

Task force probes state of women's mental health

Many women experiencing stressful life events have been inaccurately defined as having a mental health problem.

This is one of the principal findings of the Women's Task Force of the Michigan Department of Mental Health.

The task force recommended that mental health agencies join forces with community organizations to establish support groups which could help women deal with problems at an early stage.

This would divert many women from traditional mental health services and would be more effective. In addition, much of the stigma attached to utilization of mental health services would be eliminated.

The task force, under direction of Carol T. Mowbray, Ph.D., has worked for more than a year to identify women's mental health problems, examine treatment provided to women, and review problems of employment for women in the mental health system.

The final report of the task force is titled "For Better or For Worse Women and the Mental Health System."

The task force delivered the report to State Mental Health Director C. Patrick Babcock late in April.

RECOMMENDATIONS regarding treatment of

women in the public mental health system indicate that sex biases and stereotypical attitudes of many mental health professionals may result in less effective treatment or inappropriate diagnoses. The task force recommended continuing education programs for professional mental health workers and greater emphasis on family and group therapy.

Regarding women employees of the Department of Mental Health, the task force recommended policy changes which could reduce the stress which women employees face. Specifically, the task force suggested greater availability of flextime and job-sharing arrangements. It also called for more women in positions of authority.

The final section of the report concerns women and their personal physicians. The literature suggests many women are over-medicated. This applies particularly to prescriptions written for minor tranquilizers.

The task force recommended that women take a more active role in understanding and asserting what treatment is appropriate, that health care professionals undergo additional training, and that steps be taken to improve general patient education.

A public forum is set for Tuesday, May 18 in Ypsilanti Regional Psychiatric Hospital for public comment and questions on the final report.

The morning session, from 10 a.m.-noon, is re-

served for confidential testimony. The afternoon session, from 1:30-4 p.m., will be open to the public.

DETROIT AREA representatives to the Women's Task Force are Barbara Clark, Michigan Osteopathic Medical Center; Eranell McIntosh-Wilson, Plymouth Center for Human Development; Amy Allen, Walter P. Reuther Psychiatric Hospital; Lucy Howard, Washtenaw County Community Mental Health Center; Norma Cheatham, Detroit-Wayne Community Mental Health Services; Diane Wilkins, Emergency Telephone Service; and Roberta Sanders, New Center Community Mental Health Services.

Copies of the final report and appointments for confidential testimony may be requested from the Women's Task Force, Michigan Department of Mental Health, Lewis Cass Building, Lansing, 48928. The telephone number is (517) 375-3589.

ARK observes week declared for animals

May 2-8 is Be Kind To Animals Week. ARK, Inc. a humane education service has many suggestions, especially for teachers, on how to spend the week doing positive things for animals.

For information, write to ARK, Post Office Box 85, Warren 48090.

As an organization, ARK mailed suggested activities to several hundred schools in the metropolitan Detroit area.

also have purchased subscriptions to Week. ARK, Inc. a humane education service has many suggestions, especially for teachers, on how to spend the week doing positive things for animals.

The Troy Library has a showcase display of ARK materials for the month of May.

ARK workers will staff an information booth all-day Saturday, May 8, near the main entrance of Oakland Mall to give free literature and answer questions.

'Stress' is seminar topic

William Tyndale College in conjunction with Missionary Internship will host a special stress management seminar for Christian leaders beginning at 5:30 p.m., Monday, May 17, and ending with luncheon on Friday, May 21.

The theme of the week is "How to perceive, understand and effectively cope with stress."

Topics include cultural stress, burn-out, stress and illness, biblical principles in handling stress, and a personal stress reduction program.

The format includes lectures, Bible study, small-group interaction, films, documents, and personal planning.

Registration information is given by calling the college, 555-7200.

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Alison Nisbet, daughter of the world-famous doll designer, Peggy Nisbet, will be here to introduce "First Born", the newest limited edition collectible from Royal Doulton. Prized for their magnificent hand-sculpting and painting of their ivory English bone china heads and hands, and fine needlework of the costuming, these investment dolls are treasured the world over. "First Born", \$175; Others in our collection, \$125.

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