

COPY

Dr. J. M. Hershey

DIVISION C.
Regional Health Services
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Director of Health Education.

All Regional Medical Health Officers.

Mental Mechanism Film: FEELINGS OF DEPRESSION.

This fourth film in the series by the National Film Board for the Department of National Health and Welfare will go out on rural N.F.B. circuits in Saskatchewan starting Monday, January 8. Attached is information regarding the film and suggestions of N.F.B. for guidance of group leaders and resource people.

We have screened a test print here to two groups consisting chiefly of professional and semi-professional people. The consensus of reaction has been that this is a good picture and valuable for staff training, but that it should be shown lay groups only when adequate discussion leadership is available. Some thought the picture should not be shown to lay audiences, and a few thought that it might be harmful in the absence of adequate explanation and discussion leadership. We have urged Ottawa to add a trailer, as in the case of FEELINGS OF HOSTILITY.

The Division of Health Education recalls that similar reactions were noted when the other mental-mechanism pictures were introduced; subsequently it was noted that the pictures were not unsuitable for lay education. However, this is a quite different film. It is more complex in some respects, and it generalizes too much in others. It leaves the audience "up in the air" as it were, due to a rather abrupt end. There is a pronounced emotional impact on even professional people.

Unfortunately the N.F.B. field staff are not specifically trained in mental hygiene, and, moreover, while they attend as many screenings as possible, staff limitations confine their association with this and other films considerably, and for the most part they arrange and supervise the itineraries, leaving the screening and leadership to local groups, i.e. Home and School Associations, Film Councils. An effort is made to find resource leaders. For instance, there is close co-ordination with regional staffs in several of the health regions. We asked N.F.B. personnel some time ago to work with the regional health officers and their staffs, and we believe that this is being done.

It will be of considerable assistance to us, and through us to N.F.B. and the other Ottawa authorities if you will kindly let us know what the experiences are with this film in your area. If you can let us have a report after two weeks it will be appreciated; take longer if necessary. We should like to know how many screenings were conducted without professional leadership of one kind or another. How many were your staff able to attend? In how many other places was the lay leadership adequate? What was the audience reaction? Were there many questions, and did they denote interest? Did they reflect that the audiences got something constructive out of the picture; or were people bewildered? Were the leaders able to lead the discussion into constructive channels? How many screenings were there without any discussion? And, finally, please let us have your own opinion of the film as a medium for lay education.

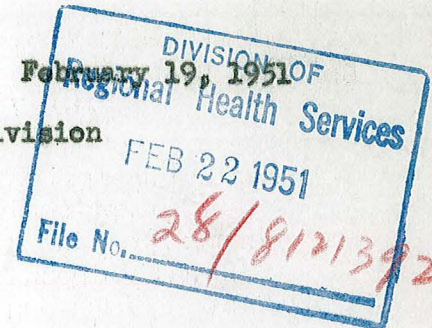
CS,EA
Encl.

Christian Smith,
Director of
Health Education.

Director of Health Education

Dr. D.G. McKerracher, Director, Psychiatric Services Division

N.F.B. Film: FEELINGS OF DEPRESSION



This picture was presented by me personally at the university to about 120 students of the College of Education, with a few senior students of the School of Nursing and some students working on their master's degrees in arts. My introduction was very limited so as not to prejudice the students in any way. Immediately after the screening I conducted a poll. The meeting was unanimously of the opinion that the film was a useful educational medium, that it should be shown to lay audiences as well as professional and semi-professional people, and finally, with two dissenting votes, the group considered the film suitable to be shown to lay groups even if no person versed in mental-health principles or having professional background was available.

Previously, the film was screened for a group of 30 parents at the Regina Airport. There was a three-minute introduction to the wide subject of producing the mental-mechanism films and their purposes.

Immediately after the screening, without discussion, the audience was asked to complete forms indicating reactions and opinions. The forms indicated no emotional reaction different from that of run-of-the-mill educational pictures. There was general approval of its educational message. With this audience we did not press for any opinion on its suitability with or without qualified discussion leadership. Most of the parents seemed satisfied with the picture as it was shown and did not appear to be confused or to have unanswered questions bothering them. One woman thought that the picture would have been more helpful if the actual psychiatric techniques by which a depressed person might be assisted - a depressed person such as the one in the picture - were shown. She thought a commentator or discussion leader would be helpful. This woman said she had studied mental health and also that she had at one time been a patient.

There was also a screening for internes at the Regina Grey Nuns Hospital. The consensus of the internes was that it was a useful picture for lay education when used with qualified leadership. I am sometimes inclined to think that professional persons are not as familiar with public reactions and response, or with public thought, as they might be, and that their criticism, as in this case, may not be altogether objective.

My own feeling is that in a year or so this picture will be accepted by everyone in the way the others have been. In the meantime the National Film Board has circulated it in rural centres irrespective of whether qualified leadership is available, although some of the groups using the film doubtless have many intelligent leaders.

cont'd...

We have bought two prints of FEELINGS OF DEPRESSION which are on our restricted list. We should now like to know whether you want further evaluations, and whether you consider that the prints may now be loaned out to community groups such as Home and School Associations, senior high-school grades (psychology, home economics, and family relationships courses). Or do you wish our prints withheld from the public unless groups bring in or have leaders approved by us?

Christian Smith,
Director of
Health Education

CS:AK

c.c. Dr. Hershey ✓

P.S. Attached is a detailed analysis of the questionnaires completed by lay groups at the Airport Huts

Dr J. M. Hershey

Director of Health Education.

January 6, 1951

All Regional Medical Health Officers.

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Christian Smith,
Director of Health Education

CS :EA
Encl.

Director of Health Education.

February 19, 1951

Dr D.G. McKerracher, Director, Psychiatric Services Division

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