

SYNANON SPELLS HOPE FOR ADDICTS

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'OWL WATCH'—Newcomer to Synanon Foundation who is "kicking it cold" (going through narcotics

withdrawal without help of pain relievers) gets sympathy, encouragement from member of Owl Watch.

Times Photos by Mary Noguera Frampton



HELP WITH PROBLEMS—Charles Dederich and Mrs. Adaline Ainlay, founders of foundation, utilize philosophy and psychology in counseling former addicts.

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Non-Profit Santa Monica Group Fights Narcotics Menace With Family Approach

This is the first of two articles on the Synanon Foundation's program of rehabilitation for narcotics addicts.

BY BOB GETTEMY

SANTA MONICA — Imagine, if you will, a family with 50 children all of whom share a common and terrifying problem — ridding themselves of the narcotics habit.

In brief, that's the picture at the Synanon Foundation, 1351 Ocean Front, where the dope habit is fought with a mixture of philosophy, psychology and common sense, firmly rooted in a family structure similar to the autocratic, 19th-century type.

And surprising progress is being made in many cases although not all addicts can be permanently cured at a given time just as all sick people cannot be restored to permanent health.

Heads Family

Heading this unique family, whose ages range from 19 into the 50s, are Charles (Chuck) Dederich and Mrs. Adaline Ainlay, who with Jesse Pratt make up the board of the non-profit foundation, formally organized about 15 months ago.

The family approach is the foundation stone of the Synanon program. Ideally, addicts who become a part of the Synanon family progress from infancy, when they are drug victims and unable to take care of themselves; to adolescence and finally to

maturity when, free of narcotics, they are able to take their places as self-reliant members of society.

When an addict is willing to voluntarily venture out of his nightmarish jungle where narcotics and still more narcotics is the only realism, the doors of Synanon are open to him if he is willing to do his share and become a member of the family in every sense of the word with rehabilitation as his goal.

Only for Serious

Dederich, a direct-speaking man with the build of a professional wrestler and an obvious understanding of human nature, emphasized that the foundation is not interested in those seeking temporary quarters or who have no intention of making a serious effort to shake off the dope habit.

An addict who joins the Synanon family does so as an infant who needs constant attention.

And constant attention he gets during the desperate, no-quarter battle he must



RELIEF FROM TENSION.—Members of Synanon accompany jazz records with bongo drums and maracas. Recreation is important part of foundation program.

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wage to burst the chains of addiction.

While there is no confinement, a "kicker" is faithfully watched 24 hours a day by those serving on the "Owl Watch" in six-hour shifts. The Owl Watch generally consists of those who have been making progress in their own fights against addiction.

Given Eggs, Milk

Dederich said during the withdrawal the addict stays in the living room, occasionally taking a nap on one of the divans. He is given quantities of eggs, milk and pancake syrup. Nothing else unless he desires some other food.

Members of the Owl Watch who have experienced the harrowing withdrawal ordeal are familiar with the cramps, convulsions and marrow-deep aches that accompany a "cold kick," where the addict is given nothing to alleviate his pain.

"Members of the Owl Watch usually play it by ear when helping someone through the withdrawal," Dederich said. "They may joke with the kicker, sympathize with him, or, if the situation warrants, give him a good tongue-lashing."

Psychological Fear

Mrs. Ainlay said there is more than just physical pain to a withdrawal.

"There is a deep psychological fear connected with withdrawal," she said. "The hypes (addicts) believe they are going to die and they are certain they will never feel good again."

Food is a key factor in the Synanon program due to the terrific loss of weight that accompanies the narcotics habit.

"Usually they're in terrible shape when they come to us," Dederich said. "In most cases we'll put from 15 to 45 lb. on our people within 90 days."

He explained that a "running hype" (constantly on narcotics) will not make eating a part of his life.

\$100-a-Day Habit

"When he does eat," Dederich said, "it may be only a chunk of bologna he boosts (steals) from a market. Many an addict supports a \$100-a-

day habit but he can't afford to eat in a restaurant."

To make sure addicts eat, a food counter is kept open 18 hours a day at the foundation. Anyone wishing to eat may help himself at any time.

Dederich said the initial withdrawal may take from four to eight days, depending on the addict. Once the first withdrawal hurdles have been overcome, the addict has progressed out of infancy and joins the family life of Synanon more fully.

Since the organization is entirely self-supporting as is any other family, there are always the chores of cooking, dish washing, laundry cleaning and maintenance of the three-story foundation building.

Everybody Works

Everybody works and as an addict progresses the chores and the responsibility that accompany them become increasingly important.

Mrs. Ainlay said she serves as the mother image in the family and Dederich is the father image. Members of the Synanon family are referred to as "kids," no matter what age they may be.

"It's amazing," Mrs. Ainlay said, "how the kids vie for the father's approval and the mother's love just as they do in any large family."

Food for the stomach is not the only kind administered at Synanon. An essential, and perhaps even more important part of the program is the administering of substantial amounts of intellectual, emotional and spiritual foods.

Open Discussions

Open discussions are held each afternoon usually centered around a book on philosophy, psychology or other food for thought.

Meetings referred to as "Synanons" are held nightly as a form of group psychotherapy. A foundation resident who has been successful in arresting addiction acts as moderator at the sessions.

He uses his insight into his own problems in trying to help others find themselves. He may use ridicule, cross-examination or hostile attack if he feels it will help him attain his objective.

(Next week's article will take up succeeding steps in the Synanon program by which an addict can eventually free himself from the dope habit and become an accepted member of society.)