The Caring Person's Guide to Handling the Severely Multiply Handicapped

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Illustrations by Martin Battye

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MACMILLAN

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Foreword

This guide is by practitioners in the Mental Handicap Service for practitioners in that service. It is a guide that demands a response from those who read it and in this way the lives of many mentally handicapped people will improve and the deformities seen so often in our long-stay wards will be minimised and possibly prevented in future generations.

In the past, it has proved difficult to attract Psychologists and Physiotherapists into the Mental Handicap Service. What could be done for mentally handicapped adults? Surely profoundly handicapped people do not present a therapeutic challenge? An attitude of therapeutic nihilism and custodial inactivity was prevalent and many profoundly handicapped people with unnecessary handicaps spent their lives without purpose or happiness.

This activity guide, written by a Clinical Psychologist and a Physiotherapist, both of whom have extensive experience with profoundly and multiply handicapped people, is for anyone who looks after such a person, and is to help them to use their time and skills more effectively, to minimise or prevent deformities and to position the person advantageously for his well-being and development. The guide is in several sections, the design being based on problem orientation so that the user can work

through, answer the questions, seek for the next piece of information and finally decide on the optimal means of intervention.

Much of the time of a Physiotherapist in the Mental Handicap Service is rightly spent in increasing the skills in physical care of other caring staff and the parents. This guide will greatly support that endeavour, allowing those who are untrained in physical care to be sure of the aims of treatment, to avoid harmful interventions and choose those that will maximise the limited skills of the mentally handicapped person.

Attitudes to profoundly handicapped people are still tinged with pessimism. This guide will help to make progress with the treatment of profoundly handicapped people; it will help to convince both ourselves as well as others that improvements are possible and that good physical care is the basis for all other areas of development. The authors are to be congratulated on the production of a guide which will have far-reaching effects in improving the lives of those who present us with so many challenges.

Joan Bicknell
*Professor of the Psychiatry
of Mental Handicap*

'How best to care for the multiply handicapped, and how to enable them to live lives that are as rich and meaningful as possible, has become not merely an ethical, psychological and nursing problem affecting only a few, but also a social problem affecting substantial numbers of people.'

(Prof. J. Tizard in his Foreword to
Maureen Oswin (1978). *Children Living in Long Stay
Hospitals*,
Spastics International Medical Publications,
Research Monograph 5,
Heinemann, London)

Information

Name of patient _____

Date of birth _____

Address _____

Attendance at school, ATC, etc. (please specify place attended and time) _____

If your patient lives in hospital, date of admission _____

Name of key worker _____

Name of co-worker _____

Physiotherapist _____

Other professionals involved (e.g. doctor, teacher, psychologist, social worker, occupational therapist, etc.) _____