PREPARING EMPLOYEES FOR RETIREMENT*

1. ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF THE AGED WORKER


Defines and analyzes the nature, patterns, and problems of personal adjustment to aging. Describes two instruments for measuring adjustment in later maturity—an index of attitudes to measure the degree to which a person's attitudes express satisfaction or dissatisfaction with his life situations, and an inventory of activities to measure the degree of participation in daily activities common to most people.


Points up the financial problems which the inflationary trend since 1938 has raised for individuals living on a pension. Notes that a budget providing an elderly couple with a decent, healthful standard of living was $114 a month in 1948 as compared to $70 in 1938, with the cost of food and shelter alone in 1948 equaling the cost of the total budget ten years earlier.


Maintains that conversion of faulty adjustments in older people to more efficient ones requires (1) measuring the mental, emotional, and social deteriorations in various situations, (2) determining the social situations into which an older person can fit just as he is, and (3) arresting and reversing deterioration if this is possible and desirable.


* Items from this list should be ordered directly from the publisher. Addresses are given in connection with each reference.
Examines the prevailing attitudes toward activity curtailment, activity modification, and retirement of 75 individuals between the ages of 50 and 80 drawn from all socio-economic strata of the population. Discusses the motivations for continuation or resumption of activity and stresses the advisability of adequate preparation for retirement.


Sees five major adjustment problems of old age—(1) adjustment to death of spouse, (2) to loss of employment and reduced income, (3) to alienation with elders, (4) to physical infirmity, and (5) the finding of satisfactory living arrangements. Suggests widening the range of socially approved roles for old people.


Summarizes the main psychological and psychiatric disorders occurring after age 40. Points out the necessity for mastery of the proper psychological techniques as well as adequate understanding of the medical aspects of the aging process in dealing with personality disorders of older employees.


Contains fifteen articles related to the following general topics: “The New Age Distribution in the New Society,” “Older Workers and Social Patterns,” and “Research—Present and Prospective.”


A collection of fifteen papers dealing with the nature and needs of older people. Titles include “Adjustment Over the Life Span,” “Aging Mental Abilities and Their Preservation,” “The Older Person in the Changing Social Scene,” “The Older Person in the World of Today—In the Family,” “Physical Changes in Old Age and Their Effects Upon Mental Attitudes,” “Applying Mental Health Principles to Problems of the Aging,” “Work Therapy, Interests, and Activities,” “Toward a Science of Bibliotherapy,” “Occupational Therapy,” “The Creative Urge in Older People,” “Mental Diseases of the Aged,” “Old Age at the Crossroads,” “Old Age, First Person Singular,” and “How it Feels to be Seventy-five and a Woman.” Includes bibliography.

Martin, Lilien J. *A handbook for old age counsellors.* San Francisco. Old Age Counselling Center (Shreve Building). 1944. 84 pp. No price given.

Describes the methods and techniques utilized by the author and the Counselling Center which she founded to rehabilitate the aged.

Reports findings of a study of 63 retirees from a wide variety of industries. A comparative study of 47 of the 63 retirees indicated that significant factors influencing the degree of satisfaction among retirees were previous attitudes toward retirement, financial conditions, and engagement in some type of compensable or non-compensable activity.


Analyzes the social problems of aging, explores possible areas of investigation by social scientists, and develops a frame of reference to stimulate and integrate the research of demographers, psychologists, sociologists, and economists working in this field. Chapters 8-10 discuss the factors influencing attitudes towards retirement and the financial, residential, vocational, and avocational adjustments necessary during retirement. Contains a comprehensive bibliography.


Discuss a budget constructed for an elderly couple living by themselves in an urban area which includes the food, housing, clothing, medical care, and other items "necessary for a healthful, self-respecting mode of living that allows normal participation in the life of the community in accordance with current American standards." The costs of the budget were computed for 13 of the 34 large cities in which the Bureau of Labor Statistics collects price data for its consumers' price index and ranged from $1,169 to $1,573 in March, 1946, from $1,363 to $1,576 in June, 1947, and from $1,440 to $1,830 in March, 1949. Warns that changes in the consumers' price index do not reflect accurately changes in the budget costs because of differences in the items included in the budget and in the index, as well as variations in the relative importance of the various items.

2. Company Programs


Proposes two methods of retiring employees gradually. One is the provision of a certain specified time off at reduced pay in addition to vacation at full pay. This would begin at some time prior to the actual retirement age, with the amount of time off lengthened each year as the retirement date approaches. A second method is to begin a gradual retirement program at the scheduled retirement age in order to permit the employee to spend more time on hobbies and become accustomed to living on his pension payments. Suggests a series of pre-retirement
interviews by a counselor, conducted in cooperation with the employee's supervisor. Such interviews would make certain of the employee's understanding of the company's sick leave, disability, and pension policies, discuss his physical condition, job performance, and future plans for residence, and attempt to stimulate interest in a hobby.


Outlines the group discussion program of this company which is designed to give each prospective annuitant a picture of the problems he is apt to face when he retires, to stimulate organized thinking toward suitable post-retirement interests and activities, and to generate some action on plans before actual retirement. Informal discussion groups consisting of ten to fifteen individuals whose retirement is about one year off meet for five one-hour periods at intervals of about four days. Topics discussed include the meaning of retirement, retirement and health, planning for retirement, what other retirees have done, and individual plans for retirement.


Utilizes an annual interview during each of the five years before an employee retires to keep him thinking and planning constructively for his retirement. The annual interviews, supplemented by informal conversations, are centered around the employee's planning, the community, educational, and cultural activities which will aid him in his planning, his abilities or interests and their applicability to a hobby or avocation, the extent to which his present job may be overtaxing, the financial aspects of retiring, and the company's interest in assisting him to plan for retirement.

General Motors Corporation, Employee Relations Staff. *My time ... is my time.* Detroit, Michigan. 1951. Seven booklets. On request.

Dealing with various aspects of planning for retirement, these booklets were published for General Motors employees and are distributed through the company's Information Rack Service.


Presents a list of practices followed in 32 companies to prepare older workers for retirement and keep alive the association between the retiree and the company. Discusses the steps a company can take to help workers condition themselves for retirement. These include helping the employee find out the standard of living he expects to maintain in retirement and whether his expected income will support the standard, making the company's medical clinics available to employees for any reason which prompts them to enter, and compelling the employee's attention to the inevitability of retirement and the need for preparing for it through a series of interviews over a ten-year period.