“That Hurts You Badder Than Punchin’”: The Troubled Teen Industry and Therapeutic Violence in Group Rehabilitation Programs since World War II

MARK M. CHATFIELD

Abstract. To explain the development of the troubled teen industry and the autocratic therapeutic community (ATC) movement, this article explores the rapid diffusion of Synanon-type programs in the United States since the early 1960s. Instead of tracing a history back through self-help programs similar to Synanon, a history of therapeutic violence in experimental group therapy settings suggests a new genealogy and perspective. This line of inquiry highlights the central importance of delinquency treatment methods and programs that originated during World War II, originally called the “total psychotherapeutic push method” and then renamed, “guided group

Mark M. Chatfield is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Florida. His dissertation examines the origins and development of the troubled teen industry in the United States. He thanks several people who contributed to this article: the two anonymous reviewers for their thorough, challenging, and constructive suggestions; Joe Spillane, who provided helpful comments during the revision process; and Claire Clark, who first provided encouragement to present this research at the Alcohol and Drugs History Society conference in Mexico City. The author also wants to acknowledge the anonymous person many years ago who referenced the book, *The Highfields Story*, in an online chatroom and mentioned the historical importance of the rehabilitation center at Fort Knox. Their first breadcrumbs, freely and anonymously given, sparked a pathway of research questions that led to this article.

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interaction." This article argues that American professionals and politicians in the 1960s were primed to endorse Synanon's confrontational peer-counseling approach. The early adoption and rapid spread of the ATC model was facilitated by 2 decades of interest, research, policy entrepreneurship, and professional enthusiasm for guided group interaction before the spread of Synanon-type programs. That broader context helps explain the diffusion of military innovations into the civilian rehabilitation programs that normalized the use of therapeutic violence in ATCs and the troubled teen industry in the United States.

To explain the development of the troubled teen industry in the United States during the second half of the twentieth century, we must acknowledge the profound importance of the hierarchical, autocratic therapeutic community (ATC) model typically associated with Synanon.[1] But we must also revise the widely accepted genealogy of the ATC movement in the United States and examine its military origins.[2] Since the 1960s,

1. The term *troubled teen industry* refers not only to program facilities but also to educational consultants, court authorities, and self-described "youth escort companies," which have forcibly delivered thousands of American teenagers to any number of residential treatment facilities, therapeutic boarding schools, religious boot camps, and wilderness programs. There is no comprehensive history of the troubled teen industry, and few historians have acknowledged its existence. Deborah Blythe Doroshow mentions it briefly in *Emotionally Disturbed: A History of Caring for America's Troubled Children* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019). Jonathan Simon mentions teen programs as a way for upper-class families to preserve wealth; *Governing through Crime: How the War on Crime Transformed American Democracy and Created a Culture of Fear* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Barry C. Feld was perhaps the first to identify the private-pay program industry as historically important, but he does not elaborate; *Bad Kids: Race and the Transformation of the Juvenile Court* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). The journalist Maia Szalavitz gives a cursory history; *Help at Any Cost: How the Troubled-Teen Industry Cons Parents and Hurts Kids* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

2. George De Leon explains that North American therapeutic communities (TCs) are "managed as an autocracy," meaning that staff and group members leverage a mixture of formal and informal authority to "make decisions grounded in the TC perspective to protect the community and specifically to foster the goals of individual growth." De Leon, *The Therapeutic Community: Theory, Model, and Method* (New York: Springer, 2000), 123–24. The well-established term "hierarchical TCs" emphasizes status levels. See Kerwin Kaye Brook, "Drug Courts and the Treatment of Addiction: Therapeutic Jurisprudence and Neoliberal Governance" (PhD diss., New York University, 2010). My usage of the term "autocratic therapeutic communities" emphasizes the cycle of therapeutic violence within totalistic programs. For histories of Synanon, see Rod Janzen, *The Rise and Fall of Synanon: A*

ATC programs have relied on the same essential features: a totalistic program design and a group culture of therapeutic violence to compel personal transformations in behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs.[3] State agencies and clinical professionals have obscured the prevalence of therapeutic violence within ATCs with soft phrases and rationalizations. A National Institute on Drug Abuse monograph refers to treatment, for example, as resocialization within "a context of confrontation (to address denial, false beliefs, and defense mechanisms)."[4] Professional clinicians like Thomas Edward Bratter have attempted to justify the use of therapeutic violence with terms like "caring confrontation and positive peer pressure" or "an insistence upon total honesty," with the justification that it "is painful because it penetrates protective barriers."[5]

Whether physical or nonphysical, *therapeutic violence* is defined here as the social infliction of intense discomfort or pain under the banner of

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California Utopia (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), and Claire D. Clark, *Recovery Revolution: The Battle over Addiction Treatment in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017),

3. For an operationalized definition of totalistic programs, see Mark M. Chatfield, David C. Diehl, Tracy L. Johns, Suzanna Smith, and Sebastian Galindo-Gonzalez, "Quality of Experience in Residential Care Programs: Retrospective Perspectives of Former Youth Participants," *Child and Family Social Work* 26, no. 1 (February 2021): 132–43. Works making the concept of therapeutic violence explicit include, e.g., Angela Garcia, "Serenity: Violence, Inequality, and Recovery on the Edge of Mexico City," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (December 2015): 455–72, and Ana Antic, "Therapeutic Violence: Psychoanalysis and the 'Re-Education' of Political Prisoners in Cold War Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe," in *Psychoanalysis in the Age of Totalitarianism*, ed. Matt Ffytche and Daniel Pick (London: Routledge, 2016). For a list of "essential elements" characterizing the ATC model, see George De Leon and Gerald Melnick, "Therapeutic Community Survey of Essential Elements Questionnaire (SEEQ)," Center for Therapeutic Community Research at National Development and Research Institutes, 1993, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237668557_THERAPEUTIC_COMMUNITY_SURVEY_OF_ESSENTIAL_ELEMENTS_QUESTIONNAIRE_SEEQ.

4. Frank M. Tims, Nancy Jainchill, and George De Leon, "Therapeutic Communities and Treatment Research," in *Therapeutic Community: Advances in Research and Application*, ed. Frank M. Tims, George De Leon, and Nancy Jainchill (Rockville, MD: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1994), 1–15, 3.

5. Thomas Edward Bratter and Lisa Sinsheimer, "Confrontation—a Potent Psychotherapeutic Approach with Difficult Adolescents," in *Adolescent Psychiatry*, Vol. 30, *The Annals of the American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 103–16, 104, 105; https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203837597.

treatment. Since World War II, this "strong-arm" approach has harnessed the power of peer groups to align social pressure with the institutional goals of treatment, increasing the capacity to inflict discomfort while labeling painful experiences as essential for growth.[6] However common shameful examples of physical brutality in such treatment settings were, innovators and their supporters proudly normalized *nonphysical* forms of therapeutic violence as a key element of this new group method. Always framed as a benevolent effort, this power and its normalization marked a new frontier in group therapy. By harnessing and orchestrating group dynamics toward institutional goals, therapeutic violence helped ensure earnest compliance with rules, induce the internalization of group norms, and enforce the daily production of personal recovery narratives. The profound historical impact of this innovation on the fields of addictions and corrections elevates the significance of its genealogy and our need to understand the historical context of its origins and proliferation.

Although no comprehensive history of the origins of the ATC model exists, the most prominent scholar and theoretician, George De Leon, has outlined a history that might be considered the most widely accepted. He attributes the label "therapeutic community" to innovations during the 1940s at Belmont Hospital, an English psychiatric hospital, that Maxwell Jones popularized as the "democratic" therapeutic community model. De Leon acknowledges, however, that whether the democratic model influenced the development of the autocratic model for addiction treatment is unknown. The ATC model began, he explains, in 1963 with the establishment of Daytop Lodge and the many first-generation programs that "spawned directly and indirectly from Synanon and Daytop Village."[7] The programs De Leon refers to—Gateway House, Gaudenzia, Marathon House, Odyssey House, Phoenix House, Samaritan House, and Walden House—represented a wider national trend in community-based corrections, the halfway house movement that promoted group treatment in lieu of incarceration. To explain the origins of "the essential elements" that constituted the ATC model, De Leon relies on Frederick

6. Teresa Gowan and Sarah Whetstone, "Making the Criminal Addict: Subjectivity and Social Control in a Strong-Arm Rehab," *Punishment and Society* 14, no. 1 (2012): 69–93, https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474511424684.

7. De Leon, *Therapeutic Community*, 15. Daytop Lodge was renamed "Daytop Village" in 1965; Barry Sugarman, *Daytop Village: A Therapeutic Community* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1974).

B. Glaser's history of three self-help groups: Synanon; Alcoholics Anonymous; and its predecessor, the Oxford group.[8]

De Leon also cites what might be the most comprehensive attempt to explain the origins of the ATC model, written in 1974 by one of Daytop's first directors, David A. Deitch. Deitch also traced a history of self-help programs but acknowledged that the "self-help" label was incorrect—a misnomer that obscured the reality of induction into a high-demand organization. In addition to Deitch's references to religious practices, examples of clinical group therapy, and earlier utopian communities as indirect precursors, he devotes several paragraphs to the similarities between Daytop's people-changing methods and those described by Massachusetts Institute of Technology psychologist Edgar Schein, whose theory of coercive persuasion explained "brainwashing" in Chinese thought-reform prisons.[9]

However compelling these intuitive genealogies may be, they do not adequately explain several questions about the adoption and proliferation of ATC programs after 1963. Considering, for example its loud rejection of mental health professionals and its reliance on therapeutic violence, why did Synanon make sense to professionally trained clinicians and researchers? Among the first professionals to embrace or develop the ATC model for addictions, why were so many of them working as probation officers and sociologists in the field of delinquency treatment? How did federal and state agencies during the 1960s and 1970s manage to spread that model so rapidly at that particular time? And why did the first generation of ATC programs diverge so drastically from the original Synanon model they supposedly came from?

Those questions demand a wide selection of evidence to contextualize the remarkable innovation in methods that made the ATC model so powerful. This line of inquiry steps outside the confines of addiction treatment and the self-help movement to explore the history of therapeutic violence in group rehabilitation programs. By exploring the history of therapeutic violence as an essential component and a key marker of what

8. De Leon, *Therapeutic Community*, 15; Frederick B. Glaser, "The Origins of the Drug-Free Therapeutic Community," *British Journal of Addiction* 76 (March 1981): 13–25, https://doi.org/10.1111/J.1360-0443.1981.TB00205.X.

9. David A. Deitch, "Treatment of Drug Abuse in the Therapeutic Community: Historical Influences, Current Considerations and Future Outlook," in *National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse: Report to Congress and the President*, vol. 5 (Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1973), 158–75, 168.

was new about Synanon's paradigm-shifting "recovery revolution," the story no longer begins with its remarkable founder, Charles Dederich, his enthusiasm for Alcoholics Anonymous, or the early practices of its predecessors.[10] Instead, the story begins with the invention of guided group interaction (GGI) during World War II and the experimental GGI delinquency treatment programs of the 1950s and early 1960s. These highly publicized experiments primed the political and professional spheres with excitement about the nation's new capacity for changing people through orchestrated group dynamics and therapeutic violence.[11]

The concept of therapeutic violence may offer a useful perspective to scholars of alcohol and drug history. As an analytical tool, it may help span academic silos to bridge the intuitive divide between treatment and punishment.[12] The concept offers a way to challenge the relevance of clinical distinctions between physical and nonphysical violence, highlighting the potential for subjective pain and harm in treatment settings. By making the subjective nature of pain explicit, the term also punctures the misleading aura around euphemisms like "confrontation," "tough love," and "positive peer pressure," revealing the fluid boundary between intensive group treatment and institutional abuse. The concept of therapeutic violence could help survivor activists, clinicians, policy makers, and families name that elusive boundary as they articulate the need to predict and prevent harm in adult programs and the troubled teen industry.

10. This article builds on Claire Clark's pioneering work that links Synanon's methods to nationwide institutional changes and the abstinence-only treatment paradigm. See Clark, *Recovery Revolution*.

11. The postwar national security interests in this new form of delinquency treatment are explicit in several primary sources, including "Undersecretary of War Conference on the Rehabilitation of Military Prisoners, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 14–16 November 1944," Sanford Bates Collection, Sam Houston State University Archives, Austin, TX; "Report of the Study for the Ford Foundation on Policy and Program (Reports 017235-001)," 1949, Reports 13949-17726, Catalogued Reports, Ford Foundation records, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY; and "National Official Urges Financial Support for County Pinehills Project," *Provo Daily Herald*, 26 December 1961, 8, https://newspapers.lib.utah.edu/ark:/87278/s6bg7450/23791110.

12. The historiography seems to be moving in this direction. See, e.g., Kerwin Kaye, *Enforcing Freedom: Drug Courts, Therapeutic Communities, and the Intimacies of the State* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019); and Jordan Mylet, "How to Treat an Addict: Institutional Confinement, Mutual Aid, and Self Realization in Postwar Los Angeles," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 40, no. 2 (December 2021): 5–48.

As the focus of this article, and perhaps most important for historians, the concept of therapeutic violence invites a new perspective on the development and rapid spread of ATC programs by emphasizing the diffusion of clinical innovations that inspired policy entrepreneurship and institutional change as examples of American political development.[13] The following three sections explore some of those developments, beginning with the invention of GGI at the Army's rehabilitation center at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and then the transfer of that innovation from military to civilian populations in New Jersey and Utah. The third section explains some ways in which those experimental delinquency treatment programs transformed the vision for America's correctional treatment systems before the popularization of Synanon, enabling the troubled teen industry. These sections demonstrate a relationship between military innovations in group rehabilitation and the prevalence of therapeutic violence since World War II. The early adoption and rapid spread of the ATC model after 1963 was facilitated by two decades of interest, research, policy entrepreneurship, and professional enthusiasm for GGI, and this history is crucial for understanding the development of the troubled teen industry.

The Military Origins of GGI

Beginning in 1942, at the Fort Knox Army base near Louisville, Kentucky, understaffed military psychiatrists synthesized sociological and psychotherapeutic methods to intensify and orchestrate the direction of group pressures to reform an onslaught of what they called "delinquent soldiers," most of whom had been arrested at the warfront for crimes such as habitual drunkenness, avoiding combat, or going AWOL (absent without leave).[14] At first, the Fort Knox staff called it the "total psychotherapeutic push method." By applying it daily in small and large peer-group sessions with up to 175 prisoners at a time, they quickly reformed large

13. Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations*, 5th ed. (New York: Free, 2003); Michael Mintrom and Phillipa Norman, "Policy Entrepreneurship and Policy Change," *Policy Studies Journal* 37, no. 4 (October 2009): 649–67; Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (New York: Cambridge University, 2004).

14. F. Lovell Bixby and Lloyd W. McCorkle, "Guided Group Interaction in Correctional Work," *American Sociological Review* 16, no. 4 (1951): 455–59; Lloyd W. McCorkle and Albert Elias, "Group Therapy in Correctional Institutions," *Federal Probation* 24, no. 2 (June 1960): 57–63.

numbers of court-martialed soldiers.[15] This new approach armed delinquent soldiers with psychotherapeutic jargon to discuss their life histories and their deviance from Army regulations, giving them words to express how they were cured of their unpatriotic attitudes, making them fit for duty back on the front lines.

Psychiatrists at Fort Knox considered their inmates' delinquency as evidence of psychopathy. To distinguish each patient's progress toward graduation and return to battle, they divided them into two status groups: Pre-Honor and Honor. Group therapy leaders Sgt. Lloyd McCorkle and Capt. Joseph Abrahams kept Pre-Honor inmates guessing about their status and their chances for advancement to Honor level. This produced "a state of tension and indecisiveness in the men which was utilized, in group therapy and elsewhere, for therapeutic purposes."[16] In his memoir, Captain Abrahams compared the revolutionary group sessions to the power of the atomic bomb and described the rehabilitation at Fort Knox as a "school for living," which, he said, "had at its heart a revolutionary treatment crucible, whose aim was nothing less than conversion of the psychopath [away] from his commitment to his alienated way of life."[17]

On any given day during the war, between 650 to 1,100 rehabilitees were in treatment at the Fort Knox Rehabilitation Center.[18] Under his command, Colonel George L. Miller had 2 group therapy directors, 14 officers, a chaplain, and technical instructors who tested, interviewed, classified, trained, and, as one local newspaper reported, "dredged for souls."[19] To handle the daily tasks of cooking, guarding, and drilling, Miller's officers managed a team of 190 enlisted soldiers. The Pre-Honor area was walled in with double barbed wire and overseen by armed military police stationed in guard towers. Inmates maintained the area

15. Joseph L. Knapp and Frderick Weitzen, "A Total Psychotherapeutic Push Method as Practiced in the Fifth Service Command Rehabilitation Center, Fort Knox, Kentucky," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 102, no. 3 (November 1945): 362–66, https://doi.org/10.1176/ajp.102.3.362; Joseph Abrahams and Lloyd W. McCorkle, "Group Psychotherapy of Military Offenders," *American Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 5 (March 1946): 455–64, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1086/219858.

16. Joseph Abrahams and Lloyd W. McCorkle, "Analysis of a Prison Disturbance," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* 42, no. 3 (1947): 330.

17. Joseph Abrahams, *Turning Lives Around: Wartime Treatment of Military Prisoners* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2006), 129.

18. Abrahams and McCorkle, "Group Psychotherapy of Military Offenders."

19. Sam Adkins, "Dredging for Souls: An Unusual Prison Camp at Fort Knox Rescues Unfortunate Soldiers from a Moral Blackout," *Courier-Journal*, 10 October 1943, 76–77.

grounds and moved between buildings in unison formations. All aspects of life were dominated by an authoritarian tone and "the discipline necessary to a therapeutic situation."[20] In a 1946 article, Abrahams and McCorkle claimed, "The shock of confinement, the threat of social ostracism and stigma of the dishonorable discharge, and a semipaternalistic reorientation rapidly maturate" 19- to 23-year-old rehabilitees.[21]

In 1944, the Army's Undersecretary of War, Robert P. Patterson, urged military psychiatrists to translate their administrative and clinical innovations to civilian practice. The demands of war had lurched forward the field of corrections, giving America an advantageous leap toward national security rooted in mental health.[22] Soon after the war, New Jersey's Director of Correction and Parole F. Lovell Bixby and the state's Commissioner of Corrections Sanford Bates, who had served for Undersecretary Patterson as a wartime consultant, invited Lloyd McCorkle to apply the Fort Knox program to civilians in New Jersey's reformatories. The total psychotherapeutic push method was a new discovery, a technology that orchestrated peer-based psychological leverage over inmates, making the progressive ideal of community-based institutional models more feasible. McCorkle renamed his methods with the more civilian-friendly term, "guided group interaction," and within a few short years, the nation's leading experts—many of whom had also served on Patterson's Board of Civilian Consultants—believed they would revolutionize America's correctional institutions. A *Reader's Digest* article in 1950 practically burst with this optimism, quoting the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, James V. Bennett, saying it's "the only thing we've found that offers hope of changing a criminal's inner drives and attitudes. . . . Nothing else ever has."[23]

Therapeutic Violence for Deviant Teens

Perfectly timed with that *Reader's Digest* publication in May 1950, Bixby was about to announce a new experiment in Hopewell, New Jersey, with

20. Abrahams, *Turning Lives Around*, 83.

21. Abrahams and McCorkle, "Group Psychotherapy of Military Offenders," 457–58.

22. "Undersecretary of War Conference on the Rehabilitation of Military Prisoners, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 14–16 November 1944," Sanford Bates Collection, Sam Houston State University Archives, Austin, TX.

23. James Finan, "Inside the Prison—a New Spark of Hope for Remaking Men," *Reader's Digest*, May 1950, 61–72, 61.

revolutionary potential for what he called "human engineering."[24] With a grant from the New York Foundation, he hired McCorkle to apply GGI to teenagers, naming it the New Jersey Experimental Project for the Treatment of Youthful Offenders. Commonly known as the "Highfields Experiment," this new, short-term, intensive regimen for small groups of 16- and 17-year-olds promised youth court judges a middle way—something stronger than probation but less harmful than long stays in Annandale, the local reformatory.

The young probationers at Highfields understood the experimental nature of the program and its potential for revolutionizing the nation's carceral system, but they had more immediate concerns. In addition to the intensive encounter sessions held five nights a week, treatment at Highfields included a series of psychoeducational seminars that were developed at Fort Knox; the same set of slides that was used for court-martialed soldiers also structured the program for the New Jersey teenagers. Seminar slides compared group therapy to a boxing match and illustrated the power of treatment as a swift kick by the large boot of authority, featuring a cartoonish 1940s-style caption on one: "We Treat by RETRAINING a Man While Helping Him *Figure* Himself Out!"[25]

Highfields boys spoke with candor in recorded statements about the reality of such intensive practices. To avoid punishment and win release, they had to demonstrate that they wanted help, and only total honesty about the past and the present demonstrated that desire. As one young inmate explained it, "If you tell the group about the things you do, right or wrong, then the meeting knows that you want to help yourself. But if you hide things and we find out later, you'll never get out."[26] An expert consultant to the juvenile court who witnessed the group sessions was impressed with how the boys broke through each other's psychological defenses but suspected the process "can bring an individual to a peculiar state of mind in which he starts to confess more than he wants to."[27]

24. F. Lovell Bixby, "A Plan for Short-Term Treatment of Youthful Offenders," November 1949, 1, High Fields (Reformatory), box 2, SINCO001, Department of Institutions and Agencies Commissioner's Office Institution and Subject Files, ca. 1920–64, New Jersey State Archives, Trenton.

25. Abrahams, *Turning Lives Around*, 19–28.

26. Lloyd W. McCorkle, Albert Elias, and F. Lovell Bixby, *The Highfields Story: An Experimental Treatment Program for Youthful Offenders* (New York: Henry Holt, 1958), 168.

27. "Excerpt, Letter of July 2, 1959, to Mrs Kohler from Jan Schouten," New Jersey State Board of Control of the Department of Institutions and Agencies (06100007) October 28,

Compared with incarceration in Annandale, initial research data suggested that Highfields was one-third the cost, four times faster, and 28% more effective at reducing recidivism.[28] But even more powerful and immediate than the early statistics were the boys' testimonials. In the mid- and late 1950s, a team of youth court judges, academics, and private funding agencies were convinced that the new method of human engineering at Highfields was the most humane, most economical, and most logical approach to correcting social deviance. In addition to newspaper articles and the 1958 commercial publication of *The Highfields Story*, perhaps even more convincing to a broader audience were two episodes of *The Twentieth Century*, Walter Cronkite's CBS news documentaries entirely devoted to promoting the Highfields method. Both episodes of "The Delinquents," "Part One: A Boy Named Bob" and "Part Two: The Highfields Story," aired in January 1959, making an especially compelling case for what the series called "a new technique of rehabilitation for the juvenile delinquent."[29]

Cronkite narrated the film footage, following Bob through the Highfields process and telling viewers in his distinctive voice, "You are seeing him in a group situation with other boys like himself as he undergoes a process designed to change him." Cronkite told viewers that the Highfields method had an 80% success rate at curing recidivism, but the boys' own metaknowledge about this change process was perhaps even more moving and convincing. One African American group member trying to "help" Bob repeated earnestly and in the most likable tone that the group knew him better than he knew himself.[30] These testimonials brought GGI into middle-class American living rooms and promoted it with emotional impact and logical proof that the peer-counseling

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1960–January 11, 1965, reel R0049, Ford Foundation Records, grants L–N, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY (hereafter cited as NJSBC R0049 RAC).

28. The program was racially integrated, and this effectiveness statistic reflects the combined scores for White and Black youth. For Black youth, it was even more effective at reducing recidivism. H. Ashley Weeks, *Youthful Offenders at Highfields* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1963). See also H. Ashley Weeks, "Preliminary Evaluation of the Highfields Project, *American Sociological Review* 18, no. 3 (June 1953): 280–87.

29. Walter Cronkite, *The Twentieth Century*, episode, "The Delinquents, Part One: A Boy Named Bob," aired 18 January 1959, on CBS News, 25:20.

30. Walter Cronkite, *The Twentieth Century*, episode, "The Delinquents, Part Two: The Highfields Story," aired 25 January 1959, on CBS News, 25:20.

method was America's best hope in the fight against deviance and social decline.

Well timed with the Cronkite documentaries in 1959, the Ford Foundation was working to establish an experimental GGI program in Provo, Utah, based on the Highfields model. The goal was to prove the concept to federal agencies and youth court judges and eventually to establish staff training and educational programs to disseminate the GGI model nationally.[31] The "Provo Experiment" led to three other experimental programs: Southfields, Essexfields, and the Silverlake experiments.[32] These four Ford programs generated new knowledge and refinements that were almost immediately promoted by the US Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), which funded the mass production of training curricula and educational materials in 1962 to prepare correctional staff with these new delinquency treatment methods.[33] Offshoot programs that originated in Ford experiments, such as Collegefields and Parkland, were eventually funded by HEW and the US Department of Labor, Office of Manpower Policy, Evaluation, and Research.[34]

The Ford Foundation's delinquency treatment program in Provo, at the Pinehills Center, operated as an intensive, nonresidential version of Highfields and was directed by Brigham Young sociologist LaMar

31. David R. Hunter, "Visit with Judge Monroe J. Paxman of the Provo, Utah, Juvenile Court (L8-360)," 30 January 1959, Ford Foundation interoffice memorandum, reel R0051, Ford Foundation Records, Grants–A to B (FA732A), Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY (hereafter cited as BYU R0051 RAC).

32. LaMar T. Empey and Maynard L. Erikson, *The Provo Experiment: Evaluating Community Control of Delinquency* (Lexington, MA: Lexington, 1972); Lovick C. Miller, "Southfields: Evaluation of a Short-Term Inpatient Treatment Center for Delinquents," *Crime and Delinquency* 16, no. 3 (1970): 305–16, https://doi.org/10.1177/001112877001600308; Saul Pilnick, Albert Elias, and Neale W. Clapp, "The Essexfields Concept: A New Approach to the Social Treatment of Juvenile Delinquents," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 2, no. 1 (1966): 109–25, https://doi.org/10.1177/002188636600200107; LaMar Empey and Steven G. Lubeck, *The Silverlake Experiment: Testing Delinquency Theory and Community Intervention* (Chicago: Aldine, 1971).

33. "Third Annual Progress Report, 1962, The Provo Experiment in Delinquency Rehabilitation," BYU R0051 RAC.

34. The Collegefields program was a modification of Essexfields, and Parkland was a modification of Southfields; see Robert F. Allen, Harry N. Dubin, Saul Pilnick, and Adella C. Yountz, *Collegefields: From Delinquency to Freedom* (Seattle: Special Child, 1970); "Toward Broader Child Welfare Services Here," *Courier-Journal*, 23 December 1964, 11; Lawrence Lasser to Robert Chandler, 6 May 1966, NJSBC R0049 RAC.

Empey. This cost-cutting, day-treatment feature increased the viability of community-based programs nationally by avoiding housing expenses, but it decreased the amount of time boys could spend "therapizing" each other outside of the formal sessions. To compensate for the nonresidential design, Empey worked to intensify the time that boys did have together and eliminated activities like sports and crafts, believing they detracted from the group's therapeutic potential.[35]

At the Provo Experiment, Empey and his Highfields-trained staff also intensified efforts to increase the level of discomfort boys experienced. In their work to maximize the efficiency and speed of the GGI process, they struggled to ensure boys did not skate through treatment without undergoing a genuine transformation. In an article draft included in their 1962 report to the foundation, they theorized that delinquent boys must be made anxious about their past identity and behavior—a lesson staff learned after discovering that an early graduate from Pinehills had changed only superficially because he "had never really been made uncomfortable in his entire stay in the program."[36] In other words, instead of his recidivism indicating a failure in the method, they reported that it indicated the superficiality of his treatment and the need to inflict greater discomfort to produce genuine change.

The developments at the Provo Experiment informed the methods used at another Ford Foundation experimental program, a second nonresidential version of Highfields in Newark, New Jersey, beginning in 1961. McCorkle's successor at Highfields, Albert Elias, worked as the initial director of the new program, known as Essexfields. Similar to the way that the first generation of ATCs for adults would later be established by culture carriers from Synanon or Daytop, Elias brought in "old boys," also known as "helped boys," from Highfields to participate in the first group sessions and to establish the GGI culture at the new location. Like the process at Highfields, "new boys" at Essexfields "got the meeting" (they were put on the hotseat); they learned to "tell their story" in an acceptable manner, and the group "gave them their problems"—the personal issues they had to figure out before the group would vote in their favor, letting them "graduate."[37]

35. LaMar Empey to David R. Hunter, 28 January 1960, BYU R0051 RAC.

36. Jerome Rabow and LaMar T. Empey, "Research and Rehabilitation: The Conflict of Scientific and Treatment Roles in Corrections," 1960, 19, BYU R0051 RAC.

37. Richard M. Stephenson and Frank R. Scarpitti, *Group Interaction as Therapy: The Use of the Small Group in Corrections* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1974).

In selected quotes from a 1962 recorded interview at Essexfields by Jackson Toby, a Rutgers University sociologist and consultant to the Ford Foundation, the boys at Essexfields revealed their understanding of the cycle of therapeutic violence:

- "New boys come in here. We're supposed to press them, make them do hard work and bring out their true self" (Joe).
- "You start to like it after a little while. You see how boys get on you; then after a while you are able to get on somebody else. In a way you feel like its revenge. You can do it now. You're not the lowest. You can do it to somebody else" (Fred).
- "At first I didn't want to stop taking drugs. . . . After I was here about 2 weeks, I knew that that was my problem, but I didn't want to help it. They just keep telling you and eventually you listen about the drug problem" (John).

As Fred put it, "The boys convince you that you have a problem." But it would be cynical to dismiss Fred as someone merely duped or coerced. Later in the transcript, he shows the love he found in therapeutic violence: "Out there people give up on you. . . . The boys in Essexfields don't give up on you. They keep at it. They keep at that problem until you want to help it. Then you start helping them with theirs. . . . The majority of them out there don't know what help is. . . . Here you've got somebody on you every day. You're talking about it. After a while, you want to talk about it. You want to explain to somebody the things you used to do." At first, Fred wanted revenge, then he learned to "want to talk." That learning took time and involved painful experiences. The first month was the worst for all the boys—Joe simply said that the boys made him cry. Jerry followed: "Me too . . . up at Annandale it's different. You come in there, and you're gonna have to fight. When you come in here [to Essexfields], the boys don't need to fight you to hurt you. . . . They hurt you all kinds of ways. By puttin' you on extra work. By saying things about you. That hurts you badder than punchin'. . . . The only thing I could do was cry, so I could feel relieved."[38]

38. "Transcript of a Discussion between Professor Jackson Toby of Rutgers University and Eight Boys Receiving Treatment at Essexfields (March 16, 1962)," 3, 9, 12, 12, 13, 16, NJSBC R0049 RAC.

From GGI to ATCs

The group methods used at the rehabilitation center at Fort Knox produced remarkable claims about the successes of GGI in treating addiction. Fort Knox Division of Psychiatry Chief Harold J. Lawn reported statistics from 1943 and 1944 showing that about half of the delinquent soldiers there had serious drinking problems before their induction: 23% were classified as "alcoholism" and 24% as "chronic alcoholism."[39] Lawn claimed the program at the Fifth Service Command was incredibly effective, reporting a 95% success rate at preventing recidivism among service members who were alcoholic. After the war, McCorkle's colleague from Fort Knox, Joseph Abrahams, promoted GGI methods while working in Washington DC as a consultant to the Federal Prison Service and as therapy leader at the National Training School for Boys. Working with James V. Bennett and other colleagues, he helped organize workshops on the new group method for corrections and established the Correctional Services Association.[40] Abrahams's work with young people at the National Training School influenced James Thorpe's innovations in GGI methods. Thorpe applied them to the treatment of adults who were addicted to opiates in the early 1950s at the US Public Health Service Hospital, in Lexington, Kentucky.[41] Thorpe's use of delinquency treatment methods as an approach to *addiction* treatment predated the Synanon organization, and Thorpe's treatment wards used jargon such as "act as if," "putting on," and "copping out"—phrases often assumed to have originated as "argot" in Synanon and ATCs.[42]

39. Harold J. Lawn, "The Study and Treatment of Alcoholism in the 5th S. C. Rehabilitation Center," *American Journal of Psychiatry* 102, no. 4 (1946): 479–82, https://doi.org/10.1176/ajp.102.4.479.

40. Abrahams, *Turning Lives Around*, xii.

41. "James Thorpe, Group Therapy Pioneer, Dies," *Washington Post*, 8 January 1992.

42. James J. Thorpe, "Progress Report of the Group Therapy Project at the National Training School for Boys; Washington, DC," Proceedings of the Annual Congress of Correction of the American Prison Association (1949): 286–97; James J. Thorpe and Bernard Smith, "Operational Sequence in Group Therapy with Young Offenders," *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* 2, no. 1 (1952): 24–33, https://doi.org/10.1080/00207284.1952.11508407; James Thorpe and Bernard Smith, "Phases in Group Development in the Treatment of Drug Addicts." *International Journal of Group Psychotherapy* 3, no. 1 (1953), 66–78, at 72–73; George De Leon, "Therapeutic Communities for Addictions: A Theoretical Framework," *International Journal of Addictions* 30, no. 2 (1995): 1603–45.

In addition to these early uses in addiction treatment, GGI promoters influenced the ATC movement in profound and direct ways. Before developing their vision for Daytop, for example, Alexander Bassin and his colleagues associated with the Kings County, New York, Probation Department sought out Lloyd McCorkle's expertise to learn about GGI and the Highfields model in workshops at the Brooklyn Association for the Rehabilitation of Offenders (BARO) clinic.[43] By 1962, when they visited Synanon seeking examples of group-based addiction treatment, experts at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), which eventually funded Daytop, were already invested in GGI through grants to the Provo Experiment.[44] And they were already deeply familiar with GGI and the Highfields model. In addition to his familiarity with McCorkle's trainings for probation officers at BARO, Bassin's dissertation advisor was H. Ashley Weeks, the director of research at Highfields who worked closely with McCorkle and published initial reports on the effectiveness of GGI.[45] That knowledge and familiarity helped introduce him to Synanon and would have framed his understanding of their practices. Demonstrating how pervasive GGI concepts were across his social network, when Bassin first arrived at Synanon, it was former Highfields intern and now famous sociologist Lewis Yablonsky who welcomed him at the front door.[46]

43. Alexander B. Smith and Alexander Bassin, "Kings County Court Probation: A Laboratory for Offender Rehabilitation," *Journal of Addictions and Offender Counseling* 13, no. 1 (October 1992): 11–23, https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-1874.1992.tb00216.x.

44. Empey and Erikson, *Provo Experiment*. Daytop's founders summarized their vision in the final sentence of their research grant application to NIMH, which resulted in a $390,000 award. They sought to legitimize their planned program design by aligning it with the Provo Experiment: "The approach which is here described represents a unique combination of features derived from the most promising aspects of frontline research engagements extending from the Pine Hills Project at Provo, Utah, with delinquent youths." Joseph A. Shelly, "Halfway House and Testing Program for Drug Addicts," application for mental health project grant to HEW, 5 October 1962, 18, folder 46, ms063018, box 2018, Samaritan Daytop Village records, 1962–2016, University of Kentucky Special Collections Research Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington.

45. Weeks, "Preliminary Evaluation of the Highfields Project," and *Youthful Offenders at Highfields*.

46. Martien Kooyman, "The History of Therapeutic Communities: A View from Europe," in *Therapeutic Communities for the Treatment of Drug Users*, ed. Barbara Rawlings and Rowdy Yates (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2001), 59–78.

Perhaps more impactful than social network influences were the systemic changes associated with the halfway house movement that GGI helped inspire.[47] In conjunction with its experimental GGI programs, the Ford Foundation played a leading role in initiating and promoting the halfway house movement. The foundation's interest in transforming the correctional field toward the halfway house model was a vision rooted in the Provo Experiment and Essexfields. In 1960, the Ford Foundation provided funding to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to develop a national coalition for recruiting and training social workers in a new way, making them "capable of effecting change in the attitudes and behaviors of offenders and potential offenders" in the "treatment of crime and delinquency."[48] The CSWE sought input from delegates representing 80 of the most prominent social science and correctional organizations and hosted their conference, "Manpower and Training for Corrections," in 1964. Two of the coalition's primary aims were instigated by innovations in GGI. One was the need to "analyze and structure correctional tasks in the light of an emerging awareness of newer approaches," and because "a new profession of correctional officer seems to be emerging," they also aimed to establish new training curricula.[49] The HEW-funded training materials produced by Empey at Pinehills were not mentioned, but the three examples of those newer approaches in the conference proceedings were the Provo Experiment, the Essexfields program, and the community-based guidance centers in California that were partly modeled after them.[50] The delegates drafted the "Correctional Rehabilitation Study Act," which was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, establishing the Joint Commission on Correctional Manpower and Training. The commission's first president was one of Lloyd McCorkle's first and most powerful champions, James V. Bennett, who had informed *Reader's Digest* subscribers in 1950 about the wonders of GGI.

47. Alexander B. Smith and Alexander Bassin, "Application of Small Group Theory to Crime and Delinquency," *Journal of Social Therapy* 7, no. 2 (1961): 76–85.

48. Milton G. Rector, "Preface," in *Manpower and Training for Corrections: Proceedings of an Arden House Conference, June 24–26, 1964*, ed. Charles S. Prigmore (New York: Council on Social Work Education, 1966), vii.

49. Charles S. Prigmore, "Background of the Conference," in Prigmore, *Manpower and Training for Corrections*, 5.

50. Daniel Glaser, "The Prospect for Corrections," in Prigmore, *Manpower and Training for Corrections*, 18.

The ATC movement surged forward so rapidly because America's correctional system was already moving in that direction with interest in community-based GGI programs. Historian Jennifer S. Light highlights that powerful shift to help explain the end of "youth republic" programs after World War II. During the first half of the twentieth century, this widely established form of delinquency treatment featured the progressive ideals of citizenship training and self-governance. The methods of GGI resonated with the postwar vision for a liberal welfare security state, and as Light notes, in the shift from progressive to liberal paradigms, youth republics were almost entirely supplanted by the ideals of community-based treatment and enthusiasm for short-term outpatient programs.[51] Clearly demonstrating the apex of that momentum in the early to mid-1960s, Oliver J. Keller's Ford Foundation research on America's halfway houses documents the central role of GGI and how the ATC concept and methods of GGI merged together as halfway houses became primary sites for addiction treatment.[52]

As GGI enthusiasts like Keller, Bassin, and Empey merged delinquency and addiction treatment under the umbrella label of "therapeutic community," GGI and therapeutic community concepts became interchangeable in the scientific literature.[53] That label expanded even further as Bassin promoted William Glasser's reinvention of GGI as a new form of group psychiatry, labeled "reality therapy," to characterize confrontational treatment in ATCs.[54] Although the labels for confrontational group

51. Jennifer S. Light, *States of Childhood: From the Junior Republic to the American Republic, 1895–1945* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2020).

52. Keller and Alper summarized this mergence: "Two well-known programs for adult narcotics addicts—Synanon and Daytop Village—while they do not use the term "guided group interaction," nevertheless practice a method of treatment which much resembles it." Oliver J. Keller Jr. and Benedict S. Alper, *Halfway Houses: Community-Centered Correction and Treatment* (Lexington, MA: Health Lexington, 1970), 65.

53. These labels apparently began to merge in the early 1960s as GGI teen treatment innovations were introduced into adult prison experiments, such as the Chino Institute for Men. For example, a newspaper article reported that "Dennis Briggs, director of the therapeutic community at Chino Prison, and John Dowlin, a group counselor at Chino are using techniques borrowed from Pinehills, just as Pinehills learned much from the Highfield, N.J., center." Joan Geyer, "Pinehills Draws Praise from Well-Known Criminologists," *Daily Herald* (Provo, UT), 5 June 1963, 7.

54. Alexander Bassin, "The Therapeutic Community Teaching Concept," in *The Reality Therapy Reader: A Survey of the Work of William Glasser, MD*, ed. Alexander Bassin, Thomas Edward Bratter, and Richard L. Rachin (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

methods multiplied during the 1970s, by 1980, former Highfields director Albert Elias concluded that GGI, ATC, and reality therapy programs all relied on the same essential modality of treatment, modified and reinvented through diffusion since its inception at Fort Knox.[55]

In that diffusion, Daytop and the ATC movement marked a profound departure from Synanon's basic philosophy and key defining features.[56] In the early and mid-1960s, for example, Synanon offered an alternative to society in which established residents worked more to retain new members than to rehabilitate them for return to society.[57] Its outspoken leader and his ambassadors rejected the whole idea of professional clinical treatment; they promoted self-reliance and were leery of external funding, and they accepted only adults who managed to enter the group by their own volition. In contrast, Daytop and other ATCs strongly resembled the Ford Foundation's experimental GGI programs for teens. Their goal was not to provide an alternative to society but to adjust the individual to society's norms—instead of retention, to restore members to society as quickly as possible. Instead of rejecting the authority of clinicians, in GGI and ATC programs, sessions were typically led or supervised by professionally trained clinicians or paid paraprofessional counselors. Instead of rejecting external funding, GGI and ATC programs relied on state budgets or philanthropic grants or were created by state agency officials with access to federal grants. Instead of voluntary self-admission, treatment was typically coerced by probation, using the threat of incarceration to compel compliance and participation in the group sessions.

These fundamental structural differences meant that the culture and group dynamics were altered as well—in ways that intensified the use of therapeutic violence. Because they received so many reluctant or resistant initiates, treatment in GGI and ATC programs began not with

55. Albert Elias, "Group Treatment of Delinquents: A Review of Guided Group Interaction," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 347, no. 1 (June 1980): 167–75, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-6632.1980.tb21266.x.

56. George De Leon, "The Next Therapeutic Community: Autocracy, and Other Notes toward Integrating Old and New Therapeutic Communities," *Therapeutic Communities* 33, nos. 2–3 (2012): 124–32.

57. David Sternberg, "Synanon House—a Consideration of Its Implications for American Correction," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 54, no. 4 (December 1963): 447–55, https://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5191&context=jclc.

treatment but with a stage of induction to persuade new members about the need for treatment.[58] And because the goals of treatment differed, the structures and rules that marked progress also differed from Synanon. Instead of gaining status as a more or less permanent member of Synanon, GGI and ATC programs awarded status increments as levels up toward graduation, making the goal of treatment, ironically, release from the very peer group that demanded intense affiliation *as treatment* and measured progress by how sincerely a member temporarily bonded and identified with the group.

More complex than the differences between Synanon and ATCs was the multidirectional relationship between delinquency programs and the ATC movement, raising questions about the way in which Synanon and ATC programs may have influenced the field of delinquency treatment and the development of the troubled teen industry. Most profound might be two broad shifts, one in the new meaning that ATCs gave to the term "community-based treatment" and another in the causality seen between delinquency and addiction. Policy entrepreneurs celebrated Highfields, Essexfields, and the Pinehills program in Provo as community-based alternatives to the harms associated with long-term incarceration. They emphasized young members' ability to interact with people outside the program and their close proximity to the neighborhoods they came from, making reentry less formidable. Daytop and other ATCs transformed the concept of "community-based" to mean "community as treatment."[59] Although experimental GGI programs had relied on interaction as treatment, they did so within a relatively porous milieu. With the ATC model's reliance on insularity, especially during the initial induction period, integration with the outside world was postponed, making it a privilege for the higher levels of treatment and preparation for reentry—a challenging process that the earlier ideal of community-based treatment avoided. In fact, that relatively open porosity and close proximity to the free community is much of what made GGI such a promising alternative to begin with.

A second transformation reversed the way that treatment providers saw the causal relationship between delinquency and drug use. Before the 1960s, drug use was considered one of many expressions of deviance, an aspect of the delinquent personality listed as one of the many

58. Deitch, "Treatment of Drug Abuse"; De Leon, *Therapeutic Community*.
59. De Leon, *Therapeutic Community*.

possible symptoms of a deviant personality. Clinicians at ATCs, in sync with broad shifts in the correctional and medical fields, reversed that hierarchy as they reconfigured delinquency and crime as symptoms of the disease of addiction rather than causes of drug use. This shift warrants future research to understand how professional, political, and social changes coincided with each other. During the 1960s, as the threat of drug abuse rose into position as the primary threat to social order, critical perspectives compared GGI with communist "brainwashing" and questioned the validity of the delinquency diagnosis and court-mandated treatment for it.[60] The idea of court-diagnosed, court-mandated delinquency treatment seems to have lost credibility as the medical diagnosis of addiction lent greater authority to state interventions.

As addiction researchers worked to establish the scientific legitimacy of their field, they promoted etiology that reversed a long-standing conceptual hierarchy. With progress in the addiction sciences, they moved toward a view that positioned addiction as the primary causal factor of delinquency and crime, with such behaviors signifying key symptoms of a brain disease.[61] Perhaps reflecting this complex and broad shift, as addiction treatment programs employed delinquency treatment methods, they reinforced this reconfiguration in explaining deviance and delinquency as an expression of addiction rather than a cause. Future research could also help explain how this reversal may have related to the shift in labeling, as GGI was increasingly associated with coercion and abuses of state power; perhaps more acceptable terms such as "therapeutic community" and "reality therapy" lent psychiatric validity to these militarized group therapy methods.

Theories and labeling shifts may have reflected broad and complex social and scientific changes, but they did not drive the growth of the treatment industry. The development of the troubled teen industry during the 1970s grew out of increased market demand by parents seeking an effective intervention against teenage drug use and other problematic behaviors. That growing demand coincided with a national shift, from the Cold War to the War on Drugs, as increasing numbers of middle-class young people began experimenting with illegal substances, elevating

60. Larry K. Brendtro and Arlin E. Ness, *Re-educating Troubled Youth: Environments for Teaching and Treatment* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1983).

61. Nancy D. Campbell, *Discovering Addiction: The Science and Politics of Substance Abuse Research* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

drug use into position as a public health crisis that threatened national security. As the Ford Foundation and correctional "manpower" alliances predicted in the 1960s, the same staff shortages that motivated Fort Knox psychiatrists to militarize peer-group therapy sessions during World War II created a similar shortage and demand for group-based methods in response to the War on Drugs during the 1970s.

Developments in Florida during the late 1960s provide the clearest example of how the history of GGI enabled the growth of the troubled teen industry in the midst of that response. After his years at the Brooklyn Probation Department, Bassin took a position at Florida State University in 1968—the same year that O. J. Keller, the renowned GGI "enthusiast," took a position directing Florida's Division of Youth Services.[62] Working in Tallahassee, these influential leaders ensured that Florida would lead the nation by promoting GGI methods in teen treatment programs. In his first year, Keller established Dadefields, a Dade County Highfields-type program, and overhauled all state youth facilities to center around GGI peer-group confrontation sessions, one of the most important contributions to the growth of the troubled teen industry.[63]

That overhaul required deliberate efforts and persuasion to establish a new institutional system. In 1970, for example, Bassin and Keller organized and participated in a 3-day encounter session with Florida judges where rehabilitated young people told their stories and testified to the benefits of GGI. The sessions were arranged so those young true believers could ask the judges face-to-face to support the creation of additional GGI programs.[64] Newspaper articles featured photos from that encounter session and from many of the state's GGI programs to show their new power. A photo taken at the Okeechobee Training School included the caption, "Group is Always Around the Clock," and praise by the journalist, "'Group' is better than good. . . . 'Group' reveals the lessons in behavior

62. In a letter to Jackson Toby, who interviewed youths at Essexfields, the Ford Foundation's director of youth development programs privately referred to O. J. Keller as "a guided group interaction enthusiast." Robert Chandler to Jackson Toby, January 25, 1967, folder 06300112, reel R0050, Ford Foundation Records, Grants O–R (FA732F), Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, NY.

63. "Biennial Report," Division of Youth Services, July 1969–June 1971, Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, Florida State Library, Tallahassee, FL.

64. Ritchie Tidwell, "No Justice in State: Juveniles Air Gripes," *Tallahassee Democrat*, 3 March 1970, 15.

the children are learning."[65] Another newspaper article, "Halfway House: New Approach Paying Off," described GGI and reality therapy as interchangeable and quoted Keller saying, "Just as a youth's peer group can get him into trouble, that group can get him out. . . . It's silly that we haven't done this before."[66]

The entire Division of Youth Services and the state's youth court judges embraced the shift toward GGI, and privately operated programs began scaling up to handle the increased demand for this type of teen treatment. In the first 3 years of operation, the federally subsidized Seed, Inc., which relied on parent-paid fees as well as an initial startup grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and a short-lived operational grant from NIMH, doubled the state's capacity for GGI interventions without any burden on the state budget.[67] The Seed and its offshoot, Straight, Inc., received a mix of parent-placed and court-mandated children and industrialized the treatment regimen with massive groups of hundreds of youth participating together in the same daily GGI sessions.[68] Such scaled-up programs benefited from Bassin's and Keller's activism and policy entrepreneurship. The same officials who embraced the state's small-group GGI programs also defended the Seed and Straight on several occasions from the early 1970s until the 1990s, when state agencies threatened to deny their licenses because of unethical methods and maltreatment.[69] Nationally, as the Seed and Straight programs continued

65. Jed Drews, "Detention Home Discipline: 'You've Got to Have Rules,'" *Palm Beach Post*, 12 August 1970, B3.

66. "Halfway House: New Approach Paying Off," *Tampa Tribune*, 13 July 1970, 1, 5.

67. Clark, *Recovery Revolution*.

68. Florida's state-run GGI programs were limited to a total of approximately 1,200 youths on any given day in the early 1970s; "Biennial Report," 1969–71. Florida officials reported that the Seed received 1,200 new intakes per year, the daily group sessions included hundreds of youths, and officials referred to the Seed's treatment method as scaled-up "'guided group interaction' or 'positive peer group pressure.'" Special Study Committee, "The Study of the Advisability of the 'Seed' in Dade County," November 1972, 5–7, Comprehensive Health Planning Council of South Florida, Seed Program, box 1, series 846, State Archives of Florida, Tallahassee, FL (SAF).

69. Drug Abuse Task Force, "Recommendations Relative to Licensing of Local Drug Abuse Programs," April 1973, folder 3, box 12, series S111, Drug Abuse–Seed Program, SAF; Elenewski to Governor Rubin Askew, 17 April 1973, folder 5, box 12, series S111, Drug Abuse–Seed Program, SAF; "Special On-site Monitoring Report, Project Straight, Inc.; 76-A4-13-EB01, Confidential," Florida Department of Administration, Division of State Planning, Bureau of Criminal Justice Planning and Assistance, 30 March 1978, folder 18, box 38,

to defeat their critics with political support, they worked to normalize therapeutic violence in the troubled teen industry.

Conclusion

The widely accepted story about the origins of Synanon looks back to the history of self-help groups like Alcoholics Anonymous. By tracing the concept of therapeutic violence in group rehabilitation, a wider scope expands the amount of relevant evidence, merging addiction and delinquency treatment histories.[70] In the candor of their testimonies, the boys at Highfields during the mid-1950s, and at Essexfields during the early 1960s, described a technology that empowered not only Daytop and other autocratic therapeutic communities but also an entire industry of teen programs in the United States. Like the delinquent soldiers at Fort Knox, they advanced from Pre-Honor to Honor, from new group to old group, as newcomers became oldcomers. In countless programs since, young people earned their way out by learning to attribute therapeutic effects to psychological or physical violence inflicted under the banner of treatment. In the United States, and perhaps elsewhere, the treatment industry grew as program directors and staffs refined the marketability of the therapeutic narratives that their methods produced.

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series S111, Straight Inc, SAF, http://survivingstraightinc.com/FloridaGovernmentDocuments/StraightInvestigations/Project-Straight-SPECIAL-MONITORING-REPORT-by-FL-Bureau-of-Criminal-Justice-Planning-and-Assistance-1978_Combine.pdf; William Nottingham, "Officials Held Back Information on Straight, Report Says," *St. Petersburg Times*, 7 May 1978, http://survivingstraightinc.com/StPetersburgFLnewspaperArticles/5-7-1978-Officials-held-back-information-on-Straight-Combined.pdf; Milo Geyelin, "Statements in Suit Contrast with Glowing Report from HRS' Last Visit," *St. Petersburg Times*, 30 January 1983, http://survivingstraightinc.com/StPetersburgFLnewspaperArticles/1-30-1983-statements-in-suit-contrast-with_Redacted.pdf; Report by Fred M. Gravius, Inspector Specialist to Lowell Clary, Acting Inspector General of the Florida State Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services, 19 May 1993, Re: "Child Abuse/Neglect by Straight, Inc.," Investigation of Straight, Inc., US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, http://survivingstraightinc.com/FBI/FBI.1.Straight.Investigation.pgs-157-265-PDF1-PartC.pdf. A nonredacted version of the "Clary report" obtained by Wes Fager is available as five separate PDFs: http://thestraights.net/news/index.htm#sullivan.

70. This expanded scope may also help to correct the popular myth that the teen program industry "spawned" from Synanon. Maia Szalavitz, "The Cult That Spawned the Tough-Love Teen Industry," *Mother Jones*, 2007, https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2007/08/cult-spawned-tough-love-teen-industry/.

By directing group pressures to enforce a new self-narrative, the process rendered a product. For desperate parents searching in the treatment marketplace, such anecdotes offered hope. They often reflected genuine change, but they also obscured experiences of profound harm. Today, disparate groups of troubled teen industry survivors and true believers are remarkable not only for their polemics but also for their ambiguous mix of stories about the love and torture and gratitude and trauma that are so often intertwined and inseparable.[71] These narratives are intertwined and perceived as both therapy and institutionalized abuse depending on the beholder's experience and knowledge of therapeutic violence.

71. Mark M. Chatfield, "Totalistic Programs for Youth: A Thematic Analysis of Retrospective Accounts," *Journal of Extreme Anthropology* 3, no. 2 (2019): 44–71, https://doi.org/10.5617/jea.7015.