

## **A medical consiliary cooperation for the care of mentally disabled adolescents in a therapeutic community under the auspices of a youth welfare organisation in Germany**

For 18 years the department for child and adolescent psychiatry at the Centre for Psychiatry in Weinsberg, Baden-Württemberg and the social pedagogic youth welfare organisation "Heimat für Heimatlose gGmbH Öhringen" have been running a joint project catering for the needs of adolescents with serious mental disorders, especially psychotic illness, borderline personality disorder and depressive disorders. In accordance with guidelines laid down in a contract the cooperation offers the adolescents, who owing to a serious mental illness had previously been receiving inpatient psychiatric treatment, supervision and care within a therapeutic community. Accompanied by adolescent psychiatric treatment these measures continue the socio-therapy which had been introduced earlier on at the clinic. The effects which result from psychotherapeutic und educational intervention after a care of over 2 years on average verify an important success in form of increase of self-esteem and self-confidence.

Placing mentally disabled adolescents in a protective and pedagogically devised environment in which they can regain and stabilise the ability to run their own lives and plan their own future career independently is probably the most essential help our therapeutic community can give them. A vital part of the rehabilitation programme must be to prepare the adolescents for their working lives by taking their abilities into account. Areas dealing with social integration must therefore be linked with a supervised vocational training under professional guidance. It is essential that such a programme, which will be continued is individually and flexibly planned.

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