

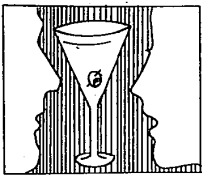
AA sessions vital to Maplegrove program

Continued from Page 3A

Patients are admitted in 10-person groups. Why is this significant?

This is another unique aspect of the program. The Toronto center is the only other one in the country that utilizes the 10-person group. In a closed group you have a lot of trust built up and it's a lot easier for the person to share his or her feelings. A lot of alcoholics find it difficult relating to others. They are very much out of touch with their own feelings and if you provide a secure kind of atmosphere such as we do here, the closed group is best for them based on all my years treating alcoholism. They're able to open up and learn how to relate to people again. It's like switching the addiction from the bottle and the pills to people. The other thing it does is provide a contrast to AA's open, unstructured group sessions which are a vital part of the program here at Maplegrove.

How do you know if someone recovers from alcoholism? In my mind, a recovered alcoholic is one who is in a state free of addictive drugs, functioning better in their fam-



ilies and jobs, functioning better physically and emotionally. Our program is only a couple of months old, so it's still too early to tell about our success rate. I just saw a group discharged about six weeks ago and I'm encouraged. The structured after care program of counseling and AA meetings is good and successful. I would say a good recovery rate is that generally at least two years later you would see 60-70 percent essentially drug and alcohol free and in an improved life situation.

You keep talking about AA. Why is it so important? It's a vital part of the program. More than half the counselors are recovered

alcoholics. Textbooks of the AA program are given to every patient when they come in and they all work the steps of AA. AA has come up with many principles which are hard to improve upon. More people recover through AA than any other way.

Have any of your attitudes changed during your 14 years working with alcoholism?

I would say there's one major one. I've come to a stronger position believing in the principles of AA as a recovery fellowship for alcoholics. A very high percentage of my patients who have recovered have done so through this fellowship. Sure, I probably started off accepting it intellectually, but today I firmly believe in it.

Why is alcoholism a stigma in our society?

My God, who wants to be an alcoholic? It's a stink row bum. Most people who come in here don't think they are alcoholics. You ask them and they say it's a bad person, it's an evil person, one who can't work, has no family, is a sinking, rotten person. There's a wide range of misinformation out there

about alcoholics. The biggest thing to happen is Betty Ford coming to town and admitting she was an alcoholic. A woman like that who says she is an alcoholic, my God, that is going to blow a lot of that stuff right out the window. She blasts the stigma by declaring herself an alcoholic.

How does one go about changing this attitude about alcoholics?

I've spent years of my life helping to train physicians about alcoholism. I've always spent time in the community trying to educate the public. I really think that's where it's at. It's important to realize that for every one who enters Maplegrove, you'll have 20 people you'll never treat. Less than five percent get into a program like this. Those people in the misery of alcoholism will probably die from it. The most difficult part is getting a person to admit he or she is an alcoholic, to confront themselves with a drinking problem. Those that enter Maplegrove already have undergone the most difficult part. If they go through the program and recover, it's a contagious thing. That's the other part of it. People who recover tend to affect others who are recovering and they in turn affect others.

They're together in a snowballing effect. They care.

Drinking in our society is glamorized. What role does that play in treatment of alcoholism?

Drinking glamorized, oh yes... liquor advertising is very successful in all kinds of hidden persuaders. It really appeals to woman, man sex appeal, snob appeal. It's very powerful and very excellent. They know what they are doing. During the program, you certainly have to talk about what it's

going to be like at a party where everyone is drinking or what it's like to sit and watch the commercial where the wine is shining, swirling around the glass and it looks so good.

Will those attitudes ever change?

Ha, not as long as the liquor industry is making money. You have to convince people they can have a good time with alcohol if you do it the right way. You don't need liquor to have a good time. You can remain sober and still enjoy yourself.

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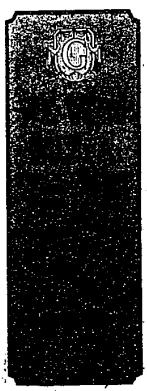
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