

AN INTRODUCTION TO ROLE TRAINING

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WHAT IS ROLE TRAINING?

Role playing may be defined as a temporary stepping out of one's own present role to assume the role of another individual or of one's self at another time.

Role training is a form of role playing in which emphasis is placed on the re-enactment of performances in real life.

GOALS OF ROLE TRAINING

1. To differentiate in action those patterns of behaviour which may have been inadequate, bringing inadequacies to the attention of the director, the individual and the group.
 2. The director, by encouraging the presentation of alternative patterns of behaviour, helps the members of the group to explore alternatives and each member to expand his role repertoire. Each member of the group can afford to be objective in evaluating the inadequate behaviour patterns of others. He learns to become critical of inadequacies.
 3. Each member of the group, as he learns
 - (a) alternative patterns of behaviour, and
 - (b) to become critical of inadequate patterns,also learns to distinguish between rejection of a pattern of behaviour and rejection of an individual. Once this distinction is internalised, the individual will tend less to experience failure in an enterprise as rejection of himself as a person. He can attribute the failure to inadequate performance in a role.
 4. All of the above involves the acquisition of social skill. It can be measured in ability to perform in roles. With greater social skill the individual can be expected to experience increased success in occupational, family and community roles.
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A ROLE TRAINING SESSION DESCRIBED

There are three stages in a Role Training session. These are: the warm-up, the enactment and the discussion.

1. The Warm-Up

The initial warm-up of a group is a preparation for action in which the director is introduced to the members of the group, the members of the group become better acquainted with each other, and the purpose of the Role Training programme discussed. Where possible the enactment of a simple situation should be encouraged, largely for illustrative purposes. There are three types of Warm-Ups used with an ongoing group.

- (a) The Directed Warm-Up: This type is most frequently used in the first ten sessions of a Role Training programme. The director has decided in advance to focus on a particular role or role complex and the warm-up is intended to focus on that role or role complex.
- (b) The Indirect Warm-Up: After a group has been together for some time the director may come to the conclusion that a particular individual needs attention. The Indirect Warm-Up is used when the director has decided in advance to focus the session on the problems of that individual.
- (c) Group-Centred Warm-Up: After a group has had ten sessions or more the director may wish to determine the area of greatest concern to the members of the group. He can do so by using a Group-Centred Warm-Up.

2. The Action Portion

The warm-up generally concludes with some member of the group moving forward to re-enact his part in a situation relevant to the Warm-Up. For example, if there has been a directed Warm-Up on the Role of "Job Applicant", the warm-up ends when someone moves forward to re-enact an experience in which he applied for a job. In the course of the situation, role-reversal, soliloquy, double and other techniques may be employed. Other members of the group may be moved into action to perform in roles required by the protagonist. The director may also suggest re-enactment of similar situations experienced by other members of the group.

3. Group Discussion

This stage of the session allows for "feedback" and permits exchange of ideas. The group may arrive at consensus on how a role can best be performed. If it does there may be an enactment demonstrating the consensus. Group discussion is not limited to the last stage of a session. At any time during an enactment the director may involve the group in discussion. The members of the group are always part of a session and may be encouraged to participate in an enactment or discussion at any time the director deems it appropriate.

THE THEORETICAL BASIS FOR ROLE TRAINING

THE MORENO IMAGE OF MAN

Man is a creative being. The creation is a continuous process in which each person in interaction with others is a participant. The world which a man finds at birth is a world which billions of his fellow beings have aided in creating. In the course of his lifetime the world is constantly undergoing change, partly as the result of man's efforts. Man is not seen as opposed to society nor is society seen as hostile to man. On the contrary, man is a willing and active participant sharing in the creation. To the extent that a man willingly participates in the activities of mankind, he is healthy. To the extent that he isolates himself from the creative effort of his fellow men he is sick.

SOCIOMETRY

There are three concepts essential to an understanding of sociometric theory. They are: the social atom, sociometric choice, and tele.

1. The Social Atom consists of all individuals toward whom a person is significantly related and who, at the same time, are related to him. A sociometric test in which persons are asked to choose others based on some social criterion is a formal way determining the structure of their social atoms. It is dynamic. Chances occur with or without the active intervention of the individual. However, he can take action that would lead to expansion, contraction or change in membership of his social atom. He can accomplish change through conscious choice or modification of his behaviour.
2. Sociometric Choice: In addition to being an instrument for determining the structure of a social atom, sociometric choice provides a means for changing it. Research in sociometry has established the fact that mutual choices occur far more frequently than by chance. People we choose tend to choose us. People we reject tend to reject us. Evidence is overwhelming that we tend to reject those who reject us. This fact has important implications for the treatment of delinquents, drug addicts, and others rejected by substantial portions of our society. If such persons can develop more favourable attitudes toward those who support the norms - parents, teachers, employers, etc. - the chances are great that these attitudes will be reciprocated. Furthermore, if they can modify their behaviour so as to elicit favourable attitudes and responses on the part of parents, teachers, employers and other supporters of the norms, they will be more likely to develop favourable attitudes to people in those roles.
3. Tele: Tele represents appreciation of the other person and feeling for him. It is not merely empathy, the ability to take the role of others in a given situation. It is the ability to assume the feelings of the other in every situation, including the one in which the individual finds himself. With development of Tele, the delinquent boy will learn to differentiate between rejection of a delinquent act by his mother, and the rejection of himself by his mother.

Sociometric theory assumes that we never deal with an individual in isolation but with the individual in relationships. The individual seeks for regard, esteem, affection, and recognition for himself, as a person. When he receives these reciprocates by relating well to others and to their goals.

SPONTANEITY THEORY

The Moreno Theory of Spontaneity is the core of his theory of action. Spontaneity is defined as the variable degree of adequate response to a situation with a variable degree of novelty. A adequate response to a new situation and a novel response to an old situation where required, are evidences of a degree of spontaneity. Novelty must be qualified by adequacy to the situation. Before the individual can take the role of others, he must play the role. Man is a role player. After acquiring the cultural definition of the role, he acts, improvises, exercises spontaneity and creates. It is important to remember, however, that unless the individual is familiar with the cultural definition of the role and knows the limitations society places upon it, his spontaneity may be pathological. The range of responses may be:

1. A novel response without adequacy.
2. An adequate response without significant novelty or creativity. Rigid conformity is an example of this.
3. An adequate response occurring with characteristics of novelty and creativity. This requires among other things, security in the role.

SOCIOANALYSIS

Socioanalysis is a method of analysing the social relationships of an individual. Psychodrama and Role Playing as used in Socioanalysis are action methods designed to explore interpersonal reality. Interpersonal action is dealt with in an effort to increase spontaneity, tele, creativity, and sociometric status. Role Training may be considered as an experimental procedure, a method of learning to perform roles more adequately. Data can be observed and manipulated for any therapeutic purpose, not only for learning roles and achieving goals, but also for increasing social skill. As one becomes more spontaneous he develops a "social reflex". He provides adequate responses and even initiates action in an adequate manner almost automatically. The action methods used in Socioanalysis thus help the individual to better understand his relationships with others and to explore the possibility of changing these relationships. As he becomes aware of alternatives he becomes better able to choose between them. He also learns how his actions affect relationships with others.

TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED IN ROLE TRAINING

Most techniques developed for Psychodramatic sessions may be applied in Role Training. Those most commonly used are: Role Reversal, Double, Soliloquy, Mirror, Self-Presentation and Future Projection. Their use will be described in detail.

Role Reversal

This technique requires the protagonist to change roles with the person with whom he is interacting in a given scene. This may be done to give the protagonist an opportunity to put himself in the other's position, play in it, and try to perceive himself and his behaviour from the standpoint of the other.

Double

In this technique a trained assistant or the director plays the role with the protagonist providing stimuli for thought and action.

Soliloquy

The protagonist is asked to state what is on his mind. He may be asked to do so while in his role or when, after a role reversal, he is playing the role of other.

In the latter instance he is compelled to try thinking as the other or guessing at what the other is thinking.

Mirror

In this technique one or more members of the group who have observed a protagonist in an enactment, re-enact the scene. The protagonist is "mirrored" by one or more others so that he may see himself as others see him.

Self-Presentation

In this technique, the protagonist is asked, before going into a particular enactment, to state the problem involved, his diagnosis of it, and his proposed solution. This is done for the information of the group and the director. They can all evaluate the enactment in conjunction with the announced objectives.

Future Projection

This technique permits the protagonist to create a scene as he believes it will be in the future. It enables him to experiment in behaviour and provides him with an evaluation by a group of a proposed course of action. It may also be used to give the protagonist and the director some insight into perceived goals and the realistic basis for them.
