

Audio-Visual Aids to Teaching

Reviews of Recent Videotapes

Psychological Defence Mechanisms (UK, 1984, 22 mins)

This videotape (not film as referred to in the voice-over) is designed for medical students during their clinical training. Defence mechanisms are illustrated by brief vignettes of varying length. The two longest stories are those devoted to what one might consider a normal bereavement reaction by denial and a more pathological use of projection. Other snippets refer to denial, projection, regression and repression. Most of the examples are clear with the exception of students chewing pens and spectacles cited as examples of thumb-sucking denoting regression in times of stress.

The demonstrations refer to 'normal' defence mechanisms and 'pathological' examples. It is not made clear that similar mechanisms may exist as a constructive method of handling anxiety or in a more distorted form where there may be evidence of psychiatric disorder. The gradation between these two situations is also not discussed.

The quality of the camera work and colour use is good but the sound has been inadequately controlled. If the volume is set to hear the voices of the actors, the voice-over booms loudly above them while if the voice-over is acceptable one cannot clearly hear the conversation between the actors.

The patients on this tape have given their consent to it being viewed by students and professionals in the medical and mental health fields. This consent lasts only until 1989 and the makers reserve the right to retrieve the tape for re-editing after that date.

The price is £50 for U-matic and £40 for VHS, plus £3 packing and postage. The tape is available from Dr Andrew Powell, Department of Psychotherapy, Clare House, St George's Hospital, Blackshaw Road, London SW17 0QT.

C. P. SEAGER
University of Sheffield

Chasing the Bandwagon (UK, 1985, 23 mins)

Mustard powder. Get hooked, and before you know where you are, you're sniffing it, licking it, and even putting your feet in bowls of it. But beware the pusher who adulterates the real stuff, with. . . . yes, custard powder!

So says Lenny Henry, the funny front man for this engaging educational film on drug abuse, aimed specifically at those most at risk—young teenagers. And of course the mustard is heroin, providing the opportunity for laughs, but not at the expense of taking the subject seriously. Indeed, the film clearly aims to get young people thinking

about the dangers of experimenting with drugs. It does this not by telling them what to do, which might drive away those who might benefit most, but by presenting drug issues in a way the audience can easily identify with. For example, the problem of saying no to friends or pushers. In the end, the audience is left to decide for themselves, as of course they have to in real life. All this is achieved by watching the funny and sometimes tragic antics of the mustard 'snackers' and then seeing Lenny Henry discuss issues raised in the sketch with a group of 13–14 year olds.

The film itself is short on information, but in fairness is meant solely as trigger material to initiate interest and discussion. An accompanying information pack includes booklets, posters, a directory of helping agencies and teaching notes. Although the film could have emphasised specific audience discussion points more, since it tends to ramble towards the end, generally both film and information pack are well thought out and likely to be attractive to a teenage audience. It should prove valuable for use by professionals working with young people, particularly teachers, doctors, social workers and nurses.

Commissioned by: National Council of YMCAs.
Production: Boulton Hawker Films. *Format:* 16 mm film VHS/Beta/U-matic/V2000 video tapes. *Distributors:* CFL Vision, Chalfont Grove, Gerrards Cross, Bucks SL9 8TN.
Purchase price: VHS/Beta £80. U-matic/V2000 £95. *Hire* £16.

NICHOLAS ROSE
Department of Psychiatry, Oxford

Agoraphobia—Psychological Assessment Interviewing (UK, 1985, 180 mins)

This programme comprises four interviews carried out by a clinical psychologist of a patient with agoraphobia. There is a useful descriptive leaflet which states that an unusual feature of the tapes is that they represent real time. This perhaps might be a problem: the first interview lasts some 40 minutes and plays without comment or break. At the end of the interview there is a summary by a clinician of what he thought happened during the interview. He says some useful things about interview skills in a general sense but it is difficult to link them to the relevant point of the interview.

The clinical details were taken from a real case and the material has an authentic 'feel' to it. The history unfolds in a natural way and nicely illustrates the typical complexity of such a case—for example it transpires that her husband has recently had an affair. The tapes also make the point that it may well take several interviews to get anything like

the complete story and an interview with a close relative may add a revealing new dimension to the case. We also see what happens when the therapist asks the patient to keep a diary of her symptoms. At the end of the four assessment interviews the therapist gives the patient the choice of four options (and makes her chose)—no treatment, treatment aimed at improving her self confidence, marital therapy and a behavioural treatment of agoraphobia. I won't tell you which one she chooses. Nor do we know how well she does!

It is always useful to have a 'typical case' available for teaching and I would be happy to use this one. But how? I don't think it is really a suitable tape for private study—not enough guidance is given. I can see it of use as a 'lecture aid' but it is too long to run without a break. I would want a transcript available and stop it every so often to ask the group what they thought.

Interviews don't make gripping television and although the recording is of a high standard I do think more could have been done to make it visually interesting. For example, it would be possible to add greater impact by better use of the zoom lens, cut-away or big close-up. The actor role-playing the patient had a difficult task. I didn't find her very believable and I think she would have benefited from more direction.

To sum up then, a useful tape for illustrating a clinical history of agoraphobia but the lecturer would need some familiarity with the tape to get the best out of it. A transcript or detailed handout would be useful.

Production: Department of Psychology, Birmingham University, and Paul Morby. *Purchase price:* £100 (VHS format). *Distributor:* TV and Film Unit, University of Birmingham, P.O. Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.

ANDREW MACAULAY
St George's Hospital, London

View from the Bar (UK, 1984, 17 mins)

This is a 17 minute recording made for use by the Navy. It is suggested that following its showing a Naval Officer might comment upon it, and suggest that his fellow officers may care to look out for the symptoms outlined in the film.

The film itself goes through most of the prodromal symptoms of alcoholism and, as the title suggests, the dialogue comes from the bar-tender who illustrates his observations by reference to his customers, who in turn display the early development of alcohol dependence in all its manifestations. For example, there is a young man being urged on to drink more than he really wants by his friends, another who is mixing his drinks and anxious to get in the last round before closing time, and a third who has suffered an injury as a result of drinking. Most of the subjects are young men, but one or two women feature in the film also. The film is not over-technical and is quite clearly aimed at an audience that it hopes will identify with one or other of the early signs of alcoholism shown. To this

extent I regard the film as well-made. The acting is convincing and the material covered is that part of the alcoholic slope which is least recognised as such by its victims.

This would make an excellent teaching film, particularly as these stepping-stones to established alcoholism are often as frequently unrecognised by doctors as they are by their patients.

Produced by: F. M. J. Hiles, MRCPsych (Surg. Cdr., R.N.) and Dragon Medical and Scientific Communications Ltd. *Format:* U-matic, VHS, Betamax and 16 mm film. *Distributors:* Stewart Film Distributors, 107-115 Long Acres, London WC2E 9NP. *Purchase price:* £200.

C. M. B. JARMAN
St. George's Hospital, London

Is Ordinary Life Possible? (UK, 1984, 25 mins)

This production is about the rehabilitation of long-stay patients from a mental handicap hospital (Darenth Park) into the community, a theme that has been well explored in the past. Although it is a sympathetic and convincing programme it does not add anything new, using newsreel techniques that give little scope for imaginative editing. The dialogue is difficult to follow at times and the predominance of Northern accents is somewhat surprising in a Kent institution.

The 'good' (community) scenes are all in bright attractive colour but there is an exceptionally long tracking shot down a seemingly endless 'institutional' corridor that is deliberately inserted in black-and-white, presumably to emphasise an intended atmosphere of hopeless dreariness. This kind of visual bias should really be confined to advertising practice and it is surprising in a Health Authorities' production.

Although somewhat long, this tape would be useful to stimulate discussion in a recipient community, but its teaching value is diluted by the large number of existing films available on this theme.

Format: VHS, hire £4.20, sale £40. *Producer:* SE Thames RHA. *Distributor:* Concord Films Council, 201 Felixstowe Road, Ipswich IP3 9BJ.

T. L. PILKINGTON
Convenor, Audio-Visual Group

A Home of Our Own (UK, 1985, 20 mins)

This video records the reactions of four young women to placement in a home in the community (Rochdale) from their residence in a large mental handicap hospital (Calderstones). It is a very professional production, well edited and with good sound. Although there is some