

Editorial

Your child is not a dolphin

If you were to learn that your child had an imaginary friend named Duso in school—a dolphin, in fact—you might at first glance find the news merely amusing. But wait. What if, like many American mothers and fathers, you were to learn that this imaginary friend was introduced to your child by a school guidance counselor, as part of a group therapy program which your child had been attending over a two-year period, without your knowledge or consent?

This is a reality which is only now being made known, as parents and concerned citizens around the country have been alerted to what really is going on under the rubric of improving the quality of education. States across the United States are mandating the use of hypnotic trance induction, meditation, psychodrama, and encounter-group psychotherapy in elementary school classrooms. Children are advised by guidance counselors who conduct these sessions not to tell their parents what is going on, or even that anything is occurring.

These sessions turn children against their parents by suggesting that youths have the capability and responsibility for setting their own moral standards, and that the arena for deciding upon these is peer-group discussion led by school guidance counselors.

The counseling programs use behavioral psychotherapy techniques, originally created to treat the mentally ill, to force children as young as five and six years of age into what the psychologists call "cognitive dissonance": The beliefs and values taught by the family are deliberately disputed, to force an emotional crisis in the young child, who has not yet developed an internal authority. According to counseling guidelines for the state of Virginia, "Moral questions, values problems, and other complex issues related to 'right' and 'wrong' actions and 'good' and 'bad' behavior emerge during the elementary school years. This does not mean that the counselor can or should provide answers to these questions. . . ."

And yet, when these questions are deliberately provoked in a group setting, psychologists confirm that the child will inevitably seek an answer acceptable to the

peer group. The 1993 guidelines for the Commonwealth of Virginia declare, "The guidance group provides a setting for decision-making and for planning and assimilating information needed to gain insight into the values and concerns that other students have and which individuals can compare with their own." In outcome-based education, one of the so-called exit outcomes children must master is "locus of control," in which mastery is judged by how well the child "goes with the flow."

The fostering of an unhealthy dependence on group consensus—"facilitated" by the counselor, of course—is accomplished through a wide variety of psychological manipulations. An example is the so-called Pumsy/Duso program, mandated in elementary public schools in Virginia and other states, which uses hypnotic suggestion to "reduce stress" and "improve self-esteem." According to the counselor handbook, children are told: "Relax. Let your whole body work like it was in slow motion. Close your eyes, but not tight. Take slow, deep breaths. When you let your breath out, you might feel like you could sink into your chair." The counselor then paints "mind pictures," or guided fantasies, using a "friendly" dragon named Pumsy or a dolphin named Duso to explore the child's feeling states.

Says the handbook, "What we want to do in the Pumsy program is to learn how to feel better about ourselves or to keep on feeling good about ourselves even when things go wrong." The recent case comes to mind of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute engineering student who flunked his course. When told he was receiving an "F," the student said he didn't care, because he "felt good about himself." When the professor asked how he would feel if a bridge he had built collapsed and carried many people to their death, the student insisted that his "self-esteem" would be unaffected.

We urge our readers to find out what is going on in the schools so that they can participate in a nationwide alert. Once the truth is out, this abuse of children will not be tolerated by any sane man or woman. Children, too, will welcome liberation. Healthy children want education, not brainwashing.