



Culture setting at CCI residential

Submitted by Sally Cooke on 9 April 2014 - 12:23am

Notes of a workshop at the Teachers' Event at Launde Abbey, Leics, UK on 4th August 2013. It includes celebration of good experiences of coco culture; outlines some potential problem areas; and suggests some ideas for good practice.

Comments are very welcome

Attended by (I think – and not everyone for all of the time): Rachel Beard, Julian Briggs, Sally Cooke, Iris Finnern, Sue Gray, Charlie Green, Sheila Lochrie, Steve Roche, Susan Tilley, Caroline Thorpe

Celebration / noticing what is going well (in our opinion)

- We took delight in the loving, warm environment we found / find here.
- We noted that it seems healthy to make a point of refreshing / re-making ground rules at each residential event.
- We felt that the process of refreshing the ground rules connects us with each other.
- A culture-setting process was modelled in the opening circle we had had this morning – we thought it a good idea to share that process on cocolist (*I am hoping that the people who facilitated it will be willing to do that?*)

What's the problem (in fact, is there one?) (*this is my personal view and I think underlay some of our discussion but wasn't explicitly stated*)

- the backchat and horseplay when we are in a group, e.g. opening circle, sometimes gets out of hand and then some people don't feel properly heard or respected
- issues that seem small to most people sometimes get discussed at length in our group sessions and we don't keep to our intended timetable, e.g. opening circles over-run and workshops have to be shortened
- in sharing rounds, sometimes the quality of listening and attention is not good; sometimes comments are made, even jokes at the speaker's expense. People can feel hurt as a result, sometimes they shut down and /or leave.

What could we try that would help ensure a good culture?

- Settings change in a residential : one moment you can be in an individual session, later in a support group, or in a workshop, or in an opening circle, or in social time, and so on.... We could be more **explicit about how the culture is different in each setting**. e.g. when

having a round in a group / workshop / circle, to say explicitly what is asked for, such as, is it a free attention round, or is interaction OK?

- If opening circles overrun extensively, there are knock-on effects . It takes up time which was meant for workshops etc. If the over-running happens due to acting out of feelings, perhaps we need to think of **other approaches to handling feelings** – e.g. calling for a *time-out* to allow feelings to subside; or reminding people of the *contract* (is there one?) for this particular activity or time-period. (Time-out could just be 'three mindful breaths'.)
- If we hold a general aim of **valuing everyone who is present**, we will naturally try to find ways of helping them to stay and to be part of the group. This includes in support groups.
- Wary Wednesdays! We noted that being **aware of group process** is probably wise – we usually get to the 'storming' stage about mid-week in a week-long residential. No surprise then that Wednesday's opening circle may often be a tricky one!

Sally / 23 Aug 2013
amended 9 April 2014

Topics

CoCoInfo Tags:

Literature tag: [Organising co-counselling events](#) >[Workshop facilitation and organisation](#)

Attachment

Size

 [Culture setting at CCI residential.doc](#)

20 KB
