

Recreation provides needed escape

By DIANE LAW

With the pressures of rising inflation, high interest rates, government unrest and social problems bearing down on us — not to mention daily personal catastrophes — using play or recreation to escape makes sense.

"It's tremendously important to find a release of tensions," says Dr. Allen Hess, assistant professor at Oakland University and a clinical psychologist.

"There is no special age group that needs a release from tension more than others. Everybody needs it."

Dr. Hess explained that play therapy is used in helping children express conflicts and tensions.

"By playing games, by using crayons and other creative materials, children are able to let inner

conflicts surface. The idea of play therapy can be applied to adults in the same way. When we play, our conflicts and tensions are released.

"PLAY IS beneficial unless too much competition becomes involved. Then play (for relaxation) ceases to be play. You have to decide whether to play for relaxation or competitive purposes. When you define play as work, tension is not reduced."

But, he said, some people feel guilty about playing or relaxing. Some find it difficult to get into new experiences or they feel that play is frivolous, a waste of time.

"These people think they are not living up to their concept of themselves as good workers," he continued.

Dr. Hess notes that a man devoted to the study of emotional

problems — Freud — summed up the goals of life in two words: work and play.

Reduction of work hours, smaller families and mechanical household conveniences suggest we have more spare time to fill. Experts recommend that leisure time should include play and creative hobbies rather than constant work.

"Life would be a balance between work and enjoyment. When people's lives are focused too much on work and when they don't take time to relax, they find something is missing in life," said a Rochester psychiatrist. "Life seems unfulfilled and this can affect emotional well-being. Just as learning one's

job is important, learning to relax is equally important."

ACCORDING TO S. R. Slavson in his book "Recreation and the Total Personality," one's background, personality, talents and ability determine his favorite play and recreation.

Slavson believes an introvert tends to avoid active group play and prefers reading, painting, sewing, music and tennis while an extrovert gets involved in contact sports, games, debates and dramatics.

Often television is substituted for a more active form of recreation. Dr. Lawrence J. Friedman of the Los Angeles Psychoanalytic Institute thinks too much televi-

sion can be harmful, not only to the individual but to society as well.

"This is the first TV generation and much of its violence can be traced directly to its early TV habits . . . a generation that grew up just pushing a button to be entertained is finding it extremely difficult to establish an objective relationship with others."

"Someone who watches too much TV may become violent because he has nowhere to go with his normal aggressive energy that he should be working off in a creative activity," says Dr. Friedman.

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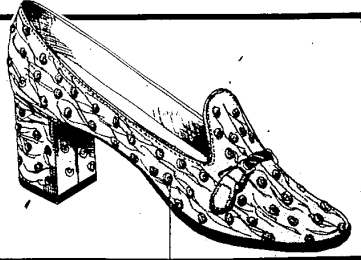
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