

Group therapy for teens:

Peer pressure as a positive influence

By SUZIE ROLLINS

Going through adolescence is difficult. Plagued by worries of acne, height problems, sexual awareness and peer group pressures, many youths don't think they'll ever survive their early teenage years.

Making peer group pressure a positive, rather than negative, experience for a teenager, Richard Blak has formed group counseling sessions for teenagers in Troy.

Blak, a psychologist at Henry Ford Hospital's Troy Counseling Center, has found group sessions oftentimes are more helpful for youths to open up and discuss their fears and problems.

"Fifty to 75 percent of our problems are interpersonal and involve others' anger, frustrations and despair," says Blak. "Group therapy takes away a lot of the kid's apprehensions. They feel safe in a group."

Currently, Blak facilitates a group therapy session with four adolescent youths referred for counseling by their parents or other sources. They have been together since October, and Blak says their diverse personalities have helped the teens develop varied problem solving techniques.

He organizes a group on the basis of similarities and differences of participants. He doesn't want all the members to suffer from the same problems because if they do, they get caught up in each other's defenses, he says.

"The group helps them to understand other's lifestyles. They listen to each other and think, this kid is similar to me but dealt with his problems differently," Blak explains.

PROBABLY THE BIGGEST problems teenagers, have, Blak says, are feeling inadequate and not being in charge of their own lives. "They feel like victims and have trouble developing autonomy."

Using group therapy, Blak tries to get the youths to lay their frustrations out the line, and discuss ways to deal with their situations differently.

Chief mission officer is guest pulpit speaker

The Rev. J. Oscar McCloud, chief mission officer of United Presbyterian Church, will speak at morning worship services in First Presbyterian Church of Farmington Sunday, March 25. Dr. McCloud, who is currently serving his second five-year term as director of Program Agency of the church, will also speak to 3,000 Presbyterians gathered for a Celebration of the Month of Mission, in Ford Auditorium that evening.

He joined the national administrative level of the church in 1968 as associate chairman for operations in Division of Church and Race, Board of National Missions. He also represented Presbyterians at the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, in Nairobi, Kenya. In 1975 he was elected to the Council's Central Committee, and currently serves on its 25-member executive committee.



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Hallmark winners

The works of Karyn Butler (at left) and Gabrielle Basso have been selected to go before a national judging committee in an art competition sponsored by Hallmark Cards, Inc. Ms. Butler is a freshman and Ms. Basso is a senior at Our Lady of Mercy High School. There were chosen from more than 3,300 entries from Wayne and Oakland counties. They are already Blue Ribbon winners, now vying for the National Gold Medal Award.

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is confidential," he says. "Oftentimes it comes out in therapy that the problems are the parents. They focus their attention on the kids to divert from their own problems."

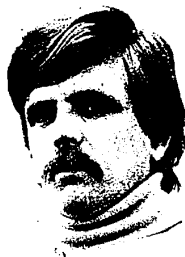
Group therapy isn't for all youths needing counseling, Blak says, but it works for many because peer group

pressure is so important for adolescents. Discussing problems in a group sometimes comes easier for teenagers than talking to an adult therapist on a one-to-one basis.

"In a group it is safe environment for change because they get a sampling how their peers will react," he adds.

'The group helps them to understand other lifestyles. They listen to each other and think, 'this kid is similar to me but dealt with his problems differently.'"

— Richard Blak



Hills man, 31, killed

A 31-year-old Farmington Hills man was killed when he was struck by a car while crossing Grand River between Halsted and Haggerty early last Saturday morning.

Daniel McGee became the fourth traffic fatality recorded this year in Farmington Hills. The city had a total of four traffic deaths last year.

McGee was struck in front of the Inner Change lounge at 1248 a.m. by a car driven by Norah Reilly, 20, of Novi.

Police Sgt. Richard Krueger said a routine investigation is underway.

"There was no evidence of foul play," Krueger said. "He was crossing Grand River. It was a dark, rainy night."

No charges were filed against the driver.

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Students earn honors

Local students from several colleges and universities have earned high academic honors.

At Lawrence Institute of Technology in Southfield, James Arnold, Michael Morise and Mark Stelmeyer of Farmington were named to the honor roll for the winter quarter.

Also earning that honor from Farmington Hills were Carol Barnard, Mark Briolat, James Eckel, Judith

Feipel, Larry Lawson, Pat Littler, Jan Moran, Vic Soreki and Diane Young.

Named to the first semester dean's list at Spring Arbor College were Randall Lewis and Brent Smith of Farmington.

At Valparaiso University in Indiana, Kathryn Lehman of Farmington

and Julie Trevisan and Deborah Cecchini of Farmington were named to the dean's list for fall semester, 1978.

Jo Park of Farmington Hills was among more than 3,000 students whose fall semester grades earned them places on the Southwest Texas State University dean's honor roll.



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