

*They did their thing . . .**. . . for just \$730*

Council T-groups feel around

They had to lie on the floor and contemplate their navels, jump up and down rhythmically while supporting an imaginary ball growing out of their chests, and conjure up the emotions of hate, love, fear, and joy and release them in one loud scream.

"Watching the emotions and hearing the scream was like you were in another world," said one observer.

by Gail Evasiuk

All this was not part of another world but rather part of a human relations seminar in group dynamics experienced by Students' Council the weekend of Sept. 13-15.

The seminar began Friday night in Dinwoodie Lounge with seventy-five people from various campus groups participating. Dan Sullivan and Pat Ryan, psychologists from New York State College, conducted the sensitivity training.

OVER THE BARRIERS

"The purpose of the Friday night session was to smash down communication barriers and shields," said David Leadbeater, Council vice-president.

Co-ed groups played blind-man's bluff to develop trust in each other; partners talked on any subject for ten minutes; they placed their hands on each others' cheeks and just looked at each other; emotionally charged experiences were recalled and related to group members.

After the three hours were over, people who were originally strangers were good friends, Leadbeater said.

The session "was really liked by all. All found it a unique experience and would like to meet the people again."

Saturday morning the council members left for Camp He-Ho-Ha, on Lake Isle, for additional training.

In the first general session, four levels of communication were discussed. The chicken-shit or politeness level is carried on mostly with mere acquaintances and all that is usually said is "Hi!"

The bull-shit level, although another superficial level, is a deeper level of communication

because participants know each other better.

At the elephant-shit level people communicate well and at a reasonable in-depth level.

The Gestalt level is a level which involves only love relationships.

MAKING IT GESTALTWISE

"It is achieved when you know what the other person is thinking or feeling without words," said Marilyn Pilkington, students' union president.

Any one person has had relationships on all levels but some are more open to the Gestalt level than others because they are more sensitive.

The total person can be viewed in four perspectives: what he knows about himself, what is known to others, what is unknown to him about himself, and what is unknown to others. The purpose of sensitivity training is to remove barriers between the four perspectives.

Council members were divided into two unstructured T-groups.

Superficialities were set aside; the rules of the world were cut away; only the here and now was discussed.

"As we are always running around with no time to relax, relaxation was a new experience for many of us. I had never felt so calm and relaxed. It was a beautiful experience," said Dennis Fitzgerald, science rep.

"I would recommend it for everyone and if everyone in the world would take this course, what a beautiful world it would be," he said.

With the present classroom set-up, students just fit into slots and there is little interaction because of barriers created by personal problems, Leadbeater said.

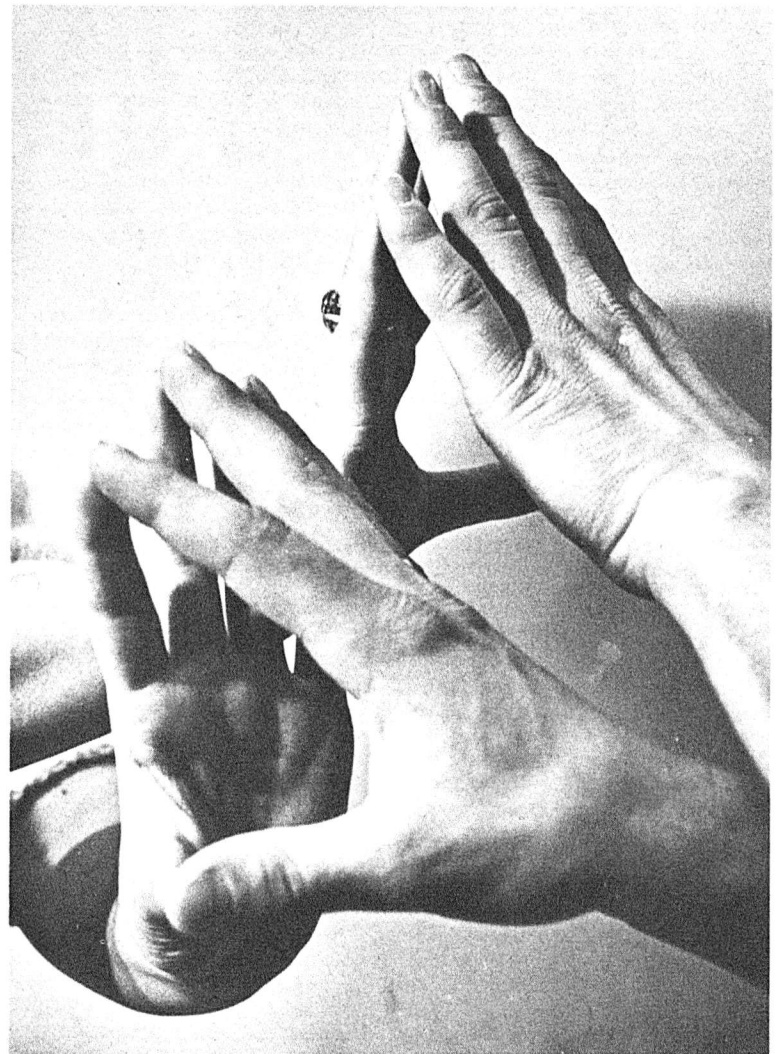
"I'm not going to say sensitivity training is God's gift to the world as it doesn't look at differences in ideas," he said.

However, it does create a "guts-level involvement with people and by such involvement you become far more human."

Total cost of the course was \$730.

"The purpose of the course was to develop an understanding amongst council members for how they respond to other people and how other people react to them," Pilkington said.

The training made the council members more sensitive to the needs and responses of others rather than their just being aware of fragmented parts playing specific roles.



REACH OUT! TOUCH SOMEBODY!

. . . patta-cake, patta-cake

WE FEEL FINE

"Within the T-groups there was a feeling of good-will and a feeling that others in the group were trying to help you to understand yourself," Pilkington said.

"It is now much easier to communicate ideas because the basis for approach is there. People can now disagree without attacking the other person's integrity."

Sensitivity training is "a humanizing process in this age of impersonality and technological excellence where human values are sometimes obscured," she said.

Now the council is more concerned with the human implications of university and students' union policies, she said.

She hoped that the training course idea will be expanded into FOS and might be open to all faculty members.

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Dr. Berkowitz is an internationally known scientist. He is head of the coal division at the Research Council of Alberta

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