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Group Home: A Case Study of the Interactional and Resocialization Processes in a Residential Setting for Adolescent Boys

by

Patricia Ann Milburn-Hayward

A thesis presented to the University of Windsor in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology and Anthropology

Windsor, Ontario, 1983

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the intense daily life interaction in a children's aid society group home. The residents in the group home include five to seven emotionally and behaviourally disturbed adolescent boys and a couple who reside in it as group home parents. Participant observation of the Oak Street Group Home was conducted over a three year period and portrays the everyday life of the boys and the group home parents in this setting.

Interactionism, as a theoretical perspective, was seen as most appropriate for this study. Accordingly, social interaction among group members and shared symbols by which meanings are given to interaction have been explored.

In the informal culture, role behaviour and the ensuing role-identities are developed according to patterned interactions. Polsky's (1962) typology of tough leaders, con-artists, quiet types, punks, and scapegoats is seen to be applicable in this setting. The boys, group used deviant means of social control such as scapegoating, aggression, threats, and ranking. The group home parents find themselves adjusting somewhat to the boys' social patterns, thereby strengthening them.
The boy's role in the group home, his identity and his dominant value commitment appeared to be major factors in his success in resocialization. A resocialization typology was developed and outlined including: the failures, the socialized delinquents, the situational delinquents, and the resocialized.

Processes that occur in the group home are similar to those that occur in any small group formation. The group members come together and strategically work out their roles and norms. They develop shared meanings and interact and communicate with one another by means of shared symbols that are exemplified through their verbal communication, body language, and style of dress. Once these are established, socialization of new members can occur.

The experience of multiple residential placements is a recurring theme in the children at the Oak Street Group Home. Group care or delinquent career contingencies were observed, as these children developed strategies to cope with the entrance into the group, the day-to-day living situations, and the inevitable leaving.

Two aspects of socialization are pertinent to this study. The members of the group home experienced socialization prior to entrance into the group home. This included childhood socialization in the family setting and, for many of the boys, socialization in another group care facility. The boys, predominately from lower-class
backgrounds, have been socialized in environments with different standards, values, and expectations than those of the middle-class group home parents, staff, and social workers.

Socialization continued while the boys lived in the group home. Socialization by the boys' group is an important function of the informal group culture. This occurs simultaneously with the resocialization efforts of the group home parents, staff, and social workers, which is a major function of the group home.
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

"None of us are wanted, that's why our parents gave us away."

"Like garbage, I've been dumped from one place to another. No one cares where I end up. I'm garbage. I'm not wanted."

This study describes how two adults and five seventeen-teen-agers go through the intense interaction of daily life in a group home. They must also interact with a wider network that includes natural parents, social workers, teachers and the neighbourhood in which the home is located. Social agencies are increasingly using non-institutional resources to help their clients and it has become most important to describe and evaluate these settings. This examination of the way these persons interact and work out their lives together, can also contribute to a better understanding of group life in general, and resocialization specifically. Attention will focus on the interpersonal relations, as well as patterns, routines and strategies that develop in the group, including the subcultural elements that define this community.

Some of the interaction processes that I will be considering have been discussed, in part, by other researchers such as Empey and Erickson (1972), Lucas (1969),
Lerman (1966). Much of their research has focused on deviance and delinquency, thus providing a guide for this study. These studies do not, however, effectively present the qualitative aspects of group home life that will be described in the present study. This study is particularly concerned with indicating how the people involved in the group home are interrelated; and the strategies they use when they come together to work out aspects of their lives. Cottage Six (Polsky, 1962), Tally's Court (Liebow, 1967) and Hookers, Rounders and Desk Clerks (Krus and Frini, 1980) provide models of the research approach that will be utilized.

The study of this group home has been approached from a developmental perspective. That is, the group will be depicted from its beginning through periods of struggle, stability and eventual change and dispersion. To begin, the group's formation will be examined. Definitions of the setting and characteristics of the group, as well as the reasons for this group's formation will be explored. Then, the group members' first encounter with each other will be described (i.e. the placement process) and the ways that each member must learn to deal with the interpersonal relationships involved in group life. Through verbal and nonverbal communication a consensus within the group is reached. This results in the emergence of a social order (group values, norms and roles) and relatively stable
patterns of interaction (i.e. group structure). Also considered are the effects of temporary interaction in the form of emergency placements. Formal group structures of status, leadership and communication are explored. Group processes, including power, deviance and social control, reinforce the social structure of the group home.

A review of pertinent literature, the methods involved in this study and the researcher's theoretical framework will be incorporated within context throughout the thesis. This allows the analysis of group home life to be grounded in the everyday experiences of the participants.

THE SETTING

The group home which provides the data for this study is situated within a middle-class community in Windsor, Ontario. As you walk down the street, this home would not stand out as different from the rest of the modern single-family dwellings in the neighbourhood. There are no signs or other markings to indicate that this home is unusual. It is only unusual in that it is a community based group home that houses emotionally and behaviourally disturbed adolescent boys, and a couple who reside in it as group home parents.
Although I have collected some data through observations and contacts from various group homes throughout the city, the major source of information has been gathered in the Oak Street Group Home itself. In an attempt to determine the representativeness of the Oak Street group home, social workers, as well as the boys in residence and other incumbents were asked how this group home compared to others they had lived in or worked with. Many of these people had been involved with several other group homes, both in the city and throughout North America. They indicated that although there were some variations in procedures and interrelationships, the Oak St. group home was fairly typical of "family oriented" group homes. As a researcher I am not attempting to portray this group home as "typical" of residential settings for youth, but several aspects of this group experience are common to many group homes and residential settings for youth in varying degrees. These will become more evident throughout the study.

As this group home is community based, the expectation of "normalcy" prevails. In using the term normalcy, I am aware that any child who is separated (even by his/her own choice) from familial surroundings will experience turmoil and trauma. In this respect, no child who enters any facility for child care -- including a group home -- is likely to be "normal". By normalcy, I am referring to that range of behavior that is expected of the majority of
children of similar age, social class, and cultural background. The group home parents are still able to adjust their expectations according to the individual child's needs and capabilities, but neighbours are often unable or unwilling to do so. It, therefore, becomes necessary for behaviour expectations to be set according to the norms of the community in order to avoid neighbourhood antagonism which often results in rejection of the children. This limits the types of children that a group home can handle effectively. Aggressive behaviours that may be "annoyances" or even acceptable to the lower class community become issues of great concern in a middle-class community where a group home is located. Since the setting is an open one, the boys must be emotionally and mentally stable enough to live in a community with a parental type supervision.

This group home setting is "open" in that it is situated within a neighbourhood, and employs community resources (schools, churches, shops and recreation), unlike a closed setting, for example, a detention home or treatment center, that incorporates these resources within the setting. Mayer et al. describe the type of child best suited for a group home.

Group homes can predominately serve the relatively normal child, the child whose behaviour deviations are not manifested by uncontrolled aggression and the mildly disturbed child who does not need too many special services. (Mayer, Michman, and Balcerzak, 1977:62)
DEFINING GROUP CARE

The old distinctions that once prevailed between the dependency institutions and institutions for the disturbed child are no longer valid. There are few institutions that serve only the dependent child. There are, however, a range of facilities that provide group care for children. Since there is little agreement concerning size and organization of these facilities, a working definition is necessary. Mayer et al. (1977:52-54) have developed definitions that clarify the role and function of each type of facility. It is these definitions that will be used in this study.

Group Homes

All group homes are differentiated from foster homes in that, regardless of staff changes, the children can remain in the home. Group homes are usually located in a residential community. The children and staff participate in the civic life of the community -- attending schools, churches, social and political activities. The building and its upkeep fit into the general style of the community. Group homes are divided into three categories.
A family group home is owned or operated by an agency or corporation. Group home parents (couples or singles) with or without the help of relief parents, take care of four to six children. The group home parents may be employees of the agency or serve, as foster parents do, on a board rate and/or service fee basis. The group home in this study is a family group home. The group home mother is an employee of the Children's Aid Society, and the group home father is employed outside of the group home requiring him to be absent from the group home during certain hours of the day.

Peer Group Homes

A peer group home is also owned or operated by an agency or corporation. Child care staff are employed to take care of five to ten children. They can care for more children, because they work on a rotating shift basis rather than living in the residence as the group home parents do in the family group home. Many of the child care workers are young adults, and most of the children are early to mid adolescents.

Group Residences

A group residence is owned or rented by an agency. A child care staff cares for a group of between ten and
fifteen children. The staff work on rotating shifts. Peer
group interaction is the major form of socialization. This
group home is usually larger than the peer group home,
therefore allowing for more subgroup formations.

Children's Institutions

An institution is one or more buildings that are es-
pecially established for the purpose of housing and caring
for groups of children who cannot live in their familial
home. It may be within or outside of a residential
community. Two types of institutions will be distinguished.

Child Care Centers

This facility serves fifteen or more children who are
mainly dependent or neglected and are not living with their
parents through no fault of the child. Child care workers
supervise these children. The children usually attend
community schools and participate in other activities in the
community. Aside from their reaction to separation, and the-
possibility of having experienced abuse or neglect, the
children are expected to behave age-appropriately and
normally. A professional staff of social workers,
psychologists, and psychiatrists is available when needed
for crisis situations. Child care staff plan programs to
teach the residents social skills. Group living is the major form of social interaction. The staff also work with the child's parents in planning the parents' role while the child is in placement and in determining long term goals for a move back home or to another group setting.

Residential Treatment Centers

These institutions are built to serve fifteen or more children who have problems in adapting to their environment and/or emotional problems that do not allow them to live in their familial home. Many of them need treatment in the form of social stimulation, social control and therapy. Residential therapy includes social, educational and psychotherapeutic activities, and provides healthy parental models. In this way all daily experiences can become important elements in the child's growth and rehabilitation. Trained professionals -- social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists and special educators, work closely with the child care staff to develop the therapeutic milieu. Although, some children are able to go to schools in the community, most of the children attend the campus school which is an integral part of the treatment program. There are some individual programs (such as individual therapy), but the group living is the main form of social interaction. The staff may also work with the families of the individuals.
PROCEDURE

The data on the residents of the Oak Street group home was collected through participation and observation in the group home over a three year period. The researcher was immersed in the group home setting — she and her husband lived in the group home for the time period under study. They held the position of group home parents and therefore had intimate contact with the daily activities and functioning of group home life, and were seen as "members" of this community. The researcher also worked in two other residential settings for youth for four years prior to this research, thus developing contacts with staff and clients who contributed to this research. Observations of these settings were supplemented by interviews and other types of data. Audio-tapes were made of some of the formal group meetings involving the youth and/or staff members. Records and field notes were kept by the researcher and other staff members on various events and occurrences regarding the group home. Lofland (1971:13) defines a qualitative analysis as the "task of delineating forms, kinds and types of social phenomena; of documenting in loving detail the things that exist." Informal time was also spent "socializing" with the members of the group home community which afforded additional information on this way of life. The researcher's intent of acquiring information for study was
not concealed from the participants. And her intimate role of group home mother thrust her into contact with teachers, social workers, staff, as well as adolescent boys in the group home and their families. These interactions made the researcher more aware of activities (deviant and otherwise) that were external to the group home and yet frequently had an important impact on the group home life. All of the names of the participants have been changed to ensure anonymity. Miller (1971:46) states that

research progress on a central problem, usually proceeds through stages, first, exploration of the social setting of the problem, the factors involved, and the criteria that may be used to measure or appraise the problem; then the descriptive and diagnostic study may be possible.

In the development of this material, the researcher attempts to explore and describe the interrelatedness of the individuals involved in the group home community. In an effort to do this, roles and strategies have been examined. Since these individuals remain in the setting over an extended period of time they are likely to find that it becomes an important element of their identities and development. As a qualitative study, there are no significant hypotheses being tested. The researcher expects this study to generate hypotheses for further projects in this area.
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GROUP

The group in this study consists of the residents of the "adolescent boys' group home", during a two and one half year period from March 1986 until December 1982. During this time period the group home housed thirteen different boys between the ages of 11 and 17 years. Most of the boys were between fourteen years and sixteen years old at the time of placement. There were other distinctive physical characteristics of this group. Most of the children were not academic achievers. 

The younger boys were in special education classes at school (e.g., learning disability, behaviour adjustment, or speech classes). Most of the older boys attended trade schools, and had difficulties in the academic classes that required language and mathematic skills. Many of these children experienced recurring health problems, such as frequent sickness, and poor dental care. Four or five boys and two group home parents resided in the home at any given time. In addition, six staff members at various times cared for the children in the group home during the group home parents' absence. The length of boys' residency ranged from two months to two years (not including emergency placements that lasted one to three days). The group home parents, a married couple, remained constant for the time period of this research. The

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1 This group home under study is for male children under the age of eighteen. The researcher will hereafter make reference to "boys" or "children" synonymously.
resulting group under study is small and a non-random sample of group home residents.

There exists a typical placement flow regarding the children who were placed at the group home during this study. More than half (nine of thirteen) of the children had previous residential placements involving group care before arriving at the group home. The other four children were shifted between parents and other family members before the group home placement. The results are that all the children who resided in the group home had previously been separated from their original familial unit. Most of these children (ten of thirteen) had experienced multiple placements. Five children came to the group home directly from a residential group care placement. The previous placements experienced varied and included placements such as residential treatment facilities, detention homes, foster homes, adoption homes as well as periods of times residing with various family members (fathers, mothers, stepparents, grandparents, siblings and aunts or uncles). Following their residency in the group home, seven of the boys went directly into residential placements other than their familial home. Two of the boys went to a foster home, one boy went to a group home, and one boy went to a child care center. One eighteen year old boy is living in-

2 Detention home/center is a pre-sentence holding facility for youth. It holds and observes the child to ensure his/her going to court to face the legal charges.
dependently in an apartment. Two other boys became involved in illegal activities -- one went to jail for a short time, the other went to a training school. Six of the boys returned to their familial home upon leaving the group home. At this time four of the six boys have left their familial home. One boy went to a treatment center, one to a foster home following additional problems at home. One boy was killed in an accident while trying to escape police after stealing a car. The two remaining boys have left the Windsor area with their mother -- their whereabouts unknown.

The characteristics of the boys in the group home study seem to indicate that group care is a recurring element in their lives. Analysis of this aspect by examining the group home and the interpersonal relationships that result is imperative.

THE PERSPECTIVE

An interactionist approach will be used to provide a framework for the analyses of the dynamics in the small group under study. This framework is particularly suited to the type of micro analysis that will be conducted in this study. With this approach, social interaction among group members and shared symbols by which meanings are given to interaction, will be explored.

According to social interaction theory social action is the outcome of complex interactions, both cooperative and
antagonistic among individuals and groups in society". (Douglas and Waksler, 1962:54) The focus here is on what goes on between individuals. Since, in this approach, it is individuals in interaction with one another that create the larger social units such as social groups, subcultures, and societies.

Interactionist theory has its roots in the work of Georg Simmel (1950) and George Herbert Mead (1934). Development of this theory can be seen in the work of Goffman (1961) and Blumer (1969), as social interaction theory derives many features from symbolic interaction theory.

Symbolic interactionism focuses on shared symbols, in a social group, that provide a framework where meanings and actions are interpreted by members of the group. Blumer (1969) describes symbolic interactionism in terms of three basic premises:

1) Human beings act toward things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them. 2) The meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows. 3) These meanings are handed down and modified through an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters.

To understand human behaviour, Blumer argues, we must give priority to how people themselves define the situation, because it is on the basis of these meanings that people act. Furthermore, meanings are a product of social interaction. So according to this view an important aspect
in the process of interaction is the creation of shared meanings. This accounts for the way that cultural and subcultural groups respond to events in characteristic ways. Culturally shared meanings arise from an interpretive process that is collective in character. Individuals can, also, engage in this interpretive process alone through thinking, but this individual thought is not the basis for social organization. Social organization occurs when people and groups interact and communicate with one another by means of shared symbols. This researcher has investigated shared symbols in the group home in terms of verbal communication, body language, and style of dress. The definitional process has also been studied within the group, and many illustrations of these processes are throughout this study.

In Lucas' (1969) study of trapped miners he illustrates how the group defines a situation and then act according to this definition. As the definition changed, over time, the behaviour of the trapped miners also changed. But the objective situation had not changed, only their definition of the situation. Lucas provides an example of how interactionism can provide insights into deviant human behaviour. According to the interactionist theory, the social world is constructed by its members through their social interaction.
Liska (1981) elaborates on the concerns of symbolic interactionists. He sees the study of subjective meanings as an important aspect of group interaction, and emphasizes social processes in the construction of social reality.

Symbolic interactionists are concerned with subjective meanings and their role in the emergence of joint action, and emphasize the importance of such social psychological and social processes as role-taking, empathy, and negotiation in constructing social reality and in the emergence of joint action. (Liska, 1981: 146)

The process of role-taking, empathy and negotiation as well as others such as coping mechanisms, rituals, careers and strategies have been dealt with throughout this study. These processes give a framework to understanding group home life, and will be introduced in Chapter 3, on social structure.
Chapter II

THE PLACEMENT PROCESSES

PRE-PLACEMENT

Since the Oak Street group home is an agency operated, only boys who have come into contact with the Children's Aid Society are eligible for placement. The reasons that these boys are initially brought into care of the Children's Aid Society (CAS) are varied and complex. Many of the boys came from other placement facilities, such as the ones mentioned previously. The boys who were placed in the group home during the period studied included dependent children and neglected children. These children may be abandoned, orphaned or children whose parents have no legal contact with them. Many of the boys in the group home have also exhibited behavioral problems in school and/or the home that may be indicative of emotional disturbances. Through a court order, boys who had been adjudicated as delinquent also became residents of the group home.

"Delinquency" is a catch-all offense created by the Juvenile Delinquents Act (1908) to cover juvenile offenses including status offenses (behavior that is not illegal for an adult). The Youth in the group home during the study were adjudicated under this act. The new Young Offenders Act had not been passed into law at the time of data collection.
Contact between the youth and his family with the assigned social worker takes place prior to any group home placement becoming involved. Once the case has been filtered through the placement committee, case files or social workers from various departments in the CAS, and a group home placement is seen to be appropriate for the child involved, the group home parents attend a meeting to obtain information available on the child. This file of information may be very brief if the family has had no prior contacts with the CAS or it may contain volumes of social worker reports, school files, and court documents.

As a group home parent, often my first contact with a boy was through a court proceeding when a CAS worker went before the family court to request CAS wardship -- either temporary (Society) or permanent (i.e. Crown) wardship. All the children who resided in the group home during this study were CAS wards. During this initial contact, group home parents get some idea of the type of boy they will be dealing with. His familiarity with the court system indicates what his entry into the group home would be like; as a boy's entry into the group home is characterized by the impact upon him of previous placements, and by the type of departure he made from his familial home and previous living situations.
FAMILY COURT

The family court process, although seemingly less foreboding and more informal than the criminal court, is still very official and frightening for many children — especially those who are experiencing it for the first time. As all the children who resided in the group home during this study were either Crown wards or society wards, they all went through the Family Court process. Some boys went through these proceedings while at a placement other than the group home, such as a foster home, or a treatment center. Other boys — the "first time" placements — experienced these legal proceedings in close timing with their move from their familial home into the group home. The child, family, and CAS social worker all attend the court proceedings. As group home parent, I attended most of the court proceedings that involved boys who would reside in the group home. All of the individuals involved must wait in the waiting area for the case to be heard before the court. The child is often impatient and nervous. It helps if the child is told beforehand the role of the people who will be present in the courtroom, and what will happen at court and meet with his lawyer where possible. Young children, and even adolescents, may have fears about court. If the parent is co-operative, this helps to make this situation less traumatic. Children, as well as adults, develop ways to
deal with situations — i.e., strategies that enable them to cope particularly with their fears about court. There are two basic types of strategies that the children in this study have used. The child may use "hiding in" strategies to express his anxiety. He may be still and quiet, or he may show nervous jitters. This child does not verbally express his anxiety. Some children use an "acting out" strategy to exhibit anxiety. This child will show loud and abrasive behavior. He may speak loudly and in an abrupt fashion with people in the courtroom. Both types of children are expressing anxious feelings, but they are using different strategies.

If the family or child has not sought legal advice before this time a lawyer of the court (duty counsel) will speak with them together and separately about the legal proceedings and their legal rights. This individual may represent him in the court room.

In most cases there are three people in the family court that speak regarding the welfare and future placement of the child. The child is represented by an attorney who speaks to the judge concerning the child's need for placement in an appropriate home. This attorney may or may not declare the child's desire for placement, depending on the child's age and emotional/mental state, and whether or not the child desires placement. The child may see the reality of his/her behavior, or the family's inability to
care for him/her and may request a placement. Or the lawyer for the child may present a case if the family wants the child to remain at home. An attorney for the society represents the Children's Aid Society. This lawyer presents a case before the judge regarding conditions in the familial home, how the child was apprehended, and plans that the Children's Aid Society have regarding this child. The CAS social worker may be called as a witness to these facts, and be asked why the child should be in care of the Society or Crown. The judge then makes a ruling on the case. The judge may or may not determine that the child be deemed a ward. And conditions to be followed by the CAS, the child, and the family may be presented by the judge. A period of time may be stipulated (e.g., six months) for Society Wardship.

An important aspect that needs attention is the emotional ties between the child and his family, and his attitudes and feelings toward placement. Most of the families involved with the CAS did not make the initial contact themselves. Many see the CAS social worker as meddlesome. Although the parents may be having discipline difficulties with the child, many families see themselves as dealing effectively with these problems. When the problems are exhibited in the community, such as the child is performing poorly at school and/or becoming involved in delinquent activities, pressure is sometimes put on the
family to deal more adequately with this "problem child". Not knowing many techniques, physical discipline is often the most prevalent form of discipline used by such families. Other children lack parental supervision altogether, when parents are unable or unwilling to provide guidance. Some parents are aware that they require aid to deal with the problem -- which they invariably see as the child's problem. These families may see a social worker's intervention as helpful. Regardless, most parents feel a strong emotional bond to their child and respond with guilt feelings or hostility that they cannot keep the child in the familial home. The child, whether he has been neglected or abused, remains emotionally tied to his family. In most cases the child wants to remain with the family, and greatly resents any suggestion of group home or other placement. This has an effect on the initial relationship building between the boy and the group home parents and staff. A boy who does not want to live in the group home, will resist attempts at closeness by any adults that he sees as trying to replace his parents. Strategies that the boys and group home parents use to deal with this will be discussed in detail later.

Bowlby (1969) provides an extensive review of attachment behaviour.
PLACEMENT INTO THE GROUP HOME

Once group home placement has been deemed appropriate for a boy, the actual placement procedure begins. The boy is told, by his social worker about the group home. The social worker explains the rules and routines of the group home as he/she sees them. Sometimes a group home parent goes to that meeting to talk to the child before he goes to the group home. How this initial contact is conducted often depends on the social worker involved in the case, and his/her relationship with the child and the group home parents. The child is then invited to the group home to meet the boys, see the home, and have supper.

The boys, at the group home are told in advance that a candidate for group home placement will be coming for supper. The boys want to know all about the boy, and ask question after question about the circumstances that surround the boy's placement. As the "keepers of the personal information", the group home parents do not tell the group any personal details about any boy. Although the boys usually share intimate stories of past lives, there are certain types of information such as sexual abuses they encountered or homosexual experiences, that the boys do not talk about among themselves. So the group home parents tell each boy that his slate is clean, and he can choose to tell or not to tell about himself to the others. Each boy is aware that the adults involved (social workers, group home
parents, and staff have read the CAS file and therefore know facts about his background. But these facts, the boys are told, will be kept confidential.

So before the candidate boy's arrival the others know his name and age, and a few other demographic details, such as the school he attends, and his religion. The candidate is brought to the house by his social worker and introduced to everyone shortly before supper. He may have a few minutes to be shown around the house. The social worker often stays for supper and helps the boy become more comfortable with the group. The boys often "show off" at the table, talking loudly, teasing each other, in attempts to "look good" for the new boy. The group some parents try to pick up on how the boy will fit into the existing group. They watch his mannerisms and see who he seems to identify with. This supper visit only lasts an hour or so, but it is an important meeting. The boys get a first impression of the candidate. They usually sum up what they see as the boy's faults fairly quickly. At the same supper, Jim described the candidate as a "queer" because he spoke in a high pitched voice. Jim quickly decided that he did not want to share a room with him, and told everyone this after the boy had left. A boy who seems likeable to the group will be requested by several boys as a roommate. The group home parents get a glimpse at how the boy will fit into the group, and if there are no extreme problems the boy is asked to spend a night at the group home within the next week.
The supper visit -- that time of first impression -- seems to be an important time for the boy who is seeing the group home for the first time as well as the residents. On occasion the residents talk about their first visit at the group home. They usually remember what the meal consisted of and other particulars of the day. The boys usually talk about what their first impressions of the group home parents and other residents were like. Several of the boys talked about the incongruence in physical stature of the group home father (he's six foot three inches, and physically muscular) and the group home mother (standing live foot tall and petite). Many of them saw the group home father's physical size as threatening, and expressed fear that he would physically hurt them. They expressed forming opinions about the residents pertaining to their physical attributes of stature, how they dressed and groomed themselves.

The candidate's overnight visit is seen as an important time because it immerses him into the everyday life of the group home. He arrives, usually on his own, from school. He participates in the after-school activities and routines and has more time to become acquainted with the group home parents and boys. It is after this visit that the group home parents make the final decision about the placement of the boy into the group home. This decision will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 on group home parents.
THE ANOMALY OF EMERGENCY PLACEMENTS

The boys in the group home are very aware of this ritual of placement of a new boy into the group home. The following of these proper placement norms seems to give a security to these children. Some of these youth lived in homes that provided little consistency in many areas. People who they did not know may have stayed at their houses, or their parents may have left them alone. So the boys become secure in the knowledge that they can rely on the same people being around them when they awake.

At times, however, the group home may be called upon to provide emergency shelter to a boy, when no other placement is available. This means that a boy may be moved into the group home in the middle of the night with very little notice. Because there are few emergency care facilities for dependent and delinquent children, this may be an important function for group homes. But there is danger involved when these emergency cases are moved into a group home with the regular population. The boys who live in the group home are involved in an interaction pattern that is different from that of the transient boy who is just passing through. Mayer et al (1977:290) advise that

Emergency cases and "regular" cases are sufficiently separated so that they do not hinder each other's progress or confuse the children about the purpose of their stay.

This may also present problems when the group home parents do not want a "strange" face and unknown person in the
house. For emergency placements, little information is available about the child. Sometimes little is known about the situation such as when a child is simply abandoned. At other times little information is available because of the time or day of night that the placement is needed, since much of the administration operates on a 9 am. to 5 pm. Monday through Friday basis.

Several such placements occurred in the group home. Each occasion presented a tense and awkward situation. Although everyone in the house expressed concern that the boy have a safe place to stay, the ritual of entry had been broken — and no one was comfortable with that. The group composition was altered, with no group involvement. John expressed his discomfort by saying “... this isn't the way you move into the group home. His social worker didn't even bring him. And he didn't have his supper visit”.

Other boys who weren't verbally expressing discomfort may act out their confusion. Jerry became aggressive and threw a chair down a flight of stairs after the "stranger" arrived. Although he wouldn't say that having this person in the house was upsetting for him, he ignored the boy for the first day of his stay.

The boy who has moved from his own home in turmoil needs a buffer before entering a group home situation. He needs a time out from the "home front" to think over what has happened to him. Although the reasons that a boy leaves
his familiar home to reside in a group home may vary, most leave in turmoil. In most cases the familiar relationships are strained, and there is often a final "blowup" of emotions before the child leaves the family home. So when the child leaves his home, he usually is emotionally charged up, feeling such emotions as abandonment, confusion, hatred, and mistrust. He needs time and help to work through these feelings. He is not ready to move into a group home that is a family setting.

Each new placement involves disruption for the existing group—a shifting of status and roles. But this process is fulfilled with this temporary emergency placement. The boys who are permanent residents of the group home see the residence as their "home", but the boy who comes as an emergency placement sees the home in different terms. It may represent a "holding place" to him—a place that keeps him until he goes to another facility such as a training school. Or it may be viewed as a boarding house where he gets a meal and roof over his head, but does not interact with the other residents. In either case, the other boys and group home parents are resentful that this boy intrudes into their lives and does not gain entrance according to the prescribed norm.
ENTRY INTO THE GROUP HOME

Characteristically, entry into the group home involves two types of children. There are boys who are first time placements, and those who have had previous residential placements. The boys who are first time placements are often fearful of their first experience away from their families. They show this when they move into the group home. These children often appear to feel rejected and alone. They are likely to remain quiet and withdrawn, asking new questions about the group home and its occupants.

A child who is a first-time placement often develops strategies to test the family bond. He may make frequent calls to the familial home, or he may refuse to speak to one or more members of his family. Jack was a boy who called home frequently. He was from a single parent home and he would call his mother before she went to work, call her at work, and several times in the evening. He spoke to her in a timid, quiet "little-boy" voice, and constantly asked her when he could go home. When I asked him what he hoped to accomplish by these constant calls, he replied: "she'll feel bad and want me to come home. She'll give in, I know it 'cuz she always does." When this strategy was discussed with the social worker and mother, it was discovered that this was how Jack controlled his mother at home and the calls were discontinued.

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5 Bowlby (1973) provides extensive research on the effects of parental separation on children.
A child who refuses to speak to one or more members of his family may feel deep rejection and anger. Jerry expressed that he didn't want to call his father because "...it's all over. He doesn't want me and I don't want him." But Maurice viewed his lack of contact in another way. His strategy was based on being accepted again into his familiar home, but was giving his father time to "cool off" from the anger he felt. The boys used strategies that they may have used while living with their families.

Thus, whenever a separation was proved to be temporary, and also whenever it is believed that a separation now in train will prove only temporary, anger with the absent figure is common. In its functional form anger is expressed as reproachful and punishing behaviour that was as its set-goals assisting a reunion and discouraging further separation. (Bowlby, 1973:248)

Among first-time placements are also the "clingers". These boys will cling to an adult, usually the house mother who is seen as a 'nurturing female', and follow that individual around. This is usually more common with younger children.

The second type of child to enter the group home is one who has been immersed in the "system" and who may have been a ward of the Children's Aid Society at another time. He is often a "street wise" boy who may have been involved in delinquent activities. This type of boy often exhibits anger, either in an explosive way -- where he is very expressive verbally and may physically act out -- or in a quiet withdrawn fashion. The expressive boy demonstrates
anger toward everyone he comes into contact with. He may see others as being responsible for his placement in the group home, and see himself as the "victim." Bowlby (1973:249) sees this anger as a result of repeated separations.

The most violently angry and dysfunctional responses of all, it seems probable, are elicited in children and adolescents who not only experience repeated separations but are constantly subjected to the threat of being abandoned.

This type of boy is very verbal and wants to know all the rules of the house -- none of which he would agree with -- and then will set down his own rules. Jim was such a boy. On the day that Jim moved into the group home he said "you leave me alone, and I'll leave you alone, we'll get along just fine".

There is also the withdrawn, angry boy. He may not say much, but there seems to be a lot of anger behind that quiet front. Jerry was an example of this type of boy. He would talk about his mysterious temper, that he didn't want to let anyone see, because he was afraid it couldn't be contained. But most of the time he was quiet and would not verbalize his emotions.

There is also a "clinging boy" among those who had previous placements. Upon entry to each new placement, he "holds on for dear life" -- hoping this will be the last. He is often a pleasant, obliging fellow who is liked by the adults, but who may find himself in a scapegoat role with
the boys. The boys see his behaviour as childish and dependent, both characteristics that are not respected by the peer group.

During the entry stage the boy who "clicks" into the group home life is sometimes observed. This boy has been in other group care settings and is familiar with this way of life. It is with this boy we can observe what we designate as delinquent or group care career contingencies.

Career contingencies refer to the situation elements affecting entrance, continuity, and disinvolve from a particular activity (Pitts and Irini, 1980). The situation, in this case a delinquent lifestyle or group care living, becomes a way of life and the child must come to terms with the situation and deal with the other people involved to enter and function in this way of life. To come to terms with this situation, the boy must "learn the ropes" — he must develop strategies to enable him to fit in with each new group of boys and the others involved in group home life. Negotiation, as a strategic response, becomes important as the individual learns the rules in each new living situation. He must learn to deal with interpersonal relationships within each group and also learn to disinvolve himself from these relationships, since this is inevitable. In the area of entrance, continuity and disinvolve, the boys and the group home parents develop strategies to enable them to deal with the situation. I will be looking at these strategies in the next section.
DEVIANCE AND RESOCIALIZATION

Much of the youthful behaviour in a group home can be regarded as an expression of a deviant subculture. From an interactionist perspective deviance is socially constructed, and the participants in the group home are the ones whose behaviour will most readily explain the norms and behaviours which result. In the study of the group home, norms and deviations from these norms are explored.

Interactionists are also concerned with the specific application of deviance. This leads to the examination of who is defined as deviant in the social situation. Discussions with the group home community of social workers, teachers and staff may shed light on this labelling process. The study of group structure may also show that the definitional process also exists with the group, as they see themselves as deviant in their living situation. The methods and strategies that these people use in constructing and applying definitions of deviance are highlighted in their social interaction.

Becker provides some insights that help in understanding the "deviant" aspect of the group under study. According to Becker (1963), deviance cannot be viewed as homogeneous because it results from interaction and consists of particular responses by various social groups to a particular behaviour of the prospective deviant or outsider.

(pag.91) In view of this, the interaction of the boys with
group home parents, social workers, staff, teachers, and others in this group home community, must be considered. It is these people who compose the network in which the boy's behaviour may be labelled as deviant. In some instances, the deviant label is a response to the unusual living situation (i.e. living away from his family) rather than due to specific behaviour. Many of the boys are referred through the court system, although not all have been involved in delinquent activities. The deviant stigma that characterizes the group home resident is grounded in his situation and not necessarily his own self-concept or behaviour. It is, therefore, important to examine this labelling process. In doing so, it is crucial to know how the resident views himself and his actions and how he defines the situation. The researcher will also examine strategies the boys may use in this definitional process.

In this respect, to call the boys in the group home "delinquents", "deviants", or "norm violators" neglects to deal with the effect of the subcultural framework in which these people are operating. Berger and Luckmann (1966) suggest that there are multiple frameworks to conceptualize activity — that is "multiple realities". According to this perspective, activity is neither "good" nor "bad". It is neither "right" nor "wrong", in and of itself. Thus, "deviance" is a quality that is given to an activity by an audience. (Becker, 1963). A group, such as that of the group
home, can be seen as having its own style of life, attitudes and characteristics. The activities of its members, therefore, appear normal and objectively correct to that group. For example, although the boys at the group home are aware of the moral issues in the use of physical aggression, it is the boy who is "toughest" (physically aggressive) that is most esteemed by the group. 6

The boy's family also has an important role in the labelling process and uses strategies to deal with the label "deviant". People are not always pleased with being labeled a deviant and frequently resist the label. The end social product or definition is frequently the culmination of extensive negotiations and bargaining. (Liska, 1981:151)

Yarrow et al. (1955) report that defining a family member as mentally ill is preceded by a long period of accommodation during which the disturbing behaviour is normalized, or explained away. Only after a long period of negotiation and redefinition is the disturbing behaviour defined as a sign of illness. The family members of the boys in the group home, likewise, experience this definition process. The strategies that they use include negotiation and bargaining, and are an important aspect of the boy's group home life.

Miller (1958) outlines lower-class concerns that apply to youth: trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, autonomy, belonging and status.
The group home setting can be viewed as a deviant subculture, according to the norms of the larger society. Some sociologists (Cohen, 1957) take the view of deviance as "norm violating behaviour". It is this behaviour that violates the norms of groups and individuals, that is defined as "deviant" by them. It has also been suggested that much of what is labelled deviant is best understood as "normative behaviour". (Frus and Irwin, 1969) It therefore follows, that what is seen as "norm violating behaviour", by some can best be understood when viewed within the context in which it occurs. That is, to understand "deviant behaviour" we need to examine the social settings in which the people are embedded. It is these social settings that this researcher delves into that will give us a better understanding of the group home setting and hopefully of groups in general.

We could, certainly, speak of children who are more vulnerable and more likely to be involved in a group home situation by looking at their "family backgrounds", or "personal qualities" that they have. This neglects the role of other persons and groups, which are important elements in the group home, and may precede the boys' (and group home parents') entrance into the group home.

The boys come to the group home with values and attitudes that developed by association within families, groups and communities. These values, frequently, are not
assets in creating a positive culture within the group home. As a result, the boys often take pride and boast openly about drinking, taking narcotics, school truancies, sexual promiscuities, robberies, fights and general trouble-making. This may indicate their social attitudes upon entering the group home. Many of these boys have been socialized in lower class communities. Dietz (1978:37) suggests that:

The general conditions that set the scene for violence can be readily recognized as having their origins in cultural patterns that are supported by the characteristic milieu existing in the lower classes. The development of a violent subculture within this climate occurs primarily in the youthful male groups.

LEARNING THE RULES

Four or five boys usually live in the group home at one time with the group home parents. The length of a boy's residency may range from a short time (a few days, weeks, or a month) to a period of one or two years. Two years was the longest period of residency for any boy during this study.

Funding considerations create pressure on the group home parents to have the group home filled at all times. In Chapter 5, on group home parents, the way in which this pressure is applied and how the group home parents deal with it will be discussed. When the group home is not at
capacity, the boys that are residing in the group home and the group home parents know there is going to be a new arrival. The boys are told a few days before the placement by the group home parents, but they know even before this. The boys all know what the capacity of the house is, and so when a boy is moving out they know that someone else will soon arrive. At times a boy may say that he'd prefer that no new boy move in. The process of reintroducing himself, knowing that any relationship will be temporary, is a tedious and painful one. Yet other boys will even "put in their orders" to the group home parents for the type of boy that would be desirable to them. The boys also refer friends or relatives that they see as suitable for the group home, wanting some input into the group composition. On several occasions, Jim (one of the boys in the group home) told us about his cousin who was presently in a treatment center. Jim thought that his cousin would fit well into the group home and "may even learn something" to turn him around. Jim assured us that he would "keep him in line". These referrals are rarely seriously considered by the group home parents.

The group home mother comments:

Having one boy from a family or neighborhood is enough. Boys who have previous relationships with boys in the group home would bring problems into the group home; like unsettled rights or team up together as a powerful team.

After the usual placement ritual, a boy who is accepted is given the "house rules".
telling the boy his curfew, bedtime, and other household expectations. This is the boy's official introduction into the group home, and this paper is symbolic of the official acceptance of that boy into the group home. The other boys handle the unofficial introduction into group care living, in that they teach the boy the ropes. It is the outcome of this introduction that will determine that boy's acceptance into "the life".

Aggressiveness and toughness are attributes that are seen as important to the boys in the group home. This is shown in their recounting of important events that involved fighting, assaults, and other violent incidents.

The boys talk about threats and fights that occurred in the group home and what the participants of these acts were like. These acts get woven into stories that are recounted to each new member, especially "heroic" acts of defiance against staff that the boys witnessed or heard about. To the boys these acts became legends, that portray the boys in heroic roles:

They (the boys) are a race of giants in a land of small adults, who back down whenever the sword of aggression and delinquency is unsheathed. (Polsky, 1962:34)

The boys in the group home told newcomers the following story about Jim and one of the relief staff. One weekend while the group home parents were away Jim went out and stayed past his curfew. When he arrived back at the group home the relief staff on duty told him to go directly to his
room. Jim said no, and took out a six inch knife that he proceeded to wave at the woman shouting that he did not have to take orders from her. The other boys who were present stood around and watched until Jim left the house with one of the older boys.

Some of the stories that the boys are most proud of include frightening and upsetting staff members to the point where they quit the job or leave the house. Although that didn't occur in the preceding tale, it was the outcome of several other antics. One winter afternoon the boys were outside wrestling in the snow. The group whose parents were away on a two week vacation and the boys had been giving one particular relief staff, who was new to the group, a difficult time. They refused to do their chores, and were contrary to anything that was asked of them. This started with the two oldest boys, but soon spread so that none of them would comply with requests. Jerry threw a snowball at the window where Judy (the staff) was sitting, and the other boys followed suit. While three of them were bombarding the window Jerry slipped into the basement door and got a carton of eggs—which he took outside and started throwing at the house. Judy, who was frightened by this, tried unsuccessfully to talk to the boys from a window. The boys then moved inside the house and started "rough playing" and throwing things at the walls in the dining room. Judy called another relief staff to help her, and quit the job.
that night. In a later conversation with Judy, she recognized that as a newcomer she also had to "learn the ropes". This process did not only pertain to new toys.
Chapter III
THE GROUP HOME SOCIAL STRUCTURE

In examining the social structure of the group home, the members of the group home are seen as having certain positions in a network of social relationships. The norms or rules which guide their behaviour toward each other must be identified. Only then, can we look at their actual role behaviour to see how they interpret these norms.

Out of the actor's interaction on the stage, mutual expectations and concerns arise. Patterns emerge that come alive in the performance of the social roles fostered by the action of the entire company. The full implications of the confrontations within and between the main and supporting actors gradually unfold before the audience. (Polsky, 1962:69)

FORMAL GROUP STRUCTURE

In our society, parents are seen as having natural as well as legal rights and responsibilities to their children. Both their rights and responsibilities are enforced by law. Parents are responsible for giving their children adequate food, shelter, clothing and health care. They are also responsible for providing educational opportunities and protection and supervision of their child's well being. This includes moral and social guidance. In most cases, in our
society, parents meet these responsibilities with little or no intervention from outside the family. But when the child's welfare appears to be in jeopardy, society may intervene. The authority for this intervention in Ontario is vested in the Ministry of Community and Social Services. This authority is exercised through the children's Aid Societies of Ontario. Each Children's Aid Society receives its mandate and has its services defined by the Child Welfare Act of Ontario. Each Children's Aid Society has its own Board of Directors who govern the methods that this Children's Aid Society will use to deliver its services as defined by the Child Welfare Act. Therefore, methods and policies may vary from agency to agency.

The members of the group home in this study must follow rules and policies that are independent of each member's informal role. The members of this group are a part of an organization that identifies certain positions that these persons occupy. The term position will be defined as "the location of actors in a system of social relationships". As such, a position implies the existence of other positions by which this one can be located. One position is identified by its relationship to other positions.

The group home parents and children live together in a home that is about ten kilometers from the Children's Aid Society administrative offices. These offices house the

Children's Aid Society staff is comprised of administrators, social workers (case workers), child care workers, clerical workers, volunteers, and custodians. Services of psychologists and psychiatrists in the community are purchased for psychological testing and/or psychotherapy for the children when deemed appropriate by the social workers.

The Children's Aid Society is headed by a Board of Directors who hire an Executive Director (a professional social worker) and is divided into teams of social workers and child care workers who deliver its various services.

The Children's Services Team is comprised of social workers who provide service to children in the care of the Children's Aid Society who are placed in foster homes, institutions or group homes. The group home parents and group home staff are, strictly speaking, members of this team. But neither are involved in group meetings, or other group functions. At one time there was a group home team comprised of one social worker and five group home parents. At the time of this study, there were two remaining group homes (an adolescent boys' and adolescent girls' home). Both have closed since this study was conducted. The others closed for reasons varying from "no need — no children in that age group" to "no suitable group home parents available". Financial considerations were also an underlying factor. Foster homes, which now take most of these
placements, provide services that are less expensive than
group homes because foster homes receive a per diem rate
rather than a salary.

The group home parents and the children in their care
are isolated from the job of the Children's Aid
Society. Although the group home parents are in constant day
to day contact with the children, and perform many parental
functions, their formal role is that of care taker. The
Children's Aid Society maintains legal responsibility for
the child, and the child's social worker is the agent of the
Children's Aid Society. It is, therefore, the social worker
who must sign "parental consent forms" for medical
procedures, school activities, or any legal documentation.
The social worker has the highest status in this social
structure. The social worker obtains that status by having
the "final say" on major decisions concerning the child,
although in some cases, as described previously, the court
may have stipulations that direct the social worker's
decisions. The group home parents are responsible for
handling daily routines with the child. They are responsible
for "creating an environment conducive to healthy child
growth and development". A job description given to group
home parents before they are hired outline this general role
and some specific responsibilities of the group home parent.

The job responsibilities range from care and
training of children, planning for leisure time
activities, encouragement of hobbies and special
skills, to the supervision of school work and
regular contact with schools, all with the
assistance of the group home worker and group home supervisor.

As the group home parents are the adults responsible on a day to day basis for the children in the group home, they are the formal leaders in the group. This leadership is not maintained without struggle. This struggle will be detailed in Chapter 3, on group home parents.

The group home parents, by virtue of their formal leadership and "parental-adult" role in the group home, represent authority to the children. This is inevitable. It is also inevitable that some children will respond with ambivalent feelings while others will respond with overt resistance. In recent years, parents have expressed ambivalence over exercising authority. Mayer (1972:484) comments on this.

What has made the handling of adolescents complicated in our time is not that today's adolescents are so much more opposed than in the past to the use of authority (Socrates complained about the unruliness and petulancies of the youth), but rather that adults have become so much more uncertain and guilt-stricken about using authority.

Our experience is that the group home parent in an authority role should not be guilt-ridden, nor should this group leader be rigid, unsympathetic and cruel. Recognizing that many of the youth coming into the group home have had conflict with authority figures, the group home parent attempts to make appropriate use of authority. Appropriate use of authority serves to strengthen relationships between the child and adult and
can contribute to the achievement of several worthy goals: to provide order and security, to reflect the larger social order in which the clients will eventually live, or to aid in the development of inner controls (Atkins, 1979: xix).

As the group leader, the use of authority by the group home parents will affect the group as a whole. The group cohesiveness, decision-taking, security and the quality of group life will be affected. In research studies on leadership, three types have been identified (White and Lippitt, 1953): 1) Authoritarian leadership is characterized by arbitrariness and control. This leader is dictatorial. The authoritarian leader gives orders, directives and does not explain plans or tasks to the individual or group. Conformity is rewarded, and initiative discouraged.

2) Laissez-faire leadership implies lack of adult direction, friendliness but not closeness, and overall passivity. The laissez-faire leader exercises minimal control.

3) Democratic leadership encourages the participation of the children in planning and decision-making through group discussion. There is open and free communication between the adult and children. Individuality is respected and initiative is encouraged. Cooperation rather than competitiveness is stressed. The group atmosphere is one of friendship and pride in the group and the physical setting.

In the group home under study, there appears to be a combination of the three types of leadership. The group home
father leaned toward authoritarian leadership although he consistently expressed a desire to become a more democratic leader. He found his position as an authoritarian leader to be confirmed by the responses of the boys. He saw certain members of the group (especially the delinquent-oriented adolescent), as being "in need of firm controls" to function and follow the household expectations. The group home father's large physical stature may have attributed to his use of this form of authority. The boys responded by attributing any new rules in the group home to the group home father, especially any rule restricting their behavior. On one occasion when the group home mother announced to the group that they would not be allowed to cook anything on weekend mornings unless an adult was with them because the kitchen had been left in a mess several times and a stove burner had been left on, one of the boys responded that he knew who had made that rule, and another agreed that the group home father must have, since he had been angry about the noise in the kitchen that had awakened him. The group home mother told them no, she had made this rule, and their grumblings continued.

The group home mother tended to maintain democratic leadership in the group. It was she who chaired the household group meetings and used group discussion in the group decision-making process. Her educational background in group dynamics as well as previous child care background
were a contributing factor to her use of this type of authority. During crisis situations, such as physical fights among the residents, she tended to respond in an authoritative manner.

A laissez-faire approach was sometimes utilized by both group home parents when the boys were participating in games and recreational activities, thus, allowing the child and/or group to make decisions independently, without adult intervention.

As authority figures, and group leaders, the group home parents have a crucial role. They are responsible for upholding the established formal group structure. To do this they need the support and backing of the agency personnel, especially the social workers. The daily routines, rules and regulations specify standards and expectations. The group home parents use these to set limits on the children's acting-out and inappropriate impulsive behaviour. Since the formal structure of the group home is seen by the children as "nonpersonal" in character, it provides the group home parents and staff with "legitimate power" in their limit-setting role. (Jacobs and Schweitzer, 1979) It is important that this status and role of the group home parent and staff is made clear to the child upon his admission to the group home. Then he is aware that there is a "control" component that is set by the program and all controls are not a group home parent's or staff's subjectiveware. Certain rules that
were set up by the agency, such as "no child is to be left in the group home without adult supervision", were approached in this manner. Although this rule was sometimes inconvenient -- as it constricted the group home parents' spontaneous activities (evening walks would be curtailed because they involved convincing all the boys to leave the house) -- the rule was upheld as a part of the structure of the group home. When boys complained about rules such as this one, the group home parents would attribute the purpose and source of the rule to the "system". "These are expectations of the CAS. They aren't my rules for you, they apply to all of us."

Each child in the group home has responsibilities as a member of that group. The child attends a community school, performs household duties and chores, sees his social worker weekly, and participates in a weekly group meeting at the group home (with group home parents and residents).

Weekly counseling sessions between the boy and his social worker (sometimes the boy's family or group home parent will attend) are seen as the main therapeutic tool in the resocialization process. As the facilitator of this counseling, the social worker maintains high status. Individual therapy is conducted at the group home or in the social worker's office. Since each child has a different social worker, there are several different social workers dealing with the group home parents. A group home supervisor
(social worker) meets with the group home parents weekly to discuss issues and problems that concern them regarding the smooth running of the group home.

Despite the emphasis on individual counseling, the staff affirmed the importance and value of the group home environment as a therapeutic milieu and rehabilitative force in the child's development. Planned weekly group meetings, conducted by the group home parents, were devised to build group cohesion and develop the group as a decision-making body.

While illustrating aspects of the group home's social structure, the researcher acknowledges that a single interaction, by itself, is meaningless. But through repetition it becomes a patterned event. Examination of these repetitive interactions among individuals in a group fits into a larger interpersonal gestalt. Subcultural aspects of the group home can then be conceptualized. The emerging informal social structure can be examined.

A small group is a collection of people who meet more or less regularly in face-to-face interaction, who possess a common identity or exclusiveness of purpose, and who share a set of standards governing their activities. (Crosbie, 1975:12)

Before informal group processes can be explored, some important group structure concepts must be introduced.
VALUES, NORMS AND ROLE-IDENTITIES

An important aspect of small group formation is a consensus of a group identity and purpose and a shared set of expectations that the group members maintain. These common beliefs are incorporated in the social order of the group. The social order is a common set of ideas that exists in the minds of the group members, and provides the basis for group interaction and group structure. Mead (1934) spoke of an individual's ability to "take the role of the generalized other", meaning that each person approaches his/her world from the standpoint of the culture of his/her group. A person, then, perceives, thinks, and controls oneself according to the frame of reference of the group in which he/she is participating. From this generalized standpoint, the individual can visualize his/her proposed action, anticipate the reactions of others and then guide his/her own conduct. Important aspects of a group's social order are its values, norms, and roles.

A value is a shared belief held by the members of a group as to what is good or desirable. Values are ideas by which individuals live. As such, value orientations compose the cultural structure of the group home. Attitudes that group home members have concerning significant aspects of their lives such as human relations, time, school, work and the group home itself go into their value orientations. Values are the residue of past and present social experience
Thus, it has been suggested by Polsky (1962) that delinquent boys in a cottage situation have a peer value system that is in sharp contrast to the value system of the staff that work with them. It, therefore, seems important to view the backgrounds of the boys and the staff and to compare their respective value orientations.

Group members do not always hold the same values, nor do they hold the same motivation to achieve the group's values. Rules or norms are then established that specify acceptable behaviours in relation to the group's values. There are rewards and penalties attached to these norms. A norm may then be defined as a shared expectation of an acceptable range of behaviour in relation to some value. If value orientations differ between the peer group and the staff, as Polsky suggested, norms would likewise differ. These expectations may apply to the member or several members of the group, or to the group membership as a whole. Norms are, therefore, differentiated so that each member is not only subjected to general group norms, but may also be subject to specific norms that apply only to him/herself.

For example, the group home parent has some expectations that are similar to parents in a family situation. The group home parent is expected to be strong (providing leadership to the boys) as well as nurturing. Other expectations are specific to a group home parent employed by an agency such as the CAS. These have been described as the
formal roles of the group home parent. Such as supplying bookkeeping accounts of any expenditures to administrative personnel, as well as, accounting for disciplinary actions — and excluding corporal punishment as a form of discipline. Likewise, the children in the group home have expectations that are similar to children in a family, in that they are expected to be obedient to parent figures. Other expectations such as living in close proximity with a group of peers and adults that are not related, and a group that is constantly changing, are expectations unique to this situation. Unlike a family situation, the children in the group home are aware that this placement is temporary. They are reminded of this constantly as children move in and out of the home. They see themselves as expendable, according to the desires of adults. When the child's behavior is seen as inappropriate they can be expelled from the group, and must move into another living situation. One child in the group home likened himself to garbage. "Like garbage, I've been dumped from one place to another. No one cares where I end up. I'm garbage, I'm not wanted."

As a norm describes an acceptable range of behavior, an evaluation process takes place by the group members. Behavior is either seen as acceptable or unacceptable. The group then uses social control to regulate the behavior of its members. Behavior that is acceptable to the group is approved or rewarded. This approval may be displayed by
verbal appreciation, or the acceptable behaviour may result in increased prestige for the group member. Behaviour that falls outside of this acceptable range is punished or sanctioned. The group member may be told verbally that the action was unacceptable. The sanction may also take the form of ostracism, physical abuse or rejection from the group. The group will sanction or approve of a behaviour to varying degrees. This is dependent on the importance of the norm and value to the group. Peer social control is exemplified in the Steve and Eddie incident that follows, in the next section.

The term social role is used by sociologists (adapted from the vocabulary of the theatre) to denote the set of general normative expectations that apply to the occupant of a given position. McCall and Simmons (1970:169) suggest that the expectations that comprise a social role are too vague and incomplete to serve as guidelines to action. Furthermore, they contend that a role-identity incorporates the character and the role that an individual devises for him/herself as an occupant of a particular social position. The role-identity is the imaginative view of the person, as he/she likes to think of him or herself being and acting as an occupant of that position. As such, role-identities serve as a source of proposed action. Imagined action, and the imagined reactions of others provide important criteria for evaluating possible plans of action. In the imagined action
is viewed as inconsistent with one's view of self in a particular social position, changes in action can take place that will be more consistent. Role-identities, therefore, coincide with Mead's reference to the "me".

It is our role-identities that give meaning to our daily routines, since they determine our interpretation of situations, events and other people. (McCall and Simmons, 1966:67)

McCall and Simmons (1966:68) go on to note that: "role-identities are not at all purely idiosyncratic but actually include many conventional standards and expectations that would be held toward any occupant of that status.

Establishing and recognizing one's role-identities occurs in the 'Testing Stage', as the newcomer is trying to find his/her place in the existing and changing group.

THE TESTING STAGE

While learning the ropes, the newcomer is also participating in a "fitting-in process". The new boy, or new staff member, is trying to find his/her place in the group home. The newcomer learns about, and recognizes, the group's social structure. As he/she is acknowledging the role of the members of the group home, the newcomer is testing his/her own role. This testing stage occurs each time a new boy or new staff member is introduced to the group home. As the group composition changes, with the entry of a new member, the group goes through a process of working out the roles of its members. No one has a firm
role at this time, roles are in transition, and strategic negotiations take place within the group. Members of the group must act quickly to re-establish their existing favoured roles.

Testing occurs among the boys, as the existing boys' group initiate the new boy. This testing stage was exemplified when Eddie moved into the group home. Eddie is a fourteen year old boy who had been physically abused by his father. He has a poor self-image, and a feeling of hopelessness about himself and his situation. Eddie moved into the group with the clothes he was wearing, which were "hand downs" of polyester pants and a shirt that was too big. He was sporting a recent, "army style" haircut - leaving one inch of hair on his head. He was quickly identified as being "unacceptable" by members of the group, who proceeded to call Eddie derogatory names like "retard" or "skin head" and ridicule him incessantly. Eddie was seen by the other boys as being ugly, small, and "weasel-like" by their standards. The boys in the group home see physical stature and verbal adeptness as desirable, and acceptable characteristics. As a newcomer to the group home and unfamiliar with its ways, Eddie was relegated to a subordinate subgroup.

Eddie did not fit into the range of desirable characteristics as seen by the boys group. He was small for his age, and not verbally adept. The other boys in the home
took turns at sending Eddie to do errands for them. In one incident Eddie tested his position with the group.

Steve and Jim were outside on the porch of the group home smoking a cigarette. Steve called to Eddie, who was inside, to go to the store to buy him cigarettes. Eddie went outside and told Steve that he had to do his chore (it was his turn to dry dishes), and so he couldn't go to the store. In an impatient, angry voice Steve told Eddie to leave "the damn dishes" until he got back. Without another word Eddie took the money that Steve had in his hand and went to the store. When Eddie returned from the store he saw the group home mother sitting on the lawn around the corner of the house where Jim and Steve are sitting with two other boys from the neighborhood. He went in the side door and started his dishes. Jim told Steve that Eddie "slipped in the side door". Steve proceeded into the house, followed by Jim and the house mother (who anticipated trouble). When Steve saw Eddie he punched him and demanded his cigarettes. Steve yelled at Eddie "I'm not gonna lucking chase you around to get my smokes (cigarettes)". As the house mother approached, Steve told her that Eddie was trying to steal his cigarettes.
A Closer Look at the Incident

As in any group, there are unwritten norms/rules in the group home. Among the boys, when a boy of high status wants something from a low status boy in the group, the high status boy calls out for it and the low status boy goes to him with it immediately. Although this chain of events may be disrupted — such as when an adult intercepts the message — it occurs often enough to establish a pattern. During the process of "learning the ropes", each boy is taught the rules of the group. Eddie went to Steve when called, but then he told Steve that he couldn't go to the store at that time which angered Steve. Perceiving this, Eddie backed down from his stance and went to the store. This, enhanced Steve's ascendent role and made Eddie the scapegoat. Upon returning, Eddie did not go directly to Steve. He used an unsuccessful avoidance strategy. Being fearful of more ridicule, he attempted to take a more dominant role. When Steve had to seek Eddie out, he used physical coercion and verbal commands to get Eddie "in line". These demands were understood by Eddie who quickly assumed a subordinate role.

In the proceeding incident, Eddie had altered his role in the group home by briefly tipping the balance of the social structure. He is a low status boy, and sees himself as a "loser" or "weasel". These have become part of his role-identity. Steve's role has once again been confirmed. His role-identity is of "commanding officer" or "godfather"
of the "family" of boys. Jim's identity is that of "informer", as Steve's "right hand man". It is often through the "upsets" in the group home's social structure that we learn the workings of the system. The social interaction pattern is balanced when there is no threat to the leadership in the group. In the testing stage, the equilibrium of interaction patterns are skewed temporarily. These slight deviations have a role in reinforcing the status quo of the social structure.

SUBGROUP FORMATION
The boys in the group home interact more among themselves than with children outside of the home. In addition, they interact within subgroups or cliques at a higher rate than with the entire group. Normally, these subgroups are developed among boys who are in close contact -- such as roommates.

Upon arrival at the group home, the boy is assigned a room that he usually shares with another boy. During the time period of this study, the maximum number of boys residing in the group home at any one time was five (except for emergency placements). This limited the number of clique combinations that were possible. The group home parents, upon meeting the new boy, would decide what room he would be assigned to.
As mentioned earlier, a boy who is seen as desirable by one or more members of the group will be requested as a roommate. The group home parents usually decide to place boys who have characteristics in common together. Boys who are similar in age, social background, and temperaments are placed in the same room. Problems sometimes result when boys who have common disturbances are placed together. Nathan's arrival at the group home exemplified such a problem.

Nathan was placed in Steve's room. They were both sixteen years old, and seemed to click when they first met at Nathan's supper visit. Before Nathan's arrival, Steve had been involved in break-ins in the community and had stolen bicycles, along with friends from his school, from several schools in the area. On a court order, Steve had a very strict curfew that kept him in the group home most evenings. Soon after Nathan's arrival, Steve and Nathan started planning "midnight excursions" and climbed out of their bedroom window without the houseparents' knowledge. During one such excursion, the police picked up the two boys for stealing a bicycle. After a stay in a detention center, Steven returned to the group home and Nathan was discharged from the group home. Since Steven had been living at the group home longer (six months) and had established himself in the group, the group home parents decided to have him stay at the group home. Nathan was seen as a new disruptive
member of the group. Other such cases of roommates who had relationships that seemed to be based on common disturbances, resulted in separation into different bedrooms.

On occasion, a new boy is seen as undesirable by the existing boys' group in the home. This presents difficulties in designating a room for this boy. In such a case, the group home parents chose a roommate that is most suitable and "hope for the best".

Since the group home parents have some control over what boy will be admitted into the group home, and they designate rooms, the subgroup formation is somewhat moulded by them. This can be a positive influence to the group, when boys can develop relationships that are built on mutual strengths.

Strategies are also developed that give the group home parents some control in the group structure. When they see that the group, is an aggressive one which uses deviant processes (these will be discussed in the section on informal group culture), they may anticipate a young, quiet child becoming manipulated and scapegoated. Therefore, they would suggest that another placement, in a more suitable group structure be made for this child.

Boys who are in the same subgroup see themselves as sharing interests and attitudes. They also participate in activities together, both inside and outside of the group.
home. They play cards, games and go to school activities together. These two aspects -- close contact and similar attitudes -- as well as exclusion of nonclique members solidify the subgroup. Clique members often have "private jokes" that they share with members by the use of a symbolic word or phrase. They exclude non-members from these jokes.

Cliques are clusters of persons within the group who communicate more frequently with each other and identify more strongly with each other than with the remaining members in the group. Cliques are often directly visible to the researcher by the physical arrangement of their members and by the differentiated activities in which they engage. (Dunphy: 1972, 178-179)

Status is also confirmed by bedroom location. When there are five boys in the house, the boy who had a room to himself was attributed the highest status in the house. And this room symbolized high status to the boys, and was aspired to by the other boys in the group. home.

SOCIALIZATION WITHIN PRIMARY GROUPS

To better understand the subgroup formation in a setting such as the group home, a theoretical point of departure seems necessary.

The individual develops his/her social self in primary groups. It is through these interactions that the individual develops social values, and acknowledges social norms. The concept of primary group has important theoretical implications for this study. A number of sociological studies indicate that the primary group plays
an integrative role at all stages of the socialization process. (Dunphy, 1972) (Hills, 1964) These studies trace the evolution of group norms, the developmental stages through which groups move, role differentiation and relationships with authority figures.

Charles Cooley (1909:23) first introduced the term of primary group. He described the characteristics of this group.

By primary group I mean those characterized by intimate face-to-face association and cooperation. They are primary in several senses, but chiefly in that they are fundamental in forming the social nature and ideas of the individual.

Cooley stressed the importance of this group in the individual's development of his/her social self. Cooley also distinguished a primary group as being a "small group" with emotional involvement.

Dunphy (1972:5) studies the dynamic processes that operate in primary groups. He sees this concept as an important variable in the socialization process. Dunphy solidifies definition of a primary group.

A small group which persists long enough to develop strong emotional attachments between members, at least a set of rudimentary, functionally differentiated roles, and a subculture of its own which includes both an image of the group as an entity and an informal normative system which controls group relevant action of members.

The primary group aspect of the group home is an influential concept in this study. The family is a prime example of a primary group. The group home in this study is also a
primary group. As a primary group, the members of the group
home have developed differentiated roles that will be
explored in this chapter. The subcultural aspect of this
group is important, in that the members see the group as an
entity. The members define a normative system by which new
members are initiated (the fitting in process), and existing
members' behavior is controlled.

The socialization process is crucial to the
interactionist view. It is through the socialization
process that meanings are acquired and shared. A theory of
socialization must, therefore, account for two phenomena.
(Lauer and Hanel, 1983) First, infants and children are
taught many meanings that are already common to the primary
group. This socialization of children is an area that is
traditionally covered in the socialization literature.
These studies have lead to the discovery that the function
of adolescent socialization has been removed from the
family. (Dunphy, 1972:17) This has resulted in the creation
of a new set of primary groups. The members of these groups
share common values and attitudes, and are referred to as
"youth culture". So as the family retains the function of
childhood socialization, it has relinquished the
responsibility of adolescent socialization to adolescent peer
groups and other primary groups (such as the group home in
this study).
A second issue that must be addressed by socialization theory is that each individual remains capable of developing and communicating new meanings when the established ones are deemed inappropriate. It is through the interpretive process that this is accomplished. By means of this interpretive process, existing meanings are used in the interpretation of events, and these events are simultaneously used to evaluate the adequacy of the meanings. When existing meanings are inappropriate to explain and respond to events, new meanings are sought. It is through this interpretive process that individuals can change and become involved in a resocialization process.

Dunphy (1972:31) notes that socialization has failed for a growing number of "disturbed" people in our society. As a response to this, primary groups have been formed with the specific intent to "resocialize" these individuals. "Because socialization takes place in primary groups, resocialization must also take place in primary groups." (Dunphy, 1972:32).

"Resocialization Groups" refer to the many therapy, or sensitivity-training groups and self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Members of these groups participate in discussions aimed at evaluating their interpersonal processes, and behaviors that are defined by themselves and others as not socially acceptable. Resocialization groups recreate primary ties to initiate the resocialization
process. The group home, as a primary group, may be viewed as a resocialization group with the functions this entails. Resocialization is a main objective of the group home. It is, therefore, imperative that we examine the informal group culture and the processes involved, to determine how successful resocialization is in such a group.

**INFORMAL GROUP CULTURE**

As described earlier, the group home incorporates a variety of types of children including the fearful, withdrawn child as well as the impulsive, aggressive child. These aspects as well as the child's background and personality go into his assuming a particular role in the informal group home culture. But the most important element determining role assumption is the network of roles available to the boy from which he must select. (Polsky, 1962:74) Polsky outlines six roles that were apparent in the group of delinquent boys that he studied. These roles also appear in the Oak Street Group Home. They include: (a) toughs (leadership), (b) "con-artists", (c) quiet types, (d) bush-boys (punks), and (e) scapegoats. Through continued and patterned interactions these roles become fixed and a part of the subgroup members' role-identity. The boys and adults (group home parents and staff) recognized the status structure that existed in the boys' subgroup. This recognition of the status structure, in itself, exerted
pressure on the toys to adjust to the structure. At the same time staff members and the group home parents worked in varying degrees to change the group structure, and the deviant processes used in the peer group. This was part of the resocialization process.

Leadership Clique (Toughs)

Every group develops a way to regulate the behavior of its members. This is the function of group leadership. The leader role is to maintain the status quo. This leadership is in the hands of the group home parents in the formal group structure. They use methods such as taking away privileges or restricting the boy’s boundaries (this is called “grounding” in the group nomenclature) to regulate the boy’s behavior. In the informal group structure, the leader of the subgroup uses distinct methods to control members’ behavior also.

Aggression and the use of threat gestures are tools that are used to resolve conflict and maintain conformity to the boy’s norms. Dunphy (1972:57) indicates that the resolution of conflict symbolizes the fact that the group has the power to exert control over members, particularly by punishing them, and that its emergent norms can be enforced.

In the group home, two of the high status boys (Jim and Ralph) were concerned that the others were going into the room they shared without knocking. So they called a group
meeting among the boys. The group home father overheard Ralph telling the low status boys to knock before entering his and Jim's room or they would "get punched in the mouth". After this the low status boys knocked before entering Jim and Ralph's room. Jim and Ralph did not knock before going into the others' rooms. This was sometimes mentioned to the group home parents, but not in Jim's or Ralph's presence.

Aggression and the threat of aggression were prevalent among the boys in the group home. At times this aggression was directed outside of the group home. One day Jim came from school yelling about "two guys who thought they were so tough" at his school. When Steve arrived, Jim met him at the door. Jim tried to involve Steve in fighting these two boys, "let's give um a good beating". Jim (a definite "con-man"); told Steve that one of the boys had said that the guys at the group home weren't so tough, and called them some names. Steve was seen as the tough leader in the group. Although Steve didn't go to the same school, he saw these two boys as a threat to the status of the group. He agreed to leave his school early and meet Jim to "take care of these guys". When the group home mother overheard these plans she talked to Jim and Steve about her objections to their use of aggression to gain status. The boys agreed that it wasn't worth the bother (and possible consequence of losing privileges) to go after these guys. Jim said "I can't walk
away if they start something. If they start it, I finish it". The next day Steve got home earlier than usual and he and Jim stood around outside the group home, in full view of the school. A small group gathered around them. They laughed and talked about these guys (who weren't there). They talked in hushed tones about plans to fight. The other residents of the group home were excited about this "rumble", and remained on the outskirts of the gathering. The group dissipated soon after Steve was called in the group home when his social worker arrived for a scheduled meeting. Steve's social worker talked to him about his involvement with the juvenile court. Steve had strict restrictions from the court because of delinquent activities. He had been involved in several thefts. Steve was told that aggressive activities, such as streetfights, would create problems for him as they would be included in the probation officer's report and may affect the plans for his moving from the group home.

The rumble never occurred as planned. It seemed to be forgotten until a few weeks later when the group home mother was called to the school by Jim's teacher. Jim initiated a fight with one of the boys and refused to leave the school yard. He was waiting for the boy to come out of the school. When he came out, they began to punch and wrestle. The fight broke up when the school principal and group home mother arrived. Jim was suspended from school for three days.
When Jim told the boys' group that he was suspended because of fighting he seemed with pride. He later told Steve that he took care of the situation himself because he knew that if Steve became involved in the fight it could jeopardize his plans of moving out of the group home. This had raised Jim's status. Jim was in line for the leadership position when Steve left the group home. For several days Jim demonstrated overt aggression to the lower status boys in the group home. He would use boxing gestures and footwork, and punch the boys forcefully. When confronted by the group home parents he replied, "I was just joking". This overt aggression lessened, and Jim's status was established.

This was a transitional period in the group home. Steve, the oldest boy and group leader, was leaving. Steve and other boys, before him had established an aggressive leadership pattern. Aggression was used, sometimes without any provocation. Nathan, who roomed with Steve and established punching sessions with the other boys, remarked that "sometimes I feel restless and I just wanna punch on somebody. They might not do anything to me just then, but afterward I feel OK." Nathan, and others saw power and aggression as its own reason for being. The leader saw himself as having a right to use his power to physically attack another boy with or without provocation. The boys would use the phrase "might is right" in explanation of this use of power.
Reports of violence in the familial homes of these boys and others fills the social worker files and journals. The boys sometimes make reference to aggressive acts where they were on the receiving end from natural parents, foster parents and other relatives. Psychiatric and psychological reports characterize some of these boys as having asocial and aggressive personalities. My attempt, as a researcher, is not to prove or disprove any of this. By observing and reporting the deviant processes and aggressive patterns that the subgroup leaders perpetuated, we can view the shaping of the group home culture.

In the group home culture, physical aggression is viewed as the norm. The tough leaders exercised what they saw as their superiority with physical aggression—punches, pushes—in daily interactions with the weaker boys. But actual physical attacks were not always used by the leaders. They also used threat gestures as a means of social control. The threat implied the use of force by the leader. Some threats were verbal—common ones included "I'll lay a job on you", "if you know what's good for you"
or reference to someone who was beaten up "if you wanna end up like Johnny". Other threats included poking or jabbing a weaker boy, using body language of making hand gestures.

8 "In the subculture of violence many lower-class children are not spanked in a calm and deliberate manner, but instead are hit with hands, objects and fists, kicked, jerked off their feet, and thrown across the room (Dietz, 1978:19)."
such as a list of "the finger" or racial gestures, and sending threatening notes. Threatening gestures were widespread in the group home. The group, along with parents and staff, expressed frustration, at dealing with these constant intimidation maneuvers.

Verbal threats were used by boys who were more verbally adept. Sometimes they would incorporate catchy phrases like "if you snooze you lose" with non-verbal gestures of taking away an object from a weaker boy. Non-verbal tough leaders use more physical body gestures. They also used swearing as a threat gesture, in that it indicated that they were very angry. Scenes were played out daily that reinforced the power and importance of the aggressor, and kept the "scapegoated" subordinate boy in place. This was done with the emotional support of the group. Dunphy (1972:57) discusses this process.

The problems of attention and status are worked out through the interaction of two role specialists named the "scapegoat" and "aggressor". The scapegoat represents an excessive dependency along with a demand for an inordinate amount of attention. With the emotional support of the group members, the aggressor symbolically "puts down" the scapegoat or "cuts him down to size", thus rejecting simple dependency as a solution to the authority problem. And also underlying the idea that centrality in the group will be shared out among members in a somewhat equitable fashion rather than seized unilaterally by the person who talks most volubly.

Aggression and the threat of it also maintained social distance between the higher and lower status boys. When Jim wanted a particular seat at the table or watching TV, a gesture would move a lower status boy from that seat.
The boys were aware of the leadership status in organizing and controlling the groups' actions. If the leader decided to "go along with" the adult in charge, the group fell in line. If he didn't, the group followed his lead. This created a problem for a relief staff one evening at the supper table. Ralph often thought of himself as the one in charge when the group home parents were away from the house. He would "supervise" the boy's behaviour as well as their chores. When the relief staff made corrections in Maurice's or Jerry's table manners or swearing, Ralph would intercede saying "oh, they're OK", therefore disrespecting the relief's authority. Ralph's role identity was "the boss". When the staff directed each boy to clean up his own area after supper, the others waited for Ralph's response. Ralph refused and left the table saying over his shoulder that "it's relief's job". The others left the table and followed Ralph into the room.

The group home parents and relief staff talked about the group leaders and the power that they held over the group at staff meetings. Several staff members expressed that they would sometimes join forces with the leader to get things accomplished in the house. Using this strategy, the staff members would pull the leader aside and talk to him.

One staff said...
After those talks Ralph helps me out when the other guys start acting up. It puts us on the same side.

This reference to "the same side" alludes to the setting up of sides to prepare for a battle or struggle. And the adults who work with the boys in the group home often make reference to the "power struggle" that exists between the adults and the group vis-a-vis the leader. This aspect will be discussed at length in Chapter 5 on group home parents.

After the informal group leader has become established in his role of leader, the overt aggression that is used decreases. When there is a newcomer in the group, or a member of the group doesn't adhere to the status structure and norms of the group, the aggressive leader will again "tighten the reins". But as the leader, usually an older boy, prepares to leave the group home he begins the process of disengaging himself from the group. His interests no longer lie within the group. He usually spends less time within the group home with the other residents. He starts making plans regarding taking care of himself away from the group home. Social workers, group home parents and staff use strategies to discourage the use of aggression by the boys, especially those who are preparing to leave the group home.

Steve talked about these with the group home mother after a session with his social worker.

He (the social worker) told me that I've gotta stay outta fights and trouble if I wanna go home next month. It's blackmail. He tells anything I do over my head and says if you don't be good, you can't go home.
Steve went on to indicate that aggression was a part of his role-identity in the group home, and would probably continue when he left. He acknowledges that role playing is strategic behaviour in the group home.

Nobody who's got any guts is gonna let some goofy punk say stuff to him and not pop him one. If you do that everybody will walk all over you. I'd even have Maurice (the youngest new boy in the group home) coming up to me. OK while I'm here I'll play the part, but that's not how it is out there.

Another boy (Ralph) who was preparing to leave the group home to live on his own in an apartment saw aggression as a part of life in the group home. This boy saw himself as a tough leader, but physical aggression was not the central part of his role-identity. Ralph was a large-framed seventeen year old who attempted independent living after his mother told him to leave the house. He had been shuffled back and forth between divorced parents for several years with a strong desire to finish high school. Ralph was directed to the CAS by a teacher. After a failure in a foster home, Ralph moved into the Oak Street Group Home. He is a very verbal and expressive boy who was adept at recognizing roles within the group. This cleverness enabled him to become a manipulative leader of the group. He didn't use physical aggression as much as previous leaders did. Sometimes he would manipulate Jim who was more volatile, into physical encounters with one of the younger boys. But Ralph used a barrage of verbal threats and hand gestures. After he left the group home, Ralph talked about aggression and leadership in the group home.
When I moved into the house I saw that there was a lot of fighting. I stayed pretty much to myself, and I was busy with work and school. But later when I quit my job I was around the house more. And I saw how the younger guys can really bug you and saying STOP doesn't always work. So I would tell them so they could understand (he makes a fist) and sometimes I'd have to show them I meant business... and punch them a few times. With "sucks" like Jack or Maurice you only have to do it (hit them) a couple times and they know that you mean what you say.

When asked if he thought of himself as a tough leader, Ralph replied "yeah". But when Ralph was asked how he handles disputes with people outside the group, he said that he didn't use physical aggression in those situations.

It would take something really serious at school or work to make me mad enough to hit somebody. At the group home it's different. The guys sometimes just ride you until you let loose and plough them. It's the way they act that bugs you.

In Cottage Six, Rinsky talks about the need that the boys have to rationalize the aggression among themselves.

The omnipresence of the strong-weak continuum institutionalized in statuses and the lack of alternative identifications exaggerate the toughness norm. Internal aggression in a primary group creates an intense need for aggressors to rationalize their behavior. (p.88)

The boys in the group home rationalize their aggression by saying the target is "queer", a big scumbag, a "suckie" (baby-like). This justifies further aggression and fixes the stereotype for both the aggressor and target. The aggressive leader rarely takes any responsibility for any aggressive actions. He sees the target of the aggression as being responsible regardless of who struck the first blow or
hurled the first insult. None of the boys saw themselves as "bullies" who struck out at someone for no reason. They rationalized that the target wanted to get them, or was going to get them, or "asked for it" in some way. They saw their behaviour as responsive and defensive.

"Con-Artists"
The "con-artists" in the group home portrayed a lively and colourful image. These boys were usually verbally adept and physically attractive. They boasted excessively about their sexual exploits, experimentation with drugs, and their athletic abilities. They were manipulative and exploitative in their relationships in the group home. This boy's main objective is to get what he can. His means in grabbing all he can for himself range from lying, bribery, and stealing to deceiving anyone who stands in his way.

When a younger, lower status boy complained at a group meeting about the bribery in the house Nathan replied, "That's the way it is in the world. If you have money, or something to trade, you can get anything." Nathan made a regular point of getting what he wanted. One evening when Maurice was watching TV Nathan offered him a cigarette to change the channel to one that Nathan preferred. They bargained, and finally settled for three cigarettes.

The "con artist" is often closely related to the aggressive leader. He is the leader's "help mate". This
gives the con-man status. It is the con-artist—who is an expert at making jokes and "put downs" at the other boys' expense. In a verbal battle he likes to have the last word, and always has a "comeback" for a comment made (usually getting a laugh from the group). His wit and energetic playfulness make him an enjoyable companion at times.

Because the con-men in the group were so verbally adept, they could "spin a tale" that could sometimes dazzle the others. The group home mother would sometimes tell Jim to "cut the razzle dazzle and get to the facts of the story". It was often difficult to catch this boy in a lie, and a real task to decipher the truth from the lies. When this con got caught lying, he would smile and shrug his shoulder as if to say, "sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, it's all just part of the game".

To deal with this boy, the group home parents developed many strategies. They found that the con was adept at putting wedges between the adults that were dealing with him. He would tell different versions of a story to his teacher, social worker and group home parents to manipulate and gain loyalties as well as material goods. The group home parents attempted to develop regular communication with the other adults that dealt with him. They spent a great deal of time checking out the con's stories. On one occasion, Jim had three pairs of running shoes that he obtained by conning. The house mother bought Jim a pair of running shoes
for his gym class at school. Wearing his old shoes (and tearing the side of them), Jim went to a meeting at the CAS offices with his social worker. Jim convinced his social worker that he needed a new pair of shoes, since the side of his foot was coming out of the shoe and he was going to his mother's house that night for a weekend visit. Jim gave a convincing story, and the social worker not being able to contact the group home for confirmation of the story, gave Jim money to get another pair of shoes. Jim used a similar story on his mother when he was visiting her, and applied some extra manipulation to play on her guilt feelings for not providing for her son. Jim laughed that he had gotten away with it for so long, when the con was uncovered a few months later.

The con in the group home was involved in stealing money and objects from people and stores in the community, as well as boys in the group home and the group home parents and staff. Because of his status in the group, the con would receive the support of the group when he stole money or objects from the adults in the group home or anyone outside of the house. The boy's group has a norm of not "squealing" or "ratting" on each other. Sometimes a younger, lower status boy would approach the group home parents privately and tell them who had stolen the item, but this was not always a reliable source.
The group home parents, and group in general, were faced with problematic behaviour on a daily basis. These behaviours created many stressful situations for the group. Con-men such as Jim, Jerry, Nathan and Paul were often involved in stealing, lying, and manipulation. These behaviours were sometimes also evident in boys due to their emotional and psychological disturbances. These behaviours and others such as sexual behaviours, drug and alcohol use, bedwetting, and runaways — and the effect on the entire group — will be dealt with in detail in Chapter Four.

Quiet Types

Polsky (1962:81) typified boys who have become institutionalized and have learned to 'fade' into the setting by keeping their emotional distance and cooperating with the boys at the top as "quiet types".

These types of boys were evident upon their arrival at the group home. But it was found that their role changed after a brief stay in the group home. This may be due to the small number of boys in the group home, which makes "fading into the setting" almost impossible as compared to a large institutional setting.

Jerry was such a boy. He had experienced multiple rejections in his life. At fifteen years of age he recalls thirteen different placements. He and his sister and brother were made Crown wards at an early age. Having different
natural fathers, none of whom wanted to care for the children, the three siblings moved from foster home to foster home. The children were separated at various times when a foster home wouldn't take all three of them. And Jerry spent some time in an institution for children. Jerry's sister was then adopted by a family who wanted a playmate for their daughter, but no sons, according to Jerry. Attempts were made by social workers to place Jerry and his brother in an adoptive home together as they didn't want to be separated. When an adoptive home was found for Jerry's younger brother pressure was applied by the CAS worker, on the prospective adoptive parents, to take Jerry too. Although several pre-adoption reports indicated that Jerry was a "disruptive force in the adoptive home, and the prospective parents were very reluctant", both boys were adopted. Jerry recalls his new parents telling him on several occasions "we only took you to get your brother Maurice". After three years the family moved to Windsor, the parents contacted the CAS reporting marital conflict. The mother left town, and the father took both boys to the CAS office and left them there. The boys had no further contact with the family. The boys spent six months in a treatment center before moving into the group home. During the first few months, Jerry made little reference to his turbulent background. He remained very quiet and seemed to be an easy going guy. Jerry had no opportunities to maintain social
relationships with adults or children. His frequent moves made this impossible. He and his mother, Maurice, depended heavily on each other. Jerry spent much of his time quietly in his room reading or in the TV room alone. He maintained emotional distance from the group, his parents, and boys. At that time the group was comprised of two very disturbed boys whose acting out behaviour drew much of the group's attention toward them. Jerry showed little concern for the group around him and would withdraw to his room when one of the boys threw a temper tantrum or was verbally abusive in the group. By the end of his two-year stay, Jerry had become very verbal himself. He became more involved in group activities, although he still backed away when situations became anxious for him.

The Bushboys (Funks)

These low status boys are characterized by childish regressive behavior. They are on the receiving end of verbal "put downs" by the higher status boys in the group home. They continue this tradition and "put down" each other and those with the lowest status in the group, i.e., the scapegoat. These verbal "put downs" comprise an interpersonal process that Polsky (1962) describes as "ranking"—which is borrowed from the language of juvenile delinquents. Ranking involves verbal, invidious distinctions that are based on group values. It goes beyond name calling.
and teasing in that it is used as a tool to keep a boy in a low status. Ranking emphasizes the weakness that the victim is seen to have by the ranker(s). The boys in the group home value strength and sexual prowess. In ranking, the boys use terms such as "wimp", "queer" and "fag" that denote weakness (passivity) and sexual inadequacy and perversion. Adolescent boys in the process of forming their sexual identities, have fears and questions about their sexuality. These fears provide a target for incessant ranking. Individuals that are seen as important to the subordinate are also objects of ranking and insults (such as mothers, girlfriends or sisters). Terms such as "motherfucker", "cocksocker", or "hosebag" are used in reference to these significant others.

The bushboys are preoccupied by their low status in the group, and react in a hostile manner when they are seen as the "butt" of a joke or ranked. They are consumed with the desire to "get even", and it is often the topic of their conversations, although not directed at an aggressive leader or con-man. Because these low status boys cannot retaliate on the leaders and con-artists, they either turn their anger inward or toward a boy of the same status, another "punk". This results in some bizarre behavior that is self-directed, as well as constant arguments over issues that appear trivial.

These boys describe themselves in derogatory terms, such as "stupid", or "no good", perhaps showing their low
self-esteem and identification with their low status (their role-identity). They become involved in scraping and cutting their arms, punching walls with their fists, and other self-injurious behaviours.

Because of their constant tickering and seemingly paranoid and overreacting tendencies, these boys' actions and reactions often come to the attention of the group home parents who respond with consequences for the behaviours (often "time out" in his room which separates him from the group). This boy then responds with more frustration that he vents in sometimes bizarre ways.

Kevin was viewed as a "punk" by the group. He was ranked continually and tested by the others for his entire stay at the group home. He attempted to appease the older boys by running errands and sharing his stolen goods (obtained from shoplifting at two local stores). But the ranking continued. Kevin sometimes would urinate and defecate in the closet in his bedroom when his frustration mounted. He also became involved in lighting fires in the group home. When he was confronted for any of these behaviours, he responded with temper tantrums declaring "I get blamed for everything". Kevin would then rank Eddie or set him up by telling the other boys that Eddie had said something about one of them.

Maurice was also a "punk" in the group. He was continuously ranked and bullied by Jim and Ralph, when he
arrived. His appearance (short hair, dress pants and dressy black shoes) were ridiculed by the boys. Soon after his arrival, Maurice conformed to the group’s code of dress wearing blue jeans, T-shirts and jean vests. He also adopted the bullying ideology of the group, using aggression and ranking on the newest member of the group, Jack, and neighborhood children.

The Scapegoat

As described earlier, the scapegoat is at the very bottom of the social structure. He is usually a new boy, younger than the rest, who is not strong. He may be the same age as the group but appear younger by his slight physical stature. Characteristics that are seen as undesirable by the group — such as an effeminate voice or mannerisms — contribute to that boy becoming a target of scapegoating.

Ralph commented on the characteristics of a new boy (Eddie) that contributed to his being scapegoated.

He’s an ugly looking guy. With that "buzz cut" (short hair) he looks like a retard. No girl would like him, they just laugh when they see him.

Eddie was also seen as a weakling and "mama’s boy" as he often ran to the group home mother when the ranking and aggression became too much for him. The group’s parents
saw his "slowness" and "low intellectual functioning" as characteristics that made him very vulnerable to "cons" and manipulation by the group. As such, he received special attention from the group home parents, especially the group home mother who would spend extra time with him teaching him to tell time and count his money. At fourteen, Eddie lacked skills that were basic to most children his age. This made him a target to his peers. Turning to the group home mother for protection reinforced the ranking and scapegoating of Eddie. Eddie became involved in stealing money and bicycles, but lacked the "skill" to avoid being caught. On one occasion, he stole a bike from his cousin who lived across the street. After riding it around the neighborhood, in full view, he "hid" it in the bushes behind the group home. The boys laughed about his "stupidity" for weeks. One group home staff commented, "In the presence of the group, that Eddie should take lessons from some of the other boys. "If he's going to steal something, at least do it so he won't get caught." The boys responded with smiles and nods of agreement. This staff member identified with the boy's ideology of "do it, but don't get caught."

Scapegoating was used as a means of social control by the group. The leader or high status boy uses deviant processes, such as aggression, threats and ranking, with the emotional support of the entire group. Dunphy (1972:57) describes scapegoating of a disliked, low status group member as a way to resolve the authority issue of the group.
The scapegoating of a disliked member is a way of resolving the authority issue in such a way as to emphasize the authoritative power of group norms. Thus group cohesion at this point is achieved by projective identification by most members with the aggressor in his attempts to silence and control the scapegoat who represents weakness, anxiety, and deviation from emergent group norms.

George was an example of a scapegoat in the group home.

George moved into the group home shortly after his sixteenth birthday. Although he was the oldest boy in the house at the time, he was slight in build and physically appeared to be about twelve years old. He had a high-pitched voice that accorded him the label "queer" from the outset. George was seen as a very sensitive, soft-spoken, well mannered boy by the group home parents. He gravitated toward the adults and rarely made any movement toward the boys in the house. He was estranged by his peers the entire time he lived in the group home. He was teased and ridiculed for anything he said. He complained to the group home parents about being bossed and coerced by his roommate Ralph. After a few months of harassment and threats George left the group home. He described the living situation as "impossible".

The boys hate me and they're cut to get me. No matter what I say or do, they constantly tell me I'm stupid and make me feel bad. I don't belong here. Even though the houseparents tell them not to, they just come after me when nobody's around.

Scapegoats, being at the bottom of the pecking order, hate their situation at the Oak Street Group Home. They hate the boys for exploiting them, they hate the group home
parents and staff for knowingly or unknowingly allowing it to happen, and they hate themselves. George expressed his hatred for the group home residents and parents in a note that he wrote before he ran away from the house. "You'll all be happy that I'm leaving. I hate this place since I came. I try to tell you (the group home parents) I don't belong, but you don't listen. You don't understand."

The scapegoat is caught up in a vicious cycle. They feel that everybody is out to get them, and sometimes become involved in behaviour such as stealing, destructiveness and lying to avoid blame and consequences. These behaviours serve to draw more exploitation to them. Personality factors are also an ingredient in this cycle. Some boys exhibit disorders, such as unpredictable temper tantrums, mood swings or learning or perceptual disabilities that make them unacceptable to the group. These boys are unable to modify their social position in the group.

New boys who enter the group home are first identified with the members of the lowest status (the punks and scapegoats). They become members of this group unless they are outstanding in a "desirable" quality such as strength or intelligence "street smarts" which are valued by the group. They usually share a room with a low status boy, since the high status boy either has a room to himself, or is sharing with another high status boy who has lived at the group home for a while. Sharing a room, "learning the ropes", and
frequent interaction with a low status boy, the new boy becomes a member of this clique and is attributed a low status in the group. He may develop successful strategies to enable him to maintain himself in the group. This often involves adapting himself to the ideology of the group. Not able to develop these strategies he may be ostracized by the group. Group members then use strategies to get rid of this unwanted member. Excessive aggression and threats often overwhelm a boy. These may increase his anxiety and fear to the point where he leaves the group home by running away, as happened with George. When the group home parents and the boy's social worker perceive the group situation as being harmful to the target of the aggression, a new placement is usually sought. Often this comes about after prolonged attempts to work out the group discord through negotiations between the group home parents or social worker and the boy's group. Group meetings are used for these negotiations, to discuss with the group other ways to handle conflict.
Chapter IV

PROBLEM BEHAVIOURS

Life in a group home with disturbed children is, not unexpectedly, full of problems. A group of people who are not biologically related are put together in close living quarters. The children come from a spectrum of backgrounds, having experienced a variety of parental styles and living situations. The group home parents, often with very little formal training or support from trained professionals, are placed in a setting with a group of children who are experiencing conflict. Many of the group home parents, such as the ones in this study, are experiencing the parental role for the first time. The group home parents, and relief staff, are in constant contact with the children's conflicts that are expressed through troubled and troubling behaviour. This problem behaviour encompasses a wide range, from withdrawal and passivity to hyperactivity, anger, hostility, and aggression. These behaviours weave through the daily activities and interaction among the children and adults.

Both the adults and the children must develop strategies to cope with some serious and very stressful problem behaviours exhibited in the group home. These include stealing, lying, sexual behaviours, bedwetting, temper
tantrums, drug and alcohol use and runaways. Although administrative personnel and social workers become involved in these behaviours, especially in crisis situations, it is the group home parents and staff that must deal with them on an everyday basis. Sometimes they feel very isolated and alone and resentful at the pressures that are involved in struggling with these very difficult situations and the consequences and effects on the individual child (who expresses the behaviour) and the entire group (who witness the behaviour).

Families in our society also experience these situations. Some of the behaviours, such as temper tantrums and bedwetting, occur in most children and are viewed as a "phase" that the child will outgrow. Other behaviours, such as occasional lying, expressions of sexuality and running away occur in children at various points in their maturation. Families attempt to cope with these behaviours, and for the most part "see the child through the phase", and the behaviour diminishes or disappears completely. Family members cope with one child or children who, at varying ages, usually exhibit one behaviour at a time. They often rely heavily on their biological and emotional relationship to that child to see them through "the tough times". It is only after they are no longer able to cope with these behaviours, or they are viewed as coping inadequately, that the boys come to the group home.
At the group home, the group home parents are faced with a group of four or five boys, around the same age, who are exhibiting several different behaviours at the same time. Because of emotional trauma, these behaviours are often exaggerated in these boys. The group home parents have no emotional or biological link to these children, but recognize that only by developing some sort of relationship will any form of resocialization take place. They then begin the difficult struggle of sorting through and dealing with combinations of behaviours that are often manipulative strategies that the boys have developed and practiced on several sets of parents and counselors.

The group home parents discuss the frustrations that they feel from some of the behaviours that they witnessed on a regular basis with each other and with their supervisor. This was expressed by the group home mother at one meeting with the supervisor.

Talking about the boy's behaviours together and with our supervisor keeps us from going crazy. We have to sit back later and talk and laugh about the situation. You have to, or you can have pent up anger and frustration until you burst. That doesn't do any good for anybody, not us or the kids. We can usually find humor in the situation and that helps take some of the sting out of it.

The discussions help the group home parents to vent their feelings of anger, frustration and difficulty at dealing with various types of behaviours. It also gives them an opportunity to go over the situation to try to develop better ways at dealing with it. These discussions took place away from the situation, and away from the group.
The group home parents also participate in a support group for group home parents and foster parents of adolescents.

The group was really helpful. It made us feel that we weren't alone in trying to deal with these kids. And that others were having the same kind of problems and frustrations. It wasn't necessarily something that we were doing wrong, but we also gave each other suggestions of strategies to better deal with the boys.

**Temper Tantrums**

A temper tantrum can be an overwhelming experience for both the child and the adult that is trying to deal with it. Temper tantrums are irrational displays of anger and frustration that are exhausting for the child and the group home parent. During a temper tantrum the child acts as though he is oblivious to his surroundings. He may scream, cry, throw things, use abusive language, try to injure himself or another person, throw himself on the ground, kick or bang his body against objects. He verbalizes, blaming someone else, often the group home parent or other parental figure, for the frustration that he feels is triggering the outburst. During these outbursts he is more likely to injure himself than to attack the adult.

Temper tantrums are often preceded by a phase where the child appears agitated and restless. He will seek an issue or sometimes will instigate a problem if none exists. A small frustration will trigger the child at this point. When
a temper tantrum is allowed to run its course the child will move about the area throwing things, and may hurt himself or other children. The group home parents can sometimes predict when a child is about to have a temper tantrum, by observing the child's restlessness and thus are able to intervene before the tantrum begins. These signals can especially be picked up on if the child has been living in the group home for a time, and the group home parents have witnessed other tantrums. To intervene, the group home parents usually talk to the child about how he is feeling and make suggestions as to how he could vent his anger in other ways (e.g., talk about what was bothering him, rather than bottling it up). Talking about feelings is sometimes difficult for the non-verbal child, so sensing this the child may be encouraged to play a physical game, such as basketball or wrestle with an adult such as the group home father. The group home father often used these strategies.

One boy in the group home threw a temper tantrum when he was told that he could not go out that evening because he had not completed his chores. Ben paced around the living room and glared angrily at the group home father who had told him that he couldn't go out. He then went upstairs to the boys' bedroom area, walking in and out of bedrooms swearing and kicking doors trying to get other boys involved in his anger. Ben then went into his bedroom and started to throw a ball against a wall. The group home father went.
upstairs to talk to Ben. Ben replied with insults and swearing, and refused to leave his bedroom area where a crowd had gathered. The group home father then picked Ben up and carried him downstairs to sit on the couch in the family room. Ben stood up and tried to walk out of the house. The group home father stopped him at the door, and returned him to the couch telling him to sit there until he had settled down. The other boys wondering what all the commotion was about came down into the family room. They were told to leave the area and the group home mother talked to them upstairs in Jim's bedroom. One boy in particular was very agitated by Ben's explosive behavior and the group home father's use of force to control him. This boy had been beaten by his own father, and was concerned for Ben's safety. He was reassured by the group home mother that neither of the group home parents wanted to hurt the boys, but they could not allow behaviors that were destructive to all the boys, such as Ben's temper tantrum. Another boy, who had lived in several group settings, said that he had seen several situations where boys threw temper tantrums. He told the group home father that he "knew that coming" (he recognized the signs before Ben's tantrum) and he thought Ben needed to be stopped "before he went crazy" in order to help him.

During a boy's temper tantrum, the group home parents try not to lose their control, since this is not beneficial
to anyone. They try to calmly handle the boy, to maintain control of the situation. This is not always successful, sometimes they respond to a boy by yelling or speaking gruffly to the group or handle a boy in a rough manner that depicts their anger. After the boy has settled down the group home, parents try to talk to him about what was inappropriate about his behaviour, what he could have done to prevent the outcome, and to discipline him for his behaviour. During a temper tantrum, the boy does not attend to what is said to him; he needs time to unwind. After the above incident, the group home father talked to Ben about his actions and his attempts at involving other boys in the issue. Ben expressed regret at his actions, and sat down with the group home father to discuss the consequences and negotiate appropriate punishment.

The group home father is a large muscular man who is physically oriented. He is active in sports and regularly plays physical sports with the boys such as basketball, baseball and wrestling. He has a set of weights in the basement that he and the boys use. He sees such sports as a way to show the boys that he is physically strong, therefore avoiding physical confrontations with an aggressive boy who wants to take control. He talks to the boys—especially the older ones who are interested in these sports—about using these activities to look better and feel more confident about themselves as well as to vent anger and
aggression. Because of his size, the group home father is rarely approached in a threatening manner by the boys. Any threats are directed at him during a rage or temper tantrum.

Jerry used temper tantrums to express anger at the group home rather than do under other circumstances.

Jerry was an angry, withdrawn boy who appeared to be very quiet when he entered the group home. He followed most of the group home expectations but kept emotionally and physically apart from the boys and the group home parents.

He set the stage by speaking with the group home mother about temper tantrums that he had in schools and foster homes where he had lived. He said, "I get out of control when I'm mad, and sometimes it takes four men to stop me. I throw a chair at a teacher and he had to call the principal and gym teacher to help him." The group home mother assured Jerry that he appeared quite in control, and changed the subject. Several months later, Jerry was especially nervous about learning that he would be going to a new school in a few weeks. He was argumentative and agitated one morning.

He started throwing coats and shoes around the house, yelling that he could not find his shoes. After finding them, he left for school in a huff without a coat. Both group home parents had spoken to him several times about wearing a coat in the winter. The group home mother looked out of the kitchen window and saw Jerry standing in the school yard without a coat. He called out of the window for
Jerry to return to the house. Jerry ignored him. The group home father got dressed and went to the school yard and told Jerry to return to the house, which he did. Jerry came into the house slamming the door and went into his room yelling and swearing that he was being treated "like a little boy". He started throwing things in his room and broke his mirror. The group home father went to Jerry's room and opened Jerry's door. Jerry started behaving very provocatively, swearing at the group home father and threatening to damage his car, promising him "you'll get yours". The group home father picked Jerry up by his arms off the floor and pushed him up against some cupboards, telling him not to threaten him. Jerry stunned, burst into tears. The group home father, realizing that he had been caught up in his own anger, let Jerry down. After cooling down, the group home father and Jerry talked about the incident. Jerry refused to recognize any role that he played in the incident. He saw the group home father as being cruel and said that he should call the police to put the group home father in jail. This being a serious issue (i.e. corporal punishment of the children is prohibited), the group home father suggested that Jerry call his social worker to hear his complaint. When his social worker arrived, Jerry and the group home parents sat down and further discussed the issue. At this meeting, Jerry talked about physical punishment and abuse (physical and sexual) that he had encountered at the hands of his natural
father. He described his father as physically looking like the group home father. Jerry described his father's role as being "mean to the children. It makes him feel big." Jerry admitted that during the interaction with the group home father he had remembered previous fearful interactions with his own father and he expected the group home father to behave in a manner similar to that of his natural father. Had he done so, this may have reinforced Jerry's image of the "father role." The group home father responded by telling Jerry that his expectations were not a father did not coincide with the group home father's own identity in the role of "father." He did not see himself as that cruel, aggressive man that Jerry was envisioning. And he saw Jerry as unfairly responding to him in that way, even setting up the situation by expecting him to behave in that manner.

During a temper tantrum the child appears to lose control. Any attempts to talk to the child or negotiate with him seem futile. He doesn't seem to hear what is said to him. In an attempt to avoid aggravating the intensity of a temper tantrum, the group home parents usually try to remove the child from the group when he is having the tantrum. It isn't an easy task to move a child who is thrashing about, especially if the adult is not physically strong. Removal of the child becomes especially important when someone is being injured during the tantrum. One group home staff encountered a situation where a boy became angry at another
boy's teasing. He began throwing things, and then attacked the other boy hitting him and running after him. The boy who had initiated the teasing, laughed as he ran, but Maurice had lost control. He grabbed hold of the boy's leg as he went up the stairs and bit him and wouldn't let go. The relief staff attempted to remove Maurice and later described him as behaving "like a wild animal." After several attempts, the staff finally moved the boys apart, with the aid of an older boy. The staff sat on Maurice to hold him down, and sent the other boy to the hospital to have the bite looked after. After all of the confusion, Maurice settled down and was sent to his room. He later cried and apologized to the staff for having caused the commotion.

Some children seem to feel guilty after a temper tantrum, and will apologize. Other children act as if the temper tantrum never occurred and refuse to admit to any role that they may have played. Sometimes fake temper tantrums are staged by a boy. This may occur if the boy was previously successful in getting his way through a temper tantrum. He then uses a tantrum as a manipulation strategy. It may take time to get to know the boy to be able to determine whether the temper tantrum is real, and the child is out of control, or if it is fake manipulation. One boy who was new in the group home threw a fake temper tantrum when the group-home-mother refused to grant his request. The fact that he stopped the tantrum on request, showed that he was not out of control.
A temper tantrum was discipline a boy in the Oak Street Group Home. The discipline, usually "time out" (sending the boy to his room or other area that is quiet and away from the group), was used to show the child and the group that the behaviour was unacceptable and would not bring the boy the results he desired. The group members sometimes became upset and confused over a boy's temper tantrum. It seems important to treat a temper tantrum in terms of the entire group, not just the boy who initiates it. When this behaviour was discussed in a group meeting, several boys thought it was a "childish" way to behave. They distinguished temper tantrums from rage or aggression. They saw low status members of the group as "throwing tantrums" or "fits", and this behaviour was considered childish. Whereas, high status members of the group who exhibited this behaviour were viewed differently by the boys. They were "justifiably angry". One boy, Jerry, said that "sometimes you just can't help it. Things just build up inside. People should stay out of your way when they see that you're getting mad, not bug you like the people around here do." The group home parents use the group meetings to reinforce the expectations of the group home. They told the boys that each of them was responsible to seek more acceptable ways to deal with their frustrations than by using temper tantrums, and the group home parents were there to help the boys in this area.
Bedwetting

Enuresis is the medical term for bedwetting, which is a disorder of the urinary function involving involuntary passage of urine. Bedwetting is reported to occur twice as frequently in boys as it does in girls. In the group home, one boy, a thirteen-year-old, was a bedwetter. After a medical examination ruled out organic problems, it was determined that the bedwetting was a manifestation of emotional disturbances. The group home parents kept a chart of when this boy bedwet to try to determine a pattern.

The enuretic child may use his symptoms to get attention from, or express hostility toward a rejecting or neglecting parent or to perpetuate infantile dependency on a mother, who may consciously or unconsciously encourage it (English and Pearson 1945:216-219). 

In the group home, the child's enuresis was viewed by the group home parents as a strategy that the child used to express his fear, confusion and anger and hostility at his living situation. This child was apprehended by the CAS from a "neglecting" home situation. He had very strong emotional ties to his mother, and ran away from the group home constantly upon his arrival. After he was told that his running away would only extend the time before he would be allowed to return home, Ben (with his mother's approval) stopped running away from the group home. His enuresis at the group home increased. Charting Ben's bedwetting showed
that he wet more often both before and after his visits at his mother's home. The group home mother talked to Ben about this, and encouraged him to discuss it further with his social worker.

The group home parents attempted to train Ben's habits around bedtime by not letting him eat or drink anything two hours before his bedtime, and being sure that he urinated before going to bed. After talking to Ben about this problem, and assuring him that she wanted to help him with it, the group home mother agreed to set her alarm during the night to awaken Ben to use the toilet. The practice of interrupting her sleep once or twice every night was exhausting for the group home mother, and she soon became tired and irritable from lack of sleep. She resented this boy's use of bedwetting, and would sometimes not get up during the night to awaken Ben. If Ben had wet the bed during the night, he was upset and irritable at the group home mother, and also embarrassed about wetting the bed. The group home mother felt guilty about not waking Ben up. The group home mother attempted to make Ben responsible for his behaviour, by giving him an alarm clock that he set to get up during the night. Also, Ben was given responsibility for changing his bed in the morning, cleaning his sheets and showering every morning after he had woken.

Ben tried to hide his bedwetting from the group, but this was unsuccessful. His roommate, and the other boys
would smell the urine and tease him. The boys would call his names and scapegoat him. His foster complained of the smell in the room, and made comments about it that the others could hear. They all then laughed at Ben, and threatened to tell children in the neighbourhood and at school. The adult's impatience and the peer's ridicule of Ben only seemed to aggravate the problem. Ben accepted his role-identity of an unwanted and scapegoated member of the group home, and he used this in meetings with his social worker to manipulate his return home. This was eventually accomplished, and Ben returned to his mother's home.

Bedwetting is a problem for the boy who exhibits the behaviour, but it is also a manipulation strategy to evoke desired results from the adults. The boy involved responds with embarrassment, and shame at his behaviour. The adults make attempts to be patient and understanding, but are angered and irritated by the behaviour. The boy's group is unaccepting of both the boy and the behaviour. They respond with ridicule, teasing, scapegoating and sometimes aggression.

Lying

Lying is prevalent among the boys in the group home. It is seen as unacceptable behaviour by the group home parents because it created confusion in the home. Truthfulness was valued by the group home parents, and expressed their
middle-class values and expectations of the boys. The boys did not value truthfulness. They did not expect to be told the truth, and were suspicious of things told to them especially by adults.

The group home parents recognized that everyone lies at some time. They knew that some of the standards that they set up for the children, expecting truthfulness, they even breached themselves. But as adults who were attempting to resocialize the children, they saw such expectations as necessary. The lies that middle-class children in our society may tell to get out of trouble were evident in the group home. But some boys in the group home lied on a regular basis, so much so that it became difficult to determine if anything they said was true. The reasons that they lied were varied.

Two patterns emerged when the boys were asked why they lied. Some boys said that they lied to avoid punishment, and to defend themselves against authority. The other group of boys seemed to lie in order to cope with frustrations that they felt. They would deny, avoid or distort the truth to avoid the anxiety that was produced when they recognized the truth of the situation. These types of lies became evident when the group home parents or an adult witnessed the situation, and then spoke to the child about the situation. The child would report a reality that was different than the reality witnessed by the group home parents.
The behaviour of the first group of boys will be referred to here as 'delinquent lying'. They often used lying as a strategy to avoid being punished for an activity, which may or may not be illegal. This type of lying was accepted and even encouraged by the boy's group. This boy's lies were sometimes recognized by other boys who were in the same clique, since they were aware of the activity that the boy had been involved in. The group would then protect the boy by going along with his story. This lying, and the group's protection, was seen as problematic to the group home parents. It made it very difficult for the group home parents to recognize and consequence deviant behaviour (a strategy used in the resocialization process) when they were not aware of the behaviour. The group home parents distrusting the boy's story, would find various ways to check the story out, such as calling the place that the boy was supposed to be and talking to an adult. The group home parents developed various "contacts" — people that they called regularly, or asked to call them if they saw a problem developing. The lying seemed to place the group home parents and boys in "detective-suspect" roles.

Through calling and checking out stories, the group home parents recognized that some boys lied even when there did not appear to be any personal gain. They would lie about where they were, or with whom, not for fear of repercussions, but as a form of interpersonal interaction.
One boy commented that his father would lie all of the time. He would tell his mother that he was going someplace, like my aunt's but we all knew that he was going to the bar. He lied about everything, I think it was just a habit to him. When asked if he also picked up this "habit" he replied "probably". Lying was the norm in some families, it was practiced on a regular basis as an established way of interacting. This type of lying was accepted by the boys. The group home parents found it problematic because they could not tell when the boy was telling the truth, and it prohibited relationship building and the development of trust which was important to them. Lying in this sense could be viewed by some as psychotic or borderline psychotic, but this was not apparent in the boys in the group home. It seemed to fall somewhere in between psychotic lying and lying to avoid perceived punishment.

The next group seemed to lie to avoid or cope with the frustration that they felt. The boys would tell lies that enhanced their status. When asked if he feared rejection by the group if he told the truth, one boy replied "no. I might exaggerate a story sometimes, but everybody does that." The boys accepted these lies, and would sometimes use this strategy when out in the community. The group portrayed the boys in the group home as tough, street-wise kids, that were "cool" to peers in the community. This sometimes involved lying and exaggerating about an incident. Boys would also
lie about their athletic abilities, or "making out" with a girl, or any other activities that were valued by the peer group, in an effort to enhance their own status within the group. When found out, a peer may comment that the boy who lied was "bullshitting", but the behavior received no group consequences. This behavior was somewhat problematic according to the group home parents. They discouraged lying in these situations, but rarely gave a boy consequences for it, and would sometimes ignore the behavior. The group home parents attempted to model truthfulness to the boys and would point out situations were they (the group home parents) could have lied to the boy but did not. This strategy was used to enhance the boy's trust in the group home parent. The group home parents tried to make a distinction between lying to increase status with one's peers and lying to oneself about a situation. In therapeutic situations it is often thought that an individual must recognize that a problem exists, and want to change the situation before any change in their behavior can occur. In this sense, the group home parents encouraged a child to be truthful with himself about his abilities and his family's situation. Unless this occurs, resocialization is unlikely.

Most of the boys did not express guilt when they were caught lying. This is something that confused and sometimes angered the group home parents. A mother at the parents' support group commented on this.
I overheard Tim (an adolescent boy in my home) telling a friend that he skipped out of school one day last week. He went to a friend's house to drink beer. When I confronted him about it, he denied it over and over. He's been with us more than a year, and he knows how I feel about him lying. I was so mad I grabbed his arm and shook him and told him "you lie like some people breathe".

In an attempt to diminish lying as a strategy to avoid punishment, the group home parents developed a rule. When the group home parents found out that a boy had been involved in a deviant activity, they would ask the boy to tell them truthfully about the situation. If, after checking out the boy's story, the group home parents found out that the boy had lied about the story, the consequences would be doubled. It was then to the child's advantage to tell the truth. This sometimes worked to get the boys in the group to tell the truth, other times the boys "prepared better lies", and "covered their tracks" so that it was less likely that the lie was uncovered.

Stealing

Stealing is a behaviour that is seen as acceptable, under circumstances, to a delinquent group. The group home parents viewed stealing, within the group home, as a problem and threatening to the group structure. As leaders in the group home, the group home parents were expected to deal with problematic behaviours. They were viewed as the adults "in charge" and could lose the respect of the boys, as well as
their supervisor by not handling difficulties in the group home. Some boys were involved in stealing objects and money from other boys, group home parents, and staff in the group home. Stealing was a pervasive problem that frustrated the group home parents. Younger, low status boys and adults in the group home were the main targets for thefts.

The group home parents presented their own, and the middle-class societal value of respect for other people's property. They talked to the group as a whole, at group meetings about their disapproval of stealing. They asked the boys' opinions about the reasons that people steal. Most of the boys could think of acceptable reasons for people to steal. One boy, Maurice, said that his father was in jail because he stole money. He said that people should understand that "sometimes, when you have kids, you have to steal so that you can feed them." His dad told me that he stole the money so that we could have things." Maurice's step-brother piped up saying, "you're dad was always a thief. He did it because he wanted to, he never gave you anything." Maurice sat still and didn't argue with his brother. Jerry continued by saying, "sometimes you have to steal. But his father did it for himself, not for anybody else. You've gotta take care of yourself." Other boys responded to reasons that people steal. "If you need something, like clothes." "If someone took something from you." "If you won't get caught" (the boys laughed).
group home mother brought up the situation of stealing because of peer pressure, "because you're friends do". The group agreed that people do that, and brought up examples of friends who had stolen things, but Jim did not mention any personal involvement in stealing. When the group was asked how we could deal as a group with the problem of stealing in the house, the boys started shifting around in their seats. Everyone seemed uncomfortable and guilty. Jim broke the silence by saying that if something of his got stolen he would find it himself, he wouldn't need to talk about it at the group meeting.

When a high status boy or aggressive leader had something stolen from him, which was rare, he dealt with the stealing himself. He would go through the other boys' dresser drawers and throw things around looking for the object. He would forcefully demand that the boy empty his pocket if money was missing. If he heard from a clique member, or a boy trying to be accepted, that they knew who stole his money or object, that was enough to prove guilt. The boy would be beat up and forced to pay the money back.

Lower status boys, or adults who had money or objects stolen from them did not have the same options available to them to retrieve their goods. Lower status boys were powerless. They would talk to the group home parents, who would support them in asking all the boys at a group meeting who had stolen their goods. On any occasion when a lower
status boy attempted to retrieve his object by looking in dresser drawers, or even questioning a higher status boy on his own he was threatened. Sometimes, it would become evident who had stolen the object, and the group home parents would tell the boy to return it or pay for a new object. But often it was hard to determine who had stolen the object or goods, since it was a group norm not to "squeal" on a group member especially a member of the same clique. On occasion it was discovered that a boy lied about his money being stolen, in an attempt to "set somebody up that he was angry with". This increased the difficulty in determining if a theft had taken place and who did it.

Scapegoats who took the blame for everything were labeled "thief" by the boys, and would sometimes be coerced to take the blame for a boy of higher status. These boys who had a poor self-concept, possibly identified with this role of thief and became involved in these activities in the group home and the community. Eddie was an example of a scapegoat who took the blame for stealing money from the group home parents. The group home parents believed that he was taking the blame for one of the group leaders but could never prove it. Eddie took the punishment and refused to reveal who had really stolen the money.

The group home parents were often the victim of thieves, since these adults had the most material goods and the most money in the house. After several attempts at discussing
the problem with the group, ‘and punishing the entire group by eliminating recreational activities to pay the money back, the group home parents put a lock on their bedroom door that they locked when they left the room. Boys still got in the room by picking the lock, or going through the outside window. On two occasions the group home parents called the police and reported the thefts when a boy went through the window and stole their stereo, after he had been kicked out of the group home. One of the boys in the group home called the boy on the telephone to warn him that the police were looking for him, feeling loyalty for his former roommate. The group home parents were furious that the boys would steal from them when they felt that ‘we gave the boys everything. They have more material goods here than the ever had at home, but they don’t appreciate it. And they don’t feel any loyalty.”

Stealing was a strategy that the boys in the group home had learned to use effectively. Although the behaviour was seen as a problem for the group home parents (since they were often the victim, and they were genuinely interested in the boys’ resocialization), stealing was not seen as a problem in the group. Since it was not defined that way, the group didn’t always use strategies to control the stealing. Strong and aggressive group leaders controlled stealing, in so far as it affected them personally. But the rest of the group members struggled alone to prevent themselves from becoming victims.
Runaways

Sometimes a boy in the group home will run away from the house. This is sometimes precipitated by a restriction placed on the boy (such as being "grounded", i.e. privileges suspended and not allowed to leave the house or yard area). Other times running away is related to peer pressure or difficulties within the group living situation. This was the case with George whose frustration with the scapegoating he received from the other boys led to his running away as described in the previous chapter. Other boys experienced a frustrating or upsetting home visit or became upset at being separated from their family and then often run away from the group home -- usually to their familial home. In most cases, the boy is either running away from something unpleasant or running to something that he sees as giving him pleasure and satisfaction.

In any case, when a boy runs away from the group home it effects the entire group. The group home parents and some of the children (usually the younger ones) are worried about the child, concerned about the possibility of the boy being injured. A child may become involved in activities that may hurt themselves or others, or he may get involved in delinquent activities.

The boys are affected because they may view running away as a way to get out of a consequence or away from a problem. Or they may see themselves as controlling the group
situations by successfully using a strategy to get rid of an unwanted group member. At a group meeting following the running away of George, the boys and group home parents talked about their feelings about running away. One of the boys described running away as a "personal thing, sometimes you have to get away from people and things and just be by yourself to think." When asked why he felt a person had to run away to think and couldn't go into his room alone, or just walk around the block, he replied "it's not the same thing. When you run, you're on your own. You know, in control of what happens." Another boy responded that nobody "makes you run, you do because you have to get out of here". When asked if the boys were happy that George had run away from the house they responded with a unanimous yes. I then asked the boys if they thought that they had influenced George to leave. Ralph replied that "George didn't like us, and we didn't like like him. So if he wants to go let him." When suggested by the group home mother that George had been "forced" to leave because he felt so uncomfortable and unwanted by the group, the boys just shrugged their shoulders. Jerry then responded by saying that "everybody feels unwanted sometimes." Ralph joined in and said, "none of us are wanted, that's why our parents gave us away". The group went on to discuss, in a very sensitive manner, their feelings of insecurity and rejection. In this group meeting there was a closeness and caring in the group, that was rarely seen.
Drug and Alcohol Use

Drug and alcohol use exists among adolescents in our society. Some children in the group home are exposed to drug and alcohol use through their families. A few of the children spoke of parents who used several of these substances and were "addicted". The children, therefore, see drug and alcohol use as acceptable. Although they usually don't approve of addiction, they had difficulties defining what addiction was, and what the symptoms were. Drug and alcohol experimentation by adolescents is discouraged by adults but recognized as a part of their culture.

The group home parents in the Oak Street group home talked to the boys about drug and alcohol use. They prohibited the use of any of these substances in the group home, or boys coming into the group home "stoned" or "drunk". The group home parents see drug and alcohol use among adolescents as problematic, and especially among the boys in the group home that exhibit emotional and behavioural disturbances. These children's judgment as to what is societally acceptable and safe behaviour is somewhat impaired as compared to the adolescents in the general community. They have difficulty in making the decision as to what is appropriate and safe behaviour, and then lack ability to mobilize their inner strengths to act on these decisions. Drugs and alcohol which impair one's judgment are a more severe problem for these children. The group home
rather told the boys one evening that he was aware that some of them had tried drinking alcohol and taking drugs.

I knew there's a lot of drugs and drinking out there, and some of you have tried to get your share of it. But you guys have enough problems, that's why you're here. And drugs or booze have never helped problems, they only add to them.

The boys responded non-verbally with their own language, they rolled their eyes back and turned away from the group home father when he talked. Later that evening, Ralph talked about drug use among the boys.

Most of these guys don't think too much about using drugs. You can buy whatever you want up at the pool hall if you've got the money. Only Jim spends his money on dugs, he's stupid. I can get all I want from friends, but I'm not interested. I don't mind having a beer after work with the guys I work with, they're not into drugs at all. The younger guys get big, but they don't do anything -- they just talk. Once when we were at the pool hall, Jerry came over there and Jim told him that they were "lighting up" (going to smoke marijuana) and so he took Jerry behind the pool hall, but Jerry didn't want to go. He took a "toke" (puffed on the marijuana), then he said he had to go. We laughed. Nobody said anything then. When I didn't want to smoke.

The children are also reminded that it is illegal for them to use drugs or alcohol, and the group home parents cannot condone anything that is illegal. The boys who drank alcohol or took drugs (marijuana, and hallucinogenics were the most popular) did so away from the group home. After a few attempts at coming back to the group home, and being detected while they were still "high", the boys tried new strategies.
The boys were surprised at how the group home parents were able to detect symptoms of their alcohol and drug use. The boys viewed the group home parents as middle-class and "not with it," and unable to perceive their drug or alcohol use even though it was sometimes openly flaunted. Drug use was used by the boys as recreational. They went out with their friends and "smoked a number," and "had a good time," commenting that "there's no harm in it, we just laugh and have a good time." Some boys would stay out all night with their friends to avoid being caught. Others waited until the group home parents went to bed, and then had another boy open the door to let them in. The smell in their bedroom the next morning often gave them away.

Some boys would become involved in drinking alcohol or taking drugs while they were home on visits, and then used their parent's approval as a means of manipulating the group home parents by saying "you can't ground me for drinking, because it's OK with my parents." The group home parents would respond to this by telling the boy that they made the rules at the group home based on what they thought was good for the boy and the group, not according to what their parents did or did not do. This could be used by the manipulative boy to set his parents and group home parents against each other, and so the group home parents would contact the family to discuss these type of issues to avoid this.
 Sexual Behaviour

Sexual behaviour includes a wide range of actions such as masturbation, exhibitionism, language and gestures, homosexuality and heterosexuality. Some of these behaviours would be viewed as normal at this developmental stage of adolescence. Other behaviours occur throughout our society in adults and children. Some researchers (Bower: 1982) indicate that these behaviours are prevalent and a part of the culture of adults and adolescents who are in institutional settings, such as jails, training schools, and boarding schools. Sexual behaviour, when viewed as a problem by the group home parents, was responded to in a different way than other behaviours. Sexual issues and questions were dealt with openly, either informally in group discussion, or at planned group meetings. But problem behaviours that were sexual in nature, were usually discussed with the boy on an individual basis. Group discussion of sexual issues seemed embarrassing to the boys in a group setting. Other areas such as stealing were dealt with as group concerns, whereas sexual issues like masturbation in public, was dealt with as an individual "problem".

Masturbation

Masturbation is a behaviour that is engaged in by both adults and children. (Kinsey et al.: 1948) The group home
parents at the Oak Street group home recognized that most of the children probably masturbated occasionally. As such, it was not considered a problem, and the boys' privacy was respected by the adults who knocked at their bedroom doors. However, when a child masturbated in public areas of the house or community, the group home parents responded to the behaviour. One boy in the group home masturbated in the family room while watching TV, during group outings, and in his classroom at school. This child was from a lower class background, and lived with his mother, father, four siblings and his sister's family in a three bedroom house. Lacking privacy, sexual acts were sometimes interrupted by other family members. Privacy was not considered a prerequisite for masturbation by this boy. The other boys didn't respond to this behaviour. The group home parents both talked to the boy, calling the behaviour to his attention and explaining to him that it was inappropriate in public. They also talked to the relief staff asking them to treat the behaviour as inappropriate and not as "bad" when performed in public. One relief staff said that she had noticed the behaviour but didn't know what to say so she ignored him. She found it difficult to be around this boy, because of his "unattractiveness" and habits.

Mutual masturbation or group masturbation is not infrequent among adolescents and occurred in the group home. When the group home mother walked into one of the boy's
bedrooms she realized that they had been involved in masturbation. She told the boys to "go do something else", and walked out of the room. She went to talk to the group home father about the incident. She was confused and concerned about the implications of this incident, and decided to talk to the boys in a calm non-threatening way to determine what it meant to them. When she talked to the boys later about their sexual behaviour they told her that they were just "fooling around, wrestling and stuff". The group home mother told the boys that they were too big to be fooling around on a bed together and that the behaviour was inappropriate. She asked them what other boys would think if they walked into the room and saw them lying together on the bed. The older boy became defensive saying "we're not queer if that's what you're saying". The group home mother assured him that she was not saying that he was doing anything "bad", or "queer" as he said, she just thought it inappropriate for a twelve and sixteen year old boy to be rolling around on a bed together. The younger boy did not seem very disturbed by the incident, but the older boy was much more agitated. This boy had been caught in sexual play with a five year old girl in a foster home. The foster parents were irate and threw him out of the foster home. He had also been involved in sexual play with one of his "sisters" in his adoptive home. His adoptive parents were upset by this incident and told him so, and met with a
social worker concerning the incident. This boy seemed embarrassed about the incident at the group home, and avoided talking to the group home mother for the rest of the day.

Exploitation

Sexual play among the boys that seems to involve force or aggression is exploitation that is treated seriously by the group home parents. This issue was of concern to them when one fifteen year old boy moved into the group home. This boy was an aggressive leader who had used force on his brother, who was seven years younger, to perform sexual acts. His mother, a single parent, responded with disgust, threw him out of the house and refused to talk to him or a counselor for several months. At the group home the boy was restricted from going into other boy's bedrooms. The group home parents assigned this boy to share a room with another aggressive leader, and watched his behavior to intervene on any situation involving exploitation. During his stay at the group home he participated in counseling sessions concerning these issues. The group home parents thought that this behavior would be seen as inappropriate and unacceptable by the group and the boy may be punished and ostracized. They, therefore, never spoke of the behavior to any of the group home staff when the children were around.
Some of the older boys expressed their curiosity about sex, and probably received sexual gratification from pornographic magazines. When there was an older group of boys, who were very discreet with these magazines, the group home parents ignored the presence of the magazines. When the group changed, and was predominately younger boys, the group home parents forbid the magazines.

Sexual Gestures and Language

Some boys in the group home used sexual gestures ("roothing" out of the windows) or exhibitionism (such as walking through the house naked) to attract attention or provoke shock. Both group home parents saw this behaviour as inappropriate in this setting and told the boys that it was unacceptable. They laughed at the boys who participated in these behaviours, encouraging them, and describing it as funny. One boy seemed to use exhibitionism as a sexual maneuver toward the females in the house. On several occasions he walked from the bathroom to his bedroom, past the kitchen and living room, undressed. Later, when confronted, he would smile and make comments about his physique. The other boys responded with laughter at his behaviour. The group home mother and relief staff (the only females in the house) talked about this behavior that seemed to occur for their benefit. They decided that they would try to avoid showing any embarrassment, and would tell
the boys that they were not impressed with his behaviour. They then sent him to his room for "time out", and ignored him until he behaved more appropriately. The boy soon stopped the behaviour.

The use of profane language is a common occurrence. Many adults and children have used swear words or sexually tinged expressions impulsively or as a response to frustration. Socialization literature would indicate that children who have been raised in families or neighbourhoods where profanity is widely used, also exhibit this communication pattern. They see this language as acceptable. The group home parents were very aware of the language that they used, and avoided the use of swearing. They told the boys that their swearing was unacceptable and annoying, and they wanted the boys to "break the habit" because "it showed disrespect for themselves and others".

For some boys "sexual" words and phrases were used as a language style for insulting as well as an expression of anger. Although this language uses terms and words that are viewed as sexual to some people, such as "motherfucker", "cunt", or "cocksucker", they were not necessarily considered sexual to the boys. In a teasing game the boys attempted to get "one up" on the other boys i.e. they used a name that was more derogatory that the previous one. This is referred to as the "dozens", where sexualized jingles are used, frequently involving each other's mother or sister as
sexual objects, to provoke the other boy. This is a status-seeking tactic that is a way of testing a boy's "roughness". The group home parents prohibited this language, and applied disciplinary action in cases where it continued. But they attempted to avoid becoming upset at the language.

These sexual phrases were sometimes used excessively when an adult responded with anger or was upset or "shaken" by it. One relief staff found it difficult to understand what she called the boys' "gutter talk". Sexual phrases, such as "cunt", were effective techniques that the boys used to get her upset. She responded with anger and sarcastic consequences. Very frustrated, she discussed what was happening on the days she worked. Other staff members tried to show her how the boys received satisfaction by seeing her respond to their language.

**Homosexual and Heterosexual Behaviour**

In the group home, the acting out of sexual behaviour -- either "homosexual" or heterosexual in nature -- created difficulties. The group home parents attempted to reflect societal attitudes toward adolescent sexuality. They recognized that adolescents may experiment with same-sex and opposite-sex activities. The boys in the group home, not unlike their peers in the community, are subject to sexual drives, peer pressure and contradictions that lead to conflicts, confusion and sexual acting-out. The group home
parents attempted to guard against labeling a child who participated in same-sex sexual activity as homosexual. They encouraged the child to talk about his confusions and sexual identity with his social worker (saying all adolescents go through confusion about life issues, including sex). Their main concern was to detect and eliminate coercion or sexual aggression. The boys, however, responded with hostility and attacks toward any boy that they saw as eliminate. Their labeling of this boy as homosexual may indicate their own confusion and insecurity concerning sexuality and their own sexual identity.

The agency has clear policies concerning sexuality issues, that were distributed to the group home parents and social workers in a handbook. As a Catholic agency, they see birth control methods and sexual activity outside of marriage as moral issues (and sins). There are formal policies that exist that determine that group home parents, and other adults working with these children, can and cannot talk about regarding sexual/moral issues. The group home parents relayed these standards to the boys. The group home parents try to clearly communicate the rules and guidelines concerning appropriate sexual conduct in the group home. Friends, of either sex, were not allowed in the bedroom area -- stressing the need for privacy of the boys who resided there. Any coed activities, such as giriiri nius, over to watch TV or parties, had to be adult supervised, and lights remained on during these activities.
The boys, invariably, asked the group home parents their feelings and thoughts about sexual issues. At group discussions—these were usually spontaneous—of formal group meetings, the group home parents communicated the value of love and respect and commitment in relationships as well as responsibility for one's actions (including sexual ones). They modeled these values in their own relationship, as well. The group home parents used films and books designed for teenagers, that dealt with sexual issues in a sensitive way, to initiate discussion and answer questions for the boys.

The group home parents, as parental role models, are significant people in the boy's life. The next chapter will discuss, in length, how the group home parents live with a group of disturbed boys, and the strategies that they develop to cope with this unique situation.
Chapter V
THE GROUP HOME PARENTS

The group home parents are the adults that are in close continuous contact with the boys. They are a married couple who live together with the boys in the group home, availing them little privacy as individuals or a couple. The literature, and the researcher's observation, suggest that many group home parents come from backgrounds of economic failure (Polsky, 1962: 122). These group home parents, in middle age, may have failed at their careers and are in search of security. With children of their own, or attracted to children, the prospect of being paid a salary to care for children seems attractive. When the CAS advertised for group home parents, several replies came from unemployed auto workers in this area who were looking for security because of lengthy layoffs of auto plants. A few group home parents combine their interest in childcare, with training and skills in social work or child care programs in the city. The community college and university in the Windsor area are also places that the CAS rely on for recruitment of group home parents and relief staff. The great demands of the job, as well as relatively low pay, fear of disturbed children, and the social isolation that accompanies the job, make it
very difficult to obtain and keep qualified and dedicated people.

The formal role of caretaker or parent accords the group home parent a nonprofessional role and status in the agency. The concept of the 'marginal man' indicates their position in the normal organizational structure (Polsky, 1962:122). They are socially isolated from the rest of their team members, because of their distance from the agency and their role. When asked, many of the social workers in the agency didn't know who the group home parents were and considered them as performing the same role as foster parents. The group home parents do not fully participate in the decisions concerning either the child who is placed in their home or the group home itself. Meetings at the agency concerning a group home placement have been held where they "forgot" to include the group home parents.

The nonprofessional status and role of the group home parents can be defined in terms of "blocked mobility" (Caudill, 1958:7). The group home parents do not either rise or fall in the staff hierarchy. They are members of a union that is separate from the social workers and staff members at the agency. As such a small bargaining unit, it dwindled from five down to two before the group home parents left, they had very little power to have their demands met. There was one category of group home parent with a pay scale that didn't encourage further training of the employees. Only one
member of the group home couple was the employee, the other
member was free to seek employment outside of the home. The
wife was usually the employee of the agency, and the husband
either worked or went to school full time.

The group home parent is in a position where his/her
job description and role includes a multitude of tasks. The
group home parent is viewed as a nonprofessional, and can be
asked to perform tasks that range from report writing, and
setting up therapeutic programs for the child to performing
household chores such as washing windows. The group home
parent, like an aide in a hospital, "is in a position where
he occupies a diffuse role, where almost any sort of demand
can be legitimately made upon him, are where he will try to
medicate the request under a wide variety of circumstances"
(Hyde and Williams, 1957: 102).

Many aspects of the position and role of the group home
parent, can be viewed as analogous to the foreman. The group
home parent must fulfill the rules set down by the CAS that
make up his/her formal role. At the same time, the group
home parents must develop a workable relationship with the
children in their care. If the group home parent identifies
primarily with administration, they may lose track of the
needs of the children and jeopardize their relationship with
the child. If the group home parent identifies primarily
with the boys, they may encourage or become involved in the
gang structure of the informal group culture (Polsky, 1962).
The group home parent must, therefore, develop strategies to deal with this position of "person-in-the-middle".

Group home parents are very concerned with how administrative personnel see their group home. They attempt to keep everything "under control" when their supervisor or a boy's social worker is coming to the group home. The group home parents tell the boys when a social worker or supervisor is coming to the house, and they "expect the boys to be on good behavior". One group home parent talked to me about the pressures of "giving a good impression" to administration.

I'd never allow my supervisor to just drop by. I try to get the kids that I anticipate will act up out of the house when I know she is coming by. And I run about, cleaning the house and organizing my paper work. They expect you to do everything, be "super housewife" and "super therapist".

Administrative personnel considered a "good group home parent" as one that can work independent of agency personnel but recognizes the "proper procedures" involved in "crisis" situations. (i.e. report the crisis to the social worker "in charge" and follow his/her recommendations). The group home parent must be able to "maintain order and control" in the group home. Some social workers said that it was important for the group home parents to have a "positive attitude" toward children with "special problems", but specific training in behaviour management (though helpful) was not necessary. They viewed the social worker as the "expert", and the group home parent must be able to "accept directions from agency staff in areas of child management".
WHY WERE LEN AND PAT GROUP HOME PARENTS?

The group home parents of the Oak Street group home — Len and Pat — did not follow the usual pattern of group home parents. They are of middle-class background, growing up together in a middle-class neighbourhood in Windsor. They both went to an inner-city school which exposed them to working class lifestyles. Len and Pat took turns holding child care jobs in treatment centers, and going to school to obtain university degrees in psychology and sociology respectively. Pat also received her child care certificate while working with emotionally disturbed adolescent girls.

They then lived and traveled in Florida for two years, working in a group home as weekend relief parents. Wanting to return to the Windsor area, they heard from a relative that a position of group home parents was available. They were interviewed by telephone, and took the position so that Pat could return to graduate school and they could save some money. Len describes their decision like this:

At first we didn't even consider the position. It seemed too demanding. And we knew from experience, what working with disturbed kids was like. But friends and relatives were telling us that the job market in Windsor was really restricted, and there were few counselor positions available. So when Pat's sister called a second time to say that the agency she worked for still hadn't found group home parents, we told her we would send a resume. It would give us an income while Pat went to school and I looked for a job.

Len and Pat identified with the counseling aspects of their position. They saw themselves as "professionals" who
had skills and training in behaviour management for disturbed children. Their role-identities differed from the expectations of their formal position. They found it necessary to negotiate on an individual basis with the various social workers that were in contact with the group home children. Initially, neither of them identified with the parental role. They unrealistically saw themselves as counselors, "on duty," twenty-four hours a day. Over time, they learned to balance their roles, and deal with the stresses of group home life. This process will be dealt with in the next four sections of this chapter: Learning the Ropes, Day By Day, The Group Home Does, and "It's Them or Us".

**LEARNING THE ROPES**

When Len and Pat first saw the group home they wondered what they had let themselves in for. It was a large single family home that showed the wear that it had received during its ten years of housing first mentally retarded, then emotionally disturbed children. It was on a corner lot. With it's back to a large field, and it's front to a church and a school, the house was separated from neighbours. It was located in a working class neighbourhood, on the fringe of a lower-class housing development. The house, at that time, lacking children, seemed to have potential but the middle-class couple were reluctant about living in the
neighbourhood. They saw their first chore to be making the
group home "homey"—in the middle-class sense of the word.

They spoke to the former group home parents who were in
the process of happily moving into their own home after
their four years in the group home. It was this couple who
taught Len and Pat the ropes. They said that they moved
into the group home four years ago and had no one to talk to
about dealing with the agency and the boys, and they had to
learn the ropes by themselves. They would be happy to talk
to the new houseparents about the group home. They warned
Len and Pat that they needed to establish themselves with
the agency personnel, to learn who could speed up and cut
through the "red tape." They showed them the budget,
explaining how they could manipulate extra money from
certain categories to cover expenses in other areas. For
example, at Christmas the group home parents could combine
their household money from several categories (like
recreation, clothing, and household supplies) to buy extra
gifts for the child. This couple also indicated strategies
that they had developed to have more control in the
placement process. They had a young daughter, who they often
referred to at meetings when aggressive, delinquent boys
were being considered for group home placement. These group
home parents had dealt with several aggressive boys, seeing
themselves as having little choice, as new group home
parents. But over time after they "paid their dues," they
were more selective in the boys they took into the home.
The agency will give you the toughest kids in town if you let them. They don't care, they don't have to live here with them. At first, we thought we had to take any kid they brought us, but we learned to say "no". Make it part of your vocabulary when talking to them and don't worry about your job. Believe me, you'll soon find out that they need you more than you need them.

The only members of the previous group, two brothers, were in the process of leaving. So the new group, some parents, Len and Pat, would start anew.

The group home parents in this study, arrived and had a few days to settle into the home before placements began. As the group formed, the group home parents developed techniques to establish relationships with the boys. Having a middle-class value orientation they had expectations of cooperation among the members of their new "family". They enlisted the boys in helping with household chores using these opportunities to talk privately with the boy about himself. Both group home parents, identifying with a counseling role, looked at the group of disturbed children as their "clients". They were very concerned with the children's needs, and would call to check that things were going well on their days off. Both parents, Len having started working yet, they regularly met with both the relief staff and the social workers, wanting to maintain a team approach in their work, and to attempt to raise their status within the formal organization.

They recognized that even though they were involved in placement meetings, much of the decision on group home
placement was being made by the social workers (and it appeared that the decision had been made even before the meeting). The group home parents' skill at dealing with "difficult children who exhibit multiple behaviour disorders" was expressed by several social workers, and the placement committee continued to place these types of children in the group home. This seemed to be a strategy used by the group home supervisor to calm the group home parents down when they became upset about the multitude of problems they were dealing with.

The group home parents received more obvious pressure from the administrative personnel to take or keep a child in the group home if flattery didn't work. They were reminded that... "it's an agency group home, and according to the Child Welfare Act the Children's Aid Society must provide protection for a child, which means the group home, if no other space is available". When the group home was not filled to capacity (five), the agency social workers would recommend boys at the placement committee meeting, saying "there's a bed at Oak Street", with no concern with what the existing group was like. The group home parents learned that they could bargain and negotiate with individual workers.

When workers hear that one boy is leaving, they pull Len or me aside when they see us, and tell us about a case with a boy that would fit into the group home. "Fit in", some of them don't know what the group home is even like or what kind of boy would "fit in". They're desperate to find a place for the kid. There's not enough foster homes and group homes available sometimes for the number of kids who need a place, especially adolescents.
After workers got to know us, they would describe kids then say "he's like Jack, and you did wonders with that kid". (Start with the lastest, we) responded more favourably to a worker who liked us and treated us like peers and professionals, and those we considered friends and socialized with. To others we'd say "no, we won't fit into the group", especially if we didn't want to work with that social worker. Other boys we would take under conditions, such as if the worker would meet with him more often and regularly, or enrol him in a special program.

After Len started a full time job outside of the group home, the operation of the group home and most of the contacts with social workers and agency personnel -- including the bulk of the decision-making -- was done by Pat. There was a gradual shifting of responsibilities concerning the group home to Pat who spent the most time with the boys.

The group home mother was the central authority in the group home during this stage. She saw management of the group home as her job. Although it was she who set the rules and routines for the boys, and set consequences for benders, many of these decisions were presented to the boys as joint decisions (made by both parents). Pat says, "we wanted to present a united front. I would tell the boys to wait until Len got home from work and then we would consider their request." It was, therefore, the group home mother who set the tone for the group home. Still identifying with the counselor role, she found herself beginning to identify with the mother role also. The group home father saw his role-identity being related to his
career rather than a father role. He also identified with his role of counselor in the group home. He experienced role conflict, in fulfilling his two roles as employee and counselor at home.

The boys' group was comprised of lower-class boys, many of them from the neighboring low-income housing development. The adults from this neighborhood became the group home parents' peers. One neighbor told the group home father: "I'd whip that boy's ass if he were mine. That'd straighten him out." Another neighbor, related to one of the boys in the group home, called the boy's father (who worked two blocks away), when the neighbor saw that Eddie had run away from the group home mother and hid in some bushes. Eddie's uncle and father ran after the boy and dragged him back to the group home, where the father took off his belt to beat the boy. He stopped at the insistence of the group home mother and told her, "if you want to keep Eddie in line give him a taste of this (the belt). Just call his uncle or me if you can't catch him and we'll get 'um".

Testing of roles occurred within the boys' group as well as between the boys and the group home parents. The group home parents recognized that there was a gap between their expectations (based on middle-class values and norms such as cleanliness — of body, clothes, and living space — cooperation, truthfulness), and the boy's actions (based on subcultural norms of aggression). This cultural gap
increased their tendency to identify the boys' behaviours as problems. As stated in the preceding chapter, the group home parents were faced with a group of children each exhibiting several difficult behaviours. The group home parents' task was to develop techniques to attempt to maintain control—many of these were developed through trial and error. The boys used this testing period to attempt to assess the group home parents' ability to dominate and provide leadership. Some of these children were quite successful in using these behaviours to manipulate adults. Once the adult is manipulated, they have lost control. The group home parents developed strict rules and attempted to make firm decisions concerning the connection of consequences to behaviour. Trying to avoid the boys' manipulation of the rules, general expectations they had started with were replaced with specific rules and specific consequences for the breaching of the rules. There were two boys in the group who were especially manipulative. An excerpt from the logs details the group home parents attempts to deal with these boys.

Steve and Nathan were both late for curfew again tonight. Steve— one and a half hours late, Nathan— four hours late. They were told to go directly to bed and, that we will speak to them tomorrow concerning the consequences. Both boys seem to be having difficulty in meeting this and other expectations in the house. Nathan said that he came by the house earlier, when Steve came in, but saw that we were still awake so he went with his friends to Mark's house. He figured that he was going to be grounded the next day anyway, so he may as well stay out longer and "get everything I can" out of the night. THE NEXT DAY, we told Steve that he would be grounded two nights since this late night romp was a repeat of last week. We
grounded Nathan four nights since he stayed out later. The boys wanted to argue with us about the consequences, saying the rules are that a boy will be grounded the next day for being late for curfew. (trying to manipulate that general rule we talked about at the last boys' meeting). No arguments, we'll talk about this further at the next group meeting. We'll set up specific guidelines concerning amount of time later for curfew and length of grounding to keep consistency and decrease boys' attempts at manipulation.

The group home parents found that specific rules were not so necessary after the testing stage, the group rules and norms are established by the group home parents and the group home parents obtained a leadership role in the group.

**DAY BY DAY**

Len and Pat saw the boys' resocialization as the main goal of the group home. They used group living and group meetings as the vehicle for that resocialization. After several months in the group home, and feeling exhausted from their twenty-four hour job, Len and Pat determined that they could not deal with every behaviour of every child. It's easy to be simplistic, but it came as a revelation. One weekend away from the group home, Len and Pat sat down together and examined the stress and exhaustion that they felt. They were attempting to deal with the problem behaviours on a twenty-four hour basis. During every waking moment the boys' language, gestures, and actions were monitored and attempts made to modify them to fit a more acceptable middle-class mode of adolescent behaviour. The group home mother even woke up at night to modify a child's bedwetting behaviour.
After discussion, Len and Pat decided to develop strategies and maneuvers to focus on a problematic behavior for each boy and the group as a whole. They attempted to narrow it down to the behavior that seemed most important. With the assistance of the boy's social worker and the individual boy, they developed treatment plans for each boy that outlined a problem behavior and mode of dealing with the behavior. At group meetings, they talked about concerns with behaviors that affected the entire group. They developed contracts with the boys that outlined agreed upon expectations of behavior for both them and the boys, as well as consequences that would occur if these expectations were not met. For example, a condition of one sixteen-year-old boy's remaining at the group home was that he followed his curfew and was not truant from school, or become involved in any thefts. He agreed to this, we wrote it out in a contract form and he, his social worker, and the group home parents signed it. If he did not follow it, he would be dismissed from the group home program. Other contracts outlined consequences such as loss of allowance or privileges.

Len and Pat agreed together to communicate to each other and the boys when they needed private time alone or together as a couple. Because of the agency rule that there has to be an approved adult with the boys, and they cannot

* The agency had to know of, and approve of, any adult who cared for the children in the group home parents' absence.
remain in the house unsupervised, it was sometimes difficult to get away together as a couple. The group home parents are given five days (120 hours) of paid time away from the children each month, when an agency relief staff cares for the children. They plan this time off sometimes two months ahead of schedule. This allows little, if any, room for spontaneity. So when parties or other spontaneous events occur, one of them either goes alone, if a relief staff is unavailable, or they both miss the event. This can be difficult for them, and further isolates them. When friends come to the house to visit the group home parents, the children's behaviors and pattern of interaction (rude remarks, and interruptions) can be distracting and annoying to both the group home parents and the guests. This often limits the social entertaining that the group home parents do within the group home. The group home mother became angry that she could no longer have friends over and told the boys that.

Do you know why we don't have friends over? Sure they may come by once or twice but after they see how you guys act -- yelling and fighting and jumping around -- they don't come back. And I'm embarrassed to ask them back. Shirley's five year old acts better than you guys. And that makes me mad that you can't behave as well as a five year old.

Privacy is necessary to marriage, not only for sexual gratification, but for intimate conversations and exchanges of information and ideas. The group home parents need sufficient privacy to talk and work out differences of
opinions and argue. They are very conscious of avoiding arguments in front of the children.

These kids come from families where all they do is argue and physically fight. We (Len and I) don't argue that much anyway, and will sometimes disagree and talk it out in front of the kids. But any arguments that involve them, or our personal relationship, go on behind closed doors, when the kids are at school, or away from the group home. That's a rule we made.

Often when they haven't had that time, they will spend the few hours they have away from the home discussing group home matters and arguing. Len and Pat decided, after several of these episodes, to only spend one hour discussing group home matters, then no more "shop talk". This strategy enabled them to get away from the group home emotionally as well as physically. Difficulties also arise because the group home parents begin to think of the group home as their home and become resentful that they are the ones that have to leave the house to get the privacy they need. Other couples dealt with these problems by having relief staff take the children out of the house for a specified period of time, or by making the group home parents' area of the house out-of-bounds to the children and relief staff during their off-hours. Len and Pat found that they needed more distance from the boys as the boys often successfully manipulated intrusions into their privacy.

The house was structurally set up so that we had a bedroom, study and bathroom that was out-bounds to the boys and away from their main living space. But they were able to manipulate the situation. When Len or I tried to get away privately into our own rooms, loud swearing, loud music or a physical
right among the boys often brought us out of our area to deal with the boys. Even when a relief staff was there, like when one of us was sick, it was difficult to drown out the boys' noise. So we usually went out. Even sick, we'd drag ourselves to my room to get some quiet.

The combination of these factors—mentioned (the forced togetherness of the group members, the problem behaviours, the lack of privacy) affect the group home parents. At different times at the end of the first year in the group home, the group home parents found themselves drawn into the boy's culture. They had a group of delinquent boys who were together about three months and formed a smooth functioning informal culture based on aggressive leadership. Because of staff turnover at the agency, the group home parents had several different supervisors and had grown tired of starting over each time with a social worker who knew nothing about the situation. The group home parents felt helpless at dealing with this manipulative group. They viewed some of the boys as "not good" and "incapable of change" and saw some of the social workers as "soft" and "incompetent". They adopted the boys' attitudes toward each other and frequently told the boys that they "didn't trust them as far as they could throw them". Watkins (1962:128) comments on this pattern that develops with group home parents that are isolated with a delinquent group.

Adults isolated with a group of organized delinquents for twenty-four hours must develop an ideology to withstand the constant manipulation. Lacking other significant reference groups to relate to, they are submerged by the boys' untrustworthiness.
as mentioned earlier, the group home parents developed "contacts" who they used to verify a boy's story. The boys were often aware that the group home mother was calling the school, or the friend's mother to "check up on him". The boy sometimes responded with embarrassment or anger that they were not trusted.

The group home parents showed some identification with the boys at this time. They viewed some of the boys as "common" and others as "punks", and they were "on these boys backs all the time". At times they viewed aggression by the leaders, and didn't intervene. They saw these boys as "asking for it", or "having it coming to them". They would encourage peer pressure in attempts to get a boy to follow a consequence they laid out. For example, the group home mother told Eddie to go to his room. He refused and went into the TV room to watch TV. She followed him into the TV room and turned the TV off, knowing that the other boys who were watching the TV would pressure him into leaving the room so that they could watch TV. After Harold threatened Eddie, he left the TV area and went to his room.

Sometimes we get tired of dealing with the same thing over and over. It's like the boys don't learn from their mistakes. So when we hear them arguing I'll say "let them deal with it themselves", and not go to see what's going on. Other times I'll go see what the commotion is, and I'll make a decision that I think is fair in order to stop the arguing. Then the boys go away and deal with it in their own way, anyway, doing something other than what I suggested.
The group home parents did not, however, identify with the boys' group value orientation completely. One evening when Jim came into the house "clumsily high", and making a real racket the group home father called the police and complained that Jim was underage and causing a disturbance. The boys were quite surprised by this, and said that the group home father was getting carried away, and this place is really becoming a jail. The group home parents found themselves justifying their actions to the boys, thus indicating their marginal position in the group home. After this incident, they talked to the boys about their duties as group home parents. They told the boys that they (as employees) have to follow rules too. "We would lose our job if the agency found out that we allowed you boys to come in here drunk, stoned, and everything else." The group home parents "copped a plea" with the boys. Negotiation is a strategy that the group home parents use in their marginal role in the group home. Their formal role involves maintaining control in the group home, but they must also maintain a rapport with the boys to get their cooperation to meet this role.
THE GROUP HOME MOVES

When the lease expired on the rental property where the group home was housed, the group home parents talked to their new supervisor about moving to another location. The group home mother and supervisor viewed several houses before deciding on one that seemed suitable.

The new group home was located in a middle-class neighbourhood in east Windsor. It, too, was a single-family home. The group home parents saw this new setting as a new beginning and talked to the boys about this. The group discussed how they would present themselves to the community. The boys agreed that they wanted to appear as "just another family" in the neighbourhood. They each created a story to tell those whom they met about what his relationship was to the others who live in the group home.

Boys who had no contact with biological family members called the group home parents their "parents" (when referring to them with friends), but continued to call them by their first names when speaking to them directly. The other boys were brothers or step-brothers, according to this story the boys devised. The boys avoided telling these stories unless they were asked, and they were concerned about becoming too close to people outside of the group home life who may not understand the situation. Maurice talks about this.

Most people think you live with your family, so they don't even ask questions. They say "tell your Mom you're going", or "ask your brother if you can
use it", so I don't tell them any different. But if they do question the different last names, I tell them that my mom (the group home mother) remarried and the other guys are step-brothers. Sometimes they'll say "your mom is young to have such old kids", and I'll just shrug. Good friends don't care though. I let Cindy know where I live. When I met her at the summer program, I knew that she was with the Children's Aid too, so I can talk to her. She knows this is a group home, her mom used to live in a group home.

To the boys who maintained regular contact with their families, and felt loyalty to them, the group home parents and the other boys were referred to as "relatives", such as aunt and uncle and cousins. One boy who had regular contact with his mother, and visited her on weekends said:

 Sometimes I get confused and I say something like "I've got an Atari game at home." Then when they come here they want to see my Atari, which isn't here it's at my mom's house. So I say "Oh, it's at my other house". If they ask any more I say 'nevermind' and change the subject.

The boys perceived that this middle-class neighbourhood would not be accepting of a group home, or a group of non-related people living there. The group home parents supported the boys' stories with their friends, but told teachers, and other adults who were involved in the 'therapeutic' aspect of the boys' lives that this was a group home.

I realize that the kids don't want to stand out and look different. And I don't want to always be explaining. If I call the doctor to make an appointment I say 'for my Son', it's easier than going through a long story. And if a friend of the boys' calls me Mrs. Campbell because a boy who lives here is Jack Campbell, I don't correct him. The kids and I just smile at each other, a knowing smile.
In the previous neighbourhood, the group home had a reputation of housing "tough, delinquent" boys. Thus, the group home parents used this new setting as a strategy to change the type of boys that they accepted. In attempts to make the group home blend into the neighbourhood, which the boys, the group home parents, and the group home supervisor saw as important, aggressive and tough boys would not be suitable. The aggressive leader, Steve, moved out of the group home just prior to the move. Ralph, a sixteen-year-old boy who aspired to higher education, moved in. The next two boys who moved into the group were from a middle-class background and had value orientations that were more similar to the group home parents than the boys' group. One boy, George, was scapegoated and forced to run away. The second child, Jack, was taken in under the leader's wing and became his personal errand boy.

The group home parents extended their role to that of "parents" around the time of the move. Both Len and Pat wanted a "family atmosphere". Len describes his change, and view of his new identity role of "father".

The boys were nervous before we moved and told me that they wanted to fit in. It seemed that behaviours that blended in at one other neighbourhood, like swearing and rights or stealing that called the police into the neighbourhood, stood out in this neighbourhood. These middle-class people had beautiful manicured lawns, and clean-faced kids are expected me to handle these kids 'my kids' in the same way. And I responded to that. I was more conscious of how the kids looked and dressed and behaved.
The group home parents both felt pressure from their peers in this middle-class neighbourhood. They once again became conscious of the deviant interaction pattern of these boys. The language, gestures and dress that had begun to seem normal to them, once again stood out, against this middle-class backdrop. When neighbours called to complain of the boys' aggressive behaviour in the neighbourhood, the group home parents were apologetic in attempts to reduce community hostility to them and the children. They were once again conscious of their molding of middle-class roles and expectations on the boys.

"IT'S THEM OR US"

There is a division between the boys in the group home and the group home parents that they both recognize. This translates into the forming of two sides or teams, "them" and "us". The group home parents see themselves as a team who has to "stick together" when dealing with the boys. They try to avoid presenting critical decisions as unilateral, rather presenting a common decision, emphasizing team work. They also try to avoid arguing in front of the boys or making allies with one of the boys. This is difficult because, as individuals, they have boys that they like best or seem closest to. Some perceptive boys are aware of this, and use it to manipulate the group home parents. The group home mother comments on this.
we both have our favourites in the group home, and they change from time to time. I mean a boy can fall out of your graces. I like boys who are sensitive and quiet, not a 'knock-it-all'. I also like a boy who is clever and witty because I like to joke with the boys. I'll support a boy that I like, and Len and I will argue about it. I usually think he's too hard on the boy, and sometimes I even sabotage his authority by calling him away when he's giving a boy a consequence that I think is too harsh.

The group home parents experienced manipulation from a "con-artist" in the group. Jim is a very verbally adept boy who would talk to the group home parents separately about an issue, and get them up to argue with each other. He often told the group home mother his feelings, and cried or spoke in a very sensitive manner about what he wanted, having found that this was the way to manipulate her. The group home parents found that the majority of their arguments were about this boy with the group home father supporting him and accusing the group home mother of being too harsh. After more than a year, and tired of this child's manipulation of the boys and the group home parents, it was the group home mother who told him to get out of the house.

It finally came to a point where I realized it was him or us. For so long I was determined to hang in there. I argued in his defense even when I saw him manipulate, usually rationalizing that this was the only way he knew to interact and we needed to keep showing him that it won't work. But he was so draining, he wanted the spotlight constantly. Len was tired of his constant ploys for attention and the boys complained of his exploitation and threats and arguments. After a year and a half, we saw little change in him. Finally, one day after he had been talking for weeks about wanting to leave the group home, I told him "so", and I meant it. We refused to take him back, even after he and his social worker met with us. I cried and felt guilty for giving up on him.
The group home parents are under pressure to accommodate to the boys' delinquent transactions and use their manipulative techniques -- the very interactions and techniques that they are trying to change in the boys. At times, they feel drained and overwhelmed, and attempt to move away from the boys emotionally and psychologically (by ignoring or not responding to the behaviour). This technique only strengthens the boys' group structure. The group home parents need time away from the group home, which Len and Pat took every six months, to develop a fresh outlook and regain their enthusiasm and understanding of the boys' group. Social workers who meet with the individual boy for one hour every one or two weeks, concentrate on the individual boy and ignore the group composition. They are, therefore, of little help in aiding the boys to develop more positive values. They also tend to react to crisis situations -- once a boy has already stolen a bike, or gone AWOL -- rather than dealing with the everyday interactions and social patterns that have carried over from the boy's home environment to the group home.

Different value orientations seem to be the main criteria in the distinction that sets up the "us" and "them", although role-identities, and age are also factors. Relief staff can be members of either team depending on their orientation. Most of the relief staff had value orientations similar to the group home parents, since this
is something the group home parents tried to identify when interviewing relief staff. One staff at the Sixth Street group home had value orientations that were similar to the boys. This created difficulties for the group home parents.

Fred was very active with the boys, and took them on several outings, so they were always glad to see him. It wasn't until several months after we hired him that we knew what activities he involved the kids in. Jim, after he became mad at Fred told us some of the things he had been doing. Fred had played pool with Jim and lost $50 to Jim through bets. He also took the boys to parties where they showed pornographic movies and drank. When we confronted Fred with these things, he admitted that he had done them and also told the boys not to tell us because he didn't think we would approve. Fred came from a lower-class background, where he saw these things as "part of a boy's growing up". Fred had been absorbed in the boys' subculture, where he became the boys' leader and used aggression and threats to control them. He was definitely on 'their' team.

The group home parents, social workers and many of the relief staff have a strong middle-class orientation. They view people as combined with good and evil and capable of change. They focus on the future, on the ability of people to achieve goals. When boys in the group home do not seem to want to become better, the adults rationalize that sometimes through early socialization these values have been embedded that are difficult but not impossible to change. The social workers are very individualistic, focusing on one boy (their client) in the group home. The group home parents are more group oriented. The boys, on the other hand, see people as corruptible and able to be manipulated by aggression. They are present oriented, with perhaps short-term future goals.
The group home parents and social workers see the clashing of these two value orientations as evidence of the boys deviancy shown by their negativism, defiance, suspicion, disregard for rules, aggressive and destructive behaviour. However, we can see that the boys and the group home parents are faced with two divergent cultural realities, which are expressed in their social interaction.

THE ROLE OF PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

The participant observer gathers data by participating in the daily life of the people under study either openly, in the role of researcher, or covertly, in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time. (Becker, 1961:22-23)

The researcher's role of group home mother was one that was accepted by the boys in the group home under study. This role, part of the formal group structure, eventually became a part of her role-identity. As a graduate student at the University of Windsor, the researcher audio-taped several of the group meetings at the group home and later talked to the boys about the Bales Analysis that she had done. Several of them, especially the older boys -- Jim and Ralph, were very interested in the analysis. The researcher continued to audio-tape every group meeting, and the boys became accustomed to having their conversations recorded. After the researcher told the boys that these recordings would be used by herself and her advisor to do the research for her
thesis, the boys sometimes referred to the researcher's "teacher" during the tapes. For example, "tell your teacher what we say about the group home", somewhat identifying Pat with the "researcher-student" role. The boy's primary identification was to Pat, the group home mother, a member of the group. It was this role of group home mother that immersed the researcher in the real life situation of the group home. The researcher saw participant observation as the most suitable research technique to meet the objectives of this study. Immersion in the social setting is an important aspect of qualitative analysis, that aids the researcher in developing an "intimate familiarity" with his/her subject (Lofland, 1975). Lofland (1976:10) accentuates the key of participant observation.

To propose to study something is to commit oneself actually to look at it; to stand close to it to scrutinize it; to go where one finds it and watch it. Direct empirical observation is by definition the basis of social, or any, science.

Since the researcher was viewed as a member of the group she did not undergo initiation rites. She did, however, deal with testing behaviours of the boys that have been described previously. Living among the boys, she was able to experience their values and attitudes, and to understand their gestures and language. This enabled her to distinguish the boys' playful jabs from aggressive and hostile ones.
In participant observation, a general rule exists; the observer should be involved to a minimum in interfering with the lifestyle in the group home. Polsky (1962: 17) comments on the difficulties an observer may encounter studying a delinquent subculture. Neutral observation in such a situation is invalid and impossible.

Without active opposition to the boys subculture, one could not maintain his sense of integrity. The observer came to the conclusion that a neutral stance is impossible in a delinquent society. The critical error is for anyone in this situation to act too much like the boys. One does not need to adopt their language, dress, and mode of interaction. The more the observer tried to close the gap by adopting their way of life, the more he complicated the situation. Cottage life was radically different from what the observer was accustomed to; imitating the boys resulted in their provoking him until he was forced to assert his integrity or become a silent accomplice. If the observer's goal was to be unobtrusive, it could have been more effectively achieved by maintaining adult standards than by "adopting" the boy's behavior and attitudes. (Polsky, 1962: 117-18)

The boys in the Oak Street group home had several opportunities to speak candidly with no fear of adult interference or reprisal. The researcher encouraged verbal communication with the boys and developed a rapport with several boys in the group. The group meetings were a time where boys were encouraged, and did speak openly about problems that occurred in the group home. The researcher continued to meet with several of the boys after they had moved from the group home, at which time away from the group home parent role, she was able to discuss issues without reporting them.
The researcher describes, in this chapter, the subtle accommodation to delinquent attitudes and behaviour. Through retrospection after leaving the group home, any discussions with her advisor, the researcher became aware of her assimilation of the boys' values and strategies. This enabled the researcher to understand the frame of reference by which the boys and adults in the group perceived each other and the world. Although the researcher found herself to be more "delinquent prone" when she was with the boys, than when she was away from the group home; it did not, however, become an integral part of her role-identity. Other researchers (Polisky, 1962:54) describe similar experiences with participant observations in a deviant subculture.

Participant observation is truly an art, because the total subjective experience or observation determines the selection and presentation of the data. He carefully weighs his material against the feelings engendered in him by the boys, and unless he understands himself better as a result of his intense experience, the objectivity for which he is aiming will be lost or greatly reduced.10

10 The researcher gives accounts of her subjective reactions to the Oak Street group home in this chapter.
Chapter VI

CONCLUSIONS

This study of group home life was approached as a descriptive study, and as such it attempts to locate relationships between variables to gain a better understanding of the interaction processes in a small group residential care facility. This type of study does not make causal inferences and, therefore, caution must be used in applying the observations of the Oak Street group home to other settings.

The description of the Oak Street group home was written, based on participant observation over a three year period, to portray the everyday life of the boys and the group home parents in this setting. Attempts have been made to depict the strategies, negotiations and bargaining processes that occur in this setting.

Interactionism, as a theoretical perspective, was seen as most appropriate for this study. According to the interactionist approach, social interaction among group members and shared symbols by which meanings are given to interaction have been explored. People operate in "symbolic realities", and attach meanings to these "realities" through ongoing interactions within groups. It is necessary to
determine how people themselves define the situation, since their actions are based on these definitions—definitions which have been incorporated throughout this research.

The creation of shared meanings is an important aspect of the interaction process.

Meaning is a relationship between an individual and events in the environment. Environmental events confront the individual as a set of conditions within which he or she must act. The meaning of the event to the individual is the response he or she makes to it or the readiness to respond to it in a particular way. (Laurer and Handel, 1963:21)

Interactionists contend that behavior is learned through association, identification, and interaction processes. This learning, or socialization, takes place within small groups known as primary groups. It is through the socialization process that one's meanings are acquired and shared, and one develops social values and acknowledges social norms. Socialization and resocialization have important theoretical implications to this study.

The experience of multiple placements is a recurring theme among the children at the Oak Street group home. Many children become involved in the Children's Aid Society, they are "rescued" from their families only to and become locked into the "system," and move from foster family to group home to institution.

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11 The function of primary groups in socialization is dealt with in Chapter 3 (pg.62-65).
For the unlucky children, there is a succession of foster homes, and then, to the accompaniment of meetings of up to eight or nine psychiatrists, therapists, and social workers, they undergo a progression of treatment until they become what is called "hard to serve". No one knows what to do with them. The correctional institutions are waiting beyond them, the prisons. (Sykes, 1933:31)

The Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services did a study of 477 "hard to serve" children in 1981 (Sykes, 1983:31). They found that by age eight every child in the group had experienced at least seven placements. By age fifteen they had averaged ten placements. Twenty of the children had been in more than twenty homes. Therefore, multiple placements is not unusual to the Oak Street group home population. These children are forced to develop strategies to deal with these multiple placements. In the Oak Street group home, delinquent or group care career contingencies were observed. Group care or delinquent lifestyles becomes a way of life to these children, they develop strategies to cope with the entrance into a group, the day-to-day living situations, and the inevitable leaving. Negotiation, as a strategic response, becomes important as the child learns the rules in each new living situation. Processes that occur in the group home are similar to those that occur in any small group formation. The group members come together and strategically work out their roles and norms. They develop shared meanings and interact and communicate with one another by means of shared
symbols that are exemplified through their verbal communication, body language and style of dress. Once these are established, socialization of new members can occur.

The concept of socialization is an important one. There are two aspects of socialization that are pertinent to this study of the Oak Street Group Home. First is socialization that occurred before entry into the group home, second is the socialization that occurs in the group home. The members of the group home experienced socialization prior to entrance into the group home. This includes childhood socialization in the family setting, and for many, socialization in another group care facility. The boys, predominately from lower-class backgrounds, have been socialized in environments with different standards and expectations than those of the middle-class group home—parents, staff and social workers. Lower class youths, in conforming to their own well-defined community, become deviants to the middle-class world. The conflict that occurs between the lower class youth and the middle-class adults is not necessarily a result of a direct challenge. Miller (1953) asserts:

This does not mean, however, that violation of the middle class norm is the dominant component of motivation; it is a by-product of action primarily orientated to the lower class system. The standards of lower class culture cannot be seen merely as a reverse function of middle class standards "turned upside down"; lower class culture is a distinctive tradition many centuries old with an integrity of its own.
According to Miller (1958), this distinctive lifestyle can be seen through a series of behaviors that we call "focal concerns". Six of these concerns correspond to lower-class culture in general, the other two are related to youth activity. Trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy relate to the lower class in general. The juveniles also focus on belonging and status. Each of these concerns are the focus of major forms of behavior in the lower class environment, and can be viewed in the interactions in the group home.

Wolfgang and Ferracuti (1967:158) indicate that the overt use of force or violence, either in interpersonal relationships or in group interaction, is generally viewed as a reflection of basic values that stand apart from the dominant, the central or the parent culture. Our hypothesis is that this overt (and often illicit) expression of violence is part of a subcultural normative system.

Violent conduct is viewed as "acceptable and normative behavior within a violent subculture." In the middle-class culture, violence in interpersonal relationships or in group interaction is not approved, although it does occur. Several aggressive incidents in the group home have been described, indicating that the boys have experienced prior socialization in a violent subculture.

There is evidence that modes of control of the expression of aggression in children vary among the social classes (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967:154). Lower-class boys, for example, seem more oriented toward direct
expression of aggression than middle-class boys. This may be due to the class-based differences in child-rearing techniques. Lower-class parents may tend to punish their children in anger, by striking or threatening to strike them, often accompanied by yelling and swearing. Middle-class parents often punish psychologically rather than physically, they often take away privileges ("grounding") or scold the child, relating punishment to feelings and relationships to produce guilt. The target of aggression is other-directed for the lower-class child. For the middle-class child, the aggression is turned inward. (Gold 1958)

Dietz (1978:19) outlines class-based patterns that relate to child-rearing techniques and the introduction to violence.

The middle-class child calculates whether or not an act will be worthwhile in terms of conscience, effect on others and potential punishment... (sees) raised voices and violence are not only unusual but an indication of a serious breakdown in the relationship... The lower class child learns to evaluate the act in relation to the probability of being caught and punished... familiarity with violent physical contact diminishes the unknown aspect for lower-class children and allows them to perceive violence as part of normal interactions... physical punishment helps to teach a disrespect for the sanctity of the person...

The group home parents and boys have both been involved and influenced by prior class-based socialization. They have, therefore, developed values that are in accordance with their cultural reference, but different from each other.

Values are precipitates of the past histories of men, including the past histories of their
species, their societies, and their groups... the more similar the past histories of two men, the more similar their values are apt to be. (Romans, 1:61:47)

The existence of class-based socialization is well documented in research, and is exemplified in social work case reports of the proportionately greater number of lower-class children who come into contact with the children's Aid Societies and reside in group care facilities such as the Oak Street group home. It is then the responsibility of such facilities to resocialize these children. It, however, does not seem to be recognized that socialization continues while the boys live in the group home. Socialization by the boys' group, "learning the ropes", is an important function of the informal group culture. This occurs simultaneously with the resocialization efforts of the group home parents, staff, and social workers. While the group home parents and social workers are attempting to change the boys' values and ensuing behaviours, their efforts are being subverted by the informal group structure.

The informal culture in the group home is comprised of cliques that form between boys with similar attitudes and are in close proximity, such as roommates. Role behaviour develops according to patterned interactions within and between cliques. Polsky's (1962) typology has been tested in the Oak Street group home, and is seen to be applicable in this setting. Tough leaders have the highest status in the boys' group, that is maintained by the use of strategic
aggression and threats as means of social control. Aggression is the norm in the group home. The tough leaders rationalize aggression by viewing the target as "asking for it" or responsible, they see the aggressive behaviour as responsive and defensive. The "ccm-artist" receives his status from his relationship with the leader, he is the leader's "right hand man". This boy is verbally adept and attractive, both esteemed characteristics among the boys. This makes him well liked. His use of strategic manipulation makes him difficult for the group home parents to deal with. The "quiet type" of boy is an institutionalized boy that has developed the strategy of "fading into the setting", and keep himself physically and emotionally away from the group. This type of boy is seen upon arrival at the group home, but because of the size of the group his strategy changes. The original category of "quiet type" was set up by Polsky (1962) as he studied a larger institutional setting. The "punks" are preoccupied with their low status. They use childish regressive behaviours, such as temper tantrums, as strategies to gain attention. The lowest status type, the "scapegoat", is usually a new, younger boy in the group who is seen as possessing undesirable characteristics such as cowardice, effeminate mannerisms or voice, or "squealing" to adults. The boys' group used deviant means or social control such as scapegoating, aggression, threats and ranking.
The social workers infrequent contact with the group home, and emphasis on the individual toy, gives them little understanding of the interaction processes. They can, therefore, be less accommodating to the delinquent values and social patterns. The group home parents, isolated from the agency and having day-to-day responsibilities for the control of the group home, find themselves adjusting to the delinquent social patterns, and thereby strengthening them. The group home parents, over time begin to identify somewhat with the boys group. They viewed some boys as "cons" or "punks" and disciplined them as a result of their manipulative behaviours -- such as temper tantrums, lying, stealing, drug use -- that were viewed as problematic by the group home parents. Some aggressive acts that occurred among the boys were ignored by the group home parents, as they saw the target as "having it coming to him". The group home parents also manipulated the informal group structure, by encouraging peer pressure. The group home parents developed strategies to deal with the entry, continual interaction and disinvolved from the group home life. They used negotiation, and bargaining with the boys and the social workers indicating their marginal position in the group home. They also used strategic avoidance and getting away from the house. Another strategy that may not be verbalized, but is communicated to the children through experience, is that the group home parents can get rid of a child. Both
group home parents, however, continued to identify with their "parental" or "counselor" role. Sypnowich (1993:31) comments on these aspects of the group care system.

The amazing thing, never to be forgotten, is that the people who make up this system are among the most altruistic in the country. They go into their profession to serve. They have been caught up in a misdirected, unbalanced bureaucracy, a system in which almost no one assumes personal, permanent responsibility for any child, or experiences the satisfaction of watching a child grow up. In this system, children are not learned. They are referred.

The family court system was frightening for many of the children in the group home. They used strategies such as "holding in," as seen by nervous jitters, or "acting out" strategies exhibited in loud, abrasive language and gestures.

The importance of family bonds and the boys' responses were described by the researcher. The children in the group home remain loyal and emotionally tied to their natural parents and family, regardless of abuse or neglect that they experienced. The impact of separation from the child's family and ensuing feelings of loss, rejection and loneliness were not a major focus of this study. The researcher, however, sees a need for further study in this area.

Do the boys accommodate to the group home parents' and social worker's values? This is necessary if successful resocialization is to occur.

What is happening now will be past experience in just a moment, and besides bringing old values to new groups, men acquire new values within them. What they have once done for the sake of something
else, they come to do, for all we can tell, for its own sake. (Ho^ans, 1961:117)

As each boy becomes a member of the group home, he assumes a social role and acknowledges the normative expectations of the group. Through interaction, the boy develops a role-identity that may or may not be congruent with his participation in delinquent activities or interactions. He also develops rationalizations for his conduct so that he can participate in the behavior without damaging his self-esteem. Each boy brings his values, attitudes and predisposition to behaviors and roles with the group into the group home where these can be reinforced, modified or changed altogether. The boys' present outlook is a mixture of their past experiences and socialization and their present socialization within the peer group and resocialization from the adults. The boys exhibit ambivalence and confusion about the two opposing value systems that are presented through the formal and informal structure of the group home. When the boys speak of future plans, some of them aspire to careers such as lawyers and engineers, middle-class aspirations that are influences of the group home parents. These aspirations exist side by side with activities such as lying, stealing, and aggression.
IS RESOCIALIZATION SUCCESSFUL?

The boy's role in the group home, his identity and his dominant value commitment are factors that determine the success of his resocialization in the group home. Resocialization is a major function of a residential setting such as the Oak Street group home. In determining if resocialization is successful, I have outlined four socialization types in the Oak Street group home: the failures, the socialized delinquents, the situational delinquents and the resocialized.

The failures were the boys who were scapegoats in the group, they were the most isolated from the group home parents and staff's values and the relationships in the group home. Having the lowest status in the group they were oriented toward the boys' norms and values. Eddie and George fell into this category. Their role-identities were consistent with this "failed" position in resocialization. They saw themselves as "losers" and "misfits." Both boys continued to participate in thefts after leaving the group home. Although both boys developed relationships with the group home parents, neither seemed able to internalize the group home parents' value orientations. Eddie spent time in a treatment center and George (who spent a short time in jail and was on probation) went to western Canada to look for a job after leaving the group home.
The second type of socialized delinquents were identified with delinquent standards. These types of boys actively participated in delinquent activities both within the group home and outside of the group home. These boys were minimally influenced by the group home parents' values and standards, and were very concerned with their status in the group home. Steve, Nathan, and Kevin typify this category. All three boys were involved in aggression and thefts throughout their stay in the group home. Steve, and Nathan as leaders instigated, Kevin, as a "punk", participated in these acts. All three boys identified with the delinquent role, and were career thieves. Nathan and Steve dropped out of school at sixteen. Nathan, subsequently spent time in a training school and jail and continued his socialization in the violent subculture. Steve continued his career in stealing bicycles and cars after leaving the group home. A few months later, he was killed in a stolen car that overturned and crushed him while attempting to escape the police. Kevin, at thirteen, returned to the lower-class housing development where his delinquent involvement was camouflaged in this violent subculture.

The third group, situational delinquents, were influenced by the group home parents and staff, but remained active in the boys' group. They participated in aggression in the group home but also developed relationships with the group home parents and social workers and progressively
identified with their value orientations. These boys' role-
identities were primarily connected to middle-class
standards by the time they left the group home. Jim, Jerry,
Maurice and Jack (the final group at the group home before
the group home parents left and the group home closed) were
in this category, each of them at different stages.

Jim, who left the group home abruptly after the group
home parents became frustrated with him, went to another
group home. He had begun to identify with the group home
parents' standards, and saw himself as "a lón guy". Jack,
Jerry and Maurice went to foster homes where they continue
to participate somewhat in the aggressive-manipulative
pattern. All three boys identified with middle-class values,
Jerry and Maurice who have experienced multiple placements
and rejection fluctuate between the middle-class and
subcultural values.

The final group appeared to become resocialized at the
group home. Ralph, who became involved in using aggressive
strategies to control the boys' group appeared to have
internalized the group home parents' and staff's norms by
the end of his stay at the group home. He showed little
interest in the boys' group and actively rejected their
norms. His increased involvement in his job (he joined the
army reserves and was away frequently on weekends and the
majority of the summer) and his educational achievements
helped in this transition.
RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher has outlined significant areas found in ongoing interactions at the Oak Street group home. Generalization of these findings to the general "group care" population can only be made with caution. However, informants in this research, the researcher's experience in other settings, and other studies indicate that several aspects of this group experience are common to group homes and residential settings for youth in varying degrees. Polsky (1962) identified similar areas, especially the deviant processes of aggression, threats, and scapegoating, and the differences in value orientations between staff and residents. The importance of the informal group structure was reaffirmed in this study. Areas that the researcher sees as needing emphasis in the resocialization process are trust building, cooperation, problem solving and decision-making. The building and maintaining of positive meaningful relationships seems to be at the crux of this. The researcher, as a practical recommendation, believes that a change in focus by the Children's Aid Society is necessary. More emphasis needs to be placed on the "group" aspect of a group home. This could be accomplished by having one social worker responsible for all of the boys in the group home, so that he/she is concerned with the entire group not individual boys. If it is seen as necessary for more than one social worker to remain involved with individual boys,
it is imperative that the social workers, group home parents and staff meet regularly to obtain a total picture of the group. Individual counselling sessions by the social worker needs to be supplemented by structured small group sessions with the boys and adults involved in the group home. Trained therapists in small group dynamics should be employed to fulfill this function; to focus on and enrich the therapeutic milieu of the group home and create a more positive culture of peers among the boys. Support groups, formal training and workshops for the group home parents and staff members would enhance their skills and enable them to share their frustrations.

FURTHER RESEARCH

Many findings in this Canadian study have supported other research in the United States (Polisky, 1982), it is, therefore, seen as contributing to understanding of the interactional processes in residential group settings. Further research on group care living is necessary, especially in Canada where such research is sparse, so that inferences can be made with greater confidence. It is essential to the study of group care, and human behaviour in general, that we view behaviours through the eyes of the participants. We can only then understand how people work out their lives with one another, and gain insight into the dynamics of group life generally.
There is a need for research of this type to be applied to residential care facilities for girls. These settings have often been ignored in research. Studies of girls' group homes, or treatment centers for girls, would give us a greater understanding of the similarities or differences in boys' and girls' interaction patterns in these settings.

A major research project that compared several group homes would provide more conclusive findings on group interactions in these settings. Comparative studies between group homes and foster homes would provide information on these settings that would better enable agencies to make decisions on the most appropriate setting for an individual child.

Further studies may indicate the implications of the trend of deinstitutionalization, and reintegration into the family. Studies of this nature are presently dealing with the closing of mental hospitals, and may be broadened to include children's care facilities.
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VITA AUCTORIS

Patricia Ann (Milburn) Hayward born in Detroit, Michigan in 1954 moved to Windsor, Ontario with her family in 1963, where she attended grade school and high school. She graduated from Patterson Collegiate Institute in 1973. She attended the University of Western Ontario and completed her studies at the University of Windsor receiving her B.A. in 1976. Upon graduation, she worked for seven years in various treatment centers and group homes for disturbed children in Windsor, Ontario and Orlando, Florida. She continued her studies and received a Child Care Certificate from St. Clair College in 1978 and her M.A. in Sociology in 1983. She is employed with the Children's Aid Society of Essex County as a Child and Family Management Worker.