

DORIE D. MILLER  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Hospital Section  
JOSEPH N. BYLER  
DIRECTOR  
ROBERT KREIDER  
ASSISTANT

AKRON, PENNSYLVANIA  
PHONE: EPHRATA 646

CAMP No. 85



ADDRESS  
STATE HOSPITAL FOR MENTAL DISEASES  
HOWARD, RHODE ISLAND

JOHN R. ROSS, M.D.  
SUPERINTENDENT AND  
UNIT DIRECTOR  
D. EARL HEISEY  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

FEB 26 1944

Feb. 23, 1944

Mr. J. N. Byler, director  
M. C. C. Headquarters  
Akron, Penna.

Dear Bro. Byler;

Robert Kreider nodoubt has told you of our problem here with patient handling, also of our proposed plan. I would like to tell you how the affair is progressing.

You are aware of the situation we have here in the Pinel Building (disturbed wards), so I don't think I shall go into detail with that explanation. However, I would like to say in some ways the situation has become better and in other ways worse. Better, to the extent that many of the so called older charge attendents we had last spring are now goen. Some of the C.P.S. men are becoming charge attendents now. This is definitely an advantage in earring out some of our methods of kindness in treating the patients. Yet in other ways the situation is becoming worse. Many of the fellows came here with high ideals and were very sensitive to the rough treatment some of the patient were getting by none CPS men as well as some CPS men. Now after one year of this kind of work, I must admit many of the fellows allowed their ideals to be pulled down to near the level of the none CPS help. Some have admitted this change within themselves. I have observed again when this last group arrived last Dec. that they too had high standards of patient treatment and went in with the conviction that they would try to treat patients so if at all possible. But with little success. I am concerned about this, and am making a serious study of it. There are different factors that enter in with this problem, as I see it. First, the men may have good intentions and try their best to carry out the treatment of love and kindness, yet if they don't have the cooperation of the other attendents and with their fellow C.Os, the attempt will be almost hopeless. There is a temptation to fall in line with the routine treatment that has been going on for years. Second, there is no doubt in my mind these disturbed wards are yet too seriously under staffed. We can't accuse the the boys too much under these circumstances. Too many times some of the men are left all along on a very disturbed ward. Third, I believe there are times when the patients disturb the attendents, get on there nerves, aggrevate them and try their patence to such an extent that the easiest thing to do is treat them rough; perhaps with a blow to the jaw etc., This, I know is altogether too true among our CPS attendents. I believe thereis never any occasion for such treatment and motivated by such a spirit. Fourth, I discovered among some of the unit here, that their conscience permits them to use force and violence in the treatment of mentally deranged people, and aren't concerned about treating them kind. If too many have these views, ones reform of the treatment of mentally ill patients becomes ridiculous to such an attendent.

2

Fifth, another possibility is perhaps it was a mistake for us as non-resistance christians to undertake to work in the disturbed wards of these mental hospitals unless the hospital would promise to staff those particular wards with enough attendants so we would be able to put our humane, christian, methods into practice. I am convinced that one can not rightfully do this unless there is enough personnel. Sixth, after all maybe this treatment of the patients in a humane, kind, and loving manner just isn't workable with the insane. Seventh, another condition that we are confronted with here are some individuals who are not of the studious type, only finished the grade school. Of course this isn't exactly a fault, but usually such a individual is not interested in studying more about the different types of mental cases, maybe it is too hard for him. But that person usually does not even put forth an effort to try to make a study of abnormal psychology. He resorts entirely on his physical strength in handling a conflicting situation, rather than on his ingenuity. Since this last group of men came for the relief training class I noticed a improvement. Most of them are more educated and understand the mentally ill better. These fellows are trying the best they can to put the kindness method into practice. I think they will help to offset the other tendency.

What I would like to see done, is an experiment or test made of the kindness method of treatment with one of the most disturbed wards here at our hospital, not only to prove this concern of mine, but for the cause of what we all stand for in witnessing our testimony to the world. If there is something to it, an experiment would answer our question. Since there doesn't seem to be any one to answer this with any authority, I feel it is high time we as an agency seek the solution by a fair experiment. I expressed to Bob Kreider my plan to conduct an experiment here at Howard. Being well aware of the obstacles I had to face, which I outlined to you above, I proceeded rather cautiously.

The first thing that I did was to call a meeting of just the fellows who worked in the disturbed building. Since I have been hearing some unfavorable reports about their method of handling the patients there I thought that would be the first step. At the meeting there were 13 present out of 14 who work there. I told them some of the reports I was getting. I asked them to give their side of it. The majority of them admitted it an impossibility to live up to the standard that I upheld. Some ridiculed the kindness method. Others denied any rough treatment, others felt they should be treated rough, that it is necessary to strike them occasionally, some felt that if the wards were staffed to the required number of attendants they still could not get by without striking the patients. Most of the fellows felt as conditions are at present, it is an impossibility to live up to the "Service Agreement", which they all signed. Yet, some thought even if the wards did have more attendants, they still would have to resort to rough treatment at times. However the majority admitted if they had more attendants they could do a better job.

I also learned at the meeting that Mr. Shaw, the supervisor of the disturbed building, has won the confidence of most of the 14 fellows who work for him. I announced the meeting to just the 14, personally to each one by a sealed envelope. Stating that I would like to have a meeting with all the CPS men who work in the Pinel Bldg. Think<sup>ing</sup> this way it would be more effective, I wasn't interested that the whole group know about the affair as yet. But unfortunately one of the fellows told Mr. Shaw in advance of the meeting I called. The majority of the fellows came to the meeting defending Mr. Shaw. His views on this problem were manifested through some of the men.

3

I saw what I was running up against, the loyalty they had for Mr. Shaw, the feeling that they were <sup>doing</sup> a good enough job because Mr. Shaw said so, and the resentment in general to the standard I upheld. I had my complete plan ready to present to them but felt it would do more harm than good to present it to them just at that time.

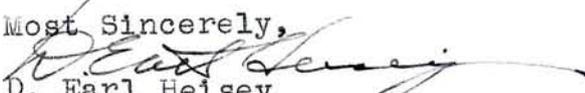
The next morning I went to see Mr. Shaw and told him about our meeting. I thought since the fellows have told him about it, I better have a talk with him in regards to the problem. I tried to tell him of my concern from a religious angle as to what we believe and that on those grounds we are interested in treating the patients kindly. I asked him if he didn't think if he had more men the boys could live up to the "Service Agreement" and our concerns better. He would not admit that. He tried to impress me that he was running his building alright. He finely admitted they could do more for the patients, if he had more help. He was afraid that I would go to Dr. Ross and impress him that he is not running his building right. Mr. Shaw is a very smooth diplomate, he has impressed the Supt. that he is doing alright. After my talk with Mr. Shaw, I found out since that he had a meeting with the men that work for him, and made light of my concerns. He took my views as a joke, and told the fellows there are times that you just must strike a patient. As yet the Supt. Dr. Ross doesn't know anything about this. The plans I had for conducting the experiment haven't been presented to Mr. Shaw or Dr. Ross as yet. It appears to me that Mr. Shaw is afraid that I am going to uncover somethings which will look bad for him, and I suppose it will. For these reasons I am going slow on the experiment idea. I could go to Dr. Ross and explain my plan and concerns and I feel confident that he will agree with me and would permit the experiment, but with <sup>out</sup> Mr. Shaw's consent I am afraid I would be inviting trouble and perhaps would upset things around <sup>here</sup>. It appears to me now that I have one of two things to do, either sell Mr. Shaw the idea to permit the experiment and then go to Dr. Ross with my plan, or try to conduct the experiment secretly with a nucleus of fellows in that building who agree with me on this plan. By the particular men requesting transfers to a certain ward over a period of time till at last the whole ward will be staffed by C.O. all of the same mind on this problem, then these fellows and myself could conduct this experiment unknownly to Mr. Shaw or any of the rest. I believe that this might work. Since the fellows and Mr. Shaw are good friends I don't think there would be any trouble for certain ones to ask for a particular ward to work on. Of course the ward that would be picked would be one of the worst.

These are just some of the thoughts that are running thru my mind in regards to this problem I have here. I don't want to cause any trouble or ~~create a scene~~ <sup>create a scene</sup>, therefore I am going slow and would appreciate any suggestions from you or the committee.

Here is another idea I have on this problem. Since Robert Kreider is assisting you as hospital director it would be of tremendous help to him if he had some actual ward experience, particularly on a very disturbed ward. Would it be possible for him to come here to Howard for several months to get first hand information with our experiment. This would be of great help to the whole MCC agency on how to deal with this much concerned problem that is facing our boys in the various disturbed wards in the hospital we are now serving.

I would appreciate hearing from you soon on this matter, better yet to be able speak to you here.

Most Sincerely,

  
D. Earl Heisey