

# HOW DOES MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC OPERATE?

(Editor's note: Mental illness has been called the Nation's Number One Health Problem. How is Torrance coping with this problem? This is the second of four articles exploring this question. This series deals with the Harbor District Mental Health Service, one-fifth of whose patients are from Torrance.)

By RALPH R. GOMPERTZ  
Managing Editor

It's normal to have problems. Problems are a part of living. Everyone has problems.

But when we are unable to cope with those problems and they interfere with our functioning we need help.

We may turn to any number of sources for help—a trusted friend, a minister, a family doctor, a private psychologist or psychiatrist.

But where may individuals turn who cannot turn to such sources because of personal and financial reasons?

Their answer is the Harbor District Mental Health Service, a community mental health clinic whose professional staff is supplied by the Los Angeles State Mental Hygiene clinic.

The community clinic, located in San Pedro, serves Torrance, Lomita, Harbor City, Carson, as well as the South Bay and Harbor areas.

The clinic is three years old. It is located at 731 South Beacon street, San Pedro (TE 26464.) Until July of this year, it was open only one day a week. It is now open full-time.

### Help Available

Here help is available for the emotionally disturbed as

well as the mentally ill.

How can such help be obtained?

There are a number of ways in which the clinic can be approached.

Quite a number of children and adults come to the clinic through referrals. They are referred by teachers, physicians, social agencies, courts, California Youth Authority, county hospital, industries, or ministers.

However, individuals may also approach the clinic directly.

Forms for application for treatment are available upon request to the clinic. These forms may be requested by phone or picked up in person.

Every individual seeking guidance must fill out such a form.

An initial appointment will then be mailed or phoned to the applicant.

### All-Purpose Clinic

Recognizing the fact that emotional disturbances or mental illness are just as much the result of an individual's environment as of his own mental and emotional processes, the clinic deals not only with the patient but with the patient's family or close associates as well.

"This is an all-purpose clinic," Mrs. Lillie Walsworth, coordinator of the community clinic, explained. "Instead of dealing only with the individual patient, we actually work with the whole family unit. That's what we mean by an all-purpose clinic."

The clinic staff is set up like a team, consisting of a psychiatric social worker, psychologist, and psychiatrist.

The reason for this was explained by David H. Ruja, senior clinical psychologist.

We believe that emotional problems can be handled

by a whole host of disciplines, Ruja said. That's why we form a team of individuals trained in these various behavioral sciences—or disciplines—in order to pool our insights in treating our patients.

After an individual has applied for consultation, and appointment is made for his application interview.

Handling interviews is Robert S. Aguado, the clinic's psychiatric social worker.

The clinic accepts only those individuals who cannot afford private treatment. Although the clinic charges a nominal fee, this fee is based on an adjustable scale (according to the ability to pay). The clinic is completely non-profit.

In addition to doing the admittance work, Aguado's duties include working with parents and children, as well as analyzing the social situations and the social treatment of

emotional and behavior problems.

Senior clinical psychologist is David H. Ruja whose work consists chiefly of measuring and evaluating the patient's specific capacities and achievements.

Finally there is Dr. Simon J. Conrad, chief psychiatrist and director of the Los Angeles and San Pedro State Mental Hygiene clinics. It is the chief psychiatrist who makes the diagnosis and decides on the treatment for the emotionally disturbed or mentally ill patient.

Sometimes a patient consults with every member of the three-man team. Sometimes only with one or two of them. But before a course of treatment or counseling is decided upon, the mental health team gets together and discusses the individual case.

Then they decide upon the course to be pursued. Visits to the clinic may vary from just one consultation (Turn to Page 17)

### EC Increases Staff Again

Four new social science instructors will meet classes at El Camino College on September 11, when fall semester classes open. They were named today by President Forrest G. Murdock, Mrs. Mary W. Farrell will teach psychology and sociology and Doyce B. Nunis, Richard P. Sherman, and Alfred J. Wrobel will teach history. Wrobel, in addition, will serve as coordinator of audio-visual aids.

### Dominguez Channel

Plans are also being drawn for the permanent improvement of the Dominguez channel reach between Denker avenue and Vermont avenue, and this project is scheduled to go to contract next spring, Supervisor Kenneth Hahn stated.

For the greatest classified results call FA. 8-2345.

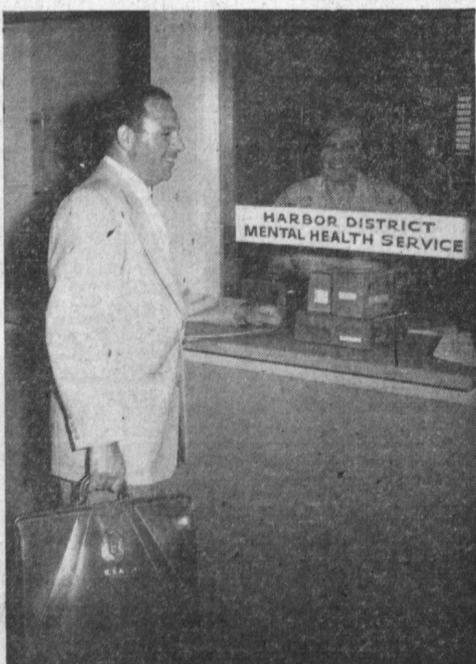


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### COMING TO WORK

David H. Ruja, senior clinical psychologist, checks with Mrs. Lillie Walsworth, coordinator of the Harbor District Mental Health Service, as he comes to work. Ruja is part of the professional staff supplied by the Los Angeles State Mental Hygiene clinic.—Press Photo.

### THE DENTIST SAYS: ERNEST J. TARR, D.D.S.

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If you have any questions concerning dental problems, you want answered in this column, write to:

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