

Video news

A brief 'best buy' guide to video tapes for teaching purposes is now available from the College. If you would like a copy please write to Debbie Symonds, c/o The Royal College of Psychiatrists.

The more comprehensive guide entitled *Video Tapes for Psychiatric Teaching* published by the Royal College of Psychiatrists and Audio Visual Group in 1989 is in the process of being thoroughly weeded. It contains many out of date or unavailable titles. A new edition will be published soon. I would welcome any comments on titles which should or should not be included.

Finally, just a brief mention of a new video tape on 'Assistance Animals'. This tape, produced by the Royal Veterinary College, looks at the relationship between specially trained animals and their disabled owners, and the benefits of pets as therapy. Tape details are given below.

NICHOLAS ROSE

Videotape reviews

Won't they just grow out of it? Putting child psychotherapy on the map

This 20 minute video has been produced professionally for the Child Psychotherapy Trust, whose aim is to extend the availability of child psychotherapy in the UK. The video is intended to educate a wide audience about the work of these professionals, rather than to convey information about techniques or training.

The video opens its argument with the particular: an interview with 8-year-old Clare, who had psychotherapy following her father's death, together with comments from Clare's mother about her own reactions to the bereavement and to the suggestion of psychotherapy. This section is expanded with explanations from Clare's therapist, so that the nature of the child's difficulties is emotively communicated. Meanwhile, on screen, a strong non-verbal message is conveyed: the good outcome in terms of the relationship between Clare and her mother.

A theoretical justification for psychotherapy with children follows. This is lucid and enthusiastic, but what will be made of the statement "Being normal, child or adult, is managing your madness well."? The explanation of the need for a personal analysis is also difficult to follow, but the case illustrations are vivid and convincing; a picture is painted of a variety

of ways in which the child psychotherapist makes a contribution within child mental health services.

Interspersed through the next section, on more ways of working and on training, are attempts to deal with possible objections to child psychotherapy (being a luxury, or too intense). Shooting in the dark is always hazardous, and one's heart goes out to Sebastian Kraemer, perched inexplicably and obviously uncomfortably amidst the Lego in a paediatric ward, more puzzled and intense in each succeeding clip. He probably avoids his own foot, but it's a close thing.

Finally, a justification for psychotherapy with adolescents is introduced. This section is highly compressed and raises far more issues than it resolves.

Throughout the film, a series of factual messages is flashed across the screen, to emphasise the extent and urgency of children's need. The language is either charmingly direct and colloquial or irritatingly ungrammatical, depending on one's point of view. Hard on the heels of the adolescent section comes the legend 'Half of those sentenced or cautioned for indictable offences are under 21.' This is either grandiose or irrelevant, and can only diminish the argument that, rather than a universal panacea, child psychotherapists are a valuable resource whose training should be more equitably funded.

This video is technically excellent and well paced. The occasional moment of incoherence is probably no bad thing, increasing the impression of patent sincerity. If the images used to illustrate the film (for example, dwelling long on the blank expressionless fabric mouth of an 'anatomically correct' doll) and to enhance its pleading (those 'messages'), sit uneasily with a child psychiatrist, perhaps this is the price of a professional production which wants to speak loudly and clearly to a non-mental health professional audience. This video could be widely used to explain child psychotherapy to managers and other potential funding bodies but its most persuasive arguments come in the first half.

MARY EMINSON

Professor Sir Martin Roth

An interview with Dr N. D. Minton

It takes an Alan Bennett to make talking heads into a fascinating piece of entertainment, but the reminiscences of the first President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists approaches this level of bewitching interest, at least for one of the older generation of