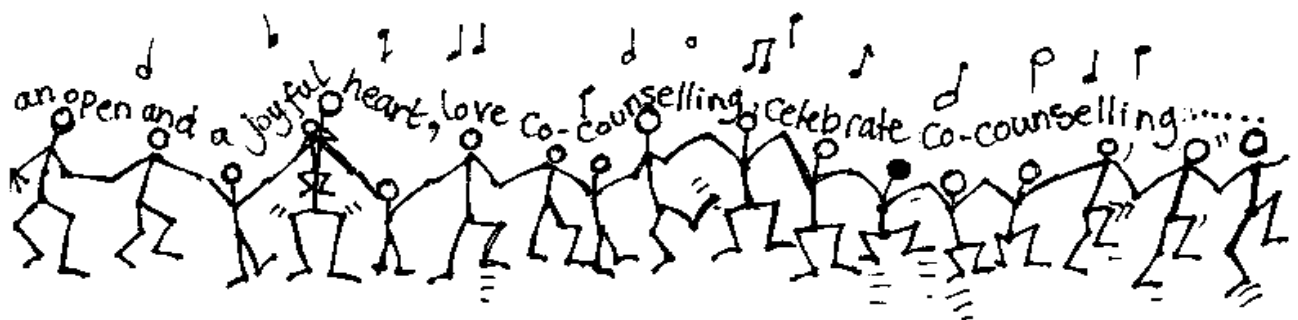


Co-Counselling

the CornuCopia way

JanPieter Hoogma

Version April 2004



Welcome

Welcome to one of the following workshops:

- Fundamentals of Co-Counselling
- Managing Conflict and Difficult Conversations
- Creating your Life
- Support and Support groups

Together they form the CornuCopia approach to Co-Counselling.

Set-up of the CornuCopia Workshop folder

At each CornuCopia workshop the participants receive handouts relevant to that workshop. All the workshop handouts relate to each other and form together a comprehensive Co-Counselling manual, which is gathered in this folder. In order to keep a clear overview all the hand-outs are organised under the following five main tabs.

Tab 1 - Personal Notes

This is the place for your personal notes, session plans and homework suggestions.

Tab 2 - Workshop theory

Here you can store the workshop theory particular to each workshop.

Tab 3 - Techniques and procedures

This is a section with three parts.

- **Core Co-Counselling techniques & procedures**
The techniques in common for most CornuCopia workshops
- **Techniques for working in a group**
- **Extra techniques**
Some CornuCopia workshop have specific techniques. Here one can find also techniques from the more traditional approach in CCI.

Tab 4 - Appendix

This is the place for the more general background handouts, e.g. a short history of Co-Counselling, the differences between the CornuCopia approach and that of the more traditional CCI.

Tab 5 - CornuCopia Booklets

Under this tab booklets like the Rescue Triangle can find their place.

Many thanks to

Anne Denniss, Jill Brooks, Marian van Wijngaarden, Sheila Lochrie,
Pete Fantes, Teresa Tinklin and all the people who offered their suggestions to me.

How can you contribute to these Handouts?

This handout is very much a project in progress. Hence your feedback and suggestions are very welcome!

By sending your feedback

To: JanPieter Hoogma

32-A Inverleith Place

Edinburgh EH3 5QB

SCOTLAND (UK)

☎ (44) 0131-551 6146

J.P.Hoogma@co-cornucopia.org.uk

If you send in these handouts with your suggestions for improvement you will receive the latest version.

Suggestions for feedback

Positive feedback

What is good about these handouts?

How was it supportive to you?

Any suggestion that can lead to improvement

How can it be improved? Suggesting sentences, graphics or illustrations.

Any other suggestion.

Test my Success Criteria

I have written these handouts with the following 'Success Criteria' in mind:

- ***As simple as possible, as complex as necessary***
Which information is superfluous?
Do the topics in these handouts cover all aspects and varieties?
- ***Accessible***
Can you find the information you need quickly?
- ***Easy to read***
Are these handouts easy to read and are the illustrations clarifying?
Does it cater for people with reading difficulties, like dyslexia or ageing eyes?
- ***Empowering***
The techniques & procedures are described in such a way that
you as ***client***
 - can easily understand when to use them
 - easily follow them
 - and easily tell your counsellor what you are expecting of himyou as a ***counsellor***
 - can easily understand how to support your client.

CornuCopia at the Internet

The CornuCopia web site

<http://www.co-cornucopia.org.uk>

- Lots of Co-Counselling literature
- A huge download page
- CornuCopia sponsored workshops with links to other Co-Counselling workshops
- Links to other Co-Counselling web sites

CoCo *interactive* Journal

<http://www.journal.co-cornucopia.org>

Here you can respond immediately to an article and its author. Other people can respond in turn to your contributions.

Personal Session Plan - Fundamentals

What issues in my life do I find difficult?

*Which ones of the above would I like to try
and address during this Fundamentals course?*

What do I want to change in my life?

*Which ones of the above would I like to try
and address during this Fundamentals course?*

What am I longing for in my life?

*Which ones of the above would I like to try
and support during this Fundamentals course?*

What are my best hopes for this Fundamentals course?

Conclusion: What issues would I like to address during this Fundamentals course?

Week 3

Getting in the 'I am OK' position.

What experiences and 'evidence' do you have that you are not an OK person?

Homework Fundamentals

Homework 1

Two meetings for sessions

*One meeting in your own house;
the other in the house of your Co-Counselling
partner.*

Session suggestions for each meeting

PART 1: 10 minutes each way (7+2+1)*

<i>The host as client:</i>	"How is it to have a session in my house?"
<i>counsellor:</i>	'Free Attention Contract'

<i>The guest as client:</i>	A topic of your choice. See your session plan.
<i>counsellor:</i>	'Free Attention Contract'

*** Positive feedback** about the
counsellor's 'free attention'.

PART 2: 15 minutes each way (12+2)

<i>client:</i>	An ID check or topic of your choice. See your session plan.
<i>counsellor:</i>	'normal contract' with open-ended questions

Asking for feedback by counsellor?

About something you did you feel
insecure. See feedback procedure.

Sharing a HUG ?

Socialising

We recommend new Co-Counsellors not to socialise until you are familiar with Co-Counselling and confident with your clienting and counselling skills.

Experience has shown that under these conditions people learn faster Co-Counselling and it is easier to maintain confidentiality and not to refer to each other's session material.

Though it seems attractive to gain a good friend from Co-Counselling, it is more difficult to find a good Co-Counsellor than a friend. You may also use Co-Counselling to find and make new friends.

Some daily experiments

1. **Use open-ended questions in conversations** How did it work? How long did it take for you to find common ground? What did you hear that you didn't expect?
2. **The face triangle: left eye - right eye - mouth** When you are listening, read easily the left eye - right eye - mouth and then the left eye again.
Ask for feedback: "How did you experience my eye-contact?"

Daily in Your Notebook

1. What were the results of your experiments?
2. What was your **NEW & GOOD** today? (CoCo jargon for "What did you enjoy today?").
- What made it specifically new and/or good for you?
- Can you re-experience + digest it again?
3. A **celebration of yourself** or "What did you like about yourself today?"
4. Did you see or hear **anyone celebrating him or herself** today?
How do you feel about this?

Refresh your memory

- Look through the handouts of this weekend. All the slides are in it.
- Browse through the 'Rescue Triangle' handout.

Homework 2

Daily in your notebook

1. Which **sensations or feelings** did you find difficult to accept today?
 - Give a 'literal description' of your sensations in your body at present.
2. What **NEW & GOOD** experience did you have today?
 - What made it specifically new and/or good for you?
 - Can you re-experience it again?
3. Write in your notebook a **celebration of yourself** or what you liked about yourself today.
 - Did you see or hear **anyone celebrating him or herself** today? How do you feel about this?
4. Did you notice anyone **bottling up his or her emotions** today or did you do it yourself? How did they or did you do it?
 - How do you feel about this?

Telephone Co-Counselling

1. A pre-arranged session: 5+2 each way.
2. An "emergency" session when
 - you actually feel distressed, or
 - you feel a need for attention, or
 - something is bothering you.

Two meetings for sessions

30 minutes each way (25 + 5)

One in your own house; the other one in the house of your partner.

Suggestions for your session

- Consult your **personal session plan** for ideas
- Work out an identification using the '**ID check**'.
- Work on an painful experience you have set aside with the 'Make a picture' technique or that is relevant for the here & now, using the '**Video Technique**'
- Work on a situation in which you felt distressed and/or powerless using the '**From Pain to Power**' procedure
- **Explore what is hindering you to exploit fully your client time.** using the technique 'And that means.....'

Choose a start sentence, like

- Expressing my feelings in front of my counsellor means....
- Showing my vulnerability to my counsellor means.....
- Co-Counselling means.....
- Feeling stuck means.....
- Working with a female/male counsellor means.....
- '**What is on top**'
 - What is bothering you at present?
 - Scan your body for its sensationsTry and find out whether an old experience is involved: '**What situation in the past I am reminded of?**'

After the session (optional)

- Counsellor asking for feedback if and when feeling unsure or uncertain
- Sharing a Hug?

Homework 3

Daily in your notebook

1. Which sensations or feelings did you find difficult to accept today?
OR Give a 'literal description' of your sensations in your body at present.
 - What negative beliefs are contained in them?
 - What is triggering them off?
 - What situation in the past or who does it remind you of? What is your unfinished business?
 - What do you need in order to change these beliefs or feelings?
2. Acknowledging the positive side of life:
 - What NEW & GOOD experience did you have today? What made it specifically new and/or good for you? Can you re-experience it again?
 - Write in your notebook a celebration of yourself or what you liked about yourself today.
3. What notes would you like to make in your Personal Session plan?
 - A dream, a picture of an old memory or a hindering, self-restrictive belief?

Telephone Co-Counselling

1. Try to arrange a daily session for a week at a fixed time. Potential topics
 - What is on top?
 - Scan your body.
 - For support on the experiments mentioned below.
 - How are you doing with...?
2. Experiment with
 - using a quick Pain-to-Power procedure for a situation in which you felt overwhelmed, pained or powerless.
 - Try out a telephone session with somebody from the phone counsellors' list you don't know.

Try to arrange a weekly session for about a month or two

30 minutes each way (25 + 5)

One in your own house; the other one in the house of your partner.

Suggestions for your session

1. Consult your **personal session plan** to get a reminder of those issues you may wish to work on.
2. **Practice techniques** such as
 - The 'ID check'.
 - Pain-to-Power technique
 - The Video technique
 - Focusing, listening to your body
 - Turning a restrictive belief into a new positive one
 - Asking for feedback.
3. **Experiment** with using sessions for:
 - Doing a tedious job with free attention
 - Having a walk, sharing your experiences as a client
 - Dreaming about something nice for the future

Personal Session Plan – Difficult Conversations

Which conflicts & difficult conversations do I want to work on during this workshop?

Think of:

- Having emotionally difficult conversations
- Dealing with 'difficult people' and difficult behaviours
- Challenging behaviours you have problems with
- Getting past 'No', creating a win-win situation
- Stepping out of your victim role and asserting positively what you want

What is the situation?

What has been actually said and observably happened?	What thoughts do I have attached to them
--	--

What emotional problem did I attach to it?

- What were the Triggers for the Invitations taken?
- Have I implicated my identity or self-esteem?
Me being an 'OK' or "good" person / my competence / my worthiness of love and attention
- What situation in the past does it remind me of?
- Who does the situation or the person remind me of?

What is my, their and our practical problem?

What options can I create?

Personal session plan: create my life

Desire project sheet dd.:

What is my desire – felt sense?

How does my 400% imagination look like

Which negative beliefs need to be dispelled?

What positive affirmation do I choose?

What support do I need and how do I organise it?

What do I need to explore and to find out?

Evaluating your Day - harvesting

Which irritation(s) did you or other people around you recently experience?

What desire or wish of you is hidden behind that irritation?

What are you today materialising?

Which of your dreams and longings?

Which restrictive beliefs?

Which desire, wish or attraction do you find difficult to acknowledge?

In what stage is a particular wish?

Personal Session Plan - Support Workshop

What do I find difficult in my life?

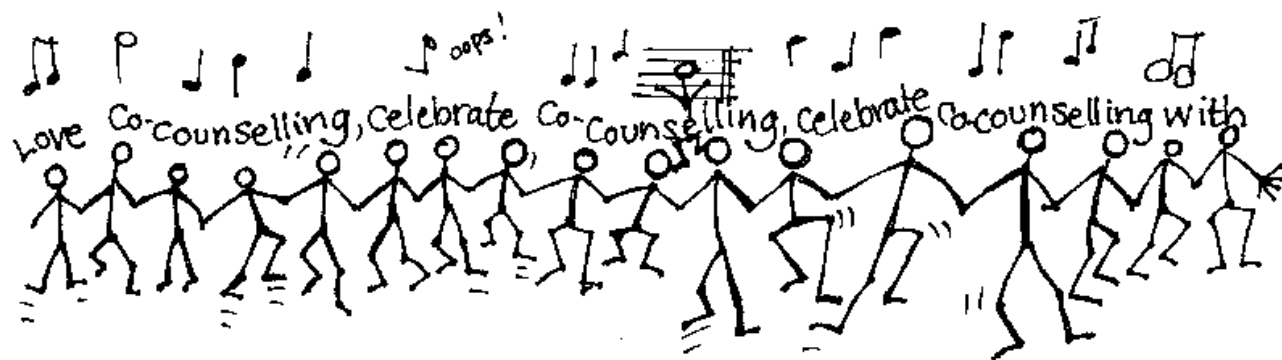
What would I like to change in my life?

What am I longing for in my life?

What is my best hope for this workshop?

What support do I need in my life?

Which of the above mentioned issues would you like to work on during this workshop?



Fundamentals Co-Counselling

the CornuCopia way

Version April 2004

Contents

1. Co-Counselling culture
2. Sessions
3. Living happily with your emotional truth
4. After the Fundamentals...



Part 1. Co-Counselling Culture

Contents

Fundamentals of Co-Counselling Culture.....	2
Taking responsibility for your self! 2	
Leave Other People in charge of themselves 2	
A sense of safety	3
Confidentiality3	
Feeling unsafe by being reminded of somebody...3	
Not feeling safe in the fundamentals course? 3	
Not feeling safe in the Co-Counselling network? 3	
Guidelines for protecting your boundaries 4	
Positivity.....	5

In Co-Counselling people have sessions with each other and meet at workshops and socially as well. Co-Counselling culture aims to support this to happen in a safe and effective way.

Fundamentals of Co-Counselling Culture

It is OK to be Me

- FEELINGS
 - I AM OK whatever feelings I *have*!
- ACTIONS, MISTAKES
 - I am OK whatever mistake I make.
 - It is the best I could manage at the time!
- THOUGHTS & NEEDS
 - are the tools I have to work with
- I am OK *and* I have feelings, challenges, etc.

I am
NOT my feelings, actions, faults, thoughts or needs

Co-Counselling 'Highway Code'

- It is OK to be me! It is OK to be you!
- Take responsibility for your own life:
 - own your feelings, thoughts and actions
 - use 'I' when speaking about yourself
 - it is OK to say 'NO', no explanation needed
- Leave other people in charge of their lives
- Confidentiality
- No violence against people or goods

Taking responsibility for your self!

- If you **need** something, speak up! There is much more chance that you get what you need, when you speak up than when you let people guess.
You might wish to ask for **minutes of fun, games**
- Accept **doubts** and **uneasy or uncomfortable feelings**:
they are cues that start off clarity and improvement if treated properly!
- **Saying 'NO'** is saying 'YES' to yourself!
You don't need to give any reason for it...
- Yawning is OK! It brings oxygen to your body

Leave Other People in charge of themselves


- Speak for yourself only ("I" instead of "We" or "You")
- Allow other people their truth: allow other people to talk

A sense of safety

A sense of safety and acceptance is necessary for people as a balance to taking some risks, exploring inner truths or experimenting with new behaviours. Hence there is much attention to the issue of feeling safe within Co-Counselling.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality...
Crucial for people to feel *safe*



- No reference to any session material at any time
- When talking with people outside this workshop about this workshop
 - No references to real people, use aliases if necessary
 - Talk about what is happening and about your own experiences
 - No discussing people

Feeling unsafe by being reminded of somebody...

A sense of safety is subjective and does not always accurately reflect how safe or unsafe a situation actually is.

You may feel unsafe with one or more people in the workshop. One of the factors that might contribute to this feeling unsafe, is that they remind you of some unfinished business from your past or unmet or unacknowledged needs in the present.

The '**Identity Check**' procedure helps to check that out. See "Core Techniques and Procedures" under the tab Techniques.

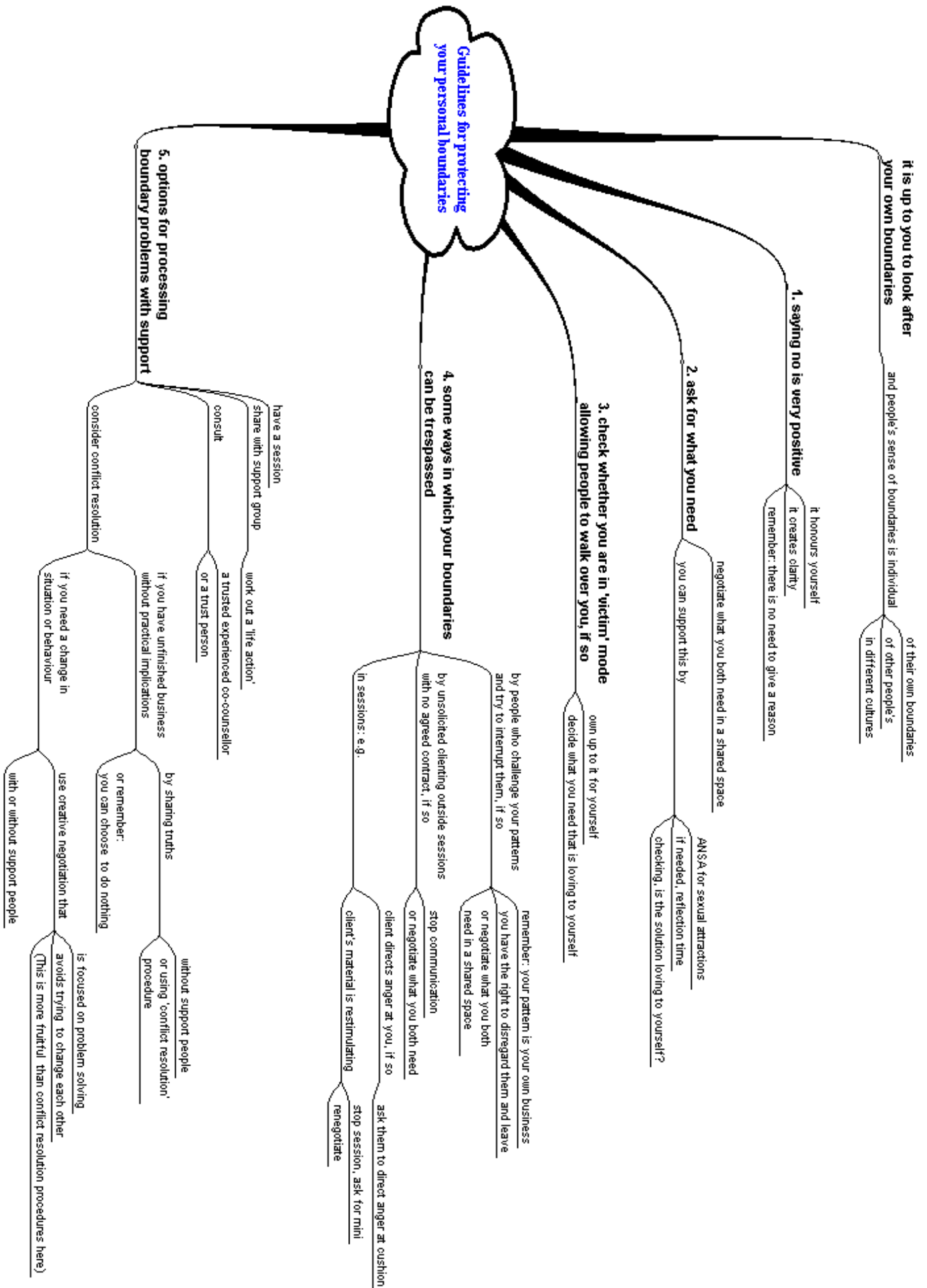
Not feeling safe in the fundamentals course?

We have negotiated a safe workshop culture with each other in the group. However, it might happen that you do not feel safe enough to raise an issue in the group. If so, please feel free to give the teacher(s) a ring and to discuss the issue privately.

Not feeling safe in the Co-Counselling network?

It might happen that something happens in the Co-Counselling network that triggers a sense of unsafe feelings in you. In Scotland and at many Co-Counselling workshops there are Trust Persons with whom you may want to discuss what is happening. For more information, see Chapter 4 "After the fundamentals..."

Guidelines for protecting your boundaries



Celebration is part of the Co-Counselling culture. It focuses attention on what is going well or what quality people have. It often sets a better tone

Moments of Celebration

- Rounds
 - ‘New & Good’
 - What did you recently enjoy?
- At end of session
 - What quality of myself made this session possible?

Celebrations

What is good about myself?

- The thinking error ‘*Mental Filter*’ creates negativity
 - ‘dwelling on the negative’
 - ‘disqualifying the positive’
- Two ways of celebrating yourself
 - on the one hand... / on the other hand...
 - simply acknowledging what is positive about yourself

Thoughts create feelings

in a workshop than moaning does.

Part 2. Co-Counselling Sessions

Contents

The client is in charge of the session	2
Session content	2
Sessions as sacred space for your truth	
Sessions are not meant to pass information on to your counsellor!	
The counsellor role: supporting the client	3
'Free Attention'	3
Why is free attention so important in Co-Counselling?	
Losing your free attention as counsellor	
Rescue Triangle: the session relationship polluted	5
General session planning	6
Choosing a partner	6
Sessions with friends, partners, boss or colleagues	
Session time planning	6
Finishing off a session	7
Asking for feedback	8
Session Contracts	9
Free attention by the counsellor in all session contracts	9
'Free Attention' Contract	9
'Normal' Contract	9
Telephone Co-counselling	10
How it works	10

SESSION *principles*

Always equal time...

CLIENT

- **in charge of session**
- it is your time
- it is *the* space for exploring and/or expressing your truth

COUNSELLOR

- **'Free Attention'** is 80% of the 'job'
- eye contact
- attitude of non-judgmental acceptance
- supporting
- confidentiality

The aim of this part is to clarify what clients and counsellors can expect from each other so that the client can get the most out of their sessions.

The client is in charge of the session

The client is always in charge of the session

- As client you can be the centre of the universe
- The client is 'King' or 'Queen';
The counsellor is 'Royal Servant'
- The client is director of what is happening in the session

Session content

You can use your sessions for any issue or activity you like... Sometimes, though, it can be wise to negotiate with your counsellor whether or not to work on certain topics. E.g., when you want to work on your aversion for school and teachers with a schoolteacher.

Sessions as sacred space for your truth

Sessions and using Co-Counselling methods offer a splendid space to explore your own emotional or spiritual truth.

Having a Co-Counselling session is different from having a chat with friends. Here the focus of attention often swings continuously backwards and forwards, interrupting your flow of awareness. Friends often tend to give advice as well. In a Co-Counselling session you are free from these influences and this gives your own truth more chance to emerge and to be 'purified'.

In sessions you do *not* have to clarify anything to your counsellor, unless you choose to.

Your counsellor is there to support you in your process. The only suggestions they are meant to give are process supporting ones. In order to this your counsellor generally do not need to 'understand' the content of your session.

Sessions are not meant to pass information on to your counsellor!

The counsellor's focus is on supporting you as client. In other words, the focus of the attention stays all the time with the client. Their opinions about anything are not meant to be part of the session process.

When you as client passes information onto the counsellor, he or she gets into an impossible situation. In a session a counsellor does not have any possibility to respond, as responding moves the focus of the process to the counsellor and away from the client.

After the session the counsellor is supposed not to refer to session material, otherwise it would be breaking the rule of not referring to session material.

As soon as a client wants to transfer information to you as counsellor, you are entitled to stop the session immediately.

The counsellor role: supporting the client

'Free Attention'

Stop for a moment and consider where your attention is focused at the moment. It could all be focused on reading this, or it could be spread around on several different things at once: pain or discomfort in your body, you have music on or hear traffic noises or there may be something going round at the back of your mind. Your attention is a very dynamic thing, which shifts its focus all the time. If there is a sudden, unexpected noise, for example, then your attention will shift quickly to that. It may be even drawing all of your attention towards it. If you have a strong feeling or emotion at the moment, it can draw all your attention as well.

FREE ATTENTION

80% of the counsellor's job

- Being there and present for your client
- **Keeping your eyes available** for eye contact
- Witnessing your client
- Letting your listening not be disturbed by your judgements
- Being comfortable with yourself

It is an attitude, not a skill!

Free attention is the amount of attention you have left over at any one point in time, the part of your attention that is not currently occupied.

Why is free attention so important in Co-Counselling?

As counsellor, giving another person free attention is one of the most powerful and healing elements of the co-counselling process. Giving free attention means being present and with the client, with your focus on them. Being really present enables you to listen to them without judging them, accept them as they are and value them as a worthwhile person, whatever they have said or done. Giving free attention is about keeping our awareness with the client.

Losing your free attention as counsellor

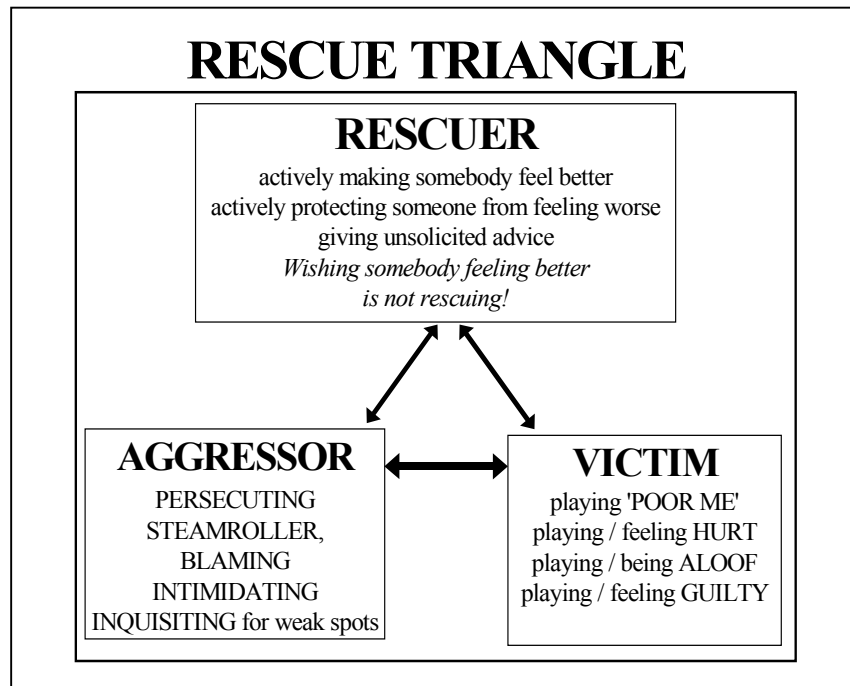
You may find that your attention is shifting back into yourself for some reason. For example, you may be triggered by something the client has said, or something they have said has sent you off on some train of thought. Or your attention may be caught by something inside or outside the room e.g. a phone ringing, a cat jumping on your lap, a siren out in the street.

Then it is important to shift the balance back towards your client. You have several options.

- Simply let go of whatever is distracting you, and refocus on your client.
- If you can't recover sufficient free attention, then the best thing for both of you is to tell the client. If you would carry on a session as counsellor, the chances are the other person will notice your lack of attention this and get distressed by this.
- If necessary, put the cat out, switch the phone ringer off, and sometimes find out what's alarming you outside.
- You could try making a picture, attention switches, or, if necessary, swap roles and be the client yourself, if the other person agrees to this.
- Another possibility would be for you both to seek telephone sessions with other people.

Equally, if you are about to have a session and you feel that you don't have sufficient free attention to counsel, ask to go first. Having your own session as client may well free some of your attention up. The coming out exercises at the end of your session, are also designed to bring your attention back into the room.

Rescue Triangle: the session relationship polluted



It is sometimes very difficult for a counsellor to witness the client suffer and trying to get out of this. Yet, leaving the client in charge and getting on with their truth is most likely to support their confidence in their own skills of getting on with their life. Also they need to be able to explore their own truth without being influenced by the counsellor's opinions or intentions.

Therefore the client and counsellor relationship needs to be a 'clean' one, i.e. they stay out of the Rescue Triangle and avoid to get involved in its sometimes very subtle manipulations.

In the booklet about the Rescue Triangle you may read more about how its dance can influence the session and about what you as client or as counsellor can do about it.

Choosing a partner

SESSION *choosing a partner*

- Choose a counsellor whom you feel
 - fits with you and your issue
 - safe with... (2 counsellors?)
- If you feel your topic can be difficult for your counsellor: **negotiate** it first
 - e.g. *working on school-teachers with a teacher*
- Say 'NO' if you are asked for a session and you don't feel good with it
- What prevents me from working with X?

Sessions with friends, partners, boss or colleagues

It is important that sessions are not meant to pass on any information to the counsellor. He or she is meant to 'forget' or not to 'know' everything from the session after the session. It is very human though to remember everything that is in your own interest, so they will remember.

It might be that you still want to have a session with any of them (we recommend to do this, only when you feel at ease both in the client and counsellor role) and that you want them to know something from your session. Tell after your session what they are supposed to know from your session.

Session time planning

SESSION *planning*

- Before a session
 - negotiation about time, venue and who goes first
 - negotiating contract with counsellor:
 - 'Free attention contract'*
 - 'Normal contract' or other contracts*
- The session itself
 - Client's Working time
 - Coming Out time
- After session *optional*
 - sharing a hug
 - counsellor asking for feedback

SESSION 'Coming out'

- 'Make a picture' *if necessary*
Frame, title, store it in back pocket
to come back to later, if you wish to choose so
- What is good / useful about your session?
Insights? Changes?
- What is good about yourself?
What quality of you made this session possible?
- Attention switches

The whole aim of this set of exercises is to finish your client time peacefully so that you are able to get on with life cleanly.

The more able you feel to come out of deep material, the more confident you will feel to work with deep emotions. This will increase your sense of control in working with your emotions.

'Making a Picture' technique

When you need to save session material at the end of a session for later you can use the 'Making a Picture' technique. This technique has more uses. For more info see part "Co-Counselling Techniques."

"What is good about your session?"

This helps you to use the reflecting side of your mind and diminish the chance that you are going to be overwhelmed by (negative) feelings.

"What is good about yourself?"

"What quality of you made this session possible?"

Here you have the opportunity to celebrate yourself and/or to acknowledge those qualities inside your self that sometimes unexpectedly showed their nice face during your session.

Attention switches

The aim of these 'silly' exercises is to engage different parts of the brain in various ways. Counting, spelling, spelling backwards, what did you have for breakfast yesterday morning, give names of five different countries/flowers/grains etc. achieve this engaging different parts of the brain.

Correct results are unimportant. An incorrect spelled word is unimportant. What counts is the act of trying to spell

After SESSION
*counsellor asking for feedback
when feeling unsure or uncertain*

- Negotiate first!
'May I check something out about my counselling?' Client may refuse.
- Identify the incident
Process, not content: 'When I said/did..., I felt...
- What was good about it?
- What else would you like to say about it?

Session Contracts

Contracts are clarifications of what two or more parties have agreed to expect from each other.

Free attention by the counsellor in all session contracts

Whichever contract you have agreed to as counsellor, giving free attention is 80% of the job.

In a normal contract, if you find yourself trying too hard as counsellor to come up with the 'right' suggestion, or a 'good' suggestion, the chances are the balance of your attention will be focused on that rather than on the client. If you realise that this is happening, shift your focus back to the client. On balance, giving free attention is more helpful than you coming up with a perhaps useful suggestion.

'Free Attention' Contract

In a free attention the counsellor does not give any verbal suggestions, with the exception of the coming out exercises at the end of the session

'FREE ATTENTION' CONTRACT
applications

- a walk with a silent partner
- having a nap
- meditation
- an action, e.g. cleaning your room or filling in a tax form
- try-outs for talks, new behaviour
- stopping your counsellor giving you suggestions
- free fantasising space

'Normal' Contract

'NORMAL' CONTRACT

USA: loving caring attention with suggestions

CLIENT

- Ask for what you need
- Ignore interventions that are not right for you
- You can switch contract any time you wish

COUNSELLOR

- Say 'No' if you don't feel comfortable with what your client asks
- Offer 'suggestions' *as reminders* that may support the client's process
- **No advice or social talk**
- Free attention stays 80% of the job!

‘NORMAL’ CONTRACT

general counsellor suggestions

Supporting the client with their process

- Open-ended questions
who, what, when, where, when, how
- What do you mean with ‘...xx...’
when you say ‘aa...xx...bb’
- NO advice, approval, disapproval or social talk

*Suggestions are not necessary!
They seem to happen*

There are more suggestions in the Normal Contract. For suggestions

- supporting the emotional process see ‘Part 3 Living happily with your emotions’
- working with personal beliefs see Part 4.

Telephone Co-counselling

Telephone co-counselling might be ideal when

- It is difficult to get together with a co-counsellor for a session, for instance when you live away from other co-counsellors.
- You are on holiday.
- You need a session much sooner than you arrange a face-to-face session
- For an ‘emergency’ session at very short notice, to let off steam or to feel supported
- You want to work steadily on an issue or action plan or you need continuous support on a daily basis. If so, then arrange a regular, daily phone session. Five minutes may sound small but it provides a focus to work effectively in.

How it works

The time, as in all sessions, is negotiated. An example could be;

Me: ‘Can I have a ‘phone session, are you free?’

You: ‘Well, I’m busy right now. Can you call back in 10 minutes?’

Me: ‘Fine, speak to you soon.’

10 mins later

Me ‘Is it all right now for a session?’

You ‘Great, what sort of time are you thinking of, 7 mins each way would be fine for me.

Me ‘7 mins is fine, normal contract & I’d like to go first if that’s ok?’

You ‘Great, timer’s on, starting now...’

After the session.

Me ‘I phoned you, so it’s your turn to phone me back for your time. ‘

You ‘ok’

Time & expense are reciprocal.

After one person has had their session, the call is finished & the other co-counsellor returns the call for the second session.

Some suggestions

From research into the effectiveness of call centres it shows that people feel more listened to when the caller imagines and behaves as if he 'sees' the other person.

If you feel as counsellor that your client has lost their balance of attention, you can check this out by asking "How is your attention?"

If you as client need to feel your counsellor more present, you may ask for making hum sounds as signs of listening.

Part 3. Living happily with your emotional truth

Contents

Intro	2
Sensations, feelings, emotions, moods & brain distress	3
Sensations 3	
Feelings 3	
Feelings and language	
The importance of the sensations and feelings distinction	
Emotions 4	
The importance of the feelings and emotions distinction	
Moods (emotional or mental states) 5	
Open and closed mind states	
Recognising your Brain-In-Distress or Mini-Mind-Paralysis	
Accepting your emotional truth “as is”	7
Blaming & owning your emotional truth 7	
Ways for accepting your emotional truth 8	
Accept your Here-And-Now & change your future 9	
Self acceptance versus personal improvement	
Working with your emotional truth	10
Focusing: having a conversation with your sensations... 10	
Escaping from brain-distress 11	
Recognising the different causes	
1. Undigested business	
2. Processing “Taken invitations”	
3. Working with information overload	
Expressing and discharging emotions 13	
The Discharge Triangle	
After the Discharge, what next?	
The feeling trap: emotional reasoning 16	
The influence of thoughts & beliefs 17	
Beliefs as filter	
Thinking errors: distortions of reality	
Summary: Living happily with your emotional truth	19
Awareness: we co-create our emotional truth 19	
The ‘Normal’ Contract & your emotional truth	20

Feelings happen
You cannot choose them!

Your only choice is:

ACCEPTANCE

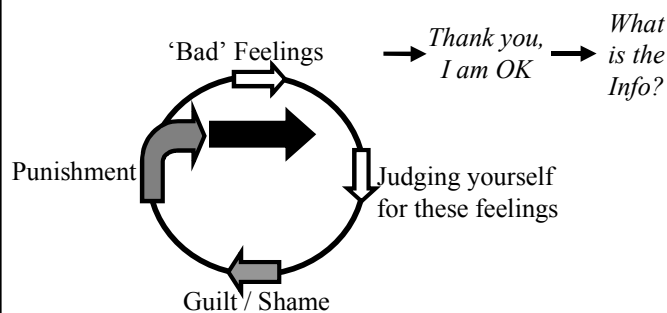
- welcoming as resource
 - information
 - learn from
- break-through
 - aliveness
 - creativity
 - happiness

DENIAL & SUPPRESSION

- nuisance, avoidance
- clueless
- stuckness & numbness
- no opportunities
- fighting to keep emotions under control
- breakdown & misfortune

You are OK whatever feelings you have

‘The feeling bad’ spiral



Sensations, feelings, emotions, moods & brain distress

Before we can discuss living happily with your emotional truth, we need to clarify the different modalities in which people experience their emotional truth.

Living with your Emotional Truth

- **Sensations**
- **Feelings:** *sensations with interpretative labels*
- **Emotions:** *feelings that need to be expressed*
- **Emotional state or mood:**
 - *a more or less permanent mental state*
 - *colouring the way you are experiencing your life*

Sensations

We get *sensations* in our bodies all the time. If you are sitting, you will be getting a sensation in your thighs as they press against the chair. You may have a hollow feeling or a rumbling in your stomach, which you would normally associate with feeling hungry. In the English language there are several phrases that describe common physical sensations. For example, ‘My heart sank’, ‘I got a lump in my throat’, ‘The hairs on the back of my neck stood up’ and so on.

Sensations can have descriptive labels “I have butterflies in my tummy”. Not all sensations have literal descriptions or descriptive labels though.

Feelings

As soon as you interpret your sensations, they become feelings. For example, most people would interpret a lump in their throat as a sign of sadness. Or a sensation of heaviness and drooping eyelids as tiredness. Or a bubbly feeling just below the ribs as happiness. Hence they might say they feel sad or tired or happy.

Feelings and language

Language can be confusing here. For instance, when people say they feel tired, they can have different physical sensations on which they base their interpretation. When some people say they feel tired, it sounds the same but it might mean something different pending their underlying sensations. So one person might feel tired in their legs after a long walk and now need a quiet sit-down or even a sleep. Somebody else might feel mentally tired because of a long day work behind the computer and they might need a walk in the fresh air.

Another language confusion comes from the way people use the verb ‘feel’. One person might say “I feel sad”, expressing a feeling. Another

person may say "I feel that you are lying to me." This actually expresses a thought. More accurate would be: "I have some sensations in my body and I think that they mean that you are lying." Or shorter "I think that you are lying."

The importance of the sensations and feelings distinction

As said before, feelings are sensations with an interpretative label. Often those interpretations are right. When you have that pressing feeling under in your tummy you know you need to pee. However, not always our interpretations of our body sensations are correct. Somebody interpreted the strangling feelings around her neck as a forecast of a depression, and because of 'self-fulfilling prophecy' she shortly became depressed. When she learnt to communicate with this sensation she discovered that this meant that there was something challenging to be faced up to. When she did face up to it, she did not become depressed. Another example. Somebody who interpreted a heavy feeling in the chest as hunger, discovered that the real interpretation of that sensation was that he felt bad about himself because he had failed in his own eyes. As soon as he tackled the thoughts with which he created his own bad feelings, he didn't need to eat anymore as response to those sensations in his chest. The technique of communicating with your body sensations is called "Focusing". Read more about this at page 10 of this part.

Emotions

When our feelings are charged with energy and more persistent, they become *emotions*. They need to get out of your system. The word 'emotion' comes from the Latin word for 'moving out. That is the difference with feelings. These do not necessarily need to be expressed; awareness is enough.

An example will clarify this. When you lay on the beach with the sun mildly shining on you, a nice cooling breeze and the soothing sounds of the waves, you may have many happy feelings and sensations within your body without need to express them. Indeed, expressing them would disturb the whole happy situation. On the other hand when you hear unexpectedly very good news, you might want to shout and yell "Hooray!", expressing all your excitement.

The importance of the feelings and emotions distinction

Emotions need to be expressed., especially when they are strong emotions, such as rage, despair, shame, grief, guilt or anger. People are anxious to keep such emotions under control, because failing to do so feels humiliating and unpleasant. 'What will other people think of me?' , 'This is not me.' 'People will discover who I really am'. For all these reasons people will generally try to hide most of their emotions. However in situations such as having lost a loved one, or dealing with stressful relationships or work that is too demanding, this control of feelings can collapse and the emotions burst out. People fear this breakdown of control.

If we try to ignore our emotions and interrupt or block them from coming out, they can become persistent and our systems can get out of

balance and in the longer term our body can become ill. A comparison with peeing and pooping makes that clear. Pee and poop need to get out of the body as well. It is OK to keep them in for a short time, but then it becomes time to let them out. If this doesn't happen the body becomes more and more ill the longer the stuff is kept inside the body.

More information about expressing and discharging emotions, you can find at page 12 of this part.

Moods (emotional or mental states)

Generally, the word 'mood' encompasses both desirable, undesirable and neutral moods, healthy and unhealthy emotional or mental states.

Emotions when not suppressed flow, come and go and the brain processes them without getting paralysed. People experience themselves in a good mood and fit mental state.

However, the brain and emotions can get stuck, resulting in moods or mental or emotional states that colour the way you experience your life. This being stuck of the brain and the emotions may take a short time or go on for a much longer time, days or even months and years.

So you may feel on a low, a high, in a balanced or fragile state, tired exhausted or alive. To understand the differences in the various moods we need to look at the underlying mind states.

Open and closed mind states

Mind states	
More closed	More open
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• not experiencing yourself as the owner of your feelings & actions• black/white or absolute thinking• loss of clear thinking• uneasy with yourself	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• experiencing yourself as centre of your feelings & actions• tolerant to ambiguity• seeing options• easy & clear thinking• at ease with yourself

**Recognising a Brain in Distress
or a mini mind paralysis**

- Feeling
 - tense *or* emotional
 - victimised, angry *or* in love
 - overloaded, overwhelmed or numbed
- Unable to witness or hear what is said *without getting excited or irritated*
- “I am not OK” *or* “You are not OK!”
- Loss of clear thinking
- Memories of old situations or people pop up
- Not enjoying or over-enjoying life

The more closed mind state is representing a brain in distress or a so called mini mind paralysis: the brain has lost some of its balance and is temporarily not able to function in a creative and adaptive way. In other words, the brain is more or less closed for what is actually going on in the here and now. There is a big chance that your perception of reality is distorted.

Feeling low or high, depressed or manic

A brain that is partially paralysed can regain its balance quite naturally. Having a short nap a difficult situation, meeting a good friend or having a good time out, many people will feel OK again. However, when there are too many situations triggering a brain paralysis, the brain will get more and more difficulties to get balanced again. Once sleeping difficulties start to come in there is a big chance that you will slip into a depression or manic mental state.

Falling in love

You might be surprised to see falling in love as a Mini-Brain-Paralysis. However it is. Nature has gifted humans with hormones and that is a very functional way to make sure that people will mate and create children. To get people together and form a bond that is long and strong enough for a child to grow up, one needs to fall "truly, *madly* and deeply" in love with each other. In other words, hormones can switch off the brain partially, like in anger, so that people become blind enough to mate and to look after their children long enough until the seven year itch.

Accepting your emotional truth “as is”

Accepting your emotional truth

- Declare yourself OK whatever your emotional truth is
 - Making a picture *technique*
 - “I am OK and my emotional truth is...”
 - “I am OK and my challenge is...”
- Accept your body sensations
 - Literal Description & Felt sense *techniques*
- Take ownership of your emotional truth
 - Take back blame: “My response is...”
- Share your emotional truth with people

Your "Emotional truth" is whatever you are experiencing in your body and your perception: all your sensations and feelings, named or not named, understood or not understood, emotions -expressed or suppressed-, and whatever mood you are in.

Accepting your emotional truth 'as is' in the here and now, is a core condition for any change. Often this acceptance is already enough to clear a block and to provide a space for your emotional truth to develop itself.

Blaming & owning your emotional truth

A special word needs to be spent on owning your emotional truth.

Especially when emotions are overwhelming blame comes easily up, either directed at somebody else, an event or yourself. The blaming can be negative, but also positive, e.g. “You make me feel so happy”.

It is important to realise that all your feelings and emotions you experience as inflicted onto you, are actually a creation of yourself through your brain. When people speak to you only waves of light and air (sounds) reach you and your brain uses these to create meaning and feelings. Hence it is more correct though less 'natural' to say: "Those air and light waves coming from you triggered this and this emotional response in me."

Of course, the exception here are the direct physical influences like knives, chemicals, being physically overpowered or physical changes in your environment. And still the way you process them is a creation of your brain.

In other words, blaming, especially other people, for your feelings and emotions is a creation of your brain. This is important to know, as this insight is the key to being in charge of your life and your power to create your life the way you want it.

When you follow the more obvious path of blaming other people for the baddies or the goodies, you create mentally your own emotional powerlessness and dependencies: you are dependent on other people to feel good or bad. In the worst case of the baddies you can turn yourself

into a victim, eternally dancing the Rescue Triangle of victim, rescuer and prosecutor/aggressor.

The way out is to own your emotional responses, even when you are blaming. Blaming happens, even to the most experienced Co-Counsellor, enjoy it if possible (but do not dump it on the other person), and then take the blame back, own it as your response to what is happening: "When this and this is happening, I respond with... and I am OK. This is my emotional truth at the moment

Blaming yourself for your emotional truth

"It is all between your ears." could be a good summary of the above. Though mostly true, people often take this as a personal failure or as evidence of them being not OK or incompetent. If you take acceptance of your emotional truth this way, you miss totally the point. Whatever your emotional truth you are an OK person. You may have a big challenge on your hands, but putting yourself down for it, won't help you to get on with this challenge. For acceptance to work as a transformer, it requires you to see yourself as OK!

Ways for accepting yourself and your emotional truth

Often blame, embarrassment, shame or feelings of guilt are powerful emotions stopping you accepting and owning your own emotional truth.

There are several ways of how you can use Co-Counselling to support you accepting and owning your emotional truth.

1. **'Making a picture' technique**
This technique supports you to improve the relationship with yourself when having the challenge of that difficult emotional truth.
For how to use this technique, see "Core Techniques"
2. **Working in a group: "I am OK and my emotional truth is...."**
Hearing from people that they now know about your emotional truth and that they still see you as an OK person, is very powerful and supports you to accept your emotional truth. It generally liberates people from hiding their truth for other people.
For how to use this technique, see "Techniques for working in a group"
3. **"Literal description" of your body sensations or "Felt sense"**
If we accept our sensations and if necessary, express them, they naturally come and go, pass through our systems and change like the weather does. It is also the first step in Focusing: having a conversation with your body sensations.
For how to use this technique, see "Core Techniques"
4. **Using baby language in a face-to-face session**
Sometimes you may feel very embarrassed about your emotional truth. Using gibberish or baby language can be a very helpful first step to familiarise yourself with expressing your emotional truth, as you do not need to spend any attention to your fears of what your counsellor may think of it.

Accept your Here-And-Now & change your future

Accepting and witnessing your present emotional truth 'as is' often is sufficient to transform your reality. Acceptance often unlocks the flow of feelings and emotions. When it doesn't there are other Co-Counselling techniques that can be used, like Video technique and the Pain-to-Power procedure.

People are often not content with how their current reality is and think that using mental energy and willpower will change this. Sometimes it does, but more often than not, mental willpower does not deliver the change or makes it worse. For instance, when putting yourself under mental pressure, your brain can get more distressed and functions less well and you will feel worse and less capable to cope with the situation at hand.

Accepting your here and now situation, feelings and perceptions does not necessary imply that you have to 'approve' of them! Instead of getting mired into disapproval, it is much more effective to focus on how you would like to see the future, serving your longings and desires. The CornuCopia "Create your life." workshop is about this.

Self acceptance versus personal improvement

Acceptance of yourself with all your feelings, actions, experiences, thoughts wishes etc, almost automatically yields personal growth and pleasure in life. The banner 'I am OK, even when I have so many challenges' provides you with the opportunity to live your life as it presents to you and to live it 'as is'. This gives you the change to digest what needs to be digested, to finish off what needs to be finished off and to connect to your wishes and longings and to live them.

Co-Counselling gives you the space to look at how you are now and to come to terms with your current situation including your wishes. In hindsight you and other people will notice with delight that you have grown as a person, as a side effect of your acceptance of your self.

However, when you try to improve on yourself, you will notice that every time you achieve an 'improvement' there will be a new thing that needs to be improved... It is a bit like the person who continuously tries to catch his own 'perfect' shadow, but never able to catch it fully.

Focusing: having a conversation with your sensations...

We see with our eyes, listen with our ears, smell with our nose and we sense with our body. Like our eyes, ears and nose perceive the world in their way, our body 'sees' our internal and external world in its own way. Our body has to tell us a thing or two.

Most sensations represent information. Some of them work automatically and you pull your hand away from something hot. Of others you know the meaning, e.g. hunger or thirst. Some more uncomfortable sensations you might like to suppress, for instance by having a drink, sex or taking a painkiller. Still it might be useful to explore what they try to tell you. For example, that persistent semi-circular pricking sensation in your stomach could be the tip of an emotion that you have swallowed or suppressed. As long as you don't want to listen to that sensation you may feel quite uncomfortable in your tummy.

'Listening to our bodies' is more than being in contact with our feelings and emotions, it is being in contact with what we physically sense, our inner wisdom.

Our bodies are wise in many ways hardly ever acknowledged in our culture. Our bodies carry knowledge about how we are living our lives, about what we actually value and believe as distinctive from what we should value or believe. Our bodies know when people bring out the best in us and when they deplete and diminish us. Our bodies know what we are longing for and what is the right next step to a more fulfilling and rewarding life.

Our minds alone do not know these things. Our minds can remember the past, repeat what other people have told us, and invent any possible future scenario we can fret or feel wishful about. Our minds can create options. Our body knows the direction to take and where to go.

Body sensations do not speak English or Dutch, but once you understand their way of communicating you tap into the inner wisdom of your body.

Focussing is a skill, the skill of having conversations with your body. Some people have acquired that skill naturally; other people need to spend time and energy to develop that skill.

Co-Counselling & Focusing

Focusing is essential in Co-Counselling. Hence one of the aims of the Co-Counselling Fundamentals is to clarify how you can 'listen' to your body and how you can enlist the support of other people with that.

The Focusing skill of listening to your physical sensations forms the basis of many Co-Counselling techniques:

- The acceptance of your emotional truth is only possible if you accept its sensations.
- When searching for the trigger of your distress, your body sensations are your guide. The 'trigger' is an important part of the Pain-to-Power technique and of discharging emotions.

- Your physical sensations are an important gateway to unacknowledged longings and forgotten undigested memories,

For the Focusing technique itself,
see Focusing in Techniques: "Part 1. Co-Counselling Core Techniques".

Escaping from brain-distress

Recognising the different causes

Some causes of Mini-Brain-Paralysis

- **Undigested business** is triggered:
 - an old undigested or traumatic experience
 - unacknowledged or unmet needs or longings
- **“Invitation taken”** to take something on board
 - *one of your buttons pushed*
- **Information overload**
 - too much information and stimulation is offered for your brain to process in one go
 - dyslexia or dyspraxia
 - too many issues are occupying your mind, each of them not really distressing in themselves

There are also other factors that can contribute to a Mini-Brain-Paralysis, e.g., lack of good sleep, lack of physical fitness, wrong diet etc. These factors are beyond the scope of this section.

1. Undigested business

When is something ‘undigested’?

- A memory pops up
 - again and again during daily activities
 - during Pain-to-Power procedure *or*
 - in Focusing session
- When thinking of that memory
 - you feel emotional, uncomfortable, numb or joyful
 - you become paralysed or excited
 - you lose your ability to think clearly
 - you switch to your ‘survival’ strategy
- You dream about it, perhaps in a nightmare

Processing undigested business

- ID check when dis-identification is needed:
 - “What is left unsaid or undone?”
 - acknowledging unmet needs or unacknowledged longings:
 - “I am OK and I need/long for...”
 - “What is here my practical problem?”
Format “How can I ...?”
- healing an old undigested, traumatic event:
 - “Making a picture” technique
 - “Video” technique

2. Processing “Taken invitations”

People can say awkward things to you and you almost automatically take them on board. You feel bad about yourself, hurt, incited, paralysed or otherwise undermined. They effectively pressed your 'buttons' and seem to have a spell over you. Often there is a sensation of you not being the centre of your experience and life anymore. You have 'taken the invitation'.

When people feel pained, overwhelmed, powerless, controlled by a belief or seem to behave in a patterned way, there is a fixed link – glue - between the emotions and behaviour and the Trigger that provokes them. This 'glue' often consists of undigested distress from the past (see above). The brain seemed to be partially paralysed and only able to give that fixed, patterned response.

In order to break the spell of a trigger over you and to grasp your own power, you must first accept and own your response. An expression such as "They pressed my buttons." is too passive one, it hides your site in it and there is where your power lies. "I have 'taken the invitation'" expresses much more clearly that ownership.

The aim of the **‘Pain to Power’ procedure** is to switch the brain back into creativity, into thinking in options as a response to that trigger. Then you will experience yourself as more open-minded and as centre of your actions and life, as opposed to feeling overwhelmed and powerless.

For more theory behind the 'Pain-to-Power' procedure and how to apply it, see "Part 1. Core techniques and procedures" under the "Techniques" tab.

3. Working with information overload

People can suddenly feel very overwhelmed and cannot think clearly any more. The brain shuts down because there is too much information and stimulation on offer to be processed. Sometimes this can happen very quickly. This is called information overload.

Information overload can happen for various reasons:

- The information provided touches undigested experiences or people distracted and took an invitation from it, like explained above.

- However, without this happening a brain can still go into information overload. The information provided can be simply too much for the brain to process. Some people, like dyslexics, dyspraxics reach that level faster than other people and that again can vary per day.

Dyslexia, dyspraxia

People with dyslexia or dyspraxic backgrounds have often experienced difficulties at school and because of these they often think that they are 'abnormal' or 'not OK'. As response they have learnt to feel bad about themselves and to hide that sometimes they can't cope with the information on offer. This trying to hide the impact of information overload worsens the impact of it

Co-Counselling can help people

- to experience themselves as OK people while having a state of information overload
- to accept states of information overload as a matter of fact, a practical problem that needs to be dealt with
- to find new ways of coping with information overload situations.

Co-Counselling can never take away though the experience of information overload, only support people to get on with it.

Expressing and discharging emotions

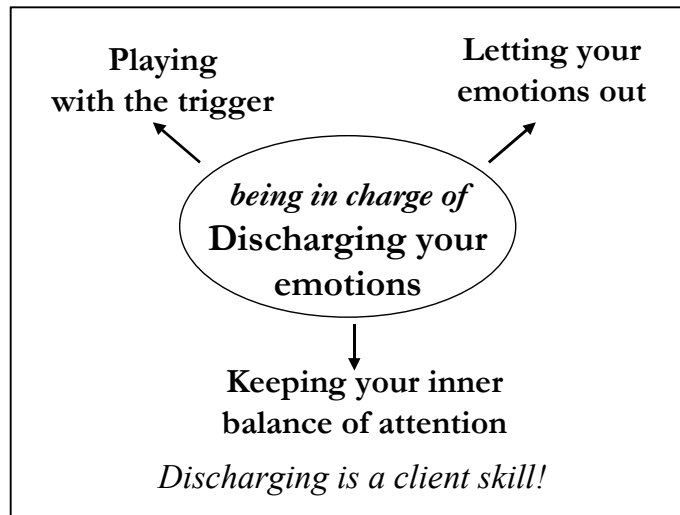
If we try to ignore our emotions and interrupt or block them from coming out, they can become persistent and our systems can get out of balance and in the longer term our body can become ill. A comparison with peeing and pooping makes that clear. Pee and poop need to get out of the body as well. It is OK to keep them in for a short time, but then it becomes time to let them out. If this doesn't happen the body becomes more and more ill the longer the stuff is kept inside the body.

Acting on an emotion is not always in our own best interests in the long run. Feeling charged with emotion can mean that our other faculties, like our ability to see things realistically or holistically, or our ability to weigh up the pros and cons of how we want to behave, temporarily get lost. When the brain is charged with lots of emotions, it is less able to think clear and handle situations effectively.

If you keep emotion bottled up inside you it can be overwhelming, It can limit your behaviour to old patterns and block new ideas, solutions & creative thinking. Releasing the emotion takes the tension physically out of your body & allows you to think more clearly about your situation.

Expressing and discharging emotions in a safe setting, for instance a co-counselling session, is one possible way to get rid of the emotional pressures and to restore our systems to a more healthy state of balance. Discharging emotions is a useful tool that enables us to free up internal resources and creativity to help us to choose how to deal with a situation.

The Discharge Triangle



The Discharge Triangle represents a model that makes it safe to work with emotions. Hence it is important that you know about it while clienting or counselling. The Triangle enables you to discharge your emotions and to stay in control of them.

1. Balance of attention

Balance of attention means that there is a balance of awareness of

- where you are now, who is with you and that you are safe in the here & now.
- what is happening inside yourself or when working on a past experience of that past event
- an inner observer. The following dialogue clarifies that generally speaking there is always an 'observer' within us:

"Are you depressed?"

"Yeah, I am very depressed."

"You are very depressed?"

"Yeah, I am terribly, totally depressed"

"Can you notice you're depressed?"

(Short silence) *"Yes, I can notice I'm depressed"*

"And tell me, is the noticer depressed too?"

(Longer silence) Then it turns out that the noticer, the observer is neither depressed, nor not-depressed.

The observer only observes

(From lecture by Ram Dass)

When you are aware of this inner observer, you know that your balance of attention is OK.

Your balance of attention is disturbed, when

- You are overwhelmed by your emotions
- You lose sense of time and proportion
- Your mind goes blank

For **techniques of keeping your balance of attention**, see Part "Core Techniques", chapter "Expressing and discharging emotions"

2. Playing with the “Trigger”

A trigger is a word used for things or aspects of situations that can provoke sudden, emotional responses in somebody, e.g. a red cloth can trigger a bull into aggression.

Other examples

- Somebody sees a spider and gets frightened
- Somebody is overlooked when biscuits are dealt around, and thinks “I am always forgotten” and feels very tearful..
- Something doesn’t work out and the automatic thought “I am a failure” comes up, accompanied by a low, depressed feeling.

Often these emotional responses can stem from undigested events in the past (restimulated by the trigger) or unhelpful beliefs, triggered by that event.

A trigger is thus something (a behaviour, sound, visual, thought, sentence) that triggers an often emotional response or behaviour on your side.

Triggers are very personal. What is a trigger for one person, is often not a trigger for somebody else. Hence it is important in a session that the client explores themselves what really the trigger of the emotions is.

Playing with the trigger is important. It can help you

- To maintain your balance of attention. When you are going to be overwhelmed by your emotions, you can use techniques to ‘weaken’ the impact of the trigger.
- To get a better insight in the causes of your emotions by figuring out what really triggers you off. There are techniques for searching for the trigger
- To get more in touch with your feelings by using techniques that ‘strengthen’ the impact of the trigger.

Playing with the trigger is also essential for those people who have a tendency to become depressed or manic. This playing helps them to keep their emotional and cognitive (knowing about the trigger) brains in balance.

For **techniques of playing with the trigger**, see Part "Core Techniques", chapter " Expressing and discharging emotions"

3. Expressing your emotions

With a good “balance of attention” and “playing with the trigger” you possess a safe and healthy base to express your emotions. However, there are some important aspects to be mentioned about expressing emotions.

1. Emotions can be compared with the weather. One cannot force the sun to shine or the snow to come. Trying it is a dangerous game. The same for emotions. When you don't feel angry, you cannot discharge anger. When you don't feel fear, you cannot discharge fear. However, you can make or act yourself into anger or fear. By doing so, you train yourself to become an angry or fearful person. Therefore, discharge only emotions that are there.
2. Most people in our society have learnt to suppress the expression of their emotions and hence they need permission to have them and to express them. As client give this permissions to your self and ask your counsellor to do that as well.
3. Emotions take time to discharge, especially the ones that are there already for longer time.
Give yourself this time by repeating the trigger or asking the counsellor to repeat the trigger for you.

For **techniques of expressing your emotions**, see Part "Core Techniques", chapter " Expressing and discharging emotions"

After the Discharge, what next?

Often while discharging emotions, insights come up. Some of these feel very much OK to be left alone. Others pinpoint in the direction of undigested experiences in the past. When this happens, it might prove very useful to make a 'picture' of them, to write this down and to have (later) a session on this 'restimulated' event.

It is also important that you look for different ways of how you may respond in the future to the triggers of your distress. Regularly people feel a 'victim' of their feelings. Creating options not only opens the brain to creativity, it also confirms physically that you are in charge of your own life. Whatever your feelings and emotions are you have a choice in how to act or what to say.

The feeling trap: emotional reasoning

Feelings tell you how you feel about things. They are not proof that the things are as you feel them. "I feel anxious, that proves that there is a burglar in the garden." "I feel rotten and bad, hence I am a rotten and bad person." Thus there is nothing what can be done to feel better. Using feelings as proof of outside reality is a thinking error, called emotional reasoning. Feelings are not 'proof' that reality, they are at best assumptions about reality to be checked and tested.

The influence of thoughts & beliefs

When you imagine a slice of a lemon on your tongue, most people feel sensations. That is one way how beliefs influence emotions.

Beliefs as filter

Beliefs have more effects though: they filter and in a way create your experiences.

How do your Personal Beliefs influence your life?

Personal beliefs filter your experience by:

- *letting through experiences that confirm your belief*
- *keeping out contradicting experiences*
- *structuring your anticipation so you get what you believe you will get*

Basic beliefs are Self Fulfilling Prophecies!

Personal beliefs influence how you feel

The word 'belief' refers to personal conviction and also to religion and spirituality. Here we talk about those beliefs about yourself and your world that limit yourself and your experiences instead of support you to create a meaningful and wonderful life for you and the people around you. Whatever religious or spiritual background, the key question is: Do your personal beliefs enhance your creativity, well-being and opportunities in life or do they undermine you and other people?

Thinking errors: distortions of reality

Thoughts and beliefs often contain thinking errors. These cause distortions of how you perceive reality. Because of these distortions they can severely limit your well-being and opportunities in life. In this Fundamentals we have seen the following thinking errors:

1. Labelling and gross generalisations

"I have a shoe, therefor I am a shoe."

"I did something that was not OK, therefor I am not OK."

2. Mental filter

Disqualifying the positive, because there are some less good aspects as well. Not being able to enjoy a nice sunny day, because there are some clouds as well.

"I cannot celebrate the courage I had in my session, because I see myself as a coward in daily life."

Dwelling in the negative: "I am a bad person, even when people seem to appreciate me. If they would really know me, they would sing a different tune." Thus stay away from intimate relationships.

3. Emotional reasoning

Using feelings as proof. "I feel anxious, that proves that there is a burglar in the garden."

“I feel rotten and bad, hence I am a rotten and bad person.” Thus there is nothing what can be done to feel better.

Beliefs are not necessarily based on traumatic or undigested experiences. Stories from people, TV or books can be hugely formative as well.

It is very easy for young people to make thinking errors and hence to draw wrong conclusions about themselves and their world. Once a tentative thought has been formed, it starts to work as a filter for supporting evidence, while keeping contradicting evidence out. The once tentative assumption establishes itself as a stronger and stronger belief.

Summary: Living happily with your emotional truth

1. Accepting yourself as a worthwhile OK person
 - with whatever emotional truth you have
 - accepting whatever sensations in your body
2. Being able to listen to the sensations of your body and
 - to recognise whether they stem from
 - Old undigested events or undigested business
 - Information overload
 - “Taken invitations”and then feeling confident in sorting those feelings and emotions out
 - to pick up the message your body wants you to know
3. Acknowledging your wishes and desires that are coming up through your body and your mind

Awareness: we co-create our emotional truth

Co-creating our emotional truth
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• With undigested business, needs and desires<ul style="list-style-type: none">– undigested events distort our perception of reality– our frozen & current needs, unfulfilled wishes & desires direct our attention and with it our feelings• By our thoughts and interpretations<ul style="list-style-type: none">– influenced by thinking errors, e.g. ‘I am my feelings’– filtered through our personal beliefs e.g. ‘I am not OK’• By our readiness to see ourselves<ul style="list-style-type: none">– as having action options & being OK versus– as being on the receiving end of emotions inflicted on us

'Normal' Contract & Feelings *counsellor suggestions*

- The better you understand how working with your own emotional truth works for you, the more you will notice that you just have given a suggestion that supported your client.
- Open-ended questions. Practise in daily life.
"What do you mean with 'un.....'?"
- Practise the following procedures on yourself
 - 'From Pain to Power' *when upset*
 - 'Video' procedure *for undigested past events*
 - 'Literal description of your body' *to check in*
 - 'Identity check' *when reminded of somebody*

Getting stuck as client...

Client options

- Literal description of body sensations
- Move around and loosen up your body
- Ask yourself
 - Who does my counsellor remind me of? *Alias!*
 - What can I do to feel more safe?
 - What don't I want to work on now? *Gibberish*
- Break confusion down into small, bite-size manageable pieces in front of you

Counsellor suggestions

- Turn the above options into suggestions

Part 4. After the Fundamentals...

Contents

1. The challenges	2
1. Working with a Personal Session Plan 2	
Working with what is on top	
Getting into the 'I am OK' position	
Freeing up expressing your emotions	
Cleaning up some 'skeletons' in your cupboard	
2. Developing your Clienting skills 3	
Setting up a review group	
3. Developing your personal support network 4	
Explore working with other Co-Counsellors	
Joining or setting up a support group	
4. Meeting other Co-Counsellors? 5	
The Scottish Co-Counselling network: CCiS	
2. Co-Counselling workshops, an overview	7
Community Days or Open Co-Counselling Days 7	
Three important Further Skills workshops 7	
'Having difficult conversations' conflict fundamentals	
'Create your life' Fundamentals	
'Organising your support: Support groups' workshop	
Other Further Skills Workshops 8	
'Working on a (too) Big Issue'.	
Do the Fundamentals again	
CoCoPlus Workshops	
CCI workshops 9	
McCoCo	
International and UK CCI Workshops	
Organisational Workshops 10	
Children & Child Minding at CCiS Workshops 10	

1. The challenges

After the Fundamentals The challenges

- Working with a Personal Session Plan
- Developing your clienting skills
Your counselling skills will develop automatically with this
- Building your personal support network
- Meeting other Co-Counsellors

All this will help to integrate
Co-Counselling into your life

1. Working with a Personal Session Plan

1. Personal Session Plan

- Working with what is on top
 - using Co-Counselling for First Aid *or* Checking in with yourself
- Working with themes
 - getting in the “I am OK” position
 - tidying up “Skeletons in your Cupboard” and “Pictures in your back pocket”
 - freeing up expressing emotions
 - your personal theme

Working with what is on top

First Aid or checking in with yourself

- What is on top?
- What is going on in your body that asks for attention?
Literal description of body sensations
- What happened today that triggered distress?
Identity check or ‘What situation in the past does this event remind you of?’
Making a picture of the distressing event
Even a quick version of ‘From Pain to Power’
- What progress are you making on a ‘theme’?
What can I celebrate about that?

Telephone Co-Counselling

may prove to be very helpful and a time effective way.

Getting into the 'I am OK' position

It is fundamental in life that people accept themselves as being OK, whatever life throws at them and however they responded to that. It is this 'I am OK' frame of mind that helps people to cope with distressful past experiences and painful daily experiences. Hence it is important that you get into the 'I am OK' frame of mind.

- What 'evidence' in personal experiences and personal beliefs do you have that support that you are not OK. Process these.
- Use the 'Video' procedure and the 'Changing your beliefs' procedures to increase your acceptance of 'I am OK'

Freeing up expressing your emotions

- 1. Scan your past for events in which expressing your emotions worked out badly for you.** Use the 'video' method to come to terms with them.
- 2. Get more free in letting emotions out in front of your counsellor**
 - Use the 'And that means....' technique.
For instance: "Crying in front of a counsellor" means...
 - Attack restricting basic beliefs about expressing your emotions
- 3. Get used to listening to your body sensations**
 - Use 'Literal Description of your Body Feelings' technique
 - Express these sensations non-verbally by movement and voice

Cleaning up some 'skeletons' in your cupboard

Highly likely you don't need to think much about these skeletons to remember them. Make a list of them, prioritise them and use the 'video' method to come to terms with them.

2. Developing your Clienting skills

2. Developing your clienting skills

- Set up a Review Group
- Have regularly sessions for 3 months with a weekly session arrangement
- Come to the Follow-up day
- Consult your Fundamentals teacher(s)
- Further Skills Workshops
 - "Conflict & difficult conversations"
 - "Create your life" Fundamentals
 - "Organising your support" "Too big issue"
- Other workshops
"McCoCo", "SummerWeek"

Setting up a review group

Review Group
format suggestions

- Opening circle
- Mini-sessions *What is on top, in my body?*
- Reviewing a procedure / technique
 - talk it through *using hand-outs*
 - use it *in a session or as exercise*
 - sharing round
How was it as client, counsellor, observer
- Closing circle

**Make a contract for 4-6 meetings
plus evaluation meeting**

Procedures	Techniques
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ‘From Pain to Power’▪ ‘Video’ procedure▪ Focusing▪ Identity Check▪ Transforming a negative belief into a hope & future based one▪ Asking for feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Open-ended questions▪ Reading the face from eye>eye>mouth etc.▪ Literal description of a situation▪ Literal Description of body sensations▪ Non-verbal expression of feelings and emotions▪ ‘And that means.../brings up...’

3. Developing your personal support network

3. Developing your support network

- Find Co-Counsellors who suit you for
 - telephone sessions
 - face to face sessions
- Make a fixed weekly session arrangement
- Later: join or set up a support group
First develop confidence in your clienting skills

By trying out several Co-Counsellors, especially those who live nearby, you develop your support network. At some point you will discover which Co-Counsellors feel safe, effective and reliable to you.

The same goes for telephone Co-Counsellors. When you are really in need for a session, you know whom you can ask for that. This knowing makes it easier to actually take the phone and ask.

Several Co-Counsellors have mentioned that asking for a session when you need it, is quite difficult because of the added distress of needing one.

By arranging a series of sessions for a period of time with a regular partner you avoid this difficulty. You provide yourself with the opportunity to explore Co-Counselling from two angles:

- When 'in need' for a session, you can use Co-Counselling to meet that need and then evaluate how Co-Counselling helped you.
- When not needing a session, you can use Co-Counselling to check in with your body, to work on issues of your personal session plan, to work on a 'theme' or to design your future.

Explore working with other Co-Counsellors

This can be a quite difficult step after the Fundamentals, as you are used to Co-Counselling with familiar people in your Fundamentals group. One way to overcome this is to go to a Community day or Workshop together with somebody from your Fundamentals group.

Joining or setting up a support group

As the word implies, support groups are there for people to support each other. All those groups have two things in common: they use Co-Counselling and its participants are committed to be present at most of the meetings. They take place in the houses of Co-Counsellors, often on a rotating base.

There is a huge variation in how these support groups function, depending on the preferences and decisions made by its members.

We recommend new Co-Counsellors not to join or set up a new support group until they feel confident in their clienting and counselling skills. Also having done the 'Conflict Fundamentals' and the 'Create your life' workshop will enhance greatly what one can get out of a support group. For more about these two workshops, see "Three important Further Skills workshops" in "2. Co-Counselling workshops, an overview".


Support groups are also organised at residential workshops for the duration of that residential. They come together at a daily base and are a great opportunity to have taste of what support groups can be about.

4. Meeting other Co-Counsellors?

4. Finding Co-Counsellors

- Finding & trying out Co-Counsellors
 - at Community days or Open workshops
 - at Workshops
 - using the Address lists
- Becoming a member of 'CCI in Scotland'
- Challenge: not everybody might be of your liking. Use ID check.

‘CCI in Scotland’ network
part of CCI world-wide federation



- Community days
- Newsletter
 - updated address list
 - telephone Co-Counsellors list
 - workshop announcements
- Safety Focus group
 - Trust persons

In the **CCiS Good&Newsletter** there is an **address list** as well as names of Co-Counsellors who are available for Telephone Co-Counselling.

1. One option is to phone Co-Counsellors for
 - a telephone session
 - a face-to-face session
2. Another one is to write a letter to Co-Counsellors living near you, setting out what your wishes and preferences are. This gives them to chance to think about it.
3. You can meet Co-Counsellors at **Community Days** and **Workshops**. We recommend strongly that you go to one of these with Co-Counsellors from your Fundamentals or with a buddy, so that you know there will be at least one person you are familiar with.

In the next chapter you find an overview of the several types of Co-Counselling workshops. Details are published in the **‘Diary’** and the **‘Workshops’** part of the **Good&Newsletter**.
4. You can make arrangements with Co-Counsellors from your Fundamentals.

2. Co-Counselling workshops, an overview

Community Days or Open Co-Counselling Days

An excellent place to meet other Co-Counsellors! It is peer group based.

After the opening circle there is a round on the needs of the participants. Then creative ways are sought and negotiated, so that everybody gets what they want or something that they can agree to. Sometimes people have 1:1 sessions, but it is a great place to work in and with a group.

They are organised all over Scotland, generally on Sundays from 10.00-5.00, occasionally on afternoons and evenings or other days. A small fee is asked, varying from 50 pence to £2.00. Food to share.

Guidelines

You may want to read or download a booklet about guidelines of how to organise an open Co-Counselling day. The address of the CornuCopia web site is www.co-cornucopia.org.uk

Three important Further Skills workshops

This Co-Counselling Fundamentals workshop is the first of three cornerstones of the CornuCopia approach to Co-Counselling. The other two are the Conflict Fundamentals and the 'Create your life' (Turn your dreams into reality) workshop.

'Having difficult conversations' conflict fundamentals

In my experience as Co-Counsellor and therapist I noticed that a huge amount of the sessions were about conflicts with other people. I realised that most of the distress people felt was self-inflicted by not having the skills to handle conflict communication and their own emotions properly. By not improving their skills people stayed in the perpetual circle of conflict-session-conflict-session etc.

People learning skills to deal with conflict, difficult negotiations and the emotions involved seems to me more effective than having regular sessions mopping up the distress of mishandled conflicts. Co-Counselling can play a very important additional role.

The concept of "Conflict" covers a wide area of meanings:

- Having difficult conversations about what matters most to you
- Listening to people who complain about you
- Dealing with 'difficult' people and difficult behaviours, for instance when they are angry with you
- Challenging behaviours you have problems with e.g. racist or sexist behaviours
- Getting past 'No', creating a win-win situation
- Stepping out of your victim role and asserting positively what you want

This Conflict Fundamentals course is a two-day workshop that aims to help you deal with conflict, difficult negotiations and the emotions involved. It will be highly participative and will offer the opportunity:

- to explore how you get emotionally hooked into a conflict
- to switch from being a victim to be in charge of your life
- to switch your brain from paralysis into creativity
- to organise your support in sorting out conflict

'Create your life' Fundamentals

This workshop is about giving direction to your life, creating your future and connecting to your longings and desires. It is about how you can stop to be your worst enemy in materialising your dreams, in becoming the person you are, in enjoying the talents you are gifted with.

This workshop is about using Co-Counselling for creating your future instead of curing distress. In other words, Co-Counselling is turned into Co-Coaching.

'Organising your support: Support groups' workshop

Support groups are a great way for giving and receiving support, using Co-Counselling. In this workshop we will explore:

- What it means to ask for support
- Various ways of how you can enlist support from an Ongoing Support Group. Think of emotional support, sessions, nurturing, a place to recover from the turbulence of life. On the other hand you may enlist support for making actively changes in our life or picking up ideas for dealing with a challenge.
- Ways in which you manage a support group, so that it will last and become eventually a kind of 'second family' as several support groups in Edinburgh have done.
- How you can avoid starting up a support group that is likely to end in failure and disappointment.

Other Further Skills Workshops

At these workshops you learn new Co-Counselling skills or apply old ones in a new way. Sometimes called simply 'Further Skills'. Regularly, however, they have a theme name such as 'Loss, Death & Bereavement', 'Art, Voice & Body', 'Empowerment', 'Horses as Therapy', 'Sexuality & Tantra', etc. These are taught by teachers or skilled Co-Counsellors on evenings, during the day or in a (residential) weekend. Apart from the costs of the venue and the organisation, the fee includes payments to the teacher of these workshops.

'Working on a (too) Big Issue'.

A particular Further Skills workshop is **'Working on a (too) Big Issue'**. You choose one issue to work on for 6 or 8 weeks. During evening workshops and with sessions in the meantime you learn what your particular way is of tackling that big issue. We recommend doing

this fairly soon after Fundamentals, as it supports building your confidence as client.

Do the Fundamentals again

Also we recommend Co-Counsellors to do a **second Fundamentals**. When you were doing your first one, everything was probably very new and perhaps there was too much to take in. Doing it for the second time will be a completely different experience: the group will be different, and you are likely to have more free attention for aspects of Co-Counselling you missed the first time.

CornuCopia Fundamentals are free for Co-Counsellors who have done the Fundamentals with CornuCopia, as long as there are free places available. Other CCI Co-Counsellors can do the Fundamentals with CornuCopia for £40. Other Co-Counselling teachers give often a discount to CCiS Co-Counsellors who want to do the Fundamentals for the second time.

CoCoPlus Workshops

These are workshops facilitated by very experienced facilitators, not only in Co-Counselling, but also in a different field. They provide their expertise in that field in such a way that you can get more out of your sessions as client and that the understanding of your role as counsellor increases. An excellent place to meet other Co-Counsellors!

They are generally organised in Edinburgh, on Saturdays or Sundays from 10.00-5.30. Bring food to share.

CCI workshops

CCI workshops are peer-based residential gatherings. Its participants offer workshops on a huge variety of topics, Co-Counselling, dancing, cabaret and any topic deemed relevant for personal development or fun.

McCoCo

This is a yearly Scottish residential peer workshop in May. Co-Counsellors from all over the UK and from abroad come to Scotland for this workshop. Its workshops combine Co-Counselling workshops and sessions with holiday and pleasure in a Co-Counselling atmosphere. There is child minding organised.

International and UK CCI Workshops

CCI Europe: each year at the end of July, beginning of August. They are organised on a rotating base: Hungary (2001), Holland (2002), Britain (2003), Germany (2004), Ireland (2005), etc.

CCI USA: each year in April in Connecticut.

CCI New-Zealand: each 3 or 4 years at the end of December: '93'97 etc.

McCoCo: a mini CCI in May-June in Scotland

CCI UK: twice a year: one in May near Sheffield, one in October near New Forest.

Organisational Workshops

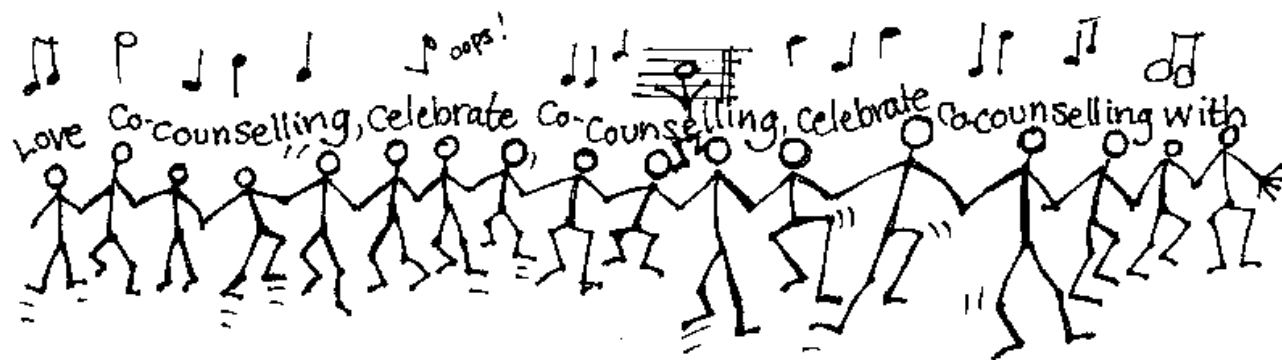
There are three types: AGM (Annual General Meeting), SGM, (Special General Meeting) and other Network Workshops. Generally these are residential weekend workshops in as central a venue as possible in Scotland. We do this to make it possible for anybody to attend, to have business meetings in a Co-Counselling way and plenty of time for sessions. There are travel grants available for people who could not otherwise afford to attend these workshops.

There are Focus groups as well around specific organisational topics, e.g. Newsletter Focus-group, Safety Focus-group, Constitution Focus-group, etc.. These are generally held in the houses of Co-Counsellors and don't take more time than about three hours at the most.

Children & Child Minding at CCiS Workshops

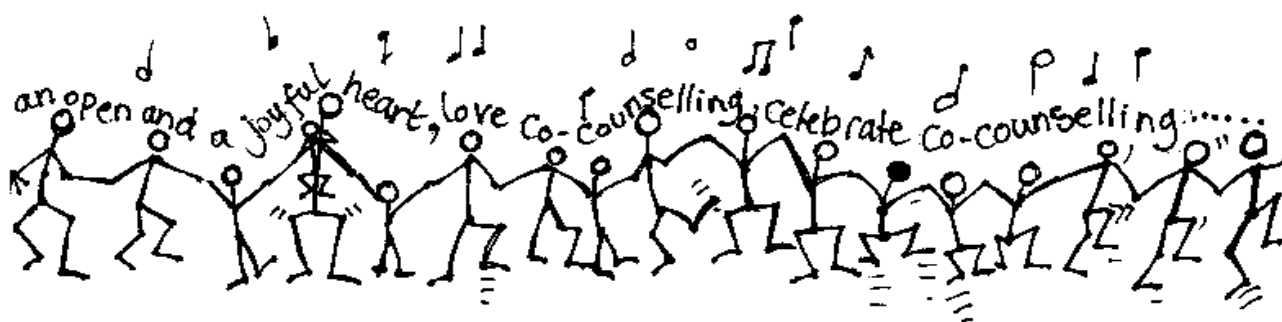
In CornuCopia and the CCiS we have a policy that there will be paid child minding at as many residential workshops as possible. This is a service to parents with children to provide them with the opportunity to attend these workshops. We try to organise child minding in such a way that all Co-Counsellors are able to attend the workshops, and the children have a good time too. The other Co-Counsellors attending the workshop are free to get involved with the children, if they want to.

This in contrast with **Kiddult Workshops**: Here the children are the focus of the Workshop and every attending Co-Counsellor knows beforehand about the expectation to be involved with the children.



Conflict & Difficult conversations

Version March 2004



Conflict and difficult conversations

Contents

Introduction	2
First: accept yourself having a conflict.....	3
What makes a conflict a conflict?	4
The practical problem...	4
Attaching an emotional problem	5
'Taking the invitation'	
Handling a taken invitation	
The ladder of inference	
Aggravating thinking errors	8
Setting your identity or self esteem at stake	
The power struggle	9
The rescue triangle loop dance	
Managing conflicts & difficult conversations successfully	10
Handling incoming invitations	10
Own your feelings and perceptions	
Avoid handing out 'invitations'	10
Appendix.....	11
Poems	11
Literature	13

Destructive or mishandled conflict

- breaks down trust and co-operation
- is unlikely to create successful solutions
- triggers a power struggle
it is easier to wage war than to create peace
- creates hostility burdening the next conflict
- increases need for coco sessions licking wounds

Constructive conflict

- builds trust, co-operation and self esteem
- produces results more likely to be successful
- reinforces the trust in future co-operation
- coco sessions more used to explore

Types of Conflict

- Having emotionally difficult conversations
- Dealing with 'difficult' people and behaviours
- Challenging behaviours you have problems with
- Getting past 'No', creating a win-win situation
- Stepping out of your victim role and asserting positively what you want

First: accept yourself having a conflict

Feelings of shame and guilt can come in and hinder the acceptance of having a conflict.

For working on shame and guilt in a group, see

- *Feelings of shame and guilt in “Support and Co-Counselling support groups” under the theory tab*
- *“Part 2. Group techniques & procedures” under the ‘Techniques’ tab*

It is OK to be Me

- **CONFLICTS**
 - You are OK whatever conflict you *have*!
- **ACTIONS**
 - You are OK whatever mistake you make
 - It is the best you could manage at the time!
- **FEELINGS**
 - You are OK whatever feelings you *have*!
- You are NOT
 - your conflicts, feelings, actions or needs
 - You are OK having them

Acceptance

I am OK and I have that challenge

- Session in group
 - share your truth and challenge
if necessary in gibberish
 - Response
 - “I hear/understand that you ...”
 - “It is OK to have that challenge.”
 - “You are OK.
I think you are OK whatever your challenge.”

Distance yourself from your challenge

- **One-to-one session**
 - ‘Make a picture’ of you and your challenge

What makes a conflict a conflict?

What is a conflict?

A practical problem
with an **emotional problem** attached
to it

- One or more people take the invitation to get hooked to an emotional charge while
- Losing sight of
 - the practical problem
 - the opportunities for co-operation
- Being tempted to get into a power struggle

The practical problem...

What is the practical problem...?

- Formulate the practical problem as a question:
'How can I / we.....?'
- It refers to
 - observable data and situations
undressed from its assumptions and additions
 - personal or shared desires
- It respects the people involved and refers only to their behaviours and talents where relevant to the practical problem

Attaching an emotional problem

Attaching an Emotional Problem - 1

- ‘Seeing’ (assuming) & **accepting** ‘invitations’ to feel hurt, insulted, manipulated...
- **Blaming** other people for my feelings
 - *Not owning that I create my feelings myself*
 - *You make yourself more powerless*
- **Demanding** *by making a thinking error*
 - ‘you must not’, ‘you should’ versus ‘I would like’, ‘prefer’
- **Allowing my identity-esteem to be threatened** *by making thinking errors*
 - *What will the other person think of ME, if?*
 - *I feel bad, therefore I am a bad lecturer*

‘Taking the invitation’

Recognising Brain Distress *or* a mini mind paralysis

- Feeling
 - tense *or* emotional
 - victimised, angry *or* in love
 - overloaded, overwhelmed or numbed
- Unable to witness or hear what is said *without getting excited or irritated*
- “I am right” - “You are wrong” *or* “You are superb...”
- Loss of clear thinking
- Not enjoying or over-enjoying life

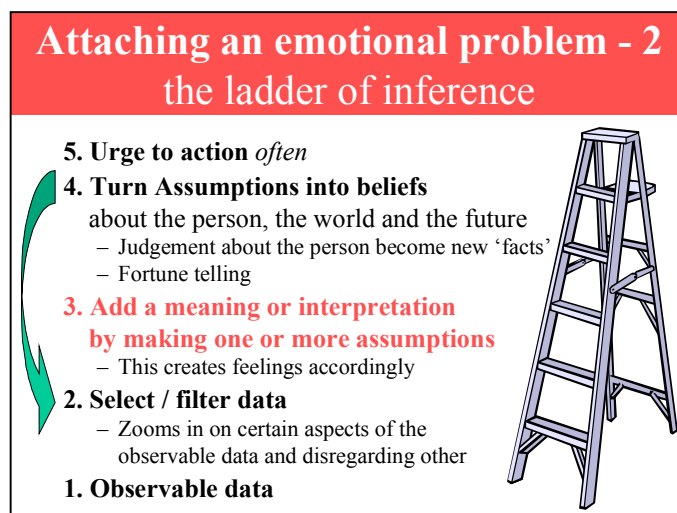
When you have ‘taken the invitation’ your mind is more closed and your brain is in distress having a so-called mini mind paralysis. The brain has lost some of its balance and is temporarily less able to function in a creative and adaptive way.

Handling a taken invitation

Handling a taken invitation

- Own your feelings
- Share them if appropriate
 - “I feel (adjective) when...”
 - If this sharing might have a blaming undertone do not share
- Keep focused on the practical problem
 - if impossible leave the room
- Use ‘Pain-to-Power’ to process the spell of the invitation

*The ladder of inference*¹



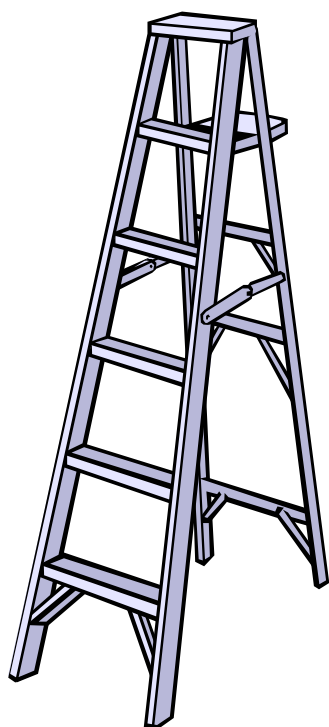
How we see our world is a creation of our mind. Here I would like to work this out in the following example.

I am participating in a Co-Counselling sharing round. When it is my turn to share, everybody seems to be interested, apart from one person, Rose, at the other end of the circle, who seems bored out of her mind. She has cuddled up to the person next to her and looks away. When my time is up, I still want to finish what I am saying. Some people before me got time to do so. But Rose says: “Your time is up. Let’s move on with the round”. Everybody moves their attention to the person next to me. I feel upset. Rose apparently thinks that my sharing is irrelevant for the group, while I think that my experiences exactly are what the group needs. Now I think about it, she never liked my ideas anyway. Clearly, Rose is a narrow-minded, dogmatic jerk. By the time the next person finished sharing, I have made a decision: “I am not going to talk to that woman anymore, let alone share with her something that is important to me. She wouldn’t listen anyway, or worse, she will use it against me. It is too bad I have an enemy who is so prominent in Co-Counselling. I need to find ways how I can protect Co-Counselling for the damage she creates with her narrow-mindedness and dogmatism.

In the time that the other person is sharing her truth, I have climbed up what Chris Argyris calls “a ladder of inference”. – a common mental pathway of increasing abstraction, often leading to misguided beliefs.

¹ I have been inspired by Rick Ross’ article ‘The ladder of Inference’ in ‘The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook’ page 242. I interpreted and extended his views with those from cognitive psychology, especially those parts about thinking errors.

Let's deconstruct the above story using the 'Ladder of inference':
start to read from the bottom of the ladder upwards



5. Urge to action	<p>"I need to find ways how I can protect Co-Counselling for the damage she creates with her narrow-mindedness and dogmatism."</p>
4. Turn Assumptions into beliefs about the person, the world and the future <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Judgement about the person become new 'facts' □ Fortune telling 	<p>Without testing the assumption of the previous step very quickly turns into a belief: "This is the truth about Rose!"</p> <p>This belief leads to the next belief: <i>"Now I think about it, she never liked my ideas anyway. Clearly, Rose is a narrow-minded, dogmatic jerk."</i></p> <p><i>"I am not going to talk to that woman anymore, let alone share with her something that is important to me. She wouldn't listen anyway, or worse, she will use it against me."</i></p> <p><i>"She creates damage to Co-Counselling with her narrow-mindedness and dogmatism."</i></p>
3. Add a meaning or interpretation by making one or more assumptions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ This creates feelings accordingly 	<p><i>"Rose apparently thinks that my sharing is irrelevant for the group, while I think that my experiences exactly are what the group needs."</i> This is one possible interpretation. Other assumptions are possible. For instance, Rose might have thought but not said, that there would be not enough time for everybody if more people would go over their time. Or, Rose could focus her attention better by keeping their eyes focused on a fixed place.</p> <p><i>"I feel upset."</i></p>
2. Select data Zooms in on certain aspects of the observable data and disregarding others.	<p><i>"When it is my turn to share, everybody seems to be interested, apart from one person, Rose, at the other end of the circle, who seems bored out of her mind. She cuddles up to the person next to her and looks away."</i></p> <p>As Rose is sitting opposite me in the group, it is more likely that I see her than Margaret, who is also cuddling up to somebody else and is only occasionally looking at me.</p>
1. Observable data	<p>As video-recorders from different angles might record the whole group in the sharing round.</p>

Aggravating thinking errors

Aggravating thinking errors

- Putting your identity or self-esteem at stake
 - you being a ‘good’ or OK person
 - your competence
 - you being worthy of love and attention
- Mind reading people’s intentions
- Blaming somebody else solely for what is happening: They are the problem

Setting your identity or self esteem at stake

Several issues around your identity can be at stake here. How does the other person see you or how do you see yourself, your self-esteem. Often there is a reinforcing interaction between how people see you and you see yourself. The issues involved are:

- You being a ‘good’ or OK person
- Your competence
- You being worthy of love and attention

Bad luck when all these issues come into play at the same time.

You taking comments as “You are a bad mother, or lecturer, or professional.. “ as invitation, implies you as well as them making the *identification* thinking error. Or the *labelling* one: “You asshole!”.

In both thinking errors people confuse a specific observable action they do not like or disapprove of, with you as a person. The attention is now focused on you as a bad, incompetent or unworthy person, away from the observables, the practical problem involved and how best can be dealt with that. Especially when you join in with that kind of thinking yourself, the practical problem gets heavily charged with emotions and even out of sight.

Once you have taken the invitation the conflict can become difficult for you, as it often diminishes the creativity of your brain hindering you to get on with the conflict. Pretty unhelpful for getting on with the practicalities of life.

There is no quick fix, nor in the specific situation, nor in the long term. People will always be more or less likely to confuse themselves with their actions as they are hiding somewhere a negative belief about themselves, especially when they are exploring new areas of their life. This exposes everybody to someone who intentionally or unwittingly presses buttons.

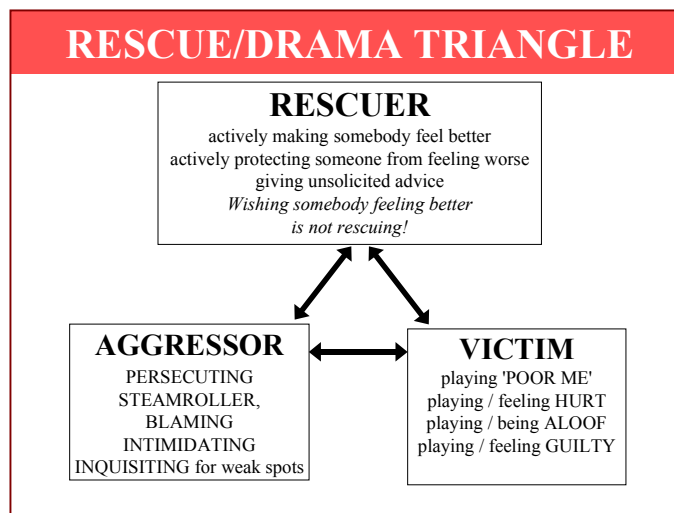
Recognising your state of mind when you have taken an invitation is the key. You then have the chance to behave differently from attacking or disempowering yourself.

There is good news too. Taking an invitation is only possible if you are holding a negative belief about yourself and/or your world that can be triggered by other people's actions. When I say to you that you are a square table, you are unlikely to take that invitation, because you are unlikely to hold that belief about yourself.

The belief triggered when you took the invitation is also likely to hinder you in other situations, especially when you had a strong emotional reaction to the trigger. So recognising that you took an invitation gives you also the opportunity to break down the spell of a negative, restrictive belief that otherwise might have been hidden or less conscious affecting your life.

The power struggle

The rescue triangle loop dance



Managing conflicts & difficult conversations successfully

Successful conflict management

- Avoid invitations
 - taking or handing them out
 - but accept the feelings of taken invitations
- Keep your eyes on
 - creating & maintaining a connection
 - holding your truth *and* **acknowledging** theirs
 - the practical problem: yours - theirs - us
- Working from your strength
 - you are OK, they are OK
 - using your *and* their dreams and best wishes
- Creating co-operation on practical problem

Handling incoming invitations

Own your feelings and perceptions

Feelings and emotions

- **Feelings & emotions happen!** *What is difference?*
 - You cannot choose them!
 - Your only choice is between
 - **denial** & suppression
 - **acceptance**, feeling them within your body or
 - **acceptance**, and sharing them without blaming *How?*
- **Where can you process your emotions?**
 - Some feelings are publicly acceptable
 - In many situations a culture and skills to work with feelings and emotions still need to be developed
 - Other feelings need to be processed privately
- **You are OK whatever feelings you have**
 - Even when there is no space for expressing your feelings

Avoid handing out 'invitations'

Handing out 'invitations' to others to attach an emotional problem

- **Using language likely to pull other people into attaching an emotional problem by**
 - interrupting them
 - threatening or attacking them or their self-esteem
 - blaming them for what is happening
 - making statements/assumptions about their intentions
 - scoring points
- **Searching for emotional buttons to press**
 - when people feel guilty, ashamed or bad about themselves, it is more likely they do what you want them to do
 - to distract them from the practical problem on hand

Poems

Phenomenal woman

Maya Angelou

Pretty women wonder where my
secret lies,
I'm not cute or built to suit a
fashion model's size,
But when I start to tell them
They think I'm telling lies.

I say
It's in the reach of my arms,
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.

I'm a woman
Phenomenally
Phenomenal woman
That's me.

I walk into a room
Just as cool as you please
And to a man.
The fellows stand or
Fall down to their knees.
Then they swarm around me
A hive of honey bees.

I say
It's the fire in my eyes,
And the flash of my teeth,
The swing in my waist,
And the joy in my feet.

I'm a woman
Phenomenally
Phenomenal woman
That's me.

Men themselves have wondered
What they see in me.
They try so much
But they can't touch
My inner mystery.
When I try to show them
They say they still can't see.

I say
It's in the arch of my back,
The sun of my smile,
The ride of my breasts,
The grace of my style.

I'm a woman
Phenomenally
Phenomenal woman
That's me.

Now you understand
Just why my head's not bowed
I don't shout or jump about,
Or have to talk real loud.
When you see me passing
It ought to make you proud.

I say
It's in the click of my heels,
The bend of my hair,
The palm of my hand,
The need for my care.

'Cause I'm a woman
Phenomenally
Phenomenal woman
That's me

Catch your negative beliefs > pain to power.

Our deepest fear

Our deepest fear
is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear
is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness,
that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant,
gorgeous, talented and fabulous.

Actually who are you not to be,
you are a child of God.
Your playing small doesn't serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around
you.

We are born to make manifest the
glory of god that is within us.
It's not just within some of us,
It's in everyone

And as we let our own light shine
we unconsciously give other people
permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear,
our presence automatically liberates others

Excerpt from Nelson Mandela's 1994 Inaugural Speech

Literature

Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen “*Difficult conversations – how to discuss what matters most, with your boss, your spouse, your friends, your kids, your clients.*” Penguin, 1999. ISBN 0-14-027782-X

Michael Edelstein “*Three Minute Therapy*”,
Chapter 4 “Marriage: vicious and delicious circles” about fighting couples.

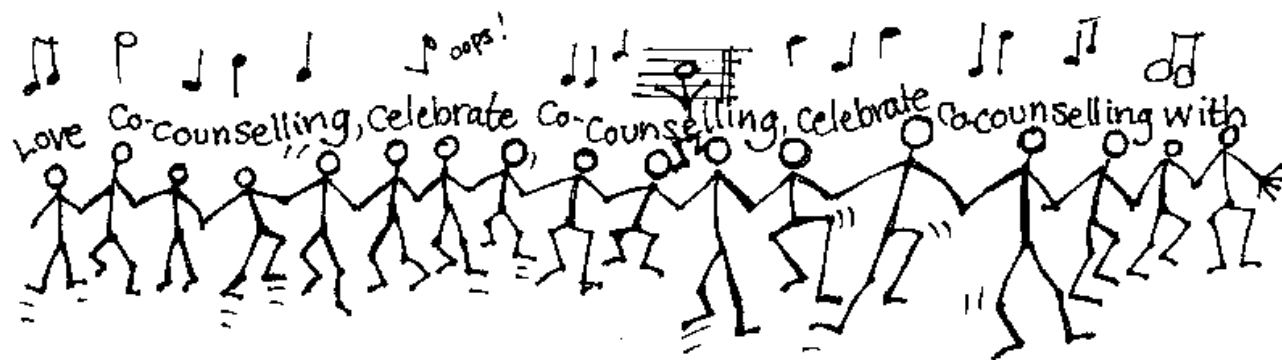
Marshall Rosenberg “*Non-violent communication.*”

Maya Angelou “*Phenomenal woman*”.

Roger Fisher and William Ury “*Getting to Yes*”

Suzette Haden Elgin “*How to disagree without becoming disagreeable: getting your point across with the gentle art of verbal self-defence.*” ISBN 0-471-15705-8

Ury, William, “*Getting past No*”



Create your life!

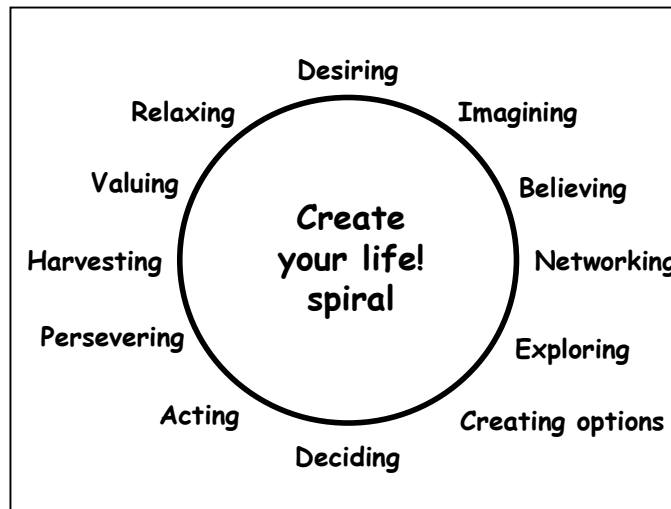
Turn your 'dreams' into reality
the CornuCopia way

Version November 2003



The Positive and Negative Creation Spiral	3
The Positive Creation Spiral	3
The Negative Creation Spiral	4
Create the life you want...!.....	4
About being in control of your life	5
1 Trying to mentally control yourself and others in the here and now	
2. Control the here and now by steering your future while letting your life happen as it happens	
Three challenges	5
What are ‘desires’, ‘imaginations’, ‘wishes’ & ‘beliefs’?	7
Recognising and acknowledging a desire.....	7
Catch your sabotaging or negative beliefs!	7
Accepting your desires, longings and attractions.....	8
A (group) session: ‘My desire, attraction, longing is...’	8
Accepting bad, unacceptable or ‘unrealistic’ desires	8
Decoding ‘Bad’, ‘unacceptable’ or ‘unrealistic’ desires and attractions	8
Session option 1	
Session option 2	
Creating Imaginations	9
‘The 400% imagination’ session	9

The 'Creation Spiral'



This Creation Spiral is an adapted from the Dutch book
Marinus Knoope "De Creatiespiraal - een natuurlijke weg van wens
naar werkelijkheid" ISBN 90-8046771-5

The Positive and Negative Creation Spiral

Globally one could say that people create positive and negative effects on their lives. The difference between those two creation spirals is based on how one manages their beliefs. Beliefs work as a filter: they accept, let through and remember information that support the belief held, but keep out and tend to forget the contradictions. In this way beliefs contribute very much to the self-fulfilling prophecy effect.

In a positive creation spiral people's personal believes support their desires and imaginations.

In the negative creation spiral people have beliefs that detach them from their own desires and imaginations and focus their awareness and attention on the 'shoulds' and fears of all the things that might go wrong.

The Positive Creation Spiral

People experience a desire, often accompanied with an imagination. They trust that somehow their wishes will be fulfilled.

It is in this vein that they talk to other people about their wishes and pick up lots of suggestions from the responses they get. As they tend to socialise with people who are supportive to their wishes, they build up a supportive network for their wishes.

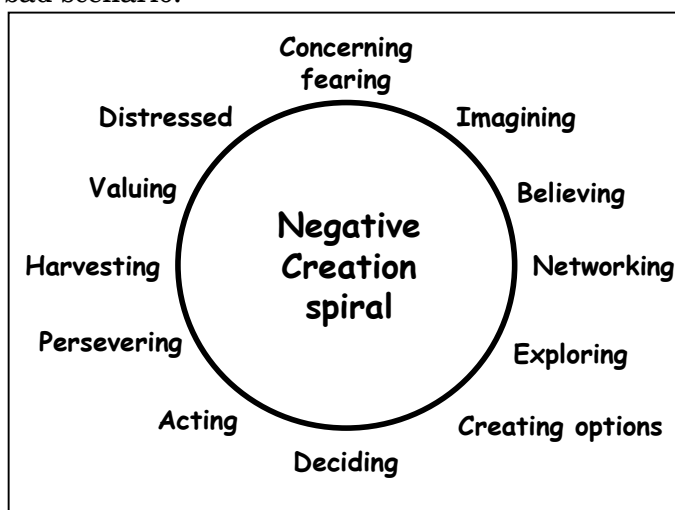
Once it becomes clearer in what different ways their wishes can be fulfilled, they tend to become more decisive and persistent in their actions and go for it.

Then the harvesting time comes in. Not only the goods will be enjoyed, but also an evaluation will be made: enjoying the success and looking at

what is missing. From the sense of fulfilment a relaxation and stillness comes in which gives time and mental space for becoming aware of new desires.

The Negative Creation Spiral

The negative Creation Spiral is a distorted Creation Spiral. It starts with a concern, a fear, actually a thought. For instance, you might be concerned that you will lose your partner. That thought takes over the place of the wish in the Creation spiral. You may add quite vivid imaginations how disastrous that will be and you start to believe that bad scenario.



Of course, you would like to talk about your concerns, they could be quite upsetting. Perhaps you have a Co-Counselling session or talk to a friend, counsellor or therapist. By now it has become likely that you want them rather to confirm your concerns than to challenge them, as in the last case you may feel unheard and don't find them sympathetic.

The action becomes persistent. Because you want to be honest in your relationship, you tell your partner time and again your concerns. Eventually she becomes fed up and leaves. Bingo!

Create the life you want...!

Create the life you want

- Option 1: Trying to mentally control the here and now
 - increase your inner critic & chatterbox
- Option 2:
 - Let your life happen as it happens
 - by acceptance and witnessing
 - Control the here and now by steering your future
 - acknowledging your wishes & desires
 - clearing up sabotaging beliefs and unprocessed or undigested experiences

About being in control of your life

Decisions happen, even when you don't try to influence them. They happen within your brain some fractions before you become aware you made them.

Two ways of being in control of your life:

1 Trying to mentally control yourself and others in the here and now

- 'inner critic', loads of inner chatter
This leads eventually to paralysis
- this can be sometimes temporary useful, in times of crisis or

2. Control the here and now by steering your future while letting your life happen as it happens

This is about letting go mental here-and-now control and its deliberations.

The here and now is there to be witnessed:

- Cupboard / authentic movement
- Which desires need to be acknowledged?
Directly or from irritations?
- What undigested events or blocking, negative beliefs are running your feelings, perceptions and behaviour?
- What inner talents come out in the present?
- What stage of the creation process are you in?
What does this stage need to be successful and productive?

You create your future by

- acknowledging your desires
- creating imaginations
- unlocking negative beliefs
- digesting unprocessed experiences
- joining the creation spiral

Three challenges

1. Connecting to your desires and wishes and taking your life from there.
2. Debunking your negative creation spiral
3. Monitoring you're here and now and harvesting the results from the positive and negative creation spirals.

Desires, imaginations and wishes

What are 'desires', 'imaginations', 'wishes' & 'beliefs'?

It is tempting to provide three definitions for 'Desire', 'Imagination' & 'Belief'. However, it is much more effective that you learn to discriminate experientially between the four of them. Therefore I will describe them in terms of their differences.

- **A Desire**
is predominantly physical, has a pre-sense, a degree of passion or excitement
- **An imagination** is visual
- **A Wish** or Attraction
is a Desire plus an Imagination
- **Beliefs** are verbal

Recognising and acknowledging a desire

There are several ways how you may recognise a desire

1. It happens, your body tells you, e.g. standing in front of clothing cupboard your attention is drawn to a particular dress. Let it happen.
2. When talking about something that is going to happen to you, you may notice a sense of expectation or passion or excitement.
3. Discover your desires from irritations
 - you feel irritated yourself by others:
they might act out one of your own hidden or unaware wishes
 - several people feel irritated by you:
you keep your own desires suppressed and people respond to you as if you are a volcano

Catch your sabotaging or negative beliefs!

Negative thoughts about yourself can easily come in, e.g. "You dirty old man!". "Who do you think you are?". Write them down to be worked on later, as they hinder you to come easily in touch with your longings.

These beliefs are the often unaware filters of your perceptions, cutting you off from seeing opportunities to fulfil your dreams.

Accepting your desires, longings and attractions....

Accepting your desires "as is" can sometimes be difficult. I am OK and you are OK, whatever desire we have!

A (group) session: 'My desire, attraction, longing is...'

My wish is...

using your wish as trigger

Each time when the trigger is presented
the client expresses whatever comes up

- Client says "My wish is... and that is OK"
- Counsellor 1: "Your wish is... & that is OK"
- (Optional) Counsellor 2: says the same
- (Optional) Counsellor 1 & 2 tell each other the wish mentioning the client's name
- And then is it the clients turn again.

Good stuff for (daily) telephone sessions

Accepting bad, unacceptable or 'unrealistic' desires

People can have wishes and desires that seem to be morally bad (paedophilia), selfish or unrealistic (a beloved person has died or the relationship has been split up).

Honour your desires and clean up your imaginations!

Decoding 'Bad', 'unacceptable' or 'unrealistic' desires and attractions

Session option 1

1. Talk about your bad wishes in baby or invented language, if you feel too ashamed about sharing them
2. What is the felt sense of that desire, using literal description of your body and perception sensations?
 - What situation does it remind you of?
 - Optional: use focusing to work that out.
See techniques handout.
3. What good imagination / wish can you attach to that felt sense?
4. **At the end of the session**
What is good about your desire?

Session option 2

Use the "Make a picture" technique of you in the situation where the desire of attraction came up. (See Part "Techniques").

What is the person in the picture feeling and longing for?

What has this to do with the situation the person is in?

Creating Imaginations

'The 400% imagination' session

Play all your imaginations out in which your longings, desires or attractions turn into reality.

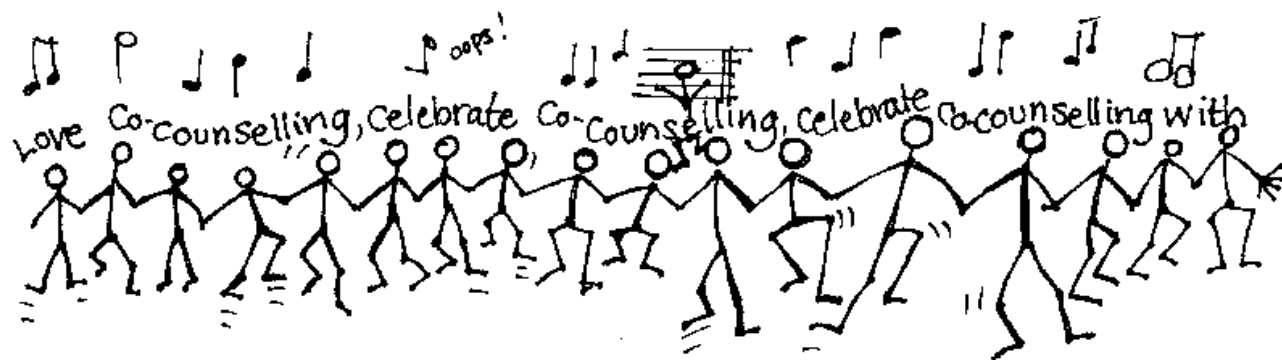
Describe them for 400% in all senses.

(See "Literal description" in part "Techniques")

At the end of the session, make a picture of those desired situations and write them in your personal session plan.

Counsellor

- Ask with each perceived limitation: "How would it be without that limitation?"
- Ask "What negative beliefs are blocking you?"
- Write down each limiting thought so that the client can work on them later.



Support & Support groups

Version March 2004



Support & Support groups

Contents

The challenge of asking for support	2
Acceptation: the first step to change	2
Shame & guilt	
What can you use a support group for?	3
Keeping grip on the group dynamics.....	4
Managing expectations	4
Irritants in expectations	
Starting up a support successfully	5
Summary: getting support and a stable support group	6
Support groups success criteria	6

The challenge of asking for support

The challenge of asking support for yourself: acceptance, shame and guilt

- Recognising your needs and longings to yourself, however 'bad' or 'strange'
 - Acknowledging them to yourself:
 - “I am OK and I have that need or longing”
 - “I am OK and I have that challenge”
- Being open about your wishes and needs: getting beyond shame and guilt
- Negotiating support
 - avoid the Rescue Triangle

Acceptation: the first step to change

It is OK to be Me

- **Feelings**
 - I AM OK whatever feelings I have!
- **Actions, Mistakes, Arguments**
 - I am OK whatever mistake I make.
 - It is the best I could manage at the time!
- **Thoughts, Needs & Longings**
 - are the tools available to me to be present in life the way I am

I am OK with all my qualities and experiences

So I am NOT
my feelings, actions, rows, thoughts or needs

Shame & guilt

Shame and feelings of guilt are often disabling feelings.

1. **First of all they form big barriers for people to accept themselves as they are and to experience themselves as OK.**
People have learnt as children to feel bad about themselves when they do something grown-ups don't like. Inflicting shame and/or guilt are often used to train children not to display the undesired behaviour. Because feelings of guilt and shame are uncomfortable children and adults try to avoid them, often by denying that there is something important going on for them.
2. **Feelings of shame and guilt are isolators and create often loneliness.**
They isolate people not only from other people in that people try to avoid to raise issues that might expose them. People often disconnect from those parts of themselves they feel guilty or shameful about, like longings, needs and wishes. When this happens, people feel as if something in themselves has died.

3. **Shame and guilt tend to render people more dysfunctional.**
Because of both the disconnection from the inner world and the avoidance of sharing with other people what they feel ashamed or guilty about, it becomes difficult for people to focus on the involved practical problems, let alone to pick up good solutions from other people.

Shame and guilt are fundamentally 'social feelings'. In your own you can feel ashamed about something, but being seen by other people with what you feel ashamed or guilty about that, magnifies those feelings immensely.

That means that working in a group is a powerful tool for getting rid of feelings of guilt and shame, much more effective than having a one-to-one session.

For more info on working on shame and guilt, see the section "Working in and with a group" in "Part 2. Group techniques and procedures" under de tab Techniques.

What can you use a support group for?

Group support options

- Co-Counselling
 - review group of Co-Counselling techniques
 - opportunities for having sessions
- Co-nurturing
 - mini-sessions, massage, having a walk or nice time
- Co-supporting
 - support (emotional and in conflicts), company
- Co-Coaching when creating your lives
 - challenging, giving feedback, thinking with you
- A support group is not:**
 - a task group
 - a personal growth-group
 - Go for this to a strong trainer or guru.

Options for individual support

- Ask for a companion during your action
- Someone questioning you after your action:
 - Did you undertake your action and how did it go?
 - What have you learnt from it?
 - What qualities of you can you celebrate?
 - What is your next step?
- Set up a telephone Co-Counselling contract
 - e.g.. In the morning: making a good start
 - In the evening: getting the best out of the day.

Keeping grip on the group dynamics

Support group development

-
- **Forming**
everybody shows themselves at their best.
 - **Storming**
irritations and frustrations are expressed
 - **Norming**
new group norms are agreed
 - **Satisfaction**
depending on the quality of the new norms
support quality increases or becomes worse
 - *Grieving or relief*

What is a conflict?

A practical problem
with an **emotional problem**
attached to it

- One or more people 'take the invitation' to attach an emotional problem
- while they lose sight of
 - the practical problem
 - the co-operation opportunities
- the 'invitation' is the trigger

Managing expectations

A support group has the best chance to be successful in meeting its members' support needs when it manages the expectations well. People hope and expect to have a good support group night. That motivates to come again and again.

Irritants in expectations

You go to your support group and expect to be there with at least four people and have a good supporting time.

- Nothing is more annoying than when you arrive and only one other person turns out to be attending that meeting. That is a one-to-one session, not a support group.
- Nobody cancelled, let alone informed every other member of the group.
- People are waiting for one or more other people to arrive who are late or perhaps not even turning up...
- Most people are chatting with each other and seem to be unlikely to begin with the support group.

Irritations will come up, that is normal in group processes.

- When they are suppressed the group will die.
- When they are expressed and mismanaged the group will die.
- When they are expressed and people focus on the practical problems at hand and manage each others' expectations well, the group will become more and more confident in tackling problems.

Keeping a grip on the group dynamics

- **Make regularly a support group contract re**
 - feeling safe in the group
 - keeping yourself 'clean' towards other group members
 - managing expectations
 - starting time definitions
 - somebody cancelling informs everybody
 - global meeting & facilitation set-up
 - who is in the group, who is temporarily outside
 - when is next business meeting
- **Evaluation, business meeting**
 - Does the group meet our needs?
 - each two/three months!

Starting up a support successfully

Give your support group a good start

1. Everybody feels confident in the client and counsellor role
2. There are no dislikes in the group
 - sometimes one gender support group
3. Expectations are well managed:
 - More or less common purpose
 - Common time commitment
 - weekly, fortnightly, monthly
 - Optimum size group:
 - max 8, always minimally 4 people present
 - A group contract & regular evaluation
4. Clean forming of support group

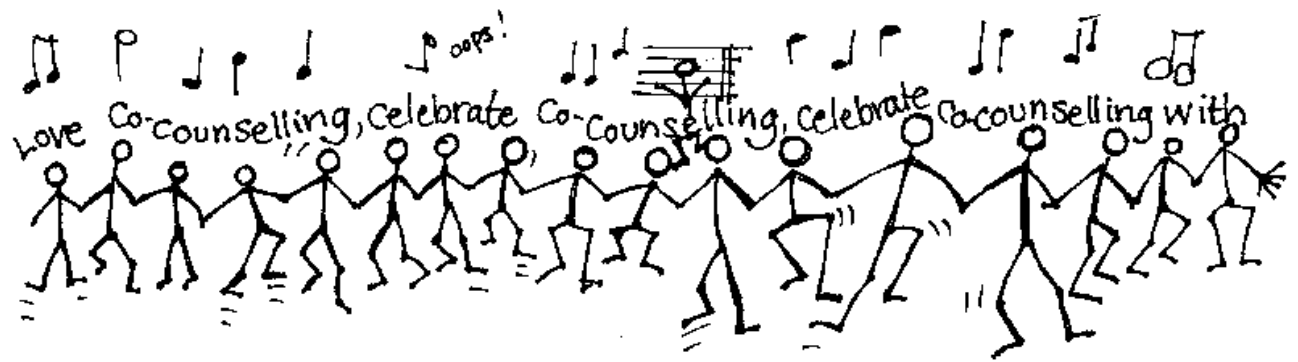
Summary: getting support and a stable support group

1. There is more chance you get the support you need, when you are open and easy about your need for support.
2. For this, acceptance of your support needs is a core condition.
3. Shame and guilt are ultimate killers for
 - accepting the way you are
 - being open about your needs
 - finding solutions for the practical problems arising from you needs and wishes.
4. Asking people for advice is a killer, as it invites them to give you the 'best possible' solution for perhaps even an unarticulated problem. Also they might expect you to do what they advised you what might be difficult to resist. Or they feel obliged to help you.
5. However, putting your need for support in terms of a practical problem in the format of "How can I...?" invites them to think with you about possible options. This supports your creative open mind and you being in charge of your life and mind. Also it increases the chance they voluntarily offer practical support as well.

Support groups success criteria

Support groups are likely to be successful and stable when

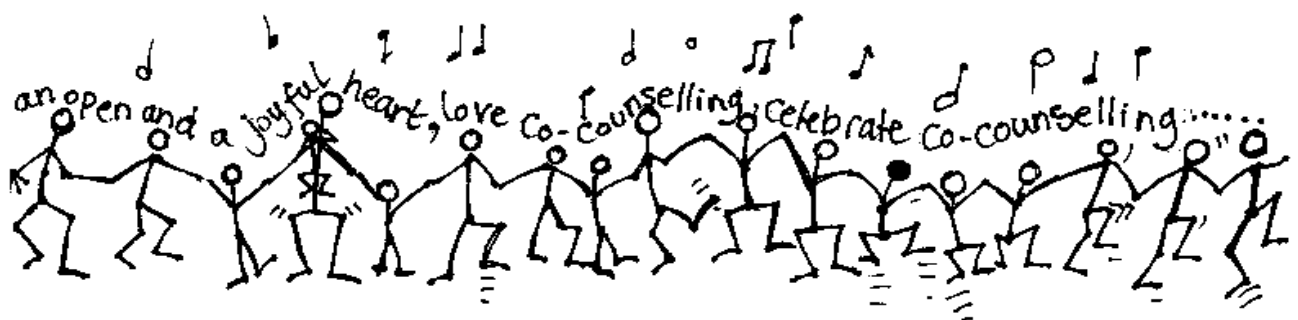
1. it starts as a group in which no-one dislikes each other
2. all its members are reasonably confident as clients and counsellors
3. peoples' expectations are well managed
 - all people are clear what attendance and arriving commitments one can expect from each other, so that at least 4 members are present at each meeting
4. people are honest about what support they need and don't avoid potential conflicts because of this
5. working with support group contracts and regularly reviewing them
6. all group members know about group development dynamics and are able to handle the necessarily arising conflicts in a co-operative and practical way



Co-Counselling Techniques & Procedures

the CornuCopia way

Version March 2004



Part 1. Core techniques and procedures

Contents

‘Identity Check’	2
When to use	2
When not to use	2
Short theory	2
‘Making a picture’	4
Video technique	5
‘From Pain to Power’ procedure	7
From Pain to Power overview	11
Expressing emotions: the Discharge Triangle Coat Stand	12
1. “Balance of Attention” techniques	12
2. “Playing with the Trigger” techniques	13
3. “Expressing your Emotions” techniques	13
Risky techniques	14
Safe procedures for working on emotionally charged experiences	
Having a conversation with your body - Focusing	15
1. Technique “Literal Description of Sensations”	15
Searching for the right interpretation	16
Working with Personal Beliefs 1 - a protocol	17
Step 1. Unearthing a limiting belief	17
Step 2. Undermining the power of the restrictive beliefs	18
Optional: Searching for those life events that triggered your belief	
Step 3. Formulating a new more productive, liberating belief	18
Formulations	
Four Positive Basic Choices In Life	
Step 4. Internalising a new positive belief	20

‘Identity Check’

Identity Check

client questions

- Who do you remind me of *physically*?
- What of your features triggers the memory of X?
- What is left unsaid or undone?
 - Client may process unfinished business now or save it for later (‘making a picture’)
 - What longing or need do I need to acknowledge?
 - What is here the practical problem? *How can I/we...?*
- How are you (counsellor) different from X?
- Do you feel sufficiently disidentified?

When to use

When you meet a Co-Counsellor you may experience as too positive or too negative, safe or unsafe. It might be worthwhile to check whether that person reminds you of somebody else, especially when going to have a session with them. If there is identification, this memory will slip as a slide between you and the currently present person. Then there is a big change you will have expectations about that person that actually belong to somebody else.

When not to use

When it is behaviour triggering your memory. Using your counsellor's behaviour as reference point in a session can make it difficult for the counsellor to maintain free attention for you.

Instead you may want to have a session with somebody else and to ask your counsellor to role-play the behaviour as starting point for using the Pain-to-Power technique.

Short theory

If a person reminds you of somebody else, then often you have unfinished business around the reminded person. This is especially the case when it affects you emotionally. This undigested business is looking for a chance to come into awareness and to be processed. As long as this hasn't happened, you will project the old memory as a slide over the other person and this may make it quite difficult for you to see the actual person.

Undigested business could imply that:

- you still need to finish some business of by saying or doing something
- you still have stored in your system the distress of having met that person so you need to digest that event properly
- The reminded person reflects a longing or a need you haven't acknowledged or met yet

To clear this identification effectively you need to come to terms with the reminded person or your current longing or needs. Sometimes it is

enough to express what is left unsaid or undone; sometimes you need to work it out further. You can do this within the session, or make 'pictures' of the memory and postpone it for a later session.

'Making a picture' *when*

This technique can be used for:

- looking at a too overwhelming situation
- parking material
 - when something comes up during your session you do not want to work on now
- saving material for later
 - when your session time is almost finished
- improving the relationship with yourself

'Making a picture' *technique*

- Describe what you see in the picture
 - 'Me here' - 's/he there' over there
 - Keep your eyes focused on the picture !
- What loving and supportive could you tell the person in the picture?
- What practical problem does the person have?
- How does the frame look like?
- What is the title?
- Put the picture into your back pocket
 - Draw the picture in your notebook (optional)

When is a past event ‘undigested’?

- The memory pops up in a ID-check, Pain-to-Power technique or Focusing session
- When thinking of that memory
 - you feel emotional, uncomfortable or numb
 - you become paralysed
 - you lose your ability to think clearly
 - you switch to your ‘survival’ strategy
- The memory pops again and again during daily activities
- You dream about it, perhaps in a nightmare

Processing an undigested event

The ‘Video’ procedure - 1

An extension of the ‘Making a picture’ technique

- ‘Me here - she/he there’ on the *video* screen. Keep your eyes directed at the screen
- Retell the story behind the pain, scene by scene.
The brain can only process stories, not singled out pain points
- Maintain a loving and supportive attitude to the person on the screen. “I love you!”
Express this in each scene and each time when s/he experiences something strongly.

Processing an undigested event

The ‘Video’ procedure - 2

- Start with the painful event itself. Process it
- Go back to a happier time and process this scene
- Go to the first scene where the beginnings of the painful event start to develop. Process this scene
- Go step by step through the scenes leading up to the painful event and then to the scenes after the event. Do this until the event has passed by.
- Choose a happy event as final ending
- Count off on your fingers all those events with short descriptions

The 'Video' procedure - 3 *counsellor suggestions*

- Ask the client to go back to the scene
 - before the distressful event
 - where nothing had happened yet
- Make sure that the client
 - uses 'Me here - she/he there' on the *video* screen.
 - keeps eyes directed at the screen
- Ask client
 - what the person on the screen is feeling
 - what loving "I love you" and supportive things can you say to the person out there on the screen
 - what is the practical problem the person on the screen is having?

'From Pain to Power' procedure

'From Pain to Power' procedure

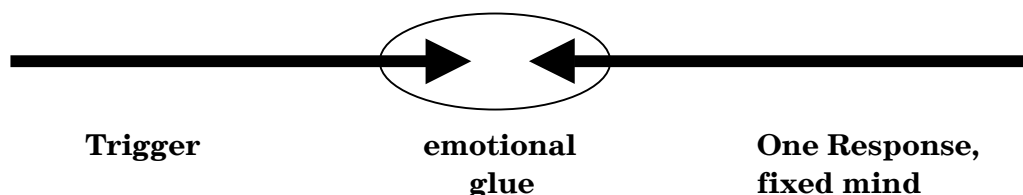
For what can you use this procedure?

- To work on a situation in which
 - you feel powerless, distressed or restimulated
 - you feel 'invited' to join in dancing in the rescue triangle *victim, rescuer, aggressor*
 - you get into a 'Persist, persist, otherwise everything goes wrong.' mood
- To change a behavioural pattern you would like to get rid of
- To break the spell of a restrictive, negative personal belief over you

Short theory behind the 'From Pain-to-Power' procedure

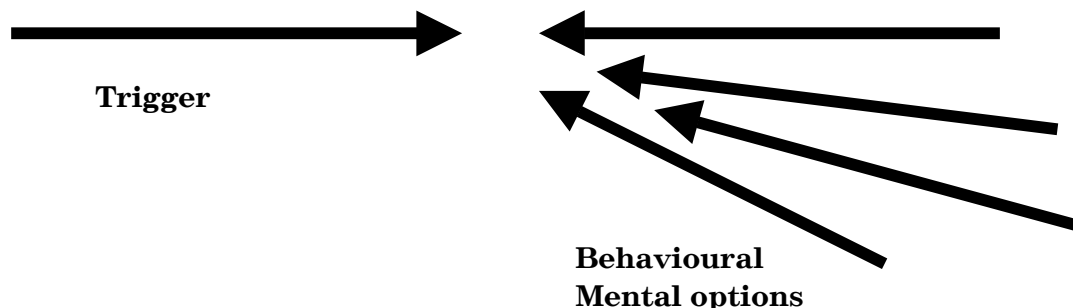
When people feel pained, overwhelmed, powerless, controlled by a belief or seem to behave in a patterned way, there is a fixed link – glue – between the emotions and behaviour and the Trigger that provokes them. The brain seemed to be partially paralysed to create response options to that specific trigger, especially when the 'glue' contains lots of past and/or current emotional distress.

Pained, powerless, patterned:



The aim of the 'Pain to Power' procedure is to switch the brain into creativity, thinking in options as a response to that trigger. The person will experience his or herself as more open-minded and as centre of their actions and life, as opposed to feeling overwhelmed and powerless.

In charge of your life



When in real life after the session the trigger will be presented again the person is quite likely not to respond in a fixed patterned way, but to tune into the situation with a more open and creative mind.

The 'Pain to Power' procedure starts with identifying the trigger of your distress. Then the glue between the trigger and your distress needs to be loosened. This may need to be done twofold:

- letting out all your current distress around that trigger diminishes the emotional pressure on your brain.
- identifying the underlying feelings and processing them. By doing so you are likely to touch the ‘reasons’ you had in the past to create that connection between the trigger and your response. The distress and sensations stemming from this need to be discharged as well.

So far the imperative connection and glue between trigger and your response has been sufficiently weakened. Often, the brain is now able to switch into ‘option’ mode when represented with the trigger again. However, to ensure this to happen you need to practise your brain to do this in the session.

“From Pain to Power”
each step 5 minutes maximum

1. Finding the trigger of your distress
Technique: ‘Literal description of situation’
 and choosing a role-player if in group
Role-player repeats trigger in steps 2,3 & 4
2. Letting out whatever comes up
3. Expressing your underlying feeling(s)
4. What options could you create in real life?
5. Dis-identifying the role-player/counsellor

Step 1: Finding the Trigger
using Literal Description

- Describing literally the specifics of the situation
 - Allow time to discharge when triggered
 - Instruct the role player
Externalise internal triggers if necessary!!
- Counsellor’s suggestions**
- Open-ended questions
 - Asking for smells, visuals, sounds
 - “What are the details of the scene?”
 - “What is the thought of your body?”

You can use the Literal Description technique to search for three kinds of triggers.

- **The external trigger:** Which words, behaviours or events outside you trigger your emotional response?
 The role-player is instructed this to present as accurately as possible.
- **The internal trigger**
 Which thought or sentence do you tell yourself in your head that paralyses you more or less? For instance “I should behave myself very polite.”
 The role-player is asked to say this sentence to you in the “You”-form: “You should behave yourself very polite.” Whispering could be effective!

- **The behaviour control trigger**

The focus here is on behaviour patterns; thoughts and feelings are not relevant. The trick is to find that sentence or command that when prescribed the specific behaviour would be provoked. For instance, when you notice that you always empty your plate, the trigger sentence is “You should always empty your plate!”

Step 2: Let out *whatever* comes up letting uncensored the pressure go

The counsellor provides the trigger at the client's requests

- **‘Physical’ mode**
non-verbal expression of feelings and emotions
- **‘Nonsensical’ or daft mode**
Any nonsensical free associations or daft expressions as answer to the trigger
- **Conversation mode**
Counsellor: ‘What would you like to say to X?’

Step 3: Working with the underlying feeling

- What is your underlying feeling?
Use ‘Literal description’ of how the trigger resonates in your body
- What past situation does this remind you of?
If any, make picture
- Express your underlying feeling in
 - the physical, non-verbal mode
 - the ‘nonsensical’ or daft mode
 - the conversational mode*Counsellor ‘What would you like to say MOST to X?’*

Step 4: What are your options?

Creating options opens up your brain and puts you back into charge of yourself

- Conversation alternatives
‘What could you say to X in reality?’
- Action alternatives
‘How could you deal in reality with X?’
Each time when you think up an action, play it out
- What is your practical problem here?
- What is your heart-felt dream?

Sometimes this procedure may seem not effective...

People sometimes say after a session with the technique that they don't feel that much better. That perception can be very right. However, they often report as well that afterwards they got on with life much better without linking this improvement to having had a 'From Pain to Power' session.

Also, because the painful event has digested so well, people forget about it and then it might seem that this procedure didn't work. Therefore this suggestion. Write down the painful event you worked on down in your diary three months later: "How did my working on event X work out?" This gives you more chance to evaluate the effectiveness of this procedure.

From Pain to Power *overview*

1. Finding the trigger

- feeling powerless: literal description
- aware negative thought: “You must....”
- behaviour pattern: “You must....”

2. Letting out whatever comes up

- physical, non-verbal mode
- daft or nonsensical mode
- conversational mode

3. Expressing the underlying feeling(s)

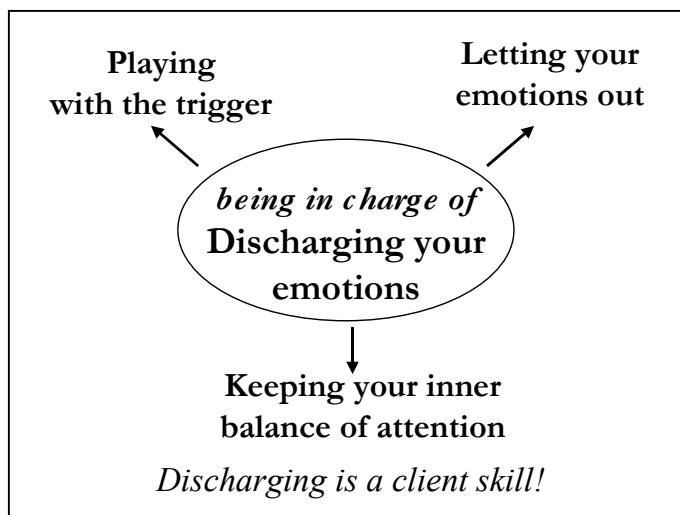
- literal description of felt sense
- what situation in the past > make picture
- express in
 - physical, non-verbal mode
 - daft or nonsensical mode
 - conversational mode

4. Creating options for real life

- action
- conversation
- heartfelt wish
- what is the practical problem
- summarise options counting them

5. Dis-identifying the role-player

Expressing emotions: the Discharge Triangle Coat Stand



There are many, many Co-Counselling techniques in use, several of them directly relating to discharging emotions. In order to clarify how they support the Discharge Triangle we would like to use the metaphor of the Coat Stand. Each peg representing one corner of the Discharge Triangle.

1. “Balance of Attention” techniques

When **you as client** are noticing that you are loosing your ‘balance of attention’, three types of techniques you can use

1. Weakening the trigger or trigger’s impact.

- Talking in the third person about yourself
- Using an alias for your self
- Talking in the past tense about yourself
- Projecting the event in front of you while describing yourself in the third person

2. Grounding exercises

- Asking your counsellor to touch you, for instance by touching you on your lower back
- Breathing into your tummy
- Walking up and down
- Asking your counsellor to do attention switch exercises with you.

3. Celebrations

As **counsellor** it is important that you keep in eye on the balance of attention of your client.

When doubting, you may ask: “How is your balance of attention?” If necessary you can suggest all the above mentioned techniques.

Nota bene. In the very unlikely case of a client not responding to the above questions and keeps hanging in an emotional state or seems to disappear even further into it, take then a much more directive attitude as counsellor.

Keep breathing calmly and tell the client: “Keep eye contact with me!” Repeat this each time when the client turns their eyes away.

You don't need to reassure your client! You becoming more directive in establishing eye contact will be sufficient for your client to regain balance of attention.

Once the eye contact has been (re-)established you can suggest one of the above mentioned techniques to maintain balance of attention.

2. “Playing with the Trigger” techniques

The better you are able to play with triggers, the more you will get out of your session.

1. Techniques for searching for the trigger

- Literal description
- Focusing (i.e. using a body sensation as guide for finding out what triggers off that sensation)
- Scanning or mind mapping (e.g. sexual experiences in your life)
- Association

2. Techniques for using a found trigger

When you found the trigger, using it supports discharging emotions at your ease

- Weakening or strengthening the sound of the trigger sentence
- With sadness: tell your truth with a very soft voice
- With anger: express your anger louder or just softer
- Weakening or strengthening the sound or movement of the trigger
- Repeating or stretching the trigger sentence (or ask your counsellor to do this for you) as long as necessary to let your emotions out.
(Glo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-ria)

3. Techniques for strengthening the trigger

If you are not involved enough in what you are working on or find that it is too remote & so you cannot work through the feelings enough to discharge, you may want to strengthen the trigger

- Use I and own your feelings and actions
- Use present tense
- Use literal description as if it is happening in the here and now

3. “Expressing your Emotions” techniques

1. “Giving yourself permission to feel and express those emotions” techniques

Here it can be very helpful to ask your Co-Counsellor to give you the following sentences (you choose them!):

- “It is Okay”
- “You are welcome to share your anger/fear/sadness with me”

- or any other sentence that you feel may support you.

The counsellor can support permission by offering tissues, a pillow to hit etc.

2. “Giving your body the time to discharge” techniques

- Locating where you feel the emotion in your body and express it from there
- Making non-verbal noises (talking may switch people away from discharging)
- The above mentioned techniques of repeating or stretching the trigger
(Glo-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-ria)

Risky techniques

There are many techniques purely aimed at discharging emotions. These techniques can contain a seduction to make you feel emotions, there where they are not here inside you or not ready yet to come out spontaneously.

‘Acting into’ techniques, especially the ‘Acting into anger’ and ‘Acting into fear’ of the more traditional Co-Counselling approach can train your body and mind to be an angry person or a frightened person.

Safe procedures for working on emotionally charged experiences

The ‘Video’ and the ‘From Pain to Power’ procedures help you to process your emotions and undigested experiences. They are both safe and effective procedures, as they each in their own way contain the three aspects of the Discharge Triangle.

Having a conversation with your body - Focusing

Having conversations with your body Focusing

- Start options
 - scanning body for important sensations
 - choosing a thought and listening to its resonance in the body
 - calling an old 'felt sense' to work on
- Describing the sensations *if necessary*
- Questioning the felt sense in order to discover its message

"Literal Description of Sensations" technique

Literal Description of body sensations > Felt Sense

- Describe literally your body sensations as if describing an 'object'
 - No interpretations of these sensations
 - Allow time to discharge by repeating the description of the sensation
- Counsellor's suggestions:**
- Open-ended questions
 - Asking for smells, visuals, sounds, shapes

Paying attention to the sensations in your body can clarify to you, how your body feels about something, especially when you bypass labelling your sensations, like 'angry', 'ashamed', 'surprised' etc.

Apart from this, some descriptions or labels of these sensations fit better than others, and your body will tell you this by a light discharge.

<i>Client</i>	<i>Counsellor</i>
Describe literally the sensations within your body.	
<p>Literally does NOT mean:</p> <p>Interpreting or labelling fear, anxiety, embarrassment etc.</p>	<p>If the client gives an interpretation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you feel it? • How can you describe it?
<p>Literally means:</p> <p>describing your sensations as you would describe objects</p>	<p>Possible Questions are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do you feel it? • How big is the feeling? • What is its shape? • What is the temperature? • How are the boundaries? • What colours do you observe? • What is the texture? • How energetic or static is it?

Searching for the right interpretation

The language of your body

The 'Stronger/weaker' game as tool for searching for the right interpretation of your body sensations

- if the sensations become stronger, you are searching into the right direction
- if the sensation doesn't change or becomes weaker your statement might be true but not a relevant interpretation of that sensation
- you will notice a **shift** in the sensation when you discover the right interpretation of your sensation

Some questions for the felt sense

- Meditating on the felt sense while listening to the thoughts popping up
- What emotion is the felt sense containing?
- What gets it so _____?
- What does it need from me / the world?
- How would 'All OK' feel?
- What truth about myself do I find difficult to acknowledge?

Working with Personal Beliefs 1 - a protocol

For more information on how thoughts and beliefs affect your life, see Chapter "The influence of thoughts and beliefs" in "Part 4, Living happily with your emotional truth."

Working on restrictive personal beliefs

- Step 1. Recognising a restrictive negative belief
- Step 2. Undermining the spell of that old belief...
- Step 3. Creating a new Life Enhancing Personal Belief
- Step 4. Establishing the new personal belief

Step 1. Unearthing a limiting belief

1. Recognising an old, restrictive, negative belief

- What thought have you that
 - you have often thought
 - feels very familiar
 - downs your energy and zest for live
- When looking at the 'facts' of your life what beliefs can you distil from these 'facts'
- The belief is your 'boss'...

I am OK & I have the challenge of a restrictive belief

When focusing on your longings, desires and attractions often very limiting or sabotaging beliefs come up, limiting severely your imaginations and confidence that you can achieve or sort out your longings and desires.

For more info in this, see the 'Create your life.' workshop.

Step 2. Undermining the power of a restrictive belief

2. Undermining the spell of the old belief....

- ‘From Pain to Power’ procedure using the old belief as trigger phrase
 - “I” becomes “You” e.g.
“I am ugly.” becomes “You are ugly”
- When a memory of an old constituting event comes up, make a ‘picture’ of it. If you wish you may use the ‘Video’ technique to process this experience.

Optional: Searching for life events that triggered your belief

2.1 Sources of restrictive beliefs

- When did you develop this belief?
Primary school time, before, after?
- Where did you develop this belief?
At home, at school, in the church, elsewhere?
- From whom did you learn this belief?
- Use the ‘scanning’ or ‘lifeline’ technique to search for traumatic or formative events of your belief. Make ‘pictures’ of those events.
- If you wish you may use the ‘Video’ technique to process this experience.

Step 3. Formulating a new more productive, liberating belief

The challenge here is to find a statement that goes straight for the core of the restrictive one that ‘kills it off’ and also contributes to your well being and opportunities in life.

3. Creating a new belief

- Create a relaxed place where you can touch your wishes and best hopes in your body
- Translate these wish and hope into a new belief. This may feel
 - very nice but unbelievable
 - very unfamiliar and ‘unrealistic’
 - pleasantly uncomfortable
 - hopeful and almost naughty
- The old belief is likely to provide ‘Evidence’ why the new believe is wrong.

Formulations

3.1 Enriching your new belief

- Use present tense as if already 'true'
- Leave out "I can", "I am able" & labelling
- Leave out any (hidden) conditions
- Transform negatives into specifics
- Enclose other people too "People enjoy..."
- Add some 'abundance':
 - "with pleasure", "easily", "naturally"
 - "very much", "enjoying"

Congratulations!

Take care of how you formulate your new belief. Your old belief says for instance "I am stupid." A literal contradiction would be "I am intelligent". However, both beliefs contain the thinking error 'identification'. When you go for the belief "I am intelligent", the next time you don't understand something, you run the risk to lose your new belief. If you choose a belief like "I have the capability to understand life intelligently in my way" there may be more mental space to accept instances of impatience or not understanding within your new belief. There is then also a bigger chance that you learn to use better the intelligence you have. Hence there is more chance that your brain is going to belief your new belief.

Often it happens that what you belief about yourself, is 'confirmed' to you by the outside world or projected by you onto it. Hence it is more effective when you involve also other people. For instance "I have my own type of intelligence and other people enjoy the benefits of it."

Four Positive Basic Choices In Life

To break through co-dependency or make yourself manipulation proof

- "I love myself **under all circumstances**, even when...."
- "I feel good about myself **under all circumstances**, even when"
- "I approve of myself **under all circumstances**, even when...."
- "I am **under all circumstances** a worthwhile person, even..."

Step 4. Internalising a new positive belief

4. Establishing your new belief

Using your new belief as trigger

- Each time when the trigger is presented the client expresses whatever comes up
- Client says new belief
 - Counsellor 1 says new belief
 - (Optional) Counsellor 2 says new belief
 - (Optional) Counsellor 1 & 2 tell each other the new belief mentioning the client's name
 - And then is it the clients turn again.

Good stuff for (daily) telephone sessions

4.1 Establishing the new belief

Imagine the new belief working

- Imagine a situation in which your new belief is actually working
- Use the “Literal Description” technique to describe this situation as fully as possible
- Give your body time to let its emotions out!

Your brain uses this imagination as ‘evidence’ that the new belief has some reality

4.2 Establishing your new belief & the people around you

- Sometimes people prefer you to stick to your old belief
- Use ‘Literal description’ to find the trigger sentence people seem to use to get you back to ‘normal’.
- The “From Pain to Power” procedure supports you to develop different ways of responding to such triggers by other people.

DIRECTION HOLDING' or 'AND THAT MEANS....'

<i>client</i>	<i>counsellor</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep coming back to your direction, but leave space for what is coming up for you• Nodding as confirmation <p>variations: Conscious choice "I choose to..."</p> <p>Tell other people who are important in your life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•• Using a mirror with close eye contact<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Tell your mirror image that you.....- Tell your mirror image that s/he.....- You see that I love myself...	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• permission to feel• "What is the thought?"• keep the client to his direction• "Yes, you are...." confirmation.

4.3 Establishing your new belief Non-coco affirmation techniques

Repeat the new belief for two to three weeks

- *silently* just before falling asleep or before getting up or during relaxation exercise
- *out-loud* in front of a mirror in a safe place. Talk alternately about yourself and to the person you see in the mirror:
"I understand that you...."

Place visual reminders of your new belief around you

Part 2. Group techniques and procedures

Contents

Having a session in or with a group.....	2
Ground rules of group sessions	2
Being physically held	2
Working on acceptance	3
Shame and guilt	
Using the understanding of your group mates	4
Ground rule	
1. Asking for / offering options	
2. Asking for / offering challenge	
3. Asking for / offering feedback	
Life action - contract.....	5

Having a session in or with a group

In a one-to-one session the counsellor is supposed to support the process only and to leave any interpretation or understanding out. This provides clients with the space to explore independently their own truth without any approval, disapproval, agreement or disagreement at all. That place for exploring the inner truth is sacrosanct and the beauty of a one-to-one session. That needs to stay that way.

A session in the group

This can be seen as an extension of the 'one-to-one' session. It has essentially the same ground rules but is potentially more powerful because of the increased amount of free attention on offer.

A session with the group

However, one can have a more interactive group session. The group essentially functions as a 'chaperone' creating more safety and balance of attention. Crucial is that the group keeps supporting the client to maintain ownership of the process and the triggered feelings.

Working in / with a support group

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "My emotional truth, my challenge is..."
Acceptation!• Being physically held• Asking for options:
"How can I...?"
"How could we?"• Asking for or
offering a challenge• Asking for or
offering feedback | <div>!IMPORTANT!<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The client is in charge of the session all the time!• Everything needs to be negotiated!• Confidentiality<ul style="list-style-type: none">– is negotiable– is normal, unless negotiated otherwise</div> |
|--|--|

Ground rules of group sessions

1. The client is always in charge and can change any session contract any time.
2. The role of the group members needs to be negotiated.
3. Confidentiality unless negotiated otherwise,
e.g. before during or after session and in Support group contract.

Being physically held

1. The arm-chair
The counsellor is leaning against a chair or wall and the client sits in between the legs of the counsellor and lies back against the chest and tummy
2. The lap-top
The counsellor is leaning against a chair or wall and the client sits in between the legs of the counsellor with both legs on one side and leans sideways against the chest and tummy. The counsellor embraces the client with both arms.

The client being physically held by the counsellor is a powerful technique. You can use it to work on:

- Something you feel very unsafe with
- You cannot hear or believe that people think you are OK despite the feelings and challenges you have. Bodies don't lie.
- Issues of being close to somebody, intimacy or attraction.

Because being held is such a powerful technique, it is recommended only for a session in a group for the following reasons:

- The holder cannot see the face of the client and hence cannot continuously offer eye contact or spot what is going on with the client.
- The above being held positions encourage a physical surrender into the body of the counsellor. The group functions as a 'chaperone' which increases safety and appropriateness of the process.

Working on acceptance

I am OK
acceptation, shame and guilt

Session in the group

- Share your truth and your challenge
if necessary in gibberish
- Group member answers
 - "I hear/understand that you ..."
 - "It is OK to have that challenge."
 - "You are OK.
I think you are OK whatever your challenge."

One-to-one session

- 'Make a picture' of you and your 'challenge'

Shame and guilt

Shame and guilt are 'social feelings' which one experiences stronger when other people are present. On your own or in a one-to-one session you may feel ashamed or guilty about something and even you may get rid of those feelings.

The real test happens when you see other people knowing what you feel ashamed or guilty about. Other people witnessing you magnify those feelings immensely. Then to hear that you are OK having the challenges you feel ashamed or guilty about can become a powerful healing experience.

If you still not believe them, someone can hold you when they say again that you are OK having the challenges you have.

Using the understanding of your group mates

Ground rule

The client accepts full ownership of feelings and restimulation potentially triggered by the options, feedback or challenge asked for or offered after having accepted the suggestion. Of course, the client can stop the process anytime.

1. Asking for / offering options

Some critical conditions for success

1. **The client puts a practical problem forward:**
“How can I deal with...?”
2. **The client has already thought up some options themselves.**
Then it is clear that their brain is already in a creative mode. If the client is still distressed their brain is much less capable to process the offered options creatively. In this case it is recommended that the client first has a session and uses the Pain-to-Power technique to switch their brain in creative mode.
3. **The client asks for options, not for advice.**
Group members offer options. Advice implies that the advisor gives the best possible solution and might expect the advice to be followed up. Consequently this might invite the client to diminish their autonomy and choice. Options, including suggestions for re-framing the problem, support and enhance the client's creative and autonomous process.

2. Asking for / offering challenge

When you offer a negotiated challenge, make sure that

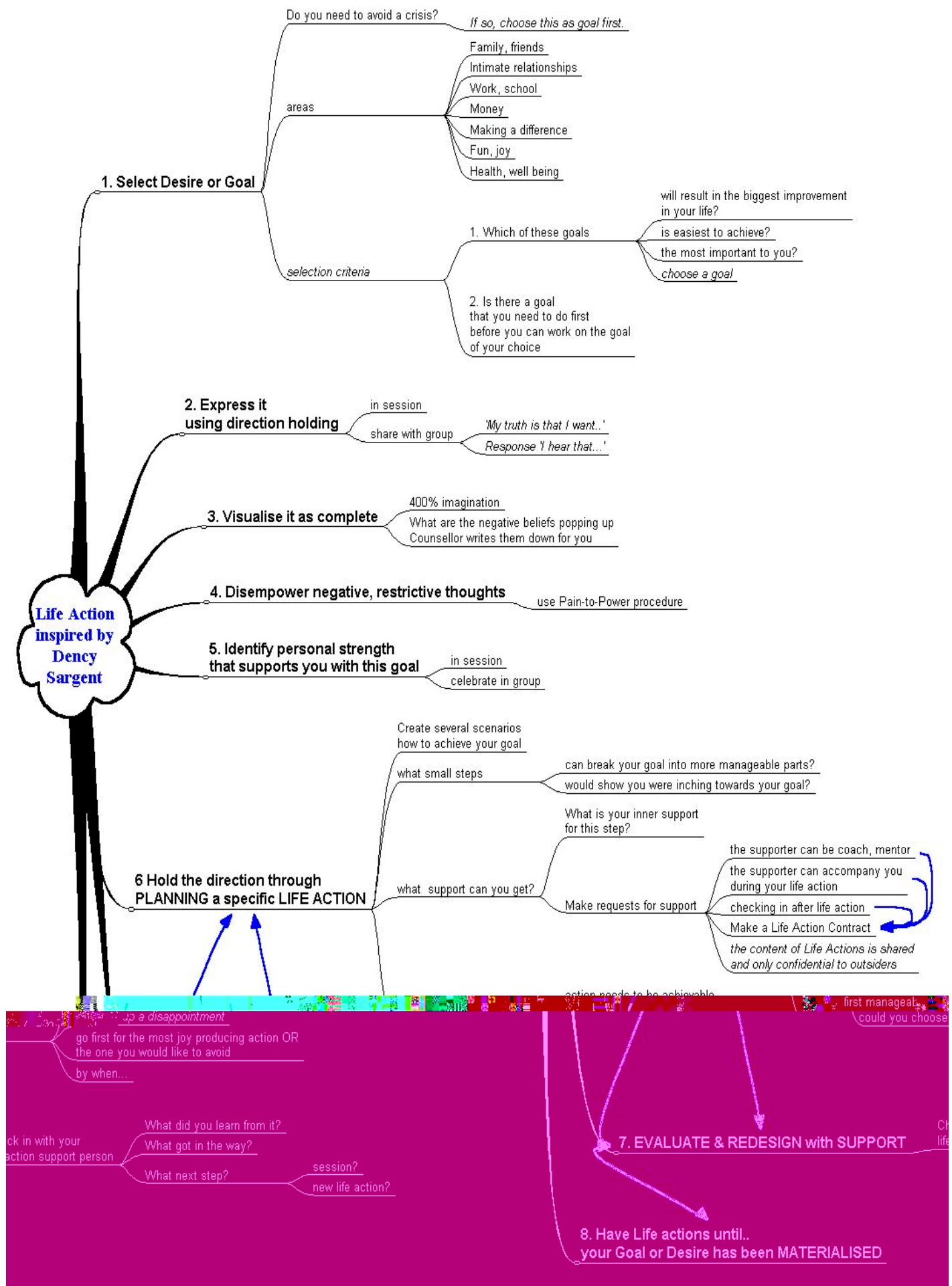
- You do it with a twinkle in your eyes
- Compassion in your heart
- And focused on observables.

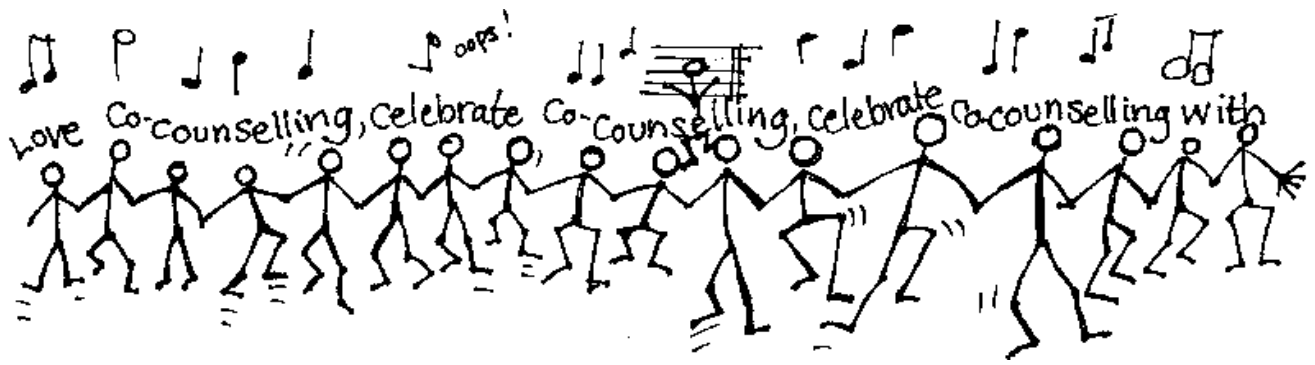
3. Asking for / offering feedback

Asking & giving feedback

- Negotiate first!
‘May I ask for / give feedback?’
The other person may refuse.
- Identify the incident
so that you both talk about the same
‘When I/you said/did...,
I felt / thought / saw...
- What was good about it?
- What else would you/I like to say about it?

Life action - contract





The Rescue Triangle

or
the art of being in charge of yourself
and not controlling other people

by
JanPieter Hoogma & Teresa Tinklin

Short Version 2.0

1 July 2002





The aim of Cornucopia Publications is to provide easy to read literature that is supportive of Co-Counselling

This publication provides an introduction to the Rescue Triangle. It forms the first two sections of a longer publication, which we are still writing. The longer version will also have chapters on socialisation, liberating yourself from the Rescue Triangle and on how to teach the Rescue Triangle. If you would like to be informed when the full publication is available, please email teresa.tinklin@ed.ac.uk or contact JanPieter Hoogma at the address below.

To receive further copies of this publication send a cheque for £1.70 made payable to CornuCopia with a stamped addressed A4 envelope to
JanPieter Hoogma
32-A Inverleith Place
Edinburgh EH3 5QB
Scotland.

Packs of 10 are available to teachers who would like to give this as a handout on Fundamentals, at a cost of £10 + £2 post and packing (UK).

Alternatively you can read it on the Internet at the CornuCopia website. Its address is www.co-cornucopia.org.uk

Constructive and positive feedback came from: Anne Denniss & Margaret Anderson
Art by Anne Denniss, Lay out by JanPieter Hoogma

Introduction

As we grow up, we naturally learn ways of controlling our environment. This includes developing patterns of behaviour that we use to control the behaviour of other people. This is not a negative process - all our patterns were developed for a positive reason, perhaps to protect us from something or to allow us to survive a particular situation. Often, however, people keep on behaving in these patterned ways when it is no longer constructive or appropriate to do so, without being aware that they are doing it. Co-Counselling helps us to become aware of our patterns so that we have more choice about how we act.

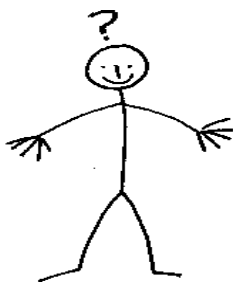
The Rescue Triangle describes common patterns that we may have learned that help us control other people's behaviour. This booklet describes those patterns and how they inter-relate with each other. Knowing about the Rescue Triangle will help you become more aware of when you or other people are acting in controlling ways. Awareness of your patterns is the first step in being able to change them.

Everyone being in charge of themselves is very nice in theory but sometimes people's Rescue Triangle patterns can get in the way of this happening. Knowing about the Rescue Triangle will help you to move towards being in charge of yourself. And, as you become more in charge of yourself it is more likely that you will leave other people in charge of themselves.

Why is the Rescue Triangle so important for Co-Counselling?

One of the basic principles of Co-Counselling is that people are responsible for themselves. If you need something, it is your responsibility to ask for it. If you don't want to do something you can say 'no'. As client you are in charge of your session: it is up to you to use your time however you want. This might mean refusing or ignoring a suggestion from your counsellor.

Everybody being responsible for themselves is very freeing: in sessions, in socialising and in relationships. If each person is in charge of themselves and you feel you can rely on them to ask for what they need and to say 'no' if they want to, you don't need to worry about how your behaviour is affecting them and you can just get on with being yourself.



Introducing Questabel

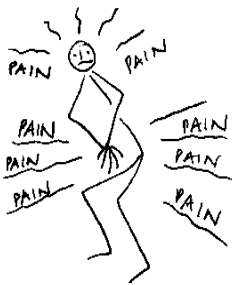
At this point, we would like to introduce you to a friend of ours, Questabel. Questabel likes to understand things so she asks lots of questions. When we think we have explained something, Questabel will come up with a question which really makes us think. Sometimes trying to answer Questabel's questions or doubts helps us to clarify for ourselves what we mean. We really like Questabel's questions, so we have included some of them in the booklet.

What is the Rescue Triangle?

There are three roles in the Rescue Triangle. These are:

- rescuer
- aggressor
- victim

We will explain the roles first, then describe how they interact with each other. Each role may be expressed in different ways.



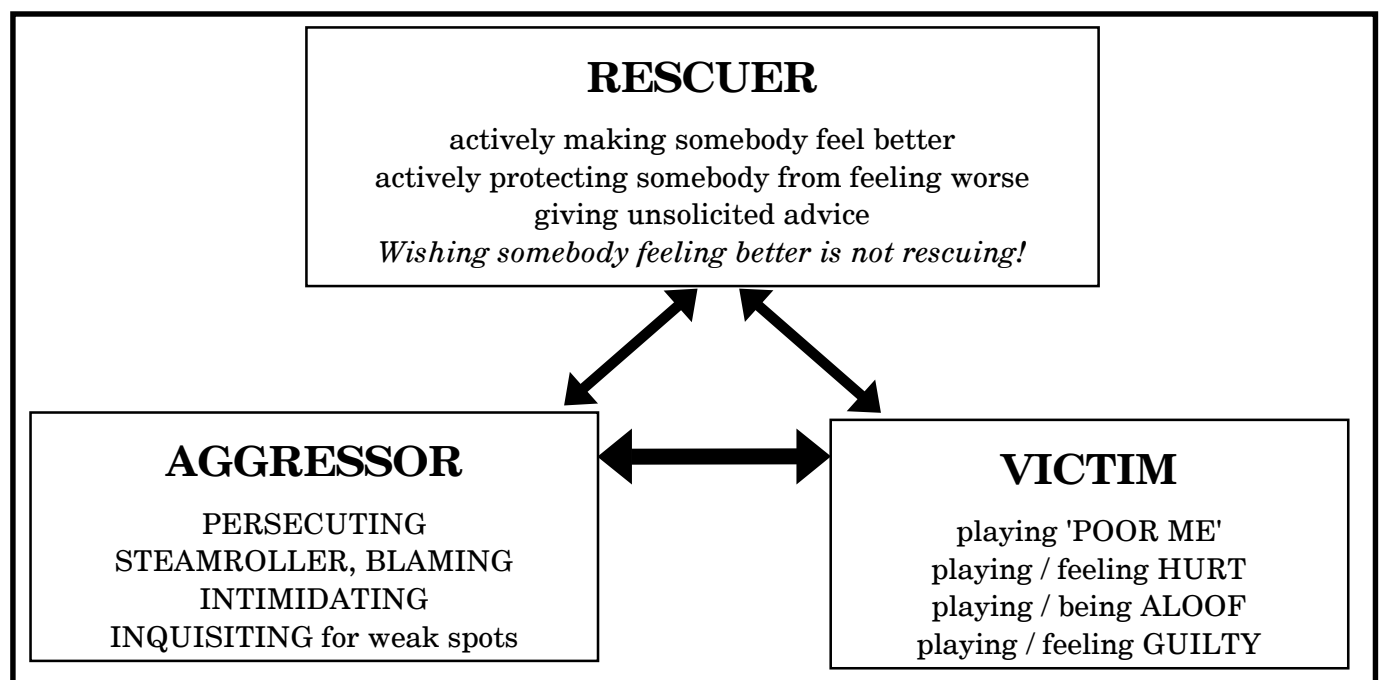
Victim role

Someone in the victim role generally feels bad inside and powerless, although some people actively play the victim role with relish.

- Someone in the victim role feels like a victim of what is happening around them. They feel at the mercy of the situation they find themselves in. They feel hurt by things that happen and not in control of themselves and their lives. They feel sorry for themselves and think '**poor me**'.
- Or they feel **guilty** because they feel it is their fault that someone else is feeling bad or that something has gone wrong.
- Or they may act **aloof**. They act as if they are OK when in fact they don't feel OK inside. This is to avoid giving anyone information that could be used against them.

QUESTABEL: *But you're not trying to control anyone when you feel like a victim, how does being in the victim role control or manipulate someone else's behaviour?*

Victims can be very powerful figures. People around them may feel guilty or responsible in some way for the victim's suffering and try to make them feel better or at least avoid adding to their suffering. They may act to try to keep the Victim quiet or happy which may involve denying their own needs and wishes.





Aggressor role

There are four versions of the aggressor role.

- The **Persecutor** harasses or oppresses others in order to control them.
- The **Intimidator** behaves in a threatening or violent way towards other people. The Intimidator uses the threat of emotional or physical violence to control the behaviour of others.
- The **Steamroller** talks loudly, is brash, insistent and intimidating, and contradicts or ignores virtually everything you say. Their overriding aim is to get their own way. They ask a lot of questions, but they are not interested in answers. Their blaming behaviour is just designed to break their victim down. If they keep on the attack maybe no-one will notice how insecure and exposed they feel.
- The **Inquisitor** also asks lots of questions, but is very interested in the answers. Inquisitors want to get information out of other people which they can use against them later. They are good at gaining trust and they use this to discover other people's weak spots.



Rescuer role

The Rescuer acts to stop people from feeling bad, to rescue people from some perceived harm or to prevent a situation from becoming worse. Those acting in a rescuing pattern try to make people feel better or at least prevent them from feeling worse. They try to avoid hurting other people's feelings. They try to solve other people's problems for them and often do that by giving unsolicited advice.

How do the roles interact with each other?

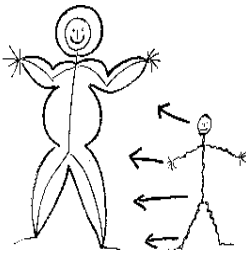
As we have already explained, there are three roles in the Rescue Triangle - the victim, aggressor and rescuer. It's called a 'triangle' because the roles interact with each other and once you get into one role it is easy to move around the triangle into other roles. In fact, if two people both start acting in the Rescue Triangle with each other they may dance together around the triangle, each switching from one role to another and back again. Once in, especially if you are both in, it's hard to get out.

An example. Jenny gets distressed during an exercise on Fundamentals. Another course member, Rita, thinks she can see the answer to Jenny's problem and tells her what she thinks she ought to do. Jenny gets angry and tells Rita to mind her own business. Rita gets upset then and feels attacked and starts crying. Jenny then feels bad and tries to say she's really sorry and that she really likes Rita and thinks she's a great person ... They are dancing together around the triangle. The dance continues until one person 'wins' the energy of the other.

'Rewards' of the Rescue Triangle

It can be rewarding acting in the Rescue Triangle. You may actually get someone to behave in the way you want them to by bullying them or acting like you are their victim. You can also get a kick out of getting what you want from someone else. However, there is usually also a cost to getting what you want using the Rescue Triangle. For example, if you bully someone into doing the washing-up, you may get the washing-up done and feel good because you got what you wanted. The person doing it, however, will probably do it with some resentment. The risk is that they store this up and 'get you back later' or sabotage the job in some way. So getting what you want from other people using the Rescue Triangle may be rewarding in the short-term, but in the long-term there is usually a cost.

Working things out through the Rescue Triangle usually gives you a dysfunctional solution. For example, in the workplace if a manager tries to get a task done by bullying an employee, the focus of both their energies becomes the power struggle, rather than the task itself. Even worse, the task itself can become a tool in frustrating each other.



The energy exchange

When someone controls another person's behaviour through the Rescue Triangle, they strengthen their own energy in some way while the other person feels depleted. Have you ever felt an energy boost or a 'high' when you feel you have solved someone else's problem? Have you ever felt more secure and stronger in your relationship because you have coerced your partner into doing something for you to 'prove' their love for you? Have you ever got people's attention by acting distant or aloof? If so, then you have used the Rescue Triangle to get other people's energy flowing towards you.

In the Oxford-Cambridge boat race, both teams expend about the same amount of physical energy in order to cross the line. But the winners are energised, triumphant, the losers depleted and exhausted. It's the same kind of thing in the Rescue Triangle. One person feels energised, the other feels depleted. In any Rescue Triangle exchange, there is a 'winner' and a 'loser'.

Playing the Rescue Triangle can be potentially **addictive**. People using the different roles can give themselves a rush of adrenaline or feel good about themselves because they have made somebody else do or feel what they wanted them to. This can be used as a habit to avoid bad feelings about themselves.

How do people learn the roles?

People act in different roles at different times. Generally, however, we each favour one of the roles and tend to act in that one more often than in the others.. Each person has one role as a 'home base'. Each of our parents will have had a tendency to act in one of the roles more often than the others. As children, if we were exposed to a parental figure acting in one role repeatedly, the chances are we developed a tendency for a matching role. These are the most common matches.

Interrogating parent - Aloof child

The child withdraws and becomes aloof to defend him or herself against the intrusive questions of the parent.

Aloof parent - Interrogating child

The child tries to get the parent's attention and energy flowing towards him or her by asking questions.

Intimidating parent - 'Poor me' child

First the child feels powerless, victimised by the parent's intimidation. Often they try to get the parent's energy flowing towards them by eliciting sympathy. The child develops the victim role to try to avoid being intimidated.

Intimidating parent - Persecuting child

Not always the child 'translates' this powerless feeling into a victim role. It might also protest, kick, shout, swear, accuse and run away. The child develops the persecutor role to try to defend its own identity.

Victim parent - Rescuing child

The child acts to try to prevent the parent suffering more than they seem to be already. The child tries to keep the victim parent happy, usually at the expense of his or her own needs and wishes.

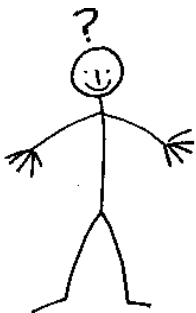
Rescuing parent - Rescuing child

The parent may choose to always put the child's needs first at the expense of their own needs. But at times the parent collapses and the child feels guilty about this. The child may then be in the position of looking after the parent, which usually involves denying his or her own needs and wishes.

What's the alternative?

The alternative is relationships in which people are not trying to control each other. If people give up trying to control each other, they are left with trying to find ways to co-operate with each other and trying to negotiate openly with each other to find solutions to problems.

Energy gets tied up in the Rescue Triangle, so getting out of it frees up energy. People who are not trying to control each other are more likely to enjoy each other's company in a way which feels clearer and more balanced.



QUESTABEL: *So you're saying it's wrong to be in the Rescue Triangle?*

We are not saying that it is right or wrong to behave in any of these ways. That would lead us into a complex philosophical debate about right and wrong. A lot of it depends on the situation. For example, most people would probably be grateful to be rescued if they were drowning in a pond or stranded in the top floor of a burning house. Our aim is to raise awareness of these patterns so that people have more choice about how they behave and to support people to be in charge of themselves.

So what is healthy support?

Healthy support:

- is negotiated. It's OK for the other person to say 'no', or to ask for something different
- leaves people in charge of themselves even when this means they will have to live through their own struggles (they will grow from them!)
- supports people to develop their own skills
- is given with attention free of restimulations, preoccupations or other distractions
- means nobody gains energy from each other

The positive side of Rescue Triangle roles

There is a positive side to the Rescue Triangle. The skills we learn in Rescue Triangle roles may prove useful to us in our lives in other ways or in other situations. That is, if we stop using them manipulatively. It is not necessary to discard or reject skills that we have used manipulatively in the past. It is the manipulation that is unhealthy. In fact the skill involved may prove to be useful if used in a non-controlling way. If you have learned to be an Inquisitor, for example, you will be good at asking questions and eliciting information from other people. An Inquisitor may make a good journalist, because these skills are useful in that job. Someone who has learned to take on the Victim role may have learned compassion which he or she can use in positive and non-controlling ways.

The challenge is to how you could use your Rescue Triangle skills in a positive and non-controlling way.

The Rescue Triangle in sessions

In the outside world it is quite common for one person to try to control the behaviour of another, for example, think of some of the ways a parent might try to get her child to do his homework. Because of this, controlling patterns could quite easily slip into the client-counsellor relationship. There are, however, several measures in place in Co-Counselling to prevent this from happening. In this way Co-Counselling provides, in its session structure, a good opportunity for people to become familiar with non-controlling, healthy patterns of support and people taking responsibility for their own needs. Here are the ways in which Co-Counselling models healthy support.

The Client is Always in Charge. *This means that he or she can refuse the counsellor's suggestions and do whatever she needs to do to maximise the benefit of the session for herself. This removes the counsellor's automatic authority.*

Co-Counselling training is primarily **Client Training**, *This prepares the client for being in charge of their process and their session. Although this approach is not always taken on Fundamentals courses in different places.*

The Free Attention Contract *also assumes that the client is in charge and is able to run their session on their own behalf.*

'Equal Time' for sessions. *This means that there is no chance that one person can rescue another by 'giving' them more time.*

Counsellor gives **Suggestions**, which means that the client can ignore them. (Although in some parts of the world the word 'Intervention' is used).

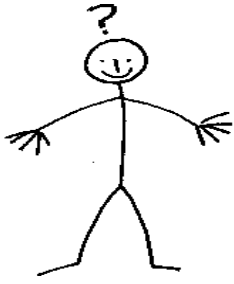
Despite these measures, controlling patterns can still slip into the client-counsellor relationship. Hence the rest of this chapter, which raises awareness of how to deal with those patterns once you perceive them.

You in the counsellor role

1. How to recognise that you are in the rescue triangle as counsellor?

Symptoms of you RESCUING your client

- feeling very involved in the client's session
- leaning forward
- feeling responsible for the client's work, 'success' or 'failure' in the session
- trying to say the right thing or trying not to 'get it wrong' as counsellor
- trying to solve the client's problem; giving advice
- trying to stop the client from feeling distressed



Questabel: At risk of repeating myself, I need to ask again: What is wrong with wanting to help my client?

There is nothing wrong with wanting to help your client per se. It is a healthy-enough attitude to want to make a difference in the lives of other people, as long as you are not unawarely doing it *to feel better about yourself* or to give yourself an energy boost.

There are different ways of helping your client. Rescuing them may give them a short-term solution, but Co-Counselling focuses on long-term changes. In the long term, it is more helpful for people to rely on their own resources to solve their problems. Being there for someone and witnessing their process as they develop their own truth will contribute to a far more fundamental change in their lives in the long-run.

Symptoms of you PERSECUTING your client

It is unlikely that you will openly behave in a persecuting way towards your client, but feeling irritated or angry with him or her for no apparent reason is a sign that you are in.

Sometimes people don't realise that they are rescuing until they move to the persecuting role.

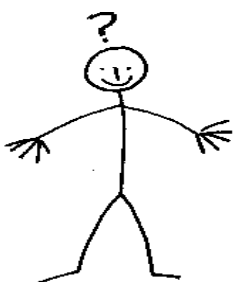
Some symptoms of persecuting are:

- feeling irritated about how the client is using the session or thinking they are not doing the right thing e.g. thinking “the client ought to be discharging now”, “the client is dodging the point”.
- repeating the same suggestion several times even though the client has ignored it, in the hope that he or she will be ‘wise’ enough to pick it up
- becoming impatient with the client
- feeling judgmental towards the client in some way, for example, accepting them as a person, but not accepting their behaviour or needs

Symptoms of feeling a ‘VICTIM’ of your client

We believe that feeling a victim of your client actually happens quite rarely. However, here are some examples of how this might happen.

- Feeling upset when your client seems to ignore all your suggestions or seems to put your counselling down in some way e.g. “I don’t want those kind of interventions”.
- Your client puts you on a free attention contract, then uses the session to tell you they are angry about something you did. You feel upset and don’t do anything to stop them.



Questabel: I can see that the first one is a situation in which you as counsellor have interpreted your client's actions as against you. But in the second one it seems that the client is actually abusing the set-up of having a session. How can I know the difference between sensing a ‘real’ abuse by the client and a simple invitation to join the rescue triangle?

This is a really important point. Yes, sometimes, very rarely, a client may actually abuse the situation of having a session and this may not be clear in the beginning. I heard the following story from a Co-Counsellor: During a session where the client had asked for and agreed on a contract of light massage, it became clear that the client had an ulterior motive. He allowed himself to

become aroused during the session, at which point I stopped it. Later on the client more openly expressed his sexual wishes and it became clear that he had used the session as a leading in.

There's no clear answer to this. If you start to feel suspicious that your client is abusing the situation, this can stem from your own restimulation or it may be an accurate sensing of the situation. Either way, you as counsellor are distracted away from being fully there for your client and this in itself is a good enough reason to stop the session. So you don't need to understand on the spot exactly what is going on.

2. How to step out of the Rescue Triangle?

We've explained how to **notice** when you as counsellor are in the rescue triangle. However, noticing you are in it is only part of the story. The next two sections are about how to get out of it and how to avoid getting into it in the first place.

How to get out of the rescue triangle when you notice you are involved in it.

Whichever role you are in there are a few simple things that you can do to get out of it.

Sit back and try to find a position where your body feels physically balanced by making small movements forwards, backwards and sideways.

The reason for this is that when people get involved in the rescue triangle they lose a sense of physical balance in their bodies. So by re-balancing you can switch out of the rescue triangle.

Stop giving interventions temporarily. Put yourself internally on a 'free attention' contract and start to witness your client's process more as an outsider. This will lessen your involvement with your client's session.

Stopping the session as counsellor

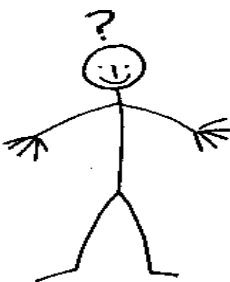
If the suggestions above don't work, remember you always have the right as counsellor to stop a contract and re-negotiate if it doesn't feel right any more. This is particularly important if you are no longer able to offer free attention or if it is a real struggle to be non-judgemental. This is about looking after yourself, but it is also about being honest with your client. If you are not able to give them free attention or regain your free attention for whatever reason, it is best to stop the session. If the client carries on in spite of what you have said, you have the right to simply walk away.

Asking safely for feedback after the session

Questabel: *Sometimes I keep worrying that I did something inappropriate as counsellor in spite of doing all the things that you have suggested above. Does that mean I am still in the rescue triangle?*

You probably are in the rescue triangle, but at the same time it could be that you simply need to check something out with your client. Here are the steps for asking for feedback safely after a session.

1. Check with your client that it is OK to ask for feedback about something specific that you did in your counselling. When you are doing this, it is important to talk about your counselling and not the material that your client worked on. If the client agrees to give feedback, he or she is accepting the possibility of being restimulated by the discussion.



2. Be specific about which of your actions you would like feedback on and make sure your client recognises the event you are talking about.
3. Ask the client what was good about the specific thing that you wanted feedback on. If the client is unable to give positive feedback, it is better to stop the procedure, because it is very likely that the client is restimulated. In this situation you are unlikely to get the information you need.
4. You then ask your client what else they would like to say about the intervention.
5. Avoid getting into a discussion. When your question has been answered stop there.

3. How to avoid ‘invitations’ to get involved in the Rescue Triangle

We have talked about what to do if you notice you are *already in* the rescue triangle. But you may become aware at some point that you are *on the verge* of getting into the rescue triangle. Something the client is doing may provide a trigger for you, or an ‘invitation’, if you like, to join in. Here are some examples of these kind of ‘invitations’.

You perceive that the client is starting to criticise your counselling, saying ‘that’s a crap suggestion, you’re not helping’, you may be tempted to get into the victim role (‘Oh no, I’m getting it wrong’) or to persecute the client (‘it’s your own fault, you’re not working on this properly’).

In some Co-Counselling cultures, where people are trained to discharge anger keeping eye contact with the counsellor, you may as counsellor start taking this personally as if it is directed at you. (We acknowledge of course that there is a good side to keeping eye contact: as long as the counsellor can stay unrestimulated, the client can see that he or she is still accepted even when angry).

This section is about how you can decline ‘invitations’, or in other words how you can avoid getting involved in the rescue triangle.

Directing anger away from you

If you feel that you are at risk of getting involved in your client’s anger when they are directing it towards you, you can ask the client to direct it away from you towards a cushion.

Prompting the client to look at the restimulation

If you perceive that the client is becoming personal with you, blaming you or feeling a victim of you, chances are that this is a projection. If this happens, ask your client

‘Who do I remind you of?’ or

‘What situation in the past does our client-counsellor relationship remind you of?’ Only do this when you feel totally calm and unrestimulated yourself, because otherwise there is a risk that your suggestion will fuel your client’s anger still further. On the other hand, experienced clients will take up this suggestion very easily.

Sitting back and switching internally to free attention

As we explained above, sitting back, balancing yourself physically and temporarily stopping making suggestions is also a good way to avoid 'invitations' into the rescue triangle.

You in the client role

1. How to recognise that you are in the rescue triangle as client

Symptoms of you RESCUING your counsellor

Here are some real examples that people told us about.

- A classic one for me is to try and 'educate' my counsellor by my work or my way of working on some issue I may perceive as helpful to him. Or more subtly, I may choose not to do some work as it would 'not be good for my counsellor' (My decision without checking that out)
- Not asking for touch because I think the counsellor can't cope.
- Asking for free attention to prevent the counsellor from feeling embarrassed because they don't know what interventions to give.
- Accepting interventions when they don't feel right so that the counsellor does not feel upset.
- Not looking the counsellor in the eyes to prevent them from feeling checked up on (i.e. whether they are doing the job well)
- Letting the counsellor 'take over' the direction of the session so that I don't upset her.
- Not working on an issue because it is too close to the bone of the counsellor's stuff. Not negotiating this or checking it out with the counsellor.

Symptoms of you feeling a VICTIM of your counsellor

Some Co-Counsellors told us their experience with feeling a victim as client.

- "Feeling disappointed because your counsellor has not given you the 'right' suggestions to get at your stuff (and sometimes silently blaming the counsellor for not doing more to help)"
- "Feeling out of control because of all the stuff that's come up through the counsellor's suggestions"
- "I felt very much a victim of my counsellor, when it was difficult for me to refuse the suggestions of my counsellor, because I was already in the space of not being able to speak up. The Frealing contract helped me very much with this." ("Frealing" is a contraction of 'feeling', 'freeing' and 'healing')
- "When I am faced with a very charismatic counsellor or one with plenty of personal power, or holding a lot of anger in his or her system, I shut down and I don't run my session anymore."

- “As client you misunderstand a suggestion from your counsellor e.g. you feel they are rejecting you or want you to shut up.”

Symptoms of you PERSECUTING your counsellor

Correcting the counsellor - reminding the counsellor of how to behave, instead of asking for what you need

Blaming the counsellor for ‘bringing up’ more stuff than you bargained for

2. How to step out of the rescue triangle

Here are some suggestions for how to get out of the rescue triangle, once you notice you are in it.

- Switch to a free attention contract
- Ask for some attention switches to switch your attention into present time
- Remind yourself that you are in charge of your session and that you can ignore your counsellor’s suggestions if they are not helpful to you
- Ask yourself: “What do I need at the moment?” Or, “How could I get more out my session at the moment?”
- Ask for what you need e.g. “I would like a free attention contract now.”, “I need to stop for a moment and just breathe.”
- If necessary, stop the session and seek a session with someone else
- If your counsellor is doing something that is distracting you or restimulating you, ask them to stop it e.g. “Could you sit back a bit please?”, “Please stop making that suggestion.”
- Consider working on what’s come up for you (see the next section).

3. How to ‘exploit’ ‘invitations’ to get involved in the rescue triangle

Being in the rescue triangle or noticing that you are on the verge of getting into it mean that you are restimulated in some way. If this happens during your session it is likely that this restimulation will become ‘what’s on top’ and will demand that you shift your attention away from whatever it was you were working on. If you feel safe enough, you could continue with the session and use this as an opportunity to work on what’s come up for you.

For example, you may perceive that your counsellor is trying to control you, or rescue you but this may not actually be the case. He/she may remind you of somebody else who tried to manipulate you in the past and now you are interpreting your counsellor’s behaviour as being the same type of behaviour.

What you can do.

Without referring to what's happened between you (because this may reduce the level of your counsellor's free attention), go straight to techniques of the 'Identity Check' like:

"Who does this person remind me of?" Or "What event in the past does this remind me of?",

"What would I like to say to that person?"

"What would I most like to say to that person?"

"What could I actually say to that person (in reality)?"

For safety put the person from the past on a cushion, rather than embodying them as your counsellor. This helps to separate the two in your mind.

If this feels too unsafe, try asking for attention switches, or if necessary, stop the session altogether.

Literature

Muriel James & Dorothy Jongeward (1971) "Borne to win"

ISBN 0-451-16521-7

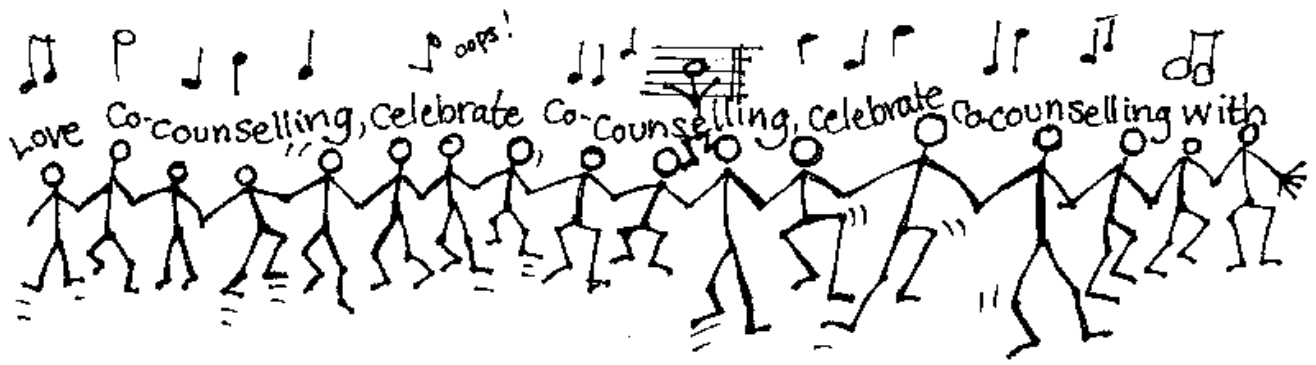
The chapter "The drama of life scripts" describes extensively the > Transactional Analysis approach and how the Rescue triangle fits into > that.

Postscript

This publication provides an introduction to the Rescue Triangle. It forms the first three sections of a longer publication, which we are still writing. The longer version will also have chapters on the Rescue Triangle in daily life and on how to teach the Rescue Triangle. For more information see page 2.

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Why is the Rescue Triangle so important for Co-Counselling?	3
Introducing Questabel	3
What is the Rescue Triangle?	5
Victim role.....	5
Aggressor role	6
Rescuer role	6
How do the roles interact with each other?	6
‘Rewards’ of the Rescue Triangle	7
The energy exchange	7
How do people learn the roles?	7
Interrogating parent - Aloof child.....	8
Aloof parent - Interrogating child.....	8
Intimidating parent - ‘Poor me’ child.....	8
Intimidating parent - Persecuting child.....	8
Victim parent - Rescuing child	8
Rescuing parent - Rescuing child	8
What’s the alternative?	8
So what is healthy support?	9
The positive side of Rescue Triangle roles	9
The Rescue Triangle in sessions	11
You in the counsellor role	11
1. How to recognise that you are in the rescue triangle as counsellor?	11
2. How to step out of the Rescue Triangle?	13
3. How to avoid ‘invitations’ to get involved in the Rescue Triangle	14
You in the client role.....	15
1. How to recognise that you are in the rescue triangle as client	15
2. How to step out of the rescue triangle	16
3. How to ‘exploit’ ‘invitations’ to get involved in the rescue triangle.....	16
Literature	17
Postscript	17
Contents	18



Fundamentals in Co-Counselling *the CornuCopia way*

Review & Feedback Form

By

JanPieter Hoogma

Version 0.4e

23 June, 2004



a CornuCopia publication

Many thanks

to

Anne Denniss, Jill Brooks, Marian van Wijngaarden, Pete Fantes, Teresa Tinklin and all the people who filled in the previous feedback forms and offered their suggestions to us.

Introduction

This booklet is meant for people who have just finished a CornuCopia Co-Counselling Fundamentals.

This booklet has **three aims**:

1. Supporting your learning by setting up a review process
2. Getting feedback about how we taught the Fundamentals
3. Getting feedback about which topics need attention at the Follow-Up day.

Reviewing Aid

This document summarises what we tried to teach you about Co-Counselling. Though the booklet may look daunting, people in the past have found it useful to spend time and effort to go through it.

Desired Learning Outcomes

Desired Learning Outcomes help teachers focus their teaching of the Fundamentals. We realised that these Outcomes also can function as a base for feedback and learning tool for the participants. We called them 'Desired Learning Outcomes of the Fundamentals.' Five areas we considered to be important:

1. Co-Counselling Culture
2. Session Culture
3. Clienting Skills
4. Counselling Skills
5. Life after Fundamentals

Feedback on the Fundamentals course

This document is also a feedback form. By filling it in and returning it, you give us feedback about our teaching. This helps us

- to select topics that need extra attention on the Follow-Up day.
- to improve the next Fundamentals.

The questionnaire is composed of boxes that look like this:

You are aware of the following general Ground rules:

1. I'm in charge of my life – you of yours.
2. Co-Counsellors own their emotional and behavioural responses.

1	2	3	4	5	Other remarks (optional):
---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------

- You can circle one of the digits 1,2,3,4,5 according to your choice.
 - 1 means: I have not learnt anything about this point
 - 2 means: I have hardly learnt anything about this point.
 - 3 means: I know about this point, but not enough.
 - 4 means: I know now quite a lot about this point.
 - 5 means: I feel confident and at ease with this point.
- If you feel like, add some remarks.

1. Co-Counselling Culture

Ground rules

You are aware of the following general Ground rules:

1. I'm in charge of my life – you of yours.
2. Co-Counsellors own their emotional and behavioural responses.
3. Co-Counsellors are human beings. Therefore rules 1 and 2 will not always be applied.

From the above ground rules it follows that:

- Each individual is responsible for protecting their personal boundaries. (Co-Counselling can provide support through empowerment.)
- It is acceptable to simply give 'No' as an answer. There is no obligation to give an explanation.
- Each Co-Counsellor is free to engage in Co-Counselling at whatever level of engagement they choose, from one-to-one sessions, to attending workshops, to volunteering in the network organisation.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

Sense of safety in Co-Counselling

You are aware that

- A sense of safety is subjective and does not always accurately reflect how safe or unsafe a situation actually is.

You are able

- To identify which factors contribute to your feeling unsafe
 - restimulation, i.e. caused by past situations,
 - getting engaged in the Rescue Triangle
 - unfamiliarity with a new situation
 - in need of practical coping skills with the present situation
- To use sessions to work out the above mentioned issues.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

You are aware that

1. There are guidelines for protecting your boundaries.
2. In many Co-Counselling networks and workshops support is organised for people who feel unsafe or have difficulties with coping with disagreements.
3. In residential workshops organised by CornuCopia there are guidelines for presenting workshops so that you can assess how safe or risky a workshop might be for you.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

Socialising

You are aware that

- We recommend people who have just done the Fundamentals not to socialise until they feel confident as client and as counsellor. You are aware of the reasons for this recommendation.
- Sexual and other attractions may occur between Co-Counsellors. There are Co-Counselling approaches by which these attractions can be separated from restimulations and frozen needs.
- Communication difficulties and conflicts may occur. You know who can be contacted in case you want to learn more about how to deal with such difficulties.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):

Social and workshop cultures

You are aware that:

- There are different ways of hugging and it is always negotiated.
- Rounds may have different cultures:
 - People generally have uninterrupted expression space.
 - Rounds can be sharply or approximately timed.
 - Sometimes they require the confidentiality of a mini-session
 - Sometimes you are assumed to know what has been said ('sharing' and 'think and listen' rounds)
- There are huge variations in workshop cultures
 - how the workshops are organised and facilitated
 - how the program, needs, wants and offers are negotiated
 - how potentially unsafe workshops are signposted.
- Culture settings are not always explicit: check out what is important to you and negotiate.
- Several but not all Co-Counselling networks have a support structure for safety issues. In Scotland there is the Safety Focus Group and Trust Persons.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):

2. Session Culture

Session Confidentiality

You are aware that

- Confidentiality is one of the foremost critical conditions for clients to have safe sessions.
- Confidentiality means there will be no referral to client's session material outside sessions independently whether the session was in a two or a group. If in the rare case that referring is deemed useful (e.g. for teaching purposes), it always needs to be negotiated.
- It is perfectly OK and normal to forget what one as counsellor witnessed in a session.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):

Other Session Ground rules

You are aware that the session ground rules are as follows:

1. Equal clienting time.
2. Confidentiality
3. The Client is in charge and the Counsellor is supporting the Client's process, whatever contract and type of support have been negotiated.
4. No advice.
5. The client is under no obligation to explain anything to the counsellor
6. Sessions are places where the client works on their own material. It is not a place to inform the counsellor personally or provide the counsellor with information other than necessary for clients to work on their personal material.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

Negotiating sessions

Arranging a session

You are aware that

- you can arrange Co-Counselling one-to-one sessions anywhere and anytime, as long as there is equal clienting time.
- Sometimes people work in a group and generally each group member has equal Clienting time. Exceptions can be negotiated with the group.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

Arranging client time in a contract: clarifying mutual expectations

You are able

- To negotiate a contract including mutual expectations and time keeping and checking whether a topic is right with the counsellor to work on if deemed necessary
- To perform as counsellor and as client a 'Free Attention' Contract and a 'Normal' Contract

You are aware that in Co-Counselling

- There are other contracts as well e.g. 'Life action', 'Conflict resolution'
- There are many different interpretations of 'Intensive contract', e.g. 'intensive process', 'Intensive normal contract'
- Some European contracts have different names in the USA
- Hence it is often a good idea to look for clarification of what is actually asked for by the client

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

3. Clienting Skills

Being in charge of the session

You are aware that

- In Co-Counselling you as client are always in charge of your session.
- Your client time is a sacred and safe place
 - to explore your personal truth, whether that is a rational, spiritual, emotional or physical one, clear or confused, peaceful or distressed, simple or complex.
 - to use your session for anything that you feel could benefit from free attention with or without suggestions from your counsellor, e.g. cleaning your bedroom or paying bills.
- Whatever the contract you as client can always switch to a 'Free Attention' or 'Normal' contract.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):

You are able to

- To negotiate a contract with your counsellor that fits you as a client and is appropriate for them to engage in
- Recognise when you are 'rescuing' your counsellor or otherwise getting involved in a Rescue Triangle dance with your counsellor.
- To extricate yourself once involved in the Rescue Triangle or to avoid its invitations.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):

Working with feelings and emotions

You are aware that

1. Sensations, feelings, emotions and emotional states have different meanings
2. Sensations, feelings, emotions and distressed states happen. People *have* them. People are OK, whatever the quality of the feelings and emotions they have. People *are not* their sensations, feelings and emotions.
3. The choice is between accepting and processing or rejecting your sensations, feelings and emotions. Acceptance however is a core and necessary condition for healing and personal change
4. Skilfully listening to your sensations, feelings and emotions provides you with meaningful information about your inner and outer world.
5. Co-Counselling sessions are designed to offer you a safe and private place to express sensations, feelings and emotions and to explore the personal truth in them.
6. Having feelings and emotions is a co-creation process, possibly involving
 - restimulation of old undigested events
 - automatic negative thinking influenced by thinking errors(Further Skills workshop on 'Interrupting negative automatic thinking')

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):

You are able

- To recognise when you are emotionally charged, and whether this emotional distress is based on
 - an overload of information or
 - unprocessed emotional experiences.
- If an overload of information is causing you distress then you are able to manage this by
 - laying out objects in front of you representing the different aspects of the situation involved
 - mind mapping
- If unprocessed emotional experiences are behind your emotional distress you are able to discharge this distress in a safe and empowering way, (especially important for people whose mental health is at risk) by using
 - the 'Pain to Power' procedure
 - the 'Video'-Technique for strong emotional or undigested past events.
 - the techniques of the 'Discharging Distress Triangle'
(finding, staying, playing with the trigger, while keeping balance of attention)
- To communicate with your body sensations in order to catch what your body is trying to communicate, by using the 'focusing' technique
- To recognise an identification or projection and to work this out using the 'ID-check'
- Recognise an undigested or traumatic past event and to make it digestible, by using the 'video' technique or 'pain to power' technique.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):***Working with 'being stuck' in a session*****You are able**

- To recognise being stuck in a session
- To recognise when your body is not involved and to involve it again by:
breathing, bodywork, 'literal description' of body sensations, or asking for some touch,.
- to recognise potential causes and to work them out:
 - avoiding issues > 'What is my worst fear? 'What is stopping me?
 - rescuing your counsellor > aliasing your issues or people, switching to 'Free Attention' contract
 - going blank because of an overload of information >
 - your body has become rigid > walking around and loosening up your body.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):

Empowerment

You are aware that

1. in order to change your life you need first of all
 - To accept and own your feelings and emotions
 - To own your behaviour and responses using 'I',
'When, I respond by ... / I feel...'
2. 'Labelling' or rating yourself up or down' is a Thinking Error.
You *are not* your behaviours, problems, failures or successes. You are OK, and you *have* behaviours, problems, failures or successes.
3. Freeing yourself from associated undigested events, identifications and other restimulations frees up your mind to act more creatively.
Especially the 'From Pain to Power' technique helps you to switch your mind into creativity.
4. There is another contract called 'Life Action' especially designed to try out new behaviour and bring about changes in your environment with healthy support.

1	2	3	4	5	Other remarks (optional):
---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------

Acknowledging Positivity and Celebrations

You are aware that

1. Acknowledging the positive side of life realistically feeds the soul and provides stepping stones for personal development
2. The 'Mental Filter' thinking error distorts perception of reality, often by dwelling on the negative or disqualifying the positive.

1	2	3	4	5	Other remarks (optional):
---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------

You are able

1. to identify a positive quality about or within yourself
2. to celebrate that quality
 - either in a capsulated, classic Co-Counselling way 'I celebrate my....'
 - and/or in 'on the one hand... On the other hand...' way.

1	2	3	4	5	Other remarks (optional):
---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------

Finishing off sessions

You are able

- To save session material for later: 'Making a picture' technique
- To switch your attention away from your session material by doing 'Attention Switches' exercises

1	2	3	4	5	Other remarks (optional):
---	---	---	---	---	---------------------------

4. Counselling Skills

You are aware that

1. Free attention is 80% of the counsellor's 'job'. If free attention disappears, any suggestion loses its supportive character.
2. Free attention is the fundamental attitude underlying counselling. It entails 'being here, being present for your client': listening with acceptance in a non-judgemental way.
Free attention is *not* a skill, it is a choice possible when your mind is not distracted by too much distress.
3. The more you recognise and understand your own 'client' processes, the more likely you are to generate spontaneous and appropriate counselling suggestions for your client. Hence we recommend developing your clienting skills, and almost automatically you will develop as counsellor.
4. The counsellor role is exclusively focused at supporting the client.
Within this context you are aware that they can use their own life experience, professional experience as therapist, teacher etc, by transforming this experience in open-ended questions offered as suggestions.
5. There are differences in effect between open and closed questions.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

You are able

- To negotiate a contract with a client that feels appropriate to them and your own sense of boundaries
- To recognise when you lose your Free Attention,
by restimulation, overload or getting involved in the Rescue Triangle
- To deal with you losing your Free Attention.
(Among others, stopping session and renegotiating contract)
- If concerned about the client's balance of attention, how to check it out and what to do.
- To take your client through the following procedures:
 - 'Identification check'
 - 'Video' technique
 - 'Pain to power' technique
- To do the timekeeping
- To come up with 'Attention Switch' exercises
- To be a counsellor in a telephone Co-Counselling session
- To keep session material confidential and not to refer to it.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

5. Life after Fundamentals

Integrating Co-Counselling in your daily life

Do you feel at ease with

- Taking initiatives in arranging Co-Counselling sessions
- Having these sessions at your own home as well
- Having telephone Co-Counselling to make more immediate support available

Are you aware that you can find Co-Counselling partners

- By asking other people from the Fundamentals.
- By going to workshops
- By contacting people on the membership list of the Co-Counselling network who live nearby.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

Practising & developing your clienting skills

You are aware that

- a regular (weekly) contract with a Co-Counsellor is a good way to get settled and develop your Co-Counselling skills. Often one of the more experienced Co-Counsellors on the course are prepared to engage into a regular contract.
- Organising a review group
- You can consult your Fundamentals teachers: How can I work on...? How can I cope with...?
- By attending Community Days and residential workshops
- By attending 3 crucial Co-Counselling Further Skills workshops
 - = Interrupting your negative thinking
 - = Working on a big Issue
 - = Developing your personal support network

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

Developing your own Support Network

You are aware that

for building a personal support network the following matters are crucial:

1. Developing clienting skills through practising is necessary for making any support through Co-Counselling work at its best.
2. Working with a regular partner and having sessions on a regular basis is for many people a good way to develop these clienting skills
3. Confidence in your clienting and counselling skills is essential for successfully joining an (ongoing) support group.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Other remarks (optional):

Finally...

How safe did you feel on the Fundamentals course? Did you feel accepted as you are regardless of your sexual, political, religious, cultural and class background?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

 Other remarks (optional):

What helped you to feel safe/made you feel unsafe?

What did you like about the way the course was run?

Is there anything you would suggest we did differently next time?

Is there anything you would have liked more of?

Is there anything you would have liked less of?

Any general comments or suggestions.

(Optional) Your name, in case we would like to contact you for more information

Thanks for filling in this questionnaire,

Jan Pieter Hoogma & Jill Brooks

Please return this questionnaire to: Jan Pieter Hoogma, 32-A Inverleith Place, Edinburgh EH3 5QB