



II. Design of a fundamentals workshop

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- [Temporal design](#)
- [A five-day workshop](#)

Temporal design

1. Forty hours

For some years many of us have considered that 40 hours is the minimum training period for co-counselling: that is, 40 hours actual training time spent in a fundamentals workshop or class. This can be covered in several ways: a block five-day workshop, 5 or 6 single day workshops at weekly intervals; two long weekend workshops; 3 hour weekly evening classes for 14 weeks.

2. Five-day block

I have used this time-structure for some years now. It has both strengths and weaknesses. Positively, it allows, if well facilitated, for the build-up of a powerful dynamic within the group and within the individual: discharge is copious and much material surfaces for individuals to work on. The power and depth of the growth process, and the ability of persons to take charge of it, becomes evident for all to see. Negatively, it is an island experience, separated off from the everyday routines of the rigid society. The individual may deal with this extreme disparity by encapsulating the experience, sealing it off, so that there is minimal transfer back into everyday life. In particular, the five-day block does not give the participant any training in regular co-counselling-at-home with the back-up and support that a weekly class provides. A person tries co-counselling-at-home after a five-day workshop, finds that the early sessions are (inevitably) a pale shadow of the co-counselling sessions within the high-energy ambience of the workshop, and so gives up through discouragement. Hence it is important, if this design is used, to provide participants with full details of local ongoing groups and encourage them to start to participate in these - such groups can provide the support needed for the early stages of co-counselling-at-home.

3. Weekly class

I used a 3 hour weekly evening class for 20 weeks, once a year at the University of Surrey for several years. The advantages and disadvantages are the reverse of the five-day workshop. Its great strength is that it enables participants from the very start to build up skills in, and develop the habit of, co-counselling-at-home. I make it a condition of membership in a weekly class that

participants commit themselves to one co-counselling-at-home session between classes every week. Feedback on these sessions is then an important part of the training process during the class. A related strength is the build up of skill in moving to and fro between the open, flexible, caring society of the class, and the closed, rigid, alienating society of everyday. The obvious disadvantage compared to a five day workshop is the need each week to start again the slow build-up toward discharge.

A five-day workshop

The following gives a possible set of events for a five-day workshop: they are not divided up into days. This is only one way of organizing the events. What is not listed are the many spontaneous pieces of individual work that occur in this kind of workshop and that provide it with much of its power and drama.

1. Round of introductions.
2. Good and new circle.
3. Culture setting statements (see above : [Culture setting statements](#))
4. Exposition of theory and discussion. Basis for contracting in or out.
5. Explanation of basic principles of method (see above: [Explanation of basic principles of method](#))
6. Free attention exercises: verbal, nonverbal; pairs, group, solo.
7. Body mobilization techniques: in group. Some will discharge spontaneously,
8. Demonstration counselling with those discharging from the body mobilization techniques, using all basic techniques.
9. Explanation of the following basic techniques: literal description, repetition, association, psychodrama, acting into; with demonstration.
10. Structured mini-session to practise these basic techniques; feedback in the group.
11. Explanation of contradiction (distinguished from felt celebration) and direction-holding; with demonstration.
12. Structured mini-session and/or structured discharge group to practise contradiction; feedback in group.
13. Explanation of scanning, with demonstration. Relate to free attention spectrum.
14. Structured mini-session to practise scanning; feedback in group.
15. Exposition of theory: distinction between person and pattern, concept of the chronic pattern; difference between discharge and dramatization; distress that is acted out and distress that is acted in. Discussion.
16. Explain identification check; with demonstration.
17. Structured mini-session to practise identification check; feedback in group.
18. Explanation of ways to start and to end a session; with demonstration.
19. Structured mini-session on working with what's on top; feedback in group.
20. Short unstructured co-counselling session for client to start to put it all together creatively; feedback in group.

21. Talk and discussion on: sex and nurturance, sex negative and sex positive theory, sex and co-counselling.
 22. Explanation of regression by reverie; with demonstration.
 23. Structured mini-session to practise regression by reverie; feedback in group.
 24. A series of longer co-counselling sessions of from 30 to 45 minutes each way, mostly unstructured, free choice or random selection; feedback in group. Interspersed with reminders about basic theory, principles of method and techniques; with direction-holding and other discharge groups; with not-for-discharge groups; with individual work in front of the group. All this will take up the greater part of the fourth and fifth days, which are days to put together and make workable all that has been acquired on the first three days.
 25. Talk on the idea of a co-counselling community, on social change and action, on follow-up and ongoing courses and workshops, on co-counselling at home, on Co-counselling International. Discussion.
 26. Farewells: high spots of workshop; closing circle.
 27. Throughout: in closing circles at the end of each day, in feedback after co-counselling sessions and mini-sessions, in special mini-sessions for the purpose - the positive, affirmative celebration of self, the positive affirmative celebration of a specific other. **Celebration** becomes a growing theme throughout the workshop as people become more confident and secure in its practice.
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