

Co-Counselling International (UK)

Co-counselling Teacher Trainers' Manual

John Heron

1978, revised edition 1998

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Foreword

This manual gives a resume of some of my thinking about, and experience of, facilitating training programmes, using a five-day block, for aspiring teachers of co-counselling. Anyone involved in training co-counselling teachers is welcome to use it in any way they see fit.

I. Possible teacher training activities

The first thing I do is list on a board or sheet of paper all the different possible activities for the five-day workshop and invite the group to add anything I have omitted. My list includes the following. I give the items below in considerable detail so that the reader of this manual can use them. All this information would just be sketched in verbally when I present the list to trainees in a workshop.

1. Co-counselling sessions. Free choice, random selection by numbers drawn out of a box, or criteria of pairing agreed by the group.

2. Discharge groups. See Co-Counselling Teachers' Manual: [Basic Ingredients](#) and [Group Work](#).

3. Not-for-discharge groups. See Co-Counselling Teachers' Manual: [Basic Ingredients of a fundamentals workshop](#) and [Group Work](#).

4. Demonstration of 'new' techniques. The teacher explains techniques that are new to a significant number of those present, followed either by a practice mini-session, or by the demonstration of the techniques with a client or series of clients working in front of the whole group. These techniques may include: various kinds of body work, birth re-enactment, varieties of counsellor's role in psychodrama, projected rehearsal role play,

future event counselling, lean ritual, spiritual celebration, counselling on spiritual potential, regression with reverie, conscious dreaming, etc.

5. Analysis and practice of intensive or demonstration counselling. I, together with the group, compile and categorise all the different interventions which an intensive non-permissive counsellor makes. Members practise intensive counselling in small groups, receiving feedback on client cues missed. I demonstrate intensive counselling to show how rapidly it can go, how many client cues there are. The following table sets out one way of portraying client cues and counsellor interventions. Client cues are content cues and process cues. Counsellor interventions either prompt client to be active, or the counsellor is active while the client is receptive and responsive.

	CONTENT CUES <i>The client's story: word/image/idea</i>	PROCESS CUES <i>The client's energy: body/breath/sound</i>
	Client cue → What client is invited to say	Client cue → What client is invited to do
Counsellor prompts <u>Client</u> to be <u>active</u>	<p><u>Evasive talk or analytic talk</u> → how feeling, how being in the body → find agenda → critical incident</p> <p><u>Stated problem</u> → critical incident</p> <p><u>Stated occlusion</u> → imagine crit. incident</p> <p><u>Critical incident</u> → scan: forward or back → earliest available memory</p> <p><u>Critical incident</u> → literal description</p> <p><u>Literal description</u> → psychodrama</p> <p><u>Psychodrama</u> → shift level within it</p> <p><u>Monodrama</u> → play internal parts</p> <p><u>Association</u> → thought → critical incident → follow chain of memories → verbalize insight/re-evaluation → positive affirmation and</p>	<p><u>Rapid speech, shallow tone</u> → slow down speech, deepen tone</p> <p><u>Distress-charged sound on word/phrase</u> → repeat, increase, associate</p> <p><u>Sudden deepening of the breath</u> → repeat, increase, associate → hyperventilate</p> <p><u>Eyes closed or evasive</u> → make eye contact</p> <p><u>Distress-charged movement</u> → repeat, exaggerate, find sound/words</p> <p><u>Distress-charged rigidity</u> → exaggerate, find sound/words → contradict, find sound/words</p> <p><u>Matching or mismatching</u> → treat alike</p> <p><u>Chronic archaic/defensive tone of voice</u> → exaggerate, find its words</p> <p><u>Chronic archaic/defensive</u></p>

	<p>reprogramming</p> <p>→ action planning and goal setting</p> <p><u>Slip of tongue</u> → repeat, associate</p> <p><u>Sudden aside</u> → repeat, associate</p> <p><u>Self-deprecation</u> → contradiction</p> <p><u>Evasive pronoun</u> → first person</p> <p><u>Evasive verb</u> → responsible verb</p> <p><u>Dream</u> → literal description in present tense</p> <p>→ psychodrama</p> <p>→ monodrama: play all dream symbols</p> <p><u>Lyrical cue</u> → Recite, hum or sing</p>	<p><u>body armour</u></p> <p>→ amplify kinaesthetic micro-cues</p> <p>→ stress positions</p> <p>→ mobilization</p> <p>→ hyperventilation</p> <p>→ regression positions</p> <p>→ frozen need expressions</p> <p>→ spatial quadrants and polarities</p> <p><u>Pensive cue</u> → verbalize thought, image</p>
	<p><u>Client cue</u>→ What practitioner says</p>	<p><u>Client cue</u>→ What practitioner does</p>
<p>Counsellor acts while <u>Client</u> is <u>receptive</u> and <u>responsive</u></p>	<p><u>Stated problem</u> → hypnosis, suggestion <u>Psychodrama</u> → negative accommodation</p> <p>→ positive accommodation</p> <p><u>Negative talk</u> → mirror with awareness</p> <p><u>Emergence of hurt child's story</u></p> <p>→ affirm validity of the client's hurt, affirm their need for discharge and healing, their deserving of time, the past need for their defenses, the safety of this situation, the present redundancy of their defenses, the deep worth of their inner child, the value of this work of healing and their courage in doing it.....</p>	<p><u>Chronic archaic/defensive body armour and intermittent rigidities</u></p> <p>→ light holding, light contact/massage</p> <p>→ light vibration/pulsing</p> <p>→ loosen muscle groups</p> <p>→ light/strong pressure on tense areas</p> <p>→ gentle opening/extension of joints</p> <p>→ long leverages, psychodynamic osteopathy</p> <p>→ energy passes with hands, breath, eyes</p> <p><u>Eyes evasive</u> → seek eye contact</p>

6. Theory sessions. Exposition of various aspects of theory with discussion and sharing.

7. Teaching about teaching. I share with the group all of various aspects of teaching fundamentals that I find important, with discussion and sharing

8. Distress-free authority and charismatic training. Exposition of the importance of true authority and charismatic presence, with role-play exercises for members to practise it, e.g. in culture setting statements, in raising awareness about lack of consideration and discipline in a class.

9. Teacher motivation.

- **Mini-session or equal time in front of group.** "Why I want to teach co-counselling". Itemize the patterns/compulsions and the authentic motivations involved.
- **Variation on this.** Mini-session or equal time in front of group on sentence completion. The client completes many times the same sentence, "I want to teach co-counselling because ...". Or the counsellor asks the client many times the question "Why do you want to teach co-counselling?"

10. Teacher Anxieties.

- **Task groups.** In small groups members identify and list all their discernible fears and anxieties about teaching co-counselling. The lists are collected from the groups and put on a large sheet on the wall for use for further exercises given below. A list of typical fears include:

Can I handle:

the aggressive intellectual critic?

someone who compulsively invalidates the method?

the very shut-down client, the chronically self-invalidating client?

interpersonal invalidation in the group?

dismissing the chronically disruptive group member?

the despairing beginner who says, "I just can't make it work".

the whole group shutting down?

myself when I am attacked and invalidated?

myself when I shut down in the group?

myself when I feel chronically insecure of myself as a teacher?

negative projections on to me as a teacher?

positive projections (sexual and/or other) on to me as a teacher?

demonstration counselling?

Can I expound theory clearly and will the class understand it?

Can I keep the group light and lively?

Will I be able to discharge in front of the group? And if so when and how shall I do it?

Will I be able to find light and elegant directions?

Will anyone ever discharge in my group?

11. Teacher training role plays. In pairs, in small groups or with the whole group. Each person takes time to develop skill in the area of her primary teaching anxiety, taken from the above list, in a role play situation. Or I will select basic aspects of the teacher's role for role play skills-building, with incidental discharge to deal with any upcoming distress. Sensitive feedback from peers, after each role play, is helpful, followed by one or more reruns of the role play to try out alternative strategies.

- **Interpersonal invalidation in the group.** Small groups of 4, **A, B, C** and **D**:
- **A** is taking her turn working on her anxiety about inter-personal invalidation in the group.
- **B** and **C** play two imaginary characters in a beginner's class, Jack and George.
- Jack starts to attack George for repetitive head-tripping. **D** is the observer.
- **A** tries out whatever strategies seem appropriate to deal with **B** and **C**.
- **A** takes time out to discharge any upcoming distress, then resumes the role play.
- Then **A** gives feed-back to herself. Then feedback from **B** and **C** and then from **D** the observer.
- If alternative strategies arise out of the feedback discussion then **A** tries one or more of these.
- Then repeat the feedback process as before.

Each person in the group may take a turn as teacher, building skills in the same area of concern or, alternatively, in their own particular area of concern.

- **The shut-down client.** I role-play a shut-down, self-invalidating, double-binding client. One of the group who has an anxiety about such a client comes out in front of the whole group to play the teacher to counsel me. If she gives me really good directions then I allow the shut-down client to respond appropriately. Then feedback from the teacher to herself, from the client to the teacher and from the group at large. When alternative strategies emerge from feedback these are tried out by the same "teacher" or by other members of the group coming out.

- **Theory questions.** Small groups of four, one person is the teacher and the other three ask beginners' questions, such as, "Can you explain what a pattern is, I haven't understood that yet?" or "How can a person get better by indulging herself in tears?", etc., etc.
- **Theory exposition.** Someone plays the teacher and spends ten minutes giving their first account of the theory to the rest of the group who play the beginners' class. The "teacher" discharges her way out of any mental blockages. Repeat with new "teacher". This may be done with two or three smaller groups.
- **Exposition of basic principles of method.**
- **Exposition of basic working techniques, with demonstration.**
- **Introducing contradiction, with demonstration.**
- **And so on and so on.** The imaginative teacher trainer can devise any number of role plays for would be teachers to practise needed skills, and to confront and discharge their fears about particular sorts of teaching exigencies.

12. Teacher anxiety round. Each person takes equal time in front of the group to work in any way that seems appropriate with anxieties and fears about teaching. The contract here is that I make a lot of suggestions as counsellor, helping the teacher-client discharge on all the material associated with the idea of teaching co-counselling.

13. Teacher assessment and accreditation.

- **Task Groups.** Members form into small groups. Each group works out a consensus list of not more than ten basic criteria for assessing the competent and qualified co-counselling teacher. Then the group lists are compared, discussed and a consensus list of criteria for the whole workshop is evolved. This may be compared with criteria already in existence. The importance of this exercise is that would-be teachers are personally involved in setting standards for the assessment of teaching. They should not be expected simply to accept, without prior discussion, existing standards.
- **Assessment and accreditation issues.** I present the difference between assessing teacher competence and accrediting a teacher to do this that or the other kind of teaching. I present types of assessment and accreditation - by self, by peers, by self and peers combined, by an authority figure or authoritative institution. Discussion with the group about all the associated issues. If there is an existing assessment and accreditation procedure I would give space to the trainees to explore their views about it. If there isn't, then I would invite the trainees to take a responsible position about a procedure and design their own version, after trying out the assessment and accreditation exercise below.
- **Teachers' hot-seat.** Each would-be teacher takes the hot-seat for equal time. For the first half of the time, she receives from her peers all their anxieties and concerns, however minimal, about herself as a future teacher. For the second half of the time, she receives all their validating impressions of what she would be like as a teacher. In both cases, she listens without making any response. It is very important to precede this exercise with a statement that people's negative impressions may consist entirely of unconscious projections; so the client is asked to exercise great discrimination about the negative feedback she receives. Any residual re-stimulation after this exercise may be dealt with by a general mini-session.

- **Assessment and accreditation exercise.** Everyone takes a turn to go through the [Assessment and Accreditation Procedure](#) described in the Co-counselling Teachers' Manual.

14. Fundamentals design exercise.

- **Temporal design.** I present and the group discusses different time formats for fundamentals classes: five-day workshop, double or triple weekend workshop, 8, 16 or 20 week weekly classes, etc., etc. The advantages and disadvantages of these different models are discussed.
- **Publicity and screening.** Different kinds of advance publicity and recruitment together with different sorts of screening procedures are discussed. The rationale of screening is discussed. Role-play exercises can be designed for members to try out screening procedures.
- **Task groups.** Members form into small groups and each group chooses a time format, makes a rough outline design for a whole fundamentals course on the understanding that it is only an outline to be used creatively and flexibly. The designs are compared and discussed. Out of this exercise, I hope everyone to be clear about the basic elements of co-counselling that need to go into a fundamentals class. I might underline this with the following exercise:
- **John's design.** I present a complete design, typical of one of my five-day fundamentals workshops, showing how I put together what I regard as the fundamentals.
- **Teach or co-teach.** A discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of both solo teaching and co-teaching (in which there are two teachers, both of equal status, dividing the tasks between them), and of having an assistant subordinate teacher.
- **Analysis of training procedures for beginners.** I and the group generate a list of all the basic training processes in a fundamentals class. This list, from my end, will include all the items given in the Co-Counselling Teachers' Manual: [Basic Ingredients of a fundamentals workshop](#).

II. Consultation on workshop design

The second thing I do is to consult and negotiate with the group for a limited time to draw up an outline programme for the workshop, based on the above list, including any items they have added. I will take a strong line on certain things which I think should go in such as intensive counselling training, distress-free authority training, certain other training role-plays, e.g. theory exposition. I propose that this programme, once we have agreed it, is in principle open to be changed at any future time. So there can be a consultative review and forward planning session each day to keep the design flexible and sensitive to emerging needs and interests. This review can be preceded by a short self-assessment exercise in which each member checks out the extent to which her individual problems and learning goals for the workshop are being met. Another model I use is that I take responsibility for deciding the sequence of training activities drawn from the presented list, but it is open to anyone at any time to propose an alternative sequence, in which case I will sound out the group to see what the consensus is.

Presenting the list, adding to it, and negotiating a flexible programme based on it, will all be done during the first half of the first morning of the five days. Thereafter, for the

remainder of the five days, we are all busy working through the programme, modifying and amending it as emerging needs and interests require.

III. Activities for experienced teachers present

If there are experienced and practising teachers in the workshop as participants then they can engage in the following exercises:

1. Fishbowl in front of would-be teachers:

- Sharing their initial problems and difficulties and how they overcame them.
- Sharing all the excitement, delight, joys, pleasures, rewards of teaching.
- Sharing their creativity as teachers.
- Sharing their present anxieties and difficulties.
- Etc., etc.

2. Form in their own group, apart from would-be teachers, and brain-storm and role-play solutions to any current problems and difficulties in teaching.

3. Again form their own group, and each teacher spends thirty minutes alone, writing out what she regards as the most important practical principles in teaching fundamentals. Share individual lists with others and produce a final composite list with each item weighted according to the number of people who have it on their original list.

4. Practising teachers hot-seat. If a significant number of people in the group have attended a teacher's classes then that teacher can take the hot seat and the first half of the allotted time receive supportive negative feedback from those people. And for the second half of the allotted time she receives validating feedback about her actual teaching.

IV. Two Kinds of Workshop

This programme is intended primarily for would-be teachers of co-counselling. I think a clear choice needs to be made between two kinds of workshops:

- A workshop for would-be teachers, and assistant teachers.
- A workshop for fully fledged practising teachers.

Both kinds of workshops, I believe, are needed, but I don't think they should be confused with each other. If the workshop is for would-be teachers and assistant teachers, it is a very good idea for some practising teachers to attend, but the main thrust of all the exercises needs to be to train, support and encourage the would-be teachers. If the workshop is for practising teachers, then some assistant teachers can attend but again the main thrust of all the exercises needs to be on behalf of the needs of the fully fledged teachers.

V. Community Building

A teacher training programme also needs to look at the very important and closely related but distinct activity which is community-building. I would therefore include some discussion on the following:

- The provision and design of on-going groups as a follow-up to fundamentals.
- The provision and design of a regular series of workshops for those who have done fundamentals. These may be anything from one-day to seven-day workshops for

general co-counselling or on special themes such as spirituality, sexism, racism, social change, etc.

- The formation of special interest groups to look at the application of co-counselling principles to particular areas such as school teaching, child raising, marriage, organizational development, etc.
- Policies about, and strategies for, reaching out to people in the co-counselling community, i.e., drop-outs immediately after a fundamentals, lapsed co-counsellors, lapsed teachers, etc.
- Developing a clear policy and programme about issues of social interaction and co-operation other than co-counselling within the co-counselling community. Also a clear policy and programme about the development and expression of human sexuality within a co-counselling community.
- Developing a clear policy and programme about issues of decision-making in a peer community with an appreciation of the role of creative tension and conflict in such decision-making.
- Developing clearly the distinction between directive leadership and facilitative or enabling leadership.

See also: Co-Counselling Teachers' Manual: [Community building](#)

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