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Treatment of Marital Discord in Catholic Social Agencies

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TREATMENT OF MARITAL DISCORD
IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL AGENCIES

by

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Maryknoll Sister

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Social Work
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Social Work

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is to present a compendium of the principal statements in Catholic literature concerning the processes and techniques in the treatment of marital discord in the Catholic social agency.

For many years marital difficulties have stood high on the list of problems treated by Catholic family caseworkers. But only recently has help with these difficulties been offered by and sought from the psychiatrist within the Catholic social agency and the professional counselor in the family bureau or marriage clinic. This thesis endeavors to collate in one paper the contributions of a limited but representative number of Catholic writers in these three professions.

In speaking about conflicts and problems among our Catholic people, peculiar to our time, Father Shehan states the following:

To resolve these conflicts will require an ever-increasing knowledge of human nature, its weaknesses, its strengths, and its possibilities, the motivation of the human will and the techniques by which adjustment can be brought
about within the Christian scheme of morality. 1

Sources

The following volumes have served as the principal source material: The Catholic Charities Review, and the Proceedings of the National Conference of Catholic Charities.

The following books and pamphlet also were used as source material:


Related literature, both Catholic and non-Catholic has been used for purposes of comparison and for background knowledge.

Scope

The scope of the literature in the Catholic volumes cited above is limited to the period of twenty-one years from 1931 through 1951. Before 1938, the articles dealing with the treatment of the interpersonal conflict of married couples are comparatively few. Therefore, this study, though not ignoring these earlier contributions, bases its results mostly on those of the later

Methodology

Before beginning this thesis, a preliminary step was necessary; namely, that of supplying an index of the particular volumes chosen for research. Three students prepared a complete catalogue of all the articles included in these volumes. Later this served as a basis for selecting several thesis subjects. Information concerning each article was recorded on index cards and included the following: (1) the subject or field of social work to which the article pertained; (2) the title of the article; (3) the author; (4) the publication in which it appeared and its date; (5) the page number of the article.

Those articles which discussed family tension and marital problems, social casework through the direct relationship, psychiatry and counseling within the Catholic social agency were read and summarized. However, in many instances, pertinent quotations have been selected since the articles are not long and give the substance in one or two lines. The articles often refer to several points and sometimes are not complete or specific. In those cases where there is a controversy, usually the Catholic position is stated and a general idea is given as to where the current philosophy disagrees with Catholic philosophy, ethics or morals. Controversial views are often expressed in the literature concerning the conflicts said to exist in the psychiatric and moral phases of marital discord.
After most of the material was gathered, the various points were itemized, grouped and sub-grouped and then placed in chapters. This thesis is the resulting correlation of this material gathered from the designated Catholic volumes and books.

**Manner of presentation**

Originally one chapter was to be devoted exclusively to the part held by the priest in marital discord problems. However, information concerning the priest-worker and these problems was lacking, or if available, was out of harmony with the purpose of this thesis. It would seem that a consideration of the priest’s role falls under the heading of the pastoral ministry, closely related with the Catholic social agency.

Chapter Two groups the descriptive references of the problem of marital discord; that is, the characteristics, sources of referral and auspices for treatment.

Some of the literature relative to treatment of marital discord emphasized the religious-moral component and religious counseling techniques in casework. This forms Chapter Three and is titled, "The Religious and Moral Components in Treatment."

Chapter Four presents the articles about marriage counseling, the process, opinions and conflicts concerning the aim in personality adjustment, and brief references to counseling based on Dr. Charles A. Curran’s text. This chapter is titled, "The Emotional Component in Treatment."
CHAPTER II

THE PROBLEM OF MARITAL DISCORD

This chapter is composed of references describing the problems of marital discord, in terms of 1) the initial contact, 2) internal factors and characteristics of the individuals involved, and 3) setting for treatment. These descriptions were not the total content of the individual articles but were separated from the content in the articles studied for the purposes of this thesis.

In selecting and compiling the excerpts from the articles, terms such as family discord, family tension, or family maladjustment were presumed to refer to marital discord, even though they are more inclusive in meaning.

The Initial Contact

The caseworker’s initial contact with marital problems occurs in various ways. Many problems are referred from the domestic courts, some by clergymen and parish organizations, some by interested persons and some by personal application.

Dorothy Mohler notes the probable procedure used in referrals to or, from a specialist:

Sometimes it is the pastor who makes the referral to the
case worker after the basic problems have been faced and dis-
cussed and when assistance is needed in carrying out practi-
cal plans for everyday living; sometimes it works in reverse,
and the case worker after preparing the way and breaking down
objections and obstacles can refer the person to a doctor,
priest or other specialist.1

Often clients do not directly present to the case worker
a request for help with their marriage problems. For example, the
conflict may reveal itself in the form of a request for child
placement, as Beatrice Faivre indicates:

The requests for child placement are increasing. Often
an agency study reveals that a couple who are experiencing
serious marital friction look upon this procedure as a solu-
tion to their immediate problem.2

Requests or "presenting" problems include a variety of inter-
relationships, a complex of social and economic pressures and of
personal and environmental maladjustments. In the family agency
there are numerous couples seeking help regarding serious marital
difficulties which are often complicated by severe emotional dis-
turbances, or are reflections of a moral disorder.3

Lourdes Lane raises these questions for consideration in
problems of marital discord--which person is most seriously dis-
turbed, what are the factors that enter into the marital difficulty
and, are these factors inherent in the personality or in the envi-

1 Dorothy Abts Mohler, "The Social Worker in Marriage
Counseling," Marriage Counseling, ed. Family Life Bureau, Washing-
ton, 1950, 25.

2 Beatrice M. Faivre, "Institute on Counseling and
Counseling, Charities Review, December, 1949, 258.

3 Ibid., 257.
roment. She believes also that, in some measure, personality difficulties may be remedied by casework treatment or by psychiatric treatment, on the basis that the kind of help that the individual needs is determined by the nature of the problem.4

**Internal Factors and Characteristics in the Individuals Involved**

In her article on environmental factors in marriage, Dorothy Mohler writes that most case workers agree that it is the feelings and attitudes that individuals have about their problem that are really important—the inner, personal reaction to that external reality in which one lives.5 The importance of this becomes apparent in her definition of marital discord given in another article. It is defined as a unique problem intimately bound up with the attitudes and the emotions of the personalities involved.6

In almost every marital maladjustment, certain characteristics seem to be present in the individuals concerned—a state which Father Curtin describes as internal confusion and hostility:

... an internal state of confusion in the individuals, with feelings often of vindictiveness, unhappiness, fear, bitterness, rejection, inadequacy, as well as an external expression of hostility, the inability to make social adjustment, and

---

4 Lourdes Lane, "Casework Treatment in Marital Conflict," Proceedings, 1944, 75.


the attempt at escape from realities by substituting other satisfactions. 7

Dr. Pacella considers the effect that personality shortcomings may have in the marital situations. It is his opinion that these can cause chronic tension which decreases the degree of tolerance in each partner, and produces a problem. In such cases, readjustment is often necessary.

Chronic tension will decrease the degree of tolerance of each marriage partner for the other and therefore produce a problem. When an adjustment to a situation is necessary rather than a release from it—a couple often must be made to readjust themselves by a psychiatric evaluation of their personality shortcomings and an attempt to reinforce these shortcomings whenever found. 8

Marital discord may be precipitated by the differences in internal factors in one or both of the partners, which are not handled with adequate understanding. Roberta Arbuthnot writes that these factors exist in educational, social, cultural, temperamental or religious differences:

Some of the internal factors which involve one or both of the couples are differences in educational background, differences in social and cultural advantages, radical differences in temperament and differences in religious belief even between Catholics. Because of these differences and a lack of proper understanding and the ability to handle the

situation adequately, friction develops which causes great harm to the security of family life.  

Basic differences, such as differences in religion, although understood and accepted by marriage partners, are apt to cause disturbances later on in marital life. One reason given for this is that perhaps no knowledge is so emotionally charged as religious belief. Robert Odenwald emphasizes the strength of the emotional element in marital discord: "Emotional conflicts, not external controls, are the most decisive factors in determining whether the marriage will function smoothly or be subjected to disharmony and friction between husband and wife." He writes that the outstanding factors in marital adjustment seem to be those of "affection, temperamental compatibility and social adaptivity."

According to A. W. Church, emotional immaturity is most frequently met most frequently by the caseworker or psychiatrist in marital problems. It is his opinion that the problem is one of integration, however, and therefore "is based on the fundamental concept of multiplicity of etiology for any problem."

In his article on mental hygiene and family social work,


Dr. Bergen emphasizes the need for a considerable amount of unselfish behavior if a marriage is to endure.\textsuperscript{12}

A portion of Father Schmiedeler's study of the family is especially pertinent to this consideration of marital discord.\textsuperscript{13} He writes that family tensions are typical sources of domestic conflict and that usually, these are found in difference of attitude between individuals. Those family tensions due to personal factors come from the dispositions that characterize husband and wife, or from their ethical standards or moral habits. He notes the aspects in a marital situation that are common to personality adjustment generally: the attitudes, information, understanding necessary in harmonious social relations:

Adjustment in marriage exhibits certain aspects that are unique to the marriage union. But it also exhibits aspects that are common to personality adjustment generally. In other words, over and above the specific problems that are peculiar to the marital situations, harmonious relation between husband and wife entails attitudes, information, understanding and conduct or behavior required for harmonious social relations generally between individuals.\textsuperscript{14}

Setting for Treatment

Dorothy Mohler writes that there seems to be no complete agreement on the question of auspices for marriage counseling ser-


\textsuperscript{13} Edgar Schmiedeler, O.S.B., \textit{An Introductory Study of the Family}, New York, 1930, 183.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 308.
vices. She states however, that as far as the Catholic agencies are concerned, these services should be "an integral part of the existing diocesan organization of Catholic Charities whether administrative as part of the family agency or as a separate bureau or department." 15

In another article, Mrs. Mohler expresses the opinion that the interest of the family case worker in the family unit affords a "vantage point both for understanding the various facets of marital problems and for treating them effectively." 16 She thinks, therefore, that these case workers probably have the best all-round preparation for marriage counseling and, recognizing their skill, suggests that it be exercised in many settings besides that of the family agency. 17

Cecile Whalen desires a preventive reaching out of family service agencies to "normal" families with "normal" problems. She supports the value of the family agency in marriage problems because of their tested experience and wide range of knowledge:

Through tested experience and trained observation over the years, the family agency has accumulated and is continuing to assimilate a vast range of knowledge about the personal attitudes, environmental factors and social requirements about

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family life especially marriage problems.\textsuperscript{18}

In 1936, Margaret Norman wrote an article in which she has set forth the philosophy underlying a family consultation unit.\textsuperscript{19} She states that there are two fundamental possibilities which present themselves as a basis for the action and program of a family consultation unit:

1) The clinic can try to hold its clients to some conception of what family relationships ought to be, either as defined in the morality of the community or as conceived in the eyes of the clinic itself or both.

2) The clinic can try to give its clients what they as individuals, independent of the prescribed morality of the community, want.

Then, relating specifically to the Catholic family consultation unit, Miss Norman urges that Catholic staff workers bring direct influence in direct relationships with clients. Thus, some degree of protection can be given against a philosophy of life based on the emotional and expedient:

\ldots some degree of protection would be afforded Catholic constituents against those who attempt to advise in regard to the most basic relationships of life in terms of the emotional and the expedient and to whom the religious motivation of human conduct and the sense of sin are, to say the least, quaint and naive.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{19} Margaret C. Norman, "Family Consultation and the Catholic Social Agency," \textit{Charities Review}, June 1936, 176.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 177.
Dr. Stanley Davies' opinion was quoted by Dorothy Mohler.21 He advocates separate centers for counseling, in operation and location, from family agency, but under their administration and direction. In his article, the argument for separate centers proposes that people will not go to an agency connected with problems that carry a "social stigma". In terms of using the center for the development of specific skills, he believes that a separate clinic would recognize more keenly its responsibility to deal with marital problems and not become involved in other types of treatment. In opposition to separate centers, the family agency states that marriage counseling is "basically good family case work and merely a new emphasis on something they have been doing more or less informally," and that reports from some of the newer family agencies indicate no difficulty in attracting clients from all income levels.

Professional marriage counseling that is "patient-centered" instead of "profession-centered" is the suggestion proffered by Father John Stafford.22 He offers two plans on this basis which involve the "team" approach. One is termed the cooperative plan. In this the marriage counselor establishes a co-


operative relationship with other professions for consultations or referrals on the premise that no matter what his own professional attachment is, he is not sufficiently sensitive to be able to make a complete diagnosis by himself; the services of the parish priest would always be involved. The other plan called the clinical plan is one in which the director may be of any profession—the essential idea is a multi-discipline co-operation within one clinic.

In his article on personality disturbances in marital discord, Dr. Bernard Pacella relates that there are some marital problems which are best handled by the priest, some by the social worker and some through referral to a psychiatrist. He states that "most marriages which are beset by disturbances in the interpersonal relationships between couples—so-called incompatibility—are usually the result of personality disturbances..."23 His general rule about diagnosis is that in all instances where emotional and mental reactions remain for any length of time, and where they seem to effect marital discord, it is preferable to obtain a psychiatric opinion. If the maladjustment results from an immature personality, or if the case is one in which tolerance must be stressed, he recommends the service of a priest who would become the constant advisor of these individuals. Referral for

psychiatric evaluation and care is indicated in cases of sexual maladjustment which are manifestations of psychological disturbances.

Margaret Norman's article reveals the following outline for procedure in treatment of marital discord.24

In the numerous marital problems, each partner may have a different goal. Even the mature, skilled caseworker finds it extremely difficult to keep identification straight and to be objective in the helping process, when she is working with married couples. The practice of assigning two workers to a case varies according to the particular marital discord problem, and, in some cases, may be dependent upon the practical availability of staff members. Regarding the time element in treatment, it is important to develop a regular appointment system with clients and to limit the amount of time spent with them. Home or office interviews should be used discriminately, according to the essentials of the situation and limitations and equipment of the agency. Both interviewing skill and content are variable elements which need competence in recording to make them effective in future treatment.

Summary

Initial Contact

Marital discord problems come to the social agency through referrals from any source in the community, and under nu-

merous "presenting" problems. These problems manifest a variety of complex inter-relationships and complications, such as severe emotional disturbances, economic and social pressures, or moral disorder.

**Characteristics of the Individuals Involved**

The individuals involved in marital discord usually present certain internal characteristics. These reveal themselves in feelings of confusion, fear, bitterness, hostility, and an inability to properly cope with reality. Emphasis has been placed on the intimate relationship of emotions and attitudes to adjustment in the marital situation. There is general agreement among case workers that in any problem the inner personal reaction to the external reality is most important.

**Internal Factors in the Individuals**

Marital discord may be precipitated by educational, social, cultural, temperamental or religious differences, if these are not properly understood and managed. Sometimes, even if understood and accepted, basic differences can cause disturbances in later marital life, as for example, a religious difference. Here the reason given for possible disturbance is based on the high degree of emotion in religious belief.

Personality defects can cause chronic tension which may produce a problem by decreasing the degree of tolerance in the partners.

It is one opinion that emotional conflicts are the most
decisive factor in marital harmony; another opinion that emotional immaturity is the disturbance most frequently encountered; and a third, that unselfish behavior is needed for an enduring marriage.

The portion of the text briefly referred to notes that adjustment in the marital situation exhibits certain aspects that are common to personality adjustment generally. At the same time, the unique aspect of the marital relationship is recognized.

Setting for Treatment

There seems to be no complete agreement on the question of auspices for treatment of marital problems. The family agency is supported on the theory that its past, broad experience and cumulative knowledge in dealing with the family unit, affords the best all-round preparation for marriage counseling. It is suggested, however, that the family case worker exercise her skills in other settings.

Separate clinics are advocated on the grounds that they can develop better skills because of their specialization and that they carry no connotation of "social stigma".

It is stated rather conclusively, that Catholic services in marital problems should be an integral part of the existing diocesan organization of Catholic Charities. Direct Catholic influence in relationships with clients is urged also, as a protection against false philosophy.
CHAPTER III

TREATMENT IN THE AREA OF MORALITY AND SPIRITUAL VALUES

Introduction

The basic framework within which the Catholic social caseworker understands marriage or toward which the client's better adjustment is directed, is stated in these words of Pope Pius XI:

Therefore the sacred partnership of true marriage is constituted both by the will of God and the will of man. From God comes the very institution of marriage, the ends for which it was instituted, the laws that govern it, the blessings that flow from it; while man, through generous surrender of his own person made to another for the whole span of life, becomes with the help and cooperation of God, the author of its particular marriage with the duties and blessings annexed thereto from divine institution.1

Father Shehan writes that it is the experience of the Catholic social agencies aiding families that most of the families have suffered breakdown in the religious field as well as other fields, and that "... no true solution can be found to their total situation unless the religious element is considered."2

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This breakdown does occur, the family experiences conflict and manifests maladjustment. According to Father Curtin, the major factor in adjustment then, is an insight into their problems. This means an ability of the individuals "to face the real situation and to judge their problems objectively and realistically." 3

This chapter consists of a compilation of those opinions which pertain to the breakdown involving the area of morality and spiritual values within the scope of treatment by the caseworker. The selections are presented under these headings: 1) religious counseling, 2) technique for moral conflicts, 3) religious factors in personality adjustment, 4) the need for priestly competence and 5) the caseworker's participation in the area of spiritual values.

Four general points might be briefly considered here before the specifics of the chapter are presented: 1) the principal religious and ethical problems which indicate marital discord, 2) the approach of the Catholic agency in these problems, 3) the characteristics required in the family caseworker, and 4) general requirements for the resolution of any moral conflict.

Father Doyle has listed the principal religious and ethical problems with which the Catholic social worker must deal. Included are those of "desertion, drunkenness, family tension and conflicts with a moral basis, impending or actual divorce, marriage
attempted outside the Church and birth control. 4

In these problems of marital discord, Father O'Grady states that the approach of the Catholic agency must be from the religious angle:

The Catholic agency must approach these problems from a religious angle. We cannot separate man's behavior from questions of right and wrong. If he has neglected his family responsibilities we assume that he has done wrong; that he has violated God's law . . . . We may find circumstances that extenuate his guilt, but the basic principle of moral culpability remains. 5

Regarding the characteristics most needed and desired in the family caseworker, Father Shehan considers as essential a balanced personality in the worker, knowledge of human nature, aptness in method and deep spiritual qualities:

. . . a well-rounded, wholesome personality, knowledge of the human mind and heart, aptness in the best methods of general casework, spiritual and religious qualities of a high order, deep conviction of the truth and value of the Church's philosophy, unswerving faith in her teachings, love of things spiritual such as is found only in profoundly religious souls and a deep earnestness. 6

Father Shehan believes that in the resolving of any moral conflict, an increasing knowledge of human nature is necessary, that is, knowledge of "its weaknesses and its strengths, its possibilities, the motivation of the human will and techniques by


which adjustment can be brought about within the Christian scheme of morality.\textsuperscript{7}

**Religious Counseling in Marital Discord**

Although individuals do not approach a social agency with a spiritual problem, frequently in the course of the casework process, they reveal religious conflicts or confusion which they have not recognized previously. This breakdown of religious and moral values is personalized and individualized in many persons who then live in a kind of spiritual isolation in which they are cut off from the channels of grace and from normal intercourse with God. There is a definite area of proficiency here in which the Catholic social caseworker may validly counsel, the limits of which are defined by the individual case.\textsuperscript{8}

Catherine Harahan defines religious counseling as a "humble, patient, prayerful effort to be of aid to a particular individual in straightening out his spiritual life."\textsuperscript{9} In this process the worker is involved in an effort to aid in solving the religious problem through skill in making the client's religion

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 133.


\textsuperscript{9} Catherine A. Harahan, "Counseling on a Religious Level," *Charities Review*, 1940, 164.
meaningful to him. The most valuable tool, after prayer, is the unhurried personal conference in which the worker gives general as well as religious counseling. Where principles are involved, the worker states them without compromise; her goal being to enable the client to be able to consult the pastor.

Again, according to Catherine Harahan, religious counseling many be active or passive. Passive counseling is that in which the worker is of definite help, but because he is scarcely aware of his Catholic attitude and conscience when he relates to his client, he fails to record his activity. Active counseling consists of definite efforts by the worker to understand the religious problem and to help in it, by providing the necessary opportunity for expression about these problems. It does not mean an authoritative relationship. "Any attempt to force confidence or to demand outward compliance with religious observance is not within the province of the Catholic social worker."

Some workers may consider the religious aspect in a marital problem as not within scope:

Some workers may disapprove of the active type of religious counseling for psychological reasons, feeling that each and every step should come from the client. The active approach is further justified in many cases by the client's desire to reveal his problems, accompanied by his inability to find the words or courage necessary for self-expression.

10 Harahan, "Counseling," 165.
11 Ibid., 164.
12 Ibid., 165.
A Technique for Conflict in Area of Morality

Father Doyle believes that an understanding on the part of the worker of the importance of the problem of morality will promote a willingness to be used as an instrument by God in whatever manner He may reveal for the client's betterment. His article presents the following ideas as a basis for helping people who have conflicts in the area of morality.

There is no single technique to be used in these problems because they are problems of conscience and will vary in different individuals according to the influences and circumstances in his spiritual background. Three suggestions are made.

First, the worker must understand the client objectively --neither influenced by self or client--and must evaluate his findings both socially and spiritually.

Second, the worker must interpret the client his moral problem "not by an appeal to the emotions, but by cold, hard reasoning." He must be made aware of the seriousness of his behavior, according to an individual evaluation. The worker should be able to recognize when a problem needs a psychiatrist's skill or is the province of the priest alone. "As for the rest, the whole question resolves itself into one of thorough study, prudence and good judg-

ment. Just how much interpretation should be given is debatable.

... the worker ought to be able to evaluate the influences of limited mentality, lack of moral training, long standing habits of sin and the devastating strengths of human passion. Just how far the social worker should go in evaluating and interpreting human behavior is a matter of some debate.¹⁴

And third, exemplification of the highest form of practical charity by the caseworker; after doing all that he can under the first two principles, he must give something of himself to the client. He must inspire in the client confidence and hope in the Church, making him understand that the Church is vitally interested in him and he is still loved by Our Lord. Next to the priest, the social worker is best able to help with the adjustment in a moral or religious problem through the use of the direct relationship.

Religious Factors in the Personality

The following two selections give some idea of the factors in the personality which are directed toward religion.

Father McEntegart describes these factors which enter into the adjustment of the personality. In total, these are principally a centering upon and development toward something which is both superior to man and dependent on the deeper values in human nature.

... the centering of man's mind on something outside of and

¹⁴ Ibid., 136.
¹⁵ Ibid.
superior to himself.

the setting up of a criterion for morality and a motivation for its pursuits which is higher than self-interest.

the development of a lasting love which is based on the deeper values in human nature.16

Father McEntegart emphasizes the necessity of "a belief in the high spiritual purpose of the universe . . . the hope of an immortality which will give life perspective and sanction . . . a sense of the dignity and the significance of life."17

Father Loftus expresses this concept of religion in the personality. He defines the design of religion as a living permeating motivation toward God in man.

Religion is designed to permeate the spirit of man, raise his sights, inculcate virtue, strengthen his moral fiber, deepen his character, sharpen his conscience, stimulate his motivation, so as to lead him to a resemblance of the infinite perfection possessed by God.18

The Need for Priestly Competence

The priest is undoubtedly the person most qualified to handle what might be called the problem of motivation in marriage. "The explanation of the elevation of a natural kind of love to a supernatural level is certainly the right and duty of one who has


17 Ibid.

sacrificed the former for the latter."19

Father Leo Geary recommends that priest-client contacts be had in moral, spiritual and behavior problems.20 In these areas the priest will have to determine first whether therapy belongs with the psychiatrist, confessor or pastor, or whether it belongs primarily in the area of his own specialized training. Accordingly, he may be available to discuss the various spiritual problems with the clients of the agency. There are specific casework services—situations regarding matrimonial entanglements—where the advice and consultation of a priest are most important. Father Geary also considers marital difficulties which evolve because of a lack of religious training and background. In these cases, the worker enables the client to accept help, if this is possible, and then continues on the other problem levels, leaving the particular religious aspect for the priest.

Margaret Norman believes that competent spiritual direction is obligatory in problems of marital relationship.

Recognition of the sacramental and enduring character of marriage places upon the social worker the necessity of securing, for the client and herself, competent spiritual direction, usually in the person of the parish priest, in


problems of marital relationship... 21

Father Schmiedeler states the unique value of the priest in the adjustment of familial difficulties in the confessional—faithful use of, its sacredness, and the confessor.

While, even with the most faithful use of the confessional, some minor slips may still occur because of the drive of the elemental forces of human nature and the circumstances of life, still, permanent or serious maladjustment is not very likely to result. 22

Not only is the minister a highly qualified ethicist equipped with knowledge and a definite grasp of moral laws, but he is also afforded every opportunity to apply the law and make adjustment in an intelligent and impartial way because of the secrecy and sacredness of the tribunal of penance. 23

The Caseworker's Participation in the Relationship

The most important role of the worker is in working with the individual toward an emotional stability and maturity that will provide a sound basis for spiritual growth. These two points seem uppermost in an article by Alice Ainsworth: 1) the variability in the ability and capacity of the client and 2) the presence of spiritual values and skill in the worker. 24

The worker's activity is governed by her knowledge of the


23 Ibid., 324.

client's ability to accept counsel and the growth attained through the casework process. The worker must have a personal conviction of spiritual values and of the inherent dignity of each individual, know her own limitations and recognize priestly competence in a particular situation, yet not allow this to destroy her awareness of psychological factors as well.

Sister Rosemary emphasizes a relationship which will make the client more aware of the reality of the spiritual order in one's life.

Psychiatry teaches us the importance of the relationship of the subconscious to the conscious life of the individual. We cannot underestimate the work of the subconscious in the spiritual life of the individual. The worker should manage the relationship in such a way that the client will be made more conscious of the necessity of giving proper importance to the supernatural order in his life. We cannot validly work toward gaining for the client the reality of only the natural emotional level, and leave out of our treatment plan all endeavor to assist the client to become conscious of the reality of the spiritual order.25

A delicate balance in the treatment of "spiritual aberrations" is embodied in the thought of Alice Ainsworth. She concludes that the casework approach involves a proportionate recognition of, first, the worker's obligation as imposed by fraternal charity, second, the strength of the client's emotions and third, the skill of the worker in timing the consideration of the spiritual problem with the client.

The Catholic caseworker should not actively or passively deny her obligation toward the correction of the spiritual aberrations of her clients, imposed by fraternal correction and by charity. At the same time she recognizes the strength of emotional blocking and she may in conscience delay the approach to spiritual problems until she has more reasonable hope of success.26

Referring again to Margaret Norman's article, the casework relationship should be so controlled and restrained that the client is enabled "to see himself clearly and to become once more capable of making rational decisions and moral judgments."27 She clarifies a point about human responsibility on the basis of Catholic philosophy: "... that not only ignorance but also emotional conditions affect human responsibility, and 'that fear is the emotion that most often clouds consciousness and diminishes guilt.'" In her opinion, the skill of the worker should evolve around enabling and counseling, according to the specifics in the individual's case, and the growth of the client.

We may, for instance, with the aid of casework theory find definite values in the non-critical, non-judgmental acceptance of the client which enables him to get clear to himself a true measure of his capacities and limitations, that emotional acceptance of self which carries with it potentials of growth and change. But if this desired outcome does not result from the controlled relationship, our role may need to become one of counseling and instructing, in accordance with the spiritual works of mercy ... .28


28 Ibid., 60.
In the area of interpersonal relationships, treatment depends upon the skill of the worker in "enabling the client to find enduring values, and living in conformity to them, and the extent of the client's desire and ability to change." Finally, in view of a possible misconception about treatment in the religious area in marital discord, she points out that even though a client and the problem are individualized, his relationship to God is not overlooked by the caseworker.

Understanding of the factors that have entered into the fashioning of the client as he is, and a realization that the problems is his own and to be solved in his own way, do not militate against the caseworker's giving thought to that major relationship in life—one's duty to God and the fulfillment of it through religion.

Summary

The contents of this chapter pertain to marital discord which involves the area of morality and spiritual values, treatable by the caseworker. Four general points serve as a basis for the specific headings: 1) a statement of the principal marital discord problems in this area, 2) the approach of the Catholic agency, 3) the characteristics required in the worker and 4) the general requirements involved in resolving any moral conflict.


Religious Counseling

Articles on this subject specifically, indicate that there is a definite area of proficiency in which the Catholic social worker may counsel, the limits of which are defined by the individual case.

Usually religious conflicts are not revealed initially but during the casework process. Religious counseling is defined by Catherine Harahan as a humble, prayerful effort to be of aid to the individual in his spiritual life. It may be active or passive. Some workers disapprove of active religious counseling for psychological reasons.

General Technique Used In Conflicts In The Area of Morality

There is no single technique which may serve as a basis in treatment because these problems are problems of conscience and therefore vary individually. Three suggestions are made in Father Doyle's article. In terms of the caseworker, these are first, objectively understanding the client and problem, second, interpretation of the moral problem to the client and, third, exemplification of the highest form of practical charity.

Religious Factors in the Personality

A brief reference to the religious factors involved in the personality results in these two descriptions. Religion is a design for a living, permeating motivation toward God and, religion is principally a centering of man's mind outside of himself, superior to himself, and based on the deeper values in human
The Need for Priestly Competence

From the casework viewpoint, in problems of marital discord, the articles indicate these opinions: 1) the priest is the person most qualified to handle what might be called the problem of motivation in marriage since it is a sacrament, 2) those clients with moral, spiritual or behavior problems should have contact with the priest--the procedure is variable according to the individual problem, 3) competent spiritual direction for the worker and client is of obligation in problems of marital discord and, 4) in the confessional, the priest and the sacrament received, when faithfully used, can deter any serious maladjustment in a marital situation.

The Caseworker's Participation in the Relationship

The most important role of the worker is in working with the individual toward an emotional stability and maturity which will provide a sound basis for spirituality.

The worker's activity is based on the client's ability and progressive capacity to accept counsel, and on the worker's skill and personal spiritual convictions.

One writer views the reality of the spiritual order in the light of the importance of the relationship of the subconscious to the conscious in the life of the individual. Therefore the relationship should be managed in such a way that the client will be made more conscious of the necessity of giving importance to his
Another opinion suggests as primary in the treatment of "spiritual aberrations" a delicately balanced relationship. This involves a proportionate recognition of every factor in the individual problems, and a corresponding skill in treatment.

Margaret Norman, one of the most frequent contributors to this subject, believes that the relationship should be so controlled that the client is enabled to use his capacity for rational decisions and moral judgments. In further considering the skill of the worker, Miss Norman evaluates casework theory with definite favor but suggests counseling if the desired result—growth in an individual case—is not forthcoming. Finally, she points out that even though a client and the problems are individualized, his relationship to God is not overlooked in treatment.
CHAPTER IV
MARRIAGE COUNSELING

In this chapter, the process, purpose and relationship in marriage counseling has been selected for presentation. It is one technique applicable to marital problems which is expressed clearly and precisely in the articles. No distinction has been made between casework in marital situation and marriage counseling, except an arbitrary grouping for the purpose of this thesis, because the literature studied does not state any. There appear to be differences of a degree regarding specific procedure in technique between the two professions. Several quotations which reveal the opinion about the qualities of the worker or counselor, have been selected also. To some degree these reveal 1) what the client in the relationship is in need of, and 2) what the worker should have to help the client. There seems to be little difference of opinion in this area, with regard to the statements concerning the subjects to be included in training. Three opinions dealing with the relationship in closely related disciplines, have been included at the end of the chapter. These add to the opinions concerning the psychological atmosphere which seems to be of primary aim in certain counseling.
**The Meaning of Marriage Counseling**

According to Dorothy Abts Mohler, by marriage counseling is meant "any situation in which a trained worker, either alone or as part of a clinical team, attempts to solve with clients problems of marital (or pre-marital) adjustment." In an earlier article, she writes that social work has not a monopoly on marriage counseling and that "it will share responsibility with a host of other professions and occupations." Some indication of the maladjustment which is the focus of counseling is seen in her statement that usually counseling is called for at a point of serious crisis when severe damage has been done to the basic structure of the marriage.

Alphonsus Clemens considers marriage counseling from this viewpoint. It is "a subdivision of marriage education" which "deals with the therapeudic and remedial aspects of marital situations." He also considers it as an art used in a "particularized set of human relationships," such as marital situations.

This distinction is made between marriage counseling and

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the types of family counseling carried on by many social agencies: "In the latter, many aspects of marriage are dealt with but only rarely are the psycho-sexual components considered in any detail" (the major emphasis in some marriage counseling).  

Katherine Griffith refers to the use of short-time counseling in family breakdowns. This involves a professional relationship with a client who "has previously demonstrated initiative, independence and an ability to avail himself of constructive opportunities." The reassurance of a confident relationship and understanding seems to be the basis of this help for the client.

... the case worker is able to see the client in his tangled social relationships, counsels with him so as to stimulate maximum effort on his own behalf, fills in where his courage would fail without a relationship of confidence with an understanding professional person.

In her article on counseling, Miriam Kelley states that the emergent element of marital discord necessitates purposive action in the relationship and in use of resources. This should be combined with a scientific approach that understands the concerns of such a disturbed person.

It is such an emergent problem that it must be met with not only understanding, but also action, and often times the caseworker must do most of the talking and most of the analyzing in order to have the client face the situation.


5 Katherine E. Griffith, "The Use of Counseling on Short-Time Contacts with Clients," Proceedings, 1940, 119.
The worker must utilize all the facilities of the community if she is to do her part in helping the client. We must be scientifically analytical in our approach, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the client who comes to us with a marital problem is a disturbed upset person who is looking for more than a scientific analysis. His great concern is for the future and we must orient our action in the present toward the future.  

Dorothy Mohler believes that the counselor may err in advising because she is not aware of the total situation.  

The counselor who does not fully understand the total situation may give well-meant but quite wrong advice. The client may ask, in apparent sincerity for information which when given he uses, consciously or not, to thwart or punish the partner. Caseworkers stress too, the importance of establishing through skillful intake interviewing the real reason for seeking help and of making a correct diagnosis of the marital difficulty.  

In connection with the above idea is the fact that "because of her knowledge of the social factors and because of her relationship with the client, the social worker usually continues to work in conjunction with the 'specialist' to achieve a maximum benefit with client."  

The Process of Counseling  

The process of counseling has its core in the relation-

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ship. Father Curran defines counseling as a "definite relationship" in which a person "surveys" and "reorganizes his emotional reactions" so that he may choose better ways to reach his goals.

Counseling is a definite relationship where, through the counselor's sensitive understanding and skillful responses, a person objectively surveys the past and present factors which enter into his personal confusion and conflicts, and at the same time, reorganizes his emotional reactions so that he not only chooses better ways to reach his reasonable goals, but has sufficient confidence, courage, and moderation to act on these choices.9

Counseling is "fundamentally a process of increasing self-knowledge."10 In this, the person himself is encouraged and stimulated to make his own self-evaluation, insight and choice. The distinguishing characteristic between this process and other similar processes by which personal information is imparted is its assimilating or integrating aspect. Father Curran delineates the process of counseling under these headings: 1) problem, 2) analysis, 3) synthesis, 4) planning and 5) re-evaluation.11 Each step is accomplished by the client and counselor through the skill of the counselor.

1. The unfolding stage, in which the individual is negative toward himself and his problem.

2. The more positive self-examination, in which the person can look at previously hidden motives and values in a posi-


10 Ibid., 410.

11 Ibid., 244-246.
tive light.

3. The stage in which the person begins to relate his problems together and acquire from his past and present state an integrated understanding of how they come about.

4. The person plans new and more adequate choices and means of action.

5. The person re-evaluates the experiences which occurred when the new solutions were acted on.

Referring again to Dorothy Mohler, the process of marriage counseling in a family agency involves the following steps—a basic idea in each is that the counselor proceeds with the client: 1) a defining of the problem and acceptance of it, 2) the examination of some of the conscious or near conscious causes underneath the difficulty—thus creating an awareness of the correction needed or goal desired, and 3) the actual re-education process under the patient guidance of the counselor.12

Father Francis Curtin relates this opinion about the solution of marital maladjustment: "... the priest engaged in family counseling, employs the technique in the solution of marital maladjustment which has been used by spiritual directors for centuries."13 A summary of his analysis of family counseling results in these three steps—a process very similar to Father Curran's analysis: 1) release of negative feeling, 2) active self-

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evaluation and 3) acceptance of new principles and actions.

It begins with a release of feeling, of what we call negative emotional factors such as fear, sullenness, stubbornness. It is a bringing into the open in the presence of the priest counselor those feelings and emotions, those thoughts and attitudes which revolve about the conflicts in the family, for in every unsolved problem there is this presence of negative emotion with its consequent anxieties and worries.

What is of the highest value in this therapy, is the fact that the persons themselves are trying to solve their own problems even though at the moment of discussion, their actions and thoughts seem quite hopeless.14

Finally with this active self-evaluation comes a rejection of the previously accepted values and an acceptance of new principles so that the couple by the success of their own introspection, become able to cope with their own unhappy marital situation.

the three-fold function of release, insight and choice, operating with the grace of God, is the priestly approach and the scientifically accepted treatment of the family problems.15

The Purpose of Counseling

According to Marie Corrigan, the purpose of counseling is to enable the client to make wise choices—choice of actions, of attitudes, of concepts, of principles—or to remedy the effects of imprudent choices.

It should help with the present problem, leave a desirable 'residual' (may be greater self-responsibility, new principles or ideas, the experience of having solved a problem successfully, more facility in self-direction) and enable the client to use his own resources to the utmost and, where these are inadequate, to seek to fill the gaps which they

14 Ibid., 161-162.
15 Ibid., 163.
the relationship may promote self-confidence, independence or a sense of personal worth and dignity.17

In the final analysis, A. W. Church chooses a specific goal toward which he would direct technique—the reality of the marital situation:

In the final analysis, we are forced to educate acceptance, tolerance, patience and charity from clients. We are compelled to use technique to show gently but factually that they were anticipating unreal marriage situations almost delusional in type. We are forced to show clients that marriage is not easy and that life anything in life it is full of frustrations, thwartings and sorrows, and that these are an integral part of life as are joys and pleasures. To help the clients see this is sound and Catholic counseling.18

The Interview in Counseling

Several quotations have been selected which indicate the nature of the counseling interview. Those few writers who have gone into the interview itself in any detail divide it into directive and non-directive.

Marie Corrigan seems to imply something of a "quasi" tone regarding a directive interview. This kind of interview secures its validity from the counselor's experience, objectivity and knowledge of available resources. By these, he is "better


17 Ibid., 88.

able to understand the client's problem, his ability to solve it, and the means of doing so, than is the client who is less experienced, has less command of outside resources, and who is bound to be more subjective in his thinking."19

In non-directive counseling, "the counselor assumes responsibility mainly for providing the psychological atmosphere and conditions" where "by the use of powers intrinsic in each personality, he can achieve a more complete realization of self."20

Father Curran distinguishes concerning the freedom involved in the non-directive interview—freedom means definite limits and responsibilities within an uncritical accepting relationship.

... setting up definite limits and leaving responsibilities with the client while at the same time being uncritical and accepting the maladjusted person as he is, offers the client a relationship where he need no longer be defensive or escape.21

He believes that a counselor is not truly non-directive in his relationship, "unless one really grasps and is thoroughly convinced of the 'strengths of human nature and its capacity for self-responsibility'. . ."22

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20 Ibid., 90.
22 Ibid., 24.
The Person of the Counselor

Selections from Father Stafford's article show one current idea about the professional attitude and maturity of personality necessary in the marriage counselor. He defines the marriage counselor as a professional person who may have received his primary specialized training in one area, but has added to his professional equipment particular techniques appropriate to handling problems of marital maladjustment.

Relative to specific areas of training, Father Stafford agrees that training is required in the psychology of personality development, elements of psychiatry, human biology, sociology of marriage and family, legal aspects of marriage and family, counseling techniques, modern psychological testing techniques and the purely economic aspects of marriage and family life. However, in addition, as Catholics we must have more.

... there must be training in the theology of marriage, since the marriage state is more than a human relationship;
... in addition to training in the modern areas of scientific specialization there must be that deeper knowledge of man as a personality that comes from philosophical and theological insights into reality.

Above all, for the Catholic counselor, there must be 1) a deep appreciation of the sacramental character of the marriage

24 Ibid., 40.
relationship, and 2) the scientific technique of modern counseling imbued with the spirit of Christ and with the grace of Christ.25

In addition, the marriage counselor must have flexibility in his techniques and should remember that the basic aim of all counseling must be helping individuals to help themselves—not coercion but clarification, according to Father Stafford. The marriage counselor "should be able to discuss all questions objectively" and "should have a scientific attitude toward variation and deviation (in individuals) as well as toward everything else." As to the personal qualifications of the candidate for marriage counseling,

. . . he should possess personal and professional integrity in accordance with accepted ethical standards, and an attitude of interest, warmth, and kindness toward people, combined with a high degree of integration and emotional maturity.26

With regard to diagnostic skills, it is Father Stafford's opinion that the marriage counselor through graduate training and experience can become sensitized to the recognition of the more serious forms of personality adjustment but would not possess sufficient diagnostic skills unless he is highly trained as a clinical psychologist or a psychiatrist.

A. W. Church refers to diagnostic methods in his article on counseling: "It is apparent that diagnostic methods must in-

25 Ibid., 43.
26 Ibid., 41,42.
clude physical examinations, psychoneurotic studies, Rorschach tests, psychiatric evaluations, etc."27

Three Opinions Concerning the Structure of the Relationship

Dom James Jerome Hayden writes that the objective in psychiatric treatment of the patient is growth in moral responsibility.

"... his objective is his patient's growth in moral responsibility through mastery of his emotional life. This he must attain by casting his therapeutic efforts within the framework of religion, not by imposing his own beliefs upon the patient, but by helping the patient come to a realization of the moral responsibility imposed upon him by his own religious convictions.28

The interpretative viewpoint is the questionable area in psychotherapy, discussed by Cecilia McGovern.29 She believes that this viewpoint lends itself to a "questionable determination and often personally biased judgment as to the volitional (therefore, responsible) participation of the individual in his own acts."

She writes further that it is not the method, but the individual flaws in the individual philosophy and ethical convictions of some of the disciples of psychoanalysis, that is at fault. The concept of relationship therapy treated by Miriam Dunn would seem to be an

27 Church, "Marriage Counseling," Charities Review, 35.
example of the individual flaws referred to in the above quotation.

Relationship therapy borrows the concept of emotional rapport from psychoanalysis and attempts in its relationship with the client the working out of the latter's problem apart from the existence of any norms of personality or other wise. 30

Miss Dunn opposes therapy of this kind, maintaining that it functions very much on the theory that behavior is inevitably controlled by psychological and physical conditions beyond the person's control, denying the free will. She states that the "influencing of behavior is not the same thing as the influencing of volition--unconscious tendency is not selection and is not volition." 31 Finally, she concludes that this is the greatest difficulty in this area:

The great practical difficulty in appraising psychiatric philosophy and ethics is the fact that there is no formulated philosophy and ethics and psychiatric opinions are approximated largely to those treatment areas where they can be of diagnostic and therapeutic value. 32

Summary

This chapter is the result of the review of about twenty articles, written mostly after 1948. There is a noticeable confusion in the meaning of terms in marriage counseling. This may be caused by different perspectives in viewing a helping process

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31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 211.
in marital maladjustment in the attempt of casework and counseling to remain distinct professions.

**The Meaning of Marriage Counseling**

Dorothy Abts Mohler states that marriage counseling occurs in any situation in which a trained worker attempts to solve with clients problems of marital adjustment. In an earlier article she writes that such services are usually called for when much damage has occurred to the basic structure of the marriage.

Alphonse Clemens considers marriage counseling as dealing with the therapeutic and remedial aspect contained in the totality of marriage education. On an individual basis, he regards it as the art of counseling a particularized set of human relationships. There is a distinction made between family counseling and marriage counseling on the basis of the aspect in marriage which receives most focus. Short-term counseling is also used in marital situations.

There seems to be some difference of opinion between the procedure of the caseworker and the procedure of the counselor in marriage counseling. From the viewpoint of the caseworker, these ideas are presented: 1) the emergent element in marital discord necessitates purposive action in the relationship and in the use of resources, indicating a directive approach as well as a scientific analysis, 2) the relationship and knowledge of the caseworker is of such value that it is believed of maximum benefit to the client that the worker continue in conjunction with any specialist and
3) a counselor may err in advising because she is not aware of the total situation.

The Process of Counseling

Counseling is a definite relationship which increases the individual's self-knowledge through the counselor's sensitive understanding and skillful responses. By clarification, evaluation and assimilation of the past and present factors involved in the situation, the individual is helped to help himself.

Father Charles Curran delineates counseling under these headings: 1) problem—negative expression of, 2) analysis—self-examination, 3) synthesis—relating of factors, 4) planning, and re-evaluation. Each step is accomplished by both client and counselor.

Dorothy Mohler analyses the process of marriage counseling in this way: 1) defining and accepting of problem, 2) examination of underlying causes, leading to increased awareness, and 3) re-education under guidance. Here also the underlying idea is that the counselor proceed with the client.

Father Francis Curtin's analysis of family counseling may be summarized under these headings: 1) release of negative feeling, 2) active self-evaluation, and 3) acceptance of new principles and actions.

The Purpose of Counseling

The purpose of counseling is to enable the client to make wise choices in any decision, or to remedy the effects of
imprudent choices.

The Interview in Counseling

Counseling interviews may be divided into directive and non-directive types. In the directive, the counselor's experience, objectivity and knowledge of available resources is the basis for its validity. In the non-directive, the counselor's skill in providing the psychological atmosphere most helpful to an individual, enables this relationship to effect his more complete realization of self.

The Person of the Counselor

These are considered necessary for the professional attitude and maturity of personality required in the marriage counselor: 1) a broad yet intensive training in background knowledge and specific techniques appropriate to handling problems of maladjustment in marriage, 2) experience, 3) a high degree of personal integrity and emotional maturity and 4) a deep religious spirit.

In addition, for the Catholic counselor, there must be, 1) a deep appreciation of the sacramental character of the marriage relationship and 2) a living of the spirit of Christ with the grace of Christ.

Three Opinions Concerning the Structure of the Relationship

First, the objective in psychiatric treatment is growth in moral responsibility within the framework of religion—that realization of moral responsibility imposed upon the patient by his own religious convictions.
Second, the danger in the interpretative viewpoint in psychotherapy lies in the questionable individual philosophy of some of its disciples.

Third, relationship therapy which borrows its concept of emotional rapport from psychoanalysis is fallacious because it treats apart from any personality norms and denies free will.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis has been to present a compendium of the principal statements in a selected body of Catholic literature which specifically consider or relate to the treatment available to problems of marital discord. It focused principally on the treatment process or techniques involved in helping the individual in marital discord. The literature centered around the development and behavior of the client, inner reactions and outer pressures and circumstances; the professional integrity of the therapist in the helping process; the aim in treatment of personality maladjustment and the problem of marital discord itself.

Sixty-three articles have been reviewed and summarized or quoted, revealing these following opinions and conclusions.

No stated single definition of the problem of marital discord was found, although all the writers recognize its complexity. Nor does any one of these articles seem to endeavor to be complete in its consideration of this, but differs according to the aspect which the individual writer wishes to consider. For example, several discuss the complex variety of interrelationships which appear in the "presenting problem" in marital discord, one
considers the situation from the viewpoint of what is needed for adjustment in marriage, and several emphasize, as the most decisive factor, the attitudes and emotions of the personalities involved, two concentrating specifically on the personality maladjustment of the individual.

Opinions vary as to auspices for marriage counseling, some advocating counseling by the caseworker in the family agency, some advocating separate centers under the administration and direction of the family agency, and one, suggesting that this be an integral part of the existing diocesan organization.

The one element found which is common to all the descriptive references of marital discord is the presence or relative importance of the inner personal reaction of the individual to the reality confronting him. The articles refer to this in varying degrees.

The articles relating to the religious and moral component in treatment of marital discord reveal the trend in thinking that some workers may consider the religious aspect in a problem as out of their scope. To a greater extent, however, there is the expression of this conviction: that the religious problem is to be diagnostically considered. If then it falls within the worker's relationship, it will receive the same progressive diagnosis as other problems, so that if the best adjustment can be gained through a resource or in conjunction with a specialist, who in these cases is the priest, this would be used. Specifics in
this process include prayer and the personal conference with skillful meaningful activity in the relationship to understand the problem and the client's feelings about it. There is agreement among the articles that it is necessary for the worker to recognize both the strength of emotional blocking, and the reality of the spiritual order which is fulfilled through religion. Father Doyle analyzes the general techniques used in problems concerning moral conflicts and recognizes that evaluating and interpreting human behavior is a matter of some debate. Exemplification of the highest form of practical charity in the person of the caseworker is stressed in his article. All of these articles recognize the primary position of priestly competence in these problems; the difference in the time for activity by the priest in treatment is based on the uniqueness of the individual problem. Robert Odenwald says that the priest is the most capable person for handling the problem of motivation in marriage. Father Geary recommends priestly help in difficulties which involve the couple's attitude toward their marriage and lack of religious training and background.

Several opinions were revealed from the literature as to the meaning of marriage counseling, although the terms used are often vague: 1) any situation in which a trained worker helps the client in the solution of marital maladjustment, 2) the therapeutic and remedial aspect of marriage education and 3) the art of counseling a particularized set of human relationships.

These three factors are emphasized by the caseworker in
the procedure in treatment: 1) a purposive relationship with scientific analysis plus immediate use of resources are demanded by the emergent element in marital discord, 2) it is of maximum benefit to the client that the worker continue in conjunction with the specialist and 3) a counselor may err in advising because an awareness of the total situation may be lacking.

The process of marriage counseling has these three basic factors, common to the opinions collected: 1) the expression and acceptance of the problem; 2) self-evaluation or examination which should create more awareness in the client; and 3) re-education, leading to new actions or choices. These are accomplished by the skill of the counselor through the definite directive or non-directive interview which is the core of the counseling relationship. The philosophy of the counselor regarding the balance in limitation and responsibility in providing the psychological atmosphere for the individual, which is most beneficial, is the focus of non-directive interviewing.

These ideas are expressed relative to this framework of relationship: 1) help or treatment toward growth in moral responsibility within the framework of religion means that realization of moral responsibility imposed upon the patient by his own religious convictions, 2) therapy cannot be properly or helpfully accomplished without personality norms and a true philosophy which acknowledges the inherent individuality and free will of the client.
For the desired professional marriage counselor these qualities are set forth: 1) personal integrity and emotional maturity, 2) knowledge and techniques for problems of marital maladjustment and 3) a deep religious spirit. For the Catholic counselor there is in addition, the need of a deep appreciation of the sacramental character of the marital relationship and, motivation in treatment which is imbued by the spirit of Christ with the grace of Christ.
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