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MENTAL HEALTH
is
EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

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Mental illness is the number one disease in the United States. Facts indicate that one person out of every ten persons is afflicted with this illness. When any disease disables a nation in such a major proportion the correction and prevention becomes the problem of all people in the nation.

The first chapter of this thesis is devoted to a clear definition of mental health. Facts are presented on the high incidence of mental illness and the lack of public interest concerning it. Examination of the reasons for the lag in the attack on problems of mental health shows interesting conjecture and facts. The alarming fact that many children are afflicted indicates the need for immediate psychiatric help and also for long range planning. The second chapter deals with actual case histories taken from first grade classes. These emotionally disturbed children required the help of specially trained personnel. Each community must urge that the Boards of Education employ qualified personnel to help mentally ill children. Early detection of mental disorders might avert severe mental breakdowns in later life. The third chapter outlines the measures for better mental health in the community of Norwalk. Emphasis is placed on the special services of the school as an essential part of children's education. The final chapter is devoted to the recommendations in the Report of the Joint Commission on Mental Illness and Health. In 1955 this Commission was assigned to study mental illness in the United States and to make suggestions for the prevention of serious mental breakdowns. This chapter also outlines the

programs now in progress in the United States and in the State of Connecticut. It further establishes that society must participate in the rehabilitation of the mentally ill. Mention is made of the 1963 program of the National Mental Health Association. This association has adopted the slogan, "Accent on Youth". The aims are first to provide adequate children's psychiatric clinics and to encourage the youth of America to select a career in the mental health field.

The establishment and progress of our nation toward better mental health should not be the burden of any one branch of government nor any one agency. It will be only through the combined efforts of all that mental illness will drop from the number one disease of America to a place at the bottom of the list. Progress must be made through the joint efforts of national, state, and local governments, and of each individual. The mental health problem of America is everybody's business.