SOCIAL

READINESS

PROGRAM

**PORTLAND
HABILITATION
CENTER, INC.**

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NOTE: Both the *Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives* and *Social Readiness Program* contain pages numbered 1-66. APOLOGIES FOR ANY CONFUSION.

Contents of SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM

WHAT THE SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM IS

The *Social Readiness Program* is designed to help the individual achieve his or her maximum potential in the development and maintenance of acceptable social behavior. It is an individualized behavior management program predicated on the firm belief that as much time needs to be devoted to *behavior* training as to *skill* training. The program develops a unique and systematic method to monitor and train a client's social behavior development *throughout a facility* on a *daily* basis. It is intended to effect changes in behavior through dynamic processes and to give consistency and a solid data base to behavioral management practices.

The Social Readiness Program emphasizes observable, common-sense behaviors the mainstream of society expects from all its members — people with disabilities no less — as minimum requirements for the broadest social acceptance. The behaviors incorporated are for the most part **"readiness"** behaviors. That is to say, they are assumed prior conditions to almost any work performance task and basic social interaction. In addition, they are behaviors closely associated with successful employment and with integration with co-workers, neighbors, and others in the community.

Behaviors in the Social Readiness Program are by their very nature applicable to the whole of a person's life. They have direct application to an almost limitless variety of daily happenings. This is in contrast with most other types of skills learned (e.g. personal care skills, eating skills, time and money concepts skills) whose application is much more limited and infrequent. The majority of the behaviors incorporated into the program requires a *context of natural occurrences* in order to train the behaviors in the most effective manner possible. *Spontaneity and immediate intervention* are inherent characteristics of the program. Moreover, behavior training will frequently involve more a change in a person's motivation than development of a truly new behavior.

It is not uncommon for an individual without a disability to display socially unacceptable behaviors. His or her acceptance by others may or may not be jeopardized as a result. Through use of discrimination and good judgment the individual often knows the circumstances in which a normally unacceptable behavior will go unnoticed or have no effect on others; or the individual will not be concerned with society's appraisals of his or her unacceptable behaviors and will have the skills to deal appropriately with any consequences. The person with a disability, however, very often does not have the advantages and skills that lead to the same favorable outcome. He or she may instead be ridiculed, rejected, or otherwise adversely treated and not know how to handle the problem or not even recognize what the problem is.

The habilitation professional must encourage the client to appreciate the effects of his or her behavior on others and to understand that very often, in order to get along with the majority, compromise in favor of local community standards and a resulting change in behavior are necessary for all of us. More specifically, the client must be encouraged to develop good work habits and inter-personal relationships, to appreciate the effects of his or her grooming and general appearance on others, to adopt common health and safety measures, to speak appropriately and with regard for others, and to display only *socially acceptable* intra-personal behaviors when in public. At the same time, parents and others responsible for the client must be encouraged to support reasonable behavior training including participation when appropriate in implementation of the client's individualized behavior development program away from the habilitation facility. In addition, they must be encouraged to expect the client to *use* newly learned social behaviors, and to realize from the client's increasing success in social behavior development *their increasing responsibility* to support continued and always more challenging behavior training.

The Social Readiness Program necessarily deals with sensitive and personal areas of a person's life. Implementation of this program will frequently involve attempts to change long-established habits and values. The client's human rights and dignity should, unquestionably, be constantly guaranteed and respected. Modification of an individual's behavior, no matter how socially unacceptable it may be, is a serious matter. However, at the same time the habilitation professional is proceeding with caution in this area, he or she must make every effort to insure that **training** in social behavior development does not stop short of **habilitation**; the potential consequences of anything less are an equally serious matter.

The Social Readiness Program should most definitely rank among top priorities in the development of each individual's comprehensive habilitation plan.

> *The program is recommended for use IN CONJUNCTION AND SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH whatever other skill training a client may be receiving. Consider using companion volume <<Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives >> for such skill training.*

It is intended to be used in any environment whose purpose is habilitation — public school or activity center classroom, work production setting, group home, institution, to name a few.

An important principle upon which implementation of the Social Readiness Program rests is that of over-training and over-learning new behaviors. It is reasonable to assume some if not most clients will begin to demonstrate less disciplined social behaviors when they are away from the habilitation facility. However, if the behaviors have been overlearned, clients should still be demonstrating these behaviors with a frequency and an appropriateness that is within the community's acceptable range.

In conclusion, the Social Readiness Program is a simple-to-use and ultimately time-saving system that offers specificity, high organization, and intra-facility consistency to monitoring and training on a daily basis the development and maintenance of socially acceptable behaviors in people with disabilities. It incorporates specific, observable behaviors which are relatively easy to train precisely because they *are* specific and observable; attempting to modify vaguely described behaviors (e.g. poor self-concept, disruptive, manipulative) is surely difficult at best. Additionally, this program provides a highly visual (color coded) and effective progress feedback component for clients, staff, and others involved in the habilitation process. It offers accountability and program effectiveness evaluation to program managers, state and other governmental funding agencies. The Social Readiness Program *does not prescribe individual modification techniques.* Rather, it leaves the full freedom and responsibility for the development of these techniques to each habilitation facility. In this way, the program broadens its base of applicability, and the individual preferences and needs of each facility can be more properly met.