Insights and Innovations
in Community Mental Health

The Erich Lindemann Memorial Lectures

organized and edited by
The Erich Lindemann Memorial Lecture Committee

hosted by William James College

**WILLIAM JAMES
COLLEGE**

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Foreward

The Erich Lindemann Memorial Lecture is a forum in which to address issues of community mental health, public health, and social policy. It is also a place to give a hearing to those working in these fields, and to encourage students and workers to pursue this perspective, even in times that do not emphasize the social and humane perspective. It's important that social and community psychiatry continue to be presented and encouraged to an audience increasingly unfamiliar with its origins and with Dr. Lindemann as a person. The lecturers and discussants have presented a wide range of clinical, policy, and historical topics that continue to have much to teach.

Here we make available lectures that were presented since 1988. They are still live issues that have not been solved or become less important. This teaches us the historical lesson that societal needs and problems are an existential part of the ongoing life of people, communities, and society. We adapt ways of coping with them that are more effective and more appropriate to changed circumstances—values, technology, and populations. The inisghts and suggested approaches are still appropriate and inspiring.

Another value of the Lectures is the process of addressing problems that they exemplify: A group agrees on the importance of an issue, seeks out those with experience, enthusiasm, and creativity, and brings them together to share their approaches and open themselves to cross-fertilization. This results in new ideas, approaches, and collaborations. It might be argued that this apparoach, characteristic of social psychiatry and community mental health, is more important for societal benefit than are specific new techniques.

We hope that readers will become interested, excited, and broadly educated.
For a listing of all the Erich Lindemann Memorial Lectures, please visit
www.williamjames.edu/lindemann.

THE TENTH ANNUAL
ERICH LINDEMANN MEMORIAL LECTURE

Generating Social Settings for a Public's Health

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Introduction

A public health approach to mental health services includes a commitment by the mental health professions to explicitly, and honestly include the participation and involvement of citizens.

When public health services have been implemented there has been clear and tangible evidence that the effectiveness of these programs derives from the quality of the collaborative relationship between professionals and citizens.

The history of public health approaches in community mental health however suggests that most preventive services have been largely dropped upon or applied to the community rather than developed with the community.

The unsettling fact is that the substantial benefits of a collaborative relationship are still not recognized either as a core value or as a style of work.

I am in the process of defining the elements and process of a collaborative relationship. I am presenting the main ideas for the first time this afternoon. These ideas are to be tested out. I believe that when they are tested out they can provide a practical framework as we design, deliver, and evaluate community based prevention programs.

The key concept I offer for creating a collaborative relationship is the concept of social setting. This concept is stimulated by the research of Roger Barker and his colleagues,,and the writings of Seymour Sarason.

The significance of Barker's research for the concept of social setting is that the places where we interact have meaning for us and affect our behavior as individuals. The significance of Sarason's writings for the concept of social setting is that the places where we interact and the places we create become resources for our development. Social settings are means by which we develop relationships and affect our social structures and stimulate personal, organizational and community change. They also serve as resources to develop a collaborative relationship between the mental health professions and citizens.

My interest in defining social settings has been influenced, and no doubt will continue to be influenced, by Erich Lindemann and the staff of the Human Relations Service of Wellesley and the Massachusetts General Hospital. The ideas of Erich Lindemann started me on my search. They continue to be a point of reference for me. What I have absorbed from him is his commitment, curiosity andenthusiasm to

understand how community processes can stimulate mental health. I am more than delighted, I am deeply moved, to be here today to offer these comments for the tenth Memorial Lecture.

My ideas have benefited from being involved in mental health consultation, which I first learned at the Human Relations Service under the guidance of Erich Lindemann and Gerald Caplan. I have observed for myself, as well as observing the work of others, that the consultative relationship, when it works, isfirmly grounded when the consultant, in collaboration with the consultee, creates social settings. Such settings make it possible to create resources for the consultee's organization and its members.

The six concepts for social settings that I will present today are my effort to continue an approach which Erich Lindemann introduced to me. They focus upon what the professional does when forming the collaborative relationship. I am assuming that the professional is taking the initiative.

In using the term citizen, I am referring to those residents of communities who are not members of the mental health professions or behavioral sciencesyet who are interested in addressing a particular social issue or community problem. They are concerned and wish to promote a better climate or condition for themselves, their family and community.

In using the term professional, I am referring to those members of the mental health professions, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, nurses and other health professions who are interested in developing community-based mental health programs.

The six concepts address the fact that most professionals are not trained, not socialized, to work in a collaborative mode. Implementing these concepts assumes that the professional, before the collaborative relationship begins, has a clear professional identity and wishes to expand or revise a particular style of work. Because of the novelty and ambiguity related to the processes of creating social settings the professional who engages in this collaborative work is expected to have invested in developing an explicit value system. To cope with the uncertainties, unexpected events and interpersonal, organizational and community processes involved in creating settings, professionals require a frame of reference, which enables them to be open to collaboration, yet clear about and anchored in their personal standards and their ethics.

The Concept of Social Setting

By social setting I am referring to the actual places and the occasions that are essential to create and symbolize a collaborative working relationship between professionals and citizens - one that is meaningful and satisfying. I believe that community-based preventive mental health services derive from a collaborative

relationship, not solely from the techniques or methods created by the professional or chosen by the citizen to promote mental health. I believe that the very process of creating social settings is a process which can be empowering and thereby preventive. When the professional initiates a process with citizens where citizens actively co-design service delivery, citizens are validated for taking action that is synonymous with what is known about the practice of good mental health. They are identifying resources, receiving support while creating resources, and having the autonomy and free choice to use these resources for the development of their own needs and aspirations. Most importantly, the collaborative experience in creating social settings will be a resource to develop new social settings in their community.

I believe that the significance of a social setting lies in accomplishing the following tasks:

1) A social setting illustrates the power of informal occasions to provide a sense of identification for participants.
2) It derives from a creative process which encourages participants to have a shared experience in doing something new and different together.
3) It illustrates the power and impact of the constructive and positive qualities of social environments upon participants.
4) It provides an opportunity to concretely reduce the ambiguity activated as the professional and citizens work to form a new relationship.
5) It gives meaning to the collaborative activities that the professional and citizen are engaged in and validates their working relationship.
6) It makes this working relationship possible without the constraints of only dyadic interactions between various pairs of individuals.
7) It sanctions professionals and citizens to become informed about their community.
8) It provides credibility to others for the collaborative work being carried out by the professional and citizens.
9) Finally, a social setting is an historical marker for the collaborativerelationship, defining the work of the participants.

These nine qualities of social settings point to the need and value of creating a meaningful structure when professionals and citizens engage in a collaborative relationship. The creation of social settings is not just another technique within the practice of community mental health: such settings are improvised and derive from the explicit needs and aspirations of the community, as was the case with the successful Rough Rock Many Farms Project, a health care delivery demonstration project undertaken by Cornell University and the Navajo Tribe. The findings do not focus upon

the techniques used, but on the quality of the relationship that was created between the physicians and anthropologists and the Tribe.   The basic challenge for the collaborative relationship is for the professional and citizens to know enough about the community so that the generated social settings are clearly derived from the community.

I propose to offer six concepts that relate to facilitating the communication between the two "cultures" of professional and citizen. Each of the six concepts addresses the processes that simultaneously assist the collaborative relationship and the generation of social settings for a public's health. They are intended to reflect the likely evolutionary nature of the collaborative relationship. The first three processes refer to beginning the relationship: (1) engaging the citizen world and appreciating its settings; (2) receiving the sanction to explore the formal and informal settings of the citizen's community; and (3) redefining some functions of current social settings. The next three processes reflect the actual collaborative working relationship: (4) creating new social settings; (5) validating and celebrating social settings; and (6) creating social settings to exchange resources. The six processes together are assumed to be interdependent and act synergistically to create in a community a social process to establish and embed a social structure for community health.

1. The Engagement Process: The Ability To Appreciate The Social Settings of Citizens

This initial social setting is a social setting which makes it possible for the professional to interact with those citizens who are interested in creating a community-based prevention program. A key to the engagement process is that the professional spends time in the community of the citizens, in their social settings, which will help inform the professional about the community. By devoting an expenditure of time and effort in key social settings of the community the professional not only begins to know the citizens themselves, but learns about the unique values, norms, and style of work of the citizens. Most importantly the professional begins to learn the cultural, social and economic constraints and pressures that face these particular citizens. The initiative taken by the professional to engage the social settings of the community communicates concretely that the professional does want to and can collaborate. The professional's initiative communicates that the professional is not behaving as an elite even though there may be differences in formal education or technical training or past socialization between the professional and some citizens.

The professional, in initiating the engagement process, has developed the awareness and the conviction that the citizens of the community, in their own lived-in reality have a commanding and privileged view of their own culture. The engagement process is

genuine and not merely another "technique" for gaining trust and credibility to facilitate the professional's preferred agenda.

As the professional engages, the focus for the selection of the actual place to define the collaborative relationship will have certain properties or qualities. Here is a sample list of qualities of such a setting:

1) The nominations for the place come from citizens;
2) The specific place that is selected is relatively convenient and accessible for citizens;
3) The place offers the opportunity for private and informal conversations;
4) The occasion can become identified as supportive for all the participants.
5) The place can become the site to establish rapport between the professional and citizens.

In sum, the place is selected to be self-consciously congruent and comfortable for the citizens. The professional adapts to the community, as a way to learn, and as a way to confirm the value of a community-based enterprise.

In moving out of a university, or research institute, community organization, or department of government, the professional is open and attentive to learn about the various social settings in the community that will be involved in developing a collaborative relationship. As the professional engages, he or she focuses upon how citizens define resources and what criteria are employed for how settings are used within their particular community. If the citizens already understand and value the creation of resources it will be easier to create a social setting where the collaborative relationship can begin.

For the professional to take this step–to engage citizens who may not be academics, who may not have extensive formal education–requires that the professional pay heed to one of the key elements when defining a consultation relationship, to be alert that as a "stranger," citizens will have stereotypes about who the professional is and what he or she stands for. When engaging, the

professional can draw upon the process of dissipating stereotypes, a process that has been eloquently and persuasively written about by Gerald Caplan.

A stereotype can function to protect the citizen from becoming too invested too soon in the collaboration. To enhance an adaptive process of collaboration the professional makes explicit his or her purposes and agenda. The professional takes the initiative to reduce the ambiguity of the engagement process. Frequent concerns that I have heard in my experience while being a professor and doing community work are that I'm there to use the community, I will not be able to be practical or appreciate constraints, I will not

be interested in what the citizens have to say, I cannot be counted on if there is trouble, or I can't be counted on for time consuming political negotiations.

Before becoming engaged the professional thinks through these possible stereotypes and evolves for himself or herself a position on these topics. The professional is also expected to be prepared and capable of tolerating the ambiguity of this process, while at the same time being vulnerable. This engagement process is a new and different social relationship, one that is unusually subtle and complex. The frustrations and disappointments over the impact of unpredictable and often uncontrollable events impinging upon the professional's work are aggravated when there are few social settings to help give structure and meaning to the work.

The engagement process is important because it helps set the tone for developing the working relationship. The professional's frustrations can be reduced when the work is defined as a relationship and is engaged in with recognition of the process involved in relationship-building. Such self-consciousness helps anchor the engagement process and helps prevent the work from being encumbered by anxieties and frustrations. For example, in the collaborative role there isn't immediate feedback for the professional's work; not all agendas are clear; and not all of the influential actors are known. The professional is certainly an outsider or a stranger, at least a guest, and an unknown quantity. Acquiring acceptance by the citizens is certainly to be earned!

The engagement process pulls from the professional personal qualities that may not be elaborated in his or her other roles. When the professional communicates where he or she stands, and listens and learns with humor and fallibility, the collaborative relationship can begin. Most importantly, social norms can take hold for activating the collaborative process.

2. Getting Sanction To Identify The Informal Settings of the Community

This particular concept rests on the premise that places which promote and encourage informality, where people can relate to each other outside of their primary occupational role and can relate to each other in a relaxed manner, are important determinants of an effective working relationship. Informal settings are expected to facilitate a collaborative relationship. The professional then discovers and identifies those settings that the citizens define as informal.

One contribution and competence that the professional brings to the collaborative relationship is knowledge of the impact of informal settings upon individuals and social groups. The concepts of social support, social integration, group cohesiveness, community development, and effective coping, can illustrate the influence of informal settings, informal communication and informal relationships upon the satisfaction and

effectiveness of individuals and groups. Awareness of the significance of the concept of informal settings as an important variable assists the professional to encourage citizens to acknowledge those informal occasions, events, and settings that are meaningful for them. In this way the professional with citizens can develop for themselves a working concept of how social structures affect behavior. As the professional and citizens begin to develop their working relationship and create for themselves informal settings, their own collaboration gives the concept of informality genuine meaning.

The significance of informal settings for health may not be apparent to citizens. The professional's ability to illustrate their significance can help citizens elaborate their own understanding of informal settings. The very process of discovering the meaning of informal settings provides essential input and perspective for their collaborative process.

In this process, as for all six of the processes in developing settings, the initiative is taken by the professional. The professional is the reference point to clarify the various meanings and the various ways informality can be expressed. In elaborating this process, the professional is dealing with initial entry, so familiar to consultants and so essential for establishing a collaborative relationship.

In addition to knowledge about the meaning of the concept of informality, the professional is knowledgeable about how to establish an informal working relationship. He or she is sensitive and informed about the qualities of persons and settings that help to create a context of informality.

Why is informality important for entry? Informal interactions can reflect the level of commitment and interest that the participants express in the primary roles they carry out and the settings that they are engaged in. In many communities the places where informal interaction takes place may not be noticeable or apparent to the casual observer. As pointed out in the observations regarding work with the Navajo Tribe, without an appreciation and knowledge of the citizens' culture the extent and variety of informal settings may be inaccessible to a guest, visitor, or outsider, such as the professional.

Some questions come up when trying to identify the nature of an informal setting. I am suggesting how the professional, in responding to such questions, can serve as a resource to citizens by being open and explicit that he or she is trying to learn about informal occasions. This helps to create a relationship in which the participants are not stereotyping the professional by believing that he or she "reads minds." In developing answers to the following questions the professional and the citizen work out shared answers as another way to define their collaborative relationship.

Is being expressive– saying what you mean–valued? In what ways do citizens spontaneously kid, banter, joke, tease, laugh with each other? When and in what settings do citizens address each other in more personal ways than their job titles would

suggest? How do citizens express joy when being together? When do citizens walk, talk and sit together in relaxed ways? Does the conversation include physical gestures, and body movements for points of emphasis? Do the citizens actively listen and give feedback to each other? Do the citizens express an interest in wanting to keep up a tradition for informality? Do the citizens express–verbally and through gestures–that there are a variety of ways to be supportive to each other? Are there shared and understood norms to sanction informal interaction by the participants and the host organization? Do citizens express that they really know something about others' acquaintances? Do the citizens express tolerance for the quirks and idiosyncrasies of others? Do citizens express concern when another citizen is not present? What are the qualities of the persons and settings that make the occasion informal? What are the events that create opportunities for informal interaction? What are the common needs and incentives that bring people together?

While these questions are not exhaustive they are offered as guidelines to pinpoint what could be taken for granted in the normal course of living but which are important in knowing about the informal exchanges between citizens in the community. As the professional engages with citizens and shares questions like these, the collaborative relationship can take hold as professionals and citizens define for themselves what is important in knowing about and appreciating informal occasions.

When it is apparent that the number and variety of informal social settings are undeveloped, the professional works to identify those traditions and styles of interaction and personal histories that create constraints for the expression of informal behavior. Out of an appreciation of the resources and constraints the professional and citizens once again define their relationship to include informal settings. Such informal settings can be a shared reference point for themselves while they go about the task of creating social settings in the community at large.

3. The Process of Redefining Social Settings

The first two processes make it possible for the professional to initiate a collaborative relationship by engaging the participants in building a working relationship and by obtaining sanctions to identify an important quality of a social setting, its informality. The third process is the process of making it possible for the participants to redefine their space, to redefine the way in which settings work and to create more opportunities for social support and autonomy within their social settings.

This particular process is a marker or index as to whether the entry process has been achieved. During successful entry the citizen and the professional have developed a shared appreciation of the citizen's culture and have grasped the sense of integration that

derives from experiencing informality. Then the citizens and professional are able to examine in what ways their own settings and the settings in which they live and work can be redefined, can be changed and can be adjusted to be more responsive to the participants.

The significance of this particular process lies in the shared and collective experience of altering a social structure, altering a set of norms that up to now have guided and affected the behavior of the participants. When the citizens are able to alter the very social processes they engage, this can be an enlightening if not empowering experience. The expected impact of this experience is that the citizens can become more invested and see the potential benefits of collaboration.

The experience of redefining new settings is the experience of coping with the entropy and inertia that inevitably sets in with any group or organization. The process of redefining settings creates opportunities for citizens to generate new roles and new occasions to serve them, in contrast to just responding to past or current traditions. The significance of this process of redefining social settings for the collaborative relationship is the awareness that citizens can maintain a flexible and self-corrective process. The citizen appreciates that in addition to individuals, social settings can become resources.

In starting off on a new working relationship, persons can often agree quickly on a given procedure, to reduce the anxiety that stems from the ambiguity of the new relationship or the desire not to offend anyone, to present oneself in a favorable light and to achieve positive status as a group member. The experience of redefining settings makes it possible for a person not to agree, or not to be obliging so fast. Citizens are aware that it is possible to make changes in their own social milieu. When citizens can take stock, review their own situation and redefine their physical space, they have reached a point where they can be comfortable in questioning and revising what they are doing in the collaborative relationship. Getting through this stage suggests that the collaborative process is working.

Here again the professional sets the tone by trying out notions, taking the risk to understand how social settings work, and asking whether there is now sufficient shared experience for the participants to examine what they do need from their settings and from each other. The professional serves as a resource for the citizens as they define and create resources.

In carrying out this evaluative role, the professional can draw upon two major findings from the research literature that emphasize the conditions for facilitating personal effectiveness - the presence of social support and the opportunities for autonomy and self expression. The professional can also determine to what degree these particular findings are salient for this particular group at this particular time.

While the professionals and citizens are discussing these functions and are revising their activities, they can experience the pleasure of developing new role relationships within the group, both between individual citizens and between citizens and professionals. The participants have become aware of the hazards and limitations of being trapped in roles or traditions that are not beneficial to themselves. As they learn how to define, create, use and expand resources they acquire a shared basis for understanding how to construct social relationships that are mutually satisfying and add to the effectiveness of the group. A spirit of elan can emerge as they see and experience the benefits of trust and self-confidence that come from revising and modifying current social practices and social roles.

The creation and elaboration of this process to redefine settings generates new energy and therefore new resources for the collaborative relationship. There is now a shared understanding that change is possible. There is now enough structure and enough interdependence for the participants to dig in and create new settings and new opportunities for new role relationships between themselves and other members of the community. It is expected that as this third process gets underway stereotypes have been dissipated and the anxieties of developing new roles and new settings reduced. The meaning of a social setting has been experienced by professionals and citizens.

4. The Creation of New Settings

This process is the defining process for generating a public's health. As the professionals and citizens examine how mental health can be promoted in the community and how mental illness can be prevented, the focus is the creation of new social settings.

What new places, what new occasions can be generated to provide an actual and symbolic recognition that citizens in the community can create resources for themselves? What are some examples of new settings? When the consultant creates an opportunity for two or more consultees to meet together, that can become a social setting. It can be a social setting because the consultees are challenged to generate a relationship with each other and the consultant. Together they create ways to respond to a particular community issue. Similarly, when the collaborative team of professionals and citizens meet in a church basement to take action to improve crime protection in their neighborhood, that meeting can become a social setting. It can become a social setting when the meeting provides a supportive structure for the participants to identify their needs, and creates an opportunity for them to be a collective resource for themselves. Similarly, when a group of persons invested in policy reform meets regularly to develop a strategy to improve health care delivery, the meetings can become a social setting–when

the participants give public recognition to their shared agenda and serve as a resource to themselves for problem-solving on the topic.

When a group of professionals and citizens agree to create a new playground the playground becomes a social setting as it emerges as a place for community interaction as well as a protective site for children's play. It is a social setting when the physical space takes on multiple and interdependent social, personal and community functions. The childrens' play place has meaning as well for adults as a place to converse and develop a sense of community while identifying shared resources for child care.

In these four examples, the place becomes a social setting as the participants create a new form of social interaction and meaning for themselves for some salient community issue. In this sense persons not usually connected to each other create an opportunity to be together and create a new social structure, for themselves. When a place becomes a social setting there is an expectation that the very act of coming together will generate a social process that enables the participants to identify common needs, to develop a common agenda, and to create a common response.

One difference between a meeting and a social setting, is that in a social setting there is a self-conscious and shared understanding by the participants about their process. As citizens get together they interact with a recognition that there is a value in helping each other, a value in combining resources, and a value in developing an action plan for their own future development.

Meetings are often one-time occasions. Generating social settings, by contrast, is part of a community development process and an organizing process that involves a variety of settings. Social settings give an added meaning to the actual physical place. The physical space becomes a social space. The notion of space is important because an actual space documents the meaning the individuals give to the assigned social space. The social processes involved in the creation and maintenance of the social setting make it possible to activate and maintain the prevention program.

There are some significant byproducts generated from the creation of a setting. Some of these byproducts are:

1) the experience derived from participatory decision making;
2) the experience of understanding the benefits of a variety of roles to be performed;
3) the experience of developing themes, agenda, issues, for the group, rather than for any one individual or group of individuals;
4) the experience of team building; and
5) the experience of engaging and resolving conflict.

These byproducts provide a shared sense of the change process and provide a framework for understanding personal experience when creating a social setting. Techniques provide the content, persons provide the skills, and the social setting provides the integration and the validation for the work.

At this particular time in history there is a compelling need for persons to be active participants in a milieu that works for them. Many social structures are only places, not social settings. They are just places, that confine and limit and restrict and fragment and isolate and alienate.

Newly created social settings can be an antidote for past experiences of limited self expression and undeveloped personal integration. Social settings can make it possible for persons to be connected in a meaningful way to others while working on tasks that have immediate and long-term benefit for the participants. Social settings can generate a shared belief that persons can give and receive support, that they can take action, and that the support they express and the action they take can lead to something. The collaborative relationship between professionals and citizens is activated and is confirmed as social settings are generated. During the process of creating settings the participants learn the value of small victories, of setting manageable goals and developing an incremental and sequential frame of reference when developing resources. During the process of creating settings the participants experience the self-confidence of personal and group accomplishment that comes from creating new relationships and a new social structure.

My thesis is that new social settings can establish a value for being resourceful in creating activities and policies that are preventive. New social settings can validate the belief that persons have the capacity to address the constraints that limit their development.

5. The Validation and Celebration of Settings

Creating a new social setting is a complex, subtle, demanding, and artistic enterprise. The principles for the formation of social settings derive from the unique ecology of the situations in which the participants are living. Because of the uniqueness and special qualities involved in carrying out the processes of creating social settings there is a need to validate and celebrate that process and the new social setting. Working from the premise of small victories, the participants realize that small victories need and deserve celebrating.

If participants do not take time to acknowledge each other and what they have created together, the new social setting may degenerate into a social structure—a place

whose original meaning has eroded and where activities take on a predictable, empty and routine quality.

As part of the collaborative relationship the professional advises citizens to take note of the importance of their work and to affirm that the significance of their work resides in the very process of acknowledging their work, of taking time out to appreciate, integrate and applaud what they have created. It is expected that the processes of celebration will not only make it possible to symbolically acknowledge their work but also sets the stage for the participants to identify new activities. The social setting then can help achieve these new functions. Since there often is a tendency for us all to stay with our successes, celebrating provides an occasion to consider the new demands, the new opportunities, the new ecology.

There is more to a celebration than having a party. A social setting for celebration can be an opportunity to assess the collaborative process and the styles of work and problem solving that the participants took to achieve their present status. When the participants generate social norms that encourage a review of past work this value for consolidation can facilitate the next phase of work. In this phase, the participants can explore how to reinvest their energy, and how they can build upon what they have achieved to create resources for their continued development. The participants can develop informal roles for planning and carrying out the celebration.

The important feature of this celebrating process is that explicit recognition is given to summarize and reflect upon what they have experienced, where they are in their own personal development, how they view their social settings, and how these evolved. What is examined are the values, the social norms, and the various roles that have contributed to the creation of the new setting, reflecting self-consciously on the elements or events or processes that have contributed to the group's accomplishments they are now honoring.

The comments up to this point have focused upon how the participants and citizens themselves create social settings. This process is incomplete unless it includes an assessment of settings in the community at large which are working and are serving important "prevention" functions. In fact, the efficacy of the collaborative relationship for doing preventive work depends upon understanding the value of these "natural" places. While the participants are active in creating their own process it is essential that they seek out, observe, note and understand how the natural settings in the community work. Conversations with the members and creators of these natural settings can help identify functions analogous to those the participants are already familiar with. The persons involved in such "real" or "natural" settings can then serve as resources to the participants of the collaborative relationship, to help them realize that there are "natural" processes going on which do accomplish the same ends. In this way, citizens and professionals in the collaborative process can be less stuffy, less self-important, and

put aside a notion that they are somehow unique and special in their skills in activating settings. Recognizing that there are places and activities ongoing in the community which can create resources for the collaborative relationship and noting how they also develop social resources to validate themselves gives real meaning to the concept of social settings.

Celebrations, for both the indigenous and the generated settings, provide an opportunity to revise their collaborative relationship. Acts are celebratory when they are genuine, spontaneous, and derive from the shared experiences accumulated during the creation of the social setting. Celebrations are then integrative. All concerned can have a deep and shared and explicit occasion to acknowledge that they now realize what they have done: they have created a social place that is unique and palpable and congealing and validating.

6. Creating Settings to Link and Exchange Resources

This sixth process clearly reflects the evolution of the collaborative relationship. A criterion to evaluate its effectiveness is whether the previous milieu has emerged as an identifiable, coherent and recognizable social setting. Then the participants of the social setting can create ways to exchange resources with other settings. As they become involved in activities related to the first five processes, they are able to create power by relating to and influencing other key resources and key social settings.

In this exchange process there is a subtle balance to be preserved. A likely outcome of the developmental process of creating social settings is, that in their self-confirming experience they can develop an understandable pride in their work and their accomplishments. They may become complacent, seem self-possessed or even arrogant. Linkage with other resources is an antidote for such complacency, making it possible for them to modulate ethnocentric pride in their own setting and accomplishments.

Another purpose in the creation of resources is to increase opportunities for these resources to be fused back into the social setting. To make this adaptation happen, the participants of the collaborative relationship must express a willingness to think about how resources can be donated or exchanged. This thinking process in itself requires a keen and deep understanding of the workings of social settings. For an exchange of resources to take place a process must be worked out to both facilitate the transfer of the resources, and to subsequently incorporate it. In essence there needs to be a ready recipient, a ready donor, and a medium of exchange.

This exchange process requires substantial commitment to understand the processes related to the meaning and viability of social settings, without becoming ethnocentric about the unique validity of the setting. It is expected that the very

socialization process that has made it possible for citizens and professionals to evolve their social setting has also affirmed their own appreciation of the value of a diversity of resources. A social setting's capacity to exchange resources contributes to a working understanding of the processes related to adaptation and survival.

In many instances, a critical ingredient in crisis management is the ability to access a variety of resources. Since there is no one single person or one single resource which can effectively solve a problem or create a treatment to solve a crisis, one option is to create a resource network. The collaborative relationship builds the capacity of social settings to survive unpredictable events by increasing the capacity of the participants of the setting to network. The networking function of social settings can be an exemplar for adaptation.

The development process for the creation of social settings is most apt for those individuals who are at the moment without resources and without the supportive structures to acquire resources. A preventive program—from engagement, to creating informal settings, to redefining settings, to creating new settings, to celebrating and linking settings—can be initiated as a collaborative process between those who are without these resources and those who have resources.

The significance of generating social settings is not just in developing a potentially precious relationship between professionals and citizens but as a practical resource for community development. The process of creating settings can be used to design community-based programs. Those citizens and professionals who have participated in the collaborative relationship, who created social settings, can now be authentic resources for the larger community development process.

Each of these six processes then, focuses on the development and empowerment of persons, settings, and the connections of settings as resources. It is expected that the experience that the citizens and professionals have in generating these various settings can become a resource to other persons and other settings.

Creating social settings for the prevention of mental illness does not just respond to the needs of one individual by offering an individual solution. The needs of a network of individuals are responded to by creating a setting, a place to work from, with an accompanying set of social supports and processes that replenish an undeveloped or depleted resource.

It is this sixth social setting concept that makes it possible for the citizens and the professionals to form together a confederation of new resources—other professionals and other citizens—to address important issues of policy reform and policy formation. A goal for the entire collaborative process is to create a grounded, embedded, connected, and informed group of persons who can create a social policy for the prevention of mental illness that brings back to the community a variety of resources that can fulfill a "bill of

rights" for the mental health of citizens: the activation of sufficient opportunities for social support and social integration within the community.

An Ecological Caveat

Before concluding, I'd like to affirm what is obvious. Creating social settings is not simple, or predictable or always fun. There are some likely negative side effects of the process which are to be considered. I want to mention a few of them.

The excitement of experiencing meaningful social relationships can be heady, and can create an illusion of change. The tough tasks of keeping at the process require a resourcefulness and persistence that often staggers or drains us. Getting caught up in the pleasure of being in informal settings does not mean that the participants are casual, relaxed, and unreflective. Designing social

settings, while invigorating, is intellectually demanding and requires all the inventiveness that participants and citizens can bring together. Also, the spirit and contagion that accompanies the process can be threatening to those watching or observing the process from a distance. How the participants and citizens respond to others who are not a part of their process, can exaggerate a possible sense of threat or create an appreciation of the experimental nature of the process.

Creating settings also pulls resources from other activities and reduces the amount of time, or money, or energy available for them. Creating settings, in pulling people together, can pull people away from other valid and essential activities. The participants consciously and continuously appraise what are the benefits and hazards of being involved in creating settings. Each of these limiting or potentially negative effects is anticipated and addressed. At each step of the developmental process of creating the six settings, the participants take stock, review, reflect upon what has transpired and what are the possible positive and negative consequences of their work for themselves, their kin, theirfriends in their own and other settings.

Conclusion

These ideas represent one approach to the continued development of community-based prevention programs. They are presented as being practical and consistent with a public health approach. The unique feature is that the mental health professional works with citizens to create places and occasions which then can serve as sources of personal identification, social integration and community empowerment.

These ideas are derived from a basic value that participation in a developmental process is essential for the well-being of persons and organizations. They call for the

professional, in addition to creating methods and techniques, to be a resource for the creation of social processes. These social processes emerge as a resource for individuals and for the community at large.

A collaborative approach for the design of social settings is responsive to the contemporary plight of fragmentation, isolation and alienation. By focusing on the social setting as the topic of choice, persons and social structures are conjoined, and the shortcomings of either an individual or a societal approach to prevention are reduced. In creating the six social settings, the professional and citizen are interdependent. The collaborative process creates not only public services, but provides a community with a network of public resources.

Readings

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