

Sex and Mental Health Education on the UNC Campus, Part II: concluding fieldwork report

Victor J. Schoenbach
M.S.P.H. student in the Department of
Health Education
January 4, 1974

Introduction:

This report covers my activities during the fall semester of 1973 for my fieldwork project concerning sex and mental health education on the U.N.C. campus. My earlier work is described in a report dated August 8, 1973.

In some ways, this semester has been the most fruitful of my sixteen months in the Department. The last few months have witnessed the realization of developments that I have had in mind for some time. I have also had the opportunity to work in other areas of mental health education besides sexuality. Because of the various strands of my work, I will report them by category.

Sex information pamphlet distribution:

As a follow-up to the Human Sexuality Information and Counseling Service's distribution of the Birth Control Handbook, the VD Handbook, and several study guides published by SIECUS (the Sex Information and Education Council of the United States) during August 1973, I circulated a memorandum among persons involved in the area of student health (see appendix). The memorandum explained our experience in distributing the pamphlets and reported the results of our questionnaire survey of student reaction. Though only 10% of those questionnaires had been returned, the response regarding the Birth Control and VD Handbooks was so favorable and the pick-up of the pamphlets so rapid that we judged their

distribution a success.

Accordingly, HSICS has requested and received from the Campus Governing Council (Student Government) appropriations to purchase 6,000 copies of each of these handbooks. Most of the copies will be distributed in the same manner as during the summer, i.e., by leaving large numbers on tables in lobbies of University buildings to encourage people to take them.

The memorandum about our pamphlet distribution was reprinted by Mr. Harold Delaney, Vice-President for Student Services and Special Programs, and circulated to heads of departments of student affairs at each campus of the University of North Carolina. In response, HSICS received a number of requests for copies of the handbooks.

In my earlier report I noted that I was attempting to prepare several pamphlets of my own on other topics concerning sex and relationships. Unfortunately, I have not had any time to devote to them this term.

Televised sex education:

The availability of a televised course on human sexuality offers the possibility of much wider dissemination of information with possible attitude reassessment than is possible with pamphlets. At the beginning of October, I circulated nearly 100 copies of a memorandum announcing the existence of a course developed at the University of Hawaii and recommending its broadcast over University Educational Television. Copies were sent to individuals in the Student Health Service, Department of Student Affairs, Carolina Population Center, Department of Health Education, Department of Maternal and Child Health, various academic and other professional departments, the Orange-Person-Chatham Mental Health Center, UNC General Administration, the State Department of Public Instruction, and University Educational Television. My intention in

circulating the memorandum so widely was to make these agencies aware of the existence of the videotaped course for possible use in their own programs, as well as to stimulate interest in the project.

I had telephone conversations and correspondence with Dr. George Bair, Director, and Mr. Hugh Fisher, Program Coordinator, of University Television. They are proceeding to review the Hawaii course syllabus that Bill Griffin kindly made available. Dr. Bair expressed interest in carrying something in the area of sexuality. He also indicated his appreciation of the need for caution and careful consideration of proposals for broadcast in view of a possibly strong negative response from the viewing audience. Dr. Bair's caution strikes me as realistic. On the other hand, the people at University Television have not kept me informed of the progress of their deliberations nor have they made me feel that they appreciated my interest and suggestion. A number of people who received my original memorandum expressed strong support for the idea of a televised course. It may be appropriate to attempt to mobilize community interest at a future date.

Meanwhile, the Hawaii series has been shown in Honolulu with predominantly favorable audience reaction. It is scheduled to be broadcast in Maine. A shorter series, developed at the University of Minnesota, has just been broadcast over public television in Minneapolis and ran stiff competition to Monday night football!

Film resources for sex education:

Despite the increasing number of good films in the area of sex education, budget limitation of interested organizations has kept these films relatively unavailable on the campus. The principal source for sex education films to date

has been the Carolina Population Center. Their films are primarily in the area of birth control and population. Most are oriented toward a lower educational level audience. There is also the problem of datedness.

One film in particular, "Sexuality and Communication", by Masters and Johnson trained Drs. Noam and Beryl Chernik, is very highly regarded and represents the only existing film that presents some of the latest findings in human sexual response and sex dysfunction. Its \$400 purchase price and unavailability for rental have kept it out of the reach of any one campus organization despite interest in showing it in several departments.

In order to obtain this film, and perhaps others through similar arrangements, I had conversations with Chuck Ausherman (Director of the CPC Educational Resources Unit), Bill Griffin (Instructor in "Topics in Human Sexuality"), Dr. William Bakewell (Professor of psychiatry), Dr. James Dingfelder (Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology), Robert Wilson (consultant in the CPC North Carolina Programs Office), and Robert Diamant (Director of HSICS). These conversations yielded expressions of definite interest in the film and offers of over half the purchase price. Kenneth McIntyre, Director of the Audiovisual Bureau, explained that conditions of their trust fund do not permit the payment of rental receipts back to the departments who purchased the film, so a loan arrangement would not be possible. He did agree that it would be possible to apply rental receipts toward the purchase of additional films in the area of human sexuality. This arrangement would provide a mechanism for the assessment of interest in films dealing with sexuality and for funding the purchase of new ones in proportion to demand. Bill Griffin has told me that if such an arrangement can be created, the Department of Health Education will purchase the film.

Sex education in graduate and professional training programs:

An HSICS report from February 1973 on "The Sexual Education and Health Care Responsibilities of the University" included a recommendation that various academic departments and professional schools revise or expand their course offerings to include relevant material on human sexuality. My enrollment in a course for clinical psychology graduate students stimulated me to make some enquiries along these lines.

Dr. David Galinsky, the director of the program in clinical psychology, confirmed that no specific sex education was contained in the graduate level courses in psychology. He was of the impression that supervision of clinical work and the undergraduate course background covered the relevant information and helped clinical students to develop appropriate attitudes. He added that these were assumptions on his part and might well be proved incorrect.

Dr. Galinsky expressed his willingness to cooperate in the administration of some type of survey to assess needs and interest among students, though he could not offer material resources. If a survey demonstrated need and/or interest, he would be willing to request resources for a program of some type. He also gave me some suggestions for involving clinical psychology graduate students in the counseling activities of HSICS as a way of interesting them in the area. Since the HSICS screening program has just been completed, the only likely manner of involvement would be as consultants for reviewing cases we handle. I will suggest this to HSICS and also look for an available assessment instrument.

HSICS organization and activities:

Much of my work described so far has been carried out through my role as coordinator for special projects of HSICS. As I wrote in August, there were

two developments I hoped to promote in my general involvement with HSICS. The first was the evolution of an active management committee that would involve a half dozen persons in the ongoing administration and planning of HSICS activities. The second concerned the expansion of HSICS public education programs, where I feel its major impact can be had.

It is a great pleasure to report that both of these developments have to a great extent been realized, though I cannot necessarily take the credit. Since September, a "management board" has met on the average of every three weeks and has provided a vehicle for increased sharing of leadership responsibilities. Also, having much of the business decision-making occur outside of the general meetings has freed the latter from the often fruitless and occasionally acrimonious debate that has plagued HSICS. Instead, general meetings include a half-hour of business followed by an educational program or group sensitivity session.

The change has been acknowledged an unqualified success. Much credit for its practical realization goes to HSICS new director, Robert Diamant. While removing business from the general meeting to a management board always raises questions of accountability and responsiveness of the board, such problems are not likely to arise. First, management board meetings are open to all HSICS members; anyone attending can vote. Second, major decisions must in any event be accepted by the general membership. Third, previously, policy was formulated by one or a few individuals but frequently without the benefit of formal discussion. And finally, the amounts of money and power are too limited to constitute a serious problem.

With regard to the expansion of HSICS educational outreach activities, several counselors have taken over the leading of evening discussion groups that I was involved in last year. The tapes and written reports from several of my presentations were useful to them in preparing. In addition to three I

conducted when no one else was available, presentations this year have included several to groups of resident advisors, several to dormitory residents, six classes at Chapel Hill High School, one to nursing students, one in a series to residents at Troy House, a home for youthful offenders. Specific and very positive feedback has come for several through the discussion evening feedback questionnaire that I used last year and in the form of a letter to the Daily Tar Heel from a residence director.

In recognition of the high demand for our services and of the considerable potential for alleviation of sex problems through educational programs, in its latest recruitment drive HSICS accepted counselors who will be concerned primarily or exclusively with outreach activities. This is the first time that HSICS has accepted people in other than a counseling role.

The expansion, realized and projected, of non-counseling activities, the increasing number of counselors giving a substantial amount of time and effort to HSICS, and the maturing of HSICS as an ongoing organization have all raised questions about future development and insitutionalization. Currently, our director and an administrative assistant receive compensation on a part-time basis from funds provided through federal work-study programs. These funds are available only to full-time students who meet certain qualifications.

Inevitably, the question of greater funding and regular salaries has arisen. While no clear answer has yet emerged, it is possible that HSICS will seek funding for several salaries and other expenses from State or private sources. While outside funding and a paid staff would change the character of the organization, their advent would make possible a further expansion of educational activities and provide a more solid organizational base.

Transportation in Chapel Hill/Carrboro:

During this semester, I have extended my fieldwork involvement into the area of local transportation, in particular commutation to and from UNC. My attention to this matter has arisen mostly because I have felt the effects of the current transportation situation on my own life at UNC and have consequently been motivated to do something about it.

Many health issues are involved with transportation questions. Nationally, the automobile accounts for a sizeable amount of mortality and disability. It is also responsible for a great deal of urban air pollution, noise, and congestion of open space. While in Chapel Hill none of these problems has developed to anything like the extent of our major cities, the automobile can be implicated in a number of negative health consequences here.

Perhaps the primary negative health consequences of automobiles in our community occur with regard to mental health. These consequences, for which my evidence is only impressionistic, concern the environmental and social impact of the buildup of traffic. Environmentally, the magnitude of automobile traffic results in a significant decline in air quality, consigns large areas of open space in both campus and downtown areas to parked cars, and turns streets (especially Franklin Street, Columbia Street, and during rush hours many others) into barriers dividing up the campus and downtown area. Being a pedestrian or a bicycle rider loses much of its inherent pleasure when constant alertness is required and crossing streets is a major effort.

One result of traffic and congestion is to turn people into competitors. This point has been made by Philip Slater in The Pursuit of Loneliness. Slater points out that increasingly in our society we tend to encounter people in situations where they are in our way. When traffic, automobile, bicycle, or even pedestrian, grows beyond a certain point, cooperative interaction decreases,

while aggressive, even hostile interaction and feelings increase. The difference among the various modes of travel is that automobiles have a much higher potential for disruption than do bicycles or pedestrians.

An additional casualty of a transportation pattern in which everyone drives his or her own automobile is casual social interaction during travel. Walking or riding a bicycle, one can observe and take part in the surrounding environment, see and acknowledge people one passes, meet people and travel with them. Group riding, hitch-hiking, and buses offer similar possibilities. In a community like Chapel Hill where the level of crowding and fear are low, commuting to and from work could be a social, pleasant experience. Even individual automobile travel affords some of these possibilities when travelling at slow speeds on uncrowded roads. But the volume of people do not permit the latter, and in heavy traffic situations, slow speeds do not contribute to good feelings.

Transportation behavior, at the individual and community levels, are like most forms of individual and social behavior intimately connected with other behavior. Changes in transportation policies can have implications for shopping patterns and consequently for the business community, which in turn affects the interest of the downtown area from the social point of view. While many people simply commute from their homes to UNC, others are required, either in the course of their job or academic program, to leave the campus during the day. At the same time, even the lack of a transportation policy results in changes since the continuing increase in traffic volume reduces available parking and lengthens travel time.

The principal measure to alleviate transportation problems in Chapel Hill being taken at present is the planned municipal bus system due to start operation in August, 1974. The bus system will provide regular service on about six lines from early morning through after midnight. Carrboro, which narrowly defeated a referendum calling for participation in the system, will not be served.

Scheduled to accompany the introduction of the bus system are various plans to restrict campus parking and to encourage riding the buses. Current plans call for fringe parking lots for commuters coming from outside Chapel Hill, purchase and resale by the University of bus passes, and higher fees for campus parking. No final decisions have yet been made.

While the bus system and accompanying measures will have an impact on transportation problems, a full solution will require many different approaches. Buses have considerable limitations for people who 1) have to transport equipment or materials, 2) do not live convenient to a bus line, 3) live out of town but do not have a car to spare by leaving it in a fringe lot all day (not to mention the crowd trying to get in or out of the lot at peak hours), 4) wish to stop off to shop for dinner on the way home, 5) have to travel out of town during their working day. For many people who have grown used to the convenience of door to door transportation, the transition to buses may prove difficult.

Other modes for local transportation include walking, bicycle riding, car-pooling, and hitch-hiking. Each of these plays a role at present, a role which is circumscribed by the existing dominance of individual automobile travel. Each of these modes of travel has assumed greater importance with the advent of the gasoline shortage, a development which will alter the economics of the proposed bus system.

Although I have spent a good deal of time grappling with Chapel Hill's transportation problems along these lines, I have not yet come up with definite answers nor have I had dealings with individuals involved in making policy in this area. I have had exploratory discussions with members of ECOS.

My first attempt at intervention consisted in meeting with Bill Small, Director for Student and Minority Affairs of the School of Public Health, and subsequently writing a memorandum for presentation to the Dean's Cabinet. The

memorandum (see appendix) recommended that the School:

- provide more bicycle racks
- change parking policies to place students, staff, and faculty on an equal footing, to encourage group riding, and to make a certain portion of spaces available for handicapped persons and persons requiring the use of their car for a particular occasion
- set up a system for facilitating car pooling among students and staff.

The first suggestion, for more bicycle racks, was acted on very promptly. Bill Small informed me that the other two recommendations would probably not be acted upon. Subsequent developments (the energy crisis and University interest in car pooling plans) may alter this position.

A second proposal I made involved the use of the railroad tracks and right of way from Pleasant Street/Estes Drive in Carrboro to the Electric plant and then to their termination behind Nash Hall for a daytime bicycle path. By filling in the area between the rails with dirt and packing it down, this route could accomodate bicycles travelling in one direction without interfering with trains making their nightly freight runs. Part of the route would enable bicycle riders from Carrboro to avoid the congested and hazardous Main Street section on their ride to campus. Implementation of the full route would give residents of Estes Park Apartments and Cedar Court Apartments a direct, traffic-free bicycle route. Since there are no major hills between Carrboro and the campus, that route is particularly suitable for bicycling.

The proposal received the endorsement of Watson Morris, ECOS' director, and of Mrs. Alice Welsh, Chapel Hill alderman. I wrote to Mrs. Grace Wagonner, the University Property Officer (the University owns part of the right of way and has an easement on another part). Her reply offered a number of objections -- principally the danger of accidents resulting from the operation of the railroad; secondarily, possible legal complications that would require the assent of

property owners from whom the University had received the easement for operation of the railroad. I communicated these difficulties to Alice Welsh along with my recommendation that before pursuing the matter further, we convene a group to make an overall assessment of bicycle routes from Carrboro. If the railroad track route remains desirable, perhaps the present objections can be met.

One hazard in bicycling along streets is the presence of storm sewer grates having openings parallel to the bicycle wheels. Most of the existing grates in Chapel Hill and Carrboro are of this type. A commission on bicycling had made a recommendation to the Chapel Hill board of aldermen on this matter, but no one had communicated on the matter with the Town of Carrboro. In reply to a letter I wrote, Mr. Frank Chamberlain III, Carrboro's town manager, indicated he was taking steps to prevent the installation of additional grates of this type. Conversion or replacement of the existing ones was not mentioned.

There appears to be a considerable need for an organization to promote the interests of bicycle riders in the local area. The Chapel Hill bicycle club has lapsed. A recent attempt to restart it may succeed, but the new group will be primarily concerned with organizing Sunday bicycle rides, at least for the present. The temptation has been strong to try to set up such an organization. But I do not think I will have the time myself, and have not found anyone else willing to try.

My other activities regarding transportation concerned car-pooling. I attended a meeting of the Graduate and Professional Student Federation called to set up a task force on the parking problem. Although I did not elect to join with that task force (it seemed to be looking for a leader), I spoke subsequently with Jarvis Sinclair about his conversations with Claiborne Jones, Assistant to the Chancellor, concerning University sponsorship of a car-pooling system. As a follow-up, I sent Jarvis Sinclair a letter outlining my suggestions for two different plans, one involving ride-boards such as are used for sharing

rides during vacations and another involving a simplified computer approach.

HEED campus fieldteam:

The current semester brought the prospect of the establishment of a fieldwork team that would be concerned with the UNC campus. This prospect was naturally important to me for the potential benefits such a team could bring for campus mental health. At the same time, the overall sentiment among new students regarded the campus as unworthy for "real" fieldwork. The needs of the campus population were judged as insubstantial in comparison with those of the four other fieldsites (Orange, Durham, Chatham, and Alamance counties). The very real danger existed that the campus fieldteam would consist of only those students who did not succeed in getting onto any of the more desired teams.

In view of the potential value to the campus of having a recognized and active fieldteam, I directed my effort toward presenting fieldwork on the UNC campus as a valuable opportunity in its own right. I sought to attract students to the idea of working on the campus as an opportunity to do special kinds of health education not nearly so feasible in more "conventional" communities.

My public relations campaign included three main components. The first consisted of informal discussions with new students about their fieldwork interests, tentative preferences for the various fieldsites, and my interests in working on the campus. I readily volunteered that it would be a "real drag" if anyone were forced to choose any fieldsite, particularly the campus, against their will. In doing so I sought to make it clear that my interest in the future of campus fieldwork did not include any compulsion to ensure participants. The negative feeling that students might be forced onto the campus team by departmental requirements had to be countered to permit the growth of appreciation for its valuable qualities.

Second, I conducted two "campus tours" for interested students and circulated