



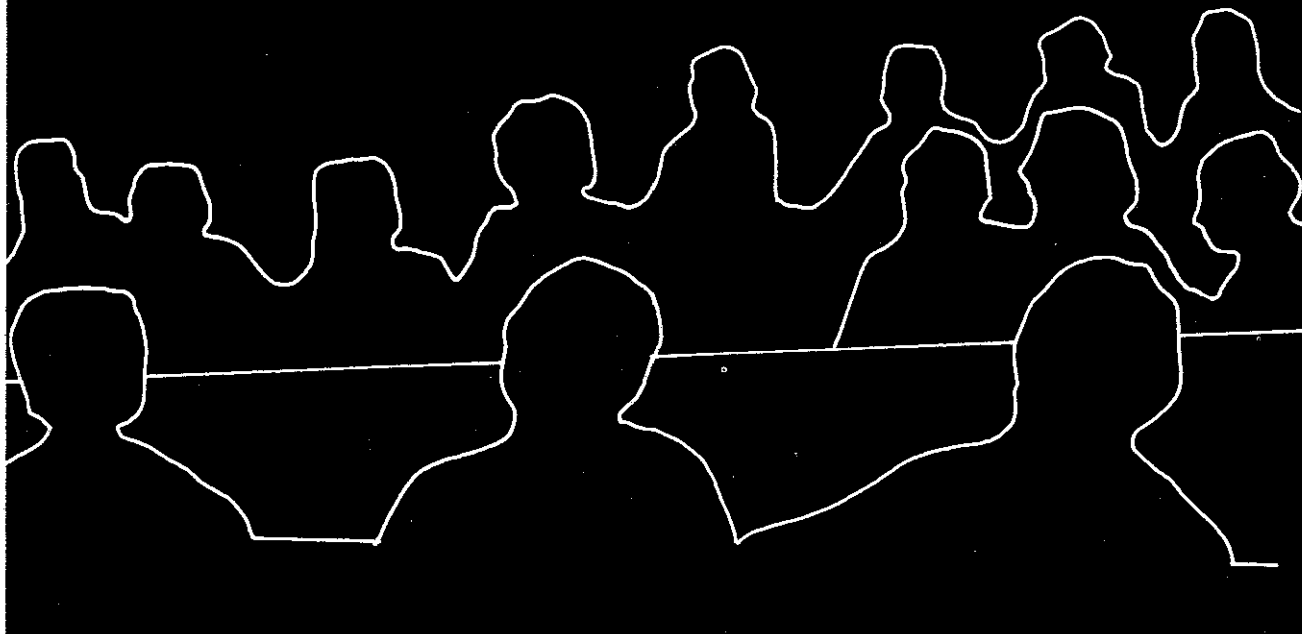
# themes & issues

A Series of Topical Papers on Developmental Disabilities

THE STATE PLANNING  
AND ADVISORY COUNCIL

ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Donald J. Stedman



Series Editors: James L. Paul, Pascal L. Trohanis

Number 1

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Donald J. Stedman, Ph.D. (George Peabody College for Teachers) is Chairman of the Division of Special Education, School of Education at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and is Associate Director of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at UNC. Dr. Stedman, a strong advocate for the rights of the handicapped, served as co-ordinator of the first White House Conference on Mental Retardation. He was formerly director of the John F. Kennedy Center for Research on Education and Human Development at George Peabody College.

## CONTRIBUTING STAFF

Printing Coordinator  
Editorial Assistant  
Artist  
Typist

Zena Harvley  
Ann Ramsbotham  
Doris Mahaffey  
Lynn Harmon

DD Themes and Issues is a series of topical papers for this nation's Planning and Advisory Councils on Developmental Disabilities. Each participating state, territorial, and District of Columbia Council develops and implements a comprehensive State Plan for the coordination of comprehensive services for citizens who are developmentally disabled.

This series is published by the Developmental Disabilities Technical Assistance System (DD/TAS), which is a consultative and assistance system for the Councils. DD/TAS is a division of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

This series was prepared pursuant to a grant from the Division of Developmental Disabilities, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Grantees undertaking such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgement in professional and technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official DDD position or policy.

Published in July of 1975

THE STATE PLANNING AND ADVISORY COUNCIL  
ON  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Donald J. Stedman

The Council on Developmental Disabilities is a unique organization which was required in each state by federal legislation passed in 1969 (PL 91-517 The Developmental Disabilities Services Act). State executives responded to the requirement that both a planning and advisory Council and an administering state agency be designated to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the developmentally disabled in each state. The federal law further stipulated that 1/3 of the Council members be consumers. Council formation and the first state plan resulted in a federal formula grant to the state for the planning functions.

Unique structures and functions, varying from state to state, were developed and implemented in an effort to assist the Council in meeting its responsibility to develop and update a comprehensive plan. There are alternative ways of structuring and operating Councils, any one or combination of which could be successful in assisting the Council to meet its goals and objectives. However, there appear to be some common denominators and central features required for apparently successful Council operations around the country.

There are three basic considerations :

- 1) There must be an effective internal Council organization acting upon clear goals and objectives with sufficient staff to implement operational strategies.
- 2) There must be adequate Council communication linkages with other structures in the state and region, particularly the administering and implementing state agencies designated by the governor.
- 3) The organizational placement of the Council, the implementing state agency, and the positional relationship between the two have an effect on the extent to which the Council can engage in adequate information gathering, planning and strategy development, follow-through on recommendations, and adequate monitoring and evaluation of implemented service programs.

Each existing state Council on Developmental Disabilities is now in some stage of development in its move towards the best structure and function to accomplish its advisory and planning mission. None is yet as fully effective in its operations as it might like to be.

## State DD Council Organization and Operation

While there are many variations from Council to Council on internal organization and makeup, there appear to be five major components of an efficient and effective Council that need to be included in order to meet its goals and accomplish its mission. These components could be the responsibility of standing committees, Council-staff functions, or combinations of each. The major components of the Council include (1) planning and evaluation, (2) information and liaison, (3) program strategies, (4) resource utilization, and (5) a core coordinating and direction unit (Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Executive or Steering Committee, and Full-time staff). Figure 1 provides a simple diagram showing these major components and functions clustered around a central committee with support from full-time staff.

The planning and evaluation activity is a primary component of the state DD Council operation, since the prime mission of the planning and advisory Council is to develop and update a comprehensive state plan. Another critical function is information and liaison activity which assures the acquisition of the information and data necessary to develop a plan and the necessary communication linkages to disseminate information about the plan. It also assists in the necessary liaison activities to implement the Councils' recommendations so that the plan can be carried out successfully.

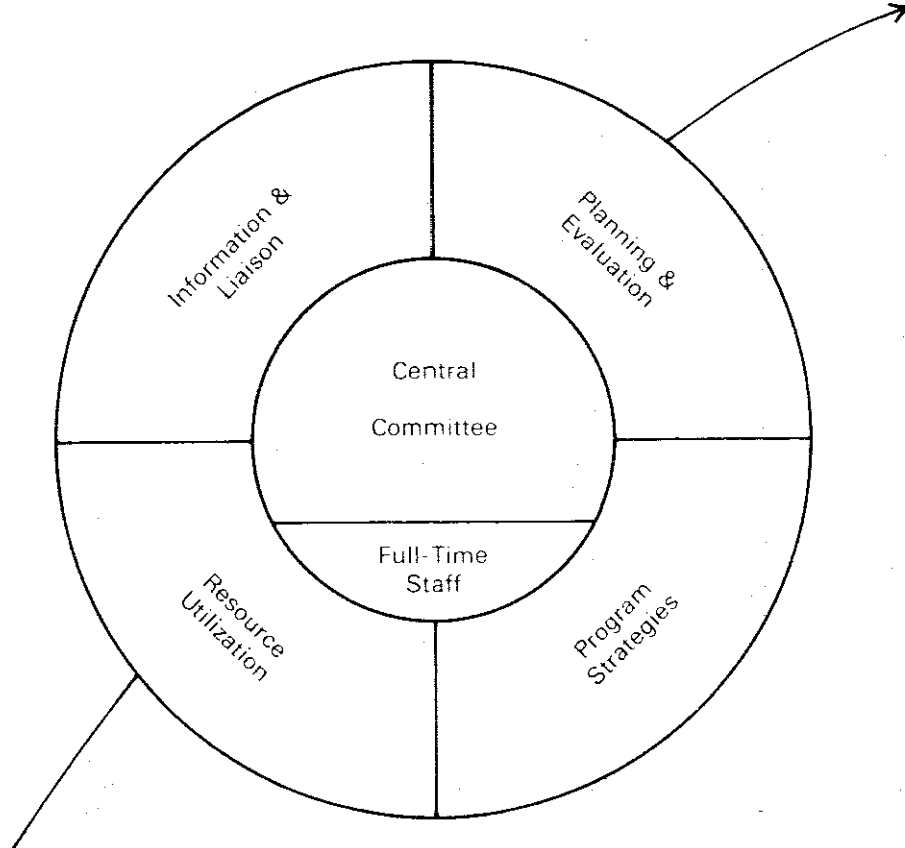
Program strategies form a third important feature. It is here that many state Councils are now placing their greatest emphasis, even in the absence of a well articulated planning and evaluation activity or of an effective communications system. Program strategies in this context mean the selective development and support of demonstration programs around the state to initiate, link, enhance, or make more accessible needed components of a set of comprehensive services for the developmentally disabled. It also relates to the importance of assisting the implementing state agency in its efforts to select and carry out strategies that will accomplish the plan developed by the Council.

Fourth is the resource utilization activity which focuses not only on developing and increasing economic and human resources from outside the state, but more especially on developing better utilization of existing resources from the variety of state agencies and organizations already available within the state. The development of new legislation that would provide the economic foundation necessary to develop and implement the comprehensive plan is an important aspect of resource utilization.

Finally, central committee, chaired by the state Council chairperson and assisted by the staff, should guide the total Council and its major components towards the goals and objectives set by the Council. The committee should make such necessary adjustments from time to time as may be necessary to accommodate to the various other sources of influence and opportunity encountered in the process of implementing a comprehensive service plan.

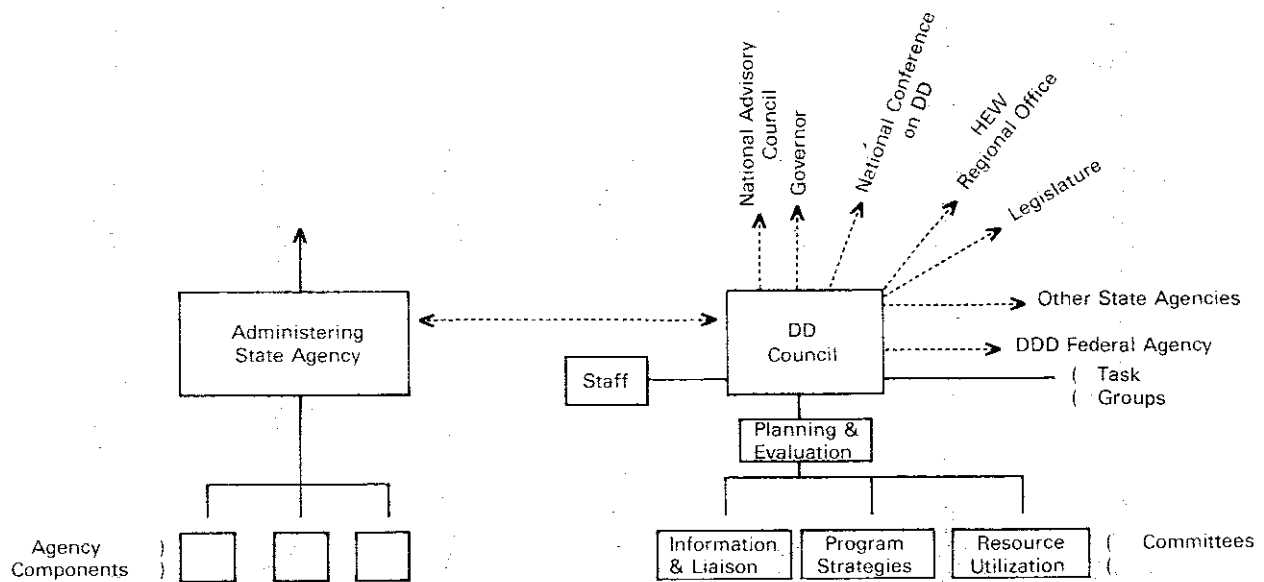
**FIGURE 1**

**STATE DD COUNCIL ORGANIZATION**



**FIGURE 2**

**STATE DD COUNCIL — COMMUNICATION LINKAGES**



## Council Communication Linkages

The developmental disabilities concept is essentially a functional concept developed around certain common service needs and should not be confused with other labeling which refers primarily to a syndrome or a specific handicapping condition. One of the central features of "developmental disabilities" as an administrative or program development concept is that it requires a tandem arrangement in each state which forms either an effective "Gemini" arrangement or an ineffective "Cain and Abel" arrangement. By this is meant that while the Council has the prime responsibility for the development of the comprehensive state plan, its updating, and the forwarding of that plan to the regional and federal offices, the implementing state agency is of equal importance and has an equally critical responsibility (often legal) to select from alternative strategies those best methods of implementing the plan through its own program development and program evaluation procedures. Neither the Council nor the implementing state agency alone can do the job. Both must work in synchrony, orchestrating their activities and plans in such a fashion that the two, working together, taking into account each other's resources and constraints, can effect a major change on the landscape of services for the developmentally disabled within their state. The absence of such a working relationship is a sure symptom of a serious problem that augurs poorly for the handicapped within that state. Councils and state agencies around the country are in varying degrees of interaction, from excellent to insufficient at this time.

Figure 2 depicts a diagram of the tandem arrangement described above. The DD Council and its staff and various Council committees and special task groups must maintain effective liaison and communication not only with the implementing state agency and its special components, but also with the governor's office, the HEW regional office, the legislature, other state agencies, and, to some extent, the federal agency (DDD) and the National Advisory Council on Developmental Disabilities. More recently the development of the National Conference of DD Council chairpersons and staff directors has provided another communications mechanism between states.

The prime linkages, however, are within the state, and an over-emphasis on liaison and communication with structures outside the state might deplete the resources of the Council and undermine its effort to develop and implement an effective comprehensive state service plan. One of the basic defects in situations where either Council or state agencies are less effective than they desire to be, is the lack of a systematic communication and liaison system between these major elements. Council chairpersons and staff directors should carefully develop and implement, on a continuing basis, the information and liaison activities necessary to acquire information for planning and decision-making, maintain liaison with similar activities elsewhere in the state, disseminate the products of the work of the Council and assist in moving the recommendations towards the executive and the legislative processes within the state that would assure their effective funding and implementation; all in concert with the state administering agency.

## Alternative Organizational Placements of State DD Councils

One primary factor which helps determine the effectiveness of a state Council is its organizational placement within the structure of its own state government. Another critical factor is the motivation, energy, and competence of the people and their ability to acquire the necessary information and to develop the clear and appropriate goals and objectives required to develop the state plan and to recognize and maximize the advantages of their current structural relationships, whatever they may be. Council objectives must be communicated effectively to those components of the state organization that will help assure the implementation and administration of the state plan.

There are at least six organizational placements currently occupied by state Councils around the country. Figure 3 indicates these varying positions. The specific placement is partly a function of the organization of state government before the planning and advisory Councils were appointed by the governor. Some placements are the product of recent reorganization of state government.

Placement 1 shows the Council attached to the governor's office with a heavy communication and liaison relationship to the governor-designated administering state agency. Here the primary communication is with the governor's office which, on the one hand, may provide some political and informational strength but, on the other hand, may limit the effectiveness of the Council in working with structures "below it."

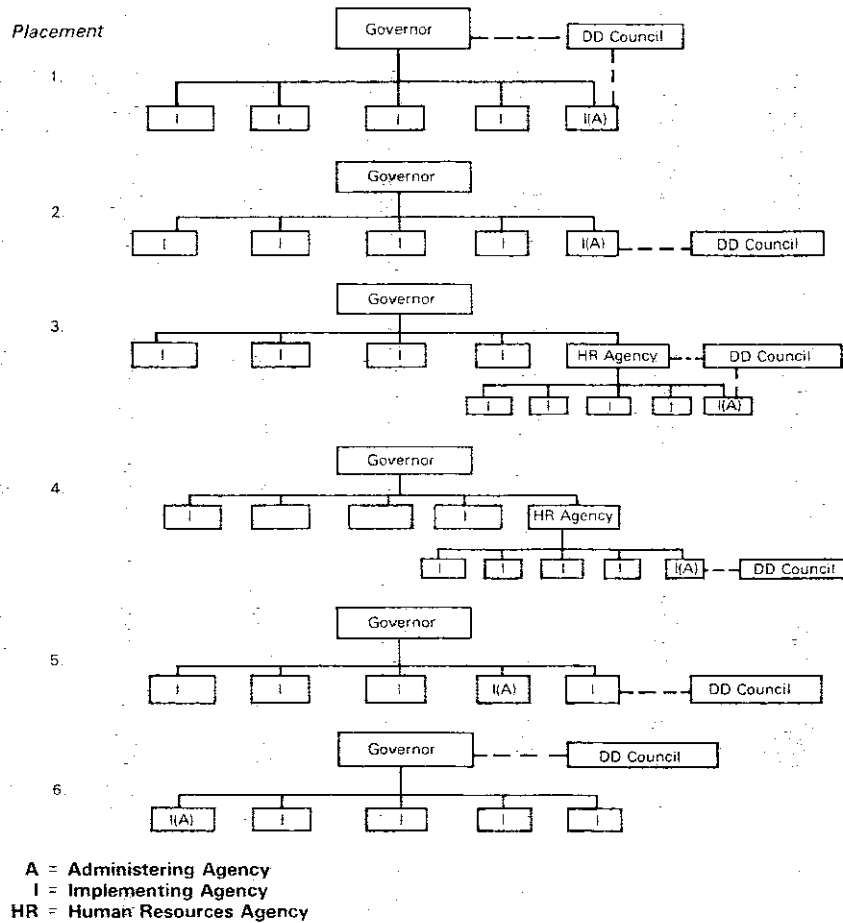
Placement 2 shows the Council attached to the administering state agency (A) (perhaps the most prominent arrangement) communicating with other implementing state agencies (I) and the executive branch through the staff of the state agency. Communications and interactions between the Council and other components of state government and special organizations around the state are either informal or effected through their representation on the Council.

Placement 3 shows the state Council attached to an "umbrella agency," a prominent new feature of the reorganization of some 20 state governments, with heavy (but not exclusive) communication with the administering state agency which is a component of the umbrella agency. This is, in the author's judgement, the preferred arrangement.

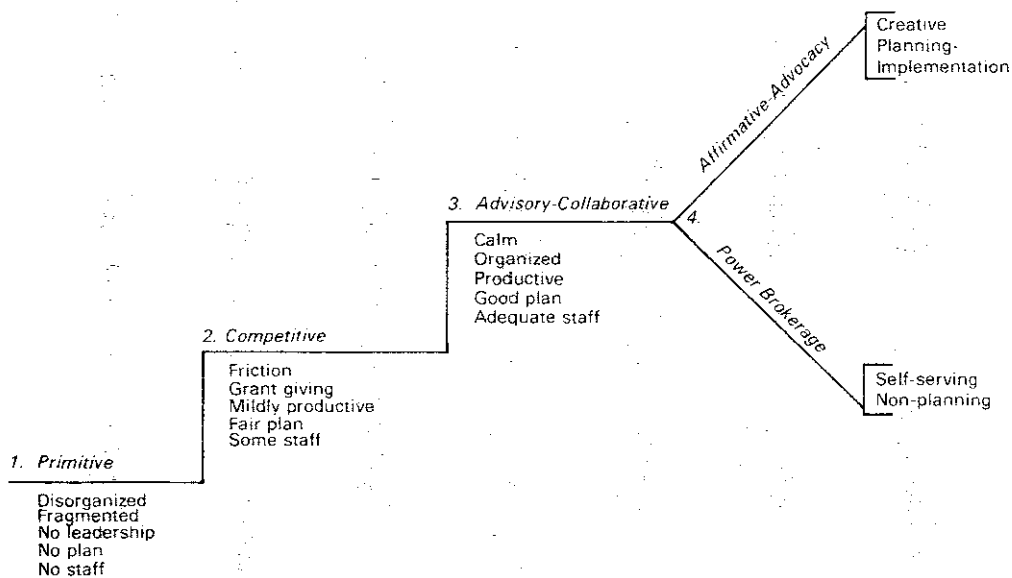
Placement 4 shows the Council attached directly to the administering state agency communicating through this agency to the umbrella agency and from there to the other major components of the state organization and the governor's office. Such an arrangement is cumbersome and full of political traps and communications problems.

Placement 5 shows the rare situation in which the Council is attached to a state agency which is not the designated administering agency. One variation is a Council attached to one of two state agencies which have both been designated as

**FIGURE 3**  
**ALTERNATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENTS**  
**OF STATE DD COUNCILS**



**FIGURE 4**  
**DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF STATE DD COUNCILS**





the administering-implementing agencies for the state. This arrangement clearly results in communication and planning problems because of ambiguous relationships.

Placement 6 shows the attachment of the Council directly to the governor's office with no communication with the implementing state agency. The Council operates relatively remotely from agencies and from other planning and advisory councils which may be attached to the administering agency by law. This can develop a situation which may deplete the resources of the Council and frustrate its attempts to develop and implement a state plan.

A variation on several of the above placements is brought about when the DD Council is a component of, or associated with, a larger or different planning body, such as a comprehensive health planning council.

### Developmental Stages of State DD Councils

There are varying organizational configurations within DD Councils around the country. There are varying degrees of interaction between Councils and the administering-implementing state agencies from state to state. It is equally obvious that there are varying stages of development in which one will find a state Council at any point in time.

Based on observations of the current state Councils, a model has been developed to portray the developmental stages of DD Councils and to characterize those stages as they relate to the mission of the Council. The conceptualization is based on the author's subjective assessment of Councils, as supported by colleagues working with him in the field.

There are four levels, or stages, of development:

- (1) primitive
- (2) competitive
- (3) advisory-collaborative
- (4a) the affirmative-advocacy or
- (4b) the power brokerage

(see Figure 4)

In the primitive stage, some states appear disorganized with regard to both internal and external organization and clarity of mission. Their plans and work activities are sporadic and fragmented. There is little or no leadership, either because of rapid turnover of membership, or insufficient motivation or competence on the part of the Council chairperson and/or membership and/or Council staff. There is a plan on paper but the plan does not reflect the needs of the state or indicate what could be implemented from the current statement of goals and objectives. There is little or no staff support for the disorganized and fragmented

Council arrangement. This is a critical stage and one in which the Council needs leadership, guidance, and technical assistance of many kinds, principally organizational development.

The competitive stage is characterized by considerable friction and negative interaction among Council members, between the chairperson and substantial numbers of the membership or between the Council and the administering-implementing state agency. Councils at this second level generally emphasize the development and distribution of grants in order to pump resources into the maintenance of already inadequate service programs. These Councils are only somewhat productive, have a reasonable plan, and have some staff assisting the chairperson and Council membership in the development and implementation of the plan. The Council appears to be in a fairly interactive relationship with the administering state agency, but there is continuous tension around the grant-giving activity and the perceived competition that the Council represents, not only to the administering state agency, but also to other state agencies in program development activities.

The advisory-collaborative stage is characterized by a relatively well organized Council which has adequate staff. It has produced a good plan, and is considered to be productive in the sense that its plan is clearly stated, is related to a set of basic data characterizing the needs of the developmentally disabled within the state, and includes a clear set of goals and objectives organized in order of priority as determined not only by the Council membership, but also by the state agencies and special interest groups in the state. This third stage is probably the most productive configuration in directly meeting the primary function of the Council, namely its planning and advisory function. It is often at this stage that a substantial regional planning system may be initiated or developed.

The affirmative-advocacy stage of development can be achieved from the advisory-collaborative stage or directly from the competitive stage. Councils in this fourth mode can become effective implementers of Council recommendations through legitimate political action and creative communication of legislative needs and strategies for service program development to both executive and legislative branches of the state government; this, in addition to continued effective planning activities.

On the other hand, Council membership may be uneven in its interest and competency, its attendance at meetings, and its point of view on major issues. It is productive in the sense that it does gain the ear of the executive, the legislature, and the state agencies in order to see the plan implemented. It is usually well organized and has an excellent staff. However, the plan may not necessarily get implemented if the major emphasis is on the political aspects of the Council's function instead of its planning-implementing-evaluating-monitoring functions which would help assure the establishment of effective services throughout the state. Therefore, a maladaptive level can be an alternative form of Stage 4 beyond the advisory level in that it may not move towards the effective implementation of its recommendations and plans. This "power brokerage" function can become a

self-serving, non-planning activity which only serves to erode and undermine previous plans and sidetracks the attention and energy of the Council away from its primary mission. It provides no continuity across the years because it is tied to a single governor or one administration.

A sequence of Stages 3 (affirmative-collaborative) to 4a (affirmative-advocacy) might be perceived as the best set of characteristics for a Council, given the assumption that the Council is to develop and assist in the implementation of an effective comprehensive program of services for the developmentally disabled within its state.

The use of a developmental stage model to characterize the different forms of Councils does not require that Councils pass through all stages or that one stage cannot be attained without having gone through the previous stage. Councils could start at any stage on the continuum because of some special existing factors such as experience of the chairperson, membership consensus, the agency, the staff, or some combination of these. The most important thing is to build steadily toward the most effective level of function possible.

### Summary

Much of this material is certainly debatable. One reason for this is that the 1969 federal legislation is deliberately nonspecific in its interpretation. This vagueness can be seen either as ambiguity leading to no action or it can be interpreted as a golden opportunity to use the flexibility available to take the initiative in developing a unique Council organization and activity pattern necessary to perform the advisory and planning functions within a given state. The latter situation is the most goal-directed and productive in the long run. There does exist a certain ambiguity, but there is also great opportunity in the flexibility and openness of both the developmental disabilities concept and the way that it can be acted out and implemented at the state and local level.

In the long run, the proof of whether or not the developmental disabilities concept is effective and productive will not depend on whether the federal legislation was definitely written or interpreted, but will depend on the extent to which state Councils and state agencies accept the responsibility and challenge and use the flexibility available in order to initiate and implement a unique, comprehensive services plan within their own state.

The author gratefully acknowledges the beneficial review and comment on this manuscript from Council Chairpersons of Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming. Also, the assistance of Council Staff Directors from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

Special thanks for reacting and helping to shape the central concepts go to Dr. Elizabeth Boggs, Mr. George Bown, Dr. Jennifer Howse, Dr. Leonard Mayo and the Advisory Board of DD/TAS, and Dr. Ronald Wiegerink and the DD/TAS staff.

Editor's Note: This paper was prepared initially for a series of DD/TAS conferences on State DD Council Roles. In the summer of 1975, this paper will appear in an issue of Mental Retardation, published by AAMD, 5201 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20015.

## **themes & issues**

**DD/TAS**

**Suite 300 NCNB Plaza**

**Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514**

BULK RATE MAILING U.S. POSTAGE <b>PAID</b> CARRBORO, N.C. PERMIT NO. 12
--