions and practices of this particular agency in relation to this particular group of clients. This study also stems from the writer's own personal interest in work with juveniles due to previous experience in child placement agencies and from training in social work which was related to this area.

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(1) Hereafter referred to as T.A.

There are many studies relating to juvenile delinquents which have been made by child guidance clinics, juvenile courts and other child welfare agencies. These studies, however, are much broader in scope, and are not related to the runaway as such. This thesis is not concerned with the runaway primarily as a delinquent, although the writer recognizes that running away is a form of delinquency. The writer is concerned primarily with the kind of casework help which may be given to the runaway child and to his family as they are clients of T.A. Although it is impossible to separate this one problem from the total situation, it is around this particular problem that casework help may be given by a Travelers Aid Society. Interwoven in the caseworker's thinking are concepts which are related to psychology and to legal interpretation of the situation, but it is the primary purpose of this study to evaluate to what extent casework help may be of service to the runaway and to his family as it may be offered within the function of a particular agency and as it applies to a specific situation.

As background for this study, the writer will describe the main functions of T.A., the setting which is peculiar to this kind of agency, as well as some of the problems which are inherent in this setting.

The main focus of this study will be on how the T.A. worker may help the runaway child to understand the problems which initiated the situation, to express his feeling in relation to this, and to see what his responsibility has been in this. Consideration will be given also as to how the family of the runaway may be helped to an understanding of the child's need to leave home since this is usually related to

an underlying problem, the parents need to be helped to recognize this problem and their part in it.

The writer wishes to examine the current practice of the agency in which the study is being undertaken in its work with runaways and their families, the effectiveness of this service in so far as it may be determined, and also the strengths and weaknesses of this service.

The scope of the study is, therefore, definitely limited to current practice of a particular agency in relation to the service offered to a specific group of clients, that is, the runaway and his family. No attempt will be made to evaluate the service of the T.A. field as a whole to runaways, nor even that of other T.A. agencies in relation to difference or similarities of practice.

During the three year period from November 1947 to November 1950, covered by this study, 70 runaways were referred or applied personally to the T.A. Society of Wilmington, Delaware. All of the case materials presented in this study have been extracted from these 70 closed cases; all of the statistical materials are drawn from these cases, and all tables are based on the total sample unless otherwise indicated.

It seems important to note here that in the majority of cases used in this study Wilmington T.A. Society is the initiating, or primary, agency; that is, it is the agency which worked with the runaway who was picked up in Wilmington. Only in a small number of cases, namely 15.7 per cent, was Wilmington T.A. Society the secondary agency, that is the agency which worked with the family of the runaway who had been picked up in another state. This means, therefore, that there is a limited amount of material available regarding the work with the



families of runaways, and, therefore, the focus of this study is on work with the runaway himself. Despite the fact that the information in the records used for this study is adequate in most cases, the writer was further limited in evaluating the final outcome of many situations because of lack of reports on this from secondary agencies.

The materials extracted from the case records include data on the child's age, sex, schooling, color and reasons for running away. The data on the families includes marital status, financial status, geographic location and setting and the parents evaluation of the problem. The writer will also attempt to analyse the casework process in an effort to determine the effectiveness of the help given to the client. Such a study naturally involves an analysis of the sources of referrals to T.A. and of referrals made by T.A. to other agencies.

Limited use is made of secondary material such as annual reports from the Detention Home. The writer has also availed herself of the thinking of current authorities in the files of casework, psychology, psychiatry and other related files.

The main body of the thesis has been organized in the following manner:

The first chapter will be devoted to a description of the T.A. setting and general functions, as well as to a brief description of other agencies in the community which are involved in work with runaways.

The next chapter will deal with statistical material relating to the personal, familial and home background information about the sample group of runaways. It will also include an analysis of the reasons given by the runaway for his behavior.

The following chapter will consist of a presentation of the

problems which arise in working with the runaway, especially in the casework area. Included in this chapter will be a consideration of the casework principles and tools which are an effective means of help to the runaway.

A somewhat more limited section will then be devoted to a description of work with the families of runaways, the problems involved in this, and an evaluation of the kind of help which can be given to them.

The last chapter will be devoted to a summary of findings and conclusions drawn from the preceeding chapters, with recommendations for possible improvements in T.A. service. Throughout the analysis casework material will be used to illustrate pertinent points, and the material thus presented will be interpreted and analysed.

## Chapter II      DESCRIPTION OF TRAVELERS AID SETTING AND FUNCTION

The Travelers Aid Society of Wilmington, Delaware, is a member of the National Travelers Aid Association. This association was formed to "maintain a chain of standard service" (1) among the individual societies. There are 108 Travelers Aid Societies throughout the United States, and 928 Cooperating Representatives in the United States, Canada and other foreign countries.

T.A. is an organized social agency specifically established to prevent or relieve the troubles which may befall a "moving person".

(2) It originated one hundred years ago, when its founder, Bryan Mulanphy, a citizen of St. Louis, Missouri, bequeathed his fortune for the establishment of an agency to assist emigrants to the far west.

The term "moving person" may apply to an individual who is traveling; it may apply to a person new in the community, but not yet established in terms of a job, home or legal residence. It is also used in a limited sense to describe a resident of a community who has a problem which is related to movement, such as planning for the child, aged or handicapped person who is traveling alone. "Thus one may be a moving person in the physical sense, in the psychological sense, or in the sense that the community imposes the status". (3) The characteristics which differentiate the moving person from other individuals in need are as follows: he is a traveler or stranger to the community;

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(1) Statement on the Function of Travelers Aid.  
N.T.A.A., New York: 1945.

(2) Ibid. p.2.

(3) Ibid. p.3.

he is frequently confronted with an emergency situation; he lacks the usual resources and supportive ties of his own community. His problem may be related to any number of factors such as health, age, financial circumstances or personal relationships. It may be related to his adjustment to a new community, or movement to another community. Or, it may be related to such general social conditions as economic depression, war or large scale migration.

Any person regardless of race, age, or creed may apply to T.A. for assistance. His request will be explored with him, and the agency will determine with him what service, including referral, it has to offer which will meet his need. The request must come within the function of T.A., and the client must be eligible for assistance and must be able to work within agency limits.

T.A. clients may be described in the following categories:

1. Travelers—juveniles alone, traveling with parental consent; aged; handicapped; inexperienced travelers all of whom may need assistance in formulating and carrying through travel plans.
2. Runaways, both juvenile and adult.
3. Newcomers to the community.
4. Migrants, male, female and families who are moving about in search of better work opportunities or living conditions, or just moving about.
5. Residents of the local community who are stranded elsewhere.
6. Unclassified. Those clients who do not come within any of the above categories.

Travelers Aid Societies are differentiated from Cooperating Representatives in that the Societies are organizations specifically established to do T.A. work. Cooperating Representatives are agencies or individuals who have agreed to cooperate in T.A. intercity service upon request. The majority of Cooperating Representatives are Red Cross

Chapters, Public Welfare agencies, Young Women's Christian Association members, and various private family and child welfare agencies. The responsibility of the Cooperating Representative is limited to appointment service (meeting clients and helping them at points of transfer), and out-of-town inquiry service. The latter involves securing social history through contacts with relatives or other agencies which is to be used with the client, and in participation in casework planning.

Intercity service is defined in the T.A. Directory of Intercity Service as "the means whereby Travelers Aid Societies and Cooperating Representatives in two or more cities work together in developing or carrying through plans which have been worked out with the client or those responsible for him". (1) In relation to the runaway, it means simply that one T.A. works with the child, while another T.A. or Cooperating Representative works with the child's family or guardian.

T.A. Societies are, when possible, located in a place where travelers are most likely to be, such as, railroad stations, bus terminals, airports, steamship piers. When it is possible, the T.A. information booth is conspicuously located in the terminal so that the characteristic T.A. lamp is readily visible to any traveler in distress.

The Travelers Aid Society of Wilmington, Delaware, is located in the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. It is a private agency and a member of the United Community Fund. Although it is affiliated with National Travelers Aid Association, the Wilmington agency is autonomous and has its own locally elected board of directors. It is a relatively small agency, but adequate for a population of 112,504, in a city which

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(1) Travelers Aid Directory of Intercity Service.  
N.T.A.A., New York: July, 1950.

is not a major transportation center. The paid staff consists of the executive director, two case workers and the office secretary. The total caseload per year during the past four years has ranged from 598 to 738 cases.

The city of Wilmington is located almost exactly half-way between New York and Washington. It is a wealthy city, having been largely developed by the DuPont industries. The main industries are chemicals, fisheries, ships, textiles and poultry farms, much of which is centered in the lower part of the state. Apart from the city of Wilmington, the rest of the state is largely agricultural. Unlike New York, Washington or Philadelphia, Wilmington is not a major point of transfer for either railroad, bus or air lines. This circumstance partly accounts for the relatively small size of the agency caseload.

The information booth in Wilmington T.A. is staffed by a group of able, women volunteers (1) who donate thousands of hours per year to this service. The volunteer at the desk is an important person. She is the first contact the client has with the agency, and, as such, she needs to be friendly and interested in each person who comes to the desk, and capable of identifying a real need for casework service beneath the client's sometimes superficial request for an incidental service. If the client then wishes to discuss his problem with one of the workers, he is conducted to the inner office, which is conveniently located adjacent to the booth. The other part of the volunteer's job is to answer quickly and accurately the innumerable questions concerning

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(1) Volunteers are given a period of training in the agency by a member of the Board who was formerly a social worker. The volunteer program is active and very well defined. This is a local, rather than a national situation.

transportation and housing facilities, city direction, helping to locate relatives and friends, etc.

Because T.A. Societies are located in transportation centers, the local personnel, including station master, porters, conductors, ticket agents and others are familiar with, and usually well related to T. A. service. They are often able to recognize the traveler in distress, especially the runaway, and refer him to T.A.

The location of T.A. in these centers provides easy accessibility for the client, but this very situation also requires flexibility and "immunity" to distraction on the part of the staff. The constant movement in the station, the noise of arriving and departing trains, and the usual hustle and bustle of a travel center are all a normal part of the T.A. setting.

Then too, the fact must be considered that, in most instances, the client is a moving person, temporarily halted in his movement by circumstances or personal inadequacies. He is enroute to a destination and has the natural desire to reach it with the least inconvenience and delay. He is, more or less, severed from his past, and not yet a part of his future. Because of this very fact he is temporarily free of responsibility for either. Yet, when he comes to T.A. he is expected to assume responsibility, to the extent that he is able, not only for the present, but also for those parts of the past and the future which are related to it. He is drawn back into reality to look at what his movement means. The client sometimes has a struggle in accepting and working with this requirement of the agency. This struggle may express itself in various ways: unwillingness to share

his plans, evasiveness, dissimulation, pressuring of one kind or another. All of which must be met and worked through if the client is to be helped to a sound solution of his problem.

The following chapters which are devoted to T.A. work with the runaway and with his family will illustrate T.A. function and the application of many of the principles described above.



Chapter III

THE RUNAWAY CHILD

It is basic to T.A. philosophy that simply returning the runaway to his home is not a solution to whatever problem or problems cluminated in his running away. That the runaway should be returned to his own home is right and necessary, except in extreme situations where there is real evidence of neglect or abuse and where court action is necessary to protect the child. However, the routine procedures employed by the police in some places in returning the runaway to his home when return fare is received offers little opportunity to either the child or his family to face this whole problem with all its conditioning circumstances and to get help with it if they wish to do so. There is no assurance that the situation will not be repeated at a later date since nothing is done to help the parents or child effect change in the basic conditions which led up to it.

When a minor, as defined legally, is picked up in the state of Delaware as a suspect runaway, or on any other charge, he must be placed in the Juvenile Detention Home until a plan is worked out for his return home, or until a formal hearing is held in the Family Court and an appropriate plan is made for him. Since the Family Court does not have jurisdiction over non-resident children, the above procedure applies only in so far as the runaway must be placed in the Detention Home until he can be returned to his own community. Police procedure provides that the families or guardians of all runaways who are picked up by them must be notified immediately of the minor's apprehension.

Frequently, the parents' response to such notification is to wire money for the child's return, or to come for him. This affects to some extent what T.A. is able to do with the child in situations which

have been referred to them, since the runaway is then apt to feel that the crisis is over, and that all that remains to be done is to plan for his return journey to his home. Under these circumstances, it is often difficult to hold the child to any realistic consideration of his problem since he already has one foot on the train, as it were.

Since the large majority of referrals of runaways to T.A. are made by the Detention Home, and indirectly by the police, it seems important to consider the relationship which presently exists between each of these authoritative agencies and Wilmington T.A.S.

As recently as 1949, the National Travelers Aid Association published a report on inter-agency agreements between T.A.S. and other agencies in T.A. Region 11, of which Wilmington T.A. is a member.

(1) The agreement with the Detention Home is described as follows:

"Wilmington T.A. refers to the Detention Home runaway minors who first come to attention of T.A. Detention Home refers to T.A. runaway minors who have been placed in the Home by the police (agreement has been made by the police and T.A. whereby the police pick up the runaway, place him in the Detention Home and teletype minor's home town that local T.A. has been notified.)"

This agreement is sound in its implication of responsible planning for the runaway. The statistics relating to sources of referral, which will be presented at a later point in this study, will point up a noticeable discrepancy between actual practice and the theoretical agreement, and this gives rise to the question of where the responsibility for this situation really lies.

The Detention Home in Wilmington is, as previously indicated,

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(1) Williams, Roberta C. Analysis of Intake Statements and Inter-Agency Agreements Between T.A.S. and Other Local Agencies-in Region 11., New York: May, 1949.

the main resource for the care and shelter of non-resident runaways pending return to their own communities. It is an old building, homey in its external appearance, with facilities for thirteen children of mixed sexes and race. A recent survey of these facilities by the National Probation and Parole Association (1) has revealed that the physical set-up is inadequate, the staff overburdened, and that only custodial care can be provided. The matron and her assistant, with the help of one cook, are trying to carry out an heroic job under most difficult circumstances. They are warm, understanding persons, but they lack orientation to social work philosophy and skills. They offer better care to the younger, less disturbed child, than they are able to give to older boys and girls who are presenting serious behavior problems. Taking all these points into consideration, it is not surprising that when the home is crowded beyond normal capacity, as it often is, referrals of runaways to T.A. are made on the basis of getting the child out of the home as quickly as possible, rather than with any real understanding of the possible need for casework service.

In the Annual Report for 1951, Miss Elisabeth O. Johnston, Executive Director of Wilmington, T.A.S., commented on the apparent lack of understanding existing in the community regarding T.A. service to runaway children. A look at Table No. 1, the source of referrals of the 70 cases on which this study is based bears out the validity of Miss Johnston's statement.

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(1) Detention of Children in Delaware. A survey by the National Probation and Parole Association, New York 1951

Table No. 1. SOURCE OF REFERRALS OF 70 RUNAWAYS

TO T.A.S.		
Source of Referral	Number of Cases	
	Total	Percentage
	70	100.0
Detention Home	25	35.7
Transportation Personnel	29	12.8
Other T.A.S.	8	11.4
Family Court	7	10.0
Personal Application	4	5.7
State Police	4	5.7
City Police	4	5.7
Interested Persons	3	4.2
Prisoners Aid Society	2	2.8
State Board of Welfare	1	1.4
Y.W.C.A.	1	1.4
Relatives	2	2.8

A total of 47.1 per cent, or 33 cases, were referred by the Detention Home and the city and state police during the three year period in question. Twenty of these referrals were made by the Detention Home, and the city and state police made four referrals each. Yet in the same period, a total of 267 runaways (1) were placed in the Detention Home, pending plans for return to their homes or place of abode. This means that a proportion of only 12.3 per cent of all runaways picked up in this community during the three period were referred to T.A. for casework service. All of these children were non-residents, and therefore, they could not appropriately be referred to local agencies, other than T.A., because of their status as non-residents, even if such other agencies were equipped to offer similar inter-city case work planning.

(1) The above statistics were extracted from the Annual Reports of the Detention Home for Juveniles of the State of Delaware, 1946 through 1950.

As indicated in Table No. 1, the remaining 52.9 per cent of referrals derive from the following sources: Transportation Personnel, 12.3 per cent; Other T.A.S., 11.4 per cent; Family Court 10.0 per cent; Personal application by the runaway, 5.7 per cent; Interested Persons, 4.2 per cent; Relatives, 2.8 per cent; Prisoners Aid Society, 2.8 per cent; State Board of Welfare, 1.4 per cent; Y.W.C.A., 1.4 per cent.

Of the total number of children referred, 15.7 per cent were residents of the state of Delaware.

The following tables present an opportunity to examine the available statistics on the runaway himself in terms of age, sex, race, personal and familial background.

Table No. 2. SEX AND AGE DISTRIBUTION OF  
RUNAWAY CHILDREN

Age in Years (a)	Number of Children	
	Male	Female
7-8	2	
8-9		
9-10		
10-11		
11-12		
12-13	4	
13-14	2	1
14-15	11	2
15-16	11	5
16-17	16	7
17-18	4	5
Totals	50	20

(a) Refers here to age at last birthday.

From the above table, we note that the greatest concentration is in the fourteen to seventeen year spread. The largest number in any single category is 16 in the sixteen to seventeen year group. The proportion of males to females is two and one half to one. The greatest concentration of males is in the fourteen to seventeen years group, while the females are concentrated in the fifteen to eighteen years group.

Except for the two seven year olds, there are no runaways under twelve years of age. Of the total number of children, only 16 were negro. The breakdown of age and sex closely paralleled that of the white children, with the major difference being in the fact that both of the seven year olds were negro.

From Tables No. 1 and 2, we may conclude that the very large majority of the children thus studied were in their adolescent years. Since adolescence is often a time of difficult adjustment, this conclusion is not surprising. The second apparent conclusion to be drawn from these statistics is that boys have a greater tendency toward this particular form of delinquency than do girls. This may be related to the greater activity and freedom which is allowed to the male as part of the socially acceptable norm. It does not imply that adolescent girls have less problem in making a satisfactory adjustment to their physical and emotional maturing, but it may imply that they are less inclined to seek an answer to their problems in running away from home, at least at the adolescent age level.

Runaways come to Wilmington from a wide variety of places. They come from the nearby states of Pennsylvania and Maryland, and from as far away as Ohio, Massachusetts and Georgia. The majority come from the areas north of Delaware: Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts. These children have not set out for Delaware, as a general rule, but simply happened to be picked up in this state. A number seem to be headed for such far away places as Texas and Florida because of the popular conceptions of adventure and glamour attached to these places. This applies also to runaways from Delaware some of whom actually get as far as Florida.

A total of 86.5 per cent of non-resident runaways come from urban areas (1), the remaining 13.5 per cent are from homes in a rural area. 63.6 per cent of runaways from the state of Delaware were residents of Wilmington, the rest were from rural sections of the state.

It is not possible to present absolutely accurate data regarding the economic status of the runaways' families, since income is seldom listed on the face sheets, although occupation of the breadwinner frequently is listed. Table No. 3, which follows, is based on the assumed social-financial status of the families in relation to their occupations. These statistics were computed from a total of sixty-five cases. Two of the children were living in institutions, and in three cases no data was recorded on the family occupations.

ECONOMIC-SOCIAL STATUS OF PARENTS, RELATIVES OR GUARDIAN  
WITH WHOM RUNAWAY LIVES

<u>Status</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Total	65	100.0
Low	13	20.0
Low Average	27	41.5
Average	21	32.3
High Average	4	6.1

It is immediately apparent that the large majority of runaways come from average (32.3 per cent) and low average (41.5 per cent) groups. 20.0 per cent fall within the low category; while 6.1 per cent are in the high average group.

The families of runaways range in size from one to fourteen children. Eleven of the runaways were only children, the most in a

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(1) Urban areas are those places which are listed in the 1950 Edition of the World Atlas as being incorporated cities or towns. Those not so listed fall into the rural category.

single category; the next largest being ten cases in which the family included four children. The largest number of children in any one family was fourteen, occurring only once. The average for the total group is 6.5 children per family. However, the majority were concentrated in the "one to four children" range.

Since one of the aims of service to the runaway is prevention of recurrence of this kind of behavior, analysis of the statistics on the percentage of repeaters among the 70 cases studied is appropriate to this section.

No data on this subject were recorded on 24 out of the 70 cases. This is a rather alarming lack, if one feels that this particular point is of importance in coming to an understanding of the runaway's problem. Of the remaining 46 cases, 67.3 per cent were running away for the first time. Eight point six per cent were running away for the second time; 10.8 per cent were running away for the third time; and 13.0 per cent more than three times previously.

Only 32.8 per cent of the total number of runaways were alone when picked up by the police. The remaining 67.2 per cent were with one or more companions—10 pairs and 6 groups of three. It is interesting to note that the boys show a far greater tendency to seek companionship in running away; only four girls were involved in two situations. This may possibly be related to the more adventurous spirit and the wanting to be part of "the gang" that is typical of teen-age boys. However, we cannot assume that this is necessary the basis for the boys' running away until we have evaluated carefully the motives shared by the boy and his family.



#### Chapter IV. WHY DO CHILDREN RUN AWAY FROM HOME?

This chapter will be devoted to a consideration of the reasons for the child's running away, as these reasons relate to problems which exist within the child, his home and the community in which he lives. Evaluation of the reasons given by the child is correlated with the material presented by the parents and the final analysis of these two, sometimes divergent, points of view is the case workers evaluation of the total situation. Two cases will be presented to illustrate the extremes of motivation, the first case representing a fairly simple situation, and the second case representing an extremely complex problem. (1)

The reasons for children running away are as varied and as complex as the reasons for any other form of delinquency, or socially unacceptable behavior. The reasons exist within the child and within his environment, especially in his relationships to others: family, school, the community in which he lives. The forces of environment react on the child's personality, affecting his development and adjustment. Each child reacts in an individual manner to these environmental stimuli.

Few situations are as simple as that of Johnny K. who ran away on an angry impulse, following an argument with his mother over eating cereal for breakfast. Johnny wanted to show his family that he was getting to be an adult, and that he could not be bossed.

Johnny K. 10/2/50. Telephone call from Mrs. B., Matron of the Detention Home, referring Johnny K., age 14, white, runaway from New Valley, N.Y. The police had teletyped

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(1) All case material is taken from the writer's own cases unless otherwise indicated.

his parents, and Mrs. K. had telephoned the Detention Home to say that no one could come for Johnny, and asking if it would be possible to have another plan worked out for his return. Mrs. B. had told her that this could be worked out through T.A.S. The only information that Mrs. B. could give us was that Johnny had had a fight with his mother before leaving home. She added that Johnny had said that he has a good home and does not really know why he ran away. He left with another boy to go to Texas. This other boy was not picked up with Johnny.

When we met in the Detention Home Johnny gave me a friendly smile, although it was obvious that he was nervous about the interview, and seemed to have been crying recently. He is an attractive youngster, with blue eyes, light brown hair and a nice tan. He is tall and slim. He was wearing a junior size Army suit, which was in bad shape after his trip.

I recognized that Johnny was nervous about the interview, and he guessed he was a bit scared. I explained how T.A. had come to be involved in the situation, and that we would try to work out some plan for his return with him and with his family. I wondered how he felt about going back. Johnny said quite spontaneously that this is what he wants. I told Johnny that I realized that he had probably been asked by others why he had decided to run away, but I wondered if this was something he might be able to talk with me about. Johnny smiled and said that everybody had asked him that. He really did not know why he had left home except that he wanted to go to Texas with his friend, George, to work on a ranch. I agreed that this was something that a lot of boys his age wanted to do, but generally they don't leave home without letting their parents know unless they are pretty upset about something. I asked Johnny if he could tell me what had happened to make him decide at that point to leave home. Johnny replied at first that it was really nothing and not even worth mentioning. I said that it might seem like nothing to Johnny right now, but it must have seemed important to him when it happened, otherwise he would not have gone off as he had. After a fairly long silence, Johnny finally said that he had had an argument with his mother. This seemed to be as far as Johnny could go at this point, so I simply suggested that he might feel more like talking about this in our next interview, and left it at that.

The rest of this interview was devoted to having Johnny tell me something about his home situation, his interests and his feeling about

school, etc. The overall picture was that of a family of good, average background living in a small town. Johnny was in a grade appropriate to his age, and had the normal interests and outlets for a boy of fourteen. He was one of three children. Johnny expressed real warmth in his feeling toward his parents and siblings. He impressed me as being a normally secure, well-adjusted boy, and I felt that he had run away in a moment of anger and resentment, rather than because of any serious problem in his relationships within his family or within the community.

10/3/50..... I wondered if Johnny had thought about our talk yesterday, and if he was feeling that he might be able to tell me a little more about why he had run away. Johnny smiled, somewhat sheepishly, and said he had thought about it, and it was sort of foolish. He guessed he could tell me that the argument with his mother had been over his not wanting to eat cereal for breakfast. I agreed that this was not much to argue about, but thought it must have made him awfully mad since he had decided to go to Texas with George. Johnny said that he had been mad, but then he had gotten over it after he had been away from home for a few hours. I wondered if Johnny thought his parents might be angry, too, about his running away since surely they were concerned about what was happening to him while he was away. Johnny thought they would be angry and worried, and he didn't blame them. He commented that he would have to wait until he is older to travel, and that he had had enough to last him this time. I thought maybe he had learned something from this experience. Johnny replied that he sure had, and he was not going to try it again.

A direct telephone call was made to Johnny's mother since we do not have a T.A. or cooperating representative in his home town. Mrs. K's warmth, interest and concern for Johnny further strengthened my impression that the family relationships were basically sound. She was able to recognize her own, as well as Johnny's responsibility for the disagreement they had had, and felt that this could be worked out

between them on his return. Because of these various factors, referral to an agency in Johnny's own community for follow-up did not seem to be indicated.

The case of Jean R. presents two important differences from the usual situations in work with runaways. The first is the fact that Jean came to T.A. voluntarily, requesting help in finding lodgings. Although it was soon apparent that Jean was a runaway minor, it was within her right to break contact with the agency if she wished to do so. It was not within the function of T.A. to deny this right since it is not an authoritative agency, such as the police or the Detention Home. This is different from T.A. practice some twenty-five years ago, when part of T.A. function was "the apprehension and disposition" (1) of the runaway. This is not to deny that T.A. has the same responsibility as other agencies in the community for the protection and well-being of minors and adults who are unable, because of age, mental incompetency or illness, to care for themselves. If T.A. feels that it is in the best interest of the runaway and the community to have him picked up by the police for protective care, this request is made, but we do not have the right to detain the runaway unless he has been released to our temporary custody by the police or the Detention Home.

The fact that a runaway applies in person for some form of help, albeit disguising his status as a runaway, entitles him to a choice of accepting or rejecting T.A. service on a very different basis than is possible to the runaway who has been picked up by the police and is being held in an authoritative setting. In the latter instance, the runaway may still refuse to discuss his problem with the worker, and reject T.A. help. He does have this choice, but it is a more limited one. The case

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(1) Kimble, G. Eleanor. Apprehension and Disposition of the Runaway, New York: National Association Travelers Aid Societies, 1924.

worker who must work within an authoritative setting, or in relation to such a setting, as the T.A. worker does, needs to be able to help the client to feel that he still has some choice within these limitations. In working with runaways who have already been placed in detention, it seems important to try to help them to understand the difference between the authoritative approach of police and Detention Home and that of T.A. which is not authoritative. This is not easily accomplished, especially when interviews are held in the Detention Home which eliminates even the difference of physical setting.

The runaway who comes to T.A. on his own, for whatever reason, does not have such obvious evidence of any connection between T.A. and the authorities who can stop his flight as when he is seen by the T.A. worker in the Detention Home. Since he frequently has problem in his relationships with adults, this may be carried over into his beginning relationship with the agency, and he may not be able to risk himself in this new relationship. It is also possible that his ability to relate to adults may be so impaired that he may not be able to use the help offered to him.

The responsibility of T.A. in working with the runaway who applies to the agency in person is to first of all attempt to relieve him of the fear that the agency is going to assume an authoritative role; and, secondly to help him to face the fact that as a minor, he is not free to make major decisions without the approval of parents or guardians. This fact is established by law as well as by social custom, and it is a fact with which the minor must live. Having worked this through, the child may then be able to use the opportunity of the contact to discuss in an atmosphere of understanding and permissiveness

his feeling about his home situation, at the same time as he is held to his own responsibility in the situation.

The writer believes that the following excerpts from the case of Jean R. illustrate fairly clearly an application of the principles outlined above.

Jean R. 3/23/50. Jean R., age 17, white, approached the T.A. desk with a request for help in locating a place to stay in Wilmington. She was referred to T.A. by the station porter. Jean is a nice looking young girl, with dark hair, blue eyes and a fair complexion. She appears to be about seventeen or eighteen, but is unusually well poised for her age. She was dressed in good taste. Jean's manner was politely friendly, if somewhat reserved.

The first part of the interview was devoted to a discussion of Jean's request for housing and her plan to continue her schooling in Wilmington, with her mother's approval.

.....I commented that Jean had not mentioned how her father felt about this plan. Jean said that her father did not know about it yet. I wondered if this meant that he would not approve. Jean replied that her father probably would not be concerned. It was obvious that she was finding it hard to discuss the situation. Jean tried to shrug it off by commenting: 'You know what these family squabbles are like'. I wondered if the problem was more than just a 'family squabble', and perhaps it had been bad enough for Jean to want to run away. Jean scoffed at this suggestion, saying that there was no question of her having run away since her mother had known that she was coming to Wilmington....Jean added that no plan had been made for her maintenance while she is in Wilmington. She had \$40.00 with her and planned to get work after school hours....Jean was offered an opportunity to discuss her problem if she wished to do so, but was unable to admit that she had run away, or that there was any basis for her having left home....I told Jean that in view of the fact that she is a minor, we would not be able to help her with her plan to stay here until we could know from her parents that this plan is acceptable to them.

Jean was unwilling to have us make this contact at first, but finally agreed to give us her mother's office telephone number. A call was put through to Mrs. R. with Jean's consent, and with her being aware of the fact that she could leave the office any time she chose to do so. It was only after the call had been put through that Jean was able to admit that she had run away, and that she was able to share the problem which existed in the home situation.

.....She went on to describe her father's behavior. He is given to frequent rages over trifles during which he is likely to beat any member of the family. He drinks often and to excess, and Jean has often seen him completely intoxicated. He is constantly fighting with her mother, using abusive language. Jean put in here that her mother does not shout back, and really has a lot of control in the way she tries to handle the situation. Mr. R. also spends money carelessly, neglects to pay bills, and is otherwise a very irresponsible person. Jean said that sometimes her mother thinks a divorce would be best, but she has never been able to go ahead with this because she feels her husband is a sick person and has no one else on whom he can depend. I wondered how Jean would feel if her parents got a divorce. She did not really know. Sometimes she feels it is the only way that the rest of them are going to be able to have a good family life, and at other times, she feels sorry for her dad and remembers that he used to be a wonderful person. I recognized that Jean would naturally be upset by such scenes as she had described, and that it was enough to make anyone want to run away. I also wondered if she felt that this had solved anything for herself or for her family. Jean supposed that even if she could make a go of it on her own, it would not have solved the problem and she would still be worrying about what was happening at home all the time, and her mother would be worrying about what was happening to her. Jean also felt that because she and her mother are very close they would both be very lonesome if she lived away from home. I asked if Jean had told her mother how she feels about the situation at home. Jean said that her mother knows how she feels, and thinks it might be good for her to get away from home for a while. Her mother had suggested the possibility of Jean's attending the Ursuline convent in Wilmington, but Jean did not

want this. She felt that it would be very hard for her to get used to this kind of life after being used to something very different. I agreed that it would be a hard adjustment for Jean to make. Jean did not see any solution except to return home and put up with the situation until she is old enough to be on her own.

Fortunately, the outlook for Jean's future was brighter than she felt. Mrs. R., who came to Wilmington for Jean, was an intelligent, warm person, fully aware of what her own indecision meant to her children. She was able to accept, at least for thoughtful consideration, the possibility of getting help from a family agency in coming to a decision regarding where her primary responsibility was in relation to her husband and her children. As an immediate step to relieve some of the pressure for Jean, Mrs. R. planned to have her go to her grandmother's home in a nearby town for a visit, and possibly to complete her school year if this could be arranged. This plan met with Jean's approval.

Somewhere in between the two extremes illustrated by the cases just presented fall the majority of situations with which this study is concerned.

At first, almost every runaway who comes to T.A. or who is referred puts his running away on the fact that he wants to go to Texas or Florida or someplace else just because he likes to travel or wants to get a job. Some of the runaways hold to this explanation throughout their contact with the agency. Most runaways, however, are able to share, at least to some extent, their feelings about their home situations and their real reasons for running away.

The majority of runaways expressed problems in their relation-



ships within their own families, as well as problems related to school, personal inadequacies, and unfavorable environment. The following breakdown of the problems presented is based on the incidence of the problem since any given situation may present more than one specific problem.

(a)  
Table No. 4. INCIDENCE OF SPECIFIC PROBLEMS PRESENTED  
BY THE RUNAWAYS

Category	Problem	Incidence
Relationships in Family	Parents lack understanding	12
	Feels unwanted by family	9
	Abused by parents	7
	Quarrels with parents	6
	Friction with step-parent	6
	Parents too strict	6
	"Babied" by parents	2
	Dislikes foster home	2
	Fights with siblings	1
Problems Related to School	Makes poor grades. Wants to work	12
	Wants to attend trade school	3
	Gets into mischief	3
	Truants	2
	Wants to join the service	2
	Rejected because of color	1
Problems in Environment	Parents quarrel constantly	3
	Parents drink excessively	2
	Parent mentally ill	2
	Has to work. Wants school.	2
	Parent in jail	1
	Parents separated	1
	Financial problem	1
Personal Problems	Confused re plans for future	3
	Illegitimately pregnant	2
	Physically handicapped	2

(a) This refers to number of problems.

As indicated by the Table above, the majority of runaways expressed problems which were related to their relationships with parents or guardians. The problems thus presented were focused by the runaway on what he felt the parent was doing, or not doing. A total of 54.1 per cent of all the problems presented fall into this category.

The next largest number of problems discussed by the runaway was related to his adjustment in school. These were expressed mainly in terms of dissatisfaction with school, a sense of failure, and a desire to stop school and go to work. Of the total number of problems presented, 23.9 per cent were in this class.

Nine point three per cent of the problems indicated by the runaways was related to environmental factors, including parental behavior which was not directed toward the runaway, but of great meaning to him. There was only one situation in which the runaway felt that financial insecurity of the family was a major problem, although this is possibly implied in the two situations where the runaway was working and wanted to attend school.

A small proportion of the runaways, 8.2 per cent indicated greatest concern with problems which were personal. This group included two cases of illegitimate pregnancy, and two situations in which the runaway was having difficulty in adjusting to a physical handicap.

It is important to note here that of the total 70 cases studied, only two runaways maintained that no problem whatsoever existed in the home situation, and this was not in agreement with the worker's evaluation of the situation.

As the above material is evaluated, there can be no question but that a very large majority of children run away because of a situation with which they feel unable to cope. For some, such as Johnny K., running away is an act of defiance and self-assertion. For others, such as Jean R., it is an escape from an intolerable situation. Although there is some evidence of pressure from environmental externals

acting as a stimulus to running away, this is certainly not general, and cannot be given the same importance in evaluating motives as is given to the relationships which the runaway has within his family and within the community. The most important conclusion to be drawn from the statistics thus presented is that running away is a symptom of some disturbance within the home situation or within the child. The problem may be fairly simple or it may be very complex, but it does exist for both the runaway and for his family, and it is directly related to his behavior.

It follows quite naturally that analysis of how the runaway may be helped, and what are some of the problems with which the worker must contend in this process will be considered in the next chapter.

Chapter V. PROBLEMS IN WORK WITH RUNAWAYS.

The present chapter is concerned with the problems which may present themselves in work with the runaway. For the purpose of clarification, these problems may be divided into two categories. In the first group are those problems which are related to external factors, such as the agency setting, pressure of time and distance, etc. The second group is related to difficulties which arise in the case work area. It is not possible to separate entirely these two kinds of problems with which the worker must deal since they are closely related to each other, and successful planning depends upon meeting the challenge presented in each area. The two cases to be presented in this section will serve to illustrate both types of problems and the manner in which they may be worked through.

There are certain necessary tools which help the caseworker on the job. Lack of these, or inadequacies in them have some effect on successful planning with the client. The T.A. worker is particularly likely to have to cope with the problem of externals because of the very nature of the setting, and because of the important part played by inter-city planning.

Initial contact with the runaway's family is generally by telephone or wire, offering an office appointment. This is followed by one or two interviews in the office.

The average number of interviews with the runaway is two. There is the initial interview and a follow-up interview. The latter serves the dual purpose of discussing with the child the report from his home community, and that of planning his actual return. If the

situation is very complicated and the family is disinterested or unco-operative, there will naturally be a greater number of interviews with the child.

Travelers Aid is a short-contact agency. Contact with the client may vary from one to several interviews covering a period of time ranging from half an hour to several weeks. The latter is very much the exception, rather than the rule. It is not the writer's contention that work with runaways and their families should involve more than a limited number of interviews, but such work does give rise to the question of how much the worker is affected by various pressures: pressure from the community in which the child is picked up to have him returned to his own community; pressure from the child to be sent back; pressure from the family who want him returned immediately; pressure which the worker may be feeling at the time in other areas of the job. Cumulatively, or singly, these pressures may be hard for the worker to withstand unless she has a sincere conviction regarding the possibility of real help to the runaway in his relationship with T.A., brief as the contact may be, and unless she recognizes that it must be limited both in time and in focus.

Most T.A. Societies and their cooperating representatives answer out-of-town inquiries promptly and helpfully, with, of course, some variation in performance. Telephone calls and telegrams are the major methods of inter-agency communication. The choice of medium depends upon such factors as distance, availability of railroad telephone lines (which are free of cost to some agencies) and the complexity of the situation. Wires are generally of the day-letter variety, since this affords a better opportunity for detailed report at less expense than a straight wire. Letters are seldom used in inter-city planning

in work with runaways, except as they are sent to confirm reports already given, or as follow-up reports on a continued contact with the runaway and his family after he returns to his own community. Although these follow-up letters are required by N.T.A.A. established standards, the writer has found that many agencies which have co-operated with Wilmington T.A. in planning for runaways have failed to meet this responsibility. This is one of the main reasons why it has been difficult to secure adequate material for analysis of work with the families of runaways, as will be seen in a later chapter.

In order to be of maximum help to the runaway, the worker must have an adequate report of the home situation and of the family's feelings toward the child. There is often no T.A. or cooperating representative in the child's home community. This may require a direct contact with the own parents by telephone, which is seldom an entirely satisfactory plan, or it may mean using an agency which is not familiar with the process of work with the families of runaways, and the result is an inadequate report which is of little value in helping the runaway face return to his own home.

Another of the external factors with which the T.A. worker has to cope is the fact that the agency case load is not a "protected" one. This means that clients come in generally without an appointment, especially for the initial interview. Or, if they are referred by another agency, it is generally at a time of crisis when immediate needs have to be met because of the client's lack of personal resources. This results in an extremely uneven intake situation and a great deal of variation in pressure.

Unlike the majority of clients, who apply personally to T.A., or who are referred by other agencies to which they have made application, the runaway does not, except in a few cases, come to T.A. voluntarily. He is picked up by the police, placed in the Detention Home and told that T.A. will plan for his return, all on authoritative basis. He is obliged to return to his own community, either to his family or to another plan, since he is a minor, non-resident, and a dependent person. Even within the authoritative setting thus established, however, the client is still free to accept or reject agency help. He does not have to share his problem with the worker, which would be a recognition of the fact that he is in trouble and needs help. He can, and sometimes does, refuse help. As in other casework relationship, then, we see the joint responsibility of worker and client for "a reciprocal giving and receiving with a purpose". (1)

From the T.A. point of view, the "purpose" of the relationship between the worker and the runaway is not merely to plan the child's return to his own community as quickly as possible. It is also to offer to him, within the limits of a relatively short contact, an opportunity to examine his reasons for running away; to help him to evaluate his part in the home situation which resulted in his flight, as well as the responsibility his family has in it, and, finally, to help him to see how his difficulty can be met in a different, more acceptable way. If there is any indication that the runaway and his family will need continued help from an agency in the home community in working through their problems, the runaway must be told

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(1) Elizabeth O. Johnston, Initial Case Interview.  
Paper delivered at T.A.S. Regional Meeting, Williamsburg, Va.:  
May, 1949, p.1.

that such help will be available upon his return to his own home.

The T.A. worker needs also to use skill and imagination in using with the runaway the information made available by the co-operating agency, since it is on the basis of this information that the child can be helped to face the realities of return to a situation which has not changed over-night, just as the runaway has not changed overnight, but one in which there may be hope for a change. If the runaway's family rejects him, lacks interest or is unco-operative, he has to be helped to face this and to accept what he cannot change, although it may be hoped that he will arrive at a different solution for himself.

In order to offer the most helpful service possible to the runaway, the worker must bring to the job a genuine interest in the runaway and an acceptance of his rights as an individual. The runaway needs to be free to accept or reject T.A. help. Since he may be suspicious of T.A.'s connection with the police and the Detention Home, it is important in beginning work with the runaway to differentiate the function of T.A., from these other agencies. No matter how adequate a Detention Home may be, it still is a place of confinement for the runaway, who often has a lot of feeling about being detained. This, too, must be handled with him, allowing free expression of his feeling. The runaway needs to be helped to recognize the fact that he is a minor who has broken the law by his action and that this has necessitated plans being made for his care and protection until he can be returned to his own community. Most important, the runaway must never be made to feel that detention is punishment for his behavior.



The following excerpts from the records of Donald B. and Edward J. illustrate the use of the various principles described as they apply in the actual process of planning with and for the runaway. They were also selected because they offer a contrast in the kinds of relationship established with the worker. Donald wanted, and was able to use the worker's help. Edward was unable to allow himself to become involved with T.A., and he consistently denied any problem in his home situation, all reports to the contrary.

Donald B. 10/18/50. Sgt. S. of the Delaware State Police telephoned to refer three runaway boys who had gone to police barracks in Dover and asked to be sent back home. All three came from Brooklyn. Their families had been contacted through the usual police channels, and \$5.50 had been wired for Donald's fare home. The boys were to be transferred to the Detention Home in Wilmington the following day to facilitate our planning with them.

10/19/50. Interview with Donald at the Detention Home. Donald is 14 years old, fairly short and heavy-set. He has very black skin, and a lovely smile. I was impressed with Donald's warmth and sincerity. He was somewhat nervous at the beginning of the interview, but soon seemed to feel comfortable. I began by explaining to Donald how T.A. had been asked by the State Police to plan for his return to his own community, but that we were not part of the Police or the Detention Home. Donald has been prepared for this contact by the Police and also knew that money had been sent for his fare back to Brooklyn. He explained that they (he and his two friends) had no money and were hungry and tired so had decided they should try to get back home. He understood why he had been brought up to Wilmington to the Detention Home, and did not seem to mind this arrangement, although he was anxious to be on his way home as soon as possible. I told Donald that this was very understandable and that we would try to arrange this as soon as we could, but that we did like to have some idea as to why a boy or girl had run away, and we did feel that it was good to know what kind of situation they would be going back to so that we might try to help them work out whatever problems there might be.

I asked if Donald could tell me why he had run away. He replied that he wanted to get work. I agreed that

this is something that a big boy like Donald might want to do, but I wondered why he felt he had to leave home to do it. Donald explained that he is one of many children and that his parents have a very hard time financially. His father does not work regularly, and his mother cannot work because she had an accident and is in a cast. A sister, Helen, is the main support of the family. She is 23 years old and lives at home....Donald had tried hard to get jobs after school, but he had been unsuccessful in getting one which paid well, and felt that he might do better someplace else. He added that one of the reasons why it is hard for him not to have any money is because he is ashamed to go to school in the clothing he has. I recognized how hard this must be for Donald, and said that I felt he was right in wanting to do something to change the situation, but pointed out that running away is not the way to achieve this since he is a minor and must be picked up by the police when he tries this.

I talked with Donald about his feelings around going home. He wanted to return, and expressed concern about causing his mother worry. He spoke with real warmth about his mother, but was impassive in talking about his father. I felt that he had a lot of negative feeling in relation to his father which was difficult for him to express. He was able to say that he did not think that his father was a good father, in the sense of being a good provider....Donald also had some problem in his relationship with an older brother who wanted to be 'man of the house' as did Donald. This naturally resulted in a good bit of rivalry and friction.

Donald was in the 10th Grade at school, felt that he did good work. He wanted to finish high school so that he could get a job afterward.....

I recognized that Donald's home situation was not an easy one for him. I encouraged him to continue to try to get work after school. I told Donald that I was glad that he had been able to talk with me about his home situation, and that we would now ask New York T.A.S. to talk with his family to see if there was any way in which these problems could be worked out when he got back home. I planned to return the following day to let Donald know how New York T.A.S. had made out in their contact with his family, and to discuss plans for his return home.

Later. Telephone call to New York T.A.S. giving an account of my contact with Donald and his feelings about his home situation. New York was requested to contact the parents for an understanding of their feelings in this situation and for an evaluation of what is in the home for Donald.....

There was some delay in working out plans through New York T.A.S. which was having difficulty in getting the father to come in to the office. It was necessary for Donald to remain in the Detention Home over the weekend. This was discussed with him.

...10/21/50. The following report was received from New York T.A.S. Donald was currently on probation from Juvenile Court. The family situation was very bad. The parents were separated but living in the same building. Mr. B. was abusive to the children, and is known to the court also. He had a criminal record, worked irregularly and was a poor provider.. ..Donald and his father were to report to the Court today. If the father failed to keep his appointment with T.A.S., a warrant for his and Donald's arrest would be issued to assure their appearance at Court after Donald's return home.

10/23/50. Report from New York T.A.S. that Mr. B. had failed to keep his appointment on Saturday. The Court had been notified of this and a warrant officer would meet Donald upon his arrival in New York.

..... When this report was discussed with Donald, he admitted that he had been referred to the Court for stealing. He again tied this in with the family's very poor circumstances, but was unable to recognize that stealing was an unsatisfactory answer to the problem since it only meant more trouble for him.. .. I talked with Donald about the fact that his father had not gotten into T.A. for an interview so that the Court was going to have an officer meet him upon his arrival in New York. Donald wondered if this meant he would have to be sent to a home. I said I did not have the answer to this question, and that all I knew was that he would be placed in custody in New York until his court hearing which would be within the next day or so. Donald commented that he guessed his father did not want him at home, which was no surprise to him. I replied that there seemed to be a good deal

of problem between Donald and his father, and it seemed as if his father did not want him back. I wondered how Donald felt about this. Donald said that as far as his father is concerned he does not mind, but he wouldn't like to live away from home because of his mother. I said that I could certainly understand Donald feeling that way, and that I wished that I had some idea as to what plan would be made for him, but I did not. I told Donald that I had gathered from my talks with him that he was really wanting to make a go of things and get help with his problem. I felt that it would be important for him to let the Court know how he feels, just as he has let me know. Donald thought that he would be able to do this.

10/31/50. A detailed letter regarding our contact with Donald was sent to New York T.A.S.

11/11/50. Report from New York T.A.S., which stated in part: "Although Donald has already been on probation over a year, the response of his probation officer and the Juvenile Court Judge was to reprimand him and continue probation, with no particular change in treatment planned. When we ventured to suggest family agency referral and mentioned a previous psychiatric clinic consultation by the family, because they were puzzled about Donald, the probation officer thought they might consider referral back to the clinic. We were glad to get your summary of October 31st, and included this material in our report to the Court, hoping that this would encourage further exploration and activity since Donald seems very much in need of outside help."

Throughout his contact with T.A.S. Donald was a part of the planning being made for him. He was aware, every step of the way of what was being done, and why. He was helped to express his feelings about his home situation and given recognition that it was discouraging, at the same time as he was expected to take responsibility for his own behavior in meeting this situation. The worker felt that Donald was sincere in saying that he wanted something different for himself, and felt that the way in which he used T.A. was the beginning

of change, however slight. One hopes that Donald has been given an opportunity by the Court to get the help he so badly needs if this movement is to be sustained.

Edward J. Edward J. was one of the boys who was picked up with Donald B. and referred to T.A., by the State Police. Money had been wired to the police by his family for his return.

10/18/50. Interview with Edward at the Detention Home. Edward is a tall, thin negro boy who looks malnourished. His clothing was terribly dirty and smelled strongly of urine. Edward was very tense throughout the whole interview, and most of the time his expression was sullen. He replied briefly to questions in a matter of fact way, but expressed little feeling.

I began by telling Edward that I was not connected with the police, but they had asked T.A. to make plans for his return to his own home. I explained something of how this would be done in terms of the fact that New York T.A.S. would be talking with his parents while I talked with him, and that T.A. was interested in trying to help both Edward and his family understand the problem which had led to his running away and work with it. Edward made no comment, but simply sat there listening attentively. I wondered if we might begin by Edward telling why he had run away. Edward said that he did not feel that he wanted to tell me rather than his not knowing. He smiled slightly, but repeated that he did not know why. I thought that Edward might be feeling that he did not know me well enough to trust me enough to talk about his reasons, but pointed out that it was hard for me to be of any help to Edward unless I knew what the trouble was. I suggested that Edward think about this, and perhaps he might feel more like discussing it the next time I saw him....

The next part of the interview was devoted to getting factual information from Edward on his home situation. As the worker did so, she attempted to gain some insight into Edward's real feelings, but she was unsuccessful in her effort. Edward presented in an impassive manner, an exceptionally positive picture of his relationships within

his family circle, in school and in the community. He said that he wanted to go home, but this appeared to have little meaning to him.

A second interview with Edward the following day went along in a somewhat similar pattern, with Edward refusing to become involved, by denying any feeling or concern that he might have. Edward was also obliged to spend the weekend at the Detention Home due to the failure of his mother to keep appointments with New York T.A.S. He was described by the matron as conforming but unfriendly.

10/21/50. Report from New York T.A.S. Edward is on probation from Juvenile Court. There is a warrant out for the arrest of his parents because of their failure to keep appointments with the Court. In June 1949, Edward had been brought into Court by his step-mother who complained that he was out of control and would not conform in any area. He was placed on probation until April, 1950, when his step-mother reported that he had run away. At this time Edward had gone to visit his own mother who had seven children younger than he is. He seemed happier and more conforming with her, but in October his mother reported that he was refusing to go to school and staying out late at night. He was picked up by the Court for gambling and again put on probation. On the day that he ran away, he was to have been brought into Court for further planning. The Court now planned to have a warrant officer meet him upon his arrival in New York. We agreed to plan for his return and to notify New York T.A.S. of the Travel Schedule and the number of the coach he would be traveling.....

When this report was discussed with Edward, he was able to acknowledge part of this as true, but again he was unable to express any feeling. He seemed to want to go back to his own community, but he was not looking forward to this with either pleasure or concern. It was good to know that immediately upon his return to New York, the Court referred Edward to Youth House for intensive study, including psychiatric examination, pending further planning.

Accepting his basic differences from Donald as an individual, Edward was offered the same opportunity as was Donald for help with his problem. He was unable to use this. There was no less understanding and interest on the worker's part, although there appears to have been some pressure exerted to make him share his problem. Basically, however, it would appear that Edward did not want to risk himself sufficiently to become involved in a reciprocal giving and receiving. Just as it is not possible to help every client who comes to an agency, neither is it possible to help every runaway. As Miss Jessie Taft has so aptly expressed it: "only if he (the client) wants the help offered through a particular service will it be possible for the helper to function." (1)

Although work with the runaway is the primary concern of this study, it is also important to give careful consideration to the question of work with the runaway's family. This is important because maximum help to the runaway cannot be achieved without a similar opportunity for help being offered to the child's family. It therefore seems appropriate to end this study with a discussion of the service which may be offered to the runaway's family and an analysis of the case work principles involved in this process.

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(1) Jessie Taft, A Conception of the Growth Process Underlying Casework Practice. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1943

Chapter VI

THE RUNAWAY'S FAMILY

As indicated earlier, the term "family" is used in this study to connote the person, or persons, responsible for the runaway. This includes own parents, adoptive parents, or relatives. It does not include foster parents working with a placement agency, since the agency carries the ultimate responsibility for the child. Neither does it include legal guardians, such as institutions. Out of the 70 cases studied only three did not involve families, as defined above. Two of the children were in institutional care, and one was in an agency foster home.

Of the remaining 67 cases, 29 children, less than half, were living with both own parents. There were 11 situations where the parents were separated, the child living with one or the other. In 10 situations, one parent had remarried, thus a step-mother or step-father was involved. Six of the children lived with a parent who was widowed, and three lived with a divorced parent. There was only one instance of a child living with an unmarried mother.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from these statistics is that more than half of the children have been subjected to the traumatic experience of separation from a parent through death, divorce or legal separation. The writer would like to note also that in the cases where the runaway was living with both own parents, there was frequent evidence of conflict between the parents, inadequacy, and other problems which do not make for a wholesome, stable home environment.

It has been difficult to evaluate accurately the various kinds of problems existing in the home situation and the frequency of their occurrence. This has been due to lack of detailed recording on contacts



with own families, inadequate reports from co-operating agencies, and resistance of families to becoming involved with an agency. Some of the most helpful material has been secured through clearance with the Social Service Exchange in places where this is established, and where families have previously been known to social agencies.

In 21 situations it was not possible to determine whether families had been previously known to a social agency due to the lack of Social Service Exchange in the community, or because of failure to clear registrations. Twenty-nine families were not known to any agency prior to the referral of the runaway to T.A. On the remaining 20 cases there were 44 registrations with Social Service Exchange. This means that 40.7 per cent of the 20 cases where clearance was possible, or determined, indicated a previously existing family problem, sufficiently severe to motivate a request for help or to bring the family to the attention of a welfare agency. Registrations most frequently listed were with Relief Departments, Family agencies, Juvenile Courts, Child Placement agencies, Health agencies and Guidance Clinics.

Some of the problems which were evident in the family situations were broken homes, as a result of separations, divorce, quarreling, abuse, alcoholism, mental deficiency, mental disease, financial problems and crime.

In their contacts with Travelers Aid and co-operatives many families showed disinterest and rejection of the children.

Generally speaking, these various manifestations of problems in family situations point up certain deprivations which fall roughly within the following category: affection, emotional security, physical necessities, and educational and social opportunities. Since affection,

emotional security, adequate physical care and reasonable educational and social opportunities are essential to a well adjusted wholesome childhood it is apparent that many of the runaways involved in this study were deprived of one or more of these necessities in their home situation.

The reaction of individual children to the home situation varies. An unhealthy home environment may impel a child to various types of delinquent behavior, such as stealing, lying, truancy, insubordination, etc. Some children have within themselves the strength to resist the negative influence of their environment. Running away from an intolerable home situation may be an indication of a degree of strength in resisting what feels bad, (as it was with Donald B. and Jean R.), or it may be simply another manifestation of maladjustment and anti-social tendencies, as was the case of Edward J. Whatever the basis for the runaway's behavior, it is a form of delinquency, and as such it is, with very few exceptions, a symptom of some real trouble.

The case histories used in this study point conclusively to the fact that the problem is related to personality difficulties, pressures and tensions within the family, as individuals and in their relationships to one another.

Work with the families of runaways must be considered in two separate sections because of the particular set up of the Travelers Aid chain of service which results in one agency, the initiating one, working with the runaway, and the other agency, the co-operating or secondary working with the family.

The previous illustrations of Edward and Donald are clear-cut examples of situations in which Wilmington Travelers Aid was the

initiating agency and may be referred to again for purposes of illustration.

In a meeting of the Steering Committee of Travelers Regional Conference of 1950, there was a discussion regarding the effectiveness of work with runaways. In relation to the responsibility of the secondary agency in working with the client, it was felt that the main focus should be on a helping the client to work through the problem and not simply to plan for the runaways return home. As this applies in work with the families of runaways, it precludes a firm conviction that there is an underlying problem and that the agency has the responsibility of helping the family to recognize this.

Both the primary and the secondary agency have the responsibility of sharing with each other, promptly and accurately, available material relating to the runaways feelings and the home situation. It is not possible to help the child's family to a real understanding of the problem if the secondary agency does not have a meaningful picture of the child's feelings about his home situation and of his contact with T.A. Conversely, it is most difficult to work with the runaway around return to his home if adequate information regarding the home situation, and especially the parents' feeling toward the child, is not secured from the T.A. or co-operating agency which is working with the family.

Work with parents, relatives or others responsible for the runaway is fraught with challenge. Like the majority of runaways, the family is drawn into contact with T.A., if not involuntarily, at least without any effort to request help on their own initiative. It is frequently threatening to the family to be faced with the fact of the

child's running away, since to even the most limited and inadequate parents this implies that there is a problem in the home situation. A common reaction to this threat is to deny vigorously the existence of any problem whatsoever. Some parents place the entire blame on the child whom they describe as "incorrigible", a wanderer, peculiar, or, just plain bad. Other parents put the blame on the child's environment, especially his companions if he has run away with another child. And still other parents use the situation to blame each other for the child's behavior. A few families place the blame on the unsatisfactory adjustment that the child has made in school. In only a very few situations are the parents able to face the fact that a problem does exist within the home situation, and that they themselves are responsible, at least in part, for what has happened.

It is obvious that if any change for the better is to occur in the home situation, the parents, as well as the child, need to be helped to face their problem, recognize their responsibility in it, and one hopes, move toward doing something about it. This is what is meant by "working" with the families of runaways. It is a stimulating and difficult task because it frequently requires dealing with the intangible. To support the worker and the client in this task is the one constant, tangible, namely, the fact that the child has run away. To this task, the worker needs to bring a special acceptance and understanding of the family's attitudes and feelings.

The following extracts from the record of Harry D. is offered as an illustration of work with the runaway's family. Harry, age 13, white, had been picked up by the police in Miami, Florida. He had run away from his home in a rural section of Delaware. Harry's father was

a prosperous farmer, specializing in poultry. This boy is one of the children of his father's first marriage, and the only one of that union still living at home.

Harry D. 9/10/50.....Mr. D. into the office for his appointment. He is a short, compactly built man, with gray hair, blue eyes and a ruddy complexion. I told Mr. D. that I was glad that he had been able to come into the office to talk with me as I realized that he was upset about what had happened. Mr. D. appeared greatly disturbed and was close to tears several times. He admitted that he had been "worried to death" about his son, and that his wife was concerned, too. She had not been able to come in because of the small children in the home. He said that he had received word yesterday from the Miami police that the boys (Harry and a friend) had been picked up, but that he had not yet done anything about sending money for Harry's return because he was at a loss to know what to do. I wondered if Mr. D. could tell me a little about what had led up to this situation. Mr. D. became very angry and said that he blamed the whole thing on the company Harry had been keeping. He said these boys had taught his son to drink and to stay out until all hours of the night. I asked how long this had been going on, and Mr. D. said that he had not known about the drinking until Harry had run away this time (the second within a six week period). One of the other brothers had told Mr. D. then. He added that actually Harry had gotten along pretty well otherwise. He is a good student and never gets into trouble at school. Except for his staying out late at night there has been no other problem in the home. I agreed that Harry's companions would have some influence upon him, but felt that Harry had apparently decided to run away and that he was responsible for what he had been doing. Mr. D. did not pick this up, but moved on to talking with real affection about his relationship with his son, and seemed to feel that they had been good companions. He said that he had never denied his son anything that he needed or wanted, and that he has never whipped him as had been claimed by some of the neighbors since Harry ran away. I wondered if Mr. D. knew what had brought about this change in Harry during the last few months. Mr. D. felt that it was Harry's wanting to drink. I agreed that it was certainly possible that Harry had done some drinking, but it seems rather unusual for a thirteen year old boy to need to drink so much that he will do anything to get liquor. Mr. D. supposed that Harry had the older boys with whom he runs around get it for him. I wondered how Harry would have the money

for this. Mr. D. explained that he gave Harry some farm stock for his own and that Harry is free to sell this at any time that he wishes to do so. Last week Harry had \$72.00 which he has apparently spent since then. I commented that \$72.00 is a lot of money for a 13 year old to be responsible for. Mr. D. supposed that it is, but Harry has always had plenty of money and has never gotten into trouble before. Mr. D. felt at a loss to know what to do. He said that he does not want to put Harry "in a home", and he is willing for Harry to live with any of the neighboring families or with any of his married brothers or sisters. I asked if this meant that Mr. D. was pretty sure that Harry would not want to come home. Mr. D. said that this was the second time that Harry had run away. He replied that he did not. He had tried to talk with Harry about it, but Harry would not say anything either to him or to his mother. Mr. D.'s eyes filled with tears again.

I said that it seems that Harry is developing a pattern of behavior which may mean a great deal of trouble for him if he does not get help with this problem soon. Mr. D. replied that he would do anything to help his son. He feels that he cannot handle this alone and needed help from someone. I told Mr. D. that since the situation had been referred to us by the Family Court in Wilmington, perhaps this was something which he might be interested in working through with them when Harry returns. Mr. D. said that he would be willing to go anywhere for help. He has had 14 children altogether, and has never had any real trouble with any of them except Harry. He added that several of his children are grown-up, married, responsible people and they never had more than Harry does. I wondered if part of the problem was in Harry's having everything he wants. Mr. D. supposed that this might not be too good for a youngster, but so far Harry had not given them any trouble. I asked if Mr. D. could tell me why he thinks this situation developed. He was unable to offer any explanation for the change in Harry's behavior, except for the fact that Harry was keeping "bad company". He felt that the situation had come to a head on Monday morning when he had forbidden Harry to associate further with a certain friend who had been getting into a lot of trouble in the neighborhood. He thought that this may have been when Harry decided to run away.

Mr. D. then discussed with me a plan for Harry to live with his married sister, Mrs. S. This was Harry's favorite sister, and Mr. and Mrs. S. had both expressed willingness to have Harry live with them. An appointment for Mr. D. and Mr. and Mrs. S. to come in to the office to discuss this further. Mr. D. also planned to bring

in the money to deposit for Harry's return fare and expenses. Miami T.A.S. was notified of the situation to date, and requested to send us a report on their contact with Harry.

Later that day, a report was received from Miami T.A.S. that Harry could be released by the Juvenile Court the following day and that he wanted to live with the S. family.

The following day, Mr. D. and Mr. and Mrs. S. came in to discuss their plan to have Harry live with them. This young couple indicated a real interest in Harry and seemed to want to do what they could to help. They were inclined to go along with Mr. D.'s feeling that the problem was related to Harry's choice of companions and were not as inclined to seek help from an agency. However, they both showed more awareness of the lack of limits which had been set for Harry in his own home and felt that something different would have to be put in with him if he came to live with them.

The next day we received a wire from Miami T.A.S. stating that Harry had been placed enroute to Wilmington, and advising us of the time of his arrival. The wire also indicated that Harry had since changed his mind and was now wanting to return to his own home.

Mr. D. was moved to tears when he learned that Harry had decided to return to his own home, and greeted Harry very warmly when he arrived. Harry expressed the feeling that he and his father could work out the problem in the home, and was not interested in seeking further help from an agency. Now that the actual crisis was over, and Harry had returned, Mr. D. withdrew from any further consideration of getting help from a local agency as he had indicated earlier in his contact with us. Because both Harry and his father were anxious to end with the agency, it was not possible to continue any discussion with them as to the basis of Harry's behavior and his feeling about his home situation. The worker was also limited in what she could do with Harry at this point, since she did not have from the agency which worked with him any detailed report on what had gone into their contact.

This report was received a few days later, and indicated that Harry was very unhappy in his home situation because of his relationship with his step-mother. He also was unhappy about the fact that his father and mother had been divorced and he wanted to have more contact with his own mother than was possible so long as he lived in a rural area.

A letter was sent to Mr. D. suggesting the possibility of his coming in to the office with Harry for further discussion of the situation in view of this report, but no reply was received.

This case illustrates clearly many of the principles previously discussed. Mr. D. was obviously threatened by Harry's running away from home, and in defense placed the blame on Harry's companions. It was extremely difficult for him to admit that there was any problem in the home or that Harry might not be happy there, so he stressed the many material advantages that he was able to offer to his son. He was able to move slightly toward recognition of his part in the situation when he recognized that he might be giving Harry too much of everything, including freedom. While still feeling the impact of the crisis, Mr. D. was even able to recognize his inability to work through this problem without outside help, and was considering referral to a local agency. However, when the crisis had passed and Harry had decided to return home, Mr. D. was unable to carry through on this plan, and Harry himself was denying the existence of the problems which existed in the home. This is not an uncommon experience in working with the runaway and his family. There is some indication that the worker was swayed by the pressure of both Harry and his father to end their contact with the agency, and this points up the need for good follow-up work with the clients when the child returns to his own community. It also points up the difficulty of picking up a situation with a child without a meaningful report from the agency with whom he has had contact while he was still feeling keenly the pressures of the home situation which have resulted in his running away.



Although referral to another agency for long time planning was not carried through in this situation, it was definitely indicated as part of T.A. service to the runaway and to his family. This is an important part of the service which T.A., a short-contact agency, has to offer to the client. It is therefore appropriate, at this point, to look at what was done in the 70 cases involved in this study in relation to referrals to other agencies for follow-up of the problem presented.

REFERRALS TO OTHER AGENCIES FOR LONG-TIME PLANNING

<u>Disposition of Case</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>
No referral made	25
Data not recorded	16
Referral not accepted by client	11
Referral accepted by client	8
Acceptance made obligatory by Court	7
Referral back to agency with whom active	<u>3</u>
Total	70

In view of the fact that the statistics previously presented indicated the existence of some problem in the home situation, in varying degrees, it is a matter of concern to note that in as many as 25 situations, no referral was made. This may point up a lack of conviction that the problem for the runaway and his family was of sufficient seriousness to warrant referral, and it gives rise also to the question of the validity of this decision in such a large proportion of cases. The fact that in 16 cases no data were recorded on this matter is also a matter for concern if this service is felt to be an integral part of T.A. service to the client.

(1)

In a survey of 317 runaway cases known to New York T.A.S., Robert Slawson reported that only 5 per cent of these cases were not referred to a "source of continued help and treatment" because the worker did not feel that referral was indicated. This bore out Mr. Slawson's premise which was that, with very few exceptions, a need for referral of runaways and their families for continued help is indicated. In relation to Mr. Slawson's study, the 35.7 per cent incidence of non-referrals of the 70 cases studied in Wilmington T.A.S. raises the question of the effectiveness of the agency's work in this area.

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(1) Slawson, Robert, M. "A Statistical Survey of 317 Runaways Known to New York Travelers Aid Society." Unpublished Master's thesis, School of Social Work, New York University, 1945.

## Chapter VII

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study based on 70 cases of runaway children known to the Travelers Aid Society of Wilmington, Delaware, may appropriately be divided into findings relating to the runaway, and to findings relating to the runaway's family.

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the study of the runaway minors is the fact that running away is symptomatic of some disturbance in the home situation. This coincides with the working philosophy of the agency in which the study was undertaken. Although the problem may be relatively simple, this was not indicated in the majority of the cases thus studied, and in the large majority of cases the problem was in the child's relationships within his own family, that is, in his relationships with his parents. The problems presented by the runaways in this area were related primarily to the feelings of being misunderstood and unwanted by their families. There were also incidents of problems relating to the emotional and mental inadequacies of parents, separation from one parent or the other, and environmental factors, such as financial insecurity. All of these problems indicate deprivation of emotional and material needs which impel the child to this particular form of delinquency, and which are unfavorable to the development of a secure, well-adjusted personality. Although the desire for adventure, or to be "part of the gang" may have been a factor in some of the cases presented, there is no single case in which this was illustrated to be the principal motivating factor for the runaway's behavior.

The statistics presented indicate that running away is a form of delinquency more peculiar to the adolescent than to the younger child, and more peculiar to the male adolescent than to the female. Since adolescence is, at best, a time of difficult adjustment, this fact is not surprising. The higher incidence of running away among male adolescents does not necessarily imply that the male has more difficulty in adjusting to the emotional and physical changes of adolescence than does the female, but seems to be related to the greater freedom of movement which is part of the socially acceptable norm for the male.

Although there was an expression of some difficulties related to the runaway's problems in school, this did not appear to be a major consideration in most cases. From which fact, we may draw the conclusion that the child was not running away from school, but from his home. This is obvious if one realizes that in the ordinary situation where a child has a problem in school, this is worked through with the school, or else the child is transferred to another school. It is only when the child feels that his parents do not understand his difficulty in school and may blame him, justly or unjustly, that he resorts to running away. Thus, the basic problem really goes back to his relationship with his family.

Since most of the runaways who come to T.A. are referred by the Detention Home, the writer feels that the relationship between this agency, and incidentally, the police, is of great importance. Inter-agency agreements, previously worked out between T.A. and these two authoritative agencies, are apparently not being carried through as indicated by the low percentage of referrals to T.A. of runaways picked up in Wilmington and placed in the Detention Home by the police. There

seem to be two possible reasons for this situation. The first is a lack of conviction on the part of these agencies of the value to the runaway and to his family of referral to T.A., as well as the pressure to get the runaway out of the Detention Home because of overcrowding. The second possible reason is lack of adequate and consistent interpretation to these agencies by T.A. of the value of T.A. service to the runaway and to the community in which he is picked up.

In relation to work with the runaway in an authoritative setting, the writer suggests the possibility of having all interviews with the runaway in the T.A. office, rather than in the Detention Home. This suggestion is made because it is understandably difficult for the runaway to separate the authoritative function of the police and the Detention Home from the non-authoritative function of T.A. when he is referred by the authorities and is interviewed in the Detention Home. The writer recognizes that this implies, possibly, additional expense to T.A. for the runaway's fare to and from the Home, and it also involves the risk of the child's breaking contact with the agency enroute. In relation to the amount of time required for the worker's transportation to and from the Home, the expense of taxi fare for the child would be negligible, and there appears to be little risk of the child's running away again, judging from the cases included in this study where no single child without escort failed to return to his own community.

In considering data recorded in the runaway's case record, the writer has noticed two important lacks. One was a lack of data concerning the frequency of occurrence of this kind of behavior, and the other was a lack of information regarding the child's grade and adjustment in

school. The writer feels that the first lack is rather disturbing if one accepts the basic assumption that the runaway leaves home because of a situation which is intolerable to him, and therefore repetition of this behavior indicates either that the child has not had an opportunity for help with his problem, or else that he has been unable to use help. The second lack seems important not only because of the opportunity which it offers to the worker to evaluate the child's general adjustment in the community, but also because it seems that helpful supplementary material might be obtained from contact with this more detached source. In so far as the writer is aware from her own experience in T.A., no attempt is made to secure from the school this supplementary information which seems to have potentialities for helpful evaluation of the material presented by the child and by his family.

The findings of this study also indicate that many T.A. societies and co-operating agencies neglect to submit a summary of their contact with either the child or with his family. Apart from the fact that this is a recognized procedure, established by National Travelers Aid Society, the writer feels that such information is of interest not only to the agency which has invested time and effort in working with the client, but it is also of importance in helping to determine, to some extent, the effectiveness of the help given to the client. Such reports, the writer would like to add, are also invaluable in research on this subject.

Because of the lack of the above mentioned reports regarding contacts with own families, it has been difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of the agency service to this group of clients. From

the limited material available, the following conclusions may be drawn.

The families of most runaways are extremely threatened by the child's running away, and they are therefore likely to deny the existence of any problem in the home. Instead, they are apt to place the blame entirely on the child, on his companions, his difficulty in school, or, in some instances, parents will blame each other. In very few instances will the parents be able to face the problem and their share in it, and hopefully work toward its solution. These findings imply that the worker needs to bring to the task a special understanding of the family's feelings and attitudes, and they suggest that an unusual degree of skill on the part of the caseworker is required to handle the intangible factors involved.

If the premise is accepted that children run away because of a situation in the home which is intolerable to them, it follows that referral to a long-time agency in the community for continued help is an essential part of T.A. work with the runaway and his family. Statistics on the 70 cases studied indicate that in a rather large number of cases such action was not taken. This may imply a weakness in the agency's work with this group of clients in this particular area. The writer feels that a collateral study on this subject might be of value to the agency in offering an opportunity to evaluate more comprehensively the service which the agency offers to the runaway and to his family.

DOCUMENT SCHEDULE

NOTE: All statistical and case material presented in this study were taken from the records by use of four key cards. Key Card No. I was used to identify cases through the use of a code number. Key Cards A, B, and C served to divide the information desired into three distinct categories: (1) relating to the runaway; (2) relating to the family; (3) relating to T.A. work with both. The code numbers on A, B, C cards are identical since information on both the runaway and the family is contained in one record.

KEY CARD NO. I

IDENTIFICATION OF CASES

<u>Case Number</u>	<u>Code Number</u>
C1319	1
C2136	70

KEY CARD A

INFORMATION ON THE RUNAWAY

<u>Item</u>		<u>Item</u>	
1	Code Number	9	Source of referral
2	Color	10	Reasons given for running away
3	Sex	11	Number of runaways involved in situation
4	Age	12	Number of previous runaway experiences
5	Grade in School	13	Disposition of case
6	Place of legal residence		
7	Date on which picked up by police		
8	Date of referral to T.A.S.		



KEY CARD B

INFORMATION ON THE FAMILY

Item		Item	
1	Code number	7	Parents evaluations of problem
2	Marital status	8	Parents relationship with T.A.S.
3	Social-economic status	9	Outcome of contact
4	Rural-urban background		
5	Number of siblings		
6	Number of previous contacts with social agencies		

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KEY CARD C

INFORMATION ON T.A. WORK WITH  
RUNAWAY AND FAMILY

Item		Item	
1	Code number	7	Referral to other agency for continued help not indicated
2	Worker's evaluation of problem in relation to runaway	8	Referral made to _____
3	Worker's evaluation of problem in relation to family	9	Referral reported as accepted
4	Number of contacts with T.A.	10	Referral reported as not accepted
5	Number of contacts with family	11	Outcome not reported
6	Referral to other agency for continued help indicated	12	Outcome not recorded

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