

5.- CONCLUSIONS

Many of the problems that adolescents present in school settings could be addressed right in the school by more effectively using the school's internal resources. Some ways to do this include:

- Improving communication between teachers, counsellors, and parents.
- Increasing the resources available to teachers when conflict arises in the classroom.
- Optimizing coordination and operations within the school, especially between the faculty, the counseling department, the dean of students and the director's office.

We believe that Counseling Departments should be able to evaluate and refer those cases that need to be treated outside of the school by services such as Child Mental Health Services. This would ensure that referrals made to the Family Services Unit be appropriate for the services offered, which do not include questions of mental health or social services.

As regards the coordination of Family Services (FSU) and schools, we feel there should be better feedback between therapists and those involved in the case at school once the family has been admitted to treatment by the FSU.

The family evaluation instrument that we used in family therapy proved to be a valid guide to the semistructured interview that helped unify and organize the preliminary information that we received about families with "problematic" children. This instrument will be modified as necessary and kept for use in the future.

There was evidence of improved therapeutic efficacy (teachers who made the referrals observed a remission in "problem behaviors" in the contexts where these behaviors had previously occurred) in those cases in which both family and group therapy (for the adolescent) were possible.

However, whether or not the family agreed to participate in family therapy, group therapy for the adolescent was effective. Furthermore, it also produced improvement in the family's ability to function.

Referring adolescent from schools to group therapy does not absolutely require that the family agree to therapy as well. However, parents (or legal guardians) do have to authorize the student's participation in the group. It is a good idea for the family to come at least once to the FSU, even if at the outset they are not amenable to family therapy. During this first meeting, it is sometimes possible to explore the family's resistance to treatment and, if nothing else, increase the family's role in helping the young person involved.