An Aid to Needy Children Program: A Study of Types and Responses to Casework Services
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ABSTRACT: In a study of an aid-to-needy-children program, an attempt was made to develop a typology and assess the effect of special services on personality, discontinuance and employment. The research design was experimental and sampling random for one part and purposive for another, as special services were available for one group and withheld from a control group. The techniques involved the California Psychological Inventory for the analysis of types and measure of personality change, and discontinuance and employment rates for the measure of the effect of the special services. Five types of clients were identified: apathetic, exploitative, transitory, manipulative, and disturbed. Experimental and control comparisons revealed no differences in the discontinuance or employment rates of the random sample, while personality showed some qualitative differences. Finally, the special services affected both the employment and discontinuance rates of the employable (purposive) sample.

The study with which this paper is concerned was part of an 18-month pilot project undertaken by the Alameda County Welfare Department for the Aid to Needy Children Program (hereafter referred to as ANC). The broad purpose of the project was to test the effectiveness of reduced caseloads and intensive casework services as provided by experienced public assistance workers under professionally trained supervisors. The project was also interested in developing and improving methods for client services. A special unit was established, the Intensive Services Unit (ISU), and charged with the special task of implementing the goals of the project. This special unit and its functions, then, became the experimental variable to be measured against the control or "usual caseload" management policies. The "usual" agency services refers to the management of large caseloads (100) with little time for the extensive and intimate con-

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contacts so vital for more intensive casework practices directed toward client change. Intensive casework services were defined both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the former case, increased contact with the client was possible due to smaller caseloads (35). This included regular monthly, hour-long visits with the clients and their families. The qualitative aspect included increased involvement in the planning for vocational training and job-finding, the utilization of other community service agencies, and solutions to major family problems.

This report will address itself to an attempt to develop a client typology, and to two hypotheses related to the special services offered. These hypotheses are:

1. Those ANC families receiving services from ISU will indicate more improved social functioning as specifically defined than those ANC families receiving the "usual" agency services.

2. Among those ANC mothers judged to be capable of attaining partial or full financial self-support, those families receiving ISU care will achieve this self-support more often than those not exposed to such services.

METHOD

An attempt was made to develop a typology of ANC mothers. The 18-scale California Psychological Inventory was the instrument utilized for this purpose. The classification of clients of social agencies has been a major concern of social work virtually since the inception of the profession. Efforts in this undertaking have had, however, limited success. Even present attempts to provide client classification schemes frequently involve great expenditure of worker time in supplying large quantities of data, entail workers' uncontrolled subjective judgments, and result, consequently, in client classifications which have little clear or reliable diagnostic information. An obviously preferable alternative would be to have a classification device which minimizes workers' time expenditure and subjective judgments, has scaleable dimensions, and provides reliable and clear categories of clients.

In the course of the present research an effort was made to investigate the extent to which the CPI met these desiderata. Easily administered, composed of well-defined scales, and having adequate validity and reliability the CPI had several of the characteristics necessary for a satisfactory classificatory device. The major questions concerned whether the instrument could provide clear client types with sufficient validity. Consequently, the measure of agreement between the classification of the clients with the CPI and the workers' judgment of their own cases was assessed.

The analysis was accomplished in a systematic fashion and included controls for bias. A random sample of 141 ANC mothers was used. At first the group profile was intensively studied and a random sample of individual profiles examined. These initial steps indicated the presence of several types. Three hypothetical groups were established, and testing these against a sam-