

DEVELOPMENT OF A STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

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by

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This seminar paper presents the development of a Student Assistance Program at Aquinas High School, La Crosse, Wisconsin. The program was based upon a perceived need to help students develop both personally and spiritually. The goals of the program involve creating a support system to meet the specific needs of the individual student. Featured in this support system are in-school support groups whose primary function is to address the issue of self-esteem.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Background

Aquinas High School is a parochial four year high school of approximately 500 students. Class sizes are relatively small averaging approximately 18 students. The school is established on a modular scheduling system which makes possible a number of open time periods for both students and teachers. Both the small class sizes and the scheduling system make available for the students a tremendous amount of individual attention. This established feature makes the incorporation of a Student Assistance Program very feasible.

Aquinas High School's emphasis on Christian education, discipline, and a curriculum primarily geared for the college bound individual, attracts students from middle class to upper middle class families primarily, however, not exclusively. The non-college bound student is offered an excellent educational foundation which emphasizes speaking, writing, and math skills. Furthermore, the concept of a Christian educational experience is the basis upon which the school has been built and continues to operate. A Student Assistance Program based upon a Christian ethic of helping others in need coincides with this concept perfectly. Aquinas High School has invested much time and has taken a tremendous amount of pride in creating an atmosphere of caring within its institution. The feeling of being a part of a "Christian Family" governs and guides the administration, teachers and students.

Statement of The Problem

Case Study #1

A seventeen year old girl is involved in a tragic car accident that kills two of her friends. She survives the accident after a long and intense hospital stay as well as a six month rehabilitation program. Months after the accident, having been integrated back into school, it becomes quite obvious she needs some help in dealing with the accident and the grief issue that the accident created.

Case Study #2

A sixteen year old girl makes a suicide attempt. Upon investigation it is discovered that the girl has a number of serious problems at home dealing with a dominating father. Coinciding with this is the problem of alcohol abuse.

Case Study #3

A seventeen year old girl was raped when she was ten years old. She repressed and carried this emotional burden with her for seven years, too afraid and embarrassed to tell anyone. Now because of a growing relationship with a boy, her repressed feelings of the event have begun to surface.

These three case studies are true stories and represent only three unfortunate instances among many that guidance counselors and concerned teachers hear from troubled adolescents. Fear, apprehension, confusion, and sadness are intense emotions and feelings that these three students must deal with. While it is fully recognized that parents bear a major

responsibility for helping their children resolve their problems, some parents are either unprepared or unable to provide sufficient help to their children alone for some types of problems. Some parents need and ask for help from others who work closely with their children daily. It is, therefore, the responsibility of schools, their administrators, and their teachers to commit themselves to a program of help so that students, such as these, find it unnecessary to travel through this rather uncertain and unstable period of their life alone. It's with this intention that Student Assistance Programs have begun to spring up throughout the community, the state, and the nation. The overall purpose of these Student Assistance Programs is to provide some structured internal support by trained personnel for students in need of guidance, direction or support in the form of a listening ear, through some of their more difficult encounters which are part of adolescence. In addition, a major part of a quality Student Assistance Program is a structured referral system by which students can obtain professional help by means of outside agencies. An all-encompassing Student Assistance Program should address itself to all needs of adolescents, regardless of how large or how seemingly insignificant they might be. An internal support program as well as an external referral system will accomplish this directive.

Aquinas High School has committed itself to the formation of a Student Assistance Program of this nature. Background information concerning the student body has been acquired, a committee structure has been formed to create this program, outside professionals in the area of adolescent behavior have been consulted, and a training program for

staff members has been completed, all of which are integral parts of the construction of a quality Student Assistance Program. This paper will explain the steps, procedures, goals, objectives, philosophy, and results of the development of Aquinas High School's program.

Need For The Program

Aquinas High School is a Catholic educational institution that seeks to help its students mature as individuals and as members of the Church and civic community. This is partially accomplished by helping them develop physically, spiritually, morally and emotionally. The school is a family community where knowledge, inspired by faith and charity, is shared by teachers, students and parents in a spirit of freedom and personal love of God.

Aquinas High School recognizes that students can experience a number of personal, family related or medical problems which can have an adverse effect on their behavior, conduct, or academic performance in school. Such problems could include learning problems, serious illness or death, emotional and psychological problems, family related problems, alcohol, tobacco and other chemical abuse, child abuse or neglect, or other personal behavioral problems. The school becomes concerned when any of these individual or family problems interfere with a student's school performance or personal development or jeopardizes the health, safety, welfare, educational opportunity, or rights of other students.

Therefore, Aquinas High School maintains a Student Assistance Program to assist students and parents in resolving problems arising from personal, family related, or medical problems.

The emphasis of the program is directed at the student's emotional and personal growth as it relates to his/her own self-esteem.

Given the clientele that Aquinas High School serves, one might expect on the surface that a school of this nature might be somewhat immune to the multitude of problems a true cross-section of the population might encounter. Aquinas, however, does not feel this is true. It believes that its students share the same concerns, problems, and fears common to all adolescents. To validate this belief, this writer investigated the types of concerns and problems with which the student body must specifically deal.

Student Reaction Study

In an attempt to fulfill one of the initial objectives of acquiring some insight into the problems and concerns of adolescents, an informal study was done during the 1983-1984 and 1984-1985 school years. The purpose of the study was to become informed as to the normal concerns that affect the lives of adolescents, both in a positive and negative sense. It was felt that in the planning and development of an effective Student Assistance Program that a proper prospective of student needs be determined. As previously stated, the Student Assistance Program was to be designed with the philosophy that students experience a number of situational crises during adolescence. An all-encompassing program should, therefore, address itself to all of those experiences challenging youth.

Subjects. The study was conducted at Aquinas High School during Psychology class. Psychology class is an elective class offered to

juniors and seniors. Their involvement in the study became a weekly requirement for the course. The study involved 224 students over a two-year period.

Procedure. Each week these students were required to write a "reaction paper". The reaction paper was designed to be an avenue for each student to express his/her feelings and thoughts about any incident that occurred to them within the past week. The following is a list of guidelines and instructions given the students concerning the reaction papers:

1. The subject matter, length, or content of the reaction paper was not to be limited or restricted in any way.
2. The reaction papers were not graded.
3. The reaction paper could be positive or negative in nature.
4. The students should write only what they felt comfortable writing. The student's level of trust in this writer would determine this.
5. The reaction papers were strictly confidential.
6. Each week the reaction papers were read by this writer and reactions were written back to each student on his/her paper.

The purpose of these reaction papers was to give the students some concept of evaluating the experiences in their lives, to become more aware of their feelings and finally, to learn to trust someone with those thoughts and feelings by expressing them on paper. Emotional health is in part determined by the ability of the student to look at himself/herself honestly, to evaluate the direction his/her life

is taking, and to be able to express emotion and feelings to significant others in his/her life. The purpose of the reaction papers for this instructor, in terms of the Student Assistance Program, was to provide some insight into the types of concerns, problems, experiences, and needs of the students this program would serve.

Results. The findings show that the group of females tend to write more personal reaction papers. The females write more about their feelings and the relationships in their lives. Almost one-half of the reaction papers written by the females were about personal feelings, relationships with their friends or relationships within their family. On the other hand, the male reaction papers appeared to be less personal and more concerned with events that were happening in their lives. Less than one-third of the male reaction papers concerned personal feelings or relationships. When the males did express personal feelings, almost one-half of the reactions indicated a lack of self-confidence or insecurities. With the females, only about one-fourth of them expressed concerns over a lack of self-confidence or insecurities. Another difference appeared specifically in the area of relationships. Females wrote more about their relationships with friends of the same sex rather than about members of the opposite sex. Males were more inclined to write about their relationships with members of the opposite sex than about their male friendships. Males also were more concerned with social issues than females. The number one specific subject written about by females was a particular teacher or class in school. The number one specific subject written about by the males was athletics

in school.

Both sexes were very concerned with school. School was the number one general subject written about by both sexes. Grades, classes, teachers, and athletics made up over one-third of all reactions. The subject matter of each reaction was recorded and separated according to the sex of the student. Results were tabulated and ranked as follows:

MALES

Total Number of Reactions 931
 Subject Matter Rated by Category - Summary

1. School 362/931 38.8%
 - A. Athletics 109/362 (30.1%)
 - B. Teacher/Class 76/362 (20.9%)
 - C. Grades 54/362 (14.9%)
2. Events 230/931 24.7%
 - A. Recreation 62/230 (26.9%)
 - B. Work 35/230 (15.2%)
 - C. Holidays 24/230 (10.4%)
3. Friends 112/931 12.0%
 - A. Relationship w/Girl 66/112 (58.9%)
 - B. Male Friendships 46/112 (41.0%)
4. Personal 97/931 10.4%
 - A. Confidence (Self-Esteem) 45/97 (46.8%)
 - B. Depression 14/97 (14.4%)
 - C. Future 10/97 (10.3%)
5. Family 61/931 6.5%
 - A. Parents 37/61 (60.6%)
 - B. Siblings 12/61 (19.6%)
6. Social Issues 29/931 3.1%
 - A. Drinking (Age) 11/29 (37.9%)
 - B. News Items 8.29 (27.5%)
7. Miscellaneous 40/931 4.2%
8. No Reactions 88/931 9.4%

Top 10 Concerns By Subject

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Athletics 109/931 11.7% | 6. Male Friendships 46/931 4.9% |
| 2. Teacher/Class 76/931 8.1% | 7. Self-Esteem 45/931 4.8% |
| 3. Relationship w/Girl 66/931 7.0% | 8. Parents 37/931 3.9% |
| 4. Recreation 62/931 6.6% | 9. Work 35/931 3.7% |
| 5. Grades 54/931 5.8% | 10. Holidays 24/931 2.5% |

FEMALES

Total Number of Reactions 1499
 Subject Matter Rated By Category - Summary

1. School 526/1499 35.0%
 - A. Teacher/Class 180/526 (34.2%)
 - B. Athletics 92/526 (17.4%)
 - C. Grades 84/526 (15.9%)
2. Friends 294/1499 19.6%
 - A. Female Friendships 156/294 (53.0%)
 - B. Relationship w/Boy 138/294 (46.9%)
3. Events 255/1499 27.0%
 - A. Recreation 58/255 (22.7%)
 - B. Holiday 51/255 (20.0%)
 - C. Work 45/255 (17.6%)
4. Personal 189/1499 12.6%
 - A. Self-Esteem 51/189 (26.9%)
 - B. Depression 31/189 (16.4%)
 - C. Future 20/189 (10.5%)
5. Family 156/1499 10.4%
 - A. Parents 83/156 (53.2%)
 - B. Siblings 47/156 (30.1%)
6. Social Issues 3/1499 .2%
7. Miscellaneous 75/1499 5.0%
8. No Reaction 125/1499 8.3%

Top 10 Concerns By Subject

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Teacher/Class 180/1499 12.0% | 6. Parents 83/1499 5.5% |
| 2. Female Friendships 156/1499 10.4% | 7. Recreation 58/1499 3.8% |
| 3. Relationship w/Boy 138/1499 9.2% | 8. Self-Esteem 51/1499 3.4% |
| 4. Athletics 92/1499 6.1% | 9. Holiday 51/1499 3.4% |
| 5. Grades 84/1499 5.6% | 10. Siblings 47/1499 3.1% |

Program Goals

It was Aquinas High School's conviction that each Student Assistance Program created should be individualized to meet the specific needs of the students they serve. Undoubtedly adolescent needs are generally more similar than different from school to school, however being a private, religiously based institution, Aquinas High School believes in creating an assistance program specifically tailored to student needs and a Christian philosophy. The specific goals of the Student Assistance Program were identified as follows:

1. To assist students and parents in resolving problems arising from personal, family related, or medical problems.
2. To create a network of support internally emphasizing the importance of a student's self-esteem.
3. To create a systematic referral system to deal with problems outside the realm of our staff's expertise.
4. To develop an open, honest, and trusting atmosphere within the school.
5. To incorporate Christian values into the program.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The foundation upon which the Student Assistance Program is based is a belief in the importance of the personal growth of the student. The concentration of the program is, therefore, toward the development of each student's self-esteem. It is the conviction of this writer, as well as professional consultants to this program, that self-esteem is the basis of an adolescent's emotional health and that the emphasis of the Student Assistance Program should be directed toward this aspect of his/her emotional growth. The following poem by Virginia Satir (1970) summarizes this feeling.

Importance of Self-Esteem

I AM ME

In all the world, there is no one else exactly like me.

There are persons who have some parts like me,
but no one adds up exactly like me.

Therefore, everything that comes out of me is authentically mine
because I alone chose it.

I own everything about me -

- my body, including everything it does;
- my mind, including all its thoughts and ideas;
- my eyes, including the images of all they behold;
- my feelings, whatever they may be - anger, joy, frustration,
love, disappointment, excitement,
- my voice, loud or soft;
- and all my actions, whether they be to others or to myself.

I own my fantasies, my dreams, my hopes, my fears.

I own all my triumphs and successes, all my failures and mistakes.
Because I own all of me, I can become intimately acquainted with me.

By so doing I can love me and be friendly with me in all my parts.

I can then make it possible for all of me to work in my best interests.

I know there are aspects about myself that puzzle me, and other aspects about myself that I do not know.

But as long as I am friendly and loving to myself, I can courageously and hopefully look for the solutions to the puzzles and for ways to find out more about me.

However I look and sound, whatever I say and do, and whatever I think and feel at a given moment in time is me.

This is authentic and represents where I am at that moment in time.

When I review later how I looked and sounded, what I said and did, and how I thought and felt, some parts may turn out to be unfitting.

I can discard that which is unfitting, and keep that which proved fitting, and invent something new for that which I discarded.

I can see, hear, feel, think, say and do.

I have the tools to survive, to be close to others, to be productive, and to make sense and order out of the world of people and things outside of me.

I own me, and therefore I can engineer me.

I am me

and I AM OKAY.

Self-esteem is a measure of how much or how little we value who we are. It's a sense of feeling worthwhile. It's the essence of an individual's emotional health. Gregory Rochlin, (1973, p5) author of Man's Aggression, The Defense of Self, states ...

"To esteem oneself and feel lovable is the bottom most common denominator in all behavioral equations of human activity. It guides every thought and act of all human beings through each waking and sleeping moment of their lives. This is our endless pursuit, above all to preserve the self."

Self-esteem determines who we are, and who we want to become. It has an overwhelming influence on relationships, on the ability to cope with life's situational crisis, and on the direction in which an individual's life is headed. It is generally accepted that people who have developed a positive self-image are characterized by the following traits:

Positive Relationships With Others

When individuals feel good about who they are, they are more accepting of others. They tend to see the good in others because they see the good in themselves. Their relationships, then, tend not to be jealous or possessive because the core of jealousy is insecurity. According to Dr. David Viscott, (1984, p27) psychiatrist and author of the book The Viscott Method, "Being insecure prevents you from accepting other people as they are." People with high self-esteem do accept others primarily because they have accepted themselves and are happy with the direction of their lives. Whether it be a peer relationship, or a parental relationship, these people feel loved for who they are rather than something they have done.

On the other hand, people with low self-esteem and consequently a great deal of insecurity, form relationships based upon that insecurity. As a result a jealous relationship develops. It's only through that other person that the individual accomplishes a feeling of self-worth. Their possessiveness results from a feeling that they must control other people's reactions since it is through them that they measure their own self-worth. Dr. Viscott (1984, p15) refers to this as "selling out" on yourself. He adds, "When you sell out for security, you think you're

taking out insurance against fate, but you're really betting you won't make it on your own." This whole process eventually reinforces the belief that the individual isn't as good as he really is.

The Ability to Bounce Back

Just as a boxer gets knocked down, so he gets back on his feet as quickly as possible. Life is full of such "knockdowns" and it appears that people with a healthy self-esteem tend to get back on their feet more quickly. A person's ability to cope with life's situational crises appears to be dependent upon that person's self-image. According to Dr. Viscott, (1984, p15) "Self-esteem rises as the ability to cope improves. The reason for this is that optimism replaces feelings of hopelessness."

Goal Setting

Furthermore, self-esteem becomes a critical need because of the expectation of success or the fear of failure. Goal setting involves the removal of self doubt, also the removal of a fear of failure. People with a healthy self-image often view their future as being bright and full of success. Therefore, it is understandable that they set high goals. They have succeeded enough times in their lives that their fear of failure is minimal. On the other hand, people with low self-esteem set very few goals as well as relatively low goals. Their self-doubt and fear of failing are often interpreted as apathy or a real lack of confidence. Dr. Suzanne Faust (cited in Faust, 1980, p75) states, "If a person views himself as a failure sort of person he often fails when he could succeed. Students often perform or achieve in accordance with

their self-picture rather than according to ability." Dr. David Viscott further views a lack of self-esteem in relationship to goal setting and fear of failure. People with low self-esteem develop a fear of giving their best shot on a task or on setting high goals because if the individual would set high goals or take some risks and fall short, he would have no way to justify his failing. These people might pretend to try but never do their best work. As a result, their self-doubt increases, thus Dr. Viscott sees failure not as a failure, but as a sign that the person is attempting to grow.

Development of Self-Esteem

There are three primary sources which greatly influence the development of a young person's self-esteem, parents, peers, and teachers. These sources are extremely critical and while a child's parents are the initial influence, peers and teachers may become equally important in the task of a child's emotional growth.

In the early stages of development, parents exert a tremendous amount of energy to insure proper physical and intellectual growth. Although much has been written by pediatricians to advise parents in these two areas of development, a far greater and more extensive amount of research has been done within the last twenty years concerning the emotional development of children. This research emphasizes the importance of the parents' role in the development of a child's emotional growth, as well as the critical importance of the child's self-esteem in that growth process. Dr. David Viscott (1984, p27) states, "Your parents' attitudes towards you determine in a large part how you feel about

yourself. As a child you learned to see yourself reflected in your parents' opinion." And never has this point been so clearly evident as in Harry Harlow's experiment (cited in Ragland and Saxon, 1981) at the University of Wisconsin with primates. He was interested in the effects of a mother's love or lack of it on an infant monkey. He attempted to measure the emotional responses of these young monkeys and draw some correlation to human relationships. In this famous experiment, Harlow substituted two artificial "mothers" for the real mother monkey. One artificial mother was made up of chicken wire with a nipple and bottle for feeding. The other substitute mother was a padded terry cloth mother. The infants preferred the cuddly and soft cloth model (without a source of food) to the wire mother. Rubbing against and clinging to something soft seemed more important to the monkeys' development of emotional warmth and security than ready access to food given by the wire mother. When the cloth mother was removed, the young monkeys began to show qualities of human neurosis, such as insecurity, isolation, and depression. From this study, Harlow concluded that a strong emotional bond between parents and child in early childhood is essential for the development of a healthy self-esteem.

From this study, as well as others, psychologists agree about the important role of parents in the development of self-esteem. Children grow up measuring their self-esteem based on their parents' view of them. Children slowly begin to damage their self-image when they fail to meet the standards set by their parents whom they have come to respect and love. On the other hand, there is a correlation between children who grow up to be self-assured, confident, and competent

adolescents and parenting styles. In a study done by Diana Baumrind (1972) of the University of California at Berkeley, she points out that:

1. Socially well adjusted adolescents come from homes where the child's self-esteem is a top priority.
2. High achieving adolescents have parents who set high but realistic goals for their children, and provide warmth and support for the child in the growth process.
3. Adolescents who were able to talk out their problems with their parents as children are likely to display self-assertive and self-confident behaviors.

Once a child reaches school age, the role of the parent begins to diminish and the importance of a child's peer group and teachers increases in value. When he reaches adolescence, the peer group becomes the single most important element in a young person's development. This time in a child's life becomes a time when the child learns to live apart from adults. An intense desire to belong characterizes this period, however the reverse of this intense desire to belong, the desire to exclude, is a primary cause of unhappiness and destruction of self-esteem during adolescence.

Schools and teachers also become a primary influence on the child and his development of self-esteem. Schools become a home away from home. Six to seven hours a day teachers become parents. No other institution can compare to the tremendous influence teachers and schools can exert on an individual.

Verne Faust (1980), author of the book Self Esteem In the Classroom

suggests that the essence of learning is self-esteem. Faust believes that by age 5-6 much of his inner strength has been lost and the school's labeling process of good vs. bad prohibits emotional growth in terms of self-esteem. Faust continues to explain that children tend to grow dependent on the teacher for their self-esteem, very similar to the process explained previously with parents. Teachers impose their standards on individuals and fail to consider those standards set up by the individuals themselves. Hence, if the teacher's standards are not met the child feels he is a failure. As a result, an intricate psychological defense system begins to develop to repress guilt, anger, and disappointment with self. Commonly used defenses such as rationalization (excuse making to justify behavior), projection (seeing one's inadequacies in others), denial (not recognizing the reality of a situation), minimizing, defiance and withdrawal, relieve anxiety but interfere with learning. Faust feels schools tend to inhibit spontaneous learning and responding by teaching students to be cautious and careful, not to be wrong. Creativity is sacrificed and students learn quickly not to take chances, all of which according to psychologists, is detrimental to the development of a healthy self-esteem. Consequently, low self-esteem leaves students feeling vulnerable and unsafe which results in additional fear and thus more defenses. The vicious circle destroys human potentialities. Faust feels that the core of the relationship between teacher and student must be positive, non-threatening and supportive of self-esteem. More of a relaxed atmosphere and open communication nurtures self-esteem. The learning climate is created by the teacher's attitude and that attitude should be centered around the

value of a student's self-image. The best learning climate is one in which students feel good about themselves as persons regardless if they achieve or fail to achieve. This statement is based on the belief that all humans are innately driven towards growth and a curiosity to learn. The Carnegie Council in their "Disaster Report" (cited in Faust, 1980, p273) reports, "High School is an alienating experience for many young people." It is then of paramount importance that teachers prevent this from happening.

Application to Student Assistance Program

"I hope that coming generations will look back at education of our time and marvel at its barbarity, its destruction of human potentialities ..."

Margaret Mead (cited in Faust, 1980, p130)

This rather strong statement serves as a motivation to educators to take a look at the system and at what can be done to insure that human potential is not destroyed. The development of self-esteem appears to be a starting point for schools, as the core of growth appears to be linked to self-esteem. A student's emotional development must be a major concern for educators either as a part of the regular curriculum or in the form of a Student Assistance Program. Verne Faust (1980, p266) suggests that "feeling classes," where students are allowed to express feelings openly, become a part of the regular curriculum. More practically, a Student Assistance Program should be an important avenue for students to learn to express feelings. It's in this process that students begin to learn about themselves, begin to learn to not be

ashamed of their feelings and begin to learn to trust, all of which are critical steps in the growth of self-esteem. The focus of the Student Assistance Program should therefore concentrate on the following principles.

Self-Help

It's always up to you to help yourself. According to Dr. David Viscott, (1984, p66) "It's always unwise and unsafe to depend upon others for your own self worth. No other person will ever make it unnecessary for you to be complete ... You learn to accept yourself and stop trying to please others as a way of proving your worth ... When you finally grow up you learn to cherish what you like in yourself and improve what you don't like." The key is learning to like yourself.

Risk Taking

Taking chances with people involves the risk of rejection. Dr. Viscott, (1984, p104) however, explains "that to experience life, a person must accept himself so that he can experience rejection without losing self-worth." Also taking chances involves changing, and understandably there is a tendency in people to act in ways to keep oneself as is. People want to change only if they still feel in control and if they gain assurance that the change will enhance their image of themselves.

Learn to Trust

Trust involves the expression of feelings. Often these feelings are disguised and protected by a psychological defense system, however, students must attempt to get in touch with these feelings and consequently

learn to express them.

The Declaration of Self-Esteem presented by Dr. David Viscott (1984) summarizes the focal point of the Student Assistance Program.

1. You have the right to be you - the way you are, the way you want to be.
2. You have the right to grow, to change, to become, to strive, to reach for any goal, to be limited only by your degree of talent and amount of effort.
3. You have the right to privacy - in marriage, family, or any relationship or group - the right to keep a part of your life secret, no matter how trivial or important, merely because you want it to be that way. You have the right to be alone part of each day, each week and each year to spend time with and on yourself.
4. You have the right to be loved and to love, to be accepted, cared for, and adored, and you have the right to fulfill that right.
5. You have the right to ask questions of anyone at any time in any matter that affects your life, so long as it is your business to do so; and to be listened to and taken seriously.
6. You have the right to self respect and to do everything you need to do to increase your self-esteem, so long as you hurt no one in doing so.
7. You have the right to be happy, to find something in the world that is meaningful and rewarding to you and that gives you a

sense of completeness.

8. You have the right to be trusted and to trust and to be taken at your word. If you are wrong, you have the right to be given a chance to make good, if possible.
9. You have the right to be free as long as you act responsibly and are mindful of rights of others and of those obligations that you entered into freely.
10. You have the right to win, to succeed, to make plans, to see those plans fulfilled, to become the best you that you can possibly become.

In conclusion, the ultimate goal of the Student Assistance Program is to develop an ability to change, but before we can change a process must occur. The steps in that process are outlined below and become the focal point of the Program.

Self-Awareness

We must become aware of our needs, our desires, our goals, our strengths, our weaknesses, our successes, and our failures. We must become aware of the feelings that become the motivation for our behavior.

Self-Acceptance

We must learn to accept ourselves and not to fear non-acceptance by others.

Self-Esteem

We must learn to like who we are and become enthusiastic of what we might become. It's then we will feel the strength to change what we don't like.

Ability to Change

We must recognize what is changeable in our life and have the courage to take the risks involved in change.

Review of Support Group Models

Part of the initial work in constructing a Student Assistance Program was to research other programs in the State of Wisconsin, both public and private. With these schools as a starting point, a committee would review each program, assimilating material that could be adapted to Aquinas High School. The following schools responded with information about their programs:

1. Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School (public)
2. Tomah Senior High School (public)
3. Osseo-Fairchild High School (public)
4. Madison Edgewood High School (private)
5. Manitowoc Roncalli High School (private)

From these assistance program models, the following list of features were reviewed and discussed, as part of the implementation into the Aquinas High School's Student Assistance Program:

1. Student Assistance Program Philosophy
2. Student Assistance Program Goals

3. Student Assistance Program Referral Model
4. Student Assistance Program Policies/Guidelines
5. Student Assistance Program Procedures/Responsibilities
6. Student Assistance Program Referral Forms
7. Review of the legalities that would affect the program
8. Suggested in-school support groups

In reviewing the information from the five various programs, two observations can be made. First of all, Student Assistance Programs require a tremendous amount of organization. Policies, procedures and roles of individuals involved must be well defined and very specific. In planning, time should be taken to clearly identify those aspects. If not, the credibility and professionalism of the program will suffer. It is the professionalism about the program that will gain the needed support from the administration, the parents, the community, the faculty, and the students.

Secondly, in a critical sense, the programs reviewed were primarily drug and alcohol related programs. Although the problems of drugs and alcohol use and abuse among adolescents should not be minimized, a totally complete Student Assistance Program should encompass all aspects of adolescent development and behavior. To deal solely with drugs and alcohol might bypass other critical issues with which adolescents must deal, such as:

1. Self-esteem
2. Family relationships
3. Peer relationships
4. Academics

5. Loss issues
6. Depression
7. Other personal/emotional problems (disorders)

Admittedly, often times alcohol and/or drug use and the above-mentioned considerations are so interrelated that it is difficult to distinguish between them. Is it the problems with the family that cause an adolescent to drink or is it the drinking that's creating problems with the individual and his/her family relationship? The point should be made clear. It really doesn't matter what is causing what. The critical issue is to be able to help or refer an individual regardless of the problem or concern. A complete Student Assistance Program should attempt to prepare itself for the entire range of adolescent behaviors. Aquinas High School Student Assistance Program planning committee began its task of creating, not only a program to screen, evaluate, help or refer drug and alcohol problems, but also provide the same kinds of services for other critical issues of adolescents, previously mentioned.

CHAPTER 3
STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Referral System

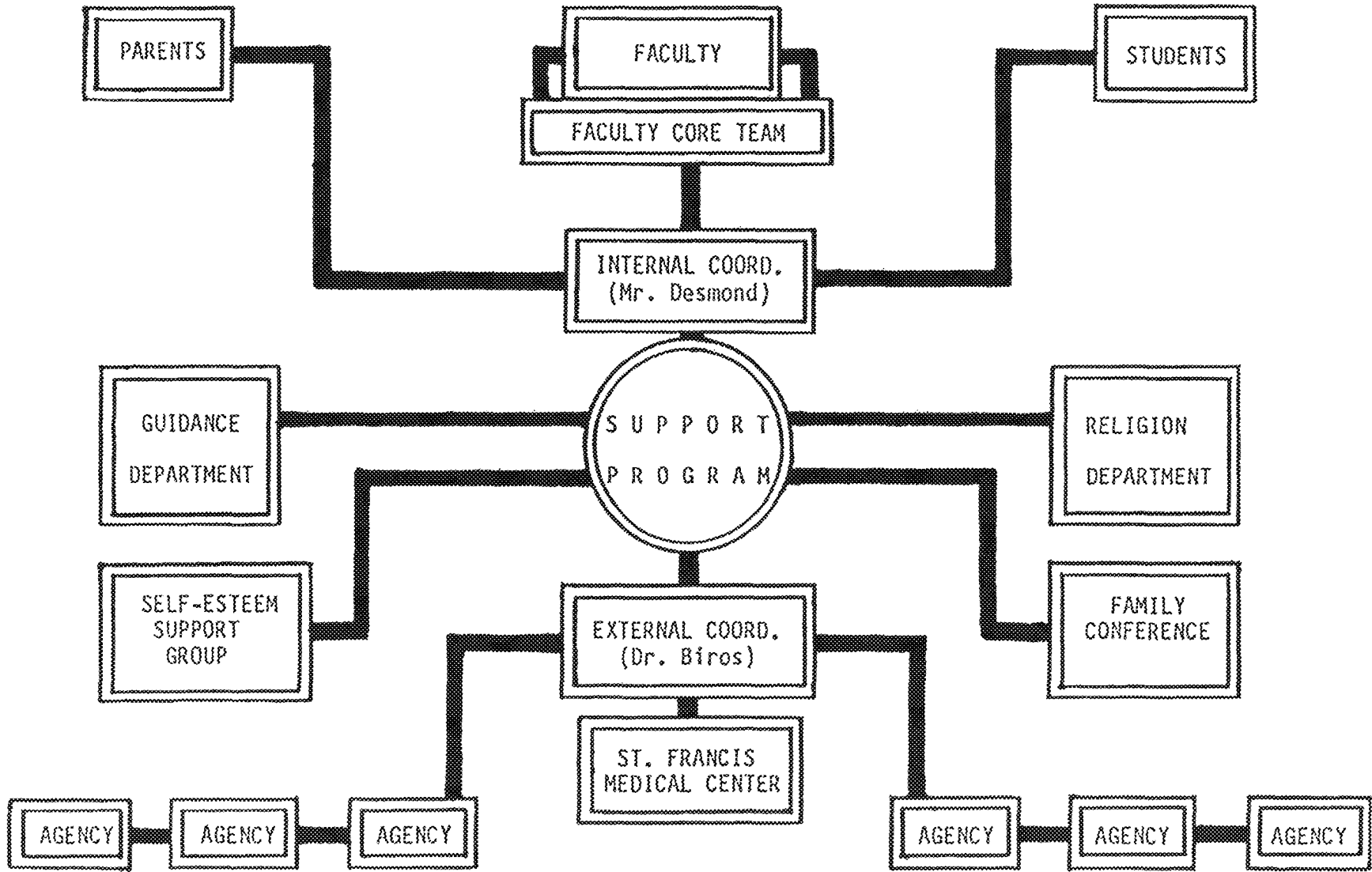
The structure of the Student Assistance Program involves a referral system that stresses two important points.

1. The organizing committee felt, to streamline the process of referral, it had to reduce the number of forms to fill out. One of the criticisms the committee had about other Student Assistance Programs was the excessive number of forms to be completed before a student was "eligible" for assistance.

2. The referral system involves constant communication among interested parties. The communication must be a process in which parents, faculty members, and students feel open to express concern for a student. In return, it is important, especially in the case of a parent or faculty referral, that the Student Assistance Program Coordinator provides feedback as to the general progress of the student referral. For instance, has the student chosen to join a support group? This requires a professional trust and judgment on the part of the Student Assistance Program Coordinator to provide essential information but certainly not breach confidentiality. Within the internal structure of the Student Assistance Program, constant communication and feedback is exchanged among the Student Assistance Program Coordinator, the Guidance Department

representative, the support group leaders and the external coordinator. Within this interaction an appropriate course of action can be decided upon as well as a support system provided for those faculty involved. Chart 1 depicts the organizational/referral process for the Aquinas High School support program.

ORGANIZATIONAL/REFERRAL CHART -- AQUINAS HIGH SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM



Depicted in this chart is the referral process. Referrals come from basically one of three primary sources: parents, faculty members or students themselves. A student may initiate his/her own participation by personal arrangement with a faculty core team member. Referrals can be informal or formal through the use of a referral form. (See Appendix A.) Referrals are received by the Student Assistance Program Coordinator. At this point, the Student Assistance Program Coordinator will set up an appointment with the student referred. In this initial meeting, a large range of topics are discussed. The purpose of this pre-assessment interview is to get to know the student better and attempt to make him/her feel comfortable with the person conducting the interview.

Adolescent Assessment Criteria

Assessments are made following the initial interview, and any referrals to be made will be discussed and decided by the core team. Areas in a student's life that must be addressed and assessment criteria upon which a decision will eventually be made are:

School Performance

1. Grades
2. Attendance
3. Extra-curricular activities
4. Behavior
5. Self-evaluation of school performance

Relationship - Family

1. Parent relationships

2. Sibling relationships
3. Consequences of inappropriate behavior
4. Self-worth within the family - How loved do they feel?
5. Self-evaluation of family relationships

Relationships - Peers

1. Social activities
2. Relationships with the opposite sex
3. Status with peers
4. Self-evaluation of peer relationships

General Questions

1. Job
2. Future plans
3. Self-esteem (strengths/weaknesses)

Interview Guidelines

The atmosphere of the interview itself is critical. The following is a list of considerations and guidelines that should be adhered to in this pre-assessment interview.

1. Take time building trust.
2. Ask questions but don't interrogate.
3. Remove anticipated fears such as:
 - A. You're going to take something away
 - B. You're going to try to change them.
4. Recognize that the person will tend to be on the defensive.
5. Avoid being judgmental.

6. Separate the person from his behavior.
7. Attain eye contact. Pay close attention to non-verbal responses.
8. Look for inconsistencies (e.g., you say you're angry and you look very sad).
9. Gather information and assess. Do not turn the interview into a therapy session.
10. Don't reinforce alibis by discussing them and don't argue.
11. Jot down significant quotes.
12. Show care and concern.
13. Ask the following questions:
 - A. What have you thought to do?
 - B. What do you want to do?
 - C. What are you willing to do?
14. Give the person encouragement to act. Let them know they've taken an important step.
15. Give the person credit for openness and honesty.
16. Get some kind of verbal commitment.

As an interviewer there are two additional things to remember. First of all, this is often a process that might demand several interviews. Secondly, there are no failures, even if the person chooses not to take any action at this time. It might be that tiny chip you made in the person's defense system that may make another person's job in helping him/her a bit easier.

Subsequent visits with the student as well as interaction with other core team members will lead to a decision being made as to possible

courses of action. At this point the student is made aware of the possible alternatives or referrals such as:

1. No further action needs to be taken
2. Personal counseling with a Guidance Counselor
3. Personal religious counseling
4. Family conference
5. Participation in an in-school support group
6. Referral for outside evaluation, further assessment or treatment.

It is important to point out that the student's participation in any of these options is a decision made by the student. The committee felt that the success of this program would hinge on the concept of a "voluntary opportunity to grow."

Student Assistance Program Policies

The following policies have been adopted and approved by the Student Assistance Program coordinating committee.

1. The Student Assistance Program is a voluntary opportunity for the student to become involved in process and decisions affecting his/her life; it is not intended as a disciplinary referral.
2. The Student Assistance Program will work in accordance with school board policies, administrative policies and state statutes.
3. At all times it is the prerogative of the student or family to accept or reject assistance.

4. No records of the student's participation in the Student Assistance Program will become a part of the student's permanent record.
5. The Student Assistance Program coordinators will inform all staff regarding philosophy, policies, procedures and any state legal implications connected with the Student Assistance Program.
6. Any student accepting referral to the Student Assistance Program is expected to make an appropriate commitment of involvement.

Procedures

1. Parents, faculty, or students may make recommendations for participation. The student may initiate his/her participation by personal arrangement with a coordinator.
2. On the basis of the assessment, the staff coordinators may recommend one or more of the following courses of action:
 - A. No reason for immediate concern - no further action necessary at this time
 - B. Personal counseling with a Guidance Department counselor
 - C. Participation in an in-school support group
 - D. Personal counseling with a member of the Religion Department
 - E. Family conference
 - F. Referral for outside evaluation, further assessment or treatment.
3. The Student Assistance Program coordinators will continue to be concerned with the student's personal growth and an opportunity

for a follow-up will be made available.

Responsibilities

The Student Assistance Program coordinator will be responsible for the overall functioning of this program. However, a team approach is essential to the success of the program. Responsibilities such as the referral process, the decision making process, and the actual functioning of the support groups should be shared.

All faculty members are given the responsibility to become involved and to become contact people for the students. It is of a critical importance that the faculty not only believe in and support the program, but that they also become involved in the program by showing concern and sensitivity for students and their problems and that they listen to their needs. At this point, the faculty members will be responsible for making decisions concerning referrals to the Student Assistance Program. Referrals could be made to the Student Assistance Program coordinator or other core team members.

The core team, which includes a guidance counselor and faculty members who have received support group training, is responsible to:

1. Meet and discuss referrals
2. Further research student backgrounds
3. Interview possible support group candidates
4. Make placement decisions
5. Assist in the formation and facilitation of support groups
6. Provide necessary feedback to faculty referrals.

Administration's primary responsibilities are to provide total support for the program. This would include:

1. Financial backing (for support group training for faculty)
2. Scheduling (freeing up core team personnel for the implementation of the program)
3. Information source and promotion (for community and parent groups).

Community Agencies

St. Francis Medical Center has become a primary source for information and outside referrals for three reasons. Dr. Dennis Biros, M.D., a psychiatrist at St. Francis, served on the planning committee as a professional consultant and agreed to serve as an external coordinator. He is consulted for advice as well as for other possible outside referral agencies and appropriate counselors. Secondly, the organizing committee felt that since Aquinas High School was a Catholic school and St. Francis a Catholic hospital, it appeared to be a logical union. Thirdly, faculty members at Aquinas were trained at St. Francis Hospital for support group experiences. The following is a list of outside contacts or agencies in La Crosse that can be consulted or referrals made.

St. Francis Hospital

1. Dr. Dennis Biros, M.D. - Psychiatry
2. Dr. George Planavsky, M.D. - Psychiatry
3. New Directions

Contact Person: Tom Roberts - Family Therapist Supervisor

4. Regional Clinic for Eating Disorders

Contact Person: Gayle Brooks, PhD - Clinical Psychology

Lutheran Hospital

1. First Call for Help

Contact Person: Steven Beazley - Community Liaison Worker

2. Regional Center for Chemical Dependency Treatment

Other Agencies

1. Coulee Council on Alcoholism and Other Chemical Abuse

Contact Person: Anne Ellefson - Education Consultant

2. Riverdale Marriage and Family Clinic

3. Teen Health Service

Contact Person: Tim Skinner - Director

4. Linda Wissing - Adolescent Counselor

CHAPTER 4

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PLANNING COMMITTEE

The purpose of the Student Assistance Program planning committee was to advise in the development of this program. Included in its responsibilities were the development of a statement of philosophy, and development of a set of objectives and procedures. In an attempt to acquire a cross section of advisory people to develop this Student Assistance Program, the selection of a committee consisted of four parents, four students, and six faculty representatives. Included among the faculty representatives was the principal of Aquinas High School, a representative of the Guidance Department, a priest representing the Religion Department, and the Student Assistance Program coordinator. The other two faculty advisors were selected based upon a prior expressed interest in this program. The parents chosen to serve as advisors were also chosen because of a previous interest in initiating a program of this nature. The students selected by the Student Assistance Program coordinator were selected on the basis of an observed interest in helping others and a previous record of involvement in Student Government and other school related activities.

Committee Members

Faculty Representatives

1. Father Robert Altmann - Principal
2. Mr. Jack Nockels - Guidance

3. Mr. Michael Desmond - Student Assistance Program Coordinator,
Teacher (Psychology)
4. Mrs. Barb Stanke - Teacher (Math)
5. Father Charles Stoetzel - Teacher (Religion)
6. Mr. Chuck Schmidt - Teacher (Math)

Student Representatives

1. Sheila Skemp - Junior
2. Dawn Bendon - Junior
3. Richard Reinders - Senior
4. Amy Donskey - Senior

Parent Representatives

1. Mr. Val Chilson
2. Mr. and Mrs. Richard Gilles
3. Mrs. Donna Bendon

External Coordinator

1. Dr. Dennis Biros, M.D. - Psychiatrist at St. Francis Hospital

The External Coordinator, Dr. Dennis Biros, was asked to serve as an advisor to our committee. It was felt that his professional expertise and enthusiasm for our program would be a key factor in the planning stages of the Student Assistance Program. His experience in group therapy was particularly critical in initiating the support group which is the core of the entire Student Assistance Program.

CHAPTER 5
STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
IN SCHOOL SUPPORT GROUP

The primary feature of the entire structure of the Student Assistance Program is the in-school support groups. The philosophy of the groups, the types of groups, the goals of the groups and the structure of the groups will be addressed in this chapter. Also included are facilitation objectives and skills.

Support Group Philosophy

The philosophy of the support groups will be centered around the issue of self-esteem. As outlined in Chapter 2, the importance of self-esteem in the healthy development of an adolescent can not be overemphasized. Even though the names of the support groups and the issues that are the concentration of each group may vary, the bottom line is the development of a healthy self-esteem in each individual who participates.

Types of Support Groups

It was recommended by the Planning Committee that the number of support groups expand slowly over a period of time, and that the program start with one group that can become effective within the school. This group might deal with a number of different kinds of issues which would be acceptable in the initial stages of the development of support

groups. Later, after a foundation has been formed, support for the program has gained momentum, and as time and scheduling allow, it would be advantageous to expand and develop additional specialized groups. These groups should be based upon needs within the particular school determined by the core team. Some suggested groups were the following:

1. Self-Esteem Groups
2. Academic Groups
3. Peer Relationship Groups

Other adolescent problems concerning alcohol/drug use or family might best be handled through outside referral.

Support Group Goals

The overall goal of any kind of support group is support. The groups are not intended to be therapy sessions although, admittedly, it is hard to draw the line sometimes between support and therapy. The faculty members who serve as facilitators for these groups are not licensed therapists and should, therefore, attempt to avoid any kind of analytical therapy. The facilitator as well as the other student members of the support group should offer emotional support instead. More specifically it is the goal of the support group to:

1. Develop a feeling of openness, honesty and trust among members of the group.
2. Develop self-awareness of feelings.
3. Encourage risk-taking which is involved in change.
4. Evaluate changes that people are making within the group. (It

might be important to note that the individual must realize that the situation in his/her life might not change but what can change is the way in which he/she views or handles the situation.)

5. Develop peer facilitation skills among all members of the group which include:
 - A. Self-disclosure
 - B. Providing and receiving feedback
 - C. Listening
6. Understand and experience empathy

Support Group Structure

Meeting Day

The support groups will meet once a week, preferably on Fridays. It was decided by the Student Assistance Program organizing committee, with the approval of Dr. Dennis Biros, that Friday is the most ideal day for the following reasons.

1. Research tends to show that in group therapy sessions, the members appear to be more open, relaxed, and honest towards the end of the week as opposed to early in the week.
2. The support group can serve as impetus and support to adolescents over the weekend. Weekends are a time when an adolescent encounters many crises and decisions.

Time of Day

It was felt that an effective support group must be run during school hours, so as not to conflict with jobs and extra-curricular

activities. During the academic day, the support group must conflict with as few classes as possible. To reduce the number of times a student must miss class to attend a support group, scheduling during free time is imperative. The committee was extremely concerned over the practice of students missing class and felt that this should be avoided. If it should become necessary to remove students from class, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Contact must be made with the teacher involved, previous to the class, to get approval. Attendance in class is still the first priority.
2. Make up obligations must be fulfilled.

At Aquinas a 40-minute lunch/homeroom period is scheduled during the middle of the day. This period was chosen for use on Fridays for meetings. The Junior/Senior period is from 11:00 - 11:40, while the Freshmen/Sophomore period follows from 11:40 - 12:20. It became apparent of the necessity to organize support groups by age levels, with the upper classes together and the lower classes together, because of these time limitations as well as different maturity levels.

Size

It was decided to keep the support groups between 5 and 10 students to maximize the 40-minute time slot and encourage open communication by reducing numbers to a comfortable level.

The First Group Session

The first group session is extremely important because it sets the

tone for subsequent group sessions. Establishment of goals and expectations by the group are a critical part of the first session. The first group session should begin with an explanation of what the purpose of the group is, namely, a safe place where they can talk about their problems and get support for any difficulties they are experiencing in their lives. Often times the problems they are experiencing are similar to those of others in the group. These similarities aid in the sharing process.

Secondly, the goals of the group should be discussed. The main goal of the group is for members to learn about themselves and to learn better ways to deal with the many situations in their lives. And in learning more about themselves each member should grow in his/her self-esteem. Again, it is the strong conviction of this writer that a good, positive, healthy self-esteem is the key in dealing with all of life's situations. Growth in self-esteem is, therefore, of critical importance to success in reaching the major goals of the group as well as individual goals.

It is important to stress to group members that it is their group and it is up to them to make the experience a worthwhile one. By sharing their feelings, their needs, their thoughts, their concerns, and their problems, they will gain insight about themselves, discover similar feelings in others, and eventually grow in self-esteem. Granted that this process involves some risk-taking. In fact, Dr. David Viscott suggests that it is in taking risks that we grow emotionally because we are experiencing life to the fullest.

Following this discussion concerning the purpose and goals, the

rules of the group should be stated. The following is a short reading that summarizes the rules and expectations of the group. This passage is read at the first few group meetings.

Support Group Rules and Expectations

The members of the group share the same problems: Family, personal, relationship problems, difficulty expressing feelings, etc.

We must share our problems and feelings with others. We will find that they too share these feelings -- we find that we are not alone.

There is no way for us to make it alone. If we want help, we must ask for it and pay for it. We pay for it by listening to what others say to us and perhaps hurting a little inside if what they say about us is true. Through open discussion, our defense mechanisms can be recognized and resolved. We find a logical approach to our problems. As we find our old defenses unnecessary, we find an increased ability to change.

We learn we cannot avoid stress; we find we can learn to deal with it.

Through self-disclosure and openly discussing our feelings, we become more outgoing and less compelled to please others at our expense.

Through this process, we gain the acceptance and love of others and are rewarded with the serenity, peace of mind and happiness we are seeking.

These are our group sessions; every person present should participate because they are an important part of the support group. The common concern of the group is that each of us help the other feel better about themselves as a human being.

WHAT IS SAID IN GROUP STAYS IN GROUP

DO'S

1. Express your feelings (there is no right or wrong answer).
2. Mirror back what you see in others -- good or bad.

DON'T'S

1. No rescuing (enabling).
2. No side conversations.
3. No sleeping.
4. No walking out without permission.
5. No avoiding direct questions.

Featured in this reading are the following group rules:

1. Maintain confidentiality - What goes on in group stays in the group.
2. Show feelings.
3. Be honest.
4. Give support to other members both inside and outside of the group.
5. Be respectful of others by listening.
6. Experience group. Group is not an excuse to get out of class.
7. Give feedback.
8. Complete any assignments given.
9. No skipping group or walking out of group without permission from the group.
10. Take part in group decisions.

Role of the Facilitator

Facilitating groups involve a variety of responsibilities. The following is a list of guidelines a group facilitator in the group

should be constantly aware of:

1. Create an atmosphere for learning.
 - A. Arrange the seating so that eye contact is maintained.
 - B. Let participants know that they are welcome.
 - C. Set the tone for the type of acceptable behavior. This generally involves respect for others and their thoughts and feelings. Acceptable behavior has been previously summarized in the reading done previous to the start of group sessions.
2. Start the process going but be careful not to dictate to the people involved.
3. Guide the discussion. Remember that each person in the group is a valuable resource and needs to be used as much as possible. Keep in mind that although a group identity develops, each person still remains an individual with specific needs.
4. As the facilitator, you are bringing experience and training into the group, therefore you can add depth and insight to what is being said. Discussion will consequently go beyond the superficial level.
5. Foster relationships and interaction among group members. Caring, respect and love need to be nurtured in the group.
6. Set an example in the group of honesty. The facilitator will become a role model for the group.

Do's and Don't's for Group Facilitators

DO'S

1. Have a co-facilitator.
2. Have a focus for each meeting.
3. Be willing to share your own feelings and ideas.
4. Create warmth and trust.
5. Have a sense of immediate and long range goals.
6. Show empathy to the individual's concerns and feelings.
7. Keep the group on the subject. In doing so, prevent avoidance of a subject and explore defenses.
8. Use open-ended questions.
9. Confront with respect and sensitivity.
10. Refer serious problems to other qualified personnel.
11. Keep spontaneity.

DON'T'S

1. Feel group success or failure is your sole responsibility.
2. Allow gossip. Talking about people who are not present is unrewarding and unhealthy.
3. Be patronizing, or "know it all". Seek group reactions instead.
4. Avoid silence. It is healthy for groups to be silent even though it may feel awkward.
5. Carry group member's problems into personal life.

Eight Skills of a Facilitator

These eight skills identified in the Support Group Training Session are the core of effective communication.

1. Attending: The facilitator's concern and interest in the group members by eye contact, body posture, and verbal feedback.
2. Paraphrasing: The facilitator's statement that mirrors the member's statement in similar wording.
3. Reflection of Feeling: The member's feelings, either stated or implied, are decoded and expressed by the facilitator.
4. Summarizing: A review of the main points discussed in the session to insure continuity.
5. Probing: The facilitator's response that directs the member's attention inward to achieve greater depth.
6. Self-Disclosure: The facilitator's sharing of his/her personal feelings, attitudes, opinions, and experiences.
7. Interpreting: Presenting to the member, alternative ways of looking at his/her situation.
8. Confrontation: The facilitator's statement or question intended to point out contradictions in the person's behavior or induce the person to face up to critical issues previously avoided.

CHAPTER 6
FACULTY TRAINING

Part of the overall plan in developing a quality Student Assistance Program is to train faculty members in the operation of such a program as well as teach interested faculty members group facilitation skills. Initially, the program might depend on qualified outside personnel to assist but eventually the school itself should assume more responsibility, especially in the operation of support groups. It was decided, therefore, that an interested group of faculty would receive support group training. Those faculty members who took part in the Student Assistance Program training were:

1. Mike Desmond - Psychology teacher/Student Assistance Program Coordinator
2. Jack Nockels - Guidance Counselor
3. May Kroner - English teacher
4. Colleen Weibel - Home Economics teacher
5. Fred Perri - Religion teacher

Money for such training was solicited through a parents' organization. This parent organization originally initiated discussions concerning a Student Assistance Program at Aquinas High School. In addition to this funding, the State of Wisconsin through the Department of Public Instruction offers fellowship grants up to \$500 for training that would include alcohol and drug education. The following training programs were investigated:

1. DePaul Institute - Milwaukee, WI
Title: Core Group Training for Student Assistance Program
Cost: \$200.00 - Registration
Credit: 2 (\$110.00/Credit)
2. Heitzinger Associates - Edgewood College - Madison, WI
Title: Student Assistance Program Workshop
Cost: \$195.00 - Registration
Credits: 1-2 (\$180.00/Credit)
3. U.W. Madison Department of Counseling, Psychology, and Counselor Education - Madison, WI
Title: Workshop in Counseling and Guidance: Substance Abuse Counseling
Cost: \$366.00 - Registration
Credits: 3 (No additional cost)
4. Evaluation Research Associates - Minneapolis, MN
Title: Group Therapy: Tasks and Techniques
Cost: \$80.00
Credits: Not offered for graduate credit
5. Evaluation Associates - Minneapolis, MN
Title: Promotion of Self-Esteem Among Adolescents
Cost: \$80.00
Credit: Not offered for graduate credit
6. St. Francis New Directions: La Crosse, Wisconsin
Title: School Support Training Program
Cost: \$2,500.00 (Cost includes a team of faculty members up to 10 and a 44 hour follow-up service.)

Credit: 1-2 (\$40.00/Credit)

The St. Francis New Directions Program was selected for the following reasons:

1. Aquinas could train several faculty members for the same cost.
2. Aquinas had planned on working closely with St. Francis Hospital.
3. St. Francis Hospital offers a one-year follow-up program.

St. Francis Hospital New Directions Support Group
Training Program

In Appendix B is an explanation of the St. Francis New Directions Support Group Training Program, a content outline for the program, the training staff, and a course syllabus that includes goals and objectives for each training module. Even though the St. Francis program focuses on drug/alcohol abuse problems (Module I, II), the training program provides ample time to address other topics of personal interest to the core team being trained, such as suicide, family related or other individual problems, and self-esteem. In addition, the St. Francis program concentrates on support group training, featured in Modules III-V. In these modules, how to work with adolescents, leadership styles, and group skills are taught and practiced.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY

This seminar paper presents the development of a Student Assistance Program at Aquinas High School. The development of the program was initiated by a committee made up of administration, faculty representatives, student representatives, and parent representatives. This program was based upon a felt need to help students mature as individuals and as members of the Church. Aquinas High School has adopted the philosophy of being a Christian "family" in which all members of its family attempt to help each other in his/her own personal and spiritual development and growth. It's within this context that the Student Assistance Program was initiated. The goals of the program involve creating a support system to meet the specific needs of the individual student. This support system features in-school support groups as well as opportunities to refer and consult outside agencies. The support groups have been constructed on the psychological belief that self-esteem is the most critical issue of adolescence. In dealing with self-esteem issues within the support groups, students will learn such skills as self-help, risk-taking, and learning to trust. It's through these skills that an adolescent can become aware of his/her needs and goals, accept themselves, learn to like who they are and ultimately change their behavior or outlook on troubling situations.

Several Student Assistance Program models were studied so that Aquinas High School could implement positive features of other programs

into its own. Developing as a result was Aquinas' own statement of philosophy, goals, policies, procedures, suggested in-school support groups, and a referral model. The referral model involves all concerned faculty, parents, and students. Referred students are interviewed and possible courses of action are discussed. An in-school support group, religious counseling, Guidance Department counseling, as well as outside referral to a community agency are all possibilities featured in the program.

The in-school support groups are the primary feature of the Student Assistance Program. With an atmosphere of openness, honesty, and trust, students are encouraged to share feelings, take some risks, confront problems and experience empathy. It is through these types of experiences that a person can grow and reach his/her human potential. The faculty facilitator's role is critical in creating such an atmosphere. Five faculty members took part in a training program offered by St. Francis to help them fulfill this role. The training program offered knowledge in adolescent problem areas, as well as taught facilitation skills.

Since the implementation of the Student Assistance Program at Aquinas High School a year ago, fourteen students have become involved in self-esteem support groups. Three of the students eventually were referred to outside agencies. Table I provides a summary of the students and a general description of the type of problem each dealt with.

TABLE I
SUPPORT GROUP STUDENTS

<u>Students</u>	<u>Sex</u>	<u>Problem Area</u>	<u>Referral</u>
A	Male	Divorce	Self-Esteem Support Group
B	Female	Alcoholic Parent	Self-Esteem Support Group
C	Female	Sibling Involved With Drugs	Self-Esteem Support Group
D	Male	School/Alcoholic Parent	Self-Esteem Support Group
E	Female	Male Relationships/ Family	Self-Esteem Support Group
F	Female	Family (Adoption)	Referred for Family Counseling
G	Female	Peer Relationships/ Eating Disorder	Self-Esteem Support Group
H	Female	Family	Self-Esteem Support Group
I	Male	Divorce	Self-Esteem Support Group
J	Male	Anxiety	Self-Esteem Support Group
K	Male	School/Family	Self-Esteem Support Group
L	Female	Eating Disorder	Referred to an Outside Agency
M	Female	Death of a Friend	Self-Esteem Support Group
N	Female	Alcohol Use	Referred to an Outside Agency

CONCLUSION

The Student Assistance Program offers an opportunity for students at Aquinas High School to confront important issues in their lives. Even though each problem in an adolescent's life is not school-related, oftentimes the problem translates into observable behavior that affects their school performance or their peer relationships in school. The Student Assistance Program fulfills a need in the lives of adolescents by recognizing and becoming sensitive to student needs, by listening, by confronting problems that adolescents tend to avoid, and by supporting students as they attempt to change things in their lives. As one student of our support group stated, "I know I might not be able to change others but I can change my attitude and confront situations."

A few constructive comments offered by students involved in the support groups this past year were as follows:

1. The single most important ingredient of a successful support group is trust. Spend time to build trust.
2. An open atmosphere created will determine the openness of the group.
3. The unity of the group must develop over time by making sure all members feel a part of the group. Interaction among members is crucial and a major ingredient in students being able to look at situations from different perspectives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having implemented a Student Assistance Program at Aquinas High School, the following comments and recommendations were cited by core team members and students involved in the Student Assistance Program this past school year (1986-1987).

1. Keep support groups small (less than 7), relaxed, and comfortable. Especially keep the first group session non-threatening.
2. Group selection, done by the core team, must be done carefully to create the right chemistry within the group. Personalities, peer groups, and type of problems must all be considered.
3. The group must have structure. Structure provides a sense of security for students. Within that structure goals for each individual must be identified and pursued. Challenge members of the group to change. Don't allow sessions to become idle "chat" sessions.
4. The facilitators must not internalize the problems of the group members or feel responsible for the success/failure of the group.
5. The image of the group within the school setting is important. It must not be used as a discipline tool. The group must be recognized as just a means for support for a variety of problems. Through this image, the program should be a self-recruiter.
6. An advisory board, similar to the planning committee, should be

appointed to continuously evaluate and recommend appropriate Student Assistance Program revisions.

7. Provide more flexibility with the scheduling to allow for more involvement by students.
8. Staff communication interaction and feedback are the survival of the group. The group can not become an exclusive group of which a great percentage of faculty become out-of-touch with and uninvolved. Keep as many faculty involved in the program as possible.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

REFERRAL FORM

If a troubled student is to be helped, he or she should be referred for screening to the Student Assistance Program. Such referrals must be based on behavior which you have actually observed. As a rule, isolated instances of poor or unsatisfactory performance will not be grounds for referring the student. However, whenever the student exhibits a definite and repeated pattern or tendency in an unacceptable direction, he or she should be referred.

Student _____ Grade _____ Date _____

Referred By _____

Please check Appropriate Response

I. ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OBSERVED:

- _____ Declining grades earned
- _____ Work not handed in or incomplete
- _____ Appears to be working below ability
- _____ Has not reported for teacher's help

II. CLASSROOM CONDUCT OBSERVED:

- _____ Work effort is inconsistent
- _____ Disruptive in class
- _____ Inattentiveness
- _____ Lack of motivation
- _____ Sleeping in class
- _____ Extreme negativism
- _____ In-school absenteeism (cutting)
- _____ Tardiness to class or school
- _____ Defiance; breaking rules
- _____ Frequently needs discipline
- _____ Cheating
- _____ Fighting in class
- _____ Defiance of authority
- _____ Verbal abuse
- _____ Sudden outbursts of temper
- _____ Vandalism
- _____ Frequent visits to lavatory
- _____ Hyperactivity, nervousness

REFERRAL FORM (continued)

III. OTHER UNUSUAL BEHAVIOR OBSERVED:

- _____ Erratic behavior from day-to-day
- _____ Negative change in friends, peer group
- _____ Older or younger social group
- _____ Sudden, unexpected popularity
- _____ Mood swings
- _____ Seeks constant adult contact
- _____ Public intimacy
- _____ Changes in personal values
- _____ Depression
- _____ Defensiveness
- _____ Withdrawal; a loner
- _____ Other students express concern about possible problem
- _____ Fantasizing, daydreaming
- _____ Frustration
- _____ Difficulty in accepting mistakes

IV. POSSIBLE ALCOHOL/DRUG BEHAVIORS:

Witnessed Suspected

- | | | |
|-------|-------|-----------------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | Selling, delivering |
| _____ | _____ | Possession of alcohol and drugs |
| _____ | _____ | Possession of drug paraphernalia |
| _____ | _____ | Use of alcohol, drugs |
| _____ | _____ | Under influence of alcohol, drugs |
| _____ | _____ | Talks freely about use |
| _____ | _____ | Associates with known users |
| _____ | _____ | Physical signs |

V. OTHER SCHOOL CONDUCT

- _____ Unexcused absences
- _____ Frequent absenteeism (excused)
- _____ Marked absent but in school
- _____ Suspensions
- _____ Schedule changes
- _____ Frequent disciplinary referrals
- _____ Loss of athletic eligibility
- _____ Increasing non-involvement
- _____ Involvement in thefts, assaults
- _____ Carrying weapons
- _____ Home problems
- _____ Job problems
- _____ Problems with law enforcement

APPENDIX B

ST. FRANCIS NEW DIRECTIONS
School Support Training Program

Philosophy: We believe in the importance of schools assisting students to develop effective coping and decision making skills as they grow toward adulthood. We believe that alcohol and drug abuse by students and/or their families interferes with the learning/teaching process. It is important that school personnel receive specific training by qualified alcohol and other drug abuse professionals to provide necessary skills, strategies, and support to allow the resulting problems to be more effectively addressed by the school and the community.

Purpose: The purpose of the New Directions School Support Training Program is to provide training by certified and experienced teachers and therapists to effectively implement school-based support programs. This training would involve intensive education, skill building and the long-term assistance of your support program.

Goal: The training provided by St. Francis New Directions School Support Training Program will enable school districts to effectively identify, intervene, refer and follow-up with adolescents whose education is being disrupted by alcohol and other drug abuse and other "high risk" problem areas such as suicide and low self-esteem. Such training will minimize the disruption of alcohol and other drug abuse and "high risk" behaviors in the classroom and thereby maximize the learning process.

Logistics: St. Francis New Directions School Support Training Program will provide necessary training facilities on the medical center grounds. Training rooms, meal facilities and all training materials will be available to all persons attending. The maximum number of persons per school for a training is ten.

Follow-Up: Unlike many other "training programs" this School Support Training Program offers a comprehensive follow-up component. This program is not a one time shot-in-the-arm but a year-long training and support program to help your school district proceed in the right direction in offering support to adolescents with alcohol, drug abuse and other "high risk" behaviors.

Content Outline for School Support Training Program: The School Support Training Program will be offered on a contractual basis. Each training package will be for a one-year period of time. This program involves three phases.

Phase I: Pre-Training Inservice (9 hours)

- a. School Board Inservice: 3 hours
- b. School Administration and Staff Inservice:
3 hours
- c. Community Inservice: 3 hours

Phase II: Core Team Training (40 hours)

- a. Intensive training of identified core team members who will be able to effectively identify, describe, intervene and facilitate your school district's handling of alcohol, drug abuse and other high risk issues.

Phase III: Post Training Follow-Up: 44 hours

- a. For the remainder of the contract year following Phase II, the School Support Training Program will provide follow-up services according to your district's specific needs. This support may include:
1. Staff inservices
 2. Consultation on specific concerns with staff or students
 3. Core team inservices
 4. Community inservice.

Training Staff:

Tom Roberts: Holds a Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy; certified in the State of Wisconsin as an alcohol and other drug abuse counselor. Tom has been working with adolescents in the alcohol and other drug abuse field for 10 years. He has been an alcohol and other drug abuse outpatient counselor, a director of an outpatient program for adolescents and is presently a family therapist and Special Projects Coordinator for the St. Francis New Directions Adolescent Outpatient Programs in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Joyce Libert: A Master's candidate in education and certified alcohol and drug counselor. Joyce has worked in

the alcohol and drug field for 10 years, teaching school for 15 years prior to that. Currently, her position is Aftercare Coordinator and Counselor for St. Francis New Directions Adolescent Programs in La Crosse and is serving as the Coordinator for the St. Francis Medical Center School Staff Alcohol and Drug Abuse Support Training Program.

Gladys Eternicka: Holds a Master's Degree in Education. Gladys organized programs for and taught learning disabled and emotionally disturbed children in the La Crosse area elementary and high schools for 8 years. Gladys is currently the school coordinator for the St. Francis Medical Center New Directions Adolescent Program.

Goals and Objectives

MODULE I: ALCOHOL AND DRUG EDUCATION

TIME: 6 hours

Goal

- To increase the participant's knowledge and awareness of alcohol and other drug abuse in the following areas: Pharmacology, the disease model, symptoms and progression, family illness, and social values and beliefs.

Objectives

By the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

- List three major drug categories and name commonly abused drugs within each category.
- Identify the five components of the AMA disease model of chemical dependency.
- List three criteria which must be present in the pathology of chemical dependency.
- Diagram the symptoms and progression of the four stages of chemical dependency.
- Describe how families function as a system and how stress affects that system.
- Recognize the survival roles and rules which develop in a dysfunctional family system.
- Identify social values about alcohol and other drug use and translate them into personal values in working with adolescents.

Materials

- Flip chart
- Easel/tape
- Felt tip markers
- Participant Manual
- Questionnaires on values and drug classifications
- Video and video player
- Filmstrip and projector

MODULE II: ADOLESCENCE AND DRUG ABUSE

TIME: 6 hours

Goals

- To gain an understanding of adolescent developmental issues
- To increase the participant's knowledge of how alcohol and other drug abuse arrests adolescent development
- To increase knowledge regarding the high risk indicators leading to adolescent alcohol and other drug abuse
- To gain an understanding of the assessment process and various screening and data gathering methods

Objectives

By the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

- Identify family development tasks at the teenage stage
- List the major developmental tasks of teenagers
- Name the specific ways in which alcohol and other drug abuse arrests adolescent development
- Identify high risk and personality indicators for alcohol and other drug abuse in adolescents
- Interpret how to use high risk indicators in the identification and referral process
- Identify what takes place in the alcohol and other drug abuse assessment process
- Compare various alcohol and other drug abuse screening and data gathering instruments appropriate to the school setting
- Select and demonstrate the use of one screening or data gathering instrument

Materials

- Flip chart
- Easel/tape
- Felt tip markers
- Participant Manual
- Film and projector
- Video cassette, player, camera

MODULE III: HOW TO WORK WITH ADOLESCENTS

TIME: 6 hours

Goals

- To better understand adolescent attitudes and behaviors
- To increase level of comfort in dealing with adolescent and alcohol and other drug abuse issues
- To develop skills and techniques which are effective in working with resistive adolescents

Objectives

By the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

- Diagram how defensive behaviors are developed
- Identify and recognize various defensive behaviors
- Identify personal issues from adolescence which may affect working with adolescents
- List at least ten necessary attitudes and attributes of the helping person
- Name twelve strategies for responding to resistive adolescents
- Explain professional enabling and how it affects the adolescent and the helping person.

Materials

- Flip chart
- Easel/tape
- Felt tip markers
- Participant Manual
- Personal item from each participant's adolescence

MODULE IV: LEADERSHIP STYLE

TIME: 3-1/2 hours

Goals

- To gain insight into personal leadership style
- To learn how personal leadership styles affect the working relationship with co-leaders
- To understand how leadership styles impact on the learning process with adolescents

Objectives

By the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

- Identify and compare the four interpersonal influence and leadership styles
- After using a self-assessment inventory, make a statement that describes his or her own leadership style
- List traits common to each leadership style and explain how these traits affect the working relationship with co-leaders
- Describe how awareness of personal leadership style can enhance the learning process for adolescents.

Materials

- Flip chart
- Easel/tape
- Felt tip markers
- Participant Manual
- Self-assessment inventory

MODULE V: GROUP SKILLS LAB

TIME: 9 hours

Goals

- To increase knowledge of groups and their processes
- Develop group facilitation skills

Objectives

By the end of this module, the participant will be able to:

- Define the following terms: Content, process, group, group process, group elements and member elements
- Describe the relationship between group maturity and the kind of leadership generally needed at each stage
- Identify three role functions group members can play
- Diagnose the stage of growth in their own group
- List elements and dynamics common to most groups
- Define each of the eight group facilitation skills
- Recognize when each skill is being practiced effectively
- Demonstrate the ability to use at least two group facilitation skills and to integrate these skills in a simulated group situation.

Materials

- Flip chart
- Easel/tape
- Felt tip markers
- Participant Manual
- Role-play cards
- Video cassette, player and camera