

PREVIEWING

Jobs in Counseling

by MARGARET M. MULLIN

THIS ARTICLE describes an attempt to practice what you preach—specifically, to give prospective counselors an acquaintance with the kinds of jobs that may be open to them when their professional preparation has been completed.

Most people in vocational guidance now agree that the prospective worker in any field should know what he is getting into before he gets into it. To achieve this end, courses in occupations are being widely taught, supplementing and extending individual counseling. This paper discusses such a course designed for prospective counselors.

Counselors of graduate students in guidance at New York University have often been disturbed by student ignorance and misinformation about the realities of the market for their services. Even a generous allowance of teaching credit for the time spent in counseling would not allow time to begin to tell each individual the things his counselors think he should know.

To meet this need, there was established a two-point course called "Employment Opportunities in Guidance and Personnel Work," open to college juniors and seniors, and to graduate students. It has been offered for several years, always meeting for a two-hour session, once a week for one semester. It has been taught sometimes by the follow-up technique, sometimes by group guidance techniques.

During the fall of 1951, 27 persons employed in guidance and personnel work, most of them NYU alumni, were invited to class, in groups of several persons, seated in

the front of the room, and interviewed about their jobs. It was the task of each panel to give to the class a realistic view of the field in which the individual panel members were engaged.

Some of the job areas explored were: counseling in elementary school, junior high, senior high, and college, in social agencies, in rehabilitation centers, in government, in industry, in placement bureaus. The job titles of the guests included branch counselor at a YWCA, senior vocational counselor of a state commission for the blind, consultant in B'nai B'rith and Federation Employment Service, rehabilitation counselor in a T.B. and health association, counselor in a federal correctional institution, personnel manager of a large New York City retail store, industrial relations director in a manufacturing plant, counselor in an admissions office, the dean's office, and a counseling center of a college.

At the end of the course the students were asked to state what effect, if any, this course had had upon their own vocational plans. The following are excerpts from the students' comments:

I was able to rule out Civil Service, primarily because the starting pay was much less than the salary I make on my present job. Counseling in the school system ruled itself out, since I do not have a license. The course has given me a new appreciation of my present job.

I still have not been able to crystallize my thoughts to the point that I know exactly what I want to do and where I fit into the picture. The field has been narrowed down to either vocational guidance in a community agency or some kind of educational personnel work. This course served to confirm my conviction that guidance is the field for me.

I have decided not to go on with my graduate work until I definitely find my work area. Certain kinds of jobs have definitely been eliminated as a result of the course.

Guidance Workers

Practice

What They Preach

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I have learned more about myself—what I like or feel that I would do well in, and what I feel would not suit me very well. I see myself in a different job than I envisioned in September—not so much counseling in a clinical sense—as in the assistant college dean plus some teaching. Last summer I had a good battery of tests—and in addition to that I sorely needed sound vocational information. This course has given that to me. Admittedly, much of the discussion has not pertained to my specific situation but the effect of *having to think* about vocations and my place in relation to them has been a healthy one and I am glad I had it.

I am more certain that I will continue in the field of guidance and personnel administration.

Would only be interested now in college position in placement. No longer interested in any other student personnel service.

I feel more confident that guidance is my field.

From the reading and the guest interviews in this course I have realized that I am doing very well in job satisfaction and financially. While I would not close my ears to attractive offers in the placement field, I am not actually looking for another position.

I know now that my real interest is in guidance and I'm going to strive to make it a full-time job in the very near future.

As a result of this course I am more convinced than ever that I want to do counseling on the secondary school level.

This course has strengthened my desire to stay in guidance work.

During this semester, following these sessions, the most wonderful thing has happened to me. I now know what I sincerely want to try my hand at. Having an R.N. degree, a B.S. in education with major emphasis on recreational work, and now (I hope) an M.A. in guidance, I'd like to work in student affairs with the hope of being director of student affairs.

The course has served as a good descriptive index of the broad range of jobs in the personnel field. It has made me feel that the position that I am now in is the most enjoyable and interesting of all the fields that were discussed and has given me the feeling that if given the opportunity to trade different type jobs with any of the people on the panel I would not do so (excepting one or two perhaps in high school personnel work in different locations).

There are many things that I have learned from this class. The most important one is that I like guidance work and have made a start in it.

Prior to this course, I had a number of courses in guidance and counseling as well as two years

of voluntary experience. But up to this time, my training and experience have been psychologically oriented. I knew little about what industry required and nothing of the needs or requirements of work in the field of education. I thought I knew so much—but I was wrong. I began to realize that to be a guidance person in the school system, one first had to be a teacher. I knew that I didn't want ever to be a teacher, so ruled out that area. I then decided that industry, which has always been my real dream, would be my area of specialization.

This course has been very discouraging at times, but encouraging at others. I have learned that it is an established fact that to do guidance work in the New York City school system one must be a teacher. The answer is that I will either become a teacher, which I doubt, or seek a position elsewhere.

As a result I have decided to stay with the U. S. Government. I am grateful for the enjoyable, worth-while time I have spent here every Wednesday. I feel that I am a happier and more secure person as a result of it. I have stopped chasing a rainbow and have decided to get the color into my life by doing my own painting.

I have some idea now about where to start, whom to see, and how to go about finding the place I want. I feel I have developed a distinct and "professional" attitude toward guidance, a security in knowing that this is where I belong.

Perhaps my biggest bit of new knowledge was in realizing that counseling in a college was not the only type of position the field offered. I didn't know that a state certificate was required for counseling nor that one had to have some experience teaching before qualifying for a counseling position in the school system. What my future plans are I couldn't say exactly. I have one last term of undergraduate work to complete, and having gotten fairly concise surveys of the various aspects of the guidance field. I'm going to take all next term to decide, based on my new information, just which aspect I'm going to head for in September. But, guidance and counseling it will definitely be.

As a registered nurse who has done a great deal of teaching and administrative work in nursing, I still feel very strongly that there is more need for guidance in this field. Many training schools are coming to the front in guidance of the student nurses but there is also a great need for guidance of the graduate staff. When I came into the guidance department to get my Master's I felt I wanted a distinct change from nursing. But due to the scarcity of jobs and the low salaries in most fields, I feel now that I can do a better job in the nursing field as

a director of nurses with an emphasis on guidance of the employees, particularly the graduate nurse. I have been amazed at the qualifications demanded of personnel workers, the difficulty in getting into the field, and the low salaries connected with the beginning jobs. The first of February I am accepting a post as assistant director of nurses in a hospital under a director who is giving me a free hand to see what I can do.

I have made a big decision through this class. I have decided that I definitely want to stay in the industrial field in preference to that of education.

When I think back to my first impressions of counseling, I have to laugh at my ignorance. To me counseling was sitting down in a nice pleasant

environment with people who sought help. Little did I know the long hours, the never-ending frustration of too-much-to-do and too little time, the lack of cooperation from superiors. However, the stimulus of working in an ever-changing field, plus the inducement of fairly rapid advancement in the nursing field, over-shadow the above disadvantages at the present moment.

Appraisal by testimony is never adequate. Some day, this course will be evaluated by the use of experimental and control groups but, to date, this has not been possible. Meanwhile, encouragement, if not conviction, may be found in the assurance that some of the students at least *think* the experience has been beneficial.

SOCIETY IS COOPERATION

If we would seek for one word which describes society better than any other, that word is cooperation. The important point to grasp is that, contrary to the beliefs of the struggle-for-survival school of thought, man does not have to create a cooperative mood for himself to erect over the tufa of his savage strivings to be otherwise. Not at all. The impulses toward cooperative behavior are already present in him at birth, and all they require is cultivation. There is not a shred of evidence that man is born with "hostile" or "evil" impulses which must be watched and disciplined. Discipline of basic impulses is, indeed, necessary, but it is the discipline of love, not of frustration which they require.—Ashley Montagu in *On Being Human*.