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PERSPECTIVES OF CLIENTS OF THE YOUTH SERVICES CENTER
II. COMPARISONS OF CLIENTS' AND WORKERS'
PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE DELIVERY

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Conclusions are tentative pending review by the Advisory Board and opportunity for response by program staff.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to analyze the service delivery process at the Youth Services Center from the perspectives of the key participants: client and provider.

Ideally, service delivery is predicated on a conceptual framework consisting of an unambiguous definition of a problem, assumptions concerning its causation, and propositions concerning intervention strategies for prevention or remediation. These elements are logically connected to form a theory of some degree of comprehensiveness and completeness. However, the literature in delinquency prevention indicates that delivery of services frequently occurs without complete delineation of causal relationships between the problem to be alleviated, the necessary intervention strategies, and the desired outcomes and that causal relationships between and among them are not necessarily known.

The delivery of services may be viewed as consisting of three inter-related components: 1) definition of a problem; 2) services or intervention strategies; and 3) outcomes of services. The literature suggests that the potential for disagreement regarding definition and description of these components may be great since they may reflect differences in perspective as well as the lack of definite knowledge concerning causal relations. Thus, the examination of these components from the perspectives of clients and providers has the potential to provide information on the degree to which their perspectives are congruent, thereby contributing to understanding of outcomes resulting from clients' participation in the delinquency program.

The sources of data for the study were interviews with clients of the delinquency program, questionnaires completed by paraprofessional workers assigned to clients, and agency reports of staffing reports on clients. Three data collections points over the course of service delivery were used: intake, and six months and one year after intake.

The results of intake comparisons indicate a general lack of agreement between client and agency on identification of client problems and selection of services to be provided. Similarly, the findings for six months and one year point to a lack of congruence between client and provider on descriptions of services actually provided and appraisals of outcomes of services, including their helpfulness.

Greater congruence between client and provider and increased effectiveness of services require some degree of shared definitions and perceptions. Thus, conclusions focus on considerations of enhanced communication through client participation in defining problems and setting goals, greater clarity regarding service arrangements, and clarity regarding the mission of the Youth Services Center.

PERSPECTIVES OF CLIENTS OF THE YOUTH SERVICES CENTER

II. COMPARISON OF CLIENTS' AND WORKERS' PERSPECTIVES ON SERVICE DELIVERY

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to analyze the service delivery process at the Youth Services Center from the perspectives of the key participants: client and provider. The delivery of services may be viewed as consisting of three interrelated components: 1) definition of a problem; 2) services or intervention strategies for remediation or prevention of problems; and 3) outcomes of services. A previous report on the clients of the Youth Services Center which examined correlates of client satisfaction concluded that there was little agreement between client and provider on perceptions of outcomes such as the extent to which service goals had been achieved and the client had been helped (Richardson and Kaufman, 1979). The evidence that client and provider are pursuing different goals suggests that their perspectives on other components of the situation are also disparate and should be investigated.

The investigation of definitions and descriptions of the service delivery situation has the potential to provide information relevant to two major issues: the consistent findings of "no effect" in traditional evaluation studies of delinquency prevention services, and the lack of relationship between client satisfaction and outcomes found in traditional evaluation studies. Ideally, service delivery is predicated on a conceptual framework consisting of an unambiguous definition of a problem, assumptions concerning its causation, and propositions concerning intervention strategies for prevention or remediation. These elements are logically connected to form a theory of some degree of comprehensiveness and completeness. However, the literature in delinquency prevention indicates delivery of services frequently occurs without complete delineation of causal relationships between the problem to be alleviated, the necessary intervention strategies, and the desired outcomes. Viewed from this perspective, the results of traditional evaluation studies are not surprising and have served as the impetus for researchers' calls for a closer analysis of the service situation in order to learn what is actually taking place.

Overview of the Study of Human Services

Services for the prevention and remediation of delinquency are included in the category of human services, a broad variety of health, education and social welfare services which have as their purpose the improvement, maintenance, or restoration of the client's well-being through changes in or control of his behaviors, attributes, status and/or environment. These services are typically studied to determine the extent to which they achieve

specified goals. In the ideal evaluation, goals are translated into operational measures and data are collected on at least two equivalent groups, one of which has been exposed to the services while the other has not. The two groups are then compared to determine whether significant change has occurred as a result of the services. Typical findings show little change in client outcomes in relation to the services. (See for example, Guba, 1972; Hirschi and Selvin, 1967). The inconclusive findings have been interpreted as demonstrating the need for qualitative research on the components of the service situation. An overview of the literature provides information on the status of our knowledge of these components.

The Provision of Services

The service situation has been described as having three components: problems, services and outcomes. The literature indicates that these terms do not have consistently clear meanings, and that causal relationships between and among them are not necessarily known.

Needs and problems do not have objective, unambiguous meanings. Conditions and situations must be defined as problems, and the fact of definition implies a need for change (Perlman, 1975). In part, whether or not a problem exists depends on the values, concepts, and perspectives of the viewer as well as on the availability of techniques to deal with it. If a problem is seen as existing, there may be little agreement on its nature or magnitude. Thus, preliminary research on clients of the Youth Services Center pointed to the likelihood of discrepancies between clients and agency on the numbers and types of problems for which help was needed (Miller, 1978). At that time, it was noted that people may adapt themselves to objective conditions which are less than desirable, such as poverty and bad neighborhoods. In such cases, these conditions of life may not be defined by the people themselves as problems although other observers may see a need for alleviation of the conditions.

Services, intervention strategies for the remediation of problems, are frequently difficult to define since they vary in tangibility and observability of process and effect. Researchers describe service methods as being "of such complexity as to defy description" (Mann, 1972) and note that the lack of standardized definitions makes it difficult to know whether people are communicating (Wakeman, 1969). Problems caused by the inability to specify what is meant by service techniques are compounded by the dearth of clear directions for their application: the selection of services to match definitions of problems is complicated by varying degrees of knowledge of causal relationships between problems and intervention strategies and by differences in perspective. The literature suggests that caseworkers and clients of delinquency programs do not agree in their preferential ratings of the utilities of various types of services for specific problems (Gottesfeld, 1965). In addition, clients and workers may present discrepant descriptions of services provided (Mayer and Timms, 1970). For example, a youth apprehended for retail theft is likely to be given services related to the provider's causal theories of delinquency and capabilities for providing assistance. In such cases, a service frequently provided

is some form of counseling aimed at giving the client insight into why he steals. On the other hand, if the client has stolen to alleviate deprivations caused by familial poverty and feels that his problems would be solved by getting a job, he may view such psychological counseling services as irrelevant or as no services at all.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of services assumes the existence of goals to be achieved and criteria for the appraisal of the extent to which actual outcomes approximate desired goals. Establishment of goals and criteria is not objective: diverse stakeholders may be concerned with different aspects of the situation and employ criteria based on their own interests to assess outcomes. Since criteria are typically established by providers of services, Perlman (1975) comments that evaluations demonstrate a marked tendency to ask whether clients are performing in the roles required by agency policies and procedures. On the other hand, clients tend to evaluate services and their outcomes in terms of the extent to which they have met the client's own needs and expectations. Thus, the earlier report on perceptions of clients of the Youth Services Center indicates that client satisfaction was related to the client's perception of receipt of desired services, the helpfulness of the services, and the worker's understanding of the client's situation and feelings (Richardson and Kaufman, 1979).

Purpose of the Present Study

The literature suggests that the potential for disagreement among participants and observers of the service delivery situation may be great: definitions of problems, selection and description of services, and evaluations of outcomes may reflect differences in perspective as well as the lack of definite knowledge concerning causal relations. Thus, while the client who has received services he considers helpful and appropriate to the problem as he has defined it may indicate satisfaction with services and outcomes, evaluations of outcomes made by observers using different definitions and criteria may reveal "no effect"; i.e., the outcomes did not approximate goals as set by evaluators on the basis of their delineations of the situation.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the perspectives of clients and service personnel at the Youth Services Center concerning definitions of clients' problems, selection of services to be provided, descriptions of services actually provided, and evaluations of outcomes. Such a study has the potential to provide information on the degree to which these perceptions are congruent, thereby contributing to understanding of outcomes resulting from clients' participation in the delinquency prevention and treatment program.

METHOD

This section describes research procedures used in the study. Included in the discussion are descriptions of: 1) the research sample; and 2) data collection procedures.

Subjects

The client sample consisted of 33 clients on active caseload status at the Youth Services Center from April 1977 through July 1978. The criteria for inclusion in the survey were availability for interviewing at intake, continuation on caseload, and availability for at least one additional interview. Following the initial interview, not all clients were available for all succeeding interviews, resulting in sample sizes of 27 and 26 for the six-month and one-year interviews respectively.

Clients ranged in age from 11 to 18 years, with a mean age of 14.4 years. The majority were white (55%, with 39% black, and 6% Spanish-speaking) and male (85%). Approximately 64% were living with the mother only, primarily due to death or separation of parents, 30% lived with both parents, and the remainder lived in other placements including foster homes.

According to agency records, reasons for referral and presenting problems varied. The reasons most frequently cited were contact with police (39%), school problems (acting out in school, 27%; truancy, 18%; dropped out of school, 6%), family problems (21%) and lack of appropriate role model (18%). The average number of reasons for referral was 2.1. Approximately half the clients (48%) came in response to the agency's outreach and recruitment efforts; referrals from family, school, community institutions and the juvenile justice system accounted for most of the remaining clients, although there were some self-referrals (6%).

The Youth Services Worker sample consisted of workers assigned to the clients interviewed. At the time the research was being conducted, worker turnover at the Youth Services Center tended to be high. Thus, while approximately half the clients maintained the same worker throughout their stay on caseload, the remainder had at least two different workers. As a result, the worker sample shows variation in its composition over time.

Data Collection

The sources of data for this study were interviews with clients, questionnaires completed by Youth Services Workers, and agency reports of staffing conferences on clients. Data sources and data collection procedures are described below.

Client interviews and worker questionnaires. Questionnaires were used to obtain data representing both client and agency perspectives over the

course of service delivery, with separate forms devised for intake and follow-up. The main factual content of the client questionnaires pertained to subjects' definitions of needs and problems, services wanted and services received. Detailed lists of specific items were developed through discussions with agency personnel, observation of staff conferences, and analysis of responses on preliminary questionnaires. For each major content category, each item in the list was typed on a separate card; subjects sorted cards into piles representing response choices. Additional items made use of multiple choice formats. The preponderance of data representing the agency's perspectives on clients and services was derived from questionnaires filled out by Youth Service Workers assigned to specific clients. Questions concerning services and service arrangements paralleled those used for clients, but were answered directly on the questionnaire form.

Interviews with clients who consented to participate in the research were conducted within two months after the client's admission to caseload, and at six months and one year (\pm two months) after intake to the extent of their availability. (For a more complete description of the procedures, see Richardson and Kaufman, 1979). For every client interviewed, the assigned worker was asked to fill out a questionnaire concerning perceptions of the process and outcomes of service delivery for the client over the appropriate time period. Members of the research team were available to answer questions and seek additional information as needed. In an attempt to minimize error due to changes in workers assigned to clients, when a worker transfer took place close to a scheduled interview point and advance information on the transfer was provided, efforts were made to have the questionnaire completed by the current worker rather than by the replacement.

Intake Staffing Records. Intake staffing records, that is, written reports of case conferences held after the client's admission to caseload, were used to provide information concerning the agency's definitions of clients' problems and needs, service goals, and projected services. Data from these records were abstracted onto coding forms drawn up with the assistance of agency personnel in order that agency and researchers would share common definitions and categories for variables. In the absence of staffings or staffing records, interviews with the workers and other agency service personnel were used to provide necessary information.

RESULTS

The discussion of the results of the comparison of client and agency perspectives is divided into two sections: 1) analysis of client and agency perceptions of definitions of client needs and projected services at intake; 2) analysis of client and agency perceptions of service delivery at six months and one year.

Analysis of Client and Agency Perceptions at Intake

At intake and during initial contacts, primary concerns are the exploration of the client's situation with attendant identification and definition of needs and problems. Ideally, at this time, treatment strategies are developed and include the selection of projected services and specification of service arrangements. This section focuses on the perceptions of client and agency as well as their degree of agreement at intake with regard to 1) definition of problems; 2) selection of projected services; 3) expectations regarding service arrangements.

Definitions of Problems. Definitions of problems and needs from the perspectives of client and agency are shown in Tables 1 and 2. Separate tables were used because not all the items are directly comparable due to differences in perspectives and categorizations used.

Client perceptions of problems and needs at intake, as shown in Table 1, indicate that the most commonly identified problem or need is job-related, that is, finding a job or getting information about jobs and job training (79%). Two additional problems or needs are cited by more than half of the clients at intake: getting advice or information about places to go for help or services (61%) and being arrested or hassled by police (52%). Other problems frequently reported include: family problems (45%); having trouble with people at school (42%); difficulties with school subjects (42%); suspension or expulsion from school (42%); and material needs for money, food, and clothing (42%). The average number of problems reported is 6.5.

The agency's views of clients' problems, as indicated by reports of the initial staffings for each case, are shown in Table 2. In contrast with client perceptions, the agency does not identify any problem as relevant for 50% or more of the clients, and the average number of problems is 3.7. The types of problems identified as most prevalent also differ from those reported by clients. The most frequently identified problem is truancy or poor attendance at school (48%), followed by academic problems (45%), family problems (45%), gang affiliation (39%), and difficulties in relating to peers (33%). In addition, although clients did not generally cite any problems beyond the items listed, the agency identified a variety of other problems.

Comparison of problems identified by clients and agency points to the possibility of both qualitative and quantitative differences in perspectives. On 12 of the 17 items that were directly matchable, the agency perceived the problem or need as relevant in fewer cases than did the clients. On the other hand, three items were mentioned as problems more frequently by agency than client--truancy, gang membership, and having no friends. Given this apparent incongruence, item-by-item comparisons between client and agency definitions were made. Three measures of agreement were used:

1. In cases where direct comparisons of items were not possible, matches were made between several categories of items.

Table 1

Clients' Perceptions of Problems and Needs

<u>Problem or Need Reported by Client</u>	<u>Percent of Clients</u>
Being hassled or arrested by police	52%
Information or advice about drugs/alcohol	18%
Having trouble with people at school, like teachers or other kids	42%
Difficulties with school subjects or getting low grades	42%
Getting into trouble over skipping school or classes	24%
Being suspended or expelled from school; dropping out of school	42%
Difficulties with my family, like my parents	45%
Not having anything to do or not knowing about anything to do	21%
Information or help about sex, birth control or pregnancy	18%
Finding a place to stay either temporarily or permanently	24%
Getting money, food, clothing	42%
Personal problems, like understanding myself or other people	30%
Finding a job or getting information about jobs or job training	79%
No adult to talk things over with and do things with	30%
Getting into trouble because I hang on a corner or am a member of a gang	18%
Not having enough friends	15%
Difficulties getting along with people at SPCC or getting into trouble there	27%
Not being interested in doing anything or not wanting to do anything	21%
Getting advice or information about places to go for help or services	61%
Other	3%
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF PROBLEMS REPORTED	 6.5

Table 2

Agency's Perceptions of Clients' Problems and Needs

<u>Problem Reported by Agency</u>	<u>Percent of Clients</u>
Contact with police, open court case	27%
Drug/alcohol involvement	3%
School problems--interpersonal	24%
School problems--academic	45%
Truancy, poor attendance at school	48%
Suspension, expulsion from school; dropped out of school	18%
Family problems	45%
Needs help in finding things to do	15%
Sex, birth control, pregnancy problems or needs	3%
Needs a place to stay temporarily or permanently	--
Needs emergency material services and goods (food, clothing, funds)	3%
Needs help with personal problems including insight into own behaviors	12%
Needs a job or information about jobs, job training	9%
Needs an adult role model	12%
Gang affiliation or hangs out with a bad crowd	39%
Can't relate to peers, no friends	33%
Another agency requested supportive services	15%
Psychological or personal problems, undefined	18%
Other	27%
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF PROBLEMS	 3.7

1) the degree of agreement between client and agency on items which the client clearly defines as needs or problems; 2) the degree of agreement on items which the client clearly specifies are not needs or problems; 3) the degree of overall agreement on items, regardless of the client's positive or negative response.² The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Percent Agreement Between Client and Agency
on Definitions of Problems or Needs

<u>Agreement Measure</u>	<u>Mean Percent Agreement</u>
Agreement on items client clearly defines as needs or problems	20%
Agreement on items client clearly specifies are not needs or problems	85%
Overall agreement on all clearly defined items	51%

The results indicate that when overall agreement is used as a measure, the mean amount of agreement between client and agency is moderate (51%). However, when separate measures of agreement are computed, a different picture emerges. On items the client defines as needs or problems, the agency shows little agreement with the client (20%). On the other hand, the agency shows a high level of agreement with client definitions of items that are not seen as needs or problems (85%). In other words, client and agency tend to agree on what is not a problem, but they tend to disagree on what is a problem.

These discrepancies raise issues concerning communication between client and agency or worker as well as questions concerning the agency's identification of problems and pursuit of goals without sharing the information with the client. This latter issue is additionally brought forward by the fact that although only 3% of the clients indicated that they saw as problems any items in addition to those on the list, the agency identified varying percentages of clients as having undefined psychological or personal problems as well as a variety of additional problems. The lack of congruence between client and agency on definitions of needs and problems suggests the possibility that divergent perceptions at this stage may be followed by differences regarding selection of service strategies.

Selection of Services. In addition to providing a variety of relatively specifiable services such as legal representation and intervention in home and school situations, the Youth Services Center makes available to clients

2. In their responses, clients were also permitted to classify items as neutral, that is, they neither wanted nor rejected help for the item described.

through the paraprofessional Youth Services Workers generalized counselling and support services. Thus, services are divided into agency services and worker services. This section presents separate comparisons of client and agency or worker perceptions for each type of service.

Clients' reports of agency services wanted are presented in Table 4. The results indicate that a large majority (85%) want placement in a job or information about jobs and job training, a finding which is in keeping with the previous identification of job-related problems by the greatest percentage of clients (Table 1). Other services wanted by more than half the group are recreation activities (58%), someone to talk with and do things with (55%), help with personal problems (52%), and advice or information about other service agencies (52%).

Comparison of clients' definitions of needs and problems with their selections of services wanted indicates that the mean number of services wanted (5.4, SD = 3.1) is significantly less than the mean number of problems reported (6.5, SD = 3.5; $p < .05$). However, there is a substantial positive correlation between numbers of problems and numbers of services ($\rho = .63$, $p < .001$). On item-by-item comparisons of needs and services, the clients show high levels of agreement between the types of problems identified and services wanted (mean percent agreement = 79%, SD = 23%) as well as between items specified as not being problems and services not wanted (mean percent agreement = 63%, SD = 30%). The findings indicate that the clients know what they want; they are consistent in their definitions of problems and the selection of services for those problems.

The agency's projections of inhouse services to be provided, as indicated by staffing records, are shown in Table 5. Results indicate that clients will receive fewer services than they had indicated as wanted, since the agency projects an average of 4.4 services per client. The main types of services projected are individual counseling (73%), recreation activities (67%), and family counseling (42%).

The degree of overall agreement between client and agency on all services--that is, those to be provided and those not to be provided--is 51%. This level of agreement may be viewed as moderate at best, and indicative of some inconsistency between clients' and agency's views of services to be provided. The finding is further substantiated by looking at individual services listed by client and agency. The greatest agreement appears to be on items related to psychological counseling for individual or family problems, recreational activities. Services involving job and school problems--which many clients include on their lists--appear to receive less attention from the agency, perhaps due to the limited availability of services of employment and school specialists. Referrals to other agencies also appear to be of less concern to agency than clients. In general, the agency appears to have projected the delivery of services different in number and type from those which clients indicated as wanted.

In addition to the relatively "hard" services offered by the agency, paraprofessional Youth Service Workers provide a wide variety of counselling and support services, as well as serving as liaisons between client and agency. Clients' and workers' perceptions of worker services to be

Table 4

Clients' Reports of Services Wanted

<u>Service Wanted by Client</u>	<u>Percent of Clients</u>
Legal services; a lawyer to handle a court case	33%
Drug/alcohol education, advice, treatment	15%
Help with problems with people at school, like teachers or kids	39%
Tutoring or help with school work	42%
Placement in a different school, program or class	48%
Help getting back into school	33%
Recreation activities, such as sports and trips	58%
Information or help about sex, birth control, pregnancy	9%
Arrangements for a place to stay or live	30%
Money, food, clothing	45%
Help with personal problems	52%
Placement in a job or information about jobs and job training	85%
Someone to talk with and do things with like a big brother or sister	55%
Advice or information about where to go for different kinds of services or help	52%
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF SERVICES WANTED	 5.4

Table 5

Agency's Projections of Services to be Provided

<u>Service to be Provided by Agency</u>	<u>Percent of Clients</u>
Legal services, representation	21%
Drug/alcohol counseling, information, advice	-
Intervention, advocacy at school	6%
Tutoring	18%
Placement in alternative school, class, program	18%
Family counseling, or intervention/advocacy for client with family	42%
Recreation activities and provision of alternatives	67%
Sex, birth control, pregnancy counseling, advice	3%
Individual counseling (from Youth Services Worker or social worker)	73%
Job placement, counseling, information	27%
Provision of adult role model	3%
Information about or referral to other agencies	-
Other	79%
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF SERVICES	 4.4

provided are shown in Table 6. The largest percentage of clients wanted explanation and advice from the worker (82%). Substantial percentages also expressed interest in additional personally supportive services and wanted the worker to be there when they needed someone to talk to (79%), help them realize what their problems are (76%), help them stay out of trouble with the police (76%), and provide intervention and advocacy with family, police, and school authorities (76%).

Table 6

Clients' and Workers' Perceptions of Projected Worker Services

<u>Service</u> ^a	<u>Percent of Clients</u>	<u>Percent of Workers</u>
Help me feel better about myself	58%	48%
Help me stay out of trouble with the police	76%	39%
Help me develop new interests or join activities like sports or dances	70%	55%
Stick up for me with my family, police, school authorities, etc.	76%	39%
Help me realize what my problems are	76%	52%
Explain things I am confused about and give me good advice	82%	58%
Make arrangements for me to get help or things I need	61%	42%
Make arrangements for my family to get things or help they need	55%	36%
Help me to control myself	52%	30%
Be there when I need someone to talk to	79%	30%
Missing ^b	--	36%
 AVERAGE NUMBER OF SERVICES	 6.8	 6.8

^a The terminology is taken from the client questionnaire. Items on the worker questionnaire are comparable although the language differs slightly. For example, the first item on the worker questionnaire reads, "Help client improve his self-esteem, self-image." The items are adapted from those developed for use with clients of the Seattle Atlantic Street Center's delinquency program (Seattle Atlantic Street Center, 1967).

^b Due to procedural difficulties, not all workers could fill out questionnaires for the assigned clients at intake.

Comparison of the workers' projections suggests that while there is some similarity of emphasis regarding counseling services, clients appear to be seeking more emotional support than workers are planning to provide. Item-by-item comparisons for each client-worker pair indicate that the average level of agreement between client and worker on services to be provided is low (33%). Once again, the results indicate that clients and agency personnel are not seeing things similarly when it comes to the provision of services.

Additional Service Arrangements. Clients' and workers' expectations concerning service arrangements--location and frequency of contact, duration on caseload, accessibility of the worker--are shown in Table 7. Clients appear to expect relatively frequent contact with the worker--more than half expect to see the worker at least once a week--at a wide variety of locations, including at the community center and at home, and two-thirds expect that they will be able to get help whenever they want or need it. Since not all workers were available to fill out questionnaires at intake, lack of complete data prohibits full analysis of their responses. However, the results suggest that workers anticipate less frequent contact with clients and in fewer locations than clients expect.

Summary of Intake Comparisons. The results of intake comparisons indicate a general lack of agreement between client and agency on identification of problems and selection of services to be provided. If these findings do represent conditions prevailing at the start of service delivery, then client and agency appear likely to be pursuing differing goals with dissimilar criteria for evaluation of outcomes. The previous study (Richardson and Kaufman, 1979) indicated that correlates of client satisfaction included both client perceptions of receipt of desired services and client perceptions of the degree to which their participation in defining problems and setting service goals was solicited. Client participation implies a level of client-worker communication which has the potential to lead to mutually held definitions and goals for the service situation. Shared perceptions would contribute to some degree of commonality regarding criteria for assessing outcomes. Clients would be more likely to receive desired services and presumably feel helped and satisfied; workers would be making their evaluations of outcomes from starting points similar to those held by clients. However, the present findings point to the possibility of further lack of congruence between client and provider regarding descriptions of the service situation and evaluation of its outcomes.

Analysis of Client and Agency Perceptions During Service Delivery

During service delivery, service strategies are implemented with ongoing monitoring and assessment of services and results. Evaluations of outcomes include appraisals of receipt and helpfulness of services. This section presents a comparison of clients' and workers' perceptions of: 1) services provided; 2) service arrangements; 3) appraisals of outcomes of services.

Description of Services. Clients' reports of Youth Services Center services received from intake to six months and from six months to one year are shown in Table 8. During the first six months, the services most commonly reported were recreational services and help for personal problems (85% each), followed by help with family problems (70%), someone to talk with and do things with (67%), help with interpersonal problems at school (59%),

Table 7

Clients' and Workers' Expectations of Service Arrangements and Contacts

<u>Service Arrangements or Contacts Expected</u>	<u>Percent of Clients</u>	<u>Percent of Workers^a</u>
<u>Location of contact</u>		
At SPCC	76%	30%
On the street	18%	33%
At client's home	52%	64%
By telephone	48%	33%
Other	3%	3%
Don't know	18%	--
Missing	--	36%
<u>Frequency of contact</u>		
Every day	3%	--
A few times a week	42%	27%
Once a week	21%	21%
A few times a month	15%	9%
Once a month or less	6%	3%
Other	--	3%
Don't know	12%	--
Missing	--	36%
<u>Worker will provide help whenever client needs or wants it</u>		
Yes	67%	48%
No	15%	15%
Don't know	15%	--
Missing	3%	36%
<u>Duration on Caseload</u>		
3 months or less	15%	--
4-6 months	6%	12%
7-9 months	3%	30%
More than 9 months	12%	18%
Don't know	64%	--
Missing	--	36%

^a Due to procedural difficulties, not all workers could fill out questionnaires for the assigned clients at intake.

Table 8

Clients' Reports of Agency Services Received

<u>Agency Services Reported by Client</u>	<u>Time of Interview</u>	
	<u>Six months n = 27</u>	<u>One year n = 26</u>
Legal services; a lawyer to handle a court case	52%	58%
Drug/alcohol education, advice, treatment	30%	15%
Help with problems with people at school, like teachers or other kids	59%	73%
Tutoring or help with school work	37%	46%
Placement in a different school, program, or class	37%	50%
Help getting back into school	52%	62%
Help for family problems	70%	65%
Recreation activities, such as sports and trips	85%	69%
Information or help about sex, birth control, pregnancy	22%	12%
Arrangements for a place to stay or live	22%	15%
Money, food, clothing	37%	23%
Help with personal problems	85%	77%
Placement in a job or information about jobs and job training	56%	58%
Someone to talk with and do things with like a big brother or big sister	67%	54%
Advice or information about where to go for different kinds of services or help	59%	54%
<u>AVERAGE NUMBER OF SERVICES</u>	<u>7.7</u>	<u>7.6</u>

and advice or information concerning other service agencies (59%). During the second six months, the same services were emphasized although percentages and orderings show some change. Help for personal problems continued to be the most frequently reported service (77%), followed by help for interpersonal problems at school (73%), recreational activities (69%), help for family problems (65%), and reinstatement at school (62%). In short, the emphasis for both periods was on counseling and support services aimed at the client and his relationships in his personal, familial, and scholastic environments.

Youth Service Workers' reports of agency services provided to clients are shown in Table 9. As compared with clients' reports, only one service--individual counseling--was delivered by workers to over 50% of clients at both time periods (56% and 54% at six months and one year, respectively). Other services emphasized over the first six months included recreation (48%), family intervention (44%), provision of adult role model (44%). During the second time period, while individual counseling maintains its position as the most prevalent service, there are shifts in other types of services provided, with the following services given attention: school tutoring and provision of adult role model (50% each), intervention and advocacy at school and provision of recreational services (46% each), and school placement or transfer as well as family intervention (42% each).

Comparison of the results in the two tables indicates differences in numbers and types of services reported or in perceptions of services provided/received. Results of item-by-item comparisons between client-worker pairs for overall agreement on agency services provided and not provided indicate moderate agreement at both time periods (at six months, mean agreement = 67%, SD = 14%; at one year, mean agreement = 60%, SD = 14%).

Comparisons of clients' and workers' reports of paraprofessional services provided are shown in Tables 10 and 11. Results are similar to those for reports of agency services in showing clients reporting receipt of more services than workers indicate they have provided. For both time periods, clients emphasize counseling and emotional support, although there are some shifts in percentages and orderings from one time period to the next. Workers' reports also indicate attention to guidance and counseling for the two time periods. Results of the item-by-item comparison indicate little overall agreement between client and worker on services received and not received for both time periods (at six months, mean agreement = 35%, SD = 23%; at one year, mean agreement = 36%, SD = 24%). The finding is consistent with previous findings of this study as well as comparisons made in the earlier study (Richardson and Kaufman, 1979) which indicated that workers and clients are not seeing things in the same way.

In short, the findings for six months and one year for comparisons of reports of client and worker on agency and worker services are similar. Clients report receipt of more services than workers report are being provided by themselves or by the agency. Genuine differences in perception may be possible especially with regard to services related to counseling and support: some clients may receive so little positive attention or support for their needs from their environments that what workers may see as routine attentions and actions are viewed quite favorably by clients.

Table 9
Workers' Reports of Agency Services Provided

Agency Services Reported by Worker	Time of Interview	
	Six months n = 27	One year n = 26
Legal representation	33%	15%
Legal advice or other legal services (not for open course cases)	15%	15%
Drug/alcohol counseling, information, advice	4%	15%
Tutoring	22%	50%
Placement in alternate school, class, or program (includes job training program)	15%	42%
Intervention, advocacy in school	37%	46%
Reinstatement in school	15%	35%
Family counseling, or intervention/ advocacy for client with family	44%	42%
Recreation activities and provision of alternatives	48%	46%
Sex, birth control, pregnancy counseling, advice	15%	8%
Individual counseling (from Youth Service Worker or psychologist social worker)	56%	54%
Job placement, counseling, or in- formation	37%	38%
Provision of adult role model (Youth Services Worker)	44%	50%
Information about or referral to other agencies	37%	23%
Other	11%	--
AVERAGE NUMBER OF SERVICES	5.1	5.7

Table 10
Clients' Reports of Worker Services Received

<u>Worker Services Reported by Client</u>	<u>Time of Interview</u>	
	<u>Six months n = 27</u>	<u>One year n = 26</u>
Helped me feel better about myself	85%	85%
Helped me stay out of trouble with the police	74%	65%
Helped me develop new interests or join activities like sports and dances	85%	65%
Stuck up for me with my family, police, school authorities, etc.	81%	81%
Helped me realize what my problems are	89%	77%
Explained things I was confused about and gave me good advice	85%	96%
Made arrangements for me to get help or things I needed	70%	77%
Made arrangements for my family to get things or help they needed	41% 67%	73% 77%
Helped me to control myself	67%	77%
Was there when I needed someone to talk to	85%	88%
AVERAGE NUMBER OF SERVICES	7.6	7.8

Table 11
Workers' Reports of Worker Services Provided

<u>Worker Services Reported by Worker</u>	<u>Six months n = 27</u>	<u>One year n = 26</u>
Help client improve his self-esteem, self-image	44%	46%
Help client stay out of trouble with the police	56%	46%
Help the client develop new interests, activities; provide alternatives	44%	54%
Provide intervention, advocacy for client with family, police, school authorities, etc.	48%	50%
Help client develop insights into his problems	59%	59%
Provide guidance and advice	70%	62%
Make arrangements for the client to get help or things he/she needs	26%	38%
Make arrangements for the client's family to get help or things they need	7%	31%
Help client control his/her behavior or change specific behaviors of the client	22%	31%
Provide emotional support for the client	29%	31%
No services provided to client	--	4%
AVERAGE NUMBER OF SERVICES	5.1	5.0

Table 12
Clients' Reports of Service Arrangements and Contacts

Service Arrangements and Contacts Reported by Client	Time of Interview	
	Six months n = 27	One year n = 26
Location of contact ^a		
At SPCC	67%	81%
On the street	37%	50%
At client's home	48%	73%
By telephone	44%	77%
Other	26%	27%
Frequency of contact		
Every day	4%	8%
A few times a week	44%	42%
Once a week	15%	12%
A few times a month	26%	31%
Once a month or less	4%	--
Other	--	--
Worker provided help whenever client needed or wanted it		
Yes	89%	85%
No	4%	12%
Missing, unknown	7%	3%

^aMultiple responses permitted.

Table 13
Workers' Reports of Service Arrangements and Contacts

Service Arrangements and Contacts Reported by Worker	Time of Interview	
	Six Months n = 27	One Year n = 26
Location of contact ^a		
At SPCC	56%	54%
On the street	26%	23%
At client's home	63%	54%
By telephone	26%	38%
Other	--	8%
Missing	15%	8%
Frequency of contact		
Every day	--	4%
A few times a week	37%	31%
Once a week	11%	8%
A few times a month	33%	42%
Once a month or less	4%	4%
Missing	4%	12%
Worker provided help whenever client needed or wanted it		
Yes	63%	69%
No	19%	23%
Missing, unknown	19%	8%

^aMultiple responses permitted.

However, at least two additional explanations are possible. First, memory lapses and/or distortions on the parts of both client and worker might have occurred, with workers forgetting attentions and services provided to specific clients and clients overestimating services provided in order to create a good impression. Second, changes in workers over time might have resulted in information on services slipping through the cracks.

Service Arrangements. Findings for perceptions of service arrangements are presented in Tables 12 and 13. Results in Table 12 indicate clients' contacts with workers occur in a wide variety of places. For the first six-month period, two thirds of the clients report seeing their workers at the center, although home visits and phone contacts are not uncommon; during the second time period, percentages for these contacts as well as for encounters on the streets have increased although the frequency of contact remains essentially the same for both time periods. Most clients also report that the workers provided help whenever it was needed or wanted.

Workers' reports of service contacts shown in Table 13 also indicate a wide variety of locations of contact. At six months, clients' and workers' perceptions of frequencies for locations and types of contacts are relatively similar except that workers appear to see themselves as making more home visits than clients reported. At one year, workers report lower percentages than clients for all locations and types of contacts. Overall percentages for the remaining items--frequency of contact and accessibility of worker--do not appear to differ appreciably.

Results of item-by-item comparisons of clients' and workers' reports on additional service dimensions are shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Mean Percent Agreement Between Client and Worker on Service Arrangements

Agreement Measure	Time of Interview					
	Six months			One year		
	n	Mean Agreement	SD	n	Mean Agreement	SD
Location of contact	27	58%	33%	24	51%	28%
Frequency of contact	21	77%	22%	21	72%	21%
Accessibility of worker	22	77%	43%	23	65%	49%

The results indicate substantial agreement between client and worker concerning frequency of contact and accessibility of worker, and moderately high agreement on location of contact. The degree of agreement does not appear to vary greatly over time.

Perceptions of Outcomes. Client perceptions of outcomes include assessments of the extent to which desired services were received and their perceived helpfulness. Mean scores for client responses to questionnaire items evaluating outcomes are shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Clients' Perceptions of Outcomes

Outcome Measure	Time of Interview			
	Six months ^a		One Year ^b	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Overall extent to which wanted services were received	57%	28%	62%	24%
Agency services	55%	28%	64%	29%
Worker services	59%	30%	59%	25%
Overall helpfulness of services	61%	23%	58%	25%
Agency services	61%	23%	58%	25%
Worker services	59%	25%	58%	27%

^a n = 27 at six months

^b n = 26 at one year

The results in Table 15 show that clients report receiving slightly more than half the services they wanted, with proportions of desired agency and worker services received seen as relatively similar within and across time periods. Mean scores for the extent to which clients feel helped by services are similar to those for extent to which desired services were received, a finding which suggests that clients perceive that they have been helped according to the extent to which desired services are seen as being received.

Worker perceptions of outcomes include assessments of the extent to which the client was helped by the services provided and the extent to which service goals were achieved. Mean scores for worker responses to questionnaire items evaluating outcomes are shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Workers' Perceptions of Client Outcomes

Worker Measure	Time of Interview			
	Six Months ^a		One Year ^b	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Amount client was helped by services provided	39%	17%	41%	19%
Extent to which service goals were achieved	33%	16%	35%	16%

^a n = 27 at six months

^b n = 26 at one year

The results show that workers' evaluations of the extent to which clients achieved the goals set at intake are low for both time periods (33% and 35% for six months and one year, respectively). Evaluations of the extent to which the clients had been helped are also low (39% and 41% for the two time periods). In other words, workers perceive the services provided to be relatively ineffective in helping clients and in achieving service goals, with services having some beneficial effect within the first six months and then levelling off in helpfulness.

In comparing evaluations of clients and workers, it is apparent that clients view the outcomes of service delivery considerably more favorably than do the workers. An obvious conclusion is that clients and workers have different goals and/or criteria for judging outcomes. It appears that clients' criteria include perceptions of receiving desired services and feeling helped by them. These criteria and evaluations of outcomes apparently bear little resemblance to those of workers, since the previous study found virtually no correlation between clients' and workers' appraisals of outcomes with Spearman rho correlations ranging from -.13 to .14 for this group (Richardson and Kaufman, 1979). Given the likelihood of discrepant goals and criteria for evaluation, it is not surprising to find that client satisfaction is related to clients' perceptions of outcomes and dealings with the worker but has no relation to workers' perceptions (Richardson and Kaufman, 1979).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study point to a lack of congruence between client and provider on situational definitions, including definitions of needs and problems, selection of services to be provided, and descriptions of services actually provided. These results are consistent with literature cited in the introduction which indicate that imprecise knowledge of causal relationships, lack of clearcut objective definitions of problems and services, indeterminate service technologies and subjective, imprecise criteria for outcomes are not uncommon and may result in lack of agreement between observers concerning the service situation. Thus, it seems clear that greater congruence between client and provider as well as increased effectiveness of services by standards other than the clients' require some degree of shared definitions and mutual perceptions. The following sections focus on specific aspects of the results as well as their implications for service delivery.

Enhanced Communication through Client Participation

Results of this study show lack of agreement between client and provider at each step of the service process. Such findings raise questions related to the degree of ongoing communication between participants and suggest the importance of seeking techniques and procedures to enhance communication.

An approach which appears particularly suited to the provision of services based on indeterminate technologies and the practitioner's art has been presented by Bersoff (1978) who suggests viewing the delivery of services as an experiment: its aims are replicable solutions to problems. The identification of problems and the setting of goals require value judgments for which clients might provide inputs. In making decisions resulting in the selection of mutually acceptable service strategies and objectives, the provider would have the right to reject goals incompatible with his values and judgments of the situation while the client would be able to reject unwanted services or service strategies inimical to his needs and interests. Clear specification of goals in a treatment contract would prevent unilateral and unshared definitions and objectives, and would allow participants to monitor progress towards agreed-upon outcomes. Since successful outcomes may be linked to shared definitions and perceptions, Bersoff advocates ongoing monitoring and feedback, with the client providing information on how well the services are related to goals.

Greater Clarity about Service Arrangements

The study has indicated a lack of agreement between client and worker concerning service arrangements, including those at intake concerning frequency and location of contact and accessibility of the worker. Studies in the literature underline the necessity of early orientation of the client to the service situation (Bersoff, 1979; Hillman and Charney, 1976; Rhodes, 1976). Roles should be defined, tasks of both client and provider specified, and expectations regarding the duration and outcomes of services shared. The utilization of services is a process. Its efficiency and effectiveness are enhanced when participants operate with similar expectations, rules and information.

Clarity Regarding the Mission of the Youth Services Center

The Youth Services Center has as its stated goals the prevention and treatment of delinquency and the enhancement of socially acceptable behaviors through the provision of services to voluntary clients. Clients' identifications of their problems and service needs reveal their desires for a wide range of services ranging from legal representation through counseling and emotional support. Receipt of these services results in satisfaction and perceptions of being helped (Richardson and Kaufman, 1979). However, it appears that clients' purposes and goals, workers' criteria for evaluating outcomes, and the agency's statements of its mission may not mesh. This appears to be part of a particularly thorny dilemma for agencies which purport to provide socially rehabilitative services on a voluntary basis. If the agency is seen solely as a multi-service center, clients will come specifically for the services available and will frequently expect to receive them without the strings of social rehabilitation attached; thus, achievement of the agency's stated goals becomes at best incidental. On the other hand, if the agency takes a direct approach and makes clear its delinquency prevention goals, will clients come willingly despite the potential stigma or labeling attached to participation?

Solutions to the problem appear to require a clear delineation of the needs and behaviors of youth and a conceptual stance on the causes of delinquency. According to the literature, there is no commonly shared view of delinquency and its causes; there are no universally accepted approaches to treatment. If delinquency is seen primarily as a function of environmental conditions, the emphasis should be on environmental change. If delinquency is conceptualized using a medical model, more systematically planned treatment strategies focused on clients appear to be necessary. If delinquent behaviors are viewed as part of the process of adolescent adjustment, a broadly defined youth-serving stance might ease the transition between youth and adulthood. In the absence of clear and objective definitions and knowledge of causal relationships, values, preferences, and service capabilities of necessity play interactive roles in defining the agency's mission and goals. Some degree of clarity concerning these values and issues would contribute to shaping the agency's role in serving youth for the future.

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