

# Moral Treatment

Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century Emerging Mental Health Model  
Ruth Caplan

Education, the quintessential element of moral treatment, was accomplished not only by training in regular and healthy habits of life and work, not only by instilling social graces and skills, and not only by religious instruction but also by formal schooling. The ideal mental hospital would resemble a boarding school....

An educational program was intended not only for mental reconstitution but also to stave off further deterioration from intellectual idleness...if possible, enough primary instruction to facilitate a better life outside the hospital....

Institutions were advised to hire teachers to act as resident tutors or governesses.

The organization...resembled what is now advocated by community psychiatry....by manipulation of the physical and social milieu [and] mobilizing staff and patients into small groups to support and control the individual strictly but without undue coercion through encouraging him to perform according to the high expectations of his associates.

...the entire therapeutic program was designed to inculcate normative cultural values and modalities so that the individual could return to society better able to cope with its demands.

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