

Material to accompany a

**Co-Counselling Core Training
(Co-Counselling International)
(CCI)**

Celia Wilson and John Talbut

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By

Celia Wilson and John Talbut

To whom this work shall be attributed.

Contact details:

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| <p>Celia Wilson 6 Bosleys Orchard Didcot OX11 7NY UK</p> <p>Telephone: +44 1235 814529 mobile: +44 7712 168897 Email: cci@orchardox.co.uk</p> | <p>John Talbut The Laurels Berry Hill Lane Donington le Heath Coalville LE67 2FB UK</p> <p>Telephone: +44 1530 836780 Email: coco@dpets.co.uk</p> |
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Introduction

This material is intended to accompany Co-Counselling Core Training courses. It consists of explanations and background information that would normally given on these courses. They are based on the materials that we developed for a course in The Fundamentals of Co-Counselling (as the same course used to be known) that we delivered in Latvia in April and May 2012.

The material can, of course, be used for courses that are delivered in English. In addition it can be used when the trainers and the participants are not fluent in the same language. Rather than the course being delivered in the trainers' language, this material can be used to support a course that takes place mainly in the participants' language. The first step would be for this material to be translated into the participant's language. The trainers would also probably want to get a set of instructions translated for activities on the course.

Where the course is delivered in English, we offer this manual as a detailed record of words that might otherwise only be spoken. As such it can be used as a reference and aide-memoire.

(We refer to “trainers” as these courses are often delivered by more than one trainer working together. They are also often delivered by a single trainer, so please read “trainers” to mean “trainer” where appropriate. You may also find the trainers referred to as “teachers” or “facilitators” elsewhere.)

When courses take place in one language these explanations are things that the trainers might say rather than having them written down. Where translation is required, having the material translated in advance means that there is more opportunity to get a good

translation and it takes some of the pressure off people translating during the course sessions.

The material is organised on the basis of 10 sessions. This could be 10 weekly sessions, two sessions a day (e.g. mornings and afternoons at weekends) or some combination of these. The idea is that you read the relevant material before each session. Different trainers may cover things in a different order, they will let you know what they want you to read for each session. You can read the whole lot in advance of a course if you wish, some of it may not make much sense until you have completed the previous parts of the course.

If your trainers are not fluent in your language, not everything you say will be translated for them to understand, especially when you are working in pairs. If you want something translated that has not been, please ask.

Non gender specific language: we use the third person plural form (they) instead of the third person, gender specific, singular forms (she, he). This sometimes gives rise to some unusual forms e.g. "themselves".

Co-Counselling Core Training

The Co-Counselling Core Training is a 40 hour course which is required for someone to be a co-counsellor. The requirement is to complete the whole 40 hours course and to have practice sessions in between the classes. The course is mainly experiential and, there is little studying or writing required. Reading this and other material can help you gain a good grasp of the principles and practice.

And, by the way, the course is usually good fun.

Who is co-counselling for?

Co-counselling is a powerful tool for personal development, and it is effective for people who are already functioning well as a human being - you don't have to be ill to get better! It does require you to be in charge when you are the "client" and be able to work on your own issues with only the supportive attention of you "counsellor".

It is for you if:

- you *want and are ready* to make changes in you life to realise your potential, increase you life skills and gain personal support.
- you are willing to "open up" and do things that may feel strange in order to do so.

You may not be ready for co-counselling if:

- you need alcohol, medicines or other substances which affect the mind.
- you are unable to give your undivided attention to another person, for example because you need a lot of attention yourself at the moment.

If you are a counsellor, trainer or therapist (practitioner)

In other words, you offer services to other people or you are training to do so, this course may *not* offer you extra techniques to do this.

The difference, particularly in CCI co-counselling, is that it is the person who is being *the "client"* who uses the techniques. You will mainly be learning how to be a "client" on this course. The counsellor is your peer.

On the other hand if you use co-counselling (that is you complete this course and then go on to have regular co-counselling sessions) it will help you to be a much better practitioner.

What you will learn

Mainly, you will learn to be better at four things:

- Giving good, supportive attention to another person without being continually distracted by your own thoughts and feelings.
- Maintaining a "balance of attention", being able to engage deeply with your material while at the same time being aware that this is a co-counselling session and by working autonomously, deciding how to work on your material
- Doing your own work, taking responsibility for how you are and using co-counselling sessions to help you change what you want to change about yourself.
- Being comfortable with emotions, yours and others', in other words developing emotional competence.

As long as you are good enough at these things, and at sticking to the rules for co-counselling sessions, by the end of the course you will pass.

This manual includes background information designed to support you in learning about and using co-counselling for you to refer to. You do not need to remember all this information.

What is Co-Counselling?

Co-counselling is "reciprocal peer counselling".

Reciprocal

Co-Counselling is reciprocal because participants take turns to be a "client" and a "counsellor".

Peer

Co-counselling is peer because all co-counsellors have the same status. There are no "experts" or "therapists" helping you to sort out your issues.

Counselling

Co-counselling has something in common with counselling because you talk through or work on things you want to change in your life with the attention and help of a counsellor. However, it is in many ways different from counselling, particularly because it is the person who is the "client" who is always in charge of the session.

Co-counselling operates within a network of people who have satisfactorily completed the basic core training course. Co-counsellors arrange sessions between themselves. Each person chooses for themselves how much they want to do as an equal partner. Usually this happens in pairs but it can be in groups. An important feature of co-counselling is that the process is free - you exchange your time and skills. If you attend co-counselling events other than taught classes (and there is plenty of encouragement but absolutely no pressure or requirement to do so), the cost generally is only to cover accommodation and expenses.

Discharge

If we just give someone good attention we find that sooner or later, and often sooner, they will start to experience emotions. If they are allowed to express or release their emotions we find that people tend to feel better and, in due course, things can change for the better in their lives.

On the other hand, people are generally discouraged from expressing their emotions or they learn to release them in unhelpful ways (for instance being violent when they are angry).

For these reasons, co-counselling focuses a lot on working with emotions. We use the term "discharge" to mean the release of emotions (think of a gun discharging the energy of an explosive charge). It is sometimes called "catharsis" or "abreaction".

Many of the techniques that you will learn on a Fundamentals of Co-Counselling course are "aim for discharge" techniques which will help you to get in touch with and release your emotions.

Terminology

We have put the words "client" and "counsellor" in inverted commas ("") above because they are temporary roles and do not mean the same as they do in other types of counselling. In co-counselling we use the word "counsellor" to mean the person who is

giving attention while the other person, the client, is working on their material. Some co-counsellors use other terminology for example worker and co-worker, worker and helper or supporter, listener and talker.

Some, perhaps many of the ideas and techniques that are covered may seem familiar from other work that you have done. The way we do things in CCI are sometimes subtly and sometimes very different. For this reason this manual does not make any assumptions about what you know. We invite you to bear with us so as to become familiar with CCI ways.

Session 1

Rounds

These are opportunities for everyone to say something about a particular topic. We shall be using them often.

Typical topics:

How am I feeling?

How did I experience the activity we just did?

News and goods: something new and something good that has happened in my life recently or since we last met (we often do this at the beginning of the day).

Something I am looking forward to (we often do this at the end of the day).

How it works

Anyone can start the round when they are ready to.

When this person has said what they want to they pass it to the person on their left or their right (they choose which way round it goes).

This person says what they want to and then passes it to the person next to them in the same direction.

Anyone can pass (say “pass”) if they want to. If anyone passes we come back to anyone who has not spoken until everyone who wants to has said something.

Sometimes rounds are timed, for example a maximum of 1 minute for each person.

Owning what you say

Saying “I”

When you speak in a round it is often useful to start by saying your name. We will often suggest this when we propose a round for example “a round of name and how you are feeling”. This is not because people may not know your name but because it makes it clear, to you as well as to others, that you are talking about yourself. It can make it more meaningful for you and easier for others to hear.

In the same way say “I” when you are talking about yourself (this will be a Ground Rule for anything you say in the group).

Example:

“I am John and when I was the talker I found it difficult to think of what to say”

rather than:

“It is difficult to talk when the other person is not responding.” -

or:

“You feel embarrassed just looking at someone and not responding.”

Notice how you may feel differently when you say things for yourself. “I” refers to your own experience, “you” refers to the other people in the group – who may not feel the same.

On a course we would always invite you to try your best and not to feel bad about yourself if you get things “wrong”. If you notice someone not speaking for themselves in the group we suggest that you point to yourself (indicating say “I”) or, if they continue, invite them to

rephrase what they are saying: “Try saying 'I feel ...'”

Rules:

Do not break the round, only speak when it is your turn. There will often be time for a more general discussion after the round has finished.

Give respectful, normally silent, attention to whoever is speaking. Only laugh if the speaker is clearly inviting people to laugh.

After the round

Where translation is being used, most rounds will probably not be translated. What is most important is that you “hear” each other both the words and the communication (body language, tone of voice) that does not need language. After the rounds the trainer(s) may ask for a summary in their language.

There will often be a time after a round for anyone to say something that they did not get a chance to say in the round. After that there may be some discussion about issues that came up in the round.

Holistic learning

We can think of learning as taking place in four different ways that fit together and support each other.

- **Practical learning:** This is learning how to do something and it includes developing skills.
- **Conceptual learning:** This is learning about some subject or learning that something is the case. It can be expressed in statements and ideas, or concepts.
- **Imaginal learning:** This is learning that means we can imagine things, patterns of shapes and actions. It involves a sense of a whole, as shapes or sequences. It can be expressed in symbols such as line, shape, colour, proportion, succession, sound, rhythm or movement.
- **Affective learning:** This learning comes out in how we feel about things, the sensations, emotions or impulses that things set up in us. In other words, how we are *affected* by them.

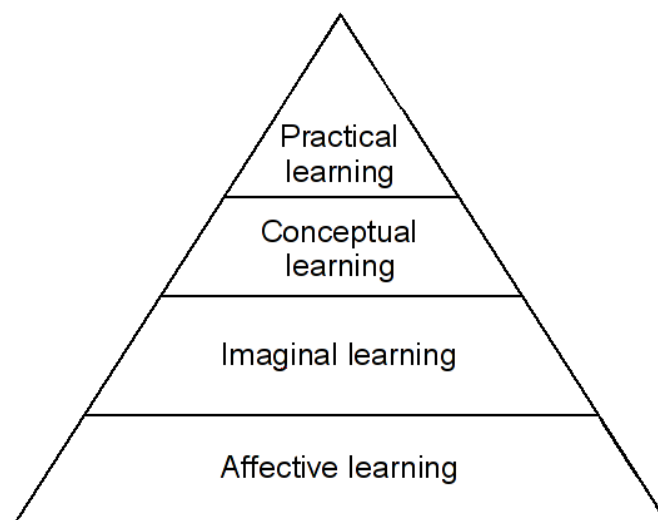
These four forms of learning are distinct yet they support each other. The ones higher in this list being supported by those that are lower, as shown below.

Another way of putting this is:

If it does not feel right, we cannot imagine it.

If we cannot imagine it, we cannot make sense of it.

If we cannot make sense of it, we cannot do it.



Derived from Heron, J. (1999) *The Complete Facilitator's Handbook* Ch3

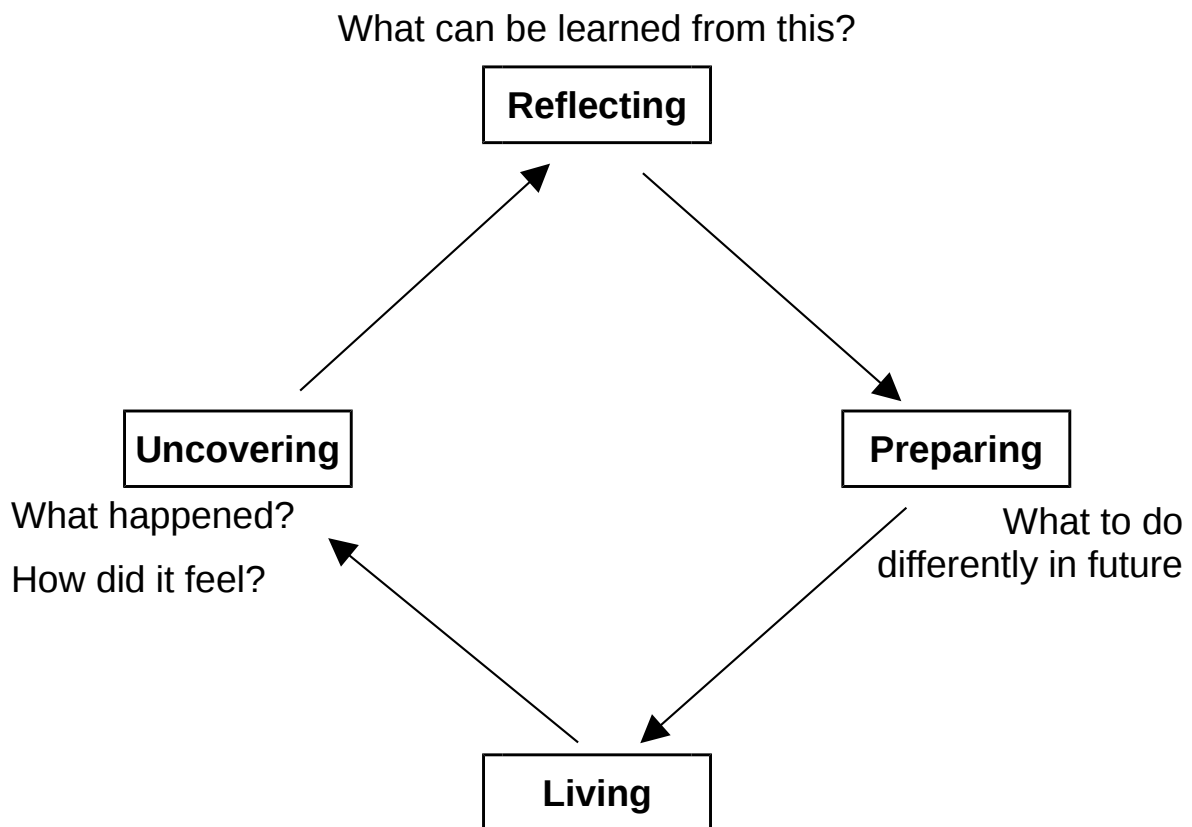
The Experiential Learning Cycle

Human beings learn naturally from experience. Many education systems fail to recognise that the *experience* of learning will have far more impact than the content of what is being taught. So, for example, if physics is taught in a way that is the students experience as boring the main thing that the students will learn is that physics “is” boring.

As soon as our brains started to work we started trying to make sense of our experiences. Many of our problems stem from us coming to inaccurate conclusions about our experiences. For example a small baby may cry and experience their tired and harassed mother responding angrily. They might guess that crying makes their mother angry. Unfortunately, another feature of the way that we learn means that the baby will tend to notice the times that confirm their guess and pay less attention to the times when their mother does not respond in this way.

The idea of the experiential learning cycle is to make this process of learning explicit. We can try to draw more relevant learning from our experiences and, perhaps, unlearn some of the inaccurate conclusions we came to in the past. What really did happen? What can we learn from this? How can we use this knowledge in the future?

There are various versions of this idea. The terminology varies but the idea is the same. One of the best known is David Kolb's experiential learning cycle. (Kolb, D (1984)) The version below is from John Heron.



Adapted from Heron, J. (2001) Figure 9.1, p119

The Culture of a Fundamentals of Co-Counselling course

3 cultures

There are 3 different situations on this course with different cultures in the sense of accepted ways of behaving. (You will also find this on events when co-counsellors get together).

1. Training group time

This is when we are doing activities, having discussions, playing games etc., usually as a whole group, being facilitated by the trainers. The training group ground rules apply to these times.

2. Co-counselling sessions

These have their own rules that you will be learning about during the course.

3. Social times

These are times other than the first two such as meal times. There are no rules applying to these times.

The circle

Working in a circle is a very effective structure for experiential training groups.

From a practical point of view, everyone in a circle is equal. Everyone can be seen and heard equally. This also means that the trainers can have an awareness of what is going on for everyone and offer support if it seems helpful.

The trainers' involvement

The trainers are human beings equal with everyone else. They sit in the circle, probably moving around.

The trainers will take part in some exercises and when they do they will be equal participants.

When the trainers have co-counselling sessions with participants they will be working as equals except that they will be thinking about how participants are getting on. The trainers will be working on their own genuine issues (bearing in mind that they have been doing this for many years).

Sometimes one of the trainers may support a participant to do some work in the group. This may be to support the participant with something that has come up for them or a participant may volunteer so that the trainer can demonstrate a training point. The trainer may be using this as an opportunity to illustrate some aspect of how co-counselling can work. However, this is not a co-counselling session as such because it is not equal or reciprocal and the trainer is taking charge. Participants are not expected to be able to work in the way that the trainers do in these cases.

Take Care!

In all three situations, take physical care of yourself, others and your surroundings. We do sometimes do energetic activities. Be aware of any physical limitations you may have and do not do anything that would be harmful to you.

Do not do anything that may damage yourself, others or any objects.

Touch

Experienced co-counsellors tend to enjoy physical contact with each other, particularly hugs. This is not a requirement. It is your choice what physical contact, if any, that you allow other people to have with you.

Be assertive

Assertiveness and co-counselling go well together. Take responsibility for yourself and do not expect others to anticipate what you need. Everyone is encouraged to ask for what they want and not allow themselves to be drawn into what they do not want.

Ground Rules for a Training Group

These ground rules help, over time, to build up a non-threatening, mutually supportive and trusting habit within a training group so that group members can talk about and learn from their own experiences.

It can take time to get used to the rules, not everyone will stick to all of them from the beginning. You are invited to encourage others to keep to the rules and to notice how safe you feel in the group when deciding what to do.

Confidentiality

Do not refer to anything of a personal nature that anyone has said, neither later during the training session nor in any other circumstances.

Autonomy and self-directedness– for you and others

We ask everyone to agree to these rules (or something very similar, we are open to some negotiation). Apart from this, most things are invitations and each member of the group has the absolute right to decide what they want to do or say.

This means:

- Speak for yourself -say “I” when that is what you mean, not “you”, “one” or “everybody” (e.g. “I would like to ..”, not “we should ..”)
- You may encourage others to do what they would choose to do, but do not push them to do or reveal what they do not want to. It is fine to be curious and you do not need to know more than anyone chooses to reveal.

You are, though, encouraged to take some risks, for example of becoming uncomfortable or embarrassed, to get the most from the training.

Treating Everybody well

No put-downs - do not criticise, advise, judge or make negative statements about others or yourself.

Supportive working within the group

- Only one person to speak at a time
- Give full attention to whoever is speaking, do not interrupt or speak out of turn in a round.
- Switch mobile phones off (If this presents an serious problem the group needs to agree a solution)
- Commit yourself to attend and be on time throughout the day
- No smoking except away from the group at lunch time.
- No taking of alcohol or mood altering substances during, definitely within 8 hours (and preferably within 15 hours) before each session of the course.

Confidentiality in different situations

One-to-One

Example: co-counselling session



Do not mention what the client says or does to anyone else.



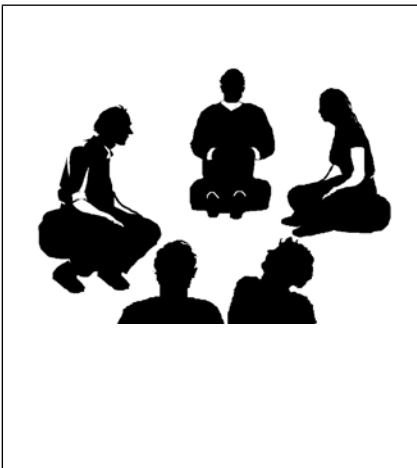
Do not mention what the client has said or done *even back to them* after the session.



The fact that the client is co-counselling at all should be considered confidential.

Group

Example: training course



Basically the same, only the confidence is to the group rather than an individual. So it applies to all members of the group:



Do not mention anything personal that anyone has said or done to anyone outside the group.



Do not refer to personal that anyone has said or done *even back to them* after the session.

The fact that someone is a co-counsellor or was present at a co-counselling meeting should be considered confidential to the co-counselling community - that is, don't tell non-co-counsellors.

Open

Examples: Setting up the room for a meeting, having lunch, a committee meeting



This isn't a co-counselling situation as such. So what you say, and what people tell you, is no more or less private than in a normal situation.



Although it may not be part of co-counselling technique, we encourage you NOT to be the local broadcasting system! Not gossiping helps you to ensure confidentiality.



If the meeting is a co-counselling event, rather than just social, the fact that anyone is a co-counsellor, or was there, is confidential to the co-counselling community as before.

Additional Points

Everyone, as counsellor or client, will make their best efforts to keep high standards of confidentiality – and we're all working towards perfection! Mistakes may occasionally be made so bear in mind that this could happen to some information about you.

You are, of course, at liberty to refer to anything of yours at any time outside the session.

You may think that it will be difficult to remember what is confidential. Most co-counsellors, though, manage fine in practice. Some co-counsellors decide to “forget” anything they have heard in a session. If you are not sure how you know something then it may be best just to treat it as confidential.

Session 2

A Definition of CCI

John Heron
(25 Dec 96)

Co-Counselling International (CCI) is a planet-wide association of individuals and local networks committed to affirm a core discipline of co-counselling while encouraging - on an international and co-operative basis - the advancement of sound theory, effective practice, network development and planetary transformation.

Local networks of co-counsellors within CCI are independent, self-governing peer organisations, exploring ways of being effective social structures while avoiding all forms of authoritarian control.

Any person and network is a member of CCI if :

1. they understand and apply the principles of co-counselling given below
2. they have had at least 40 hours training from a member of CCI
3. they grasp, in theory and practice, the ideas of pattern, discharge and re-evaluation

The Principles of Co-Counselling

1. Co-counselling is usually practised in pairs with one person working, the client, one person facilitating, the counsellor, then they reverse these roles. In every session each person spends the same time in the role of both client and counsellor. A session is usually on the same occasion, although sometimes people may take turns as client and counsellor on different occasions.
2. When co-counsellors work in groups of three or more, members take an equal time as client, each client either choosing one other person as counsellor, or working in a self-directing way with the silent, supportive attention of the group. For certain purposes, the client may request co-operative interventions by two or more counsellors.
3. The client is in charge of their session in at least seven ways:
 - a. trusting and following the living process of liberation emerging within
 - b. choosing at the start of the session one of three contracts given in no. 9 below
 - c. choosing within the first two contracts what to work on and how
 - d. being free to change the contract during their session
 - e. having a right to accept or disregard interventions made by the counsellor
 - f. being responsible for keeping a balance of attention
 - g. being responsible for working in a way that does not harm themselves, the counsellor, other people, or the environment
4. The client's work is their own deep process. It may include, but is not restricted to:
 - a. discharge and re-evaluation on personal distress and cultural oppression
 - b. celebration of personal strengths
 - c. creative thinking at the frontiers of personal belief
 - d. visualising future personal and cultural states for goal-setting and action-planning
 - e. extending consciousness into transpersonal states

CCI takes the view that the first of these is a secure foundation for the other four.

5. The role of the counsellor is to:
 - a. give full, supportive attention to the client at all times
 - b. intervene in accordance with the contract chosen by the client
 - c. inform the client about time at the end of the session and whenever the client requests
 - d. end the session immediately if the client becomes irresponsibly harmful to themselves, the counsellor, other people, or the environment
6. The counsellor's intervention is a behaviour that facilitates the client's work. It may be verbal, and/or nonverbal through eye contact, facial expression, gesture, posture or touch.
7. A verbal intervention is a practical suggestion about what the client may say or do as a way of enhancing their working process within the session. It is not a stated interpretation or analysis and does not give advice. It is not driven by counsellor distress and is not harmful or invasive. It liberates client autonomy and self-esteem.
8. The main use of nonverbal interventions is to give sustained, supportive and distress-free attention: being present for the client in a way that affirms and enables full emergence. This use is the foundation of all three contracts given below. Nonverbal interventions can also be used to elaborate verbal interventions; or to work on their own in conveying a practical suggestion; or, in the case of touch, to release discharge through appropriate kinds of pressure, applied movement or massage.
9. The contract which the client chooses at the start of the session is an agreement about time, and primarily about the range and type of intervention the counsellor will make. The three kinds of contract are:

Free attention

The counsellor makes no verbal interventions and only uses nonverbal interventions to give sustained, supportive attention. The client is entirely self-directing in managing their own working process.

Normal

The counsellor is alert to what the client misses and makes some interventions of either kind to facilitate and enhance what the client is working on. There is a co-operative balance between client self-direction and counsellor suggestions.

Intensive

The counsellor makes as many interventions as seem necessary to enable the client to deepen and sustain their process, hold a direction, interrupt a pattern and liberate discharge. This may include leading a client in working areas being omitted or avoided. The counsellor may take a sensitive, finely-tuned and sustained directive role.

10. Counsellors have a right to interrupt a client's session if they are too heavily restimulated by what the client is working on and so cannot sustain effective attention. If, when they explain this to the client, the client continues to work in the same way, then they have a right to withdraw completely from the session.
11. Whatever a client works on in a session is confidential. The counsellor, or others giving attention in a group, do not refer to it in any way in any context, unless the client has given them explicit, specific permission to do so. It is, however, to be taken into account, where relevant, by the counsellor in future sessions with the same client.

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Introduction 1 to A Definition of CCI

A Definition of CCI is intended to be a necessary and sufficient definition of Co-Counselling International. It covers all the necessary principles of CCI co-counselling.

It is called “A Definition ...” rather than “The Definition ...” because it has not been formally adopted by CCI. In fact, CCI has no way of adopting anything formally. However, it has been around for many years and has stood the test of time. Anyone who complies with this definition will have little problem co-counselling with CCI co-counsellors from anywhere in the world. Conversely, when people do not comply with the definition it may cause problems.

John Talbut wrote the initial drafts of “A Definition of CCI”, consulting widely within CCI to try to find what we all held in common. Finally John Heron, who was one of the people who founded CCI in 1974, produced the version which is used today.

You do not need to read through the whole definition when you first receive it. The various parts of it are explained in explanations like this one.

Here are two extracts with comments:

“Co-Counselling International (CCI) is a planet-wide association of individuals and local networks committed to affirm a core discipline of co-counselling while encouraging - on an international and co-operative basis - the advancement of sound theory, effective practice, network development and planetary transformation.

Local networks of co-counsellors within CCI are independent, self-governing peer organisations, exploring ways of being effective social structures while avoiding all forms of authoritarian control.

Any person and network is a member of CCI if :

4. they understand and apply the principles of co-counselling given below
5. they have had at least 40 hours training from a member of CCI
6. they grasp, in theory and practice, the ideas of pattern, discharge and re-evaluation”

This means that CCI is not an organisation with a membership that you can join. If you comply with the definition then you are a member of CCI. The purpose of this Fundamentals of Co-Counselling course is to enable you to comply with the definition.

“11. Whatever a client works on in a session is confidential. The counsellor, or others giving attention in a group, do not refer to it in any way in any context, unless the client has given them explicit, specific permission to do so. It is, however, to be taken into account, where relevant, by the counsellor in future sessions with the same client.”

Sometimes you may think that it would be useful to refer to something that your client has said or done in their session. This may happen during this course say during a feedback round and you want to ask about or say something about something that happened for the client when you were the counsellor. You can only do this if the client gives their permission.

The permission needs to be explicit, in other words you cannot assume for some other reason that it is all right. It also needs to be specific, to refer to a particular piece of information. It is not acceptable for a co-counsellor to say “you can refer to anything in my

session” as this undermines the value of confidentiality. Also, you have to ask without revealing what it is you want to refer to, so this can take some ingenuity! For example: “Can I refer to the repetition you used about a parent” where the client has only mentioned one parent. If in doubt, or if the client does not give a clear “yes”, then make do without referring to whatever it was.

If you work with the same partner more than once you may remember things about them from previous times when they were the client. You can use this information to help you support them more effectively in later sessions, but you must not refer to it. This will make more sense later in the course when we cover process and content and using interventions.

Scanning

Scanning is a technique that is used in various ways in co-counselling. The idea is to associate with an object, for example “doors”, or an idea, for example “times when I was very high up”. Unlike word association or free association as it is used elsewhere, scanning keeps associating with the original object or idea. The intention is to get a number of associations before deciding whether to use any of them for further work in your session.

A simple way of doing this is the first example below. By taking an object, you identify a number of associations in your life, to choose from in deciding what to work on in your session without getting heavily into any one thing at the beginning.

Generally, you keep going back to the original object or idea and repeating it until a new thought comes up. For example, using “doors”:

Doors, doors

doors being shut in my face, opportunities being closed

doors

doors at school, classroom doors, waiting to get out of class at the end of lessons

doors doors

my front door needs painting, in fact half the house needs painting, and loads of other jobs, I'm too busy, how can I get all these things done

doors

old doors ... antique shops, every antique shop we pass you have to go in, boring boring boring

doors ... doors

doors to opportunities, doors opening in my lifeshall I take the chance of training to work in a different department?

Several of these could lead to further work in the session.

As you scan you may pursue each idea a bit, but the idea is to keep coming back to the scanning until you feel that you have enough ideas to choose from.

We refer to the idea of scanning for particular purposes in other parts of this manual. An example would be scanning on similar events. Maybe once I was very high up and afraid. These days I seem to be more afraid of heights than seems reasonable. If I scan on “times when I was very high up” it will allow me to identify a number of incidents in my life when I had similar feelings, including this particular event. I can then work more deeply on these feelings.

A session plan

Agree on time and who is first/second

Client specifies how much warning they want before the end of the session

START

Aim for discharge

Counsellor WARNING:

“... minutes to go”

What would I like to take away from this session?

Something I am looking forward to.

Attention out

END

Explanation of session plan.

Agree on time

During the course the trainers will say how long the sessions are or will negotiate the time with the group.

When you are arranging sessions at other times you will need to agree when, where and for how long for example: 20 minutes each way at 6pm next Friday at your house.

Anything less than about 10 minutes each way is usually referred to as a mini session.

Client specifies how much warning they want before the end of the session

You will get to know how long you need to finish the session, from “Counsellor warning” below. It is your responsibility when client to have your attention back to the present place and time by the end of the session.

It is part of the counsellor's job to keep track of the time, preferably without it being too obvious to the client.

With central timing the person doing the timing will either decide how much warning to give or will consult the group about it. Often this will be half a minute or a minute's warning for short, 5 – 10 minute each way sessions.

Start

The counsellor starts the timer (unless there is central timing for people in the same room). It is a good idea if the counsellor does not give attention to the client until they are sure any timers are running.

The trainers may give you suggestions at an early stage in a course for what to work on. Later, they will give you more information about this (see Starting work in a co-counselling session).

Aim for discharge

This is what you will be learning to do during the course.

As client, it is your time. If you choose not to work on what the trainers have suggested you can work on anything you like. Just tell stories or ramble on about whatever the topic is. There is no need to make any sense. You can be silent and you can talk about what is happening for you in the present.

If you notice any feelings or emotions that is absolutely all right. Notice them, be interested in them, do not try to suppress them and in the early stages, do not try to magnify them either.

Counsellor warning: “... minutes to go”

The counsellor should say this clearly, on the second irrespective of what the client is doing. It helps if the counsellor also indicates this non verbally, for example by holding up three fingers to indicate “3 minutes to go”.

What follows is a suggested sequence for “coming out” of the session, perhaps lightening the mood, reflecting on your learning and getting your attention back into the here and now. From this point on, do not be tempted to carry on working or go back into your material.

You may well skip some of the items, particularly in mini sessions.

What would I like to take away from this session?

What have you discovered in this session? Is there something you particularly liked about this session? Or something you particularly liked about how you were in this session? Is there a direction that you want to take to do something in your life or to work on in your next session?

In this review, remember not to go back into your material. These are just a few “headlines” that summarise “in a nutshell” what you have got from the session and lighten your attention ready to go back into the everyday world.

You may want to write these down for future reference, particularly for a future session.

Something I am looking forward to.

An unconditional positive: it could be something small – “I am looking forward to sitting down with a cup of coffee” – or big “I am looking forward to my graduation ceremony next week”. Not “I am quite looking forward to” nor a hidden negative “I am looking forward to the weekend” (i.e. I am not looking forward to the rest of the week) but it could be “I am looking forward to going windsurfing at the weekend”. You can create a positive as long as you believe it is reasonably possible “I am looking forward to making a meal with my children this evening”.

Attention out

Other wordings you may come across for this are “Attention Switch” or “Present Time”. This is an activity for the client to finally get their attention away from what they were working on and on to the present time and place. This is done by focussing on light mental exercises like “what is your telephone number - backwards” or “name 5 flowers beginning with P”

Sometimes, particularly when they are using free attention, the client may do this for themselves. Normally they will ask the counsellor for some questions: “Questions?” “Attention out (questions)?” or “Attention switch?”.

If the client is not obviously doing this for themselves, then the counsellor should ask them some questions during the final half minute or so of the session anyway.

However, it is the client's responsibility to have their attention out by the end of the session.

End

When the timer goes off.

If this was the first half of the session, change roles and go back to:

Client specifies how much warning they want before the end of the session

Repetition

This is the first of the “Aim for Discharge” techniques.

Often when people are talking and they touch upon something that is a bit uncomfortable, that might make them feel emotional, they will switch and talk about something else. Often they will do this without even noticing it.

In co-counselling we recognise that getting in touch with our emotions can be really helpful. One way of doing this in sessions is when we do or say something that feels as if it might be connected with some emotions we do it again, we repeat it. Usually we repeat it several times. If the emotion starts to come to the surface we may carry on repeating until repetition seems to have got us as far as it can. Then we go on to use some of the other techniques that you will be learning.

On the course you will probably do some “gymnastic” exercises, like simply repeating a phrase that the trainer gives you for, say half a minute. The main point of these exercises is to help you get over any inhibitions you may have about repeating things in this way.

In a real session, when you realise that some words hold tension for you, the idea is to try repeating these words a number of times.

Exaggeration

You may have noticed when you were practising repetition that you wanted to say what you were repeating more loudly or emphatically. This is the natural progression from repetition.

There are several ways in which you can exaggerate what you are saying and doing. In practice you will tend to do all of them together.

Exaggerate the meaning

"It's a nice day .. it's a beautiful day ... it's a glorious day ... it's a fantastically wonderful day ..."

Swearing

In our experience even the most polite people may swear when they are co-counselling. We invite you to think of swear words in this context just as sounds that emphasise how strongly you feel. (In fact, you can make up words or sounds instead of swearing.) It does not mean that you are a coarse individual or that you necessarily use such language in ordinary conversation.

So, exaggeration:

"Go away ... get away from me get away you fucking evil bastard"

If the counsellor finds this too upsetting then they can ask the client not to swear. The counsellor's rights with respect to the client's material will be covered in more detail . (see Counsellor's rights)



buggity buggity fuck fuck

*A future king of England
in a therapy session,
from the film "The King's
Speech"*

Exaggerate the volume

Say it louder – and louder.

Try to keep your mouth and throat open if you are shouting, let the sound come from your belly, it makes the sound more powerful and it helps stop you getting a sore throat.

If you are saying something quietly you can also exaggerate the quietness, go even quieter, or in a high pitch voice, go higher or low pitch go lower.

Exaggerate what you are doing with your body

If you are moving your arms about, do so more vigorously. If you feel like stamping then stamp, stamp harder, jump up and down. If you are tensing some part of you, tense it up even more.

An Example and Exercise

In a short session, when you are client, have a "warm up" period to find something that has some feelings attached to it. An example might be "I am cold".

Try repetition, repeating "I am cold" several times

Try exaggerating the meaning of "I am cold" - "I am freezing" etc.

Then try exaggerating the sound

Then try exaggerating what you are doing with your body

Work with what happened – do whatever you like with this time, talk about how you found the exercise, anything you thought of while doing it or anything else.

Checklist of topics

This is a list of topics that may be covered on a Fundamentals of Co-Counselling course. You may look at this list after each session or day and tick those items that you think have been covered.

| | | Session 1 | Session 2 | Session 3 | Session 4 | Session 5 | Session 6 | Session 7 | Session 8 | Session 9 | Session 10 |
|------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Techniques | Repetition | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Exaggeration | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Contradiction | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Breathing | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Bodywork | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Touch | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Scanning | | | | | | | | | | |
| | What's the thought? | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Literal description | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Present tense | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Acting into | | | | | | | | | | |
| | What's left unsaid? | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Goal setting | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Action planning | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Direction holding | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Interrupt patterns | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Attention out | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Role play | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Identity checks | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Starting and finishing | | | | | | | | | | |
| What's on top | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Practice | Basic rules | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Contracts | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Free attention | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Balance of attention | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Restimulation as counsellor | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Confidentiality | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Timekeeping | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Right to say no | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Arranging sessions | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Owning feelings | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Body language | | | | | | | | | | |
| | What is an intervention? | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Process and content | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Celebrating | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Validations | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Hugging | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Using "I" | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Discharge | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Aiming for | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Encouraging | | | | | | | | | | |
| Non-judgmental | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Client in charge | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Socialisation | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Issues | Empowerment | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Confronting | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Oppression | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Intimacy | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Sexuality | | | | | | | | | | |
| Peerness | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Theory | Feelings map | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Restimulation | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Feelings v emotions | | | | | | | | | | |
| | What is a pattern | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Pattern/person distinction | | | | | | | | | | |
| Re-evaluation | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Background | History | | | | | | | | | | |
| | The CCI | | | | | | | | | | |

Opening and Closing Circles

At co-counselling events and on this course we generally start and finish the day in a circle, usually standing and holding hands.

Part of idea of these circles is to start and end the day on a positive and our attention in a good state.

Closing circle

At the end of the day in the closing circle there will typically be a round of your name and something you have liked about yourself during the day.

Next there will often be a round something like “things you are looking forward to before we next meet”. As stated for ending a session, this does not have to be anything big but it needs to be an unconditional positive.

After that we think of a light and lively way to end and break the circle.

Opening circle

At the start of the day there will be an opening circle. This may start with a game in the circle. After this there is often a round of your name and how you are feeling.

Next there may be a “news and goods” round. This is an invitation for you to say your name and something that is new and good that has occurred in your life since we last met. Or you can have a (positive) “new” and a “good” if you like. Another possibility is a light question like “something interesting you noticed on the way here.”

The idea, as well as getting good attention, is to encourage you to notice the positives and the changes in your life. Good is to notice the good things, however difficult life seems to be – like having a nice conversation with someone. New (and positive) might be something like saying “no” to someone who you have found it difficult to say “no” to.

They can be quite small things or they might be big things that you really want to celebrate. And, of course, you can pass.

So a new and a good might be:

“I am Mary and new and good is that I told my boss that I objected to him telephoning me when I am off work ... Yessss!”

or

“I am Peter and good is the heathers in my garden and new is I had my hair cut at a different hairdressers.”

You are encouraged to notice news and goods in your life not only so that you will have something to say in News and Goods rounds but also to help you feel better and grow.

Session 3

Principles and Models for co-counselling

The purpose of this handout is to show some of the important principles that lie behind CCI co-counselling, what we may wish to bear in mind and where we are aiming.

CCI, however, is not rooted in any particular theory (in “The Barefoot Psychoanalyst” (Southgate, J. and Randall, R. (1989)) co-counselling is linked to different theories from those described here). These ideas may be useful to you to understand how co-counselling works. You may or may not agree with them. The main thing is that co-counselling does work.

Co-counselling is a core humanistic practice. Humanistic practices (humanistic psychology or personal growth work) tend to share three characteristics:

- a positive view of human beings
- a recognition of the interconnectedness of mind and body and
- a belief that emotions are normal, useful parts of being human.

As we shall see, co-counselling shares all these characteristics.

Co-counselling can be seen as a natural extension of person centred therapy, going from putting the client at the centre to putting them in charge. It is also a slightly formalised extension of what good friends have done for millennia and the kind of helpful attention that can sometimes (with luck) be shared by parents and babies or small children.

The basic nature of Humans

Co-counselling considers that humans are at core

- intelligent (able to think well about new situations, use experience to concoct accurate and flexible responses to them),
- loving (able to relate well to others),
- powerful (able to understand what choices we have, decide among them well and act on our decisions)
- wise (able to use our previous knowledge well)
- whole (every part of us, mind, body, spirit, is connected to every other part)
- we want to live in ways that show all these characteristics and always do our best to do so.

Needs and Hurts

We have needs which may be met or to a greater or lesser extent not met. If we have the right conditions we tend to “self-actualise” or be and act more in touch with our human potential.

When things go wrong we may be actively hurt, physically, emotionally or both, or some aspect of our needs may be neglected by those around us at a very vulnerable time in our lives.

Feelings and Emotions

We generally use the word “feelings” to refer to anything that could follow “I feel like ...” So hot or cold could be feelings. Often feelings impel us to do things like “I feel like going for a walk”. An important set of these feelings are ones that impel us to behave in ways that are not in our interests or, as we say in co-counselling, we run patterns. So I may have a pattern of always saying yes when certain people ask me to do things. I *feel* unable to say “no”.

Emotions are another set of feelings. We generally use the term “emotion” to refer to the

primary emotions of joy, anger, sadness, and fear.

Our minds and bodies are completely interconnected and having feelings is just as central to our humanity as having human bodies. We often express our feelings through physical processes, for example the colour in our faces may intensify or drain away when we are angry or afraid.

Our emotions have survival value and may be one of the reasons why we are such a successful species. They help us solve the problem that gives rise to them.

- Fear helps us deal with danger, alerting us to it and enabling us to avoid it
- Anger fuels our determination and gives us strength particularly to hold our boundaries when dealing with aggression
- sadness is our response to lack or loss of love and connection. It can encourage others to reach out to us and us to reach out to others.

[Note that anger and aggression are completely different. Rather than being an emotion itself, aggression is dramatised misbehaviour towards another person that usually involves violating their boundaries or not respect their right to make decisions for themselves. Aggressive behaviour may be triggered by various emotions buried in the aggressor. It is entirely possible to be angry without being aggressive and aggressive without being angry.]

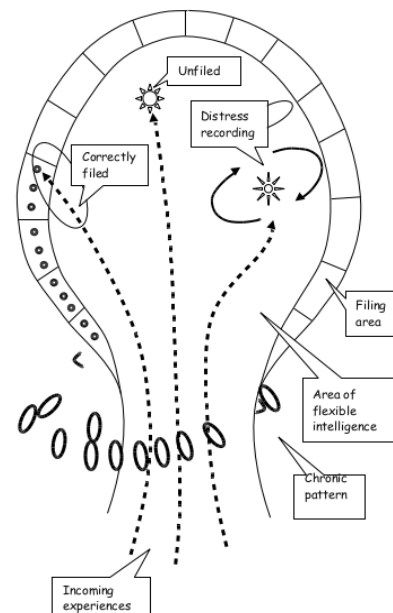
Restimulation

Frequently in life we react to situations compulsively in ways that are not useful for us. We react to the same sorts of situation in the same way and we can find it very difficult to act in different ways that would be more effective for us. We may not even realise that we are doing this and we may not realise what it is about the situation that leads us to behave this way.

There are many explanations of this phenomenon which we call *restimulation* and is sometimes also called *triggering* or *reacting*. What seems to happen is that there were situations where our needs were not met or we have been hurt, physically, emotionally or spiritually. Initially the memory of this event may be thought of as unrecorded. If we have sufficient opportunity to release our feelings and complete our emotional responses then the memory may be correctly “filed” amongst our normal memories. Otherwise, it may sit there as a “distress recording”.

We recognise, probably without realising it, some similarity in our current situation with one that has gone before and jump to the conclusion (without being aware of it) that the new situation is “just like” the old one. We move into a rigid, robotic response (a “distress pattern”) that is quite unlike our flexible, flowing, intelligent response. This seems to be associated with pain in the previous experience along with our needs not being met and not having had the opportunity to release our feelings adequately.

Example: My mummy goes to work and leaves me with a carer. This feels like life and death to me as I am very small and do not have a clear idea of when she will come back.. Then I feel grief, fear and anger and may not release it at all or not completely. In future similar situations I feel more sad, afraid and angry and am less able to be away from my



How patterns get recorded

mum with confidence or happiness. This can persist to adulthood.

If I am able to release the emotions completely, my ability to deal with future similar situations is enhanced rather than hindered.

Discharge

When we are either hurt or experiencing the restimulation of an earlier hurt, releasing our emotions seems to help. Many of the leisure activities most associated with emotions bear this out. Story-telling, drama (comic or tragic), music can all help us get in touch with our feelings when we perform or watch them and we feel better as a result. This happens through various processes that we call *discharge* (others may call it emotional release, catharsis or abreaction) in which certain physical processes help to release certain emotions.

The following table gives an idea of how particular emotions may be discharged.

| Emotion | Discharge process(es) |
|---|---|
| Grief | Crying, sobbing |
| Fear (light, embarrassed) (heavy) | Blushing, laughing, sweating, talking High pitched noises, shaking, cold sweating, going pale, urinating |
| Anger (heavy) boredom | Talking angrily, loud noises, violent movement Yawning |

When we are not under the influence of pain or restimulation, our natural attitude and demeanour seems to be a happy and relaxed enthusiasm for our life, the world and all that is in them and a willingness to devote our clear attention to the external world and the people in it.

Balance of attention

To work successfully on “melting” restimulation and retrieving our good attention in the area of our distress patterns, it seems to be very helpful to keep our attention balanced between our old (or new) difficulties and the world as a good place. Having someone else to help with this process, while not absolutely essential, is very helpful. In co-counselling the presence of the counsellor helps to remind us that this is a safe space while we are connecting with other, difficult, times and places. Stories of discharge being harmful may arise from discharging without this assistance or without emotional competence.

Emotional Competence

We are aiming at a state we call Emotional Competence. It involves being comfortable with our own and others' emotions and being able to choose freely whether, where, when and how to release our emotions. This frees us to choose where to put our attention at any given moment.

Sources

The ideas in this handout come from many sources as well as our own experiences. There is a book list at the end of this manual with suggestions if you want to study any of these further. In particular, John Rowan's booklet on Humanistic Psychology (Rowan, J. (2005)) and Sheila Ernst and Lucy Goodison's book “In Our Own Hands” (Ernst, S. and Goodison, L. (1981)) outline the background of humanistic psychology. Harvey Jackin's book “The Human Side of Human Beings: The Theory of Re-evaluation Counselling”

(Jackins, H. (1994)) is a very readable description of the original theory of co-counselling. Anne Dickson's book "Trusting the Tides" (Dickson, A. (2001)) is a book about emotions from a CCI co-counsellor.

Introduction 2 to A Definition of CCI

Principles “4”

Leading on from what seems to work and what we understand about people, how does the client use the opportunity of a co-counselling session?

A Definition of CCI includes the following:

- “4. The client's work is their own deep process. It may include, but is not restricted to:
- a. discharge and re-evaluation on personal distress and cultural oppression
 - b. celebration of personal strengths
 - c. creative thinking at the frontiers of personal belief
 - d. visualising future personal and cultural states for goal-setting and action-planning
 - e. extending consciousness into transpersonal states

CCI takes the view that the first of these is a secure foundation for the other four.”

Much of this course focusses on “aim for discharge” techniques. An important reason for doing this is to gain some re-evaluation, new insight or change in how we feel or understand our situation. It seems that our capacity to do other work on our personal development, such as b., c., d. & e., is diminished unless we do this discharge work. Hence “CCI takes the view that the first of these (a.) is a secure foundation for the other four.”

Co-counselling is not solely about focussing on our own internal issues. It is also about how we respond to the situation in the world about us including cultural oppression.

CCI has no collective view on spirituality or religion. However, it is probably generally held that to deny any sort of spiritual or transpersonal possibilities is not rational. The “trans” in transpersonal has the sense of crossing over or reaching out. So we can use co-counselling to try to draw on wider universal or spiritual metaphorical energies.

The clients work is “not restricted to ...” in other words as client you can use any approach to personal development known to humankind – *as long as you can do so self directedly as client.*

Introduction 3 to A Definition of CCI

Principles 1 - 3

Leading on from what seems to work and what we understand about people, how does the client use the opportunity of a co-counselling session?

In A Definition of CCI it is written:

“1. Co-counselling is usually practised in pairs with one person working, the client, one person facilitating, the counsellor, then they reverse these roles. In every session each person spends the same time in the role of both client and counsellor. A session is usually on the same occasion, although sometimes people may take turns as client and counsellor on different occasions.”

If you do not have enough time for both of you to do all you want on one occasion it is generally better to split the time equally and both work for a shorter time then arrange another session. Otherwise, it is easy for all sorts of reasons not to have the return session. Also, as you get used to co-counselling you can find that you can do a lot in a short session. Nevertheless, the option remains.

“2. When co-counsellors work in groups of three or more, members take an equal time as client, each client either choosing one other person as counsellor, or working in a self-directing way with the silent, supportive attention of the group. For certain purposes, the client may request co-operative interventions by two or more counsellors.”

Sometimes when groups get together to co-counsel there is an odd number. If they split up for sessions often 3 people will work together and the rest in pairs. Sometimes groups of co-counsellors will work together with each person having equal time as client.

The things that a counsellor may do other than giving free attention are covered later in this manual, .

“3. The client is in charge of their session in at least seven ways:

- a. trusting and following the living process of liberation emerging within
- b. choosing at the start of the session one of three contracts given in no. 9 below
- c. choosing within the first two contracts what to work on and how
- d. being free to change the contract during their session
- e. having a right to accept or disregard interventions made by the counsellor
- f. being responsible for keeping a balance of attention
- g. being responsible for working in a way that does not harm themselves, the counsellor, other people, or the environment.”

“*The client is in charge*”, not may be, *is*. In other words **the client is required to be in charge at all times**. This is a unique feature of CCI co-counselling.

“in *at least seven ways*”: sometimes we say “The client is in charge. (full stop)”. In other words the client is not limited to being in charge in these seven ways, these are just illustrations of how the client is in charge.

“*trusting and following the living process of liberation emerging within*” “Trusting the process” is a phrase that is often used in connection with personal change. Learning to trust the process is one of the reasons for doing the co-counselling core training course. Effectively this is learning that co-counselling works, not just as an idea but as something

we have experienced in ourselves or in others. We may well not understand why it works but we “get” that it does work. We learn to trust that doing co-counselling will enable some sort of process to go on within us and that by “following” it we will change (see Process and Content). It is “living” because it is a process that involves learning from life which is continually unfolding.

We also learn to trust that this change will be a “process of liberation” that emerges from within us. In other words becoming free of (liberated from) our patterns (see Life and Patterns), able to be flexible and in our own power. This is the process that Abraham Maslow called “self-actualisation” (Maslow, A. (1943)).

This is the main reason for doing co-counselling – to live a happier and more fulfilling life by freeing us from the things that we have developed deep in our minds that prevent us from feeling and doing the things that are in our best interests. Those things may of course include changing the world for ourselves and others

The “*three contracts*” and “*interventions made by the counsellor*” are introduced later in this manual, see Contracts and counsellor interventions.

Starting work in a co-counselling session

There are 3 broad possibilities for starting the work:

- An immediate issue
- Thinking about current issues in your life and then choosing what to work on
- Working on something that you have planned to work on

An immediate issue

What's on top right now

This will be something that you are feeling emotional about right now. This might be something that happened on the way to the session, for instance narrowly avoiding a traffic accident. Or it could be something recent like an argument with someone or receiving some bad news.

It may be important to do some work on this first because it may take up your attention making it difficult to have attention for what you are doing or to give good attention to your partner when they are the client. It may be best if you choose to be client first in these cases.

Beware, though, that you may not want to spend most of your session on this issue. You could, therefore, ask your counsellor to tell you when you have had, say, 5 minutes and then you would go onto either of the next two approaches. Or you could have a 5 minutes (for example) each way session first in order to get immediate issues out of the way.

An immediate issue may be the “top layer” of some much deeper issues for you and may provide you with a useful way in. The question is whether you want to carry on working on these in this session, bearing in mind the considerations below.

Thinking about current issues in your life and then choosing what to work on

What's on top in my life

Start by “scanning on what's on top”, in other words scan on the issues that are current in your life, the things that are bothering you or that you would like to change. Do this until you think you will not have missed anything important. Then decide which of these issues you want to work on.

Sometimes a client has what appears to be a productive session and works on various important issues. After the session, may be when they are leaving, they say “by the way, I have just been given the sack” or some such important issue. This is the issue that they have been busily avoiding throughout their session but which they really needed to work on. As client of course you have the choice to do this and you may regret not working on the “big issue”

Working on something that you have planned to work on

In the days or hours before a session it is quite common to think about what you want to work on. Indeed, you may do some preliminary work at this time.

You may have an issue that you want to work on over a number of sessions.

Co-counselling sessions can follow on from one another, you can start a session where you ended the previous one. Your partner (if they are different) does not need to know anything about what you have done before. You may want to use some of the short practice sessions during the course in this way.

Quite often when we finish a session we may think that it would be a good idea to work on something that came up in this session in our next session. If you keep a journal of your co-counselling sessions you can use it to make a note of these ideas.

Cushion work

Co-counsellors use cushions a lot. For a start we often work sitting on them because it supports us to move around in response to how we are feeling.

We can also, in our imagination, sit other people on cushions and talk to them. Or we can imagine the other cushions are other people – or even things.

If we imagine that the other cushions are people then we can hug them, pet them, hit them, strangle them, stamp on them or anything else we might feel like doing to them. Or we can use contradictions and see what happens if we try to do the opposite of what we feel like doing.

Cushion work may be effective because because the people that we have difficulties with are the ones that we are carrying around in our heads. Once we have sorted things out with the people in our heads then the real people are much less of a problem. Also, we can sort things out with the people in our heads even if the real people are no longer in our lives.

So a way we can work on the difficulties is to, so to speak, take the person out of our head, put them on a cushion and talk to them. (We write about a cushion but it does not have to be one. It can be anything that you can imagine someone sitting on, even a tissue or a place on the floor.)

The important part of doing this work is to remember that this is mainly *not* about what you would *actually* say to someone. The technique can be used to develop and rehearse what to say to someone, but the important thing is to say the things that you would *not* say first.

You use your balance of attention, you keep your attention balanced between imagining the real person in front of you and knowing that this is a co-counselling session and they are not going to know what you said. You can say absolutely anything you like to them.

Using cushions offers many possibilities. You can have several cushions with different people on them. For instance, you could have your parents and siblings on cushions, or your boss, their boss and a colleague.

The “people in your head” may be part of you. “Critical parent” may have been a real parent or it may be an amalgamation of messages from people in authority that you have internalised. There may be part of you that telling you that you must do this or not do that. (If you are familiar with the concept, we are referring to subpersonalities here.)

You can also swap places with the other person. So if, for example, you have got your mother on the other cushion you could try swapping places and respond as if you were your mother. You may swap back and forwards and have a conversation with her – with emotions!

Try these things out!

Celebration

As we have seen, co-counselling, along with other humanistic approaches, takes a positive view of human beings. In other words we believe that human beings are essentially good and given the right conditions will grow and develop or “self actualise”. Any sense that we are any less than wonderful is a pattern, a piece of distress from the way that we have been treated in the past.

As Harvey Jackins wrote:

“Every single human being at every moment of the past, if the entire situation is taken into account, has always done the very best he or she could do and so deserves neither blame nor reproach from anyone, including self.

This, in particular, is true of you.”

Over and over again, strange as it may seem to you at first, we find that when people behave less than rationally, however terrible their actions, if we listen to their stories of how they came to be how and where they are we can understand why they might be as they are.

Culture of celebration

Some co-counsellors, particularly in the USA, talk of having a “culture of celebration”. What they mean by this is that they try to interrupt any negativity, any suggestion that we are less than wonderful. Instead they focus what is good about us, what we do well and what we might be.

We suggest that when you are with other co-counsellors you watch out for times when they either put themselves down or you put yourself down. If you notice it, see if you can gently, but firmly, interrupt it. So, for example, if someone says “I am an idiot, I forgot to bring my purse” you might say “You are a wonderful person and you have not brought your purse”. A light touch is usually needed here!

You may also find it useful to act similarly, though less obviously, in ordinary conversation with people who are not co-counsellors. Although in general we suggest you **do not** try to use co-counselling techniques with other people out of co-counselling sessions, in this case this type of response may help you to become better at relating to others – one of the longer-term benefits of co-counselling.

Celebration as contradiction

In your co-counselling session if you notice that you are putting yourself down in any way we suggest that you try contradicting it. So, for instance, if you catch yourself saying, or thinking, “I am no good at asking for what I want” you could try a simple contradiction “I am very good at asking for what I want” or you might find it more believable first to scan on times when you did or do ask for what you want. Then celebrate asking for what you want. Try joyfully putting people on cushions and asking them for what you want. If you are attending a class there may be exercises to give you this opportunity. You may also find it helpful to bring genuinely celebratory attitudes into your life more often than has been your habit.

Session 4

Bodywork

What part do bodies play?

In the section about the Principles and Models for co-counselling it was said that “Our minds and bodies are completely interconnected” and in a core training course you will normally be asked to move around and play physical games.

We may often become ill when under stress, feel more ill when our minds are in low energy states or find that a headache will go away when we have a good co-counselling session. This does **not** mean that “all illness is psycho-somatic “ or “ just be positive and you will overcome your cancer”.

Our bodies appear to “store” our unprocessed feelings in many ways. The storage may relate to very early times in our lives as well as what is happening in the present moment. The non-verbal cues that we get from our bodies are often a more accurate indicator than those for which we have words. How we feel about our bodies (well or ill) significantly influences our sense of self. Indeed it is sometimes said that “ Bodies never lie”.

This topic looks in more detail at how to bring the messages our bodies give us into the open and use them in our personal work. We shall be focussing on

- breathing,
- cushion work with body parts,
- control patterns (physical actions that hold our feelings in place)
- touch and hugs.

Issues around our sexuality will be covered in a later article (see Intimacy and co-counselling). For now, it is enough to say that intimacy is often confused with sexuality and for this article what we are concentrating on is non-sexual.

Physical control patterns

We live in a society that discourages us from an early age, from using the discharge processes to release our emotions and children learn early that their releases are either not welcome or only welcome to a very limited extent. We often devise physical actions that will help us suppress our emotional release. Examples are screwing up our hair, digging our nails into our hands, shifting from one food to another. If you find this happening in your sessions, work with it in the ways suggested below.

Breathing

Keep doing it. Our breath is crucial to our survival. Without being able to take in and give out the gases we need, we die more quickly than if any other of our needs is not met.

How we breath is also connected with how we feel. One thing that people often seem to do when some emotion is beginning to surface is to hold their breath as they hold the emotion back. If you notice this in a co-counselling session try to keep breathing and let the emotion come.

Actively trying different ways of breathing can be used as an aid to discharge. Experiment with all the different parameters of breathing: speed; depth; belly, chest or both; through your mouth or through your nose; with or without sound; standing up or lying down.

Wilhelm Reich suggested that we have layers of invisible “body armour” behind which we bury our emotions. Breathing seems to provide a way through these layers. You may wish to research Reichian breathing to find out more.

On the other hand, outside of co-counselling sessions, breathing can also be used to stay calm and not be driven by our emotions.

Some exercises and examples

1. The "7-11" technique.

Breathe in for a count of seven, breath out to a count of eleven.

2. Breathing exercise:

This is about relaxing, concentrating on your breath and moving towards making your out breath longer than your in breath.

Sit comfortably on a cushion cross legged with a straight back, or , if that is not comfortable for you, on a chair without arms, your legs and feet bent at right angles. Close your eyes and listen . Ask someone to read the next part out loud.

"Whatever part of you is touching the floor, bring your attention gently to it. Feel your weight pushing against the floor. Feel the floor pushing back. Starting with your feet, gently relax all the muscles in your body. Put your attention in turn on your feet, calves, thighs, bottom, belly, waist, lower back, chest, upper back, shoulders, arms, hands, neck, head and *relax* the muscle sets in turn. Imagine there is a thread connecting the top of your head with the sky above your head. Keep part of your attention on keeping all these muscles relaxed, particularly your back, shoulder and neck muscles.

Now bring your attention to your breath. Breath in and out comfortably at a normal speed. After several breaths, start to count gently as you breath. Start a new count with each in breath (say 1 – 2 – 3 – 4) and repeat on the out breath. It may be that your in breath and out breath are approximately the same length. When you have done this for a few breaths, try lengthening the out breath by one count and continue. Repeat and see how far you can, gently and comfortably do this. Check the relaxation of your muscles at intervals.

Go back to ordinary breathing , gently open your eyes.. You may wish to tell someone else what happened and how you feel now."

Some people find they feel more calm, grounded and centred after this exercise. Even if that hasn't been the case for you, you may wish to try it at other times to see what effect it may have.

Using co-counselling techniques with body parts in a session

Sometimes you may notice that a particular part of your body seems to have a message for you. This may be

- an urge to move or be energetic
- an ache, pain, soreness or illness
- tiredness that won't go away with sleep
- a habit you have of holding your body in a certain way
- a habit of taking something into your body inappropriately, such as drugs or more or less food than you need

Several techniques can be used to have a conversation with your body. Repetition, exaggeration, contradiction and cushion work are all suitable. Here is one example of how it might go, as client with free attention from the counsellor:

"My head aches",

“my head aches” (repetition)

“my head really aches a lot” (exaggeration)

“my head ache has gone/Only my head aches/ I have a small and not very painful headache” (contradiction)

(“put my head” on a cushion) “hello head, I see you are hurting – what have you to tell me?”

(move to sit on the “head” cushion) “It's stuffy in here/I didn't sleep well last night/ I have been in this kind of situation before and I don't like -----”

(move back) “What do you need, head?”

(move to sit on the “head” cushion) “some fresh air/ a short sleep/ a session on what this reminds me of”

and then you can do something about what you have heard.

There is another approach, Focusing, developed by Eugene Gendlin (Gendlin, E. (2003)), which, while not a part of co-counselling, can be used in co-counselling sessions by the client to work on body sensations.

Touch and hugs

Touch can be on the one hand a huge contradiction to distress, and on the other, very restimulating. It all depends on your personal history. As client in a co-counselling session you may want to hold hands with your counsellor. You may also try getting them to touch you in some way, for example on your back, or hold you.

The counsellor may do what is requested and is only obliged to give free attention. They do not have to do anything that they find unacceptable to them. If the counsellor responds to a request for touch by just continuing to give free attention that is perfectly all right and the client can work with whatever comes up for them.

Co-counsellors often hug each other and some prefer not to.

If you want to ask someone for a hug, be aware of how you ask. If you want a hug try saying “I would like a hug” rather than “Would you like a hug” - unless you are genuinely offering them a hug because *they* look as if they would like one. If you don't know them you might ask first, whether they like to hug. All this can often be done non verbally by, for instance, approaching someone with your arms outstretched.

Be aware of how you hug. Notice how the other person is hugging you and try to reciprocate that. It is generally best not to hug someone more tightly than they hug you. You might sometimes try hugging a bit more tightly to see if the other person responds – otherwise you can end up hugging someone gently when you would both like firm hugs!

There are, of course, different ways of hugging, for example: “A” frame, full contact, bear hug, windmill and heart to heart.

It is always all right to say “no” to a hug. You can also refuse a hug non verbally, for example by holding your hand up in a “stop” gesture.

Contradiction

Contradiction is, probably, the most effective technique for getting in touch with emotions, particularly the emotions that lie behind some of the things about yourself that you would like to change.

This article is about simple contradiction. A later article will consider more advanced contradictions (see [More on Contradictions](#)).

Use contradiction with repetition and exaggeration, in other words, try repeating and exaggerating the contradictions.

As with exaggeration, there are several ways in which you can contradict what you are saying and doing.

Contradict the meaning

“I hate this miserable weather I love the soft rain and gentle light”

Contradict the sound

For example, if you are talking quietly, try shouting. If you are being loud, try being quiet, in a high pitch try a low pitch and so on.

Contradict what you are doing with your body

Particularly, if you sitting down, still and perhaps slumped, try standing up and dancing about. If you are being energetic, try being still. If some part of you is tense, try relaxing it.

Literal description and present tense

Literal description

This technique is a way of getting back into the moment when something happened and reconnecting with what you felt then. It is often used with scanning for when you have felt a certain way. Scan several incidents then pick one and work on it with a literal description.

The idea is to describe the moment in detail including all your senses, what you could see, hear, smell, feel and even taste if it is relevant. Things like a smell or a sound can be very effective in bringing back how you felt at the time.

Imagine you were an actor in a play where several actors were on stage when the curtain went up. Then imagine describing to someone the scene when the curtain went up. Try to describe it so that the other person can experience what it was like to be you at that moment.

It is important not to tell the story, this is a “stop motion” technique. Think of it like taking one frame from a film and describing what is in that frame, adding in the sounds, smells and so on.

For example:

“I was sitting in the conservatory. The sun was shining in from my left and it felt warm. I was sitting at a glass topped table and someone had draped some orange sheets over the chairs on the other side. There was a window sill going round three sides and I noticed some pink flowers on the sill opposite me. Outside was a small garden that had been recently weeded. Beyond it was a wooden fence. There was a little intermittent buzzing sound, a sound a bit like refrigerator and distant sounds of traffic and aircraft.”

Keep describing until you feel fully in that moment.

Present tense

The next technique, called present tense, is generally used with literal description. The idea is to talk about something that has happened or maybe will happen as if it is happening now. In other words describe the scene using the present tense.

For example:

“I am sitting in the conservatory. The sun is shining in from my left and it feels warm. I am sitting”

Future events

These techniques can also be used for events that have not happened yet, for example a difficult conversation that you need to have, an interview or a presentation. “I am standing in front of these people. My boss is on the front row and she is looking critical. There are large windows on the wall to my right, it is raining outside. There is a smell of polish

This can be the starting point for some role play where you can practice and it does not matter what you say or do. You may find that feelings come up and you need to go back to past situations. For instance, you might want to confront someone who has been aggressive towards you. You may find that you need to go back to the situation when they were aggressive and discharge some anger. You may find that the amount of anger coming up leads you to earlier situations when other people were aggressive towards you.

Balance of attention

This technique illustrates and emphasises the importance of keeping a “balance of attention”. Part of your attention is far away in time and space and you may have all sorts of feelings in that place. Part of your attention is aware that this is a co-counselling session, it is a safe place and whatever is, was or will be happening in that other place is not happening here. This is a safe place to get in touch with whatever was happening or will happen then.

As an exercise you might try describing a pleasant childhood memory using present tense and literal description and keeping your balance of attention.

Session 5

Acting into

Sometimes in our sessions we have a sense of an emotion or maybe the idea that given what we are working on it would be appropriate to be feeling a particular emotion. Some of the techniques that we have been looking at can help to bring the emotion out so that we can discharge it. We can use present time and literal description to get back into the moment or use repetition and exaggeration to build up what we are feeling.

Acting into is another technique for getting more in touch with the emotion. What we do is to act as if we were fully feeling the emotion, we put on an act of discharging the emotion. You may think of it as if you were an actor on stage. Your character is grief stricken, terrified or furious and you have to convince the audience that that is what you are feeling.

Acting into is not pretending to discharge or dramatising how you feel. You know that it is a technique and the aim is to get in touch with the real emotion within you. If it works you will find that rather than deliberately putting energy into acting into the emotion, the emotion starts to come in and you start to discharge naturally.

Acting into is a sort of contradiction, you are contradicting your reluctance to discharge the emotion.

Cushions can be useful for acting into. You can hug them or say goodbye to them when acting into grief. You can beat them, stamp on them, strangle them and murder them in various ways.

Make sure that you keep a balance of attention when working with acting into. Do not do anything that will hurt or damage you, anyone else or any thing. If you are thumping or kicking make sure that you have enough cushioning securely in place. If you are striking at a wall, particularly if you are lying on your back and kicking, make sure that the wall is strong enough. Plasterboard walls generally are not!

Here are some ways to work in your session. An exercise that you may do on your core training or in a group involves "milling round" and briefly acting into each emotion in turn with a partner before moving on.

Acting into anger

Props are particularly useful for acting into anger.

A rolled up towel can be strangled or used to hit a cushion or a wall. You could ask your counsellor to pull the other end.

Badminton racquets and plastic baseball bats can also be used to hit a cushion. A badminton racquet can be used quite flexibly as long as you hit the cushion with the flat of the racquet.

A technique that may need to be used with a baseball bat and can be used with other items is to kneel on a cushion with a cushion or a pile of cushions in front of you. Your counsellor gives attention from off to one side. Repeatedly hold the item above and behind your head with both hands then bring it down to strike the cushion in front of you. Let out loud sounds or yell things like "I hate you".

You can, of course, imagine that a cushion is someone with whom you are angry. Shout at the cushion ("how dare you" or anything else) and do things to the cushion that you might feel like doing to this person. Remember this is not a recommendation for action outside your session!

Acting into grief

Think about an actor, for example playing Romeo or Juliet in the scene where Romeo comes into the tomb or Juliet wakes up to find the other (apparently) dead. Acting into grief would be like convincing the audience of how distraught your character is at this moment.

Acting into fear

Again, think about how an actor would portray being terrified. Notice any ways that your body reacts to fear, particularly shaking, and exaggerate that. Try panting.

Acting into joy

It may often be helpful to act into joy about something, until you can feel a real sense of joy. This can help you get your attention onto the good side of a situation.

Finding the way through our material

Co-counselling is essentially serendipitous, like “looking for a needle in a haystack and coming out of it with the farmer's daughter”. We frequently go through our sessions, come to the end with some new insight or feeling different about something and thinking “well, I never thought I would end up working on that”.

So there is no set way of working through our material. How, then, do we decide what to do next? We have a set of techniques, how do we use them?

We call these techniques “aim for discharge” techniques so this is one guide, follow the emotions. If there is anything that you say or do that has some, even the smallest bit of, emotional charge in it try to work into that emotion. Try repeating what had the charge, try exaggerating it, try acting into the emotion.

If there are other people involved, put them on cushions, talk to them, be emotional with them, be physical with them. Try taking their place. If you are debating things within yourself, try putting the parts of yourself on other cushions. Try being the different parts of you.

If you think you may be onto something but there is not much emotion coming up, try scanning on similar situations, times when I felt like this. Alternatively try contradiction. We discuss patterns and contradiction in other articles (see Contradiction, More on Contradictions, Life and Patterns). Working with these is a very effective way of getting in touch with the underlying emotions.

Notice what happens to you when you discharge. You may find yourself spontaneously remembering other situations, often well in the past, and even feeling as if you were there. For example, a client is having difficulty doing something.

(On cushion 1) “You really ought to get on with it”

(On cushion 2) “Don't want to”

(On cushion 1) “You really ought to, you now you should”

(On cushion 2) “Shan't, won't, you can't make me, waah, I hate you”

The client notices that their tone of voice becomes childlike and they feel like a petulant child. There seems to be energy in it so they carry on repeating, exaggerating, perhaps hitting the other cushion or jumping up and down and generally having a tantrum. As they do this they may recall incidents from childhood, possibly ones where they might have felt like having a tantrum but it was not safe to do so. They carry on until they feel they have discharged this piece of emotion.

Sometimes you may not go spontaneously back to earlier times and you may find it useful to scan on earliest memories. However, it is not necessarily the case that the problems we are having relate back to our childhood. Co-counselling can be a bit like looking backwards through time and working backwards through more recent things first. On the other hand, if you know that there are issues in your past that you want to deal with then you can go right ahead and do that.

Re-evaluation

Co-counselling is not about thrashing about in our pasts or discharging for the sake of it. The aim is to gain some insight or re-evaluation and make changes that improve our lives in the present.

The term “re-evaluation” has been in co-counselling all along. It may sound rather

cognitive – to give something a different value. It is, however, essentially a change in how we feel. There may or may not be new thinking associated with the change.

For example someone who is having difficulty with their boss may do some work which results in them feeling less angry and with the realisation that it was their father that they were really angry with, not their boss. On the other hand, they still find it difficult to say “no” to their boss when it would be reasonable for them to do so. They work on this in their sessions and one day something changes. They do not know anything that they did not know before – that it makes sense for them to say “no” to their boss and the history of why they find it so difficult – but something is different, they actually can say “no”. Often a deep re-evaluation of this type may arrive in small chunks – after a session you may wake up thinking “oh, so THAT is what that was about”.

So re-evaluation includes some sort of shift deep in our minds. It is probably the same as what other people call an enlightenment experience (Chapman, J. (1988)). Sometimes it happens in sessions, often after sessions and sometimes at other times. You may notice a sudden shift or you may realise that you have changed over time. The end result, though, is that you feel different in ways that liberate your potential, enable you to live your life more joyfully and effectively, that enable you to be more in your own power.

Life and Patterns

Goals (intentions) and what gets in the way

If you think about the things in your life that you would like to change you may be able to think of some goals or intentions or things that you might achieve as part of making the change.

Useful goals (intentions) are often things that you would like to be different in the not too distant future. They need to be things that can change because something about you is different or you do something different. There is no point in wishing that where you live was closer to where you work because these places are where they are. You could, though, want a different job nearer home or to move home nearer to work.

Similarly there is no point in wanting other people to be different from how they are. The only person you have a chance of changing is you (and that is hard enough). You may hope to influence someone else but even if you do you cannot predict how they will change. At any moment people are the way they are and that is what we have to relate to. They may change but we do not know how, nor have we any control over it. So there is no point in, for example, wishing that people stopped trying to get you to do things for them. You could, though, wish that you could say “no” to them.

The question then is, if you have decided what a particular goal or intention is, why do you not just go straight ahead and do whatever it is? The basis of much cognitive therapy is that you do just that, identify goals and go ahead and achieve them. However, we often find that it is not as easy as that. Something gets in the way. Often these are what we call patterns.

For example, I might have a goal of handling criticism more effectively. I learn how to do this from assertiveness training. For example, I need to start by making sure that I have understood the criticism correctly and I have enough information about it. I know this, but I just cannot do it. When I am criticised I feel dreadfully undermined. I want to explain myself and tell the other person how they have misunderstood me. The thought of asking for more information fills me with horror. These responses, feeling undermined and being defensive, are patterns that get in the way of me handling the situation more effectively.

It is useful to list (in or out of a co-counselling session) several things you would like to change, pick one and then (in session) work on the possibilities of change including what might get in your way.

Patterns

A pattern is like the design on wallpaper, it is something that keeps repeating. So a behaviour pattern is a behaviour that we keep repeating, especially whenever we encounter a particular situation. Generally they are behaviours that we repeat without thinking.

Many of our behaviour patterns are very useful. If we are driving a car and somebody steps out into the road in front of us we do not need to think about what to do, we just slam on the brakes. If we want to lift a glass of water our mouth we execute a complex pattern of muscle actions that we once had to learn but no longer think about. We may have sets of useful patterns like being kind or doing particular tasks well.

On the other hand, some of our patterns are not useful and it is these patterns that generally seem to lie at the root of many of the difficulties that we have in life. These patterns seem to be driven by feelings rather than thoughts. There may be thoughts or

beliefs associated with these patterns or possible beliefs that we can use to give the pattern a name.

Generally in co-counselling when we talk about patterns or distress patterns we mean these not useful behaviour patterns. We talk about breaking, melting or busting patterns.

We often only run a pattern in particular circumstances or with particular people. We may, for instance, find it easy to say “no” to some people and not to others.

It is the fact that a behaviour is to some extent compulsive that makes it a distress pattern. So, for example, doing things to a high standard is a very useful trait. This becomes a “be perfect” pattern when someone has to do everything to a high standard even when is not necessary or, indeed, necessary to do it to a lower standard because of time or resources.

We also talk of interrupting patterns. In life we might try to interrupt someone else's pattern. For example, if someone has a pattern of not asking for what they want then we might ask them to say what they want – but this is *not* co-counselling.

We may try to find ways of interrupting our own patterns. For example, if we have a pattern of eating too much we might try not having much food in the house. Someone with a “be perfect” pattern might try to change this to doing things to a perfectly appropriate standard.

In co-counselling, exploring interrupting our patterns in our sessions is a form of contradiction. It can help us get in touch with and discharge emotions that are driving the pattern.

Here are patterns that we have touched on in this handout:

I can't say “no”

I cannot ask for things

Eating too much

Be perfect

Being defensive

There is a longer list in a separate item

Some Patterns

Some of the following, like “being organised” ”I need your approval” or “be strong” may sometimes be perfectly fine. It is when they are done compulsively or obsessively that they are unhelpful patterns.

Addictions
Avoiding
Be perfect
Be strong
Being disorganised
Being hooked on content
Being organised
Can't say "no"
Conforming
Controlling
Defensiveness
Dependency
Doing too much
Falling in love
Fear avoidance
Feeling guilty
I am not allowed to ask for what I want
I can't change anything
I have not got any patterns
I love you therefore you must
I must not hold hands with other men
I must not make mistakes
I must not change my mind
I must not upset you
I must tell how I feel
I must win/must not lose
I'm not good enough

I'm not OK
If it's work it's boring
Indecisiveness
I need your approval
Interrupting when other people are speaking
Intimacy = sex
It is all right for people to treat me however they like
Letting others go on talking ad infinitum
Looking like I should
Manipulating
My opinions do not matter
Pleasing
Rescuing
Running away
Scared rabbit
Self-destruct
Shopping
Staying
Stiff upper lip
Sulking
Task avoidance
Taking responsibility for other people's problems
Workaholic
You must not upset me

Process and Content

Content: A person's words and actions at face value, the things that a person consciously intends to say or do.

Process: The process of thoughts and feelings that underlie the content.

Many personal development practitioners (e.g. counsellors, psychotherapists and trainers) consider that having an understanding of process and working with process is important. Some think it is the most important thing.

We all need some sort of understanding of human behaviour in order to be able to interact with others. Generally we build this up throughout our lives from experience laced with all the potential errors that come from the human learning process. Often we tend to try to understand other people starting from the erroneous idea that they are like us, that they do things for the same reasons that we would. These ideas, which we develop subconsciously, become part of our own process. Some of what we are doing by using co-counselling is to correct some of these errors.

There are many models and theories, from the simple to the complex and esoteric, that aim to try to explain or understand process. None of these more than scratch the surface of the complexity of the human mind. People nevertheless will find particular models that appeal to them and help them to make some sense of their and other's behaviours.

The idea of patterns is a way not so much of understanding process, as of describing somewhat compulsive reactions of ourselves and others.

Another simple and quite useful model that can fit with co-counselling comes from Transactional Analysis (Berne, E. (2010)). This includes the idea that we sometimes behave as if we are a parent, sometimes as a child and sometimes as an adult. In a co-counselling session we can have three cushions and deliberately act in each of these ways.

Paying attention to process is useful in co-counselling, it is part of how we find our way through our material. As counsellors it makes the task more interesting, enhances the quality of our attention and the quality of any interventions we may make.

The one thing, however, that we always need to remember is that the only thing we know about process is that we do not know, we can only guess. Because of this, the following examples are not intended to be exhaustive or accurate

Examples:

1. *Content:* "I was on my own last weekend"

Process possibilities: I feel angry because you did not come and visit me; I find it difficult to ask for what I want, find things to do, go out and meet people; dependency; I like being on my own and find it a great relief to have some time to myself; I really enjoyed the weekend and I want/don't want you to know that.

2. *Content:* A patient complains a lot.

Process possibilities: The patient needs attention, possibly because they did not get it as a child; they are frightened, possibly because of what is happening to them, possibly because of what it reminds them of from their past; they are angry, probably about things that are nothing to do with the current situation.

3. *Content:* A student finds learning about computers very difficult.

Process possibilities: The student does not have a "feel" for machines or logical concepts;

they have not learned these types of patterns at an affective level; they are afraid of machines or "know" that they are no good with them, possibly from long experience of unhelpfulness and put-downs from people who are confident with machines.

4. *Content*: A student finds it very easy to write music:

Process possibilities: The student has been encouraged from an early age to write music the way other children might write stories (and they have seen their relatives doing the same); the student finds that music is the only way that they can express themselves, particularly emotionally; the student is socially isolated and finds a refuge in music.

Here-and-now, there-and-then

There will be process underlying the immediate interaction with a person here, where it is taking place, and now, at the present time. There will also be process, which may be different though connected, that underlies the rest of the person's life there, in some other place, and then, at another time, including the part that they may be talking about.

Process indications

There are many indications that give clues to process. These can be divided in to those that are contained in the content and body language. Sometimes a clue might be in a combination of the two, as when someone says they are pleased about something and their body language says otherwise.

Indications from content

Indications may be clearly stated, e.g. "I feel angry about this", or slightly less so: "I don't know what to say". Internal inconsistencies can give other indications, for instance if someone says that they love another but spends most of the time complaining about them. What someone says may not fit with another person's perspective, such as when someone appears to be competent in a particular way and yet says that they are not.

Finally, there is the whole area of where someone's actions do not appear to be in their own good interests. How do they feel that they behave in this way, what underlies or is at the root of those feelings?

Body language

A great deal of information about process is conveyed by people's body language. To some extent, this language is universal. Experiments have been carried out that demonstrate that people can correctly identify the feelings expressed by facial expressions in others from a wide range of cultures and racial backgrounds. (Ekman, P. (1999))

As well as facial expression other examples of body language indications of process can be the way someone is sitting or standing and movement e.g. tapping of feet or shaking. What someone is wearing and how can also give clues to process. Tone of voice also carries a lot of information.

Body language can be incredibly subtle. We pick up things from other people without being able to identify what it is that we perceive. Psychotherapists will sometimes try to get a better understanding of a client's process by noticing what they, the psychotherapist, is feeling. It may be that body language has a lot to do with how people who do things like fortune-telling seem to know so much about someone they have never met before.

Process and learning

Another way of thinking about it is that process is what happens in the affect (the

assemblage of all our feelings and emotions). All learning appears to be rooted in the affect. Heron's model (Heron, J. (1999) p47) can be paraphrased as "If it does not feel right, I cannot imagine it, if I cannot imagine it I cannot understand it and if I cannot understand it I cannot do it".

Facilitating affective learning involves working with process. It is particularly in this area that teaching and counselling can be seen to be similar. Both are about the facilitation of learning. Teachers tend to work with groups and cover a lot of cognitive learning, counsellors tend to work with individuals and focus on affective learning but there is plenty of overlap.

Role play

Sometimes it may seem to you as client that “putting someone on a cushion” is just not enough.. You may want to have a good solid session about someone in your past and you may be finding having only the cushions leaves too much to your imagination. The more lifelike you can make the situation and the more detail you can put in, the more you may be able to “get at” your feelings and discharge them.

The first part of this, which you may already have tried, is to talk to your counsellor as if they were someone else. As counsellor remember that everything that a client says in a session is their material, none of it is about you. However, if you find it too restimulating to have your client talking to you (with emotions) as if you were someone else, you can ask them to talk to a cushion instead (you can do this nonverbally by pointing to a cushion).

In some psychological systems, role play is used in a way that allows another to invent words and ways of being and try them out on you. That is not how it works in CCI co-counselling. In role play, as client, you may have an actor at your disposal and if so they do exactly as you say. Only you, the client, specify the words that are to be said.

Here is a possible example, in which the client has been speaking to their mother on a cushion for some time.

Client: Would you frown at me please. Frown more angrily. Say “well you brought it upon yourself” and turn away. Could you pout your upper lip. And so it goes on, the client asks the counsellor to try various things to help them get in touch with and discharge their emotions connected with their mother.

As in cushion work, the client can swap places and (in this case) be the mother, inviting the counsellor to play the part of the client themselves. Still the (real) client invents all the words in the drama. The counsellor uses the words they are told and resists any temptation to embellish.

In general, as client you can ask your counsellor to do anything. As counsellor you only do what you feel comfortable doing and is appropriate for co-counselling. So, for example, if your client asks you to stand on your head, is that something you are able and willing to do while continuing to give the client good attention? If so, is this genuinely about helping the client to work on their material (say, about an abusive uncle who was an acrobat) or are they running a pattern of trying to control people and make them do odd things?

Remember, as counsellor you are only required to give free attention.

More on Contradictions

In a previous article we discussed simple contradiction in which you say or do the opposite of what you had previously said or done. That is often used as part of a progression in which you notice that your process has changed and you have moved into a state of tension or pain. You may repeat, exaggerate, contradict and perhaps exaggerate again. This can be effective if you contradict patterns that you are running in the session like being slumped or avoiding discharge.

The real effectiveness of contradiction, though, comes when you can find contradictions to the to the underlying distress or pattern. Rather than simply and mechanically expressing the opposite of what you are doing in the session, you creatively try to find contradictions to the patterns you are running in life. It can help if you do this lightly, have some fun, send up the pattern.

For example, say you have difficulty dealing with criticism, here are some examples of possible contradictions: "*Thank you so much* for your wonderful criticism"; "I love it when you criticise me"; "Tell me more, I really want to understand what you are saying"; "Come on, you can criticise me better than that"; "Isn't that wonderful, I got a whole 1% wrong" etc..

If you are stuck in how awfully someone is treating you, try celebrating the good things about the relationship, scan on times that were really good, try saying "I love you" etc..

Contradiction seems to release emotions that are associated with, or perhaps are driving, a pattern. If you hit on an effective contradiction you will find that you discharge spontaneously.

As counsellor

As the counsellor, as part of following the client's process, it is valuable not only to try to spot the patterns that they may be running but to think about possible contradictions to them. Again this is helpful in making your task as counsellor interesting and enhancing the quality of your attention. It may also give you ideas that you can use in your own sessions as client.

Some Examples and Exercises on Repetition, Exaggeration and Contradiction

This section gives some exercise examples using, Repetition, Exaggeration and Contradiction, both simple and more advanced that may be used in the core training course. These techniques often form a set to be used together, one flowing into another. Thus a real session might include "repeat, repeat, exaggerate, repeat (the exaggerated version), contradict the meaning (simple), repeat, exaggerate....etc." A more advanced contradiction might also be followed by repeating and exaggerating and so on.

Repetition Exercise

The client describes something about where they live, or anything else they want to talk about. During the session they repeat at least 3 things (anything) at least 10 times each. For example:

"The kitchen is quite small the cooker is on the left hand side
the cooker is on the left hand side
the cooker is on the left hand side
... (10 times)

there is a window over the sink ..." and so on with at least two more sets of repetitions.

The counsellor gives free attention except that when the client is repeating the counsellor silently counts the repetitions on their fingers so that the client can see. (You would not count in a real session)



Exaggeration Exercise

This exercise is also for practice. The point of using exaggeration when you do it for real is to get more in touch with some emotion. Now you are learning the technique you may not get in touch with emotion (though it is perfectly all right if you do).

The point of the exercise is to help you get used to the idea of exaggeration.

As client: try

1/2 minute repetition, repeating "I am cold"

1/2 minute exaggerate the meaning of "I am cold"

1/2 minute exaggerate the sound

1/2 minute exaggerate what you are doing with your body

2 1/2 minutes work with what happened – do whatever you like with this time, talk about how you found the exercise, anything you thought of while doing it or anything else.

1/2 minute attention switching, counsellor ask the client some attention switching questions.

Simple Contradiction Exercise

This is a similar exercise to the one on exaggeration.

As client:, try

1/2 minute repetition, repeating "I must do what you want me to do"

1/2 minute contradicting the meaning

1/2 minute contradict the sound

1/2 minute contradict what you are doing with your body

2 1/2 minutes work with what happened – do whatever you like with this time, work on what came up for you in the exercise, talk about how you found the exercise or anything else.

1/2 minute attention switching, counsellor ask the client some attention switching questions.

Exercise in more advanced contradiction

Here is a 5 part exercise to practise thinking up contradictions. The second part is not co-counselling because you suggest words for the client and because what is said is not held entirely confidential. Each person has a turn of about 12 minutes.

1. Client picks a pattern to work on with Free Attention, by scanning on "what's on top" or otherwise and seeks their own contradictions (3mins)
2. Suspend co-counselling, first person (who has been client before) listens, second person suggests contradictions with with the first person writing them down if desired. Play, be bold and outrageous! (2mins)
3. Resume co-counselling with the client as in 1. Client tries various contradictions picks from what the other person has said with Free Attention (2mins)
4. Client continues trying contradictions or working with what comes up with Free Attention (5mins)
5. Attention switch (1min) then swap over

In a training course there will usually be an opportunity for questions. And perhaps a round of any insights, thoughts or feelings.

A second exercise in advanced contradiction

In a group situation, each person writes an example of a pattern on a piece of paper. Put the pieces of paper face down in the middle. Pick up a different piece of paper and write on it a possible contradiction to the pattern. Use these suggestions or not, as you wish. Have a co-counselling session in which the client decides what contradictions to use.

Contracts and counsellor interventions

The articles up to now have all been based on the client working with free attention from the counsellor. CCI is rooted in the ability to give and work with free attention. You may have thought that this deskills the counsellor but in fact giving free attention is a skill. CCI co-counsellors are often better at doing other things that involve listening because of their ability to give free attention.

We emphasise again that the client in CCI co-counselling sessions is required always to be in charge. This is not optional, the client is not permitted to “self-directedly” hand any responsibility over to the counsellor.

However, there are some more things that the counsellor may do assist the client, provided that the client asks them to. The client does this by setting what we call the “contract”. What we have been considering up to now we call a “free attention contract”. There are two other possible contracts: “normal” and “intensive”. We will be covering the normal contract during the rest of this course. We shall not say much about the intensive contract, if you want to you will be able to learn about this at further skills classes or workshops at CCI gatherings.

Let us see what A Definition of CCI says about the contracts and the role of the counsellor.

“5. The role of the counsellor is to:

- a. give full, supportive attention to the client at all times
- b. intervene in accordance with the contract chosen by the client
- c. inform the client about time at the end of the session and whenever the client requests
- d. end the session immediately if the client becomes irresponsibly harmful to themselves, the counsellor, other people, or the environment”

With regard to the last item, d., we emphasise that it is the clients responsibility to maintain a balance of attention and not hurt or damage anyone or anything. If, however, the client, so to speak, “loses it” the counsellor should end the session. This very rarely happens. We shall be discussing the counsellor ending the session for related reasons in another article.

“6. The counsellor's intervention is a behaviour that facilitates the client's work. It may be verbal, and/or nonverbal through eye contact, facial expression, gesture, posture or touch.

7. A verbal intervention is a practical suggestion about what the client may say or do as a way of enhancing their working process within the session. It is not a stated interpretation or analysis and does not give advice. It is not driven by counsellor distress and is not harmful or invasive. It liberates client autonomy and self-esteem.”

Or to put it another way round, the counsellor does not do anything that might undermine the client being in charge. In practice, the counsellor interventions are restricted to suggestions about which of the techniques that you are learning on the course they might try next.

“8. The main use of nonverbal interventions is to give sustained, supportive and distress-free attention: being present for the client in a way that affirms and enables full emergence. This use is the foundation of all three contracts given below. Nonverbal interventions can also be used to elaborate verbal interventions; or to work on their own in conveying a practical suggestion; or, in the case of touch, to release discharge

through appropriate kinds of pressure, applied movement or massage.”

Again the first part of this emphasises the importance of free attention and it being the basis of everything else we do in CCI co-counselling. It is also making the point that giving free attention is not doing nothing. It is an intervention, it intervenes in the client's process. In fact it intervenes in a very powerful way.

With a normal contract suggestions can be conveyed nonverbally. For example, try exaggerating something that the client is doing with their body could be conveyed by the counsellor modelling the exaggeration. Contradicting a particular movement could be conveyed by the client gently touching them in a way that interrupts the movement. Sometimes if the counsellor can see that the client is holding some tension in their body the counsellor could try touching them there.

“9. The contract which the client chooses at the start of the session is an agreement about time, and primarily about the range and type of intervention the counsellor will make. The three kinds of contract are:

Free attention

The counsellor makes no verbal interventions and only uses nonverbal interventions to give sustained, supportive attention. The client is entirely self-directing in managing their own working process.”

This is what we have been describing up to this point in the manual.

“Normal

The counsellor is alert to what the client misses and makes some verbal or non-verbal interventions to facilitate and enhance what the client is working on. There is a co-operative balance between client self-direction and counsellor suggestions.”

This is what we shall be describing next.

“Intensive

The counsellor makes as many interventions as seem necessary to enable the client to deepen and sustain their process, hold a direction, interrupt a pattern and liberate discharge. This may include leading a client in working areas being omitted or avoided. The counsellor may take a sensitive, finely-tuned and sustained directive role. “

This contract you can learn about once you have become a member of CCI.

Session 6

The Normal Contract

From A Definition of CCI:

“Normal

The counsellor is alert to what the client misses and makes some interventions of either kind to facilitate and enhance what the client is working on. There is a co-operative balance between client self-direction and counsellor suggestions.”

“6. The counsellor's intervention is a behaviour that facilitates the client's work. It may be verbal, and/or nonverbal through eye contact, facial expression, gesture, posture or touch.

7. A verbal intervention is a practical suggestion about what the client may say or do as a way of enhancing their working process within the session. It is not a stated interpretation or analysis and does not give advice. It is not driven by counsellor distress and is not harmful or invasive. It liberates client autonomy and self-esteem.”

Or to put it another way round, the counsellor does not do anything that might undermine the client being in charge. In practice, the counsellor interventions are restricted to suggestions about which of the techniques that you are learning on the course they might try next.

As counsellor

Being the counsellor in a co-counselling session is very different from any other sort of counselling, helping or befriending you may have done. Many interventions that may work well are not permitted in co-counselling. This is principally because they may undermine the client being in charge and experiencing the counsellor as being unconditionally supportive and accepting.

As counsellor, remember to pay attention to your client's process. The content, the story or information, is only of interest in that it can give clues to the client's process. Pay attention to their body language and tone of voice so as to see what emotions may be there. Try to work out what patterns the client may be running, both in the session and in life. What is getting in the way of them being how they want to be or doing what they want to do?

You may have information about the client other than what they have revealed in their session. You may have had previous sessions with them or you have met them elsewhere, including on this course. You can use this information, to help you to understand the client's process. You must not, though, refer to what you know.

Think about how you might work with the client's material if you were the client, bear in mind the suggestions we made in the article about Finding the way through our material.

Look at the lists of interventions. You will see that we suggest a brief and direct form for interventions, for instance starting with “Try”. The sense is of a suggestion offered lightly and your tone of voice will have a sense of it being a question. The intention is to convey an idea to the client without interrupting their process or getting them to think about what you have said. You may well hear them expressed as a direct question such as “Would you repeat that?”

Try not to be too concerned about getting it right, most interventions do not work or not in the way we thought they would. If the client reacts to the intervention: “What do you mean,

try acting into grief, what a stupid intervention” that is perfectly all right. In fact you may be helping the client get in touch with something, so you might even try the intervention again.

Be aware that by the time you have thought of an intervention, the client may have moved on and it will no longer be appropriate. When you are working with more experienced clients you may find that they think of things before you do and you may not make many interventions.

Always remember that you are only *required* to give free attention. If you do not make any other interventions, that is fine, whatever the contract.

Following the client

In a normal contract the counsellor always follows the client wherever they go with their material. The counsellor may have all sorts of ideas about what the client needs to work on or information that would be useful to them, nevertheless they need to stick to co-counselling interventions that support the client working in the ways that they choose.

For many people it is very tempting to think that we can help people better by making suggestions or telling them this or that. It can also be tempting to reach out for this sort of help. It is remarkable how much quicker and more effective it can be to let the client find their own way in co-counselling sessions.

Do not be tempted to do the work outside of the co-counselling session. In other words, do not discuss your session work, for example, after the session, and do not co-counselling work with it. You might achieve something this way, and you will undermine the possibilities for achieving much more by using only co-counselling with this person.

The wording of the interventions

For the time being you may find it best to use the words on the list of interventions. Some of the interventions suggest adding some words, such as suggesting something to scan on, e.g. “Try scanning on times when you felt like this”. Others can be added to as well, e.g. “Try repeating ‘I didn’t like that’ ” when the client has just said “I didn’t like that” and there seemed to be some emotion in it.

As you become more experienced you will develop different ways of saying the interventions. In particular, you can offer contradictions, e.g. “try standing up” if the client seems slumped, as long as you are clear what the pattern is for which you are suggesting a contradiction and you do not introduce any new information into the session. Some co-counsellors phrase their interventions as questions.

Thought and keep breathing

We have discussed breathing but not ‘thought’ as client techniques. They are both to do with noticing something that indicates that the client may be blocking or avoiding something.

The intervention “Thought” is said as if it is a question. Some co-counsellors say “What’s the thought?” or “That thought”. This is for when the counsellor notices that a thought may have popped up in the client’s mind but the client has not said anything about it. The counsellor may notice a look, a change of expression or the client may swallow. It is possible that the client did not notice it or they quickly put it on one side, perhaps because it might be a bit uncomfortable. The intervention “Thought” calls the client’s attention to it. Of course, the client can do whatever they like with the intervention or the thought, if, indeed, there was one.

Sometimes when some emotion is coming up we tend to hold it back and in doing so we

stop breathing, or breath very shallowly. If the counsellor notices the client do this they can use the intervention “Keep breathing”. Note, though, that breathing can also be a way of relaxing and calming emotions, so try to notice whether the client is not breathing to hold an emotion back or let it through. Possibly shallow breathing can let grief through but holds back fear and anger.

Aiming for discharge

Remember that this is the direction in co-counselling. If the client is getting in touch with some emotion, the counsellor's interventions should encourage this. Whatever seems to be working for the client, encourage them to do it more. If the client is, for instance, getting angry about how badly their father behaved then interventions like try exaggeration or acting into are probably appropriate. Inviting them to contradict what they are saying about their father would probably not help at that moment.

As client

You can respond to your counsellors interventions in a range of ways:

Ignore them

Try what they suggest

React to the suggestion – go with any feeling that comes up: “What do you mean, try contradiction, contradict what? Incompetence. I can't stand incompetence. I deserve better. Do you hear?” (And back to past events of being let down by incompetence)

Remember that you can change the contract at any time, and that the counsellor is only required to give free attention.

List of techniques

This is a list of the techniques that can be suggested by the counsellor in a normal or intensive contract. The counsellor's suggestions or interventions should be brief and direct, but do not have to use the words below. For example, if a client has indicated how angry they feel about someone, "Say 'I hate you' to this person (indicating a cushion)" may be another way of saying "try contradiction" where the idea is to contradict the client's pattern of being unable to express anger towards someone.

If you are thinking of an intervention as counsellor then we suggest that you check that it is equivalent to suggesting one of the techniques below.

As client, of course, you can use any technique you like as long as you can do it self directedly, without needing any input or guidance from your counsellor. Only the techniques below can be suggested by the counsellor.

Acting into

Attention switch

Celebration

Contradiction

Exaggeration

Identity check

Keep breathing

Literal description

Present tense

Repetition

Role play/cushions

Scanning

What's on top?

What's the thought?

List of interventions

Try acting into

Try contradiction /

Contradict that

Exaggerate

Keep breathing

Try literal description

Present tense

Repeat that

Try role play

Scan on

Thought

Identifications (ID Checking)

Our functioning can be easily impaired by unawarely identifying someone that we are dealing with as if they were someone else, or a type of person, from our past. In such cases our functioning can be improved by the technique that is described here.

This is a particular type of restimulation that may catch us unawares. Someone in our life reminds us of someone else. The tendency to project whatever feelings we may have had about the other person, without being aware of it, may affect our relationship with the current person in unhelpful ways. If the earlier person mistreated us we will tend to expect similar mistreatment and react accordingly, even possibly leading to further mistreatment. If we have positive associations we may unawarely expect special treatment from the current person that they are unable to give.

Example:

Tall, energetic Aunt Eliza always used to bounce into our house when I was a child and insist I join her for a rough game of football in the garden. My ankles and legs would get hurt as she “accidentally” kicked or pinched me, but my parents thought she was a wonderful playmate and would not hear a word of it when I said I did not want to play that game. Or perhaps red-haired Uncle Dominic would always bring me just the right present and I adored him. One year he stopped coming and I was not told why. I would only learn as an adult that he had moved away to live with a new partner.

Now I share an office with tall, energetic Tim, and my new co-counselling partner is red-haired Donna. Whenever Tim comes near me, especially if he is being energetic, I feel scared and I want to get away. Sometimes, when he is on the other side of the office and I notice him being excited about something I feel like crying.

I am in love with Donna but afraid that she will not want to carry on co-counselling with me.

The technique that we are introducing here, ID Checking, is useful to uncover and clear away old material from these current relationships. It is particularly recommended that you use the technique to check for any identifications when you start co-counselling with a new partner. (Note that cross-gender identifications such as in the example above can be difficult to spot.)

Working on the identification you have before you (e.g. Donna, if I am having a session with her) may be easier because you can see the person and notice their characteristics.

By the way, it is perfectly all right to fall in love with your co-counselling partner and entirely understandable. As in this case it is highly likely to be restimulation. It may be wise not to say to your co-counselling partner how you feel about them, even when you are client, as they may find it restimulating. However, it may be valuable to work on saying “I love you” to the person you have identified them with (Uncle Dominic in this case). We strongly recommend that you do not have any non co-counselling relationship with this co-counsellor, not at least until you have done a lot of co-counselling and you are clear about what you feel for the real person (i.e. Donna).

The identification with Tim can be dealt with by talking to Donna as if she was Tim or putting him on a cushion.

The questions I can use for an ID check in my co-counselling sessions are below. There is a free Attention version and a Normal Contract version.

ID Checking

Free attention version

Scan on “Whom do you remind me of”

Pick one.

Scan on “How do you remind me of this person?”

**“What's left unsaid to that person?
(including expressing feelings)”**

Aim for discharge

Scan on “How are you different from this person”

“You are (name)”

ID Checking

Normal contract version – counsellor's interventions

“Try scanning on whom I remind you of”

Client picks one.

“Try scanning on how I remind you of this person”

“Try scanning on what's left unsaid (including expressing feelings)”

Client aims for discharge

“How am I different from this person”

“I am (name)”

Session 7

Emotional Competence

Being aware of my emotions, being comfortable with them and having choices about them all help me to manage my life well. John Heron called this Emotional Competence (Heron, J. (2001) pp12-16). One of the many reasons I might have for doing co-counselling is to have this ability in my everyday life. My emotions help me to get my needs met assertively in many situations. That helps me to know how to be more helpful to others and to choose whether to help them and if so how much.

Developing ourselves

Developing our emotional competence helps us to access more of our potential free of our inability to get our basic needs met, free of our distress patterns and of being held back by our feelings from the past. It frees us to learn and be creative.

Abraham Maslow used the term self actualisation (Maslow, A. (1943)), for this process of developing our human potential. It is central to why we do co-counselling, see Introduction 3 to A Definition.

Helping others

When offering help to others, I aim for a situation where the help I offer and the way I offer it are as free as possible from my own fears, angers and sadness, gathered from past pain and other difficulties not relevant to the current situation. I can do this better as I become more aware of my reactions to situations.

Here's an example. I come across two work colleagues who are squabbling about something. I have good reason to think I am justified in intervening.

I might feel as though I know exactly what they should do and feel like telling them so. Instead I try to put aside this feeling and do something else. I would expect that this would help them to learn and come to their own way forward.

For example I might

- offer them my attention, encouraging them to speak in turn about the matter and how they each feel about it. Repeat as necessary OR
- If they know about co-counselling, invite them to have a short co-counselling session with each other or with me OR
- help them put their attention onto something else.

If the situation requires it, for example if there were customers coming, then helping them to learn may not be relevant. I would then firmly and assertively ask them to stop squabbling and get on with their work.

Choosing what to do with our emotions

The following four sections offer four different choices we can make in response to situations and our own thinking and emotions about them, see the coloured diagram. We make flexible and intelligent choices among the four possibilities.

Stay calm

I am aware that I feel some emotion, I know that that is all right and I may have some sense of how much of the emotion relates to the present situation and how much is restimulation. Given the situation and the people involved I decide that it will work best for me if I keep my emotions to myself. As we saw in the work example above, it is often possible to take my attention away from hurtful things when I need to do something else. I

handle the situation calmly and I do let my emotions support me to handle the situation as well as I can.

This is not the same as suppressing my emotions, pushing them down so that I am not aware of them, and I will probably give them some attention later for example in a co-counselling session.

This can work on individual occasions. Staying calm and suppressing our emotions all the time is bad for our physical and emotional health.

Expression

There are times when I may choose to express my emotions for the purposes that they evolved for in the present moment. For instance I can use my anger non aggressively to stop someone behaving aggressively towards me. I can cry when I am feeling lonely. I can express my emotions in the "here and now" through conversation, sex, art, music, dance, sport and so on. In these activities, the expression of emotion is not the primary purpose of the activity

Catharsis

I can use the healing power of emotional release processes that I practise in co-counselling in other situations, at a level that makes sense for me at this moment. I can use my ability to get help from others and to switch my attention when I want or need to. Of the four ways of bringing our emotions to the fore, this (sometimes deep) release of feelings that may have been buried for a long time, is probably the most interfered with in our environment and perhaps the most potent.

Old emotions are released through catharsis and in order to to gain benefit from the consequent change in my psychological position. The value of an audience, if I have one, is as witnesses who support me in a similar way to my counsellor in co-counselling.

Transmutation

Shift hurting energy into a positive emotional state involving either calmer or more active energy. This can be helpfully done by:

- meditative methods as in Buddhist and mindfulness practice to achieve calmness or peace
- reframing, such as from "life is full of difficulties" to "life is full of interesting and exciting challenges and possibilities".
- Practising "magic" in the sense of "changing consciousness at will" as described by Starhawk (Starhawk. (1999) p44, p152 pp 388-395) The "good reality" and the "bad reality" are both possible and we can shift from one to the other.
- transmuting the energy of the emotion into determination for example moving from "I can't do anything about it" anger with an element of powerlessness to "I choose to/will do something about it" or "I will *never* let anyone do that to me again".
- connecting with the wider humanity or the universe, feeling the ways that we are not alone and drawing on universal energies.

Transmutation and catharsis may both be needed in order to achieve personal change. Without catharsis our potential for transmutation will be limited. On the other hand, catharsis may lead to transmutation and sometimes, maybe often, re-evaluation is something being transmuted.

Why be emotionally competent?

It is important to notice that the emotionally competent processes described here are very different from the suppression of emotions most of us have been subjected to in our lives. Societies bent on controlling their members have for millennia, denied the valid place of

emotion in human lives. A person whose emotions have been suppressed with no outlet may

- become ill, physically or emotionally or both
- be relatively less able to join with others in standing up against mistreatment
- allow authority to become tyranny in their vicinity
- allow others to control them inappropriately
- place inappropriate control on others including children
- try to take away the emotional competence of others including children
- be willing to obey orders or injunctions they disagree with, without question
- buy goods they do not want or need
- buy and take pills they do not want or need
- carry out any or all of a very long list of such activities

Conversely, being emotionally competent helps us to be more in our own power. We are more able to understand the problems, see the possibilities, act on them and choose for ourselves what we believe is in our own best interests. We are far less likely to be or do any of these things.

Among the most damaging things we can do to ourselves is to believe and act on the anti-cathartic messages imposed on us by society.

In recent years, some of these anti-cathartic messages have become more sophisticated, subtle and dangerous as people have realised that releasing emotions can be a good thing. We have talk in schools and social work of “emotional wellbeing” and the idea of “emotional intelligence”. We propose that when you look at these things in detail they too are anti-cathartic.(ref)

Summing up

In summary then, we can use any or all of the four ways to handle our emotions described in this handout in both a personal and societal context. They allow us to spot when we are “triggered” or reminded of pain. This in turn helps us to avoid “dumping” onto someone else. We become more flexible and adapt well to circumstances. We can think more clearly, behave more lovingly and when we need to confront someone or some group of people about an issue, do so more supportively and effectively. We enjoy and express positive emotions and base our emotional life on celebration and self-esteem.

Exercises and Examples

Here are some exercises and examples that you may

- come across in your Core Training,
- wish to use as practice in your co-counselling
- wish to consider in personal reflection time.

Exercise 1. Using emotional competence

Choose someone in your life who matters to you and who you sometimes, maybe often, find it difficult to relate to. It could be someone close to you like a partner or someone you work with like your boss or a colleague or someone else with whom you are in contact fairly regularly. If someone comes to mind straight away that you have difficulties with, they might be a good choice.

Spend time discharging your feelings about this person. (co-counselling, catharsis)

Practice calmly asking the person to do something. This needs to be something that they can do that does not involve them being different. For example, there is no point in asking someone not to be critical, because that is how they are at present. You can, though, ask them to give you more detail about a criticism they made, or you could ask them to assess something saying what was good and what could be better. (Stay calm)

Practice asking them with feeling, be appropriately emotional as you speak. Standing up, continue to ask them while incorporating movement and body language. (Expression)

Think (silently or aloud) about how this person is not relating successfully to you. What is their process? What patterns of theirs are getting in the way? How might you be able to help them to relate more effectively? (Helping)

Sit silently (meditate) and connect with your inner, wise, benevolent self. See the difficulties that you are having with this other person as an interesting problem with many possible solutions that you will enjoy exploring (reframing). (Transmutation)

What have you learned, particularly about yourself, from doing this? (Self-actualisation)

Exercise 2 – short appraisal of how I am emotionally competent

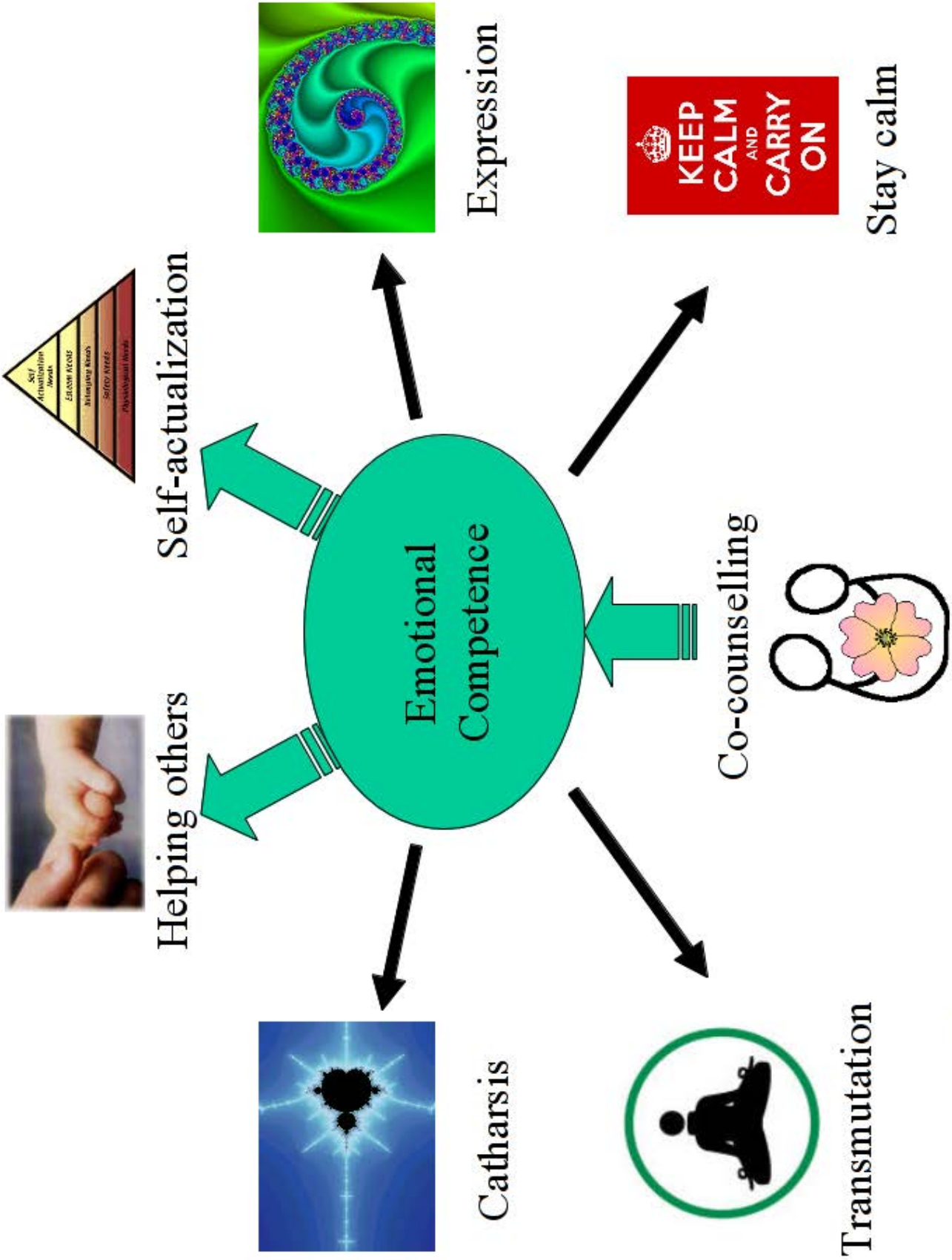
Using free attention from another person, or in your own reflection time, run through the four styles of responding (Keep calm, express, cathart, transmute) – where in your life have you found these a) useful, b) difficult? Make a note for reference.

Exercise 3. Changing consciousness at will (transmutation exercise)

Alone or with another, think of a current situation with which you are not happy as “the bad reality”. An example would be “he’s always criticising me, I must be useless or a bad person”.

Think of what “the good reality” would be like for example:

“This person is giving me information some of which may be useful. My perception is that it doesn’t seem to have much to do with me. They seem to have difficulty in criticising constructively. I can decide what to respond to and when. I can help them communicate more effectively”



Quality control?

Everyone in CCI is equal. There is no hierarchy, no committees, no body to complain to or from whom you need to ask permission to do anything.

What this means is that we are all in charge and we are all responsible for looking after CCI co-counselling. If we think that something is not as it should be then it is up to us to do something about it.

A Definition of CCI is a list of all the things that we hold in common in CCI. Anything else we can disagree about. Accordingly, the only things to watch out for outside of co-counselling sessions are confidentiality, the quality of training and attempts at hierarchy.

Outside of sessions

Confidentiality

This is the bit of the session that extends outside of the session. We have emphasised the importance of confidentiality in CCI. CCI confidentiality is tighter than you will see in most organisations where “confidential” information can be shared with a number of people. In CCI “Whatever a client works on in a session is confidential. The counsellor, or others giving attention in a group, do not refer to it in any way in any context, unless the client has given them explicit, specific permission to do so.”*

So, if you become aware or suspect that someone is breaking co-counselling confidentiality it is important to confront this. On the one hand we are very particular about this in CCI and on the other hand it is not a big issue. People make mistakes and something slips out without them realising it, when it is pointed out they generally just respond along the lines of “Whoops, thanks for pointing that out”.

If it is your own material you will know that it is confidential. If someone is talking about someone else then you may suspect that something is session material but you do not know. It is still advisable to check - “That sounds as if it could be confidential session material.”

By the way, it is only the client material that is confidential. What we do or say as counsellors is not confidential.

The quality of training

CCI co-counselling trainers are the initial gatekeepers who decide at the end of the core training courses that they facilitate whether each participant complies with A Definition of CCI. This training is a hierarchical activity that is the gateway leading into the fully peer CCI approach.

There is no mechanism for accrediting trainers, as it implies in A Definition any member of CCI can teach it. Some local networks exercise some oversight of who facilitates core training courses in their area but they have no formal authority to decide who can or cannot do so. There are published lists of people who offer to facilitate CCI co-counselling core training courses.

So, again, it is up to all of us to pay attention to the quality of training. If any of us think there is a problem with someone facilitating core training courses, the content of their courses or how they are facilitating, then it is up to us to do something about it. What that may be we will come back to when we discuss CCI more generally (See Co-Counselling International (CCI), particularly Conflict).

Attempts at hierarchy

Apart from “avoiding all forms of authoritarian control”^{*} and confidentiality there are no rules in CCI outside of co-counselling sessions. Once again, it is up to all of us to confront any attempts by anyone in CCI to exercise control over others.

In sessions

As client you can do whatever you like as long as you maintain a balance of attention and work “in a way that does not harm themselves, the counsellor, other people, or the environment”^{*}. We cover in another article (Counsellor's rights) what happens if the client “loses it”.

As counsellor your interventions are constrained by the stipulations in “A Definition of CCI”. In particular each of your interventions is “not a stated interpretation or analysis and does not give advice. It is not driven by counsellor distress and is not harmful or invasive.”^{*}

* From A Definition of CCI

Direction holding and Action planning

Direction holding

This is an aim for discharge technique for using in sessions. The idea is to “hold a direction” against a pattern. The aim is to get in touch with and discharge the emotion that is driving the pattern. Successful directions can often be very exaggerated and include things you might never say in reality: “I promise to tell my boss he is a useless pig every time I see him” or “I am going to take over the job of chief programmer – tomorrow” (for the example below). You are released from your direction at the end of the session. You may want to work with a more realistic direction between sessions as part of an action plan.

The technique is a version of contradiction. You decide to hold a direction against the pattern for as long as you want to use the technique, maybe for a whole session, maybe for several sessions. You then explore not having this pattern. Celebrate not having it, whatever that means for the particular pattern. If any doubts come in, you contradict them.

For instance if you think you are no good with computers you might try the direction that “I am perfectly capable of working with computers”. You might then, scan on things that you can do with computers – and resist or contradict any tendency to say what you cannot do. You could dance around celebrating how good you are with computers. You could try putting various people on cushions and telling them that you are perfectly capable of working with computers. You might find yourself saying things like “stop treating me as if I cannot do this” or “I am perfectly capable of understanding this if you explain it properly” or “get out of the way, let me have a go and answer my questions when I ask”. You might find yourself going back into the past and screaming “I can do it” or “Let *me* have a go”.

Patterns like this one can be connected with cultural oppression, when you are taught from an early age that you are not as good as some class of people and you are better than others. Hence you have more or fewer rights than these classes of people. The result is that you internalise these beliefs, you internalise your oppression. So some women, for example, may internalise the belief that they are no good with computers or machines. This may be part of a generalised, sometimes conscious, sometimes not, sometimes deeply subtle and out of awareness, internalised feeling that women are not as good as or have fewer rights than men.

This, with an accompanying lack of confidence and self empowerment, is at the root of the various cultural oppressions: racism, sexism, homophobia, prejudice against people with physical or learning difficulties and so on. The Re-Evaluation Co-Counseling Communities have developed the idea of commitments as a way of holding a long term direction against these oppressions. Many of them are quite long, but a short one is the women's commitment:

“I solemnly (fiercely, cheerfully) promise that, from this moment on, I will never again settle for anything less than absolutely *everything*. This means that... _____.”
and then say something specifically that this would mean for you. Or for disabled people:
I cheerfully promise that from now on I will always remember that my body is wonderful and that I am fully human, that I am totally admirable and lovely to be close to, and I will confidently expect to be cherished exactly as I am by all human beings.
You can make your own up to suit the pattern you are working on.

In a normal contract your counsellor can help by noticing if you are diverging from your direction and suggesting techniques that will bring you back, like “try contradicting that” or “try celebrating how good you are at ...” (another way of saying “try contradiction”). The counsellor does not bring in new information and they stay with where the client is

working. So if the client abandons their direction the counsellor does not try to drag them back. (This is different in an intensive contract where the counsellor can be more active in helping the client to hold a direction that they, the client, have chosen.)

Action planning and goal or intention setting

This is about what you may do after the session and making a plan during your session can be part of direction holding. What you do is to choose one or more goals that become part of your plan to achieve something despite your patterns.

In project management people talk of SMART objectives and this is useful here as well:

S: specific, so "I am going to set up a working spreadsheet" rather than "I am going to practice computing"

M: measurable, in that, for example, you will know when you have a working spreadsheet

A: achievable, in your session you might want to start with something that might be more than you can achieve, say a spreadsheet with macros, and see how it feels. The idea is to settle on an objective that is a bit challenging and you think you can achieve.

R: relevant to your longer term objectives

T: time bounded, e.g. by Thursday.

In your session once you have decided on your goal you hold the direction that you are going to achieve it, for example promising to your counsellor that you will achieve it.

You might also do some SWOT analysis:

S: strengths, your qualities that will help you achieve your goal

W: weaknesses, especially your patterns that will get in the way

O: opportunities, things or people in the world that can help you

T: threats, things or people in the world that may make it more difficult for you

Some co-counsellors suggest that you ask for your counsellor's support outside of the session, for example to telephone you on Thursday to ask how you have got on. However, this is not really part of a counsellor's role in co-counselling and it could end up getting in the way of you experiencing this person as a totally accepting and supportive co-counselling partner. You can ask (after the session) and they are free to refuse. It may be better to think about other people whom you could ask for this type of support.

You may notice that action planning is quite cognitive and there is nothing wrong with doing cognitive work in a co-counselling session, provided that you can do it self-directedly as client. Similarly, if you have a difficult piece of work to do, you could bring a notebook or a computer into your session and work on it.

The focus and advantage of co-counselling is that you can pay attention to any emotions that are getting in the way and work towards discharging them. Also you do not have to pursue something logically or in a way that anyone else might think is sensible. You might spend some time randomly letting ideas pop up, including nonsensical ones.

None of this, of course, precludes any day to day catharsis. You may find some emotion coming up as you try to work on a goal. Or you may recall, perhaps as part of an action plan, a direction from your session. If the circumstances are appropriate, for example you are on your own or with accepting friends, you might do some discharging. John, for example, had a friend, now dead, who used to tell him "do not make a job when you do a job". This is a good direction for John against his pattern of not putting things away after a job or not planning a job so that it does not create more work. So at times John will stomp

about shouting at his friend for 'making' him do something.

Session 8

Intimacy and co-counselling

Co-counselling is a very intimate activity. You may be saying things that you have never before said to anyone. You are exploring the the deep parts of your being. And you are witnessing your co-counselling partners doing this. You will learn much about people from co-counselling. Things that even trained psychotherapists find difficult to acknowledge you will recognise as part of the variety, good and bad, of human experience.

The opportunity for safe intimacy is part of what makes co-counselling so effective.

Our need for intimacy is an important part of our humanity. The ways in which we connect, share with and support each other contribute considerably to our success as a species.

Unfortunately society tends not to see it that way. Many forms of intimacy are discouraged, unacknowledged or undermined. Touch is often discouraged both socially in how people are treated when they have any contact in public and in families where parents are not physically intimate with their children. We may not notice the intimacy in watching a beautiful sunset with someone, in going through a crisis together or being put together for months on end in a tin box in a vacuum going around the earth. If we share intimate thoughts or emotions with someone then the information may be misused, may, for example, become the subject of gossip.

As a result, many of us are starved of intimacy. The inaccurate message we learn is that the only way to be really close to someone is through sex. We see it in films, typically woman is upset, man holds her in his arms and it is a direct link from there to (heterosexual, in this example) sex.. In English the word "intimacy" is sometimes used to be synonymous with sex, like the lawyer asking a witness in court "were you intimate with them?".

So intimacy can be highly restimulating and what may happen is that we become sexually aroused.

It is all right to be sexually aroused, whether by your contact with a particular person or by the intimate nature of co-counselling sessions. *Just do not act on it.* At least, not now

How much of this is a genuine attraction and how much is restimulation? What if you do feel that a particular person is genuinely sexually attractive for you?

The first thing to do would be to understand your own reaction better, perhaps by working on it in sessions with someone else, maybe preferably of the opposite gender to the person you find attractive. After that you may feel that there is a genuine sexual attraction for you. Then, if the other person is willing, you may try to sort this out with them and see what you both want to do with it. We include an article from John Heron called "Aware Negotiation of Sexual Attraction" which is a set of suggestions about how to do this. Enjoy it.

At gatherings of co-counsellors, outside of sessions and workshops, there are no rules about how we relate to one another. What you do is entirely your choice. We do tend (because of what we have learned in ourselves as a result of doing co-counselling) to treat each other in normally respectful ways. Some people may have a lot of fun making up for lost intimacy and being non sexually intimate together. It is entirely up to you whether or not you take part. We also may have workshops on many aspects of sexuality and intimacy. You may wish to take part in some of these workshop sessions even if you feel scared about doing so and then you may learn a lot. Should you not wish to take part, no one will put you under any pressure to do so.

Aware Negotiation of Sexual Attraction (ANSA)

4th edition, John Heron, August 2000

Author's note: I wrote ANSA in the 70s. The third edition was circulated in July 1979 and has been around, without further revision, ever since. Reading it now (August 2000) it does seem to be very much a product of its time, that time being the first few years of the human potential/personal growth movement in the UK, when people were in the early stages of experimenting with how to be more authentic in every aspect of their living, including their sexuality. Though dated in style, ANSA has a certain blunt charm. I have preserved it substantially intact, with only minor revisions, clarifications and additions. Its commitment to openness, honesty and directness has ongoing relevance. The contemporary reader can readily adapt these values to the current climate.

If one person is sexually attracted to another and there is some indication that it may be reciprocal and circumstances are such that to acknowledge and discuss it may be appropriate, then here is a set of possible stages for the two people to go through.

The point about these stages is that they demand honesty, directness and courage in both parties. They exclude dealing with the attraction by compulsive seduction, unaware flirtation, innuendo, ulterior transactions, game playing, or any series of ploys that do not acknowledge what is really going on.

1. The first declaration: If one person is sexually attracted to another and the attraction may be mutual, then someone has to own it. Traditionally the male has owned it, but only indirectly by some apparently innocent non-sexual invitation. On the ANSA model, one person owns it quite directly to the other. To get away from role stereotypes, this person is female as often as male. The first declaration, if handled well, has an exploration clause: I feel vulnerable about saying this, but I find you sexually attractive. I would like to ask if this is reciprocal, and if so, whether we could meet soon to talk it over and explore what it means to both of us?

The important point about the exploration clause is that it leaves space for the other person to look at the attraction without commitment or subtle pressure to act on it. If you omit the exploration clause there is a danger that the other person will already feel trapped by unidentified expectations and demands.

2. The straight response: The one who is asked the above question needs, on the ANSA model, to give a direct, honest response.

Yes, I do (or No, I do not) find you sexually attractive.

I don't know whether or not I find you sexually attractive.

The respondent also needs to give a direct reply to the invitation to meet and explore what the attraction might mean.

If the respondent goes into agitation and confusion on talking either about the attraction or about the meeting to discuss it further, I would advise you respectfully and tactfully to withdraw and end the ANSA.

If the respondent says "Yes", or "I don't know", about the sexual attraction, and clearly declines the invitation to meet and talk, this also ends the ANSA. If the invitation to talk is rejected, graceful withdrawal is more noble than compulsive pursuit.

A "No" reply ends the ANSA. Although in some cases you still both might decide to meet to explore other mutual interests.

3. Clarifying the attraction: This is the stage when two people have agreed to meet and explore the meaning of a mutual attraction already explicitly owned to each other. There are two parts to this stage. First, a sensitive exchange about what each one finds attractive in the other, about the history and perceptions of the attraction, about the thoughts and emotions elicited by it. Second, and developing inevitably out of the first, a check for hidden projections. Each person takes turns to see whether the other is identified, at a subliminal or near conscious level, with someone else from the past with whom a lot of unresolved negative, positive or ambivalent emotion is attached.

If this inquiry shows that either way there is a lot of projected material at work, then it is probably wise to end the ANSA, because some sexual attractions constitute the leading edge of unidentified distress. In these cases, to act on the attraction is chaotically to displace and act out the distress to the mutual misery of both people. The wiser course is to separate and work on the underlying material. Checking for hidden projections goes as follows:

A. Do I remind you of anyone? (A repeats until B comes up with an association).

A. How do I remind you of X? (B identifies the associations and connections).

A. What's left unsaid to X? What emotions are still to be expressed to X? (B expresses these feelings to A as if A were X).

A. How am I not like X? (B consciously withdraws the projection and specifies how A is unlike X).

Then B asks the same questions of A. If the projections, whether negative, positive or ambivalent, are relatively light the ANSA can proceed. Never proceed unless the projections, however light, have been identified. If the projections, whether negative, positive or ambivalent, are heavy, end the ANSA.

4. Clarifying the circumstantial factors: The discussion continues, and now each person explains fully, without holding anything back, the details of their current lifestyle; whether single, whether in one or more relationships, whether married, whether there are children, whether existing relationships are open or closed, honest or duplicitous; relevant facts about accommodation, occupation and income, health, contraception and so on.

This discussion moves on to a statement from each as to how free, morally and psychologically, each one feels about taking this attraction any further, given all the relevant circumstantial factors. Either or both people may end the ANSA at this point. However, there may be some necessary overlap with the following stage, before a clear decision can be taken. Circumstantial factors may legitimate one or more of the options discussed below rather than others.

5. Clarifying the options: If the circumstantial factors seem to give some scope for continuing the ANSA, then the two people can move on to consider awarely the full range of possibilities for honouring the sexual attraction between them. Here is one fairly comprehensive spectrum of possibilities:

Enjoy the attraction but do not act on it in any way other than enjoying each others company on social and recreational occasions: conversations, walks, theatre, etc.

Meet as above but also enjoy nurturance clothed. This means non-erotic contact and embraces, warm and loving without nakedness. The sexual attraction is left tacit within the explicit warmth and nurturance.

Go to bed and enjoy naked nurturance, with no explicit genital sexuality and with a clear contract about keeping out of explicit genital sexuality.

Go to bed to enjoy naked nurturance and leave it open as to whether genital sexuality develops, without any expectation or demand either that it should or that it should not.

Go to bed with the mutual expectation that naked nurturance will develop into explicit genital sexuality.

Plunge into bed for the celebration of unmistakably sexual passion.

Of course, the two people may start with the first on the list and have an open ended contract as to whether any one or more of the others may develop at a later stage - again as a function of aware negotiation.

6. The caring, rational contract: Both people commit themselves to a contract that they will care for each other by celebrating their friendship erotically and in other ways, by excluding irrational demands and expectations, by awarely negotiating every stage in the relationship and any change in a previously and mutually agreed stage. They also commit themselves to some mutually agreed and effective growth-orientated way of dealing with compulsive hassles and tangles that may arise.

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South Pacific Centre for Human Inquiry

11 Bald Hill Road, R.D.1 Kaukapakapa, Auckland 1250, New Zealand

email: jheron@human-inquiry.com, jheron@voyager.co.nz

www.human-inquiry.com

Counsellor's rights

We come to the one section of "A Definition of CCI" that you may have noticed we have not referred to so far:

"10. Counsellors have a right to interrupt a client's session if they are too heavily restimulated by what the client is working on and so cannot sustain effective attention. If, when they explain this to the client, the client continues to work in the same way, then they have a right to withdraw completely from the session."

What is the problem?

It could, possibly, happen that, say, a white Australian and an aborigine Australian co-counsellors were having a session and when the white Australian was client they started to rage about lazy stinking aborigines.

It could be that the aborigine was confident, in their own power and was comfortable giving the white person an opportunity to discharge their distress about being made to feel that aborigines were inferior. To suggest that the aborigine should not choose to do this would be demeaning.

It could be that the white person has checked with the aborigine that it would be all right for them to work on this type of material or they may know from seeing the aborigine at co-counselling gatherings that they are comfortable handling this sort of material.

On the other hand, the aborigine could find this highly restimulating, reminding them of how they or their ancestors had been treated. It would not make sense for the white person to work in this way because they would not be getting good attention from their counsellor. Moreover, they may well be running a pattern of treating aborigines as inferior.

This is a classic victim-persecutor scenario. It is not generally very useful to expect people with persecutory patterns not to run them in order to protect potential victims. What we can do, and is more successful, is to support people's rights and abilities to stand up to persecution.

Also, there are other reasons why a counsellor may find their client's material highly restimulating.

The emphasis is, therefore, on the rights of the counsellor in this situation.

In general it is not reasonable to expect that you can work on any material whatever with any co-counsellor. Nor may it be reasonable to make any assumptions about what another co-counsellor may or may not find restimulating. If you want to work on something that you think another co-counsellor might find too restimulating then choose who you work with and if you are at all unsure, check it out with them.

What to do if you find your client's material too restimulating

This is the procedure:

- If you are finding that your client's material is restimulating (or, in fact, if your attention is wandering for any other reason) try to get your attention back. Try a brief attention switch like thinking about how many colours you can see behind the client. Then focus on the client's process.
- If this does not work then tell the client what is happening "I am finding what you are working on too restimulating and I cannot give you attention if you continue to work on it".
- The client has a range of choices, they could work on the material in a way that may not be restimulating, for example non-verbally or using "nonsense language", or they could work on something else and leave the other material for sessions with a different co-counsellor.
- If the client continues to work on the material then you tell them again: "I am finding what you are working on too restimulating, I cannot give you attention and I will end the session if you continue to work on it"
- If the client continues to work on the material then you end the session: "I have said that I am finding what you are working on too restimulating, and I am ending the session", get up and move away.
- Do not get into a discussion about what has happened. Be regretful about it happening and leave or, if you are in your place ask the other person to leave.
- You may both need some sessions with other co-counsellors.

However, this rarely happens. On the whole co-counsellors get used to giving attention to a wide range of material, they become more confident and grounded in themselves and they do not work on heavy material with people who might not be able to handle it. Therefore the situation described above, even if it were to happen, is not permanent. *And* you need to know how to do it so that you know, as counsellor, that you are not forced to put up with everything that comes your way.

Practice exercise

First of all, imagine something that you are going to find restimulating for the purposes of this exercise, spiders, for example, or blood.

Take a two minute each way session. When you are the counsellor tell the client what it is you find restimulating. The client then works on this and for a while imagine that you may be restimulated and practice switching attention and getting it back to the client. After a while tell your client that you are finding this too restimulating. As client, at this point change what you are working on or work on it non verbally or in gibberish.

Next, do the same except that this time the client continues working on the topic. As counsellor go through all the steps above, give the two warnings then end the session and walk away.

Sessions 9/10

Self certification

Towards the end of the course you will be asked you whether you believe that you comply with A Definition of CCI. Your trainers also have to make a decision about this, so they watch how you are getting on, particularly when they have sessions with you.

This sheet sets out how to assess yourself and what your trainers will be looking out for. You are not expected to have a high level of skill and understanding, what is required is that you are “good enough”, you “have learnt the basics” in particular so that you can co-counsel with any other CCI co-counsellor from anywhere in the world.

If there is anything that you do not understand, there will be opportunities for you to ask. You can, of course, also discuss things with your fellow participants. If you would like to have some feedback about how useful your interventions were as counsellor, you can ask your partner after the session, but beware of discussing their material. The questions to the client “what did you like about your session, and what would you have liked to be different?” will give you good information.

In A Definition of CCI it says:

“Any person and network is a member of CCI if :

1. they understand and apply the principles of co-counselling given below
2. they have had at least 40 hours training from a member of CCI
3. they grasp, in theory and practice, the ideas of pattern, discharge and re-evaluation “

You will comply with 2. by completing the course.

3. refers to “in theory and practice”. In other words do you understand the concept and do you have a felt practical experience of them that fits?

Here are six questions, tick the right hand column if you think the answer is yes.

| | |
|--|--|
| Do you understand what is meant by a pattern in the context of co-counselling, i.e. an unhelpful behaviour pattern? | |
| Have you observed any patterns in yourself and others and do you have a sense of the feelings that impel you and others to run patterns? | |
| Do you understand what is meant by discharge? | |
| Have you discharged yourself or experienced other people discharging and do you feel open to discharge in the future? | |
| Do you understand the idea of re-evaluation? | |
| Have you experienced re-evaluation in yourself following discharge, have you observed it in others or are you aware of it happening to anyone? | |

Finally 1. refers to the principles of co-counselling, i.e. the rest of A Definition, and is about how you do it. The next questions are about whether you understand and apply the principles.

| | |
|---|--|
| Can you give good free attention? | |
| Do you use a range of aim for discharge techniques as client to get in touch with and discharge your emotions? | |
| As counsellor with a normal contract, can you make a number of co-counselling interventions at appropriate times? | |

Disappointment, loss and bereavement

As you approach the end of the fundamentals of Co-counselling course, you may be thrilled or disappointed at how it has gone. Either way the course will come to an end on the last day. There is a loss here which is inevitable. Even if the same group of people were to meet weekly for the rest of our lives, this group for this course will end.

Working on loss and on moving on from it is vitally important. All of us have suffered losses in our lives, large and small, on a daily basis, from the beginning. Each loss may have a variety of emotions attached to it – grief, anger, fear, guilt, joy – and whatever emotions we feel right now are OK and fine to work on. Also, losses may be attached to one another – you may feel unaffected by a major bereavement and then find yourself crying wildly when you break a cup – or vice versa. It is impossible to tell in advance which losses will affect a particular person a lot or a little. Paradoxically, intense feelings may surface when the work is kept light

Examples of important losses include:

- the death of someone important to us
- loss of a job
- moving home
- children leaving home
- the end of a relationship
- loss of health
- the menopause
- having a baby, and hence the loss of a lifestyle without this responsibility.

The prospect of future losses can be a big part of our work and can be approached in similar ways. This applies to foreseen losses of all types and to our own death.

The small losses we experience every day seem to be deeply entwined in the bigger ones which we have not yet discharged – a friend can't meet us when we would like them to; that balloon bursts; we lose keys and think we will never find them, we are left as a little person without understanding why or for how long. If you find it significant, then it is.

Balance of attention is very important in this work. Some people say they have cried all night for months over a bereavement and it hasn't helped. In co-counselling we invite you to keep a good balance between what can be major hurts and a positive present time reality. Practise your skills at noticing your own or your client's attention state. Using your emotional competence, choose whether to work on a large issue or a smaller one.

Experiences of loss often carry with them the possibility of new beginnings. Dealing with the old feelings helps us move on to a new position and appreciate new possibilities.

Co-counselling on bereavement

There is no prescription for how to work. Take your time. Some ideas as client include:

- Tell the story of what happened or how you learned about the loss, maybe repeatedly
- What did I like about the thing or person lost?
- What happy memories do I have about them?
- What couldn't I stand about them?.
- Use cushion work to speak to them (scan on what's left unsaid) and invite their reply
- Celebration (of the thing/person lost)

You may wish to check how you are working on the full range of emotions that may be triggered by bereavement. If you notice that any are missing you may want to try working on these. Similarly if you are aware that you have difficulty discharging some emotion then you may wish to work on this, perhaps using a direction to work on it, or you may simply note to yourself or out loud that you have this difficulty.

Give enough space to attention switches at the end

As counsellor, watch for signs of tension and use interventions that help the client pause and discharge (e.g. repetition, non-verbal interventions)

The Death of someone close.

This is a difficult issue for many people. If that is true for you, you may wish to use a long session to look at this. The list of ways to work above apply in the same way. It is good if both workers bear in mind how useful it can be to discharge this material deeply and encourage this.

The emotions may appear in odd ways. Typically after losing someone close some people may start getting angry in situations that they do not connect with their loss. Someone who has got out of an abusive relationship may feel, justifiably, very angry. They may not realise that some grief that they are feeling is also about the loss of something which, while having a lot bad about it, was also a familiar part of their lives.

There usually seem to be a couple of milestones in the bereavement process. One is when we can talk about the loss without getting more upset than we would like.

The other is when we are ready to say goodbye. This can be the point at which we are ready to let go of someone, if they are still alive. Or the point at which we feel ready to get rid of symbols of their presence or go to their grave and say goodbye or stop feeling we have to keep fresh flowers on their grave. It does not mean that we forget them.

Examples and exercises

Here are some examples of activities that might be used in your class.

1. Rounds of something you have liked and something you will miss about this class:

2. The Happy Memories Game is a brief question-and-answer game. You stay light and avoid going deeply into any very distressed area for now. Each person gets three turns to think of and talk briefly about happy memories, with laughter and light discharge.

Find a partner and decide who will listen and suggest topics first. One picks light topics and listens. The topic-picker says "give me a happy memory to do with (topic) and then listens to the (brief) answer. If the talker doesn't have a happy memory on that topic they pass and you offer them another topic.

Suitable topics might be the colour red (or any other colour); the sea; a holiday; a person or animal I am fond of; boats, mountains, wood, - be inventive as the topic giver and remember to keep it light.

This game can be used at social events or with people who know nothing about co-counselling, if they are willing. Be aware of the circumstances – sometimes it may be important to use a simple conversational listening rather than full-on free attention, and swap after each topic that is not "passed".

3. A short session and round to list your losses, large and small. Include losing the keys and the smashed cup as well as the dog dying and major bereavements

4. In a longer session, let rip with your choice of loss

Co-Counselling International (CCI)

CCI is an unusual type of organisation. It has no structure apart from being a network, no decision making bodies and you cannot actively join it or leave it. As it says, anyone who complies with A Definition of CCI is a member so, if you complete this course, you will be a member of CCI. As long as you continue to comply with A Definition, which means that you go along with the process of co-counselling and you abide by the rules in A Definition then you continue to be a member of CCI. Any group of CCI members that exists " while avoiding all forms of authoritarian control" is also a member of CCI.

Without setting out to, CCI provides an inspiring model of organisation and decision making. It does this because it has followed the logic of equality and self empowerment that is inherent in co-counselling. CCI co-counsellors generally accept that no one has the right to exercise control over anyone else or, conversely, that everyone has the right to decide for themselves what to do in any situation.

History

Co-Counselling International (CCI) was started in 1974 as breakaway from Re-evaluation Counseling by John Heron who was at the time director of the Human Potential Research Project, University of Surrey UK, and a group of co-counsellors from Hartford (CT, USA). The CCI break was ideological and CCI developed in significantly different ways in practice, theory and organisation.

The first gatherings of CCI co-counsellors took place in 1974 in the USA and in Europe. Annual international gatherings have taken place in both continents since then. The European gatherings currently rotate between Germany, Hungary, Ireland, The Netherlands and UK.

John Heron's status within the network has always been as an equal member, although inevitably as a founder member, activist for some 15 years and the person who developed much of the thinking behind CCI there was a certain amount of transference on to him. He now lives in New Zealand and has an involvement with the CCI network there.

There is no imperative in CCI to evangelise and so the network has spread somewhat slowly and according to the energies of individuals. In the USA the network existed for many years mainly in and around Connecticut but it is now spreading to other parts of the country. Outside of Europe and the USA the main development has been in New Zealand where there is now an active network and they hold their own series of international gatherings. There is also an active group in Israel. Core Trainings have been delivered in Latvia, Poland and Sri Lanka.

Organisation

These are examples of things that are organised by and for co-counsellors in the UK:

- Core Trainings in of co-counselling - 10 or more a year;
- Local networks of co-counsellors to co-ordinate activities and help co-counsellors to keep in touch with each other;
- Regular meetings where people can have co-counselling sessions or "peer groups" of co-counsellors who meet regularly to support each other, have sessions or do whatever else they choose to do;
- One day get togethers to co-counsel, learn further skills or do anything else that the participants choose to do;
- Residential gatherings from two to seven days doing the same sorts of things as the one

day events, often with a choice of several things to do at any one time. Also these events offer the experience of being with other people who are working on their own self development and, in particular, learning how to relate well with others. Six or more a year;

- Newsletters, e-mail lists and web sites to help with coordinating and informing people about activities.

Generally, CCI co-counsellors are welcome to CCI events anywhere in the world where they take place. International events are residential gatherings of around a week to which co-counsellors from different countries are particularly welcome.

It is entirely up to individual co-counsellors to what extent they take advantage of any of these. CCI strongly supports people to be self directed and this can include anything from self directedly deciding not to take part in anything to self directedly organising a major international event.

CCI activities are generally self funding, in other words each event or newsletter covers its own costs, and costs are generally kept to a minimum. No one is paid for organising CCI activities. The facilitation at gatherings is shared by the participants. Activities can range from groups that meet together to work on an issue like bereavement or gender with everyone sharing the facilitation. Or there may be sessions facilitated by co-counsellors who happen to be highly skilled trainers or therapists.

CCI does not and is not able to take formal or legal responsibility for looking after or safeguarding children. In general if children are allowed at co-counselling events they remain the responsibility of their parents or guardians in the same way as they would be at any social event that did not include formal childcare.

Some events do include provision for co-counsellors to bring their children. Sometimes there is formal childcare provision during mornings and afternoons when particular activities are taking place. Otherwise parents come prepared to take responsibility for their children throughout even when other participants (including other parents) organise some informal childcare.

People as young as 13 have trained to be co-counsellors and they would be entitled to attend co-counselling events in their own right (though, of course, younger teenagers would have to be accompanied at the event by one or more co-counsellor parents or guardians).

Decision making

CCI has developed ways of making decisions that John Talbut has given the name *panocracy* or rule by everyone. Part of this is doing things by consent. People listen and discuss proposals to see if there is enough consent. If there is then their proposal will get enough support for it to be viable. If not then either there will be insufficient support or active opposition.

The way in which decisions can be made that affect the whole network is that proposals would be shared and discussed and people would, perhaps, try them out. If, after a time, nearly everyone thought it was a good idea it would become part of what we do.

In groups of co-counsellors who get together we efficiently make lots of decisions. The process is rooted in making sure that everyone can be heard and everyone's needs and opinions are acknowledged. For example, rounds may be used to give everyone a chance to speak. If it seems necessary someone (it can be anyone) may gather the sense of the group, i.e. summarise all the different points of view. There may be some sort of voting to see what support there is for this or that. People may indicate which of several possibilities for action they are proposing to take. In the end there is no "group decision",

each person decides for themselves. People can decide to do different, even competing, things and they do so in the light of what they have heard from the others.

Leadership

CCI as a whole does not actively address issues of leadership nor does it have an agenda for promoting or supporting leadership. It is, however, highly effective in doing so. This is one of a number of ways in which CCI seems to operate in the Taoist manner of Wu wei (“doing by not doing”). You may see someone come along shy and unconfident to their first co-counselling gathering and not many months later you see them out there shining and leading, facilitating, running workshops or even organising gatherings.

In CCI if nobody does anything, nothing happens so people do things and they happen. All the activities listed above happen because individual co-counsellors or small groups decide to make them happen.

Conflict...

...happens. Of course.

One of the advantages of CCI's (lack of) structure is that conflicts between individuals do not draw in the whole network. Also, in recent years individuals in CCI have built up considerable experience in containing any conflict.

If you feel that you have a conflict with someone then you are not listening to them, not accepting them (you are expecting them to be different from how they are) or both. Otherwise you only have a disagreement or a practical problem of how to relate to them, them being how they are.

What this means is that you can end the conflict by getting to being able to accept the other person as they are and hear what they are saying. That does not mean that you necessarily agree with them or what they do. Nor does it mean that they will necessarily hear you. But you will be able to deal with them clearly and in ways that are in your best interests. Or you will be able to let them go, have less or no dealings with them if that seems appropriate.

So the recommendation of many co-counsellors is that if you have a conflict with someone, work on it in a co-counselling session. If you still have a conflict, counsel on it again. If you still have a conflict counsel on it with an experienced co-counsellor – maybe asking for an intensive contract. If you still have a conflict, ask for help from other co-counsellors, preferably ones who have experience in dealing with conflicts. Often at gatherings a few people will be asked or will volunteer to help if any conflicts arise.

Helping and loving

It is always acceptable to ask for help, whatever your difficulty might be. No one is obliged to help you and usually in CCI there are people who are very willing to help.

If you do not ask you are unlikely to get and people in CCI tend to have learned not to “rescue” - to do things for people that they can do for themselves or that they have not asked for. So if other co-counsellors think you are running a pattern, like wanting to be “rescued”, they may not respond in a way that you might expect – or like. What they will be trying to do, more or less competently, is to help you to learn to be more of the person you would choose to be and to do the things that you can for yourself.

As John puts it “to love someone is to accept them as they are and to support them to be more of what they would, in enlightenment, choose to be”. Somehow, as people co-counsel, they get better at loving. The wonderful thing about being at gatherings of co-

counsellors is being with people, without rules, who are learning to get better and better at loving.

Welcome to CCI.

Validation posters

Validation posters are a way of celebrating each other. Co-counsellors have traditionally made validation posters at the end of fundamentals classes and also at many of the two day or longer residential gatherings (sometimes we have validation envelopes at gatherings and people put cards in them).

The idea is to take a large sheet of paper each and using coloured pens write your name in the middle (probably your name as you have been using it at the event in the class) in as fancy a way as you like – making sure that you leave plenty of space for other people to write on it. Then you can write a self validation underneath your name. Make it an “I” statement and unconditional (in other words no “quite”s or “a bit”s). For instance “I like my ability to say what I want” or “I love my ability” or better still “I am amazingly good at saying what I want”. And you can celebrate several things about yourself for example “I am a wonderful loving parent, I give brilliant attention and my pancakes are out of this world”.

Next you put your poster where other people can contribute to it. Everyone goes round other people’s posters and writes validations on them . Again, make them celebratory, unconditional “I” statements, for example “I love your clarity” “I have greatly valued your support” or “I think your pancakes are out of this world”. And preferably sign them. Again, you could celebrate several things. You do not have to put something on everyone's poster.



Book list

These are books referred to in this manual and others that are in use by Celia and John. Where there is a choice, the ISBN is quoted for paperback versions.

Book List

Berne, E. (2010) *Games people play : the psychology of human relationships*, London: Penguin ISBN: 978-0141040271

Chapman, J. (1988) *Tell me who you are*, Hanslope: J. and E. Chapman in association with SPA ISBN: 978-1854210265 Available from: <http://www.enlightenment-intensives.info/storage/TellMeWhoYouArepart1.pdf> [Accessed: 14th August 2012] Enlightenment intensives are describe in Wikipedia as “a cross between a meditation retreat and a co-counselling workshop”.

Chapman, J. (1988) *Tell me who you are*, Hanslope: J. and E. Chapman in association with SPA ISBN: 978-1854210265 Enlightenment intensives are describe in Wikipedia as “a cross between a meditation retreat and a co-counselling workshop”.

Dickson, A. (1985) *The Mirror Within: A new look at Sexuality*, London: Quartet books ISBN: 978-0704334748

Dickson, A. (2001) *Trusting the Tides: Self-empowerment through out emotions*, London: Rider ISBN: 978-0712605472

A comprehensive account of Anne's approach to self empowerment through emotional wholeness.

Dickson, A. (2001) *Trusting the Tides: Self-empowerment through out emotions*, London: Rider ISBN: 978-0712605472

A comprehensive account of Anne's approach to self empowerment through emotional wholeness.

Dickson, A. (2012) *A Woman in Your Own Right*, London: Quartet books ISBN: 978-0704372696

The recently revised 30th Anniversary Edition an excellent book on Assertiveness updated with new material.

Anne Dickson, a former teacher of CCI co-counselling, has published many important books. Her work provides the basis of our courses on assertiveness.

Downing, G. (1998) *The massage book*, New York: Random House ISBN: 978-0679777892

Ekman, P. (1999) *Facial Expressions in Dalglish, T. and Power, M., The Handbook of Cognition and Emotion* Sussex: John Wiley & Sons ISBN: 978-0471978367

Ernst, S. and Goodison, L. (1981) *In Our Own Hands: A Book of Self-help Therapy*, London: Women's Press ISBN: 978-0704338418 An excellent guide to a number of therapies and how they can be used in self help groups including many exercises.

Ernst, S. and Goodison, L. (1981) *In Our Own Hands: A Book of Self-help Therapy*, London: Women's Press ISBN: 978-0704338418

An excellent guide to a number of therapies and how they can be used in self help groups including many exercises.

French, G. and Harris, C. (1999) *Traumatic Incident Reduction (TIR)*, Boca Raton: CRC Press ISBN:

Gendlin, E. (2003) *Focusing: How To Gain Direct Access To Your Body's Knowledge*, London: Rider ISBN: 978-1844132201

Hennezel, M. (2011) *The Warmth of the Heart Prevents Your Body from Rusting: Ageing without growing old*, London: Rodale ISBN:

Hennezel, M. (2012) *Seize the Day: How the dying teach us to live*, London: Macmillan ISBN: 978-1447205777

A moving account of this psychologist's work with terminally ill people.

Heron, J. (1999) *The complete Facilitator's Handbook*, London: Kogan Page ISBN: 978-0749427986

Heron, J. (2001) *Helping the Client*, London: Sage ISBN: 978-0761972891
A compendium of counselling and helping skills

John Heron was one of a number of people who started CCI co-counselling in the 1970s as a separate movement from RC. John, who now lives in New Zealand, started the Human Potential Research Group at the University of Surrey, UK and developed there his Six Category Intervention Analysis (for which he considers co-counselling a pre-requisite) and his comprehensive theories of learning and facilitation.

Houston, G. (1990) *The Red Book of Groups: And How to Lead Them Better*, London: Rochester Foundation ISBN: 978-0951032336

Houston, G. (1995) *The Now Red Book of Gestalt*, London: Rochester Foundation ISBN: 978-0951032367

7th edition of Gaie Houston's classic book on Gestalt therapy

Jackins, H. (1994) *The Human Side of Human Beings: The Theory of Re-evaluation Counselling*, Seattle: Rational Island Publishers ISBN: 978-1885357076

Jackins, H. (1994) *The Human Side of Human Beings: The Theory of Re-evaluation Counselling*, Seattle: Rational Island Publishers ISBN: 978-1885357076

Jackins, H. (1997) *The List*, Seattle: Rational Island Publishers ISBN: 978-1885357489

Harvey Jackins wrote many books about his theory and practice of Re-evaluation Counselling, which shares many characteristics of the CCI counselling on this course and is its antecedent. The first book is a simple description of the model; the second the last book he wrote, in which he attempted to draw together all the insights of RC so far. Harvey died in 1999.

Kahn, M. (1997) *Between Therapist and Client: The New Relationship*, New York: Henry Holt ISBN: 978-0805071009

This book describes a number of psychotherapies and postulates that the relationship between client and therapist is the most or only important determinant of whether therapeutic work can take place. It's conclusions may lead to the invention of co-counselling!

Keating, K. (1991a) *The Little Book of Hugs*, London: Fontana ISBN: 978-0006378006

Keating, K. (1991b) *The Second Little Book of Hugs*, London: Fontana ISBN: 978-0006378013

Kline, N. (1993) *Women and Power: How Far Can We Go?*, London: BBC Books ISBN: 978-0563364498

Kline, N. (1999) *Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind*, London: Ward Lock ISBN: 978-0706377453

Nancy Kline's powerful books reflect her long association with RC and her development since moving away from it. The two books quoted are slanted respectively towards women (though also useful for men) and towards organisations. From each perspective

she explores her idea of a “thinking environment” and how to achieve it through exchanging listening attention and through the use of “incisive questions”.

Kolb, D (1984) - *Experience as a Source of Learning and Development*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall ISBN: 978-0132952613

Lerner, H. (1999) *The Mother Dance: How Children Change Your Life*, New York: HarperPerennial ISBN: 978-0060930257

(also the Dance of Anger, Dance of Deception etc) Harriet Lerner, a psychologist from east coast and Midwestern USA, believes catharsis is unhelpful. She also believes that the client should be in charge and allows her personal stories to gallop around her books even when they put her in a poor light. She is brave, honest and funny. Her approach seems sympathetic to co-counselling even though the basis of her work is quite different.

Lewis, C. (1966) *A Grief Observed*, London: Faber and Faber ISBN: 978-0571066247
An emotionally incompetent person (not his fault), who is also a famous academic and writer of the “Narnia” children's books, “attempts to argue out his grief” at the death of his wife, “H” (Helen Joy Davidman). The inspiration for the film “Shadowlands” and an interesting comparison with co-counselling.

Macy, J. and Brown, M. (1998) *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*, Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers ISBN: 978-0865713918

An expansion of Joanna Macy's earlier “Despair and Personal Power in the Nuclear Age”. Many find her “work that re-connects” inspiring and it is compatible with co-counselling.

Maslow, A. (1943) *A Theory of Human Motivation*, ISBN: Available from:
<http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm> [Accessed: 8th April 2012]

Maslow, A. (1943) *A Theory of Human Motivation*, ISBN:

Postle, D. (1988) *The Mind Gymnasium : a New Age Guide to Self-Realization*, New York: McGraw-Hill ISBN: 978-0070505698

This is an excellent survey of humanistic psychology by someone who is, amongst other things, a CCI co-counsellor.

Roche, S. and Gray, S. (2011) *What's on Top*, Ipswich: Personal Transformations ISBN: 978-1447585893 <http://www.lulu.com/shop/steve-roche-and-sue-gray/whats-on-top/ebook/product-17446055.html>

A useful introduction to co-counselling by two active teachers.

Rogers, C. (1978) *Carl Rogers On Personal Power: Inner Strength and Its Revolutionary Impact*, London: Constable ISBN: 978-0094620902

Rogers, C. and Freiberg, H. (1994) *Freedom to Learn*, New York: Merrill ISBN: 978-0024031211

An inspiring book about how education should be.

Carl Rogers developed person centred therapy and person centred learning. His work seems to have a lot in common with Co-counselling which is almost its logical outcome. His daughter Natalie commissioned and published a revision of his educational work after he died.

Rowan, J. (2005) *A Guide to Humanistic Psychology*, London: UK Association for Humanistic Psychology ISBN: 978-0955194801
Short and handy (his other books aren't) this opens up the field of Humanistic Psychology to further study, offering a short section on each working style.

Rowan, J. (2005) *A Guide to Humanistic Psychology*, London: UK Association for Humanistic Psychology ISBN: 978-0955194801

Short and handy (his other books aren't) this opens up the field of Humanistic Psychology to further study, offering a short section on each working style.

Solter, A. (2001) *The Aware Baby*, Goleta, CA: Shining Star Press ISBN: 978-0961307370

One of several books on parenting inspired by the co-counselling ethos, others include "Helping Young Children Flourish" and "Tears and Tantrums".

Southgate, J. and Randall, R. (1989) *The Barefoot Psychoanalyst: Illustrated Manual of Self-help Therapy*, Loughton, Essex: Gale Centre Publications ISBN: 978-1870258067
This manual combines the practice of co-counselling with the theories of Karen Horney.

Starhawk. (1997) *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*, Boston, MA: Beacon Press ISBN: 978-0807010372

Combines "magic, spirituality and community" with personal growth and political/social change including the concepts of "power over" and "power from within" and introducing much of the ritual that is common in personal development groups. Magic is defined as "changing consciousness at will".

Starhawk. (1999) *The Fifth Sacred Thing: A Visionary Novel*, London: Thorsons ISBN: 978-0722538890

This novel is a brilliant vehicle for Starhawk's ideas.

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