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SEX ATTITUDES

Sexual rehabilitation sessions concerning the handicapped conducted by the University of Minnesota Medical School for para-professionals and professionals (with their spouses or "significant others") sounds valid, from one person's experience.

The SAR (Sexual Attitude Reassessment) I attended produced questions in my mind that may not have occurred to the Oct. 22 writer. These "attitude reassessments" are called education, not brainwashing. Yet in an honest educational effort one will find a "marketplace of ideas" concept operating. The SAR claims to make one comfortable with sexuality—but with whose sexuality?

The one actual "marketplace" that I noticed at our SAR was a large table with a sign over it advertising various devices as inexpensive Christmas gifts. These things are normally found in questionable bookstores. We saw one film of a handicapped couple enjoying their sexuality. But to be honest, the most time was not spent on that. We saw repeated films of very attractively prepared homosexual activity. We watched a film that pointed out the ugliness of a pregnant woman's lot, we were exposed to an evening of hardcore pornography, we watched a film on autism and others on free love. There were small group discussions, but one could not attend these with his husband or wife. Implosion techniques were used in order to create a cinerama "you are there" effect. If one feels really involved in socially labeled deviant sexual behavior one is much less likely to be judgmental toward those of that orientation. I question the validity of blurring one's judgment through desensitization processes.

While it is commendable that the medical school wants professionals to be prepared to help those with sexual problems, could this training not occur in an upright position in a lighted classroom? Lying on pillows in a dark room at a research facility is more apt to provide an emotional high than produce an education, in my estimation.

Sexuality is an important aspect of everyone's life from cradle to grave. What is it that makes the so-called experts more expert

than the participant? Before more people are influenced by the SAR approach we should determine if the U of M has the right to promote SAR sexual attitudes as best for health professionals. Have persons been misled into taking a course designed to reassess and restructure the sexual attitudes of participants?

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