

# MENTAL HEALTH

*ITS PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE*

WITH EMPHASIS ON THE  
TREATMENT OF MENTAL DEVIATIONS

BY

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# MENTAL HEALTH

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FIRST EDITION

A-K

TO  
ADOLF MEYER

*Professor of Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University*  
*A Pioneer in the Promotion of Mental Health*  
*Founder of Objective Psychobiology (Ergasiology)*  
*Originator of the Psychobiologic Approach in*  
*Psychiatry (Ergasiatry)*

## MENTAL HYGIENE

"Vaccination has virtually eradicated smallpox. Antitoxin prevents diphtheria. Proper sewage disposal and clean drinking water have reduced typhoid fever to a rare disease. Drainage of swamps caused malaria to disappear. While these diseases resulting from known germs have decreased, mental diseases have increased. What, in the field of mental diseases, may be done to compare in its effects with vaccination, antitoxin, sewage disposal, swamp drainage?

"Some mental diseases are caused by excessive use of alcohol; these are preventable. A fair percentage of mental diseases is caused by one of the venereal infections; these, too, are preventable. A certain percentage is caused by premature old age. Others are caused by the stresses and strains of life. The last two groups could be materially reduced if the basic securities of life were assured; if all people had the proper food to eat; healthful conditions of work; hygienic family life, especially in childhood; proper habits of recreation and adequate opportunities for rest; and if people generally from early life could come to regard diseases, whether mental or otherwise, as a misfortune to be prevented rather than a shame and disgrace to be feared."

—ALBANY COUNTY MENTAL HYGIENE ASSOCIATION

## PREFACE

OUR physical well-being is more secure than it has ever been. This generation has witnessed striking advances in the prevention and cure of disease. New knowledge concerning human nutrition and health has been widely disseminated. Countless mechanical triumphs have given us new powers, pleasures and comforts. Yet living has become increasingly difficult. This eager, hurrying world contains elements which disturb our peace of mind.

Just as a modern urban community must use sanitary measures and regulations which are unnecessary on scattered farms in rural districts, modern civilization brings need of mental controls which were not so insistent in the slow-moving simpler life of two generations ago. Our increasingly complex social structure has brought forcibly to our attention the type of adjustment demanded in our remodeled and changing world. Not merely outward adaptation to a machine-made world is needed but an inner adjustment of cravings, impulses, ideas, beliefs and ideals.

Although we use our minds every moment of our waking life and even to some extent during our sleep, most people are more interested in the results than in the processes involved. Some direct concern with the elements and organization of our psychobiological processes helps one to develop these into ways most favorable to effective living. A major aim of this book is to help the student and professional worker (educator, physician, nurse, social worker, lawyer, clergyman, etc.) to construct a view of his mental organization which will enable him to avoid the more common unwholesome or pathological deviations from mental health. A considerable portion of the book is devoted to practical procedures for teachers and professional workers. However, it is the conviction of the authors that a sound scientific and philosophical point of view and a knowledge of the fundamental conditions for healthful mental development are indispensable in the preparation of these workers. No teacher, psychiatrist, social worker, nurse or practitioner can become an effective worker in the field of applied mental hygiene until he himself has a hygienic

personality gained through putting into practice the principles of psychobiologic hygiene.

A legitimate criticism of the mental health movement is that while it can and does make out a good case for the need of mental hygiene it does too little in giving practical and suggestive techniques and procedures. The authors have attempted to meet this need by presenting a wide variety of material representing the best modern thought and practice.

The facts and principles of mental hygiene are illustrated by representative "case studies" which will be found helpful to the student in gaining an insight and a working knowledge of the practical approach to mental health problems. Although the use of case studies must always be tinctured with discretion and caution, yet in view of the fact that this book is primarily intended for students and professional workers it is felt that such material could be utilized to good advantage, providing professional objectivity and professional ethics are espoused.

No apology is necessary in this day and age for placing "emphasis upon mental deviations." When we pause to reflect upon the growing incidence and the tremendous financial and economic toll mental disorders make upon the state and nation, every responsible person will obligate himself to learn the significant facts of this problem. For example, in New York State it is estimated that at least one out every twenty persons will at some time during his life spend a period in a mental hospital. There are more persons confined to hospital beds for the mentally ill than for all other types of sickness put together. Nor are the fields of education and industry exempt. Up to 20 per cent or more of such personnel is handicapped by personality maladjustments; pupils and students from the elementary to college levels inclusive have been studied from the mental health angle, showing that 33 per cent or more are suffering from behavior or personality maladjustments. In the light of such facts every professional worker should see to it for his own sake or that of his immediate relatives and friends, that he becomes inoculated with a virile type of mental hygiene vaccine.

To those educators and other professional workers who steer shy of anything smacking of "abnormality" or "deviation" as though the facts of human behavior were beyond the pale of their interest or obligation, the authors wish to emphasize the fact

that there is no better way of gaining a working knowledge of the so-called normal child or adult than by studying the abnormal, unwholesome or pathological deviations as well as the normal or wholesome deviations (special abilities, unique talents, etc.). Those who like to stamp persons in an "either-or" dichotomy of "normal" and "abnormal" types are uninformed or unwholesomely biased with respect to facts of individual differences and individual likenesses. There is nothing in the abnormal that is not in the normal, potentially, latently or actually. It is merely a matter of degree and quality, not of kind. We must therefore obligate ourselves critically to study, digest, evaluate, reconstruct and improve *varying degrees of normality*. Each varies from his own norm of behavior as well as that of the group at different times of his development and upon different occasions or circumstances. From the standpoint of understanding and treating the maladjusted and in helping the "normal" to improve himself, i.e., capitalize his constructive potentialities to the optimum, the term *normal* had best be used in a statistical sense rather than as a normative evaluation since no two persons have the same conception of an ideal type of person or function. Nor do we wish to delude ourselves in following such a static conception or guiding fiction of an ideal type. Such a point of view is contrary to the facts of nature. There would be no progress or growth if we suppressed wholesome deviations. Our job is to be on the *qui vive* to detect and to cultivate these rather than to keep everyone "in line." Thus a study of individual deviations of behavior or of varying degrees of individual capacity for social adjustment helps us to capitalize the normal by throwing his deviations into bold relief. It also assists us in turning to social advantage the wholesome variations as well as in reconstructing unwholesome or pathological deviations. When such facts are adequately grasped, those who make themselves more or less responsible for the so-called "normal" individual will reach out to a much greater extent after the services of specialists in psychopathology and psychotherapy in order to *share* with them human psychobiologic problems of mutual concern.

One of the features of the book is the inclusion of critically formulated "Questions for Discussion and Review" which will be found to be particularly valuable for collateral study in conjunction with this text, and the references "Recommended for



Further Reading." As a further aid in facilitating a grasp of this subject there is appended a "Glossary" of the more common technical terms.

The authors wish to acknowledge their indebtedness to various authors mentioned in the text and to all those who have contributed to the theory and practice of mental hygiene. One of the authors (F. L. P.) in particular desires to take this opportunity to express his indebtedness to Dr. Adolf Meyer whose viewpoints, practice, and philosophy he has attempted to express, directly and indirectly. The deep impressions made on him by this renowned psychiatrist, neurologist, psychobiologist and philosopher during his intimate association while a Fellow in Psychiatry at the Henry Phipps Psychiatric Clinic have sought expression in coloring many pages of this book. The authors also wish to thank Dr. Meyer for the privilege of reproducing certain of his charts which have hitherto appeared only in lecture mimeograph form. They are likewise grateful to the authors and publishers who have permitted the use of illustrations from their works. Their thanks are also expressed to Dr. Sanger Brown II of the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene, and to certain others for the privilege of utilizing certain representative case material. They desire also to express gratitude to Miss Maude E. Nesbit of the Medical Library and to Miss Martha L. Phelps of the Educational Library and associates of the New York State Education Department who so kindly verified references and placed at their disposal a rich body of pertinent literature. Miss Lorraine Gage of the secretarial staff of Middlebury College has given valuable assistance in many of the details in the preparation of the manuscript.

F. E. H.

F. L. P.

*October 1934*

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## CHAPTER I

### PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MENTAL HYGIENE

"Resolve to be thyself; and know that he  
Who finds himself loses his misery."

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

**Managing Ourselves.**—Every normal person has at some time felt the surge of satisfaction which comes with accomplishing something when his mental and physical organization seems to strike a high level of effectiveness. This awareness of "fine form" often brings with it a wish that such states of mind could be brought into play and maintained with greater frequency. Many excellent and capable people have periods of vague feeling that their performance is low and their energy unreleased or inadequately managed. An inarticulate desire for better assertion and direction of one's intellectual and emotional resources is a common human experience.

For all of us life begins as an unformed and unconscious effort, and for most of us it continues as an eager though somewhat blind struggle toward the attainment of desires. The primary soil of personality is a human being striving to experience life. This world of ours is obviously not made expressly for man's happiness, yet the striving goes on with little taking stock of gains or losses. Most people live with little philosophy and little interpretation and evaluation of their own existence. Man's uncritical attitude toward his own nature is one of the greatest obstacles to his happiness. It is a curious fact that he has been so late in arriving at an interest in and a knowledge of his own psychobiologic make-up.

Through the rapid advancement of science we have arrived rather suddenly at some most significant controls in our physical world. In the world of our mental life scientific knowledge and controls have lagged behind, but we are constantly increasing our understanding of the mechanisms or *modus operandi* by which human personality functions for better or for worse. We are moving toward a better understanding of the drives, trends and controls of the human psyche. Our age is becoming increasingly

self- as well as social and world conscious. Modern science, literature, and art all attest the fact that in this generation man is attempting to take a larger part in the possibilities of his own destiny. In fact, this objective self-conscious attitude is the most significant and promising characteristic of our age. Man has always been inclined to project his interests outside of himself and to be concerned predominantly with the purely objective aspects of his environment. His rapidly developing interest in the powerful forces of his own nature is a significant step in social evolution. He is discovering that most of the social problems of our age are basically psychological and herein he is finding new instruments with which to attack the problems of living. In increasing numbers thoughtful people are seeking guidance in the complex demands of modern life, and are concerned with the need of a better balance in personal equipment. Changed conditions of living, the scramble for wealth and social position, immoderate seeking of excitement, and the increasing mechanization of life call for intelligent feeling-attitudes, self-knowledge and self-direction.

**Life as a Quest for Happiness.**—An eminent American naturalist once published an article intended to show the joyousness in the lives of wild creatures. His observations are interesting and convincing, but we might properly object to the use of the term joy as applied to sub-human creatures. When its vital processes are running smoothly and the animal is going through simple cycles of life it doubtless has some sort of experience that we might call pleasure or a sense of well-being, but this could hardly be compared with joy as experienced in human life. True joy or happiness involves both anticipation and recall of experiences in terms of images and emotions. Increased richness and refinement in these processes as well as greater opportunities for experiencing them give a corresponding increase in the capacity for happiness. Man shares with animals certain bodily needs, but in life on the typically human level the deeper satisfactions are conditioned on something more than a rhythm of bodily processes and a favoring physical environment.

In the animal world impulses and drives are carried out instinctively. There is a balance between the animal's cravings and its equipment for satisfying them. Its life is a simple cycle of feeding, rest, and the propagation of its species. In man most of

the drives become associated with the higher mental processes such as choice, decision, anticipation and imagination. All cravings in a normal person tend to become mental, integrated and more or less intellectualized, though of physiological origin. As men become sensitive to the achievements of past generations their wants become rooted in their mental capacities; their interests and desires multiply and diversify. Success in the satisfaction of these desires brings a progressive richness of life impossible at the more primitive stages. *Achievement on the more intricate levels requires more and more critical planning for and budgeting of physical and mental energies with reference to a growing sense of individual and social values. Such achievement is an important goal in mental hygiene.*

The facts of biology and psychology indicate that where there is life there is a seeking of satisfactions. On the conscious human level this could be called a quest for happiness. The direction and emphasis of the quest change with ever changing conditions and new knowledges. The ways in which individuals seek happiness are many and devious. Man's desires so outrun his capacities to satisfy them and his environment presents so many limitations that he finds it difficult to organize all his diverse reactions into truly satisfying activities.

**Is Happiness a Worthy Quest?**—There are many false leads in our happiness hunting. Pleasures do not always bring happiness. In the interest of true happiness there is always a need of sound discipline of desires. How can one normally seek happiness? What things if obtained are calculated to bring it? To what extent can wealth, knowledge and education make contributions? What criteria can we use to determine whether our seeking is rational or irrational? We must face the question of both ends and means. We shall be a long way on the road to the understanding of happiness if we are aware that it is not a sum total of pleasures. Many people surfeited with pleasures are far from happy. It is not something to be attained by direct seeking. It is not merely a by-product but an integral functional component in the harmonious operation of all the energies of a well-unified and wisely directed personality. Understood in this sense, nothing could be of greater concern to a man than his own happiness and the happiness of others. Human will and foresight cannot control all the forces and losses of life, but much unhappiness is the result



of bad management and misdirection of energy. Under such conditions resignation to it is weak, stupid and selfish. The deliberate seeking of happiness in selfish pleasures is like hunting for gold at the end of the rainbow, but thinking of happiness as governed by lucky or unlucky stars is equally unprofitable. Awareness and proper utilization of the conditions that lie largely within our own power to control, which are concretely psychobiological functionings and their environmental stimuli, may save us from much futile seeking, supine endurance, and misdirected revolt.

**Is There a Science of Happiness?**—Science can give us no formula for attaining happiness. Happy living is an art and must be learned by practice, but the science of human behavior can point out some conditions and principles to guide us in our practice. Insight into one's own behavior and the behavior of others should help one to a wiser ordering of his thought, feeling and action. External realities are not the only hindrances to achievement, self-development and happiness. Much depends upon the selection of values, opportunities, and the management of wishes, longings, cravings, drives, ambitions and expectations. Our powers are so limited and our modern environment is so stimulating that we are prone to want things that are often mutually contradictory. During a lifetime every normal person develops a whole gamut of desires. These are determined in part by the inner nature and in part by the demands of environment. In human life both of these factors are complex and ever changing. Thus the problem of optimal adjustment to life may become exceedingly complicated. In the past man has been much more successful in dealing with natural forces than with the forces of his own nature. With the increasing complexity of life there is a corresponding need of understanding the multiplicity of psychobiologic factors entering into the problem of adjustment to life. Mental health, happiness, efficiency and social adaptation largely depend upon the nicety of balance between the mode of expenditure of an individual's energy in relation to biological needs and environmental demands and opportunities. If his management of psychobiological functions is inadequate, erratic and uncertain, his personality, peace of mind and social adaptation suffer accordingly. Expenditure of energy brings most satisfying returns when it energizes essential, well-organized patterns of behavior.