

Video news

A brief 'best buy' guide to video tapes for teaching purposes is now available from the College. If you would like a copy please write to Debbie Symonds, c/o The Royal College of Psychiatrists.

The more comprehensive guide entitled *Video Tapes for Psychiatric Teaching* published by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and Audio Visual Group in 1989 is in the process of being thoroughly weeded. It contains many out of date or unavailable titles. A new edition will be published soon. I would welcome any comments on titles which should or should not be included.

Finally, just a brief mention of a new video tape on 'Assistance Animals'. This tape, produced by the Royal Veterinary College, looks at the relationship between specially trained animals and their disabled owners, and the benefits of pets as therapy. Tape details are given below.

NICHOLAS ROSE

Videotape reviews

Won't they just grow out of it? Putting child psychotherapy on the map

This 20 minute video has been produced professionally for the Child Psychotherapy Trust, whose aim is to extend the availability of child psychotherapy in the UK. The video is intended to educate a wide audience about the work of these professionals, rather than to convey information about techniques or training.

The video opens its argument with the particular: an interview with 8-year-old Clare, who had psychotherapy following her father's death, together with comments from Clare's mother about her own reactions to the bereavement and to the suggestion of psychotherapy. This section is expanded with explanations from Clare's therapist, so that the nature of the child's difficulties is emotively communicated. Meanwhile, on screen, a strong non-verbal message is conveyed: the good outcome in terms of the relationship between Clare and her mother.

A theoretical justification for psychotherapy with children follows. This is lucid and enthusiastic, but what will be made of the statement "Being normal, child or adult, is managing your madness well."? The explanation of the need for a personal analysis is also difficult to follow, but the case illustrations are vivid and convincing; a picture is painted of a variety

of ways in which the child psychotherapist makes a contribution within child mental health services.

Interspersed through the next section, on more ways of working and on training, are attempts to deal with possible objections to child psychotherapy (being a luxury, or too intense). Shooting in the dark is always hazardous, and one's heart goes out to Sebastian Kraemer, perched inexplicably and obviously uncomfortably amidst the Lego in a paediatric ward, more puzzled and intense in each succeeding clip. He probably avoids his own foot, but it's a close thing.

Finally, a justification for psychotherapy with adolescents is introduced. This section is highly compressed and raises far more issues than it resolves.

Throughout the film, a series of factual messages is flashed across the screen, to emphasise the extent and urgency of children's need. The language is either charmingly direct and colloquial or irritatingly ungrammatical, depending on one's point of view. Hard on the heels of the adolescent section comes the legend 'Half of those sentenced or cautioned for indictable offences are under 21.' This is either grandiose or irrelevant, and can only diminish the argument that, rather than a universal panacea, child psychotherapists are a valuable resource whose training should be more equitably funded.

This video is technically excellent and well paced. The occasional moment of incoherence is probably no bad thing, increasing the impression of patent sincerity. If the images used to illustrate the film (for example, dwelling long on the blank expressionless fabric mouth of an 'anatomically correct' doll) and to enhance its pleading (those 'messages'), sit uneasily with a child psychiatrist, perhaps this is the price of a professional production which wants to speak loudly and clearly to a non-mental health professional audience. This video could be widely used to explain child psychotherapy to managers and other potential funding bodies but its most persuasive arguments come in the first half.

MARY EMINSON

Professor Sir Martin Roth

An interview with Dr N. D. Minton

It takes an Alan Bennett to make talking heads into a fascinating piece of entertainment, but the reminiscences of the first President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists approaches this level of bewitching interest, at least for one of the older generation of

psychiatrists. It should be equally entertaining for the younger members of the profession. I would say to them: "Ignore the somewhat stilted and pompous start and watch with increasing interest the unfolding story of one of the leaders of the profession, told modestly but clearly and spanning the great teaching centres and the great names of psychiatry of this century."

The relationship between psychiatry and neurology has always been a vexed one and the debate still goes on about how much neurology, compared, say with medicine, paediatrics, philosophy and management should be expected, particularly in the context of the membership examination. In the '40s, when Sir Martin started his training, there were no such doubts and he started at Maida Vale Hospital, working with Sir Russell Brain, William McKenney and Sir Francis Walshe.

With a firm base of such neurological training, he moved across to the Maudsley Hospital where he worked with another collection of great names including Eliot Slater, Aubrey Lewis, Guttmann, Clifford Scott and Willi Mayer-Gross. With two of these he was to become the junior author of a most influential textbook on British psychiatry. He continued his research at Crichton Royal Hospital and Graylingwell Research Unit before taking the chair of psychiatry at Durham University, moving shortly to Newcastle with the separation of the two Universities.

He was not only a formidable figure in the field of psychiatric research, but he played a most important part in the development of the College. As he points out, he was not the choice of the then Establishment as candidate for the presidency but was hastily nominated by 12 colleagues as the champion of the members at large; and he was duly elected.

He notes the influence of the College in promoting improvement in psychiatric services and pays tribute to the support received from Sir Keith Joseph, then Secretary of State. This was a time of great decision making, including the move to 17 Belgrave Square which has since realised its potential with extensions to house the many educational and research developments of the burgeoning field of psychiatry.

But why a video? It is not enough to say that this is a modern means of communication. A visual component must be an essential part of the communication process. Much of what Sir Martin says could be developed more extensively by the written word, with opportunities to pursue arguments more closely. But here is the man, chatting to us in our living room, coming over more as a person than a magister. It is indeed something to warm to and to treasure.

Yet the atmosphere is sometimes stilted, the questioning intrusive and the profound 'noddies',

those breaks in continuity intended to relieve the monotony of a single face, are sometimes inserted at inappropriate moments. But these are minor blemishes on a canvas depicting the story of Sir Martin Roth, an individual who has made an enormous impact on British psychiatric research, teaching and clinical development as well as becoming the first moulder of the neophyte College as it fought to achieve status and recognition. As he says of his appointment as first professor of psychiatry at Cambridge University, he had to struggle to avoid being the last. Without his efforts as first president, the same might have applied.

PROFESSOR PHILIP SEAGER

Journeys

'Journeys' is a video concerning two real life people who have experienced life in institutions because of their learning disability and handicaps. The video is presented in two parts. Part 1 depicts the worst aspects of life in institutions—enforced routines to maximise organisational efficiency, the lack of privacy, the depersonalisation and the total dependence on others for basic opportunities to enjoy life to the full. This drab description suddenly changes to the bustling outside world and its numerous opportunities to integrate into ordinary community life. It is here that one meets Pauline who describes her life both in the institution and in the outside world. Pauline is now in her middle years but is able to describe her current life style, which contrasts so markedly with her former experiences.

Part 2 is about a young man called Martin, who has severe physical and intellectual disabilities. The video bravely attempts to show what it feels like having things done to oneself and how easy it is for carers to ignore the very person they are supposedly supporting and caring for. Martin's mother gives an articulate and impassioned plea for services to be more responsive. She gives an account of the various obstacles and problems she has had to encounter and overcome during Martin's childhood and adolescence. One of her major pleas is that society changes its attitude to those who are disabled.

Generally the video is well made though it is a little difficult to follow Pauline's narrative early on. The video is essentially about two people's journey from the institution towards a more integrated life in the community. Perhaps more signposting of the journeys might have given a little more structure to the personal stories. Its major strength though, is its ability to raise the many points which arise from society's attitude to the disabled, de-institutionalisation and the move towards community care. It is thus a rich source of material for use in training staff and questioning their attitudes towards community care generally.

JOHN MORGAN