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HUMAN SEXUALITY IN SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION:

A REVIEW AND A PROPOSAL

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ABSTRACT

This study was undertaken in an effort to draw attention to social work's neglect of the area of human sexuality. Its major aim was to determine the nature and extent of knowledge available on human sexuality, and to offer a tentative model of sex education for social work which would develop and integrate this knowledge for social work practice. A broad literature review revealed that an extensive, multidisciplinary contribution has been made to the existing fund of knowledge on human sexuality. This literature has tended to be biologically and psychologically based, with more recent contributions made by the social sciences. An examination of the social work literature revealed a general lack of attention to, and reflection of the extensive information which is available on human sexuality.

A small, very recent literature on human sexuality in social work education was reviewed. In addition, human sexuality content provided in Canadian schools of social work was examined. A number of questions were raised pertaining to course content, course structure and teaching techniques. Recommendations were made for the introduction into social work education of a sequence in human sexuality. Such a sequence was seen as involving courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, opportunity for field work which would provide training in direct intervention with sexual and sex-related problems, and support for relevant research into human sexuality. Finally, some suggestions were offered for future research into this area.

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R. B.

INTRODUCTION

The starting point for the present study was the perception that human sexuality is a relatively neglected area both in social work practice and in social work education. The appearance of such services as sexual dysfunctions counselling, family life and sex education programs, rape crisis centres, and pre- and post-abortion counselling are becoming increasingly common across Canada. Social work involvement in the development and implementation of these and other related services has been minimal.

It was noted that in other disciplines a great deal of attention has been paid to various aspects of human sexuality. Areas such as sexual response and sexual dysfunction, sex differences, sex roles, sexual politics, sexual development and sex practices have received multidisciplinary attention from both a theoretical and practical frame of reference. Since social work is a helping profession which draws its basic interventive skills and knowledge from cognate disciplines it seemed unusual that social work has not developed and applied

what is already a considerable body of knowledge on human sexuality.

It was further noted that within the field of social work education which one would expect to be somewhat in advance of the profession at large in incorporating new social and behavioral science material, relatively little attention seemed to be paid to human sexuality. While sex-related services require the involvement of social workers, little attention is being paid by the profession's educators to the training and preparation of students to assume roles within these services. In the past five years less than one half dozen courses in human sexuality have been offered in Canadian schools of social work.

On the basis of this apparent neglect, it was decided to explore in some depth the current knowledge base in the area of human sexuality as it is reflected in the literature. Subsequently the social work literature together with a number of Canadian social work education programs were examined to determine the extent to which they reflected the current state of knowledge regarding human sexuality. The degree to which this knowledge had been translated into social work principles of practice and content in social work education was of primary

interest. An attempt was made to locate descriptive material and course outlines on human sexuality from various sources. Some attempt was also made to examine these in light of social, behavioral and life science findings and to develop a tentative model for sex education curricula for social work.

CHAPTER I

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The subject of sex has received multidisciplinary attention and study. Sex research has extended into such fields as psychiatry, psychology, anthropology, sociology, religion, philosophy and medicine. It has involved the examination of customs, social regulations, ethics, individual behaviour, origins of maleness and femaleness, that which is regarded as sexually normal and that which is regarded as aberrant, and much of that which on the surface appears to be unrelated tc sexual influences. Human sexuality has been viewed biologically and physiologically; it has been studied in terms of the psychological processes involved in sexual attraction and pairing; and it has also been viewed within a sociocultural context.

Any single attempt to do justice to this abundance would fall short of its goal. Out of personal interest, coupled with the significance of the subject in the field of social work, human sexual behaviour will be the focus of the

literature review which follows. A number of subject areas have been selected, each of which contributes to a basic understanding of sexual behaviour. The subject areas to be dealt with have received significant, multidisciplinary attention, and together, while they do not represent a comprehensive overview of human sexuality, reflect the general trend and content of the literature on human sexual behaviour.

The first area to be considered is sexual development, which will be approached both from a biological and psychological perspective. Secondly, the area of sex differences will be explored along with the research contributions to this area of biology, psychology, sociology and anthropology. Sex practices will then be considered, with attention paid to the variation imposed upon sexual activity and behaviour by numerous social factors. Within this area as well, sex standards and their impact on behaviour, in addition to deviant sex practices, will be examined. Finally the area of sexual response will be explored. The available research results on sexual response, sexual dysfunctions and the treatment thereof, will be highlighted. These areas have been selected for review on the basis of their direct relatedness to social work practice with sexual and sex-related problems.

Sexual Development

The Physical Aspect

The biology of sex seeks to teach us about the structure of the sex and related organs. The physiology of sex explains the functions of sex and sex-related organs. One of the contributions of the life sciences to the area of sexual development has been to establish the basic tendency of all human embryos to develop as females. Following from this beginning of life, knowledge is available about the process by which genetic sex becomes fixed and genital differentiation takes place. Via the provision of information about the human reproduction systems, biology teaches us about the nature and function of the male and female sexual organs from early childhood through to old age. The physiology of sexual development includes the extent of brain control over such development along with endocrinological and hormonal influences. From biology and physiology we are also able to gain understanding of the extent and influences upon physical or body changes during different life phases and in turn, about the effects of these upon sexual functioning.[1]

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[1]For a more complete and comprehensive review of the biological and physiological aspects of sexual development, see

The Psychological Aspect

The psychological aspect of sexual development relates to psychosexual development and the acquisition of a sexual or "gender" identity. Psychoanalytic theory of psychosexual development postulates that psychologic development follows underlying biologic growth. This theory suggests that psychological development is an instinctual progression which parallels sequential changes in physical development and abilities. According to analytic theory, psychosexual development occurs in stages, with the nature and sequence of these phases well established. In other words, the basic scheme for each individual cannot be environmentally directed or modified.[1]

Social learning theory of psychosexual development places a great deal more weight on environmental or social

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John Oliven, Clinical Sexuality (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1974); Herant Katchedourian and Donald Lunde, Fundamentals of Human Sexuality (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972); Mary Jane Sherfey, The Nature and Evolution of Female Sexuality (New York: Random House, 1966).

[1]An in-depth overview of the psychoanalytic approach to psychosexual development is provided by Gerald Blum, Psychoanalytic Theories of Personality (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1953).

influences. The acquisition of gender identity (and sex role) is, according to this approach, a learned phenomenon. Taking cues from the immediate environment at first (i.e., family, significant others), and from other social institutions later on in life, individuals learn to see themselves and to behave in the manner which they have been taught is appropriate to a member of their sex.[1]

Sex Differences

The literature on sex differences is enormous and includes experimental findings relating to differences between male and female on numerous levels. Contributions to this area made by biology and physiology, include findings on the hormonal, genetic and bio-chemical influences which apparently predispose our masculinity or femininity.[2]

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[1]For a succinct, thorough review of social learning theory in regard to psychosexual development, see Bernard Rosenberg and Brian Sutton-Smith, Sex and Identity (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972).

[2]See John Money and Anke Ehrhardt, Man and Woman, Boy and Girl (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972); see also David Hamburg and Donald Lunde, "Sex Hormones in the Development of Sex Differences," in The Development of Sex Differences, ed. Eleanor Maccoby (California: Stanford University Press, 1966).

The psychological literature in this area focuses on sex differences in behaviour. It provides us with data on differences in intellectual abilities and postulates causes for and explanations of these differences.[1] A portion of the psychological literature provides us with numerous theoretical explanations of sex-typed behaviour in general.[2] Other sex differences, in areas such as mental or emotional disorders, task performance in a variety of areas, fantasy life, sexual arousal determinants, and so forth, have also been individually researched.

The sociological and anthropological literature, like portions of the psychological literature, seek to offer explanations for the existence of sex differences in behaviour. While psychology tends to consider sex differences in terms of personal characteristics, anthropology and sociology generally conceive of these differences as social and cultural institutions. From

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[1]Eleanor Maccoby, "Sex Differences in Intellectual Functioning," in Maccoby, ed., The development of Sex Differences.

[2]For opposing arguments see Walter Mischel, "A Social Learning View of Sex Differences," in Maccoby, ed., The Development of Sex Differences; and Lawrence Kohlberg, "A Cognitive-Developmental Analysis of Children's Sex Role Concepts," in Maccoby, ed., The Development of Sex Differences.

this point of view sex differences are not simply characteristics of individuals; they are also culturally and socially transmitted patterns of behaviour determined in part by the functioning of society.[1]

Much of the anthropological and sociological literature which deals with sex differences, relates the subject to the concept of sex roles. These studies often deal with women in the family and in the economy, and with the "cultural contradictions" of being in both.[2] This literature also includes cross-cultural comparisons of sex role acquisition and maintenance, and reflects the manner in which sex role stereotyping is destructive in our own society.[3]

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[1]A general but instructive review of the anthropological position on sex differences is presented by Robert d'Andrade, "Sex Differences and Cultural Institutions," in Maccoby, ed., The Development of Sex Differences; see also John Gagnon and William Simon, Sexual Conduct (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1973); and Nancy Chodorow, "Being and Doing: A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Socialization of Males and Females," in Vivian Gornick and Barbara Moran, eds., Women in Sexist Society (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1971).

[2]See for example Georgene Seward and Robert Williamson, eds., Sex Roles in a Changing Society (New York: Random House Publishers, 1970).

[3]See Margaret Mead, Male and Female (New York: William Morrow Co., 1949); Donald Broverman et al., "Sex Role Stereotypes: A Current Appraisal," Journal of Social Issues 28 (May,

Sex Practices

The literature on sex practices offers us data on the nature of sexual activities engaged in by different groups of people, and the factors which influence the variation in human sexual behaviour. It includes the study of sex standards, variation in sex practices according to numerous factors, and the study of sexual deviance.

Sex Standards

Within this context, the studies of Alfred Kinsey are generally thought of as the starting point of a new era in the social science study of sex.[1] The results of Kinsey's work, published in the late 1940's and early 1950's, sharply challenged the traditional sex morality in America by revealing that a significant disparity existed between people's professed

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1972), pp. 59-78; and Barbara Roszak and Theodore Roszak, eds., Masculine/Feminine (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969). For a pointed politically oriented argument see Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1970).

[1]It is known that criticism has been levelled at the methodological and statistical deficiencies of Kinsey's research. These studies are believed to have offered invaluable information and enlightenment in the area of sex practices in spite of their drawbacks.

beliefs and their actual behaviour in matters of sexual conduct. An important discovery also made by Kinsey was that marked liberalization of premarital sex practices occurred during World War I and the 1920's.[1]

The evidence provided by Kinsey that a change in both attitude and behaviour had taken place since the turn of the century sparked the notion of a "sexual revolution" in North America. A host of studies and appraisals appeared on the scene during the 1950's and 1960's examining new trends in sexual behaviour, and trying to determine the extent of the sexual revolution.[2] What appears to have been established by

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[1]Alfred Kinsey, Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders Co., 1948); and Alfred Kinsey, Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female (Philadelphia: W.B. Saunders, 1953).

[2]See for example Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, Sex and the College Student (New York: Fawcett World Library, 1965); Mervin Freedman, "The Sexual Behaviour of College Women," Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 11 (January, 1965), pp. 33-48; Eleanor Lucky and Gilbert Nass, "A Comparison of Sexual Attitudes and Behaviour in an International Sample," Journal of Marriage and the Family 31 (May, 1969), pp. 364-379. For sociologic reviews and appraisals of the American sexual scene in the late 1950's and 1960's see Ira Reiss, Premarital Sex Standards in America (Illinois: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960); and John Gagnon and William Simon, eds., The Sexual Scene (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1970).

these studies is that while America has not yet experienced a sexual revolution, there appear to have been definite shifts in attitude in several pockets of society. Among certain segments of society, most notably the middle class, attitudes toward premarital permissiveness are becoming more liberalized. The double standard is beginning to fade, and among the general public there is the beginning of a greater tolerance for knowledge expansion in the area of sexuality. There is growing freedom of discussion of sex in the various communication media, the education system, religious institutions and government circles.

Variation in Sex Standards and Sex Practices

While some of the research results indicate shifts in sexual attitudes and some shifts in behaviour, these changes have not affected all of North America. Exploration of sexual expression among the poor[1] and among the working class,[2] along

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[1]Lee Rainwater, "Marital Sexuality in Four Cultures of Poverty," in Donald Marshall and Robert Suggs, eds., Human Sexual Behaviour (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1971).

[2]Ruth Hartley, "American Core Culture: Changes and Continuities," in Georgene Seward and Robert Williamson, eds., Sex Roles.

with studies comparing blacks and whites,[1] point to the fact that a high degree of multiplexity in both attitudes and behaviour exists in America. Studies such as these suggest that what may in fact be revolutionary or set the stage for a revolution, is the eager willingness of society to embrace the idea that a sexual revolution is going on, in spite of the evidence to the contrary for many groups in North America.

Sexual Deviance/New Lifestyles

The area of sexual deviance has received the most attention from the fields of sociology, anthropology and psychology. Psychology has paid the greatest attention to individual behaviour which is habitual or compulsive sexual behaviour, and which has been socially defined as deviant. Such behaviour is seen as requiring "treatment" or extinction since it is socially defined as dangerous, and may include such deviations as exhibitionism, pedophelia, voyeurism, sex killing, and numerous others.[2] Anthropology has engaged in

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[1] Ira Reiss, "How and Why America's Sex Standards are Changing," in Gagnon and Simon, The Sexual Scene.

[2] See Oliven, Clinical Sexuality, Ch. 20 for a more detailed discussion of these and other sexual deviations and aberrations.

the cross-cultural study of sex mores and differing patterns of deviance in different societies. The focus is oftentimes on contrasting cultural conceptions of deviance and social processes of its production.[1] Current sociological literature is focusing more on deviant (sexual) lifestyles and striving to develop a more contemporary and humane definition of what is sexually deviant as opposed to variant.[2]

Sexual Response

Sexual response literature deals specifically with human physiological response to sexual stimulation and excitation. Until recently the information available in this area was incomplete and in many instances incorrect. The scientific investigation into human sexual response was pioneered by William Masters and Virginia Johnson.[3] Based on

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[1]See Marvin Opler, "Sex Mores and Social Conceptions of Deviance," in Harold Resnick and Marvin Wolfgang, eds., Sexual Behaviour: Social Clinical and Legal Aspects (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1972).

[2]See for example Mary Walshok, "The Emergence of Middle Class Deviant Subcultures: The Case of Swingers," Social Problems 18 (Spring, 1971), pp. 488-495; and Erich Goode and Richard Troiden, Sexual Deviance and Sexual Deviants (New York: William Morrow Co., 1974).

[3]William Masters and Virginia Johnson, Human Sexual Response (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1966).

direct laboratory observation of volunteer's reactions during coitus as well as self-stimulation, the work of Masters and Johnson has greatly broadened our knowledge of the physiology of human sexual behaviour.

Within this genre of research, again with the pioneering efforts made by Masters and Johnson, the study of sexual dysfunctions or malfunctions has gained increasing attention.[1] Various treatment techniques and programs aimed at the correcting of sexual dysfunctions have been developed during the last decade. Most of these are based to some extent on the original formulations of Masters and Johnson.[2]

While Masters and Johnson have focused on the physiology of human sexual behaviour, a good deal of attention has also been paid to the psychological aspects of sex. This literature aims at expanding our appreciation of the psycho-

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[1]William Masters and Virginia Johnson, Human Sexual Inadequacy (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1970).

[2]See for example Helen Kaplan, The New Sex Therapy (New York: New York Times Book Co., 1974); and William Hartman and Lillian Frith, Treatment of Sexyal Dysfunction (California: Center for Marital and Sexual Studies, 1972).

logical and emotional influences upon an individual's sexual experience and upon sexual relationships.[1] More recently, attempts have been made to assess sexual responses from a socio-political perspective.[2]

Speculations on the Social Work Literature

Having briefly reviewed some of the scientific literature on human sexuality which is particularly relevant to social work, we may now speculate as to how social work has adopted this knowledge for its own use. A review of the social work literature should reveal some attempt at evaluating some of the studies previously discussed in terms of their applicability to social work practice. One might also expect to find some attempt at converting theories of human sexual behaviour into practice theory. Perhaps another not unreasonable expectation might be to find some evidence of

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[1]See for example Seymour Fisher, The Female Orgasm (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1973); and Albert Ellis, Sex Without Guilt (New York: Lyle, Stuart and Co., 1962).

[2]See Alix Shulman, "Organs and Orgasms," in Gornick and Moran, eds., Women; and Ann Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," in Shulamith Firestone and Ann Koedt, eds., Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1970).

efforts to link social and behavioral science theory and conclusions about human sexuality, to already established practice theory related to human behaviour in general.

According to Greenwood, practice theory in social work "has been built up in the main in a trial and error, crudely empirical and highly pragmatic manner".[1] He also states that while the practitioner does not produce knowledge by contributing to scientific theory, his success depends on how skilfully he utilizes that which is already known.[2] It would seem then, that the greater the effort of social work to tailor and utilize scientific theory, the more effective and sound the practice. Greenwood contends that social work practice theory of the 1930's and 1940's was not developed via systematic research which converted social science laws into principles. In the following chapter, the writer will review the social work literature on human sexuality keeping in mind Greenwood's contention and whether it still holds true today.

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[1]Ernest Greenwood, "Social Science and Social Work: A Theory of Their Relationship," Social Service Review 29 (January, 1955), p. 28.

[2]Ibid., p. 27.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL WORK LITERATURE

A review of the major social work journals from 1965-1975 reveals a dearth of references to human sexuality.[1] Among those articles which do address themselves to the subject, four foci appear: family planning, family life and sex education, sexual dysfunctions, and the place of the entire subject of human sexuality in the social work curriculum.[2] More recently, a number of articles and general works have appeared which focus on the issue of sex role stereotyping in social work practice. The bulk of professional literature which considers the varied aspects of human sexuality is to be found in those journals and texts frequently consulted by social workers but rarely contributed to by them.

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[1]Journals reviewed include Social Work, Social Work Journal of N.A.S.W., Social Service Review, Social Casework, Smith College Studies in Social Work, Social Work Education Reporter, Journal of Education for Social Work, The Social Worker, The Social Welfare Forum, and Child Welfare.

[2]This last focus will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Explicit References to Human Sexuality

Family Planning

Florence Haselkorn and Lydia Rappaport have been social work's major proponents of the need for social work training and involvement in family planning. Offering her rationale for social work's involvement in this area, Haselkorn states, "There can be no professional debate about the fact that family planning is a basic human right, and a social goal that is pertinent to social work's central purpose of enhancement of social functioning."[1] Recognizing that birth control is a value-laden issue, Haselkorn maintains that education must take the lead in strengthening students' appreciation of moral, ethical, social and political value considerations in family planning.[2]

Like Haselkorn, Rappaport bemoans the fact that the whole human problem area of family planning has been seriously neglected by the social work profession. While she concedes

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[1]Florence Haselkorn, "Family Planning: Implications for Social Work Education," Journal of Education for Social Work 6 (Fall, 1970), p. 14.

[2]Ibid., p. 17.

that there are various impediments and value issues that contribute to the complexity and uncertainty of social work participation in family planning, she stresses that we must move beyond these.[1]

Belanger, while agreeing that there is a need for a social work contribution to and involvement in the field of family planning, cautions that simply instituting programs will not result in their success. She describes a medical-social study of women attending a family planning clinic in Vancouver, British Columbia. The study revealed that "poor women do not go to such clinics nor do they want to."[2] Belanger's observations in Vancouver support the findings of Rainwater which were discussed earlier. The findings of the Vancouver study also illustrate the importance of recognizing the values and attitudes of the target population at which a family planning program is aimed.

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[1] Lydia Rappaport, "Education and Training of Social Workers for Roles in Family Planning," Journal of Education for Social Work 6 (Fall, 1970), pp. 27-39.

[2] Karen Belanger, "Family Planning and 'The Poor'," Social Worker 42 (January, 1974), p. 17.

Family Life and Sex Education

Miller more encouragingly reports on one family agency's success in instituting a family life education program.[1] As a result of extensive reaching out to the community, it was found that large numbers of people who would not otherwise have sought agency services, could in fact be reached.

Just as family planning and family life education have received limited attention, the role of social work in sex education has been the subject of little analysis. Two recent articles however, stress the need for involvement and describe two successful attempts at sex education with young adolescents.[2]

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[1]Robert Miller, "Family Life Education: An Experiment in Agency Outreach," Social Work Journal of National Association of Social Workers 13 (October, 1968), pp. 72-77.

[2]See Ned Elsass, "Sex and Sexuality Presentations to Emotionally Disturbed Children in a Residential Treatment Centre," Child Welfare 49 (April, 1970), pp. 212-219; Karen Signell, "Prevention of Illegitimate Pregnancy: A Consultation Approach," Family Co-ordinator 18 (July, 1968), pp. 222-225; and John Paonessa and Mary Paonessa, "The Preparation of Boys for Puberty, Social Casework 52 (January, 1971), pp. 39-44.

Sexual Dysfunctions

Until very recently social workers have tended to consider the problem of sexual dysfunction as merely symptomatic of conflict or difficulty in the overall relationship in which the sexual dysfunction was occurring. As a result of this psychodynamic orientation, social workers have been slow in their adoption of techniques for the treatment of sexual problems. Avoidance of this in the field is reflected by similar neglect in the professional literature.

Hoxworth states that "the social work literature abounds with articles regarding social workers' treatment of cases of family discord, often with special emphasis allotted to marital counselling. Yet, even the articles on marriage counselling, much less other social work literature are almost devoid of any description of techniques or discussion of handling sexual problems."[1] In fact, only a handful of references to such treatment are to be found in social work journals.

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[1] David Hoxworth, "A Case Presentation of the Treatment of Dyspareunia," Clinical Social Work Journal 1 (Winter, 1973), p. 251.

Harris and Wagner have described a successful treatment approach to sexual dysfunctions which with some modification is based on the work of Masters and Johnson.[1] Although the authors are psychologists the relevance of their work to social work practice has resulted in its publication by a social work journal.

Within the social work literature, Gochros has emphasized repeatedly the need for social work involvement in the direct treatment of sexual and sex-related problems. He maintains that the influence of psychoanalytic theory on casework practice "has led social workers to adopt a 'disease' orientation in which unorthodox, dysfunctional and problematic behaviours are perceived as only 'symptoms' of underlying pathology."[2] This is reflected in the frequency of the opinion by social workers that a given sexual problem is simply a manifestation of deeper, underlying relationship

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[1]Gloria Harris and Nathaniel Wagner, "Treatment of Sexual Dysfunction and Casework Techniques," Clinical Social Work Journal 1 (Winter, 1973), pp. 244-250.

[2]Harvey Gochros, "Social Work's Sexual Blinders," in Harvey Gochros and Leroy Schultz, eds., Human Sexuality and Social Work (New York: Association Press, 1972), p. 85.

problems, and therefore sex per se will not be directly dealt with. Like Gochros, Rappaport contends that it is social workers' discomfort and lack of knowledge and skills that prevent their intervention in sexual problem areas. She states,

> It is a paradox that social workers are knowledgeable and comfortable with psychosexual development knowledge, and with unconscious aspects of sexual drives, needs and even aberrations, but are uncomfortable with conscious sexual behaviours, feelings and practices.[1]

In an effort to combat both social work's knowledge gap and lack of comfort with sexual matters, Schultz and Gochros have approached the subject of human sexuality in a sufficiently comprehensive and sensitive fashion as to offer social workers a valuable resource. It should be added that their text, Human Sexuality and Social Work, is the only social work text that has attempted to integrate social work concepts with a wide range of sexual problems and issues.

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[1] Rappaport, "Education and Training of Social Workers," p. 30.

Sex Roles

This subject, like family planning, family life and sex education, and sexual dysfunctions, has received most attention from professions and disciplines other than social work.[1] One study in particular has great significance for social work practitioners.[2] In a study of professional helpers it was discovered that the characteristics and qualities which they attributed to a healthy, well-functioning adult were equivalent to those attributed to the healthy, well-functioning male. However, these helpers' concepts of a healthy women differed markedly. Healthy men were seen as mature, strong, resourceful, reasoned, while healthy women were considered to be passive, submissive, excitable, emotional. That is, for a woman to be considered healthy,

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[1]See Alice Hochschild, "A Review of Sex Role Research," American Journal of Sociology 78 (February, 1973), pp. 1011-1029; Michael Gordon and Penelope Shankweiler, "Different Equals Less: Female Sexuality in Recent Marriage Manuals," Journal of Marriage and the Family 22 (August, 1971), pp. 459-465; and Shirley Angrist, "The Study of Sex Roles," Journal of Social Issues 25 (January, 1969), pp. 215-232.

[2]Inge Broverman et al., "Sex Role Stereotypes and Clinical Judgement of Mental Health," Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology 34 (January, 1970), pp. 109-131.

she must in fact show signs of behaviour that no self-respecting male would want to manifest. The results of this study strongly suggest that we as social workers may be applying differing criteria of mental health and appropriate social functioning for male and female clients. This kind of a bias appears to be the result of the expectation that the female client does not have the growth potential that is true of the male client.

In spite of the significant attention to sex roles in the non-social work literature, only a very few articles have appeared in our own literature which address themselves to the implications of sex role stereotyping for social work practice.[1] Unfortunately, these articles do not deal with the relationship between sex role stereotyping and sexual functioning, nor do they discuss the implications of such stereotyping by therapists who treat sexual and sex-related problems. For example, the

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[1]See Rosemary Chapin, Susan Jones and Nancy Waldman, Sex Role Stereotyping: Implication for the Human Services (Minneapolis: Minnesota Resource Centre for Social Work Education, 1973); Catherine Brogan, "Changing Perspectives on the Role of Women," Smith College Studies in Social Work 42 (February, 1972), pp. 155-173; and Carol Westley, "The Women's Movement and Psychotherapy," Social Work Journal of National Association of Social Workers 20 (March, 1975), pp. 120-125.

woman who has been indocrinated with the notion that "sex is a man's pleasure" may experience difficulty in assuring her own sexual gratification during sexual encounters. If she seeks help with the problem of lack of sexual satisfaction, the attitude and knowledge of the therapist will greatly affect the nature and even outcome of the treatment.

One recent article by Lieberman deserves mention as it is illustrative of an attempt to integrate the concept of sex role with the nature of individual sexual expression.[1] Despite its frequent moralistic overtones, this article is a pioneering effort in that it explores some of the effects of the Women's Liberation Movement on the sexual expression and activity of adolescent girls. In addition, Lieberman examines the implications for treatment of sex-related problems such as teenage pregnancy, in light of recent social change regarding sex standards and sex roles.

Implicit References to Human Sexuality

In addition to the limited amount of specific, sex-related interest in social work literature, there are many

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[1]Florence Lieberman, "Sex and the Adolescent Girl: Liberation or Exploitation?" Clinical Social Work Journal 1 (Winter, 1973), pp. 224-243.

examples of implicitly biased, value-laden and frequently "sexist"[1] attitudes and practice in the literature frequently consulted by the profession. The disease orientation which grew out of social work's alliance with psychoanalytic thought, coupled with a discomfort in openly confronting sexual issues is evident when a review is undertaken of texts and articles found in social work libraries.

In her well known text, Perlman speaks about the "hard to reach" client. She states, ". . . It is [the client] who is a thorn in the community's flesh, such as the delinquent adolescent or who is troubling the community's peace of spirit, such as the unwed mother, who is considered to be the proper responsibility of the social worker."[2] She continues, asking what social work is for, "if not to make social beings out of these misfits or to protect society against their

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[1]The term "sexist" as employed in this study refers to the belief that the sexes have distinctive characteristics that determine their respective personalities and capabilities, usually involving the idea that one sex is superior and has the right to rule the other.

[2]Helen Harris Perlman, Social Casework: A Problem-Solving Process (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 154-155.

depradations? Where can they be helped or dealt with if they are not to be put in places of confinement or punishment?"[1]

Here, Perlman labels the unwed mother as a misfit and a deviant who in order to be "helped" may in fact have to be removed from the mainstream of the society which she has offended with her behaviour. It is difficult to ignore Perlman's equation of help with punishment and her judgement of premarital sexual behaviour as a transgression on the part of the female. No mention is made however, of how to help or deal with the putative father. One might conclude that by such an obvious omission, Perlman is unwittingly betraying her own double standard to her readers. Unfortunately, it is a standard that the social work profession as a whole supports, and reflects in its general lack of concern with the role played by the fathers of illegitimate children. Direct services are typically geared towards the pregnant girl alone, thereby implying that the sole responsibility for the pregnancy and its outcome lies with her.

Later in the same text, Perlman elaborates on the goals of professional social work. She states, "The ideal goal for

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[1]Perlman, Social Casework: A Problem-Solving Process, p. 155.

what we call a 'rejecting mother' would be that she would come to feel tenderly towards her child."[1] She then goes on to describe the casework process as one which should be aimed at helping the mother to change her feelings and behaviour regarding her child in such a way that she becomes better able to fulfill her mother role. She then discusses the changes in contract which are sometimes necessary in the worker/client relationship:

> [If] The caseworker, in attempting to influence her [the client's] feelings, concludes that the rigidities apparent in the woman narrow the possibility of much emotional change, [then] The goal contracts. Now it becomes that of helping the compulsive, repressed mother to act in certain ways toward the child so that the child will not be so badly hurt by her, and so that the child's consequent responsiveness will gratify the mother. [If] Discussions with the mother, as to the ways she puts advice into practice, her consequent reactions, and so forth reveal that she is more disturbed and more damaging to her offspring than was originally perceived [then] The goal contracts further or actually changes. It now becomes that of helping this mother relinquish her child to placement.[2]

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[1]Perlman, Social Casework: A Problem-Solving Process, p. 201.

[2]Ibid., pp. 201-202.

Perlman's suggestions do not include helping the mother to examine fully her ambivalence about her child, nor does she entertain the thought that the casework goal of helping the mother to relinquish her child may in fact be a positive one for this particular woman. The implicit assumption being made by Perlman is that a healthy and appropriate means of self expression for women is via motherhood, and that only when the woman is "disturbed" is she unable or unwilling to fulfill that role. It is noteworthy that Perlman does not label or make any outward judgement about the client's state of mental health until it becomes clear that the client cannot be persuaded or "influenced" to change her feelings. At that point she becomes "repressed" and "compulsive"--obviously "disturbed".

In one of many such articles on family therapy, MacGregor points out the need for therapists to help parents to occupy and perform their "proper" sex roles in order that the children might be exposed to healthy role models, and that the parents might achieve ultimate satisfaction within the marital relationship. The mother's appreciation of her own femininity is said to come about if she helps her husband to be more masculine. MacGregor's reflections on true femininity consist of submissiveness on the mother's part to

her husband's and child's needs, and of fulfilling primarily an "emotional-expressive" function as wife and mother.[1] Implicit here is the assumption that helping mothers attend to their nurturant and self-giving functions will enhance their own sense of self worth as well as securing the identities of their husbands and children.

Congruent with MacGregor's approach to the concept of sex roles within marriage, is the definition of appropriate role behaviour as put forth in the Family Categories Schema which is based on the theories of Nathan Ackerman. This document, which is a highly comprehensive outline for the assessment of family problems, is in use at present in numerous Canadian schools of social work. The schema, in its outline of the expectations which define the father's role in the family includes "having ultimate responsibility for important decisions (and) occupying the ultimate authority position in the family".[2] The mother's role in turn, "calls for the

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[1]See Robert MacGregor, "Multiple Impact Psychotherapy with Families," in Nathan Ackerman, ed., Family Process (New York: Basic Books Inc., 1970), p. 901.

[2]Nathan Epstein, John Sigal and Vivian Rakoff, "Family Categories Schema," unpublished document, Jewish General Hospital, Montreal, Quebec, p. 9.

performance of mainly expressive functions" and for her performing "efficiently and happily as homemaker and mother".[1] Where the parent roles are not carried out as defined, a label of "idiosyncratic" is applied to the existing role behaviour.

The sexist overtones in the section of the schema which deals with appropriate role behaviour must be recognized for they are clear and potentially damaging. On the other hand, the schema also stresses the importance of autonomy for each marital partner and the importance of each partner's ability to make separate, responsible choices. One might question how much autonomy and freedom to choose the mother actually has within the narrow definition of the limits and boundaries of her role. It would appear that either the concepts of "autonomy" and "role behaviour" as outlined in the schema are incompatible and that this represents an inconsistency in the theory underlying the schema, or the autonomy which is referred to is basically reserved for the father.

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[1]Epstein et al., "Family Categories Schema," p. 9.

In her review of 'Childhood and Society' by Erickson and 'The Person' by Lidz (two texts used extensively in Canadian and American schools of social work), Schwartz contends that there is a heavy sexist bias in both works.[1] Although both books are used to teach social work students about psychosocial and psychosexual development, Erickson virtually ignores the subject of female development (thereby implying its lack of relevance and importance) and Lidz contends that a firm female identity is achieved once the female "is wishing primarily to complement the life of her husband and find happiness in her family".[2] In these and in a host of other works, the female is defined solely in terms of her childbearing capacity.[3]

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[1]See Mary Schwartz, "Sexism in the Social Work Curriculum," Journal of Education for Social Work 9 (October, 1973), pp. 65-70.

[2]Ibid., p. 67.

[3]See Carol Westley, "The Women's Movement," pp. 120-125; Barbara Stevens, "The Psychotherapist and Women's Liberation," Social Work Journal of National Association of Social Workers 16 (July, 1971), pp. 12-18; and Saul Levine, Louisa Kamin and Eleanor Levine, "Sexism and Psychiatry," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 44 (April, 1974), pp. 327-336 for critiques of this view. See also Cordell Thomas, "Women's Rights in Social Welfare Agencies," Social Welfare Forum 99 (May, 1972), pp. 227-235 for a critique of the sexism apparent in many social welfare programs supported and engaged in by social work.

Examples of the narrow and biased position which social work and other helping professions have held regarding various aspects of human sexuality are abundant in the literature. It is perhaps ironic that social work has seen fit to support and become involved (however minimally) in sex education programs both within schools and the community at large,[1] and yet has continued itself to adhere to many of the fallacies, myths and prejudices it has sought to eradicate elsewhere.

It is apparent that implicit, biased references to sexuality are to be found much more frequently in social work literature than is true for explicit references to the subject. The social work literature which has approached the subject of human sexuality more directly, is for the most part very recent, and limited to consideration of the introduction of sex education into social work programs, the implementation of family planning services and the treatment for sexual problems. There is virtually no evidence in the social work literature of any effort to evaluate and integrate the research and knowledge which has been developed by other disciplines.

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[1]See Robert Miller, "Family Life Education," pp. 72-77; Ned Elsass, "Sex and Sexuality Presentations," pp. 212-219; Karen Signell, "Prevention of Illegitimate Pregnancies," pp. 222-225; and Paonessa et al., "The Preparation of Boys," pp. 39-44.

CHAPTER III

MODELS FOR EDUCATION

In spite of the general lack of attention to the various aspects of human sexuality in the social work literature, there has recently been a growing acceptance of the need for sex education for social workers. This acceptance seems for the most part related to the recognition of changing sexual patterns. In an address to participants at a symposium on Human Sexuality and Fertility Services, Florence Haselkorn makes reference to the "sexual revolution" and "the new sexuality" as opposed to "the conventional sexuality."[1] Gochros has emphasized the need for social workers to develop the knowledge, comfort and skills necessary to respond to the increasing willingness of clients to verbalize and seek

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[1]See Symposium on Human Sexuality and Fertility Services, Proceedings of the Symposium on Human Sexuality and Fertility Services (Ontario: Canadian Association of Social Workers, 1972), p. 8.

help with their sexual problems.[1] The proliferation of new lifestyles and an increasing acceptance of diversity in sexual lifestyles has been cited by Morrison as evidence of change with which social workers must come to grips if they are to work effectively with clients adhering to these changing patterns of sexual behaviour.[2]

It is evident that there is a beginning recognition that the area of human sexuality has been neglected by social work, and that the subject warrants attention. There is growing acknowledgement of the need to prepare beginning practitioners for involvement in family planning, family life and sex education, and sex counselling. In relation to this, an important and obvious question has been raised by educators regarding the place of human sexuality in the social work curriculum. In the opinion of some, the ideal is a situation wherein the subject is integrated and continually addressed

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[1] See Harvey Gochros, "Introducing Human Sexuality Into the Social Work Curriculum," Social Work Education Reporter 18 (September, 1970), p. 49.

[2] See Eleanor Morrison, "Teaching Human Sexuality: The Use of Discussion Groups and Teaching Aides in a College Course," Family Co-ordinator 20 (April, 1971), p. 173.

within existing curriculum arrangements.[1] It is argued that content in human sexuality has obvious linkages with knowledge from the behavioral sciences, practice courses, policy and research. In other words, since sex is a pervasive and natural part of life it should be treated as such.

The dearth of references to sexual problems and issues in the social work literature, and the lack of serious attention to sexuality within general curriculum content, suggest to this writer that social work has not yet accepted the naturalness of sex and its relationship to most subject matter. The writer's bias towards a separation of the subject of human sexuality from other curriculum content has received solid support from several sources in the literature.

Haselkorn has expressed the opinion that the case which has been stated for integrating content in sexuality, at this point in time merely represents "an armchair position of the academic purist which crumbles in the face of the curriculum capers that flow out of competition for time and space

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[1]See Naomi Abramowitz, "Human Sexuality in the Social Work Curriculum," Family Co-ordinator 20 (October, 1971), p. 349.

in the curriculum."[1] She continues, "adaptive capacity often requires that we accept what is feasible", and suggests that more often than not, integration is not feasible.

The reasons cited by Haselkorn which would justify a separate course in human sexuality include:

> (1) the unavailability of a sufficient number of teachers who are prepared to teach this content
> (2) the opportunity to identify appropriate content in a new curriculum area, which may in the future find its way into the core curriculum, and to experiment with new teaching methodologies
> (3) the opportunity to extend student learnings that originate elsewhere in the curriculum, and
> (4) the opportunity for depth for students who have special career interests in family planning, family life education, sex education and marriage and sex counselling.[2]

Rappaport contends that "within the integrative approach knowledge, issues and problem-solving approaches are dealt with in the context of a broad range of social problem areas. There is less opportunity to build cumulative knowledge and to develop specialist sophistication in any one social problem

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[1] Symposium, Proceedings, p. 7.

[2] Ibid.

area.[1] Gochros feels that a dissemination of sexual content in a variety of courses such as human behaviour, social welfare and social policy, and practice, with sexuality being treated as just another aspect of social functioning may eventually be desirable. He maintains however, that at this time sexuality cannot be regarded as "just another" facet of human behaviour. "It is a unique one, which often brings out discomfort, confusion, resistance, biases and ignorance on the part of students and faculty who deal with it." For this reason, it seems more effective to have a separate course entitled Human Sexuality.[2]

Within the literature which favours a specific, elective course in human sexuality, a number of recent articles discuss the manner in which the subject matter might be treated.[3]

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[1]Lydia Rappaport, "The Education and Training of Social Workers," p. 32.

[2]Harvey Gochros, "Introducing Human Sexuality," p. 49.

[3]See for example Eleanor Morrison, "Teaching Human Sexuality"; Naomi Abramovitz, "Human Sexuality"; Libby Tanner, "Teaching a Course in Human Sexuality in a Graduate School of Social Work: Strategy and Content," Family Co-ordinator 23 (July, 1974), pp. 283-289; Joy Johnson and Olek Matek, "Critical Issues in Teaching Human Sexuality to Graduate Social Work Students," Journal of Education for Social Work 10 (July, 1974), pp. 50-55.

These course proposals and outlines are all similar in several respects. All the authors agree on a two-fold primary objective: The first is to familiarize students with the range of expression of human sexuality, for example sex behaviours, sex practices, variation in sexual expression according to age, culture and class. The second is to increase students' comfort to deal with sexual problems. Based on the assumption that most students are initially uncomfortable in this area, most courses aim at producing an attitude and emotion change that will facilitate work with sexual problems.

A further point of agreement of the articles reviewed is an agreement on the three basic components of a course in human sexuality: the affective or attitudinal, the cognitive or knowledge, and the skills or intervention component. Each of these components will be briefly elaborated upon

The affective component: This component of a course in human sexuality generally aims at the gaining of openness among students and at their acceptance of sexual matters. The vehicles for achieving this goal include the desensitization of students to sexual matters by means of explicit films depicting heterosexual and homosexual relations and

masturbation, and guest speakers who may lead class discussions on a variety of popular topics. Also included are teacher presentations, students presentations, communication exercises, and the small group or tutorial format. All of these are aimed at stimulating self confrontation and awareness, as well as the discussion of personal values, biases and attitudes among students.

The cognitive component: This component of a human sexuality course as described in the literature, is aimed at gathering factual information pertaining to human sexual functioning. It may include psychobiological data, psychosexual development, sexual deviance, sexual disorders, sexual variation, and so forth. It is the cognitive component that potentially develops the student's expertise in the area of human sexual functioning.

The skills component: The skills component, as defined in the literature, concerns interventive and practice techniques. Current trends and techniques of social work intervention in the sexual and sex-related problems of individuals, couples and families may be considered. Less frequently techniques of macro-intervention with problems shared by groups of people

and where the source of these problems may be due to social policy or legalities, are also examined. Some sexual issues that may be considered as social problems include pornography, prostitution, illegitimacy, and so on. Effort is also made to increase the student's interview and assessment skills regarding specific sexual problems.

There appears to be consistent agreement in the literature that the affective objectives must be realized before students are able to effectively integrate cognate data and intervention strategies and techniques. Based on this belief, all the courses reviewed included in their format small group discussions as one of the major vehicles for "desensitization" and learning. These sessions are seen as providing a necessary opportunity to communicate feelings with others in an informal setting. Within this context, each individual's comfort level and awareness, as well as his or her knowledge can be increased. Morrison enumerates some of the advantages of small group discussions as follows:

(1) the high priority of the peer group as a source of information, thereby being conducive to the counteracting of myths and misinformation
(2) the importance of reflecting one's familial and personal learnings about sexuality and testing these against those of others from different cultural or value traditions

(3) the allowance for the development of ease in communicating about sexual matters without seductive or embarrassed overtones
(4) the small group more easily brings implicit values to a level of awareness and exposes each student to the value systems of others, and
(5) the risk of exposing one's personal ignorance is much less in a group of six or seven than is true in a group of one or two hundred.[1]

Affective goals are said to be extensively realized via "desensitization" techniques. As a result of their exposure to explicit films, speakers, panels, video tapes, erotic literature, and other forms of sexual material, students are said to become more knowledgeable and also more comfortable to speak about sex. They begin to develop a sexual vocabulary, to explore sexual matters frankly and openly and learn to talk about these matters candidly and professionally. Johnson and Matek strongly emphasize that "desensitization is the major vehicle in reshaping attitudes wherein students' personal interests, biases, preferences, blocks, and resistances are recognized and a professional role is established."[2]

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[1]Eleanor Morrison, "Teaching Human Sexuality," pp. 173-174.

[2]Joy Johnson and Olek Matek, "Critical Issues," p. 54.

Human Sexuality in Canadian Social Work Programs

It was believed that a number of Canadian social work programs had experimented with graduate level courses in human sexuality. In order to determine the general extent and drift of sex education in Canadian social work schools, ten universities which offer a graduate level degree in social work were contacted by mail.[1] In each case, a request was made for descriptions and outlines of any courses in human sexuality which were being offered during the 1974-75 academic year.

The nine responses received suggest that only two elective courses in human sexuality were offered during the past academic year. One school of social work indicated that such a course had been given during the 1973-74 academic year. It was subsequently decided by this school that human sexuality content should be integrated into the existing curriculum

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[1]A review of course content in Canadian Bachelor of Social Work programs revealed that there are no human sexuality courses being taught at this level at the present time. While it is also known to the writer that other university programs do offer such courses, it was specifically social work programs that the writer wished to explore.

rather than continue to be treated as a separate subject. The school suggested to this writer that the "integrative" approach was to be adopted presently. Of the remaining seven social work schools contacted, none had adopted either an "elective" or an "integrative" approach to the teaching of human sexuality. Only one of these schools indicated any plans to include human sexuality in their curriculum in the near future. However, no indication was given as to when such content would actually be made available to students.

Of the two social work programs which offered an elective course in human sexuality during the past year, only one enclosed a course outline.[1]

It should be noted that three course outlines have been included in the Appendix along with one course description. These will be referred to as courses A, B, C and D. The particular schools of social work which have offered these courses will remain anonymous, since their identification would not be relevant to the purpose of this study. Course A, given

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[1]The second school unfortunately misunderstood the request made and sent instead an application for, and information about, admission to the school for graduate study in social work.

during the 1973-74 academic year was designated as a basic course at the graduate level. Course B is to be given in the 1975-76 academic year and is also designated as a basic graduate level course. Course C, given during the 1974-75 academic year, is described as an "advanced level" course. Students registering in this course were assumed by the instructor to have broad background knowledge in the area of human sexuality and to be at a higher level of personal maturity and self awareness than the average student. Course D was offered during the 1973-74 academic year; following that a decision was taken to replace it with the "integrative" approach. No outline was provided for course D.[1]

Course A was offered only once, "experimentally." The program in which the course was offered does not include human sexuality in its curriculum at the present time. It is not known whether Course C, offered during the 1974-75 is to be made available in the coming year. Course B is being offered for the first time in the coming year. Course D was given only once.

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[1]Although there are a number of course descriptions and outlines to be found in the literature, these have not been presented in the Appendix. They will be referred to and referenced in subsequent chapters.

A Comparison with the Literature

It appears that Canadian social work programs, in their experimentation with human sexuality content, have thus far chosen to approach the subject as an elective area of study. This approach is consistent with most of the recommendations to be found in the literature. A similar agreement can be found in course objectives. Courses A, B, C, and D aim at "increasing comfort" of students and "facilitating communication" about sex. Courses B and C note specifically that tutorial sessions will help to achieve this goal. It is not known whether Courses A and D included tutorial sessions in their format. Each of these courses also aim directly at increasing self awareness and at examination of attitudes and backgrounds of students. These are listed as goals separate from the accumulation of knowledge and skills and not as byproducts of knowledge acquisition. One of the methods of achieving the desensitization of students shared by Courses A, B, and C is the showing of a film or films depicting explicit sexual encounters.

Like the literature, these courses aim at achieving affective, cognitive and skills goals in one course. The semester for courses A, B, and C is divided according to the

three components. Several sessions focus on attitudes and values, another few weeks on gathering information on a number of topics and typically, towards the end of the course, a couple of sessions are spent focusing on intervention. Each of these courses runs (or ran) for one semester.

Briefly summarizing, the courses represented in the appendix closely approximate the suggestions in the social work literature on a number of counts. Courses A, B, C, and D all appear to have been aiming at realizing affective, cognitive and skills objectives. Courses A, B, and C have utilized what the literature refers to as "desensitization" techniques to assist in the achievement of affective goals. Courses B and C specify their use of tutorial sessions to further assist in the realization of affective goals.

CHAPTER IV

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF HUMAN SEXUALITY COURSES

While the social work literature seems generally to have ignored the subject of human sexuality, the work of several authors reflects an attempt to utilize the knowledge which has been developed by other disciplines. In addition, the courses offered by several Canadian schools of social work which were discussed earlier, have also attempted to integrate some social and behavioral science concepts and theory. In spite of this, many of the suggestions offered in the social work literature and the number of Canadian course outlines which were examined, seem to have certain weaknesses. In the opinion of the writer, these weaknesses exist in the areas of course content, teaching methods or techniques, and course structure.

The area of course content will be dealt with first. Some suggestions and rationale will be given for the inclusion of topics which have hitherto received little attention by

social work educators. The subject of teaching methods will be dealt with in relation to course goals. Some questions will be raised regarding the common focus on "desensitization" to achieve affective goals which appears in the literature. Lastly, the question of course structure will be examined. The manner in which existing and past courses in human sexuality have been structured will be reviewed.

Course Content

The belief in the notion of a widespread sexual revolution appears to be common to sex educators in social work. This belief persists in spite of research evidence which indicates that changes reflecting such a revolution are for the most part limited to white, middle class, often college-educated individuals. There is no doubt that recent changes in attitudes toward pre-marital permissiveness, sex roles, and sex practices have had an impact on society at large. However, it has been demonstrated that the effects of the "sexual revolution" on the lower classes, segments of the working class and certain ethnic groups have in fact been minimal.[1]

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[1]See Marjorie Buckholz, "Human Sexual Behaviour and Class Structure," in Harvey Gochros and Leroy Schultz, eds., Human Sexuality.

The social work literature emphasizes change in the areas of sex standards and sex practices. This suggests that social work educators may be approaching the subject of human sexuality from a middle class perspective. A large number of the clients seeking help from social work agencies are of lower socio-economic and working class backgrounds. One cannot necessarily assume that topics such as "alternatives to marriage", "changing concepts of masculinity and femininity", or "changing patterns in sexual expression" equip social work students to meet the needs of these people. There is an obvious need for an examination of the impact such issues have on different groups of people.

The course outlines presented in the appendix as well as the majority of such outlines to be found in the literature, include the topic of "variation in sexual expression by culture and class." Social and cultural variables (among others) are significant determinants of attitudes and behaviours relating to such issues as marital, pre-marital and extra-marital relationships, family planning, birth control, homosexuality, sexual deviance, sexual response, sex ethics and sex norms. If sexual behaviour is seen as influenced and shaped by more than just physical drive,

variant factors such as culture and class must be recognized as constantly contributing to an individual's sexual attitudes, preferences, behaviours and subjective sexual experiences. A mode of course presentation which approaches this issue of variation as an isolated and separate topic minimizes the pervasiveness of variation in human sexual expression and should therefore be examined for its effectiveness.

By approaching the matter of variation in sexual expression as a separate topic, its manifestations may be neglected when other content such as "sexual deviation" or "changing concepts of masculinity and femininity" are considered. If "variation" is treated separately from other course content, the remaining material is in danger of being presented as though it were true across the board rather than examined for its applicability in a variety of contexts and situations. Course A provides a good example of a disproportionate emphasis on the phenomenon of "change" and a virtual exclusion of the issue of variation in sexual expression. Three out of ten class sessions of this course were spent dealing with changes of one sort or another which were assumed to result from the sexual revolution. In one of these sessions reference was made to the fact that some consideration

would be given to the influence of social, economic, religious and political factors on sexual values and behaviour. Once again however, this consideration was made within the context of "change" and is therefore slanted in that direction.

Unlike most of the material reviewed, Course A did not devote any time at all to a consideration of variation in sexual expression by class, culture or ethnicity. Rather it focused more on popular topics such as homosexuality. Half of this course focused on new lifestyles and the sexual revolution. The applicability to everyday social work practice of such content is at best questionable, since it has been established that these issues directly affect only a small percentage of North Americans.

Course B includes some consideration of "sexual variance". It is difficult to determine whether "variance" in this context refers to variation by external factors, or whether it refers to specific sexual behaviours, such as homosexuality. If the topic does refer to variation, then we have another example of the issue being treated separately from the rest of the course content, and being given an insufficient time allotment. If "variance" does not refer

to "variation" then Course B like Course A, appears to ignore the issue entirely.

Gochros, in a suggested course outline, does list social, class and cultural differences in sexual behaviour as well as rural-urban differences in sexual behaviour in the range of content which he proposes.[1] The manner in which this content should be presented or integrated into a course, is not elaborated upon by him.

It is suggested that all content in social work courses in human sexuality should bear some relevance to direct practice. It is also suggested that the majority of clients seen and worked with by most social workers, stem from other than middle class backgrounds. In light of the above, one might argue that variation in sexual attitudes, values and behaviour be addressed throughout a course in human sexuality and should relate to existing client groups.

The physical aspects of sexuality--anatomy, phsiology, and sexual response, is another area that in this writer's

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[1]Harvey Gochros, "Educating Graduate Social Work Students to Deal with Sexual Problems," in Harvey Gochros and Leroy Schultz, eds., Human Sexuality, p. 248.

opinion has not received enough attention. Unlike attitudes and behaviour, anatomy and physiology are consistent regardless of ethnicity, class or cultural background. This is an area of knowledge that social workers are sadly lacking. This lack seriously limits our ability to intervene effectively in cases where there is confusion as to "normalcy" versus "abnormality" or pathology in sexual response, or where the client is in need of education about his or her own body. One result of this lack of knowledge is that social workers are forced to rely on their own personal understanding and biases about sexual functioning, or to simply ignore the problem completely. Insufficient physiological information often results too, in social workers applying a psychodynamic interpretation of a problem that in fact is not psychological.

Course B utilizes only one out of thirteen sessions to focus on "human sexual functioning and dysfunction". This would appear to be quite insufficient to give students a thorough understanding of sexual response. Course A similarly considers this area in one session but does so in the context of "normal versus abnormal". No time seems to be spent in this course teaching students about sexual response beyond a pathological frame of reference. Gochros suggests that the

physical aspects of sexuality be included in course content but lists it merely as one of eleven possible topics that an instructor might select.

There is little doubt that psychological factors in human behaviour have to date been given more than their due in the social work curriculum. Indeed, in recent years most schools have strengthened their social science content. Similarly, it can be argued that in the area of sexuality, priority should be given to social, cultural and class factors, and to physiological and anatomical factors. These are certainly as crucial a part of sexual functioning as is psychology and the effects of social change.

The subject of sex roles or sexual socialization for example, receives very little attention in the course outlines which were reviewed. Although all include content on social and environmental influences on sexuality, there appears to have been little attention paid to the effects of sex role stereotyping on sexual functioning. A number of articles in the literature have set out strong arguments for the inclusion of women's studies in social work programs.[1] These

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[1] See Leatrice Hauptman, Janet Bruin and Florence Field, "Women's Issues in Social Welfare," Social Welfare

suggestions include an examination of sex role stereotyping and female psychology but do not discuss the influence of these issues upon (female) sexuality and sexual response. Similarly, course proposals and outlines for human sexuality do not seem to have included the effects of and relevance of sex role stereotyping on sexual functioning.

While Course A seeks to develop among students an awareness of their personal attitudes toward homosexuality, no effort seems to be expended in helping students to confront personal prejudices and biases regarding what is "normal" and "healthy" sexual functioning for men as opposed to women. None of the material examined by this writer suggests the relevance of exploring the manner in which sexual lifestyles, practices and problems may be influenced by our socialization into sex roles. It is felt that more attention must be paid by educators, to helping students achieve an awareness for, and appreciation for, the manner in which our society socializes beliefs, attitudes and values

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Forum 99 (May, 1972), pp. 213-226; Mary Schwartz, "Sexism"; and Meisel Schilling, Susan Perkins and Ann Freedman, "The Need for Women's Studies in Social Work Education," Journal of Social Work Education 10 (Summer, 1974), pp. 67-74.

that affect sexual behaviour and sexual relations. This is perhaps especially true in light of the biased orientation which, as discussed in Chapter II, students are exposed to, in much of the social work literature.

Social workers must have some awareness of the extent to which their definitions of "normal" sexual functioning are sex-role stereotyped. Without such awareness, it seems inevitable that they will maintain and perpetuate myths and non-truths in their practice. Sexual behaviour and attitudes are shaped by cultural norms, social prohibitions and expectations, and by the manner in which individuals are taught to express and gratify sexual needs. What we have been taught to believe is "right" and "healthy" for us as males and females will have direct bearing on our sexual expression and responsivity. The inclusion of socialization into sex roles as an influence on sexual behaviour and functioning is seen as an important element of "environmental influences" upon sexuality.

Teaching Methods and Techniques

As discussed earlier, a commonly held assumption in the social work literature is that "desensitization" of

students is a prerequisite for their learning about human sexuality. The content, organization and format of many courses seem to rest on this assumption. In some course, the specific goal of several class sessions is to desensitize students to sexual material. Gochros emphasizes that "among the most effective teaching procedures are [those] geared explicitly to desensitizing students to speaking about sex".[1] Johnson and Matek indicate that desensitization became a major factor in their course.[2]

Various techniques have been used to achieve the goal of desensitization, among them being the showing of films with explicit sexual content early in the course. Courses A and B as well as a number of courses discussed in the literature, utilize the film "Rich and Judy". This film depicts a heterosexual encounter and is typically shown during a class session and followed by discussion. Both Gochros[3]

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[1]See Harvey Gochros, "Educating Graduate Students," p. 250.

[2]See Joy Johnson and Olek Matek, "Critical Issues," pp. 50-55.

[3]See Harvey Gochros, "Educating Graduate Students," p. 250.

and Tanner[1] recommend the use of films to desensitize students.

There are a number of questions which might be raised regarding the manner in which the concept of "desensitization" has been applied in the effort to achieve affective goals in human sexuality courses. First the term "desensitization" is not defined in any of the articles which recommend its use. The purpose of the affective component of any sexuality course is usually defined as making students more comfortable with sex. The social work literature then, equates increasing comfort with desensitization. While this equation is not entirely inaccurate, it is somewhat simplistic.

In the strict sense of the term, as it is used in psychology, desensitization refers to a specialized technique of behaviour modification which in turn is a particular form of treatment for a variety of psychological conditions. More recently the principles of behaviour modification have also been applied in non-clinical settings, such as schools where behavioral problems require intervention.

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[1]See Libby Tanner, "Teaching a Course."

Describing the principles upon which desensitization is based, Bandura states:

> Neutral events, through their conjunction with aversive experiences, acquire emotion-arousing properties. Desensitization is a method of behaviour modification which is based on the principle of counterconditioning, and is widely applied to behaviour in which conditioned emotionality plays a part. . . If negatively valenced events are repeatedly associated with positive experiences, the stimuli gradually lose their aversive quality. This outcome is achieved by eliciting activities which are incompatible with emotional response in the presence of fear or anxiety-arousing stimuli.[1]

It appears then that the procedure of desensitization is utilized to "countercondition" or reverse the fear or anxiety response to given anxiety-arousing situations for an individual. The repeated, simultaneous presentition to the individual, of the anxiety-producing stimulus along with some pleasant or relaxing stimulus is stressed by Bandura. It is by means of the repeated pairing of negative and positive experiences or stimuli, that the negative emotional response of the individual gradually lessens.

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[1]Albert Bandura, Principles of Behaviour Modification (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 40.

In light of the above, it would seem that the term "desensitization" is being used very loosely at best, in the social work literature. For desensitization to occur, Bandura sets out three necessary conditions:

> (a) that an effective anxiety-neutralizer which is capable of eliciting competing events of sufficient strength to predominate over negative emotional response be selected and used consistently
> (b) that the presentation of aversive events be in attenuated form so that the emotional responses to be counteracted are relatively weak and thus easily extinguished, and
> (c) that the anxiety-reducing and anxiety-provoking stimuli must be contiguously associated.[1]

If desensitization of social work students to sexual content were in fact a goal, it is obvious that much more planning is needed than appears to be reflected in the literature. The behaviour modification literature suggests that much more would be needed than simply the showing of an explicit film, or videotape, or the construction of a sexual crossword puzzle as is suggested by Gochros. It is apparent that the social work literature does not really mean desensitization in the true sense of the word when it utilizes the term. What appears to happen in practice is that in a number

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[1]Albert Bandura, Principles of Behaviour Modification, p. 490.

of courses, students are initially flooded with unrelated sexual stimuli. The stated assumption underlying such an approach is that the "shock" will soon wear off, students' discomfort and anxiety about the material will subside as they discuss it among themselves, and the business of "learning" is then facilitated.

There are a number of implicit assumptions however, which underlie this kind of approach to education and which require some examination:

(a) that all students entering a course on human sexuality are at the same level of discomfort, anxiety and lack of self awareness regarding the subject matter
(b) that they all require "desensitization"and to the same extent
(c) that intense, short-lived exposure to sexual stimuli will ultimately reduce anxiety rather than raise it, for all students
(d) that acquiring factual information about human sexuality and broadening one's knowledge base will not in itself induce sufficient comfort in students
(e) that ideas, values and attitudes ingrained via socialization since birth can be significantly altered in a few short months, and
(f) that such change is necessary before the beginning practitioner can engage in competent and effective intervention with sexual problems.

It is suggested that all of these implicit assumptions can be questioned. The assumption that all students in social

work share the same level of self awareness, comfort or discomfort, and knowledge in any area, including human sexuality seems clearly untenable. It is possible that for some students comfort or lack of it is not the major problem but rather that a lack of sufficient specific knowledge and intervention skills constitutes their weakness.

If it is incorrect to assume a uniform level of intellectual ability, self-awareness, maturity and acquired knowledge among students, then it follows that students may not uniformly require desensitization to sexual content. Without the knowledge of, and appreciation for "where the student is at", an instructor can only guess at what the needs of a student group will be. In such circumstances, any attempt at desensitization would be little more than a shot in the dark.

There are instances both in education and direct practice where scientifically validated guides are not available to the social worker. Where such guides are available however, they should be utilized. At this time there are at least two instruments available to educators which can help to determine both degree of sex knowledge and to some extent, attitudes towards this kind of material. The Sex Knowledge

Inventory[1] and the Sex Knowledge and Attitudes Test[2] can both help an instructor to determine the level of incoming students.

Another possibility to be considered is that exposure to an anxiety-provoking experience such as an explicit film or a highly charged discussion about an aspect of sexuality will raise rather than lower the anxiety level of some students. Within the clinical context, as described by Bandura, an anxiety-neutralizer is always introduced concurrently with the anxiety-arousing stimulus. The two must be contiguously associated. In addition, the subject is not permitted to go on and confront sources of increasing anxiety until it has been established that he or she is in fact comfortable and relaxed with the previous exposure. The social work articles which discuss desensitization do not take into account the need for an ordered hierarchy of anxiety-producing events nor do they acknowledge the need for the introduction of anxiety-neutralizing stimuli. In addition, it is questionable whether

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[1]Cited by Naomi Abramovitz, "Human Sexuality," p. 350.

[2]Cited by Libby Tanner, "Teaching a Course," p. 280.

an instructor can realistically ascertain that students have in fact had enough time to digest and integrate each exposure so that they are more rather than less comfortable, unless some sort of evaluative test is employed after each class session. The articles reviewed make no mention of whether or how student comfort levels are measured.

The social work literature consistently suggests that the acquisition of a cognate grasp and facility with human sexuality is insufficient to ensure the subsequent integration of practice skills. There is no evidence to support such a stance. In fact Bandura suggests that the mere presence of anxiety and avoidance behaviour does not necessarily mean that it is the emotional response which is the key factor and which must be dealt with directly. He states,

> A person who lacks requisite behaviours for coping effectively with the social, intellectual and vocational demands of his environment will be repeatedly subjected to punishing experiences. Under these circumstances, feared situations are in fact aversive and hence the emotional arousal is not unrealistic. In cases of this type behaviour deficits constitute the major problem, wherein the emotional component is a secondary consequent. A treatment devoted solely to extinguishing emotional response would be at best a temporarily effective means of producing a relaxed incompetent. On the other hand, a treatment

> that establishes behavioral competencies would substantially decrease the punitiveness of the client's social environment and thus achieve stable reduction in fearfulness.[1]

Social work support for the use of desensitization in the teaching of human sexuality appears to be based mainly on the fact that "it has worked". Perhaps other approaches might "work" as well. Perhaps a significant part of discomfort regarding human sexuality for students and seasoned practitioners alike, is their lack of knowledge and expertise in the area. The lack of attention in the social work literature on human sexuality courses, to evaluating outcomes of these courses suggests that the effectiveness of the techniques employed should be more closely examined.

An additional factor which may be influencing student discomfort with regards to human sexuality content, is the avoidance of the subject by previous educational institutions attended. The student has therefore had no previous access to formal education in the area of human sex uality. With the threat of having ignorance exposed, many students will experience some degree of discomfort. Perhaps this discomfort

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[1]Albert Bandura, Principles of Behaviour Modification, p. 461.

which has been noted at the outset of a number of courses described in the literature, relates to this ignorance, real or imagined. It may also relate to the overstimulation by sexual content which is isolated from any kind of framework, which occurs at the outset of many courses.

Another question which warrants attention is whether it is always necessary for students' attitudes toward sexual material and their sexual value systems to change in order for competent practice to take place. It is unavoidable that the social worker's values and attitudes will at times differ from those of clients. Should the aim of education in social work be to change those attitudes and values which may not be contemporary in some circles, or should it be to help the student to understand how and why his or her attitudes differ from those of others? It seems reasonable to assume that increasing knowledge will broaden a student's perspective and will contribute significantly to increased objectivity and tolerance. The teaching of the ways in which sexual attitudes and values are acquired through socialization, and how this socialization differs among various groups, is seen as preferable to the aim of altering attitudes and values adhered to by students.

A major vehicle for the desensitization of students as described in the social work literature, is the small group discussion.[1] During such group discussions, personal reactions to, feelings about, and questions regarding sexual content are the focus. When the content of these discussions is examined however, it becomes clear that the perception of the small group discussion as comprising an effective component of a desensitization program, is an inaccurate one. Students are encouraged to expose inner feelings and thoughts, to share these with one another and thereby become more self aware, more knowledgeable and more importantly, increasingly comfortable to talk about sex in an interpersonal situation. It strikes this writer that what is being described is almost analogous to a therapy group situation which encourages self-examination, the development of insight and the sharing of oneself with others.

Generally speaking, in the courses reviewed, the acquisition of tools for professional development, i.e., knowledge and skills do not seem to be focused upon as much

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[1]See Eleanor Morrison, "Teaching Human Sexuality"; Libby Tanner, "Teaching a Course"; and Joy Johnson and Olek Matek, "Critical Issues."

or as soon as is self expression and self revelation. One is reminded of Bandura's caution regarding the development of "relaxed incompetents". On the other hand, it is quite possible that the approaches described in the social work literature are viable and legitimate in the teaching of human sexuality. Because no real evidence has been offered for this, one cannot say for certain that other approaches might not be more effective.

As discussed earlier, there is a growing social science and behavioral science literature on the various aspects of human sexuality. The literature on physiology and sexual response is quite complete at this point. In spite of the availability of this information, comparatively little appears to have been integrated into social work courses on human sexuality. The success of the social work practitioner has always been dependent on how skilfully he or she is able to use and apply what is already known. If schools of social work fail to transmit to students what is known in the area of human sexuality in terms of factual, scientifically-based data, they will be sending beginning practitioners into the field ill-equipped.

Course Structure

The structure of most graduate (and undergraduate) programs in social work is such that the majority of courses are offered on a one-semester basis. One must seriously question whether goals of attitude change, knowledge acquisition and skills development can realistically take place in a period of three months. It is perhaps the desire of faculty to achieve affective, cognitive and skills goals in such a short time period that contributes to the lack of cohesion and lack of content relatedness that appear to characterize the human sexuality courses examined in this study. Abramowitz admits that she was unable to realize skills acquisition goals in her course for lack of time.[1] Gochros too, has revised his program and now offers a sequence of courses in human sexuality at the University of Hawaii.[2] Each of these courses is a two-semester course with the basic introductory course being a prerequisite for the others. Opportunities for related research and field placement are built into the sequence.

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[1] See Naomi Abramowitz, "Human Sexuality."

[2] See Harvey Gochros, "Concentration in Social Work Practice with Sex-Related Problems," Journal of Education for Social Work 10 (Spring, 1974), pp. 40-46.

Evaluation of the Learning Process

A number of questions have been raised regarding the content, teaching techniques and the structure and format of human sexuality courses for social work students. These questions have been raised since the literature does not offer any valid basis or rationale for what is being advocated. Rather the arguments appear to be based on the fact that the approaches used seem to work well and seem to facilitate the learning process. Perhaps they do indeed. It is not being suggested that these approaches and techniques be immediately abandoned. It is this writer's concern however, that other equally or more effective modes of teaching human sexuality are not being explored and that the methods in use are not being evaluated. If the dates of publication of social work articles on the teaching of human sexuality are examined, it is notable that Gochros was the first to express interest in, and concern about this subject in the journals. The articles which appear in the literature aside from those of Gochros have all been published subsequent to his work, and are all very similar, deviating little from the biases and suggestions which appear in Gochros' initial article. Thus, there does not appear to have been very much variation in the approaches

toward the teaching of human sexuality. One wonders if perhaps it is not yet time to re-evaluate existing approaches and experiment with others.

CHAPTER V

A PROPOSAL FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF HUMAN SEXUALITY COURSES

A number of comments have been made, and criticism leveled at the proposals and outlines for human sexuality courses which have been developed by social workers. It is felt that many of the shortcomings of these and other courses are the result of problems inherent in any attempt to develop a single course in human sexuality. The writer views this subject as differing from other subject matter commonly taught in schools of social work, in many respects.

The breadth of the subject of human sexuality is such that one is able to list countless sub-topics under the larger umbrella of "sexuality". An obvious first step in determining the nature of course content would be to look to the field with several questions in mind. First, what type of sexual and sex-related problems are social workers in a variety of settings (e.g., medical, psychiatric, family agency, or community) likely to encounter? Having answered this question,

one might then ask what kind of information and knowledge is required by social workers in order to understand the nature of such problems and the kinds of intervention possible? Thirdly, consideration might be given to the kinds of skills and intervention techniques which social workers should have within their repertoire to permit effective handling of such problems.

The above questions having been dealt with, some thought should be given to the composition of the student group. Are they at a uniform level of background knowledge? Are they involved in the same or different practice areas? With these facts established, and the amount of available time determined, (is the course to be a one- or two-semester course?), the choice of course content can be somewhat facilitated. Content selected on the basis of the above considerations would be relevant to practice and thus to the common needs of all students. In addition, it would necessarily be based to some extent on the limitations and restrictions which are inevitably imposed within the educational system.

Another difficulty in developing a course in human sexuality relates to the fact that human sexuality content does not lend itself to sequential ordering in terms of

complexity. This poses the problem of ordering (of content) for an instructor. Whereas other courses such as casework, groupwork, and psychopathology may be ordered on a continuum, from basic material to advanced content, this model is not readily applicable in the case of human sexuality. It is more a question of how deeply a given aspect of human sexuality will be studied than of determining how much more complex one aspect is than another.

There is no basis for determining that sexual response is a more complex subject than sexual deviation, or that a grounding in one is necessary for an appreciation and understanding of the other. This is in part a result of the multidisciplinary research into human sexuality. More specifically, an understanding of sexual response requires a thorough familiarity with the physiology of bodily response, and with the variety of physical and psychological factors than can interfere with, block, or generally influence sexual response. An understanding of sexual deviation can be achieved without a grounding in physiology. What is needed here are the contributions of psychology and sociology to such areas as psychosocial and psychosexual development, identity formation, personality disorders, and social control. Thus, while both of these areas

are certainly a part of human sexuality, the knowledge base necessary for a grasp of each differs somewhat. The same would hold true for content in cultural and social variations in sexual attitudes and practices, and the anatomy of the reproductive organs. While all of these areas are interrelated in a general sense, they have not developed one out of the other. The attempt to determine which is the most and which is the least complex is a meaningless endeavour.

A further difficulty stems from the fact that a variety of frames of reference might conceivably be applied. The fact that in many of the outlines reviewed, content is not presented within any theoretical framework, perhaps attests to the difficulty of selecting a single one. As a result, many social work courses in sexuality resemble what Haselkorn has referred to as the "bead string" model of teaching, "the stringing together of a number of discrete topics disembodied from any theoretical orientation."[1] Courses A and B, in addition to a number of courses described in the social work literature, suffer from this weakness. Such an

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[1]Florence Haselkorn, "Proceedings of the Symposium," p. 11.

approach is not conducive to students integrating a body of material in a meaningful and comprehensive way. Certainly, exposure to a variety of topics such as homosexuality, abortion, sexual dysfunctions, sexual deviance and so forth, will enlighten the student to some extent. It is questionable however, whether such exposure results in the development of a useful and coherent knowledge which is directly relevant and applicable to social work practice.

It is felt that "bead string" model courses in human sexuality may be in part the result of the exaggerated emphasis by social workers on changing sexual patterns. There is much in the sexual scene which has not changed greatly but still requires study. The concepts of "change" and "revolution" in the sexual sphere do not necessarily provide the most appropriate rationale for, or basis around which courses in human sexuality should be structured. These concepts are global, lacking in empirical support, and faddish, all of which limits their ultimate relevance to social work practice. It is therefore proposed that human sexuality courses, like most others in social work, be tied to a theoretical framework (e.g., physiological, psychological, interactional), with the orientation chosen relating to the specific needs of the

student group. The recognition that "everything" cannot be covered at once would result in fewer problems relating to content and its organization.

In the development of a course in human sexuality, the inclusion of direct "desensitization" or "comfort inducing" techniques should be examined carefully. The myth of uniformity may be as destructive when applied to students as it is when applied to clients. Students do not all have the same emotional or intellectual needs. They do have similar professional needs. It is suggested that these latter needs be addressed more intensively, and that personal needs of students take on a secondary importance where they appear to be relevant. The inducement of comfort and self assurance with sexual material is a valid and important goal of human sexuality courses. A group discussion comparing various treatment approaches to sexual dysfunctions for instance, will result in the same sharing of ideas, information and attitudes among students as would a discussion focusing on attitudes and feelings regarding such dysfunctions. In addition, the first discussion would involve critical analysis and valuable knowledge acquisition.

The question of whether it is feasible or desirable to achieve multiple goals in one human sexuality course has already been raised. It is this writer's opinion that affective goals can be achieved largely through the pursuit of knowledge goals. It is felt however, that relevant knowledge acquisition and skills training cannot be accomplished in one semester. Rather, a sequence of human sexuality courses accompanied by opportunity for relevant research and field placement, is necessary if affective, knowledge and skills goals are all to be realized.[1]

A Tentative Model

A sequence in human sexuality as envisaged by this writer, would include three courses. Since Canadian social work education now involves for the most part undergraduate programmes, many practitioners in the field are at a Bachelor of Social Work level of training. This being the case, course content in human sexuality should be offered both at the Bachelors as well as at the Masters level. The sequence which

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[1]This view is also expressed by Gochros. See Harvey Gochros, "Concentration in Social Work Practice."

is being proposed would begin at the undergraduate level. Pre- and post-testing devices such as the Sex Knowledge Inventory might be utilized for all of these courses:

Course 1 - The formal goal of an introductory course which would be offered at the B.S.W. level, would be to help students increase their knowledge about sexual and psychosexual development through the life cycle. The course itself would be knowledge-focused and would examine psychosexual and physiological development from early childhood through to old age. The effects of psychological and environmental influences upon sexual response would receive ongoing attention. More specifically, content might include:

1. the physical aspect of sexual development - the structure and function of sex and sex-related organs as determined by life stages such as childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age; errors of the body such as hermaphroditism,

2. the psychological aspect of sexual development - psychoanalytic and social learning theories of psychosexual development; the influence of psychological and social factors upon sexual development and growth; the relationship between sexual, social and emotional growth,

3. determinants of sexual response throughout life - the influence of social, psychological and physiological factors upon sexual responsivity; sex differences in physiological response to sexual stimulation and excitation.

Such a course would require a dual framework: physiological and interpersonal. Its implicit goal would be to help students to develop increasing ease in speaking about sex in an interpersonal situation, and to develop a sexual vocabulary. Presentations, assignments, and examinations would be verbal whenever possible. The more limited the enrollment in this course, the greater the opportunity for verbal exchange and verbal presentations. Students would have repeated exposure to the experience of speaking about sex both formally and informally, thereby becoming more comfortable with such verbalizing, and thereby also developing a sexual vocabulary.

Teaching techniques for this course might include a combination of didactic lecturing, structured verbal presentations by students, and class or group discussions led by students. The active involvement of students in verbal

presentations and interchanges focusing on sexual material is seen as the primary vehicle for the achievement of the stated implicit goals.

Course 2 - The study of environmental influences on sexual expression is seen as an undergraduate or graduate level, elective course which would follow the introductory course. Content in such a course would include:

1. socialization into sex roles - the influence of culture, class and ethnicity upon the socialization process,

2. cultural, social and class differences which contribute to variation in sexual attitudes, norms and practices,

3. variation in attitudes toward, and methods of birth control,

4. differing sexual lifestyles, for example "swingers", group marriage, homosexual marriage, and the factors influencing their emergence,

5. recent changes in sex standards and attitudes - where have these changes originated; who do they affect and how; what are their overall implications.

The explicit goals of this kind of course would include helping students to gain a more extensive understanding of the external forces which shape sexual attitudes and behaviour, and to explore the ways in which these influences are exerted upon, and integrated by each individual. Another explicit goal would be for students to develop an appreciation and understanding of their own sexuality and the great variation in sexual expression among others. This kind of understanding is seen as a necessary component of objective, non-value laden practice. Some attention might also be paid in such a course, to encouraging students to examine more critically, other social work literature to which they are exposed, keeping in mind what they are being exposed to in the present course.

A good deal of student responsibility for ongoing discussion within class sessions should be expected. Structured debates, quizzes, verbal presentations, panel discussions, and examination of case studies are seen as potential devices to encourage both verbal interchange and knowledge acquisition.

Course 3 - Intervention techniques, if they are to be examined from a macro as well as a micro perspective, require a separate

course. It is suggested that at least one of the two previously described courses should be a prerequisite for a course on intervention with sex-related problems. In such a course, assessment, interviewing and ongoing intervention skills would be developed. Different treatment and consultative approaches to individual, couple and group sexual problems should be covered. Content in this course might include:

1. assessment and interviewing guidelines for such presenting problems as abortion candidacy or post-abortion difficulties, rape, sexual dysfunction, need for birth control choice,

2. treatment techniques for sexual dysfunctions, such as desensitization, couple therapy, group approaches,

3. various approaches to community, institutional or educational consultation regarding sexual problems or issues. Examples might include consultation to schools, residential treatment centres, police departments, and educating community groups,

4. strategies for the implementation of sex-related health services within communities and established systems.

Examples of this might include family planning services, rape crisis centres, venereal disease clinics.

The explicit goal of such a course is to train beginning practitioners for effective assessment and intervention with a variety of problems and client systems, on sexual matters. An important aim for students would be to separate personal values and intuitions from the treatment process by substituting for much of these, a repertoire of skills based on accumulated knowledge. An implicit goal of this course would be to provide students with something other than a dynamic framework from which to view, assess and intervene with sexual problems. Inherent in the achievement of this goal would be an increased ability on the part of students to more critically evaluate methods of intervention cited in other social work literature, and to be more discriminating in their overall application of a dynamic model.

The primary teaching technique for this type of course is seen as role play, perhaps involving the use of video tape. It is suggested that the value of a course in skills development rests on the extent to which it is experiential. Ongoing,

structured role play of various practitioner/client situations, educational presentations to lay groups, and consultative situations, allow students to "try themselves out" and to experience the forms that future practice will take. It offers as well, the opportunity for integration of what has been learned in previous sexuality and practice courses.

Additional Components of a Sequence

The inclusion within the general program of field placements which provide competent supervision in areas such as family planning, family life and sex education, and various forms of sex counselling must be aimed at. Encouragement must also be given to students to engage in meaningful research projects relating to human sexuality.

The argument which has been presented, is based on the belief that the subject of human sexuality is too broad to receive comprehensive attention in a single, one-semester course. What has been recommended is a sequence of courses, each requiring one semester. At the completion of the sequence, affective, cognitive and skills goals would have been achieved. The method which has been advocated would concern itself less

with the direct manipulation of student's attitudes and more with the dissemination of fact. Therefore, direct efforts at "desensitization" are not seen as warranted. The use of a screening device prior to the commencement of each course is recommended in order to help the instructor to determine the level of incoming students, or as a selection device. Such a procedure would be an aid in determining knowledge gaps and students' educational needs. We must ask at this point, whether the "hypothetical" sequence described above is in fact feasible given the current shape of social work education.

What is Feasible?

On the basis of what the literature indicates, one could reasonably speculate that student interest would be high enough to ensure sufficient enrollment in three courses such as have been described, as well as in related field placements. The introduction of such a sequence into the social work curriculum would be largely dependent upon the priority assigned to sex education by an individual school of social work. Another requisite condition would be the availability of an instructor who is sufficiently knowledgeable and has a

sufficient investment in this area to develop a sequence. Given social work's history in relation to sex education curricula, the two necessary criteria cited above are realistic uncertainties. A further difficulty in introducing a sequence relates to already existing competition for priorities within the present curriculum.

These difficulties, along with other unforeseen limitations could interfere with the introduction of an entire sequence in human sexuality at one time. If this be the case, alternatives must be considered. It has been argued that a one-semester course is insufficient to provide a comprehensive learning experience. It is more likely however, that greater tolerance for, and acceptance of one elective course would exist in many schools of social work. Should this be the case, one is faced with the dilemma of whether to teach nothing at all in the area or to accept existing limitations and restrictions, and be satisfied to offer students a more limited exposure.

In the event of the non-feasibility of introducing a sequence in human sexuality, priority should be given to the inclusion of whatever number of human sexuality courses reality will permit. It is suggested then, that effort be

made to determine the extent and nature of human sexuality courses available through other university departments, as well as within other local universities. University programs such as medicine, psychology, sociology, human relations, applied social science, and health education may offer human sexuality courses which social work students could take advantage of. Where limitations exist within a school of social work, an exploration of other educational resources would help to determine what might best be augmented by social work.

Where no other educational resources exist, deliberation over what a single course should focus upon and aim to accomplish, would not be an easy matter. Such a course should be taught in spite of the necessary compromise it would involve, as in the long run, even limited, formal exposure to a subject as pervasive and relevant as human sexuality, would benefit students more than no exposure at all. Under such circumstances, the selection of a theoretical framework based on a previously ascertained need of the student group, along with a knowledge-focused orientation, is suggested. Skills goals should not be pursued as it has been shown that they cannot be achieved in addition to cognitive and affective

goals, in a single course. Rather, a solid basis in relevant knowledge for practice is the recommended aim for such a course. The development of skills could then be more readily achieved at a continuing education level.

It is unlikely that the area of human sexuality can be neglected by the helping professions and their educators, for very much longer. With increasing awareness beginning to develop among large sectors of the lay public, demand for services geared towards sex-related problems will increase as well. This will highlight the growing and overdue need for professional sex education. Inclusion of even one human sexuality course in the social work curriculum is seen as a first step towards recognition of human sexuality as an area deserving study. Hopefully, the development of a sequence such as has been described, if it were not introduced in its totality, would soon follow this first step.

CHAPTER VI

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The findings of this study suggest that numerous questions pertaining to sex education for social work students still remain unanswered. As a result, further research into this area seems warranted. More information regarding educational approaches to human sexuality content, and more feedback regarding content applicability and usefulness in practice is desirable.

Pedagogical techniques which have been employed might be more closely examined and evaluated than the scope of this study permitted. In addition, experimentation with hitherto untried teaching methods might be attempted and their outcomes evaluated. Such research could establish more firmly the effectiveness of a variety of educational approaches and identify those that clearly do not achieve desired goals. Another area for investigation concerns social work students who have already been involved in human sexuality courses.

Follow-up study of such students could determine the usefulness of differential course content.

A population which has not yet been examined consists of those social workers and other helping professionals who are currently engaged in sexual counselling and counselling for sex-related problems. These practitioners could provide useful information and suggestions regarding the type of human sexuality content most important for subsequent practice in this area. All of these studies would be of significant aid in the development and operationalization of a sex education curriculum for social work.

SUMMARY

This study was undertaken in an effort to draw attention to social work's neglect of the area of human sexuality. Its major aim was to determine the nature and extent of knowledge available on human sexuality, and to offer a tentative model of sex education for social work which would develop and integrate this knowledge for social work practice. A broad literature review revealed that an extensive, multidisciplinary contribution has been made to the existing fund of knowledge on human sexuality. This literature has tended to be biologically and psychologically based, with more recent contributions made by the social sciences. An examination of the social work literature revealed a general lack of attention to, and reflection of the extensive information which is available on human sexuality.

A small, very recent literature on human sexuality in social work education was reviewed. In addition, human sexuality content provided in Canadian schools of social work was examined. A number of questions were raised pertaining to

course content, course structure and teaching techniques. Recommendations were made for the introduction into social work education of a sequence in human sexuality. Such a sequence was seen as involving courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, opportunity for field work which would provide training in direct intervention with sexual and sex-related problems, and support for relevant research into human sexuality. Finally, some suggestions were offered for future research into this area.

APPENDIX

Course Descriptions and Outlines

Course A

Description: not provided.

Outline: Session I - The Vocabulary of Sex

The purpose of this session is to facilitate the students' ability to communicate about sexuality in interpersonal relationships, and especially in professional practice.

Session II - Heterosexuality (Film: Rich and Judy)

Same purpose as Session I.

Session III - Sexuality - Facts and Fictions

Some important myths, fictions, stereotypes and prejudices about sexuality will be considered in order to help students:

1. appraise their current understanding of sexuality;
2. appreciate why this subject is replete with myths and stereotypes; and
3. stimulate them to objectify their knowledge in this area.

Session IV - The Sexual Revolution - 1

Consideration of major societal trends that have culminated in revolutionary changes in sexual mores,

attitudes and behaviour during the past decade. The influence of social, religious, economic and political factors on sexual values and behaviour will be examined.

Session V - The Sexual Revolution - 2

The session will examine the recent changes in sexual behaviour, particularly among youth, that represent the sexual revolution. Attention will be given to changing sex roles, the focus on autonomy and gratification in sexual behaviour, contraceptive practice, and the erotica industry.

Session VI - The Sexual Revolution - 3

This session will be concerned with considering emerging intimate lifestyles, that relate to the sexual revolution.

Session VII - Homosexuality (Films: Holding, Vir Amat)

The focus of the session will be on developing an understanding of homosexuality and awareness of one's own attitudes toward homosexuality.

Session VIII - The Normal and Abnormal in Human Sexuality

An examination of cultural factors in determining sexual norms, values and behaviour, sex in the life cycle, and some common sexual problems--frigidity, impotence and premature ejaculation.

Session IX - Social Work Intervention - 1

(Guest speaker) A discussion of current trends in social work intervention with sexual problems of individuals, couples and families.

Session X - Social Work Intervention in Sex as a Social Problem

A consideration of the stance and action of the social

work profession in relation to such problems as pornography, prostitution, unwanted pregnancies, abortion and overpopulation.

Course B

Description: It is proposed that by examination of our own attitudes and backgrounds we can become more aware of how we express our individual sexuality and how this affects our behaviour and the relationships which we enter. Secondly, by understanding some of the social issues in the realm of human sexuality one can more effectively function in a helping relationship. The third objective of this course will be the accumulation of more information re psychobiological aspects of the human reproductive system.

The basic framework for this study shall be based upon the concept of human relationships. Format will include lectures following the general course outline. Films and guests will be used. Tutorial sessions will provide an opportunity to communicate feelings with others in a small group setting, so that each individual's comfort level and awareness as well as his or her knowledge will be increased.

Outline: Session I - Introduction: Objectives and Expectations.

Tutorial formation. What is Sexuality? (Film: Love Toads).

Session II - Attitudes toward Sexual Expression and Sexuality Education.

Session III - Human Sexual Functioning and Dysfunction.

Session IV - Fertility and Planned Parenthood (Guest speaker).

Session V - Sexual Conditioning and Heterosexual Behaviour.

Session VI - Psychosexual Development.

Session VII - Sexual Variance.

Session VIII - Sexual Orientation: Homosexual/ Heterosexual/Bisexual. (Guest panel).

Session IX - Sex Roles: Inequality in Bed?

Session X - Love and Sex Relationships: Marriage and Alternatives.

Session XI - Student Project Presentations.

Session XII - Student Project Presentations.

Session XIII - Summary Evaluations; Sexuality and the Future.

Course C

Description: This is an advanced level course designed primarily for practitioners already in the field, who recognize that both general and self-knowledge in the area of human sexuality is imperative if clients (and society) are to be helped attain optimum socio-sexual functioning.

It is assumed that students in this course will already have constructively integrated life experiences into their own professional and personal lifestyles and also that they will have a broad background knowledge of technical and philosophical aspects of human sexuality.

Films and audio-visual material will be used to supplement course material and guest lecturers and special workshops will be utilized to present particular issues in the area of sexual "dys-function."

Tutorials will give students the opportunity to interact with one another, to communicate more effectively and to learn, through shared experience, greater awareness of self and society.

Outline:

Session I - Introductory Lecture - Course Outline, Tutorial Formation, etc.

Session II - "Film Festival" (Three films on Heterosexual Intercourse). Discussion on films as education and (de) sensitization technique, student reactions, etc.

Session III - Masturbation; Encounter Groups as Sexual Therapy.

Session IV - Sex Roles and Sex Counselling; Issues and Treatment Strategies. (Guest speaker).

Session V - Geriatric Sexuality.

Session VI - Homosexuality. (Guest panel).

Session VII - "The Love Shop" - philosophy and practice. (Guest speaker).

Session VIII - Forensic Psychiatry; Sex and the Law. (Guest lecturer).

Session IX - "Trans-sexualism". (Guest speaker and film).

Session X - Sex and the Handicapped. (Film).

Session XI - Open session.

Course D

Description: The objective of this course is to provide beginning preparation to social work practitioners to enable them to pick up, analyze and help with the sexual problems of clients. The importance of this objective is based on the fact that social workers are the third largest professional group dealing with sexual problems, and the belief that sexuality is a constant and vital aspect of every human being.

Content will cover the range and variety of sexual activity, sexual myths in our culture, sexual expression as it varies by age, class, religion, education and lifestyle; and changing cultural attitudes. It is hoped that students will develop cognitive understanding and emotional comfort in approaching and dealing with sexuality.

Outline: not provided.

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