

A compendium of

Roadworthy skills

for counsellors and other helpers



David Kranz

Vicky Sanders

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DAVID KRANZ
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Important notice to readers

We encourage you consolidate your learning from this text by completing the written exercises and other worksheets that occur throughout. They can be downloaded from our website for printing and 'hands on' work.

Our website is: questcounsellingskills.com.au

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Dedicated to

*Dr Robert Carkhuff and Dr Bernard Berenson
whose early writing and teaching showed us what was possible,
whose vision inspires us, whose passion challenges us, whose ongoing creativity
expands us*

and to

*Dr Robert Cash, Dorothy Mitchell, Sharon Loeschen and Donna Eisman,
whose teaching skills enriched our first taste of skills training*

and to

*a host of clients, students and colleagues
from whom we have learned to tailor, expand and refine our skills
as we journey on.*

*Our special thanks to
Sue Kentish
for her helpful comments during preparation
and for carrying the baton following our retirement.*

Foreword

This book is a very welcome addition to the library of any student or teacher of counselling, helping, or human relations. The authors' opening remarks remind the Western world of the ancient wisdom of the East—that 'counselling is a gently rolling vehicle that provides assistance, step by step, for the person to follow their unique path'. The book's title, 'Roadworthy skills', encapsulates this traveller image very well.

Kranz and Sanders are well equipped to assist both students and teachers through their unique journey. They have spent most of their lives devoted to counselling and counselling skills training, and travelled with many others along the way. Indeed they have played a significant part in my own journey, generously sharing much of their wisdom, insight and expertise.

The authors' description of their work as a 'compendium' is appropriate since they give one of the most detailed and complete descriptions of helping skills available in the field today. Being key navigators, they begin with a summary of the history and development of helping skills. They accurately point out that an actual focus on 'skills' is surprisingly missing. They then draw upon the foundational work of Doctors Robert Carkhuff and Bernard Berenson, and review many of the current influential counselling texts. Having set the scene, they integrate the information with their vast counselling knowledge to propose many new ideas about counselling and counselling skills training.

Kranz and Sanders walk you through the helping process from beginning to end in a substantial way. They give examples, case studies, and exercises to help the reader integrate the information in the book. Important areas are tackled with relative ease. These include: how to assess and build on counsellor qualities; new ways to improve observation and listening skills; innovative ways to deepen empathy and achieve commitment to a clear and chosen goal for change; practical ways to help people achieve goals, including assertiveness skills training, decision making, and action planning.

Being a counsellor is a privilege. Becoming one is a challenge. That is why I highly commend 'Roadworthy skills'. It is a rich trans-theoretical text for learning and teaching the skills of counselling. Further, I cannot think of two better people to help you along your way to becoming an effective 'skilled helper'. Enjoy the ride!

Paul Whetham PhD
University of South Australia

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION and OVERVIEW

Introduction

The essence of counselling

This book is for counsellors, and other helpers, who want to learn the skills that create both the climate and the means for others to optimise the likelihood of fully expressing their unique potential. Such is the task and the privilege of the counsellor. The Chinese character for ‘counselling’ captures its essence with a few swift strokes of the pen. Four elements blend to communicate that counselling is a gently rolling vehicle that provides assistance, inch by inch, for the person to follow their unique path (Tao). Figure 1 shows the relationship of the elements: (1) vehicle, gently rolling, (2) assistance, (3) way or path (4) inches.

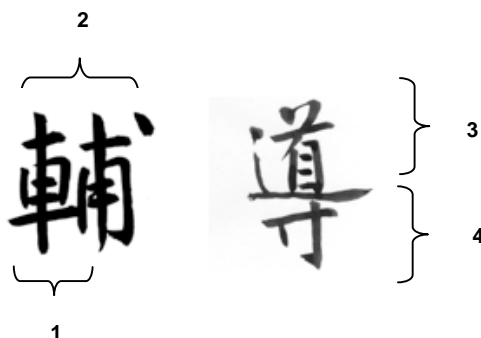


Figure 1. Showing the elements of the Chinese word for ‘counselling’.

It is hard to determine the origins of this Oriental perspective on counselling, but the ancient picture embodies our contemporary view of counselling.

Contemporary counselling has the perspective that each person’s ‘path’ unfolds as their unique, latent potential is actualised. Contemporary counselling holds the belief that each traveller has the inner resources to ultimately negotiate their path (however unlikely that may seem from time to time). Contemporary counselling has the task of sharing the journey with others to assist them to navigate difficult passages, and find their path when lost. Contemporary counselling uses a set of skills to power the vehicle in which others can explore unfamiliar terrain with safety, recognise the land marks, and reorient their course to reach their next ‘stop-over’ successfully. Contemporary counselling teaches clients the very skills that helped them, then bids them ‘bon voyage’ when they, in turn, have learned the skills sufficiently well to travel independently, and to be able to negotiate ‘detours’ with sufficient confidence to enjoy the ‘scenery’ en route.

This view differs markedly from traditional psychotherapy where experts ‘treat’ people who are seen as suffering from a diagnosed disorder. Counselling is a collaborative problem-solving process to overcome the impediments that limit growth and fulfilment. Counselling and psychotherapy may conjoin when the current resources of the person concerned are not yet able to find a way to deal with the impediment, and then ‘move on’. We say ‘may’ because other strategies such as ‘teaching’, ‘advocacy’ or ‘mediation’ may be preferred over ‘therapy’. Chapter 18 discusses the relationship between counselling and other helping roles in more detail.

Our journey and ‘roadworthy’ skills

Our title ‘Roadworthy skills’ might sound a bit gimmicky at first, but we chose it for quite substantive reasons. We will explain. We both studied Social Work in the early 1960’s—Vicky in England, and David in South Australia. We had lots of fervour and a fair amount of compassion—so off we set, starry eyed, to do our ‘casework’. Our lecturers failed to tell us that casework was ‘a set of undefined techniques, applied to unspecified problems, with unpredictable outcomes’—an approach for which ‘rigorous training is recommended’ (Fischer 1973, p. 6). It was a bit like that for us. Our Social Work training gave us lots of facts, conceptual perspectives, theoretical models, the latest on ‘rats and stats’ and more—but **nothing about skills**. According to Anthony, the word ‘skill’ did not appear in the helping literature until 1974 (Carkhuff, Berenson & Associates 2003, p. 43). We were on our own; no maps, no tools. We floundered a bit. We had good days and bad days in terms of being useful to others. Our best way of telling the difference was feedback from our clients. Any supervision we had was mostly opinion without much substance. Then we got promoted and supervised other staff, and gave them mostly opinion and not much substance. The crunch came for David when he became responsible for developing a one-year ‘pressure cooker’ course to service the shortfall of Social Workers in both the Department for Community Welfare and the Department of Correctional Services in South Australia. He needed more than he got from his university training. He wanted skills—for himself and for others.

David heard about the work of the American researcher, Dr Robert Carkhuff, whose comprehensive and rigorous work had identified what skills worked in helping others, where and when they applied, and how to systematically teach them to others. David undertook such training, in 1976, from a team led by Dr Robert Cash, at California State University, Long Beach. Advanced training continued under the leadership of Dr. Bernard Berenson, a co-author with Carkhuff. The training was intense, substantive and successful. As new learning flooded in, David shed tears for the delinquent kids, and their families, that he felt he had disserved, from his ignorance of his ignorance, for over a decade. On his return, he mounted a series of training programs for welfare staff. By this time, Vicky had come to Australia as a recruited Social worker from Britain. She joined a training program, and found the substance that had been missing in her formal training. She subsequently took up an appointment at the Staff Development Branch and co-trained with David thereafter. The programs were successful and were expanded across the State Public Service, in Colleges of Advanced Education and Universities.

Our journey had taken us across the wilderness of professional uncertainty, through the valley of ignorance (that we sensed, but whose void we could not fill) until we found travellers, from another hemisphere, who willingly shared their map, gave us tools, and challenged us to blaze a trail ‘down-under’ so that others could follow. However, at

the time, David relished the challenge, but doubted that he was sufficiently grounded to ‘blaze the trail’ for others. He well remembers saying to Dr Cash, on departure: ‘How can I get this stuff off the ground back in Australia?’. His retort was simple. ‘Trust the model, Dave, trust the skills.’ He did! We do! The skills have been our stalwart vehicle along the trail. They are, indeed, roadworthy

Why we wrote this book

Immediately following our initial training we depended upon the same resources that Cash, Berenson and Banks had previously supplied. As our confidence grew, and our competence expanded, we found new ways of doing things better, and so we created training materials that added refinements and extensions with successive programs. As contract teachers, we delivered skills training in the Master of Social Science (Counselling) course at the University of South Australia, and shared our ‘updates’ with students, but these were in ‘handout’ form, and a mere appendage to the prescribed texts. In 2000, we developed a generic course for people who had the personal qualities to become effective counsellors, but who did not have the prerequisite qualifications to enter the Masters course. This course is nationally accredited under the Vocational Education and Training (VET) scheme at Advanced Diploma level (and later extended to a Degree). During the development phase, we reviewed the literature relating to skills training, and concluded that our cumulative refinements went beyond what is currently available. This encouraged us to consolidate the notes that we issue for students of our ‘VET’ courses, and publish them for interested others. Writing, and no doubt reading, such a text is less exciting than the dynamic exchanges of face to face training, but we hope that future trainers and trainees will benefit from our post-retirement effort.

Throughout our years of teaching, we have maintained the language of the foundational researchers and teachers of the skills—apart from minor changes for which reasons are given. We have also chosen to use the term ‘counselling process’ interchangeably with the researchers’ term ‘helping process’. We have done this to honour the wisdom of the Orient. We note that other writers seem to have embraced the substance of the researchers, but have changed the language to create their own ‘models’. In our view such departures make it more difficult for learners to identify with the historical, current, and future writings of the researchers. Over time, the ‘helping process’ has been referred to (by the researchers themselves) as the ‘Human Resource Development (HRD) model’, ‘Human Achievement Skills (HAS)’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976), Interpersonal Skills (IPS) (Carkhuff 1983), and both ‘Intra-personal Processing Skills’ and ‘Interpersonal Processing Skills’ (Carkhuff 2000, 2000a). Note that the latter reference highlights the applicability of the skills for helping oneself as well as for others. The names differ but the substance is the same.

Carkhuff and Berenson’s original work was so fundamental that it has found application in all levels of human endeavour. The pinnacle of their work, at the time of writing, provides an ‘Architecture for Global Freedom’ (Carkhuff, Berenson & Associates 2003). It is beyond the scope of this text to detail these developments, but we summarise both the vision and the architecture, below, and indicate how we see our link to them.

The vision is of a peaceful world—where people willingly collaborate to generate ‘socially empowered responses that enable cultural relating; economically empowered responses that enable economic enterprise; and politically empowered responses that enable supportive governance...[thus] freeing individuals, as well as cultures and nations’ (Cannon, in Carkhuff, Berenson & Associates 2003, p. xvi). Some vision!

The 'Architecture' of the 'Freedom Doctrine' provides a curriculum for the effective management of: 'human, organisational, informational, mechanical and marketplace capital development' within the functional areas of 'community, economic, and governance capital development'. It also provides scaled measures of the 'stages of freedom building': from 'dependency' to 'free inter-dependency' in the area of cultural relating; from 'control' to 'free enterprise' in the area of economic enterprise; and from 'totalitarian' to 'free democratic' in terms of governance support. The architecture provides for a 'freedom centre' that offers interactive teaching (and distance learning via 'freedom satellites') to public and private resources from interested nations in order to establish 'freedom-building contracts' as well as 'personal projects'. The architects recognise the need for all 'freedom building' to be modified by continuous, interdependent processing of constantly changing requirements, and continuously evolving values (Carkhuff, Berenson & Associates 2003, pp. 315–328). Some architecture!

The generation of possible options for such a visionary proposal flows from the new 'Possibilities' Science which was also developed by Carkhuff and Berenson (2000). It does not replace the more familiar 'Probabilities' Science, which seeks to 'describe', 'predict' and 'control' the phenomena being researched, but embeds it as yet 'another possibility'. The wider functions of the Possibilities science are to 'relate', 'empower' and 'free'. This is how the developers see the relationship:

We employ possibilities to drive probabilities: possibilities ensure that we are **doing the right thing**; probabilities ensure that we are **doing things right** (Carkhuff & Berenson 2002, p. 226).

Our link to the grand vision of what is possible, globally, is small but important. The refinements that we have made to the helping process enhance the effectiveness of the way people relate at the interpersonal level. The architects assert that such relating is the '**precondition** of all such [freedom] possibilities...Indeed it [relating] is the foundation of all civilization: it is reciprocity in relating that enables civilization' (Carkhuff, Berenson & Associates 2003, p. 27). We write to share our 'extras' on an already roadworthy vehicle, with the hope that those whom we teach will, in turn, teach others how to travel more courageously, more joyfully and more effectively towards a more fulfilling personal life, and a richer community life in a self-sustaining, peaceful world.

Skills and related professional dimensions

Whilst the primary focus of this text is skills training, it needs to be said that just 'skills' are not enough for the practice of professional counselling. In the training courses that we have designed, the following related areas are covered: (1) self-development and self-care (because the counsellor, as the 'tool', needs to 'stay sharp'); (2) theories of counselling, human development, personality, and a range of psychological constructs (to provide 'windows' through which clients, and the world, can be viewed with greater acuity); (3) knowledge of sociological and cultural influences together with that of community resources (to give an appreciation of the contexts in which clients live their lives); (4) knowledge of ethical, business, and referral procedures (so that services can be offered appropriately, effectively and efficiently); (5) knowledge of, and association with, professional networks (as a means of learning, sharing and growing with other professional colleagues). The ultimate task, of course, is to integrate all of the above and express them constructively with skill.

What this book includes

The book is presented in four parts.

Part One includes this introduction, an historical summary of the skills that are addressed in part two, and an overview of the personal qualities, values, skills, and process that are relevant to counsellors as people and practitioners.

Part Two describes each skill, discusses where and when each applies, and details the steps required to learn each skill used in the counselling process. Related exercises and training procedures are included. The relationship between counselling and other helping roles is discussed. A summary review of the counselling process is provided.

Part Three includes Appendices that offer exercises whereby readers can review their understanding, knowledge or performance in given areas—either of their own volition, or as an activity prescribed by a trainer.

Part Four is dedicated to reference areas, and contains ‘answers’ to written exercises, a glossary of terms, indexes for figures and tables, and a general index.

PART ONE

Chapter 1 provides a brief summary of the research history of the helping professions from 1952 (when Eysenck concluded that, on average, helping did not help) to 1973 by which time the helping skills were clearly defined, and their effectiveness tested. The chapter highlights the diversity of opinion, and the nature of tensions between research approaches. It is written in the belief that trainee counsellors should be aware of the history of their craft.

Chapter 2 discusses the range of contexts where helping skills can be applied, and highlights the central role of the person as the ‘tool’ in helping. It overviews the relationship between personal values, resourcefulness and action strategies in terms of personal impact, stress management, fulfilment and contribution, regardless of context.

Chapter 3 overviews the ‘personal skills’ that are known to characterise effective people. It provides a checklist to facilitate personal assessment in relevant areas.

Chapter 4 overviews discrete behaviours that characterise five discernible levels of effectiveness across different aspects of the physical, emotional/interpersonal, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions.

Chapter 5 overviews the four stage helping process. It discusses the preconditions for its use; describes the sequence of tasks that it undertakes; lists the skills that are used by the counsellor (or other contributive person) in the engagement of each task; and the impact on the client (or other beneficiary) at the closure of each task. The learning that occurs in each stage is highlighted. It also considers the ‘recycling’ of the process as a means of progressively moving towards personal fulfilment, and the actualisation of human potential.

PART TWO

Chapter 6 considers the skills of attending to others effectively, with decency. The attending skills involve contextual attending within an appropriate setting; physical attending with appropriate body posture; and psychological attending by engaging others in such a way that there is consciousness of ‘congruity’ between those concerned.

Chapter 7 covers the skills of observing the appearance, voluntary and involuntary behaviours, and energy levels of others (within a context), and a means of processing those observations, so that accurate inferences of the emotional state of another person can be made and tested. A comprehensive list of affective adjectives and a summary of research findings on non-verbal communication are provided.

Chapter 8 deals with the skills of listening. A listening test is provided to help diagnose any of a number of difficulties that arise in hearing accurately, and its application is discussed. Ways of hearing both the word content and the paralinguistics (the non-verbal aspects of language) are also discussed.

Chapter 9 covers the responding skills that are currently used in counselling, in other professional activities that have a counselling component, and for effective communication generally. The chapter explains how to discriminate differences in effectiveness between various verbal responses that can be made to what others have said, and describes the skill steps required to construct the most effective responses.

Chapter 10 describes advanced responding skills that we have developed for particular application in professional counselling. The skill steps of how to respond at an advanced level are detailed. We argue the need for refining the existing scale used to measure the effectiveness of responses, so that students undertaking professional counsellor training can learn to make clearer distinctions between responses—especially during practice.

Chapter 11 looks at ways to discriminate different levels of client exploration, and discusses how people learn to self-explore. Related research findings are discussed to highlight how different levels of helper skills impact on the nature of helpee exploration. Some generalisations from this research are made that relate to organisational climates and to helper ‘burnout’.

Chapter 12 deals with the skills of confrontation. Five types of confrontation are described. The chapter describes how each type is constructed, and where each is used appropriately. Some research findings are reviewed showing how, and why, helpers with differing skills levels, and experience, use confrontations differently.

Chapter 13 shows how to determine when to stop ‘responding’, and when to start ‘personalising’. The chapter covers the four steps of the personalising skills that help clients become fully aware of their current reality. It details these steps that help clients progressively: (1) accept how they contribute to their difficulty; (2) pinpoint their current lack of skill that perpetuates their problem; (3) ‘forgive’ themselves for being as they are; and (4) commit themselves to learning the newly identified skill in order to **manage** their circumstances more effectively, **adapt** to them more comfortably, **leave** them with dignity, or **transcend** them with grace. The chapter also considers how these skills can be applied to encourage the expansion and generalisation of existing skills.

Chapter 14 helps learners to ‘operationalise’ the goals that have been identified in the personalising stage. This skill defines goals into elements that spell out: (1) who is involved in pursuit of the goal; (2) what specifically is to be achieved; (3) where it will be undertaken; (4) when the proposed action will start and finish; (5) why the action is being undertaken (in terms of anticipated benefits); (6) how it can be approached (in terms of a broad strategy) and; (7) how success will be evaluated.

Chapter 15 deals with the skills of assertiveness. It shows why some assertive strategies are likely to be unsuccessful, and gives ‘graded’ levels of assertions and their effectiveness for differing target groups.

Chapter 16 covers the battery of skills for effective decision making. The strategies ensure that all relevant personal values are taken into account, and that all possible options are considered when deciding which of them is the preferred option. A way of testing the viability of the preferred option is given.

Chapter 17 deals with the skills involved in writing an action plan that is likely to succeed in attaining an operationalised goal. Ways of discerning the right number of steps for a given individual are offered. The methodology develops appropriate time lines; motivates implementation with appropriate reinforcers; rewards attainment of major checkpoints; and encourages celebration and review of successful achievement.

Chapter 18 seeks to clarify the fifty-year old debate on the difference between ‘counselling’ and ‘psychotherapy’. The historical arguments are reviewed, and the argument is put that a functional discrimination can be made by identifying who has the ‘power’ in the helping exchange. A model, ‘Counselling Sandwich’, is offered to delineate power shifts that occur before and after the counselling ‘filling’. The model specifies a number of complementary roles that counsellors frequently adopt (including the application of therapeutic techniques). We argue the desirability of using the counselling process to identify appropriate therapeutic tools over the prescriptive approach adopted by many psychotherapists.

Chapter 19 introduces several simple therapeutic initiatives that are deemed to be ‘post-counselling’ activities—even though the counsellor and client may be continuing in the same interaction. This is done to demonstrate the shift in power from ‘counselling’ to ‘therapy’ as suggested in Chapter 18, and encourage ‘specialist therapists’ to reflect on the need for a ‘counselling prelude’ prior to administering their ‘speciality’ without the full understanding or commitment of their clients.

Chapter 20 offers a summary version of ‘counselling in a nutshell’ that may be useful for revision of the process, and to people (such as teachers, medical staff, clergy and the like) who may want to use the helping process as an adjunct to their work.

Chapter 21 overviews strategies to help trainers develop the ‘content’ for training programs; and to plan, and deliver, training sessions. The chapter includes a number of practical tips that we have found to be effective during actual practice sessions.

PART THREE

The appendices in part three, help readers to assess the level of their personal resourcefulness; the quality of their interaction with others; their level of interpersonal functioning prior to, and following, training; and to identify any impediments that may reduce their effectiveness when listening to others.

PART FOUR

Part four includes the answers to the various exercises offered throughout this book. In some cases there is no one ‘right’ answer—just our best effort to demonstrate examples of what could fit. Part four also includes a glossary that focuses on colloquial Australian language, and includes words that might be unfamiliar to readers whose first language is other than English. Indexes of figures and tables are included separately from the general index.

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An annotated history

Can I skip this chapter?

If you are a hands-on person, wanting to get into the nuts and bolts of counselling, you may well be tempted to ‘write off’ historical stuff as both boring and a bit irrelevant. Feel free to push on, but we also invite you to reflect on what we learned about the relevance of history to professionalism from Kym, our motor mechanic. During one of our chats, David mentioned that we owe a lot to Daimler for inventing the four-stroke motor. He put him right by telling him that it was a Nicholas Otto who perfected the first four-stroke engine, back in 1876. It was fuelled by gas. Kym went on to say that Gottlieb Daimler’s contribution was to build a lighter, petrol driven motor. That was in 1886. Then Kym got wound up about gearboxes: pedal gears in Henry Ford’s ‘Model T’, preselector gearboxes, synchro-mesh gearboxes and modern hi-tech automatic transmissions. He knocked us over with the history lesson! We thought, ‘This bloke doesn’t just fix cars—he loves them!’ It hit us that Kym’s enthusiasm, knowledge, skills and prowess as a mechanic really highlighted the qualities and competencies that characterise professionalism— whatever the vocation.

The encounter got us thinking about the history of counselling. It, too, has moved from ‘horse-and-buggy’ helping. There are now clearly defined skills that are the ‘engine’ of the process that underpins all helpful interactions. Too few professionals are aware of the history. Many are unaware of the specifications and potency of the ‘engine’, and the universality of the ‘vehicular’ process. Reading this chapter will give an overview of the story with references to chase the detail if you so wish. May you get a sense of the ‘roadworthiness’ of the components that drive effective counselling.

Preamble

From the year dot, people have wanted help to sort out whatever mess they were in. They consulted seers and prophets, soothsayers and sages, witch doctors and medicine men, clairvoyants and sorcerers, astrologers and miracle workers, wizards and witches, occultists and priests. Those consulted were deemed to be experts. The process was all very mystical. The experts had the power. What they said ‘went’.

In more recent times, the Viennese doctor, Sigmund Freud, wrote volumes trying to demystify why his patients' psyches got them into strife, and how he could fix them with 'psychoanalysis'. It seems fair enough that he focused on sexual issues. The libidos of his male patients were as corseted, socially, as their lovers' bodies were physically. His female patients lived in pervasive fear of their next pregnancy. Many read his tomes avidly, and either followed as disciples, or modified his theories in the light of their own clinical experience. Some of these, in turn, attracted their followers. So a range of 'psychotherapies' emerged. The craft was still a bit mystical. The 'experts' kept the power. What they said still 'went'.

When we joined the ranks of helpers in the 1960's we learned about a number of these therapies, and did the fashionable thing. We became 'eclectic'! We took what we thought would work for a particular client from the theory that seemed to suit best at the time, and then created our own way of implementing the 'treatment'. We were left to our own devices because we had only been taught concepts, principles and perspectives—not skills. Our chosen field seemed to lack substance and, if not entirely mystical, clear strategies were certainly elusive. Some days things worked—some days they did not. We did not know why. We wondered if, in overall terms, we were making a constructive difference. We were not the first to wonder this. Eysenck asked a similar question in 1952. His enquiry got the research ball rolling! The subsequent history is clearly documented and insightfully annotated by Berenson and Carkhuff (1967). From that time on these authors have continued to create history to demystify, distil, and refine the trainable skills that power the vehicles intended to transport humans, from their current state, on the lifelong journey of self-actualisation. Carkhuff and Berenson no longer saw people seeking help as 'sick patients', but as 'human resources' whose potential could be realised through teaching. Helpers no longer needed to be power-retaining experts, but collegiate 'empowerers'. Carkhuff and Berenson have shown how to apply these skills through progressively sophisticated levels of human endeavour. We, in our small way, have focused on refining the basic skills they taught to us so that people choosing to take the journey can get a little 'better mileage' as they travel. Kym, our mechanic, might say that we have managed to fine-tune the carburettor on an already effective motor.

How we got to where we are

The contribution of Eysenck

Hans Eysenck (1952) was interested in the effects of psychotherapy, and in the efficacy of therapist training. To determine the merits of psychotherapy he asked two questions. The first was: what changes occur when patients undergo treatment from trained therapists? The second was: what changes occur when patients are treated in some other way? He sought answers to the first question by reviewing 19 studies from clinics in Germany, England, and the United States that had reported on the recovery rates of patients treated by trained therapists who were using either a psychoanalytic or an eclectic approach between 1920 and 1951. He was able to compare these groups against levels of 'spontaneous recovery' in patients who had either been in 'custodial care' or regularly seen by their own general practitioner (GP). The custodial care results related to patients discharged from New York State hospitals between 1917 and 1934. They had been diagnosed with a neurotic illness, but not treated for it by a trained therapist. Information about those treated by their own GP related to consecutive insurance claims from neurotic patients with severe neuroses who had been totally disabled for at

least three months. Whilst Eysenck (1952) had questions about consistency across control groups, and had to correct the maths of some writers who could not add up or calculate percentages, he was still able to conclude that **there were no grounds, on average, to claim that neurotic patients got well as a direct result of psychotherapeutic treatment.** Eysenck's results are summarised in Table 1. His finding set the cat amongst the high-flying pigeons. Sanford made it clear, in his rejoinder, that his feathers were pretty ruffled, and that 'the only sensible course with respect to such a challenge is to ignore it' (Berenson & Carkhuff 1967, p. 32)! Established therapists, who seem to have been comfortable with the 'mystical' nature of their craft, reacted quite defensively when the effectiveness of their collective endeavours was questioned. Teuber and Powers reported that, to many therapists, such research 'seemed slightly blasphemous, as if we were attempting a statistical test on the efficacy of prayer' (Berenson & Carkhuff 1967, p. 32).

State	Group	Number of studies	Number of patients	% 'cured' 'much improved' or 'improved'
Treated	Psychoanalytic	5	760	44%
	Eclectic	19	7293	64%
Untreated	Custodial	1	not recorded	72%
	General practice	1	500	72%

Table 1. Showing the relative effects of different treatment programs of patients diagnosed with neurotic disorders. The table summarises results that are detailed by Eysenck (1952).

The word was out. Untreated patients (72%) fared better than those undergoing Psychoanalytic treatment (44%) or an eclectic approach (64%). The profession had to come to grips with what many of their patients could have already told them.

The contribution of Levitt

Eugene Levitt (1957) was keen to see what results an analysis of reports on psychotherapy with children would produce. His method was similar to Eysenck's, but the nature of his control group was different. It was drawn from traumatised children who had been assessed and accepted for treatment—but remained **untreated**—often because appointment dates were delayed for up to six months after assessment. Two studies provided relevant information. Witmer and Keller (1942) followed up on a group children who remained untreated for between 8 and 13 years after assessment, and found that 78% of them had improved. Lehrman and others followed up on a group of untreated children one year after assessment and found that 70% of them had improved (Berenson & Carkhuff 1967, p. 35). Levitt averaged these results to find that 72.5% of the 160 children from both groups had improved. He used this figure as a baseline for evaluating the results of the children who had been treated.

The information on children who had been **treated** came from two sources. The first assessed whether or not a group of children had improved at the close of treatment. This group contained 17 independent studies from America, and one from England. The second assessed whether or not a group of children had improved after an average period of 4.8 years after treatment. This group contained 17 independent studies. Three were from England and 14 from America. The children in eight of these studies had

been assessed both at closure of treatment and in follow up studies. Levitt (1957) screened out cases relating to delinquency, mental defectiveness and psychosis so that only cases ‘which would crudely be termed ‘neuroses’ were included. He found that 67.05% of the 3399 children in the first group had improved at the close of treatment. He also found that 78.22% of the 4219 children in the second group had improved during the follow up period. Levitt (1957) concluded that **his results ‘fail to support the view that psychotherapy with “neurotic” children is effective’**. He noted, however, that the passage of time seems to be an important factor in the improvement of child patients. Table 2 summarises Levitt’s results.

State	Group	Number of studies	Number of child patients	% ‘cured’ ‘much improved’ or ‘improved’
Treated	at close of treatment	18	3399	67.05%
	follow-up after 4.8 years (average)	17	4219	78.22%
Untreated	in need of treatment	2	106	72.5%

Table 2. Showing the relative effects of different treatment programs of child patients diagnosed with neurotic disorders. The table summarises results that are detailed by Levitt (1957).

Eysenck and Levitt created a springboard for rejoinders of varying quality. There seems to have been no peep from Sanford. His ruffled feathers may have moulted. There seemed to be some responses that were more reactive than scientific. By 1960, Eysenck appeared quite willing to rub salt into some of these defensive therapists’ wounds. In a quotable quip he wrote:

To judge by their writings, some advocates of psychotherapy appear to take an attitude similar to that adopted by Galen, the father of modern medicine, in his advocacy of the wondrous powers of Samian clay: ‘All who drink this remedy recover in a short time, except those whom it does not help, who all die and have no relief from any other medicine. Therefore it is obvious that it fails only in incurable cases (Berenson & Carkhuff 1967, p. 46).

The contribution of Rogers

During the 1940’s Carl Rogers began a radical approach (then called ‘Client-Centered’ Therapy) that was to prove to be a turning point in the practice of counselling and therapy. Two major divergences, from the then accepted practice, were that therapist qualities account for therapeutic benefits to clients—not just knowledge or technique; and that the therapist should interact with clients in a ‘non-directive’ way rather than in the accepted ‘directive’ approach that therapists used to control what happened with clients. Rogers’ writings relate more to the development of theories and perspectives than to research, but a summary of his work will help to see the influence that he had on future research.

In 1951, Rogers promoted the notion that ‘empathy’—the therapist’s ability to enter the feeling of clients—was the most important factor in assisting people to change in constructive ways that he called ‘therapeutic personality change’ (Rogers, 1951).

By 1957, Rogers hypothesised that there were six ‘necessary and sufficient’ conditions, for what he now called ‘constructive personality change’ (CPC) to occur. These were:

1. Two persons are in psychological contact.
2. The first, whom we shall term the client, is in a state of incongruence, being vulnerable or anxious.
3. The second person, whom we shall term the therapist, is congruent or integrated in the relationship.
4. The therapist experiences unconditional positive regard for the client.
5. The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client’s internal frame of reference and endeavours to communicate this experience to the client.
6. The communication to the client of the therapist’s empathic understanding and unconditional positive regard is to a minimal degree achieved. (Rogers 1957, p. 96)

In presenting his six conditions, Rogers (1957) went out on a professional limb to comment on what was **omitted** from his hypotheses. He was aware that the opinion of the day held his ‘omissions’ as virtually indisputable facts of clinical life. His omissions made it clear that he disputed the currently held tenets that:

- different conditions could apply to different types of clients;
- other conditions are essential for therapies other than client-centred;
- in essence, the psychotherapeutic relationship is significantly different from other constructive relationships found in everyday life;
- special knowledge—be it psychological, psychiatric, medical or religious—is required of the therapist. (Rogers acknowledged that training in these areas was valuable for therapists, but insisted that it did not actually **equip** them.);
- it is necessary to have an accurate psychological assessment for therapy to be effective.

Rogers eventually subsumed his six hypotheses into three critical conditions:

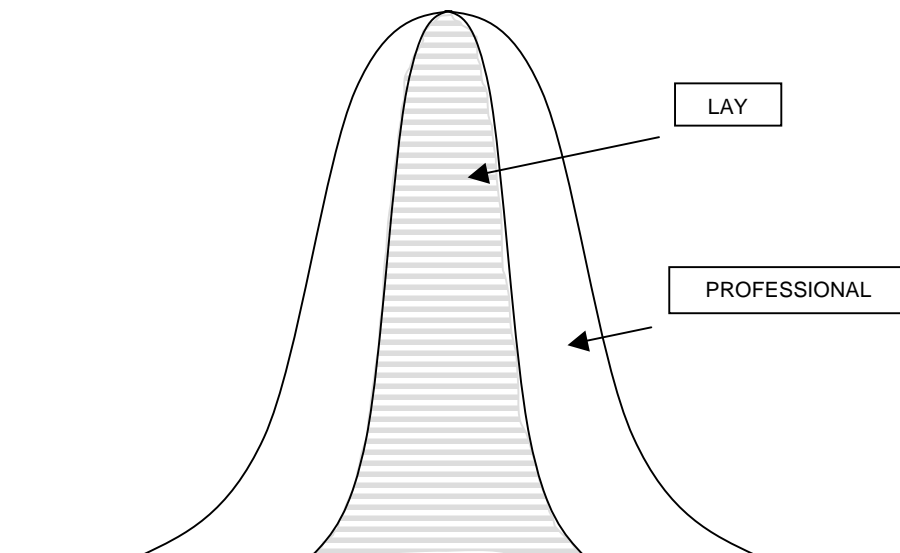
1. empathy: the ability to experience the feelings of another, within oneself, in order to communicate an understanding of those feelings to the other;
2. unconditional positive regard: warm acceptance and caring of others, without judgment, to communicate a ‘prizing’ of the others individuality;
3. congruence: whereby self-aware therapists are able to express genuineness, or authenticity, with transparency and without façade (Meador & Rogers 1984).

Rogers’ contribution was foundational to later research, and although he described ways of recognising the presence or absence of his conditions he did not describe how, in a skills sense, these conditions could be learned.

The contribution of Bergin

A paper published by Allen Bergin (1963) signalled another milestone. Of particular interest are his comments on a study by Gendlin (1962) where both the experimental and control groups were drawn from schizophrenic patients, so that each closely matched the other. The experimental group was then subdivided again. Half of the

experimental group (group A) were seen by therapists who provided the ‘high therapeutic conditions’ that Rogers had described. The second half of the experimental group (group B) were seen by therapists who lacked Rogers’ conditions. The results that followed showed that patients in group A showed significant improvement and those in group B got worse. This was big news. The findings further showed that when the two results (A + B) were added together they nullified each other, and matched the control group. The results were hailed as an ‘exciting breakthrough’. Bergin concluded that ‘changes do indeed occur in psychotherapy, but in two opposite directions, the direction depending upon therapist qualities’ (Berenson & Carkhuff 1967, p. 50). ‘Proper’ control groups are intended to be static, but Bergin noted some variance in Gendlin’s control group. Bergin attributed this to the likelihood of control group members getting help from a range of people such as ‘friends, relatives, clergymen and physicians’—sufficient grounds, in his view, to question the validity of earlier assumptions of ‘spontaneous recovery’. The breakthrough was clear. Bergin concluded that therapists had a greater impact on people than ‘lay’ helpers. They were either more constructive or more destructive. The key points are summarised graphically in Figure 2, below.



DESTRUCTIVE

patients felt devalued
 therapist played a ‘role’
 patients felt misunderstood
 worst professional ‘help’ is more destructive than worst lay ‘help’

CONSTRUCTIVE

patients felt valued
 therapist was genuine
 patients felt understood
 best professional help is better than best lay help

On average, destructive ‘help’ nullifies constructive help

Figure 2. Showing how different personal qualities of professional and lay helpers determine the nature and degree of help experienced.

An aside

It is worth pondering the full significance of these findings for a moment. It is not hard to see how professionals with the right qualities could offer more help than lay people. It is harder to see why professionals who lack appropriate qualities should be more destructive. Berenson and Mitchell (1974) point to one probable explanation. They identified that practitioners who were ‘low facilitators’ actually used ‘negative confrontations’ more and more through time. This means that the longer non-empathic therapists stay in practice, the more likely they are to focus on the inadequacies, vulnerabilities and incompetencies of their clients—in ways that are very judgmental, and sometimes harsh. A simple example of this was related to us by a client who, early in her first interview with a psychiatrist, told him that she was bulimic. ‘That’s disgusting!’ was his immediate, loud, and critical rejoinder. That inappropriate judgment did not destroy this client—she left there and then! The tragedy is that many fragile clients stay ‘in therapy’ and deteriorate further. A number of our clients have told us that they eventually discontinued ‘treatment’ because they continued to feel worse after each visit. In the mean time, they remained over-concessional to the practitioner, and tended to tell themselves things like: ‘Well, he’s the expert—and from what he has said I must be worse than I thought’. Here is a principle. Beware ‘experts’ who lack empathy or expertise. They may be well ‘credentialed’ but not ‘qualified’ to do the job!

Back to the history

The focus of this chapter is not intended to overview the great range of therapeutic approaches and theories that have emerged through time. Interested readers could refer to Corsini (1984) or Corey (1991) for such summaries. The intention, here, is to trace the development of the struggle to understand the way to achieve therapeutic effectiveness—to figure out what works best. The early debates were more about beliefs, perspectives, concepts and methodologies than people—or so it seemed to the existential therapists. May and Irvin highlighted the humanistic focus that was inherent to the existential approach:

These existential therapists believed [that] drives in Freudian psychology, conditioning in behaviorism, archetypes in Jungianism, all had their own significance. But where [they asked] was the actual, **immediate person** to whom these things were happening? How can we be sure that we are seeing the patient as he [sic] really **is**, or are we simply seeing a projection of our own theories **about** him? (May & Irvin 1984, p. 354).

The debates had the distinct flavour of a heavily garnished omelette. The development of a host of therapeutic techniques had evolved from trial and error activities in clinical practice—not scientific scrutiny. The growing need was to unscramble the egg, identify the blend of the garnishes, figure out any unpalatable ingredients, and spell out the recipe—so that clients could get consistently palatable and nourishing serves from an unfranchised chain of ‘clinical cafes’.

The contribution of Truax and Carkhuff

Scientific scrutiny is planned

In 1964, Truax and Carkhuff raised the fundamental question: ‘**what** levels of **what** ingredients of psychotherapy produce positive personality and behavioral change?’ (Berenson & Carkhuff 1967, p. 360). They took into account the finding of Wrenn

(1960) that there was virtually no relationship between what therapists said to clients and their espoused theoretical orientation, and so they deemed it wise to tape record what therapists **actually** said and did rather than what they **said** they did in their interactions with their patients.

Truax and Carkhuff also noted that a number of studies had shown that successful patients were more actively involved in therapy sessions, able to explore their issues better, and could express their ‘private self’ more easily than unsuccessful patients. The task of observing all that the therapist and patient actually said and did within given settings, and all that occurred in the interaction between them became a research imperative.

Truax and Carkhuff generated the following equation as the basis of their quest:

$$CPC = k + (TV_1 \dots TV_n) + (PV_1 \dots PV_n) + (SV_1 \dots SV_n) + (IV_1 \dots IV_n) + e$$

This universal equation simply said that to identify what contributes to the constructive personality changes that occur in therapy (CPC), we must investigate the relationship between four things. They are: (1) everything the therapist does (variables $TV_1 \dots TV_n$); (2) everything the patient does (variables $PV_1 \dots PV_n$); (3) the effects triggered by the setting (variables $SV_1 \dots SV_n$) and; (4) all that happens during the interaction (variables $IV_1 \dots IV_n$). Furthermore, Truax and Carkhuff recognised that there would be some constant factors currently beyond investigation (k), and that there would be errors (e) in the process from which they could learn to make refinements in future reappraisals.

The contribution of Carkhuff, Berenson and others

Skills, outcomes and process are identified

The research work began. Tapes of interactions were recorded and analysed. Carkhuff and Berenson (1976) summarised what the analyses revealed. The researchers irrefutably confirmed Gendlin’s contention that therapy was for ‘better or for worse’. They confirmed Rogers’ hypotheses that ‘empathy’, ‘unconditional positive regard’ and ‘genuineness’ were **necessary**, but not **sufficient**, therapist qualities. Predictive studies identified that other qualities (self-disclosure, concreteness or specificity of expression, confrontation, and immediacy of experience) were characteristics shown by facilitative therapists. These qualities were defined, and then factor analysed to distil two discrete, tangible ‘helper’ skills—**‘responding’** skills that communicate accurate empathy, and **‘initiative’** skills that enable action (Carkhuff 1969). Further analysis identified the **‘attending’** skills that ensure that full attention is paid to others (Carkhuff 1969). The research later identified the **‘personalising’** skills that lead to ‘ownership’ of problems and commitment to act to deal with them constructively. (Carkhuff 1972). The helper skills are linked and sequenced as shown below.

ATTENDING ⇨ RESPONDING ⇨ PERSONALISING ⇨ INITIATING

The Carkhuff team was buzzing during the late 1960’s and 1970’s. The work of Vitalo (1970), and Michelson and Stevic (1971), highlighted the need to incorporate problem-solving, decision making, and program development skills into the initiative phase of the process. Collingwood (1972) found that the fitter helpers were, the more effective they were in the use of the facilitative skills. What ‘worked’ was becoming clearer. A growing understanding of the impact of these skills on ‘helpee’ outcomes emerged as the skills themselves were being clarified. Firstly, it was shown that the quality of helpers **‘responding’** skills was significantly linked to the level of the **‘exploration’** undertaken

by helpees when discussing personal issues (Carkhuff 1969). It also it became clear that the helpers **'initiating'** skills enabled constructive **'action'** by helpees at the conclusion of the process (Carkhuff 1969). It was later shown how the **'personalising'** skills provided an effective link between helpees' exploration and their actions, by clarifying their **'understanding'** of the implications of what they had explored—including the personal responsibility they needed to assume in order to act to improve their circumstances (Carkhuff 1972). It was later shown that the 'attending' skills were the windows through which other facilitative helper attributes were communicated to helpees. These include their respect, care, potency and availability (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976). These (and others to be discussed in later chapters) were called the **'Pre-helping'** skills that facilitate a willingness in helpees to become **'involved'** in discussing personal issues. The relationship between helper skills and helpee outcomes, and their progression through the **three-phase process**, shown in Figure 3, is the enduring paradigm that remains the basic 'engine' for all helping (Carkhuff 2000).

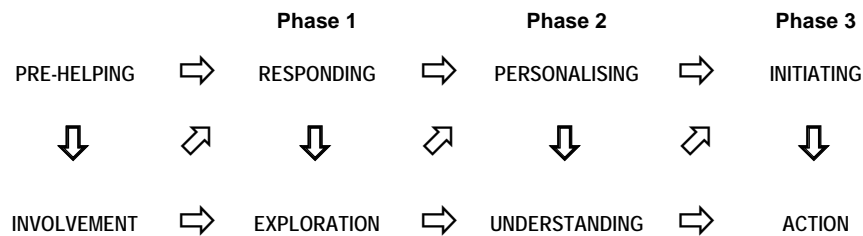


Figure 3. Showing the interrelationship between helper skills and helpee outcomes. Derived from *Teaching as Treatment*, by Robert R. Carkhuff & Bernard G. Berenson. Copyright © 1976, Used by permission of the publisher. HRD Press, Amherst, MA, 800-822-2801, www.hrdpress.com.

The oblique arrows in Figure 3 reflect the finding that helpees **learn** from their helpers' modelling. This means that they are enabled to progressively respond to themselves more accurately, assume personal responsibility for themselves more readily, and initiate from their own resources more capably. It is as if they 'catch on' to what the helper is doing, and 'give it a go' themselves. The notion that 'teaching is the preferred mode of treatment' flows from making such learning overt (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976).

Benefits beyond therapy are identified

There was more buzzing in the Carkhuff hive to develop new studies to see if the benefits extended beyond the emotional and interpersonal areas. Researchers put more honey in the jar. Aspy (cited in Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, p. 23) demonstrated that students had significantly better results when teachers applied responsive skills in the classroom, and significantly worse results when they did not. Big news! Intellectual functioning was influenced by the level of facilitative skills employed by teachers. Collingwood (1976) showed that improved physical fitness improved both emotional and intellectual functioning. More big news!

These findings showed that the range of benefits went beyond the limited notion of 'constructive personality change', and the term 'Human Resource Development' (HRD) was minted to define the desired outcome. Similarly the term 'therapist' gave way to the notion of 'helper'. Application of these skills did not just 'fix' people—it expanded them! The switch in perspective was from 'patients are sick and need treatment' to 'clients are human resources who can develop'. Because of the potential of the skills (shown in Figure 3) to find application in every area of human endeavour, the

researchers called them the ‘Human Achievement Skills’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976). These skills apply beyond effective ‘one-to-one’ helping to constructive living, effective learning and fulfilled working.

Application of the Human Achievement Skills underpinned the expanded ‘Educational Achievement Skills’, ‘Career Achievement Skills’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976), ‘Management Skills’, ‘Community Development Skills’, ‘Social Planning Skills’ (Berenson 1976) and ‘Nation Building Skills’ (Carkhuff 2002) that have culminated in structures that could bring global freedom (Carkhuff, Berenson & Associates 2003).

Contributive sources are considered

In their book, *Beyond Counseling and Therapy*, Carkhuff and Berenson (1977) discussed the unique contributions made by different modes of treatment to the helping skills. Their overall conclusion was that particular treatment modes emphasised one aspect of the helping process to the exclusion of others. None embraced all three phases of the helping process. Carkhuff and Berenson recognised the contributions of the ‘Client-Centred’ and ‘Existential’ approaches in Phase 1, the ‘Psychoanalytic’ and ‘Trait-and-Factor’ approaches in Phase 2, and ‘Behaviour Modification’ strategies in Phase 3.

Phase 1: The Responding skills

Carkhuff and Berenson (1977, p. 57) identified ‘Client-Centred Therapy’ (now called ‘Person-Centred’ (Meador & Rogers 1984, p. 142) and the Existential approach as sources of contribution to the responding skills of Phase 1. The responding skills enable clients to tell their story, and explore its content with greater insight than they have previously experienced. Self-awareness is expanded. Clients become clear about where they really ‘are’ in relation to their particular issue. The contributions from both sources are discussed below. The term ‘Person-Centred’ is used, hereafter, in this text.

The contribution from Person-Centred Therapy

Rogers’ Person-Centred Therapy is underpinned by two central ‘theorems’. The first affirms that people can recognise the things that hurt or restrict them, and that they have the latent capacity to deal with them. The second is that this inherent power can be mobilised in the deep acceptance that an empathic, congruent therapist is able to provide. The responding skills provide the means and the climate for these latent capacities to find practical expression. They embody and operationalise (make do-able) the person-centred tenets whereby clients have the freedom and opportunity to: (1) say what they want to, their way; (2) get immediate feedback so that they know that they have been heard; (3) talk about things that they would normally avoid addressing, or have never thought of addressing, without fear of judgment; (4) attend to matters not previously attended to; and (5) discover flaws in the way they view their world—all of which combine to give a clearer and fuller awareness of who they really are, and where they stand in relation to any issue under discussion. Similarly, the responding skills provide the means for therapists to: (1) communicate their care and acceptance of clients; (2) gauge how well clients are functioning; (3) monitor the quality of their own empathy; (4) operate effectively within safe boundaries; and (5) be free of the need to use jargon and interpretations.

Carkhuff and Berenson draw attention to the limiting factors of the Person-Centred approach in that it does not accommodate more directive techniques that apply when initiatives for action are appropriate. Rogers’ approach does not require action.

The contribution from the Existential approach

Carkhuff and Berenson (1977) recognised that, by minimising the restriction of roles, and offering a ‘developed cosmology for existence’, the Existential approach helped to create a safe climate to enable an ‘honest human encounter’ between therapist and client. This ‘cosmology’ includes such notions as: (1) humans need validation and security within human relationships; (2) humans have an intrinsic fear of losing others and being alone; (3) humans, paradoxically, **are** alone, because each must ultimately accept choice, and assume responsibility for their actions. Existentialists suggest that the fear of loss of others leads to a tendency to ‘please others’ in order to hold on to them. Such placating, in turn, leads to loss of autonomy—actions fail to express the authentic self. This failure is seen as the principal source of ‘real’ guilt—the inability to act with freedom. The task of Existential therapy, then, is ‘to enable man [sic] to act and to accept the freedom and responsibility for acting’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p. 81). The tenets of a ‘cosmology for existence’ challenge therapists to interact authentically, and gives clients freedom to **pursue** freedom. Such freedom, and the associated responsibility to act, can be awesome. Note the ultimate challenge to humankind in the following paradox of existence:

Although man’s [sic] life in its very nature has intrinsic meaning, man’s tragic burden is his compulsive search for meaning in a meaningless world...Only in a full confrontation with the ultimate in ‘aloneness’ or death can man choose life (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p.81).

In spite of the richness of perspective, the Existential approach was ultimately seen to be limited because it fails to address the ultimate goal of being fulfilled whilst being able to fully stand alone when needs be.

Phase 2: The Personalising skills

Carkhuff and Berenson (1977, p. 57) identified the Psychoanalytic and the Trait-and-Factor approaches as sources of contribution to the personalising skills of Phase 2. This battery of four discrete skills, used in the personalising process, both summarises and analyses the material, explored in Phase 1, so that clients come to understand: (1) their own reality more clearly and, in particular, their own contribution to a current difficulty; (2) the skills they currently lack to deal with such difficulty; (3) the nature of the self-criticism that such awareness triggers; and (4) to experience the hope that emerges when the deficit is ‘flipped’ and rephrased as a personally relevant goal whose attainment will enable clients to successfully change, adapt to, or move on from, their current difficulty. Clients progressively accept responsibility for the necessary future action, as they progressively ‘own’ their ‘truth’, as each step unfolds throughout personalising.

The contribution from the psychoanalytic approach

Carkhuff and Berenson suggest that the major contribution from the Psychoanalytic approach flows from four major theses that claim that: (1) most human behaviour is irrational and driven by the unconscious; (2) insights about human nature may help to alleviate human suffering; (3) therapists can apply their findings to life; and (4) it is possible to describe the way that destructive forces develop and are perpetuated in individuals and society.

The researchers listed ten contributions from the Psychoanalytic approach. The following three, that stand out in this context, are discussed below.

- 1 Psychoanalytic theory has provided an explanation of the durable influence of early childhood experiences for those functioning at below level 3. [the meaning of ‘level 3’ is discussed below].
2. Psychoanalytic theory was the first system to deal with and begin to comprehend the importance of affect [emotion].
3. Psychoanalytic theory and practice has given focus and meaning to the polarities of feeling and behavior (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, pp. 98–99).

Childhood experiences: Psychoanalytic theory evolved from clinical observations of sick, dysfunctional people. It claims that everyone not only carries constraining ‘baggage’ from childhood, but is ‘stuck with it!’ Cyclical crises occur when the baggage gets so heavy that it creates undesirable tensions. Psychotherapy aims to minimise the pain associated with these crises, but offers ‘no possibility of high levels of pleasure, joy or creativity upon “breaking through” the crisis experience’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p. 93). Carkhuff and Berenson dispute the apparently universal inference that childhood influences necessarily endure through adulthood. They ‘draw the line’ at ‘level 3’ (the notion is explained below), and hold that people constantly living above level 3 are free of the influences of early childhood conditioning—indeed the very task of therapy is to help clients to ‘cross the line’.

Table 3, below, shows what is meant by ‘level 3’. It is the midpoint of a five-point scale that Carkhuff developed to describe different levels of human effectiveness in the ‘physical’, ‘emotional’ and ‘intellectual’ dimensions (Carkhuff 1981, p. 98). We later added the ‘social’ and ‘metaphysical’ (now spiritual) dimensions (Sanders & Kranz 1987, pp. 13–14). The full table is discussed in Chapter 4 (from page 61) of this text. Table 3 simply gives a general description to characterise the differences between levels.

Dimensions of human effectiveness					
Levels	Physical	Emotional	Intellectual	Social	Spiritual
5. Very effective	actualise own potential as they contribute to life				
4. Effective	contribute to others as they participate in life				
3. Minimally effective	participate in life without overall contribution or detraction				
2. Ineffective	observe life but fail to participate—tend to be ‘knockers’				
1. Very ineffective	detract from life—tend to be ‘users’				

Table 3. Showing broad behaviours that characterise different levels of human effectiveness across the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual dimensions.

The historical contribution relating to childhood experiences continues to be evident in many counselling sessions. During the personalising stage, Phase 2, it frequently emerges that difficulties currently experienced by clients have their origins in childhood experiences. After clients acknowledge the implications of this link, the personalising skills help clients set a personally relevant goal to nullify the retarding effects of such

experiences. Thus, when the goal is achieved, history is shed—protective garments whose utility is outgrown are shoved in ‘the rag bag’ (Kranz 1987, p. 13)—and increments of ultimate freedom are forged.

The importance of emotion: Understanding the legitimacy of feelings has been one the greatest contributions to emerge from psychoanalytic origins. Expressions of emotion, including ‘polarised feelings’ that swing between pain and pleasure, love and hate and so on, occur frequently in any counselling session. Recognition of feelings is important throughout the whole helping process, but is of particular significance during the personalising stage, Phase 2. Firstly, the recognition and acceptance of the ‘pervasive’ feeling experienced during the first two steps of the personalising process provides the insight that helps clients start to assume responsibility for their current circumstances and for future action. Secondly, profound benefit flows from the validation of, and release from, the self-critical emotion that occurs in step three of the personalising process. Recognition and ownership of this emotion is the turning point in the helping process. It frees clients to ‘forgive’ their personal imperfections; to assume responsibility for what they need to do; and rechannels energy (that was previously ‘siphoned off’ by the inherent tension related to unresolved issues) to mobilise optimism, and commitment to tackle what needs to be done.

The limitations of the Psychoanalytic approach: The historical contributions from the Psychoanalytic approach find ready acceptance in many theoretical approaches, but there seems to be limited translation from psychoanalytic treatment into therapeutic benefit. This limitation may be because psychoanalytic theory evolved by observing the dysfunctionality of the ‘sick’ rather than the functionality of the ‘well’. Carkhuff and Berenson concluded that any benefits flowing from the Psychoanalytic approach were ‘infrequent and limited’, and only applied to ‘a small number of people amenable to this kind of therapy’, namely:

1. persons functioning at level 2;
2. psychologically attuned, affluent, intelligent, sophisticated, and intellectually curious persons who are functioning adequately at a concrete level;
3. future analysts (Carkhuff and Berenson 1977, p. 97).

Carkhuff and Berenson discuss the limitations of the Psychoanalytic approach when viewed through the window of their five-point point scale outlined above. Apart from acknowledging the historical contributions and the intellectual complexity of the theory, they see no functional benefits in it for people who participate in life at the minimally effective level (level 3) and above. Here are their judgments:

...in out view, Freud identified and described what persons functioning above level 3 must escape from (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p. 93).

Again, the [psychoanalytic] theory’s inability to bring the individual to level 3 and above constitutes its major limitation. Along with the understanding psychoanalytic theory offers of the artificial world, its comprehensive description of the psychic experience and behavior of those functioning below level 3 constitutes its major contribution (Carkhuff & Berenson, 1977, p. 101).

The next quote seems to encapsulate Carkhuff and Berenson's overall evaluation.

Mostly, it may be absurd to consider psychoanalysis as an approach to helping because it only deals with how losers lose and how one may discover over and over and over again that the depressed loser has an infinite variety of strategies to lose and invites others to do the same (Carkhuff and Berenson 1977, p. 103).

The contribution from the Trait-and Factor approach

The Trait-and-Factor counselling approach has its roots in matching people and their jobs (Parsons 1909). Its contribution lies in the fact that this approach: (1) leads clients to define their values with greater clarity; (2) makes information concrete; and (3) works towards goals whose achievement will lead to greater satisfaction without undesirable upheavals of the client's environment. The emphasis on clear, unambiguous language, and the pursuit of relevant goals, parallels some functions of the personalising process. The synthesis and analysis of the information that clients have explored lead to clear, concrete statements of personal meaning, personal implication, and personally relevant direction for clients. In the personal counselling application, the dialogue is likely to be more intimate than standard Trait-and-Factor counselling which, historically, has tended to ignore the emotional aspects, and focus on intellectual appraisals. Carkhuff and Berenson (1977, p. 114) see this omission as limiting on the grounds that 'it attempts to deal reasonably with what is often an unreasonable life situation'.

Phase 3: The Initiative skills

The contribution from the 'behaviourists'

Carkhuff and Berenson (1977, p. 57) found that the only significant contribution to the initiative skills came from a range of techniques then known as the 'Behaviour Modification' approach. The major global contribution made to helping by these various approaches is their emphasis that **action is critical** if people are to develop. The 'insights' that a number of therapies 'settle for' are barren unless they are acted upon to deal with the issues that have been 'peered into'.

Contributions to clients include: (1) an appreciation of the treatment process and their role in it; (2) feedback on progress being made; (3) opportunity to transfer what is learnt to life (including dealing with maladaptive behaviour); and (4) the assurance that the treatment process is geared to change what it sets out to change.

Contributions to therapists include: having the confidence that flows from having a well-defined role in a system of well-defined strategies, and opportunities to creatively apply therapeutic techniques to life.

Behavioural therapies are 'directive'. The therapists take charge. Clients influence what happens by the responses they make. Therapists note these responses to further modify what happens. Carkhuff and Berenson noted the limitations applying to both client and therapist during treatment that uses a behavioural approach in the following terms:

The client is not a thinking, feeling, valuing person; he or she is, however a behaving, acting, organism, subject to the influence and impact of any interaction with the present environment. The therapist can act upon the client only from the outside with the use of rewards, punishments, and various other behavior-modification techniques leading to the possible alleviation of symptoms (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p. 131).

Carkhuff and Berenson were aware of the rapid expansion and popularity of behavioural approaches during the 1970's. This is what they feared.

If it [behaviour modification] is successful to the point of being the 'wave of the future' for therapists and social engineers, it will become the next major social problem of our time (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p. 148).

The prophecy has a touch of Job about it, but their comment was underpinned by their view that behaviourists failed to fully appreciate the nature of learning. They saw that 'conditioned' learning was more applicable to given contexts than to the fuelling of new creative options.

Learning does not equal conditioning. Learning requires entering the learner's frame of reference; conditioning does not. Learning involves the reproduction of behaviors whenever and wherever those behaviors are functional for the achievement of systematically developed, personally relevant goals. Conditioning involves the production of behavior whenever and wherever the original stimulus is approximated...When people limit their input because they have limited their learning (exploration, understanding and action), they limit the organization and meaning they can give their experiences. Conditioned people come up empty and ready for more conditioning (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, p. 243).

They were referring to the phases of learning inherent in the helping process as shown in 4, below.

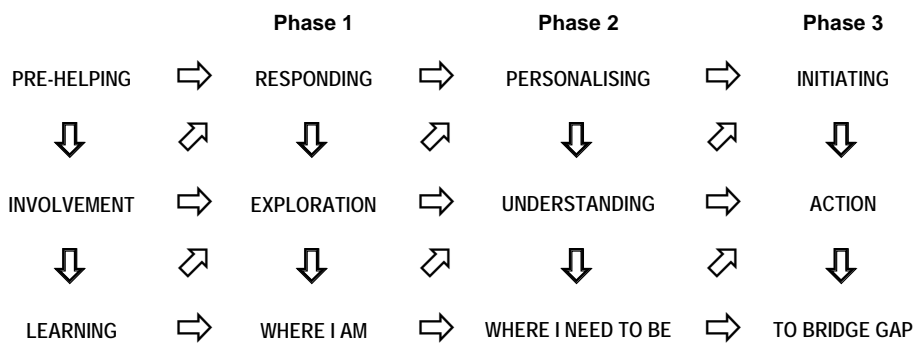


Figure 4. Showing the interrelationship between helper skills, helpee outcomes and associated learning.

It should be noted that the 'Cognitive-Behavioural' approach is now an established part of 'mainstream' behaviour therapy (Corey 1991, p. 292). Techniques have been developed for changing behaviour by changing the way people **think**. 'Multimodal therapy' is an approach that encourages 'technical eclecticism'. It compiles a 'BASIC ID' for individuals by asking questions about clients' **B**ehaviour, **A**ffect, **S**ensation, **I**magery, **C**ognition, **I**nterpersonal relationships and **D**rugs—including biological functions, nutrition and exercise (Corey 1991, p. 309). Multimodal Therapy was developed by Arnold Lazarus who has written a useful summary in Corsini (1984, p. 491).

The point to be made here is that, however sophisticated, such treatments may do no more than modify behaviour at a level that does not deal with core issues.

Questionnaires, however well structured, are unlikely to achieve the degree of specificity of ‘what needs changing’ that can be pinpointed in the personalising phase of the helping process. Corey (1991) has noted that some behaviourists tend to ‘jump in’ to apply a treatment without really ‘hearing’ their clients’ core needs. He encourages such practitioners to listen more carefully to clients **before** implementing a treatment plan with:

conditions...such as active listening, accurate empathy, positive regard, genuineness, respect and immediacy—before implementing a treatment plan...A mistake some counselors make is only getting at a minor problem as they focus on the presenting issue, which they then work with instead of listening to the client’s deeper message (Corey 1991, p. 315).

Corey’s ‘conditions’ are in fact the qualities that Carkhuff and Berenson (1976, p. 19) verified as the ingredients of the helper skills in their earlier work. Corey has, apparently, not noted the change from ‘conditions’ to ‘skills’. This oversight is in contra-distinction to Egan (1998) who seems to have integrated the substance that Carkhuff and Berenson distilled into his own three-stage ‘skilled helper’ model. Egan’s model explores the ‘current scenario’, identifies the ‘preferred scenario’, and develops appropriate ‘action strategies’. We applaud his initiative but have chosen to use the original researchers’ terminology, rather than create a new language around it. We describe our refinements in the chapters that follow using Carkhuff and Berenson’s terminology.

Journal responses—bouquets and brickbats

This history is by no means exhaustive. We have written it to give practical helpers an appreciation of the origins of the skills training that they will undertake by working through the content of this book.

Some readers may want to skip further summaries on the interplay between different researchers’ perspectives on Carkhuff’s work. If so, we suggest skipping to page 33 to pick up on responses that different practitioners have made.

Carkhuff published an article in 1966 that criticised contemporary training practices for counsellors and therapists. He claimed that lay counsellors who had undertaken skills training could accomplish anything in counselling and therapy that their supervisors could. (Note the congruity between this finding and Rogers ‘omission’ on page 14.) The article was a well-argued paper whose provocative nature was embedded in its title: *Requiem or Reveille?* (Carkhuff 1966). The bugle had sounded. Wake up or die! The reveille awakened, trained, and mobilised numbers of lay helpers [which Carkhuff (1971) came to refer to as ‘functional professionals’] in a wide range of community services. The paper aroused the profession. Some heralded Carkhuff’s work whilst others were critical of it. Differing perspectives were brought together in volume 3, number 3, of *The Counselling Psychologist*, 1972. Selected articles are summarised below.

Robert Carkhuff (1972a) presented an update on his work. In it he drew on conclusions from his earlier research to reiterate the fact that: (1) the counselling profession was in crisis; (2) that contemporary training practices were ineffective; and (3) that his work pointed to a new direction for effective training for the helping professions that focused on skills. To demonstrate this he reported on a study where five different groups of

students were offered help to ‘work out any important problems’ in their lives. The help was offered from five different sources which were ‘blended’ as shown in Table 4, below. The sources involved a computer-based program called the ‘Education and Career Exploration System’ (ECES); counsellors who were trained to use the ECES program; those trained in Carkhuff’s HRD skills; and those who were traditionally trained. The results of all five groups proved to be better than the current high school guidance programs where only 13% of students reported having been helped.

	Group I	Group II	Group III	Group IV	Group V
	ECES & HRD counsellors + computer	ECES counsellors + computer	HRD counsellors alone	traditional counsellors alone	computer alone
Post counselling success rate	74%	67%	91%	25%	50%
Base success rate	13%				

Table 4. Showing the relative success rates between different approaches of helping students with important life problems. From *Teaching as Treatment*, by Robert R. Carkhuff & Bernard G. Berenson. Copyright © 1976. Used by permission of the publisher. HRD Press, Amherst, MA, 800-822-2801, www.hrdpress.com.

The base success rate used in this study was 13%. It derived from traditional counsellors of whom 75% reported that their interviews took between 5 and 10 minutes. These counsellors were required to extend that time to fifty minutes while working with group IV. Their success rate increased to 25%. Carkhuff concluded that ‘A working counsellor is better than the average counsellor’ (Carkhuff 1972a, p. 13). By comparison, the students working alone with the computer (group V) were twice as effective (50%). Hence, the conclusion that ‘an effective program is better than the average working counselor’ (Carkhuff 1972a, p. 14). The success rate of 67% in group II, led to the conclusion that ‘an effective program plus a working counsellor trained in the program’s skills is better than an effective program alone’ (Carkhuff 1972a, p. 14). In group I, the students visited the computer and also saw counsellors who were trained in both HRD and computer skills. Their success rate was 74%. HRD trained counsellors, working alone in group III, seemed to have ‘clear and unfettered direction in their activities’. Their success rate was 91%. The results of groups I and III suggested that ‘effective counsellors and effective programs are effective complements’ (Carkhuff 1972a, p. 14).

In reflecting on these results, Carkhuff argued that helpers and trainers need to be selected appropriately, and that quality control should be managed by developing a hierarchy comprising: trainers, master trainers, training consultants and master training consultants. Such a hierarchy should be determined by the **functionality** of the people concerned (as opposed to traditional academic **credential**). The functional hierarchy enabled those at higher levels to create an effective organisation to service those at lower levels—by ‘skilling’ them to create, and deliver, effective programs to those that they, in turn, serviced. Carkhuff proposed that training be provided, in cumulatively linked skills, across the physical, emotional/interpersonal and intellectual areas. He argued that this initiative would not only elevate professional standards, but provide services that effectively delivered constructive benefits to both those being helped and those offering the help. His formula for overall effectiveness was:

$$\text{Effectiveness} = \text{effective people} + \text{effective programs} + \text{effective organisations.}$$

Claire and Harold Korn (1972) served a critical letter on Carkhuff which, having acknowledged the abysmal short-comings of the profession, accused him of being both ‘punitive and self-righteous’, and tactically suggested that, if he wanted the profession to ‘explore’ the issues raised, he should ‘aim for a level 3.0 response to reflect our [Korn & Korn’s] concern for the state of the profession’ (Korn & Korn 1972 p. 75). They accused him of being simplistic by failing to recognise that people do not want to change. Their view was that:

... even suffering humans resist change. They fight altering fundamental aspects of themselves, even when faced with enormous pain. They struggle against narrowing the gap between the self and their ego ideal; they remain fixated with what the analysts would call ‘character fixation’; they maintain self-defeating, underachieving behaviors... This applies not only to individuals, but also to institutions
(Korn & Korn 1972, p.75).

Korn and Korn (1972) considered that whilst Carkhuff’s work demonstrated an ability to help individuals, it failed to detail any application in real institutions.

Allen Ivey not only saw Carkhuff as ‘undoubtedly one of the most creative and original thinkers in current American Psychology’ (Ivey 1972, p. 70), but also captured his vision, and saw a flow-on from individual skills training to much broader applications:

At this point in time I know of no other model of human behavior change more comprehensive than that proposed by Carkhuff. While based on individual skills of helping, the methods and concepts are immediately translatable into group dimensions of interaction. In turn these same skills and issues can be applied at community and institutional levels. Problems such as poverty, racism, credibility gaps and housing patterns cannot be solved by individual action...[nor] by political or social intervention either (Ivey 1972, p. 74).

Reciprocally, Carkhuff saw compatibility between Ivey’s ‘microtraining’ and his Human Achievement Skills training. Ivey believed it was time for counselling psychology to make a shift to training, and asked the question: ‘Can counseling respond to systematic training programs?’. History has shown that some have, but that many have not.

Arthur Resnikoff (1972) was a proponent of research rigour. He acknowledged the ‘great accomplishments’ and ‘tremendous achievements’ of Carkhuff’s work (Resnikoff 1972, p. 53), but was critical of some methodological gaps in it. Carkhuff wanted to distil ‘meaning’, and was interested in verifying results in order to move on to find better ways of helping people. Resnikoff wanted more rigour. He compared the tensions of the ‘rigour–meaning’ debate in these terms:

The proponent of meaning may at times believe without analyzing the results of inadequate studies; the proponent of rigor may choose not to focus on certain important questions because they seem to defy rigorous examination.
(Resnikoff 1972, p. 46).

Carkhuff had shown the link between helper functioning and client exploration, and the link between exploration and client outcome. Resnikoff conceded that ‘no doubt the dimensions on which Carkhuff focuses bear some relationship to outcome’, but pushed

for more rigour to verify the link. He argued that ‘the paradigm of A is to B, B is to C, and therefore A is to C, does not hold (Resnikoff 1972, p. 53). Resnikoff was also critical of the fact that Carkhuff failed to use proper control groups in his studies, but gleaned results from applying ‘pre’ and ‘post’ tests of the experimental group. He argued that, by not using control groups, Carkhuff was only able to show that ‘training’ was better than ‘no training’—not that his training was better than other training. A further criticism related to the lack of controlled observations to provide fuller explanations of research results. He argued that such additional work would go beyond Carkhuff’s finding that ‘trainees of high-functioning supervisors seem to gain more than do trainees of low-functioning supervisors’ to show **why** this is so. In conclusion, Resnikoff shared the view that ‘the HRD model is being disseminated as a full and complete system before all the results are in’ (Resnikoff 1972, p. 53). Our view is that the results are **never** fully ‘in’. In terms of optimising contribution to the world the question arises: Is it sometimes more perfect to be less perfect?

David Aspy (1972) saw Carkhuff as a ‘consummate genius’ who has ‘accomplished five gigantic tasks’ at a time when the helping professions had lost their way:

1. He has delineated the contributions of a variety of approaches to counseling.
2. He has specified the limitations of those same counseling procedures.
3. He has integrated the various counseling procedures by relating them to each other in a system which incorporates their unique contributions.
4. He has confronted the crisis facing the helping professions and has explicated both the new directions they must take and the technology for doing so.
5. He has related the helping professions both to themselves and to society at large. (Aspy 1972, pp. 35–36)

Aspy lauded Carkhuff’s essential measures of ‘effectiveness’. He recognised that helping was now a ‘public process’ that was easily accessible. Helping had been demystified! Aspy could see that Carkhuff was ‘an enigma to “dyed in the wool” [sic] theoreticians because his [Carkhuff’s] system is both theoretical and a-theoretical’ (Aspy 1972, p. 36). Carkhuff’s theoretical formulations, when tested, were then constantly transcended, subsumed and integrated (as the research continued) into higher order notions based on honest feedback from the helper–helpee relationship. These were then ‘tested and refined by scientific procedures which in turn shaped the next level of development’ (Aspy 1972, pp.36). The purists were critical of the lack of rigour in this approach.

Aspy was aware of the criticism that Carkhuff’s structure was so ‘tight’ that creativity was stifled. This criticism still exists, and its rebuttal still applies: ‘Creativity is not the antithesis of discipline, it is an extension of it’ (Aspy 1972, pp. 37). Put another way, the greater the skills repertoire, the greater the creative artistry. Aspy outlined his application of skills training in educational settings. This area is beyond the purpose of this history, but more detail can be read in Aspy and Roebuck (1977).

Thomas Hefele and Michael Hurst (1972) expressed some degree of conflict.

As counselors, we are thoroughly convinced that the training and treatment models advanced by Carkhuff are exceedingly useful and experientially ‘true’. As scientists, however, we can readily understand the discomfort experienced by many of our

colleagues when they focus upon the scientific validity of Carkhuff's measurement procedures (Hefele & Hurst 1972, p. 62).

They viewed Carkhuff's work through the lenses of 'precision', 'validity' and 'utility'.

In relation to precision, Hefele and Hurst questioned the accuracy and consistency of the rating scales used in the measurement of interpersonal skills. Apparently, the very high re-test and inter-rater reliabilities of .08 and .09, which had been established in benchmark research, were subsequently used as 'given' in further studies. Hefele and Hurst argued that such constancy could not necessarily be presumed if the former raters trained a new generation of raters. Further criticisms were raised because different scales had been used in different studies: some nine, some seven, and some five point scales. The constructs of empathy, respect and concreteness, identified in earlier research, were later embedded into the 'responding' skills, and the constructs of genuineness, immediacy, and confrontation were similarly factored into the 'initiative' skills. Hefele and Hurst's reservations about the reliability of these constructions stemmed from the unanswered question as to 'whether or not the same variables (whatever they are) have in fact been measured in the same way across all of the research studies' (Hefele & Hurst 1972, p. 64).

In relation to validity, Hefele and Hurst viewed Carkhuff's work in the light of the argument of Klein and Cleary (Hefele & Hurst 1972, pp. 64–65) that, unlike traditional psychometric instruments, if rating scales are used then 'the raters, and not the rating scales, are the actual measuring instruments'. It follows, then, that differences in perceptions and acuity of discernment will influence ratings. Thus, if the raters are the instruments, their reliability is only as good as the level of agreement between them when looking at the same thing at the same time—the concurrent validity. From their analysis of 22 studies conducted by Carkhuff and others, Hefele and Hurst concluded that 'the concurrent validity of the interpersonal skill ratings is quite good **within** studies, but unknown **across** studies' (1972, p. 65). Hefele and Hurst further argued that a **traditional** concurrent validity study would actually yield information relating to the **content** not the **instruments**—the raters. Although Carkhuff had not conducted such a study, these authors considered that the content validity of his scales were quite high.

Gauging the validity of the instrument (the raters) presented another challenge. The authors suggested a strategy to validate the instrument (the raters) by assessing the level of agreement between their **descriptions** of any given content, rather than the numerical rating ascribed to it. They saw this as being more accurate than solving the rater content validity problem by Carkhuff's practice of only using high-functioning raters. They considered the rating of high-functioning raters as a circular issue, and therefore flawed—how valid are the ratings of the raters of the high-functioning raters, ad infinitum? Whilst satisfied that predictive and construct strategies were fairly well established with respect to trainee levels of interpersonal functioning and self-exploration, they were dissatisfied with indices relating to 'psychological disturbance', 'improved race relations' and 'changes in emotionally disturbed children'. In these areas they felt that 'too much has been made of too few studies' (Hefele & Hurst 1972, p. 68).

In relation to utility, Hefele and Hurst seemed to allow the meaning of the 'counsellor' in them to over-ride the rigour of the 'scientist'. They accepted the arguments of Kaplan, and later Bakan, that behavioural scientists who wanted to effect significant changes, should claim the freedom (as Carkhuff had) to 'step beyond the traditional

criteria of scientific methodology', without, of course, totally dispensing with the notions of reliability and validity. In other words, to be willing, as Carkhuff had long since suggested—to subjugate the “criterion of rigor” to the “criterion of meaning”... and thereby escape being “methodologists in pursuit of a question” [and so become] “questioners in pursuit of apt methodologies” (Hefele & Hurst 1972, p. 68). The authors acknowledge that, having taken that freedom, Carkhuff had contributed:

- in the area of counselor training...systematic procedures which unquestionably add significantly to the lives of those seeking help;
- in the area of psychotherapy...a systematic, comprehensive model that provides the means to help humans get better;
- in the area of developmental psychology...a ‘delightfully simple’ way of understanding the impact of historical conditioning;
- in the area of social action...a programmatic approach to humanize social institutions. (Hefele & Hurst 1972, p. 68)

However, Hefele and Hurst attribute these remarkable achievements more to Carkhuff's extremely sensitive personal phenomenology than to his ‘sketchily adequate reliance on traditional hypothetico-deductive type methodologies’. The authors pen a delightful cameo of an enigmatic giant:

We are struck by the image of a ladder on which many of the rungs are missing. It should have thirty rungs, but after the first five or six (corresponding to the traditional-type work of Carkhuff and friends...in the 1960's) most of the rungs are missing. However, we are impressed by the fact that the climber is near the top of the ladder. His manner of getting there defies traditional interpretation; nevertheless, the climber is there! The fact that he has accomplished the feat by other than usual [probabilities] ‘scientific’ procedure doesn't dilute the existential fact. What creates a problem for us is that the climber keeps stating that he accomplished what he did by ‘scientific’ procedures...The failure of the climber is in not recognizing that the procedures have been continually changed over the course of his many studies, and that, in the traditional sense, they have not been ‘systematic’ (Hefele & Hurst 1972, p. 68).

Another way of viewing this (with hindsight to the previous century) is that, in his blasphemy against the god ‘rigour’ (in the science of probabilities), Carkhuff sowed the seeds for the liberating fruits of the ‘Science of Possibilities’ that he jointly developed with Berenson (Carkhuff & Berenson 2000). This, in turn, will no doubt attract criticism, both constructive and otherwise, from contemporary scientists.

Norman Kagan (1972) expressed the belief that the significance of Carkhuff's work will only be fully appreciated, retrospectively, by historians who may point to Carkhuff's contribution as having been ‘the most influential of its day’ and ‘an especially important vector forcing psychology away from a trend towards dehumanisation and the “under-dimensioning” (Louis Untermeyer's term) of man’ (Kagan 1972, p. 42). Kagan joined others writers in calling for refinements to rating scales (such refinements are continuing as will be seen in Chapters 9 and 10 of this book). He called for more detailed and effective ways of making training ‘instructor-proof’. He saw this as critical because of diminishing benefits from programs whose trainers were trained by someone, who was trained by someone!

George Gazda (1972) reviewed a number of Carkhuff's papers and raised similar criticisms to those already cited. However, he expressed overall conviction of the effectiveness and utility of his work. He commended Carkhuff for his work with lay-helpers (functional professionals), and the push for performance-based criteria for effectiveness (called 'competency-based' assessment under the Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) scheme). Gazda saw the need for consultants with highly developed HRD skills to enter the socio-political arena. Gazda acknowledged that many previous gaps in the HRD model had been filled.

Robert Carkhuff (1972b) apparently previewed other writers' articles prior to publication, and shared some reflections in a rejoinder. In it, his pragmatism and thirst for meaningful outcomes were evident. For Carkhuff the research process seeks evidence from which added refinements can be made to enhance delivery of service. His strategy was to periodically 'break free' from process studies (where helping variables were manipulated) to conduct outcome studies, and so avoid bogging down and minimising 'meaning'. Current learning became the springboard for future learning towards increasingly effective models that are 'testable empirically and experientially' (Carkhuff 1972b, p. 80). The various scales that other writers criticised for being 'non-standard' across studies were seen by Carkhuff as progressive refinements towards the development of more efficient and more effective tools. His paper reviewed his work, and updated an overview of it. He also noted that some researchers 'get lost in the process' by assuming that 'outcome indices must be independent of training indices'. He suggested that this was as absurd as teaching reading and then having a maths test. 'You just do not change what you do not train for!' (Carkhuff 1972b, p. 83). He leaves readers in no doubt about his research credo:

I live my life as I conduct my research: as a tentative hypothesis to be stated as forcefully as possible and tested in experience, modified and reformulated, with the essential core of outcome not just intact, but broadened and deepened...That's what it's all about! Anyway! (Carkhuff 1972b, p. 86).

The journal debates continued through 1972 and 1973. Summaries of those papers will follow to help readers decide whether or not to follow up on detailed articles.

George Banks and William Anthony (1973) declared their view that Carkhuff's work was the most thorough, expansive and relevant in the helping field. They listed the areas where benefits from training had either been shown (or were needed) in the areas where traditional helping had failed—prisons, reformatories, minority groups, the Armed Services, physical and psychiatric rehabilitation, and a range of other community groups.

They adopted a novel approach to appraising the various perspectives that had been presented in the journal of 1972. They decided to rate the various submissions against a modified version of Carkhuff scale of effectiveness where:

- HIGH (above level 3.0) = a facilitative response that captures the essence of Carkhuff's work and extends it into a unique area of expertise;
- MEDIUM: (level 3.0) = a minimally facilitative response that captures the essence of Carkhuff's work;
- LOW: (below level 3.0) = a non-facilitative response that distorts or detracts from Carkhuff's presentations (Banks & Anthony 1973, p. 103).

Aspy rated 'high' on this scale because he had responded to the full implications of Carkhuff's presentations. He captured the significance of the discipline and specificity that pertained to Carkhuff's work, and had extended and applied its benefits into the field of education.

Ivey's paper was rated as 'medium' because, although he had captured the essence of Carkhuff's contribution, he did not extend its application beyond his current interest in micro-counselling.

Korn and Korn Resnikoff, Hefele & Hurst, Kagan and Gazda were all rated as 'low' for various reasons related to lack of rigour, or failure to incorporate new learning.

Allen Ivey (1973) seemed a bit shocked that his 1972 paper had only been rated at level 3.0 by Banks and Anthony. Nevertheless, he expressed admiration of them 'for having the guts' to tender their assessment (Ivey 1973, p. 111). Ivey challenged his counselling colleagues to accept the collegiate, professional responsibility to respond constructively to Carkhuff's work to 'get out of the rut of [their] own helplessness brought on by the scientific "objectivity" of psychology' (Ivey 1973, p. 112). He urged the profession to: (1) use its skills to refine what needs refining; (2) adapt programs for local needs; (3) demystify counselling and helping; (4) cooperate to become effective people with effective programs in effective organisations; and (5) influence needed changes in the training of newcomers to the profession. In his paper Ivey encourages commitment to community action, and quoted Carkhuff's poem to reinforce his plea. No doubt, in the language of the day, 'brother' was intended to include 'sister' in the poem below:

If any of my brother Americans live in poverty,
so also am I poor.
If any of my brother Americans are addicted
so also am I addicted.
If any of my brother Americans are indicted and convicted as criminals
so also am I convicted as a criminal.

Until the last vestige of the American dream has been realized,
the American dream has not been realized.
For the American dream is of human development and
human fulfillment (Ivey 1973, p. 113).

The debate of 'what works' tended to diminish in 1973 as the focus shifted onto methods of training.

Arthur Resnikoff (1973) virtually restated the criticisms that he made in 1972 relating to: the link between therapist process and client benefits; absent or improper control groups; and lack of controlled, detailed observations of interactions.

Michael Hurst and Thomas Hefele (1973) suggested a systems approach to training which combined Carkhuff's emphasis on **what** to train with Zifferblatt's emphasis on **how** to train. They developed a very detailed flow-chart for this purpose.

George Gazda (1973) listed a number of universities offering counselling training, and commented on the relative merits of three known programs, including his own. He found Carkhuff's approach to be the most complete system for training counsellors and other helpers which, in his case, were medical, nursing and para-medical staff. He expressed preference for Carkhuff's rating scales over Burk's 'Counselor Interview

Rating Scales (CIRS)' used by Blocher and Wolleat. He was 'disappointed' in Zifferblatt's approach in that it failed to present 'the essence of a counselling model' (Gazda 1973, p. 116).

Our summary of the history concludes here to consider some current views that typify different perspectives on the nature of counselling.

Practitioners' response to this history

In spite of the debates surrounding the rigour, meaning and relevance of Carkhuff and Berenson's work, it is clear that the historical debates are neither fully resolved, nor has the counselling profession fully embraced the skills thrust advocated by historical researchers. We, however, are persuaded that the tools developed by Carkhuff and Berenson remain unmatched in terms of their effectiveness in the helping process. Prior to their work, different 'schools' performed separate functions. Existentialists and Client-centred therapists provided means for people to 'explore' an issue; Psychoanalysts and Trait-and-Factor practitioners sought to 'understand' the nature of an issue, and interpret that understanding to the people concerned; Behaviourists developed strategies for people to learn to 'act' differently. Thus, different practitioners provided means for clients to:

explore **OR** understand **OR** act upon (an issue).

Carkhuff and Berenson offered practitioners the means to enable clients to:

explore **AND** understand **AND** act upon (an issue).

We are among those who rejoice that our random search for functional eclecticism was over more than a quarter of a century ago. We, with others, continue to experience the roadworthiness of the integrated substance of the helping skills. However, this was not, and **is** not, the universal position of many practitioners. Purist specialists cling to their specialities and mostly dismiss 'skills training' as mechanistic and mechanical. Some hold on to 'specialities' for reasons of 'professional identity', 'intellectual coherence' and 'external legitimacy', or for commercial purposes to market their 'brand name' therapies (McLeod 2003, p. 54). Others may claim to be 'eclectic', but are critical of Carkhuff's substance simply because they find concepts easy to talk about, and skills hard to master. Some (still) argue the need for a 'trans-theoretical map' when, in our view, the map, and the vehicle, have been long since established. Readers who are keen to pursue the current debate are pointed to Chapter 3 in McLeod (2003). He reflects that:

It should be clear that there is no one 'eclectic' or 'integrated' approach to counselling. There is rather, a powerful trend towards finding ways of combining the valuable ideas and techniques developed within separate schools and approaches. At the same time, however, there are also strong forces within the counselling and psychotherapy world acting in the direction of maintaining the purity of single-approach training institutes, professional and publication networks. The only prediction that would appear warranted is that this tension between purity and integration is unlikely to disappear, and that this is to be welcomed as a sign of how creative and lively this field of study is at this time (McLeod 2003, pp. 70–71).

McLeod's perspective of 'creative liveliness' seems generous and, perhaps, very 'British' when compared with contemporary American analysis. There, researchers Hubble, Duncan and Miller (1999) speak of 'the battle of the brands' between the 250 (or more)

therapy models that vie for a slice of the market. They report Hubble and Haley's 1992 findings (in Hubble, et al. 1999, p. 3) that 'the tolerance for theoretical allegiance is in direct proportion to the money available to support it'. Their evidence highlights the lack of professionalism that sidelines functionality in favour of an undeclared agenda—be it economic or status. In their pursuit to refine an understanding of 'what works' in therapy, Hubble et al. have been criticised as 'traitors to our profession, grumbling malcontents "on the fringe"' (Hubble et al. 1999, p. 4). Eysenck and Carkhuff before them incurred similar wrath for highlighting what does not work.

The professional 'treason' shown by Hubble, Duncan and Miller was to draw attention to the fact that 40 years of American research has shown that one cannot say that one model or technique is superior to another. They have identified four common factors that influence success in therapy and that these, and their relative percentages, are:

- extra-therapeutic factors (client strengths, events between sessions, context resources etc): 40%;
- therapeutic alliance (bond with client and working with client's goals—not therapist's goals): 30%;
- hope engendered in client: 15%;
- therapeutic technique: 15%.

David Morawetz (2002), in summarising the work of Hubble et al., argues that an effective therapist is able to harness all the four common factors, by:

- carefully assessing the extra-therapeutic factors, and helping the client to initiate positively in relation to them;
- working empathically with clients, and not attempting to 'force' clients to conform to the therapist's chosen model;
- generating hope and positive expectation by operating as a warm, caring, optimistic person. (We note that that being organised and non-pathologising also contribute to counsellor effectiveness (Blatt cited in McLeod 2003, p. 481);
- using a treatment model that is appropriate for a particular client at a particular time.

An Australian practitioner, Robinson, (2003) used the 'outcome informed, client directed approach' advocated by Duncan and Miller as a means of giving direction to his work. He reports on the success of using this approach—particularly with resistant clients. Robinson's clients gave him feedback to show that he scored higher on the relationship scale than on the goal setting scale. He recognised how his emphasis on one technique over another limited his overall effectiveness. This is earnest professionalism seeking to enhance itself. It could also be said that Robinson's experience seems to highlight, yet again, the restrictiveness of any model that does not include a process that employs a range of counsellor skills to facilitate client involvement, exploration, insight, commitment to change, and ultimate action programs that successfully enable change.

The debates and the struggles continue to find what, in our view, is already known. For us, Carkhuff's approach fully integrates functional means for accessing, processing and acting upon clients' information in ways that lead to client benefit. Feedback from our clients has confirmed this over past decades, and given insights for us to progressively refine the skills employed within the helping process. Our effectiveness is enhanced by contributions from the many schools that provide 'windows' through which to view

client information with greater insight and clarity. Our effectiveness is enhanced by strategies, from various schools, that expand the range of initiatives that can be employed when clients have fully explored an issue, and understand what they need or want to achieve in the action phase of helping. Yet no single approach seems adequate or fail-safe. We fail to understand why so many practitioners avoid, or reject, travelling with roadworthy skills that require the selective use of appropriate initiatives from the expanding range of possibilities.

Efforts, similar to Robinson's, to refine practice through client feedback, if continued with rigour, may well point to rediscovery of the power and effectiveness of the skills and beneficial process that Carkhuff and Berenson described nearly four decades ago. We offer a short-cut to such professional fulfilment by inviting readers to master the skills in Part 2 of this text. Others, who already incorporate these skills in their practice, no doubt share our wonder why so many practitioners either fail to use the skills, or continue to seek that which is already known. We will monitor the ongoing debates with interest.

Summary

Eysenck (1952) first drew attention to the fact that, on average, traditional helping did not help. Levitt (1957) found this to be equally true for populations of children. Rogers (1957) shared radically new perspectives that focussed on helper qualities, and a non-directive approach to replace highly directed expert knowledge. Bergin (1963) showed that Eysenck's and Levitt's earlier findings could be explained, in part, because the positive results of some helpers were nullified by the negative results of others. Bergin also pointed out that control groups could not be 'mothballed' entirely, since they too received help—both good and bad—from lay people. Subsequent to these findings, Truax and Carkhuff (1964) formulated a strategy to observe all of the variables related to 'helping' and to develop testable hypotheses in order to see what 'worked' and what did not. Carkhuff (1969) became the primary researcher; Berenson co-authored with him and undertook some joint and related research. Specific skills were identified and tested. The researchers showed how they were sequenced, through three phases, to optimise constructive 'helpee' outcomes. They named the fundamental skills the 'Human Achievement Skills'. Carkhuff and Berenson (1977) showed how, and in which phase, contributions were made to the helping process from the Person-centred, Existential, Psychoanalytic, Trait-and-Factor and Behaviourist approaches.

Aspy (1969) showed that the Human Achievement Skills could translate to improved learner outcomes when teachers used them in the classroom. Other applications were referred to in the fields of career, management, community and social development.

Several writers reviewed Carkhuff's work during the busy 1972–73 period. All affirmed the breadth and appropriateness of his work as having profound 'meaning' for future helping. A number also offered criticism for his lack of scientific 'rigour'. In the ongoing debate there is a quest for 'integration' of approaches in the wake of substantial research. 'Purist' practitioners maintain ongoing resistance to integration for what may simply be pecuniary interests. Others seek ways of refining practice through client feedback. It is suggested that mastery of the skills detailed in this text will accelerate the professionalising of the counselling profession.

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Skills and me

The big picture

The 'Human Achievement Skills' are the core skills that effective counsellors use, but Carkhuff and Associates have developed a 'Human Technology' to show how they can also be applied in educational settings, in career selection and development, and in the areas of management, community development and social planning. The skills build cumulatively as they extend beyond 'living' to 'learning' and 'working', as Figure 5 suggests, to provide the means for contributing to others and for actualising one's own potential. Life is about growth for self and others!

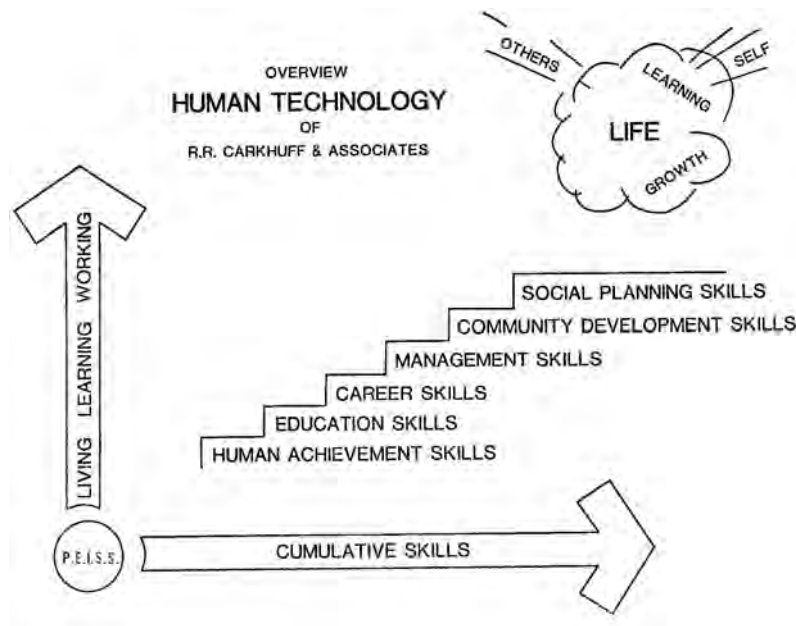


Figure 5. Showing the cumulative skills whereby whole people enrich life for themselves and others.

Our experience, that skilful living encompasses the whole person, is represented by the 'PEISS' circle (bottom left) which shows the personal investment that flows from the **P**hysical, **E**motional, **I**ntellectual, **S**piritual and **S**ocial resources of contributive people.

The tragedy is that too often, in education, teachers burn out and students drop out; unfulfilling careers grind on until retirement; managers mismanage human and other resources; community developers frustrate communities; and social planners impose unwelcome restraints on societies. The double tragedy is that well intended people, working across these areas, become isolated and demoralised because their efforts and commitment seem to be misunderstood along the way—life lacks fulfilment. So often, trained specialists fail to ‘connect’ with the people they were trained to help because their training did not teach them **how** to connect—even though it emphasised the **need** to! The missing ingredients are the ‘Human Achievement Skills’—the skills that help to relate empathically, ascribe meaning succinctly, identify relevant goals specifically, and provide the means to achieve them systematically—regardless of the context.

It is beyond the purpose of this text to consider how the Human Achievement Skills are applied across the areas listed in Figure 5, but references are provided at the end of this section for readers wanting to follow up on the way the basic skills transfer into the areas of education, career choices, management, community and social development, and towards global peace. The discussion beyond this point will focus on counselling applications, but readers need to stay aware of the potential for universal applications.

Counsellors quite often see people whose core problems stay unresolved because such people lack these skills themselves, or were brought up by parents and others who lacked these skills. Frequently, counsellors teach clients to use the same tools that they themselves used to help clients see their value. Experience confirms the research that heralded ‘teaching as the preferred mode of treatment’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976).

Fitting ‘me’ in all this

There is a commonly held belief that there is an exclusive set of ‘counselling skills’ that can be incorporated into training packages ranging from telephone sales staff to senior managers, and the like. We hold the view that counsellors do **not** have skills that are peculiar to their profession (as do, say, surgeons or spray painters) but that they artfully apply a variety of well-honed, discrete ‘life skills’ that are common to all effective human endeavour. Such skills are not ‘nine to five’. They permeate life ‘after hours’. They are ‘part’ of the person who uses them effectively. It is not hard to pick some sales people, for instance, for whom skills are an ‘add on’. They seem to be glib and non-authentic whilst wheedling their way into your wallet! Truly effective people present authentically. One senses that their skills are backed by a set of values that are in harmony with the way they present themselves. One senses a depth of personal resourcefulness in such authentic, effective people.

In our experience, the most definitive and substantive set of ‘life skills’ is the battery of ‘Human Achievement Skills’. They can be named, defined, systematically learned, applied across a broad range of human endeavour, and transferred into new areas as creative opportunities arise. They were not ‘dreamed up’, nor randomly assembled. They were distilled by observing effective therapists at work, and are being continually refined by human feedback. They are confirmable in human experience, and applicable across a broad spectrum of activity.

To get an overall appreciation of their scope we can conceptualise an intrinsic link between our own being—our core ‘me’—to the spirit and the substance of the Human Achieve(me)nt Skills. We envisage a kind of ‘nesting’ from which we can reflect on the

linkage, balance and harmony between our personal values, behaviours and resourcefulness. Figure 6, below, presents the links graphically.

The ideal ‘me’

We can conceptualise the **ideal** ‘me’ as a triune being—a fully actualised ‘star’ with:

- Perspectives: that embrace the noblest set of values in ‘what I believe’;
- Personal skills: that enable expression of abundant personal resourcefulness, with full self-awareness of ‘what I am’;
- Process skills: that provide an infinite number of strategies to ensure success at ‘what I do’ for any given task in any realm of endeavour.

The reality is that **none** of us are ‘there’. Yet we find value in holding the ‘ideal’ as descriptive of the **latency** in all humankind—the potential that we strive to actualise both for ourselves, and for those to whom we would contribute—whatever their current circumstances, or however ‘daggy’ they are deemed to be. Holding this ‘ideal’ is not always easy. There are those in whom such latency is withered and seemingly dormant. We rekindle our optimism for such people by recalling what ‘God’ told Neale Walsch (1998, pp. 22–26) about the way he (God) sorted out His own problem. One may, or may not, give it credence. This is gist of what God said: ‘I am well aware that I am magnificent, but since I am the embodiment of all that is, I have no vantage point (external to my self) from which to view, and actually **experience**, my magnificence (as you can my sunsets). Then it hit me! (said God reflectively) I will divide myself into lots of tiny pieces so that each piece can experience an increment of my collective magnificence. You are such a piece. **You** are a part of **Me**! We are the same stuff! We need each other’. Some will resonate with the notion that human latency—our ‘divine potential’—our unique magnificence—finds expression when creative energy is mobilised.

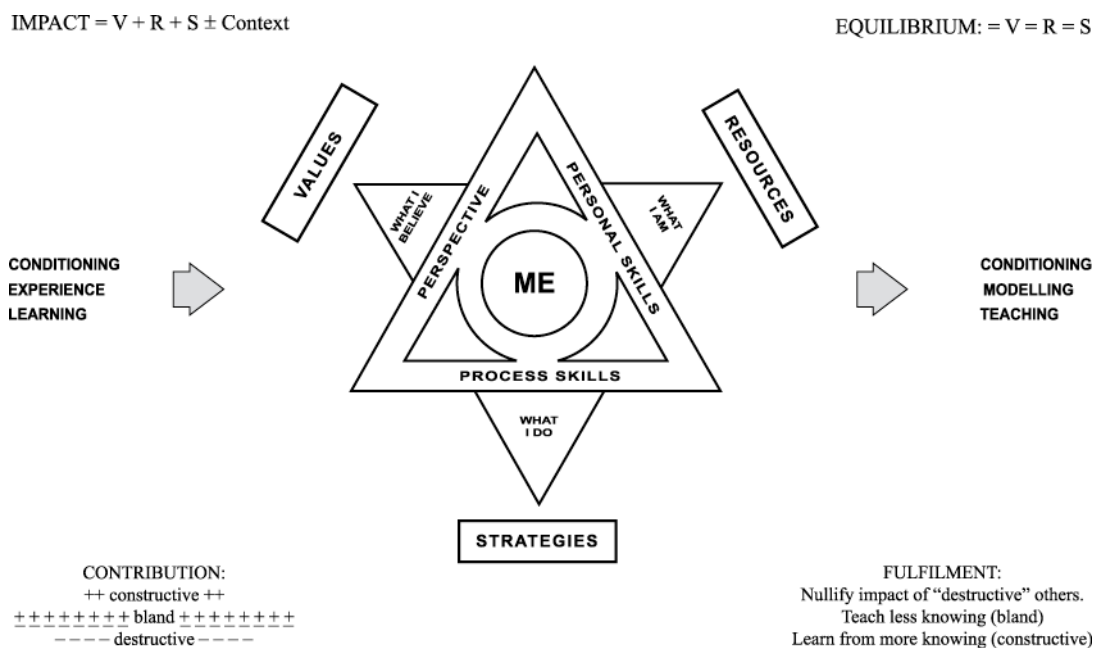


Figure 6. Showing how values, resources and strategies in ‘me’ develop, and how they then influence others.

The real 'me'

The real 'me' has a life-long quest for its actualisation. Its unfolding gives meaning. Its empowerment unbridles freedom. Its progression brings fulfilment. It is axiomatic to say that no one achieves actualisation—there is always more in an abundant universe. For any given genetic predisposition, the 'me' in each of us is shaped by the responses that we make to the cumulative experiences that occur through time. Figure 6 shows schematically that the emergent 'me' is impacted by: (1) the conditioning imposed by others; (2) the experiences that nurturers created for us during our early development; and (3) the learning that we accumulate through living. Such influences will either facilitate or retard the emergence of our latent potential. Through time, we form a set of beliefs and values that underpin our perspective on life. Through time, we shape who we are (or are not) in terms of the personal skills that express the nature, and capacity, of our individual resourcefulness. Through time, we develop a set of skills to process information (or fail to do so) so that we can make an impact on the world by the things that we do—constructively or destructively. An overall **facilitative** impact from others eventually enables each 'me' to become free to determine the values that guide and drive us; the level of personal resourcefulness we choose to develop; and the strategic areas in which we develop mastery of skills. An overall **retarding** impact from others may be so inhibiting on the 'me' that both fear and self-doubt will block its latent personhood from emerging. Such a 'me' requires assistance from someone whose perspective holds that growth is possible, whose resourcefulness is underpinned by love, and whose skills can mobilise increments of courage to a shuffling, but willing step towards fulfilment.

The arrow to the right in Figure 6 reminds us that we, in turn, impact others with the conditioning we impose, the modelling that we provide and the teaching that we offer. Our impact, in turn, will also be facilitating or retarding—for better or for worse! This awareness, for some new parents, becomes the motivating force for them to grow their 'me'—'I want my kids to have it better than I did!' For counsellors, it is a reminder that, as they express their craft, they are the 'tool'—and that they can give no more than who they, themselves, are.

How values, resources and strategies relate

The contributions made between 'authority' figures to children in their homes, students in schools, workers in their workplace, and clients in counselling rooms, will reflect the functionality of the contributor. A simple way of gauging the effectiveness of such contributions is to see how well individuals are able to communicate an empathic understanding of another's experience, that is, to recognise how well responses capture the significance of what others have said. The results are less than encouraging. In a simple study, 10,000 American teachers were asked to say how they would respond to someone who says: 'I have a headache.' The researchers found that only 100 responses related empathically to the headache sufferer. Of the other 9,900 the responses were 'at best irrelevant and at worst downright harmful' (Aspy & Roebuck 1978). This result may seem a bit incredulous, but it highlights the point that contributions from the 'me' in each of us have the potential to be constructive, destructive, or just plain bland.

At the start of any professional training program we conduct similar, but more detailed, testing to establish a 'learning baseline' for each learner. The results also provide an index of learners' current capacity for contribution. Over a series of programs for 380 South Australian educators, our pre-tests showed that 20 educators produced potentially constructive responses (likely to engage learners), 44 produced potentially destructive

responses (likely to switch learners off) and the remainder produced bland responses that would randomly engage students for brief periods to relieve the pervasive boredom experienced with that particular teacher (Kranz 1986). The abbreviation (bottom left in Figure 6) reflects these proportions—more destructive contributors than constructive contributors, with the majority whose bland contributions are minimal and random.

Impact on others

It is useful to recognise the inter-relationship between Values (V) Resources (R) and Strategies (S). The abbreviations (top left in Figure 6) suggest that one's overall **impact** is the cumulative mix of personal values, resources and strategies. We will come to see in more detail, in subsequent chapters, how the personal values of love, truth, excellence and others, provide motivation for the development and maintenance of personal resourcefulness. We will see how the resourceful person's vigilance enables them to gather information more accurately so that their processing is more effective. We will come to see how more effective processing enables the person to reconcile any conflicts that may push refinements of their value base. For now, the simple examples below should serve to show the interactive relationship between the three aspects.

Consider the following scenarios, and reflect on how personal impact is a function of values, resources and strategies.

Person A, who holds contributive values, is personally resourceful, and has strategies to processes information skilfully, is likely to produce empathic responses when appropriate and take initiatives when appropriate. They will have a constructive impact on the lives of others (Impact=V+R+S).

Person B, who holds contributive values, has strategies to process information skilfully, but whose personal resources are depleted by a lack of energy, poor organisation or poor health, is not likely to produce empathic responses (or appropriate initiatives) unless the significance of the person in need, or the desperation of their need, 'pushes' them to deploy effective strategies in bursts. Their impact on others will be constructive, but limited (Impact = V+S-R).

Person C, who holds contributive values, and whose personal resources are exemplified by good health, abundant energy and good organisation, but who lack strategies to produce empathic responses will wonder why others do not accept the well-intended, but random, advice that they offer. They are likely to be seen as nice, well intended people who are unable to be helpful with personal issues, but who are quite willing to assist with tasks in areas where they have 'practical' skills (Impact = V+R-S).

Person D, whose values applaud self-indulgence will not be willing to offer empathic responses to others (unless they hope to impress for selfish purposes) even though they may have ample personal resources, and have learned to respond to others empathically. The impact is likely to be bland on those who can 'see through' person D's selfishness, and destructive towards those whose gullibility renders them vulnerable to the seductive engagement of the 'helper' (Impact = R+S-V).

Person E, whose developmental influences leave them with unclear values, negligent in personal care and resourcefulness, and indifferent to (or afraid of) communicating with others. Their needs and dependency will make others weary. Their impact will be bland on those who tend to avoid them, and potentially destructive to those 'close' to them (Impact = -V-R-S).

The influence of context

Note that the abbreviation, ‘Impact = V + R + S ± Context’, in Figure 6 on page 40, introduces the influence of the ‘context’. For example Persons B and D, above, are likely to impact others differently in different social contexts. Political regimes will create contexts that are congruent with reigning ideologies that will, of their very nature, facilitate or inhibit both opportunity and encouragement for authentic, effective, personal expression. Politically oppressive contexts may require the suppression of constructive behaviours or declaration of personal values. Skilled people can have an equally constructive impact in different cultural contexts. We consider the implications of this in a separate section at the close of this chapter. It can be salutary to consider how one’s sense of personal potency may vary in different contexts—and why.

Stress and equilibrium

We frequently hear of people needing to get away from stressful situations. Sometimes, we hear of courts ordering substantial ‘payouts’ to sufferers of stress that, allegedly, has been induced by some person or circumstance. Perhaps the courts have taken into account the level of functionality of the claimant—or perhaps not. In our view functional people will have the skills, and the awareness, to avoid chronic stress by doing what is needed to maintain a sense of equilibrium between their personal values, resourcefulness and strategies. We have found that stress is, primarily, the internal emotion that progressively emerges with increasing disequilibrium between one’s values, resources and strategies. Fully functional people redress this disequilibrium by the application of skill, or the modification of their value system. In this sense growing people welcome manageable disequilibrium. Less than fully functioning people will become stressed when their ‘me’ is unable to manage a given level of disequilibrium. Failure to manage the stress becomes the precursor to increased stress which, in turn, may convert to physical symptoms that eventually enforce withdrawal from the ‘unmanageable’ situation. The situation is then blamed for the stress because the person lacked the skills to change what was possible, adapt to what was necessary, or ‘quit’ with dignity so that personal growth, albeit painful, could continue. Some examples will clarify this notion. The three cameos that follow illustrate how stress can be experienced when any one aspect (values, resourcefulness or strategies) conflicts with the other two.

Judith is a competent, resourceful person who runs all aspects of the office for a small building contractor. She really likes her job, and prides herself that ‘the Pope himself could audit the books any time he liked to drop in’. However, the boss takes on a new partner who requires Judith to allocate materials to different jobs that will actually be used to build his beach shack. She has the skill and the resourcefulness to do the ‘fiddle’ but feels a bit stressed because the requirement conflicts with her integrity. She is not prepared to ‘adapt’ to an unethical practice, and she could not quit with dignity in these circumstances. She restores her personal equilibrium by refusing to conform, and assuring the partner that any similar request would be made known to her employer.

Roger is good at his routine factory job. The boss has noted that he gets on well with his workmates, and offered Roger the foreman’s job. He gave Roger a couple of days to think it over. Roger felt quite stressed over the two days because, although the extra money would come in handy, he knew that his organisational skills were so poor that he would not cope with the various tasks required of the foreman. He chose to reduce his stress by ‘staying put’. He chose not to grow. He saw it as too painful to develop his personal resourcefulness in order to earn more money (which fitted his values) and support his team (for which he had adequate strategies).

Lillian has a passion to preserve the environment. She is organised, energetic and resourceful. She set up a series of meetings to explore ways of establishing work groups to create a better environment. The first meeting was well attended. There were a large number of apologies at the second. There were no apologies, and only a couple of ‘weirdos’ at the third meeting. Lillian was stressed by the lack of support she was getting. None of the drop-outs had the courage to tell Lillian that they could not stand her ‘bulldozer’ approach at the first meeting where ideas from the floor were not even ‘heard’, let alone considered. Lillian was unaware of how inadequate her communication strategies were until they failed her in a situations where her passions ran high and her adequate resources were fully committed.

It can be useful when experiencing stress to identify the area that is ‘out of sync’ in order to refine one’s values, improve one’s resourcefulness, or expand one’s strategic repertoire—as required. This approach both manages stress and facilitates growth.

Personal fulfilment

Personal growth is seldom a smooth ride. The ‘me’ in each of us can carry scars from the historical impact of destructive others. At any given time there may be bruises from the current impact of destructive others. In our quest for fulfilment we need to find and use strategies to nullify such impact. For some, this may mean seeking help from a trusted, constructive person, whether lay or professional. In order to grow we need to engage with those from whom we can learn, whether formally or informally. To enrich the sense of fulfilment we need to be willing to teach others the best of what we have learned. Fulfilment is about filling the ‘me’ till it is full—so full that it overflows to others. There can be no stagnancy in such a ‘me’.

One simple guide to fulfilment is the ‘principle of concession’ whereby, we:

- concede to the ‘more knowing’ from whom we can learn,
- do not concede to the ‘less knowing’; (but be willing to teach them, without pushing, if they are willing to learn from us)
- have the humility and the skill to discern the difference (Berenson 1976).

Subsequent chapters of this book focus on personal resourcefulness, personal values and personal strategies in more detail.

Cross cultural contribution

Doubts are often raised about the efficacy of counselling, as practiced by Westerners, for people in foreign cultures. It is our experience that the principles embodied in the Human Achievement Skills are equally effective in cultures other than our own. The fundamental principle is that counsellors work fully in the frame of reference of their clients. It just takes a bit more work in an unfamiliar culture where one’s eyes and ears need to work overtime to learn the values that apply locally. One listens and observes with heightened sensitivity to capture the nuances in what is being communicated. One checks one’s understanding of the meaning ascribed to local events. One clarifies what action the locals consider needs to happen. One shares one’s creativity to consider how that action may best occur. The process proves to be universal. Vicky’s experience exemplifies this principle. She was recruited in England to do Social Work in Australia. Within weeks, she was appointed as a Welfare Officer on a tribal aboriginal reserve. Not long after her appointment she was confronted with an angry group of men who were ritualistically rattling their spears. She looked, listened and learned that this signalled

‘war’. The hostility was directed at the white Manager. A young man had died in the bush from petrol sniffing on the previous day. He was known to be a Christian, so his burial was not dealt with tribally. His body was brought into the camp. The Manager had ordered that it be put into a galvanised lumber shed, to await the arrival of relatives to attend his Christian burial. The elders saw this ‘resting place’ as disrespectful. Vicky initially thought, from her cultural perspective, that the small brick ‘hospital’ would be a more appropriate, respectful and hygienic place to store the body, but she soon learned how disadvantageous this would be. She was given to understand that members of the local community could, thereafter, boycott the hospital on the grounds that it was culturally inappropriate to enter an enclosure where the dead have lain. After more listening and dialogue, Vicky learned that finding a clean, respectful, cooler resting place, would satisfy the elders’ needs. The spears stopped rattling, but the job was not complete. There was but one brick garage on the settlement, but it was disused and dirty. Vicky talked with the elders who agreed that it would be suitable if ‘made nice’. After more listening and talking it was decided that Vicky would help the aboriginal women to prepare it. The garage was adorned with suitable native vegetation. Next, Vicky learned that no aboriginal person was prepared to enter the shed to retrieve the body. More listening and more talk. The elders agreed that it would not be offensive for Vicky and a white colleague to transport the body. They did so, and harmony was restored, and cultural needs had been honoured. There was calm amid the sadness within the settlement, and at the funeral. The Manager missed an opportunity to learn a little more of the culture that he was paid to oversee. Vicky learned, first-hand, that with empathic skills she could constructively enter the ‘world’ of the oldest culture on earth, and be made welcome. She worked with unfamiliar values in an unfamiliar context. She served others to their satisfaction. She, herself, grew in understanding.

Summary

The skills that counsellors use are ‘life skills’ that find application in all areas of human endeavour: in living, in learning, in working, in community, and in social development. The most definitive and substantive of these life skills are the Human Achievement Skills. They have implications for the core ‘me’ in each person in relation to their values, personal resourcefulness and action strategies. This ‘me’ (for any given genetic predisposition) is shaped by its response to historical conditioning, and progressive experience and learning. Such conditioning and experience can facilitate or retard the growth of each ‘me’. Facilitative experiences grow the ‘me’ until it is able to be self-determining. Retarding experience may inhibit growth to the extent that the ‘me’ remains dependent on others. In turn, each ‘me’ impacts others in a facilitative, constructive way; a bland, neutral way; or a retarding, destructive way. The impact that each ‘me’ has on others is optimised when the cumulative blend of values, resources and strategies is harmonious. The core ‘me’ experiences stress if one of the values, resources or strategies mismatches the other two. The observation that the majority of people make random contributions to others suggests the need for the ‘me’ in each to ‘work on’ its growth towards fulfilment. There appear to be fewer constructive people (who are likely to experience fulfilment) than destructive people (who are likely to be unfulfilled and either dependent on others or over-bearing towards them). One way to enhance fulfilment is to apply the ‘principle of concession’, whereby the more knowing share their learning, and less knowing choose to learn. The skills are not culturally bound if effectively applied.

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Personal resourcefulness

Preamble

Chapter two presented a broad overview that suggested that effective living is most fulfilling when one's physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social capacities work in concert to enable the actualisation of one's full potential. It inferred that the nurturing of others towards a fuller expression of their potential is part of one's own actualisation. The overview showed that competence grows as skills develop, cumulatively, in our living, learning, and working. It showed that the core 'Human Achievement Skills' underpin more complex skills that apply to educational, career, management, community, social, and global effectiveness. The bottom line, however, is that effectiveness in **any** area of human endeavour is determined by the personal resourcefulness, personal values and the action strategies of the unique 'me' of all those involved.

This chapter focuses on personal resourcefulness. It relates to the skills that each uses in developing, and caring for, the unique 'me' that both enshrines our personal beliefs and acts upon the world—the 'me' about which each can say 'I am ...'. The chapter is presented in three parts. **Firstly**, it offers a simple questionnaire to check how aware you are of your personal resourcefulness, and provides space to note areas that could be 'worked on' as part of the 'Action Planning' addressed in Chapter 17. **Secondly**, it describes what the skills are, how they were identified, what they do, why they are important, and how they inter-relate. It suggests ways to enhance those skills that are not addressed fully in subsequent chapters. **Thirdly**, it offers an exercise to review the material. These skills are not only important for counsellors' personal management, but they provide a valuable checklist against which to pinpoint areas of client deficiency.

How well do I know 'me'?

Before reading this chapter you may wish to see how aware you are of the personal skills that reflect your personal resourcefulness. If so, there is a simple questionnaire in Appendix I, on page 452, that requires a 'yes' or a 'no' to a series of questions that range across the personal skills described later in this chapter. Each 'yes' will affirm your current resourcefulness, each 'no' will provide opportunity for further reflection.

Personal skills

If you did no more than glance at the questionnaire, mentioned above, you may have noticed that the questions are listed under the broad areas of, ‘health-management’, ‘self-discipline’, ‘physical fitness’, ‘decency’ and ‘vigilance’ skills. Many training programs in the Human Resources area tend to overlook these dimensions. We include them in the light of the research findings of Carkhuff and Berenson (1976 pp. 250–251) who showed them to be significant prerequisites to the ‘higher order’ interactive skills. Figure 7, below, shows the order in which the skills were identified (from right to left) and how they function, cumulatively, (from left to right). We have added the ‘metaphysical skills’ and factors that predispose our individual resourcefulness. We will look at the research process by which the skills were identified, and then discuss them, and their functions, in more detail in the next two sections.

The research story

Early research by Carkhuff and Berenson identified the ‘attending’ skills as the precursor to effective helping (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, p. 20). The attending skills included the skills of ‘physically attending’, ‘observing’ and ‘listening’. These skills, collectively, provide the means of ‘getting information in’. Poor perception in this ‘pre-helping’ phase can only lead to ineffective responses in the helping process. Carkhuff continues to include observing and listening as part of the attending skills (Carkhuff 2000) and yet, in outlining their research findings, Berenson (1976) used the term ‘Vigilance Skills’ to embrace the three discrete skills of ‘attending’, ‘observing’ and ‘listening’—a distinction that we make in this text. The research story, outlined below, is noteworthy.

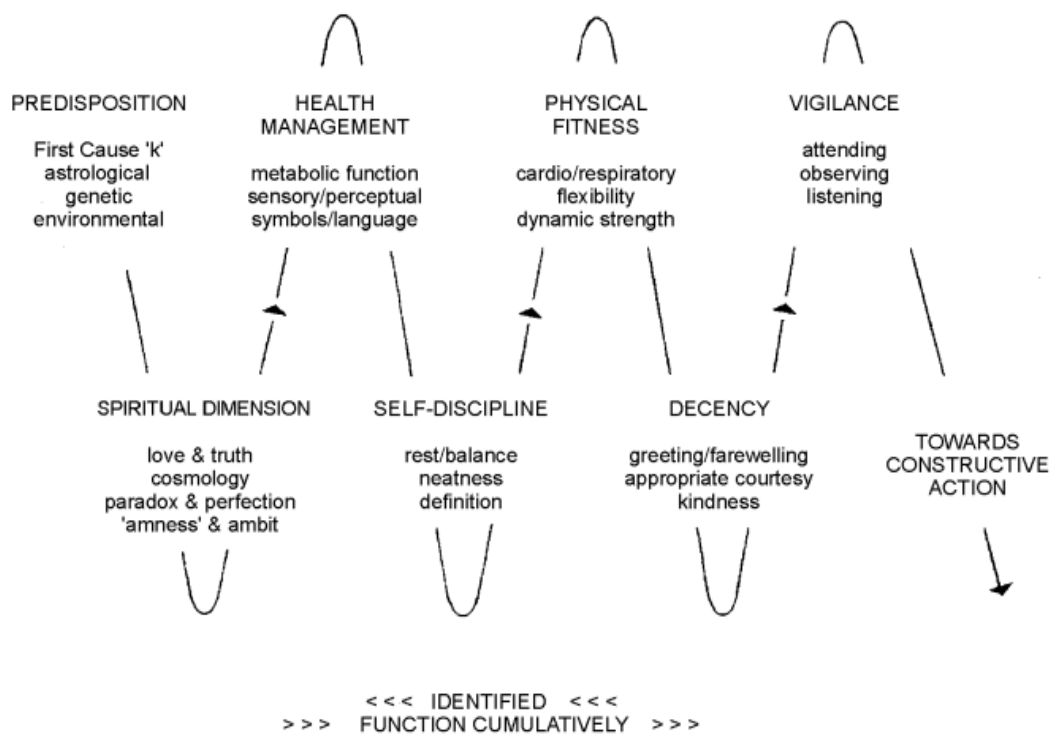


Figure 7. The personal skills ‘squiggle’ showing the elements in the areas that cumulatively contribute to personal resourcefulness.

During some of the early training programs, there were reports that the attending behaviours of some students had negative consequences. For example, trainees on the receiving end of such ‘attentiveness’ felt exploited by being ogled, scrutinised, or judged—rather than being supported and valued. This feedback led to a closer study of attending behaviours. Berenson and Banks subsequently identified forty variables, some of which accounted for the creating of negative experiences, and some of which communicated caring and availability for ‘good purposes’ (Berenson 1976). Since the purpose of the studies was to discover ‘what works best’, the constructive variables, when analysed, factored down to three distinct areas: (1) the manner of ‘greeting’ (and farewelling); (2) the appropriateness of the ‘politeness’ shown; and (3) the quality of ‘kindness’ shown. Together, these three factors were called the ‘Decency’ skills.

As further observations of the helping process were made, it was found that the overall effectiveness of some individuals tapered off as the work day progressed, or as pressures mounted. This decline was traceable to the lack of helpers’ reserve energy. For this reason, the research shifted its focus to the role of ‘fitness’ in helping. Three areas were shown to be important: (1) the level of cardiac/respiratory functioning was seen as an index of endurance; (2) the degree of physical flexibility as pointer to personal flexibility; and (3) dynamic strength as an indicator of reserve energy. Together these three elements made up the ‘Physical Fitness’ skills.

When it became known that fitness enhanced helpfulness, some helpers went overboard to the extent of being ‘self-indulgent’ about their jogging and ‘work-outs’, and so the research focus shifted to look at how people set personal boundaries to manage themselves (Berenson 1976). An analysis showed that effective people: (1) ensured that they took regular, adequate rest, and maintained balance between their activities at work, at home, in the community, and for personal recreation; (2) were well organised; and (3) had good vocabularies. This led to descriptions of the ‘rest/balance’ skills, ‘neatness’ skills and ‘definition’ skills which together made up the ‘Self-discipline’ skills—so called because of the disciplined self-management required to develop and sustain them.

The last area to be looked at related to the ‘Health-management’ skills. It became a logical and necessary area to consider in the light of the fact that some helpers were seen to have blind spots in their personal discipline when it came to self-care. Three factors emerged as having particular relevance. The first related to metabolic function, particularly in terms of diet and the use of pharmaceutical and social drugs. The second area related to cortical functioning—particularly in relation to symbols and language. The third element relates to sensory/perceptual functioning which focuses on the need to ensure that the fidelity of our eyes and ears is maintained.

We have included two areas in Figure 7 that were not covered by the original researchers—the ‘Spiritual dimension’ and ‘Predisposition’. We did so because, like Berenson and Banks, we were keen to account for differences in overall effectiveness that were attributable to personal resourcefulness. Our elements in the ‘Spiritual’ area were derived from ongoing observance of people. Others have confirmed the appropriateness and relevance of our observations. Many people have reported a kind of ‘resonance’ with them—a means which Reaney (1994), a quantum physicist, sees as a legitimate way of ‘knowing’ a truth. The dimensions are discussed more fully below, and in the following chapter. For now, it seems sufficient to say that a loving, honest person who is fully present, with high ideals and global perspectives is likely to be more helpful than one whose personal qualities are lacking in these dimensions.

Our ‘bottom line’ inclusion, in Figure 7, relates to the predisposing factors that account for individual differences. One such powerful factor that helps to shape adult competence is the range of environmental influences that have sculpted the life during developmental years. These were briefly mentioned on page 41 in the previous chapter. Another obvious factor is the unique genetic inheritance that each life has. This was taken as a ‘given’ in the previous chapter, but counsellors in training need to undertake specific sociological and psychological studies to appreciate the predisposing ‘contexts’ from which they, themselves, operate and from which clients present themselves.

The ‘astrological’ dimension is harder to validate as a legitimate pre-determinant of latent potential, but it is hard to dismiss the recognisable profiles that trained astrologers can generate from an ephemeris—given that they have accurate information about birth dates, times and locations. It is an area of study that is known to provide helpful tools to those who respect its boundaries, and who give little credence to the ‘stars’ columns in popular magazines. It is still a grey area for many, particularly for some fundamentalist Christians who see astrology as evil occultism—yet affirm the literal verity of the Magi’s pilgrimage to Bethlehem. Such black and white makes for very streaky grey!

Our observations of life, and our dealings with people over many decades, lead us to conclude that the predisposing factors of genetic inheritance, environmental experiences and probable astrological influences lead to a mindset about the very nature of life itself. We have observed a broad spectrum ranging from: ‘Life’s a shit and you die!’ to: ‘Life is a gift from God, and its purpose is to manifest itself fully to glorify creation’—and many points in between. It is our observation that where one lies on this continuum of belief about ‘First Cause’, is perhaps the fundamental determinant of one’s willingness, and capacity, to contribute to others, and to seek the actualisation of self. We may be wrong.

The skills and their function

The order in which the personal skills were identified can be likened to the peeling of an onion. Each new layer moves nearer to the core of the onion—towards the personal ‘me’. It is that core that ultimately characterises one’s foundational ‘person-hood’, and determines the level of one’s personal resourcefulness. The skills that express this personal resourcefulness function from the core towards the periphery of the ‘onion’—from left to right in Figure 7, on page 49. Their cumulative effect is that:

- the predisposing influences help determine the values we hold;
- our values influence the level of care that we apply to personal health;
- our level of health contributes to the level of discipline we can tolerate;
- our level of self-discipline is critical to the maintenance of our fitness;
- our level of fitness provides the energy required to interact with others effectively and decently;
- the level of our decency influences the range and nature of things that we attend to.

The significance of this chain is easily seen. We can only interact effectively with the people, events and other phenomena to which we have attended. We take the risk of being ‘clobbered’ by people, events, and other phenomena to which we are non-attentive.

There is value in looking more closely at the elements involved in this chain.

The predisposing factors

Personal resourcefulness flows from what we do with what we are given by way of genetic inheritance; the time and place where we were born; and the environmental factors that have influenced our growth and development. These factors predispose, rather than predetermine, what 'shape' our life may become. They tend to facilitate or constrain the choices that we make. Any negative, predisposing influences can be moderated, but their management is much less tangible, and much harder than, say, the 'day to day' management of a fitness program. Genetic disadvantages can be improved with surgery, prosthetic aids, or pharmaceutical intervention. It is beneficial to understand, accept, and work with the way our brain's 'wiring' predetermines our preferred ways of recouping energy, gathering information, making decisions and establishing comfortable levels of structure (Briggs Myers & Myers 1992). Environmentally induced disadvantages can be overcome through effective counselling, religious conversion, or some other significant life event. For example, there are frequent reports of people having 'near-death' experiences who live, thereafter, with revised perspectives and more constructive behaviours following their 'second chance'. Study of these factors are the provinces of psychology, sociology, biology, astrology, and theology.

The spiritual dimension

The quality of our life in the spiritual dimension predisposes our approach to higher order skills. The spiritual dimension may be seen as values held, or rituals undertaken, but it can also be seen in 'skills' terms when spiritual energy is translated into action. Chapter four discusses ways of discerning five different levels of effectiveness in the expression of such action. To get a flavour of these skills, consider the following behaviours that we believe characterise 'level 5' behaviour in the spiritual dimension. At that level, effective people:

- express love, compassionately, without desire for reward, and receive gifts of love, unconditionally; even when such gifts may be imperfect;
- pursue truths worth living by, and if needs be, worth dying for;
- live in such harmony with 'the Cosmos' that there are net energy gains;
- synthesise apparently irreconcilable paradoxes so that 'antagonistic' elements can be reframed in 'complementary' terms;
- pursue visions that are beyond contemporary excellence;
- live constructively in the focused present without the constraint of one's history, or distraction from unrealistic, future hopes;
- maintain an open-mindedness that is able to embrace all phenomena in one's thoughts, actions, and interactions.

Health-management skills

The health-management skills optimise physical well-being. Such management is our own responsibility in partnership with appropriate health professionals. Research in this area highlighted three areas for self-management: basic metabolism, sensory/perceptual processes and symbolic/language skills (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, p. 250).

Metabolic processes

Understanding our basic metabolism requires an understanding of physiology that may be pursued formally or informally. A basic understanding will lead to better personal

choices when consulting a doctor, or assessing the credibility of the myriad of magazine articles that seek our discipleship. Three areas need to be managed to optimise healthy metabolic functioning: the physical environment, diet, and drug use.

The physical environment

There are limitations to the extent that we can upgrade our physical environments without political lobbying and periodic voluntary community clean-ups, but there are areas that we **can** manage to our advantage. For instance, we can breathe purer air if we live in an area with trees to convert carbon dioxide to oxygen—away from heavily trafficked roads. We (in Australia) can install rainwater tanks to provide unchlorinated drinking water whose quality can be optimised by restricting its input (with readily available plumbing devices) until sufficient rain has fallen to wash the air, and our roofs and gutters. Further enhancement can be made by filtering the tank water through any of a wide range of readily available devices. We can minimise any possible detrimental effects of electro-magnetic radiation by using hands free mobile phones. Kinesiologists highlight the detrimental effects of fluorescent lighting. They also note that the anapaestic rhythmic pattern (having two unstressed beats followed by a stressed beat) of some rock music has a detrimental effect on the thymus whereas the Beatles rhythm does not (Diamond 1983, pp. 159–161). We can renew body, mind and spirit by tending a garden patch; by insulating against noise; and by bathing in music to inspire, excite, stimulate, or mollify as our needs dictate. The practices of meditation and the use of aromatherapies claim to be beneficial to the internal environments of some people. We need to ensure that ‘renewal’ practices do not spill over into indulgences that limit the expression of our resourcefulness.

Diet

One of the trickiest contemporary domestic tasks is to provide a balanced diet of wholesome foods to match the metabolic needs of the range of body types that may be found in any household. Research that may have warned against ingesting certain food types is often countermanded by later research that extols the virtues of the forbidden item. Farming practices tend to favour selective fertilisers to accelerate plant growth but, at the same time, diminish the stock of trace elements in the planet’s topsoil to the extent that mineral and other oral supplements may be required. Advertisers tend to mobilise a kind of guilt if parents fail to provide supplements that may do little more than make their progeny’s urine more expensive than it needs to be. Debates rage about the benefits, and otherwise, of genetically modified foods. The ‘managers’ of our kitchens have tough decisions to make in order to keep us healthy. The choices are individual. Related information is diverse. The skill is in finding a way to choose the best balance, of the least contaminated foods, to meet individual health needs, of people with known metabolic functioning, by ongoing monitoring, and the taking of supplements as required—all without going overboard—yet still allowing the ‘right’ to have periodic guilt-free binges! That’s as hard to do as the last sentence was long! We have included recent references, without prejudice, that may be of value and interest.

Drug use

Most people are aware of the benefits and harm that can occur from taking both social and pharmaceutical drugs. Soon after concerns about drug abuse became widespread, a government handbook (*The use and abuse of drugs*, 1970) noted that ‘Generally speaking, any chemical substance, natural or synthetic, which alters the structure or function of the body may be labelled a drug’. When we recognise that laxatives, corn pads, sunburn cream and vitamin pills all fall within this definition we are less likely to

be fearful of the word ‘drug’, and be freer to make informed personal choices about the substances that we ingest. The subject is too broad, the information bank too vast, and the decisions too personal to be adequately discussed in this context. The resourceful person will check allergic responses in food preservatives, seek information about the side effects (or addictive nature) of prescribed drugs, and consider alternatives that may have fewer side effects, or may take longer to act. They will consider the long term impact on their metabolism. They will choose stimulants when desirable, sedatives when necessary, and hallucinogens only if, and when, some beneficial use is found. The skill is in making informed choices that will enhance physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual well-being. The resourceful person will choose wisely.

Sensory and perceptual processes

The resourceful person is well aware that to interact effectively with others, and to avoid personal danger, one needs to be able to see and hear what is happening around them with clarity and accuracy. It follows that a management strategy will include both protective and remedial aspects. Conscious effort will be made to wear appropriate protective equipment in relevant industrial, domestic, sporting, or recreational pursuits. The remedial strategy will involve comprehensive eye and ear checks at regular intervals that are negotiated with an optician or audiologist. In short, we keep up with Father Time by upgrading optical prescriptions and by turning up the volume of our hearing aids—right up until his inevitable scythe strikes!

Symbolic and language skills

Constructive expressions of personal resourcefulness require effective communication that may use either graphic representation of some kind—diagrams, charts, pictures and the like—or language—written or spoken words. Spatial and language skills are formally trained throughout one’s schooling but, subsequently, are often taken for granted. We are tragically reminded of their significance, from time to time, when we see brain-damaged accident victims or stroke patients struggling to relearn to communicate. Most people that we know are grateful for the research that suggests that one way of minimise the likelihood of having a stroke is to keep our blood thin with a daily dose of red wine. A useful, fun way to maintain spatial acuity is to do jigsaw puzzles, ‘spot the difference’, ‘sudoku’, and similar puzzle book games. Similarly, language development and recall can be honed by doing crossword puzzles, cryptograms and the like. Such exercising helps maintain our facility to take in data and communicate our meaning.

Self-discipline skills

The self-discipline skills ensure that one is sufficiently well organised to manage life constructively. Research in this area highlighted three areas for self-discipline: ‘rest and balance’, ‘neatness skills’ and ‘definition skills’ (Berenson 1976).

Rest and balance

Many helpful, but undisciplined, people either eventually burn out, or become progressively resentful that they are ‘everybody’s dogsbody’. The process may take several decades. We know a few zealous contributors whose compulsive helpfulness is unbridled. They have been taken aback when told that helpers need to learn to say ‘no’ to requests that would limit regular, adequate sleep, or create ongoing imbalance between the times spent between work, home and family, community involvement, and personal recreation. Indeed, some see this perspective as not only uncharitable but as downright ‘self-indulgent’. We have observed (and experienced) the erosive effects on personal resourcefulness through deprivation of sleep, and the over-emphasis in any one area of work, family, community or personal pursuits. The disciplined helper will

ensure that sufficient sleep, rest breaks (during repetitive or arduous tasks) and balance are planned for—so that there is greater effectiveness, fulfilment and beneficial outcome in all undertakings. There is no indulgence in saying a considered ‘no’ in order to be fully present in other events that merit a well-considered ‘yes’. The disciplined helper has the willingness and flexibility to respond to crisis situations, but also has the good sense to reject a ‘crisis mentality’. They are able to maintain fires in their bellies, but they do not burn out. They sow no seeds for future resentment that others’ needs robbed them of precious family time, restricted their career opportunities, stifled their community involvement, or denied them time for renewal in pursuit of personal hobbies or interests.

Neatness skills

The term ‘neatness’, in this context, is to do with the discipline involved in storing things so that they can be easily retrieved. Applied neatness skills save time, minimise frustration, and exemplify good organisation. Some everyday examples will serve to make the point. Each person’s socks are stored, in matched pairs, in a particular drawer in their own bedroom—not left in a pile, with other clean laundry, on a ‘spare’ chair in the lounge room. Household accounts are filed systematically in a labelled area in a filing cabinet—not bundled into the shoe-box that was last seen on top of either the kitchen cabinet or one of the wardrobes. Car keys are stored in a specific, predetermined place—not on the table or shelf near where the dog greeted the driver on return home, nor on the sink or TV where a loving spouse gave their ‘welcome home’ kiss. Tools are on shadow boards. Passports are stored in safes. Computer files are stored in systematically developed, logically linked, logically labelled folders. Equipment handbooks are filed for easy retrieval when one forgets how to operate a sophisticated technological device. ‘Neat’ organisation facilitates personal effectiveness and efficiency.

Definition skills

The definition skills relate to the ‘labels’ we are able to apply to phenomena—things, events, emotions, and so on, so that our communications can be accurate, unambiguous and comprehensible. In a sense, as counsellors, we need to develop a variety of vocabularies in order to relate empathically to a diverse range of clients. The discipline is in checking out the actual names for the ‘whatsits’, ‘thingummybobs’, ‘doo-flickies’ or ‘what-d’ye-call-its’ that may slip into the conversation from time to time. Counsellors need to hone these skills particularly in the area of affective adjectives—feeling words. Over the years, we have learned that many students have considerable difficulty in being able to find a matching word for the feelings that others express verbally or non-verbally. The significance of this will be addressed in Chapters 7 and 8.

Physical fitness skills

The physical fitness skills generate and maintain the physical energy required for constructive living, learning and working. Maintaining fitness is a lifelong activity. Research in this area highlighted three areas for physical fitness: ‘cardio-respiratory efficiency’, ‘flexibility’ and ‘dynamic strength’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, p. 250).

Cardio-respiratory efficiency

Most readers will be familiar with the benefits of aerobic training that helps to: strengthen the heart muscle fibre; enlarge the muscles used in respiration; increase the number, and efficiency, of capillaries in the lungs and body generally; and improve the elasticity of artery walls. Such training improves the efficiency of the intake and distribution of oxygen to the body, and the collection and discharge of carbon dioxide so that the body’s endurance is enhanced, and recovery from fatigue accelerated. The

efficiency of this system is a major determinant of one's energy base. Different people prefer different ways of enhancing such functioning. These include jogging, cycling, swimming, and aerobic groups, to name a few. Readers not currently addressing this area of personal resourcefulness are encouraged to check out their needs, options and fitness 'baseline' at a local gymnasium. In his research, Banks showed that counsellor fitness is critical to good counselling (cover note on Collingwood & Carkhuff 1976).

Flexibility

Flexibility exercises are designed to stretch muscles, ligaments and tendons. They not only increase the range of movement of the body's joints, but also increase the supply of nutrients for the health and growth of bones. One interesting thing to note about physical flexibility is the finding that it correlates significantly with emotional and intellectual flexibility (Berenson 1976). In other words, having supple joints is somehow linked to an ability to accommodate a diversity of information and 'get your head' around it, and 'follow' the variable mood swings that counsellors frequently encounter in their clients. It seems evident that exercises like Tai Chi or the practice of Yoga are likely to enhance one's personal flexibility.

Dynamic strength

Strength exercises, such as weights training, are designed to increase the size and tone of the muscles of the body. The benefits that flow are increased endurance with greater 'reserves'; better posture and balance; the dynamism to act upon the world; and an overall sense of well being. Strong muscles act in concert with flexible joints to increase dexterity. It is recommended that in commencing a fitness program one seeks an assessment from a trainer at a reputable gymnasium, and negotiates a training schedule that is in harmony with personal preferences.

Decency skills

The decency skills show respect, and express appropriate care for others. Research in this area highlighted three important areas: 'greeting and farewelling'; 'appropriate courtesy'; and 'kindness' (Berenson 1976). It has already been mentioned that the personal skills function cumulatively. This is more clearly seen as one starts to interact with others. The decency skills 'set the stage' to optimise mutually beneficial outcomes from current and future interactions. The decency skills are perceived as non-authentic if not backed by caring values. They are harder to sustain when in poor health, if disorganised or de-energised.

Greeting and farewelling

The way we greet others signals the extent to which we want to connect with them, and gives others an initial impression of ourselves, from which they may determine their willingness to be involved with us. In the counselling waiting room, our initial greeting may well trigger the 'sizing-up' questions in the mind of a new client: Who **are** you? Are you 'real'? What are you offering? What is behind all the trimmings? and, ultimately, Do I want to get involved with you? Effective greeting affirms our genuine willingness to be involved, affirms the intrinsic worth of the other, and establishes a positive base for trust to develop.

The skills of greeting involve: (1) giving the other full, authentic, attention (the micro-skills of which are spelled out in Chapter 6); (2) introducing oneself and indicating the way you prefer to be called; and (3) asking the other person what they prefer to be called. This is the initial link from which social pleasantries can follow, mutual expectations can be expressed, orientation to a venue can occur, and agendas can be

negotiated. Greetings at subsequent meetings can be enhanced by linking with something known to be personally relevant for the other, such as: ‘No doubt you would be pretty pleased with they way your footy team came from behind to win last Saturday’. It is common practice, but worth mentioning that greeting expected guests at night starts by switching on the front door light, and maybe illuminating your house number.

There are a range of situations that call for ‘farewelling’. Some relate to people that we see on a daily basis where a simple expression of goodwill is all that is required. Farewelling from events, such as regular business meetings, can be enhanced by sharing a positive aspect of the meeting that involved the other, such as: ‘I look forward to hearing your progress report on the Smith project, Harry—all the best for now!’

Put simply, effective farewelling ensures that the ‘door is left ajar’ for the next greeting. More thought needs to be given to ‘ceremonial’ farewells. These may include retirement, graduation, migration, or funerals where appropriate protocols may be formalised. In closing a counselling relationship with a client it is appropriate to summarise key aspects of the journey, congratulate successful progress, assure willingness for future contact if needed, and celebrate the ‘bon voyage’ in a way that has significance for the client.

Appropriate courtesy

In multicultural Australia it is important to be aware of the courtesies that pertain in different cultures so that our interactions with others will be appropriate. The same, of course, is true when travelling abroad. We have found it helpful to firstly observe the way people from an unfamiliar culture interact themselves, then share our observations, and then invite them to ‘teach us as we go’. On greeting another we might then say thing like: ‘I notice that when you greet each other you kiss each other on both cheeks. I’m not sure if that greeting is just for family and close friends, or whether it is appropriate for me to do so or not’. The skill seems to be to take the lead from the other when appropriate (when you are in their setting) and to give the lead when appropriate (when they are in your setting) so long as there is an apparent willingness to share perspectives, and learn from each other. Such exchanges break the ice, enrich the relationship, liberate authenticity, and validate our nationhood.

Appropriate courtesy also involves the keeping of the protocols in a wide range of settings—from no thongs in the pub dining room, to the dignified procedures and proper dress code when one ‘fronts up’ at Government House to receive an OAM!

Kindness

The meaning of kindness, in this context, goes far beyond the dictionary definitions. Here the focus is on having the willingness, and the ability, to **suspend** one’s own needs, concerns and preoccupations—in the moment—so that one’s resources are fully present for another. This notion is critical for counsellors in many ways. It enables one to be fully attentive to others. It minimises the likelihood of getting ‘hooked’ by some aspect of a client’s world that parallels some vulnerable or unresolved aspect of the counsellor’s own world. Ceasing such ‘suspension’ (after each interview) makes it less likely that counsellors will ‘take home’ issues raised by clients. Such suspension is like an ‘internal gate’ through which one enters, without clutter, in order to relate empathically to another, and through which one subsequently exits to reclaim one’s immediate person-hood. David has a clear recollection of practicing the ‘attending’ skills whilst training in America. His ‘client’ was a very attractive female. His internal experience was ‘Geez you’re sexy!’. In that moment, he recognised that he was there for himself—indecent attending! He has since adopted a phrase that triggers his ability to (almost

always) suspend himself to attend to others for their sake. He simply say to himself: ‘In this moment, I empty myself of all but love for ...’, and he names the client in his heart.

Vigilance skills

The vigilance skills ensure that one accurately sees and hears what is happening so that any subsequent action for self or others is based on reality—not misconceptions. Research in this area identified three discrete skills: ‘attending’, ‘observing’ and ‘listening’ (Berenson 1976). As indicated in Chapter 1, all three are often described together as ‘attending’ (Carkhuff 2000). The micro-skills of attending, observing and listening will be covered in detail in Chapters 6–8 respectively.

Summary

This chapter described the research that identified the personal skills that help to express personal resourcefulness. It put the view that such skills are influenced by the values held by the person concerned, and by their developmental history and genetic inheritance. It suggested that the development and maintenance of personal skills is a life long activity. It pointed out the cumulative relationship between them, such that, if one is attuned to spiritual values, maintains a healthy lifestyle, is disciplined, fit, decent and vigilant; then one will have the perspective, capacity, energy, interest, and ability to take in information from outside oneself. Such information can then be used constructively (in conjunction with higher order skills of responding, personalising and initiating) to benefit others, and oneself.

This chapter is no more than an overview of some the parameters of resourcefulness. You are urged to stay abreast of developments that have personal application for you, particularly in the environmental, health, and fitness areas where new information is frequently being published in books and journals, broadcast on radio and television, and accessible on the internet.

Reviewing personal skills

Two activities are offered to assist in reviewing personal skills. The first relates to your personal skills, and the second is an exercise in consolidating recall of material covered in this chapter.

Reviewing your personal skills can be undertaken at a time of your choice, or at a time allocated by your tutor. To do so, fill out the questionnaire, in Appendix I on page 452, reflect on the results, and record any areas that you intend to work on. You may choose to defer any action until after working through ‘action planning’ in Chapter 17, or you may decide to work on specific areas immediately. If so, the references on health and fitness, below, may provide some helpful strategies to assist you.

Exercise 1, on the following page, provides an opportunity to test your recall of the concepts described in this chapter by simply filling in the blank spaces. A space is provided for any personal notes that you may wish to make.

Exercise 1: Reviewing personal resourcefulness

The Personal Skills are:	The Skill Dimensions are	Notes:
PREDISPOS_T__N	FI_ST _AUSE AST_OLOGI__L GE_ET_C EN__ONME_TAL	
_P__T_AL	L_VE _RUT_ COSM__OGY PA_AD_X P_RF_CT__N AM-N__S AM_IT	
HE__TH M__GEM__T	__TAB_LIC S_NSORY/P_RC_PTUAL SY__LS & _ANGU_GE	
S_LF-_ISC_PL_NE	R__T & B_L_NC_ NEA__ESS D_F_N_TION	
PHY____L FI____S_	CARD__R_SP____TORY F__XIB____TY DYN_M_C ST____T_	
_ECE_CY	GR____ING/_ARE____LIN_ A_P_O_RIA_E COUR_ESY KI__N__S	
_IGI_A__E	__TEND____ _BSER__NG L_S_E_I_G	

Answers to Exercise 1 appears on page 480.

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Personal values

Preamble

Chapter three suggested that the quality of one's personal resourcefulness is expressed by personal skills, whose effectiveness is linked to developmental influences, and to the personal values held. It is interesting to note that, during the 1960's and 70's, the conventional wisdom required that helping professional practitioners should be 'value free'. It was against that trend that Carkhuff (1977) declared that the values that drove his work were, **Love** to give reason for contribution, **Truth** to give substance to contribution, and **Excellence** to enhance contribution. This chapter looks at additional values, within the physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual dimensions. Their full expression adds to personal fulfilment, and to the nature and quality of interaction with others. The discussion seeks to embrace the different meanings of the term 'value' so that the meaning and significance of each will not only have application to one's person-hood, but will provide useful windows through which counsellors can see ways of assisting clients assess the 'me' in them (a function of the personalising skills covered in Chapter 13). An exercise to review one's personal profile in these and related dimensions appears as Appendix II on page 458.

Values and human effectiveness

A broad sifting of the Macquarie Dictionary definitions of the word 'value' separates the 'commercial' sense of the word from the 'non-commercial'. The commercial aspects that relate to 'price' and 'trading merit' are of little relevance to this discussion. However, a distillation of the non-commercial aspects gives a multifaceted view of 'personal values'. The **general** view relates to things that are respected for their desirability, usefulness, excellence or importance. The **ethical** view relates to qualities that are desirable as a means, or as an end in itself. The **mathematical** view relates to the magnitude or measurement of a quality. The **sociological** view relates to 'the things of social life' that may elicit either positive or negative feelings, such as 'freedom' or 'cruelty'. A range of values that fall within the 'non-commercial' aspects of the dictionary definition are listed within the physical, emotional, and intellectual dimensions in Table 5 on page 62, and within the spiritual, and social dimensions shown in Table 6, on page 78. Each value within these dimensions is briefly discussed below.

DIMENSIONS of HUMAN EFFECTIVENESS

Table 5

LEVELS of FUNCTIONING	Impact	EMOTIONAL			INTELLECTUAL							
		Fitness	Motivation	Interpersonal relating	Learning	Teaching	Information relating		Representing information	Individual processing	Interpersonal processing	Inter-dependent processing
							Conceptual	Operational				
5. VERY EFFECTIVE (actualising leader)	++	stamina	mission	initiating	act	individualise instruction	objectives or technologistsing	standards	MD multi-dimensional nested model	technologising	go	inter-dependent acting
4. EFFECTIVE (contributor)	+	intensity	self-fulfilment	personalising	understand	set goals	applications	conditions	ND nested dimensional model	operationalising	merge	inter-dependent understanding
3. MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE (participant)	0	adaptability	achievement	responding	explore	diagnose	principles	processes	3D three dimensional model	synthesising	give	inter-dependent exploring
2. INEFFECTIVE (observer)	-	survival	incentive	attending	involved	develop content	concepts	components	2D two dimensional matrix	analysing	get	inter-dependent goaling
1. VERY INEFFECTIVE (detractor)	--	sickness	avoidance	non-attentive	uninvolved	unprepared	facts	functions	1D single dimensional list	goaling	non-engagement	non-engagement

Table 5. Summary of the different levels of effectiveness of the qualities, behaviours, outcomes or skills that are valued for their importance, utility or influence in contributing to human effectiveness within the physical, emotional and intellectual dimensions of human experience. The table is drawn from *Toward Actualizing Human Potential* by Robert R. Carkhuff, Copyright © 1981, and *The Freedom Doctrine* by Robert R. Carkhuff & Bernard G. Berenson, Copyright © 2003. Used by permission of the publisher, HRD Press, Amherst, MA, 800-822-2801, www.hrdpress.com.

The dimensions in Table 5 were developed by Carkhuff (1981, p. 98; 2000, p. 260) and Carkhuff and Berenson (2003, p. 86). The dimensions in Table 6, on page 78, were developed by Sanders and Kranz (1987). The values within these dimensions will be discussed, column by column, at five different levels of functionality.

The 'levels of functioning' columns (in both tables) contain two sets of five associated, but discrete, descriptors that embrace the 'mathematical' and 'sociological' aspects of values. The first set of five descriptors, from 'very effective' down to 'very ineffective', provides a qualitative measure of each value as its particular row intersects each column in the table. This (mathematical) measure denotes an impact from 'plus plus' through to 'minus minus'. The second set of descriptors, from 'actualising leader' down to 'detractor' are terms that sociologists might use to classify groups of individuals. These (sociological) classes are likely to evoke positive feelings of admiration for contributors and actualisers, and negative judgments of observers and detractors. The descriptors link as follows.

Level five skills are **very effective**. This is where achievers excel. They push the boundaries of their learning towards the **actualising** of their potential. They get there primarily by having been contributive to others. Effective leaders function at this level.

Level four is characterised by **effective** functioning. Competency at this level is **contributive**. People at this level not only participate in life but they add to it, both for themselves and others.

Level three is the level of **minimal effectiveness**. At this level people are sufficiently competent to 'get by' reasonably well. They **participate** in activities but, on average, have virtually no impact on events—there is neither net contribution nor detraction.

Level two typifies **ineffective** living. People functioning at this level are more competent than those at level one, but they tend to **observe** life rather than participate in it. They either 'sit on the fence', or criticise what they have observed.

Level one behaviours are **very ineffective**. People functioning at this level are viewed negatively. They are seen as **detractors**. They sap others' energy, and generally make things worse for themselves and others. They are frequently on the take.

The flow, from level 1 to 5, is the direction in which competencies develop, and that in which any remedial action needs to occur. When all columns have been discussed the profiles to each level will be considered, and some related implications highlighted. The cameos are not intended to be exhaustive explanations of the elements.

Dimensions of effectiveness

The physical dimension

Whilst there are a number of elements within the physical dimension, fitness is seen as the critical factor because it is a general index of one's wellbeing. This is good news for those of us who are glad that physical appearance is not the arbiter!

Fitness

Our level of fitness provides the energy for living. Fitness relates to the outcomes we achieve from our approach to overall health care. It is, perhaps, the area where we can

increase personal functioning most tangibly, but maintaining fitness also requires strong discipline when activities from other dimensions demand our attention. Lapses in fitness will deplete emotional and intellectual resources in the short term and, if not maintained, will significantly diminish long term effectiveness in other dimensions. Different levels of functioning are considered below.

Level 1: Sickness

The term sickness, in this context, relates to the state of being where one lacks sufficient energy to attend to one's own needs. There is dependency on others which, in functional terms, is a detraction—even though those attending the sick may do so both willingly and lovingly. The notion of detraction is more socially visible when people appear to be slothful rather than ill. People at this level are physically very ineffective.

Level 2: Survival

People functioning at level 2 tend to 'kick-start' the day with 'coffee and a fag' (or other non-nutritious ritual) and manage to limp lethargically through a day's work with extended breaks. They make it back home after work, and might well watch 'the telly' until they shuffle off to bed! They are physically ineffective.

Level 3: Adaptability

At level 3, people have enough energy to work well during the day. They can deal with contingencies that may require increased effort whilst at work, but they are tired at the end of day. They choose not to get too involved in evening activities, but are likely to manage non-energetic outings or activities at weekends, or on rostered days off.

Level 4: Intensity

People functioning at level 4 are physically effective. They have energy to work well regardless of the nature of their job. They have energy reserves for 'out of hours' community involvement, recreation, and play. They are likely to have a systematic exercise program at home, the park, or the local gym. They are physically effective.

Level 5: Stamina

People at level 5 are very effective in terms of their energy. They can manage rigorous work with ease, and have rapid recovery rates after playing strenuous sport, and the like. They have energy for significant community involvement, recreation and play, with plenty in reserve. They are likely to adhere to strict exercise programs where they closely monitor their heart-rate, body fat percentages, and the like, to stay in peak condition for their age.

The emotional dimension

Two factors were identified by the foundational research in the emotional dimension. They relate to personal motivation, and the way that we relate to others. Other factors may yet emerge.

Motivation

Our motivation flows from internal 'prompts' that give us reason to act the way we do. Motivation reflects the incentives that 'drive' us. It is valued for the impetus it gives to 'dare' to act. Different levels of functioning are considered below.

Level 1: Avoidance

At level 1, activity is undertaken to avoid punishment or criticism. An example might be a group of workers who are having a ‘quiet bludge’, but who rally when the boss comes within earshot—simply to avoid getting ‘caught’ and ‘blasted’. They function very ineffectively in terms of motivation.

Level 2: Incentive

At level 2, the dominant reason for working is for monetary or other rewards. This is not to say that people do not perform satisfactorily even though the task may be seen as a chore. Workers at this level often have strong affiliations with their trade union. This, in turn, is not to say that dedicated unionists may not be motivated above this level.

Level 3: Achievement

At level 3, people strive to do well at the tasks they are required to undertake. Even if their tasks may be not personally fulfilling, people at this level have little incentive to seek work that would be more personally satisfying. They stick to what they do well.

Level 4: Self-fulfilment

At level 4, people are driven to engage in vocations where they find personal fulfilment and a sense of contribution in the nature of the tasks undertaken. They are competent in achieving their tasks. Financial remuneration is not their dominant motive.

Level 5: Mission

At level 5, the incentive is to push boundaries towards the actualising of one’s unique potential. Contribution is expanded with a passion that characterises a sense of ‘mission’ that undertakes tasks regardless of the cost, or personal return. Beneficial initiatives are undertaken ‘come what may’! Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, and Jesus are notables that exemplify this level—but it can be anyone!

Interpersonal relating

The element of inter-personal relating involves the effectiveness with which we connect and interact with others, and how well we process information—so that subsequent actions will be relevant, beneficial and successful. Table 5 (page 62) shades this column to highlight its significance, together with ‘learning’, as the vehicle that enables success through life’s journey. What follows are simple cameos of the skills that are detailed in Chapters 6 to 17 in this text. Different levels of functioning are considered below.

Level 1: Non-attentive

Non-attentive people, at level 1, fail to accurately see and hear what is happening around them. They create crises that detract from others who subsequently need to ‘sort them out’ in some way or another. They remain dysfunctional until they learn to be vigilant.

Level 2: Attending

At level 2, people have good attending, observing and listening skills with which to gather information accurately. They are functionally ineffective, however, if they do not know how to process such information constructively, or if they choose to remain as ‘observers’ without participating with others.

Level 3: Responding

People who are functioning at level 3, are able gather information accurately with focused attentiveness, observation and listening. They process information in such a

way that they can communicate an accurate understanding of an issue from another's point of view. In short, they can respond to others empathically. As valuable as this may be to help others 'get stuff off their chest', these people are only minimally effective, functionally, if they are not able to contribute beyond this level of helpfulness.

Level 4: Personalising

People who are fully attentive and empathically responsive, can contribute effectively to others by processing the information that they have seen and heard (in a given dialogue) in a way that enables them (the responder) to succinctly summarise the personal meaning, and the implications, of that information so that the person concerned is able to acknowledge the accuracy of the summary; affirm the legitimacy of the implications; see what they need to do (as a consequence); and accept the responsibility for doing it.

Level 5: Initiating

The very effective person, at level 5, is able to do more than help others clarify **what** they need to do to deal constructively with unresolved issues—they can also help them work out **how** to resolve the issue. They do this by sharing initiatives that help others decide on a preferred approach to achieve their goal, and then help to develop a manageable action plan that will lead to successful goal attainment.

The intellectual dimension

We will consider the intellectual dimension, in Table 5 on page 62, in two 'bites'. The first 'mouthful' considers the areas which have immediate relevance for counsellors: 'learning', 'teaching' and 'conceptual relating'. Conceptual relating is a term that refers to the conceptual knowledge that Carkhuff originally referred to as 'intellectual substance' (1981, p. 98).

The second bite provides an introductory taste of the tools used in the new 'Science of Possibilities' (Carkhuff & Berenson 2000). These tools provide the means to relate to information operationally; represent it with sophisticated models; and systematically process such information to generate new possibilities and new innovations. Processing is undertaken individually, interpersonally, and interdependently. The immediate applications for counselling are less apparent, but there should be an awareness of the emergence of this new science. References are provided for readers who may wish to pursue applications of Possibilities Science in the areas of: education, leadership, organisations, culture, community, or global freedom.

Learning

Learning is the intellectual outcome that occurs when we interact with phenomena (be they people, data, events, or objects). We learn as we relate to them in ways that help us **explore** their attributes, and **understand** their significance for us. We learn still more when we can **act** on such understanding in ways that are relevant and beneficial to us. This area, together with the adjacent 'inter-personal relating' column, (in Table 5) are shaded to highlight their inter-relatedness. For example, during a counselling session, different levels of counsellor skill will enable progressive learning for clients. Nevertheless, learning is not dependent on an **inter**-personal relationship with another. Learning can occur equally well, by oneself, if one involves oneself with a phenomenon, explores its dimensions, understands its significance, and acts appropriately upon that understanding—that is, by systematically processing information **intra**-personally.

Theorists, such as Kolb, (in Litzinger & Osif 1993, p. 79) have identified preferred styles of learning. In simple terms, these relate to the questions that people tend to ask when learning. Some ask ‘what’, some ask ‘why’, some ask ‘what if’, and others ask ‘how’. We raise this here because some teachers interpret this to mean that their teaching should (only) match the learner’s preferred style. Such an approach can lead to ‘random’ learning that leaves gaps that minimise both confidence and competence. Effective learning occurs when all the questions are addressed by systematic processing. For example, random learners may know **what** Pythagoras’s Theorem states without realising **how** it can be easily applied, say to peg out a square lawn patch. Others may know that this is done by tying knots in a loop of string that are three, four and five units apart, and then by driving in pegs at the knots to form a perfect 90 degree angle—without knowing **why**. Effective learning explores all aspects of an issue, understands their implications, and provides the means to act accordingly. The following cameos indicate different levels of effective learning.

Level 1: Uninvolved

At level 1, would-be learners are uninvolved with phenomena (people, events, things or processes), and are not prepared get involved. They tend to avoid new learning. They do not ask questions about the phenomena, apart, perhaps, from ‘why bother?’. They may have been denied stimulation by non-attentive parents. They may have ‘dropped out’ from a school system that kept reminding them how hopeless they were (because their preferred learning style was never engaged). They may have been bruised by life, and be living in a defensive lifestyle mode. They may have a neurological disorder, or they may deliberately chose to avoid involvement for reasons best known to themselves. People who ‘learn’ at level 1 tend to repeat old mistakes. They may continually experience ‘having a bad time’ in life without accepting (or recognising) that their unwillingness to get involved in the business of ‘fixing it’ simply perpetuates it.

Level 2: Involved

At level 2, learners will become involved in areas of potential learning either from their innate curiosity, or from a random stimulus from people, things or events. It is likely that learners will only ask questions about the phenomena that match their preferred style of learning. In the counselling situation, some clients may choose to only become involved (in their unresolved issue) when they sense that the counsellor’s energy, respectfulness and attentiveness are such that they are likely to be ‘safe’ and ‘heard’. The decision to become involved is not taken lightly by people who have previously sought help and failed. Counsellor authenticity and skills are well and truly ‘sussed out’ by bruised people before significant involvement occurs. The same is true of teachers. It is no myth that ‘kids don’t learn from people they don’t like’ (Aspy & Roebuck, 1977).

Level 3: Explore

Learners functioning at level 3 get involved in learning, and are able to explore all aspects of the phenomenon being attended to. If an issue is being discussed with a person who is empathically responsive, or if one is able to relate to it intra-personally, at level 3, then exploration of the issue will be facilitated, and the person concerned will come to learn **what** they feel about the issue and **why** they feel that way. They learn where they stand in relation to that issue.

Level 4: Understand

Effective learners, functioning at level 4, find answers to open-ended questions asked of the material explored: ‘What does it all mean?’ ‘How am I implicated?’ ‘What is missing?’

'Where do I go from here?'. Similar answers may be abstracted by an effective counsellor for clients seeking help, or by the person themselves can if they are competent at using the personalising skills (level 4). Either way, the significance of the exploration will be fully understood, and responsibility for any appropriate action that is required will be assumed at this level.

Level 5: Act

Very effective learning occurs at level 5 when, having identified where one **'is'** (level 3), and where one **wants to be** (level 4), one is able to apply appropriate initiatives to move on from the current circumstance to achieve the desired goal. At this level, **'how'** questions become relevant because their answers provide strategies for action. **'What if'** questions are also useful because they expand the range of options that can be considered for action.

Teaching

Teaching is the process of passing on knowledge to others in ways that enable them to learn. It is valued for the enlightenment that it brings. Counsellors, themselves, frequently become teachers as the 'preferred mode of treatment' (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976) so it is important for them to recognise what characterises functional teaching. Counsellors often teach their clients the communication skills and initiative strategies that they themselves use, as a 'preferred mode of treatment'.

Carkhuff, Berenson and Associates claim that applications of their new 'information processing skills' now make it possible for students to 'control their own learning destinies' (2003, p. 78). This creates new challenges for teachers. Interested readers are referred to Carkhuff & McCune (2000) for more detail.

Level 1: Unprepared

At level 1, teachers fly by the seat of their pants. They are so disorganised, or unfamiliar with content, that they have nothing prepared to teach. They might well settle for a video, or similar, that is randomly available.

Level 2: Develop content

Teachers operating at level 2 are well organised, but rigid. They know their subject and have well prepared materials. They deliver their content as planned. There is no room for deviation or negotiation. There is no real 'connection' with their learners who will more than likely 'switch off'. Students may be criticised by such teachers for being 'reluctant learners'.

Level 3: Diagnose

Teachers working at level 3 will have a well prepared content, but they do not share it until they have 'diagnosed' what their learners already know about a given topic, and where the 'gaps' are. They do this by using their responsive skills, together with a simple exercise and/or discussion to affirm what is known so that they can then 'pitch' the lesson at a level, and pace, that will meet learners' needs. Students value teachers who understand where they are 'coming from'.

Level 4: Set goals

Teachers functioning at level 4 know their students, their gifts, and their difficulties. Armed with this knowledge (together with mastery of their content), such teachers are able to set learning goals with, and for, their students. In one sense the learning goals are

predetermined by the curriculum, but in another sense, skilled teachers use their personalising skills to interact with individual students to ensure that set tasks are manageable for them. Students seldom give up on a challenge that seems manageable and purposeful, especially when individual attention is given.

Level 5: Individualising

At level 5, teachers who have set goals for individual students will make time to individualise instruction when required. Such teachers create ways for learners to ‘make it’. They differentially reward results for potential to be actualised. David well remembers sitting in a presentation from Dr Berenson on this particular topic. Berenson was challenged by a group of teachers who claimed individualising instruction was just not possible. His response was simple. A teacher with a class of 33 must have 33 ways to teach maths. Some walked out muttering. Most stayed. Berenson invited the class to recall the teachers who had truly made a constructive difference in their learning. There was general agreement that there were not many such teachers, but that the memorable ones understood where their learners were coming from, seemed to know what they needed, and took time to help them struggle through their ‘fog’ until there was both clarity and a sense of relevance.

Relating to information conceptually

As mentioned previously on page 66, relating to information conceptually is synonymous with Carkhuff’s notion of ‘intellectual substance’ or as ‘conceptual knowledge’. Knowledge is valued for the enrichment and empowerment that it brings. The first four levels of understanding at a conceptual level are only **about** phenomena (people, data or things). Phenomena can only be ‘acted on’ (be operational) at level 5, the highest level of conceptual understanding. This is not to infer that conceptual definitions are inferior to operational definitions. Rather, it **is** to say that rich, conceptual understanding provides the intimate knowledge required of phenomena before it is possible to fully relate to them in ‘operational’ terms (to be discussed in the ‘second bite’). In the following cameo descriptions, we use knowledge about overhead projectors to exemplify the different levels of conceptual knowledge (from ‘facts’ through to ‘objectives’ (or ‘technologising’ as Carkhuff originally called level 5).

Level 1: Facts

Conceptual information at the factual level merely attaches a ‘label’ to describe who or what a ‘thing’ **is**. This makes it possible to identify and recognise them. For example, it is quite possible to recognise a thing labelled ‘overhead projector’ without knowing anything else about it.

Level 2: Concepts

Conceptual knowledge at level 2 has an appreciation of what a thing **does**. For example, it is possible to know that an overhead projector focuses a light source through an image on a transparent slide that is positioned horizontally, then through a lens onto an angled mirror that projects a magnified image onto a vertical screen. With just that information you might wonder why you would bother having one of them.

Level 3: Principles

Conceptual information at a principle level spells out **why** things are **important**. A statement of principle clarifies the effects and benefits of applying a piece of knowledge. A useful paradigm for such a statement is: If (cause) > then (effect) > so that (benefit).

So, our simple example will state the principle that: **If** we use an overhead projector (the cause), **then** graphical information can be magnified and projected onto a screen (the effect) **so that** large numbers of people can clearly see material that a presenter can immediately share, face to face with an audience, without having to write it on a board or turn their back to the audience (benefit). With this added knowledge it might seem reasonable to have an overhead projector.

Level 4: Applications

Conceptual information at level 4 becomes more effective by defining **where and when** things can be **applied**. Thus, our example expands by detailing that overhead projectors apply in venues of a given size, for a certain number of viewers, with lighting controls to optimise both screen illumination and ease of note-taking, at a time when a live presenter needs to share graphical information, with a minimum of text, that is easily read from the back row. In these circumstances it could make sense to get one.

Level 5: Objectives

At level 5 of conceptual information, we learn the ‘object’ of a phenomenon—what we can ‘do’ with it. The earlier term ‘technologising’ was used to describe how to **do** ‘it’, **use** ‘it’, **make** ‘it’ or **create** a better one of ‘it’. For the presenter, this means preparing uncluttered transparencies, positioning the projector so that it will not block vision, and so on. For the manufacturers, it means improving optics and luminescence, minimising bulk and weight without sacrificing robustness, and so on. Creative people will seek ways to develop new technologies that help to achieve the principle benefits more effectively—such as the use of ‘PowerPoint’ presentations that can accommodate sound and movement, and increase flexibility by linking lap-top or hand held computers to a multimedia data projector. It now seems that, if the budget would stand it, we ought to trade in the old OHP on a hi-tech upgrade!

Possibilities Science

Before considering additional areas of the intellectual dimension, we will glean some appreciation of Carkhuff and Berenson’s new ‘Possibilities Science’ that extended the traditional approach of relating to information **conceptually** by relating to it **operationally**. This extension gave rise to the new intellectual tools that are listed in columns 9–13 of Table 5 on page 62. The following quote provides a summary glimpse at the vision, significance, purpose, and intent of the Possibilities Science from which ‘interdependent information processing’ derives.

In summary, we have crossed a threshold in civilization. Where once we defined people and organizations by past traditions, possibilities leaders now define them by future requirements. Where once we aspired to independency and competition, possibilities leaders now are dedicated to interdependency and collaboration. The interdependent processing systems are the tools of interdependence and collaboration.

What makes interdependent processing possible is the science of possibilities itself. The new science holds that all phenomena are inherently changeable. Therefore, we can begin to enhance them only by aligning with this changeability. Interdependent processing is the key to actualising phenomenal experience: relating to the phenomena, representing phenomenal images, generating new and more powerful phenomenal images.

The old science of probabilities holds that the purpose of science is to control phenomena by controlling their variability around some central tendency. To this end, it dedicates its functions:

- Describing phenomenal operations,
- Predicting phenomenal operations,
- Controlling phenomenal operations.

In discharging these functions, the old science is extremely wasteful of the phenomenal information eliminated in the so called '*error variance*'. Probabilities leaders forced people and other entities to conform to their static image of our changing potential.

The new science of possibilities holds that all phenomena are continuously changing. To this end, it dedicates its functions:

- Relating to phenomenal operations,
- Empowering phenomenal operations,
- Freeing phenomenal operations.

In discharging these functions, the new science engages us in interdependent processing with changing phenomenal images. Possibilities leaders incorporate and then generate all phenomenal information.

The freeing functions to which the new science is dedicated are defined by response repertoires. Freedom is defined by the phenomenal processing capacities. Possibilities leaders relate to phenomena to merge with their potential. Possibilities leaders free people and phenomena to seek their own differentiated expression. Indeed, the people and other phenomena free themselves when their repertoire of processing systems is sufficient.

In transition, nature's secret is its social nature. Interdependent processing enables us to relate and align with this social nature; to empower and enhance its phenomena; to release or free these phenomena to fulfil their own changeable destinies and, in so doing, to fulfil our own. There is only interdependency and its infinite potential (Carkhuff & Berenson 2000a, pp. 223–4).

Carkhuff and Berenson point to quantum leaps in perspective: from personal independence to global inter-dependence; from a competitive world to global collaboration; from going beyond 'probabilities' science (that seeks 'mastery' over nature) to their new 'possibilities' science (that seeks to 'align' with nature); from discarding or ignoring information to incorporating it. Their closing sentence has a prophetic ring of a profound, unifying, cosmological-cum-theological axiom. The dedication of possibilities science to 'relate to, empower and free' phenomena can both tantalise and challenge personal values, and can invite a response from us.

Processing information

Relating, Representing and Reasoning

The summary quote, above, makes it clear that 'interdependent processing' is the key to aligning with ever changing phenomena, unlocking their possibilities, and freeing their potential in ways that merge with nature. To overview the 'processing' process we need to understand the three 'critical phases' that systematically generate new and more powerful responses. Carkhuff and Berenson call these three phases 'The New 3Rs': 'Relating', 'Representing' and 'Reasoning' (Carkhuff & Berenson et al. 2003, p. 95).

Figure 8, below, replicates the pertinent headings from Table 5 on page 62, and shows which skills are involved in the 3R functions. R¹, **Relating** involves skills that relate to information at different conceptual and operational levels. R², **Representing**, involves skills that represent information at different levels of complexity. R³, **Reasoning**, involves different levels of processing skills to ‘make sense’ of the representations when considered individually, and interpersonally by groups. The ultimate reasoning task is to recognise the ‘interdependence’ between the elements being considered, in order to create more life enhancing possibilities.

Information relating		Information representing	Individual processing	Interpersonal processing	Inter-dependent processing
Conceptual	Operational				

Figure 8. Showing which battery of skills are involved in the new 3 R’s of Relating, Representing and Reasoning.

The reasoning tools add new dimensions to traditional practices. They go beyond the pursuit of ‘world best practice’ to generate ‘best process’. Carkhuff and Berenson argue that best practices no longer work, simply because ‘by the time we have trained responses in best practices, the conditions have changed and the practices are no longer “best”’ (2003, p. 14)! Their response, in a rapidly changing world, is to generate ‘**best process**’ whereby ‘stimulus inputs are transformed into response outputs that the stimuli were **not intended** to elicit’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 2000a, p. 109).

The reasoning tools employed for creating ‘best process’ involve using multidimensional models for individual, interpersonal and interdependent processing. Interdependent processing leads to further discovery of the interconnectedness between things—to the social nature of nature. Such discovery provides new possibilities to relate to nature with increased intimacy. Such intimacy with whatever phenomena we relate to, draws us towards a closer harmony with nature—with the Cosmos—with God—whatever name one give to infinite potential. Such is the significance of the dotted, ‘R¹ Relating’ bracket in Figure 8. All that is of ultimate consequence starts and finishes with relating. We lack experience in the execution some of these skills, but offer the following summaries of the skills listed in Table 5 as a means of introduction to interested readers.

Relating to operational information

We have already noted that the first four levels of **conceptual** knowledge are descriptions **about** things, and that only the fifth level can be **acted upon**. When conceptual information is redefined in ways that can be acted on, or reasoned with, it is said to be **operational** information. Both aspects are important. We need to know **about** phenomena conceptually to appreciate what they do operationally. The five levels of relating to information operationally, listed in Table 5, appear listed below.

Level 1: Functions

Level 1 relates to functions—what is being done. This level defines the specific purposes, or outputs, of a person, group, organisation, or any other phenomenon.

Level 2: Components

Level 2 relates to components—who and what produces the outputs. This level defines the specific human resources or other physical inputs required to perform the functions.

Level 3: Processes

Level 3 relates to processes—how the inputs relate to outputs. This level defines the specific procedures used by the components to perform the functions.

Level 4: Conditions

Level 4 relates to conditions—where the processes occur. This level defines the context in which the processes are undertaken by the components in performing the functions.

Level 5: Standards

Level 5 relates to standards—how well things happen. This level defines measures of excellence pertaining to the conditions, processes, components, and functions.

These dimensions can be adapted to any setting—from a hot dog stand to the United Nations Organisation. There are further aspects of relating to be considered when the processing dimensions are discussed below.

Representing information

When we are able to fully relate to operational phenomena we have sufficient data to **represent** them in some way or another, so that information can be reflected on personally, or shared with others. The nature of the representation depends upon the degree of complexity required. The notion of ‘**dimensionalising**’ underpins the different ways of representing information. The first three levels of representation will be familiar to most readers. Levels four and five will be labelled here, but are too complex to detail in this text. Interested readers are reminded of the references provided at the end of this chapter. The five levels of representing information are listed below.

Level 1: Single dimensional representation: 1D

Level 1 represents information in a single dimension (1D). Lists that are ‘ordered’ in some way, such as hierarchical ranking, have a single dimension. A shopping list that randomly details household requirements lacks this dimension. A single dimension list, such as ‘functions’, ‘components’, ‘processes’, ‘conditions’, and ‘standards’, provides five possible pieces of information to consider.

Level 2: Two Dimensional Matrix: 2D

Level 2 represents information in two dimensional matrices—such as graphs, tables, or spreadsheets, where the interrelationship between two sets of information can be represented. A two dimensional table that represents five factors on each axis (x and y) will generate 25 possible pieces of information (5 x 5) whose interdependence can be considered (or ‘processed’ to use Carkhuff and Berenson’s terminology).

Level 3: Three Dimensional model: 3D

Level 3 represents information in three a dimensional model—such as an image of a cube. where three sets of information can be represented. If cube ‘A’, in Figure 9 on the following page, represents five factors on each axis (x, y, and z) it will generate 125 possible pieces of interrelated information (5 x 5 x 5) whose interdependence can be then be processed.

Level 4: Nested dimensional model: ND

Level 4 represents information in a ‘nested dimensional model’. Such models have a three dimensional, cubic ‘shell’ within which smaller dimensional cubes are ‘nested’. If cube ‘A’, in Figure 9, is nested in cube ‘B’ (which also represents five factors on each of its axes), then this model will generate 15,625 possible pieces of interrelated information $[(5 \times 5 \times 5) \times (5 \times 5 \times 5)]$ whose interdependence can be then be processed.

Level 5: Multi-dimensional nested model: MD

Such models have a nested dimensional model, nested within another three dimensional cubic shell. This overall ‘nest’ is seen as cube ‘C’ in Figure 9. It nests cube ‘B’ which, in turn, nests cube ‘A’. If all cubes represents five factors on each axis, then the composite model will generate 1,953,125 possible pieces of interrelated information $[(5 \times 5 \times 5) \times (5 \times 5 \times 5) \times (5 \times 5 \times 5)]$ whose inter-dependence can be then be processed.

The notion of nesting may not be crystal clear, but it can be appreciated that, if further generations of nesting are created, untold numbers of possible interrelationships can be generated. We will not go down that track, but endeavour to keep discussions brief and simple.

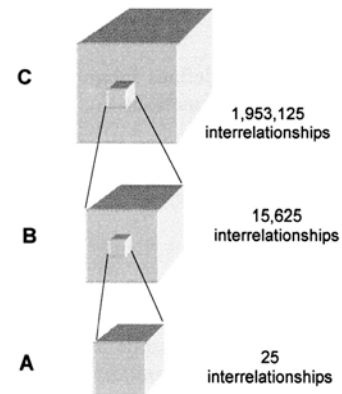


Figure 9. Showing how information can be represented in a multidimensional model.

Individual processing

Once information has been represented it can be processed by concerned individuals. Individual processing is undertaken as a preparatory step for interpersonal processing by a group. The five levels of processing information individually are listed below.

Level 1: Goaling

At level 1, individuals process information that relates to goals. Simply put, ‘goaling’ considers whether or not the resource inputs produced the desired outcome. In an organisation, the question would be asked at all assessable levels—from individual performance at workstations through to overall organisational profitability.

Level 2: Analysing

At level 2, individuals process information to analyse whether or not the performance between resource inputs and product outputs meets a predetermined standard. This analysis occurs across all relevant factors. It can be appreciated that a more detailed analysis can occur when the data is represented in more detail. For example, nested models will provide more detail than information presented in tabular form. The more closely data can be scrutinised, the more insightful the analysis will be.

Level 3: Synthesising

If the analysis is satisfactory, this (and subsequent steps) are discontinued. If the analysis is not satisfactory in some area, individuals continue to process information, at level 3, to redress the dissatisfaction. In such cases, a multidimensional model can be used to generate new possibilities, and synthesise this additional information in a ways that distil new innovations, so that a preferred, ‘corrective’ step can be decided upon.

Level 4: Operationalising

At level 4, individuals process information to make the corrective step do-able. Simply put, this level proposes a strategy to implement the innovative refinements needed to correct the deficiencies identified in the analysis.

Level 5: Technologising

At level 5, individuals process information to program the action steps required to accomplish the new tasks associated with the innovative action. The action may be implemented directly, or taken to the next phase—interpersonal processing.

Interpersonal processing

In essence, interpersonal processing occurs when people, who have individually ‘done their homework’, come together to swap notes, and to ‘reason together’ in order to determine the best overall steps to enhance their particular operation. This might sound like normal meeting procedure, but it differs, markedly, from traditional meetings because multidimensional modelling has a degree of sophistication that provides immediate opportunity to generate new possibilities that take into account all related factors. Such tools appear to put random ‘brainstorming’ techniques in the hold of Noah’s Ark! The five levels of processing information, interpersonally, are listed below.

Level 1: Non-engagement

Level 1 of interpersonal processing relates to the non-engagement of those who are absent, unprepared, or disengaged to the extent that they fail to participate.

Level 2: Get

At level 2, all those participating in interpersonal processing share the results of their personal reflections so that everyone ‘gets’ everybody’s perspectives. They get the reports, and they discuss it until they ‘get it’ intellectually. At this level the leader of the group is the last to report.

Level 3: Give

At level 3, the leader of the group has taken all that has been shared into account, and then gives a further perspective in the light of collective information.

Level 4: Merge

At level 4, there is a collaborative merging of all perspectives to create images of greater complexity (and therefore clearer definition) than any individual view—including the leader’s. The blending is a synthesis from which individually conceived goals are refined to harmonise with others to the mutual benefit of all.

Level 5: Go

At level 5, those who collaborated at level 4 will use the knowledge pertaining to their individual area of interest to operationalise and implement the new programs.

Interdependent processing

Although ‘interdependent processing’ is the heading of the last column to be considered in Table 5 (page 62), it is not an activity that occurs **after** interpersonal processing has concluded. In fact it occurs **throughout** both individual and interpersonal processing. It is the heart of both. Simply put, interdependent processing means that everything must be processed in relation to everything else. Nothing can be effectively processed in

isolation—because, ultimately, every thing is connected in some way or other. It seems worth repeating that, ‘such is the social nature of nature’.

Carkhuff and Berenson provide broad theoretical perspectives on the ‘mechanics’ of interdependent processing systems in the publication, *The Possibilities Leader* (2000a). It is beyond our capacity, and the focus of this text, to try to detail these mechanics. However, we have chosen to comment on the levels of interdependent processing described in *The Freedom Doctrine* (Carkhuff and Berenson (2003, p. 86). We take the liberty to comment on them in terms of an attempt to align with nature.

Level 1: Non-engagement

At level 1, there is an inability or unwillingness to seek out the links that relate one phenomenon to another. If prolonged, those operating at this level will progressively disengage from life, live in dissonance with nature, and allow existing relationships to wither and die prematurely.

Level 2: Interdependent goaling

Level 2, interdependent goaling, requires an ongoing review of all the things we use, all the things we do, and all the things that we create—the overall relationship between our ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’ in life. In this way that we can assess our individual effectiveness and sense of personal fulfilment.

Level 3: Interdependent exploring

Level 3, interdependent exploring, requires the ongoing employment of empathic skills to relate more intimately to all the phenomena that can conserve our inputs from life, and optimise our contributive outputs to life. In this way we can synthesise new information to enhance our potential for contribution to others, and promote an increased sense of wellbeing.

Level 4: Interdependent understanding

Level 4, interdependent understanding, means that increased intimacy from the ongoing exploration of phenomena expands information, so that we can more clearly understand what we need to do to actualise our potential for contribution to other people and to other phenomena.

Level 5: Interdependent acting

Level 5, interdependent acting, implements the programs that progressively actualise our potential, and resonate with nature.

A final comment

As we see it, the reasoning skills are an extension of, but in harmony with, the interpersonal relating skills that are addressed in detail in this text. What is new relates to the possibilities offered by the development of multidimensional tools that enable us to systematically ‘get our heads around’ complex, interrelated information.

We recognise the limitations of our summary of information processing. We suspect that by the time this text is read that the references that we have used and provided may be superseded. Readers wishing to check the latest developments can do so at ‘Possibilities Publishing’. The website is at: www.HRDPress.com.

The social dimension

Of the host of social dimensions that exist, we see personal networks as the most universal, and as exerting the greatest influence on human effectiveness.

Networks

In looking at Table 6, on the page 78, we consider the ‘social’ dimension first, so that we can work from right to left towards ‘love’—the richest of all human values. Social networks are valued because they meet the deep human need to belong, to give and receive support, and to engage in a broad range of activities that are impossible alone. Our observation is that people interact with others in their network in ways that relate to their level of contribution and perceived status within the network.

Level 1: Exploit

People functioning at level 1 are seen as ‘exploiters’ in a social network. They are seen as ‘bludgers’ who not only use others in all kinds of ways, but who isolate themselves from all but the ‘saintly’ folk, and those who are paid to ‘rehabilitate’ them. Exploiters are likely to function at low levels across all dimensions, but many are likely to have a ‘cunning’ for survival. They may move from group to group, or choose isolation. They are not all ‘down-and-out’. There are wealthy exploiters whose networks hold together from utility—not from care for the persons, or pleasure in their company.

Level 2: Net take from shrinking network

People functioning at level 2 are harder to recognise than a ‘constant’ exploiter. In overall terms they ‘take’ from their network, but they may make periodic contributions to it. They tend to make promises that they do not keep, borrow tools, and forget to return them, and the like. They may just be very passive—without exploiting in any overt sense. They may just be ‘observers’ whose only detraction is to fail to interact. For such people, networks tends to shrink. Other network members choose to offer such people fewer and fewer invitations to functions, or fail to re-elect them onto social committees, and the like. After people have identified another as a ‘net taker’, they tend to excuse themselves from engaging in social initiatives taken by the net taker.

Level 3: Interact with static

Level 3 is a comfortable zone for many people. They like being with the same people, and they are liked by others for who they are. These people enjoy being with their families, workmates, and the people they drink with at the pub, play cards with at the club, or worship with in a stable church community. They contribute to the network, and are contributed to by the network, in about the same proportions. They get along, do not rock the boat, and are quite happy with the stability.

Level 4: Net give to expanding network

People at level 4 generally have a good supportive network, but they are also the kind of people that are ‘looked up to’ because of the overall contribution that they make. Others tend to come to such people when they need a bit of support—and they get it. These contributors may volunteer to undertake tasks that require a time or financial commitment. They tend to be good mixers, and good at ‘sorting things out’. They tend to be trusted, and are likely to be sought out for nomination to various committees. They go beyond the ‘call of duty’ at work, at home and in community, but still make time for their ‘base’ network. They are the kind of people that attract others, or welcome others into their expanding network.

DIMENSIONS of HUMAN EFFECTIVENESS

Table 6

LEVELS of FUNCTIONING	Impact	SPIRITUAL										SOCIAL
		k	Love	Truth	Cosmology	Paradox	Perfection	Am-ness	Ambit	Networks		
5. VERY EFFECTIVE (actualising leader)	++		storge/agape	quest for absolutes (k)	resonance	synthesis	vision	time focused	cosmological	lead		
4. EFFECTIVE (contributor)	+		eros/storge	wisdom	harmony	concession	excellence	spontaneity	international	net give to expanding		
3. MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE (participant)	0		pragma/eros	empiricism	consciousness	rationalisation	endeavour	equilibrium	national	interact with static		
2. INEFFECTIVE (observer)	-		ludus/pragma	situational bias	cosmosis	avoidance	laissez-faire	constraint	family and interest groups	net take from shrinking		
1. VERY INEFFECTIVE (detractor)	--		mania/ludus	distortion	dissonance	rejection	denigration	useta/gunna	self	exploit		

Table 6. Summary of the different levels of effectiveness of the qualities, behaviours, outcomes or skills that are valued for their importance, utility or influence in contributing to human effectiveness within the spiritual and social dimensions.

Level 5: Lead

People who become network leaders are likely to have grown into level 5 through the cameo of level 4. Fellow committee members see their competence, and nominate them for Presidency. They emerge in community crises, and have the energy, perspective, personal qualities, and skills to address the issues, involve others appropriately, and maintain confidence. They are likely to be fast-tracked in their employment. They know when it is time to quit, and they are likely to have groomed a successor.

The spiritual dimension

When we drafted the elements of the spiritual dimension in 1985 (Sanders & Kranz 1987) we called it the metaphysical dimension. That seemed outlandish to some, but our histories, experience and observations persuaded us that ‘spirit’ was a substantive realm that influenced human effectiveness, so we decided to ‘add on’ the metaphysical dimension to Carkhuff’s ‘physical’, ‘emotional’ and ‘intellectual’ dimensions. We struggled to find a starting point. At that time we scanned the indexes of a number of psychological texts, but failed to find any reference relating to either ‘metaphysical’ or ‘spiritual’. We recalled the work of John Lee (1975) on ‘styles of loving’ which we intuitively ‘graded’ through five levels. The remaining factors seemed to identify themselves spontaneously as if by cosmognosis (‘knowing’ derived from the ‘cosmos’).

We were tentative in sharing our table at first. The ideas were not based on any research. It was well outside the boundary of the Public Service in which we worked. Nevertheless, we were very encouraged by the feedback that we got from others in terms of the relevance, helpfulness, and discernment of the table. We invited input to refine and shape the table, and watched the literature for new developments. We forged ahead regardless of the contemporary view that ‘there is still a total lack of consensus regarding the actuality of any parapsychological phenomenon’ (ed. Gregory 1987, p. 586). We leave readers to evaluate the relevance or applicability of Table 6 for themselves. We recognise that there may be a range of different cultural perspectives in some of the descriptors. Indeed, we acknowledge that there may be disagreement that our factors can be called ‘spiritual’. We continue to invite comments on the range of factors, and our treatment of them. The dimensions are listed in Table 6 on page 78.

Ambit

Ambit is the term we use to describe the personal boundaries that people hold. It reflects the ‘world view’ that typifies the extent and nature of individual perspective. The element is valued because it encourages expanded concern for, and inclusion of, others—and ultimately for the well being of the planet.

Level 1: Self

At level 1, the ambit does not extend beyond the person’s skin. It reflects the egocentricity that continues to ask: ‘What’s in it for me?’. It is totally unrelated to the philosophical perspective that argues that even the noblest philanthropist is ultimately selfish because of the absolute joy that such generosity brings to the giver.

Level 2: Family and interest group

Ambit, at the level of family and interest group, level 2, has the catch-cry that ‘charity begins at home’. Such people may well be generous within their family and may be a benefactor at their local sports club, but they are most unlikely to march against an

injustice that falls outside their ambit. They are likely to be manipulative, and push self and family interests, such as having ‘chats’ with a team coach to advantage a grandchild’s opportunities over other more talented, or equally talented, team mates. It should be noted that ‘interest groups’ can be quite diverse—such as Hitler’s Gestapo and the Underwater Basket Weaving Group.

Level 3: National

It could never be argued that national interest, at level 3, should be ignored, especially when under threat of arms. However, this traditional boundary is being progressively stretched. The White Australia policy is long since gone, but there are those who rue it. ‘Buy Australian’ is becoming progressively difficult when local manufacturers merge with (or sell out to) international companies. Those whose ambits are locked in at this level have little sympathy for new waves of migration, and less for refugees. They despise the globalisation of world markets. Those Australians, with more expansive ambits, happily regress to this one, however, in international sports arenas to blissfully chant: ‘Come on Aussie, come on!’—yet still remain able to applaud a good stroke by a foreign cricketer.

Level 4: International

An international ambit, at level 4, may create tensions between parties who subscribe to it, but for different reasons. One group tends to **espouse** this ambit because it enables them to make greater profits in the global markets by expanding business ventures into countries where labour is cheaper, taxes less stringent, or markets bigger and closer at hand. Another group may hold this view because they see merit in free trade, cultural exchange, and like the notion of a global family.

Level 5: Cosmological

This ambit is more extensive than the international view. It is not widely held apart from visionaries, some conservationists, and idealists. It embraces all phenomena, the world’s people, its politics, its resources, and a commitment to environmental longevity. Many with this ambit acknowledge a spiritual energy, and a perspective that yearns for ultimate cosmological harmony. It is noteworthy that Carkhuff and Berenson (2003) have constructed an ‘architecture for global freedom’ that exemplifies the full application of Possibilities Science so that all phenomena can relate, be empowered and set free—all having discovered the ‘social nature of nature’ (Carkhuff & Berenson 2000a, p. 224).

Am-ness

We have coined the term ‘am-ness’ to mean the degree of freedom experienced to be fully authentic—who we really are—moment by moment. We value this element for the liberation that it gives, the empowerment that it brings, and the impetus it gives to fully ‘be’. It makes ‘becoming’ easier, less cluttered, and more fun.

Level 1: Useta/gunna

At this level, people’s current lives seem to be dominated by what they used to do, or what they hope to do. Most readers will have acquaintances who dwell on ‘the old days’ who continue to talk about ‘when I was young, I ...’. and ask ‘do you remember ...?’ and so on. David had an uncle who spent most of his life sharing what he ‘usetá do’ at Gallipoli during World War I, 1914–18. Others come to mind who focus on the future in ways that are linked to chronic dissatisfaction with the present. Their typical openers are things like: ‘when I win the lottery I’m gunna ...’; ‘when I retire I’m gunna ...’; and the like. Both perspectives limit the fullness of the only real time—now.

Level 2: Constraint

When functioning at level 2, current activities are hampered by unresolved past issues, irrational future fears, or unrealistic aspirations. The past constrains the present, and fears constrain the future. Many clients seeking help from counsellors seem to function at level 2. Current issues are frequently related to past events: inadequate, harsh or abusive parenting; physical or emotional trauma; or cross-cultural conflicts—to name a few. Some fail to take initiatives for fear of failure, of flying, or of being ‘stuck’ with an ageing parent.

Level 3: Equilibrium

People function reasonably well at level 3. They maintain a balance between the past, present and future. They may be aware of some ‘baggage’ from the past, but it has mostly been dealt with, or is currently being managed. They may be preoccupied from time to time with future events that are currently not practical: ‘We must get to see a test match at Lords, one day’. Either way, they are still well able to manage current activities, and do not let dreams or fears of future activities limit their current experience.

Level 4: Spontaneity

At level 4 people live spontaneously. Mostly, we understand ‘spontaneity’ to mean that words or behaviours emerge without premeditation or constraint. However, we are tantalised by one aspect of the dictionary definition that highlights that spontaneity is ‘produced by natural process’. Does this mean that it is dissonant with nature to live otherwise? Is there some Cosmic delight in humans who have shed constraints of ‘role’ and other inhibitors of authenticity? We think so—but fail to get to that level of delight as often as we would like. The notion is worth pondering.

Level 5: Time-focused

At level 5, each moment is lived so fully that other time is inconsequential. These are the peak experiences, described by Maslow (1970), that seem impossible to sustain. This, of course, is consistent with a universe whose atomic structures, galactic mysteries, and all else, function in a cyclical fashion. Our picture of time-focusing is analogous to a magnifying glass that focuses light spatially, and can, for example, focus the sun’s rays from the area of a glass to a ‘point’ so that it can burn. Our image is that by focusing time to a ‘now’ moment we can really ‘burn’ (in the colloquial sense) in that moment. It appears as if the great creators through history had an element of this quality.

Perfection

By ‘perfection’ we mean the degree to which effort is made to achieve high quality results. At the time we developed the metaphysical dimension, the training fraternity were beaver away to instil the culture of ‘excellence’ in organisations as the pinnacle of best practice. We formed the view that today’s excellence is but the springboard for tomorrow’s vision—hence unceasing efforts towards perfection. We now see the congruity between this general view and the specific thrust that Carkhuff and Berenson have developed with their Possibilities Science. Changeability is a given, and there is always more! The element of perfection is valued for the creative restlessness that it engenders.

Level 1: Denigration

At level 1, people have a ‘destructive’ attitude to quality results or products. In the immediate post war years (WWII), for example, discharged troops who may have

wanted to buy a second-hand car (from the 1930's) were warned that some dealers stuffed bananas into the differentials and/or gearboxes of 'clapped out' vehicles to minimise the noise from worn parts. Needless to say it was a temporary measure only. The goods were inferior to what was presented. Another example is the reckless defacing of memorials by unsolicited, and unwelcomed graffiti. Those who denigrate what others value detract from others, and ultimately from themselves.

Level 2: Laissez-faire

At level 2, people are 'sloppy' in their approach to producing outcomes. Standards are not likely to be met in the production of goods. Makeshift repairs are made with a mindset that 'rough enough is good enough'. Insufficient, or inaccurate information is given in the delivery of services. If writing at this level, we could say: 'That definition's rough enough! No worries!—Get back to me if you don't get it!

Level 3: Endeavour

At level 3, people strive to meet required standards in their products. They consult repair manuals when confronted with an unfamiliar task. They have some kind of check list to see that all points have been covered in offering services. They take pride in their efforts, and are likely to remedy any unforeseen problems that they may have caused—with an appropriate apology, and probably with no additional fee.

Level 4: Excellence

People at level 4 are leaders in their field both by reputation, and in the execution of tasks. They keep up to date with 'world best practice', and upgrade what they do by reading journals, undertaking appropriate training, and attending relevant conferences. They flourish. They also know that it is sometimes more perfect to be less perfect.

Level 5: Vision

People at level 5 push the boundaries of excellence. They envisage new and better ways to create products and deliver services. They find new ways to transcend contemporary excellence. Truax and Carkhuff envisaged ways to demystify helping, and create trainable substance. By 2003 Carkhuff and Berenson had envisioned strategies to apply progressive developments of those efforts to work more effectively for world peace. Sir Frank Whittle envisaged the benefits of jet engines over propellers for aircraft, and patented the idea in 1930 (Mee, undated). Subsequent refinements propelled men to the moon. Visionaries have ingenuity, competence, perseverance, and a sense of mission.

Paradox

A paradox is a statement, proposition or set of behaviours that seem to be self-contradictory or absurd, and yet explicable as expressing a 'truth'. A paradox is reconciled when things that appear to be contradictory can actually be seen to be complementary—from the right vantage point. We will consider five different responses to the ongoing paradox that half the world is hungry, and the other half produces enough to feed everybody. The element of paradox is valued for the challenges it brings.

Level 1: Rejection

At level 1, there is a denial that a paradox exists, or that an issue needs resolution. The 'haves' deny the plight of the 'have-nots' or, at best, say: 'It's up to them'—and continue to over-eat, become obese, and waste a great many 'left-overs'. The have-nots may be unaware of the plenty that abounds elsewhere. Perhaps the thoughtlessness of the haves, and ignorance on both sides can be seen as a rejection—by default.

Level 2: Avoidance

At level 2, the apparent contradiction is recognised, but the issue is avoided, and no further consideration is given to the matter. This may be due to a restrictive ambit that excludes international or cosmological perspectives. Even with global perspectives, individuals may see the task as ‘far too big’, and so avoid involvement or even discussion. Whatever the reason, either active or passive avoidance characterises behaviour at this level.

Level 3: Rationalisation

At level 3, the paradox is acknowledged and all factors are considered, but an adequate conclusion is ‘rationalised away’. Parliaments may stress the need for others to be self-sufficient; debate the economic impact of dumping surplus foods on market prices; highlight the implications for farm subsidies, and the like; whilst also taking into account humanitarian factors in order to arrive at a rational conclusion—which may lead to an inadequate aid plan that has entangling strings attached.

Level 4: Concession

At level 4, the paradox is taken seriously. All parties ‘concede’ that effective resolution to bridge the gulf between the haves and the have-nots must occur. At this level there can be agreement on ‘what’ needs to happen without knowing (or agreeing) on ‘how’ any such resolution can occur. In terms of meeting world nutritional needs the ambit must embrace international perspectives.

Level 5: Synthesis

At this level, creative new ways are developed to blend things that, hitherto, were deemed irreconcilable. Experiences and perspectives will have been mutually explored by all parties. Agreement will have been reached on what specifically needs to happen, in what locations, for which people, by when, and for what reasons. Criteria will have been set to indicate successful completion of the task. Actions plans will have been developed to achieve the goal. As a first step, there might be agreement to write off the third world’s debt. Other steps to act on the agreement will have been developed. When the action plan has been successfully implemented, the paradox will have been reconciled. There is synthesis between elements that once appeared to be irreconcilable. Contradictions become complements. Impossibilities become possible!

Cosmology

Cosmology is the branch of philosophy that concerns itself with the origin and structure of the universe, its parts, elements and laws. In this context, the focus revolves around the ‘laws’, and the way that we humans inter-relate our humanity with such laws. Simply put, cosmology is the extent to which people live in harmony with the laws of nature. The element of cosmology is valued for the vibrancy it brings.

Level 1: Dissonance

At level 1, there is an exploitation of, or antagonism to, nature and natural forces. There is no consideration or awareness of the desirability, or need, to harmonise with nature. Our ignorance (or lack of concern) about the release of ‘CFC’s into the atmosphere has been an obvious dissonance. Discharge of toxins into waterways, nonchalance towards recycling programs, fishing on a dodge tide, planting seedlings out of season, drug abuse and non-sustainable forestry programs are all instances of dissonance with nature.

Level 2: Cosmosis

At level 2, benefits occur from natural sources, but recipients are either unaware of the source or fail to acknowledge it. We coined the term ‘cosmosis’ as a fun way of describing ‘osmosis from the Cosmos’—nature giving consciousness an unobtrusive nudge! The notion emerged from hearing people report incidents where they had acted on impulse, and either an unexpected benefit resulted, or an accident was avoided. With some incredulity, they said something like: ‘I’ve no idea where that came from!’ or ‘I just knew, somehow, that that was what I needed to do’. There are many instances where, ‘out of the blue’, there has been an urge to ring someone only to find that that the call was ‘especially valued and timely’, or a crisis could be averted.

Level 3: Consciousness

At level 3, there is an awareness of, or belief in, natural energies that are potentially beneficial to humans. People functioning at this level are not surprised by events that are the kind of ‘freak coincidences’ alluded to in level 2 awareness. People from all religious faiths have confidence that it is ‘natural’ to have access to the ‘supernatural’ through prayer. Farmers are very conscious of patterns in seasonal changes, and their implications. People at this level look for links with natural phenomena.

Level 4: Harmony

At level 4, the commitment goes beyond seeking links with nature. It intends to align human endeavour with nature and natural forces. Organic gardeners plant leafy seedlings when the moon is waxing, and root crops when the moon is waning to optimise growth. The development of wind generators, river desalination schemes, land care programs, and the use of natural therapies are but a few instances of harmonising with nature.

Level 5: Resonance

At level 5, there is such a degree of harmony between people and other natural phenomena that new energies are created. Indigenous populations experience enrichment of spirit when they harmonise with the land and its bounty. Human spirit is energised with resonant music. Kinesiologists detect higher energy in the body when the person reflects on a positive (harmonious) thought and vice versa. Richard Gerber (1996) provides a smorgasbord of related examples. One such powerful image is of the relationship between a ‘loving healer’, their patient, and Mother Earth. Gerber reports that, even during non-contact healing, the rhythms of a patient’s breathing, heart activity, and brain-wave patterns not only move towards resonance with the healer, but that the brain-wave patterns of both vibrate, at 7.8 Hz, in harmony with the so called ‘Schumann resonance’ of the Earth’s magnetic field—the energy that ‘cradles living cells in a nurturing and orienting energy environment’ (Gerber 1996, p. 590).

Truth

The element of truth highlights the different ways that people deal with facts, reality and honesty. The element of truth is valued for the liberating experience that ‘truth sets free’!

Level 1: Distortion

At level 1, facts are presented inaccurately from lack of skill, or by intent. No reader needs written examples of how distorted truth detracts from life. Even ‘white lies’ detract from those who tell them. They create barriers between the ‘liar’ and the person

that the lie is intended to protect. Intimacy is reduced by the perceived necessity to withhold or distort information.

Level 2: Situational bias

At level 2, reality is skewed and incomplete. Certain aspects are excluded, withheld or exaggerated so that a particular bias is maintained. Parliamentary and other debates are delivered to highlight the ‘truth’ of a given perspective. Newspaper editors determine the bias of their publication. Mediators work to reduce the bias inherent in the situations presented by the parties concerned in order to reach a more amicable, and more realistic conclusion.

Level 3: Empiricism

Truth, at level 3, is verified by scientific research methods. Empirical truth is valuable because it helps in being able to describe phenomena in greater detail which, in turn, enables predictions to be made with greater accuracy, so that we can control the way things are used with greater effectiveness. Empirical truth can be reaffirmed by replicating what was done previously to achieve the desired results now. However, the down side to constraining truth to this level is that it limits freedom to act in ways that are not substantiated by current research—which itself often changes. For example, we know of a number of professional helpers who seemed to be tentative in their parenting because of a commitment to adhere to the ‘latest’ research on child-rearing strategies.

Level 4: Wisdom

At level 4, we know something to be true ‘in our bones’. We are not dependent upon research data to validate such truths. At this level, it seems that confirmation comes from intuition—our ‘inner tutor’. This seems akin to ‘cosmognosis’, a notion defined in the Shorter Oxford Dictionary (but not in Macquarie) as ‘the instinct which teaches animals the right time for migration, and the fitting place to which to go’. There is plenty of evidence to show that people who claim to ‘know’ a truth are proven to be wrong. This, however, does not deny the likelihood that humans (as higher-order animals) have latent remnants of under-utilised cosmognosis. Most people seem to put their inner tutor in a sound-proof box! Some seem to get in touch through meditation and prayer. Others, though willing, seem unable to recognise the tutor’s ‘voice’ amid the host of thoughts, ideas and ‘noise’ within. Some have come to discern their inner wisdom by filtering their confusion with the three simple questions that follow. ‘Is this my noblest thought?’ If no, ignore it. If yes, ask: ‘Is this my clearest truth?’ If no, ignore it. If yes, ask: ‘Will this bring the greatest Joy?’ If no, keep filtering. If yes, you have heard your tutor! Neale Walsch claims to have heard this simple rule when he was ‘in conversation’ with God (Walsch 1998).

Level 5: Quest for absolutes

Truth at level 5 is paradoxical in the sense that absolutes do not exist in a world discerned by relativities. Yet there seems to be an innate yearning to know truth beyond our current knowing. When we get a glimpse of it from our inner tutor, we sense a quality of truth that is worth living by—and, if needs be, dying for.

Love

The element of love considers the different degrees of affection that humans have for one another. We have taken the six ‘styles of loving’ described by Lee (1975). He wrote of their differences, and suggested that the satisfaction in loving is in finding a partner

‘who shares the same approach to loving, the same definition of love’ (Lee 1975 p. 21). We considered his styles and concluded that it was possible to table them into merging levels of effectiveness, at least to our satisfaction, in the following manner.

Level 1: Mania/Ludus

Manic love seems to be at the bottom of the pack at level 1. The Greeks called it ‘*theia mania*’, the madness from the gods. It is characterised by an insatiable desire for attention and affection from the lover. It provides grist for theatrical mills—‘*furious jealousy, helpless obsession, and tragic endings*’ (Lee 1975, p. 25). Despair prevails in the absence of the beloved. It is neurotic and unhealthy; a pathological kind of affection that throws a dramatic tantrum when things do not go right. It may, or may not, be a transient experience in adolescence. Lee points out that Mania can be reduced by resolving underlying self-esteem issues, and by diminishing the desperate need to be loved.

The Roman poet Ovid coined the term ‘*amor ludens*’—playful love. Such ludic love is a game, enjoyed as a pleasant pastime with limited involvement. Ludic lovers may have several partners on a string. They do not become dependent on any partner, nor allow intimate attachment to themselves. They want sex for fun—not emotional bonding. In fact, sexual gratification is only a minor part of the complex, tactical game. We figure that work-sponsored ‘happy hours’ are a kind of ludic gesture in those organisations that play the game of caring for staff, but actually depersonalise them into ‘units of production’.

Some manic lovers behave in ways that are similar to ludus. These manic, ludus lovers ‘alternate between a detached devil-may-care attitude towards a partner, and a worried, lovesick desire for more attention...They need, and resent, love; and they cannot control their emotions long enough to maintain a cool relationship’ (Lee 1974, p. 22). This loss of control may well contribute to the ‘honey-moon-beat up’ cycle in domestic violence.

Level 2: Ludus/Pragma

The next notch up, in level 2, is the style of loving known as pragma. Lee describes it, rather neatly as ‘love with a shopping list’ (Lee 1975, p. 27). Pragma is characterised by conditionality. Arranged marriages, in traditional societies have this flavour. Both sides know what they are getting. Computer matching services take this pragmatic view. Data from ‘his’ and ‘her’ list match—and ‘bingo’, the shopping is in the bag! Lee suggests that pragma has the manipulative aspect of ludus blended with the stability of ‘*storge*’ (yet to be discussed). This is discernible in pragmatic ‘affairs’ which are ‘managed’ so that neither individual domestic relationships, nor regular routines are disturbed.

Level 3: Pragma/Eros

Erotic love is the most familiar. Its typical symptom is a strong, immediate affinity with the appearance of the ‘beloved’. There is a ‘chemistry’ in the air. In the initial stages of a relationship, physical affinity is seen as far more important than personal and intellectual qualities. Erotic lovers have a strong desire to ‘know and be known’. They yearn to share themselves with each other. Through such sharing, the fascination with ‘beauty’ can extend to psychological intimacy between lovers who, classically, ‘seek a deep, pervasive rapport with their partners and share development and control of the relationship’. Even so, Lee suggests that ‘pure’ eros relationships are vulnerable—as fiction attests—and that ‘the success of a few keeps the dream alive for many more’ (Lee 1975, p. 21).

Level 4: Eros/Storge

Storge seems the ideal ingredient to add to ‘pure’ eros to introduce some endurance to erotic lovers who are keen to override their vulnerability and stay together. Storge has been described by Proudhon (in Lee 1975, p. 23) as ‘love without fever, tumult or folly, a peaceful and enchanting affection’. Storgic love is ‘grown’ in loving families, and with lifelong friends. It is based on friendship and companionship. It seeks stability and richness. Pure storge is a bore to erotic lovers because it tends to avoid the conflicts that passion brings, and its ‘reasonableness’ and ‘predictability’ go beyond the ken of pure erotics.

Level 5: Storge/Agape

All the great religions share a concept of love that is a generous, unselfish, and compassionate giving of oneself—even anonymously. In our culture, this is called ‘agape’ simply because it was the word St. Paul used to tell his Greek readers in Corinth what he meant by love from the Christian perspective. Lee reports that he did not meet any saints in his study of 112 subjects, although he had a ‘few respondents who had had brief agapic episodes in relationships that were otherwise tinged with selfishness (Lee 1975, p. 27). It will be news to no-one that there is not a glut on this style of love. We listed it last, at level 5, because it seems axiomatic that actualising people will seek to express such love, both in their giving and receiving. We add ‘receiving’ because we have been saddened, on many occasions, to see some sparkle leave the bright eyes of children who have put their ‘all’ into making a gift—only to hear a well intended parent say: ‘That’s lovely dear, but wouldn’t it be better if you had...(done something differently)’. Such comments shift the receiving from unconditional agape to conditional pragma. Repetitions of this kind sows the seed that ‘love comes when you please others’. Such seeds grow pathological perfectionists.

‘k’

The column headed ‘k’ (in Table 6) is blank because there is nothing to write. Scientists use ‘k’ to signify the unknown. For example, in their initial research Truax and Carkhuff included ‘k’ to make clear that there will still be more to research (see page 17). As unknowns become tangible they are no longer in ‘k’—but ‘k’ persists, nested in the bosom of the Cosmos. There is always more. ‘k’ has been called the ‘constant k’ but it is now recognised that the only cosmological constant is ‘changeability’. Its boundless mystery may tantalise during quiet reflective moments.

What is k’s substance? What are its boundaries? What is its influence? If we assume some cosmological factor—say the rate of inevitable evolutionary development, whether linear, cyclical, helical or exponential, we are led into reflections of ‘beginnings’. For us, this triggers both the poetry and the science of Darryl Reaney (1994).

The start was the big bang—the paradoxical event where everything came from nothing, and before which there was no time! It was the birth of stardust—in which we grow more conscious that we, ourselves, are ‘star-stuff’—part of a boundless Cosmos ‘awakening in self-awareness, seeking to know what it **was** in order to understand what it **is** so that we can look forward to what **may be**’ (Reaney 1994, p. 20). According to Reaney, all matter, having exploded into the space, carries a ‘memory’ which yearns to become one again—cosmological ‘reconciliation’. The yearning of the physical world is gravity. The animal kingdom is guided to find its place by instinct and cosmognosis. Humans discover it by choices. The ego, in choosing its own indulgences, maintains a boundary that militates against its host’s intrinsic yearning.

The actualising of any potential that does not diminish ego and ‘fuse’ with (or relate to) the collective knowing, is counter-productive to the ultimate cosmological reconciliation towards the paradoxical ‘everything’ that is ‘nothing’. There is wonderful freedom here—‘where nothing is present as form, everything is present as possibility. All order is the gift of chance. All song is the gift of silence’ (Reaney 1994, p. 26). Actualisers becomes nothing in the quest to become everything—relating, as one, with all phenomena.

Some observations and implications

The discussion from Table 5 flowed from a blend of Carkhuff’s work between 1981 and 2003. In 1981, he compared the broad profiles of two groups of people. The first group consisted of twenty people, whose productivity, contribution and relationship skills classified them as ‘actualisers’ of their potential. The productivity of the second group of eighty people was low, but they were selected to match the actualisers in terms of working environments, backgrounds, age and exposure. The researchers recognised that the numbers did not represent random sampling, but following selection, all were observed, inventoried and interviewed under circumstances of random sampling. The researchers aim was to account for the difference. Crudely put, they asked: ‘How come some people get to be productive and helpful and others do not, when they are so much alike in all other respects?’. The profiles, shown in Figure 10, were predictable in general terms because they were selected to be ‘actualisers’ and ‘non-actualisers’. The significance lies in the conclusion that the actualisers were learners who had ‘freed themselves from the conditioning schedule’ (Carkhuff 1981, p. 102).

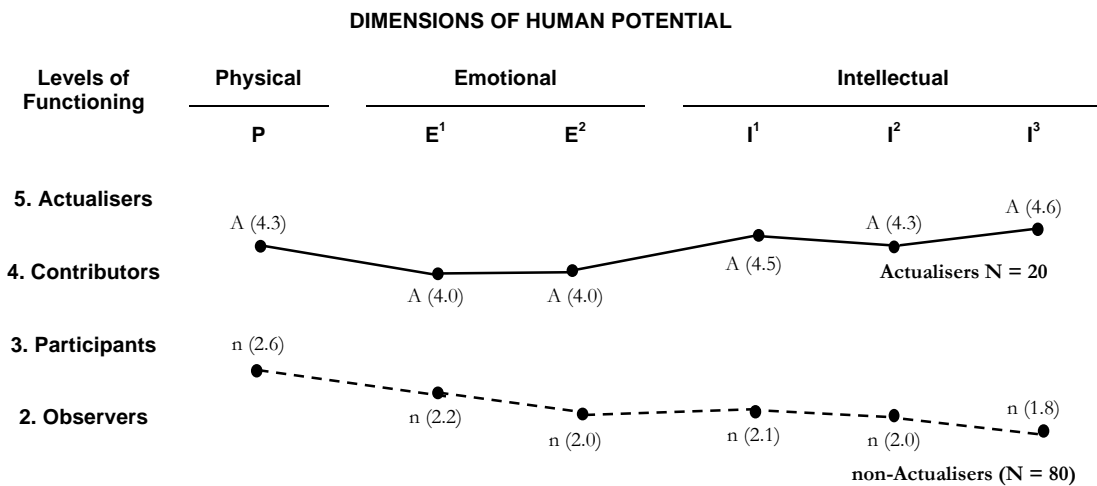


Figure 10. Comparing the average profiles of Actualisers and non-Actualisers. From *Toward Actualising Human Potential*, by Robert R. Carkhuff. Copyright © 1981. Used by permission of the publisher HRD Press, Amherst, MA, 800-822-2801, www.hrdpress.com.

Simply put, when confronted with a given set of circumstances, actualisers explored all the factors involved; made sense of them; saw what would improve the situation; created a program to achieve what needed to happen; and did it. They learned new strategies. Given the same circumstances, non-actualisers tended to do what they have previously done in these circumstances. They replicated what they had been conditioned to do. The actualisers used the Interpersonal Skills listed in Table 5 on page 62 (shown as E² in Figure 10) in their interactions with others. The non-actualisers did not. The

actualisers used these skills to develop programs for their personal fitness and in their work. The non-actualisers did not—apart from some who had a fitness program.

It follows that in actualising one's own potential we seek to have abundant energy, and involve ourselves in areas that are fulfilling to ourselves and contributive to others. Above all, we hone, and apply, our interpersonal skills so that we can continue to learn, and pass on our learning to others when appropriate. We learn to process information to produce creative initiatives that will lead to human benefit—all backed by a loving spirit that pursues truth with passion, and seeks to reconcile factional interests that distort the harmony that all nature embraces.

We have not researched the profiles of people in the spiritual and social dimensions, but our observations have been that there are many people who score at high levels in the 'love', 'truth' and 'cosmology' dimensions, in particular, who literally 'blossom' in terms of impact, confidence, and ability to learn after achieving a degree of mastery through interpersonal skills training. We also observe that people with poor interpersonal skills are likely to behave between levels 2 and 3 in the social dimension.

It needs to be noted that developmental, or remedial, programs should move one level at a time. One level seems achievable and desirable. More than one seems unachievable and demotivating. Too frequently, parents, teachers, and other helpers tend to push growth beyond one step. They want 'observers' to be 'contributors' before they have learned to be 'participants'. Such intensity is likely to fail, and create poor self images in the learners to the extent that they give up.

The last observation to be made is that whilst the elements discussed so far can be valued intellectually for their utility for humans, they only really **have** value when they are expressed in the actions of people. Their acquisition and refinement, as skills or behaviours, is a lifetime activity. The challenge is to 'die growing'.

Summary

This chapter addresses the personal values that enhance personal resourcefulness, and underpin effective personal strategies for actualising one's own potential, or helping others to actualise theirs.

The Macquarie Dictionary definition of 'value' is mentioned to highlight the 'general' 'ethical', 'mathematical' and 'sociological' aspects associated with values. Brief reference is made to show how these different aspects are reflected in the descriptors used in two tables that list five different levels of effectiveness in the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions of our humanity.

A series of cameo descriptions are sufficient, in most cases, to clarify their intended meaning, but in some instances, particularly in the intellectual dimension, referenced descriptions are provided to assist in clarifying the significance of the elements involved.

Reference is made to earlier research that highlights the differences in functioning between actualisers and non-actualisers. The differences were explained in terms of the application, or otherwise, of effective interpersonal skills.

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Personal strategies

Preamble

The preceding chapters discussed the personal resources and personal values that enhance personal effectiveness. These help to select and drive the many strategies that we employ to engage in life. This chapter singles out the helping process, developed by Carkhuff and Berenson that was introduced graphically in Figure 4 on page 24. Readers will recall that whilst the process was distilled by observing effective counsellors and therapists, its principles were shown to apply to effective strategies that were applied across a broad range of human endeavour. Its utility is beneficial in day to day interactions, personal management, and in assisting others. In our view, its total relevance to generic counselling remains unchallenged. However, the discussion on page 33 makes it clear that this view is not universally accepted. There are those who are still endeavouring to chart a unified ‘trans-theoretical map’ of counselling. McLeod (2003, p. 68) credits Egan’s *Skilled Helper* as being one such map. It is worth noting, however, that Table I of Egan’s *Training Manual to Accompany The Skilled Helper* (1975) is clearly fabricated on the template that Carkhuff and Berenson distilled between 1967 and 1972. We wonder why McLeod and other authors fail to acknowledge Carkhuff and Berenson’s substantial, eclectic ‘map’ as the primary source of such integration. The ongoing search for a map seems clouded because theorists lack agreement on the functions of counselling and psychotherapy. (In Chapter 18, we suggest a way of discerning their differences, and appreciating their complementarity.) We leave it to readers to compare the substance of the map to be outlined, below, with the fragmented pieces that others debate, strive to integrate, or justify, in contemporary counselling literature.

The counselling process

Simply put, counselling is a process that involves at least two people—a counsellor and a client. The counsellor has a set of values, personal resourcefulness, and the skills to live effectively, which, together with other knowledge, they are willing to use to benefit others. The client is a person who, in a given set of circumstances, is unable to deal with certain aspects, or consequences, of those circumstances to their personal satisfaction, and so seeks outside assistance to resolve the impact of those circumstances.

The counselling process begins when its appropriateness has been established, and both parties agree to proceed. The process involves collaborative dialogue between the counsellor and client. It seeks to find constructive ways for the client to act to deal successfully with the particular issue that led them to seek counselling.

This simple version points to the important features of counselling: (1) the preconditions for counselling; (2) the client needs that are met by the process (and their associated learning); (3) the tasks to be undertaken during the counselling process, and (4) the skills that counsellors use to navigate the process.

Preconditions for counselling

The first precondition is that the counsellor is satisfied that counselling is appropriate for the particular person in the given circumstances. For example, one would not engage in counselling an inebriated person, or a patient during a psychotic episode. Rather than ‘counsel’ one would directly intervene to deal with the crisis situation, or refer elsewhere if the presenting need justified such action. Counselling is the appropriate process to help others resolve issues of concern to them so long as, in a professional setting, the nature of the process is understood by the client, and certain boundaries have been discussed and agreed.

The second precondition, then, is for the counsellor to establish a ‘contract’ with the client after roles, expectations, method of working, fees and other details that may pertain in individual cases have been discussed, clarified and mutually agreed. A brochure can be posted before the first interview and then discussed at it. Written contracts are not usually drawn up for signature, but some counsellors do require them. An exception to this could be a court order whereby an offender could enter into a Bond with the court to keep certain conditions for a given period of time. Courts frequently require that defendants ‘receive counselling’ within specified boundaries. This becomes a legal contract between the offender and an assigned person, such as a Youth-Worker, Community Corrections Officer, or agency nominated in the court order. In these cases the requirements are discussed in terms of opportunities and consequences.

Client needs and learning

Clients seek help from counsellors to resolve an issue of some kind, but most people try to deal with such issues in other ways before deciding (or agreeing) to see a counsellor. At first, they may ‘stew’ on the issue privately, but without success. This lack of resolution continues to bother them. Their bellies churn, their energy flags, they ‘go round in circles’, and they may seem preoccupied or moody to others. They might put on a brave face and ‘soldier on’. They might ‘drop their bundle’ and withdraw from others, or ‘get agro’ and blame others for causing their issue. They experience internal ‘disarray’, and they feel a need to ‘do something’ to fix it; but lack either the skills or the insight to act effectively.

When their own efforts fail to resolve their issue, the person may turn to friends or family for help. What frequently happens is that, once the issue has been briefly outlined, well intentioned friends jump in with ‘random’ suggestions to deal with the issue. They say things like: ‘Why not try (such and such)? It worked for a mate of mine’. or: ‘Maybe you should just tell him/her (so and so)—that could work’. Even though the person with the problem may find some relief at ‘letting off steam’ or ‘getting it off their chest’, it is likely (on average) that they will have thought of, and dismissed, four out of five of the random suggestions on how to fix it. One in five random initiatives may

bring some success. Mostly, however, very little changes when random initiatives are all that is offered. Disarray continues, and effective solutions remain elusive. Clearly a more effective approach is needed to deal with the issue.

The next source of help for this person might be a counsellor listed in the 'Yellow Pages' directory, but it is possible that this might not be helpful. Counselling in Australia is currently an unregulated profession. Anybody can advertise as a counsellor. It is possible that some counsellors will suggest initiatives that sound 'professional' which are, nevertheless, offered randomly, and therefore only offer 'hit-and-miss' benefits. Clients are best served when counsellors act in ways that meet four specific client needs, including the need to act.

Need 1—involvement

The first need is for clients to become fully 'involved' in their issue. This sounds obvious and simple, but people who are troubled by an issue often find ways to avoid involvement by denial, withdrawal, over-work, excessive drinking, or simply putting it in their 'too hard basket'. If they decide to see a counsellor, their willingness to become involved will depend on their early impression of the counsellor's qualities, skills and trustworthiness. If the counsellor creates a positive impression, the client will learn that they are not alone, and decide to become involved in the counselling process.

Need 2—exploration

The experience of disarray is primarily caused because clarity of thoughts, feelings and ideas about the troubling issue are clouded over by blind spots from personal prejudice; distortions from misunderstanding; and gaps from ignorance of relevant aspects of the issue. Once there is a willingness to become actively involved in the issue, there is a real need for the client to explore all the pieces until they become clear about where they really stand in relation to the issue. Feelings must be expressed, and the reasons for them made explicit. Blind spots must be made visible, distortions straightened out, and gaps filled with new insights that come into mind during exploration. To explore in this way means that the person needs the freedom to discuss the issue 'their way'—without being judged. They need to feel safe, understood and valued during such exploration. If they are talking to a counsellor who lacks the skill to communicate such understanding, they are likely to regret the involvement, and withdraw from further contact. If the counsellor is effective, the clients come to learn where they 'are' in relation to their issue, and signal some desire to move on.

Need 3—understanding

It does not resolve an issue simply to have a clear picture of where one stands in relation to it. There is a need to 'make sense' of the picture that has been explored. Firstly, clients need to understand in what way they, themselves, have contributed to their issue (they always do, but seldom think so at first). Secondly, they need to understand, specifically, what they are not yet able to do to resolve the issue (this is never clear at first—which is why random suggestions are fruitless). Thirdly, they need to understand how they judge themselves because they lack the specific skill that has emerged as a critical part of the counselling process. Fourthly, they need to understand that their next responsibility is to acquire the skill whose lack was identified previously. This awareness helps them to learn where they 'want (or need) to be' in relation to where they currently 'are'. Such understanding brings clarity, renewed optimism, and a desire to act constructively.

Need 4—action

The understanding stage spelled out **what** specifically needs to happen. The client now needs to find out **how** to do it. They come to see that any successful action plan must start where they ‘are’, and get them to where they ‘need to be’. An effective counsellor will help them consider what resources they already have to contribute to an action plan, and what resources might need to be co-opted or developed. The counsellor will help the client draft a manageable plan that, with support, the client can implement with enthusiasm, confidence, and success. Clients thus learn how to bridge the gap between where they are and where they want to be.

These needs and learning outcomes are summarised in the bottom two rows of Figure 11 on page 95. The preconditions are shown in the first column of the same figure.

The counselling tasks

Simply put, the four counselling tasks are dedicated to meet the four client needs. Skilled counsellors are aware of these tasks and how they are sequenced. They have the skills to discharge each task, and they know how and when to switch between tasks. The tasks and the related skills to meet client needs are:

- Task 1 is to provide a facilitative climate that will meet the client’s need to be **involved** in the counselling interaction. This requires that counsellors have skills to **prepare** themselves personally and contextually to be fully attentive.
- Task 2 seeks to generate relevant, honest discussion in ways that meet the clients’ need to **explore** their issue fully, without judgement, and so realise where they stand in relation to it. This requires that counsellors have the skills to **respond** empathically to whatever clients say so that they (the clients) determine which matters are relevant.
- Task 3 sets out to **synthesise** explored information so that clients can **understand** its significance in terms of where they ‘want or need to be’ in relation to where they currently ‘are’. This requires that counsellors have the skills and knowledge to analyse, diagnose, and synthesise information, and ‘**personalise**’ such information for their clients.
- Task 4 uses selective knowledge to achieve the specific goal identified in task three so that the client’s need to **act** is met. This requires that counsellors have a range of **initiative** skills to help clients decide on their best options for action, and to jointly draft action plans for clients to implement successfully.

These tasks are listed as column headings on the top row of Figure 11. Each column lists the counsellor skills and client needs associated with each task.

Counselling skills

Preparation skills

Counsellors need to prepare themselves, and the counselling venue, before engaging with a client. This means doing what is necessary for them to be ‘fully present’. In the broadest sense this requires ongoing development of personal resources, the refinement of personal values, and the ability to communicate their availability to clients. Effective preparation requires getting the setting right by ensuring that no telephone or other interruptions will occur; making sure that simple refreshments will be available to clients on arrival; that tissues are at hand; and that privacy and comfort can be assured. Above

all, it is necessary for the counsellor to be able to suspend any preoccupations so that uncluttered attentiveness can be given to the client from the moment of greeting to the time of farewelling. More detail is given to these aspects of the process map when considering the attending skills in Chapter six.

THE COUNSELLING PROCESS

PRECONDITION	TASK 1	TASK 2	TASK 3	TASK 4
	PROVIDE facilitative climate	⇒ GENERATE relevant and honest discussion	⇒ SYNTHESISE explored information	⇒ USE selective knowledge to meet specific need
COUNSELLOR assesses appropriateness has a 'contract' with client	PREPARE clear preoccupations commit time, energy, respect, offer focused attentiveness	⇒ RESPOND to client perceptions thoughts, feelings, confront incongruities, distortions and gaps	⇒ PERSONALISE analyse what exploration means diagnose what skill deficiency there is respond to probable client self-criticism 'flip' deficit into a relevant goal	⇒ INITIATE define goal in operational terms decide which option is preferred develop manageable plan of 'attack' encourage, reinforce and support plan implementation
	↓	↓	↓	↓
CLIENT needs to resolve a worrying issue	GET INVOLVED in interaction	⇒ EXPLORE to clarify and order unclear issue	⇒ UNDERSTAND new direction with clarity and commitment	⇒ ACT with enthusiasm confidence and success
LEARNING OUTCOME	know I am not alone	⇒ know where I stand, where I 'am' (A)	⇒ know where I want or need to 'be' (B)	⇒ know how to get from A to B

Figure 11. Summarising the counsellor and client preconditions, tasks, counsellor skills and client outcomes at different stages of the counselling process.

Responding skills

Responding skills facilitate client exploration. The word 'respond' literally means 'to give a reply in words'. In this context, the 'reply in words' has specific qualities. It should be succinct and specific, but its prime quality is that it communicates accurate empathy. Popular descriptions of empathy talk about 'walking in another's shoes' or 'seeing the world through another's eyes'. Such empathic responses neither judge, criticise, nor advise. They communicate an understanding of the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of the other. The fullest empathic response communicates an understanding of what another feels emotionally, and an understanding of what caused the feeling. Such responses are known as 'interchangeable responses' because they 'express essentially the same affect [feeling] and meaning [reason for the feeling] as the person being responded to' (Carkhuff 1969, p. 175). The quality of such responses will vary with the skill level of the responder.

We note that well regarded texts such as George and Cristiani (1990), Egan (1998), Carkhuff (2000, 2000a, 2000b), and McLeod (2003) describe, and give examples of, interchangeable responses, but do not fully detail the attributes that account for the variability in the power of interchangeable responses to facilitate client exploration. This

text addresses that gap by introducing ways of producing responses with increased degrees of empathic ‘intimacy’ that have not, hitherto, been described in the counselling literature. These additions help to produce responses that get closer to the Macquarie Dictionary definition that empathy is a ‘mental entering into the **spirit** of a person or thing’. The most effective responses capture the essence of emotion, intellect, and spirit. Such distillation of another’s ‘truth’ helps to ‘set them free’.

The truth that emerges during client exploration is more accurately described as the client’s perception of their reality. Such perceptions may drift between levels 1 and 4 when considered against the Truth dimension in Table 6 on page 78 (distortion through to wisdom). As clients tell their story, skilled counsellors may hear some ‘level 1 truth’ that contradicts what has already been said, or is a distortion of what is known to be an objective reality. Occasionally these may be deliberate distortions but, in our experience, they are more likely to be the result of confusion, misunderstanding, or ignorance. Either way, effective counsellors will employ confrontation skills to address the occurrence. Confrontation skills are outlined below.

The ‘mechanics’ of the responding skills are covered in Chapter 9.

Confrontation skills

Confrontation skills are used to highlight any distortions, gaps, or inconsistencies in the information that clients are exploring, or any incongruities between the verbal material being shared and the associated non-verbal ‘body-language’.

In confronting distortions or gaps in client information, counsellors need to be able to supply **objective** information to correct the distortion or fill in the gap. It is important to point to the source of such information. Such confrontations have a teaching function, and are called ‘**didactic**’ confrontations (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 76).

In confronting inconsistencies between different client statements, counsellors need to tender specific evidence to highlight the misfit so that clients are more able to explore where they really stand. Such confrontations arise from the **subjective experience** of the counsellor rather than an objective source. Such responses are called ‘**experiential**’ confrontations (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 74). Counsellors may use experiential confrontations to draw attention to any incongruities expressed by clients, for example, between verbal and non-verbal communication—what they say and how they look. Again, counsellors need to tender specific evidence for client to consider.

Confrontation is not a matter of ‘catching them out’ so much as ‘upgrading’ clients’ awareness of their own truth. In all cases, counsellors should continue to respond to whatever clients say when replying to the confrontation.

The ‘mechanics’ of the confrontation skills are covered in Chapter 12.

Personalising skills

Personalising skills enable clients to understand what they need to do to resolve an issue, and to assume personal responsibility for doing it. The counsellor skills involve a complex, four step process.

The first step requires an ability to analyse, précis, order, and communicate the salient meaning of all that a client has explored. The communication must be so clear that the client is able to affirm the truth of who they currently are—including historical events that shaped them; things they manage well (or mismanage); specific attitudes they hold; and any specific behaviour that contributes to, or perpetuates, their problem.

The second step calls for diagnostic skills that pinpoint the particular skill that the client lacks in being able to deal with their issue. In this text we emphasise the desirability of this diagnosis being so accurate that the identification of the specific lack comes as ‘news’ to them. Such news invariably causes a self-critical reaction in the client along the lines that: ‘Wow! if I’d seen that before I might have been able to deal with this earlier!’. or ‘Why couldn’t I see that for myself?’. This can be a painful moment.

The third step requires an ability to read and respond to the verbal and non-verbal cues that indicate the nature and degree of self-criticism that clients make of themselves when recognising and ‘owning’ the critical deficiency of skill that has, hitherto, both eluded them, and accounted for their inability to deal with their current issue. This can be a liberating and energising moment.

The fourth step builds on the previous response by highlighting that the skill that is currently missing is the skill that needs to be acquired. The response simply ‘flips’ the deficit statement into a goal statement, and spells out the benefits that can be expected when the goal is eventually achieved.

Note that the oblique arrows in Figure 11 (page 95) indicate that clients may be able to participate in the process. For example, the arrow pointing to the right hand column of Figure 11 indicates that clients may offer initiatives towards attaining their goal.

The personalising skills are also confrontive of the client’s ‘strengths and weaknesses’ (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 77) in ways that are detailed in Chapter 12.

The ‘mechanics’ of personalising are covered in Chapter 13.

Initiative skills

In this stage, initiatives are undertaken to attain the personal goal developed in the previous stage. In broad terms, such initiatives can lead to action in one of two ways. Either their goal is such that clients themselves are able to achieve it, or the goal is such that an ‘expert’ is required to (say) administer a therapeutic strategy, or act as advocate, or teach clients particular skills. If the latter is the case, we argue, in Chapter 18, that collaborative counselling, as such, ceases at the end of the personalising phase even if it is the same counsellor who switches roles to act as therapist, advocate, or teacher.

We see the counselling process continuing when initiatives are developed collaboratively for implementation by the client. In these circumstances the skills used are as follows.

The first skill redefines the personalised goal into operational terms. This means that the client is able to define who will be involved in the pursuit of the goal; where and when the action will commence and be finalised; what benefits will be obtained; what broad strategy will be employed to achieve the goal; and the standards by which successful goal attainment will be measured. It is not uncommon for clients to be torn between a number of alternatives during this goal definition. By way of simple example, if the goal is to ‘improve our accommodation before adopting a third child’ the client may find it hard to decide on a particular broad strategy. They may see merit in:

- extending existing house (ground floor plan);
- extending existing house (add first floor);
- sell house and purchase a bigger dwelling;
- purchase a new house, and rent out their existing home.

No actual planning can occur until the preferred strategy is decided upon and shown to be viable. This calls for the use of decision-making skills that consider the merits of each option against the factors that are important to the client.

Once the decision-making strategy has removed any ambiguities in the operationalised goal statement, the action planning skills are used to spell out how the preferred strategy can be broken down into achievable steps so that the people concerned can achieve their objective within the predetermined time frame, and enjoy the anticipated benefits.

It is sometimes necessary to confront clients on the need to act after plans have been developed. Such ‘action confrontations’ highlight the benefits of action and the consequences of inaction (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 81).

The ‘mechanics’ of the initiative skills are covered in Chapters 14, 16 and 17.

Immediacy skills

In a series of predictive studies in 1969, Carkhuff first identified ‘immediacy’ as a factor whereby helpers communicated their experience of clients in terms of ‘what is going on between us’—here and now. He also developed a five level scale to discriminate how effective counsellors communicated this dimension (Carkhuff 1969, pp. 192–3). Later analysis, however, showed that the immediacy skills were an incorporated factor of the initiative skills (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, p. 20). In our experience, immediacy can also be subsumed within the responding phase of helping as well as the initiative phase.

In the responding phase, counsellors may recognise that something about their ‘role’, ‘presence’, ‘status’ or ‘manner’ may trigger a particular emotion in the client. If so, an accurate counsellor’s response may lead to clients recalling that they have a similar emotional response to others of similar role, presence, status or manner. Some counsellors, with psychoanalytic training, may see what was ‘going on’ between themselves and their client in terms of ‘transference’ and ‘counter-transference’, and simply translate their insight into conversational language, to ensure its empathic ‘fit’ for the client. Others, with similar training, may adopt the ‘expert’ stance of therapist.

In the same predictive study mentioned above, Carkhuff also researched the function of counsellor ‘self-disclosure’ in helping. Here again, he developed a five point scale to discriminate how appropriately, and how willingly, counsellors were prepared to share themselves in ways that matched clients’ needs (Carkhuff 1969, pp. 186–9). His later analysis, however, also showed self-disclosure to be a factor incorporated in the initiative skills (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, p. 20). What is of interest, here, is that self-disclosure can go either of two ways. In the first instance, it can disclose (with immediacy) that ‘such and such’ is happening between us. An example could sound like ‘Tim, I can’t help applauding your passion to get on with the job, but I want to tell you that my gut churns a bit when you gloss over the hurdles that lie ahead. My belly is not a bad indicator, nowadays—so I’d like us to have a closer, more objective look at your personal resources, and match them against the task to see what preliminary steps you might need to take to make sure that you get there successfully’.

The second way that self-disclosure can occur is by making an assertive statement about one’s personal needs. For example: ‘Tim, I need to finish this session in ten minutes, and would like to sum up now, and make sure that you are OK to leave here with some homework to do before our next session’. Assertive skills are seldom used in the actual counselling process, but they frequently need to be taught to trainee counsellors and

some clients. For that reason, we discuss the mechanics of assertive skills (in Chapter 15) in ways that enhance the effectiveness, and avoid some of the pitfalls of some traditional assertive training.

We see value in incorporating immediacy in the training of both responding and initiative skills, and do not dedicate a specific chapter for it in this text. However, not all authors agree with this perspective. For example, Egan (1998, pp. 224–9) discusses immediacy as a discrete activity that has three aspects in helping: (1) ‘self-involving statements’, (2) ‘relationship immediacy’ and (3) ‘here-and-now immediacy’. Egan notes that such tasks demand competence in other skills—attending, listening, empathy (which we call responding); advanced empathy (which is part of the personalising skills) and other forms of challenge (which are similar to some of the of confrontation skills detailed in Chapter 12.

The continuous process towards actualisation

We have outlined the counselling process as if it were unique to counselling. It is not. It is more correct to say that counselling is one application of a process that is fundamental to all human endeavour. So far, we have considered how one can work through the disarray created by a worrying issue to a point of clarity where one can then act to effectively deal with the issue. We need to be aware, however, that any action creates new experiences. Some relate to new learning, some to new possibilities, but none achieve an ‘absolute’. There is always some residual disarray that begs further clarification and refinement—further exploration, further understanding and further action—and more residual disarray. Such disarray is the precursor to further learning. Disarray is one’s growing edge. Productive lives continually process their experiences in this cyclical fashion towards actualisation and fulfilment. For self-actualising people, this cycle never stops—they die growing! Effective people, including counsellors, do this **intra**-personally for themselves, and **inter**-personally for others. Figure 12 shows the ‘flow’ of such life-long learning.

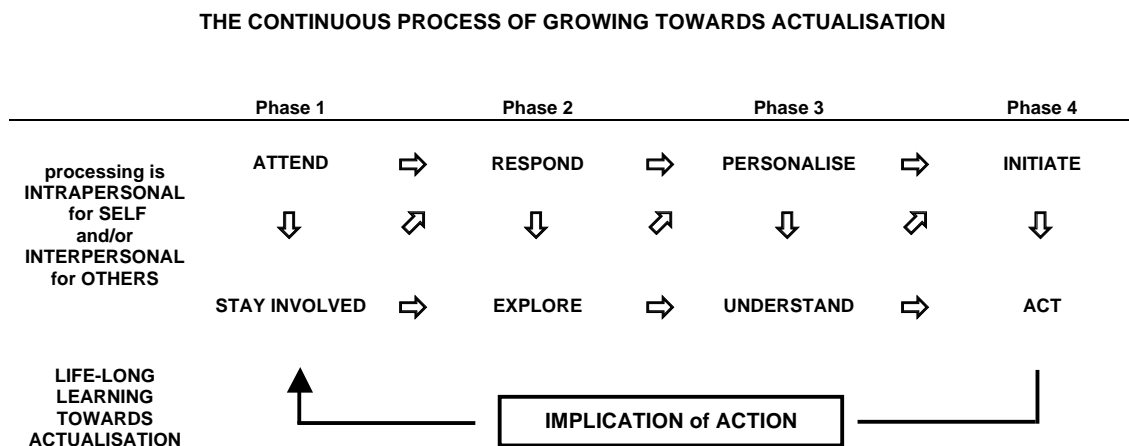


Figure 12. Showing how the process used in counselling is but one application of a fundamental process that, with continuous re-cycling, leads to life-long learning and growth towards the actualisation of human potential, intra-personally for self, and inter-personally for others.

Summary

This chapter overviews the helping process identified by Carkhuff and Berenson as it applies to counselling. Although McLeod (2003) asserts that there is no single eclectic approach to counselling, it is clear to us that the process just outlined is the preferred strategy for generic counselling because it is research based, skills focused, facilitates the actualisation of individual potential, and is verifiable in human experience.

The overview of the counselling process discusses: (1) the preconditions for counselling; (2) client needs and learning; (3) the tasks that need to be undertaken to meet client needs; and (4) the skills that counsellors use to fulfil these tasks. The preconditions involve an assessment of the appropriateness of the circumstances for counselling to proceed, and the need for a contractual relationship to be established.

Four client needs are discussed: (1) the need to become involved in the counselling process; (2) the need to fully explore their issue; (3) the need to understand the implications of what has been explored; and (4) the need to act on that understanding in order to deal with their issue successfully.

Four tasks are required to be undertaken to meet clients' needs. Each requires the application of counsellor skill. The tasks are that counsellors: (1) provide a facilitative climate that will involve the clients; (2) help clients generate relevant, honest discussion so they (the clients) can explore their issues fully; (3) synthesise the explored information so that clients can understand and 'own' the current and future implications of what has been explored—including the relevant action they need to take; and (4) use selective knowledge to enable clients to attain the specific goals that were previously identified. To perform these tasks, counsellors need the skills to prepare fully, respond empathically; confront where advisable; personalise what has been analysed and synthesised accurately; and offer initiatives that are creative, relevant, and manageable so that clients can act successfully.

Mention is made of the fact that 'immediacy' and 'self-disclosure' skills are incorporated in the process, and can apply to either 'here and now' issues, or to personal assertion. Attention is drawn to the appropriateness, and efficacy, of the helping process as a continuing means of progressive actualisation towards each person's personal potential.

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PART TWO

MASTERING MICRO-SKILLS

Introduction to part two

There is no substitute for practice, practice, practice, when learning to acquire any skill. Counselling skills are no different from golfing skills in that regard. We have written this text to provide an appreciation of what the particular skills are, what they do, when to use them, what beneficial outcomes can be achieved from their application, and above all, to provide a series of sequenced, do-able steps that will lead to mastery of them—with sufficient practice.

Without a doubt, students will gain most benefit from this text by attending a course where skilled teachers offer individual coaching of the skills outlined, within laboratory groups that, ideally, have no more than nine participants. Throughout the text, we have used the term ‘regular course’ to refer to such courses that we have designed and conducted, or have trained others (regular trainers) to conduct.

It is important for both coaches and learners to know what skills learners already have at the beginning of a course. Accordingly, regular trainers of these skills will have particular ways of determining a ‘learning base-line’ for each course participant—both at the start of the overall program, and as each new skill is introduced.

Readers who are not part of a training laboratory may wish to determine their own baselines so that they can assess the progress of their learning. We have provided a ‘Communication and Discrimination’ exercise, in Appendix III on page 469, that is similar to the ‘pre-test’ that is offered at the commencement of a regular training program. This exercise provides an opportunity for readers to record their current way of communicating and discriminating ‘helpful’ responses. Their efforts will record their current ability in empathic communication, and in their discernment between empathic responses of different quality. We have provided space to re-do the exercise after readers have mastered the responding skills detailed in Chapter nine. By then, the significance of this baseline will become clear because readers will be able to rate the effectiveness of their work, in measurable terms, and affirm the level of skills acquisition that has occurred between the two attempts. Other simple self-assessment exercises are suggested to help independent readers establish a baseline for each new skill as it is addressed in this part, Part two.

Regular trainers in these skills will employ a strategy called ‘ROPES’. This is an acronym for a five step approach to skills training developed by Berenson, Berenson and Carkhuff (1978). The steps are: (1) **Review**. This step identifies the level of knowledge and skill that learners have before proceeding. It is the baseline referred to immediately above. It helps the trainers know how to ‘pitch’ what follows. (2) **Overview**: In this step the trainers present a detailed picture of the skill that affirms what is already known, and focuses on what is yet to be learned. This text provides resource material to revise the overview. (3) **Presentation**: In this step the emphasis is on the breakdown of the skill-

steps that need to be mastered to achieve competence in the skill. In a regular training program the presenter will describe the steps required to perform each skill, demonstrate how each is performed, and provide an opportunity for participants to 'try out' each skill. This text includes skill steps not listed in contemporary training literature. (4) **Exercise:** This is the step where coached practice occurs, and skill are acquired. It is the most time-consuming and demanding aspect of training. There are written exercises to help in the discernment and understanding of the 'mechanics' of the skills that will be useful for training groups or individual activity. Model answers are provided in Part four of this book. (5) **Summary:** In this step students summarise their understanding of the skills and their application. This can be done by discussion in training groups to tie up 'loose ends'. Space is provided, at the end of each chapter in this part, for learners to summarise their learning in their own words.

We wish you happy learning and a happy journey. As you master the skills and experience their effectiveness when you are on the 'receiving end', we have no doubt that you, too, will find the skills to be not only 'roadworthy', but a powerful vehicle to take you, inch by inch, along the unique path to becoming who you were born to be.

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Attending skills

Preamble

The effectiveness of all that we do is determined by our attentiveness. Our attentiveness links us to the external world. If we are non-attentive we miss things that we should see and hear, and therefore make poor choices from limited or distorted facts. We miss cues that lead to opportunities. We miss signals that lead to danger. In what follows, we consider the notion of attending under three broad headings—‘contextual’ attending, ‘postural’ attending, and ‘psychological’ attending. All three impact on some aspect of the way we relate to people and events.

Contextual attending

All events occur in a context. The effectiveness of any event is influenced by the attention given to contextual arrangements. There are five broad factors to be addressed by those who offer services to others. They are: (1) engage purposefully—to explore the appropriateness of the particular service to potential clients’ needs, and mutually agree on the next step; (2) furnish functionally—to ensure that the setting is appropriate for the service offered; (3) prepare personally—to ensure that ‘all is ready’ before engaging formally with clients; (4) welcome effectively—so that clients can locate the service and feel at ease; and (5) contract clearly—so that mutual expectations are clear and boundaries are set. In the discussion below, the emphasis is given to the counselling application, but examples of general application of the five factors are mentioned.

Engage purposefully

The purpose of the counsellor engaging with potential clients, in the first instance, is to mutually determine the appropriateness of establishing the counselling process, and to clarify the nature and scope of services undertaken. Differences in engaging with ‘voluntary’, ‘involuntary’ and ‘impossible’ clients are discussed below.

Voluntary clients

Voluntary clients are those who seek assistance on their own initiative. Even so, it is not necessarily easy for clients to decide to seek counselling help. The decision to seek help is often only taken after long discussions with trusted friends or workmates have failed

to resolve some disturbing aspect of their life. The big question for them is whether or not a counsellor can do any better! In enquiring about an appointment, a potential client's underlying purpose is to 'suss out' the cost benefit of paying to talk to a stranger. The quality of personal attentiveness given to their enquiry will help them decide whether or not to become involved. They need to be confident that they are talking to an authentic, caring person who both 'understands' them, and 'knows their stuff'. For this reason, it seems preferred for enquirers to speak directly to the counsellor concerned (rather than an assistant) wherever possible. The purpose of such discussion is twofold. Both parties are able to seek, and give, specific information.

During the discussion, the counsellor will interact responsively (see Chapter 9) to a request for help in order to: (1) assess whether or not counselling is the appropriate service, and if so; (2) discuss whether or not a colleague of the opposite gender to the counsellor might be more beneficial to, or preferred by, the particular client; (3) determine possible appointment times that best suit the client's circumstances; (4) note the client's name (including how they prefer to be addressed), address and contact details; and (5) suggest an appropriate referral if counselling is not appropriate.

In the same exchange, the client will need to know: (1) how the counsellor 'sees' clients, and what the client can expect from the counsellor; (2) the fees involved and payment methods; (3) an agreed appointment time (if by now they wish to proceed); and (4) the address of the office, parking arrangements, or public transport details (means, route, and stop number), access points to building; and if applicable; (5) out of hours availability, and how to gain entry after hours; and (6) whether or not child minding is available, whether lifts are installed or stairs need to be negotiated—and any other contingency that occurs to either party. Before closing the initial call, the counsellor should indicate that confirmation of the appointment, and an enclosed map, will be forwarded by post.

Follow up notice

A follow up notice to clients has value on three fronts. Firstly, it is a courtesy to ensure that clients can recall the counsellor's name, details of their appointment time, and other administrative matters. Secondly, a reiteration of the counsellor's approach gives clients a chance to reflect on the process, and raise any concerns with the counsellor before proceeding with the first appointment. Thirdly, it tends to encourage responsible behaviour by indicating that a financial penalty **could** apply, under certain conditions, for failing to give notice of cancellation. A sample letter is shown below. Feel free to modify it to suit your needs.

Dear

Thank you for choosing our organization to assist you. As discussed when you rang earlier today, I am forwarding confirmation of our agreed appointment time, and a summary of our objectives and how we operate.

Our Philosophy and Objectives

We believe that everybody has the desire and the potential to live happy, creative, fulfilling lives, but that sometimes personal histories, or current circumstances, limit such potential. We have found that in having an opportunity to discuss such circumstances, we are able to help our clients understand and deal with these limitations so that they can live more fulfilling lives.

How we Work

The initial session is spent exploring the situation with the client. We listen intently and regularly check that our understanding is accurate. The unique picture that emerges provides the substance for an analysis of the critical factors that need to be addressed. This is often sufficient for some clients, but others may need help in developing appropriate action plans and ongoing support during their implementation. We usually allocate two hours for the initial session (even if it is not needed) so that clients feel unhurried and un-pressured. Later sessions are individually negotiated.

Fees

We charge \$ an hour for our services. This fee is not currently recoverable under Medical Benefits, but is a similar amount to the 'gap' between health benefits paid and the scheduled fee of similar services. The fee is sometimes allowable as a tax deduction. A lower fee may be negotiated depending on personal circumstances and the type of service required. Unless previously negotiated, we appreciate payment by cash, cheque or credit card on the day, or payment within seven days. We appreciate ample notice of cancellations. A fee of \$25 may be charged for cancellations, under 24 hours notice, to cover basic costs if we are unable to offer the appointment to another client.

Appointment details

I look forward to meeting you at this address at (time) on (date). The enclosed map will help you locate our office. The car park entrance is on the eastern (uphill) side of the office. We aim to offer the highest quality service at all times.

Yours sincerely

Involuntary clients

Involuntary clients are pressured into seeing a counsellor from some source or other. It may be from an insistent spouse who says 'go or else!'. There may be pressure from family, friends, or employer on a person whose dependence on an addictive substance is so strong that it overcomes any real commitment to 'rehabilitation'. The pressure may be a requirement by an authority of some kind. These can include an order by a court, a conditional directive from an employer, sporting authority, or a medical referral.

It may be that counselling is not appropriate in the first instance. An example of this would be in the case of an alcoholic who needs to attend a sobering-up program before counselling is considered. When appropriateness has been established, the counsellor's task is to talk with the client to discover the reasons for their resistance. In the light of these reasons, together with any conditions applied by the 'pressure source', the counsellor will suggest the benefits of becoming involved in counselling, and the consequences of refusing to become involved. In such discussions, resistant clients invariably 'suss out' the counsellor. If they like the counsellor's energy, decency, authenticity and 'straightness', they may be more inclined to become involved in counselling, especially if, say, the consequence for not proceeding is banishment from a marriage that they want to continue.

The futility of simply 'presenting' for counselling—with the intention of 'going through the motions' to appease, or conform with the requirements of others may also need to be discussed. It is not unknown for resistant clients to be more amenable to engage in counselling after counsellors have declared their personal unwillingness to 'play games'.

Counsellors in drug rehabilitation centres are often either ex-addicts or very experienced. New, involuntary clients may have a very well developed set of excuses for being the way they are, and have plausible defences for avoiding treatment that will be 'seen through' by rehabilitated or experienced counsellors who may be very confrontive in discussing the consequences of long term addiction. Potential clients may be jolted into becoming involved voluntarily—albeit with some reluctance.

News bulletins occasionally report that a sporting body has taken action against a player for discrediting 'the game' by using inappropriate language on the field, or by involvement in some kind of 'incident' in a public place. The report may advise that a fine has been imposed, and that the player has been 'referred for counselling'. The counsellor, however, may decide that an educational program is preferred to counselling in order for the offender to 'get the message' about maintaining a good public image, and being a good role model for younger players. Recall that the first task is to assess the appropriateness of counselling. Not all referrers understand the nature of the service asked for.

Magistrates, sitting in a court of law, may give offenders a 'second chance' by having them sign a 'bond' to keep certain conditions for a given period of time. The offender must also agree to pay a prescribed amount for breaching the agreement. The conditions may specify details relating to, say, consorting, curfews, non-frequenting of certain places (and the like). At their discretion, magistrates may order that the offender also 'attend counselling'. It is useful to note that not all clients, so ordered, are necessarily involuntary clients. Some may be quite willing to be counselled within the context delineated by the court. During a first interview, counsellors will, from legal necessity, discuss their role within the context of the prescribed conditions.

When working with involuntary clients, it is important to ensure that the contextual attending factors that pertain to voluntary clients are applied. The nature of the need, and diverse agency policies may impinge on the preliminary contextual requirements. Whilst it is important to discuss these contextual requirements or constraints, it is critical that the counsellor does so within a responsive climate to 'get the client's picture' and work with it. There is no other starting point than where the client 'is'. The overriding requirement is for the counsellor to do whatever is necessary to 'humanise' an authoritarian setting to the extent that clients make an informed choice about the pros and cons of engaging in the counselling process. The counsellor's inability to engage the client at this decision point, or their insistence that some overriding, authoritarian intervention be applied, can contribute to the sculpting of an 'impossible' client.

'Impossible' clients

The delineation of a new class of clients—impossible clients—warrants attention primarily because the enhancement of contextual attentiveness, the employment of empathic listening, and the collaborative creation of effective initiatives has nullified the validity of such a demeaning label—at least in the instances reported by Duncan and Miller (2001). The term 'impossible' still draws consensus among some mental health professionals when discussing individual patients over morning tea. Duncan and Miller flipped the notion of impossible clients to 'veterans' within the mental health systems who are the 'casualties of treatment technologies'. These clients have been subject to a range of diagnostic testings and psychotherapeutic programs, and have ingested scores of different medications that often have unpleasant side effects. They have been cyclically hospitalised, discharged and readmitted. They have given up on life, and their

helpers have mostly give up on them—to the extent that ‘diagnoses are even tendered as retaliatory explanations for treatments gone awry’ (Duncan & Miller 2001, p. 34).

During their five year research project, Duncan and Miller identified two culpable ‘pathways to impossibility’ that were ‘borne in our training, traditions and practice’. They called the first of these pathways ‘attribution creep’. Simply put, once a simple trait or formal diagnosis is ascribed, there may be a ‘resilient’ expectation of ‘hard going’, or a ‘poor outcome’ that, if left unchecked, becomes the person. The client is ‘deindividuated’ to the extent that ‘clinicians will unwittingly distort information to conform with their expectations’ (Duncan and Miller 2001, p. 36). The researchers drew attention to compelling evidence to show the extent to which such distortion can occur.

In a classic, but often over-looked study, Rosenhan recruited and trained a group of normal confederates to obtain psychiatric hospitalization. To gain admission they falsified a single psychiatric symptom (hearing voices). The pretend patients were admitted for stays ranging from 7 to 52 days. During their hospitalizations, the pseudo patients showed no signs of psychosis, yet the original diagnosis not only remained in place, but also came to serve as a confirmatory bias. An examination of the clinical records revealed that staff distorted normal behavior of the confederate patients to conform with prevailing theoretical notions about schizophrenia (Duncan & Miller 2001, p. 36).

Such attribution creep’ denies the actual personhood of clients. It shrinks the will to live. It may lead to impenetrable passivity or unmanageable aggression. No one wins.

The second pathway to impossibilities is paved by professionals who fail to take into account the motivations and perceptions of their clients. This ought not be news. The need to work in the client’s frame of reference was heralded by Rogers a half century ago. Carkhuff and Berenson provided the tools to work empathically with clients a decade or so later. But yet, it still appears necessary for writers such as Duncan and Miller to remind the current generation of mental health practitioners of the importance of collaborating with clients in ‘treatment’. They remind us that ‘to do less or impose agendas motivated by theoretical prerogatives, personal bias, and perhaps some sense of what would be good for the client, invites impossibility’ (Duncan & Miller 2001, p. 37).

In essence, Duncan and Miller have tendered a blueprint for a third pathway towards the ‘possible’ that comfortably aligns with the approaches of Rogers, Carkhuff and Berenson. They call it working with the ‘client’s theory of change’. They hold that clients are the best teachers of therapy. For them, ‘learning the client’s theory’ literally means taking the time to explore their thoughts, feelings and attitudes about the problem, as well as their ideas about how therapy might best address their problem and their goals’ (Duncan & Miller 2001, p. 35).

Whilst they do not use the term ‘contextual attending’, they claim that ‘the most important thing we did contradicted clinical conditions about borderline clients’. They behaved authentically, they were welcoming, they ‘responded to and nurtured the relationship’—right from the first contact (Duncan & Miller 2001, p. 37). There is a temptation to think of contextual attending as merely a preliminary activity to ‘get the setting right’, but we want to stress the ongoing need for the context to serve the needs of clients. In this regard, there is no greater determinant for overall success or failure than the behaviour of the therapist/counsellor. Empathic counsellor behaviours honour

the client's theory, and ultimately empower and free them. 'Expert' behaviours that disregard or dismiss the self-perceptions of clients will erode their confidence and personhood to the extent that may create impossible clients.

Duncan and Miller provide a clear example of a case whose 'impossibility' was contributed to by a non-empathic 'expert'. Natalie had been diagnosed with dissociative identity disorder (DID). She had been seen by a specialist in treating Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) who insisted that each alter (different personality) should 'come out and talk' so that she, the therapist, could 'break down the current system' in order to 'integrate' Natalie. Natalie terminated this long-term relationship because the therapist's intrusion was as obnoxious to Natalie as 'what had been done to "us" [her different alters] by our dad'. This treatment was antagonistic to Natalie's 'theory of change'. She later sought help elsewhere because she had 'lost access to her alters' This distressed her greatly because she depended on their different talents to function. She wanted 'restoration' so that she could call on each personality when needed. A review of Duncan and Miller's report showed that by empathically working in Natalie's frame of reference, the therapist was not only able to acknowledge the beautiful practicality of having been able to access the best alter to deal with a given situation, but within the flow of seven sessions, had heard about 'Linda', and had interacted with 'Gretchen' and 'Nora' as health and relationship issues were discussed. The therapist only became 'expert' when the particular alter had worked out with Natalie what needed to happen. The therapist worked primarily with Nora in constructing visual images whereby each alter contributed a gift which collectively merged into an integrated whole. Thus, Natalie was able to proclaim: 'I am me'. Much had been achieved. The summary closes with Natalie saying: 'It's their gifts! That's why there's no hardness here. And I haven't been scarred. It means I have a chance of dealing with the world fresh. It means I can treat my dad with compassion...and everybody [my alters] brought gifts. I think I am a collage of those gifts' (Duncan & Miller 2001, p. 40).

Duncan and Miller conclude that:

Clients and their predicaments are not impossible. *Rather, they only seem so because of a well-intended treatment process that unwittingly dishonours the client's theory of change.* When the 'means employed' are changed from theory-directed to client-directed, then possibilities emerge (Duncan & Miller 2001, p. 40).

In order to learn their client's 'theory', understand their experience, or appreciate their perceptions, counsellors must be fully attentive to them—contextually, posturally and psychologically. Purposeful engagement with veterans might not always be easy, but it is the starting point that offers opportunities for the possible to emerge.

General applications

The notion of engaging purposefully with a view to a fruitful outcome is far from being restricted to the arrangement of counselling interviews. It is rampant in the realms of commercial advertising. The greetings offered in fast food chains may be a bit mechanical, but one's needs are meticulously checked out, and the delivery invariably matches the expressed need. Gentler applications occur in the thoughtfulness given to 'who sits next to whom' at a wedding reception or dinner party. Those who take time to find out how people like to be addressed (and how to spell that name) when preparing name tags for an impending conference capture the spirit of purposeful engagement.

Furnish functionally

In considering the layout, décor, and furnishing of counselling premises, we consider that a balance needs to be struck between ‘comfort’, ‘function’ and ‘identifiability’. We do not want to be prescriptive about the layout or décor of the counselling room, but draw attention to some points that add to its functionality, and attentiveness to client needs.

Comfort

Effective temperature control is an important aspect of contextual attending so that full attention can be given to the counselling tasks in physical comfort. Ducted air conditioning is preferred because it is quieter, and therefore less distracting than wall mounted units or some ‘split’ systems.

For the sake of acoustical comfort it is desirable for counselling rooms to be located towards the back of the building if street noise is high. The counselling rooms should be physically and acoustically separate from the administrative functions and waiting area. Any child minding area should be positioned so that loud, gleeful, or tetchy sounds are inaudible in the counselling rooms. Toilets should be located so that clients who may have been tearful can ‘freshen up’ without having to walk through a public area.

In small private premises, counsellors may have their desks and computers in the counselling room. In these circumstances, it seems preferred that the desk is positioned so that clients have their back to it.

Function

The counselling room should be well lit with ‘soft’ light. Fluorescent lighting should be avoided because of its potential to de-energise (Diamond 1979, p. 128). Natural lighting is preferred where possible—augmented with incandescent lighting when necessary. Vertical blinds make it possible to adjust the level of light for intensity (and direction at different times of the day) whilst maintaining visual privacy. A suitably placed table lamp makes it possible to softly illuminate the client’s face with minimal shadow, and facilitate observation of non-verbal facial expressions. If fitted with a ‘dimmer’, the lamp can be adjusted to create a serene ambience for meditative activities if appropriate.

Counsellors, like dentists both need functional chairs to facilitate effective outcomes (no dental pun intended). Deep, plush lounge chairs are not functional and should not be used. Chairs similar to an upholstered dining chair (with or without armrests) are much preferred. The reason for this is because ‘postural attending’ (detailed in the next section) is much more effective when sitting on a standard chair. Counsellor and client chairs should be identical to portray the equality intended within the collaborative counselling relationship.

Furnishings should be simple and functional. A small coffee table should be provided at the side of the client’s chair to provide easy access to the tea, coffee, or water that was offered on arrival. A box of tissues should be on the side table for use during tearful moments. A small bin for used tissues should be placed under the table. A quick chat will clarify which side of the chair individual clients prefer to have the table—a detail easily overlooked in creating an attentive context. A white board should be available to list summary points, or develop plans as required. It may be wall mounted or mobile, but should be positioned so that the client need not move chairs to see it. A clock should be positioned so that the counsellor can see it with minimal distraction. A small bar fridge is useful for storing a supply of cool water, or for other refreshment when

celebration is appropriate. It is handy to have a small library of books in the room ‘for loan’, or a suite of pamphlets for information or for referral purposes.

Identifiability

The décor should be such that clients ‘identify’ with it. The choice of colour scheme and pictures and posters, should reflect the needs of the clientele. They are likely to be more vibrant for children and adolescents, and more restful for adults. Most of our recent experience has been with voluntary adult clients, one of whom gave us two words that captured all that we had hoped for in our office setting. We sat at an engaging distance, on a pastel trimmed, white, hand made, two metre round Chinese rug. It was an evening appointment, The lighting was brighter around us than in the corners of the room. The client called our space a ‘sacred bubble’. She felt safe, nurtured, and loved. Nothing less will do now.

General applications

Contextual attending is effective when the setting is arranged and furnished in a way that facilitates the purpose for being in that particular context. For example, fast food chains select ‘active’ colours for their outlets so that customers ‘whip in’, wolf down a whopper, and ‘whiz out’. Art galleries are designed so that natural and artificial lighting are blended to optimise visual satisfaction, and benches are strategically positioned for people to reflect on masterpieces.

Prepare personally

The most effective counselling occurs when skilled counsellors are ‘fully present’. This involves ensuring, administratively, that external interruptions will not occur. This is simply dealt with by maintaining a policy that incoming calls will be taken by a receptionist, an answering machine, or voice mail facility, and that one’s personal mobile phone is switched off. Preparing to be fully present also means minimising internal distractions. In practical terms this means allowing sufficient time between appointments to ensure that issues from a previous appointment (or personal preoccupations) will not intrude into the next. It also means having an appropriate intake of food and fluids throughout the day. Personal preparation calls for strategies for ‘centring’ oneself in order to be fully present. Personal preparation also involves recalling details of the incoming client, including the client’s preferred name.

General applications

The need for personal preparation is well recognised. Surgeons scrub up, singers warm up, actors dress up, machinists tool up, and shopkeepers stock up. It is noticeable when individuals have not prepared themselves for a task—they invariably screw up!

Welcome effectively

There was a period when we were offering services that required visiting a number of different schools. The level of contextual attentiveness became discernable on arrival. Some car parks had signs directing us to a visitors’ area, others did not. Those with signs also made it clear how to find the reception area. Others left us wondering. It became clear—intellectually and emotionally—that effective welcoming begins in the car park.

Effective contextual attending ensures that offices are easily located. It is not sufficient to just send a map to clients. This means that street numbers should be visible to both pedestrians and motorists. Appropriate signs should guide clients to the reception area

from both the street and any onsite car park. Access doors and the ‘night bell’ should be illuminated for the convenience and safety of after hours clients.

The reception area should be furnished in ways that signal ‘you are welcome’. As an example of what not to do, we are reminded of a welfare agency in our hometown that had a sizable poster of a miserable looking gorilla behind the reception desk. Its caption read: ‘Don’t talk to me—I’m having a bad day!’. Fun for the staff, perhaps, but clearly non-attentive, contextually speaking, for troubled clients.

Reception staff need to greet warmly and authentically. Since it is possible that clients are tense, they might be offered the chance to ‘freshen up’ so that they can empty their bladders and learn where the toilets are located. Policies will differ between offices on how and when refreshments are offered as a welcoming ritual of symbolic nurturing.

The personal greeting by the counsellor is a contextual aspect of the counselling that is to follow. It usually includes going to the reception area and welcoming the client, using their preferred name, with a proffered handshake. It may involve appropriate ‘small talk’ en route to the counselling room. It involves observation of the client’s state of wellbeing. It mostly involves offering the client the chair that is nearest the door. This is to give the client a sense of freedom to leave should the need arise. This may not apply for some involuntary clients and some agencies. The skills of greeting were overviewed on page 56.

Contract clearly

Clear contracting sets mutually agreed ground rules about what will happen. Once seated for the initial interview, there may be some short social chat that will be directed towards the receipt and understanding of the follow-up letter, court order, or referral letter. Matters arising will be clarified, time constraints discussed, procedures reviewed, and a tacit ‘contract’ to proceed agreed. In some agencies such contracts are formalised in writing. The counsellor may check whether or not the client needs to keep their mobile phone switched on. During this period the client is no doubt further ‘summing up’ the counsellor whilst perhaps sipping tea. We have often noted that clients seldom drink their tea once the work begins. (Perhaps there is a need for a rechargeable coaster that switches on to keep drinks warm when the mug is full, and off when it is drained!)

Counsellors need to be aware, especially in the first session, that even though voluntary clients are **willing** to be involved this does not preclude some from being **‘reluctant’** clients—perhaps from a history of failed help; perhaps from difficulty in trusting others; perhaps from wondering if the unknown cost of changing is worth the elusive benefits; perhaps from fear or shame at what might ‘come up’ during counselling.

The level and nature of reluctance will unfold at its own pace as skilled helping proceeds. This may be evidenced by long pauses to sip what is likely to be cold tea, perhaps a few tears, or a trip to the loo, and lots of client-directed talk until session closure. The ‘farewelling’ aspects of contextual attending will be considered next.

Farewelling

Farewelling closes off a session. When conducted appropriately it ‘leaves the door ajar’ for the next greeting. In concluding the counselling session, a suitable summary will have been shared, arrangements made for future contact, and a check made on whether or not the client needs any further attention to ensure that they are OK to leave. For example, if tears have been shed clients may want to splash their face, or refresh their make up. If there has been emotional turbulence, a quiet ‘sit’ and a coffee might be

called for if the client needs to drive. If the session has gone on longer than expected for any reason, the client may want to advise their home of any implications of the delay.

General applications

There is merit in contracting clearly in a broad range of contexts to avoid potential conflict or misunderstandings. For example, appointment times, fees and conditions need to be clear in making arrangements with people servicing home appliances, and the like. A check that the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ aspects have all been covered is helpful. It is a common error to overlook one or more of the so called 5WH elements (to be discussed in Chapter 8). It is not uncommon to receive flyers advertising some event where, for example, the location has not been included.

Postural attending

Postural attending is about the way that individuals position their bodies so that they can focus on what it is that they need to fully attend to. Sports umpires position themselves where they can best ensure that no rules have been infringed. Readers position themselves so that they can focus on a given text with minimal eye strain. Viewers position themselves to watch TV. Seating ‘floor plans’ are arranged differently (in rows, circles or horseshoes) so that people are suitably positioned in a formation that best suits a particular task. Counsellors position themselves so that they fully engage their clients in intimate dialogue.

This section focuses on the dimensions of postural attending that counsellors employ so that they can effectively: (1) communicate their personal availability and interest in their client; (2) communicate a personal confidence, and quality of care so that it feels ‘safe’ for clients to become involved; (3) motivate the client’s willingness to express themselves; (4) assist their own concentration; (5) position their eyes and ears to optimise the accuracy of what they see and hear when engaged with their client.

The way that counsellors position their bodies in order to be fully attentive to their clients is of such fundamental importance to the effectiveness of counselling outcomes, that readers could expect to find consensus on the subject in a review of literature related to counselling training. To our disappointment, this is not the case.

Reviewing current competence

Readers who are part of a regular training group will engage in an exercise that will help them to recognise what they do well currently, and what aspects of their attending behaviours will need ‘sharpening up’ in the training laboratory.

If you are a reader who is not engaged in formal training, we suggest that, before reading beyond this paragraph, you take time to note (in your own words) the way that you position your body when you are paying full attention to another person. We hope that, after reading the next section, you will be sufficiently clear about the five critical dimensions of postural attending to be able to identify the skills you already have, and those that you will need to ‘polish’. Do not be too concerned if you do not have it all together as yet. As you will see, neither does the literature.

Assessing postural attending

Readers who reviewed their own current competence may vary between ‘no awareness’ and ‘full awareness’ of what they do when attending to others. There are also similar

differences in the degree of detail reported in various texts. From the practitioners point of view, we are interested in ‘what works’. Our comments on the perspectives expressed in the literature will highlight the gaps that fall short of, or differences that contradict, what our experience has shown works best.

Some readers may have had difficulty in pinpointing what their bodies do when they interact with others. They might recall that they say ‘g’day’, and then just start talking. Richard Nelson-Jones offers very little to dispel such lack of clarity. He makes reference to greeting clients and other related dimensions of contextual attending, but makes no reference to postural attending beyond saying that ‘from the start, you observe and listen to the client’s verbal, voice and body messages so that you can respond appropriately’ (Nelson-Jones 1992, pp. 38–39). This summary gives no pointers on how to enhance attending skills—even though the fidelity of what is observed and listened to is a direct function of the effectiveness of the attention given.

Others readers may be have been aware of little more than that they like to sit opposite to people when they interact with them. This is an important dimension. Geldard and Geldard might confuse such a student. They make no reference to postural attending as such, but point out that during training for ‘face-to-face’ counselling practice, chairs should be placed at right angles to each other (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 26). Our experience is consistent with Carkhuff’s research that found that chairs should be directly opposite, in what the jargon refers to as the ‘squared-off’ dimension. In their diagram of the ‘counselling room arrangement’, Geldard and Geldard have modified the angle between two large arm chairs to approximately fifty degrees (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 322). Apart from failing to square off, the use of arm chairs suggests to us that Geldard and Geldard have chosen ‘comfort’ over ‘effectiveness’. For that reason, the use of armchairs could be seen as a ‘distraction’ from effective outcomes.

Some readers may have recognised that they not only like to sit opposite others when they talk to them, but that they like to look at them as well—and make eye contact. This is another important dimension that is mentioned by Corey, whose sole comment on attending is: ‘Attending implies engaging in behaviours such as maintaining eye contact and being psychologically available to the client’ (Corey 1991, p. 147). The lack of specificity about the ‘implied’ behaviours limits their trainability. We will come to see that Corey’s ‘psychological availability’ is a consequence (in part) of effective postural attending—not a behaviour that contributes to it.

Other readers may have been reasonably clear about what they do whilst attending to another person. They may be aware of squaring off, and making eye contact, but also have noted that they lean forwards when things get interesting. Others may have noted that they try not to fidget with things—like clicking a biro, or flipping through a magazine while they are talking. Others might have added that they like to keep their feet apart and flat on the floor. Others might have noted that they try to remember to leave their hands in their lap—rather than fold their arms—when they talk, because it somehow feels better when other people talk to them like that. Others may have noted that they like to be at a comfortable distance from the other person when talking. Such readers have collectively intuited the five critical behavioural dimensions of postural attending: (1) squaring off; (2) maintaining eye contact; (3) leaning in; (4) adjusting distance; and (5) avoiding distractions. These dimensions have been described in training publications by Carkhuff since 1972, but it of academic interest that earlier research by Ivey supports the foundational work of Carkhuff, Truax, and others by

concluding that ‘the attending behavior and its related concepts may be described in behavioral terms meaningful to beginning counselors’ (Ivey, et al. 1968, p. 1).

Carkhuff’s five elements differ, in some respects, from the five micro-skills that Egan (1998) summarises in the acronym ‘S-O-L-E-R’. Egan’s ‘S for squarely’, ‘L for lean’ and ‘E for eye contact’ match Carkhuff’s descriptions, but lack detail on ‘how to do it’. His ‘O for open posture’ discusses the desirability of avoiding crossed arms and legs. Those using Carkhuff’s terminology would see a closed posture as one of the ‘distracting’ behaviours that need to be avoided. Egan’s ‘R for relaxed’ has two elements. Firstly, it means ‘not fidgeting nervously or engaging in distracting facial expressions’, and, secondly, ‘it means becoming comfortable with using your body as a vehicle of contact and expression’ (Egan 1990, p. 64). Again, it is clear that the first element is another aspect of distracting behaviours, whereas the second element can be viewed not so much as a behaviour that can be refined with practice, but as a consequence of feeling ‘at home’ with postural attending. We have found that this is not always as easy as it sounds—particularly for some female learners. What needs to be noted is that the SOLER approach fails to address the critical ‘distance’ dimension—a dimension that requires considerable sensitivity to get right. In transcribing the 1975 version of Egan’s SOLER approach to attending, George and Cristiani (1990, pp. 148–149) also omit reference the distance dimension. So too does Carkhuff’s recent version (2000, p. 64).

It is interesting to note that Cash, Scherba and Mills (1975, p. 6) recorded a sixth attending behaviour—congruent facial expression—in their training manual. This was consistent with the Carkhuff findings of the day, but we later dropped the dimension when we realised the such congruity was a consequence of effective psychological attending—not a dimension to be ‘put on’.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) strategies include the notion of ‘mirroring’ the body posture of their clients as a way of communicating acceptance, and helping in the diagnosing of their client’s state of being (Lewis & Pucelik 1990). In our view, some practitioners go to extremes by constantly mirroring changes—if the client crosses their right leg over their left, they follow—mirroring each gesture. Learners have tried out this approach in training laboratories, and in all instances the feedback suggested that the strategy is counter-productive, and should not be used as an alternative to Carkhuff’s dimensions. The mirroring strategy seems very useful, however, in establishing rapport in social settings, and in assisting highly visual clients to clearly ‘see’ how they ‘appear’ when, with client approval, the counsellor adopts a matching posture to demonstrate a more powerful visual image than words could possibly achieve.

The micro-skills of attending

Before considering how to master the skill of postural attending we need to be clear about the detail and implications of each skill step of effective attending.

Square off

In the counselling context, squaring off simply means sitting directly opposite the client. Sitting ‘face to face’ has a number of advantages over sitting ‘along-side’ or at an angle to each other. There is a greater awareness of each other’s ‘presence’. The client can see the level of authenticity, interest and care that is communicated both verbally and non-verbally by the counsellor. Conversely, the counsellor can fully observe changes in facial expression on both sides of the client’s face, and can listen more acutely—necessary ‘inputs’ for effective work. Egan (1998, p. 63) puts the view that ‘an angled position may

be more helpful' if facing the person is too threatening. We disagree with this proposition on two counts. Firstly, our experience suggests that any discomfort on the part of the client is more likely linked to the 'distance' or the 'eye contact' dimension than it is to squaring off. This will be discussed more fully below. Secondly, if it is the counsellor who is uncomfortable, we see the need for the counsellor to resolve the 'comfort versus effectiveness' dilemma, by considering whether or not it is worth diminishing visual and auditory inputs for the sake of retaining personal comfort. The source of the counsellor's personal discomfort should be explored, identified, and dealt with so that professional effectiveness is enhanced. The dilemma is resolved when comfort and effectiveness go hand in hand.

The very act of sitting together optimises squaring in the vertical dimension as well. This actually tends to equalise any power difference that the client may experience, and symbolically signifies the collaborative nature of the counselling interaction. To appreciate the significance of the vertical dimension, in relation to power issues, it is worth recalling the function, and symbolism, of the elevated positioning of the Speaker in the House of Representatives, the 'bench' in the courtroom, and the pulpit in the church. In these contexts, we 'look up' to the power. The flip side relates to the many clients who feel pervasively 'looked down on'. Some carry memories of being literally and metaphorically 'stood over'—by a towering, critical teacher whose scornful finger made them cringe even lower into their desk—by a brutal parent who pushed them to the floor only to make them cover under a stream of venomous invective—or by an exploitative boss, domineering partner, or other demeaning source. It offers potential empowerment when the counsellor just sits—on an identical chair—with the mindset and posture that fully project a loving 'with-ness'. Squaring off adds an increment of inducement to become involved.

Maintain eye contact

Eyes not only receive visual input—they transmit what is happening behind the eyeballs of the viewer. There is some substance to Leonardo da Vinci's observation that 'the eyes are the windows to the soul'. Anger darts from the eyes. Resentment smoulders in the eyes. Love makes them glisten. Despair leaves pools of emptiness and draws them into their sockets. From this perspective, it is critical that the eye contact offered by counsellors continues to communicate—above all else—in each moment, I am here for you—even when eye contact is not returned.

Eye contact is not staring. During practice sessions in the laboratory, an effective coach will count the eye blinks that occur in the allocated twenty seconds (in a standard practice exercise), and watch for the minute eye movements that occur when they eyes gently 'wash' the face of another. The absence of at least two blinks, and the absence of eye movement provides specific evidence that the person practising needs to 'soften' their eyes in their next practice attempt.

Eye contact is not ogling for personal gratification. Eye contact does not give the 'come hither' look to confuse the nature of the relationship between counsellor and client. Eye contact lovingly scans the face and upper body, seeking evidence of the client's emotional state, and assures the client that the counsellor is there for them.

In our laboratory sessions we have heard feedback from people being attended to that they have felt 'judged' or 'scrutinised' by the practicing counsellor. The 'culprit' was identified as half-spectacles whose wearers 'peered' over the top of the half frame. We created the same effect by wearing normal glasses lower on the nose. Since then we

have suggested that counsellors take this factor into account when upgrading an optical prescription.

If eye contact is not returned, the counsellor should nevertheless offer eye contact to the area where connection would be made if the client either moved their face to the normal position; or opened their eyes, if closed. Reluctant clients frequently withhold eye contact, but we have noted that they will look up for a few seconds, from time to time, and make contact with that being offered by the counsellor. It appears that if the client senses either a 'with-ness', or even a lack of judgement, then both the frequency and duration of their eye contact increase—they return eye contact more often for longer as confidence and trust inch towards free engagement.

Maintaining eye contact can be difficult for counsellors whose natural preference is to process information visually. They find it easy enough to maintain eye contact whilst the client is talking, but they invariably look upwards and to the side as they process the client's information and formulate the response that they will make to it. The feedback they receive in the training laboratory makes it evident that this tendency has a negative impact on the client. It takes disciplined practice to overcome this tendency.

Lean forwards

Most people lean forwards when their interest is aroused by a tense moment in a film, or an exciting piece of news. These moments are generally not sustained. We frequently lean back in our chair until the next arousal draws us forward. Effective counsellors,



Figure 13. Showing the lean-in position. Note the angle, placement of feet, and shoulder to ankle line.

however, lean forwards for long periods (similar to that shown in Figure 13) in order to project their interest and to focus fully on the client. Carkhuff's research suggested that the angle should be between 30 and 45 degrees for the duration of the interaction. The way in which one sits and leans is important in maintaining comfort throughout the session, and for long term avoidance of back and neck pain.

The first thing to note is that the weight of the trunk should not be borne by the muscles in the lower back—it is transferred to the floor. In our laboratory sessions we have found the following steps to be useful in enabling this transfer. (1) Sit with the feet well forward at the same distance from the front of the chair. (2) Move the feet sideways so that the distance between them is wider than the shoulders. They are at about the right distance apart if the forearms are parallel when the backs of the hands are placed on the inside of the knees. (3) Roll the pelvis forwards so that the lower back arches inwards. (4) Hold the fingertips of one hand with the other and lean forward, 'hinged' at the pelvis, so that the forearms, immediately below the elbows, rest on the legs just above the knee. (5) Adjust the feet forwards (or backwards) so that the line from the shoulder–elbow–knee–ankle is straight. These steps place the skeletal 'superstructure' in a position to optimise support, and minimise fatigue. We sometimes refer to it as the 'loo' position. No doubt you can see why.

Short people, in particular, may have some difficulty with one or other of the above steps. This is likely to mean that they need a lower chair. People of different heights can 'play' in the laboratory with various make-shift footstools to determine the best height chair to optimise the quality of their attentiveness. When a lower chair is used it seems wise for the counsellor to lean nearer to the 30° angle rather than the 45°. This means that their heads will be higher which, in turn will minimise the risk of having neck pain. It is a matter of personal preference whether or not one chooses to have a lower chair, wear high heels, or use a suitable foot stool in one's office. Having a lower chair than the client will not matter—if anything, it will give client the experience of being looked up to.

A number of female learners have some initial difficulty with leaning forwards, in this way. Firstly, there are issues with short, tight skirts and low necklines. Embarrassment in this area is invariably overcome by dressing for the job—with trousers, a long, loose skirt, and appropriate neckline. It is harder for those whose early training taught them the prudence of sitting with ankles crossed and an upright posture. Frequently, a first attempt falls short of what they consider to be 'ladylike' requirements, even though they have tried to meet them. Feedback from others on the limited impact of their attending invariably encourages an improved re-run. It is frequently suggested in discussions that traditional feminine etiquette has been responsible for masking the actual personal power of many women. The initial difficulties are invariably overcome within the first few days of struggle with the comfort versus effectiveness dilemma.

Adjust distance

Whether or not counsellors connect with clients at a level that eventually leads to psychological attending depends, to a large degree, on fine tuning the 'distance' dimension. Carkhuff determined that the average effective distance is somewhere between two and four feet (60 to 120 cm) measured 'between eyeballs'. Edward Hall (1966) studied 'territoriality'—the space people claim as theirs—and described four 'body zones' called the 'intimate', 'personal', 'social' and 'public' distance zones—each with a 'close' and 'far' phase. Hall's work is described in more detail on page 148, but an understanding of the intimate and personal zones helps to clarify why the distance dimension is so critical for intimate involvement to occur in counselling.

The intimate distance zone

Actual physical contact occurs in the close phase of the intimate zone. It is reserved for love-making, cuddling children and expressions of affection with very close friends. The far phase is within the range 15–45 centimetres (6–18 inches).

The personal distance zone

The close phase of the personal zone is from 45–75 centimetres (18–30 inches). This space is comfortable for some people for intimate dialogue. The far phase from 75–120 centimetres (30–48 inches) extends to the outer limit of Carkhuff's finding.

Figure 14, on page 119, shows how the degree of intimacy between persons 'A' and 'B' varies when 'eyeballs' are two feet apart (in the top illustration (A1–B1), and four feet apart in the lower illustration (A2–B2). The scaling is in units of six inches to reflect Carkhuff's and Hall's work. The circles centred on A1 and B1 have a radius of 18 inches—the outer limit of the far phase of the intimate zones of both subjects. The shaded area shows the overlap of the far phase of the intimate zone of each. This is a very intimate and very effective distance for counselling, but may feel too close for some clients, especially in the early stages of counselling. In the lower illustration, the inner

circles that centre on A2 and B2 are now disengaged. Engagement at this distance is influenced by the intersection of the outer limit of the close phase of the personal zone of both A2 and B2—a radius of 2.5 feet (30 inches). This distance is less effective in terms of intimacy, but is offset by a degree of increased comfort. Note the inverse relationship between intimacy and distance—the shorter the distance the greater the intimacy. The research figures of two to four feet (24–48 inches) reflect average distances. Individual preferences will generally fall within those limits, but there is no doubt that some people may fall outside them. For example, we have noted a tendency that people living in rural areas are more comfortable with increased distance.

The task for the counsellor is to ‘fine-tune’ the distance by adjusting their chair and observing the impact that small changes in distance have on the client, and upon their own awareness of the degree of intimacy, so that they optimise the balance between intimacy and client comfort. With practice, learners can develop a sensitivity to an ‘energy resonance’ when intimacy peaks. This is achieved by experimentation and detailed feedback in laboratory practice. The

counsellor has two options if client discomfort is observed (or verbalised) at peak intimacy. The counsellor can either adjust for comfort, as discussed, or actually respond verbally to the discomfort caused by the intrusiveness of their proximity. Neither is necessarily preferred, but we have noticed that if the discomfort is responded to, clients may well start to share some experience or other that accounts for the discomfort—in which case exploration is under way.

Avoid distractions

This dimension covers postural distractions such as folded arms and legs, leaning back, and ‘lounging’, which Egan (1998) highlights as barriers to good communication in his discussion of ‘O’, the ‘open’ element of the SOLER approach. In addition to these, it is worth noting that the presence of a desk, or even a coffee table, between counsellor and client tends to create a psychological barrier that should be avoided.

Mention has already been made of the desirability of maintaining eye contact in the silences—looking away whilst reflecting on client’s information detracts from the quality of involvement. We have heard feedback along the lines that, ‘when you turned away, even for a short while, I actually felt as if you didn’t really care about me’.

There are a number of other distracting behaviours that could be interpreted as lack of interest. These include: looking at one’s watch; fiddling with a glider clip, buttons, jewellery, or any other device; picking at one’s clothing; twisting one’s wedding ring; scratching; mumbling; ear tugging; fingernail picking; foot tapping; doodling; sucking a pen or pencil; or peering over one’s spectacles. There are no doubt others.

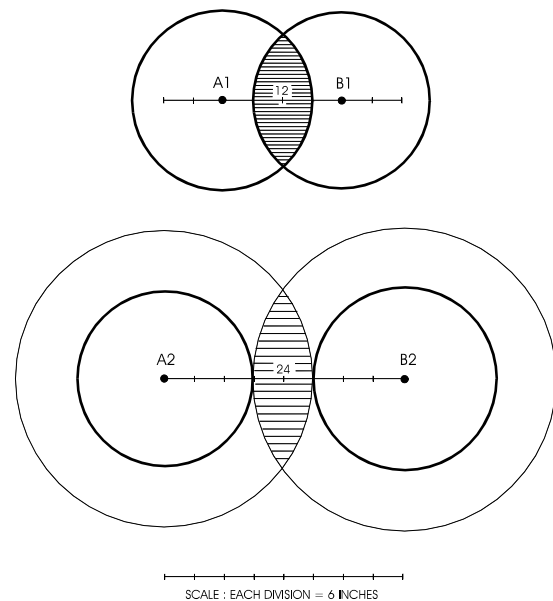


Figure 14. The ‘far/intimate’ zones overlap between eyeballs A1–B1 to enhance intimacy. Intimacy is reduced when the distance between eyeballs A2–B2 increases so that only ‘close/personal’ zones overlap.

The next step

It is important to have an appreciation of the elements of attending before beginning to practice them. Their significance is reinforced by both one's internal experience, and the feedback of learner colleagues during practice sessions. The training method is discussed immediately after the notion of psychological attending has been considered.

Psychological attending

Psychological attending occurs when a sense of 'one-ness' is experienced between those involved. Such attentiveness enhances relationships with significant others, but is not usual (or necessary) in most day to day interactions. Counsellors need to have appropriate caring values, and adequate skills, to enable them to engage clients with a degree of intimacy that observers can recognise as evidence of being visibly 'attuned'.

Psychological attending is what counsellors strive for. It is characterised by both parties being conscious of an intimate 'with-ness'. Psychological attending can be observed by noting the congruity of 'presence' between counsellor and client when, for example, mutual smiles appear, or tears well up—both triggered from the world of the client.

The skills of contextual attending and postural attending both contribute to psychological attending, but it is the innate personhood of the counsellor that determines its quality. Many of the enabling counsellor qualities were discussed in Chapter 3, but it is timely to discuss ways of managing the inevitable personal distractions that may inhibit psychological attentiveness from time to time.

The ideal mindset to have in the moments of preparing for the next client is one of 'emptiness'. Preoccupations need to be suspended in order to be fully focussed on the client's world. We have found that creating a simple personal mantra is helpful in this regard. We use: 'In this moment, I empty myself of all but love for—(and name client sub-vocally)' or 'I choose to be fully here for...'. A friend uses: 'I seek to be a channel of the healing Cosmos for...'. We encourage learners to find their own words or visualisations that effectively 'still' them.

Some preoccupations or agendas are so over-riding that they need to be dealt with before effective work can occur. On these occasions it is helpful to attend and respond to oneself in order to explore and resolve issues—or be comfortable with them being 'on hold'. Sometimes it is wiser to seek the counsel of a trusted colleague.

We have noticed that some learners, with a tendency to be perfectionists, have difficulty in achieving 'emptiness'. They are so keen to 'do things right' that their 'inner critic' maintains their focus on their own performance rather on their client. This may be dealt with by discussion, but frequently highlights an historical event that needs to be explored and dealt with. The paradox of psychological attending is that you matter most when you have no personal need to matter.

Practicing attending

Before the first practice session begins, the coach will introduce themselves; orient the work group to their work area; give each learner the chance to introduce themselves and share some comment about themselves. The group will develop a set of 'norms' to determine how the group will function. Then the work begins.

General approach to training

The general approach to training outlined in this section applies to most skills addressed in this text. The group structure and training roles described below will apply as each new skill is considered chapter by chapter. Minor variations in approach will be discussed when required. Readers are reminded that the skills are taught, and function, cumulatively. A degree of mastery is required of each before the next skill is tackled.

In the training programs that we have conducted, participants have been allocated to ‘small’ practice groups. Group size should not exceed the ideal number of ten people—nine ‘new’ learners and a tutor. All are learners. The tutor’s tasks are to: (1) facilitate a full understanding of the theoretical material presented in the plenary session prior to the practice session; (2) demonstrate what is required to perform the skill to be practiced; (3) provide structured, systematic, individual practice so that individual learners are able to integrate theory with practice; (4) apply both responsive and initiative skills when coaching learners; (5) discern when to monitor rather than coach so that learners can gain confidence before moving on; and (6) learn from their learners so that training procedures can be progressively enhanced. Wise trainers—‘old’ learners—value this source of learning above all others.

New learners engage in three roles initially, and progressively adopt a fourth. The roles are: ‘counsellor’, ‘client’, and ‘observer’. As proficiency increases, learners grow into the ‘coach’ role. The tutor normally acts as coach until proficiency is achieved. Once skills mastery is achieved, there is very little need for supervision (in a process sense)—learners who have learned to coach others become able to supervise themselves!

In the client role learners are asked to be authentic. Their task is to be ‘real’—not to role-play some person or situation that they know about, nor discuss an issue that they have already resolved. Their task is to experience the impact of the skill being practiced by the ‘counsellor’, and give them specific feedback on the effectiveness, or otherwise, of their effort. In this role, clients learn first hand ‘what works’.

The counsellor is in the ‘hot seat’. Their task is to apply all skills learned to date—with specific focus on the new skill just presented. In this way the cumulative links between each skill are progressively applied more naturally. After each practice round, the coach ensures that the counsellor is given first opportunity to assess their effort before receiving feedback from the client. The observers, and the coach then give feedback to the counsellor, in that order. Counsellors seem more receptive to feedback from others after they have assessed their own performance.

The observers note what is happening while others are practising. They assess how well the practice meets the requirements, and give the counsellor feedback accordingly.

The coach monitors what happens throughout the practice, and in the giving and receiving of feedback. The coach will give feedback to cover the gaps that were not spotted by any of the learners, make any appropriate teaching points, verbally reinforce what was successful in the practice, and verbally contract with the counsellor about areas that need a coaching ‘push’ in an immediate follow on, or in the next round.

A typical practice round in postural attending

The preparation

Each skill is introduced in a plenary session where the presenter: (1) facilitates a **review** of learners’ current awareness of attending; (2) builds on the learners’ ‘picture’ with an

expanded, general **overview** to cover the ‘full picture’ of attending skills; (3) **presents** details of the ‘how’ steps to master the attending skills—including a demonstration; and (4) outlines the **exercise** process that will follow. These are the first four of Carkhuff’s ‘ROPES’ teaching strategy referred to in the introduction to Part two. After the practice exercise session that follows has concluded, learners will write a **summary** of their learning, in their own words. These summaries are the fifth step in ROPES. The presentation following attending—on observing—will again summarise the functions of attending to highlight the cumulative link between attending and observing. This principle, that a summary of the previous skill introduces the next new skill, applies throughout.

The training room set-up

The typical small group training room is arranged as illustrated in Figure 15 below. Note that the whiteboard is directly behind the client chair. This enables the counsellor to be squared off to any cues that may be listed on the board to assist early in the practice round. The counsellor, client and tutor/coach sit in the chairs 1, 2 and 3 respectively during actual practice. The people acting as client and counsellor will sit in the spare chairs (4) during ‘board-work’—not in their ‘work’ chairs. Observers sit in the unnumbered chairs.

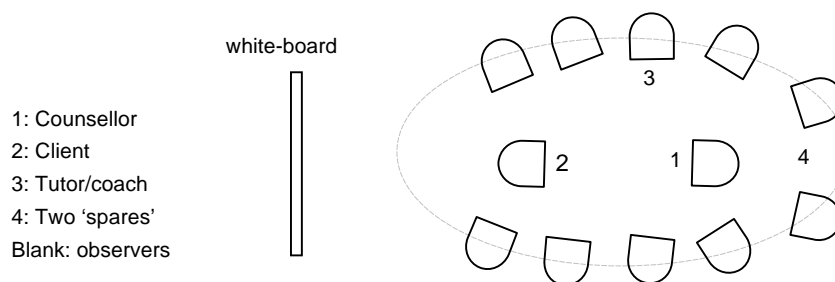


Figure 15. Showing the floor plan for a typical laboratory practice session.

The practice session

Before actual practice starts, the tutor will lead a brief discussion to have the five key elements of postural attending recalled, and listed on the white board so that the practicing counsellor can clearly see what is written up: (1) square off; (2) maintain eye contact; (3) lean forwards; (4) adjust distance; and (5) avoid distractions.

Before the practice session starts, tutors will have observed the natural attending behaviours of members of their practice group in order to identify those participants who are already comfortable with the attentive posture. The tutor invites one of these students to act as client so that the tutor can model what the counsellor does.

When the task is clear, another naturally attentive person will be invited to ‘have a go’, in the counsellor role, in the first learner practice round. This step avoids early expression of objection, or even scepticism, that could otherwise occur if, say, a low-functioning or sceptical participant went first.

The tutor reminds the group that the counsellor is to attend to the client, in silence, for twenty seconds in a way that embodies the elements listed on the board. The client is to authentically experience being attended to, and give feedback on its impact. The

observers are to note how well the elements were integrated, and whether they saw any evidence of psychological attending.

Practice proceeds, and the tutor calls ‘time’ after 20 seconds. The counsellor then comments on their experience and critiques their own effort. The client then gives feedback to the counsellor. This feedback needs to be specific. For example, ‘I felt a sense of connection, after a while, as if you cared for me—it made me want to talk to you even though we are not supposed to—it changed a bit towards the end though—when you looked at the tutor—as if you were wondering about the time’. This provides opportunity for the counsellor to assess a match between internal experience and external impact, and for the tutor to make any teaching points. Specific feedback is much more useful than non-specific feedback such as: ‘I thought you did pretty well—especially in the middle’. Observers then give specific feedback to the counsellor—some of which may tail off into hypotheses about how this would not work in situations A, B and C. The tutor will discourage such discussion, and focus on the reality of what is currently occurring. The emphasis is on learning from the experiential evidence created in the room. The tutor will then give their feedback. The tutor, as coach, may also invite the counsellor to ‘have another go’, and give specific instructions on what to do differently—in the hope that the client’s feedback will indicate that they experienced the counsellor’s increased care, availability and potency.

When round one is concluded, the counsellor shifts to the client chair, and a volunteer moves to the counsellor chair. If the volunteer vacates a chair that is in a better position to more fully observe the interaction, an observer, who is the least squared off to the ‘action’, should shift into the vacant chair. The client in the tutor’s demonstration, and the first participant’s round, acts as observer until all other participants have acted as counsellor and client. The participant who acted as client in the tutor’s demonstration (the very first round) is the last person to act as counsellor.

To conclude the session, participants discuss what has been learned, together with ideas about application of the principles to other areas—such as attending to learning materials, visual display units and others. Before closure, learners are invited to document their individual summaries of their understanding (see page 126).

Summary

What attending is

Attending is the skill of creating a climate that assists concentration and facilitates involvement:

- **contextually** by preparing for constructive engagement and arranging the setting to suit the task;
- **posturally** by the way one’s body is positioned;
- **psychologically** by focussing undistracted, caring energy.

What attending does

Effective attending:

- communicates interest;
- involves others;

- sets a climate of attention and respect;
- optimises decent intimacy;
- motivates self expression in others;
- assists concentration;
- establishes a base for constructive exchange;
- generates confidence and self-confidence;
- prepares one to access information accurately.

Why attending is important

If one creates an attentive climate, then the basis for a constructive interchange of information is established, so that the task at hand is addressed more effectively.

When attending is used

Attending skills are used whenever one wants to:

- become involved;
- involve others;
- communicate interest;
- create a facilitative learning climate;
- begin to solve problems;
- present with confidence.

How to attend

The skill steps which lead to effective **contextual** attending are to:

- ensure setting is comfortable and attractive;
- ensure furniture is functional for the task;
- make setting 'identifiable' by using signs to find it, and décor to identify with;
- avoid interruptions and distractions.

The skill steps which lead to effective **postural** attending are to:

- square off;
- maintain eye contact (naturally, not staring);
- lean forward (ideal 30–45 degrees);
- adjust distance (ideal is 60–120 cm or 2–4 feet between eyes);
- avoid distracting behaviours.

The skill steps which lead to effective **psychological** attending are to:

- attend contextually;
- attend behaviourally;
- suspend own values and preconceived ideas;
- 'still' inner distractions;
- actively focus attention.

When all aspects of attending are skilfully executed in an interpersonal situation, an observer is able to note congruity of expression between the attendee and attender.

The attending skills can be applied in a wide variety of settings including attending to learning materials, Visual Display Units and to others in telephone dialogue.

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My learning about attending

Write in your own words

What attending is:

What attending does:

Why attending is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own attending skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my attending:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Observing skills

Preamble

In the previous chapter, the discussion on eye contact focussed on the projective power of the eyes to communicate the counsellor's care and availability. This chapter considers the receptive function of the eyes. It is clear that our eyes enable us to take in an abundance of visual information from which we can accumulate knowledge, appreciate beauty, make deductions, ascribe meaning, and avoid mishaps. However, in this chapter we will focus specifically on the observations that are especially critical in counselling—that of being able to visually observe an individual, and be able to accurately describe the current emotional state of that person at any given moment.

In a process that is commonly perceived as dependent on words, it may come as a surprise to realise just how important visual observation is in the counselling process. In 1971, Albert Mehrabian sought to identify the cues that people used in judging whether others liked them or not. The results were rather startling. He found that actual words contributed only 7% of the overall impression, whereas the way the words were spoken (voice cues, or para-linguistics) accounted for 38% of the impression. The remaining 55% provided evidence from the expression on the face. The study also found that if the facial expression did not match the words, then people believed what the face 'said' rather than the words (Mehrabian 1971).

Observing seems quite easy and 'natural', but, when observing feelings, many people have difficulties that do not occur when observing other phenomena. This chapter offers an explanation of how these difficulties may be culturally related, and suggests, a strategy to overcome such difficulties. The strategy provides details of what to observe; how to process such information; how to label the emotion; and how to test the conclusions of such processing.

Reviewing current competence

In our regular training groups, participants engage in an exercise to help them recognise whether they actually see what they are asked to observe, or whether they simply make inferences about what they have seen. The exercise also indicates the degree of accuracy, and the extent of information taken in by their observation.

If you are a reader who is not engaged in formal training, we suggest that you immediately cover up the text directly below the following image, Figure 16. Now observe the image and judge whether: (1) lines A and B are of equal length; (2) line A is longer than line B; or (3) line A is shorter than Line B. When you have noted your conclusion, uncover the text to read what your conclusion might indicate.

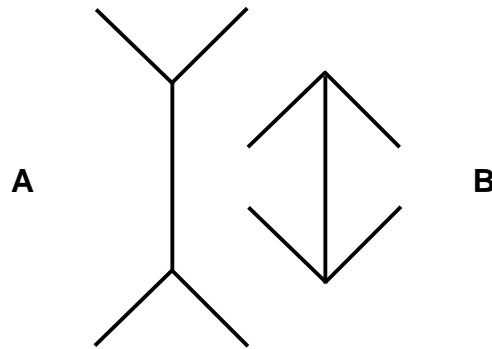


Figure 16. An exercise to review one aspect of observing skills.

Well done if you said that A is shorter than B. That seems to be an unlikely conclusion—unless you measured it. We suspect that many readers recognised Figure 16 as the Müller-Lyer, ‘arrow illusion’ (cited in Gregory 1967, p. 136), and assumed that both lines were of equal length—even though line A looks longer than line B. This is an understandable response. It is a familiar illusion that may have ‘caught’ us, previously, and been ‘remembered’ ever since. We must admit to tampering with the image by making line A 25 mm long and line B 27.5 mm—an additional 10% extra length!

Part of the apparent reason for the ‘real’ Müller-Lyer illusion is that the brain utilises ‘remembered’ information about ‘perspectives’. It tends to interpret the two dimensional arrows illusion as a representation of three dimensional objects. The brain’s perceptual mechanisms tend to enlarge those parts of the image that represent distance, and diminish those that represent proximity (involving a process called constancy scaling). Thus, line A appears to be enlarged because its perspective is similar to the furthest corner of a room, and line B appears to be diminished because its perspective is similar to the closest corner of an office block (Gregory 1967).

We manipulated the graphics of the original illusion to make three points. The first is to highlight that perceptions are not necessarily accurate—they are the brain’s ‘best bet’ at a hypothesis. The second point is simply to note that hypotheses are testable. In this case, a clearly graduated ruler will show that the actual measurements falsify the hypothesis that $A=B$. (We will later come to see the importance of client feedback in testing hypotheses). The third point relates to the problem of stereotyping—the ‘trap’ that we set with the Müller-Lyer illusion, ‘hook’ the tendency to assume that things that are **similar** to a preconceived ‘standard’ are **identical** with that standard. Stereotyping offers both benefits and disadvantages. The benefits are obvious if we consider, for example, the unambiguous meaning that is ascribed from an early age to the positioning, colour, and sequencing of traffic lights. Stereotyping is disadvantageous in the counselling arena because it may lead to false conclusions by overlooking the unique idiosyncrasies of individual clients.

An 'observation' about observing feelings

It is not uncommon to hear comments such as: 'I can see that you are angry (or afraid or whatever)'—as if feelings can be **observed**. The fact is that they cannot. They can only be **inferred** from what has been observed—and, in our experience, very few trainee counsellors are able to consistently draw inferences about feelings that 'hit the bullseye'. Many are only able to hit the 'target' randomly. We note, however, that the same people do not express such divergence of opinion when observing non-emotive objects. We have wondered why it is that normally competent people have such difficulty in recognising feelings accurately.

As with the Müller-Lyer illusion, other perceptions go beyond the immediate image projected optically onto the retina at the back of the eye. Retinal images are assessed against other data in the brain's memory bank, and the brain computes its 'best bet' of what has been 'seen'. In this process, the brain's sensory perceptual mechanism provides 'evidence for checking hypotheses about what lies before us' (Gregory 1967, p. 11). It follows that if people's eyes are in good working order (with or without spectacles), any perceptual errors must be accounted for in terms of the adequacy, and fidelity, of information that the brain has in store, and against which its checks are made.

Since almost all counselling trainees seem proficient in processing non-emotive data, we conclude that the randomness of their inferences about feelings must be accounted for in terms of inadequate memory banks relating to the recognition, labelling, and communication of emotional experiences. This possibility seems plausible in the Australian culture where many of us have learned to ignore, or 'play down' feelings.

The Necker Cube offers an interesting way of seeing how the absence of critical information, whether visually or cortically, influences the accuracy of hypotheses. The Necker Cube (shown in Figure 17) is a 'pattern which contains no clue as to which of two alternative hypotheses is correct: the perceptual system entertains first one and then another hypothesis, and never comes to a conclusion, for there is no best answer' (Gregory 1967, p. 12).

Gregory refers to the fact that the circle can appear to be sometimes on the front face, and sometimes on the back face of the cube. What interested us (when 'playing' with the cube) was that, when we mentioned the 'top' and 'bottom' of the cube, we could see four other possibilities by simply thinking 'look down on' and 'look up to' (see page 480 for these options). It was as if the brain followed directions to engage other known concepts to create new hypotheses—none of which were right or wrong because of the lack of adequate information to 'clinch it'. This simple experience may help explain why some people have difficulty in accurately assessing other people's feelings—there is insufficient related data in the brain's memory bank to produce accurate hypotheses. These deficiencies may occur because the Australian culture tends to approve the suppression of feelings, and avoids discussing them. Our experience suggests that the gaps in people's memory banks occur in one or more of three areas: (1) a range of images related to 'body language' and appearances; (2) a comprehensive vocabulary of affective adjectives (feeling words) that are easily retrieved; and (3) an effective process for labelling the images (in the context in which they occurred).

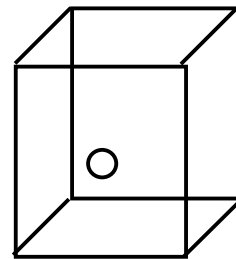


Figure 17. The Necker cube lacks sufficient visual cues for the brain to provide a single 'best' hypothesis about the specific plane on which the circle is placed.

Some trainee counsellors seem to have all three aspects to their memory banks. They are almost always accurate with their hypotheses, but not all can articulate the process that they use. There are those trainees who are able to sense feelings, intuitively, but who have difficulty in naming the feeling until they see it in a printed word list. There are others who know a range of feeling words, but have trouble recalling them when required to match them with particular gestures or facial expressions.

A process for labelling feelings

It needs to be noted that people observe people for reasons other than to infer feeling states. A coach will observe another person to assess **performance** of a given task—what works, what does not work, and what needs modifying? A driver will observe another driver for cues of **intention**—is it safe to turn, or will they ‘run the light’? A person may watch their partner at a party to assess **motive**—are they just being friendly or overly flirtatious? Strategies other than the process for accurately inferring feelings are required for assessing performance, intentions, and motives.

The process described below will normally occur concurrently with the listening process in determining how others may feel. In the first instance, however, the skills should be practiced with visual cues only, not words. This will expand the skills of trainees who may otherwise rely heavily on auditory cues alone. The skill steps of the process are detailed below.

The skill steps of observing

Observe systematically

Scan the evidence

When actually observing another person, the information that floods in becomes more manageable (and details more readily retained) by consciously and systematically noting details in four specific areas. The areas are (1) ‘context’, (2) ‘appearance’, (3) ‘voluntary behaviour’ and (4) ‘involuntary behaviour’. These areas appear as column headings in Figure 18 on the following page. Each column lists the areas that should be noted if present. Cameo descriptions of each area are given later in this chapter. The ‘busiest’ scanning will occur in observing the voluntary and involuntary behaviours because the context and appearance are virtually static.

Check for congruity across the evidence

Figure 18 lists a series of ‘congruity checks’. The first takes notice of the involuntary behaviour—it is the most reliable evidence—and checks to see if the voluntary behaviour is congruent with it, or attempts to mask it. This gives evidence of client authenticity or otherwise. The second check reflects on whether or not the behaviours are congruent with the person’s appearance—and whether or not the different aspects of appearance are internally consistent. The third check will focus on the influences that any contextual information might throw up. These influences may not be discernable until one learns more about one’s clients—by which time the cultural, domestic and social influences, in particular, will add substance to the counsellor’s reflections. There is a certain artificiality in describing these steps, sequentially, because they tend to occur quickly and concurrently. The merit in defining them separately is that no aspect is overlooked. Verbal evidence is also likely to be included in these congruity checks.

OBSERVING for FEELINGS

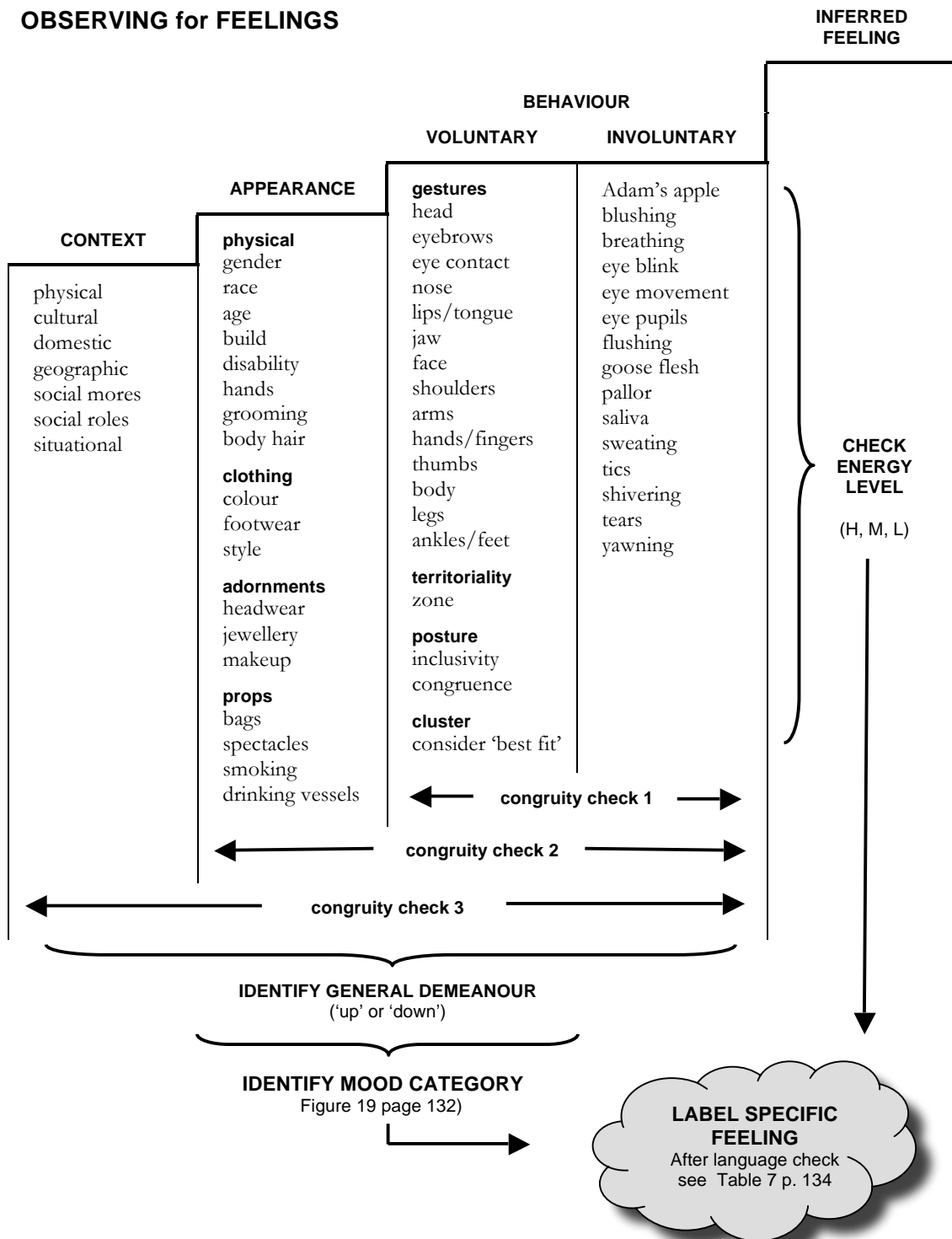


Figure 18. Schematic representation of the observed areas, and skill steps, involved in optimising the accuracy of inferences made about 'feelings'.

Identify general demeanour

Many people may be able to identify how a person feels with some degree of accuracy by the end of the previous step, but there are those who are unable to make sense of what they have seen. For them, the next step is to make a broad assessment of general demeanour—whether in overall terms the person is feeling 'up' or 'down'—'positive' or

‘negative’, ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘OK’ or ‘not OK’, about their current experience. [It is an interesting aside to note that teaching schizophrenic patients how to attend to others sufficiently well to discriminate whether they felt ‘good’ or ‘bad’ was the start of their successful rehabilitation—having been hospitalised for 10–15 years, and been labelled as ‘unsalvageable’ by their attendants (Berenson 1976)].

Identify mood category

Although a number of researchers have classified sets of ‘primary’ affects, it is clear that none is universally agreed. We have tried (in Figure 19) to assemble a way of classifying mood categories that has some inherent logic, makes it easy for trainees to remember, and provides a guide for accessing related lists of feelings, within each mood state, that can assist in pinpointing very specific feelings.

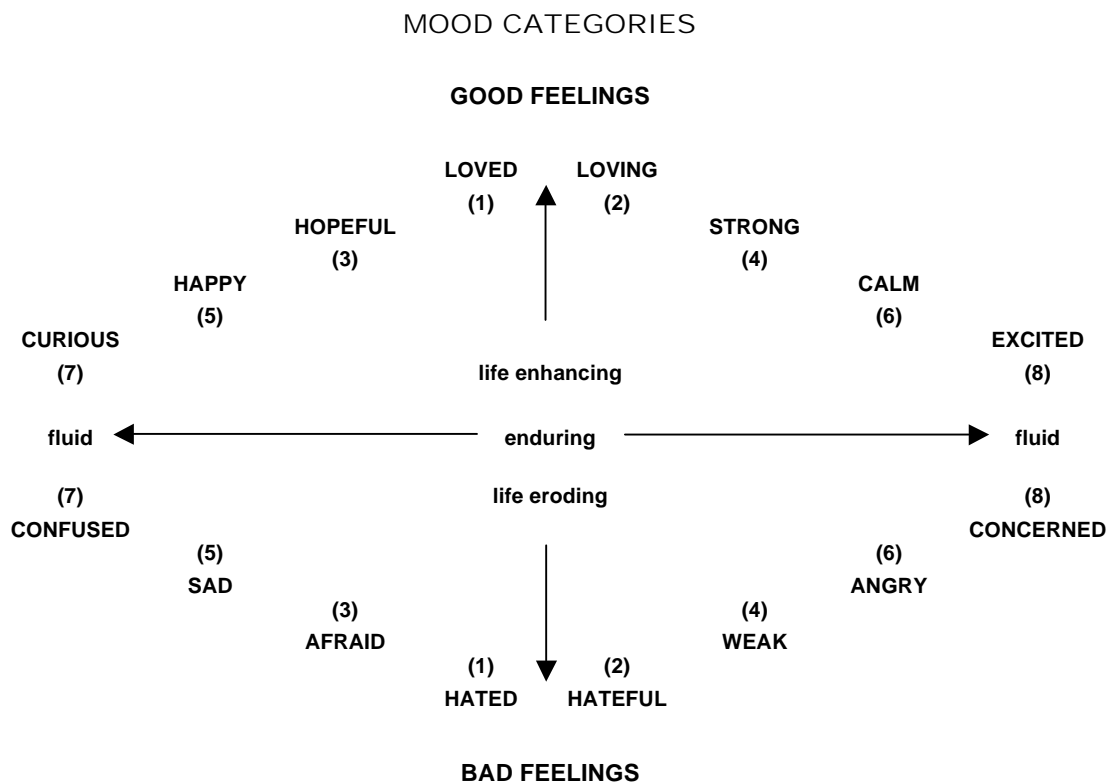


Figure 19, Showing how the emotional states that have greatest impact on life are the least amenable to change, whereas those that fluctuate the most are the least life shrinking or life enhancing.

Inspection of Figure 19, will show that it reflects a good ‘up’ side and a bad ‘down’ side. The vertical axis reflects the ‘potency’ of the mood—loving and being loved are the most life enhancing experiences; and, conversely, being hated and being hateful are the most life eroding. Furthermore, since love persists in hardship, and hate is hard to quench, we have shown them as the most ‘enduring’ on the horizontal axis. Other moods are displayed to suggest their relative potency (vertically) and relative endurance (horizontally). For example, curiosity and excitement are positive moods that may be potent, but are relatively fluid—they come and go. The numbered columns cross-refer to the feeling word lists in Table 7, on page 134. Their use will be discussed below. Identifying the mood category is, almost always, merely an approximation of the feeling word because it fails to qualify the intensity of the mood. Having determined, say, that

the demeanour is ‘good’, one uses the ‘mood categories’ chart to identify ‘what kind of good’ is a clearer approximation. A similar enquiry is made of a ‘bad’ demeanour.

Identify the specific feeling

Once the mood category has been identified, the next task is to ‘grade’ it to pinpoint the precise feeling word that best fits the person’s experience. Table 7 on page 134 lists a series of feeling words that apply to each mood category. The lists are subdivided under three headings: ‘high’, ‘medium’ and ‘low’. These refer to the level of energy expressed by the client during the period of observation.

Assess energy levels

In assessing a client’s energy level, the observer should also consider the level of verbal energy if the client has been talking. The observer must ask: ‘Is this energy high, medium or low **for this person—relative to their ‘norm’?**’ The temptation to make comparisons between people, or to assess feelings against some external standard is likely to lead to erroneous inferences. Consider the example of two people who are **equally pleased** with the outcome of the same event. One may simply smile and nod gently to express their pleasure; and the other may broaden their smile, nod harder, and punch the air with both hands as they say ‘yes!’. In comparative terms, one might infer that the first person is only feeling ‘satisfied’ with the result, and that the second person is actually feeling ‘thrilled’ with the outcome. If these hypotheses were tested with the people concerned, each is likely to ‘negotiate’ them. One could say: ‘Well, it’s more than just satisfied—I’m really pleased’. The other could say: ‘Well, thrilled is a bit of an overstatement, but I really am pleased with they way things turned out’. Whilst the inferences made in the example ‘get by’ reasonably well in day to day conversations, they need to be ‘spot-on’ to accelerate exploration during the counselling process.

Find the specific word

Once the mood category and the energy level have been decided, it is a simple matter to refer to Table 7, find the heading that matches the mood, and check out the alphabetical list in the appropriate energy column until the ‘best fit’ is identified. The headings in Table 7 are numbered to cross-refer to the mood categories of Figure 19.

Make a language check

When satisfied that the feeling label is as accurate as one can judge, the observer needs to ask themselves whether or not the client is likely to understand the selected word. If not it is necessary to change it to an appropriate synonym. For example, if one’s best inference was that a six year old felt ‘euphoric’, a language check would suggest a change to a simpler word such as ‘bubbly’, or similar.

Recheck the label against the evidence

Before actually speaking, it seems wise, as a final check, to ‘replay’ (in the mind’s eye) what has been observed to ensure that the inference is the ‘best fit’, and not just a consequence of stereotyping. At this point, people with a well developed kinaesthetic sense will invariably know that they are accurate because they actually ‘feel’ the feeling.

Test the inference

The final step is to test the inference for accuracy against the client’s experience. This is done by using the training format: ‘You feel ...’. It is important for the counsellor to watch and listen for feedback at the time of making the ‘you feel’ statement. If the inference is accurate, the observer should watch for a nod or a slight rise in energy about the face or in the eyes, and listen for verbal affirmation—‘Yes! that’s exactly how I feel’. If the inference is very inaccurate, the client will say so, but may or may not be



able to tell the observer what their actual feeling is. If the inference is ‘in the ‘ball-park’ the client will ‘negotiate the feeling’ (so-called) by saying something like: ‘It’s a bit like that, in a way, but maybe its more like ...’.



We recognise that what is observed visually must be congruent with what is heard verbally, and sensed kinaesthetically. Sharpening the skills of visual observation, alone, ‘rounds out’ the skills of those who may be dependent upon auditory or kinaesthetic skills, alone, in making inferences related to feeling states.

Feeling word list





Table 7 below, lists the mood categories shown in Figure 19. Each category is subdivided into three columns headed ‘high’, ‘medium’, and ‘low’. These columns classify the way each mood can be expressed at different energy levels. The words in each energy column are alphabetically listed. These specific feelings describe subtle aspects of the particular mood.



Table 7. Feeling word list

LOVED			HATED		
					
MOOD CATEGORIES 1					
high	medium	low	high	medium	low
adored cherished endeared honoured irresistible lovable loved prized revered treasured trusted	admired affirmed cared for esteemed re-affirmed respected valued wanted	appreciated close complimented liked supported understood well-regarded	abandoned degraded abominated despised detested devastated exiled forsaken hated humiliated loathed martyred ostracised ridiculed	alienated alone antagonised blocked discarded disregarded dropped dumped insulted isolated jilted rejected unwanted	distanced estranged excluded ignored indifferent kept at bay left out overlooked pushed away turned down

LOVING			HATEFUL		
					
MOOD CATEGORIES 2					
high	medium	low	high	medium	low
altruistic compassionate devoted forgiving generous infatuated intrigued love-struck loving lustful lusty noble patriotic randy trusting turned on yearning	affectionate an affinity benevolent benign decent empathic friendly helpful just kind kindly liberal maternal sexy sympathetic tender thoughtful titillated turned on understanding warm-hearted	amiable biased congenial cordial courteous fond grateful inclined interested neighbourly obliging partial polite thoughtful tolerant warm charitable willing	contemptuous detesting hostile loathing nauseated repulsed revolted spiteful venomous	covetous critical cynical disgusted envious jealous offended rancorous repelled	disapproving disagreeable disgruntled disinclined frustrated indignant
HOPEFUL			AFRAID		
					
MOOD CATEGORIES 3					
high	medium	low	high	medium	low
determined expectant inspired longing radiant confident starry-eyed	aspiring believing buoyant hopeful optimistic positive rosy sanguine trusting	accepting encouraged keen philosophical willing wishful	frantic frenzied frightened horrified overwhelmed panic-stricken paranoid terrified terror-stricken	alarmed anxious apprehensive dreadful fearful intimidated nervous threatened vulnerable worried	cautious fidgety guarded hesitant ill at ease jittery shaky suspicious tentative uncomfortable uneasy

STRONG			WEAK		
					
MOOD CATEGORIES 4					
high	medium	low	high	medium	low
arrogant bold courageous dynamic effective invincible potent triumphant tremendous wise excited exuberant forceful full of beans inspired intense mischievous optimistic spirited vivacious	able alert alive assured attentive capable confident durable eager efficient interested lively productive proficient skilful successful sure switched on together well equipped	adequate bright coping determined fit keen prepared ready secure well	blundering degraded demeaned distressed dreadful frantic frenzied guilty hopeless humiliated impotent inadequate incapable ludicrous maladroit mortified petrified ridiculous self-disgust stupid useless	abashed absurd disconcerted embarrassed idiotic ineffective ineffectual obligated penitent pressured prudish rattled repentant shamefaced stressed trapped two-faced unable uncomfortable vulnerable washed-out	a bit of a dill amateurish awkward bashful coy foolish inept lazy shy silly upset wishy-washy withdrawn
HAPPY			SAD		
					
MOOD CATEGORIES 5					
high	medium	low	high	medium	low
brilliant bubbly delighted ecstatic enraptured enchanted euphoric joyful thrilled wonderful	charmed glad good lucky pleased positive rapt tickled-pink	agreeable content fine fortunate mellow nice O.K. satisfied thankful trusted trusting	agonised anguished battered crushed distressed dreadful empty frantic futile hysterical in agony lost melancholic nauseated remorseful tormented	afflicted aggrieved awful dejected depressed disappointed dispirited exhausted gloomy hurt miserable sad sick sullen troubled	discouraged downcast glum nostalgic miserable regretful plaintive sorry bad below par fed up ill at ease low upset

CALM			ANGRY		
					
MOOD CATEGORIES 6					
high	medium	low	high	medium	low
comforted emancipated free freed liberated marvellous pacified peaceful reassured serene consoled smug solaced transcended trusting unburdened	allayed alleviated consoled demure innocent lightened mellow nonchalant appreciative relieved restful	at ease bland bored eased helped mellow passive quiet rested satisfied sedate softened supported undisturbed	aggressive bitter detesting disgusted enraged exasperated furious incensed infuriated insulted irate livid mad nauseated outraged seething	annoyed cheated disgruntled frustrated fuming hostile indignant negative resentful pissed off riled sore	crabby critical cross cynical disapproving displeased irked irritated miffed peeved perturbed piqued sulky surly troubled vexed
CURIOUS			CONFUSED		
					
MOOD CATEGORIES 7					
high	medium	low	high	medium	low
amazed bewildered devastated dismayed flabbergasted shocked startled stunned	alarmed baffled contemplative dazed disbelieving understanding intrigued meditative stirred-up surprised thoughtful curious	distracted inclined partial reflective interested stimulated thoughtful	baffled befuddled confounded distraught floundering nonplussed perplexed shattered stressed torn trapped	anxious blocked disconcerted disorganised doubtful frustrated mixed up muddled perturbed troubled	foggy puzzled uncertain unclear undecided unsure vague wondering

EXCITED			CONCERNED		
					
MOOD CATEGORIES 8					
high	medium	low	high	medium	low
ecstatic hysterical delirious ebullient effervescent engrossed enraptured enthralled exhilarated fascinated inflamed intoxicated orgasmic proud thrilled vibrant wild	absorbed agitated eager encouraged engaged enthusiastic frisky lit-up motivated stimulated stirred-up titillated	animated aroused attracted prepared prompted	agonised anxious disturbed pressured stressed troubled hysterical delirious overwrought	agitated bothered strained jumpy uncomfortable worried	awkward bad bored concerned dithery impatient over-loaded overworked restless tired twittery uncool upset

Body language images

In our waking moments, our bodies move in a multitude of ways in response to personal needs and external events. Others may interpret such movements in terms of our state of being, motives or intent—and, in that sense, they ‘read’ our ‘body language’. Fluency in this language is enhanced by familiarity with its ‘alphabet’—the individual elements that combine to communicate specific images to create meaning. As already mentioned, there are two classes of such elements—‘involuntary’ and ‘voluntary’. The involuntary behaviours, controlled by the autonomic nervous system, adjust heart-rate (and a host of other functions) for survival, or adaptation to changing circumstances. Involuntary behaviours are beyond conscious control. The voluntary behaviours are movements controlled by the peripheral, or somatic, nervous system. Such behaviours can be controlled at will, although they most frequently emerge, without forethought, in response to external events, and in that sense are not ‘conscious’. Together, individual involuntary and voluntary behaviours are the building blocks that combine to create body language—a bit like letters forming ‘words’ that make ‘statements’ that the ‘reader’ can infer what the body is ‘saying’. Such statements are influenced by contextual settings, cultural influences, and gender in some instances.

Involuntary behaviours

It is not the purpose of this text to detail the anatomy and physiology of the autonomic nervous system, but it is important for counsellors to recognise the inter-relationship between emotion and changes in neuromuscular, respiratory, cardio-vascular, hormonal

and other functions that are regulated by the hypothalamus, part of the midbrain structure. When drawing inferences about another person's state of being, counsellors should be aware that involuntary evidence is more credible than voluntary behaviours or verbal comment that may be 'intended' to contradict it. Involuntary data make it easier to identify when people are 'putting on a front' or being 'over-controlled'. Consider the employee, called into the boss's office, who presents with confidence—apart from the telltale blotch on the neck that gets pinker and pinker! What follows is an overview of involuntary behaviours—listed alphabetically.

Adam's apple jump

The Adam's apple jump is a conspicuous up-and-down motion of the Adam's apple that is more prominent in men than in women. It is an involuntary sign associated with emotional anxiety, stress, or embarrassment. It may occur in a listener who finds it hard to 'swallow' a speaker's suggestion, perspective, or point of view (Givens 2004).

Blushing

Blushing occurs when the capillaries in the face dilate to increase the blood flow to redden the face. This flushing can be associated with the emotions of embarrassment, shyness, shame, or modesty. Blushing may also be associated with anger, but according to Brannigan and Humphries it is 'never seen in a purely aggressive individual; it is a sign of actual or possible defeat' (cited in Givens 2004).

Breathing

Physical exertion, and a range of strong emotions can quickly increase the normal rate of respiration (about 16 times per minute in the average resting adult). Changes in breathing rates and patterns profoundly influence changes in the body's chemical and biological states that effect our neurology. According to Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) theorists, there are recognisable breathing patterns that indicate which 'accessing mechanism' is currently in play. 'Breathing high and shallow in the chest (or the momentary cessation of breathing) accompanies and accesses **visual** attention. Deep, full breathing low in the stomach area indicates **kinesthetic** accessing. Breathing in the diaphragm (or with the whole chest), often accompanied by a somewhat prolonged exhale...will accompany **internal dialogue**' (Dilts & DeLozier 2000). 'Breath-work' practitioners have developed therapeutic procedures related to breathing (Taylor 2003).

Eye blink

The normal resting eye blink rate is about 20 closures per minute. The rate increases when one is excited, stressed, in courtship, speaking in public, and when lying. It is interesting to note that, during the 1996 presidential debates, candidate Bob Dole averaged 147 blinks per minute, whereas Bill Clinton averaged 99. However, this jumped to 117 when Clinton was asked about increases in teen drug use (Tece, in Givens 2004).

Eye movements

Researchers in the study of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (Bandler & Grinder, et al. cited in Dilts & DeLozier 2000) have identified the ways in which humans internally process new information, and access information that has been memorised. Individuals usually have a 'preferred' mode—but most people are able to use all three. The first is the **visual** mode where data is processed in 'pictures'. In the **auditory** mode processing is undertaken verbally. In the **kinaesthetic** mode data is processed by 'feeling it'. The minute, involuntary movement of the eyes provides cues as to 'what is going on' inside a

given subject. Figure 20, shows the relationship between the direction in which the eyes move, the mode that is being accessed, and whether the information being processed is historical or futuristic.

To make an accurate inference about ‘what is going on’ one needs to know three things. (1) Are the eyes looking up, down, or ahead (laterally)? (2) Are the eyes looking to the left or the to the right? and (3) What is the subject’s dominant hemisphere? Points 1 and 2 are easily determined, but point 3 is less clear. Simply put, ‘dominance’ relates to how the brain is ‘wired’. The subject shown in Figure 20 is assumed to be ‘right dominant’, and will apply to most right-handed people. Knowing the dominant side makes it possible for the observer to discern **imagining** (or constructing) **future** events when the subject looks to their right, and **remembering** (or reconstructing) **past** experiences when the subject looks left. A simple test to determine which side is dominant is described below.

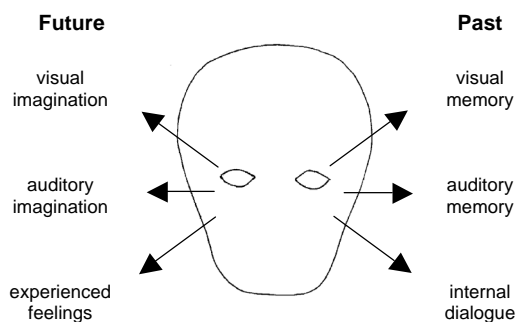


Figure 20. Showing the basic NLP eye accessing cues.

As Figure 20 shows, for right dominant subjects, visual processing of future events (creative imagination) is associated when the eyes look up and right. Recalling past events, visually, occurs when the eyes are looking up and left (using the non-dominant hemisphere). If the upturned eyes switch between left and right, it is most likely that an historical event is being reviewed, and a future plan of some kind is being considered in an attempt to ‘deal with’ the historical event.

Auditory processing will occur in a similar way, with the eyes moving to either side in the horizontal plane. Lateral right movement is associated with auditory imagination (future), and lateral left movement is observable during auditory recall (past). Oscillation between the left and right sides occurs during subjective assessment of information, or as the subject ‘edits’ what to say and what not to say. Such editing is often observable when political and other leaders are being interviewed on current affairs television programs, for example.

Feelings can only be experienced in the present. However, subjects may be apprehensive that they **will** be fearful in some future circumstance (maybe because they recall that they **were** fearful in similar circumstances, historically). Such cogitations will occur visually or in auditory mode, but may trigger emotion in the present. Such internally induced feelings, or those triggered by external stimuli, will be experienced kinaesthetically, either by touch (tactile) or by ‘gut feeling’ (visceral), in association with eyes that move downwards to the right. Eye moment that is downwards to the subject’s left is indicative of ‘internal dialogue’ that is emotionally charged.

One cannot take for granted that all right handed people are ‘wired’ in the way that is portrayed above. However, the dominant hemisphere can be quickly recognised by asking (say) a question that will require recall: ‘Can you remember who you sat next to on your first day of school?’ If the subject’s eyes move to their left they are right dominant, and will access information as described. If their eyes move to the right they are left dominant, and will access information in the reverse direction—to the right to

access past data, and the left to create future information. Each subject is internally consistent in the way that they access information.

On occasions, the eyes may hold a fixed focussed position. This is likely to indicate an 'internal staring' where the person reflects on a recalled or constructed fixed image. On other occasions the eyes may appear 'fish-eyed'—apparently focussed 'in space'. This usually indicates daydreaming, but may also be related to a drug induced state.

Eye structure—pupil size and iris 'maps'

The pupil in the eye is the space through which light passes into the eye. The pupil is surrounded by the iris. The muscles in the iris are controlled by the autonomic nervous system to regulate the amount of light that falls onto the retina, via the lens. The pupil dilates (opens) when the light source is dull and constricts (closes) in bright light. However, the pupil also dilates when the person is fearful or in pain. Furthermore this mechanism is sensitive to the use and abuse of pharmaceutical, social, and illegal drugs—some dilate, some constrict, but all are telltale. Changes in the size of the pupil are the most obvious functions of the iris. Dorothy Hall, an iridologist, describes how the 'geometric logic' of the circles, segments, and zones within each iris, provide 'maps' which, together with discolorations of the pigment, provide an accurate tool for 'fine tuning' a diagnosis of ill-health made by any other method (Hall 1980).

Flushing

Flushing is a sudden reddening of the skin. Flushing of the face (blushing) has already been discussed. However, flushing may occur elsewhere on the body as irregular shaped blotches. In the counselling context these are most frequently visible from above the collar line to the lower neckline. This colouration may indicate suppressed emotion—often anger. Hot flushes, accompanied by the sensation of heat, are one of the symptoms of menopause, neuroses and psychoneuroses.

Goose flesh

Goose flesh is an involuntary response to fear, or awe—as if suddenly becoming aware of a spiritual 'presence'. There is the feeling that hair, particularly in the nape of the neck, is 'standing on end'. The autonomic nervous system contracts the tiny arrector muscles attached to the base of each sloping hair to create this sensation which, in early humans also elevated body hair in response to cold weather.

Pallor

Pallor is the unnatural paleness that occurs when the blood supply to the face is restricted. It is most obvious in death but, to a lesser degree, can occur in ill health, or prolonged unhappiness, and can occur spontaneously when a person experiences fear, anger or shock.

Saliva

The body normally produces the right amount of saliva for oral comfort and eating requirements, but it can also produce excessive amounts (ptyalism) as a symptom in a range of medical conditions, in 'nervous states', and during pregnancy. Excess saliva (and associated swallowing) seems evident when embarrassment and (sometimes) guilt is experienced. Alternatively, the mouth will be uncomfortably dry if the production of saliva diminishes (xerostomia). Taber's Medical Dictionary (2001) notes that a dry mouth is associated with anxiety and 'some types of (unspecified) neuroses'. Lack of saliva can also be a side effect of some medications, or as a consequence of using

marijuana. The condition may be present if clients are observed to take frequent sips of water during a counselling session.

Sweating

Sweating is a natural response to elevated temperature or physical exertion, but it is also innervated by strong emotional states. It is most evident in the palms of the hands, soles of the feet, the armpits, and on the brow and upper lip. Abnormal sweating may indicate a fever, anxiety or stress.

Tics

Tics are caused by spasmodic contractions of muscles in the face, neck or shoulder muscles. Tics may become an involuntary habit where muscular tensions reflect emotional frustration. They may appear as a partial wink, non-productive sniffing, or any kind of abnormal twitch. Tics may also occur in patients who have suffered from lethargic encephalitis—the ‘sleeping sickness’ caused by the bite of the tsetse fly. Such muscular contractions on other parts of the body are generally referred to as twitches. People who are seen as ‘nervous types’ are colloquially said to have ‘the twitches’. Tics can occur when a ‘controlled’ person experiences a strong emotion.

Shivering

Shivering is a slight tremor, trembling or quivering of the skin that can be triggered by exposure to cold, or by excitement, fear, anxiety, or distaste. The response to fear may come as a ‘wave’— ‘cold shivers down the spine’ or ‘someone walking over one’s grave’.

Tears

We are mostly oblivious of the constant production of tears from the lachrymal glands which ordinarily keeps the surface of the eyes moist. These tears normally replenish any loss of moisture through evaporation. Any excess is drained into the nasal cavity. Strong emotions such as joy, grief, pain, compassion, remorse, desperation, loneliness, gratitude, and hopelessness can trigger more tears than the draining system can manage, and either merely ‘cloud’ the eyes, or be shed from them as tears.

Yawning

Yawning is the involuntary inhaling of air that may reflect fatigue, sleepiness, boredom, or emotional conflict. In tense meetings yawning may signify mild anxiety, disagreement, or uncertainty. It may provide opportunity for an alert listener to ‘explore un-verbalized objections, or clarify unvoiced concerns’ to another person’s controversial ideas (Givens 2004). In a tense setting, adrenaline lowers the blood’s oxygen level, and yawning speeds reoxygenation (Hill cited in Givens 2004). Yawning is socially contagious.

‘Fight or flight’ and immobility

Many of the autonomic functions are triggered by some kind of need to take urgent action. Autonomic functions prepare the body for combat, or for escape from potential or actual danger. Givens (2004) notes that the response of the human brain is not too different, in this regard, from the ancient ‘aquatic brain’ where accelerated heartbeat, raised blood sugar levels, and released hormones from the adrenal gland, prepared an alarmed fish to ‘chase and bite’ or ‘turn-tail and flee’. This tendency is commonly referred to as the ‘fight or flight’ response. It is interesting to note that when people want to move—and cannot—the body progressively mobilises the ‘combat’ mechanisms by increasing levels of adrenaline and noradrenaline. Givens supports his view by noting how easily people become angered in airline terminals, hospital

emergency rooms, and in heavy traffic; and reports that in England more nurses are attacked in emergency wards than in psychiatric wards!

Voluntary behaviours

Individual gestures may have particular meaning, but they seldom occur in isolation. It is helpful to review the dominant aspect of individual gestures, and then consider how they combine to show the way people claim space, posture themselves, and show feelings.

Individual gestures—from top to toe

Head tilt-back

The lifting of the chin with the head tilted back is universally recognised as a sign of superiority. It makes it easy to ‘look down your nose’ at someone!

Head tilt-side

The tilting of the head to either side is seen as a submissive pose—deference to a superior, or coyness in courtship rituals. ‘In Spain, tilting the head sideways and resting the cheek in the palm of the hand is a deliberate signal which says ‘sissy’ (Morris, cited in Givens). That information might come in handy at a future quiz night!

Head shake

In 1872, Darwin noted that shaking the head from side to side is a ‘universal sign of disapproval, disbelief and negation’ (cited in Givens 2004). It may also signal sympathy, or misunderstanding.

Head nod

The nodding head (up and down) is a cross-cultural gesture that shows approval, understanding, or agreement when listening; and one that gives emphasis, or shows conviction, when speaking. It may also indicate excitement or rage (Givens 2004).

Head lowered

The lowering of the head is seen as a sign of respect or humility, but may also signal feelings of guilt, shame, grief, pain, depression, or the holding of an internal dialogue.

Eyebrows—raised

Raised eyebrows express surprise, disbelief, uncertainty, or exasperation. They also tend to exaggerate the intensity of a smile or stare. When associated with a tilting back of the head, raised eyebrows suggest a supercilious air of disdain, haughtiness, or pride.

Eyebrows—lowered

Lowered eyebrows occur (with the wrinkling of the brow) when frowning or scowling to express anger, displeasure, disagreement, doubt or concentration.

Eyes—contact

Eyes that engage signal a willingness to talk. Avoidance of eye contact signals desire to be left alone. Eyes down suggests introspection.

Nostrils

The flaring of the nostrils is associated with arousal, anger and indignation.

Lips—smile

Givens (2004) describes two distinct smiles—the ‘true’ smile, and the ‘false’ (polite or camera) smile. In a true smile the corners of the mouth curve upwards, and the outer corners of the eyes crinkle into crows feet to signal happiness, gladness, or joy. With the false smile the lips do not curl upwards, and the crows feet are not visible. The false smile can simulate happiness, but can also be used for deception. The true, heartfelt smile is hard to produce on demand because it tends to be controlled by emotion. It is

technically known as the zygomatic smile because it involves the zygomaticus muscles. The false smile can be produced at will, and uses the risorius muscles. The zygomatic smile is a more accurate indicator of joy. The link between smiling and humour, love, and joy has not yet been fully described.

Lips—compressed

Compressed lips are pressed together and roll inwards to signal anger, dislike, sadness, grief, sympathy, frustration, uncertainty, nervousness determination, anger, or reluctance to speak. Tensing the mouth in this way may signal the onset of a mood shift, reflection on a novel thought, or a sudden change of heart (Givens 2004).

Lips—pouting

The protruding lower lip is used universally by children to express disappointment, displeasure, uncertainty or sadness. Adults may pout to show disagreement with comments made by others.

Lips—pursed

Protruding, puckered lips suggest disagreement, scheming, or calculated thought. The tightly screwed-out lips show that a listener has gone beyond the pout of uncertainty to a dissenting frame of mind. As a mood sign, the lip-purse reflects formation of an alternative verbal reply in the brain's primary speech centre, called 'Broca's area' (Givens 2004). This is a useful cue for presenters and counsellors to watch for so that any mental resistance can be cleared up.

Lip biting

Biting the bottom lip suggests apprehension, fear or anxiety.

Tongue show

A momentary protrusion of the tongue between the lips is a universal mood sign of unspoken disagreement, disbelief, disliking, displeasure, or uncertainty. It may modify, counteract, or contradict a verbal remark. Following the statement, 'Yes, I agree,' a protruded tongue may suggest, 'I don't agree.' Tongue-shows can reveal misleading, ambiguous, or uncertain areas in dialogue, public statements, and oral testimony, and, as such, signal the need to further explore an unresolved verbal issue.

Jaw droop

The jaw-droop is a reliable sign of puzzlement, bewilderment, uncertainty, or surprise.

Face—blank

Givens (2004) classifies a neutral, relaxed, seemingly expressionless face as 'blank'. The eyes are open, lips are closed, and the muscles of the face, jaw and neck are neither stretched nor contracted. The blank face generally reflects calmness. We may maintain a blank face in social situations to maintain 'polite distance'. They abound in lifts where passengers are silent. Andreasen notes that a blank faces that never changes may be seen as a core, negative Type II symptom in schizophrenia (cited in Givens 2004).

Shoulder shrug

The shoulder shrug is the raising or forward flexing of one or both shoulders. It is recognised universally as a sign of resignation, uncertainty or submissiveness. Givens (2004) notes an interesting relationship between the shoulder shrug and the word 'just', as in: 'I don't know why—I just did!' Here 'just' denotes a sense of powerlessness or uncertainty of motives. Jaskolka (2004) suggests that the shrug may accompany momentary feelings of helplessness, or signal a resigned apology for lying.

Arms folded

Folded arms are seen as a defensive gesture that may be used to create a barrier between oneself and others (to symbolically protect the heart). The gesture may arise from lack of familiarity with the person, or from disagreement with them. Folded arms may also indicate a need to comfort oneself—particularly if associated with a gentle rocking movement of the body. Jaskolka (2004) suggests that women disguise this gesture by holding their handbag with both hands in front of the body when they ‘feel exposed’ in strange company. It is possible that a person whose arms are folded and who verbally agrees with you may not be telling the whole truth.

Arm across body

The movement of one arm across the body can be seen as a subtle variation of the folded arm barrier. Jaskolka (2004) draws attention to the way Britain’s Prince Charles tugs at his cuff just prior to making a speech. Adjusting one’s tie is a similar gesture. Checking one’s watch may be a protective ruse to ‘buy time’ to gather one’s thoughts before speaking.

Arms extended

Open arms suggest a safe, open heart. They are inviting and welcoming. Two extended arms embrace others to show affection or comfort. One extended arm is used to greet with a handshake, or to comfort by touching or putting around another’s shoulder.

Arms up

One raised arm with the palm forward universally means ‘stop’. Two arms raised almost always signifies surrender or defeat.

Arm-swing

The swinging of arms occurs naturally when walking, but Givens (2004) notes that restless back and forth arm movements may reveal an unconscious desire to ‘walk away’ from a group meeting or discussion group.

Hands—palms down

Palms down gestures show confidence, assertiveness, and dominance. When associated with a ‘beating’ action it ‘pushes’ an opinion to make it more convincing.

Hands—palms up

Hands with the palm up, during speech, may imply an appealing, imploring or begging position, or it may accompany conciliatory remarks. Uprturned palms project a non-aggressive, receptive pose that cross-culturally reflects congeniality, humility, or uncertainty (Givens 2004).

Handshake—equality

Equality in a greeting is experienced when both parties hold their hand vertically.

Handshake—dominance and submission

In 1988, Blum (cited in Givens 2004) noted that ‘the hand that is on top in any given handshake signifies the dominant party. It appears that the ‘dominant handshake’ has become a ‘big deal’ in some circles. Some people may feel submissive, and actually be concessional in offering the palms-up, submissive hand shake. Others may note the other’s dominant posture, but reciprocate, out of courtesy, without being submissive in any way. Some others may neither know nor care about the niceties of handshakes. However, Pincombe claims that ‘you would be well within your rights to reject the offered hand’; and details two counter-moves, developed by author Allan Pease, to deal with such dominance. He concludes (rather reactively in our view) that these are ‘not

good public relations, but when a person attempts to dominate you he or she deserves every intimidation you can give them in return' (Pincombe 2001. p. 172).

Handshake—limp

In general, people who give the 'wet-fish' handshake are judged to be 'weak characters', or a 'push over'. However, the person concerned could simply be being careful of their hands—such as surgeons, musicians or arthritis sufferers.

Handshake—power

Power handshakes 'crunch' the other's hand as an aggressive act that may seek to intimidate or dominate. Pincombe (2001) suggests three countering moves—the least reactive of which is to apply lots of pressure in return.

Handshake—fingertip

Some people express their social discomfort by partly closing the palm and offering the fingertips when greeting others.

Handshake—two-handed

The two-handed handshake expresses valuing and respect. However, it is likely to be seen as intrusive and inappropriate if two hands are offered by relative strangers.

Hands—clasped

Clasped hands held below the face and above the waistline, as if in prayer, suggests a contemplative pose or humble disposition.

Hands—clenched fist

The raised clenched fist signals anger, threat, or frustration. However, Jaskolka (2004) suggests that it is unlikely that the person adopting this pose will actually take further hurtful action.

Hands rubbed together

Rubbing hands together may mean that one is cold, expectant (particularly of receiving money), excited, or ready for action.

Hands on hips

The palms resting on the hips with the elbows pointing outwards is known as the 'akimbo' position. It is frequently used to make the body look bigger (and therefore more powerful) by people who feel superior, or wish to threaten others, or as a defensive gesture when they themselves are threatened.

Hands—two hands behind head

Hands clasped behind the head with the arms extending sideways (like wings) suggest that the person feels superior to others—either intellectually, or in terms of status.

Hands—one hand behind head

During conversation, one hand touching or scratching the back of the neck is likely to signal uncertainty, disagreement, frustration, anger, or disliking. Givens (2004) notes that in counselling, interviewing, or cross examination this gesture signals a 'probing point'—an opportunity to explore an unresolved issue that needs to be expressed.

Hand over mouth

The hand is often placed over the mouth when a person lacks confidence in what they are saying, or is 'fibbing'. Jaskolka (2004) notes that this gesture also signals disbelief of another's statement.

Finger steepling

Birdwhistell first coined the term 'steepling' to describe the gesture where the finger tips of each hand touch each other. Steepling reflects precise thought patterns. It may be

used while listening, speaking, thinking, to entertain a provocative or novel idea, or to contemplate a creative solution to problems at hand (Givens 2004).

Finger pointing

There are a number of familiar rude and patriotic signs that have different meanings in different cultures, however the extended forefinger on a prodding hand seems to universally signal aggression, particularly if waved in the face, or thrust at the chest. In Transactional Analysis, finger pointing is seen as an indicator that one is speaking from the 'parent' aspect, as if to the 'child'.

Fingers drumming

Drumming on a table or similar surface often signals frustration, nervousness, or impatience. The drumming is likely to become more forceful with the severity of mood. Clicking the mechanism of a ball point pen may signal the same moods.

Finger sucking

As infants we all sucked our fingers (and thumbs) when in need of nurture or comfort as a substitute for the breast. The gesture surfaces in children and disturbed adults during times of stress, or when in need of nurturing. The habit of sucking a pen or pencil is a socially acceptable alternative, and may occur under mild stress, or during reflective periods such as when drafting a document.

Nail biting

The habit of nail biting begins as an extension of finger sucking. Penzel (2004) notes that serious adult nail biters (chewed back to the cuticle) report that their habit soothes them when stressed, stimulates them when bored, and invariably delivers pleasurable relaxed sensations and assists concentration by recycling silica (Hall & Odell 1982). Many nail biting adults tend to hide their hands behind their backs or in their pockets.

Thumbs—ups and downs

The pointing of the thumb mirrors the state of being. When things are OK—it is 'thumbs up'. When something has gone wrong, or we are not OK, it is 'thumbs down'.

Thumbs—'unsheathed'

People may express an attitude of dominance or aggression by putting their fingers into their left and right pockets and hooking their thumbs (the most powerful digit) so that they are external and visible—a kind of unsheathed claim of strength. Jaskolka (2004) suggests that when the thumbs are unsheathed in the back pockets the sense of superiority still prevails—it is just not displayed.

Body alignment

The alignment of the body, whether facing or angled, has been discussed under 'postural attending' (see page 115) and will be further discussed below when considering 'posture' on page 150. It is worth noting, in this current context, that aligning the upper body with that of others shows agreement, liking and loyalty (Givens 2004).

Body shift

A shift in body positioning may signal physical discomfort, a changing emotional state, or a changing awareness of surrounding events. 'Gross changes in body position, such as shifting in the chair, may show negative feelings toward the person one is talking to' (Mehrabian, cited in Givens 2004).

Legs

Legs that are spaced apart with both feet on the floor signal a 'grounded-ness' that suggests alertness, confidence and stability. It will be recalled that this is the placement recommended in postural attending.

Legs—extended forwards

Legs that extend forwards are likely to signal boredom if the body is leant back, and arrogance if, in addition, both hands are held behind the head. This does not apply in postural attending when the torso leans forward.

Legs—crossed

Legs may be crossed for comfort while seated, but can unwittingly signal defensiveness against social or sexual intrusion. Women are (or have been) culturally taught to sit with crossed legs, which means that they may be seen as ‘not having their feet on the ground’ and thus (at least traditionally) are seen as less potent as people. Jaskolka (2004) suggests that another person is ‘showing interest’ if the foot of the crossed leg is pointed towards you. If the foot points away from you, a lack of interest is indicated.

Legs—coiled

Legs that are ‘coiled’ together, with the knees crossed and the toe of one foot locked behind the ankle of the other, show an exaggerated version of the crossed legs. The gesture signals defensiveness that may have undertones of embarrassment, shyness, or fear.

Legs—Gait

The way the legs move indicates attitude, mood or physical health. A normal, healthy gait is a likely indicator of general well being. An exaggerated ‘swagger’ in males is a visual way of using space to demonstrate power or strength—John Wayne style. Some people may exaggerate the side to side hip movement to attract male attention. A shuffle, limp, or awkward gait may indicate an emotional or physical disability.

Ankle cross

Crossing the ankles is comfortable when relaxing in a chair, however it can be perceived as a subtle barrier. Jaskolka (2004) suggests that this is more likely if used when standing. This seems odd to us because the body seems less stable and less powerful.

Feet—pointing

Jaskolka (2004) suggests that whether standing or sitting we tend to point our feet towards the person or object of most interest to us. This seems more likely to be associated with ‘function’ than any emotive reason—simply because we tend to ‘square off’ to look at things of interest, and the feet follow.

Feet—tapping

Tapping of one or other foot tends to signal impatience and the desire to ‘get on with it’. Stamping the feet signals anger or stubbornness.

Feet—rested on ‘desk’

One might ‘put the feet up’ on an object of one’s own simply to relax. However, the same behaviour on a bus signals the desire for privacy, a notion to be discussed below.

Territoriality—how we claim space

Regardless of how crowded our habitats are, we all seek to claim our ‘personal space’. The way we defend our own space and react to its invasion; and the way we encroach on the territories of others, is an integral part of the way we relate to others (Fast 1981).

Edward Hall (1963) coined the term ‘proxemics’ in his anthropological studies of territories, and describes four ‘body zones’ where he showed an inverse relationship between distance and intimacy. The distances were derived from studying human interactions. Each zone is bounded by a ‘close’ and ‘far’ phase. The first two zones were discussed when considering the ‘distance’ dimension in attending (on page 118).

Intimate Distance Zone

In the close phase of the intimate zone, actual contact is made for making love, in moments shared between close friends, when children cling to a parent, or romp with each other. The far phase of this zone is from 15 to 45 cm (6 to 18 inches) from the body. This is close enough to hold hands, but can be a source of discomfort between strangers, or across genders—especially if eye contact is prolonged.

Personal Distance Zone

The close phase of the personal zone lies between 45 and 75 cm (1.5 to 2.5 feet) and is the space one attempts to ‘create’ when entering a lift, for example. The far phase of this zone is from 75 to 120 cm (2.5 to 4 feet). It is a comfortable distance for a ‘chat’, but lacks intimacy—people are ‘kept at arm’s length’ so to speak. Hall calls this phase ‘the limit of physical domination’.

Social Distance Zone

The close phase of the social zone lies between 1.2 and 2.1 metres (4 to 7 feet). It is very limiting to try to engage in counselling at this distance—in spite of contrary impressions from the movies. It is the distance at which people generally transact impersonal business. The far phase of this zone is from 2.1 to 3.6 metres (7 to 12 feet) and applies in more formal social or business relationships. For example, this distance is preserved between reception desks and the waiting room chairs to minimise opportunities for conversation—so that reception staff are able to continue working on given tasks without appearing to be standoffish to the public.

Public Distance

The close phase of the public zone lies between 3.6 and 7.5 metres (12 to 25 feet) and is suited for a range of gatherings such as a presentation at a conference. The far phase of this zone is beyond 7.5 metres (25 feet or more) and may be used by politicians when security factors need to be taken into account. Further to this, Fast (1981, p. 36) makes the interesting observation that ‘the far public sphere of the politician, or the actor on stage, contains a number of body-language statements which are used to impress the audience, not necessarily to tell the truth’. That seems fair enough for actors whose job it is to create illusions—but seem dubious as a conscious strategy for politicians!

It is important to be aware that there are many cross-cultural implications of territoriality. Hall noted that in Japan, crowding is a sign of warm and pleasant intimacy but, even so, the Japanese preserve formality and aloofness in their closeness. Arabs also like physical closeness, and they like to touch and smell their companions—‘to deny a friend his breath is to be ashamed’ (Fast 1981, p. 39). It is not our intent to discuss differences in cultural attitudes and mores in further detail, but we cannot omit Fast’s anecdote on how the English social system achieves its privacy—through carefully structured relationships that are accorded by social standing—not by physical closeness.

An American college graduate met an English Lady on an ocean liner to Europe. The boy was seduced by the Englishwoman and they had a wild affair. A month later he attended a large and very formal dinner in London and among the guests, to his delight, he saw Lady X. Approaching her he said, ‘Hello! How have you been?’ Looking down her patrician nose, Lady X drawled, ‘I don’t think we’ve been introduced’. ‘But...’ the bewildered young man stammered, ‘surely you remember me?’ Then emboldened, he added, ‘Why, only last month we slept together on the trip across.’ ‘And what,’ Lady X asked icily, ‘makes you think that that constitutes an introduction?’

Fast 1981, pp. 42–43).

Territoriality and groups

An understanding of the sense of territory is especially important for group leaders (including counsellor trainers) who should note how group members position their chairs; posture themselves in relation to the leader and other members; the age and gender mix that sub-groups choose; who comes early, who comes late, and who fails to attend. In general, it is likely that a person who maintains an exaggerated **physical** distance between themselves and others will also create abnormal psychological distance, and maintain a rigid defence system.

Territoriality is not only communicated by distance, but also by the orientation of the body; and placement of arms, legs, hands and feet in relation to other people (see 'posture' below). When a person's territorial defences are weakened, or intruded upon, their self-assurance tends to grow weaker. The need for personal space is graphically shown in a study of prisoners. Hall (1963) found that some prisoners prefer to be in isolation cells—despite the associated deprivations. They would assault others who had done no more than come close to them. These violent prisoners kept the experimenters at twice the distance permitted by the non-violent prisoners. Their body 'buffer zones' were four times those of the non-violent prisoners. The violent group panicked and became violent when someone intruded upon their extended body zones.

There are 'recognition ceremonies' that tend to be required when choosing where to place oneself when sitting in public. The ritual includes asking a fellow passenger if the vacant seat adjacent to them 'is taken'. The ritual requires lowering the eyes when seated, and the avoidance of further eye contact. Sommer (in Fast 1981, p. 61) suggested that the choice of seat in a restaurant, on a bus, or in the park reflects the struggle for privacy. Sommer concluded that an aggressive person will seek privacy by 'holding off the world'—for example, they will 'hog' a table and keep others at bay. A passive person, however, will seek privacy by sharing their place, at a table, with others but will keep them at a distance—they will sit at the corner of the table where there is likely to be minimal intrusion—preferably facing away from the door.

Posture

The term 'posture' relates to the overall positioning of the body. Givens (2004) notes that when a bearing, pose, or stance of the body is sustained for longer than two seconds it becomes a posture, and although duration varies postures are more expressive of attitudes, feelings and moods than brief gestures or movements.

In his study of the significance of posture in human communication, Scheflen (1964) noted that different body positions are related to different emotional states, and that emotional states can be recaptured by resuming an earlier position. He also suggested that shifts in postures tended to 'punctuate' a conversation, as exemplified below.

... imagine a situation in which one man is holding forth on a particular subject. The listener leans back in his chair, arms and legs crossed, as he listens to the speaker's ideas. When the listener reaches a point where he disagrees with the speaker, he shifts his position in preparation for delivering his protest. He may lean forward and uncross his arms and legs. Perhaps he will raise one hand with the forefinger pointed as he begins to launch a rebuttal. When he is finished he will again lean back into his first position, arms and legs crossed—or perhaps into a third, more receptive position where his arms and legs are uncrossed as he leans back, signalling that he is open to suggestion.

(Scheflen, in Fast 1981, pp. 125–125).

A shift in posture indicates that something is happening but does not, of itself, fully say **what** is happening. Postural shifts may be more expressive in some cultures than others.

Schefflen (1964) suggested that all postures that people adopt when they are with others will fit into one of three groupings: (1) 'inclusive-non-inclusive'; (2) 'vis-à-vis or parallel body orientation'; and (3) 'congruence–incongruence'.

The inclusive-non-inclusive posture

This notion relates to the many ways that people use their bodies, arms and legs to include or exclude others. A group at a party can form a 'circle' to include some and exclude others. A foot can be extended across an aisle to deter 'intruders', and hold others 'captive'. The options are legion.

The vis-à-vis or parallel body orientation posture

Under this notion, Schefflen distinguishes the different level of intimacy that is experienced when people sit 'face to face' (vis-à-vis), or along side (parallel). The former position is likely to be adopted in exchanges between 'teacher and student, doctor and patient or lover and lover...where feeling or emotion is exchanged' (Schefflen in Fast 1981, p. 131). This is the 'squaring off' dimension of postural attending discussed on page 115. Parallel positioning is generally adopted when people are not mutually engaged, but engaged with a third object, such as in watching TV, or reading.

The congruence–incongruence posture

Schefflen noted that people tend to imitate the positioning of others to express support or agreement with them. Alternatively, incongruent postures are likely to suggest differences in status, importance or perspective. An example of this could be one member of a group who places hands on hips, like wings, to assert superiority over other group members. Fast (1981, p. 132) makes the further observation that the leader of a group often 'sets the position' that others tend to follow—for example, 'If the wife sets the position (shows a 'strong' posture), then the chances are that she has the strongest hand in decision making, and in effect wears the pants in the family'.

Clusters of gestures

Summaries of clusters of gestures, and their inferred meanings, are listed alphabetically below. It must be remembered that they are guides only—not strict definitions. Involuntary behaviours are listed within the patterns and identified accordingly.

Anger

- body held in erect posture, hands on hips or hands behind head (to appear powerful);
- jaw tensed to a biting position;
- flared nostrils;
- knuckle of bent forefinger symbolically bitten (especially in Italy) (Morris in Givens 2004);
- head jerks;
- clenched fist or palm down with beating movement;
- frowning—with vertical furrows above the nose and horizontal wrinkles over the bridge of the nose—eyes 'flashing' (Givens 2004).

Anxiety

- twirling a ring or fingering jewellery;
- feet tapping or moving in a rhythmic manner;
- rapid eye movement may suggest a search for an exit;
- general postural shifts;
- rubbing palms against a fabric;
- adjusting clothing;
- frequent swallowing;
- moistening lips;
- facial tics (involuntary);
- pinching fleshy part of hand;
- sitting in a rigidly upright position with ankles locked;
- hands interlocked and rhythmically massaging one thumb against the other (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Boredom

- drumming on table or desk;
- tapping with feet;
- clicking ball-point pen;
- jiggling foot;
- holding head in palm of hand with eyes drooping;
- doodling;
- staring blankly with body taut and erect;
- glancing at ceiling, watch etc.;
- positioning body towards the exit (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Confidence

- proud erect stance;
- frequent eye contact with increasing duration, eyes blink less;
- steepling—hands with finger tips joined like a church steeple (the term was coined by Birdwhistell 1963);
- subtle steepling—hands in lap; steepling or fingers joined; the more important the person feels the higher the steepling;
- thumbs casually inserted in coat pocket, thumb sticking out;
- a faint smile, with upturned lips—‘the cat that got the canary’;
- general relaxation shows confidence, respect and lack of anxiety;
- hands joined together at back, chin thrust upward (position of authority);
- elevating oneself gives superiority (judge, preacher or actor);
- leaning back with both hands supporting head (confident, relaxed aggressive) (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Conflict

- eyebrows usually down, particularly at inner ends;
- lips tense and pushed slightly forwards;
- eyes glaring (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Deception

- gazing down with head, and nodding movements;
- employing 'gravity defying' movements—lifting toes while seated and raising upwards on toes if standing;
- raising eyebrows;
- sweaty palms (the galvanic skin response measured with breathing and heart beats in 'lie detectors');
- more body movement and less facial movement (Burgoon in Givens 2004);
- increased pupil dilation and eye blink (involuntary) (Givens 2004).

Defensiveness

- folded or clasped arms;
- eyes downcast and turned away;
- hands folded, fingers interlaced tightly and mounts of thumbs firmly together;
- palm of hand to back of neck as if in pain;
- arms crossed at chest (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Disgust

- curled upper lip;
- narrowed, partly closed eyes;
- lowered inner corners of eyebrows;
- wrinkled nose and flared nostrils;
- backward head jerks and side-to-side head shakes;
- protrusions of tongue (Givens 2004).

Dominance

- may select tailored business suit with padded shoulders and fingertip length coat to project broad shoulders and enlarged torso;
- hands placed on hips, head tilted back;
- palm down gestures;
- walks with swagger—slaps table to make presence felt (Givens 2004).

Dominance and aggression

- sitting straddling a chair;
- feet on desk in a superior/subordinate situation;
- feet pressed firmly to floor, hands pressing on knees (especially males);
- sudden arm movements (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Enthusiasm

- sitting on edge of chair;
- feet apart, possibly on toes in a sprinter's position;
- hands firmly on table;
- facial congruence: eyes alert, slight smile, unfurrowed brow;
- widening of the pupil of the eye (involuntary) (Nierenberg and Calero 1971).

Evaluation

- pausing for thought —taking off glasses and carefully cleaning them, or removal of glasses and inserting earpiece in mouth;
- stroking chin (often eyes are squinting);
- head slightly tilted (signals interest);
- hand to cheek, hand to face, chin to palm, index finger along cheek with remaining fingers positioned below the mouth;
- if evaluation is 'positive'—body leaning forwards;
- if evaluation is 'negative'—the body is drawn back;
- glasses dropped onto the lower bridge of the nose; eyes peering over them (this produces a negative response in others);
- pinching bridge of the nose usually means making a decision;
- pacing (quietly) usually means making a decision;
- tugging at pants usually means making a decision;
- rubbing nose, ear or eye (usually indicates doubt/puzzlement);
- putting things to mouth (as if to nourish) may signal a need for additional information;
- slight blinking of eyes;
- mouth relaxed, chin forward;
- lifted eyebrows signal disbelief (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Expectations

- rubbing of palms;
- crossed fingers (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Fear

- body 'angles' to feared person or event, then turns away in avoidance;
- 'displacement' hand gestures—'get away' or 'get me out of here';
- faster eye blink rate yet staring eyes with enlarged pupils (involuntary);
- increased breathing rate and accelerated heart rate (involuntary);
- trembling and chattering teeth (involuntary);
- clinging to others if present;
- freeze reaction—tense muscles, maybe crouching in cowering posture, open mouth or firmly closed with lips compressed and rolled inwards;
- goose-bumps, sweaty palms, throat clearing (involuntary) (Givens 2004).

Frustration

- kicking the ground;
- slapping own forehead signals frustration with self;
- making a double karate chop at the air;
- removing hat and running fingers through hair;
- throwing a pencil or similar object;
- breaking a pencil (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Help me (especially with mental illness)

- hands up with palms up;
- head up, then short pause, followed by hands drop (Engel, cited in Givens 2004).

Hiding

- speaking out of side of mouth;
- hands in pockets;
- elbows on table forming a pyramid with forearms and holding hands together directly in front of mouth (playing cat and mouse);
- hands over mouth—possibly lying;
- eye contact avoided, gaze averted (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Liking

- moderately relaxed posture, neither extremely symmetrical nor asymmetrical;
- leaning towards the person and orienting towards them;
- persons of equal status assume close, but side-by-side positions;
- person of higher status is usually very relaxed;
- eye contact increases with liking;
- genuine smile;
- close position to other (too close may cause discomfort);
- touching (pat on back, shoulder etc.);
- hand gestures congruent with speech;
- winking (Mehrabian 1970).

Openness

- open hands, palms upward;
- unbuttoning of coat—applicable when wearing suits, but may indicate a change of mind;
- handshake (especially if interlocking or touching both hands) (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Readiness to achieve a goal

- hands on hips (feet almost always apart);
- hitching up trousers;
- seated with one hand on mid-thigh and leaning forward;

- sitting on edge of chair (shows overall enthusiasm);
- arms spread and hands grip edge of table as if to say, 'listen to me, I have something to say';
- moving into intimate space—person lowers the voice and gives impression of confidentiality, but is actually trying to dominate (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Need for Reassurance:

- clenched hands with thumbs rubbing against each other;
- cuticle picking or hand pinching;
- sticking pen or pencil in the mouth;
- touching the back of a chair before sitting down;
- wringing hands;
- a woman in need of assurance may slowly and gracefully bring her hand to her throat (the gesture may be disguised as checking for a necklace) (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Rejection

- folded arms;
- crossed legs or feet;
- body turns away, maybe only slightly and subtly;
- sideways glance (45 degree turn);
- feet or entire body pointing towards exit;
- touching or slightly rubbing nose (usually index finger), variations—rubbing ear or eye;
- turning up nose, usually simultaneously with downward glance;
- slightly tense posture, sitting forward, or sitting with an extremely bad posture;
- frequent scratching;
- changing position during conversation, especially turning away;
- looking away more often;
- 'akimbo' (hand on hip) position tends to signal dislike or lack of respect;
- tense touching (pushing) connotes very strong negative feelings;
- comes late or does not come;
- tightly clenched hands (suggests suspicion);
- an aggressively hostile cluster includes: eyes wide open; lips tightly closed; corners of eyebrows down; sometimes even talks through teeth;
- shrugging of shoulders;
- making a fist (hostile);
- shows interest in own teeth or fingernails (hostile);
- tightening of jaw muscles and maybe lips;
- squinting of eyes;

- looking away whilst speaking ('don't interrupt me') (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Sadness

- bowed posture, gazing down;
- drooping head, slumped shoulders, drooping or closed eyelids;
- frowning eyebrows and mouth;
- constricted throat, excess saliva and repeated swallowing;
- moistened eyes or crying;
- possible rocking and pulling own hair (Givens 2004).

Self-control

- holding an arm behind the back and clenching the hand tightly while the other hand grips the wrist of the arm;
- locking ankles;
- clenching hands;
- restraining an arm;
- sitting rigidly erect with hands folded in the lap;
- gripping the wrist (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Wish to speak

- tugging at ear;
- flicking hand upwards a few inches (centimetres), and letting it fall back;
- putting index finger to lips (Nierenberg & Calero 1971).

Facial expression and culture

It is of interest to note that Charles Darwin conducted the first major scientific study of facial communication in 1872. Darwin concluded that meanings ascribed to expressions of emotions such as: astonishment, shame, fear, horror, pride, hatred, wrath, love, joy, guilt, anxiety, shyness, and modesty are universally accepted. However, in 1962, Tomkins described only eight 'basic' facial emotions: surprise, interest, joy, rage, fear, disgust, shame and anguish—only three of which appear in Darwin's list (cited in Givens 2004). In 1971, cross-cultural studies by Ekman, Sorenson and Friesen (1969) supported Darwin's conclusions. They concluded that there are nine universally recognised 'primary' affects—interest, joy, surprise, fear, anger, distress, disgust, contempt and shame, all of which occur innately because of the way brains are 'wired' (to put it simply)—not because they are socially learned, as many have thought. This is not to say that social and cultural influences do not have their impact on interpretations. As Izard noted in 1971, 'such facial patterns are subject to repression, suppression, and other consequences of socialization during childhood and adolescence' (cited in Givens 2004). What a good thing that counsellors have to be skilled at making correct inferences that are testable against the client's experience—rather than having to remember the details of numbers of theorists!

Appearance

Appearance refers to what a person looks like—apart from the behaviour. As odd as it may seem, counselling trainees tend to disregard the visual cues associated with a

person's appearance. When asked to observe a particular person, and list what they have **seen**, many training groups produce little more than a long list of emotions (many of which are inaccurate inferences). If there are doctors, nurses or police officers in the group, the list usually expands to include observed behaviours (crying, smiling, blushing, etc.). It is a rare occurrence, however, for trainees to list any details of appearance (Caucasian male, thick grey hair, aged 50–55, wearing tortoise-shell rimmed glasses etc.). This exercise raises trainee awareness of the value of creating 'cognitive bins' into which observed data can be stored and processed. Disciplined observation may identify some 'appearance' cues that are congruent with the behaviours that have been observed; others may seem incongruent with observed behaviours. Either way, the observer can consider all clues in developing a 'best bet' hypothesis. The comments that follow are not meant to be exhaustive. They are simply offered to highlight the range of clues that counsellors can consider when drawing inferences about their clients. It should be noted that, ideally, counsellors try to gain a clear picture of each client's normal, or typical, appearance. Deviations from this norm can be clues that suggest improvement or deterioration of personal management or well being.

Physical characteristics

Gender

The identification of gender is usually obvious and easy. Other factors, may indicate the degree of satisfaction a person experiences with their genetically predetermined gender.

Race

It is likely that a person's racial heritage will be identified through discussion, but it is useful to note the characteristic skin colour, facial bone structure, shape of eyes and eyelids and the like, so that, over-time, one's general awareness of life is enhanced. It could save asking a Japanese tourist for directions if you get lost in Hong Kong!

Age

One can know a person's age by simply asking. However, observing indicators of age can help appreciate the kinds, and range, of historical experiences and influences that clients may have had. Observations of skin texture and tone, flexibility, eye clarity, facial lines and so on, can give evidence of a person's well being—both physically, and in the way that they are managing their lives.

Physical build

This area is the subject of many hypotheses. Kretschmer (1925), Sheldon and Stevens (1942) and Alexander Lowen (1975) have similar perspectives on the relationship between 'body build' and 'temperament'. Sheldon's three 'somatotypes' are still referred to in the body-building and diet industries. The types are: (1) 'endomorphs' who have 'predominant abdominal regions', and deep fatty tissue. Their temperament is 'viscerotonic'—they like comforts of the viscera (belly area)—joy in eating, joviality and relaxation; (2) 'mesomorphs' who have well developed muscles, bone, and connective tissue. Their temperament is 'somatotonic'—they like physical (somatic) activity—they are competitive, energetic and aggressive; (3) 'ectomorphs' who have 'prominence of skin and neural structure'. Their temperament is 'cerebrotonic'—they prefer to use their brains (cerebrum) rather than their bodies, and are described as being apprehensive, restrained, shy, and hypersensitive. Most people have components of each type (cited in Munn 1961). Other broad hypotheses are that: (1) long slim fingers indicate a creative person; (2) short squat fingers indicate a practical person; (3) an extremely upright bearing indicates a rigid personality; and (4) hunched shoulders (where one shoulder is lower than the other) indicates a person 'carrying' an unresolved emotional issue.

Disability

The presence of a wheel chair, walking sticks, neck-brace, limbs in plaster, and the like will provide evidence of temporary or permanent disability.

Hands

Observation of the hands will indicate the extent of manual labour undertaken. For example, blistered hands may suggest that a professional person has ‘overdone’ it, say, by digging a long trench to lay stormwater pipe during the recent weekend.

Grooming

Variations in the quality of grooming are noteworthy indicators of changes in wellbeing. Major variation can indicate the onset of a psychotic episode. Common clues of deterioration relate to: washing, brushing and care of hair (greasy, dirty, dandruff); cleanliness and condition of clothing (unlaundered, torn, food stains); personal hygiene (body odours, perspiration, urine, faeces); state of fingernails (chipped nail-polish, bitten, dirty); oral hygiene and general dental care (bad breath, broken teeth, dirty denture, failure to wear dentures).

Body hair

Facial: Men may grow a beard for a number of reasons: to create an image; disguise a ‘weak chin’; look tough; hide some disfigurement, or avoid a shaving rash. An unkempt beard may indicate lack of self care. Facial hair on women may indicate hormonal imbalance, particularly after menopause. This can cause considerable embarrassment and heartache if associated with loss of femininity.

Axillary: Shaving of armpits, or otherwise, is a decision that many women make in relation to matters of comfort, hygiene, fashion, feminism or culture.

Legs: Hairy legs in women can be an embarrassment, a feminist statement, or simply be natural and acceptable to a self-assured person.

Clothing

People mostly dress to adorn the body in a way that will accentuate its strength, beauty, or ‘presence’, and/or to mask its unattractive features. Clothing is also selected to be appropriate for given activities (sports gear, overalls, formal wear, and so on). It may indicate membership of a vocational group (police, armed services, airline staff, etc.). Dress may reflect social, ethnic or religious affiliations. The style, colour, patterning and texture of materials, and the design of clothing provide abundant clues to the way people feel about themselves.

Style

Clothing is designed to ‘suit the occasion’, but people with different temperaments make different choices in this regard. For example, whilst some employers may **require** an individual to wear a tailored suit, it is a matter of choice—and an expression of conservatism—if a person wears a suit on informal occasions. Likewise, the wearing of ‘exaggerated’ clothing for any given occasion usually indicates some resistance to formality. The ‘meaning’ is reflected in the ‘context’—an area yet to be discussed.

Footwear

The choice of footwear may reflect who we are—or who we would like to be! Children want to wear the footwear produced by the manufacturer that sponsors their hero. Short people wear platform soles to gain height. High heels are seen as sexier in women—especially if painted toenails are exposed. More men wore cowboy boots after fashion trainer, John Molloy, found that women thought that men in cowboy boots were more

attractive than men in ordinary shoes. Buckled motor-cycle boots are functional, but Givens (2004) suggests that Marlon Brando (*The Wild One*, 1954) and Peter Fonda (*Easy Rider*, 1969) furthered the role of footwear as a fashion statement designed to figuratively ‘stomp’ on the establishment. The way one maintains one’s footwear seems significant. Dirty shoes may convey a slovenly approach to life. Shoes in obvious need of repair may indicate that the person is socially or economically ‘down on their uppers’.

Colour

In 1970, Lüscher (1978) published a test to identify personality traits as a function of the choices that people made in ranking a series of different coloured cards. Since then Richmond, McCroskey and Payne (1991, p. 172) have provided a succinct summary of both the moods and the symbolic meanings associated with different colours. These are shown below in Table 8. It is worth noting the polarised meanings that occur within the lists. These ‘bright’ sides and ‘dark’ sides may well be reflected in the colours people choose to wear. For example, brightly coloured clothing is usually associated with an extroverted person—but it could mean that the wearer is actually feeling down, and wants to ‘get a lift’—seeking to translate, say, hostility into affection by wearing red.

COLOUR	MOOD	SYMBOLIC MEANING
WHITE	joy, lightness, neutral, cold	solemnity, purity, chastity, femininity, light humility, joy, innocence, fidelity, cowardice
RED	hot, affectionate, angry, defiant, contrary, hostile, full of vitality, excitement, love	happiness, lust, intimacy, love, agitation, restlessness, royalty, rage, sin, blood
ORANGE	unpleasant, exciting, disturbed, distressed, upset, defiant, contrary, hostile, stimulating	sun, fruitfulness, harvest, thoughtfulness
YELLOW	unpleasant, exciting, hostile, cheerful, joyful, jovial	superficial glamour, sun, light, wisdom, royalty (China), age (Greece), prostitution (Italy), famine (Egypt)
GREEN	cool, pleasant, leisurely, in control	security, peace, jealousy, aggressiveness hate, calm
BLUE	cool, pleasant, leisurely, distant, infinite, secure, transcendent, calm, tender	dignity, sadness, tenderness, truth
PURPLE	depressed, sad, dignified, stately	wisdom, victory, pomp, wealth, humility, tragedy
BROWN	sad, not tender, despondent, dejected, melancholy, unhappy, neutral	melancholy, protection, autumn, decay, humility, atonement
BLACK	sad, intense, anxiety, fear, despondent, dejected, melancholy, unhappy	darkness, power, mastery, protection, decay, mystery, wisdom, death, atonement

Table 8. Showing the moods and symbolic meanings attached to different colours (after Richmond, McCroskey & Payne). Note the polarised meanings contained in some lists.

Note the striking example of the power of colour change in relation to mood. ‘Black Friars Bridge in London with its extensive black iron work was well known for its frequent suicides. When the city fathers painted it green, they were surprised to discover that suicides declined by more than one third’ (Vargas 1986, p. 153).

Adornments

The ‘dressing up’ of the body is frequently extended beyond clothing. The body is adorned with headwear, jewellery and tattoos. These all add clues to an individual’s temperament and, perhaps, the mood that prevailed at the time of dressing, or the impression one was hoping to make.

Headwear

Headgear does more than keep the head dry in the rain and shade the eyes from the sun. Its various shapes, colours, and attached logos may indicate status, gender, or personality; and signal one’s occupation, mood, favourite sport, hobby, social allegiances, or religious affiliation. Wearing a sports cap (especially a baseball cap) is said to make the wearer feel stronger and younger, and a connection with other males—a team thing. Women’s hats mostly seem to be designed to reflect individuality. Wigs may be worn for fun, vanity, disguise, status, or for a range of emotional reasons following hair loss as a consequence of chemotherapy.

Jewellery

The wearing of jewellery has quite different meanings for different reasons. Expensive jewellery may be a declaration of status, a show of opulence, or worn to please a loved one. Jewellery that ‘has been in the family for many generations’ may be worn with pride or arrogance. Cheap jewellery may be worn by children and adolescents to feel ‘grown up’, or by adults for ostentation—to claim status that lacks substance. Jewellery worn in the lapel can indicate membership of a community group, service club, or war service. Rings worn on the hands can indicate matrimonial status, opulence, or ostentation. Rings worn in the ear can be ‘keepers’ for pendant earrings, may be for adornment, or to signal sexual preferences.

The practice of body piercing to put rings (or jewels) in the ears, eyebrows, nostrils, lips, navel, genitals, and elsewhere seems related to a need to demonstrate individuality or sub-cultural affiliations. It is frequently a rebellious act in adolescence, but is not necessarily so.

Makeup

The use of cosmetics to accentuate and enhance facial features is a common practice. Radical changes from a client’s normal habit may indicate a shift in mood or self-image. Tattoos are permanent adornments that make personal statements of identity. They may be associated with some kind of initiation rites; used as a ‘gang badge’; to create a ‘warrior’ image; to make a statement of affection for ‘mother’, ‘Doris’ or whoever; or may be a small, hidden adornment to display only to intimates. Some teenagers get tattooed to mimic a pop idol; others may get a non-permanent tattoo as a rebellious act just to shock parents.

Props

Props are things that are used to either give emotional support or to project an image. Those in common use include bags, spectacles, smoking, and drinking vessels. In fact many objects can be used as a protective barrier, or emotional prop.

Bags

Handbags may have more utility than simply being a means of carrying a myriad of items, or a matching accessory to enhance personal appearance. They may be clutched by both hands in front of the body to give nervous people a sense of security. They are useful (along with shopping bags) to place on seats in public places to extend one’s personal space. They can conceal items, such as capsicum sprays, for use against muggers.

Spectacles

Spectacles may be more than optical aids for some people. It is often a difficult choice to select a frame that suits the image that one wishes to project. On occasions, their removal, and sucking on one of the wings, helps to 'buy time' when reflection on an issue is desirable. The same need can be met with pens, pencils and pipes. Spectacles can be pulled lower down the bridge of the nose and 'peered over' to intimidate others with a sense of being scrutinised.

Smoking

Many people reach for a cigarette when feeling nervous; in need of reassurance, calming down, or distraction; to have something for their hands to do; or to satisfy an addiction. The way people smoke, and what they smoke, provides clues about their feelings. Jaskolka suggests that blowing smoke upwards shows confidence and assurance, whereas blowing smoke downwards demonstrates anger. She also notes that 'the definite and premature extinguishing of a cigarette clearly signals that a decision has been reached' (Jaskolka 2004, p. 72). Deep inhaling suggests the urgent need for satisfaction, either emotionally, or as a consequence of addiction. Cigar smoking may be a display of status.

Drinking vessels

The drinking vessel can have significance apart from its contents. The hot mug warms the hands and the heart. The wine glass extends the hand to reach out in fellowship. The goblet stem can be stroked as an ambiguous gesture with sexual connotations.

Context

All events occur in a context. 'Context' refers to the immediate physical setting or a prevailing 'set', such as cultural influence. The nature of the context may alter the meaning of the behaviour, motive or intent of a person, and may modify the interpretations placed on other indicators. For example, a naked person streaking onto a packed sports stadium is viewed quite differently to the same person frolicking on the sand of a beach that is officially reserved for nude bathing. The following simple examples should be enough to show the importance of considering contextual factors when drawing inferences about the way others are.

Physical context

A furrowed brow is usually associated with puzzlement or reflective-ness, but in a physical context which has inadequate lighting it could be associated with eyestrain.

Cultural context

Avoidance of eye-contact (in the Australian culture) often indicates the 'hiding of self' arising from feelings of rejection, shame or embarrassment, but in some countries like Puerto Rico, and amongst tribal aboriginal people in Australia, it is a sign of respect.

Domestic context

Awareness of a person's domestic environment will give clues to attitudes, values, and state of being. Domestic (and extended family) influences, including the presence or absence of significant role models that prevailed during a person's formative years, may be very significant in understanding current circumstances. Such evidence is gleaned through discussion, but may modify the meaning of what is observed.

Geographical context

People from rural areas generally like to have more personal space than urban dwellers.

Social context—mores

'Back-slapping' in a hotel bar, sports meeting, or at a party usually indicates a sense of camaraderie. The same behaviour at a funeral could well mean acute unease.

Social context—roles

When a person puts a hand on the shoulder of a friend it usually indicates affection, but if a person in authority (in a 'boss' role) does the same thing to a subordinate it often signals a desire to exert authority.

Situational contexts

It is important to note factors in the nearby environment in order to interpret behaviour. For example, imagine a situation where a person is running along a country road at twilight. The chances are that most people would barely notice 'just another jogger'. The sighting of a 'rolled' car in the vicinity, however, would rapidly change the earlier nonchalance to current concern.

Practicing observing

The general approach to practicing observing follows the outline given under 'Practicing attending' on page 120. The set up of the room is identical to that shown in Figure 15, on page 122. Before practice commences, the tutor will review the material presented in an earlier presentation. The schematic of the observing process will be drawn on the whiteboard to remind students of the task.

A typical practice round

A student will be asked to volunteer to act as client and reflect on a significant past, current, or future event, and so provide an opportunity for other students to draw an inference about their current feeling. Another student will act as counsellor and attend and observe the client. Other students will also attend to and observe the client.

Observers will observe the client for 20 seconds or so, or until the client 'comes back' from their reflection. Observers will list their evidence on paper, and process it to infer the volunteer client's feeling. The counsellor will be the first to test their hypothesis. The counsellor will remain attentive and say: '(client's name) you feel ...?'. The counsellor will continue to attend to the client to observe the impact of their hypothesis.

The client will be asked to limit their response to a simple 'yes', 'no', or 'kind of', at this stage. Other observers will then share their inferences with the client. Each will continue to observe, and note the client's visual and verbal affirmation or otherwise. The tutor will share their inference last.

The client will be asked to give feedback on any discernable differences between feeling words that were 'bullseyes', 'around the mark', or 'inaccurate'. Such feedback invariably shows that accuracy is valued, and that the observers who are consistently the most accurate are progressively seen as the most credible. The tutor will draw attention to the fact that when a feeling word is accurate, the client's face will express a rise in energy as well as giving verbal affirmation.

Observers who were the most accurate will be asked to read out their list of evidence. So too will those who were inaccurate. This pooled evidence will be discussed, gaps noted, and links made with the written notes on 'Body language images' from page 138. The practice session continues with each trainee, in turn, acting in both counsellor and client roles. During practice sessions there is little opportunity for 'having a second go',

but it should be noted that, if inaccuracies occur during a counselling interaction (either during practice, or in the field), the counsellor will use client feedback to correct such error.

Tutors will encourage trainees to memorise energy ‘norms’ for each colleague as a precursor to ultimately being skilled in memorising information about their future clientele. Tutors will also stress the merit of consciously creating ‘bins’ in the memory to ‘store’ data about ‘involuntary’ and ‘voluntary’ behaviours, ‘appearance’, and ‘context’. Sharing evidence in practice groups, and occasional reference to the feeling word list or other notes, helps to consolidate the information in the ‘bins’. Such bins make it easier to ‘call up’ what to focus on during observation, and provide a matrix against which observed information can be checked out.

If students have ongoing difficulty in reading behaviours, tutors may suggest that trainees not only read through the lists between pages 138 and 163, but actually ‘perform’ the movements suggested—as a means of enhancing kinaesthetic awareness of emotional experiences. This strategy is similar to the way that young actors are taught to ‘get into role’. In this regard it is interesting to note Paul Ekman’s finding (cited in Stone 1991, p.18) that by ‘manipulating the muscles and blood vessels of the face may trigger chemical changes in the brain that make us measurably happier or sadder’. It seems we can learn to ‘write’ body language as well as read it.

Summary

What observing is

Observing is the skill of using one’s eyes to focus on the widest possible visual cues.

What observing does

Observing provides visual cues which enable one to:

- add to one’s store of general knowledge;
- assess **performance** in order to refine or modify skills and other behaviour;
- assess other’s **intentions**, and avoid accidents, or misunderstandings;
- assess other’s **motives**, and avoid misunderstandings, or hasty judgements;
- work out what others are **feeling** in order to make empathic responses.

Why observing is important

If one utilises the maximum amount of information available, then one has a rich store of knowledge from which one can make accurate assessments, and so act and interact effectively.

When observing is used

Observing is used as often as possible and whenever particular information is needed.

How to observe (for feeling inferences only)

The skill steps for effective observation are:

- attend posturally and psychologically;
- observe contextual factors;

- observe appearance;
- observe behaviour;
- infer the 'feeling state' of another by:
 - checking congruity between all elements, but especially voluntary and involuntary behaviours;
 - determining the demeanour (as 'up' or 'down');
 - determining mood category;
 - noting energy level: high/normal/low (against individual norm);
 - selecting feeling word of matching intensity within the mood category;
 - rechecking the selected word against the evidence;
 - satisfying self that the feeling word is comprehensible to the other;
 - testing the accuracy of inference by sharing it with the other;
 - using visual and oral feedback to refine the accuracy of the inference if necessary.

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My learning about observing

Write in your own words

What observing is:

What observing does:

Why observing is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own observing skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my observing:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Listening skills

Preamble

Listening is such a familiar activity that any discussion could seem like ‘teaching grandma to suck eggs’. There is hardly any need to say that we listen in order to hear what others are saying; to capture what they mean; and to understand how they feel about issues. We hardly need reminding that, without really hearing what others have to say, we ourselves are sometimes at a loss to know what to say that is appropriate. We tend to resent it when people do not appear to listen to us, and we have experienced that such behaviour can lead to misunderstanding. Listening may be familiar, but it is not easy to actually ‘hear’ effectively—as strange as that may seem.

The previous chapter argued that the **absence** of memorised information (relating to feelings) could account for inaccuracies in assessing feeling states. This chapter argues that the **presence** of memorised information has the potential to distort what we think we have heard. Left to its own devices, it seems that the brain wants to hear what it already ‘knows’ and ‘believes’. George Miller, an early leader in the field of language and communication, noted that ‘the nature of the situation somehow influences what the listener expects, and from this relatively narrow range of expected events he chooses the one that seems to him most probable’ (Miller 1963, p. 78). It is this subjective expectation that must be ‘disciplined’ for effective listening to occur. To do this we must be aware of the particular ‘tricks’ our brains play to create such expectations—and any other impediment to effective listening. Counselling is more than a helpful chat—it is an ‘exacting’ task for which accurate listening is critical. ‘A reliance on familiar patterns of words may...get us by in polite conversation, but in more exacting situations it can point our whole endeavour in the wrong direction...’ (Miller 1963, p. 228).

Two things that highlight the exacting nature of listening are: (1) Egan’s listing (1998) of ‘shadows’ (detractors from listening); and (2) Carkhuff’s ‘steps’ on how to listen (2000). However, knowing **about** shadows does not ‘bring home’ to people how they, themselves, might unwittingly apply them. To enhance this awareness, we have devised a simple baseline (review) exercise as a tool for self-diagnosis of the cognitive ‘tricks’ that may influence the effectiveness of an individual trainee’s listening skills. We see the raising of such self-awareness as an important preliminary step to training that is best followed by Carkhuff’s systematic micro-skills approach.

Reviewing current competence

Readers who have attended regular training are likely to have undertaken the simple review (baseline) exercise to see how accurately they listened to, and heard, a short prepared statement. Readers who are currently attending a regular program, but who have not yet undertaken the exercise are strongly advised to delay reading further in this chapter until after the review exercise has been undertaken and discussed in class.

Readers who are not involved in training are invited to enlist the help of a friend to read the statement to them, then write it down verbatim, before reading on. The necessary briefing for the exercise, and the actual statement, appear in Appendix IV on page 478.

Diagnosing listening problems

The listening test highlights the unconscious ‘cognitive tricks’, and other events, that may occur to distort or inhibit listening. The ‘verbatim’ requirement is for diagnostic purposes only. There is no suggestion (or expectation) that one needs to have total recall of all discussions. Over the years we have noted that some specific listening irregularities emerge. Once these are ‘aired’ and discussed, the tricks tend to become more manageable, and therefore less intrusive during the listening activity. These irregularities are discussed below.

Performance pressure

The most common indicator of ‘performance pressure’ is that a number of people get somewhere near the mark with recall of the first and third sentences of the listening test statement, but completely miss out the middle sentence. This occurs because these people need to ‘do well’, and this very need sabotages their effort. Trainees report common internal thoughts that go along these lines:

‘I’ve got the first bit of what she said, but I wonder how long she’s going to go on? Blast! what was that she just said?’

‘This is going on a bit too long—I won’t get all this.’

Comment: Any internal dialogue ‘puts corks in your ears’, overrides listening, and thus limits hearing. To help trainees overcome performance pressure (and associated thoughts) we have found it useful to get them to ‘play at being a tape recorder’. We read them a simple sentence like ‘the cat sat on the mat’ which they can invariably ‘play back’. We progressively make longer and longer statements until accurate ‘playback’ stops. We are almost always able to praise effort that well surpasses the original ‘baseline’ effort. Over time trainees come to trust that, by eliminating internal noise, the brain performs like a high fidelity tape from which information can be recalled with relative ease.

‘Hooked’ by content

One student, a teacher, was able to recall the first and last sentences, but had no recall of the middle sentence because her interest was ‘hooked’ by the word ‘union’. This is what she had to say by way of self-diagnosis:

‘I remember wondering what union was being talked about—as if it mattered—then I found myself thinking how pleased I was that the Teachers’ Institute is getting more militant these days. The next thing I heard was how to get into the Town Hall.’

Comment: Internal dialogue of any kind is perhaps the most common impediment to listening. The habit of internal dialoguing is best managed by focussed attending that is backed by the ‘kindness’ dimension of the decency skills (see page 57) that requires the listener to suspend themselves in order to be fully present for the speaker.

A similar impediment to listening (that is not identified by this exercise) is the tendency to formulate a response (or counter-argument in some contexts) whilst the other person is speaking. This tendency, if present, will become evident during the interchanges that occur when practicing the responding skills. It is overcome by deliberately suspending oneself during the listening period, and then using ‘think time’ immediately after the person being listened to has stopped speaking.

Familiar phrases

A common mistake is that listeners ‘hear’ ‘Friday the 13th’ rather than ‘February the 13th’. Such listeners are taken aback that they got it wrong. They make comments similar to:

‘Well, it’s hard to know why I made that mistake. I suppose Friday the 13th is such a common phrase that you just assume that is what was said.’

Comment: This error exemplifies the common tendency to stereotype. If the listener loses momentary focus (for whatever reason) there will be a sufficient ‘glitch’ for the brain to get it wrong. When processing too few cues, the brain makes its ‘best bet’ decision against its memory bank of familiar phrases. This tendency diminishes as trainees become more able to attend psychologically so that such glitches are minimised.

Time distortion

We have come to predict that, in a training group of twenty-four people, between four and six people will substitute 10.00 a.m. for 10.30 a.m.—the set time for the union meeting. The transposition is always unconscious, and in most cases is made by people who ‘like to always be on time’. We have heard many variations on the following theme:

‘I can’t believe I did that—but I hate being late—it’s true that I generally allow about half an hour when I plan to be somewhere, but I really heard ten o’clock.’

The second, less frequent version relates to people for whom time-keeping is a low priority. Their dominant theme is along the lines that:

‘Getting to places on time is more or less irrelevant to me—so I’m a bit slack on noting the time.’ Some people have added: *‘I knew it was sometime in the morning so I just put down ten o’clock’.*

Trainees will sometimes ‘make up’ a time other than 10.30 a.m. because they failed to hear what was said due to some preoccupation, or ‘sloppy’ listening. Some have said:

‘I thought that she must have said a time, but I didn’t hear it, so I made it up.’

‘I missed the time—so I put 7.30 because most meetings are at night.’

Occasionally the time is omitted because an internal panic is triggered. People for whom this is an issue comment along these lines:

‘I really tried to remember the time when you said it, but I turn to jelly as soon as there are numbers—I’ve never been any good at maths—stupid, isn’t it?’

Comment: The reasons for the range of errors are diverse, but in all cases reflect the personality of the listener concerned. Tutors make mental notes of ‘who does what’ during the baseline exercise, and attempt to individualise remedial learning during practice sessions. For some, this will mean finding more effective ways of focussing

attentiveness. For some, a simple awareness of the nature of the trap is enough to avoid it. For others it may mean that the tutor augments standard exercises with simple listening exercises tailored to progressively extinguish ‘bad habits’ or ‘current fears’.

Values bias

There are many people who are ideologically opposed to unions, who translate ‘it is important for **us** all to attend’ into ‘it is important for **you** to attend’. Again, people are surprised at their unconscious error, and make comments like:

‘I don’t agree with unions. I wouldn’t go to that meeting myself.’

Conversely, some active union members have made a similar, but opposite, translation. They claimed to have heard: ‘It is imperative that we all attend. A strike is inevitable!’.

Comment: This error exemplifies the principle that personal values have the potential to bias what we hear (in either direction). It appears that the stronger the value is held, the greater will be the deviation from what was said. Once again, this is best managed by focussed attending backed by the kindness dimension of the decency skills.

Preoccupation

There are frequent minor word changes, omissions, or distortions (in what students had written) because people drift in and out of their own thoughts about other matters that may be on their mind. Students are generally able to account for distortions in terms of some current preoccupation. The interesting thing is that such preoccupations do not have to be ‘actively’ in consciousness during the reading of the listening test. For example, one trainee put the date of the union meeting on October 13th. When the person was invited to explain where that date ‘came from’ they said:

‘It’s hard to know really, it just came to me—although, on reflection, it occurs to me that October the 13th is my dad’s birthday. He’s been pretty sick recently, and been on my mind a lot.’ (paraphrased)

Comment: In this and similar examples, it is quite plausible to see how the hearing of half of the date (...13th) is sufficient for the brain to come up with its ‘best bet’ when aligned with other data that may be ‘incubating’ in the background, or drift into conscious thought. Again, the incidence of this kind of error is likely to be minimised with ‘decent’ psychological attending that is fully focussed on ‘uncluttered’ listening.

Introjection

In this context, we use the term introjection to describe the tendency to take on another person’s comments and ‘hear’ them as if the listener was the speaker. This is not a conscious activity. One participant on a particular program happened to be the union shop steward in a division of a government department. His last sentence read: *‘By the way, the bus leaves for the Trades Hall at 9.45’*.

His comment caused a bit of laughter, and some participants suggested that he was trying to be funny, but he insisted that that was what he really thought was read out.

Comment: This type of listening impediment does not surface often during this listening exercise, however, it frequently occurs in a milder form when students are practicing empathic responses. The introjection becomes evident when the response imposes the listener’s ‘twist’ on what was said.

Editing

During the early 1980's, we were involved in training teachers in communication skills, and we became aware of an impediment to listening that occurred, in particular, with some teachers of English. They made minor omissions or distortions that were common to others, but we, and they, were fascinated to discover that they were 'marking' the statement as if it were an English exercise. The marking was quite unconscious, but all agreed, with interest and good humour, that the 'verbatim' requirement took second place to 'good English'. A composite rewrite of their efforts is something like the following:

A Union meeting will be held in the Adelaide Town Hall on the thirteenth of February next at 10.30 a.m. It is most important that everyone attend to discuss the possibility of strike action. Members should enter by the southern entrance.

Some of the remarks during the 'diagnosis' were:

'You can't say there is on a future date—clearly, future tense is called for—one must use 'will be'.

'It's much less clumsy to say Adelaide Town Hall—why would you say Town Hall, Adelaide?' (very many others have made this same revision)

'It's just natural to write 'it is'. The contraction is OK for oral use, but 'it's' is 'not on' in written text.'

'I think I must have thought of it as a draft notice—that would account for me recalling the statement as I did.'

It is not possible to recall all of the comments put forward on that afternoon, but it is salutary to recognise the impact that personal perspectives can have on the fidelity of listening—however laudable those perspectives may be.

Rebellion

In almost every training program there is at least one person who produces a series of accurate bullet points to outline the gist of the statement that was read. We have fun with such people by suggesting that either they do not listen to instructions, or actually hear them, and 'rebel' against 'stupid instructions'. Mostly people acknowledge that they like to 'do things their way', and are sensitised by the discussion to be more aware.

Other diagnostic exercises

The exercise discussed above is a useful general statement for highlighting listening issues for Australians, but we have found it to be less useful with students in Hong Kong, however, where Friday the 13th is not a familiar 'bad luck' day; and where there is either indifference to, or unfamiliarity with, trade unions. Exercises must therefore be drafted to tap into the prevailing psyche.

With homogeneous groups, we have written further statements to test their reaction to other factors. For example, with a dedicated group of Scout Leaders, we read a statement (of similar length to the one discussed) in a strong authoritative voice. It began: 'Scouting is a **spent force** for today's kids...' We could see their hackles rise as we read. Their reaction to such 'criticism' was such that almost half of the group failed to hear beyond the first sentence.

In a training group of teachers, we read a moderate statement, but glared at them, yelled as loudly as we could, and ‘pointed the finger’ at them. They were so stunned that most failed to hear beyond the opening statement. During the discussion, one participant asked: ‘So why do some teachers yell at kids, and then blast them for not listening?’

Comment: It is salutary for those in authority to become aware that people are less likely to hear what is being said to them if they are being criticised, or being yelled at.

Effective listening

George and Cristiani (1990) see listening as the core of effective counselling, but have little to say about it other than the fact that it calls for decoding messages.

Tubbs and Moss (1991) suggest that effective listening involves: (1) paying attention; (2) listening for main points; and (3) using ‘spare time’. They quote several researchers findings that boil down to the fact that attending is a good thing, but not easy to do. They suggest that one way to stay motivated to remain attentive is to listen for the ‘main points’. We would point out that one must first hear **all** points in order to determine what the **main** points are. Tubbs and Moss refer to the findings of Goss (cited in Tubbs & Moss 1991, p. 191) that people can understand information relatively well at the rate of 400–500 words per minute, whereas normal speech is between 125 and 150 words per minute. In spite of the beliefs of some ‘listening experts’ that these different rates create ‘spare time’ for ‘extra thinking about what the speaker is trying say’, we support Tubbs and Moss’s view that such thinking is ‘a bit tricky’ in a two-person conversation. It is more likely that uninterrupted, disciplined focus is required during the ‘spare time’ to avoid the difficulties discussed above—at least early in a training period.

In coining the term ‘rewarding listening’, Richard Nelson-Jones (1992) encompasses a broad range of skills that, in the terms of this text, include attending, observing, listening and responding. His discussion does not address the ‘how to do it’ skills of listening. Nelson-Jones’ view that we ‘hear’ in order to ‘listen’ (1992, p. 93) differs from the Macquarie Dictionary definition—**listen**: to give attention with the ear; attend closely for the purpose of hearing’. Nelson-Jones has a point, in that we can hear music in shopping centres without listening to it, but in this text we consider that ‘listening’ has purposeful intent, and ‘hearing’ is a cognitive outcome that ascribes meaning to what has been listened to.

Geldard and Geldard (2001) encourage ‘listening with intent’, expressed by using ‘minimal responses’ (like ‘Mm-hmm’) and ‘invitations to continue’ (like ‘tell me more’); sitting at an undefined ‘appropriate’ distance; leaning forwards at significant times; showing care with facial expression and eye contact; mirroring the client’s posture; and speaking with clarity. These suggestions may show that one **is** listening, but fail to describe **how** to listen.

Gerard Egan (1998) discusses listening as a discrete skill that is associated with, but different from, the attending skills. He notes the need to listen for: (1) the verbal message; (2) the non-verbal message (paralinguistics); (3) the context; and (4) ‘sour notes’—things that might eventually need to be challenged. The verbal message uses words to describe the client’s experience and behaviour, and affect (feelings). The non-verbals add meaning to the verbals. Egan discusses ‘empathic listening’ as relating to attending, observing, listening, and ‘being with’. Egan also discusses ‘Tough-Minded Listening: hearing the slant or spin’. This notion relates to unrealistic, or contradictory,

information. These aspects are discussed, under ‘confrontation’, in Chapter 12 of this text. Egan also lists ‘the Shadow Side of Listening to Clients’. These are: (1) ‘inadequate listening’—through preoccupations and distractions; (2) ‘evaluative listening’—judging what others are saying; (3) ‘filtered listening’—selecting from personal biases; (4) ‘labels as filters’—where ‘diagnosis’ over-rides the person; (5) ‘fact’, not ‘person’ centred—collecting facts and missing the person; (6) ‘rehearsing’—working out what to say when you should be listening; (7) ‘sympathy’—distortion that is possible from ‘feeling sorry’; and (8) ‘interruptions’—where the term ‘benign’ applies when the interruption is to check something out, and ‘malignant’ applies to those interruptions that occur in order to say something considered to be more important than what is being said. Egan makes a final point that while listening, one needs to listen to oneself (on a ‘second channel’) to deal with any impediments to one’s effective listening (Egan 1998, pp. 73–79).

Robert Carkhuff (2000) linked the discrete listening skills with the skills of attending and observing. Furthermore, he adopted a micro-skills approach by describing do-able steps to practice and apply in helping settings. The listening steps for subsequent hearing are: (1) have a reason for listening—the goal is to help; (2) suspend personal judgement—listen whether you approve or not; (3) focus on the helpee—hear what they experience, and how they tell it; (4) focus on the content—especially the ‘5WH’ interrogatives (who, what, where, when, why, how); (4) recall expression—a sub-vocal review-check of what was said (in initial practice sessions this is to be verbatim); (5) listen for themes—listen for common themes as dialogue proceeds (to hear where clients are ‘coming from’). Carkhuff (2000, 2000a, 2000b) provides an additional Trainer’s Guide and associated Student Workbook that include exercises to enhance listening.

We surfed the net for further perspectives without success. We reviewed twenty of the most likely sites (of 37,500) listed, but none of them discussed skill steps. Most were a blend of tips for students to be more attentive, to concentrate harder, and the like. Some followed the texts that we briefed above by confusing listening with responding to what had been heard. Some listed blocks to listening in less detail than our summary of Egan.

Paralinguistics

The literature highlights the need to hear both the words, and **how** they are spoken—the ‘non-verbals’ of the verbals. The term ‘paralinguistics’ is the term used to describe these non-verbals. They are an important source of information in a counselling setting because they provide additional evidence that is either complementary or contradictory to what has been observed. This assists in identifying clients’ feelings, or meanings, more accurately. The paralinguistics are introduced below.

Accent

Accent is the way one pronounces words. Accent gives hints to one’s cultural, geographical, or educational history, and is therefore a potential indicator of the contextual influences on the way that people ascribe meaning to different events.

Fluency

Fluency is the ease with which words flow. Fluent speakers invariably have a good vocabulary, knowledge of their topic, and confidence in presentation. Lapses in an individual’s ‘normal’ fluency could indicate: (1) preoccupation, or internal or external distraction; (2) inner doubt about a point being made; (3) emotional stress that often manifest as errors not normally made, and (4) extreme fatigue—the kind that new mothers, home-carers, and compulsive, nocturnal sports-viewers may experience.

Inflection

Inflection relates to modulated changes in emphases, and nuances that can alter the meaning of the same words. Try this. Emphasise the words in bold type, and compare the difference between the question: *'Do you have a problem of a **psychological** nature?'* and the statement: *'Do **you** have a problem of a psychological nature!'*

Intonation

Intonation relates to the tone of voice—the **way** things are said. The intonation indicates the emotional state behind the words. Skilled listeners will note incongruities between word content and intonation. Compare: *'I'm quite well thank you'*, when spoken gently and then angrily.

Length

Length refers to the number of words used in statements. Unusually **short** statements may indicate a lack of self-confidence or reluctance to be involved. **Concise** statements suggest a disciplined mind. Unusually **voluble** speech may denote anxiety.

Volume

Volume relates to how loudly or softly a person speaks in relation to their 'normal' speech. The volume should be appropriate to the context and content. Inappropriate volume in a given setting often indicates insecurity, or a tendency to dominate.

Rate

Rate relates to how quickly or how slowly people speak. Rapid speech often indicates time pressures or emotional stress. Slow, deliberate delivery often indicates that the speaker is searching for just the right words—thinking as they speak.

Stability

Stability relates to the degree of self-control that the speaker has. The voice will often quiver, or change pitch, if one is anxious, angry, or close to tears.

Trailing off

Trailing off relates to a failure to complete sentences. This tendency signifies a lack of self-confidence, or that issues have not been well thought through. It could also indicate poor physical health.

Representational system

Representational system relates to the preferred communication mode: (1) visual mode: *'Do you get the picture?'* (2) auditory mode: *'Do you hear what I am saying?'* and (3) kinaesthetic mode: *'Do you grasp my meaning?'* Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) theorists suggest that it is important to recognise a speaker's preferred modality so that the response to them can be made in the same modality.

Energy level

The energy level differs from the volume in that it adds evidence for passion or lethargy that the speaker has for the subject

Audible non-verbals

Whilst not strictly paralinguistics there are vocal, but non-verbal, behaviours that are indicators to emotional states, and are therefore noteworthy. They include laughter, sighs, grunts, groans, humming and whistling.

Laughter

Laughter has many forms. It can be in response to joy, embarrassment, excitement, humour, exhilaration, or as an instrument to mock others. Gallows laughter is the hollow, expressionless ‘mock’ laughter that is spawned by the ironic and the macabre. ‘Real’ laughter is said to be ‘the best medicine’. Indeed, it ‘provides relief from stress by releasing pain-killing, euphoria-producing endorphins, enkephalins, dopamine, noradrenaline and adrenaline’ (Givens 2004). Laughter is socially contagious.

Sighs

The presence, frequency, and audibility of sighing can indicate a person’s state of being. A ‘heavy’ sigh can express sorrow or weariness, whereas a lighter sigh may accompany relief at the conclusion of a task, or the closure of an internal dialogue.

Grunts

A grunt is a deep guttural sound that is invariably linked to discontent—often with oneself, but can also be linked to wry amusement. The strength, duration, and volume give a measure of the degree of discontent.

Groans

A groan is a low mournful sound that may indicate pain or grief, be murmured in derision, or uttered to show disapproval.

Humming and whistling

People sometimes engage, unconsciously, in humming a melody to themselves, or may ‘whistle’ to themselves with a kind of soft, ‘breathy’ flow of air that is almost inaudible. These activities are generally associated with a sense of well-being and contentment. A knowledge of the words of whatever melody is being produced may give a clue to the nature of the contentment.

How to listen**What to listen for**

Listening, in the counselling context, is a multi-function task. There are specific ‘targets’ for one’s listening which, in an analogous sense, occurs on three ‘channels’ (to extend Egan’s idea). On ‘channel one’ the focus is on the client’s content. This content has a ‘word’ component and a ‘feeling’ component which, together, encompass the client’s ‘meaning’. These elements are all present in the statements that clients make in each segment of their ‘story’. The counsellor responds to each segment throughout the dialogue. ‘Channel two’ is a kind of ‘diagnostic’ channel that listens for ‘themes’ that will be imbedded within the segments, and also for what is **not** said. The notion of themes is discussed in Chapter 13 (Personalising), and a way of confronting what is not said is discussed in Chapter 12 (Confrontation). There is opportunity to process information in this channel during ‘spare’ time or ‘think’ time—once one has become adept at listening. On ‘channel 3’ the listener monitors their own response to the client’s content. Such monitoring alerts the listener to any internal distractions that may need to be dealt with. The skill steps to achieve these tasks are discussed below.

Know own foibles

The skill steps of listening are aimed at avoiding the detractors from listening (pages 169 to 172), and optimising both the accuracy and comprehensiveness of what has been listened to. The listening test is a beginning step to an awareness of possible listening traps, but it is important to monitor one’s personal response (on our virtual channel 3) to what is being said in order to deal with one’s personal listening foibles.

Be purposeful

It is not possible to listen to anything that has not been attended to. Vigilant people consciously attend to, and observe, the person, image, or event that they choose to listen to. However, since focussed vigilance is an energetic activity, it pays to be purposeful in choosing to be fully ‘switched on’—to have good reason to listen—be it to help another, to learn something, or to be absorbed by music. When not working, one can be equally purposeful in choosing to be ‘on standby’—relaxed, but still well aware of one’s surroundings. The purpose of purposeful listening is to hear. The purpose of hearing is to grasp meaning. Grasping the meaning of others is a critical task of the counselling process.

Avoid internal distraction

In developing the skills of attending, one practices ‘being empty’ in order to be ‘fully there’. This is mastered in silent practice. It is quite another matter to sustain this suspension of self during the listening activity. This step involves discovering individual strategies for dealing with personal foibles. Since it takes disciplined practice and energy to hold focussed, ‘noise free’ attention, one strategy might be to engage in a fitness program to enhance one’s energy base. The flatter the battery, the greater the static!

Suspend judgement

For some people the greatest difficulty is to suspend judgement—particularly when the person being listened to seems to behave in ways of which we disapprove. It follows that acceptance of the person—in spite of their behaviour—will minimise the distraction from such judgement. In the following chapter on responding, we introduce a set of ‘think steps’ to assist responding to feelings. Student feedback from an exercise relating to these think steps, confirms that they are also a useful means of being more accepting of a person that they actually dislike. We hope that this ‘advance notice’ says two things: (1) there is more to come in relation to processing what has been heard; and (2) it is not expected that avoiding internal dialogue (or other skills for that matter) can be mastered instantaneously. Mastery comes progressively as skills are applied over time.

Focus on content

Word component

It should be understood that the listener is fully attentive to, and actively observing the client as well as listening to them. In that sense they are already focussed on the person. The ‘new’ task is to focus on the content of what is being said. As a way of being prepared for this task, it seems helpful to suggest that people create imaginary ‘bins’ in their heads into which the ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ of any content can be cognitively filed. We call such bins the ‘5WH bins’ for short. Deliberate consciousness of such ‘bins’ somehow adds to confidence and effectiveness in retrieving verbal information that has been discussed. This mindset appeals to some people because it **seems** organised in the first instance and, for them, leads to increased confidence and effectiveness. Others are happy to trust their ability to ‘just listen’.

It is important to develop confidence that the brain will, in fact, work a bit like a tape recorder if we let the ears ‘run in record mode’. To this end, it seems worth devoting time for learners to recall short sentences (verbatim) at first, and progressively increase their length and complexity until it stops being a fun challenge. During such exercises we urge people to stay totally focussed, and avoid any internal distraction, or processing, during the ‘spare time’ referred to earlier by Tubbs and Moss.

It is virtually impossible (and unnecessary) to recall long statements, verbatim. However, it is helpful to stay focussed **during** the listening activity, and recall the content **after** the client has stopped speaking—a period we call ‘think time’. During think time the listener asks themselves the 5WH interrogative questions. This deliberate process may feel a bit cumbersome and ‘overdone’ at first, but with practice becomes ‘automatic’, and effective recall of content becomes easier. It is as if recall from the ‘cognitive bins’ is almost spontaneous. As listeners become confident at managing internal distractions, some find it helpful to use Tubbs and Moss’s spare time by ‘tagging’ the incoming information (as a ‘what’, or a ‘who’, and so on), and imagine filing that information into the appropriate 5WH bin. This activity acts as a mnemonic to assist recall.

Feeling component

The feeling component of a client’s content is mostly communicated in the non-verbals (paralinguistics). The verbal and non-verbal content are inseparable during the listening activity. The brain appears to process them simultaneously, and, in seeking to produce its ‘best bet’ in relation to feelings, also takes into account the visual evidence that is observed during the dialogue. To this end, it seems useful to make such comparisons consciously (at least as a training exercise) so that the brain is somehow more aware of the importance of such comparisons when the attention centre is fully ‘switched on’. The recall of the paralinguistics during ‘think time’, and conscious comparison with observed data (for congruity or otherwise) seems to improve the rate of processing, and degree of accuracy over time.

Reflect on content

While clients are talking, the task is to listen. During spare time, and especially in self-determined think time, the task is to reflect on the content. The nature of these reflections may differ at different phases of the process (to be clarified in later chapters), but the primary purpose is to capture their meaning, affect, significance, or implication from the client’s point of view—or ‘frame of reference’ as it is often called.

Practicing listening

The general approach to practicing listening follows the outline given under ‘Practicing attending’ on page 120. The set-up of the room is identical to that shown in Figure 15, on page 122. Before practice commences, the tutor will review the material presented in an earlier presentation. The steps of the listening process will be listed on the whiteboard to remind students of the task.

A typical practice round

The presentation on listening is revised. Participants discuss their experiences of the listening test, and declare any particular distraction that they want to eliminate. This information gives the tutor an indication of how to tailor exercises for each trainee. Before individual practice occurs, the training group complete the following exercise.

A listening exercise

The trainer will have prepared a ‘client statement’ (or selected one from elsewhere in this text—for example, the client statement on page 195), and reads the brief that appears on the following page.

'In this exercise I will read a client statement once only. Your task is to attend, observe and listen to me as I read. Do not write during the reading. Take time to reflect on what was said, and then write down what you **heard** in terms of the content, and what you **inferred** from the non-verbal paralinguistics. Use the 5WH structure to assist recall.'

What I heard:

WHO is the content about?

WHAT is the content about?

WHEN did the incident occur?

WHERE did the incident occur?

WHY is the incident important?

HOW did the incident occur?

HOW was the statement expressed—reader's delivery?

What feeling words were stated?

What, in summary form, is the statement about?

The inferences that I made:

The current feeling of the reader:

The energy level from the reading:

Congruence between what I observed and what I heard:

On completion of the exercise, results are discussed, success is verbally rewarded, difficulties are noted, and individual practice begins. There is a certain sameness to the procedure, but after each round trainees have the opportunity to assess progress. What follows is a summarised example of what might happen (as a confidence builder) to help a nervous listener ‘practice being a tape-recorder’ with a view to ‘replaying’ data verbatim.

Individual practice

The members of the laboratory group sit in a horseshoe formation, with the ‘listener’ in the centre so that they can square off to each member in turn with minimal movement.

The tutor will invite the first ‘client’ to make a short statement, and brief the ‘counsellor’ to attend, observe, listen, use think time to recall, and then repeat back the statement.

The client might say:

The black cat sat on a white mat.

The counsellor repeats:

The black cat sat on a white mat.

The tutor will praise the success, and invite the next client to extend the statement.

The client might say:

The black cat sat on a white mat and played with a ball of wool.

The procedure is repeated until the counsellor either calls a halt or makes an error—in which case the tutor calls a halt. The difficulty may have occurred with a statement like:

The black cat sat on a white mat and played with a ball of wool. The cat tangled the wool so much that it started to miaow. The noise attracted the attention of the lady of the house. She scolded the playful pussy and muttered something about no kitty-cat for naughty kitty cats.

Quite often the trainees in the circle have more difficulty in recalling what was said last and so have trouble ‘building’ the statement. It can be purposeful fun.

When the halt has been called the trainer acknowledges the success, points out the advantage of having continued repetition, and suggests a last try at a different statement. The trainer will produce this, and shorten it to ensure success. It might be:

I can't help thinking about the idiot in a big black Ford who ran a red light as I was about to turn right into the North East Road this morning. It was a close call. It really shook me up.

There is a possibility that a minor error may occur but invariably the listener's confidence and competence have improved.

Trainees will take turns at being the counsellor. During the practice session, the tutor will invite each person, in turn, to act as the client and make a personal statement (say 30–40 seconds long) so that others can practice the 5WH recall of the salient points. Repeated practice of sharing and recalling personal material not only improves listening skill, but also accelerates the bond that develops between group members.

A review of vigilance skills

Since all three of the vigilance skills have now been introduced and practiced, trainees may wish to undertake the simple Review Exercise on page 184. The task is to recall the elements of the vigilance skills, and complete the table by filling in the blanks.

Summary

What listening is

Listening is the process of actively suspending internal distraction in order to fully **hear**.

What listening does

Effective listening:

- enables the listener to hear, and therefore more accurately recall verbal, musical, and other sonic information;
- provides the listener with information to work out what other people mean;
- provides the listener with information to work out how other people feel;
- communicates interest in, and concern for, the speaker;
- helps avoid misunderstandings;
- provides information to enable the listener to respond appropriately.

Why listening is important

If one can **accurately** hear what others say, then one can understand better what is meant so that, in turn, one can interact with others more appropriately.

When listening is used

Listening skills are used when one has a personal or professional reason to hear what others are saying, and when one wants/needs to hear any other information.

How to listen

The skill steps for effective listening appear below:

- identify personal listening ‘foibles’;
- attend, observe and listen purposefully;
- avoid internal distractions; suspend own judgements, values and perceptions;
- focus on other’s content—both words and paralinguistics;
- repeat information to self—verbatim (practice exercise only);
- reflect on the content to identify:
 - **who** is being discussed;
 - **what** specifically is being discussed;
 - **where** the people/items/events are located;
 - **when** the events occurred;
 - **why** the content is important to the speaker;
 - **how** things are being tackled;
 - **what** are the implications;
- ensure that new information is congruent with previous data;
- compare observed and paralinguistic data to infer other’s feeling state;
- monitor own response to client’s content;
- listen for themes, and for what is **not** said.

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My learning about listening

Write in your own words:

What listening is:

What listening does:

Why listening is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own listening skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my listening:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Exercise 2: Review the vigilance skills

The Skills:	The focus	The Skill Steps:
_TT_ND_N_	CO__EX_UA_	1 E_GAG_ PU__OSE__LLY 2 _UR__SH FUN__IO_ALL_ 3 PRE__RE P_RSO_AL__ 4 WE_C_ME EF_ECT__EL_ 5 __TRA_T C_EA__Y
	PO____AL	1 S_UA_E OFF 2 MA_NTAI_ __E CO__A_T 3 L_AN FO_WAR_S— __◇ to _5◇ 4 A_JUST D_STAN_E— _0 cm. to 1__ cm. 5 A__ID DIS_RAC__ONS
	____CH_LOG_CAL	1 AT____D _ONT____UAL__ 2 _T_END __STUR__LY 3 SU__END PER__N_L __LUE_ 4 ST_L_ I_N_R DIS_RA_TIONS 5 PRO__CT _ARI__ _VAI_ABI_ITY
O_SER_ING	CONTE_T APP__RA__E _O_UN_A_Y BE_A_IO__ __VOL__TAR__ __HAV__UR E_ERG_ LE_EL	1 OBS__VE _YST__ATICA__Y 2 ID__TIFY GE_E_AL D_ME_N_UR 3 _DEN_IF_ _OO_ C__EGO_Y 4 _DENT__Y S__CIFIC _EEL__G 5 DO LA_GU__ __C__CK
____TEN_NG	AV__DING ____TR_CT____ W__D CONTE_T FE__N_ C__EN_ ME_NING THE_ES and what N__ SA_D	1 K__W OWN LIS__ING __IBLES 2 _EA_ 5__ ELE__TS _F W__DS 3 H__R __RAL__GUI__IC C_ES 4 __CUS ON __NT__T 5 R__LECT ON CO__ENT

The answers to Exercise 2 appear on page 481

Responding skills

Preamble

The previous three chapters on attending, observing and listening, have focussed on effective ways of **taking in** information. This chapter discusses what to **do** with such information—how to respond to what has been seen and heard. The chapter builds on the overview of the responding skills given on page 95, and discusses the range of alternative responses that can be made to other people's information. Some such responses are unhelpful and stifle constructive dialogue. Others are helpful and facilitate constructive dialogue. Before proceeding to describe these differences, and consider their application, it seems useful to recall the historical context in which the skill steps were developed.

The overview on page 95 highlighted the fact that empathy is the dominant quality of helpful responses. Carl Rogers was the first person to emphasise the value and function of empathic responses. His influential primers, (1942, 1951, 1961) described what constituted helpfulness, but he left learners to translate his conceptual definitions into skilled responses. We were among untold numbers of students and practitioners who spent years trying to work out the best way to 'do' what Rogers said was required to express empathy— 'to sense the client's inner world of private personal meanings as if they were your own, but without losing the 'as if' quality' (Rogers 1962, p. 419). Rogers believed that (together with counsellor 'genuineness' and 'unconditional positive regard') empathic responses were both necessary and sufficient for clients to gain the necessary insights required to deal with troubling issues (see page 13).

The work of Carkhuff and Berenson (introduced on page 17) made it clear that empathic responses were certainly necessary, but not sufficient. In defining the helping process, they showed how the responsive skills were sequenced in relation to the necessary pre-helping, personalising, and initiating skills (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976). Carkhuff and Berenson demystified the counselling process by: (1) defining the discrete skills involved in each phase of the process; (2) describing the attributes that characterise each skill; and (3) detailing the steps required to acquire each skill. Carkhuff also developed a five point scale to discriminate relative differences in effectiveness between responses at different phases of the helping process.

We note that subsequent writers of training texts, such as Nelson-Jones (1992), Geldard and Geldard (2001) and Egan (1998), have failed to incorporate the precision and

breadth of Carkhuff's work. Their failure to provide discernable standards, or, in some cases, workable descriptions of skill steps, leaves committed learners as powerless as those who struggled to follow Rogers' lead fifty odd years ago. Without the means to discriminate differences in the quality of discrete, tangible skills, practitioners remain dependent on external supervisors to assess their effectiveness—albeit by no better measure than 'experienced based opinion'. With such means, practitioners are well able to monitor, assess, and, where necessary, correct their work as it occurs during practice—they have the tools to be their own supervisors.

For us the challenge has been twofold. The first task was to acquire and master the tools that Carkhuff and Berenson taught us. The second was to reflect on the application of the skills in the counselling setting, with a view to honing, or modifying, them in ways that enhance their effectiveness for counselling clients.

The primary focus of this chapter is to provide an annotated description of the prototype responding skills developed by Carkhuff and Berenson (Carkhuff 2000, 2000a, 2000b) together with some extensions of our own. The chapter includes an exercise to establish a learning baseline; ways of discriminating differences between responses; and discussion of the function of the different levels of responses, their attributes, the skills steps required to produce them, and their applications. Pencil and paper exercises are provided, and suggested practice procedures outlined.

Chapter 10 will further discuss some additional refinements of the responding skills that we have shown to be particularly useful in professional counselling.

Reviewing current competence

Readers who have undertaken a regular training program may have completed two simple exercises at the very start of the program. The first is a 'communication' exercise that indicates the quality of the participant's current responses to other people's statements. The second is a 'discrimination' exercise that indicates how they discern different levels of effectiveness in a sample of possible responses to the same statement.

Readers not currently involved in training are invited to do similar exercises, in Appendix III on page 469. The instructions are listed on the fronts of both exercises. The exercises will be redone when the skills of this chapter have been learned. By then, readers will be equipped to rate their own work, and assess gains made between their 'pre' and 'post' efforts.

Discriminating response effectiveness

It is important to be able to discriminate the different levels of effectiveness of verbal responses so that we: (1) have a basic template to assist in the construction of responses; (2) can monitor our own effectiveness during practice or work sessions; and (3) assess the effectiveness of others from whom we may seek personal services.

There are seven different ways to respond to an initial statement. Four of them are deemed to be '**reactive**' because, in different ways, the listener 'reacts' to what the speaker said from their own (the listener's) point of view. Such responses **retard** exploration. The other three ways are deemed to be '**responsive**' because, in varying degrees, the listener 'responds', with different levels of empathy, to what the speaker said. Such responses **facilitate** exploration. The seven ways of responding can be

graded on a scale between 1 and 3. The scale reflects the level of empathy shown by the responding listener. The significance of this is that a number of client outcomes can be predicted from the level of empathy shown. They are: (1) how understood the client feels; (2) how willing the client is to continue to talk; (3) how effectively the client is enabled to explore; and (4) how credible the counsellor is seen to be.

Consider the differences between the following seven counsellor responses made to this client statement.

God! Who do think you are? Call yourself a counsellor? I'm sitting here spilling my guts, and all you do is sit and look at the clock. Why don't you bloody well listen?

Response 1: Negation

'Well, as a matter of fact, I've actually let you work on into my lunch break.'

Comment: In this response, the counsellor **reacts** entirely from their own frame of reference. It has no empathic connection whatsoever with the client's remark. It therefore rates at level 1.0 on the scale on page 190. Level 1.0 responses are discernible because they dismiss, deny, judge, or ignore what the client has said—in essence they negate the client's 'current truth'. The example given sounds quite patronising, but even a warmer sounding response such as, '*I understand how you feel*', would also be rated at level 1.0 because it fails to demonstrate **overt** empathy. It fails to name a feeling. In that sense it ignores the client's remark. It gives the client grounds to say; '*Pigs you do! How would you know?*'. It is predictable that clients subjected to level 1.0 responses will feel negated—misunderstood, dismissed or judged. They will not wish to talk further. If, from courtesy, they do talk, they are most unlikely to discuss personal issues in depth.

Response 2: Reassurance

'It's been useful for you to confront me like this. You should be pleased that you are able to assert yourself so well.'

Comment: In this response, the counsellor **reacts** from their own frame of reference. The reassurance offered is a 'professional viewpoint' that is deemed to be helpful, but is no more than an indirectly related 'allusion' to the client's remark. The response communicates random, partial empathy only, and rates at level 1.5. The tendency to be reassuring is common in people who believe in 'being positive' (regardless of evidence to the contrary). They may also consider it to be a supportive strategy in the face of loss, hardship or danger. It is predictable, however, that clients will tend to doubt unrealistic assurances, and question the sincerity, or the efficacy, of what may seem to be a bit glib.

Response 3: Random initiative

'I think it would be helpful for you to find better ways of communicating. When you feel emotional, just count to ten, cool off a bit, and perhaps say something like: I'm a bit unhappy, I'd like to give you some feedback.'

Comment: In this response, the counsellor also **reacts** from their 'expert' frame of reference, by offering a random initiative that alludes to a solution for an implied problem. Any empathic connection with the client is 'oblique', and so is rated at level 1.5. The tendency to offer premature advice on how to act in given situations is very common in people who like to 'fix' things—'*If I were you, I would ...*'. There is evidence to suggest that, on average, only one in five random, premature initiatives may have some merit. This differs markedly from selected initiatives that are likely to work almost every time—once a specific goal has been identified. It is predictable that clients get

diverted from the task of exploring their issue by premature, randomly suggested initiatives. They may acknowledge that one in five (on average) initiatives could work, but they are likely to have thought of, and dismissed, the other four ‘helpful’ suggestions that were offered. Level 1.5 initiatives are inefficient, and disempower clients who feel as if they are being pushed to go where they neither want nor need to be.

Response 4: ‘Irrelevant’ questions

‘Could you tell me, specifically, what your thought processes were just before you spoke out in the way you did?’

Comment: In this response, the counsellor also **reacts** from their own frame of reference, but seeks specific information that they, themselves, have some reason to seek. In the example, the inference is that the counsellor is an expert who, with sufficient information, can analyse it, and come up with a ‘professional’ prescription that is intended to be helpful. Such questioning has little empathic connection to the client’s remark. Such allusive responses are also rated at level 1.5. The tendency to ‘diagnose and prescribe’ on somebody else’s behalf is not uncommon in the general population. Readers may well have experienced the earnest probes of people who want to know ‘all about it’ so that they can help. It is predictable that client’s subjected to a series of such questions feel increasingly resistant to, and disempowered by, the approach. They tend to think, if not say: *‘What do they want to know that for? Where is all this going? What has that got to do with what I’m saying?’*.

‘Relevant’ questions certainly have their place. They work best when selectively applied to determine the best course of action to achieve an acknowledged goal. For example each time you visit the doctor, both you and the doctor have an agreed goal—to determine the nature of the current ailment. The doctor knows what to ask—and why.

Response 5: Summary of meaning

‘So, you are suggesting that I am preoccupied to the extent that I have failed you badly as a counsellor.’

Comment: In this response, the counsellor **responds** empathically, at an intellectual level, by summarising the essence of what was said—what the client ‘means’. Summaries of this kind are rated at level 2.0. They are useful for paraphrasing large volumes of information into more succinct statements without the loss of salient meaning. It is predictable that if an accurate summary is made of what has been said, then the person concerned will feel that they have been heard, and that there is little need to say more. In counselling parlance this means that exploration tends to stop. This makes such responses useful at the closure of a counselling session, or for a person chairing a meeting to appropriately close discussion that is tending to be repetitive.

Response 5: Response to feeling

‘I can see that you are furious with me.’

Comment: In this response, the counsellor **responds** empathically to the emotion that is present in what has been said or observed. Empathy at an emotional level is more facilitative of exploration than empathy at the intellectual level. Accordingly, it is rated at level 2.5. It is predictable that clients feel understood emotionally when such responses accurately match their experience. Such responses trigger a desire to talk further to declare or identify why such feeling occurs.

Response 6: Response to feeling and the reason for it

'So, you feel devalued because I seem to pay more attention to the clock than to you.'

Comment: In this response, the counsellor **responds** empathically to the emotional and the intellectual components of the client's remark. Such responses are rated at 3.0. They are said to be 'fully interchangeable' (Carkhuff's term) because the same statement **could** have been said by the client to fully explain their current feeling and the reason for that feeling. Level 3.0 responses are the most facilitative of exploration. It is predictable that clients feel fully understood, and are willing to talk more if these responses are accurate. The construction of level 3.0 responses will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

Table 9 summarises the ratings, functions, training formats, and outcomes of different verbal responses between levels 1.0 and 3.0. The three levels in the scale are part of a five point scale developed by Carkhuff in ground-breaking research (Carkhuff 1969, 1969a, 1984, 1984a). The scale has been modified over time. In his current scale, Carkhuff calls level 1 'non-attending'—where 'feeling and content are both absent or inaccurate', and level 1.5 'attending'—where the response is 'indirect but accurate to content but without any direction (e.g., a relevant question, explanation of related information)' (Carkhuff 2000a, p. 25). We have changed these to 'negating responses' and 'allusive responses', respectively, on the grounds that 'attending' and 'non-attending' relate more to the gathering of information than to a quality of response to such information. We also use the word 'content' differently from Carkhuff. We understand content to include all that is presented—visual and verbal data with intellectual and emotional components. Carkhuff restricts his usage of 'content' to exclude the emotional component.

In our view, a working knowledge of the following scale (and its later extension to levels 4 and 5) is fundamental to effective counselling. It provides a effective means of monitoring the counselling process as one works, and knowing that the appropriate 'tool' is being used to achieve the purposes of each phase. This is the scale by which you will assess the baseline of your responsive skills and subsequent learning gains.

The exercises, from the page following the table, will help you to become more familiar with the scale.

Rating scale of verbal behaviours: levels 1.0–3.0

Rating	Function	Training format	Outcome
	<p>RESPONDING to information: facilitates trusting climate promotes relevant, honest discussion prepares base for understanding and action planning</p>		
3.0	Response to feeling and meaning (reason for the feeling)	'So you feel ... because ... (reason for the feeling)?'	fully understood
2.5	Response to feeling	'So you feel ...?'	emotionally understood
2.0	Response to meaning	'So you're saying ... (topic + qualification of topic)?' 'So you figure that ... (as above, or intellectual summary)?' 'The point you're making is' ... (concise intellectual summary)?'	intellectually understood
	<p>REACTING to information: works against a trusting climate inhibits relevant, honest discussion erodes base for effective outcome</p>		
1.5	<p>Allusive response: comments indirectly relate to content as unjustified reassurances, premature advice, or 'irrelevant' question</p>	'I'm sure it will work out OK' 'If I were you I'd ... (initiative).' 'I'd like to know what are your thoughts about that?'	80% misunderstood discredited, or suspicious 20% mild interest
1.0	<p>Negating response: unrelated to what has been said: comments dismiss, deny, judge, or ignore content An unsolicited expression of listener's viewpoint</p>	'Don't feel like that.' 'You shouldn't ...' 'That reminds me of ...' 'My interests/ concerns are ...'	other feels put down, annoyed, irritated or inferior

Table 9. Showing the ratings, functions, training formats and outcomes for different verbal responses. The scale derives from Carkhuff (2000a).

Discrimination exercise

This exercise provides an opportunity to practise discriminating the differences between a range of responses that could be made to a statement made by an overloaded Administrative Officer in the following situation.

Assume that a colleague has just delivered a report to the officer. The colleague says it requires urgent attention. The officer glances at the report and says:

'Oh no! Not another thing on top of everything else. How long have you been sitting on that? Just put it over there! I'll deal with it when I can.'

The task is to rate each response in terms of the scale on the previous page. Assess the responses in terms of the elements that are absent or present in the content—**not** whether the response 'appeals' to you or not.

Record your rating in the column shown, and record the reason for your rating as shown in the example for response 1.

Response	My rating
1. Have you been overdoing it again? How long is it since you had a holiday, or a decent break at the weekend without taking work home? Reason: <i>The response is from the listener's frame of reference. It is an irrelevant question that alludes to what the responder thinks will help. Caring—but could be one of the four out of five that won't help!</i>	1.5
2. Look, don't take your bad temper out on me! Reason:	
3. Gee, Bill, you really seem at the end of your tether. Reason:	
4. What's wrong with you!!! ??? Reason:	
5. I can see that you've got more than enough on your plate at the moment. Reason:	

<p>6. Come on, Bill, chin up—it's a lovely day out there.</p> <p>Reason:</p>	
<p>7. How about giving yourself a break—knock off early today and we'll go for a quiet drink and a chat.</p> <p>Reason:</p>	
<p>8. I'm surprised at you accusing me of holding it up. You know I'm more co-operative than that.</p> <p>Reason:</p>	
<p>9. You seem to be very frustrated because my delay adds unnecessary pressure to an already tight schedule.</p> <p>Reason:</p>	
<p>10. Would you like me to work on it with you?</p> <p>Reason:</p>	
<p>11. Hey, I've done a course on stress management. It might help you too.</p> <p>Reason:</p>	
<p>12. We've all got our problems—I'm part of the same show too, you know. Anyway, it is urgent so you'd better find some time to deal with it.</p> <p>Reason:</p>	

Assessing the exercise outcome

The following steps will show how to assess your discrimination score. (1) Transcribe your ratings from this exercise to the 'My rating' column in the table on the next page. (2) Calculate the differences between your rating and the associated 'Expert rating' by

deducting the lower number from the higher number in each of the 12 responses. For example, in response 1, both ratings are shown as 1.5, and so the difference shown is '0'. 'My rating' could have been incorrectly rated as either 2.0 or 1.0, but the difference from the expert rating of 1.5 will be .5 in either instance. The 'direction' of the difference does not matter, only the degree. Record your calculations for each response in the 'Difference' column in the table. The next steps are given below the table.

Response	My rating	Expert rating	Diff'ce
<p>1. Have you been overdoing it again? How long is it since you had a holiday, or a decent weekend break without taking work home?</p> <p>Reason: <i>The response is from the listener's frame of reference. It is an irrelevant question that alludes to what the responder thinks will help. Caring—but could be one of the four out of five that won't help.</i></p>	1.5	1.5	0
<p>2. Look, don't take your bad temper out on me!</p> <p>Reason: <i>Reactive, judgemental, negating response</i></p>		1.0	
<p>3. Gee, Bill, you really seem at the end of your tether.</p> <p>Reason: <i>Although not in the training format, this is a response to feeling. 'End of your tether' is a feeling phrase that serves the same purpose as a feeling word.</i></p>		2.5	
<p>4. What's wrong with you!!! ???</p> <p>Reason: <i>Although this is a question, the '!!!' infer judgement rather than constructive, diagnostic intent, so 1.5 is unwarranted.</i></p>		1.0	
<p>5. I can see that you've got more than enough on your plate at the moment.</p> <p>Reason: <i>This is tricky. Having more on your plate etc. sounds a bit like a feeling phrase, but it is really more of a colloquial summary of what is happening. Preceded by the training format: 'You are saying that you've...' it confirms level 2.0 status as an intellectual summary.</i></p>		2.0	
<p>6. Come on, Bill, chin up—it's a lovely day out there.</p> <p>Reason: <i>This sounds like an initiative and reassurance, but the initiative is 'stupid' and the reassurance hollow. It is negating.</i></p>		1.0	
<p>7. How about giving yourself a break—knock off early today and we'll go for a quiet drink and a chat.</p> <p>Reason: <i>This premature initiative that has the potential to offer some respite. It is not negating, but merely alludes to possible assistance.</i></p>		1.5	
<p>8. I'm surprised at you accusing me of holding it up. You know I'm more cooperative than that.</p> <p>Reason: <i>Perhaps the intention is to be reassuring, but the response is clearly defensive, judgemental and negating.</i></p>		1.0	

9. You seem to be very frustrated because my delay adds unnecessary pressure on an already tight schedule. Reason: <i>This response not only responds to the feeling of frustration, but also communicates an understanding of the reason for the frustration.</i>		3.0	
10. Would you like me to work on it with you? Reason: <i>This is an initiative in question form. It could be the one in five initiatives that help, but we need not know the outcome to rate it.</i>		1.5	
11. Hey, I've done a stress management course. It might help you too. Reason: <i>A clear initiative from the responder's frame of reference.</i>		1.5	
12. We've all got our problems—I'm part of the same show too, you know. Anyway, it is urgent so you'd better find time to deal with it. Reason: <i>A critical response that negates the initiative.</i>		1.0	
Sum of differences			
Mean difference			

The next step (3) is to tally the figures in the difference column, and record the total in the 'Sum of differences' box. The next step (4) is to divide the sum of the differences by 12 (the number of responses) to calculate the Mean (average) difference. Record this figure in the box provided. This figure is your 'raw' discrimination score. Copy your raw score into the bottom row of Table 10 below. The final step (5) is to identify your level of effectiveness by noting how your raw score equates with the levels shown in the table. Record your score in the space provided.

Raw score	Level of effectiveness
between 0 and .19	level 5
between .2 and .39	level 4
between .4 and .59	level 3
between .6 and .79	level 2
higher than .8	level 1
My raw score:	My skill level:

Table 10. Showing the conversion of 'raw scores' to levels of effectiveness in discriminating the levels of empathy inherent in different verbal responses.

The lower the raw score the more effective the discrimination. An overall score of zero means that you matched the expert ratings throughout. Bravo! That makes you a level 5.0 expert! Exercise 3 on the following page provides further opportunity to practice this skill. Refer to rating scale on page 190 as required.

Exercise 3: Rating responses to level 3.0**A farmer's wife says:**

'I really don't know where to go next. We've had a run of bad seasons on the farm, and you can't guarantee a good harvest this year either—even though we have had reasonable opening rains. The one thing I've tried to hold out for is the kids' education. The older ones all boarded at college in the city, but we've had to compromise with Jillian. We found her accommodation in Tranmere so that she could ride her bike to Norwood High, but it isn't working out. She's overwhelmed by the size, and I s'pose you could say the 'pace', of the school. She's behind with her studies, and worse still, the people she's staying with aren't at all supportive. In fact they seem to either ridicule her or ignore her. She's so unhappy. We've let her down so badly.

Consider the elements in each of the alternative responses below. Assume the accuracy of each, and score it against the Carkhuff Scale.

Response	Rating
1. I don't think there's too much to worry about—Norwood High has got a pretty good reputation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You feel so helpless.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. It's awful isn't it—although a lot of people really think that this year's harvest could be above average.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Perhaps Jillian could get the school counsellor to arrange to have a chat with the host family so that they can be more understanding.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. So, what seemed to be a reasonable compromise at first is turning out to be academically unsatisfactory, and socially and personally hurtful for Jillian.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I've always thought that the Education Department should do more to support country children. It really is unjust!	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. You feel guilty because the option you were forced to take disadvantages Jillian personally, educationally and socially.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Perhaps it might pay to look for alternative accommodation. That should help.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. What do you mean by the 'pace' at Norwood? Are you scared of drugs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. You feel very sad that your circumstances make it impossible for you to give Jillian the same chance you gave the others.	<input type="checkbox"/>

It will be easy to calculate your raw score and level of effectiveness in this instance by simply noting the individual differences between your rating and the expert ratings that are given on page 481. The sum of these differences, when divided by ten (the number of responses), will give a raw discrimination score that can be converted to a level of effectiveness by referring back to Table 10 on the previous page.

The structure of empathic responses

This section will list the purpose of each of the three kinds of empathic responses that were rated in the Carkhuff scale at levels 2.0, 2.5 and 3.0, and detail the skill steps necessary to ensure that specific attributes are included.

Level 2.0: Responding to meaning

The purpose of level 2.0 responses

Level 2.0 responses communicate an understanding of the ‘essence’ of what a person means by what they have said. Such responses condense what was said to enhance its clarity and communicate its accuracy without loss of meaning. Level 2.0 responses are intellectual summaries. They have broad applications in a wide variety of settings. However, they are less preferred than levels 2.5 and 3.0 in the first phase of counselling, because the absence of an emotional component tends to limit further exploratory discussion. For that reason they should be used sparingly, if at all, in phase one.

The skill steps for level 2.0 responses

A number of factors need to be considered when constructing level 2.0 responses. Not all responses will necessarily incorporate all factors, but an awareness of them makes it easier to tailor appropriate responses for given situations. An asterisk in the following list indicates the factors covered in Carkhuff’s current training publications (Carkhuff 2000a, p. 49; 2000b, pp. 42–54). The remainder have occurred to us through time. Responses need not be developed in the sequence listed below:

1. *be succinct—to communicate efficiently;
2. *be specific—to avoid meaningless generalisations, confusion, or ambiguity;
3. be comprehensive—to incorporate all salient points (if desirable);
4. *be non-judgemental—to avoid wrong interpretations and false conclusions;
5. use appropriate lead-ins—to assist conversational flow;
6. clarify uncertainty—to avoid misunderstanding;
7. order jumble—to add clarity;
8. *use language that clients understand—to enhance clarity;
9. *test the accuracy of the response—to ‘stay on track’.

Each factor will be discussed, below, to consider contextual and related factors, provide examples where appropriate, and list the skill steps involved.

Be succinct

Succinct responses are generally more acceptable to others than long-winded, reiterative statements. However, the terms ‘reflective listening’ and ‘mirroring’ that were used, historically, to describe the notion of responding, suggested the verbal equivalent of the visual ‘mirror image’, and so some people literally repeated back what was said. This ineffective strategy was soon dubbed ‘parroting’—for the obvious reason. The call now from various writers is to be brief, concise, or succinct. Remember—only galahs parrot!

The skill required is the ability to paraphrase information succinctly without loss of meaning—in short, to make a *précis*. When used as a verb the word ‘*précis*’ means to ‘cut short’—to be precise—which, in turn, means ‘abridged, strictly expressed, exactly defined’ (Oxford). Other skills combine to ensure that ‘meaning’ is not compromised by the desire to be brief.

Be specific

Responses that are specific avoid confusion and pointless generalisations, and communicate concrete, unambiguous meaning. They give precision to the paraphrase. However, it is possible to construct responses that are: (1) specific, but omit some salient points, and (2) specific, and include most salient points. To discriminate this difference we call the first type a ‘segmental’ response, and the second type a ‘comprehensive’ response. The distinction is useful, but not precise because judgements about what is salient, and what is not, will vary between different people.

The skill step for identifying the ‘specifics’ in any information is to use the 5WH strategy that was previously described on page 174. Examples of specific, segmental and comprehensive responses will be made to a statement that Carkhuff attributed to a student. The bracketed notes identify the different 5WH elements within the statement (Carkhuff 2000, pp. 101–102). We have slightly modified the statement to read:

‘I thought I was on track with the teacher (who)—but I just failed an important test (what). I suppose we were on different wavelengths (why), and I didn’t do enough study (how) at home (where) before for the test (when)—but I didn’t expect the questions to be so hard (why).’

Specific but segmental

In paraphrasing a response, Carkhuff, specifies points about the student’s behaviour in relation to both the teacher and the student’s studies. His example is:

‘In other words, you overestimated where you were with the teacher and with your subjects’ (Carkhuff 2000, p.102).

This is a specific but segmental response. The value of such a response is that the student has evidence that s/he has been ‘heard’, and intellectually understood.

Specific and comprehensive

The following is an example of a specific and comprehensive response.

*‘So, in other words, you failed because you **overestimated** where you stood with the teacher and the subject, and you **underestimated** the study requirements.’*

The skill step to make a specific response more comprehensive is to include as many additional 5WH elements as deemed desirable to express the meaning without losing succinctness, or comprehensibility.

Comparing segmental and comprehensive examples

The first difference to note between the segmental and comprehensive responses is that the former focuses on aspects of **why** the student failed, but does not respond, overtly, to the salient point **that** the student failed. In the flow of general dialogue, such failure would be generally understood by both people concerned, but in a counselling context, its specific inclusion has value in that the reality of failure is more ‘up front’ and therefore more ‘available’ for reflection and discussion.

A second difference is that the segmental response only specifies the tendency to overestimate, whereas the latter also includes underestimation. Whilst this addition might seem a bit pedantic in general discussion, it has merit in a counselling setting because it gives the student opportunity to reflect more fully on how they actually make judgements—both ‘over’ and ‘under’ reality. The student might recognise that this tendency may not only apply to schoolwork, and make links to other areas of their life. If so a possible ‘theme’ may emerge—behaving the same way in different situations.

In judging which is the better response, one must take into account the nature of the client, and the circumstance and purpose of the discussion. For example, some people prefer to discuss things ‘a bit at a time’. For them, the segmental response may be preferred. Some people like to talk more globally—in ‘big pictures’. For them the second, comprehensive response is likely to be effective. If the purpose of a discussion is to share information, or give someone a chance to let off steam, a segmental response is adequate. If the purpose is to fully explore an issue (as in counselling), it is helpful to be able to construct comprehensive responses.

Segmental responses, similar to those below, are commonplace and adequate in general conversation, because they communicate a level of understanding, but in the counselling setting they are less likely to stimulate significant exploration.

‘So you reckon that you flunked because you didn’t do enough homework.’ or:

‘So, as you read the teacher, you figured the questions would be a lot easier.’

Be non-judgemental

Carkhuff defines a judgemental response as one that ‘adds a new conclusion, interprets the other person’s behaviour as good or bad, or distorts what the person actually said’. He provides an example of a judgemental response to the following statement made by a grandparent:

‘Oh leave me alone. I know what I’m supposed to do, but I’ll be damned if I’ll sit around and let someone else tell me what to do.’

Note the inappropriate, interpretive judgement expressed in the response:

‘You’re saying you know better than they do and that gives you the right to ignore them’ (Carkhuff 2000b, p. 48).

The skill of screening out broad interpretations, false conclusions, distortions of fact, and judgements about behaviour is to ask oneself: *‘Is what I am about to say consistent with what I actually heard?’* If not, the response should be reformulated to be interchangeable with what was said. If the response is consistent, it can be tested for accuracy with the client. It is possible that the counsellor may have judged the response to be interchangeable, and then be told by the client that it was inaccurate. When this occurs in practice rounds, the coach needs to help the counsellor identify whether the problem is one of poor listening skills, or unwarranted interpretations. We have noticed that people who pre-test at lower than 1.3 on the Communication Index have the greatest difficulty in withholding personal interpretations. This is no surprise. Their score makes it clear that they operate almost entirely from their own frame of reference.

‘Externalise’ to avoid judgement

If assessed against Carkhuff’s definition of a judgemental response, the earlier response to the student (brought forward below) would be ‘cleared’ as non-judgemental.

‘So, in other words, you failed because you overestimated where you stood with the teacher and the subject, and you underestimated the study requirements.’

It does not add a new conclusion, interpret the student’s behaviour as good or bad, or distort what the student actually said. However, our inclusion of the word ‘you’ in the response, actually blames the student for his/her failure. Whilst this is factually true, it is wise to avoid such judgments during the first phase of the counselling process. The merit of such avoidance will be argued shortly. The way to achieve this avoidance is to replace the word ‘you’ with an ‘externalised’ reason for the outcome. The modified example that follows shows what an ‘externalised reason’ looks like.

*‘So, in other words, **your overestimation** of where you stood with the teacher and the subject, and **your underestimation** of the study requirements both contributed to your failure.’*

The word ‘you’ in the earlier response pointed to an ‘internalised’ reason for the outcome, whereas ‘your overestimation’ and ‘your underestimation’ point to ‘externalised’ reasons. In the earlier response, YOU are clearly at fault—YOU are a lousy estimator! In the second response, YOU are blameless—it was ‘your facility for estimating’ that let you down, but that is not really YOU—however, YOU are able to influence IT (your facility for estimating) if you choose to work on IT.

The following broad examples should help to make this distinction quite clear.

‘You haven’t quite got the point yet because our explanation is a bit woolly.’

‘You haven’t quite got the point yet because YOU are a bit thick.’

Hopefully you felt a twinge of resentment in the explicit judgement of the second response. If so, you have experienced the kind of judgement to be avoided in phase one.

The skill in avoiding the word ‘you’ is to attribute an external reason for the experience. To do this we ask ourselves: *‘What other person, thing, event, or client attribute is responsible for the outcome?’*

It is easy to see how another person, thing, or event can have an external impact on one’s experience, but some trainees have trouble in seeing that personal attributes (such as ‘your value base’, or ‘your critical nature’) are different from the actual ‘YOU’. A simple chat about the notion of ‘subpersonalities’ (an aspect of Psychosynthesis theory described by Ferrucci 1982) generally helps them experience the difference. Simply put, we can identify a range of subpersonalities (for ourselves) that relates to our personal experience of our prominent traits, attitudes or motives. Once identified, each ‘can be observed from outside by a process called dis-identification’ (Ferrucci 1982 pp. 48–49). This very process brings the realisation that the part is not the whole. By similar logic it follows that the external ‘your head’ need not be experienced as ‘you’. The following example should therefore be less ‘prickly’ than the internalised response above.

*‘You haven’t quite got the point yet because **your head** hasn’t quite grasped the full significance of the difference.’*

Be judgemental when required

In some contexts, such as a legal setting, there may be every justification—even a requirement, to avoid an externalised response, and use a response that is intentionally judgemental, such as:

‘So, you are saying that you are guilty; that you admit to bashing your spouse.’

Use appropriate lead-ins

Level 2.0 responses can be made to different kinds of statements. An appropriate ‘lead-in’ to the response communicates an understanding of the nature of the statement, and helps dialogue to flow more conversationally. Table 11, below, provides examples of suitable lead-ins for responses to different kinds of statements. An inspection of the table will show that these examples are commonplace in communications between individuals, and warrant no further explanation. However, their application is frequently overlooked in group settings where their use can be effective. For example, it is not unusual for participants in meetings to ask questions, or make points, that are barely audible to other participants. When this occurs, the activity tends to become little more than a discussion between the presenter and the participant concerned. In these

circumstances, it behoves the presenter to audibly summarise the question, or the comment. The use of a response with an appropriate lead-in maintains group interest and helps the presentation to ‘flow’:

‘Julie is asking whether ...’. or *‘Robert is making the point that ...’*.

Nature of statement	Lead-in
Responding to a statement	<i>‘So, you are saying that ...’</i>
Checking a directive	<i>‘So, you want me to ...’</i> or, in a chain of command, a verbatim restatement such as: <i>‘All engines half speed ahead, Sir.’</i>
Responding to a request	<i>‘So, you are asking whether ...’</i> .or, <i>‘So you are wanting to know if ...’</i>
Acknowledging a point of view	<i>‘So, as you see it ...’</i> . or <i>‘So, in your opinion ...’</i>
Responding to a suggestion	<i>‘So, What you are proposing is ...’</i> or <i>‘So, you think we should ...’</i>
Clarifying the unclear	<i>So, are you saying that ...’</i> or <i>‘So, are you telling me that ...’</i>

Table 11. Showing examples of common lead-ins for responses to different kinds of statements.

From time to time in meetings, some people, when ‘holding the floor’, may ramble, or become repetitive. When this occurs the chairperson can decently intervene (during a brief pause in the ramblings) and respond at level 2.0 by saying something like:

‘Mr Tapp, Can I confirm that your three key points are...(a),...(b)...and (c)?’

In almost all cases, the Messrs Tapp of this world will feel heard, acknowledge the accuracy of the summary, and be happy to sit down and stop ‘dripping’.

A further group application of level 2.0 responses is for a chairperson of an informal meeting to summarise the conclusion of a discussion—at a suitable speed for the minute secretary to record all relevant details. This procedure gives participants opportunity to check the conclusions reached, and the chair can ensure that all 5WH elements are minuted so that tasks are allocated, time lines scheduled, and venues listed. For example:

‘It was agreed that Ms A and Mr B (who) will jointly undertake to ... (what) at ... (where). The project is to be finalised by ... (when) so that ... (why) can occur. \$500 dollars have been allocated for the task (how). Mrs C will consult with ... (who) on standards, and sign off the project for the committee (how measured).’

The skill is to recognise the nature of another’s statement and choose a suitable lead-in.

Clarify uncertainty

There are occasions when others make statements that are ambiguous, non-specific, or inferential which, if taken at face value, could lead to misunderstanding or discontent. One option for seeking clarity is to question what the other means. This option is not always fruitful—especially if the other person is inarticulate, naturally vague, or wilfully non-specific. An alternative option is to specify an interpretation of what is unclear in a way that requires affirmation or denial. For example, consider the following ‘request’ that a boss might make to a subordinate, Clive:

'Clive, you know John who has just joined us—well, he doesn't know the ropes yet, or where things are. It would be good if you could help him. I like all my staff to feel at home as you know. You'll know what to show him.'

Clive may wish to clarify a non-specific aspect of the request, by 'testing' a segmental level 2.0 response, in these terms:

'Are you saying that you trust my discretion to take as long as I consider necessary to orient John to the organisation?'

This gives the boss the opportunity to say 'yes', or to be more specific such as:

'No, I'd thought you'd realise that I meant your section, not the organisation. You ought not take more than an hour, or your own work will suffer.'

This creates an opportunity for Clive to communicate an understanding of the time constraint, and be more specific about the task:

'Ok! So I've got an hour to overview where our section fits in the organisation, meet each team-member, get a feel of what they do, and how he links with them; and talk through the support and training program that John can expect.'

In the late 1970's, approval had been given for us to conduct a skills training program for teachers in the Education Department in our state. Soon after arrangements had been finalised, we were told that funding had been withdrawn. In the light of teacher enthusiasm, we decided to find a way to run, privately, for no fee. Vicky was in private practice, and agreed to donate her time. David was employed in a welfare agency, and applied to take three months long service leave. The administrator who normally signed such leave applications as a routine matter, was aware of our intention, and called David to his office and said: *'I don't think I can approve your leave for such a purpose?'*

David was taken aback, and offered the following clarifying 2.0 response:

Mr.... are you assuming the right to tell me what I can and cannot do during the long service leave to which I am entitled?'

The form was duly signed.

Order jumble

Clients, and others, often talk in a jumbled, disjointed way, and it helps them to clarify their thinking if a response 'orders' what they have said. For example, a response to a rambling statement from a distressed student could be ordered chronologically:

'So, you are saying that after you reported you failure to your parents (event 1) they got right in your face (event 2), and then you went and dumped on your girlfriend (event 3).'

Similarly, a long, rambling 'story' may describe a range of things that could be clarified by responding to the salient points in a hierarchy of importance. For example:

'So, the guts of it is that you are using drugs (most important), and this has serious implications at home (important) as well as impacting on your studies (least important in this context).'

Use language that clients understand

It is of fundamental importance that clients understand and relate to the words that are used in each response made. Responses that 'talk down' to people in a patronising way, may be belittling and aggravating. Grandstanding one's eloquence to impress others is likely to turn others off. In working with some teenage groups, for example, one may need to understand (if not learn) a whole heap of cool lingo that dudes dig, (or whatever vernacular is currently in vogue), or less cool 'gutter language' that some may use. In our

view, there should be no general rule (as some advocate) to say that counsellors must necessarily ‘speak’ the other’s language. In our view, a general rule should require that counsellors understand their client’s language (and are not shocked by it, or judgemental of it), and respond with words that are understood by the client (but not necessarily used by them) in a manner that reflects the counsellor’s authenticity. This is not to say that counsellors should avoid particular words from a client’s vocabulary. It is to suggest that if, by ‘going overboard’, one scuttles one’s authenticity, then one could, thereby, lose some credibility as a helper. The use of language that clients do not normally use (but understand) provides modelling that can, over time, subtly expand a client’s verbal facility and social effectiveness. Judgements about the usage of ‘sub-cultural’ language is a grey area that, ultimately, is only resolvable by individuals for themselves.

At a less philosophical level, readers are reminded of the NLP suggestion that communication is enhanced by matching the representational system used by clients (see page 175). It can also be helpful to employ similar metaphors and idiomatic imagery used by others. One also needs to be aware of the diversity of meanings that can be given in a multicultural society like Australia. One example will suffice, but the subtleties are legion. Soon after migrating to Australia, Vicky’s first Australian visitor said, on departing in the late afternoon, ‘I’ll see you later’. Since the English take this statement literally, it is understandable that, at eleven o’clock on that evening, Vicky phoned her friend to say, ‘I’ve been expecting you back. Are you OK?’.

Apart from cultural differences, there may be generational gaps that ought to be avoided. Consider the following exchange between David and his youngest grandson.

‘How tall are you poppa?’

‘I’m six feet five and a half inches.’

‘How tall is that in centimetres?’

It is fun to use elegant language pedantically. It is fun to use common language loosely. It is wise to know when to have what sort of fun. It is not fun for others if you don’t.

Test the accuracy of the response

Once a response to a statement has been formulated, its accuracy is tested against the experience of the client. This is done by noting what the client does or says after hearing the response. If it is accurate, there is likely to be an affirming, verbal response: ‘*exactly*’, ‘*right on*’, ‘*true enough*’, or similar. Sometimes verbal affirmation is not given, but invariably, there is a subtle, but observable, lift of energy in the client’s eyes.

If a response is inaccurate, there will be verbal and nonverbal feedback to that effect. When this happens the responder seeks to incorporate the feedback into a restructured response that might use a lead-in like these:

‘I see, so the emphasis is really on ...’. or, ‘So I misheard the fact that ...’.

There is no ground to debate that the response was accurate once contrary feedback has been given by the client. The principle is that the person being responded to is the sole ‘expert’ of the accuracy of their own truth. It is possible, however, that one’s observations were sufficiently astute to ‘see beyond’ what was presented. The client may later come to say what had previously been negated. The important thing is to ‘stay with’ material as it is presented, not anticipate it.

The following exercise will provide opportunity to practice formulating responses to ‘meaning’.

Exercise 4: Responding to meaning

Write a level 2.0 response to each of the following client statements.

Use appropriate lead-ins, keep responses as concise, specific and comprehensive as possible, consciously externalise where appropriate. Match the language used in the statements. Avoid using feeling words.

1. An elderly woman says to you:

'I'm frightened by what the doctor told me yesterday. He didn't actually say much, but he wants to put me in hospital for a small operation to see if he can find out what's wrong with me. They'll do tests to see if they can find the cause of the bleeding. I'm really scared about what they might find.'

My response:

2. A teacher says to a Principal:

'I think we should cut down on the number of staff meetings we have. They take too long; you don't get to say what you want because someone always hogs the show; and often those who should be involved don't come. I reckon it would be better if just a few of us involved in a particular issue met as a work group when we need to—more like a task force.'

My response:

3. A friend says to you:

'I don't agree with you about getting involved in political issues. You can't trust politicians as far as you can throw them. They only take notice of money and power! Why bother wasting time when we're powerless to change anything.'

My response:

4. A student says to a teacher:

'I don't follow what you mean when you say "practice your skills regularly". What skills are you talking about? How often is regular? I want to keep up, but I don't want to do unnecessary stuff either.'

My response:

5. An unfulfilled worker says to you:

'I'm thinking of giving up my job as a public servant. I operate as a consultant now, and I'd like to have a go at freelancing. I reckon I could make a go of it, but my wife is dead against it because of the mortgage and all that. I tell her to trust me, but she won't even talk to me about it anymore.'

My response:

Possible responses to Exercise 4 appear on page 481.

A group activity to practice level 2.0 responses

Introduction

It is a common observation that groups discussing a controversial topic can 'generate heat', consolidate factional divisions, and 'go nowhere'. The following exercise provides an experience that facilitates an exchange of ideas in a way that tends to moderate factional divisions, and expand perspectives. It should be overseen by a skilled trainer.

The task

1. Work in groups of nine to twelve people who have identified a controversial issue about which members hold strong, diverse views.
2. Sit randomly in a circle to mix those with differing viewpoints, and to optimise opportunities for mutual attending.
3. Select a person to put a point of view about the issue.
4. When their point of view has been put, the person immediately opposite responds to the 'meaning' (at level 2.0) to what has been said, and then puts their own point of view, whether supportive or not.
5. In turn, a person almost opposite them (next the person selected in 3. above) will respond to the previous speakers comment at level 2.0, before putting their point of view.
6. Repeat this process in an structured fashion until all members have responded once.
7. Continue the discussion on a random basis, but in every instance each person must respond to the previous speaker before putting their own point of view.
8. There are no rules about how many times individuals may speak, so long as the discussion is punctuated with level 2.0 responses. It does not matter too much if individuals lapse into occasional responses at level 2.5 (to feeling) or 3.0 (both feeling and meaning) towards the end of the discussion.
9. At the end of say 15 minutes, have someone summarise the points that were made during the discussion—without commenting on the process.
10. Have members add to the summary, or negotiate any difference they may have with the it.
11. Suspend discussion of the **topic**.

12. The trainer will facilitate discussion on the **process**, with a view to sharing learnings, particularly in relation to: (1) ‘feeling heard’ by those with different views; (2) seeing an opposing view differently; (3) being better informed about the issue; and (4) moderating a viewpoint in the light of the discussion.

Level 2.5: Responding to feelings

The purpose of level 2.5 responses

A level 2.5 response communicates an understanding of the current emotional state of the person who has shared information. Such responses ‘speak to the heart’. They accept the legitimacy of the emotion without judging it. Such acceptance enables clients to explore why they feel as they do, and in most cases, share their reasons in ongoing dialogue. However, some clients may occasionally ‘clam up’ because either their thoughts are too painful or scary to share, or they withdraw into private reflection. In these circumstances, skilled counsellors will respond at level 2.5 by processing the observable visual cues. Such responses are likely to restimulate further dialogue.

The skill steps for level 2.5 responses

Chapter 7 detailed the skills required to identify specific feelings from visual observation alone, but additional skills can be employed when verbal information complements the visual cues. Counsellors who prefer to process information verbally are likely to depend on these skills more than on visual cues. However, processing both visual and auditory information makes it possible to test for congruity between verbal and non-verbal data. Blind counsellors, and telephone counsellors, are entirely dependent on techniques for processing verbal information.

The factors that need to be considered when constructing a level 2.5 response are:

1. Identify the current feeling—to optimise exploration.
2. Ask the feeling question—to overcome ‘getting stuck’.
3. Use only one feeling word—to avoid confusion.
4. Use synonyms where possible—to avoid repetition.
5. Qualify the feeling word when appropriate—to enhance accuracy.
6. Use a feeling phrase if appropriate—to capture idiomatic imagery.
7. Use language that clients understand—to enhance clarity.
8. Avoid using ‘pseudo level 2.5’ responses—to maintain professional rigour.
9. Check accuracy of response—to ‘stay on track’.

Identify the current feeling

In discussing an issue, clients share historical information that is connected in some way to the current issue. For example, a wife may talk at length about how angry she was some months ago to learn of her husband’s infidelity. However, all the visual cues and the paralinguistics suggest that she is quite depressed as she speaks. The important principle is that responses be made to the current feeling—depressed—not an historical feeling—anger. The current feeling identifies the current **effect** of historical events, and offers opportunity to explore relevant, associated information. Responding to historical feelings in the form, ‘you felt...’, functionally rates at 2.0 (see page 211), and is likely to invite repetition and limit exploration. The format for responding to a current, feeling is:

‘You feel ... (present tense).’

Ask the feeling question

When the feeling is not obvious from observable or verbal evidence, the ‘feeling questions’ are useful tools to help identify the elusive emotion. The feeling question is asked, sub-vocally, by the responder in the ‘think time’ that starts after the client has finished their statement. Carkhuff’s feeling question is: *‘If I were the helpee and I were doing and saying these things, how would I feel?’* (Carkhuff 2000, p. 105). This helps to focus on a broad feeling category (or mood) from which a specific feeling can be selected to match the intensity of the client’s energy level. As an additional adjunct to a feeling word-list, Carkhuff suggests that feeling words can be generated, during think time, by using a ‘stimulus’ word to trigger additional words that are chained sequentially as shown in the following example:

‘When I feel angry, I feel furious. > When I feel furious, I feel burned .> When I feel burned, I feel cheated. > When I feel cheated, I feel hurt. > When I feel hurt I feel sad (Carkhuff 2000b, p. 60).

Many students find these strategies very helpful. However, some trainees using this approach have been unable to consistently identify accurate feelings. When asked to vocalise their mental processing of Carkhuff’s ‘feeling question’ during practice sessions, it became evident that they could not discriminate between their own **actual** experience and the **‘as if’** experience of others. This was especially true of trainees who had unresolved issues that were similar to the client’s issue. To offset this tendency we developed a feeling question that would **avoid** using personal experience, and immerse the counsellor in the client’s experience. The question is:

‘How does it feel, right now, to be (name/race/age/sex/role) in (circumstances) with (history) and (expectations) under (pressures/constraints) from (within/outside)’ (Kranz 1979).

By giving words (sub-vocally) to each element of the question, the counsellor begins to ‘attune’ to the other’s state of being—reflection on the person; their cultural heritage; the roles they play that shape them; the circumstances that impinge on them—now and historically; the expectations they seek to fulfil; the internal and external pressures that drive them and restrict them; and the internal fears and external threats that constrain them. Reflecting on the detail of these elements tends to create a ‘resonance’ with the client’s world and the associated emotive state. The observation skills continue to be used during the thinking process, which, if vocalised, could sound a bit like this:

‘How does it feel right now to be Jacob, a forty five year old African refugee, husband and father of three, who has recently arrived in Australia after spending the previous ten years moving from camp to camp to avoid attack, rape and pillage by rebels. He has a cultural requirement and expectation of being protector and provider for his family, but has learned that the Australian Government makes Centrelink payments payable to his wife. He is angry with the wife he loves, and sees it as ‘wrong’ for her to handle the money. He doesn’t blame her, but he cannot adapt to this reversed role. I hear his internal pressure to go back to Africa to avoid the shame of such emasculation—‘if she must manage the money—I must go’. Yet the constraint to stay here is equally powerful—safety, hope for the kids, maintaining his faith without fear of persecution. It’s tempting to think ‘emasculation’ might be his dominant feeling, but that’s only part of it—anyway, I doubt he knows the word. This is potent stuff. He is torn, but more than just torn. I sense the fracture of his very spirit. Part of him would risk death rather than fail as a provider. His English is not bad, but I struggle to find his kind of word. There is deep anguish, but that is

*not such a common word either. What idiom will capture it for him? Maybe stuff related to torture—remember the brutal kicking from the rebels— his eyes suggest a tortured spirit, and a troubled heart cloistered in a strong body that is now slumped—staring downwards, in pain. I have no one word—what comes to me now is something like: “His shamed heart tortures his broken spirit”. Sounds a bit heavy but it seems to fit what I see and hear—how he feels right now. I want one word, one word —Ah! Its coming to me that—a shamed heart and a broken spirit **shatters** the man. That is it—he feels **shattered** because his shamed heart tortures his broken spirit’.*

I will say, Jacob, you feel shattered.’

I said it. He affirmed it. We moved on towards a subsequent resolution.

The process of thinking through this question somehow mobilises one’s capacity (perhaps openness) for empathy. Our evidence for this claim flows from the outcomes that trainees report after completing the following exercise.

Empathy exercise

The exercise brief is simple: Think of someone you know quite well, but do not like very much. Focus on them, and ask yourself the feeling question. Detail what you know of them. Use as specific, ‘colourful’ language that you are comfortable with. By this we mean do not use formal language like ‘she lives with an abusive husband’ if you know that ‘she cannot see any option but to remain with a cowardly, drunken bastard that curses her with filthy words, punches her about the face, and forces her (pardon the frankness) to suck him off against her will’. Remember, you are the only one aware of your internal reflections. Meet the person in your mind, just as they are. After three minutes or so, jot down anything you have learned from the exercise.

Comment: Virtually all participants better ‘understand’ the person they do not like, but perhaps 70–80% of participants ‘accept’ or ‘feel compassion’ for the person in a way that is both surprising and ‘liberating’ for them.

We have compared the outcomes of our ‘new’ question with Carkhuff’s ‘old’ question in a controlled study, and found that the new steps took longer to master, but led to more consistent accuracy than the old steps (Kranz 1979). They seem especially useful in situations beyond the responder’s experience, and when detailed information is known.

Use only one feeling word

On occasions, one could respond with two (or more) feelings. In the course of friendly conversations, or in offering support, one can ‘get away with’ naming two feelings such as, ‘*You feel upset and angry*’. In a counselling situation, however, it is wiser to identify the dominant feeling—say ‘anger’ in the above example; or, find an ‘umbrella’ word that embraces both—say ‘churned up’. This is done to avoid confusion for the counsellor if one of the words is inaccurate. If the client says, ‘*No, that’s not how I feel*’, the counsellor can not tell which word is wrong if two feeling words were presented. Using only one word will avoid ambiguity, and help to facilitate the exploratory process ‘a piece at a time’.

Carkhuff provides a useful strategy where, having identified two feelings, the responder asks: ‘How do I feel when I feel...and ...?’. He gives the following example:

A parent says: ‘I don’t want to fight with my kids all the time. I know I am responsible for giving them direction and helping them make wise decisions. But it’s such a battle sometimes, I feel like giving up.’

The feeling question then becomes:

*‘How do I feel when I feel **responsible and fed up?**’*

This question draws on the experience of the responder who may say: *‘You feel **discouraged**’* (Carkhuff 2000b, p. 68). Such a strategy is very useful for self-aware responders, but may present difficulty for those who cannot discriminate their own actual experience from the ‘as if’ experience of others.

Use a synonym if possible

Sometimes clients are able to describe their own feelings, and it could be tempting to respond with the same word. This would certainly be affirmed as accurate, but often the use of a synonym can enhance clarity. For example, if a client said that they felt ‘very sad indeed’, the response ‘You feel despondent’ may be preferred.

Qualify the feeling word when appropriate

There may be occasions when the words in the feeling word list on page 134 might be used more accurately by intensifying their energy with ‘qualifying’ words such as ‘very’, ‘severely’ and the like; or by moderating them with words such as ‘a little’ or ‘a hint of’.

Use a feeling phrase if appropriate

On occasions, a ‘feeling phrase’ may be preferred to a feeling word. This is particularly true if the phrase matches the day to day metaphors and idioms that are used in the community, or have relevance for individual clients. For example, mechanically-minded clients are just as likely to work with, ‘you’re firing on all cylinders’, as they are with ‘you feel energetic’. Many feeling phrases can be seen as clichés, which Egan asserts ‘are hollow’ and should be avoided (Egan 1998, p.96). We disagree with this perspective when an appropriate cliché fits snugly in a particular client’s vernacular. We agree with Egan if clichés are dropped in a platitudinous fashion, but believe that his blanket judgement warrants refinement to allow creative matching of words to client experience.

Feeling phrases will invariably be accepted as feelings by kinaesthetic processors (in the Neuro-Linguistic Programming sense), but auditory processors may discriminate them as action statements rather than emotive descriptors. It is useful to be aware of common feeling phrases, use them when appropriate, and indeed to create them if the muse strikes. Some common feeling phrases are:

all fired up	beside yourself	in a pickle	over the moon
all shaken up	bogged down	in a rut	ready to explode
at boiling pint	bowled over	lost in a haze	snowed under
at breaking point	bubbling over	off the planet	taken aback
at the end of your tether	down in the dumps	on cloud nine	treading water
at your wit’s end	flying high	out of control	wading through treacle
below par	full of beans	out on a limb	walking on eggshells

Use language that clients understand

The need to use understandable language, that was discussed in relation to level 2.0 responses, also applies to the choice of feeling words. For example, a lively six year old is unlikely to understand a feeling word such as: *‘You feel **euphoric**’*—unless, of course, the youngster is particularly precocious—in which case it is arguable that there is a better than ‘chance’ probability that the *aforesaid pre-adolescent may spontaneously express eloquent appreciation of the requisite pedantry to dispense such accurate, empathic*

and euphonious sensitivity. That rambling garbage should make the point clear that there's a fair chance that a smart kid might like it when someone notices how bubbly they are.

The skill is to ask the 'language check' question: '*Will this person understand the word I have chosen?*'. If there is any doubt, a simpler synonym should be used.

Avoid pseudo level 2.5 responses

Some learners fail to use a feeling word even when using the training format. They say things like: '*You feel **that** it is unfair to have to remember so many details.* When used in this way the word 'feel' actually means 'think' or 'believe'—which means that the responses only warrants a functional rating of 2.0. It is important to ensure that a feeling word or phrase follows the verb 'feel'.

Test the accuracy of the response

Clients will affirm an accurate response by word or gesture. Invariably, their facial expression will be energised—even if the feeling is negative. Inaccurate responses will either be negated or 'negotiated' (if near it—but not quite a bullseye). When either occurs, the counsellor should reword the response in line with the feedback.

The following exercise will provide an opportunity to practise responding to feelings.

Exercise 5: Responding to feelings

Write a feeling response to the following client statements. Try to use creative feeling words (or phrases). Qualify them if you wish. (The feeling word list starts on page 134).

1. A tense client says:

'Why are you looking at me like that? You think I'm crazy or something? You're the crazy one needing a job that feeds on other people's problems.'

My response:

You feel

2. A caring daughter says:

'My mother is such a difficult woman. She keeps having little strokes but she refuses to consider moving to a hostel. Instead she expects me to go around to her place daily—sometimes twice daily! She doesn't seem to consider that I have a life to live!'

My response:

You feel

3. An upset wife says:

'I made a real mistake getting married to Jim. He's self-centred, and abusive to me. He manages to put on a good show with others so they don't know what it's like for me, and anyway, I can't leave because he's always said he'll fight me for the kids if I do.'

My response:

You feel

4. A teenager says:

'Mum and dad are so old-fashioned. When I've been out they smell my clothes to see if I've been smoking. I get a lecture about 'being careful' before every social event. I mean, I'm an intelligent woman—nearly 20. When will they stop treating me like a child?'

My response:

You feel

5. A bride-to-be says:

'I'm getting married in two months time and my mother is so busy organising everything. It's my wedding but if I object to anything or disagree with her she gets huffy. It's as though I had no right to interfere, but I have, haven't I?'

My response:

You feel:

Possible responses to Exercise 5 appear on page 481.

Level 3.0: Responding to feeling and meaning

The purpose of level 3.0 responses

Level 3.0 responses are the most effective empathic responses for use in the first phase of counselling. This is because they respond simultaneously to both the emotional and intellectual components of a client's information. This makes it possible for counsellors to collaborate with such clients in a fully interchangeable way. Such responses give stimulus, and freedom, for clients to explore issues in their own way because they (the client) control the direction of the dialogue.

As exploration continues in a responsive climate, counsellors become progressively aware of client issues, and clients become progressively clearer about where they stand in relation to their particular issue. There are indicators to signal when it is appropriate for counsellors to stop responding at level 3.0, and move into the next phase. These indicators will be discussed in Chapter 13—Personalising skills.

Level 3.0 responses can be used effectively in non-counselling settings wherever one wants to communicate a full understanding of how another person feels, and why they feel as they do.

The skill steps for 'level 3.0' responses

In essence, a level 3.0 response is structured by adding a level 2.0 meaning to a level 2.5 feeling. The most effective linkage between the two elements is the word 'because' in the training format, below. Notice how any words that might follow the word 'because' provide an intellectual understanding of the reason for the feeling.

'You feel...(current feeling) because...(reason for the feeling).'

A number of factors need to be considered when constructing level 3.0 responses. Some aspect of the skills have already been considered independently in the previous sections on levels 2.0 and 2.5, but further examples will be given to show their application at level 3.0. Not all responses will necessarily incorporate all factors, but an awareness of them makes it easier to tailor appropriate responses for given situations. An asterisk in the list that follows indicates the factors covered in Carkhuff's current training

publications (Carkhuff 2000a, p. 55; 2000b, pp. 70–80). The remaining factors occurred to us through time. The factors need not be processed in the sequence listed below when developing a level 3.0 response.

The factors are:

1. *identify the current feeling—to optimise exploration;
2. *causally link feeling and meaning—to make the reason for the feeling overt;
3. *be succinct—to distil the essence of the meaning and communicate efficiently;
4. *be specific—to avoid meaningless generalisations, confusion and ambiguity;
5. be comprehensive—to incorporate all salient points (when desirable);
6. *be non-judgemental—to optimise freedom for exploration;
7. avoid pseudo level 3.0 responses—to maintain professional rigour;
8. *use language that clients understand and relate to—to enhance clarity;
9. *test the accuracy of the response—to ‘stay on track’.

So that structural differences can be considered, and qualitative comparisons made, a discussion of the above steps will be linked to a single statement by ‘Martha’, who says:

‘It really makes me angry when Ron’s mother keeps dropping in unannounced—as if she owns the place—and then picks on the way I do things. She came over again yesterday—she does it all the time! Her way is the only way as far as she is concerned—I can’t do a thing right whether it’s to do with kids, the way I clean, or get Ron’s tea—she goes on and on ‘til I could go nuts. When she’s gone I just scream—and then sometimes I sit and fume, and give Ron a ‘serve’ when he gets in from work—and then, often as not, we have a bit of a row. It makes me sick just thinking about it!’

Identify the current feeling

The importance of the responding with the present tense ‘you feel ...’, and the relative ineffectiveness of responding in the past tense was discussed in the previous section. It is therefore easy to identify lapses into the past tense, such as:

‘So Martha, you felt edgy because Ron’s mother dropped in again, yesterday, like she often does.’

However, it is equally easy to be misled, in some instance, if the link word ‘because’ is replaced by ‘when’. Egan suggests that ‘because’ and ‘when’ can be used synonymously as causal links (Egan 1998, p. 84), but in our view this seldom holds. ‘When’ is an adverb that relates to time. Its use introduces an historic dimension to a response—even when the response starts with the present tense: ‘You feel...’. For example:

‘Martha, you feel tense when your mother-in-law drops in without an invite.’

In our view, this response should be rated at 2.0—not 3.0, because it is a statement about a recurring event, and is tantamount to saying:

‘So you are saying that each time your mother-in-law drops in, without invitation, you get tense.’

The only way that we can see to legitimise the use of ‘when’ (grammatically) as a causal link in a level 3.0 response seems rather cumbersome, but, in the following example, it is clear that the ‘reflection’ is in the present—‘right now’:

‘So Martha, you feel edgy when you reflect, right now, on the way Ron’s mother drops in and gives you a hard time.’

This distinction is technically pedantic, and the use of ‘when’ is unlikely to matter in day-to-day discussion, but we believe that, as a principle, precise language gives a positive edge, professional rigour, and ultimate effectiveness to a response.

In Martha’s case, the evidence is clear—the very act of talking about it makes her ‘sick’. Her word could be used, but a suitable synonym, such as ‘nauseated’ may be preferred.

Causally link the feeling and meaning

The link word between the emotive and the intellectual components of a response is called a ‘causal link’ to explain the ‘reason for the feeling’. This is most clearly expressed in the training format: ‘*You feel ...because...*’. This ‘integrative’ function between the ‘head’ and the ‘heart’ provides a powerful tool to facilitate exploration.

Consider the impact of such responses on ‘fragmented’ clients who present with turbulent feelings and runaway thoughts. For them, each response brings incremental reintegration and diminished turbulence. Continued responding completes its task when ‘de-fragmentation’ has led to realistic clarity (for the client) of where they stand in relation to their previous confusion.

Consider the confrontive nature of such responses on those who tend to make ‘ill-informed’ decisions with their hearts alone, and on those who make ‘hard-hearted’ decisions based only on what is ‘reason-able’. Both sets of people have a ‘dormant’ side—either their head or heart ‘slumbers’. A causally linked response confronts that dormant side with information that can ‘awaken’ it to accept, or reject, the validity of the causal link to the already ‘awake’ side—be it either head or heart. Thus, each causally linked response offers an increment of wholeness as head and heart fraternise anew.

Make sure the causal link is logical

Imagine, that in a later discussion, Martha says, through tears, that marriage is very important to her, but that her marriage to Ron is on the verge of breaking down. Note the lack of logic when a response causally links a positive reason and a negative feeling:

‘You feel really sad because marriage is important to you.’

One is not sad about things that are important to them—one is sad when important things are threatened in some way. For the causal link to be logical it should say:

‘You feel sad because the marriage that you committed to for life seems to be on the threshold of collapsing.’

Avoid qualifying a feeling with a feeling

The benefit of linking the emotive and cognitive components is lost if the reason given for the feeling is another feeling, yet it is a frequently made mistake. An example is:

So, Martha, you feel anxious because she frightens you in some way.’

Such responses should be rated at level 2.5. It is a clumsy response to two feelings.

We encourage mastery of the ‘*You feel ...because...(reason for the feeling)*’ training format, in the first instance (even though some see it as ‘rigid’ and ‘mechanistic’) because it ‘hammers home’ the need for causality between the elements. Once mastery of the training format is achieved (or as circumstances warrant) other linking options can be considered. The first of these is to reverse the order—paraphrase what was said and then identify how that makes the person feel. For example:

*‘So, Martha, Rob’s mother frequently drops in unannounced and then criticises you—almost non-stop **and that makes you feel** really churned up.’*

Some trainees who are ‘all head’ have great difficulty in identifying feelings, and suffer performance pressure when required to use the standard training format. We have found that by using the ‘reverse’ format, some are able to paraphrase the reason well, and then become less fearful of being coached to identify the feeling.

The ‘then and now’ sequencing of event and feeling offers a simple causal link, but, as in this case, it often leads to internalising.

‘So, Martha, you gave Ron a hard time in the wake of his mum’s criticism, and now you feel regretful.’

There are occasions during counselling sessions when some gesture or inflection of voice might hint at a meaning that is not obvious in the words used. In such cases the counsellor may experience authentic tentativeness that is wise to express in the response by using the ‘as if’ link. For example, in an actual setting a response could be:

Martha, it may not fit, but as you spoke, I fancy I saw a flicker of despondency, as if these arguments with Ron are somehow inevitable—beyond your control.’

The word ‘when’ is popularly used as a causal link. The limitations, discussed in the previous section, should be taken into account when used in a professional setting.

There are likely to be more creative ways to rephrase the standard training format than we have described here, but we want to say that we almost always use the standard format during the exploratory phase of counselling. We are aware that trainee counsellors seek alternative ways to respond out of fear that clients will notice a single repetitious format, and be critical of them. Our experience does not confirm such fear if the responses fully capture the essence of who clients experience themselves be.

Be succinct

Succinct responses are brief and to the point—precised. As a rule of thumb we have (historically) suggested that, to be succinct, the cognitive component (what follows ‘because’) should be about ten to fifteen words long. However, after hearing a trainee coach criticise a 17 word response, we now suggest that succinctness is best assessed by ensuring that redundancies are avoided, and that **every word counts**. For example, there are no superfluous words in the following response:

‘So you feel sickened because these frequent criticisms are unwelcome—unwarranted—and unhelpful.’

Wordy responses are mostly a consequence of undisciplined work, where trainees talk as they think instead of refining their response during ‘think time.’ Poor Martha has enough to contend with—without unbridled verbiage such as:

‘Well, no doubt you feel sickened by your mother-in-law and the way she just comes and goes as she pleases without respecting that your home is your castle so to speak—and then apparently she thinks that there’s only one way to kill a cat—and that’s her way—and because she tackles you for not bringing up your kids the old way, or keeping the house looking immaculate, you bottle it all up—along with the digs about your cooking—till she’s gone and then, if you haven’t simmered down, you take it out on poor old Ron when he gets in from work.’

It is likely that Martha would reply: *‘I just told you that!’* Parroted responses are experienced as ‘waffly’, ‘boring’, or a ‘turn off’. They are barely tolerated. We frequently hear trainees say, *‘You lost me there’*, as a rejoinder to a long-winded response. They are to be avoided.

Don’t bother to count words. Just ensure that every word counts—that’s what counts!

Be specific

The previous example of a succinct response can be enhanced by ensuring that important elements are **specified** rather than inferred.

'So, Martha, you feel sickened because these frequent criticisms are unwelcome—unwarranted—and unhelpful—especially when they knock your skills as a mother, domestic manager, and wife.'

The primary function of specificity is to avoid generalisation. Note how the following generalised response could apply to Martha—and most other people at different times:

'You feel a bit bothered because your situation gets pretty stirred up from time to time.'

Generalised responses of this kind fail to specify tangible, relevant thoughts or ideas that clients can test for 'fit' against their experience, or reflect upon to see some personal implication in a new way. Generalised responses retard exploration, and contribute to what has been called the unhelpful 'level 3.0 circle' (Carkhuff 2000b, p. 56). This notion will be discussed in greater detail in the next chapter. For now, consider how the following sequence 'goes round in circles'—back to going nowhere.

'Martha, you must be feeling pretty lousy because there's a hell of a lot going on for you, right now.'

This general response is likely to evoke a reaction in Martha that elicits a rephrasing of her earlier statement. It could sound like:

'A lot going on! That's the understatement of the year! Like I told you, she's always trotting over here and criticising me—till smoke comes out my ears!'

A subsequent generalised response from the counsellor will increase the likelihood of 'going around in circles'. For example:

'So, you feel steamed up because her behaviour really gets to you.'

It is not hard to imagine how further bland responses from the counsellor could stop any client exploration and stimulate a reaction—a bit like this:

'Well don't you think it would get to you too! I'm no saint, you know!'

Simply put, bland, non-specific, responses (however succinct or non-judgemental) tend to result in limited exploration, and a tendency for clients to be repetitive, if not reactive.

Be comprehensive (when desirable)

A response is considered to be comprehensive if as many salient points as possible can be distilled in a specific and succinct way that is 'comprehensible'—that is intelligible, but not overloading. This requires some judgement of a client's capacity to manage the volume and complexity of a response, so that an appropriate balance on a 'segmental—comprehensive continuum' is struck (see page 197). For example, by expanding the number of ideas in response 1, the counsellor presents a client with more 'trigger' words—any of which may stimulate exploration in a related area.

Response 1. *'So, Martha, you feel sickened because these frequent criticisms are unwelcome—unwarranted—and unhelpful—especially when they knock your skills as a mother, domestic manager, and wife.'*

Response 2. *'So you feel sickened because these frequent lectures are unwelcome—unwarranted—and unhelpful—they not only knock the way you manage the children and your domestics, but the aftermath of these criticisms ignites and fuels your fiery arguments with Ron.'*

Judgements about where to pitch responses on the ‘segmental—comprehensive’ continuum, differ from client to client. It is important for coaches not to push for comprehensive responses until trainees are reasonably competent in producing segmental responses that are accurate, succinct and specific, such as:

‘Martha, you feel critical because Ron’s mother assumes the right to visit whenever she chooses.’ or;

‘Martha, you feel regretful because Ron often cops some of the flack that his mum stirs up in you.’. or;

‘Martha, you feel offended because your mother-in-law’s constant criticisms have no foundation as far as you are concerned.’

Segmental responses, with fewer trigger words, are likely to facilitate exploration that is ‘sequential’. For example, Martha’s rejoinder to the last of the segmental examples, immediately above, could be:

‘You’re dead right—her criticisms are not justified—who does she think she is. Mind you, if I’m really honest with myself, she’s got a point with my Christmas cake—hers are much better. Why the hell can’t she just do it nicely!’

This new statement provides new material to which a further response can be made:

‘Martha you seem a bit peeved, because, with the right approach, she could give you some handy tips—at least in the Christmas cake department.’

Comprehensive responses invariably contain more trigger words than segmental responses. Clients who like ‘big pictures’ might springboard from any of these triggers to explore what might seem to be quite oblique—even though it makes sense to the client. For example, it is quite feasible that Martha (in big picture mode) could follow up response 2, above, with a rejoinder as obtuse as:

‘You’re dead right about the fiery arguments—I really blow my stack when some bugger criticises me. I’ve always been the same—God knows how many times I got kept in at school for fighting with kids that picked on me. It was the same at home—I’d blow up every time my dad blamed me for stuff my sisters did—and that was pretty often. It makes me smoulder just thinking about it.’

The ‘segmental—comprehensiveness’ continuum has more place in the training room than in the counselling room. It is important in the training room to progress through different degrees of complexity, so that, in the counselling room, the counsellor’s skills repertoire is able meet the client’s need in the richest possible way.

Be non-judgemental

Avoid judgement by withholding introjections

One aspect of an interchangeable response is that nothing is added to the clients content. Counsellors do not introduce their opinions, perspectives, or judgements into a response—however well intended or subtly put; however morally or legally right such inclusions might appear to be. Judgements can still be communicated even in a response that has an externalised cause. For example:

‘Martha, you feel a little intimidated because your mother-in-law’s standards are much higher than yours are ever likely to be.’

Avoid judgement by externalising

The notion of ‘externalising’ a level 2.0 response, described on page 198, related to the avoidance of ‘blame’ for an **‘outcome’**. The distinction to be made, here, is that an externalised level 3.0 response avoids blame for causing one’s **feelings**. This is

important in the counselling setting, where many of the clients feeling's are negative. Failure to externalise the reason for the feeling (by using the internal 'you') means that any negative feeling is caused by some personal inadequacy, or ineptitude, for which the client is judged to be responsible. The example blames Martha's ineptitude as a manager:

*'You feel inadequate because **you** have trouble managing your mother-in-law.'*

Such judgements may cause some clients to become defensive, or even reactive ('*nobody could manage her*'). This distracts clients from personal exploration. Any sense of potential guilt or defensiveness related to such a deficiency is easily diminished by 'externalising' the reason for the feeling. For example:

'You feel inadequate because your interfering mother-in-law is really very difficult to manage'.

Skill steps

The first step in externalising the reason for the feeling is to answer the think question: '*What specific other person, thing, event, or client attribute causes the feeling?*'. In this case the specific cause was 'your mother-in-law'.

The second step is to select an adjective to qualify the specific cause. In this case the qualified, specific cause was 'interfering mother-in-law'.

The third step is to finish the sentence by saying something about the cause that makes the reason for the feeling clear. The reason in this case was because 'your interfering mothers in law is really very difficult to manage'.

When externalising does not apply

In early practice sessions, we tend to apply a 'no "you" after "because" rule' so that trainees become skilled in externalising. When mastery is achieved the rule is relaxed to accommodate two exceptions: (1) when the feeling is positive; and (2) when the reason is 'pseudo-internalised'.

Affirming positive feelings

There is value in internalising level 3.0 responses where the feeling is positive. Using the word 'you' to follow 'because' will acknowledge and affirm client competence, effort, or progress. For example, the following response might apply as Martha gains insight during her ongoing exploration:

Martha, you feel more confident, because you can now see a constructive way of managing your reactions effectively.'

Recognising pseudo-internalising

Some trainee coaches assume that the word 'you' should never be used in a response to a negative feeling, and tend to give inappropriate feedback to counsellors (about not internalising) who may have said 'you' following the causal link 'when'. They miss the point that some verbs can follow 'you' and point to an external reason for the feeling. For example, note how the verb 'reflect' points to the external qualities of Martha's mother-in-law.

*'Martha you feel angry when **you** reflect on your mother-in-law's intrusiveness and criticisms.'*

The same rule holds for 'you think about', 'you consider that', 'you recognise how', 'you realise that', and similar leads. On recognising such pseudo-internalising, budding coaches might give feedback about the minor redundancy of the words 'when you

reflect on'; could recall the 'tense' issue with the historical 'when' (see page 211), and discuss the possibility of rephrasing the response to be:

'Martha you feel angry because your mother-in-law is intrusive and critical.'

Avoid pseudo level 3.0 responses

In our view, responses that substitute the word 'because' with prepositions are merely pseudo level 3.0 responses because they fail to provide a **reason** for the feeling—they simply describe people, things, events, or client attributes that **relate** to the feeling. Prepositions most often used are 'about', 'by', 'for', 'of', (frequently 'because of') 'over', 'regarding', and 'with'. Such responses lack the potency of level 3.0 responses, but some triggers to exploration can be achieved by increasing the degree of specificity that follows the preposition. Consider the differences between the following seven responses (spread down the page) to Martha's earlier statement:

- (1) *'Martha, you feel churned up by these circumstance'.*
- (2) *'Martha, you feel churned up because of your situation'.*
- (3) *'Martha, you feel churned up about all that'.*

Note that these first three responses are so generalised that they add virtually nothing to the effectiveness of a level 2.5 response. Some trainees erroneously believe that by including the word 'because' gives a reason for the feeling, but reflection will show that response 2 (above) simply alludes to what the feeling is **about**. For an number of years we rated such responses at 2.5, but for training purposes, we suggest that different ratings could apply to classify such pseudo responses. A rating of 2.6 G seems suitable for generalised responses like the three above. The 2.6 says that it is a 2.5 'tailed' with words that fail to give a reason for the feeling, and the G indicates that those words are generalised, or non-specific. The rating is not intended to infer that 2.6 is intrinsically more effective than 2.5 in terms of facilitating exploration.

The quality of 2.6 G responses can be enhanced by making the tail more specific. For example:

- (4) *'Martha, you feel churned up by her visits.'*
- (5) *'Martha, you feel churned up because of her visits and criticism.'*
- (6) *'Martha, you feel churned up about her visits and criticism, and your tiffs with Ron.'*

The skill step to identify specific nouns is to ask oneself: *'What other person, thing, event, or client attribute relates to the feeling?'* Multiple nouns can be identified and listed to add to the comprehensiveness of the response. Note that the preposition in response 4 relates to one noun; response 5 relates to two; and response 6 to three nouns. The responses progress along the segmental-comprehensive continuum.

Responses 4–6 are more specific than the previous three, and communicate an understanding of how they relate to the feeling—but they still fail to provide a reason for it. Because they retain the 2.6 quality, and also add specificity, we suggest that a rating of 2.6 S could apply—at least for training purposes. Such responses will make conversations more meaningful than the 2.6 G, but have limited additional impact on the quality of exploration.

The quality of 2.6 S responses can be enhanced by qualifying the nouns with descriptive adjectives. For example:

- (7) *'Martha, you feel churned up about Ron's mother's **unwelcome** visits, her **unwarranted** criticism, and your own **ill-founded** tiffs with Ron.'*

The skill step to qualify a noun, is to ask oneself: *'How does the client view the specific noun?'*. With some reflection on the 'visits' we recognise that Martha sees them as 'unwelcome'. Similarly, she is likely to see the 'criticism' as 'unwarranted', and the 'tiffs' with Ron as 'ill-founded'. By qualifying the nouns in this way, response 6 is expanded to become response 7. However, since none of the added words provide an overt reason for the feeling, the 2.6 status continues to apply, and a rating of 2.6 Q could be used to indicate the increased specificity over a 2.6 S—at least for training purposes.

Responses with (2.6 G, S and Q) structures are frequently used in daily conversation, but generally speaking, should be avoided in favour of robust level 3.0 responses in a counselling setting. The reason for such avoidance can be seen from the examples—the 2.6 responses listed the things that churn Martha up, but failed specify for **how** they churn her up—they fail to spell out what the visits, criticisms and tiffs actually **do**.

Use language that clients understand

The discussion on pages 201 and 208 adequately covers this factor.

Test the accuracy of the response

The discussion on pages 202 and 209 adequately covers this aspect.

The following exercise will provide an opportunity to practice responding at level 3.0. If you wish to review the skill steps before starting, their description begins on page 210.

Exercise 6: Responding to feeling and meaning

Write a level 3.0 response to each of the following client statements. Use the training format, and be as succinct, specific and comprehensive as you can. Externalise the reason for the feeling, which should be in the present tense.

The first five are the same statements as those in Exercise 5 on page 209. You may wish to bring your feeling words forward, or use others:

1. A tense client says:

'Why are you looking at me like that? You think I'm crazy or something? You're the crazy one needing a job that feeds on other people's problems.'

My response:

2. A caring daughter says:

'My mother is such a difficult woman. She keeps having little strokes but she refuses to consider moving to a hostel. Instead she expects me to go around to her place daily—sometimes twice daily! She doesn't seem to consider that I have a life to live.'

My response:

3. An upset wife says:

'I made a real mistake getting married to Jim. He's self-centred and abusive to me. He manages to put on a good show with others so they don't know what it's like for me, and anyway, I can't leave because he's always said he'll fight me for the kids if I do.'

My response:

4. A teenager says:

'Mum and dad are so old-fashioned. When I've been out they smell my clothes to see if I've been smoking. I get a lecture about 'being careful' before every social event. I mean, I'm an intelligent woman—nearly 20. When will they stop treating me like a child?'

My response:

5. A bride-to-be says:

'I'm getting married in two months time and my mother is so busy organising everything. It's my wedding but if I object to anything or disagree with her she gets huffy. It's as though I had no right to interfere, but I have, haven't I?'

My response:

6. A mother talks to a friend:

'The school rang the other day to tell me that Michael was bullying other kids, and they want me to go to talk with them about a behaviour management program. It's ridiculous. Michael is a lovely boy—not aggressive at all. I should know I'm his mother!'

My response:

7. A husband confides in his priest:

'My wife suddenly announced last night that she is a lesbian! It seems she has been having a relationship with another woman for a couple of years now. I can't believe she has been pretending and lying all this time. Why didn't I wake up to it all before this? I never had a clue! I just can't believe it.'

My response:

8. A woman talks to a friend:

'I'm beginning to feel more and more in a rut. John and I talk about the same things—we do the same thing, week in and week out. He seems happy with that, but I see my life slipping away. When I was younger I had such dreams, and I thought he shared them. But I now think he just went along with me until we established our cosy domesticity. God, I don't know what to do. He's a nice guy but... .'

My response:**9. A husband tells a workmate:**

'My wife has just gone back to work, and although the extra money's good, things are just chaotic at home. The washing is never done, meals are not ready and the kids have to look after themselves for two hours after school each day. When I point this out she gets angry and starts crying. I just don't know how to get through to her that the extra money might not be worth the hassle.'

My response:**10. A mother talks to her doctor:**

'I know this might seem a bit vain but I have been thinking recently about having some plastic surgery. I don't feel old yet, but my face is showing more and more signs of wear. I hate the thought of surgery really, but my husband has begun to be a bit sarcastic about my looks, and I'm frightened that he may start looking for a new 'model' soon.'

My response:

Possible responses to Exercise 6 appear on page 482.

Practicing responding

The general approach to practicing responding skills follows the outline given under 'Practicing attending' on page 120. The set-up of the room is identical to that shown in Figure 15, on page 122.

Preparatory steps

Before practice commences, the tutor will review the material presented in an earlier presentation. This should lead to an outline of the helping process to provides the context for the practice rounds (see Figure 4 on page 24), and a listing of the skill steps, and response attributes that need to be incorporated as practice proceeds. The list should be developed by group members. Some may still lack confidence in their mastery

of their skills of attending, observing and listening, and want to list areas in which they want coaching support and feedback.

The list is not likely to be as extensive as it logically could be, but could include any of the following:

- sit facing the client;
- lean in towards the client—between 30–45 degrees;
- adjust distance—eyeball to eyeball—to approximately 1 metre;
- keep consistent eye contact that ‘washes’ the client’s face and shoulders;
- eliminate distracting behaviours;
- suspend own judgements, values and preconceived ideas;
- resist distractions—both internal and external;
- check congruity of energy and emotion with client—psychological attending;
- observe client context, appearance, and voluntary and involuntary behaviours;
- listen for paralinguistics as well as words;
- reflect on client content;
- use the training format being practiced;
- use one feeling word (or feeling phrase) only;
- make sure the feeling is in the present tense;
- make sure the causal link is logical;
- make sure the reason for the feeling is succinct (paraphrased—not parroted);
- make sure the reason for the feeling is specific (not vague);
- make sure the reason for the feeling is externalised (if feeling negative);
- balance response comprehensiveness with client comprehension;
- take as much think time as is needed to construct the best possible response;
- rehearse the response (in head) before delivering it;
- make sure it is language the client will understand;
- deliver the response with sensitivity and caring;
- watch client’s face for energy shift, as well as listening, to check accuracy;
- get feedback from client, observers and coach;
- incorporate feedback in subsequent attempts.

A typical practice round

Even an abridged list of response attributes can be overwhelming for some trainees. To avoid what can be crippling ‘performance pressures’ for them, coaches need to identify a performance base line, for each group member, that can be extended in manageable increments. An effective way to assess this is to note what trainees can, and cannot, do when given time to construct a written response to a single statement, so that individualised practice goals can be comfortably set when trainees ‘perform live’.

Written exercises to verbal statements

In the written exercise, a volunteer acts as client, and shares a personally relevant statement (of say 15–20 seconds duration) with the group. All group members will attend, observe, and listen to the statement before writing a response at level 3.0, and include as many of the attributes listed on page 221 as they are able. They are given as much time as deemed necessary to complete the response—including time to edit their first effort if they so choose. Each trainee is then invited to read their response to the client. Until all responses have been read, the client will restrict feedback about their accuracy to a ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘kind of’. Observers will watch the client to practise recognising the different non-verbal clues that accompany their verbal feedback.

When all responses have been presented, the client is invited to comment on the impact of different responses. The group is asked to identify what attributes were present or absent in the different responses, and discuss their relevance. The coach should see that the discussion is focussed on the responses—not the client’s statement. The coach will note the level of response chosen by individuals, and their level of competence, as way of gauging how to tailor future practice for each person. The coach will negotiate how many rounds of written responses are completed before moving on to verbal responses.

Verbal responses

Early verbal practice rounds are restricted to producing a limited number of responses, mostly between one and three. Trainees all take turns in the counsellor, client, and observer roles. They are rotated so that the client moves to the less demanding position of observer, to ‘rest’ (after what may have been an emotional exploratory session). In each round, the client shares a personally relevant statement, the counsellor processes the information, constructs, rehearses, and delivers a response. The client will give feedback on the accuracy (either verbally or non-verbally), and, if inclined, may continue to share additional information. If so, the counsellor responds to the additional information. If the client continues, a third response may be made. The coach is likely to ‘cut’ the dialogue at any stage if the counsellor repeats a mistake. It is deemed wiser to get corrective feedback than to continue making the same mistake.

The observers monitor the interaction, and particularly note the counsellor’s responses on an ‘Observer sheet’ which is configured as shown in Figure 21 on the next page but printed in landscape orientation for practice sessions.

The Observer sheet

Figure 21 provides an example of how observers record counsellor responses with a view to providing feedback at the end of a round. These are the things noted.

1. John is the trainee in the counsellor role.
2. The stick figure indicates that John’s attending posture is OK, his lean forward is well supported with a nice line from shoulder to knee to floor—but note (3).
3. The ‘up’ arrow indicates that John breaks eye contact with the client, and looks upwards during think time. This suggests that John processes information visually. (The observation may corroborate the client’s feedback that ‘John looked away, and sort of left me from time to time’.)
4. The ‘12’ in the ‘Think’ column shows that John took 12 seconds of ‘think time’ (from the time the client stopped talking to the time he delivered his response). This suggests that John was not formulating his response as he listened. Good old John!


OBSERVER SHEET						
Helper	Attend	Think	You feel	because	Rating	Explore
<i>John</i>		12	<i>distressed</i>	<i>b/c your mother's health is deteriorating rapidly.</i>	3.0	
		2	<i>anxious</i>	<i>you can't face the prospect of having to care for your mother as well as holding down a top job.</i>	3.0 2.0	
		0		<i>So why don't you try and get more help from the domiciliary service?</i>	1.5	

Figure 21. Showing the configuration of the Observer sheet and examples of its use.

5. The word 'distressed' in the 'You feel' column is the feeling word John chose for his first response.
6. The text in the 'because' column records the reason John gave for the distress.
7. The observer will have written the '3.0' in the rating column immediately after John finished his first response. The fact that the rating was not amended in any way indicates that the client affirmed John's response as accurate.
8. The second response was recorded in the appropriate columns. But note (9).
9. The observer circled the word 'you' because John internalised the reason for the feeling. Furthermore:
10. The observer initially rated the second response at level 3.0 (even though it was internalised) The crossed out 3.0 shows that the client did not accept the accuracy of the response. The 'F' indicates that the feeling, 'anxious' was inaccurate. The '2.0' indicates that the reason for the feeling was accepted. (Had the reason also been rejected, the observer would record 'F & M', and the rating would be 1.0).
11. The observer failed to record the feeling that the client gave when negotiating the inaccurate 'anxious' (say 'stressed'). In such instance, the coach should remind the group that it is helpful to record any client negotiations so that subsequent feedback to the counsellor can be more specific.
12. The observer noted that the 'think time' for the second response was only 2 seconds. The observer's feedback might suggest a link between limited think time and the inaccuracy of the response—a common problem.
13. No think time was given to the third response. It was rated at 1.5. Apparently John had difficulty in maintaining an empathic mind-set. His response suggests that he is a 'fix-it' man.
14. The 'Explore' column is left vacant because the group has not yet learned how to rate client exploration.

John's average skill level is $(3.0 + 2.0 + 1.5)$ divided by $3 = 2.16$. He needs a lot more practice to achieve an average of 2.8 over ten consecutive responses. This is the level of effectiveness required to proceed in our regular courses.

The 'round-robin'

After each trainee has demonstrated reasonable competence in an early round, the coach will structure a 'round-robin' so that trainees can experience how an extended series of responses will lead to continued exploration—without any individual having to sequence the series on their own. To do this the trainer/coach usually becomes the client. Trainees sit in a semicircle around the client so that each can attend equally well to the client. The trainer outlines the process:

1. The trainer, as client, will indicate that s/he will discuss an unresolved personal issue. S/he stresses the importance, and benefits, of discussing an unresolved issue. The importance is that discussing resolved issues is tantamount to a non-authentic 'role play' where emotions are unreal, and exploration is feigned. The benefits are that there is potential help towards a solution.
2. The trainer, as client, will face trainee 1, introduce the issue, and stop talking at a natural pause.
3. Trainee one will respond at level 3.0 to the client statement.
4. The client will turn to trainee two, and affirm (or negotiate) trainee one's response, and continues talking to trainee two until a natural pause occurs.
5. Trainee two responds at level 3.0 to what the client says next.
6. This pattern will continue until all trainees have responded to the client.
7. If exploration is continuing the client may start the round again with trainee one.
8. During the round, all trainees will record the process on observer sheets, apart from the time when it is their turn to respond to the client.
9. The trainer, as both client and trainer, will call a halt at a suitable time, and the group will discuss the process.

Trainers 'put themselves on the line' in this exercise. They model authenticity. They show that 'together' people have a 'growing edge' that, until 'grown', is characterised by a degree of disarray (the precursor to all learning). They do what they invite their learners to do—be real!

Working in triads

Once trainees have experienced the ongoing interaction between client statements and counsellor responses, trainees move to work in triads where, by rotating roles, each has: (1) greater opportunity to practice the skills as counsellor; (2) greater privacy and freedom to discuss personal issues as client; and (3) greater responsibility to provide effective feedback as observer. We have found that it is beneficial to structure triads where all three trainees have similar proficiency. In this way the 'high flyers' will learn without frequent requests for trainer coaching, and the 'needier' trainees can work together on the same issues with more intense coaching from the trainer. We have found that in mixed triads, a much less competent member not only retards the learning of the other two, but tends to give up because they see themselves as 'way below par'. As training proceeds, trainees are invited to self-select triad membership in order to expand their range of experiences.

During this phase of practice trainees also come to experience what it is like to be a client. They learn what it like to be internally ‘busy’ during the exploratory process. They may learn how easy it is to be flooded with turbulent thoughts, and wonder what to say next, and how best to express themselves. They learn that clients need think time, too, to reflect on a counsellor’s response and assess its implications. They learn, experientially, that ill-timed and long-winded responses can interrupt client processing and hinder exploration, and that well-timed, succinct responses facilitate exploration. This learning helps shape their behaviour when in the counselling role, and gives them insights to refine the feedback that they give in the observer role.

As proficiency is developed, trainees may want to experiment with alternatives to what they may see as a mechanistic or restrictive training format. Many, however are surprised that clients are generally much more interested in the quality of what goes in the ‘blanks’ than in noticing repetitious formats.

As practice proceeds, the aim is to produce well constructed, accurate responses that are delivered with the appropriate sensitivity, energy, and timing, to optimise the opportunity for clients to control the flow, and seek clarity about where they really stand in relation to the issue being explored. Some students like to see the artistry of the process reflected in the analogy of pushing a child on a swing. The child feels the freedom of the swing when the push is well timed, right at that point where the oscillation stops for a moment. It requires the right amount of ‘push’ to maintain the flow—too little will diminish the joy of flying—too much will jerk the swing, break the rhythm, and perhaps elicit some fear. Pushing against the flow of the swing upsets the synchrony, and limits the experience. Skill and artistry must blend for optimal benefit.

Checking communication and discrimination skills

At the start of this chapter it was suggested that you complete the first round of the Communication and Discrimination exercises on page 469. If you feel confident that you have a degree of mastery of the content of this chapter, you could re-do the original exercise beginning on page 474. If you wish to remind yourself of the instructions for these exercises, please turn to page 469 for the communications brief, and page 471 for the discrimination brief. The means of checking your learning gains is detailed at the end of the post-test on page 476.

Once you have determined your pre and post scores you may be interested to see how you fared in relation to the scores of the first 380 educators that we trained in the early 1980’s (Kranz 1986). Their ‘pre’ and ‘post’ communication and discrimination scores are represented graphically, in Figures 55 and 56 on page 477. They were rated according to the Carkhuff scale.

Summary

What responding is

Responding is the skill of communicating accurate understanding of what has been said to the person who said it. Responding can be oral, behavioural or in written form.

What responding does

Effective responding performs the following operational tasks:

- focuses on immediate information;

- communicates one's understanding of that information;
- uses feedback to check accuracy of the understanding;
- amends inaccuracies before considering new information.

In effecting the above operational tasks, responses perform the functions to:

- communicate accurate understanding of what others are saying or asking and/or what they are experiencing or may experience (as if);
- clarify uncertainties and avoid confusion;
- encourage, motivate, and facilitate freedom to explore issues;
- lead to an understanding and acceptance of current reality;
- provide the means to 'walk in another's shoes'
- communicate care and interest;
- generate trust and openness;
- earn credibility;
- avoid blame or accusation;
- expand awareness;
- generate the information necessary to work out what needs to happen;
- put one in touch with one's real self.

Why responding is important

Responding is important because, if one responds accurately to another, or oneself, then awareness is expanded and understanding is confirmed, so that whatever follows can be built upon what is substantial and real for the other, or oneself.

When responding is used

Responding is used whenever one wants or needs to:

- check understanding;
- help oneself or others to reduce uncertainty;
- deal constructively with reactivity.

How to respond

The skill steps for responding to meaning (at level 2) are:

- be succinct—*précis* rather than 'parrot';
- be specific—to avoid meaningless generalisations, confusion, or ambiguity;
- be comprehensive—to incorporate all salient points (if desirable);
- be non-judgemental—to avoid wrong interpretations and false conclusions;
- use appropriate lead-ins—to assist conversational flow;
- clarify uncertainty—to avoid misunderstanding;
- order jumble—to add clarity;
- use language that clients understand—to enhance clarity;

- test the accuracy of the response—to ‘stay on track’.

The skill steps for responding to feelings (at level 2.5) are:

- identify current feeling;
- ask the feeling question, when appropriate;
- use one feeling word (or feeling phrase) only;
- use a synonym rather than repeat the client’s word (if able);
- avoid pseudo 2.5 responses.

The skill steps for responding to feeling and meaning (at level 3.0) are:

- identify the current feeling—to optimise exploration;
- causally (and logically) link feeling and meaning—to make the reason for the feeling overt;
- be succinct—to distil the essence of the meaning and communicate efficiently;
- be specific—to avoid meaningless generalisations, confusion and ambiguity;
- be comprehensive—to incorporate all salient points (when desirable);
- be non-judgemental—externalise to optimise freedom for exploration;
- avoid pseudo level 3.0 responses—to maintain professional rigour;
- use language that clients understand and relate to—to enhance clarity;
- test the accuracy of the response—to ‘stay on track’ and reword to incorporate feedback if inaccurate.

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My learning about responding

Write in your own words

What responding is:

What responding does:

Why responding is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own responding skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my responding:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Advanced responding skills

Preamble

The previous chapter focussed on the skills of responding as they are variously described in current training literature—with some embellishments and additional comments of our own. The skills described have served us well in our consulting, training and counselling endeavours. Over time we have broadened our perspectives, gained insights, honed our skills, and added progressive rigour to our training programs, but, until now, have not made time to document what we have learned in other than upgraded training notes for our range of courses.

This chapter will discuss an expanded understanding of what the ‘reason for the feeling’ really means, and how this shift in perspective gave rise to the construction of more dynamic responses that add greater intimacy of empathic connection with clients. We have dubbed such responses ‘intimate’ responses. They seem more able to facilitate exploration than the best of those currently described, or exemplified, in contemporary skills training literature. We have field tested these skills, and found them to be totally ‘roadworthy’. The skill steps for constructing intimate responses will be fully detailed, and practice procedures outlined.

For convenience, we refer to the range of responses discussed in the previous chapter as ‘Mark I’ responses, and intimate responses as ‘Mark II’ responses. We see Mark II as an additional tool in the responding toolkit, not as a replacement for Mark I. Nevertheless, there is a uniformity in Mark II responses that contrasts with an ‘elasticity’ in Mark I, and there are discernible differences between responses that would all rate at level 3.0 on the current Carkhuff scale. We see this elasticity as undesirable, for training purposes, because it gives licence for trainees with marginal skills to achieve identical ratings as trainees who are able to produce more effective responses. To resolve this anomaly we argue a case for a revision of the current Carkhuff scale (at least during professional training) where Mark II responses reset the benchmark for level 3.0.

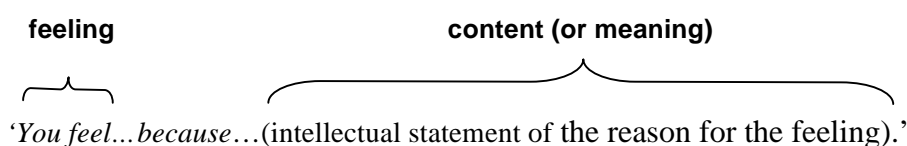
We recognise the value of the Carkhuff scale, and recommend its use in areas other than professional counselling training. We recognise that much of this chapter may seem pedantic and unnecessary for readers wanting to acquire skills for general use or in other areas that may have a counselling component. Individual readers and trainers should choose the level of sophistication that matches their task or, in the case of professional counsellors, that which is on the growing edge of their current competence.

The structure of advanced responses

Reflection on what causes feelings

An appreciation of the structural differences between Mark I and Mark II responses comes from an understanding of what actually causes feelings. We start there.

Ever since Carkhuff paved the way for systematic skills training with the first edition of ‘The Art of Helping’ in 1972, there has been a general acceptance of the apparent truism that, ‘every feeling...is prompted by some specific cause’, and that [in the case of a level 3.0 responses] ‘the content provides the reason for the feeling’ (Carkhuff 2000, p. 118). This is how the apparent truism is frequently represented:



We use the word ‘apparent’ deliberately because, while we acknowledge that every feeling is prompted by some specific cause, we do not accept that the content provides the reason for the feeling in all cases. As it stands, we accept the truism when the reason for the feeling is internalised—when the feeling is induced by one’s own thoughts or actions. However, to establish the ‘real’ cause of the feeling of an externalised response, consideration must be given to other perspectives.

The Stoic philosopher Epictetus, of the first century AD, is credited with the quotation that ‘people are disturbed not by things, but by their view of things’ (Dryden & Ellis 1988, p. 214). This perspective influenced the formulation of the basic hypothesis of Rational-Emotional Therapy (RET), which is that our emotions stem mainly from our beliefs, evaluations, interpretations, and reactions to life situations’ (Corey 1991, p.327).

When we combine the above perspectives with our counselling observations and our own internal experience, we conclude that no external agent can actually cause a feeling—it can only trigger an internal reaction to which one ascribes a personal ‘meaning’ that actually causes the feeling. In other words, it is the **impact** of the external agent on the person concerned that determines what emotion is experienced.

It does not matter ‘two hoots’ to clients what causes feelings. They will continue to experience the effectiveness of well-structured Mark I responses because they recognise the relationship between the feeling and the reason given—even though they may not, technically, be ‘causal’. What really matters to us (and ultimately to counsellors) is that an analysis of the rapid sequence of events that **actually** cause the feeling helps us identify the nature, and function, of each event, and this, in turn, makes it easier to ‘manipulate’ the elements that will enhance the intimacy—and consequent potency—of responses.

The sequence of events linking an external agent with an internal feeling is:

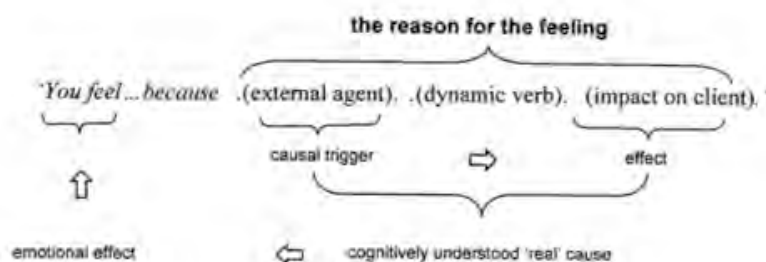
1. an external agent ‘triggers’ an internal reaction in the client;
2. the client ascribes ‘meaning’ to the internal reaction;
3. the ascribed meaning determines the impact on the client;
4. the nature of the impact causes a related emotional feeling.

The training format for Mark II responses

Reflection on the sequence of events that leads to feelings suggests that the following elements need to be made overt in the training format for level 3.0 Mark II responses:

1. the client's current feeling;
2. the external trigger;
3. the impact on the client—pointed to by an active verb.

Mark II responses build in a 'cause' and an 'effect' within the cognitively expressed reason for the feeling. The earlier general claim that the content provides the reason is validated by this incorporation. Mark II responses refine the standard training format in



Comparing Mark I and Mark II responses

Both Mark I and Mark II level 3.0 responses result from the pursuit of Carkhuff's challenge and requirement 'to understand with our minds what the helpees feel in their guts. This we do by crawling inside their feelings. Then we comprehend the reasons for the feelings expressed in their content' (Carkhuff 2000, p. 121). We contend that the skill steps used to structure Mark II responses add greater depth to our comprehension of the state of another's guts than the best of the Mark I strategies, and provide a simpler and more dynamic template for expressing that comprehension.

Let us look again at Martha's statement so that comparisons can be made against responses from the previous chapter.

'It really makes me angry when Ron's mother keeps dropping in unannounced—as if she owns the place—and then picks on the way I do things. She came over again yesterday—she does it all the time! Her way is the only way as far as she is concerned—I can't do a thing right whether it's to do with the kids, the way I clean, or get Ron's tea—she goes on and on 'til I could go nuts. When she's gone I just scream—and then sometimes I sit and fume, and give Ron a 'serve' when he gets in from work—and then—often as not we have a bit of a row. It makes me sick just thinking about it!'

Compare the similarities and differences between the following examples of Mark I and Mark II responses:

Mark I: *'So, Martha, you feel sickened because these frequent criticisms are unwelcome—unwarranted—and unhelpful—especially when they knock your skills as a mother and domestic manager.'*

Mark II: *'So, Martha, you feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism **erodes** your self-confidence as a manager, wife and mother, and this, in turn, unwittingly **sabotages** your relationship with Ron.'*

Similarities

Since both responses are to the same statement, it is no surprise that the feelings are the same—‘sickened’ and ‘nauseated’ are close synonyms. Notice, too, that the external triggers are very similar. It is not hard to accept that Martha would consider that ‘frequent lectures’ and ‘unwarranted criticism’ are virtually the same entity that is responsible for her subsequent troubles. Here the similarities end—and significant differences begin.

Differences

To clarify the difference between our two responses, it is time to brace ourselves for a peek into what, for some, may be the gruesome world of grammar. (Hang in if the word ‘grammar’ triggers a phobic response—there is no test to follow.) The areas to focus on are the words (clauses) that follow the conjunction ‘because’. These clauses are known as ‘main clauses’ because they can stand alone as simple sentences having the structure:

Subject — predicate.

The ‘subject’ of a sentence is the ‘participant’—the person or thing that is doing something, is involved in a process, or is in some kind of state of being. In the training format the external agent (the causal trigger) is the subject. Each example nominates its own causal trigger. The subject of the Mark I example, above, is ‘these frequent lectures’. The subject of the Mark II example is ‘your mother-in-law’s unwarranted criticism’. The subject is said to be in the ‘nominative case’ because it names (and may describe) the participant.

The ‘predicate’ of a sentence tells us about the subject. To do this the predicate must contain at least one finite verb—with or without additional words.¹ The major difference between our examples is that the verbs in each tell us quite different things about the subject. Mark I describes the ‘state’ of the subject. Mark II tell us what the subject **does**. Here are the structural differences.

The predicate following the subject of Mark I is a:

‘copulative verb’ + ‘complement’.²

The predicate following the subject of Mark II is a:

‘transitive verb’ + ‘object’.³

Now to see how the jargon can help focus on the differences.

The Mark I example uses the verb ‘are’ (to be). As a copulative verb, ‘are’ simply ‘links’ the subject to the complement. The complement **describes**, or gives more information **about**, the subject. Both the subject and the complement ‘name’ (nominate) different

¹ Ramsay (2004, p. 45) describes a finite verb as ‘a verb that has a subject’ (overt or understood). Thorne (1997, p. 470) expands the definition of finite as ‘A term used to denote verbs marked for tense, person and number (*the boy sings, they sing, he sang*).

² Copulative verbs link the subject to a ‘complement’. The verbs *be, become, seem, remain, look* and *appear* are copulative verbs (Ramsay 2004, p. 44). Nouns that follow a copulative verb (in a predicate) are in the same case as the subject that precedes it—the nominative case (paraphrased from Ramsay 2004, p. 44).

³ A complement is necessary to complete the meaning of copulative verbs...The predicate of such sentences is composed of the copulative verb plus an adjective or noun (or noun equivalent) (Ramsay 2004, p. 70).

aspects of the same entity, and for this reason are both said to be in the nominative case. The Mark I example has this structure.

SUBJECT: *These frequent lectures*
COPULATIVE VERB: *are*
COMPLEMENT: *unwelcome—unwarranted—and unhelpful especially when they knock your skills as a mother and domestic manager.'*

The complement includes another verb 'knock', that grammatically speaking, is used as a transitive verb here within a 'noun clause'.⁴ For our purposes, all that needs to be noted is that the words '*when they knock your skills as a mother and domestic manager*' simply add additional descriptive information about the subject—the frequent lectures.

In this context, the crux of all this is that **copulative verbs** can only describe the **nature** or the **process** of the causal trigger—they never describe what the subject **does**.

The Mark II example uses two verbs 'erodes' and 'sabotages'. As transitive verbs, they describe the **transition** from what the subject **is** to what the subject **does** directly to a given **object**. They describe action. They add dynamism to a response. For this reason, we have chosen to use Thorne's apt term 'dynamic verb' rather than 'transitive verb' in the training format for Mark II responses on page 232—even though, grammatically speaking, the terms are not true synonyms.⁵

The Mark II example has this structure.

SUBJECT: *Your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism*
COPULATIVE VERB: *erodes*
COMPLEMENT: *your self-confidence as a manager, wife and mother, and this, in turn, unwittingly sabotages your relationship with Ron.'*

The object includes the primary effect of the erosion, and a subordinate clause that adds additional information about the secondary effects of the erosive, unwarranted criticism—the sabotaging of Martha's relationship with Ron.

Little more needs to be said to clarify the fundamental distinction between our examples, although more needs to be said in relation to both Mark I and Mark II responses. Firstly we realise that not all Mark I responses use copulative verbs, and see value in assessing the frequency of their use. Secondly, we are yet to discuss the nature of the objects of Mark II responses, and show how they can specify different degrees of 'intimacy' with the personhood of clients—with matching degrees of effectiveness.

We hope that readers, who may have found our brief voyage on the sea of syntax a little turbulent, will have grasped the primary purpose of the excursion; that is, to understand

⁴ A noun clause is a subordinate clause that does the work of a noun (Ramsay 2004, p. 28).

⁵ Thorne (1997, p. 8) classifies dynamic verbs as those which 'express a wide range of actions...'. The term appears to be an 'umbrella' word that can cover the action of both transitive verbs (that must be followed by an object) and intransitive verbs (that do not need to be followed by an object to make sense). That is, a transitive verb must be a dynamic verb, but a dynamic verb need not be a transitive verb. Our requirement that the Mark II training format includes a direct object that specifies the impact of the trigger on the client, technically requires the use of a transitive verb. However, when the required object is in place, the verb preceding it will always be a transitive verb—nesting in the broader dynamic classification. In our view, the word 'dynamic' reflects the spirit of the training format more effectively than 'transitive'.

how Mark II responses add dynamism to responses by specifying what the causal trigger actually **does** to clients—a simple function that we have not seen made overt elsewhere.

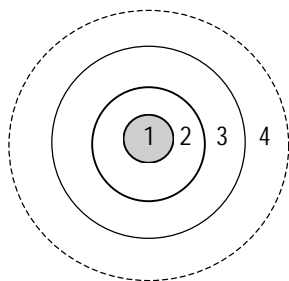
A closer look at Mark I responses

To gain a clearer picture of the nature and range of Mark I responses, we reviewed seven texts relating to counselling (or helping) skills, or counselling practice. One author made no reference to skills. Another made no reference to the structural elements of responses. These were put aside. We only assessed examples provided by the other five authors, all of whom had made reference to the ‘*You feel... because...*’ format. Given that context, it was surprising to note the elasticity of interpretation in the 76 examples that were collectively given. Of these, 33 were pseudo-responses—the feeling was linked to the ‘tail’ (its pseudo reason) by either a preposition, or the conjunction ‘and’—there was no causal link. Of the remaining 43 responses, 16 were internalised. We chose to disregard these, for our purposes, and only assessed the remaining 27 externalised responses. Of these, 18 used copulative or other descriptive verbs. That is, they nominated a trigger, and then **described** it. The remaining nine all used dynamic verbs, but four of these were used as ‘intransitive’ verbs—that is, they made sense without being followed by an object. The remaining five responses used transitive verbs—that is, they nominated a trigger and then said what the trigger actually **did**. Of this five, **only one** (randomly) included an action that had **personal impact on the client**. The exercise was somehow reminiscent of the old song ‘Ten Green Bottles’!

The exercise made it clear that, in spite of the espoused theoretical constructs, 43% of the 76 examples were not what they were purported to be. The 16 internalised responses met the requirements of nominating a feeling and specifying a reason for it, but in our view, should have been written in the external form to exemplify disciplined work. Of those written in external form, 67% of the examples **described** the trigger, and 33% specified what the trigger actually **did**. In the whole sample, **only 1.3% described the impact on the client’s world**—the goal of Mark II responses.

The nature of Mark II objects

The training format for Mark II responses requires a specific statement about how the trigger **impacts the client**. In training presentations we stress the desirability of describing that impact as ‘intimately’ as possible. By this we mean the impact on the very personhood of the client—not external objects that are connected to the client in some way. This distinction can be made by thinking of different degrees of intimacy shown in Figure 22. Number 1 represents ‘core’ intimacy. The higher the number, the less intimate the impact. The degrees of intimacy can be described in four target zones:



1. The core of personhood: ‘*your inner self*’, ‘*you*’,
2. Personal attributes: ‘*your values*’, ‘*your figure*’, ‘*your tendency to sulk*’, ‘*your self-image*’, etc.
3. People and things that give identity: ‘*your footy club*’, ‘*your relationship*’, ‘*your job*’, ‘*your recent award*’;
4. External entities: ‘*your car*’, ‘*community opinion*’, ‘*last week’s lottery ticket*’, etc.

Figure 22. Showing the target areas in which clients can be impacted.

The limitations of targeting zone 1

In spite of the intention to respond with maximum intimacy, targeting ‘personhood’ in zone 1 has limitations, particularly if the dynamic verb targets ‘you’. Responding in this way usually does little more than infer a second feeling. For example:

‘You feel sickened because these frequent lectures belittle you.’

The words ‘your spirit’ seem preferred to ‘you’ in describing personhood—especially by those who see themselves as spiritual beings with a body (as distinct from those who see themselves as ‘having’ a spirit). Descriptive adjectives can be used to qualify ‘your spirit’ in ways that cannot be applied to ‘you’. For example:

*‘You feel increasing powerlessness because her erosive nagging withers **your flagging spirit**—bit by bit with each unwelcome visit.’*

For some people ‘your spirit’ refers to an unchangeable and enduring essence. This sets it apart from all other, changeable ‘your...(zone 2 personal attributes)’.

The effectiveness of targeting zone 2

While zone 2 is not the most intimate zone, it seems to be the most effective area to target. This is because the naming of relevant personal attributes focuses on aspects that are amenable to change, and therefore more likely to stimulate exploration.

*‘You feel sickened because these frequent lectures belittle **your management of the house, and your contribution to Ron and the kids.**’*

The usefulness of targeting zone 3

A response that refers to the people, or things that give people identity (zone 3) as the primary target not only reduces its intimacy, but has the potential to reduce clarity by assuming that any undeclared links are understood. Comparison between the following two responses demonstrate this point.

*‘So, Martha, you feel nauseated because your mother-in-law’s unwarranted criticism unwittingly **sabotages your relationship with Ron.**’*

*‘So, Martha, you feel nauseated because your mother-in-law’s unwarranted criticism **erodes your self-confidence as a manager, wife and mother, and this, in turn, unwittingly sabotages your relationship with Ron.**’*

It is quite possible that, on hearing the first response, Martha might say something like: ‘I don’t quite see what you’re getting at—it’s me she has a go at—not Ron—I thought I’d made that clear’. The second response clearly spells out how the erosive effect in zone 2, becomes the cause of the sabotaging effect in zone 3. From this we can see how useful zone 3 targets can be in a subordinate clause.

The inappropriateness of targeting zone 4

Targeting external entities (zone 4) should be avoided—even though they may have some connection with the client. At best they slow down exploration. At worst they may trigger unnecessary reactivity. Consider how this response might impact Martha.

*‘You feel sickened because these frequent lectures only **highlight** the lack of care and sensitivity of Ron’s arrogant mother.’*

Externalising the effect of the lectures in zone 4, is likely to evoke more evidence of her mothers-in-law’s faults rather than enhance the exploratory process to help Martha clarify where she stands in relation to Ron’s mother.

We need to be very clear that externalising in zone 4 is quite different from externalising in zone 2. Compare the previous example with the next one that externalises in zone 2:

*'You feel sickened because these frequent lectures **create** a negative reaction in you that has flow on repercussions for your relationship with Ron.'*

This response is likely to facilitate Martha's exploration of either the nature, origin, or intensity of her 'negative reaction'; or the nature, intensity, frequency and consequences of the 'repercussions on her relationship with Ron'.

An important aside

We have observed diligent students attempting to increase the intimacy of a response to zone 1, 'you', to see if it has greater impact than intimacy in zone 2. Their efforts would look like this if applied to Martha.

*'So, Martha, you feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism **makes you** lose confidence as a manager, wife and mother, and this, in turn, unwittingly sabotages your relationship with Ron.'*

Feedback on their attempts has been inconclusive, but in our view, it is a moot point that targeting 'you' in this way is preferred—even though by our definition is technically more intimate. The important question that this example raises is the old chestnut: *'Can anyone really make anyone do anything?'* Targeting zone 2 seems wiser in most cases.

According to the philosopher Descartes the answer depends on one's will. 'Will consists simply in the fact that we are able alike to do and not do a given thing...such that we feel ourselves not to be determined by any external force' (Descartes, translated by Anscombe & Geach, 1964, p. 96). We would like to extend Descartes' 'will' to read 'will and skill'. This is because the skills of responding meet people where they frequently feel 'determined by' (or at least restricted by) external forces; and the personalising skills (see Chapter 13) help people make a 'shift in will', to realise that they **can** manage their affairs **in spite of** external forces—when 'externals' no longer **make you** do things. Helping others make this shift in will and skill is the essence of counselling.

Ultimately, no one can 'make' another do anything—except by exerting powerful duress. Generally speaking, others can be no more than an aversive stimulus that triggers some inadequacy, vulnerability, or fear that we have not yet learned how to manage personally. It follows that if we structure a response whose trigger targets zone 1 (**makes you...**(do something) we **incorporate an ultimate untruth**. If we also accept the premise that 'truth sets free', then responses that use the verb 'to make' will be less liberating when targeting zone 1, than similar responses that target any of the other three zones. For example, compare zone 1 and zone 2 targets:

*'She makes **you** lose confidence'. with 'She makes **your confidence** shaky'.*

Constructing advanced level 3.0 responses

Advanced level 3.0 responses have the same purpose and function as other level 3.0 responses, but are structured from a more detailed training format:

*'You feel... because...(external agent)...(dynamic verb)...(impact on client).'*⁶

The purpose of advanced level 3.0 responses

The purpose of the advanced level 3.0 response is to extend the response repertoire of counsellors, in particular, so that they will be more effective in facilitating client

⁶ Since the majority of feelings responded to in a counselling context are negative, the training format specifies 'external agent'. However, if the feeling is positive, the causal trigger may be internal. For example, *'You feel great because you finally overcame your fear of flying'*. (see page 222).

exploration, and less likely to encounter situations where clients ‘go round in circles’, and are unable or unwilling to proceed towards resolution of given issues. This is not to infer that advanced responses cannot be used beneficially in non-counselling situations.

The skill steps for advanced level 3.0 responses

Some steps of the Mark II format are identical to Mark I. Accordingly, this section will assume familiarity with the steps to identify the feeling (Skill step 1 in this sequence); and focus on the steps not described elsewhere. These are:

- identify the causal trigger—the external agent that has an impact on the client;
- choose the best dynamic verb to describe what the trigger does to the client;
- identify the most appropriate intimate zone that the trigger targets;
- specify the nature of the impact.

The requirements to use language that is familiar to the client, and the test for the accuracy of the response are assumed.

Identify the causal trigger

A causal trigger is an external agent (see footnote 6 on page 237 for the exception) that causes an effect which personally impacts a client. The terms ‘trigger’ or ‘cause’ are often used instead of ‘causal trigger’. The trigger can be identified at three levels of complexity—specific, qualified, and intimate.

The specific trigger

The specific trigger is a single noun, pronoun, or simple noun phrase.

Skill step 2 identifies a specific trigger by asking oneself: ‘*What other person, thing, event, or client attribute triggers (causes) the feeling?*’ (even though we know that the impact is the real cause).

If we take it as given that Martha’s feeling is ‘nauseated’, then this step will identify ‘Ron’s mother’ as the specific trigger (cause). This can be reframed as ‘your mother-in-law’ to make it marginally more intimate to Martha. We start to build the response:

‘*You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law...(impacts you).*’

The qualified trigger

A specific trigger becomes a ‘qualified trigger’ by adding words to make it more specific.

Skill step 3 qualifies the trigger by asking oneself: ‘*What is it **about** her mother-in-law (or other specific trigger) that makes the trigger sharper?*’.

This step may throw up a number of possibilities before a selection is made. In Martha’s example these could be her mother-in-law’s intrusiveness, criticism, arrogance, or other aspect. When more than one possibility comes to mind, a second question must be asked: ‘*Which possibility has the greatest impact on the client?*’. In Martha’s example we would choose ‘criticism’ because it bites deeper, hurts more, and lingers longer than the alternatives. The response grows to:

‘*You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law’s criticism...(impacts you).*’

The intimate trigger

The qualified trigger becomes an ‘intimate trigger’ by incorporating the **client’s opinion** of the qualified trigger.

Skill step 4 makes the qualified trigger intimate by asking oneself: *'How does the client view her mother-in-law's criticism (or other qualified trigger)?'*

Reflection on Martha's words (and non-verbal cues) may suggest a range of opinions of the criticisms—impertinent, hurtful, or unwarranted. When more than one possibility comes to mind, a second question must be asked: *'Which opinion has the greatest impact on the client?'* In Martha's example we would pick 'unwarranted' because, as she sees it, there are no grounds for such criticism. The response now becomes:

'You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism ... (impacts you).'

Choose the dynamic verb

The dynamic verb tells how the trigger actually impacts the client.

Skill step 5 identifies the dynamic verb by asking oneself: *'What does the trigger do to Martha?'*

The answer may not always be obvious. It is less likely to be expressed overtly, and more likely to be masked or inferred. In Martha's case a number of possibilities may come to mind. The criticism may hurt her (in some way), or embarrass her (in some way), or erode (some part of her) or anger her (in some way) or goad her (or some part of her). When more than one possibility emerges, a second question must be asked: *'Which verb has the most enduring and detrimental effect?'*

Note that some of the verbs (hurt, embarrass, anger) create a 'feeling' experience **within** her, others (erode, goad) do something **to** her. These are the verbs to choose between. In Martha's case, 'erode' seems the better verb—erosion can be progressive and detrimental, and so the formulation of the response, so far, will be:

'You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism erodes... (some part of you).'

It should be noted that when the feeling is negative the dynamic verb will lead to a destructive impact, and where the feeling is positive the dynamic verb will lead to a constructive experience. Alphabetical lists of 'destructive' and 'constructive' dynamic verbs are provided from page 245.

Identify the most intimate target

The most logical intimate target is zone 1, 'personhood', but since any personal change depends on a change in one or more personal attribute, zone 2 is generally the preferred target in our response. Zone 3 generally involves others with whom change requires collaboration. Accordingly, our think steps focus on zone 2. The target can be identified at three levels of complexity: specific, qualified, and intimate—just like the trigger.

The specific target

The specific target in zone 2 is a simple noun phrase that identifies the particular client attribute that is impacted by the dynamic verb.

Skill step 6 identifies the specific target by asking oneself: *'What aspect of the client is targeted by the dynamic verb?'* or in Martha's example, *'What part of Martha does the criticism erode?'*

We may conclude that the criticisms erode Martha's self-confidence, or her ability to stay in control. However, the evidence suggests that she does not lose control until after Ron's mother has gone. We would therefore choose self-confidence, whose erosion is enduring and intimate. The formulation of the response, so far, will now be:

'You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism erodes your self-confidence.'

The qualified target

A specific target becomes 'qualified' by adding words that make it more specific.

Skill step 7 qualifies the specific target by asking oneself: *'What aspect(s) of the target are involved?'*, which in Martha's example translates as: *'In what areas is Martha's self-confidence eroded?'*.

Reflection on Martha's statement will indicate that the lectures were about caring for the kids, cleaning, and Ron's tea. This can be paraphrased to cover the roles of manager, wife, and mother. The response now becomes:

'You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism erodes your self-confidence as a manager, wife and mother.'

The intimate target

A qualified target is made intimate by describing the **personal significance** that the client gives to the impact of the causal trigger on the targeted personal attribute.

Skill step 8 describes the target in intimate terms by asking oneself: *'What are the consequences (for the client) of that aspect (or those aspects) being targeted?'*, which in Martha's example translates as: *'What is the consequence for Martha when her self-confidence as a manager, wife and mother is eroded?'*

This question helps to focus on the fact that Martha gets so stirred up after Ron's mum leaves that Ron quite often cops the backwash when he gets in. If there is other evidence that things are normally OK with Ron, we can conclude that Martha would prefer not to 'take it out' on Ron—she just can't help it, and regrets what these arguments do to their relationship. The consequence is, then, that the criticisms lead to a kind of sabotaging of her relationship with Ron—but not by wilful intent. We can then complete the response by including a paraphrase of these reflections:

'So, Martha, you feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism erodes your confidence as a manager, wife and mother, and this, in turn, unwittingly sabotages your relationship with Ron.'

So far we have only constructed the response 'in our head', and during the reflection time that precedes delivering it, we may occasionally reword our response, quite spontaneously, to give it a different emphasis. This is not to say that our earlier, systematic processing was unnecessary or redundant. Its efforts created the elements that make re-assembly possible. Such a spontaneous revision could be:

'So you feel nauseated because your mother-in law's unwarranted criticism not only erodes your self confidence as a wife and mother, but triggers a kind of smouldering anger that can drives a bit of a wedge between you and Ron'.

In these 'pre-delivery reflections', we should check that every word counts. We might consider omitting the words 'a kind of' (smouldering) and 'a bit of' (a wedge), but decide to leave them stand on the grounds that they moderate the intensity of the response.

The skill steps are summarised in Table 12 on page 241, to include the kind of reflections we might have in producing a response from 'scratch'. Once the steps become familiar, a well formulated response can be constructed in a few seconds. There is merit in working through Table 12, and then doing Exercise 7— with 'Arthur', on page 243.

Table 12: A summary of the skill steps used to produce an intimate level 3.0 response for Martha

Martha's Statement		Evidence		Reflection		Decision	
Skill step							
<p><i>'It really makes me angry when Ron's mother keeps dropping in unannounced—as if she owns the place—and then picks on the way I do things. She came over again yesterday—she does it all the time! Her way is the only way as far as she is concerned—I can't do a thing right whether it's to do with the kids, the way I clean or get Ron's tea—she goes on till I could go nuts. When she's gone I just scream—and then sometimes I sit and fume and give Ron a 'serve' when he gets in from work—and then—often as not we have a bit of a row. It makes me sick just thinking about it!'</i></p>							
Step 1: Identify the current feeling. (apparent or hinted at) I will use either Carkhuff or Kranz 'think-steps' (on page 206) or my intuition—as seems required	angry going nuts screaming fuming being sick		I won't use long think steps—she gives plenty of evidence. All but 'being sick' were 'then' —reflecting on her stuff makes her sick now —so she feels sickened. What is a good synonym for sickened? woozy, queasy, nauseated, churned up, disgusted, chagrined? 'Nauseated' seems to match the intensity best.		the feeling is 'nauseated'		
Step 2: Identify the specific trigger (cause). Ask: <i>'What other person, thing, event, or client attribute 'causes' Martha to feel nauseated?'</i>	Ron's mother		Is there a more intimate way of saying 'Ron's mother'? Why not 'your mother-in-law'? The possessive pronoun 'your' makes the cause 'hers' rather than Ron's—a marginal, but more intimate shift.		the specific trigger is 'your mother-in-law'		
Step 3: Qualify the trigger (cause). Ask: <i>'What is it about her mother-in-law that makes Martha feel nauseated?'</i>	her intrusiveness? her criticism? her arrogance? her interference?		Any of these behaviours could make Martha feel sick but 'criticism' seems to have the greatest impact. At least she has some relief when the intrusiveness is over, the arrogance quietened and the interference suspended—but criticism lingers.		the qualified trigger is 'your mother-in-law's criticism'		
Step 4: Make the qualified trigger intimate. Ask: <i>'How does Martha view her mother-in-law's criticism?'</i>	There is no overt evidence, but Martha's words 'I can't do a thing right' infer that she believes that her way is generally OK.		If Martha can do things right then she is likely to see criticism as 'harsh' 'uninvited' or 'unwarranted'. It is easier to dismiss 'uninvited' criticism—even if it is 'harsh'—than when it is unwarranted—so 'unwarranted' seems the most intimate.		the intimate trigger is 'your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism'		

<p>Step 5: Identify what the trigger does. Ask: 'What does her mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism actually do to Martha?'</p> <p>The answer to step 5 will target intimacy area 1. It is better to blend steps 5 and 6.</p> <p>Step 6: Identify the specific target. Ask: 'What does her mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism actually do to Martha—personally—what parts of her are impacted?'</p>	<p>drives her almost nuts pushes her to near screaming point knocks how she manages the kids, picks on her cleaning skills judges the meals she serves Ron pushes self-control to near limit goads her into being cranky with Ron</p>	<p>Going nuts, screaming and getting cranky are certainly related—but they are not part of her. Her self-control is part of her, but is managed while being criticised. The kids, the cleaning and her cooking are part of her 'management' these are affected—but is there a more personal aspect?</p> <p>As I think about it, frequent criticism about how you manage is like a dripping tap—it wears you down—not just you—your confidence suffers. Got it! It erodes her self-confidence.</p> <p>I now have the pieces for a response where an intimate trigger impacts a specific target.</p>	<p>The verb is 'erodes' and the specific target is 'your self-confidence'</p> <p><i>'You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism erodes your self-confidence.'</i></p>
<p>Step 7: Qualify the specific target. Ask: 'In what areas is Martha's self-confidence eroded?'</p>	<p>Targets for the criticism were: child management, cleaning and meal preparation.</p>	<p>So her self-confidence is likely to be eroded in the roles of 'mother' (for mismanaging the kids); 'manager' (for the sloppy cleaning); and 'wife' (when it comes to Ron's tea). It might be a bit fancy, but I am going to call them in a way that goes from least intimate to more intimate: manager, wife, mother.</p> <p>I now have a response where the intimate trigger impacts a qualified target</p>	<p><i>'You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism erodes your self-confidence as a manager, wife and mother.'</i></p>
<p>Step 8: Make the qualified target intimate. Ask: 'What is the consequence for Martha when her self-confidence as a manager, wife and mother is eroded?'</p>	<p>She feels like going nuts but seems to delay any reaction until Ron's mum has left. Then she screams, then cools down to a 'fume' but sometimes this ends up in a row with Ron.</p>	<p>The rows are occasional, but after unwelcome visits, Ron is actually 'dumped on'. Martha's fuming is at his mother—not Ron. In that sense she is damaging what seems to be an OK relationship (there is no evidence to the contrary) without wanting or meaning to. She is unwittingly sabotaging her relationship with Ron. Yet she is not the saboteur. It is a domino effect of the unwarranted criticism.</p> <p>I now have a response where the intimate trigger impacts an intimate target</p>	<p><i>'You feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism erodes your self-confidence as a manager, wife and mother—and this, in turn, unwittingly sabotages your relationship with Ron.'</i></p>
<p>Step 9: Check and rehearse the response. Ask: 'Is it Martha's kind of language?' Ask: 'Does my response flow well and does every word count?'</p>	<p>I have not used Martha's name. All points seem to be covered.</p>	<p>I think it's her kind of language, but maybe I can make it more conversational with reshuffled words (in next column)</p> <p>On second thoughts, I think my previous effort (from step 8) was better because the sequence of events is clearer, but I will need to use her name at the start of the response.</p> <p>I'll now test that response for accuracy with Martha.</p>	<p><i>'So, Martha, you feel nauseated because your mother-in-law's unwarranted criticism not only erodes your self-confidence as a manager-wife and mother but it also sabotages your relationship with Ron.'</i></p>

Exercise 7: Creating an advanced response to Arthur

Arthur's Statement

'I'm really trying to kick the drug habit since I became a Christian, but it's not easy—you feel so awful, so alone, and you have these rotten mood-swings and cravings on and off. My friends still seem to be having a great time and they laugh at me for bothering to try to give up. The worst part is that Josie, that's my girlfriend, is seeing me less and less—and she's the one person I thought I could depend on. But I really thought she would support me. I don't know why everyone's letting me down—it's as if they prefer me to die rather than get healthy. I don't think it's worth trying anymore.'

Skill step	Evidence	Reflection	Decision
Step 1: Identify the current feeling.			the feeling is:
Step 2: Identify the specific trigger (cause). Tailor this question to fit Arthur: <i>'What other person, thing, event, or client attribute triggers the feeling?'</i> .			the specific trigger is:
Step 3: Qualify the trigger (cause). Tailor this question to fit Arthur: <i>'What is it about the trigger that makes it 'sharper'?''</i> .			the qualified trigger is:
Step 4: Make the qualified trigger intimate. Tailor this question to fit Arthur: <i>'How does the client view the qualified trigger?'</i> .			the intimate trigger is:

<p>Step 5: Identify what the trigger does. (remember the dynamic verb list on page 245) Tailor this question to fit Arthur: <i>‘What does the qualified trigger do to the client?’</i>. and</p> <p>Step 6: Identify the specific target. Tailor this question to fit Arthur: <i>‘What aspect of the client is targeted by the dynamic verb?’</i>.</p>			<p>The verb is: and the specific target is: Write your response so far:</p>
<p>Step 7: Qualify the specific target. Tailor this question to fit Arthur: <i>‘What aspects of the target are involved?’</i>.</p>			<p>Incorporate the qualified target:</p>
<p>Step 8: Make the qualified target intimate. Tailor this question to fit Arthur: <i>‘What are the consequences (for the client) of that aspect (or those aspects) being targeted?’</i>.</p>			<p>Incorporate the intimate target:</p>
<p>Step 9: Check and rehearse the response. Ask: <i>‘Is it Arthur’s kind of language?’</i> Ask: <i>‘Does my response flow well and does every word count?’</i>.</p>			<p>Decide on your final response:</p>

The full processing of a response to Exercise 7 appears on page 482.

Dynamic verb list					
EXTERNAL TRIGGER	+	DESTRUCTIVE VERB	→	NEGATIVE EFFECT	

abolishes	bashes	clobbers	deludes	disregards	explodes
absolves	bastardises	clogs	demands	disrupts	exploits
abuses	batters	clutters	demeans	disservices	extinguishes
accosts	befuddles	cocoons	demolishes	dissuades	fatigues
accuses	belies	coerces	demoralises	distances	feeds
adjusts	belittles	combats	dents	distorts	flattens
adulterates	berates	commands	deprecates	distracts	flogs
afflicts	betrays	compels	deprives	distresses	flouts
affronts	binds	complicates	destabilises	disturbs	flummoxes
aggravates	black lists	compounds	destroys	diverts	focuses
aggrieves	blames	compromises	detracts	divides	forces
agitates	blasts	condemns	devalues	dominates	fractures
alarms	bleeds	confines	devastates	domineers	fragments
alienates	blinkers	conflicts	develops	dupes	frightens
allows	blitzes	confounds	devours	eases	fritters
alleges	blocks	confronts	dictates	emasculates	frustrates
alters	blots	confuses	diddles	embarrasses	generalises
ambushes	bludgeons	connives	diminishes	embellishes	grinds
amputates	blurs	conquers	directs	empties	guillotines
annoys	breaches	conspires	disables	encroaches	hammers
annuls	breaks	constrains	disadvantages	endangers	handcuffs
antagonises	browbeats	constricts	disarms	enervates	handicaps
anticipates	bruises	construes	discourages	enflames	hardens
appals	brushes aside	contaminates	discredits	engages	harms
appeals to	brutalises	contradicts	disembowels	enlarges	haunts
appears to	buggers up	contributes to	disgraces	enlivens	highlights
assails	bulldozes	convinces	disgruntles	enrages	hinders
assaults	bullies	corrodes	dishonours	enslaves	horrifices
assassinates	burdens	crumbles	disillusions	ensnares	hounds
assumes	captures	crushes	disintegrates	entangles	humiliates
astonishes	castigates	debases	dislocates	entices	hurts
astounds	castrates	debunks	dismantles	eradicates	ignites
atrophies	catapults	deceives	dismembers	erases	impairs
attacks	cements	decimates	dismisses	escalates	impedes
avenges	censures	decreases	disorientates	estranges	impels
axes	channels	defeats	disparages	exacerbates	impoverishes
backfires on	chastens	defends	dispels	exaggerates	imprisons
baffles	chills	deflates	displeases	excludes	incites
bamboozles	chokes	deforms	disposes	excuses	indoctrinates
banishes	churns	defrauds	dispossesses	exempts	induces
bankrupts	clashes with	degrades	disqualifies	exhausts	infests

inflames	modifies	poaches	ruffles	spurns	tortures
inflicts	mortifies	pole-axes	ruptures	squashes	throws
inhibits	muddles	pollutes	sabotages	squelches	tramples
instils	murders	poo-poops	sanctions	staggers	traps
insulates	muzzles	prejudices	saps	stagnates	trashes
insults	negates	preoccupies	saturates	startles	tricks
interferes with	nobbles	pressures	scars	starves	trivialises
interrupts	nudges	prohibits	scoffs at	staves-off	truncates
intimidates	obliterates	prolongs	scolds	steers	undercuts
introduces	obstructs	prompts	scorns	stifles	undermines
intrudes on	occupies	prostitutes	scraps	stomps on	unifies
invades	offends	pulps	seduces	strangles	unsettles
inverts	oppresses	pulverises	separates	stresses	usurps
invokes	ousts	refutes	shames	strips	vanquishes
involves	outlaws	regulates	shatters	stuffs up	vetoos
jars	overawes	reinforces	shocks	subdues	violates
jaundices	overrules	relaxes	short-changes	subjects (to)	voices
jeopardises	overshadows	removes	shrinks	submerges	wallops
jolts	overturns	renders	shrivels	subtracts	warps
knives	overwhelms	repels	siphons-off	subverts	wastes
lacerates	penetrates	represses	skews	suppresses	weakens
limits	permeates	repudiates	skittles	swells	wedges
liquidates	perpetrates	reshuffles	slams	swindles	whacks
maims	perplexes	resurrects	slaughters	taints	white ants
maligns	persuades	retards	slays	tantalises	withdraws
mangles	pervades	reveals	smashes	targets	whitewashes
manipulates	perverts	reverses	smothers	tarnishes	wrings
manufactures	petrifies	revises	smoulders	teaches	
marginalizes	pirates	ridicules	snares	tempts	
mars	placates	rocks	snubs	tests	
melts	plagues	rouses	splinters	titivates	
misleads	plunders	rubbishes	spoils	torments	

TRIGGER (external/internal)	+	CONSTRUCTIVE VERB	→	POSITIVE EFFECT
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abolishes	allows	backs-up	caresses	complicates	decreases
absolves	alters	benefits	catapults	compounds	defends
achieves	ameliorates	bestows	cements	compromises	demands
adapts	anchors	binds	channels	confirms	develops
adds to	appeases	boosts	clarifies	confronts	directs
adjusts	applauds	brightens	cleanses	conquers	emancipates
advances	arms	buoys	clicks with	conserves	empowers
affirms	assuages	calms	cocoons	constrains	empties
aids	assumes	capitalises on	commands	convinces	encourages
allays	astonishes	captivates	compares	cossets	enhances
alleviates	attunes	captures	compels	cultivates	enlivens

enriches	helps	melts	quenches	resonates with	tailors
enshrines	highlights	mends	quietens	resurrects	tantalises
ensures	honours	ministers	ratifies	retards	targets
entices	ignites	modifies	reassures	retrieves	teaches
equips	illuminates	nourishes	rebutts	revamps	tempts
eradicates	impels	nudges	reclaims	reveals	tests
erases	improves	nurtures	recompenses	reverses	thrills
escalates	incites	occupies	reconciles	revises	throws
excites	increases	opens	recovers	revitalises	titivates
excuses	induces	overcomes	rectifies	revives	transfigures
exempts	indulges	overrules	redeems	revolutionises	transforms
exonerates	informs	pampers	refines	rids	unifies
facilitates	inhibits	penetrates	refreshes	rouses	unravels
fits with	injects	permeates	refutes	salvages	upgrades
flatters	inspires	persuades	regenerates	sanctions	upholds
focuses	instructs	pervades	regulates	satisfies	uplifts
forces	insulates	placates	rehabilitates	saturates	validates
fortifies	interferes	preoccupies	reinforces	scraps	verifies
fosters	interrupts	prepares	rejuvenates	secures	vibrates with
frees	introduces	preserves	relaxes	separates	vindicates
fulfils	inverts	prevents	relieves	serves	voices
galvanises	invigorates	proclaims	remedies	shapes	warms
generalises	invokes	prohibits	removes	shields	whets
generates	involves	prolongs	rends	solves	woos
gladdens	justifies	promotes	repairs	soothes	zeros in on
gratifies	kindles	prompts	repels	spurs	
guarantees	liberates	propels	replenishes	stimulates	
guides	lifts	protects	repudiates	subdues	
hardens	manufactures	proves	rescues	subjects	
heals	maximises	provides	reshuffles	submerges	
heartens	mellows	purgesquells	resolves	supports	

Exercise 8: Advanced responding to feeling and meaning

This exercise uses the same client statements as Exercise 6 on page 218. This time you are asked to respond using the Mark II format. The important task is to specify the impact on the client. Use the level of complexity that matches the client statement. It may be an ‘overkill’ to include an intimate trigger and an intimate target in a number of instances. Compare any differences with the responses you wrote in Exercise 6.

1. A tense client says:

‘Why are you looking at me like that? You think I’m crazy or something? You’re the crazy one needing a job that feeds on other people’s problems.’

My response:

2. A caring daughter says:

'My mother is such a difficult woman. She keeps having little strokes but she refuses to consider moving to a hostel. Instead she expects me to go around to her place daily—sometimes twice daily! She doesn't seem to consider that I have a life to live.'

My response:

3. An upset wife says:

'I made a real mistake getting married to Jim. He's self-centred and abusive to me. He manages to put on a good show with others so they don't know what it's like for me, and anyway, I can't leave because he's always said he'll fight me for the kids if I do.'

My response:

4. A teenager says:

'Mum and dad are so old-fashioned. When I've been out they smell my clothes to see if I've been smoking. I get a lecture about 'being careful' before every social event. I mean, I'm an intelligent woman—nearly 20. When will they stop treating me like a child?'

My response:

5. A bride-to-be says:

'I'm getting married in two months time and my mother is so busy organising everything. It's my wedding but if I object to anything or disagree with her she gets huffy. It's as though I had no right to interfere, but I have, haven't I?'

My response:

6. A mother talks to a friend:

'The school rang the other day to tell me that Michael was bullying other kids and they want me to go to talk with them about a behaviour management program. It's ridiculous! Michael is a lovely boy—not aggressive at all. I should know I'm his mother!'

My response:

7. A husband confides in his priest:

'My wife suddenly announced last night that she is a lesbian! It seems she has been having a relationship with another woman for a couple of years now. I can't believe she has been pretending and lying all this time. Why didn't I wake up to it all before this? I never had a clue! I just can't believe it.'

My response:

8. A woman talks to a friend:

'I'm beginning to feel more and more in a rut. John and I talk about the same things—we do the same thing, week in and week out. He seems happy with that but I see my life slipping away. When I was younger I had such dreams and I thought he shared them. But I now think he just went along with me until we established our cosy domesticity. God, I don't know what to do. He's a nice guy but....'

My response:

9. A husband tell a workmate:

'My wife has just gone back to work, and although the extra money's good, things are just chaotic at home. The washing is never done, meals are not ready and the kids have to look after themselves for two hours after school each day. When I point this out she gets angry and starts crying. I just don't know how to get through to her that the extra money might not be worth the hassle.'

My response:

10. A mother talks to her doctor:

'I know this might seem a bit vain but I have been thinking recently about having some plastic surgery. I don't feel old yet, but my face is showing more and more signs of wear. I hate the thought of surgery really, but my husband has begun to be a bit sarcastic about my looks, and I'm frightened that he may start looking for a new 'model' soon.'

My response:

Possible responses to Exercise 8 are on page 483.

Practicing advanced responding

The general approach to practicing responding skills follows the outline given under ‘Practicing attending’ on page 120. The set up of the room is identical to that shown in Figure 15, on page 122. The procedures are very similar to the practice of responding skills (see page 220)—written exercises, verbal practice in groups, use of observation sheets, the ‘round robin’, and individual practice in triads. However, in practicing advanced responses trainees can move progressively from simple to complex structures. Figure 23 shows how that progression can occur. This is how it works.

Once the current feeling has been identified, the simplest possible ‘reason for the feeling’ consists of a specific trigger (A) that impacts a specific target (B). For example.

‘You feel weary because Ron’s mother saps your energy’.

Responses at this level of complexity use steps 1, 2, 5 and 6 in Table 12 (page 241). They are easily learned, and can enhance communication in the home, school and work place.

The next stage offers two options. The first is for the specific trigger to impact a qualified target (A–D). The second is for a qualified trigger to impact a specific target (C–B). As trainees become competent in constructing simpler responses, they move towards the most complex (E–F) through the other combinations (A–F), (C–D), (C–F), (E–B), and (E–D). Trainees can choose to sequence the options that extends their competence with the easiest progression for them.

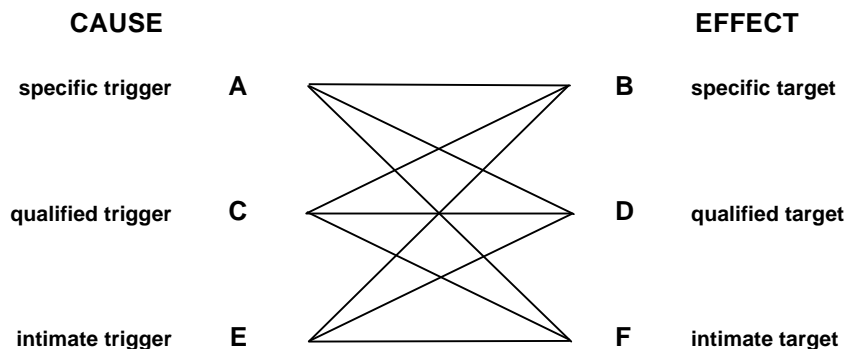


Figure 23. Showing the possible combinations that enable trainees to progressively acquire advanced responding skills through selected degrees of complexity.

It is important for counselling trainees to become competent and confident in constructing the (E–F) combination—not because every response in a counselling setting requires this degree of complexity, but because they enhance both effectiveness and efficiency whenever clients’ statements are sufficiently detailed to warrant their use. However, trainers and observer-coaches should be aware that some trainees (with ‘perfectionist’ tendencies) can become immobilised with ‘performance anxiety’ if required to do too much too soon. If this occurs, coaches should encourage such students to focus on the combination that is just one step of complexity beyond their current comfort zone. This offers challenge from a position of relative confidence. (At an appropriate time, it is often helpful to suggest that they talk about their performance anxiety when they are in the client role with a trusted colleague in the counsellor role).

Practicing advanced responding skills will add new requirements to the coaching checklist, suggested on page 221, for what we now call Mark I responses. The amended check list, below, brings forward some elements of that list, omits the detail of the vigilance skills, and adds new checks to cover advanced responding. As this checklist becomes more familiar, trainees not only become more effective in the observer role, but can become more proficient in the counselling role, to the point that they become progressively less dependent on external coaches. The checklist reads:

- attend psychologically, observe, and listen;
- reflect on client content;
- use the training format being practiced;
- respond with Mark II responses when appropriate by:
 - using one feeling word (or feeling phrase) only;
 - making sure the feeling is in the present tense;
 - identifying the specific causal trigger;
 - qualifying the specific trigger;
 - making the qualified trigger intimate;
 - identifying the dynamic verb that best describes what the trigger does, and simultaneously; nominating the specific target of the dynamic verb;
 - qualifying the specific target;
 - making the qualified target intimate.
 - checking and rehearsing the response before delivering it;
 - testing the response for accuracy.

The case for scale refinement

In developing the current (standard) five point scale, Carkhuff determined that the mid point (level 3.0) was the point of ‘interchangeability’—the point where we ‘meet’ others as they are, emotionally and intellectually, so that they feel understood, and can explore an issue with freedom and without judgement. This is a profoundly important, but general principle that has not, as yet, taken into account the verbal facility of clients, nor addressed the fact that, in practice, not all responses currently deemed to be at level 3.0 are equally effective in facilitating client exploration. This variance in effectiveness is reflected in the different ways that responses can be structured (as the previous chapter described), even though they may individually comply with the broad requirement that a level 3.0 response incorporates both ‘feeling’ and ‘meaning’⁷ (Carkhuff 2000a, p. 25). These structural differences are evident in the following examples that Carkhuff used to introduce the skill of responding to feeling and content—all of which would, by his definition, be rated at 3.0.

Familiarity with the content of the previous chapter will enable many readers to clearly recognise the functional differences between the following five responses by simply inspection. Others may appreciate some revision.

⁷ Carkhuff defines level 3.0 responses as ‘accurate responses to feeling and meaning’ in 2000a, but in the companion texts 2000 & 2000b, he uses the word ‘content’ as a synonym for ‘meaning’. In discussing his examples we use the word ‘meaning’ to refer to the intellectual component of content.

Feeling	Content
(1) [I feel] happy	about being promoted.
(2) [I feel] angry	with my teacher for giving me a low grade.
(3) [I felt] sad	when I knew that I'd never see her again.
(4) I feel great	because my boss gave me a raise.
(5) I feel tired	due to my hurried schedule (Carkhuff 2000, p. 119).

Response 1 simply links the feeling and the remaining content with a preposition that points to the **object** of the feeling, whereas responses 2, 3 and 4 offer a **reason** for the feeling (using differing causal links). Responses that incorporate a reason for the feeling are more likely to facilitate exploration than those that do not—a claim that may have already been tested and experientially substantiated during practice sessions. Response 5 **seems** to offer a reason for feeling tired, but it fails to explain, overtly, how the 'hurried schedule' leads to, or effects, the tiredness. Our laboratory and field experience suggest that responses cast in formats matching responses 1 and 5 have about the same impact as a level 2.5 response in terms of facilitating exploration, and should be therefore be rated below 3.0.

Note that response 3 is in the past tense. Readers will recall from pages 205 and 211 that such responses simply describe an historical event, and should be rated at level 2.0.

Response 4 offers a 'stronger' reason for the feeling than either response 2 or 3. Its strength lies in the fact that the conjunction 'because' conjoins two 'stand alone' sentences—the emotive '*I feel great*', and the intellectual '*The boss gave me a raise*'. Here the reason for the feeling is overt.

In our view, it is no longer appropriate to give a level 3.0 rating to responses that vary so widely in their effectiveness in stimulating client exploration. We see clear benefits in refining the standard Carkhuff scale to reflect these differences, so that trainees can be more discriminating when acting as observers, and more aware of what they are constructing when acting in the counsellor role.

By using the simple 'You feel...because...?' format, trainees can meet all requirements of Mark I responses (current feeling, causally linked, succinct, specific, comprehensive, non-judgemental, appropriate language, and accurate), and still construct **bland** responses. This is especially true of the high ratio of responses that contain copulative verbs. As a consequence we hear periodic complaints (during practice sessions) that after about six or seven responses, exploration 'dries up' and the client 'gets repetitive', or the dialogue 'goes round in circles'. This seems to be a common experience. Carkhuff calls this phenomenon 'the unhelpful circle', or the 'level 3.0 circle'. These are his comments to trainers on how to deal with the level 3.0 circle.

'The helpee introduces a problem; the helper responds accurately to feeling and content. The helpee states the same problem in new terms; the helper responds accurately again. The helper [sic] [helpee] reintroduces the same problem, again in new words; and again the helper responds accurately. The helper is obviously functioning at a 3.0 level. Yet, nothing is happening. The interaction is simply going around in a circle and ending up where it started. Should this situation arise, you may ask the trainee who is serving in the role of helpee to introduce new material' (Carkhuff 2000a, p. 56).

We recognise the behaviour, but disagree with Carkhuff's analysis of it. If the response is accurate, we question the assertion that the 'helper is **obviously** functioning at a 3.0 level'. (It might appear to be obvious because of the elastic latitude of the current measure.) It seems more accurate to conclude that the helper is **not** functioning **optimally** at level 3.0. In our experience, the way to break the 'unhelpful circle' is to use a Mark II response—with a dynamic verb and an intimate target—rather than to ask the 'helpee to introduce new material'. Unless the effectiveness of responses is elevated, the 'new material' is likely to meet the same fate—another unhelpful circle. The fact that Mark II responses are almost always effective in breaking the unhelpful circle suggests to us that they should become the benchmark for level 3.0 responses. Other Mark I responses can be re-rated against that benchmark.

Revision of the standard Carkhuff scale

At the outset, we want to acknowledge the utility of the current scale for general use. The proposed revisions are seen as being helpful in the professional training of counsellors, and are perhaps too detailed for human resource managers, clergy, teachers, and others who have a counselling component in executing their chosen profession. Furthermore, we need to declare that the numbers in the revised scale, in Table 13, (on page 254) are unlikely to have mathematical precision in terms of reflecting the degree of difference between different responses. **Their intended purpose is to sharpen discriminations during training.** Nevertheless, we believe that the rank order of the responses reflects the potency of responses to facilitate exploration. This confidence is underpinned by the collective experience of a team of highly competent and discerning trainers. We recognise a lack of formal research to support our revision. We hope that future research will add useful refinements.

The first broad discrimination to note in Table 13 is that there are three sections that relate to the link between the feeling and the remainder. The first section covers responses where the reason and the feeling are both 'current'. This section will use the definite 'because' or the tentative 'as if' as causal links. The second section covers responses where the feeling is 'conditional' upon an historical reason, using the link 'when', or a hypothetical reason, using the link word link 'if'. The third section covers the pseudo-3.0 responses that fail to specify a reason, because they use prepositions to link the feelings with other words or phrases. We have already noted that the elasticity of Carkhuff's scale would rate such responses at level 3.0. Historically we have rated these responses at 2.5—hence the 3.0/2.5 current rating in formats 9–11 in Table 13. The arguments for using 2.6 G, 2.6 s, and 2.6 Q can be recalled from page 217.

The second point to note is that we distinguish 'comprehensive' (C) from 'segmental' (S) throughout the table, but do not rate one above the other numerically. This is because we suggest that, during triad workgroups, trainees discuss whether or not an appropriate balance between 'response comprehensiveness' and 'client comprehension' was struck on the segmental—comprehensive continuum (see page 214).

The third point to note is that we have not covered all possible combinations of triggers and targets for the Mark II responses (numbers 1–3). It seems an unnecessary overload to include other than the A—B, C—D, and E—F combinations discussed on page 250. Furthermore, we have not included all combinations of the Mark I qualities. For example, we have rated a 'blanket' response 6 at a nominal 2.7. Our intention is that, by so doing, observer-coaches can easily draw attention to a deficiency, or deficiencies, of critical factors.

The final point to be made is that responses 9, 10, and 11 were rated at 2.6 in order to recognise them—not to ascribe a level of effectiveness to them. Our experience suggests that at least the 2.6 G and 2.6 S are on a par with 2.5 responses in terms of their functionality. A 2.6 Q response may offer sufficient additional stimulus words to add marginal effectiveness to a 2.5 response.

Revisions to standard Carkhuff scale—level 3.0			
No	Format	Rating	
		current	revised
	Current reason for feeling ('because' or 'as if')		
1	You feel ...because (intimate trigger) (dynamic verb) (intimate target, zone 2). (comprehensive or segmental)	3.0	3.0 C 3.0 S
2	You feel ...because (qualified trigger) (dynamic verb) (qualified target, zone 2). (comprehensive or segmental)	3.0	2.95 C 2.95 S
3	You feel ...because (specific trigger) (dynamic verb) (specific target, zone 2). (comprehensive or segmental)	3.0	2.9 C 2.9 S
4	You feel ...because (any trigger*) (dynamic verb) (target, zone 3 or 4). or You feel ...because (specific, succinct, external reason—no personal impact). (comprehensive or segmental)	3.0	2.85 C 2.85 S
5	You feel ...because (any trigger*) (copulative verb) (description of trigger). (comprehensive or segmental)	3.0	2.8 C 2.8 S
6	You feel ...because (the reason is not specific, succinct, externalised, or it qualifies a feeling with a feeling).	3.0	2.7
	Conditional reason for the feeling ('when', 'if', etc.)		
7	You feel ...when (any trigger) (dynamic verb) (any target).	3.0	2.0
8	You feel ...when (trigger) (dynamic or copulative verb) (description of trigger).	3.0	2.0
	No reason for the feeling ('about', 'because of', 'by', etc.)		
9	You feel ... about (qualified specific person, thing, event or client attribute).	3.0/2.5	2.6 Q
10	You feel ... about (specific person, thing, event, or client attribute).	3.0/2.5	2.6 S
11	You feel ... about (generalised non-specific, universal, 'the situation').	3.0/2.5	2.6 G
* In formats 4 and 5, 'any trigger' includes 'specific', 'qualified', or 'intimate' trigger, but excludes non-specific triggers such as 'the situation' and the like. Regardless of the quality of the trigger the lower ratings apply because: in (4) the target zones lack intimacy and in (5) simply describe the target.			

Table 13. Showing revisions to expand the Carkhuff scale that detail different degrees of interchangeable responsive intimacy.

Exercise 9: Discriminating revised response ratings

This exercise is best undertaken in a professional counselling skills training group. We suggest that each response be rated individually and then discussed. The task is quite tricky, and will require frequent referral back to Table 13. Its purpose is to help clarify the nature of the response elements, and to become familiar with them.

For some the exercise may seem too detailed. The ratings are complex, and are much less important than getting a sense of the different structures, and their relative effectiveness. Some responses are included that do not exactly match the rating scale. The first example is such a response. In example 1, the rating is ‘better than’ 2.9 and ‘not as good as’ 3.0. It is not important to take averages to ‘get it right’. It is much more useful to discuss the merits of the elements, and then generate ideas about **what could be said (as a coach) after having observed similar responses in practice sessions**. Such discussion is time consuming, but productive. It helps trainees refine their efforts during practice to move to their next level of difficulty with increased confidence.

Assume the accuracy of the responses. Use the space provided to give your reasons for your rating, and list any comment that you could make as a coach.

Our client Arthur says

‘I’m really trying to kick the drug habit since I became a Christian, but it’s not easy—you feel so awful, so alone, and you have these rotten mood-swings and cravings on and off. My friends still seem to be having a great time and they laugh at me for bothering to try to give up. The worst part is that Josie, that’s my girlfriend, is seeing me less and less—and she’s the one person I thought I could depend on. But I really thought she would support me. I don’t know why everyone’s letting me down—it’s as if they prefer me to die rather than get healthy. I don’t think it’s worth trying anymore.’

Response	My rating
<p>1. You feel dejected because your friends threaten your resolve to kick a habit that could ultimately destroy your body and wither your spirit.</p> <p>Notes: <i>This response has specific trigger and an intimate target. It would rate at 2.9 if the target was also specific—so it is better than 2.9, but not as good as 3.0 because the trigger is not intimate.</i></p> <p><i>As a coach, I would encourage the counsellor to try to construct a qualified trigger by asking the think step: ‘What is it about the friends that does the threatening?’. I would negotiate with the trainee about whether or not to then try to make the trigger intimate.</i></p>	<p>> 2.9 but < 3.0</p>
<p>2. You feel really cheesed-off with the way it’s all going.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	

<p>3. You feel really bitter because your friends' spiteful mockery throws cold water on your desire to give up drugs to the point where you almost give up trying.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>4. What I hear you saying is that, because you want to kick the habit, your friends laugh at you, and Josie is slowly opting out of your relationship, and that hurts like hell.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>5. You feel very scared when your unpredictable mood swings kick in so hard that your self-control goes right out the window.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>6. You feel quite dejected, Arthur, because your friends' abandonment seriously threatens your resolve to kick the habit, and virtually leaves you without any support.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>7. You feel dejected because, in different ways, your friends and Josie all threaten your present resolve.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>8. Arthur, you feel dejected because your friends' abandonment seriously threatens your present resolve.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>9. Arthur, you feel dejected because your friends' cruel and hurtful abandonment seriously threatens your resolve to kick a habit that could ultimately destroy your body and wither your spirit.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	

<p>10. You feel really hurt, Arthur, because your friends, including Josie, are unaware of just how hard it is for you to ‘hang in’ on the detox program.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>11. You feel rejected because Josie seems to be winding down your relationship with her.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>12. You feel deeply troubled when Josie backs off and you start thinking that maybe she wouldn’t care if you actually died.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>13. You feel rotten because your world is a mess at present and you aren’t handling things well right now—there is just too much going on.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>14. Arthur, you feel dejected because your friends’ abandonment seriously threatens your resolve to kick a habit that could ultimately destroy your body and wither your spirit.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>15. Arthur, you are really troubled by the way your mates mock you, and by Josie’s waning interest in your relationship.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>16. You feel really down because Josie really dashes your hopes for successful rehabilitation.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	

<p>17. Arthur, you feel really dejected because Josie’s progressive withdrawal from your relationship highlights her unwillingness to support you when you need her most.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>18. You feel very hurt because of the way that Josie is opting out.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>19. You feel pretty rotten, Arthur, because Josie’s loss of interest was totally unexpected.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	
<p>20. Arthur, you feel quite despondent because your friends’ abandonment really threatens your resolve to kick your addiction to drugs.</p> <p>Notes:</p>	

The ratings and explanatory notes for Exercise 9 are on page 484.

Summary

This chapter offers a new, ‘advanced’ systematic way of structuring level 3.0 responses that are more effective in facilitating client exploration than previously described strategies. For descriptive convenience, the advanced responses are called Mark II responses, and all previous approaches referred to as Mark I.

The opening discussion challenged the universal acceptance of the Mark I proposition that the ‘reason for the feeling’ is in fact the actual reason—in spite of the fact that generations of clients have been happy to affirm that this is so. We have argued that an external agent can do no more than trigger an internal reaction to which one ascribes a personal meaning which, in turn, determines the emotional response. As a consequence, the Mark II format was developed to ensure that ‘reason for the feeling’ spelled out the dynamic impact that the external agent had on the client.

A grammatical analysis of a Mark I and Mark II response to the same statement showed that the major difference between them was that Mark I responses mostly **described** some aspect of the external agent, where Mark II responses always said what the external agent **did to the client**. This dynamic action was made more specific by describing client ‘target zones’ of differing degrees of intimacy.

The skill steps for producing Mark II responses were listed, and an example of how these are applied was detailed. Resource lists of ‘destructive’ and ‘constructive’ dynamic verbs were supplied to assist the structuring of Mark II responses.

Attention was drawn to the fact that the range of possible Mark I responses (at level 3.0) seemed too broad in terms of their effectiveness to warrant the same rating. Such elasticity was seen as undesirable in the training of professional counsellors, because it legitimised trainee counsellors producing ‘bland’ responses without comment from observer/coaches. Such blandness frequently failed to facilitate exploration, and led the counselling interaction spiralling into the unhelpful ‘level 3.0 circle’. This suggested the need for some revision of the standard Carkhuff rating scale so that practising counsellors and observers are better able to recognise relative differences of effectiveness between responses. The revised ratings are experientially based rather than research based. The ratings rank the alternatives in terms of relative effectiveness, but do not necessarily denote the degree of difference between them.

What advanced responding is

Advanced responding is a new way of responding to another at level 3.0.

What advanced responding does

Advanced responding performs the following operational tasks:

- focuses on immediate information;
- communicates an understanding of:
 - the person, thing or event that triggers an internal, personal reaction;
 - what the trigger specifically **does** to the person being responded to (client);
 - what specific personal zone is targeted by the trigger;
- uses feedback to check accuracy of the understanding;
- amends inaccuracies before considering new information.

The above operations ensure the following functions:

- communicate an intimate understanding of how the client is impacted by their external world;
- stimulate client exploration in ways that many Mark I responses do not,
- enhance the functions of Mark I responses by:
 - clarifying uncertainties and avoiding confusion;
 - encouraging, motivating and facilitating freedom to explore issues;
 - leading to an understanding and acceptance of current reality;
 - communicating care and interest;
 - avoiding blame or accusation;
 - earning counsellor credibility;
 - generating trust and openness;
 - expanding client awareness of their ‘current truth’.

Why advanced responding is important

If one responds with empathic intimacy to the specific, personal aspects of a client that are dynamically impacted by external agents, then clients are likely to be able to explore

confusing issues with greater effectiveness, efficiency, depth, and clarity so that whatever follows is built upon what is substantial and real for them.

When advanced responding is used

Advanced responding is especially useful in a professional counselling setting to enhance client exploration, and to break the impasse of the unhelpful 'level 3.0 circle'. It may have applications in general discussion, or in offering personal support to others.

How to structure an advanced response

The skill steps for responding to at an advance level is to:

- attend, observe and listen to the client;
- identify the current feeling;
- identify the specific trigger (that can be seen as the cause of the emotion);
- qualify the trigger—to say what particular aspect of the trigger contributes to the feeling;
- make the trigger intimate—to communicate an understanding of how the client perceives the qualified trigger;
- identify what the intimate trigger does to impact the client;
- identify the specific personal attribute that is targeted by the trigger;
- qualify the target—to say how, in particular, the personal attribute is effected;
- make the target intimate—to communicate an understanding of the personal consequences of the impact on the client;
- couch the advanced response in language that is familiar to the client;
- rehearse the responses and check it against the client's statement;
- make the response to the client and note its accuracy or otherwise from their visual or verbal feedback.

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My learning about advanced responding

Write in your own words

What advanced responding is:

What advanced responding does:

Why advanced responding is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own advanced responding skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my advanced responding:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Client exploration

Preamble

Previous chapters have made reference to the fact that different qualities of counsellor responses facilitate different degrees of client exploration. The emphasis in those chapters was on the skills of the counsellor. We now need to recognise that the outcome of the first phase of the counselling process is also a function of the **willingness** and the **skill** of clients to engage in **self-exploration**—an activity that it is usually simply shortened to ‘exploration’.

In this text, ‘exploration’ refers to an internal activity that is ‘client-directed’. By this we mean that clients control what they talk about. They determine whether responses made to their statements are accurate or not. In the presence of effective responses, clients gain new insights into personal aspects not previously considered. In short, as clients explore, they become more self-aware of their ‘blind spots’, and who they are. Egan describes an exploratory strategy that is ‘expert directed’. This strategy also seeks to help clients deal with their blind spots by asking a series of ‘challenging’ questions (Egan 1998, pp. 146–200). In many ways Egan’s strategy serves a similar purpose to the personalising process that is yet to be discussed. In our view Egan’s approach is less preferred because expert directed activities tend to predetermine the areas to be explored. In our experience clients access, ‘own’, and deal with their blind spots more effectively when personal relevance emerges under the client’s own control.

This chapter: (1) offers an opportunity for readers to undertake a simple review of their current ability to self-explore; (2) describes the nature and function of exploration; (3) describes discernable levels of exploration; (4) discusses how people learn, and use, the skills of exploration; (5) reviews some research that shows the relationship between different levels of ‘helping’, and different levels of ‘helpee’ exploration; (6) provides a written discrimination test.

Reviewing current competence

One’s competence at self-exploration is reflected in one’s level of self-awareness. We are not talking here about the numerous questionnaires and psychological tests that can add to our self-awareness. Here, we are simply concerned with how skilfully we ‘enlighten’ ourselves about ourselves as our lives unfold through time. A simple way to assess this

is to ask ourselves: ‘How do I talk to myself about myself in critical moments?’. Assess your typical ‘self-talk’ (when things go wrong) against the standard Carkhuff scale. You will have a general preference for: berating yourself at level 1 (God! I’m an idiot!); giving yourself initiatives at level 1.5 (Come on—pull yourself together!); or responding at various levels through to 3.0 (right now, I am stumped because I really do not have the know-how to break this impasse). Such self talk will be discussed later in this chapter.

Client exploration

The nature and function of exploration

It is impossible to explore the personal significance of our world without conscious introspection that relates to it. Effective exploring leads to an understanding of what our experience means to us—how thoughts and feelings and events ‘fit’ (or otherwise) with our values—and how contented (or otherwise) we are at being who we currently are. Effective exploring leads to personal clarity about where we currently ‘are’ in life, and thereby establishes the only pertinent vantage point from which to envisage the future wants or needs that will lead to our fulfilment—towards the actualising of our potential. Effective exploring is always personally relevant, up to date, and expressed to oneself with clarity. Exploration leads to understanding and action. It underpins all learning.

Very few people are able to sustain effective exploration. Such people are fully aware of who they are, and what they are doing (and why) at any given moment. Some may perform this on a random basis in particular circumstances. Others ‘get by’ with occasional exploration at minimally effective levels. Others lack skills of self-exploration, and are only superficially aware of who they really are, and frequently live unfulfilled lives by conceding to the random (often unhelpful) initiatives suggested by others.

Levels of exploration

Carkhuff appears to be the most productive researcher of self-exploration. Initially, he developed a five point scale to discriminate different levels of exploration. We currently, limit these discriminations to three levels. They are Carkhuff’s original level 5—now called ‘high’; level 3—now called ‘medium’; and level 1—now called ‘low’. Carkhuff’s original definitions of these three levels still generally pertain.

High exploration

High exploration (H) is where ‘the helpee actively and spontaneously engages in an inward probing to newly discovered feelings or experiences about himself [sic] and his world’ (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 39). In general terms, we see high exploration as the client gaining insight into their blind spots, or making links between aspects of their world that they had previously deemed to be unrelated. It is at this level that the experience of disarray becomes progressively clarified and ordered. It is at this level that new meaning can be ascribed to what has become ordered. Those who are able to gain new insights into their personal experiences of their own volition are referred to as ‘high explorers’.

Medium exploration

Medium exploration (M) is where ‘the helpee voluntarily introduces discussion of personally relevant material, but does so in a mechanical manner and without demonstrating emotional feeling’ (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 39). We see medium exploration as a willingness to discuss historical material (that may or may not include an emotional component) that is not ‘news’ to the client, but could be news to the counsellor.

Low exploration

Low exploration (L) is where ‘the helpee does not discuss personally relevant material either because he (sic) has had no opportunity to do so, or because he is actively evading the discussion even when it is introduced by the helper’ (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 38). In general terms we see low exploration as a reactive state that focuses on external rather than personal factors. Those who are never able to gain such insights without assistance are referred as ‘low explorers’.

Trainees seem to appreciate the summary analogy of Captain Cook’s exploits. He is a real explorer (H) when charting unknown waters. He is merely a kind of ‘tour guide’ (M) when he trudges around the familiar, home-town streets. He is agoraphobic (L) when he says indoors and resents visitors.

Client skills and exploration

The ability to self-explore is underpinned by both general intelligence and verbal fluency but, in our experience, superior functioning in these areas, alone, does not guarantee skilled exploration. The critical dimensions seem to be both a predisposition, the skill, and a willingness to explore.

Predisposition to explore

Not all people are driven to maintain ongoing self-awareness. Some seek to understand themselves only from external sources—the opinions of friends, popular psychology texts, and attendance at various short courses that focus on ‘self-improvement’. Others focus inwardly to explore the nature of their experience, and its personal significance both in terms of current meaning and future implications. This is most effective when data from external sources is incorporated in the internal reflections. The quality of such exploration depends on two things—the area being explored, and the skill level of the explorer.

A series of studies in 1967 showed that the combined data from high and low functioning subjects showed ‘a pronounced relation between levels of **inter**-personal functioning and **intra**-personal exploration in a given area’ (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 40). This simply says that the more responsive one is to others, the more likely, and the more effectively, one will explore particular areas of one’s own experience. The research also noted a tendency for people to explore more effectively in the areas where they were more functional, and less well in areas where they functioned less well—the very areas where crises are more likely to occur, and where skilled exploration needs to occur. It is at this point that dependence on one’s own skills of exploring may require the facilitative support of a skilled counsellor.

The skills of exploration

We have already noted that responsive people tend to be better self-explorers. This is simply because they respond to their own experience as they would to another. The sad observation is that most people have never learned to respond empathically to others—let alone themselves. The sad truth is that the authority figures who influenced the development of most people held up images of what they (others) **should** be like—rather than respond to what they **were** like (at the time) and so offer a foundation on which to build what they **could** become. Consequently, many people, as adults, talk to themselves in the same way that they were spoken to as children—sometimes at level 1.0 (‘you idiot!’ and other self-deprecations), and quite often at 1.5 (‘you should!’ and other inappropriate advice or random initiatives). It is possible that this tendency may

have surfaced in the review of current competence. If so, the good news is that when circumstances muddy the waters of one's self-awareness, clarity can be restored by simply responding to oneself (at 3.0) so that implications can be drawn, and dealt with.

Willingness to explore

People generally only seek help from others when their own resources are unable to resolve some current issue. Regardless of the need to explore their issue, there is almost always a reluctance to reveal details of intensely personal aspects until clients have had opportunity to 'suss out' the competence of the counsellor. We have already seen that this assessment can begin when arranging the appointment (see page 104). However, when the preliminaries are concluded, and the client senses that the counsellor is both caring and authentic, the willingness of the client to explore (even at a medium level) is now dependent upon the responsive skills of the counsellor.

The mechanics of mobilising willingness to explore work a bit like this. The client makes an opening statement to which the counsellor responds. If the response accurately matches the client's experience, then the counsellor will earn an increment of credibility in the eyes of the client. If this sequence recurs for several responses, the counsellor earns sufficient credibility (for the vast majority of clients) to appear trustworthy. Clients then tend to feel a little freer to share more intimate material (and safer to probe 'murky' areas). If responses continue to be effective, clients will share more, particularly if the responses are intimate. High level explorers will tend to uncover their own blind spots in the presence of effective responses. Low level explorers depend on the responses to help them make exploratory links and may, over time, actually learn to explore for themselves from the modelling of the counsellor. If, in the early stages, the counsellor's responses are not effective (inaccurate, or accurate but 'bland') then the client is far less likely to share new material, and the pair engage in the unhelpful 'level 3.0 circle'.

As the process continues, sufficient new insights will occur for the client to become clear about the nature of the issue being discussed, where they stand in relation to it, and what they may be doing to perpetuate the issue. Evidence of this, and other indicators, will signal that the client has explored enough, and the counsellor will move into the next phase of the process—personalising—to be discussed in Chapter 13.

The relationship between counsellor and client skills

The mid-1960's was a period of intense research across a range of helping dimensions. During that period there was a series of process studies that looked at the relationship between 'helper level of functioning' and 'helpee level of exploration'. To appreciate the significance of these studies, we need to understand the way that responses were rated at the time.

The rating of 'helper-offered conditions' differed from the current standard Carkhuff rating scale (introduced on page 190) in the way that they were labelled, but they embodied similar levels of effectiveness. The earlier scale reflected the two stages of helping that the research had identified at the time—the 'facilitation' phase to explore an issue, and the 'action' phase to resolve the issue. (The personalising skills had not then been identified). The earlier ratings were determined by combinations of 'high' and 'low' facilitative (empathic) dimensions together with 'high' (H) and 'low' (L) action oriented statements. For example, a response was rated at level 3.0 if it was 'highly facilitative' and 'low on action orientation' (labelled HL). For a full description of the structure of the original scale see Chapter 8 in Carkhuff (1984).

The findings of the process studies led the researchers to further studies and process refinements. We include them here because of the practical implications that can be drawn for counsellors, and indeed, with some licence, to give insights into important aspects of organisational functioning. Our discussion will proceed as if the ratings of the 'helper-offered condition' shown in the original graphs match the ratings of the current Carkhuff rating scale—the similarities are sufficiently close to highlight the principles, but attention will be drawn to some apparent discrepancies.

The effects of withdrawing quality responses from low explorers

The first group of studies involved helpers who were proficient in responding at level 3.0, and helpees who were low explorers. The experimental design required the helper to respond at level 3.0 for the first third of the therapy hour (often considered to be 50 minutes), then withdraw 'hovering attentiveness' and respond at level 1.5 for the second third, and then, with full attentiveness, respond at level 3.0 for the final third of the interview (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p. 177). The experimental task was to determine how such shifts might effect the low level explorers. The bottom curve in Figure 24 shows how dependent low-level explorers were on the skills of the helper. Exploration virtually stopped during the period when the helper withdrew effective responses. Exploration resumed in the third period at the same level that occurred in the first period.

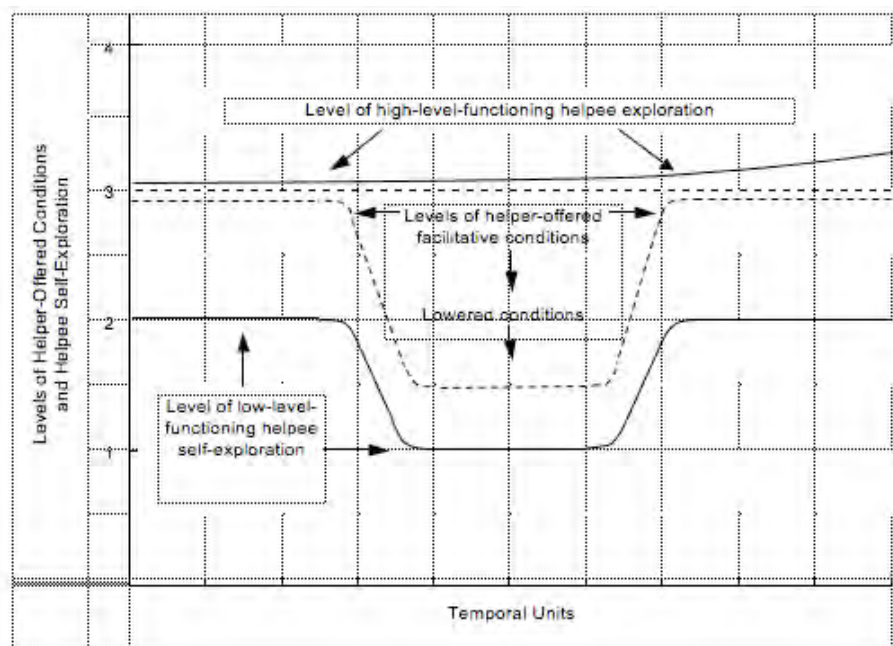


Figure 24. Showing the effects of the experimental manipulation of a high-level-functioning helper's facilitative conditions (responsiveness) upon the self-exploration of both low and high functioning explorers.. From *Helping & Humanrelations Volume II*, by Robert R. Carkhuff. Copyright © 1984. Used by permission of the publisher, HRD Press, Amherst, MA 800-822-2801, www.hrdpress.com.

The first of these studies was conducted by Truax and Carkhuff in 1965. The helpees were inpatient schizophrenics. Holder, Carkhuff and Berenson had similar results in 1967. Their helpees were low-level functioning college students (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 25). Cannon and Pierce replicated the 1965 results—again where the helpees were inpatient schizophrenic patients (cited in Carkhuff 1984a, p. 24). The researchers concluded that 'the relatively high-level-functioning helpers influenced the low-level-functioning

helppees' level of functioning by the level of facilitative conditions they offered. When the helper offered high levels of conditions the helpee explored himself [sic] at high levels; when the helper offered low levels of conditions the helpee explored himself at low levels' (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 25).

A practical implication

A simple implication of this study is that normally effective counsellors need to 'take stock' if, for any reason (fatigue, preoccupation, boredom, etc.), their effectiveness seriously lapses—especially when working with low level explorers. It might be time for a break, early termination, or skills revival! Vicky recalls one particular client with a serious relationship issue—he simply 'bored the pants' off those around him. She was not immune. A little way into a particular session, Vicky was 'infected', and her effectiveness suffered. She took stock, stopped responding, and used her 'immediacy' skills (page 98) to declare how she too felt a drowsiness in his presence. This feedback improved the quality of dialogue from that point on.

The effects of withdrawing facilitative responses from high explorers

A similar study to those previously described was conducted by Piaget, Berenson and Carkhuff, (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 26). The only difference was that the helppees in this study were naturally high-explorers. The results were markedly different. The high-level explorers continued to explore their personal experience when the quality of responses was lowered, and went on to consider some kind of remedial action after the effective helper condition were restored. The results are shown in the upper curve in Figure 24 on page 266.

A practical implication

A practical implication of this study is that high self-explorers will continue to 'work' even if normally high functioning counsellors suffer minor lapses in effectiveness—but the ideal scenario—but comforting for counsellors!

The effects of withdrawing mediocre responses from explorers

In a different process study conducted by Piaget, Berenson and Carkhuff (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 25) a low-functioning helper responded at level 2.0 for the first third of the therapy hour, then withdrew those 'mediocre' responses to talk about themselves, or respond to helpee statements at level 1.0 during the second period. In the third period the helper resumed responding at level 2.0. The helper interacted with both high level explorers and low level explorers.

The lower curve in Figure 25 shows that during the first period, the low-level explorers seemed able to 'tell their story' (medium exploration) to the low functioning helper. However, during the second period, the low explorers discontinued discussion that was relevant to their issue. Furthermore, when the level 2.0 responses were reinstated, the helpee did not resume exploration at the previous level. The results were similar for high explorers. The upper curve in Figure 25 shows that in the early stages of the interaction they were not only able to share their stories but were able to gain clarifying insights for themselves as they spoke. However, during the second period they started to 'wind down' their self-exploration, and this trend continued until the interaction concluded.

The researchers' conclusion was that 'if a helpee is cast in a relationship with a low-level helper *and cedes him [sic] the power in the relationship*, he will deteriorate over time, with those helppees functioning at the lowest level deteriorating most rapidly, although others will deteriorate just as surely' (Carkhuff 1984a, p. 27). This conclusion gives further

substance to the discussion that follows Gendlin's earlier observations about 'destructive' helping (see page 15).

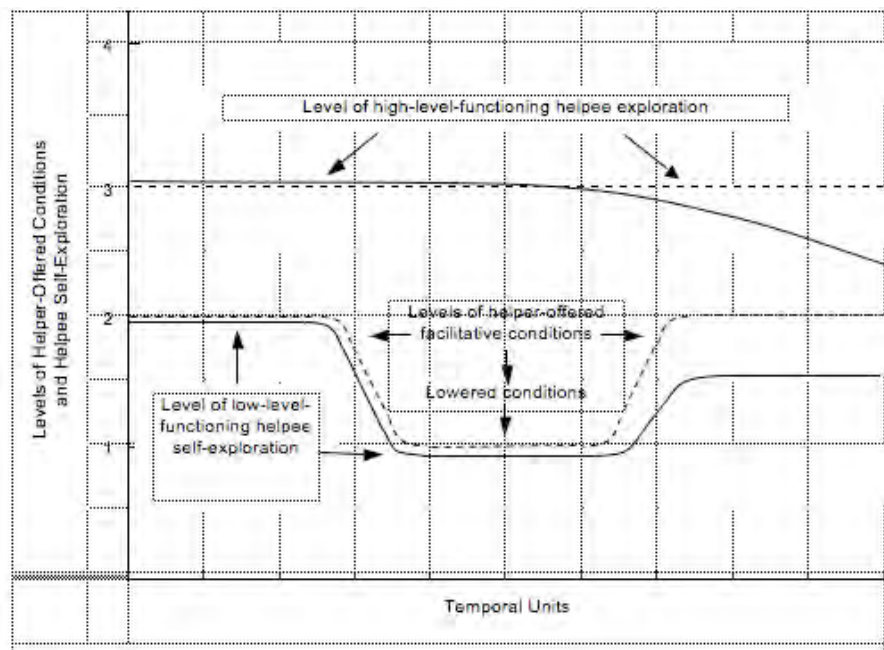


Figure 25. Showing the effects of the experimental manipulation of a low-level-functioning helper's facilitative conditions (responsiveness) upon the self-exploration of both low and high functioning explorers.. From *Helping & Humanrelations Volume II*, by Robert R. Carkhuff. Copyright © 1984. Used by permission of the publisher, HRD Press, Amherst, MA 800-822-2801, www.hrdpress.com.

Some practical implications

This study challenges practitioners, supervisors, and professional associations to ensure that skill levels are maintained at effective levels. Failure to do so is to accept payment for contributing to the deterioration of others.

The study suggests that clients should not concede power to practitioners who are unable to communicate an ongoing, accurate understanding of the client's experience at both emotional and intellectual levels. A further implication is that clients should terminate their relationship with such practitioners, and seek help elsewhere.

Implications for organisations

In what might be a fanciful generalisation of the study's conclusions, we have reflected on the impact of leadership on staff in organisations. Through discussions with people in a number of organisations, we have concluded that where leadership does not interact collaboratively with staff, or where it ignores or rejects the experience and initiatives of staff, the outcomes match those of this study—people start to withdraw. Commitment goes first, then follows a psychological withdrawal where people just go 'through the motions'. The 'smart ones' then withdraw physically, and seek work elsewhere. Those who stay on lose energy, use up their sick leave, and 'ride it out' until retirement.

This cameo differs markedly if we make similar generalisations about organisations that have an empathic leadership that is responsive to staff experience and initiatives. In such places, the patterns tend to reflect similar outcomes—many of the rank and file follow the influence of the leadership—they are happy to be concessional to functional leadership. The big plus in such organisations is that the 'high flyers' are 'given their

head' by leadership and their creativity is additive and rewarded, and the business thrives. Staff grow and stay committed.

The effect on helpers when helpees manipulate levels of exploration

A further group of process studies, by Alexik and Carkhuff (1967); Carkhuff and Alexik (1967); and Friel, Kratochvil and Carkhuff (1968), changed the previous experimental design. Here the behaviours of **helpers** were being observed in a situation where a female helpee manipulated the process to experimentally introduce a 'crisis' for helpers (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p. 180). She had been instructed 'to explore herself deeply during the first third of an interview, to talk only about irrelevant and impersonal details during the middle third, and to explore herself deeply again during the final third of the interview'. The impact produced marked differences between high and low functioning helpers.

The upper curve in Figure 26 shows that up until the 'crisis' point at the end of the first period, the high functioning helper responded at level 3.0. During the middle period, this helper 'was able to relate seemingly irrelevant material to personally meaningful experiences of the helpee... the helper stretched to tune in on its meaning [to the extent that] it was difficult indeed for the helpee to maintain her mental set [of producing irrelevancies]' (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p. 182). When the helpee resumed exploring in the final third, the high-functioning helper maintained a high level of responsiveness.

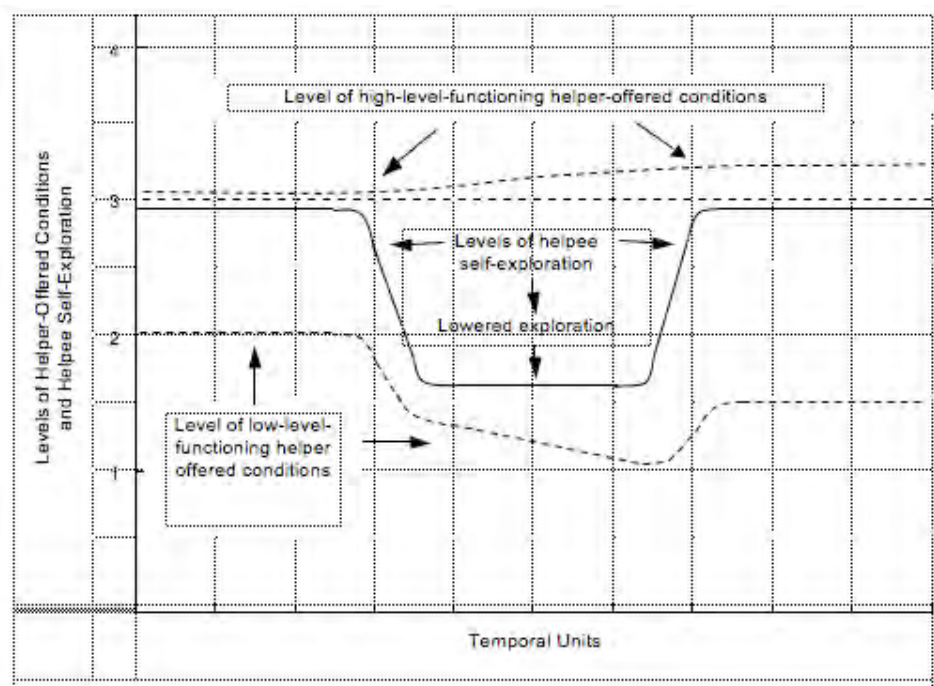


Figure 26. Showing the effects of experimental manipulation of helpee self-exploration upon helper-offered conditions. From *Helping & Humanrelations Volume II*, by Robert R. Carkhuff. Copyright © 1984. Used by permission of the publisher, HRD Press, Amherst, MA 800-822-2801, www.hrdpress.com.

[Excerpts from the interaction transcripts (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, pp. 182–184) suggest that the helper responses shown above level 3.0 in the second and third periods do not fit the current understanding of the ratings for the personalising skills (above 3.0), however the responses include both a facilitative component and some orientation to action—the criteria used in the original rating scale that would justify the elevation.]

The lower curve in Figure 26 shows that low-functioning helpers behaved quite differently to high-functioning helpers. Some of the low-functioning helpers' responses in the transcript of the initial period were limited or woolly (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, pp. 184–186). After the 'crisis point' (the beginning of the middle period), the helpee completely led a disjointed chat about irrelevancies—including the weather. During this period, the researchers noted that the helper 'appeared to feel more comfortable' (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, p.186). In the final period 'the helper does not quite return to the level at which he was functioning during the first period of the study' (Carkhuff and Berenson 1977, p.187). The helper's responses seemed marginally related to the helpee's statements, but the platitudes went nowhere.

The same helpee interacted with a number of helpers. Each time she discussed the same issue. Her comments are revealing:

I must mention that as an inexperienced layman, albeit a beginning student in counseling, I had anticipated that I would learn a bit more about my self, particularly in regard to the techniques, from experienced counselors. I had absolutely no forewarning that I would be so appalled at the destructiveness of some of the helpers nor that I would be so excited by the facilitative ones. I had not really envisioned that there would be differences that I could so easily detect. After all, these were highly trained, experienced helpers, each of whom counseled several helpees daily. ... With some I came away feeling that I had a glimpse of a real human being in a genuine encounter, and that this person had some understanding and appreciation of me as a human being. I felt that I had learned and could learn more about myself and life from this individual and was, therefore, hopeful of finding a better way of living. With others, I came away feeling that the helper had been totally indifferent to me and to my needs, either because of his own needs, or because he was incapable of feeling for me, that I had not only learned nothing from the encounter, but also that I left feeling very depressed and hopeless. ...With some I felt sympathy—with others I felt disgust and anger that they should be allowed to be in the so-called "helping" profession (Carkhuff & Berenson 1977, pp. 186–187).

This experience of the 'manipulative client' is by no means unique. McLeod has summarised the research studies of client's experience of counselling and psychotherapy between 1951 and 1985. Regardless of the counsellors' theoretical orientation, clients perceived them as 'helpful or hindering' depending their warmth, their 'with-ness' and whether or not they appeared to 'have their act together' personally (McLeod, in Mearns & Dryden, 1990).

Practical implications

It seems crystal clear that practitioners, employing agencies and professional bodies should employ means to monitor skill levels to ensure that helping truly helps. Where this is not the case, skills training is of paramount importance. Where this is not effective, practitioners should cease practicing for their own sake as well as for that of their clients. This is most important in Australia, where professional registration is not mandatory at present.

We have known a number of dysfunctional people in various helping roles who, over time, have become shrivelled, cynical, and in some cases exploitative. Over the same period we have observed growth, fulfilment, and wisdom reflected in the lives of effective colleagues. It is critical to their own wellbeing that 'experts' are expert!

Exercise 10: Rating levels of exploration

This exercise will help readers to discriminate different levels of client exploration. These discriminations are important to help counsellors: (1) assess the natural ability of clients to self-explore; (2) assess the effectiveness of their responses; and (3) recognise when it is appropriate to proceed to the personalising phase of the counselling process.

Read through the client statements below. Assume that these statements are rejoinders to a response from a counsellor, and rate the levels of exploration in accordance with the following three level scale:

- **low (L)**—the client does not talk about personally relevant material, negotiates the response, or is reactive to it;
- **medium (M)**—the client relates personal thoughts and feelings of which they are currently aware (some of these thoughts may be new to the counsellor but not the client);
- **high (H)**—the client voices some new insight—discovers something about themselves of which they were hitherto unaware.

Write down the reasons for your choice.

Client statement 1

'I'm sure my colleague at work is drinking too much. I can sometimes smell drink on him first thing in the morning. I've noticed that he doesn't seem to be as with it as he should. He'll get sacked if he's not careful.'

Level of exploration:

Reason:

Client statement 2

'You're right. I am scared. Having to go back for more tests implies that they've found something not right in my last mammogram. I don't know how I'll deal with bad news. I can now see that I have a tendency to think the worst, but I'm terrified that I may be going to die.'

Level of exploration:

Reason:

Client statement 3

'That's rubbish! Everyone is selfish these days. It's modelled by parents and teachers, but it's big business and Government that are the worst. No-one cares about the little man anymore.'

Level of exploration:

Reason:

Client statement 4

'True enough! I felt terrible when he called me into his office. My knees shook and my throat was dry. It was like I was back at school being told off.'

Level of exploration:

Reason:

Client statement 5

'That's so. I've got a thing about swearing. I especially hate it when a woman swears. It just seems unladylike to me. Do you think it makes me a fuddy-duddy?'

Level of exploration:

Reason:

Client statement 6

'Thank God, I've at last found someone who seems to be able to understand my way of doing things. I've seen two other therapists, and they made me feel like a freak. They tried to push me to do something about my marriage. I'm sure they were trying to be helpful, but I know I need time to think things through. I've always been a bit slow to get on with things. Usually I found it is best for me in the long run.'

Level of exploration:

Reason:

Client statement 7

'When you put it that way I can see that I must come across as autocratic or defensive. Gee, I didn't realise that. I must seem like a real pain to people sometimes. How galling to realise that.'

Level of exploration:

Reason:

Client statement 8

'This is really exciting! I think I can now see how to get around the issue with Ben. The steps we've talked about will be so helpful. I can't believe it has taken me so long to see why we have been having difficulties. I feel terrific!'

Level of exploration:

Reason:

Client statement 9

'I went to the doctor and she said I needed help. I could have told her that! Doctors are useless, they tell you the obvious, and shut you up with a prescription. There ought to be better selection criteria for doctors. Some might know their stuff but they can't relate as human beings.'

Level of exploration:**Reasons****Client statement 10**

'Hmm, I am starting to feel a great sadness as we talk. It really hurts. It has been so long since I have felt such deep emotion. I guess I have kept it all in for years. It scares me'.

Level of exploration:**Reasons:**

The ratings for Exercise 10 are on page 485.

Summary

What exploring is

Exploring is a personal, individual review and extension of thoughts, feelings and ideas.

What exploring does

Effective exploring:

- provides opportunity to review where one stands in relation to an issue;
- progressively integrates the emotional and the rational;
- assists the consideration of aspects not previously addressed;
- links seemingly unrelated elements in ways that makes increasing sense;
- raises consciousness and understanding of the self.

Why exploring is important

If one is able to explore all aspects of a situation, then one is able to understand more fully and clearly so that one feels more 'whole', and aware of one's relationship to significant others, things and events.

When exploration is used

Exploration is used:

- whenever one experiences uncertainty or disarray;
- after any action—so that one can ascribe its meaning.

How to explore

The skill steps which lead to effective exploration are:

- attend, observe, listen and respond to oneself, or (if this is not possible for any reason);
- seek out a trusted person who is more functional than oneself, in the moment, and have them attend, observe, listen and respond to you.

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My learning about exploration

Write in your own words

What exploration is:

What exploration does:

Why exploration is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own exploration skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my self-exploration:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Confrontation skills

Preamble

The very word ‘confront’ needs to be confronted! Its meaning derives from the Latin *con*, short for *contra* meaning ‘opposite’, and *frons*, or *front*, meaning forehead or face (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary). Literally speaking, then, to confront is to be face to face. The quirk is that the word, now, has a number of ‘faces’. Many people avoid confronting others, or being confronted by them, from fear of the word’s ugliest and most familiar faces—hostility, defiance, and opposition. A gentler face sees confrontation as ‘setting face to face or side by side for purposes of comparison’ (Oxford) or ‘bringing together for examination or comparison’ (Macquarie).

A quick review of the counselling literature highlights some of the features of the different faces. Gardner is said to be the first person to describe confrontation as a specific therapeutic technique for ‘resolving recalcitrant client insight versus action difficulties’ (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 9). Gardner’s confrontations were mostly of a hypothetical nature—rather than arising from his personal experience of his patients. In a sense, this approach confronts clients with an ‘expert’ face.

Egan noted that, ‘The history of psychology has seen periods when irresponsible confrontation was justified by “honesty”’ (Egan 1998, p. 148). One such period spanned the 1960’s to 1980’s when ‘Encounter’ groups encouraged complete candour in face to face (confrontational) expressions of approval, affection, criticism, dislike, anger, or other expression—often in 24 hour ‘marathons’ that were seen as both honest and open. For many, such confrontational encounters by unbridled faces were personally demeaning and damaging. This may explain why Egan has chosen to use the word ‘challenge’ instead of ‘the more hard-hitting term confrontation’. Egan’s notion of ‘challenge’ ‘involves a set of communication skills that are to be used in all stages and steps of the helping process’ (Egan 1998, p. 148). Egan’s discussion of such skills, however, does not include a number of the specific skills discussed later in this chapter.

Extensive studies by Berenson and Mitchell (1974) delineated five distinct types of confrontation called: ‘experiential’, ‘didactic’, ‘strength’, ‘weakness’, and ‘encouragement to action’—to be detailed later in this chapter. Each serves a particular function. All such confrontations are initiated by the counsellor. They are not hypothetically derived. They emerge from the counsellor’s experience of the client or of life. These

confrontations have strong, caring faces that, in the moment, can create a ‘mini-crisis’ whose resolution can also lead to reflection, clarity, or constructive action for the client.

Geldard and Geldard (2001) encourage counsellors to examine their motives for confronting clients. They warn against confronting with an impatient, pompous, or angry face, and add a timely reminder that confrontation should not occur until a trusting relationship has been established with the client. The examples they provide fit exclusively into Berenson and Mitchell’s ‘experiential’ category. Geldard and Geldard (2001, p. 153) suggest that confrontations include ‘a statement of the counsellor’s present feeling’, for example, ‘puzzled’ (by the disparity). We acknowledge this useful refinement. We have not included this in our training formats, but will now do so.

George and Cristiani (1990) give examples of four different forms of feedback. They are all confrontational in the sense that they occur in face to face interactions. The first form provides examples that confront discrepancies in client data. These all fit Berenson and Mitchell’s ‘experiential’ category. In our view, their other three forms exemplify the more discrete skills of ‘reframing’, ‘immediacy’, and ‘questioning’—not confrontation.

In 1988, Nelson-Jones proposed three main categories of confrontation: (1) facilitative confrontation; (2) hot-seat confrontation; and (3) didactic/interpretive confrontation. In this categorisation, facilitative confrontation included examples of Berenson and Mitchell’s ‘experiential’ and ‘didactic’ types, together with an example of reframing. Hot-seat confrontations were used to ‘indicate loud and clear that they are not prepared to collude in their client’s fantasy worlds, illusions, defences and smoke screens’ (Nelson-Jones 1988, p. 77). Nelson-Jones reminded readers that Fritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt therapy, worked in this category of confrontation, and placed clients in the hot-seat and confronted them until they communicated directly’. Perls apparently had a ‘do or die’ approach to therapy. He likened clients who were ‘stuck’ as being like a ‘blue baby; it can’t breathe for itself and it can’t breathe through its mother any longer, so it either learns to support itself or it dies’ (cited in Feiss 1979, p. 4). Berenson and Mitchell (1974) were very critical of ‘specialists’ in confrontation, and argued that confrontations must be used in an empathic climate—not from an ‘expert’ position. Nelson-Jones sees didactic/interpretive confrontations as a means of helping clients see how they sustain their problems. In a later edition, Nelson-Jones made it clear that he did not advocate ‘hot-seat’ confrontation, and excluded reference to them (Nelson-Jones 1992, p. 143).

In 1979, Carkhuff and Anthony (1979) drafted the first version of a skills ‘template’ for creating experiential confrontations. In doing so, they were insistent that such tools should be used cautiously, if at all. Their warning was made at a time when confrontation was ‘fashionable’ to ‘jolt’ helpees into a recognition of their problem areas. It is of historic interest that, by 2000, Carkhuff no longer included confrontation skills in his *Art of Helping* series (Carkhuff 2000, 2000a, 2000b). The omission may be because Berenson and Mitchell concluded that ‘Confrontation is never *necessary*. Confrontation is never *sufficient*...’ (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 106).

The quote immediately above is incomplete. It continues... ‘In the hands of those few who have the right to help, confrontation may be *efficient*’ (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 106). ‘Those few who have the right to help’, refers to those with a full repertoire of the other helping skills described in this text. So, in spite of the many perspectives and many faces of confrontation, we choose to draw on the most helpful concepts from the literature, particularly from Berenson and Mitchell, to provide a suite of training formats for learning the skills of confrontation in different areas of application.

Reviewing current competence

To determine a learning baseline for confrontation skills we suggest that readers reflect on the following questions to heighten personal awareness of current behaviour.

1. What do I mean by ‘confrontation?’
2. How comfortable am I in pointing out to others that they give ‘mixed messages’, and how do I go about it?
3. How comfortable am I in pointing out to others that they are drawing wrong conclusions from flawed or incorrect information, and how do I go about it?
4. To what extent do I point out other people’s strengths and weaknesses, and how do I go about it?
5. How comfortable am I about encouraging shy, scared, or lazy people to do the things that they know they need to do—but don’t—and how do I go about it?
6. How do I react if others react negatively towards me when I confront them?

Confrontation skills

In a literal sense, all counselling is confrontational. It is face to face. Its interactive nature brings up information that is examined for meaning, that is compared with internal values and external realities for appropriateness and utility. An effective counselling outcome can occur without employing the specific confrontation skills that are described later. However, if used selectively, in conjunction with the responding, personalising, or initiating skills, confrontation skills can make the overall counselling process more time efficient by dealing with discrepant behaviour which, thereby, makes the interaction more ‘immediate’. Regardless of the type of confrontation, it is important that the counsellor responds (at level 3.0) to the client’s rejoinder.

As previously mentioned, Berenson and Mitchell have delineated five major types of confrontation skills—They are; experiential, didactic, strength, weakness, and encouragement to action. Each will now be discussed in detail.

Experiential confrontation

Broadly speaking, an experiential confrontation is so named because it brings together the **client’s expressed experience**, and the **counsellor’s subjective experience** of the client so that the client can compare the highlighted difference. Berenson and Mitchell provide a more comprehensive definition:

Experiential confrontation is defined as the helper’s specific response to any discrepancy between the helpee and helper’s experiencing of the helper-helpee relationship, or to any discrepancy between the helpee’s overt statement about himself [sic] and the helpee’s inner, covert experience of himself, or to any discrepancy between the helpee and helper’s subjective experience of either the helper or helpee.

(Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 14).

Once a trusting relationship has been established, the counsellor could confront the client experientially whenever they experience an inconsistency in the information being

communicated by the client. This can be at in any stage of the counselling process, although experiential confrontations are most frequently used during the exploratory phase. Discrepancies between client information can occur in a number of ways that will be described later in this section.

The purpose of experiential confrontations

Experiential confrontations are formulated to give clients the opportunity to take a closer look at themselves in the light of feedback that spells out how differently they are perceived from the way they see themselves. If the client recognises the validity of the counsellor's perception, they will either concede the point, or react to it. If the counsellor responds to the concession the client will continue to explore with greater clarity. If the counsellor responds to the reaction, the client has the opportunity to explore the reason for the reaction. Either option provides an increment of clarity and growth. If the client considers that the counsellor's perception is inaccurate, then they have the opportunity to justify their own position by articulating why they reject the counsellor's viewpoint. An effective counsellor will respond to the client's comment, and then either concede the error if appropriate, use their immediacy skills to discuss the differences in the 'here and now', or confront further in the light of new evidence of further inconsistency. These options all provide opportunities for increased clarity and growth. If, however, counsellors lack decency or higher order skills, the negation of such a confrontation (by the client) may well degenerate into an aggressive debate about who is right!

Areas where inconsistencies may occur

During the course of a counselling session, the counsellor may experience inconsistencies in the information that is presented by the client. Such disparity can occur between: (1) verbal and verbal information (2) verbal and non-verbal information; (3) expressed values and actions; and (4) client self-image and counsellor perception of client. Before these different areas are discussed further, it is useful to note the four elements that are common to the skilful formulation of experiential confrontations.

The skills of confronting experientially

Regardless of the source of the perceived disparity in information expressed by clients, all experiential confrontations contain:

- an expression of the counsellor's feeling (related to the disparate data);
- evidence of the client's expression;
- conflicting evidence of the client's expression;
- counsellor's declaration of misfit.

The training formats that follow vary slightly to tailor them to the match the source of the particular inconsistency.

Disparity between verbal and verbal information

It is not unusual for clients to contradict themselves during a session, or say something that differs from what is recalled from an earlier session. In either case the following training format is helpful:

'I'm...(feeling). You say/said...(evidence)...,but you also said/say (evidence) ..., and those two things don't fit.'

Example: *'I'm a bit puzzled. You say you value creativity in your staff, but previously you said that they really need to be kept in line—and those two things don't fit.'*

Disparity between verbal and non-verbal information

From time to time a client may make a statement that seems to be contradicted by the way it is said, or by the associated facial expression or body gesture. The training format is easily modified in the following way:

'I'm...(feeling). You say...(evidence)..., but you sound/look as if...(evidence) ..., and those two things don't fit.'

Example: *'I'm a bit confused. You claim to fully accept that the boss had a good reason to sack you—but as you spoke I noticed that the knuckles on your clenched fist were white, your jaw tensed up, and your neck flushed up—and those two things don't fit.'*

Disparity between expressed values and actions

During the counselling process, clients express the values that they hold, or declare their intentions or aspirations—any of which may be contradicted by their actions. Again, the training format can be adapted as follows:

'I'm...(feeling). You say that you...(evidence)..., but you do...(evidence)...,and those two things don't fit.'

Example: *'I'm a bit unclear here. You say you are desperate to save enough to take Carol to Hong Kong for your silver-wedding anniversary, but you consistently blow an average of about \$150 bucks a week on the pokies—and those two things don't fit.'*

Disparity between client self-image and counsellor perception of client

As a client relates their thoughts and feelings during counselling sessions, the counsellor become increasingly aware of how a client views themselves. The counsellor's experience of the client may differ markedly. This scenario differs from the previous example because the counsellor does not confront an inconsistency **within** the client's expressed information. Here, the counsellor highlights the disparity **between** the client's view and their own perception of the client. The training format changes only slightly, thus:

'I'm...(feeling). You see yourself as...(evidence)..., but I actually see you as...(evidence)..., and those two views don't fit.'

Example: *'I'm a bit surprised. You keep referring to yourself as fat but actually I see you as someone with a figure well within what is regarded as normal limits.'*

Didactic confrontation

Broadly speaking, a didactic confrontation is so named because it has a 'teaching' function that straightens out distorted client information, and/or fills in any gaps in areas where clients lack information that they need. The main difference between didactic and experiential confrontations is that the didactic confrontations provide **objective information** to the client rather than share the counsellor's **subjective perception**. Didactic confrontations are much less likely to trigger reactivity in clients because they confront intellectual distortions rather than the strongly held, emotional distortions that can often be the subject of experiential confrontations.

The purpose of didactic confrontations

Didactic confrontations are formulated to give clients the information that they need, (when they are unaware of the need) so that misconceptions can be corrected, and blind spots enlightened. With additional accurate information, clients are enabled to function more realistically. Clients are generally accepting of such inputs, and are prepared to work with them, even though some new information may ‘shock’ them.

Areas where inconsistencies may occur

During the course of a counselling session, the counsellor may hear that clients are expressing expectations, hopes or opinions that are, in fact, not viable; or that they are drawing conclusions from distorted or inadequate premises. Such distortions and gaps can be in any area of life.

The skills of confronting didactically

Regardless of the area where information is incorrect, distorted, or lacking, all didactic confrontations contain:

- evidence of client’s misinformation—and its source if appropriate;
- objective evidence to correct misinformation or provide lacking information.

Correcting distorted information

During the course of a counselling session, it may become clear to the counsellor that clients have drawn conclusions from false premises. Clients may have been misinformed by a friend or hearsay; or distorted factual material through misunderstanding, prejudice, or other reason. The following format can be used to correct such misinformation. The inclusion of the ‘source’—if known, and deemed appropriate—gives the client an opportunity to review its credibility, and may even evoke some reaction to it.

‘You believe...(evidence, including its source if appropriate)..., but the reality is...(different, objective information quoted from a credible source).’

Example: *‘You seem to have believed the boy who told you that you can’t get pregnant from having sex just once—but any book on sexual health will tell you that every pregnancy follows just one single act of intercourse. Getting pregnant depends on the fertility of both partners, the timing within the menstrual cycle, and other factors that we can usefully discuss. I can give you a simple pamphlet that spells it all out clearly.’*

Filling the gap

It is also possible during a counselling session that clients may express expectations or hopes that have failed to take other relevant facts into account. The training format can be simply modified to fill in the information gap:

‘You say...(evidence)..., but you also need to know that...(new, objective information quoted from a credible source).’

Example: *‘You say you think you’ll get the manager’s job you applied for because of your experience in the field, but you need to know that the advert clearly said that a PhD was required—and you don’t have one.’*

Strength confrontations

Berenson and Mitchell (1974) describe strength confrontations as experiential confrontations that relate to client’s abilities or personal resources in any area. Strength

confrontations can also be seen as didactic confrontations when objective data is incorporated in their formulation.

The purpose of strength confrontations

Strength confrontations actually confront weakness. They are used to put an alternative perspective when clients negate or underestimate their competence, or undervalue their personal resources. Such responses are most appropriately used when plans are being developed in the action phase, and clients doubt their ability to implement a particular step. Strength confrontations may also be used occasionally in the exploratory phase, but Berenson and Mitchell give a timely reminder that this phase is dedicated to client's coming to understand how they **see themselves**, and indicate that 'too many strength confrontations probably would be disruptive under such circumstances' (1974, p. 80).

The skills of strength confrontation

Regardless of the particular ability or resource in question, the disparity in perception between client and counsellor will include similar elements to other experiential confrontations. The confrontation will be 'experiential' when the counsellor is only able to express a subjective assessment based on personal observation. It will be 'didactic' when the counsellor has objective evidence of competence. The difference is, perhaps, more theoretical than practical, because much so called 'objective' evidence—such as school reports, references, and even formal qualifications—has the subjective overlay of those who provided it. The elements of a strength confrontation are the:

- expression of counsellor's feeling (in relation to the disparity)—optional;
- evidence of client's negative view of their competence or resourcefulness;
- counsellor's subjective assessment of client's competence or resourcefulness, or documented objective evidence from a credible source;
- counsellor's declaration of misfit.

Experiential strength confrontation

The training format for experiential strength confrontations is similar to the formats used in previous examples of experiential confrontations.

'I (feeling). You say that you...(client's negative self-view), but I...(evidence of competence)..., and those two things don't fit.'

Example: *'I'm a bit surprised. You seem to see yourself as bit of a misfit—just as your father predicted—but, from the perspectives you shared in the last team meeting, I see you as a thoughtful, creative person with leadership qualities—and those two things don't fit.'*

Didactic strength confrontation

The training format for didactic strength confrontations is virtually unchanged. Again, there may be merit in referring to a contributing source of the perspective for the reasons given above.

'I (feeling). You say that you...(client's negative self-view), but...(objective evidence of competence)..., and those two things don't fit.'

Example: *'I am at a bit of a loss when you insist so vehemently that you haven't got the administrative skills to head up the new branch office. You gained second distinction in your MBA, your quarterly stats show excellent results, you completed the Wilkins project before schedule—and exceeded the preset standards—and that profile just doesn't fit with your view.'*

Strength confrontations and personalising

It needs to be noted that a form of strength confrontation may be included in the first step of the personalising process (to be discussed in the next chapter). In that step, a verbal cameo of the client is ‘drawn’ to describe a range of the client’s significant qualities. An element of the cameo could highlight a strength of the client, but would not generally be described as a confrontation. There, as here, such actions are taken purposefully—not just to offer ‘positive strokes’.

Weakness confrontations

Berenson and Mitchell describe weakness confrontations as experiential confrontations that relate to clients’ liabilities or pathology. Skilled counsellors will use them very infrequently, and with great caution—perhaps never in the exploratory phase. However, Berenson and Mitchell found that helpers who lacked functional skills, ‘used weakness confrontations [to focus on pathology] with hospitalised patients more than any other type of confrontations...[that is], with those helpees least amenable to helping, and least able to tolerate such confrontations’ (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 81). Such exaggerated behaviour is an abuse, and shows a clear lack of functional professionalism.

A form of weakness confrontation occurs in two steps of the personalising process. These specifically relate to liabilities and, in some cases clinical pathology. They will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The purpose of weakness confrontations

Weakness confrontations are used to put an alternative perspective when clients have an exaggerated view their competence. They are most appropriately used during the initiative phase when plans are being developed and clients over-estimate their ability to implement a particular action step. The value of a weakness confrontation at this time is that it may ‘jolt’ the client into developing smaller, more manageable sub-steps into their plan, and so increase the probability of its successful implementation.

The skills of confronting weakness

The format for weakness confrontations is similar to that of strength confrontations, except that the client’s exaggerated view of their competence becomes the subject of the confrontation, and some remedial action is signalled. The elements are the:

- expression of counsellor’s feeling (in relation to the disparity) —optional;
- evidence of client’s exaggerated view of their competence or resourcefulness;
- counsellor’s subjective assessment of client’s lack of competence to achieve what is hoped to be achieved, or documented evidence from credible source;
- counsellor’s declaration of misfit;
- counsellor suggestion for possible remedial action.

Weakness confrontation

I...(feeling). You say that you...(client’s exaggerated claim)..., but I... (evidence of inability)...and those two things don't fit—and I think we need to...(proposed next step).’

Example: *‘I’m a little troubled, Ben. You are planning to eventually seek a transfer to teach children with learning difficulties. You claim to be an effective teacher, but I have seen your class ignore your pleas to settle down, and heard them ridicule your claims to want the best for them—and those two things don't*

fit. I think we need to detail an initial step to review your current competence before launching into further studies. What do you reckon?’

Encouragement to action confrontation

Berenson and Mitchell (1974, p. 15) say that ‘encouragement to action involves the helper’s pressing the helpee to act on his [sic] world in some reasonable, appropriate, and constructive manner; and discouraging a passive stance towards life’. Their research found that low-functioning helpers were premature in their ‘exhortations’ for helpees to act, and that their predominant use of such confrontations led to deterioration or no constructive change. Beware counsellors who function at level 1.5!

The purpose of action confrontations

In our view, confrontations that encourage action should only be used in the initiative phase of counselling when a client has developed an action plan to attain a personalised goal (detailed in the next chapter), but fails to implement it; or has agreed to a referral elsewhere but fails to attend. The purpose is to motivate action by reiterating the intention, spelling out both the benefits of acting, and the consequences of failing to act.

The skills of confronting to encourage action

The format for a confrontation to act contains the following elements:

- a statement of the client’s declared intention;
- recognition of deferral or failure to act;
- the benefits of implementing those intentions;
- the consequences of failing to implement those intentions.

Motivating inaction

‘You have planned/agreed to...(action)..., and you need to get started/attend so that...(list benefits)—If you don’t get started/attend...(list consequences).’

Example: *‘You have developed a clear, workable plan to start your own business—but you keep putting off its implementation. If you get off your butt now to start step1, you will be on the way to achieving the autonomy you really want, but if you dillydally as you are, you will continue to be just another lackey at the office where you feel so undervalued.’*

On confronting others

Practical principles to bear in mind

Because the impact of confrontations leads to constructive or destructive outcomes, it is important to consider the following:

1. Confrontations should only be made by those who have ‘earned the right’ to confront because they have goodwill, and mastery of other process skills.
2. Counsellors should not confront clients until a they have earned sufficient trust for clients to freely share the information that may become the subject of the confrontation.
3. Experiential or didactic confrontations are best used in the exploratory phase where they are likely to enhance the exploration.
4. Strength and weakness confrontations should not be used unless the counsellor can discriminate adaptive strength (such as **chosen** lack of assertion in a given

hostile context) from maladaptive weakness (such as ‘victim-like’ passivity that limits fulfilment). Furthermore, the counsellor must have the skills to either: (1) incorporate those discriminations into the personalising process to assist the client to accept responsibility for appropriate, constructive future action; or (2) utilise those discriminations in helping clients to plan for future action more realistically and successfully.

5. Confrontations to encourage action should be avoided unless the client has a relevant, understood, clear goal, and a desire or intention to achieve it.
6. As in other interactions, confrontations should be couched in language that matches that of the client, and delivered respectfully.
7. In all instances, counsellors should note the impact of their confrontation and respond (at level 3.0) to that impact.

Research findings to be aware of

The groundbreaking research of Berenson and Mitchell (1974) was conducted at a time when many helpers were traditionally trained, skills training was relatively new, and confrontation was ‘in vogue’ as a ‘specialty’.

The studies showing how helpers from different disciplines (clinical psychology, counselling psychology, psychiatry, social work, and graduate students) and different orientations (analytic, client-centred, eclectic, and relationship) used different kinds of confrontations were of interest, but we wish to only highlight the significance of results that compared levels of facilitation and length of experience with frequency of use for different types of confrontation.

The facilitative index

The now familiar five level scale of helper effectiveness was less refined then, and so the researchers measured helper effectiveness against five level, established scales of empathy, positive regard, genuineness, and concreteness to compute a ‘facilitative index’ for each helper in the research program. The facilitative index made it possible to classify the 56 helper subjects into two groups. In this study thirteen subjects were classified as ‘high facilitators’ with an individual score greater than 2.0. The remaining 43 ‘low facilitators’ had a mean individual scores of less than 2.0 on the facilitative index (1974, p. 25) The facilitative index approximated the effectiveness of the Carkhuff scale on page 315.

Length of experience

The 56 subjects were also divided into two groups that reflected their experience. Those with six or more years as practitioners were classified as ‘high’, and those with five years or less were classified as ‘low’. Each group contained both high and low facilitators. Table 14 shows how the subject were distributed across these groups.

Frequency and distribution of use

Table 14, opposite, shows the frequency and distribution of how different groups of practitioners used different types of confrontation.

The first thing to note is that, regardless of experience, high-facilitators offer many more experiential, didactic and strength confrontations than low-facilitators. This highlights the fact that high facilitators work much more effectively at sharpening reality, minimising misinformation, and affirming residual client resources—all of which contribute to client clarity, knowledge, and self-image.

The second result is disturbing. It shows that low-facilitators use an increased number of weakness confrontations as they have more experience. Such focussing on clients liabilities or pathology are the kind of ‘put downs’ that erode the well-being of clients and counsellors alike. It is worth recalling the demise of both clients and counsellors that was highlighted in Figures 25 and 26 on pages 268 and 269 respectively.

FREQUENCY and TYPE of CONFRONTATION by HELPER LEVEL of EXPERIENCE and FACILITATIVE INDEX				
	High Experience (6 – 15 years) (n=28)		Low Experience (0 – 5 years) (n=28)	
Confrontation	High facilitator (n=10)	Low facilitator (n=18)	High facilitator (n=12)	Low facilitator (n=16)
Experiential	33	12	50	7
Didactic	11	6	15	4
Strength	5	0	5	1
Weakness	0	22	6	7
Action	3	2	5	7
Total	52	42	81	26

Table 14. Showing the differences between the way skilled and unskilled helpers use confrontation skills as a function of their experience. From *Confrontation for Better or Worse*, by Bernard G. Berenson and Kevin M. Mitchell. Copyright © 1974, Used by permission of the publisher. HRD Press, Amherst, MA, 800-822-2801, www.hrdpress.com.

A third interesting result suggests that as high-facilitators gain more experience they use no weakness and fewer experiential confrontations. This is possibly because, with practice, high-facilitators enhance the potency their responding skills.

Practicing confrontation

Apart from structuring hypothetical situations from which to practice confrontation skills, participants should be vigilant to opportunities that might occur during extended practice of other skills. Perhaps the greatest opportunities arise during day to day interactions in work, home, and social settings. The following written exercises provide opportunity to: (1) identify different types of confrontations; (2) comment on qualitative differences between examples of confrontations; and (3) construct confrontations from given scenarios.

Exercise 11: Discriminating types of confrontation

Listed below are some things that clients have said and the confrontations that were made by the counsellor. Read each statement and confrontation, decide what kind of confrontation is being used and give the reasons for your decisions.

Client Statement 1

‘I’m going to move out of home. I’m sick of my parents trying to run my life. It can’t be too hard to manage financially. I earn about \$200 a week and I reckon I could get a room somewhere with full board and lodging for half that which would leave me about \$100 a week to spend.’

Counsellor Confrontation 1

You seem to think that \$100 per week will provide for your rent and food, but the reality is that in Saturday's Advertiser (newspaper) I happened to notice 90% of the advertisements for board and lodging were around \$180 per week.

What type of confrontation I think this is, and why

Client Statement 2

I'm desperate to lose weight. I hate my body when I see myself in a mirror. However, I also think that there is too much stress placed on body image—especially for women. We shouldn't be slaves to media hype.'

Counsellor Confrontation 2

I'm a bit confused. You say you hate your body and want to lose weight, but you also imply you think women should free themselves from body image pressure. Those two things don't fit.'

What type of confrontation I think this is and why

Client Statement 3

I really appreciate coming here. The work we do is so worthwhile. I'm sure I'm changing for the better.'

Counsellor Confrontation 3

I wonder if you could clarify something for me. You are telling me you really find our sessions worthwhile, but I've noticed that you often come late and sometimes need to leave early—so those two things don't fit.'

What type of confrontation I think this is and why

Client Statement 4

'How dare you suggest I'm angry. I am not!'

Counsellor Confrontation 4

I'm a bit uncertain. You say you're not angry—but your face is flushed and you are raising your voice. These things don't seem to fit.'

What type of confrontation I think this is and why

The answers for Exercise 11 are on page 486.

Exercise 12: Assessing the merits of confrontations

A Scout leader asks the Group Leader for a reference to support an application for a job. He shows the advertisement for the job, and his draft application, to the Group Leader. The Group Leader could make any of the responses below. Assume that they are all accurate. Identify the kind of confrontation being used and appraise its quality.

Response 1

'Bill, I don't want to be a wet blanket, but you seem to be pinning your hopes on the fact that your experience in scouting will offset your lack of formal qualifications as a youth-worker. The ad makes it quite clear that Certificate 4 Youth Work qualifications are essential even though the bloke you spoke to at the welfare agency said that they were only desirable. That's how it used to be, but I happen to be on the Welfare Advisory Committee, and know that there is now a firm policy to ensure that all new appointees hold formal qualifications.'

My comments

Response 2

'There's not a snowball's chance in Hell of you landing that job Bill!'

My comments

Response 3

'Bill, you say in your application that you're well organised—and we both know that that's a bit far fetched don't we?'

My comments

Response 4

'Bill, I know that you really value your home life with Mary and the kids, and here you are applying for a job that'll have you away from home almost every night of the week. Those two things just doesn't fit.'

My comments

Response 5

'Bill, I've had to remind you as recently as last Thursday that your tendency to go off on a tangent, or take over projects that the Group Council has allocated to someone else, has created some serious tensions within the whole Group. I'm afraid that my reference would have to make some comment about your periodic failure to follow through on tasks that you judge to be menial, and that really conflicts with your claim to be a cooperative, competent team member.'

My comments

The answers to Exercise 12 are on page 486.

Exercise 13: Writing confrontations

For each of the client statements below, decide what kind of confrontation would be appropriate, and write a suitable confrontive statement. You could also use a partner, and have them read them to you, as if you were the client, in order to test their impact.

Client situation 1

At her performance review, Jane is telling you (as her manager) that she sees herself as a witty person who relates well to others by using her wit. However, you have evaluations from the last team review that say that others find her sarcastic and hurtful.

The confrontation type is:

My confrontation:

Client situation 2

Jennifer has been unemployed for several months. She says she hates being dependent on 'welfare' and having limited money, but says she doesn't want to undertake the training program that the employment agency has suggested.

The confrontation type is:

My confrontation:

Client situation 3

Tom says he loves his children, but has spent nearly 10 minutes out of the last half hour's conversation criticising them.

The confrontation type is:

My confrontation:

Client situation 4

Mary is revising Maths very heavily for an exam she believes to be tomorrow. The exam timetable clearly shows that Physics is on tomorrow, and Maths is next Wednesday.

The confrontation type is:

My confrontation:

Some possible confrontations from Exercise 13 are on page 486.

Summary

What confrontation is

Confrontation is the skill of presenting information to clients that differs from their own (the clients) experience of themselves so that clients can compare it with the presented viewpoint and act (or otherwise) on its usefulness to them.

What confrontation does

Operationally, the skills of confrontation:

- assess a body of information for inconsistencies, distortions, gaps, weaknesses, strengths or reluctance to act appropriately;
- utilise an appropriate verbal format to draw attention to the inconsistencies, distortions, gaps, weaknesses, strengths or reluctance to act appropriately;
- are likely to produce a ‘mini-crisis’ for the client;
- utilise the skills of responding to deal with crises produced by confrontation.

Functionally, the skills of confrontation:

- challenge another to be more real;
- clarify misinformation (distortions or gaps) with accurate information;
- bring to attention those things which are not known but need to be known;
- assist in moving another out of potentially destructive ‘ruts’;
- encourage a pro-active stance and discourage passivity.

Why confrontation is important

If one confronts effectively, then the other (or oneself) is made aware of necessary information so that any action is based on clearer reality.

How to confront

The skill steps in confrontation are:

- attend, observe and listen;
- respond until trust has been established, and inconsistencies, misinformation, weaknesses, strengths or reluctance to act appropriately are noted;
- confront **experientially** where there is a discrepancy between the client’s self-perception and the counsellor’s perception of the client;
- confront **didactically** where the client is misinformed or uninformed;
- confront the perceived weakness with a realistic **strength** confrontation when clients seriously under-value their capacity or resourcefulness;
- confront the perceived strength with a **weakness** confrontation when clients seriously over-estimates their capacity or resourcefulness, or there is a diagnosed pathology;
- confront to **encourage action** when clients need, but are reluctant, to act;
- in all instances, be succinct, and use language appropriate to each client.
- always respond (at level 3.0) to the impact of the confrontation.

It is incumbent on counsellors to master the full repertoire of interactive skills. Such people will fully appreciate the warning, and the wisdom, of Berenson and Mitchell's final conclusion:

‘Only the few who have the right to help, have the right to confront.
Confrontation is never *necessary*.
Confrontation is never *sufficient*.
In the hands of those few who have the right to help
confrontation may be *efficient*’ (Berenson & Mitchell 1974, p. 87).

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My learning about confrontation

Write in your own words

What confrontation is:

What confrontation does:

Why confrontation is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own confrontation skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my confrontation:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Personalising skills

Preamble

In simple terms, the previous chapters have been concerned with a range of skills that combine to help clients ‘tell their story’ in a way that enables them become clear about where they stand in relation to a troubling issue. In equally simple terms, the personalising skills not only help clients see what they need to do to deal effectively with the same troubling issue, but they also help them to assume responsibility, and willingness, for doing it. Functionally speaking, then, the personalising skills provide an intellectual and emotional bridge between the insights gained in the earlier exploratory phase and the action that will be required in the initiative phase that follows.

This chapter will detail the cues that counsellors need to recognise before shifting from using the responding skills to using the personalising skills. It will then discuss the personalising skills in detail; provide examples and written exercises; and outline a practice strategy. Before proceeding, it is useful to consider how other authors deal with helping clients identify the goals that will help them manage life more effectively.

George and Cristiani (1990) tend to describe the key concepts of a broad range of counselling approaches and counselling issues rather than detailing specific skills or processes for practical counselling. However, in discussing procedures and skills, they note that Egan’s advanced empathy skills are useful in identifying themes. This is one of the activities related to the first step of personalising.

Nelson-Jones (1992) presents a five stage counselling process that uses the acronym ‘DASIE’ whose components are: (1) ‘Develop the relationship, identify and clarify problem(s)’, (2) ‘Assess problem(s) and redefine in skills terms’, (3) ‘State working goals and plan interventions’, (4) ‘Intervene to develop self-helping skills’, and (5) ‘End and consolidate self-helping skills’. Stage 2 of Nelson-Jones’ process identifies the problem areas, and the ‘thinking and action skills weaknesses that sustain them’. Stage 3 then considers the ‘best way to manage problems and develop requisite skills’. It does this in two phases by firstly stating the goals, and then planning interventions. Goals are originally ‘stated in terms of the broad skills required to attain ends’, and then broken down into a range of sub-skills (Nelson-Jones 1992, p. 48).

The personalising process described in this text is similar to the ‘A’ and ‘S’ elements of the DASIE process in that it assesses problems, defines them in skills terms, and identifies goals. However, the personalising process differs from the DASIE process in

that, in diagnosing the problem, it narrows down possible ‘sub-skills’ to pinpoint **one** critical skill deficit—not a broad range of deficits, such as the six described in the Nelson-Jones’ example (1992, pp. 48–50). As described later in this chapter, we have experienced that the lack of that **one critical skill** is usually affirmed by the client as being the specific impediment to achieving their broad goal of dealing effectively with the core problem that was fully explored in stage 1 of the helping process. This specific deficit when subsequently ‘flipped’ becomes the **one critical goal** that the client needs to live more effectively in the problem area. A second difference from the DASIE process is that the personalising process does not consider planning interventions—it focuses on **what** needs to happen. The ‘**how**’ of achieving the goal is the function of the initiative phase that follows.

Egan (1998) calls his second stage of helping the ‘preferred scenario’. Its function is to identify future needs. This function matches the overall purpose of the personalising process, but uses quite different terms and strategies to achieve it. A critical difference between Egan’s approach and the personalising process hinges on when, and how, divergent and convergent thinking are applied. Divergent thinking expands information; convergent thinking narrows it.

Egan’s first step in stage II uses a divergent approach that uses brainstorming, ‘future-oriented probes’, and other structured questions—to ‘invent’ a future—to dream up possibilities. Egan’s next step is to then move from ‘possibilities’ to ‘choices’. This is a narrowing process to ensure that goals are: (1) expressed as outcomes; (2) clear and specific; (3) will make a difference; (4) are ‘prudent’ (directional and wise); (5) realistic; (6) can be sustained (7) have some flexibility; (8) are consistent with client values (9) are appealing to client; and (10) are ‘owned’ by client. The personalising process covers all ten of these criteria—with the exception of point 7 which calls for some flexibility. In arguing for flexibility, Egan uses Napoleon’s quote that, ‘He will not go far who knows from the first where he is going’, to argue that ‘sometimes making goals too specific or too rigid does not allow clients to take advantage of emerging opportunities’ (Egan 1998, p. 247). In our view, his argument for flexibility to accommodate changing circumstances is entirely relevant to planning, but not to goals. The reason for this apparent rigidity will become clearer when the function of the personalising process is better understood.

In our approach, the divergent expansion of information **precedes** the personalising process. Such expansion occurs in the exploratory phase, and continues until all that **needs** to be said **is** said. In fact, the indicators that signal the readiness to move into the personalising phase are embedded in the client’s exploratory content. The personalising process is entirely convergent. As detailed later, this narrowing begins by sifting the explored material to glean its salient significance and implications, and concludes by pinpointing one very specific goal. This goal seeks to acquire the specific skill needed to remove the ‘block’ that impedes the client’s current growth. Attaining this specific goal makes it possible to avoid repetitions of the kind of issue that led to the need for counselling. Such specific goals are seldom, if ever, obvious from the outset; and, in our experience, are most unlikely to be arrived at by processing brainstormed possibilities.

Geldard and Geldard (2001, p123) present a comprehensive flow chart to outline their approach to a counselling session. After a period of active listening, questions are asked, and information is summarised, to clarify the problem. The questions seek to help the client identify the most pressing problem. Their chart suggests that some change in

attitude may be appropriate at this point by using reframing, normalising, or confrontation skills; or by challenging self-destructive beliefs.⁸ This may lead to further questioning and summarising to clarify the problem. The next step involves finding and exploring options. Clients list their possible options, and others might then be suggested by the counsellor. This, again, is a divergent process that differs from the convergent personalising process. The ‘pros and cons’ of alternative options are then explored. We are doubly surprised at these authors’ comments that, firstly, some clients are sometimes ‘unable to resolve a dilemma [choose an option] even though the issues are clearly understood’; and, secondly, that they ‘give permission [for the client] to stay stuck’. They do this by saying, ‘Look, it seems as though we’ve come to an impasse. There doesn’t seem to be an easy solution, and today you seem to be stuck and don’t know which way to go. Let’s leave it there. Come back another time and we will talk together again.’ (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 196). Such procrastination seems to be very unsatisfactory.

The flow chart shows that once the options are explored, and dilemmas resolved, the process seeks to facilitate action. We are left to assume that the preferred option becomes the goal to be achieved. Geldard and Geldard introduce this step by noting that some clients are resistant to action, and proceed to describe the ‘Gestalt awareness circle’ as a means of arousing, raising awareness, and mobilising energy before choosing to act. They further discuss a number of blocks that impede this flow. We suspect that this need might arise because no specific goal has been identified, and that any resistance might arise from the sheer enormity of broad, general goals that may seem to be insurmountable. Our experience, when having personalised a clear, specific, relevant goal, is that clients own it responsibly, and are highly motivated to pursue it. Without personalising the goal, clients are likely to replicate the experience that Geldard and Geldard describe, ‘Often when clients have gone some way in one direction, they will realise that the goal originally targeted is one which is no longer desired. That is clearly OK, but the client will consequently need to reassess their overall goal’ (2001, p.206). This lack of precision does not seem OK to us—it seems to waste time and energy.

One of the ‘post-modern’ approaches is called ‘solution-focussed counselling’. Many of its ideas are attributed to Milton Erickson who was committed to utilising people’s competencies in creating a context for change. The solution-focussed counselling process is ‘seen as a journey out of a problem-saturated world into a world of increased autonomy and personal success’. Simply put, the process achieves this transition ‘as it emphasises and amplifies the client’s strengths and resources when solving problems’ (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 210). It is not our purpose to describe the details of the overall process, but what is of interest, in this context, is its approach to ‘goaling’. Goaling typically uses a series of three kinds of questions to help clients formulate goals—‘scaling questions’, ‘miracle questions’, and ‘goal-oriented questions’. Scaling questions get clients to rate certain factors on a scale of 1–10. An example is, ‘On a scale of one to ten, where one represents terrible and ten represents wonderful, how would you rate your relationship with your partner?’ (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 215).

⁸ The term ‘confrontation’ has been described in Chapter 12. ‘Reframing’ is discussed in Chapter 19, page 431. ‘The goal of normalising a client’s emotional state is to help the client to reduce anxiety by letting them know that their emotional response is a normal one’ (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 167). Challenging self-destructive beliefs involves challenging the functionality of living by the beliefs of what one ‘should’, ‘must’, or ‘ought’ do; or by challenging other irrational beliefs that are held.

‘Miracle questions are used to help clients begin to find hypothetical solutions to the problems they are experiencing. A typical miracle question is: ‘If a miracle happened and the problem was solved, what would you be doing differently’ (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 220). Goal-oriented questions are used to help clients find solutions. In our view, the examples given show a great variation in regard to goal orientation. Some are exploratory. ‘What do you think your life would be like if you didn’t get angry?’ Others relate to setting a specific goal: ‘If you had a particular goal that you wanted to achieve with regard to..., what would it be?’. Still others relate to action planning, ‘What would you need to do to achieve your goal?’. The examples are from Geldard & Geldard (2001, pp. 220–221). The approach may be post-modern, but in our view still embodies a disjointed approach that is avoided by the systematic personalising process.

Earlier references have been made to Carkhuff’s research and subsequent refining of the helping process. The last major refinement to that work was the identification of the personalising skills. These skills provide a fluent bridge for counsellors to move from responding to initiating. The profound benefit for clients is that the personalising skills provide a clear understanding of the relevance and necessity of the personal goal that emerges—as well as providing motivation and a sense of personal responsibility to achieve the goal. This systematic approach, and its efficiency and effectiveness is not matched by any other process known to us. For that reason, much of what follows is similar to Carkhuff’s latest publications (2000, 2000a, 2000b). However, through the years we have refined and modified the steps in several ways. We will comment on these differences as they occur.

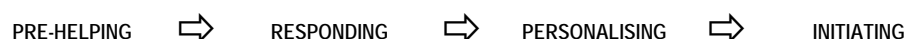
Reviewing current competence

To establish a learning baseline readers should identify the strategies they currently use when setting goals. The following questions may help to elicit your usual approach.

1. Do I fully explore all the related factors before setting my own goals?
2. Do my goals randomly emerge ‘as the spirit moves me’?
3. Can I describe a clear distinction between setting goals and achieving them?
4. How do I go about helping others set goals?
5. Does my way help others to ‘own’ their goal, or do they tend to be uncommitted to a goal that we have previously discussed?
6. Have I had feedback from others that they really see the point of goals that I have helped them set, and feel motivated and energised to achieve them?

The personalising process

The personalising process provides the bridge between ‘responding’ and ‘initiating’.



Simply put, the process makes sense of what the client has explored in the responding phase, and leads to a clear understanding of the initiatives needed for clients to **change** their behaviour creatively, **adapt** to their circumstances comfortably, **quit** them with dignity, or **transcend** them with serenity—whatever befits their growth and wellbeing.

The specifics of the goals that lead to change, adaptation, departure, or transcendence are not just ‘good ideas that might be worth trying’. They are logically derived from the synthesis, analysis, and diagnosis of the information generated by the client in the exploratory phase. It is critical, therefore, that the exploratory phase has adequately considered all of the significant pieces that relate to the particular person, in the given circumstances, within the context of their unique history. Comprehensive exploration paves the way for an effective crossing of the bridge. Inadequate exploration is likely to require a retreat to the causeway to ‘lay more pavers’. The trick is to know when exploration is adequate. The skill is to know how to read the ‘road signs’.

Signs of readiness

In addition to responding to clients’ information during the exploratory phase, counsellors must also listen for the ‘signs of readiness’ to begin the personalising process. These signs are a bit like traffic lights. The analogy shows the folly of ignoring the red light, the risks of running the amber, and the safety of proceeding on the green.

Red stop light

Client externalises

Readers will recall that clients invariably tend to externalise responsibility for their circumstances during the exploratory phase, and that counsellors’ responses contain externalised reasons for the current feelings to provide judgement-free opportunity for such expression. Quite the opposite applies in the personalising phase. Counsellors now ensure that statements are ‘internalised’—made ‘personal’ to the client. The word ‘**you**’ becomes the focus—not external people things or events. At some stage in the exploratory process, clients may make some comment that is internalised, such as, ‘*Well I guess it’s not all their fault—I’m no angel either—I...*’. This example may lead to further ‘I’ statements that imply some degree of ‘ownership’ of the issue. However, it must be remembered that is **futile and premature** to start to personalise whilst explorers continue to externalise, and blame others for their state of being. The red light must not switch to amber until the client has at least begun to internalise—with the one exception (detailed on page 299) where certain clients become repetitive.

Amber caution lights

Client internalises

The previous discussion suggested that progress is being made when clients internalise their statements during their exploration. This is a necessary step to prepare for personalising—but it is not a sufficient, stand-alone indicator. The quality of internalised statements may vary considerably, but some internalised statements indicate an avoidance of commitment to change. For example:

‘I’m really hopeless. I’ll never be any different. I am what I am’.

High exploration has occurred

During an effective exploratory process, clients make significant links between hitherto unrecognised connections. These will be expressed in an statement such as, ‘*I’m really only just beginning to see how important my Grandma has been in my life—she’s not the old tyrant I thought she was—she’s been a real nurturer for me*’. Such insights are very helpful in moving clients toward an understanding of where they stand in relation to an issue, and they add impetus towards personalising—but not by themselves. There should be several instances of high exploration to ensure that ‘new ground’ has been covered.

Client and counsellor recognise themes

When the exploratory process begins, a problem situation may be presented such as, say, a relationship problem with a supervisor at work. After some time the client may realise that the problem is similar to the difficult relationship they have with the Chair of the Selection Committee at their local bowling club. Further in the discussion, some parallels are then seen to have previously occurred at secondary school—and surprise, surprise, they had the same sort of issue with their dad as a kid. The client may see the theme equally as well as the counsellor and say something like:

‘Gee, after all that talk, it’s pretty clear that I have strife with people that have a sort of power over me—judge me in some way. You know, stuff like: Do I get a promotion? Am I good enough to skipper a ring at bowls? Can I matriculate? And God knows how many things I stuffed up as far as my dad was concerned’.

This is high exploration. This level of client self-awareness may tempt some counsellors to switch to green, but prudent counsellors will patiently await further evidence.

Counsellor hears client’s contribution

It is possible that the client, alluded to above, was not yet able to see beyond their recognition of a life-theme. However, the counsellor may well have gleaned sufficient evidence to hypothesise about how the client contributes in some way to the recurrence and perpetuation of their problem with ‘power people’. It is highly probable that many counsellors, who were confident of the accuracy of their diagnosis of the client’s contribution to their problem, would risk moving to step one of the personalising process. Most would do so successfully—even though the light is still amber.

Green go light

Client recognises contribution

The foolproof indicator for beginning to personalise is when the client recognises their contribution to their problem—the behaviour that we have come to call the ‘do-do’. The client in the earlier example could internalise a statement along these lines:

‘Do you know what it seems like to me? It’s like, as a kid, I was never good enough to please my old man, and copped plenty of criticism. It’s just dawned on me that I somehow still expect a negative response from the likes of my boss, and I mouth off at ‘em in a very defensive way that puts me a really negative light. Yeah! That’s what I do! I constantly anticipate the worst from people who influence what I do, then mouth off in a way that I shoot myself in the foot, so to speak. It’s about time I sorted my self out’.

This client started to personalise for themselves. We will see in later examples how counsellors incorporate such insights.

Flashing amber light

Flashing amber lights indicate that you do not have absolute right of way, but you may proceed with caution. The analogy holds for personalising in two situations—the foreshadowing of initiative; and, in some instances, of the client repeating their story.

Client foreshadows initiative

In the ‘green light’ statement above, the client not only recognised his/her contribution to the problem, but expressed a desire to ‘do something about it’. Declaring such a desire to act is called ‘foreshadowing an initiative’. Foreshadowing adds weight to the counsellor’s decision to ‘go green’, but in isolation, should be considered as ‘flashing amber’. For example, clients may say things like, ‘*What a mess. I’m sick of feeling like this all the time, I really must do something about it*’ or, ‘*My marriage has been going downhill*’

for ages—we really must sort it out. Such foreshadowed initiatives may well be heartfelt, but are not sufficient evidence that the client is ready to personalise.

Different counselling approaches may suggest different strategies in the wake of client comments similar to those above. For example, Nelson-Jones suggests that one way to help clients move forward is to say and ask, *'You are obviously in a very uncomfortable situation. What do you see as your options?'* (Nelson-Jones 1998, p. 192). This approach will obviously lead to expanding, divergent discussion to consider options for fixing an **'it'** that is very general and non-specific. A counsellor who prefers to use the convergent personalising approach may, nevertheless, decide to proceed if they consider that they have sufficient other evidence (amber lights) to risk proceeding—even if it means that the dialogue may have to make a 'U-turn' and recommence exploration.

Client repeats story

In some instances, clients lack the intellectual capacity, or the emotional stamina, to make insightful links between the different aspects under discussion—and seem only to retell their story in, perhaps, slightly different terms. In such circumstances it may be necessary to proceed cautiously to personalise what information has been presented. This will effectively confront clients with their 'own truth' and help them get a clearer picture of themselves, and may trigger further exploration. In these circumstances, the process may see-saw for a period between the responding and personalising phases.

In the first instance, however, it is possible that the repetition is not due to the client's lack of capacity, but to the counsellor's repeated use of bland responses. Remember, and avoid, the unhelpful 'level 3.0 circle'.

Signalling an intention to personalise

Once the counsellor gets the green light to proceed, we have found it useful to gently signal an intention to do so. This provides an opportunity for clients to confirm that they too are ready to move on. The intention is expressed a bit like this:

'Well, Julie, we have covered a lot of ground, so far. It might be helpful for me to summarise what we have discussed to see if I've got the gist of it accurately. What do you reckon?'

Clients invariably agree to the summary, and the personalising process begins. Before looking at the skills of personalising in detail, some readers may wish to do Exercise 15 on page 318, Recognising 'signs of readiness'. Others may prefer to read on.

The personalising skills

Personalising goes beyond what the client has said during the exploratory phase, but draws on what has been said to synthesise its personal significance to the client. In other words, the ingredients of the personalising process are embedded in, or implied by, the client's explored information.

The first thing to note is that the personalising process deliberately shifts the focus from the 'external' (which gives freedom to blame others), to the 'internal' (which attributes personal 'ownership'). This is simply achieved by using the word 'you' in all personalised statements. The second thing to note is that there are four distinct steps in the personalising process. The counsellor processes this information sequentially. The client provides feedback at each step to affirm its accuracy, or to negotiate further until its accuracy is achieved. The names and ratings of the four steps are:

1	Personalise the meaning	rated at level 3.25
2	Personalise the problem	rated at level 3.5
3	Personalise the new feeling	rated at level 3.75
4	Personalise the goal	rated at level 4.0

We process and rate these steps a little differently from Carkhuff, their original developer, but their sequence remains the same.⁹ The ratings, and broad functions performed by the four steps are:

1. The personalised meaning (3.25) **analyses** what the client has explored, and **describes** the significant highlights—including a clear statement of what the client does to contribute to (or maintain) their problem—their ‘do-do’.
2. The personalised problem (3.5) **diagnoses** what the client cannot yet do to resolve their particular problem, and describes this behaviour as a skill deficit.
3. The personalised new feeling (3.75) **responds** to the self-criticism that the client feels when they recognise, and acknowledge, their skill deficit.
4. The personalised goal (4.0) **‘flips’ and restates** the skill deficit so that the client understands that their immediate, most relevant, personal goal (in relation to the explored issue) is to find a way to acquire the skill that is currently lacking. This step also **spells out** the benefits of such acquisition.

The importance of these steps is that, as the process unfolds, clients progressively assume responsibility to pursue their personalised goal, and are motivated to do so. The skills for these functions are complex, but each will be described in detail, and exercises will be provided to get a ‘feel’ for them. Practice strategies will be suggested.

Personalised meaning: level 3.25

The first step of personalising requires that the counsellor reflects on, and analyses, the client’s explored information in order to abstract, and give words to, its **personal meaning** for the client. From the time the skills were developed, Carkhuff has applied a simple format to distil this personalised meaning. The format is:

*‘You feel...because **you**... (personal significance).’*

Carkhuff continues to use short statements when personalising the meaning. In recent examples, he highlights the aspect of particular significance. The first example, below, carries a serious a personal implication, and the second refers to a changing feeling.

‘You feel devastated because you are once again dependent upon the people you tried to leave behind’ (Carkhuff 2000, p.141).

‘You feel scared because you’re all alone’ (ibid, p. 143).

We used this ‘short’ format early in our counselling practice, but soon found that our clients valued a broader ‘verbal cameo’ of the highlights that we had distilled. It gave them evidence that we had really listened. In drawing the verbal picture, we

⁹ During David’s initial training in 1976, the rating scales for the four steps of personalising were 3.5M (meaning), 3.5P (problem), 3.5NF (new feeling), and 4.0 (goal). Carkhuff currently rates the personalised meaning at 3.5, and the personalised problem, goal and feeling all at 4.0 (Carkhuff 2000, p. 174). We have assigned the ratings listed in the text above to indicate the degree of progression through the process.

‘unscrambled’ what the client had often shared in a disjointed way, summarised the salient facts and ordered them chronologically—historical aspects first, then current experiences, followed by future implications. It took a little longer for us to realise that the most significant implication of all was that clients unwittingly contribute, in some way or another, to the perpetuation of their problem. We called this tendency their ‘do-do’—the ‘bad habit’, attitude or behaviour that is self-sabotaging. Making the do-do overt, in this context, is a constructive use of a weakness confrontation (see Chapter 12). It is perhaps the most helpful aspect of the personalised meaning step—especially when balanced by the inclusion of positive aspects of the client’s profile. Eventually, we settled on the following format for personalised meaning statements.

past	‘You... <i>(verb...perceptions of related history)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...relevant qualities/attributes)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...evaluation of things encountered)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...things experienced)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...beliefs held)</i>
present	You... <i>(verb...assumptions made)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...things done)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...things not done)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...things avoided)</i>
future	You...<i>(verb...the behaviour that perpetuates the experience)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...consequent effect)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...expectations)</i>
	You... <i>(verb...future implications)</i>

and all that makes you feel...*(overall, pervasive feeling)*’.

The elements are not binding—so long as the do-do is included. The other descriptive elements can be modified to highlight significant aspects of each client’s circumstances.

As yet, we have not discussed the last line of the format—the overall ‘pervasive’ feeling. Unlike the feelings that keep changing for different reasons during the exploratory phase, clients also tend to have an ongoing, pervasive feeling about things that they do not like, but cannot change satisfactorily. Their experience seems to be that ‘the whole damn thing’ is pervasively debilitating, or overwhelming, or frustrating, or the like. For this reason we have chosen to respond to the feeling at the conclusion of the format.

The skill steps for personalising the meaning

The skill steps for personalising the meaning presuppose an ability to remember and recall clients’ personal information. Once the ‘signs of readiness’ have been noted, the counsellor will decide to begin personalising, and indicate this intention to the client in a conversational way. The counsellor then analyses what can be recalled from the client’s exploration, and sifts out the salient points; including the ‘do-do’. These points are held in consciousness by the counsellor, and then delivered, chronologically, as a series of short, dynamic statements that collectively ‘sum up’ the client and their circumstances—including the overall, pervasive feeling associated with their unresolved issue. The counsellor allows time between each short statement to give the client opportunity to affirm its accuracy—and hence own it.

Personalising the meaning is a big task that requires considerable practice. It is not unknown for some beginning counsellors to have a tea break prior to personalising, so that they can reflect on the task. Some have drawn aside during such breaks to write out the personalised meaning. Such strategies may be helpful until confidence is built up.

In order to list the skills in detail, and show how they apply, we will follow a script of Vicky working with a client, 'Reg'. The script has been abbreviated to minimise redundancy, and modified to preserve confidentiality, but the essence of the story, and the responses made are factual. Reg's statements are printed in normal font. Vicky's responses are printed in italics, and her summary thoughts are bracketed.

Background

Reg was referred for counselling by a friend. At the time of making the appointment he said he had been feeling unwell and the doctor had suggested that 'some emotional factors' might be influencing his health. After the preliminary greeting and establishing a contract for their work, Reg said:

The interaction

'I feel a bit silly being here. Normally I'm in control of things. But just now it seems like my body is going berserk, and I guess I should listen to the doctor. I feel anxious all the time these days, and my heart goes erratic on occasions. I had to go to 'Casualty' at the hospital the other day. They said I had heart arrhythmia, but they couldn't find out why. I find I'm also angry all the time, and I'm sure my staff don't know how to handle me.'

'It seems like you feel out of control because your body's unpredictable responses are sabotaging your effective functioning in many areas.'

'Yeah, I just don't understand it. I mean I am basically healthy. I know I have more responsibility now than I had before. You see I have just returned home after travelling for some time. I'm managing one of our family hotels at present. It took me a while to get into it, but I'm reasonably intelligent, and I'm learning the ropes reasonably well I think; even though I know it's a big job, and will take time to lick it into shape.'

'So, you are a bit puzzled because even taking on new responsibilities doesn't seem to account for your health issues.'

'Well, I know I can do things well, but I guess I'm not sure that the **staff** think I'm competent. You see my mother ran the place before, but she's getting old and when my father died I came home to help with the businesses. I suspect the staff think I've been given things on a plate. And what's more she 'pops in' still, and I find her chatting to staff—possibly about things they should talk to me about!'

'You sound angry because your mother's interference limits your authority and credibility in running the place your way.'

'Spot-on! If only they knew the real story. She is now showing early signs of dementia, and some of her ideas about the place are highly questionable. Also she is living in the past. I have new ideas about how to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the place. So I am trying to introduce these new ideas, and she floats in and chats to the staff. I'm sure they like her better because people don't like it when they are challenged to improve standards, do they? But I really believe it is in all our interests to change. However, none of them really support me.'

'You feel really disheartened because the outdated "old firm" of your mother and the staff are undermining your goodwill, creativity and desire to build.'

'Yes. I often feel so unsupported by anyone—both my ideas and me personally. At work, my mother and my staff argue with me about whatever I suggest. Even at home, my partner never seems to agree with my suggestions about the house or social activities, and if I try to talk about my worries at work she says she's too tired. I listen to

her though! I know she has a hard job, and I try to be compassionate, but she seems totally uninterested in my issues. It just doesn't seem fair.'

'You seem to feel very isolated because your efforts, and giving, are trampled on, and are not reciprocated by others.'

'I do...(Reg paused, and tears appeared in his eyes). Sometimes, I think I should go back to travelling. At least there are no pressures in that. I used to pick up work wherever I could, and move on whenever I wanted to. No-one made any demands on me, but I guess I was pretty lonely too. Also I'm getting older, and I can't travel forever. I have to make a go of something a bit more "grown up". People will think that I am no good if I don't make good in a proper job. Certainly my mother has always been critical of my lifestyle.'

'So the need to prove yourself to others, especially your mother, drives you to conquer the current challenges rather than run away, but this leaves you feeling very pressured.'

(quietly crying) 'She never really loved me I'm sure. Neither of my parents were ever around when I was a kid. I had a series of nannies, some of whom were quite brutal. I used to try to tell my mother, but she would brush me off. I never remember her cuddling me. I just used to cry alone in my room. I can still feel that pain.'

(I don't think I should reach out to touch him right now, his tears are very private, I'll just stay fully attentive and not respond just yet—I'll pause awhile).

'You have a broken heart because your unmet childhood needs for love and nurture still haunt you.'

'I tried and tried to do what would make them love me. I was "good". I did very well at school, and I've always tried hard to make others happy. I just can't understand why I don't get more back. I just seem to give and give, but no-one ever gives me as much back. In fact they sometimes complain that I am too intense. That really hurts.'

'You seem to feel really pained because doing good things for others seems to bring criticism—not the love you yearn for.'

'Yes. I've had quite a few relationships where I give all that I can, and the other ends up turning on me, and either criticising me, or leaving me. God knows what I have to do to get a little something back. I mean it isn't too much to ask to be thought about with love, and have one's needs taken into account, is it—especially when I give so much?'

'You feel betrayed because others' lack of reciprocity in giving back what you give erodes your trust in relationships.'

'Yeah. Sometimes I think I'll never have another relationship. People always let me down...(quiet reflection). I sometimes feel totally unlovable...(crying softly again). Sometimes I also feel very angry. It's all so **unjust**. What do I have to do to get what I want?'

'You seem to feel quite empty because despair and anger are your bedfellows—not love and care from others.'

'How true! It's been like that all my life! Others seem to manage much better than me. I must be doing something wrong. I wish I knew what it was. I so much want to have the kind of life and relationships I know I am capable of.'

(Reg senses that he somehow contributes to his problem, but hasn't seen how at present. Perhaps I should stay responsive until he becomes clearer, but I think I've got it pretty right by suspecting that he is so desperate for affection that he

pushes people so hard that he drives them away—I think it is OK for me to start personalising now that I’ve got a fairly safe hypothesis about his ‘do-do’).
‘Reg, we seem to have talked about a lot, so far—What about if I summarise my understanding just to check that I haven’t missed any important bits.’

The skill steps

Skill step 1: The first step is to decide on when to personalise.

In this instance Vicky did not get the ‘green light’ from Reg, but she heard his willingness to acknowledge that he was a contributor. She backed her experience, and diagnostic skills in hypothesising on the do-do. It is sometimes necessary to personalise in these circumstances because not all clients have the ability recognise or articulate their role in contributing to their problem. However, the green light is the ideal.

Skill step 2: The second step is to signal an intention to personalise.

This serves a joint function. In the first instance, it means that the counsellor is aware of their deliberate choice to personalise. It also signals a change of approach for the client, and a chance to evaluate progress. In this instance, Vicky used different words from the example given on page 299. This is of no consequence so long as the statement is conversational, is in the spirit of the example, and the client’s agrees to proceed.

Skill step 3: This step calls for an internal review, and analysis, of the explored information (by the counsellor) to identify the earliest, significant, historical event and its implication(s).

This review should give a broad sense of the significant elements of the cameo, and their sequencing, but the individual statements should to be formulated in ‘dense’ language and delivered, with heightened attentiveness, in the shape of the format—a line at a time, In Reg’s case, Vicky’ delivered the following first line, and then paused:

‘Reg, you grew up without much love.’

Skill step 4: This step requires the counsellor to pause long enough for the client to experience the impact of the statement, and acknowledge its truth, or otherwise.

In many instances this acknowledgement is no more than a nod, and almost always no more than a simple ‘uh-uh’, ‘yep’ or ‘true’. Inaccuracies will need to be corrected and further exploration responded to. But in this case, and most others, there is a nod and reflective silence. The first seed of ownership

Skill step 5: During the silence, the next statement can be reflected on and formulated. To do so, the counsellor considers, *‘What comes next? What will help the picture unfold?’*

In Reg’s case, Vicky identified how Reg sought to compensate for the lack of love. Her next statement was condensed to:

‘You earned approval by achieving things.’

Again the pause, the reflection, and the affirmation. The previous skill steps were repeated as many times as necessary, yet few enough to be sufficient, to give Reg a recognisable cameo of himself—including his do-do. They are listed on the next page.

Skill step 6: When the profile has been ‘drawn’, the counsellor asks the think-step, *‘So what overall feeling pervades Reg’s experience in relation to these circumstances?’*. In this case Vicky identified that the pervasive feeling of ‘desperation’ had implications for Reg’s health.

The overall ‘meaning’ response, including the statements already considered, became:

'Reg, you grew up without much love.'
You tried to earn approval by achieving things.
But you never got it.
You give a lot to others.
But you get little back.
And then you give even more.
You even smother them with your giving.
In fact, you push people so hard that you drive them away. (the do-do)
So you've moved from unsatisfying relationship to unsatisfying relationship.
And you never get your love needs met.
You've contemplated travelling again to lick your wounds.
But you've learned that that doesn't fill you either.
You yearn to be filled.
But you stay empty,
and all that leaves you feeling desperate.'

The counsellor knows that this step is complete when all has been affirmed, no new exploration has occurred, and the client says something like:

'I don't like it much—but I guess that sums me up pretty well.' or
'That's me to a tee—I couldn't put it better myself.'

The product looks simple. However, without a rich life experience, or a number of theoretical 'windows' through which to view life, this and subsequent steps are quite difficult to master. For example, Vicky was helped in formulating her second statement by knowing that, when deprived of love, children are likely to learn alternative maladaptive ways to get those needs met.

A short version of personalising the meaning

From our experience, there is no doubt that clients prefer the 'long' version of personalised meaning described, over the 'short' version that we originally learned. Nevertheless, the shorter statement is useful for day to day discourse, or issues that require limited exploration. The simple version uses the format:

'You feel...because you...'

An example of this, in Reg's case, could be:

'You feel isolated because you push people so hard that you drive them away.'

Using the pervasive feeling 'desperate' in this single response would seem inappropriate.

Personalised problem: 3.5

Simply owning the 'picture' of one's personal meaning, and acknowledging the associated pervasive feeling does not **change** the pervasive feeling. It lingers, and will do so until an appropriate intervention is able to replace it with a sustainable, positive experience. Personalising the problem begins such an intervention by pinpointing the particular skill whose current lack makes it impossible to resolve the core issue—converting the dysfunctional do-do into a constructive 'can-do'. This skill deficit is the 'can't-do' which, when 'flipped', becomes the personalised goal. Subsequent plans that attain this goal achieve a successful 'can-do' (because I 'have done') and the associated pervasive positive experience.

By defining problems as skills deficits we derive new, relevant goals. Specifying relevant goals encourages new plans for how to act more constructively. Constructive action contributes to others, and fulfils oneself. Such actions add to the actualisation of one's potential. Such is the significance of this transitional 'pivot point' in the counselling process. It is the point from which 'passive victims' may become 'active self-developers'.

Carkhuff proposed the following format for personalising the problem:

'You feel...(pervasive feeling)...because you cannot...(skill deficit).'

Carkhuff allows for variations in the 'feeling' space, but we suggest that the pervasive feeling be carried forward from the previous step. It not only seems logical to assume the persistence of that feeling, but we have found it both appropriate, and fluent, to restate the pervasive feeling in an introductory 'link' to the training format. Recall the closing statement of the 'meaning' response to Reg—'*and all that makes you feel desperate*'. After some reflection, Reg replies, '*You've summed me up really well, you're right—it does, it leaves me feeling desperate—constantly*'. Vicky then makes the link:

'So Reg, to put it another way—you feel desperate because you cannot yet find a way to (or figure out how to)...(skill deficit).'

This simple link signals a shift in the way of looking at the cameo; it reiterates the pervasive feeling, but the words 'you cannot yet find a way to' infer that there **is** a way of dealing with the feeling—you (just) cannot find the way—**yet!** This is a subtle motivator. It is fair to say that some trainees consider the use of the word 'cannot' to be 'too strong'. We have played with alternative options such as 'aren't able to', 'don't know how to', 'lack the ability to', in the training laboratory—but, on the receiving end, the consensus seems to be that 'cannot' is the most effective. The tricky bit is finding the right words to follow the 'cannot'.

The skill steps

The overall question to be answered when personalising the problem is: '*What is it that the client cannot yet do to deal with their issue?*'. To assist in processing this question Carkhuff suggests three broad steps: 'conceptualise deficits', 'internalise deficits', and 'specify deficits' (Carkhuff 2000, p. 145). To these we add, 'pinpoint the deficit'. Carkhuff provides a simple example of an unemployed person to describe these steps. The steps are not linked to any given history, so we have written the following personalised meaning response to conform with Carkhuff's 'implications' format (see page 300) to provide a possible context in which to see the process.

'You feel despondent because you seek work conscientiously, but you miss out time after time, and this means that you have to pinch and scrape to survive.

In 'conceptualising' the deficit, the counsellor answers the question. '*What is missing that is contributing to the problem?*'. In this example, the counsellor concludes that 'job skills are missing' (Carkhuff 2000, p. 146).

By 'internalising' the deficit, counsellors formulate responses that 'assist the helpees to understand their role in the problem'. Such responses 'communicate the helpees' accountability or responsibility for their deficits'. In this example, the response was:

'You feel hopeless because you cannot manage to get a job' (Carkhuff 2000, p. 147).

'Specifying' the deficit makes it possible to specify the goal (by simply 'flipping' it). This means that by developing an action plan the deficit can ultimately be overcome. In Carkhuff's ongoing example the response to specify the deficit was:

'You feel disappointed because you cannot present yourself to prospective employers effectively' (Carkhuff 2000, p. 148).

In our view this goal is still too broad. It has (probably) not told the client something s/he does not already know. We have found it useful to ask the following question to pinpoint a more specific deficit: *'So what is it that this client cannot 'do', to do that last step?'*. To refine Carkhuff's example we would ask: *'So what can't the client do to present her/himself to prospective employers effectively?'*. The answer will either be somewhere in what has been explored, or in the comment that the client makes as a rejoinder to the response just made. For instance, imagine that the client might say:

'Yeah, what you say is pretty right, but I have got jobs in the past with employers that I've known through the footy club, and from the church—it's just that I've had some bad experiences with bigger companies where you don't know the people and its all go, go, go, and you don't get a chance to find out about the job, or feel comfortable in telling them about what you've done.'

The counsellor hears a refining shift from 'can't present' to 'can't prepare'. If the counsellor has the 'know how' of job preparation, s/he can respond along these lines:

'That sounds as though you can't find a way to prepare adequately before an interview—like getting a detailed job description, and pay and work conditions; and tailoring your résumé to link what you have to offer to what the company is looking for.'

Now imagine that the client says:

'You're dead right—I can see how that would help if I could get a handle on that, but I'd have no idea where to start—they didn't teach that sort of useful stuff when I was going to school. I'm sure I could pick it up once I got started.'

It is not hard to imagine that the counsellor could respond along these lines:

'So, in real terms, your disappointment boils down to the fact that you can't actually find a way to check out a person, or agency, that can effectively teach you to prepare what needs to be done in order to successfully front up at a job interview with confidence.'

The client may well follow through with a remark such as:

'How thick can you get? Why the hell didn't I see that for myself? I need to figure out the best place to learn those preparation skills—at the best price—or a freebee if there's such a thing.'

Comment: The simple example above highlights a number of significant points:

1. The greater the refinement, the sharper the pinpoint. The sharper the pinpoint, the sharper the inferred goal. The sharper the inferred goal, the 'easier' the action plan. The difference here is between a general program to 'present well' and a specific program to find an effective, economic teaching agency.
2. Personalising the problem seems to be most effective when the level of refinement is such that it is 'news' to the client. As the 'penny drops' or 'the light goes on' clients are likely to be self-critical, but the recognition of the 'bottom line' deficit also brings an intuitive understanding of what needs to be done. As we shall see later, there are still two important steps to complete the process.
3. Pinpointing skill deficits is a collaborative process. The counsellor continually incorporates client feedback into the next level of refining the skill deficit.

4. Unless counsellors know ‘what works’ and ‘how things get done’, they will have difficulty in being able to identify specific skills. It is important for counsellors to ‘know their stuff’, and have broad life experience, in order to help others.

Before returning to see how Vicky applies these skills to Reg’s situation, it is important to point out the simple test of the validity of a skill deficit. It is this: The deficit, when flipped, must become a goal whose attainment will fix the problem. Consider this pseudo deficit:

‘You feel desperate because you cannot believe that your spouse would be unfaithful to you.’

It is quite possible for such a statement to be experientially true, but it is nonsense to consider that flipping it, to find a way to believe the infidelity, will fix the desperation!

Conceptualising Reg’s deficit

Skill step 1: The first step is to conceptualise the area where the ‘do-do’ creates, or perpetuates, the problem for the client.

The answer to this might be obvious, and easily recognised from one’s own experience, or it may require theoretical knowledge of some kind or other. For example, it was easy for Vicky to see that Reg’s behaviour, in swamping people and pushing them away, was evidence of poor interpersonal relating. Without further insight, Vicky may have only been able to conceptualise a broad deficit such as:

‘So Reg, to put it another way, you feel desperate because you cannot find a way to interact with people without somehow driving them away.’

No doubt Reg would agree with this, but Vicky’s experience told her that such broad deficits lead to broad goals that seem unattainable to clients—even though they desperately want and need to achieve them. However, in this case, Vicky reviewed Reg’s evidence in the light of the spiritual dimensions that we had developed (see page 78). Her conceptual picture of Reg was that of a person who had only experienced conditional love as a child (level 2.5–3.0). Vicky recognised that such conditionality drove Reg to seek approval by achieving things that would never satisfy his love needs. She recognised this as ‘pathological perfectionism’ that never stops seeking recognition. This richer, conceptual picture enabled her to internalise a richer deficit.

Internalising Reg’s deficit

Skill step 2: In this step Vicky structured an internalised response, in skill terms, to help Reg recognise his role in the problem—to see that there is a link between his pervasive feeling, his dysfunctional behaviour, and what he can’t currently do. Her response was:

‘So Reg, to put it another way, you feel desperate because you cannot find a way to overcome the inner compulsion that you developed as a child—a compulsion that seeks, in vain, to win the love of others by constantly giving to them—being there for them.’

Reg reflected on the response and acknowledged its factual truth, and went on to say:

It is like that—God damn it, I’m a grown man with plenty of skills—but there is a kid inside of me that drives me—a lonely, angry, hungry kid—desperate to be held—desperate to be loved.

It is not easy to identify a specific deficit when considering such personal material as this from one’s own life experience, or from simple logical deduction. A logical diagnosis would suggest that the adult cannot find a way to ‘ignore the kid’, ‘tame the brat’,

‘befriend the child’, or ‘feed him in some way or another’. The option chosen will reflect the experience of the particular counsellor. However, Vicky’s familiarity with the concepts of John Bradshaw’s work on nurturing the ‘wounded inner child’ (Bradshaw 1992), enabled her to respond to Reg in these words:

Reg, you feel this pervasive desperation because you cannot find a way to nurture the little Reg within. The child who stays wounded from the lack of love and still drives you to fill him, and pleads to be loved. You cannot find a way, as an adult, to nurture him so that he grows to become the fulfilled adult that you yearn to be—so that you and he are one.

Reg wept, and slowly said:

Oh my God!—What a picture!—If only I could!

Personalising the new feeling: 3.75

The so called ‘new’ feeling emerges as the client accepts the reality of, and responsibility for, their deficit. At this stage of the process, Carkhuff originally invited his readers to ‘try to communicate a more accurate understanding of the feelings he [sic] has inside or his feeling towards himself’. The example given then was:

‘You feel disappointed in yourself because you can’t act on an opportunity’ (Carkhuff 1978, p. 120).

Whilst acknowledging that disappointment is a common feeling about deficits, Carkhuff currently suggests that this feeling ‘may become feelings of weakness or vulnerability because the helpes lack responses to handle their situations’. His example of this step responds to the unemployed person (previously mentioned) in these terms:

‘You feel vulnerable because your inability to present yourself to prospective employers has left you without a job and without direction’ (Carkhuff 2000, p. 149).

There are significant differences between these two approaches. Our first observation is that the second response is not a personalised statement—its structure matches an advanced level 3.0 (intimate) response. Our second observation is that, in this step, it seems very important to continue to respond to the inner-directed, new feeling as originally suggested. To do this we prefer to use the following format. It is a modified version of the format taught in David’s initial training (Cash 1975, p. 33):

*You feel... (new feeling) at
with yourself because... (restate the deficit).’
deep inside*

This format makes overt the fact that the new feeling is **inner-directed**. Responding to this new feeling seems to be a critical point in the counselling process. The process goes like this. In the previous step, the counsellor seeks to pinpoint a deficit that is ‘news’ to the client (that is, the deficit had not been previously considered or recognised). This is a difficult task. The counsellor must remain particularly vigilant, when refining the deficit, to watch for the fleeting evidence of the new feeling. This evidence occurs when the ‘penny drops’, and the client recognises and ‘owns’ the deficit. The evidence is usually expressed as a grimace, gesture, sigh, or remark that signals, ‘Ouch! that hurt a bit’. Over time, we have come to call this event the ‘ouch’ moment. We have noticed that this new feeling is almost always ‘self-critical’. This criticism mostly occurs in one of three broad areas. Those who are inclined to be ‘perfectionists’ tend to be disappointed with themselves. Those who see themselves as ‘insightful’ or ‘organised’ tend to be annoyed with themselves. Those who are ‘sensitive’ tend to experience a deep internal sadness.

It must be said that we have observed many instances of counsellors specifying a deficit that has been acknowledged as accurate by the client, but where there has been no ‘ouch’ moment. We have come to learn that however plausible the ‘agreed deficit’ may sound, it is wise to continue to seek to pinpoint a sharper deficit still—for as long as it takes to trigger the ‘ouch’ experience.

Response to a new feeling that is self-critical has profound significance. When the counsellor has responded accurately to the new feeling, clients frequently report that they now feel ‘liberated’, or ‘hopeful’; or say things like ‘I can forgive myself for not being perfect, and start again’. In many instances, there is an observable rise in energy that somehow seems to be released from ‘keeping the problem contained’ to ‘making it (the energy) available to ‘fix it’. The nature of the impact seems to be related to intensity of the ouch—which can fall somewhere between being a mere ‘twinge’ through to being well and truly ‘clobbered’. Now it is time to see how all this fitted for Reg.

Personalising Reg's new feeling

We left Reg reflecting on his personalised skill deficit in these terms:

Oh my God!—What a picture!—If only I could!

The skill step: As Vicky attended to Reg, she noted his tears, heard the yearning in his heavy sigh, and saw his right hand move to support his forehead. It looked like self-criticism related to disappointment with himself. However, she recalled that he saw himself as an organiser and manager, and wondered if, perhaps, he was dissatisfied with himself for overlooking this option in the past—but concluded that the evidence favoured ‘disappointment’. She edited the deficit and responded in these words.

Reg, as I watch you, I sense that you feel disappointed in yourself because, as a responsible adult, you cannot find a way to nurture the wounded child in you in a way that will help him grow into the lovable man that you yearn to become.

There were more tears. And as he pondered, his demeanour became a little more positive, and he looked at Vicky in a way that seemed to say, ‘I trust you. I can’t believe that you’d have said that if such nurturing were not possible’. His energy started to increase a little and he said:

‘Yes, I am disappointed—disappointed in myself—God knows I’ve tried all I knew—and I’ve failed. It’s true—I cannot find a way to nurture myself—I wouldn’t have thought it relevant or possible—but somehow just giving it words makes it seem at least vaguely possible—Mind you, I haven’t got a clue about how it might happen—let alone how you might get started—but it’s sure as hell what I want.’

Vicky reached out and held Reg’s hand for a short period before proceeding to the final step—personalising the goal. Reg’s energy continued to rise. He expressed hope.

Personalising the goal: 4.0

The skill step: Personalising the goal is a simple step that repeats the personalised new feeling, then flips the deficit to restate it as a goal, and then spells out the benefit of achieving the goal. The training format is:

<i>‘You feel...(new feeling)</i>	<i>at</i>	<i>yourself because...(repeated deficit)</i>
	<i>with</i>	<i>and you want...(flipped deficit)... so that...</i>
	<i>deep inside</i>	<i>(anticipated benefit).’</i>

Personalising Reg's goal

Vicky made a link statement to introduce the goal statement by saying:

Reg, we've made a lot of progress, so let me recap. You've acknowledged that you feel disappointed in yourself because you cannot find a way to nurture the wounded child in you, and you both want and need to find a successful way to nurture little Reg in a way that will help him grow into the lovable man that you yearn to become—so that you can eventually experience the joy of loving another adult who will love you as you are—for yourself—without condition.

Reg's energy rose further. So too did his optimism as Vicky proceeded to the next step in the process—that of 'operationalising the goal'—the topic of the next chapter.

A dilemma for counsellors

It is not unusual when the personalised deficit has been identified, for clients to intuit that its flipside is the goal that they both want and need. This creates a bit of a dilemma for counsellors about the need for personalising the new feeling. Since working with a particular client, Basil, we have opted to include the new feeling step, even though, in a sense, it may mean 'going backwards'.

Basil was a university lecturer who had suffered a severe stroke that left him paralysed down his left side. He hated it when people treated him like a 'sub-human', because of his hemiplegia. To keep the example simple, his deficit was something like:

'You feel frustrated because you cannot find an effective way to communicate to others how important it is for disabled people to be treated normally.'

Basil immediately anticipated the inferred goal and said:

'Yeah, got it—I can see how helpful it would be to draft a brochure on the subject—I could get a couple of my crippled mates to work on it with me.'

This was crunch time for me (David), because we were in the middle of making a demonstration tape for training purposes (back when 'reel to reel' recorders were the state of the art', and I was hell-bent on modelling all the steps. So I said:

'Basil I can see your enthusiasm for a plan of action that is already gelling in your head, but I just wonder, for a bloke with your history, that you might feel a bit disappointed with yourself because you can't effectively communicate your needs to others.'

Basil looked at me intensely, then dropped his head and sobbed:

'And I'm a teacher, for God's sake, I'm a bloody teacher—you bet I'm bloody disappointed.'

We finished the tape, with a repeat of the goal step, and then talked about the process. Basil said he had no idea why he cried when I 'hit him with that disappointed bit', but it was 'like taking my heart to the dry-cleaners, I felt all fresh and raring to go'.

Since then we practice, and advocate that it is worth 'going backwards', if necessary, on the grounds that it has helped others to 'go forwards' with greater clarity.

Personalising—a schematic summary

Figure 27, on the following page, provides a visual summary of the personalising process and how it links the exploratory and action phases of helping.

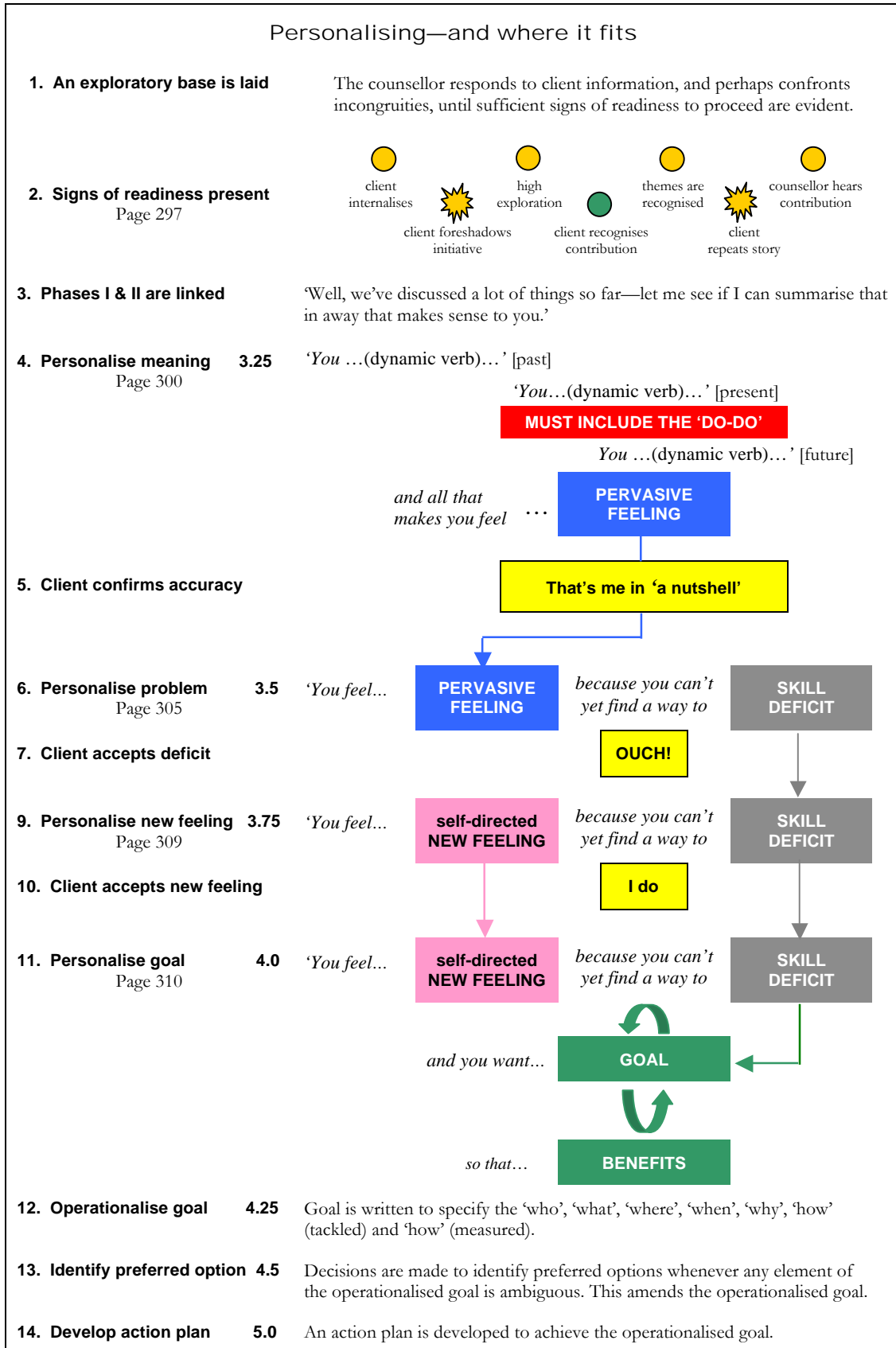


Figure 27. Showing how the personalising skills flow from the responding phase, and lead into the initiative phase within the overall helping process.

Personalising to affirm personal achievement

So far personalising the problem has processed information related to troubling issues, negative pervasive feelings, and skills deficits. However, the same process can be effectively applied to affirm achievement, and stimulate personal growth. Here, the pervasive feeling will be positive. Personal assets will be identified—not deficits. The new feeling will pass positive judgement on the self. The goal will be to expand the current assets, or apply them to new situations. The battery of personalising skills can be used in this way by parents, teachers, supervisors, or friends, to affirm others; but in this context, we will look at an example in the counselling setting.

This interaction was in the closing session of a couple who had been unhappy with their marriage, and came for counselling with David. Their joint personal goal was to learn the basic helping skills, and apply them at home. What follows approximates the process before the celebration and farewell.

Personalised meaning: 3.25

David's preamble led into the formal process:

'Well, we've travelled a fair way together. It's been a fruitful journey. And now you are confident that you can travel together without help. Let's recall some of the milestones. As I recall it:

You were nuts about each other as teenagers.

You let the hormones get the better of you.

You, Mary, fell pregnant and you, Tom, wanted to 'do the right thing'.

So, you married—against the wishes of both your parents.

You 'made it' for a year or two—just to show 'em you could.

Then you started bitching at each other when things got tough.

You got to despise each other over the years.

But you hung in there for the kids' sake.

You got desperate enough to seek professional help.

You came to realise that neither of you really listened to the other.

You've now learned to listen effectively, and to use what you've heard constructively.

You've used these skills to rediscover each other.

You both like what you've found.

You have reaffirmed your love.

You've resuscitated a dead sex-life and enriched it beyond your dreams.

And to cap it off, you've noticed positive changes in the kids too.

And all that leaves you feeling very joyful.'

There were nods, and some smiles, as each statement was affirmed. There was agreement that 'That sums it up pretty well'. David continued:

Personalising the asset: 3.5

'So, to put it another way, You are both really joyful because, after a marathon struggle, you have found a way to listen to each other respectfully; acknowledge and accept each other's different points of view; discover and build on what you hold in common; and implement plans to achieve the goals you have developed together.'

David watched attentively to see how Mary and Tom received the statement so that he could respond appropriately to the new feeling. They looked affectionately at each other, and then smirked as Mary had a little giggle.

Personalising the new feeling: 3.75

David felt that repeating the ‘asset’, verbatim, was unnecessary (even though such repetition is clearly beneficial when personalising a deficit) and responded accordingly:

*‘I can see that you are both really **tickled pink with yourselves**—and why wouldn’t you be—you’ve learnt to interact respectfully, accept differences amicably, and get things done together. You’re a real team—in bed and all!’*

There were more smiles. Tom nodded and rubbed his hands together.

Personalising the goal: 4.0

David continued to personalise the goal. Here there was no deficit to ‘flip’. Here the task was to capture what successful people do with their assets—invest them in the hope of enriching returns. Here David opened up the option for Tom and Mary to apply their skills advantageously with their children. It went like this:

So, to wrap it up, you are both tickled pink with yourselves with the competence you have achieved in acquiring quite difficult interpersonal skills, and now, perhaps, you could not only just model these to your kids—as you have been already—but actually teach them the skills so that they will be better prepared for life than you yourselves were.

There was a chat about how this might happen, and how they would have to keep themselves up to scratch if they were going to be teachers. David pulled a cork. They drank to the future, hugged, confirmed that the door was always open, and said their farewells. David poured another half glass (it was the end of the day) and reflected on how beautifully the Chinese character spelled out what counselling was all about, (recall page 2) and what a privilege it was to walk a while with others whenever paths meet.

Structuring responses to personalise assets

The formats for personalising assets are similar to personalising skill deficits apart from two modifications. The first is that words relating to the deficit are changed—‘can’t find a way to...(deficit)’ becomes, ‘you have learned how to...(asset)’. The second change is that there is nothing to ‘flip’ in the goal statement. The format looks like this:

	<i>at</i>	<i>yourself because...(asset) and perhaps now</i>
<i>You feel...(new feeling)</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>you could...(extend asset/apply it elsewhere)</i>
	<i>deep inside</i>	<i>so that...(anticipated benefit).’</i>

Personalising for groups

The personalising skills have application for resolving group issues—from couples to organisational teams. They do so by incorporating individual perspectives into collective perspectives. A consultant will use ‘you’ (plural) statements, and a team leader will use ‘we’. The skills are the same—there is just more data to process from multiple sources.

Discrimination and other exercises

The interpersonal rating scale that includes the personalising skills appears in Table 15 on page 315. A series of exercises follow on from page 316. They can be undertaken at a trainer’s discretion, or worked through by individual readers.

Interpersonal skills rating scale

Task	Rating		Summary of contributor functions	Summary of contributor behaviours
	Functional	Dysfunctional		
1	1.75		Establish climate Establish climate	Disorganised, listless, ignores, lacks interest, non-attentive Organised, energetic, invites, greets, shows interest, attentive
	2.0 2.5 3.0	1.0 1.5	No comment; comment unrelated to, or denies, other's content; sole expression of own views Comment related to content (as guidance, advice, relevant question or reassurance) Response to content Response to feeling Response to feeling and meaning (reason for the feeling)	'I don't... understand, agree, approve, have interest or time.' 'I do...' 'I think you should...' 'Who/ what/ where/ when/ why/ how/ have you?' 'You're saying/ suggesting/ asking....' 'You feel....' 'You feel...because....'
3	3.25		Personalise the 'meaning' (summary descriptive cameo that includes what other does to perpetuate their experience)	'You (verb)...., You (verb)...., You (verb)...., You (verb)...., etc., and all that makes you feel... (pervasive feeling).'
	3.5		Personalise the problem/asset (identify skill deficit/asset)	'You feel... (same pervasive feeling)... because you cannot/ can....'
	3.75		Personalise the new feeling (triggered by 'owning' problem/asset)	'You feel...at, with, inside yourself because you cannot/ can....'
	4.0		Personalise the goal ('flip' the skill deficit or extend asset)	'You feel...at, with, inside yourself because you cannot/ can....and you want to....',
4	4.25		Define goal in operational terms (5W2H)	'Your goal is... (who/what/where/when/why/how tackle/how measure success).'
	4.5		If 5W2H options are unclear in previous step	'Your goal is now... (who/what/where/when/why/how + evaluative standard).'
	4.75		Redefine goal to incorporate preferred option(s) from previous step	'Your preferred option is...; and it is viable at....%'
	5.0		Select viable, preferred operational elements to achieve goal	'Your steps, sub-steps, timeline checkpoints, reinforcers and checklists are...'
		1.5	Develop action plan Push a 'prescribed' plan of action	Strategies are offered randomly —not selectively

Table 15. Showing the ratings, functions and training formats for different verbal responses as they link to the four tasks of the counselling process. The table derives from Carkhuff 2000a.

Exercise 14: Rating responses to level 4.0

Use the scale on the previous page to rate the responses to the following client statements.

Teacher to a colleague:

*'I'm about to give up on my exercise program again. I just can't stick to it. I know about the need for energy and all that, but I just get overwhelmed with other things that **have** to get done and my exercises just fall by the wayside— what's the use?'*

Response	Rating
1. 'You sound really frustrated because the demands on your time force you to drop your exercise program.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. You feel a bit disappointed with yourself because you can't find a way to ensure that your exercise program gets priority over other things, and you really want to find a way to ensure your exercise program gets priority.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. 'You are a busy bloke and a damn good organiser. What's more I've heard you say that you know you focus better at work when you work out regularly at the gym. The weird bit is that you actually put that perspective in the bin, and scuttle your energy when there's a big project on—all of which leaves you feeling drained.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. 'You feel frustrated because, whilst you realise the importance of keeping fit, you invariably let your programs slide because somehow you let other things build up to these periodic crises.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. 'You really want to find time to maintain a level of fitness so that you can manage the rest of your world better, but you just can't find a way to ensure that your exercise program gets priority over other things; and for a good organiser like you I guess that that realisation makes you a bit disappointed with yourself.'	<input type="checkbox"/>

Mother to friend

'I let my kids do what they like until they run so wild I can't stand them any longer then I really clamp down on them and come on so heavy I can't stand myself.'

Response	Rating
6. 'Have you tried talking to them, and tried to work out a happy medium?'	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. You want to find the right balance between freedom and control—so that everybody's happy. It's bad enough to know that you don't do that, but when you realise that you can't you get really mad with yourself.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. 'You find it hard to raise kids without either spoiling them or hurting them.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. 'I do the same!'	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. 'You're saying that you 'blow hot and cold'. You're either too hard on them or too soft, and that whichever way you do it you end up feeling continually frustrated.'	<input type="checkbox"/>

Wife to Marriage Counsellor

'My husband is ridiculous. Everything has to be done when he wants it done, the way he wants it. It's as if nobody else exists. I'm not just wife and mother—no way. I have to do his typing—get stuff from the shops for his silly bloody hobbies—and oh, brother, if it's wrong—I'm just a dumb housewife.'

Response	Rating
11. 'You feel really angry that you can't cope with all the demands your husband makes.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. 'When you reflect on your marriage you get hopping mad.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. 'It makes you livid when you realise just how many ways he takes advantage of you.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. 'You feel that your husband exploits you, then abuses you if it's not perfect.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. 'When you look at your marriage and realise that you can't find a comfortable way to tell your husband what you're prepared to do, and what you're not, you feel that it's necessary to discover just how you can best do that.'	<input type="checkbox"/>

Husband to mate

'After all these years of niggling at each other or backing off, I'm really excited about the way things are going at home. We hit rock bottom, and then the counsellor suggested this Quest training course. We learned to listen to each other and talk stuff through. I didn't know we could be so happy—I'm even thinking it might work with the kids too!'

Response	Rating
16. 'Sounds great to have things finally going so well for you.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. 'You're really pleased with yourself because you and your wife have at last found ways to talk to each other without bitching—even when you don't agree. And from what you're saying you really want to make it work with your kids too!'	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. 'I'm glad you're so happy.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. 'Well, bully for you. Enjoy it while it lasts!'	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. 'You've had it rough over the years. I know you nearly broke up a while ago. You are both nuts about each other, and you wanted to make it work, but you both wanted to be top dog. You hated the way it was, and you were smart to get a bit of help—and even smarter to do that course and learn a few communication skills. You've been as happy as Larry ever since!'	<input type="checkbox"/>

Ratings for Exercise 14 are on page 487. If you want to determine your discrimination score, and cannot recall the conversion table it is on page 194.

Exercise 15: Recognising 'signs of readiness'

In this exercise, assume that the following client statements occurred after a reasonable period of exploration. Your task is to decide whether to 'externalise' your next response (3.0) or begin to 'personalise' (3.25). Record your choice, and note your reason for doing so.

Statement 1

'She drives me mad! She's lies in bed until midday, and then mooches about demanding this, that, and the other. She's not the only kid in the neighbourhood without a job, but I'll bet they don't just hang about getting on their mother's nerves. And she's so rude—she hasn't got a civil word for anyone! I've had it up to here!'

Externalise Personalise

Reason

Statement 2

'I feel so flat and useless—I just can't seem to get going. The project's clear enough in my head—I'm on this merry go round—the less I do, the more depressed I get—so I do even less! I reckon that once I'm underway it'll be OK, but it's the first step that is so difficult.'

Externalise Personalise

Reason

Statement 3

'Oh, I'm so confused now. I can see I've been too harsh and rigid in the way I discipline the kids. Yelling at them is about as non-productive as it gets! No wonder their schooling is taking a nosedive. Yet I keep on in the same old way—I think it's time to take stock!'

Externalise Personalise

Reason

Statement 4

'I'm about ready to walk out. I've been telling him for years now to stop drinking so much, but he just won't listen. Impossible!'

Externalise Personalise

Reason

Statement 5

'God knows where the kids around here get their money. Most of 'em are out of work—and no fathers—but they seem to have enough to keep a car going. And they litter the street with junk food containers—and that doesn't come cheap. They've got to be into house breaking or something. Who knows?'

Externalise Personalise

Reason

Answers to Exercise 15 appear on page 487.

Exercise 16: Personalising the meaning

In this exercise, assume that the following client statements occurred during a reasonable period of exploration. Your task is to produce a 'short' personalised meaning response (3.25) for each. This should include a pervasive feeling, and what the client does (habitually, frequently, continually, usually) to maintain or exacerbate their present difficulty—the 'do-do'.

Statement 1

'I know I have the time to do all I need to do. After all I only work part-time now! But somehow the more time I have the less I seem to manage. It's as if I am no longer organised or something.'

My 3.25 response:

Statement 2

'I love my kids. I really wanted them, but sometimes I just get so tired that I yell at them instead of listening to them. I know it only makes them worse, but somehow I just react automatically, and we seem to be going from bad to worse.'

My 3.25 response:

Statement 3

'I'm bored out of my brain. Sometimes I wake up in the night feeling really panicky, as if I'll die before I do anything interesting. I know the security of this job is good, but I now realise I've always put security above challenge, and that scares me to death.'

My 3.25 response:

Statement 4

'I've worked with people like my boss before, and my reaction is typical. Whenever I come across autocratic people I just dig my heels in and fight them. I know it makes it worse—and sometimes I sabotage my own prospects, but it's as if I have the same difficulty I had with dad. I react automatically.'

My 3.25 response:

Statement 5

'I've been trying to give up smoking for years. Now the doctor has told me that I'll kill myself if I don't! I know I'm stupid, but smoking is a real crutch. I can avoid problems and people when I smoke. It seems to suppress my real feelings. I really know I have to change my habit, but I am so scared that I won't manage without my 'helper.'

My 3.25 response:

Possible responses to Exercise 16 are on page 487.

Exercise 17: Personalising the problem

In this exercise, assume that you responded with each of the short personalised meaning statements to different clients, and that they confirmed the ‘do-do’ as accurate. Your task is to personalise the problem (3.5) by specifying their skill deficit—the ‘can’t yet do’. Remember to use the pervasive feeling identified in the meaning response. Flip your deficit (in your head) to test that it could fix the problem.

Personalised meaning 1:

‘You feel perpetually ‘chicken’ because you let other people bully you into getting their own way—even when you have a strong reason for doing what you want to do instead.’

My 3.5 response:

Personalised meaning 2:

‘You feel discouraged because you always start fitness programs with enthusiasm, but within a month you abandon them.’

My 3.5 response:

Personalised meaning 3:

‘You feel stressed most of the time because you are always saying ‘yes’ to other people’s needs—you always prioritise their needs above your own.’

My 3.5 response:

Personalised meaning 4:

‘You feel frightened because you often blow up, and resort to aggressive—even violent—behaviour when you have differences of opinion with anyone. You seem to believe everyone should agree with you all the time.’

My 3.5 response:

Personalised meaning 5

‘You feel imprisoned because you keep all your feelings to yourself, and somehow expect other people to read your mind because you yearn to be known for your true self—but you never declare it.’

My 3.5 response:

Possible responses to Exercise 17 are on page 487.

Exercise 18: Sequencing personalised responses

In this exercise, assume that the client statement below was made after a reasonable period of exploration. Your first task is to respond at level 3.0, and then work through the personalising steps in sequence. You will get hints on what to write from the client's rejoinders. It is quite artificial, but the aim is to give you a 'hands on' sense of the 'flow' of the process.

Client statement:

'My boss is useless. He never consults, he pinches my ideas and takes credit for them later. He's nice to me, but so he should be. I do most of his work for him.'

My 3.0 response**The client's rejoinder:**

'True, but I seem to be in this situation a lot of the time. I work hard. I share ideas and I let other people take advantage of my cooperativeness. I always need to be seen as the 'good guy' so I back off from any possible confrontation.'

My 3.25 response:**The client's rejoinder:**

'Yeah, That's me! I'm a real people pleaser. I don't like it—but I can see that that's what I do.'

My 3.5 response**The client's rejoinder:**

'You're right! I can't find a way to value myself sufficiently to challenge those who abuse me. Nor, if I am honest, would I know how to confront someone. I've spent so long 'backing off' I don't know how to do anything different.'

My 3.75 response:**The client's rejoinder:**

'Yes, yes, that's exactly how I feel—I really must get on top of this.'

My 4.0 response:

Possible responses to Exercise 18 are on page 488.

A client summary—a model for exercise 19

A ‘client summary’ is a useful format for filing client details, or for forwarding to another colleague or other agency for referral purposes. We have included the following client summary as a model for the next exercise. Names and identifying details have been changed, but the essence is essentially authentic. The steps shown are those that Vicky used when working with ‘Barbara’ (Sanders 1998). In Exercise 19, you will read the client summary of Derek, and draft the steps of the personalising process, in the same way that is shown below.

Client Summary

Client descriptors

Name: Barbara	Age: 39
Marital Status: Married	Profession: Home duties

Problem as presented by client

Barbara was unable to concentrate. Experiencing anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts.

Factors that emerged during exploration

Barbara had been in a stable relationship for some 12 years, and had three children with her partner. This relationship had been unsatisfactory for some time. There was some domestic violence, and little overt affection.

Barbara had assumed responsibility for the running of the home and all domestic chores. Her partner was a successful businessman. She is a very creative person, and felt restricted within that long term relationship. She had felt unvalued, and sometimes afraid. She had recently met another man, Fred, with whom there was a strong mutual attraction. Fred valued and excited her but, because she felt a strong loyalty to her current partner and children, she was neither prepared to terminate her current relationship, or remain involved with Fred.

She was experiencing grief because an exciting possibility seemed lost. She was angry because her current relationship was abusive. She felt trapped, by circumstances, in a dissatisfying life.

It also emerged that as she was growing up she was subjected to much criticism by her parents. She constantly felt unloved. Her exploration led to the realisation that by marrying her current partner she had opted for parental and societal approval. She would have preferred to expand a relationship with a person who was more ‘exciting’—but less successful (and therefore less acceptable to her family). She felt unworthy as a person—except when she conformed to family standards that didn't really ‘fit’ her.

Themes that emerged

In overall terms, Barbara had grown up with criticism and had no experience of feeling ‘legitimate’ for being herself. She did not have autonomy. She yearned to allow her creative side to flourish, but she always conformed to the standards set by her family. She had spent her life seeking parental approval that had never come. She had made choices that limited her true self. Her spirit was dying. She had learned from the limited contact with Fred that it was possible to feel valued and excited by life. She was terrified that she would never feel that way again. Her pervasive feeling was shame about being who she was.

Personalised meaning (3.25)

*You grew up in a critical household.
 You had no experience of personal legitimacy.
 And so, you lacked a sense of autonomy.
 You yearned to allow your creativity to flourish.
 But you needed the approval of your family.*

*And you always conformed to the standards set by them.
 And so, you withered as you waited for the approval that never came.
 You made choices that limited your creativity and spiritual development.
 And at last, you have learned from 'Fred' that you have intrinsic worth.
 You know that life can be more fulfilling.
 But you dither about abandoning the lifestyle that imprisons your spirit.
 And yet, you yearn for the fulfilment that you have experienced with Fred.
 But you lock yourself into a life of non-authenticity—
 and all that makes you feel a pervasive sense of erosive shame.'*

Personalised problem (3.5) (after several approximations)

'You feel this erosive sense of shame because you can't find a way to progressively shed the 'false' identity you have adopted, and progressively claim your more creative, true self.'

Personalised new feeling (3.75)

'You feel angry with yourself because you can't find a way to progressively shed the false identity you have adopted, and progressively claim your more creative, true self.'

Personalised goal (4.0)

'You feel angry with yourself because you can't find a way to progressively shed the false identity you have adopted, and progressively claim your more creative, true self—and you need, and want, to find a way to progressively shed the false identity you have adopted, and progressively claim your more creative, true self for the sake of both your health and your spirit.'

Exercise 19: Personalising from a case study

Client summary

Name: Derek Age: 58
 Marital Status: Married
 Profession: Medical practitioner

Problem as presented by client

Cyclical depression that was very debilitating.

Factors that emerged during exploration

Derek had grown up in a very wealthy, but austere family. Money was made, but rarely spent. His family only valued people with extensive wealth. Derek had been given an expensive education, and had become a successful medical practitioner. He had also attempted to make even more money by investing in various stocks and shares. Some of these had failed, and he had lost a lot of money. He had left private practice some eight years previously to join a large organisation because he believed that he had the capacity to 'rise to the top'. He had been given many difficult tasks to undertake, and had the reputation of being 'tough' and autocratic. He disliked this reputation because it did not seem to match his internal experience, but he believed it to be necessary in order to get the job done. He was promoted, but then the organisational culture changed as a result of 'Board policy', and he found himself being overtaken for promotional positions by a different, more 'problem solving' and 'collaborative' type of manager. Derek felt devastated, cheated, and bewildered. He did not know how to change, or what to do. His marriage was convenient and suitable for his status—but was unloving. His three children were adult, but still financially dependent on him. He realised, as he talked, that he had tried to give to them some of the indulgences that he did not get as a child. Overall, Derek felt useless.

Themes that emerged

The pervasive feeling of uselessness that Derek experienced was because he had adopted a family culture that had not really satisfied him as he was growing up, or as an adult. He had lived his life in accordance with the values of toughness, wealth creation, and personal austerity—but he had also been an indulgent father to ‘make up’ for the love that he did not receive. He had tried to achieve according to the values he grew up with—but had had limited success. He was not very wealthy. He had made investment mistakes. He had done what was expected, but felt uncomfortable as a manager; and now he was ‘out of fashion’. He realised as he talked that he had spent his life trying to accumulate wealth, quickly, **so that he could do what he really wanted to do**. He actually enjoyed reading, creative writing, and cooking, and he yearned to have joy and fun in his life. He had lived his life in a way that had measured his worth by wealth, but he really valued personal satisfaction, caring, fun and creativity more (Sanders, 1998, p. 58).

Personalised Meaning—3.25**Personalised skill deficit—3.5****Personalised new feeling—3.75****Personalised goal—4.0**

An example of the personalising process for Exercise 19 is on page 488.

Exercise 20: Personalising my own goal

This exercise offers the opportunity to reflect on your own circumstances, and personalise your own personally relevant goal. Simply substitute 'I' for 'you' in each of the formats. Take time over this. Consciously work through steps 1–11 in Figure 27 on page 312.

My personalised meaning (3.25):

My personalised problem (3.5):

My personalised new feeling (3.75):

My personalised goal (4.0):

No 'answers' are supplied for personal work undertaken in Exercise 20.

Practicing personalising

The general approach to practicing personalising skills follows the outline given under 'Practicing attending' on page 120. The set up of the room is identical to that shown in Figure 15, on page 122.

Preparatory steps

Before practice commences, the tutor will review the material presented in an earlier presentation. This should lead to a listing on the whiteboard similar to Figure 27 on page 312. Since many trainees seem overwhelmed by the complexity of the process, trainers can introduce a group exercise that is a fun way to come to grips with the 'mechanics' of the process, and minimises individual performance pressures. The exercise relates to 'famous persons'.

Exercise: famous persons

The group is asked to identify a famous person, with whom members are familiar through popular magazines, or other common sources. Popular choices have included Her Majesty the Queen, and Elvis the 'King'. The group is asked to call out things they know about the person. These are listed on the whiteboard until the random contributions are exhausted. The group then generates a scrambled 'case study'. Under tutor guidance, the group identifies the earliest fact, 'translates' it into the '*You...verb...*' format, and writes it on the board. The group works through the 'case' information, chronologically, to build up a 'meaning' cameo. Since no one is perfect, the participants usually have fun agreeing on the 'do-do'. The tutor encourages discussion to ensure that thematic aspects are included, and that trivial tidbits are excluded. The group agrees on a possible pervasive feeling—and the tea-break is abuzz.

Since the 'client' is absent, the group can focus on the 'mechanics' without the pressure of getting the content 'right'. The tutor guides the group through the process of specifying the skill deficit, and at each suggestion, will ask: 'So what skill is needed to do that?'. In this way the group senses the need for, and legitimacy of, pinpointing the deficit through a series of approximations that emerge through collaborative dialogue.

Both personalising the new feeling, and personalising the goal are developed under tutor guidance. The tutor will stress the motivational value of spelling out the benefits of attaining the goal at the end of the statement. Groups frequently like to rerun the exercise with a different famous person. It is time well spent.

The 'empathy round' exercise

In this exercise, a volunteer student shares their issue with the whole group. Group members take turns to respond to each new statement. This activity is similar to the 'round robin' described on page 224. The tutor invites trainees to signify when they think a sign of readiness has been given. The evidence for each indication of readiness will be discussed by the group to decide whether or not to begin personalising. When there is agreement to proceed, each participant, including the client, writes a personalised meaning statement. Adequate time is given for editing. Each trainee then reads their statement to the client in turn, and the tutor follows. The client goes last. The tutor instructs trainees to pause between each element of their statement so that the client can consider and affirm each element. The client withholds feedback until all responses have been heard. Feedback is given to each individual. The group discusses the feedback. The tutor invites comment from the client about the experience—what works, and what does not.

Each trainee then writes a personalised problem statement. Each is delivered in turn. Trainees note the client's rejoinders to each, and observe to see if the client 'goes ouch'. Refined statements are written to incorporate new information from the rejoinders. This pattern continues until an 'ouch' is observed. The time gaps in between the steps in this written exercise may hinder the process, but the tutor will work to optimise the experience for all.

Individual efforts of personalised new feelings, and personalised goals will be drafted, shared, and discussed in a similar fashion to those already discussed. This is a long process overall.

Verbal responses

The group may require a number of 'round robins' for members to feel confident about producing verbal responses, individually. When ready, the group will break into triads, and practice will proceed in the same way that responding was practiced. The triad members will take turns as counsellor, client and observer. The task is to work through to a personalised goal. Tutors and observers may notice that responding skills diminish as trainees seem preoccupied with learning new skills. This is quite a common occurrence, and is almost always relatively short lived. In our regular programs, these activities continue for the remaining sessions in the semester.

Triads often 'get stuck' in the early rounds. In our regular programs, we have found it advantageous to invite skilled, willing students from previous years to assist as co-trainers during this phase of learning, so that each triad can be fully supervised until confidence rises. The assistant co-trainers consolidate their learning further as they begin to teach.

Using 'outside knowledge' to refine deficits

Trainees have more difficulty in pinpointing deficits than with any other aspect of the overall helping process. This is most likely because many have little more than their own experience to draw on. On our regular programs, trainees learn these skills first, but later learn a number of theoretical frameworks that expand their ability to identify deficits. In the interim period, we refer to the 'Dimensions of Human Effectiveness' tables on pages 62 and 78. They provide a simple 'window' to help to conceptualise the problem area, recognise the client's current level of functioning, and identify the requirements of the level immediately above. This latter level will be the most attainable, and therefore the one to work towards. It may be tempting to point to the ideal at level 5.0, but this is likely to be demotivating for clients because of its perceived unattainability. Carkhuff's work on the self-actualising process suggests that one's motivation to grow is optimised when what is offered is 'within a level' of what is currently experienced (Carkhuff, 1981, p. 133). There is wisdom in the Chinese character that speaks of helping as an 'inch by inch' process (page 2).

Consider a simple case where the 'do-do' is that the client 'procrastinates, and fails to meet deadlines, because their energy flags and lets them down'. In conceptualising the problem, Table 5 on page 62 suggests that the 'physical' dimension is lacking. Familiarity with the notes relating to the tables (on page 64) suggests that our client is barely functioning at 'survival' level, level 2. This means that a shift to level 3—'adaptability' becomes their next desirable, manageable step. With this in mind, the counsellor must reword the table definition (that talks about 'people' and 'they') to 'internalise the deficit'—that is, to talk about 'you'. The reworded statement could be expressed something like:

'You feel drained because you can't yet find a way to maintain sufficient energy to clear a full day's work on time—let alone any unforeseen tasks that need urgent attention.'

The client's rejoinder to this statement will provide insights into a more specific deficit. Subsequent rejoinders will provide further opportunities to pinpoint the deficit until the 'ouch' moment signifies that the 'new feeling' has been experienced by the client.

A week or so prior to the presentation that links the 'Dimensions of Human Effectiveness' tables to the personalising of deficits, we recommend that students undertake the 'Personal performance review', in Appendix II on page 458. This helps students focus on their own levels of functioning, and gives them familiarity in assessing tabled levels of effectiveness.

Summary

What personalising is

Personalising is a battery of skills for helping oneself, another, or a group, to accept appropriate responsibility for personal (or group) growth and development.

What personalising does

Operationally, the skills of personalising:

- shift the frame of reference from external to internal;
- draw together all the salient points, which emerged during exploration, into a comprehensive, summary description of what they currently mean to the person (or group) concerned—particularly what the person(s) does to 'perpetuate' their issue;
- identify the pervasive emotion associated with that personal (or group) summary.

Where the pervasive emotion is negative, the skills of personalising:

- identify the skill whose absence accounts for the person (or group) feeling unable to progress beyond the current experience;
- respond to the self-criticism which emerges with the realisation that one's own lack of skill has blocked progress;
- assert the desire/need to acquire the missing skill so that the person can overcome the restrictions of the past.

Where the pervasive emotion is positive the personalising skills:

- identify the skill which accounts for a success;
- respond to the self-satisfaction which emerges when one (or a group) acknowledges that their own skill has contributed to personal development/achievement;
- assert the desire/intention to develop the existing skill, and apply it to other areas, so that one's (or a group's) potential can be more fully realised.

Functionally, the skills of personalising:

- shift perspective from defensive (reactive) to constructive (pro-active);
- confront people with their 'personal (or collective) truth';
- lead to an acceptance of responsibility for one's own (or group's) life;
- link the understanding between where the person (or group) currently 'is' and where they need 'to be';
- put one (or a group) in greater control of their destiny;

- provide the link from living defensively (reacting) to living constructively (pro-acting);
- mobilise commitment to act in ways that will achieve personally relevant goals.

Why personalising is important

If we have a personalised understanding of how we contribute to our own (or a group's) situation (for better with skills, and for worse without them) then we can understand what needs to be done, and so feel in greater control, more fulfilled, and more contributive to ourselves and to others.

When personalising is used

The personalising skills are used whenever one wants to help oneself, or another person (or group) to find personal (or group) direction or set personally relevant (or relevant group) goals.

How to personalise

The personalising process involves four sequenced steps:

- personalise the meaning—level 3.25;
- personalise the problem (asset)—level 3.5;
- personalise the new, inner directed feeling—level 3.75;
- personalise the goal—level 4.0.

Personalising formats use 'I' for self, 'you' for others, and 'we' for a group.

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My learning about personalising

Write in your own words

What personalising is:

What personalising does:

Why personalising is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own personalising skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my personalising:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Defining goals operationally

Preamble

The personalised goals developed in the previous chapter were specified in conceptual terms. This chapter moves the process forwards by defining personalised goals in ‘operational’ terms that make them ‘do-able’. Operationalising the goal is the first step in the ‘initiative’ phase of helping. In this phase, counsellors blend their knowledge of ‘what works’ with clients’ own resources to spell out the best possible initiatives to achieve clients’ personal goals. Most authors tend to merge goal definition with action planning, but we follow Carkhuff’s process by defining the goal in ‘5W2H’ behavioural terms before plans are drafted. This chapter describes how this step applies to counselling, and discusses applications within the community. Examples and practice exercises are offered.

Reviewing current competence

Imagine that you have a friend who runs a profitable small business. Your friend has a staff of six people. They work competently as a team, and rotate tasks so they can ‘cover’ for each other in the event of sickness and holiday periods. However, your friend has not taken a holiday in years. She talks about it periodically, and actually claims to enjoy travel, but it gets postponed because ‘something always comes up’ at work. You have decided that, the next time she expresses an interest in a trip, you will put some pertinent questions to encourage both her commitment and motivation to actually go to the destination of her choice. Note the questions that you ask and how you went about choosing them. Compare your answers with the approach suggested in this chapter once you have worked through it.

Operationalised goals

A personalised goal gives clients a clear understanding of **what** it is that they need to do deal with their issue, and **why** it will be beneficial to achieve it. Clients are frequently relieved and delighted with that degree of understanding but, quite often, many are at a loss to know **how** to achieve their goal—how to act. However, it is important to define other elements of the goal, in a way that seems **achievable** to the client, before beginning to draft an action plan. Without such optimism, clients can feel overwhelmed. This sense of achievability grows as the counsellor and the client collaborate to define the goal operationally. This is done by asking (and answering) the 5W2H, ‘adverbial’ questions in order to spell out what is intended

in specific, observable, manageable, measurable terms. The seven questions to be answered, and the rationale for asking them, are:

1. **What** is to be done?— to reaffirm the personalised goal.
2. **Who** else should be involved with you?—to include stakeholders and support people.
3. **Where** is the most appropriate place for the action to occur?—to get the best venue.
4. **When** will you be able to start the action plan (both date and time), and by when is it feasible to finish, or review, (both date and time)?—to establish a manageable timeline.
5. **Why** the action is intended?—to reaffirm the personalised benefits.
6. **How** can it be tackled, in terms of a broad, manageable strategy?—to make sure that it is ‘do-able’.
7. **How** will you judge successful completion, in terms of observable, measurable, standards that suit you?—to know that you have really ‘made it’, and can celebrate.

When working with clients, we have found that it is helpful to summarise the answers to each question on a whiteboard as they emerge. We tend to record the results in the format shown below. If the white board does not have the facility for printing a hard copy. it is desirable to provide a pro-forma so that clients can have a personal copy.

My operationalised goal

I want (who).....

to (what).....

at (where)

beginning on (when)*and ending* (when)

so that (why/benefits)

My broad approach will be to (how/strategy)

I know that I/we will have achieved my/our goal if the task is completed on or before

the target date and: (how/standards)

Frequently, a number of alternative options are discussed and assessed against each question, and the answer to any particular question may depend on the answer to another. This is where the whiteboard is helpful in ensuring that the ‘latest edited version’ is visually presented.

Sometimes, the ‘pros and cons’ of alternative options make it difficult to decide on a preferred option. In these cases, a more sophisticated decision-making process is used. This is described in Chapter 16. Furthermore, In some instances a goal seems ‘too big’ to feel achievable. In this case the goal can be broken down so that one of its component parts can be achieved. A strategy to determine the most achievable component will be discussed later in this chapter, but for now, we will summarise the steps of how Vicky interacted with ‘Reg’ to operationalise his personalised goal.

Defining Reg's goal in operational terms

In the personalised goal that was developed in the previous chapter, Vicky said:

Reg. You've acknowledged that you feel disappointed in yourself because you cannot find a way to nurture the wounded child in you, and you both want and need to find a successful way to nurture little Reg in a way that will help him grow into the lovable man that you yearn to become—so that you can eventually experience the joy of loving another adult who will love you as you are—for yourself—without condition.

She continued:

Reg, we need to make that goal a bit clearer so that it feels feasible for you to achieve. There are a number of aspects to look at, so I'll write each on the board as we go. For example, it's already clear that your goal is to find a way to nurture the wounded child that still influences you, so that you can be free of his influence to share in a loving adult relationship, mutually and unconditionally.

Vicky had ensured that she and Reg were positioned so that they could both square off to each other, and the whiteboard, with relative ease. She turned to the board and wrote:

What: to nurture wounded 'little Reg' through to healed maturity

Why: If I nurture my wounded child to maturity, then he will befriend me, not sabotage me, and so I will be free to love myself and others, and be loved without his restriction.

She continued:

'I've changed the words a bit in the 'why' statement to spell out the effect, and the benefits, of achieving your goal. Do they fit for you, or do you want to change them?'

Reg confirmed the summary statements, and said that he could hardly wait to get started, but that he had no idea what to do. He trusted Vicky, and sought assurances that he could do what he needed to do in private. He wondered what ideas Vicky had, so she continued:

'Let me outline a couple of approaches that have a good track record in this area. The first is called either 'Rebirthing' or 'Breathwork'. This uses breathing techniques to alter your state of consciousness so that early trauma can be accessed and dealt with. I need to say that whilst I have some experience in this area, I am not expert, and I believe that it would be better to refer you to someone else if you choose this option.

The second option follows a program developed by a man called John Bradshaw. It is specifically designed to help adults nurture their wounded inner child until, in his terms, they 'champion' the child¹⁰. It starts with doing some 'original pain work', where you really get in touch with 'little Reg' through discussion, with a trusted person, about childhood photographs and other memories. Then 'big Reg'—that's you—dialogues with 'little Reg' in writing. You write normally with your preferred hand, and little Reg answers with your non-preferred hand. This might sound a bit weird, but somehow it helps the brain work out whose talking. This really helps clarify what little Reg needs. Then big Reg has to commit to meeting these needs—to indulge when needed, to protect at all times, and to teach when necessary. Of course the therapist helps through all the steps.¹¹ I am experienced in this area, but I could also recommend a course, in Sydney, where groups work together through the process.

¹⁰ Bradshaw's program is referenced at the end of this chapter on page 348.

¹¹ The term 'therapist' rather than 'counsellor', is used deliberately, because although Vicky continued to work with Reg, she—not Reg controlled what happened. The rationale for this shift is argued in Chapter 18.

Reg asked a few questions to help clarify some areas, but decided on the Bradshaw option because he could envisage the possibilities of the process; he preferred to follow through with Vicky; and it could occur locally and privately. Vicky listed the agreed strategy on the board:

What: to nurture wounded 'little Reg' through to healed maturity

Why: If I nurture my wounded child to maturity, then he will befriend me, not sabotage me, and so I will be free to love myself and others and be loved without his restriction.

How: I will use Bradshaw's approach to nurture little Reg

Vicky then went on to say:

'I guess from your remarks that your 'where' will be at my office here, and that the 'who' of your goal will include you and me, but I want to check if there is anyone else that you would want to be involved in any way.'

Reg said that there was no one else, nor would he be telling anybody about his intentions because of fear of being ridiculed in some way. So Vicky continued:

'Then we need to establish a time-line that will be manageable for you. It is important to have a sense of continuity in what you do, without having undue work pressures. It will be easy enough for us to check out our diaries and set a start time, but it's a bit more difficult to set a target finishing date, because so much depends on what little Reg needs. Ideally, we should have a two hour session on a weekly basis for six to eight weeks, and, then, as required. On average the process can take up to six months. Can we look at your current commitments, and pencil in some dates?'

Reg checked his diary, and decided to postpone a planned holiday break—so that he could devote times that ensured continuity. A review date, rather than a finish, date was agreed, and the new information was listed in spaces that had been left previously. The board now reads:

Who: myself and Vicky

What: to nurture wounded 'little Reg' through to healed maturity

Where: At Vicky's office and at home

When: Starting on May 10, at 9.30 am—to be reviewed Sept 3

Why: If I nurture my wounded child to maturity, then he will befriend me, not sabotage me, and so I will be free to love myself and others and be loved without his restriction.

How: I will use Bradshaw's approach to nurture little Reg

Reg said that seeing it on the board like that seemed to make it all seem possible. His energy and optimism were the highest that they had been during the whole session. Vicky continued:

'There is only one more task to complete for now, and that is the other 'how' step—how will you know you have achieved your goal? We need to set tangible, measurable standards that are high enough to be successful, but that have a enough leeway to be attainable—we are not aiming at perfection—just comfortable viability.'

After some discussion, several indicators were identified and added to the board. They were:

*How: I will know that I have achieved my goal and little Reg and I are pals when my arrhythmia has stopped and my blood pressure is normal;
I have at least one fun experience every day;*

My partner's feedback will indicate that my requests are not 'demanding' for at least 70% of the time.

Reg copied the goal on the pro-forma. His homework was to bring as many childhood photos as he could to the next session on May 10th. Reg and Vicky subsequently worked for two hours per week for six weeks, then monthly for five meetings. Reg achieved his goal.

Managing big goals

There are occasions when it may be appropriate to break a 'big' goal into its component parts so that a selected component becomes the 'what' of an smaller operationalised goal. The question then becomes, 'Which of a number of elements do we work on first?'. Let us work through this part of the process as it applied to Peter, a client who was brought up in a household that emphasised that 'joy' is a synonym for 'putting Jesus first, Others second, and Yourself last'. To summarise, it became clear that Peter had put himself last so frequently that he was unaware of who he really was. His personalised 'do-do' was that he 'followed trends that others set'. His pervasive experience was that of being 'chaff in the wind'. His personalised goal was 'to find a way to become sufficiently self-aware to become self-determining'. The goal seemed too big for Peter to even imagine its achievability. To help him find the preferred, achievable element to start on, David suggested that they identify, and then weight, the areas where Peter wanted or needed to be more self-aware. The elements were listed on the whiteboard as each was discussed. The listing is shown in Figure 28.

5.0	
4.0	<i>food</i>
3.5	<i>clothes</i>
3.0	<i>feelings</i>
2.5	<i>music</i> <i>entertainment</i>
2.0	<i>thoughts</i>
1.5	<i>beliefs</i>
1.0	<i>values</i>

Figure 28. Showing an example of how the elements of a 'big' goal can be broken down to identify the 'easiest', and therefore the preferred, element to tackle first.

To begin, David put it to Peter that there is a line above which things work for us, and below which things work against us. He recognised this to be so. He also recognised that the further things are below that line the more they work against us, and the harder they are to fix. David then drew up the blank table on the whiteboard. He called level 3.0 the 'pivot line', and suggested that the other numbers gave a rough scale against which to rate the degree of difficulty. They had a quick chat about the areas where Peter was self-aware—the food he liked, and the clothes he chose to wear. He was more sure about food than clothing, and so they were listed, as shown, to reflect their relativity on the functional side of 3.0.

It was clear from the exploratory information that Peter had real difficulty in recognising his own thoughts, beliefs, and values. It was agreed that these were the 'hard ones' and so, initially, David wrote them all in the 1.0 line, with a view to coming back to them.

David pushed Peter to identify simpler areas where he was unclear and wanted to be more aware. The two areas that emerged were ‘entertainment’ and ‘music’. After some discussion, he felt that his taste in music was a bit easier to work out—in spite of his tendency to ‘go along with his mates’ in this regard. Music was then listed at about 2.75, and entertainment at about 2.25. At first Peter thought that he ‘should’ work on the harder ones first to ‘get them out of the way’. He was delighted to hear David’s recommendation that the easiest—music—was a much wiser element to start with, simply because of its achievability—and therefore the probability of success, and a sense of progress.

David raised the issue of feelings. Peter said that he was sometimes aware of his feelings and sometimes not. He was generally more aware of strong feelings. David suggested that, in time, they would need to find a way to relate feelings with the ‘reason for them’. He gave an instance that effectively structured a five point scale against which to make discriminations: ‘I **love** this music because...’; ‘I **like** this music because...’; ‘This music is “**so-so**” because...’; ‘I **dislike** this music because...’; ‘I **hate** this music because...’. Peter’s energy and optimism rose as he sensed the achievability of operationalising a music related goal.

They returned to discuss the ‘hard ones’ and listed them in the order shown in Figure 28. David put it to Peter that when he was clear about his personal preferences for music, they could work down the list. David shared his experience that when one has achieved a goal from just below the 3.0 line, so that it moves above it, one seems to create space for others to ‘move up’, because the skills acquired in mastering the easier task can be applied ‘down the line’ to make other tasks easier. Peter saw the point. They proceeded to write an operationalised goal whose ‘what’ became, ‘I want to be able recognise my true feelings about the music that I hear, and be able to say why I feel that way’. In time, Peter achieved the other goals, right down to becoming aware of, and owning, the values that drove him.

Community applications

One of the frustrations in many organisations is that decisions that have been made often fail to be implemented. The minutes always record what was decided, sometimes list who will ‘action’ it, but almost never detail targets dates to start and finish—so very little may happen between meetings. There is merit in chairpersons ensuring that decisions are minuted with sufficient operational detail so that the meeting’s intentions get done.

Invitations to various functions may appear in our letter boxes, but sometimes the actual address, the date, start time, or who gets the proceeds may not be detailed. It is important for organisers to check that all (5WH) operational detail is included before circulars are printed.

Practicing operationalising goals

During our regular training program, the skills of defining goals operationally are usually introduced during the period where participants are continuing to practice the personalising skills. Once trainees have personalised a goal, they are encouraged to continue working to define it in operational terms. There is usually only one dedicated period for group practice of the skill. In this period trainees work in dyads, and take turns to help their partner define a personally relevant goal in operational terms.

At another level, we encourage trainees to ‘think operationally’ in all day to day activities, so that reports are more comprehensive, generalised intentions are enacted, children have a clear picture of what is expected, the car gets serviced on the due date, and there is always a back-up can of beans in the larder—ad infinitum!

The following exercise provides opportunity to become familiar with the process.

Exercise 21: Operationalising goals

Task 1

Imagine that you have been talking to a colleague for some time.

In due course they make the following statement:

I guess the realities are that I need to get my act together and make time for reading technical journals, or I'll get even further out of touch. As I said, I've been meaning to put some energy into it for a while now, and I'm annoyed with myself that I can't organise my time well enough to do it.'

- (1) What stage has your colleague reached in processing her/his issue?

- (2) What needs to happen next?

- (3) Write a set of typical questions to operationalise your colleagues goal.
 - 1.

 - 2.

 - 3.

 - 4.

 - 5.

 - 6.

 - 7.

Task 2

Imagine that you, as a manager, have been talking to a subordinate for some time.

In due course he makes the following statement.

I'd really like to get a better atmosphere created in our reception area. I've been meaning to put some energy into it for some time now, as I've said, and I'm a bit dissatisfied with myself because I haven't got myself organised and dealt with it yet'.

What questions would you would need to ask to help him achieve his goal?

Write them below:

Possible answers to Exercise 21 are on page 489.

Summary

What defining goals operationally is

Defining goals operationally is the skill of spelling out requirements in specific, observable, measurable terms which render them achievable.

What defining goals operationally does

Defining goals operationally breaks the personalised goal into component parts by specifying:

- what is to be done;
- who is involved;
- where the action will occur;
- when the action will commence and be completed;
- how it can be approached;
- why the action is intended;
- how success will be measured.

Functionally, defining goals operationally:

- helps one spell out one's intentions exactly;
- sets standards to aim for, based on performance not opinion;
- gives a sense of optimism that the goal is achievable.

Why defining goals operationally is important

If one defines goals in operational terms, then one knows exactly what one intends to achieve, and so the likelihood of succeeding with less effort, less fuss, and greater effectiveness is increased.

When to define goals operationally

Goals are defined in operational terms whenever there is a need to clarify the specifics of a general direction.

How to define goals operationally

The skill steps in defining a goal in operational terms are:

- reflect on the practicalities of the personalised goal, administrative requirement or request for action, and;
 - specify what is to happen;
 - list all who are (or will be) involved;
 - set a date and time to start and to finish;
 - state the venue or location of the activity or action;
 - state how it will be tackled;
 - express why it is being done (rationale and anticipated benefits);
 - state how success will be verified in quantifiable terms.

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- Carkhuff, R. R. 2000b, *The Art of Helping in the 21st Century, Student Workbook*, HRD Press, Amherst, Mass.

My learning about defining goals operationally

Write in your own words

What defining goals operationally is:

What defining goals operationally does:

Why defining goals operationally is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own skills in defining goals operationally:

Steps I want to take to improve my competence in defining goals operationally:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Assertive skills

Preamble

The verb ‘assert’ means: to declare something as true; to maintain or defend one’s claim or right; or to put oneself forward boldly and insistently. Strictly speaking, the assertive skills are not part of the counselling process as such, yet they are of great importance. Assertive skills help to define the boundary between the need to express one’s personal needs authentically, and the desire to meet another’s needs empathically—a tension that must be balanced for counsellors to live fully and effectively. Furthermore, the lack of assertive skills is frequently seen as a contributing factor in the problems that lead clients to seek counselling. It is therefore important that counsellors are able to teach clients to be assertive, or at least be able to refer them to an effective training program. The latter may not be as easy as it sounds because, historically, we have learned from a number of people who have attended assertive training that, very often, the skills have ‘backfired’ on them. This chapter overviews the founding tenets of assertive training, comments on applications by subsequent authors; considers some possible causes for the ‘backfires’, and suggests some modifications of current practice to prevent them.

The need for assertiveness training was originally assessed and prescribed as a ‘treatment’ in psychiatric clinics. Rimm and Masters (1974) describe that research background; methods of assessment; case histories; theoretical perspectives; and methods of treatment.

In 1969, Manuel Smith (1975) saw the need to train well educated members of the Peace Corps in how to cope effectively with day to day conflicts in a non-defensive, and non-manipulative, manner. This non-clinical experience led Smith to develop a ‘Bill of Assertive Rights’, and a series of ‘systematic assertive skills’ that was part of his ‘systematic assertiveness therapy’ in the hospital setting where he worked, but which also had community application. We list them both because they continue to influence current training practices. The Bill of Assertive Rights asserts that individuals have the right to:

1. Judge your own behaviour, thoughts and emotions, and to take the responsibility for their initiation and consequences upon yourself.
2. Offer no reason or excuses for justifying your behaviour.
3. Judge if you are responsible for finding solutions to other people’s problems;

4. Change your mind.
5. Make mistakes—and be responsible for them.
6. say ‘I don’t know’.
7. Be independent of the goodwill of others before coping with them.
8. Be illogical in making decisions.
9. Say ‘I don’t understand’.
10. say ‘I don’t care’.
11. Say ‘no’ without feeling guilty.

Smith also named a range of systematic assertive skills whose definitions appear below.

Broken record: A skill that by calm repetition—saying what you want over and over again—teaches persistence without you having to rehearse arguments or angry feelings beforehand, in order to be ‘up’ for dealing with others.

Fogging: A skill that teaches acceptance of manipulative criticism by calmly acknowledging to your critic the probability that there may be some truth in what he [sic] says, yet allows you to remain your own judge of what you do.

Free information: A skill that teaches the recognition of simple cues given by a social partner in everyday conversation to indicate that it [the information] is important to that person.

Negative assertion: A skill that teaches acceptance of your errors and faults (without having to apologise) by strongly and sympathetically agreeing with hostile or constructive criticism of your negative qualities.

Negative enquiry: A skill that teaches the active prompting of criticism in order to use the information (if helpful) or exhaust it (if manipulative) while prompting your critic to be more assertive, less dependent on manipulative ploys.

Self-disclosure: A skill that teaches the acceptance and initiation of discussion of both the positive and negative aspects of your personality, behaviour lifestyle, intelligence, to enhance social communication and reduce manipulation.

Workable compromise: In using your verbal assertive skills, it is practical, whenever you feel that your self-respect is not in question, to offer a workable compromise to the other person. You can always bargain for your material goals unless the compromise affects your personal feelings of self-respect. If the end goal involves a matter of your self-worth, however, there can be **no** compromise (Smith 1975, pp. 323–324).

Smith’s work in assisting passive or dependent patients to defend their rights more effectively, and put themselves forward and insistently, subsequently spilled from therapy in the hospital to training in the broader community. Such training was popular in women’s movements. One approach suggests that ‘assertiveness is not something that you do—assertiveness is who you are’ (LeMon 1997, p. 22). LeMon’s approach believes that the development of self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-confidence are necessary for the ‘genuinely assertive person’ to express themselves with managers, peers, employees and customers. Jane Downing disagrees with this approach on the grounds that if you wait ‘until you get your sense of self improved before you communicate differently [it] can end up being a very long wait or a good excuse for not actually beginning to change your behaviour’ (Downing 1995, p. 39). Downing sees

assertion as ‘an antidote to our cultural habits of *win-lose*, power-over styles of relating’, and asserts that ‘assertion is about power sharing with others’ (Downing 1995, p.31). This seems to be the dominant perspective. Most assertive training programs contextualise their activities by distinguishing ‘assertive’ behaviours from ‘passive’ and ‘aggressive’ behaviours. Simply put, the distinctions between these options are:

Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
I forfeit my rights, or I concede to you.	I stand up for my rights, but uphold yours as well.	I stand up for my rights, and either ignore or violate yours.

Thus, assertive behaviours are geared towards the authentic declaration of one’s personal ‘truth’, collaborative behaviour, and the resolution of conflict by seeking ‘win-win’ outcomes. Most assertive training programs infer, or declare, a set of rights and skills similar to Smith’s early work, and emphasise the need to use ‘I’ statements to avoid the threat that is inferred by ‘you’ statements.

There is no doubt that ‘I’ statements help people to communicate what they want, how they feel, what they believe, or where they stand across the whole gamut of human experience. There is much to be applauded in teaching passive people say, ‘I want...’, rather than them feeling hurt because no one sees their need—nor meets it. There is much to be applauded in teaching aggressive people to say, ‘I hope you can come’, rather than, ‘You are expected to be there!’. Yet we believe that some assertiveness training falls short in some areas.

Shortcomings and suggested remedies

The simple assertion, ‘I feel angry’ is a declaration of one’s truth, without implications for others. However, it seems to us, that some authors exaggerate the attributes of ‘I’ statements, and fail to fully understand their nature and impact. Others recommend confrontive strategies that have the potential to ‘backfire’ by incorporating aspects that can trigger reactivity in others. Our concerns, and suggested enhancements for current practice, are discussed below.

LeMon provides examples to compare ‘you’ statements with ‘I’ statements. The first pair is:

‘You really make me angry.’ and *‘I am angry about what you said.’*

She rightly points out that the ‘you’ statement is likely to ‘create a defensive attitude in your listener’. However, we challenge her claim that: ‘The ‘I’ statement, on the other hand, is assertiveness at its best. Here is someone who is willing to take responsibility only for himself [sic]. There is no blaming or victimisation’ (LeMon 1997, p. 31).

Firstly, it is a moot point that there is no blaming in the ‘I’ statement. At best, it could be argued that the example expresses that ‘my’ anger is triggered by your comment—not you personally. Even though the reason for ‘my’ feeling is externalised in this way, it is probable that non-discerning recipients will feel accused to some degree, and react accordingly.

Secondly, and more significantly, the claim that the assertion signals a willingness to ‘take responsibility’ suggests a failure to recognise that the statement has the form of a 2.6 G response to self—that is, it is an unexplored, segmental aspect of ‘me’—not a self-aware, personalised understanding of ‘me’ for which ‘I’ have assumed responsibility. An example of such an ‘owned’ statement might well be something like:

'I'm a bit disappointed with myself because I haven't yet found a way to stay tolerant when I don't agree with somebody else's opinion—even though I want to—and I'm afraid your last comment hit my button. So let me see—the point you are making is ...'

By exploring the significance of 'Why I am angry about what you said', and declaring that significance in terms of a personalised goal, the asserter adds to the quality of the assertion by:

1. Self-disclosing at a level of personal 'truth' that is thought through and owned—not partial, and momentarily reactive.
2. Acknowledging that disappointment in a personal deficit is the more real experience—not anger at 'your' comment.
3. Creating a context in which there is freedom to declare, without judgement, that 'your comment hurt'.
4. Declaring a personal desire to be 'a better me', and in so doing, mobilise constructive energy that makes it possible to respond (say at level 2.0) to indicate that, in spite of the hurt, I heard what you said (along the lines of the group activity on page 204).
5. Providing an opportunity to then declare a counter-viewpoint, or highlight an area of contention that can be further discussed, in a more collaborative spirit than might be engendered by the shorter, reactive response that 'I am angry about what you said'.

Readers may well recognise that our example could render the asserter a bit vulnerable, and that its closing sentence is empathic, not assertive. They are right on both counts! Whether or not those observations make the response a 'good' or a 'bad' example, however, depends on its purpose, and the audience. We would see the example as an appropriate statement to an intimate friend with whom the resolution of a contentious issue was mutually desired. We would see the example as inappropriate within a casual or formal relationship—especially a 'power' relationship such as employer–employee. Later in this chapter, we will discuss in more detail how the type of audience, and the asserter's level of clarity and state of being, can influence the purpose and nature of the assertion.

Downing (1995, pp. 55–59) classifies four types of 'I' statements: 'stating', 'answering', 'preventing' and 'confronting'. Each type is clearly defined and exemplified, but we have reservations about the effectiveness of the two confrontive strategies that are given. Downing defines 'confronting' as 'telling another person that you cannot accept their behaviour because it interferes with one or more of your needs'. Downing sees her first strategy of 'simply describing the behaviour and then explaining how you feel [as being] enough to raise their awareness, and encourage an immediate change from them'. Examples of her first strategy are:

'When you don't keep deadlines, I feel very angry with you.'

'When you play your music this loud, I can't concentrate on what I am doing. I'm feeling frustrated.'

'When you say that, I feel put down and ignored.'

Our concern with this strategy is that its structure exemplifies a partially explored aspect of the asserter's experience—expressed in the form of a poor level 3.0 response to

themselves (or a 2.0 if the feeling is not current). In the examples, the asserter tells the listener that **they** are the reason for their feeling. This unintended ‘blaming’ may evoke an ‘immediate change’ that is reactive—not the conciliatory change hoped for.

Downing suggests using a second strategy if the initial strategy is unsuccessful. She calls this ‘the full four-part confrontive “I statement” (DESC) strategy’. The acronym ‘DESC’ refers to the following components (Downing 1995, p. 58):

- D** Describe the situation or behaviour: *‘When you...’* (don’t judge/blame)
- E** Explain how you feel, what you think: *‘I feel / I believe ...’*
- S** Suggest an alternative: *‘I need / I would prefer / I want...’*
- C** Consequences—state the benefits: *‘So that / in order that / ...’*

Again, the ‘D’ and ‘E’ elements communicate that the listener’s behaviour is responsible for the asserter’s feeling—in contradiction of the direction to not judge or blame. No doubt the suggested alternative, ‘S’, makes clear what is required by the asserter, but it leaves little room for collaborative ‘win-win’ dialogue. Furthermore, the ‘C’ element in Downing’s example, below, omits any benefit to the listener. This seems to be counter-productive in the light of the declared intent that assertion is about ‘win-win’.

‘When you interrupt me, I feel frustrated. I need you to let me finish before you start to speak so that I feel I’m surviving equally in the conversation’ (Downing 1995, p. 59).

While the DESC approach has value in highlighting the elements that an assertion needs to address, its effectiveness is questionable, in our view, when ‘D’ is reactively critical of others, and when ‘C’ excludes any benefit to the recipient. There are gains, for example, in rephrasing ‘C’ to read:

‘... so that we can both hear each other’s viewpoint more clearly’.

Effective assertions: audience and ownership

We applaud much of what assertive training does in helping people to: (1) declare individual wants, needs, beliefs and intentions with clarity; (2) answer questions or requests without ambiguity, and with clear brief reasons for ‘yes/no’ answers; and (3) negotiate in non-manipulative ways that avoid future conflict. However, apart from the criticisms raised in the previous section, we have a further perspective that does not seem to be addressed in current assertive texts. It involves three dimensions: (1) the type of audience of the assertion; (2) the degree of ownership that the asserter holds for the assertion; and (3) the interrelationship between these two factors. As we see it effective assertions depend on ‘who you are’ and ‘how I am’.

The audience

We will consider three types of audience to which assertions may be made. They are:

Audience A: This audience is known and trusted—intimates who will not ‘write you off’ even if your assertion hurts them.

Audience B: This audience includes acquaintances and those with whom you have a formal relationship. They are functional, empathic people who see reactivity for what it is, and do not take umbrage at it—people with whom you do not have to ‘walk on eggshells’. They are capable of helping you explore your reactive state.

Audience C: This audience includes those with whom you have a informal or formal relationship. They are reactive, ‘prickly’, non-empathic people with whom you want or need to relate constructively. When assessing your audience, take into account that audience B becomes audience C if they are ‘having a bad day’.

Degree of ownership

The degree of ownership of the assertion will depend on the level of clarity that the asserter has about their own ‘truth’. The level of clarity is a function of the ability and the willingness of the asserter to be their own counsellor when they encounter an aversive experience. The levels of ownership are:

Exploratory: At this level (3.0), the asserter reacts to a triggering incident without exploring the nature or the reason for their reaction. Personal clarity is likely to be foggy, and ownership of the assertion will be partial.

Understanding: At this level (4.0), the asserter has explored the nature and reason for any initial objection or reactivity to another’s comment or behaviour, and has personalised an understanding of its significance. Personal clarity will be focused, and ownership of the assertion will be complete.

Initiating: At this level (4.25), the asserter declares, in operational terms, what they want to happen in relation to another’s comment or behaviour. Their clarity has dynamism, and ownership is honoured by such a declaration.

The interrelationship between ownership and audience

We can imagine the kind of situation that gave rise to Downing’s last example on the previous page. She was apparently involved in a one-sided conversation where her comments were overridden, perhaps out of rudeness, or perhaps from passionate enthusiasm. Either way the result was both frustrating and stifling for the asserter. Now imagine ourselves in a similar situation, with different degrees of ownership, and with different audiences.

Ownership at the exploratory level

We are in the exploratory state when we have not thought through where we really stand with an issue. It happens to the best of us that, in certain situations, we may simply react to someone that interrupts us. Our worst reaction could sound like:

‘Why don’t you shut up for once, and give me a break!’

Our best, spontaneous reaction could be an overt level 3.0 response to oneself—which, to the audience, happens to be an assertive ‘I’ statement of the kind generally advocated:

‘When you continually interrupt me, I feel really angry with you’.

or (externalised for the other)

‘I feel really angry when your interruptions break my train of thought.’

Note that the second assertion actually externalises the blame for the anger (for both parties), whereas the two ‘you’ words in the first assertion clearly blame the interrupter for the feeling. The final ‘you’ in this assertion seems superfluous, and appears to emphasise the blame, but the assertion actually matches the format proposed by Downing (1995, p. 58).

Impact on audience A

Audience A is likely to tolerate any of the reactive statements above, and will deal with it in accordance with their own state of being. Their rejoinders could include: (1) an apology followed by an effort to not interrupt; (2) a counter reaction that triggers a ‘bit

of a tiff; (3) an empathic response to dissipate the anger; or (4) continued interruption. The thing about audience A is that ‘they will love us in the morning’, so to speak. Any distance that a blaming assertion creates is most likely to be bridged subsequently.

Impact on audience B

Audience B is able to tolerate our reactivity, and they too will deal with it according to their current state of being. However, in spite of their capacity to respond empathically, the nature of their relationship with us is likely to determine the nature of their rejoinder. Some casual acquaintances may apologise and withdraw, others may respond empathically or talk it out collaboratively.

Any power differences within formal relationships will influence the outcome. For example, an employee who blames their boss for their anger at being interrupted may be wiser to bide their time, and construct a less reactive assertion (at an understanding or initiating level of ownership). An employer who blames their employee for their anger at being interrupted is likely to be given an apology and subsequent compliance—and have a worried, employee. Any distance that a blaming assertion creates may or may not subsequently be bridged, or may result in negotiated, conditional bridging.

Impact on audience C

Audience C will inevitably become defensive or dismissive of assertions that carry any hint of blame or criticism. Such is their perpetual, reactive, ‘prickly’ state of being. With such people it is wise to bide time, and withhold one’s assertion until any strong feelings have been explored, and the degree of ownership is at the initiating level. Any distance that a blaming assertion creates is likely to be increased in the first instance with audience C. The nature of the relationship will determine if, how, and when this distance is subsequently bridged. If the asserter needs such bridging, it is more likely to occur on terms determined by the audience than by negotiation with the asserter. It is with this audience that the most frequent ‘backfires’ occur.

Ownership at the understanding level

We have ownership at the understanding level when the full significance of the all the factors that contributed to the triggered anger is understood at a personalised goal level. Such a person could realise, and assert, that:

‘I feel disappointed in myself that I can’t yet find a way to put my point of view with sufficient clarity and energy to hold your attention long enough for you to really ‘hear me’, and therefore have a useful exchange—and I want to be able to do just that so that I can communicate more effectively with you to our mutual advantage.

That is quite a mouthful, and discloses some personal vulnerability. However, at this level of clarity the original anger is dissipated, and we are free to share our understanding with others at a level that we judge to be appropriate to the particular audience.

Sharing with audience A

There will be those intimates with whom we could comfortably share the above statement. Some would appreciate both our sincerity and trust in them, and perhaps the opportunity to give feedback about their frustration at how indirect and repetitive we are, or whatever. Some will appreciate the modelling of how we declared our position.

There are those intimates with whom we may want to discuss the ‘communication issue’ without declaring our feelings. The anger has been put to bed, and our disappointment

with ourselves need not be communicated. From the same position of understanding, we could then assert something like:

'I have come to realise that I have a difficulty in communicating with you that is partly due to my shyness and lack of fluency, but I am also aware that your habit of interrupting, and finishing my sentences is also an important contributing factor. I believe we can resolve it, and I want us both to work on it.'

This assertion both declares our experience and what we want. It is confrontive, but tenders factual evidence for the audience to reflect on. As with confrontations, it is desirable that the asserter respond (at level 3.0) to the audience's rejoinder.

Sharing with audience B

Functional people are capable of listening constructively to personal information, but without good reason to do so, it seems unnecessary at this level for asserters to declare their feelings. In most instances, the second alternative assertion above seems preferred.

Sharing with audience C

If we were in a power position (such as a teacher) where we had the responsibility for the personal development of members of audience C, we may choose to share the more personal option, above. We may deem such modelling to be a means of introducing a way for students to initiate discussion where some negotiation, or other means of resolution, is desirable. If not, the second of the previous alternatives seems preferred. Again, we should respond to the audience's rejoinder.

Ownership at the initiating level

We express ownership at the initiating level by moving beyond our personalised goal, and asserting our wishes in terms of an operationalised goal, with the exception that the 'why' element not only specifies the anticipated benefits for both parties, but may also include possible negative consequences if deemed to be appropriate. An initiating assertion can be confidently made to any target group. The format becomes:

'I want/need to...(concise, concrete, personalised goal)...with...(whoever is involved)...at...(an appropriate venue)...on...(a date and time). I want to achieve this by...(specify the preferred strategy). I will be pleased if...(specify a satisfying standard). If successful...(list mutual benefit)...If not, then...(negative consequence).'

For example, a manager could make the following assertion to an employee:

'Bill, I want the both of us to discuss the communication issue that we have, due to my lack of clarity and repetitiveness, and your habit of interrupting me. I suggest we do this in the Board Room on Thursday, between 10 and 12. This is the time we allocated to review our project, but I intend to renegotiate another time with you for that purpose. I hope we can achieve a good outcome by giving each other straight feedback, and taking each other's need into account. We don't have to be perfect, but I'd be really pleased if we could get through a project meeting without me rehashing stuff, or you putting words in my mouth on, let's say no more than two or three times each meeting. If we can manage that, we will not only save time, but be more productive and less frustrated in our ongoing project work. If we can't resolve this issue however, my bottom line is that I will need to reallocate you to another project of similar significance—even though, from a technical point of view, I believe that we are the best team for our current task.'

Delivering assertions

We need to underline that assertive points do not need to sound like a lecture. This is especially true of long statements like the last example. They can be shared interactively. For instance, the manager, above, could stop (at the end of line 2 in the example) to get tacit agreement to the meeting.

Assertions should be delivered with strength and authenticity, and only after consideration has been given to the need for, and ‘cost-benefit’ of its declaration.

Reviewing current competence

Take time to review Smith’s ‘rights’ and ‘skills’ that are quoted early in the chapter, and reflect on whether or not you have had experienced or observed assertions that have ‘backfired’. Simply note any implications that fit your experience. Any difficulties that you may identify as a ‘reluctant asserter’ could be suitable topics to explore, in the client role, during practice sessions.

Practicing assertions

Apart from discussing the appropriate uses of assertive statements, limited time is devoted to dedicated practice during regular training programs. However, assertiveness is encouraged in declaring personal needs during training sessions between participants and with training staff.

The following exercise is offered to formulate written assertions.

Exercise 22: Preparing a series of assertions

Read the following 3 scenarios and for each of them:

- identify the degree of ownership being manifested by the person;
- identify the type of ‘target’ audience;
- write what you would do and/or say if you were the person needing to assert.

Scenario 1

Jean’s regular vegetable delivery has just arrived. She discovers that some potatoes are ‘greening’ and look unfit to eat. She is a regular, ‘good’ customer, and has a good relationship with the greengrocer. She needs the potatoes for a dinner she is giving tomorrow, and she wants to get the potatoes replaced as soon as possible.

Jean’s degree of ownership is: exploratory understanding initiating

The ‘target’ audience is: A B C

Jean’s assertion is:

Scenario 2

Mark has worked for his current employer for some four years. He has been on a contract for the whole period, but when he started, his boss, John, said that after ‘a period of satisfactory work’ he would be given secure tenure. Mark believes he has worked hard; that his work has benefited the company, and that he deserves tenure now. He knows himself to be a bit of a ‘soft touch’, and thinks the boss will continue to use his services without appropriate recognition unless he says something. He is also very cross with himself that he didn’t insist on a more specific date for his contract to be renegotiated when he started work.

Mark’s degree of ownership is: exploratory understanding initiating

The ‘target’ is audience: A B C

Mark’s assertion is:

Scenario 3

Rose has been standing on a cold, windy street for over half an hour. She has been waiting for her best friend, Meg. They had intended to ‘have a good day out’ together, and Rose was really looking forward to it, and had worked extra hours in order to get the ‘flexi’ day off. Rose and Meg have mobile phones. Rose can’t understand either Meg’s delay or her failing to contact. She is getting cold, angry and worried. She then sees Meg coming around the corner, smiling brightly.

Rose’s degree of ownership is: exploratory understanding initiating

The ‘target’ is audience: A B C

Rose’s assertion is:

Some possible answers to Exercise 22 appear on page 490.

Exercise 23: Developing my own assertion

Write a real-life assertion that you would like to make to someone you know. Write from an initiating level of ownership, using the following format:

'I want/need to...(concise, concrete, personalised goal)...with...(whoever is involved)...at...(an appropriate venue)...on...(a date and time). I want to achieve this by...(specify the preferred strategy). I will be pleased if...(specify a satisfying standard). If successful...(list mutual benefit). If not, then...(negative consequence).'

No 'answers' are supplied for personal work undertaken in Exercise 23.

Summary and conclusion

The primary purpose of this chapter was review current assertive training perspectives, and suggest alternative strategies to minimise the reactive 'backfires' that can occur. The thrust of the suggestions was that the effectiveness of assertions can be enhanced (and the risk of backfiring minimised) by matching the level of ownership (and type) of one's assertion with the type of audience to whom the assertion is directed.

What asserting is

Essentially, asserting is declaring something as true, including one's own 'truth', in ways that uphold the rights of others as well as presenting one's own.

What asserting does

Operationally effective asserting:

- declares formally and distinctly that (something) is so;
- insists upon the recognition of one's own and others' rights;
- affirms the existence of (something).

Functionally effective asserting:

- tells others what one wants, needs, or intends;
- lets others know what one thinks and feels, when appropriate;
- communicates what one believes is one's right;
- gives others the opportunity to affirm, confirm, debate, or disagree with one's declared position;
- gives feedback to others;
- gives others the benefit of one's knowledge and/or wisdom;

- leads to equality of interaction;
- allows authentic behaviour.

Why asserting is important

If one asserts appropriately, then expanded truth will emerge so that a just outcome is more likely to occur.

When asserting is used

Asserting is used whenever one wants to take a stand—especially in the face of an injustice (or potential injustice) either against oneself or another.

How to assert

The following are some possible approaches to move towards more constructive assertion and away from potential reactivity in others:

- determine the cost/benefit of making an assertion by asking yourself:
 - Is the effort to ‘take a stand’ worth any potential repercussions?
 - Can I adapt to the current circumstances if I don’t declare my position?
 - Do I need to assert to maintain my integrity or ensure a just outcome?
- if proceeding, identify type of audience for your assertion where;
 - type ‘A’ is known, trusted, and accepting;
 - type ‘B’ is comprised of functional, helpful, acquaintances who are known informally and formally;
 - type ‘C’ is comprised of reactive, ‘prickly’, non-empathic people with whom you want or need to relate constructively;
- if you proceed, and your audience is type ‘A’, you are likely to ‘get away with’ an exploratory level of ownership, such as a ‘simple’, ‘traditional’ or ‘DESC’ script assertion;

Exploratory assertions

Simple assertion:

‘I feel...’. *‘I think...’.* *‘I want...’.* *‘I intend...’.*
‘I need...’. *‘I believe...’.* *‘I choose...’.* *‘I insist...’.*

Traditional assertion

‘When you...(annoying behaviour)...I feel...and I want you...(modified behaviour)’.

The DESC script:

- D** —describe the offensive behaviour objectively;
- E** —express how you feel about the behaviour;
- S** —specify how you would like to see the behaviour changed;
- C** —consequences—spell out the benefits for all parties if possible.

- if you proceed, and the audience is other than type ‘A’, respond to self until you are non-reactive so that you can operate from your ‘head’—not your ‘belly’ at either an ‘understanding’, or ‘initiating’ level of ownership;

Understanding assertion:

- use the personalised goal format, but consider the following options;
 - choose whether or not it is appropriate to include the new feeling;
 - decide on whether or not it is wise to include negative consequences;

Initiating assertion

- include all appropriate operational (5W2H) elements to be clear about:
 - what you want;
 - who you want to do it;
 - where you want it to happen;
 - when you want it to occur;
 - how you want it done (or believe it could be tackled in a given situation);
 - the measurable standards required;
 - the positive benefits of achievement, and negative consequences of non-achievement.
- speak with strength and authenticity to ensure that congruity between face, body and words are sustained;
- decide on the strength of the words, and kind of format to be used—don't use a hammer to kill a fly—or tweezers to get the neighbour's elephant off your lawn!
- respond to the impact of the assertion—to minimise reaction in others;
- use feedback to modify and/or repeat assertion.

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My learning about assertion

Write in your own words

What asserting is:

What asserting does:

Why asserting is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own asserting skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my asserting:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Decision-making skills

Preamble

In the previous chapter on operationalising goals, each of the 5W2H elements was defined to spell out what was intended for a given goal. Mention was made that, on occasions, a decision-making process was needed when clients were unable to decide between possible options. Consider the simple goal of taking a holiday. The dates and times can be decided on quickly (and unambiguously) by, say, matching rostered breaks with school holidays. The decision-making process comes into play if, for example, five different locations seem equally attractive—all for different reasons. Sadly, most counselling texts offer very little in relation to the **skills** of decision making.

Nelson-Jones proposes two broad steps to making rational decisions. The first is to ‘help clients to become aware of their decision-making styles’ (1992, p. 301). This will normally be one of eight styles, described below, which he attributes to Arroba. The second broad step is to ‘help clients develop “rational” decision-making skills’ (1992, p. 302)—Arroba’s first style.

Rational: You dispassionately and logically appraise all important information and then select the best option in the light of your criteria.

Feelings-based: Though you may generate and appraise different options, the basis for choice is what feels intuitively right. This style emphasises getting in touch with what you truly feel.

Impulsive: You make decisions rapidly, based on sudden impulses. You act on initial and surface feelings rather than explore and evaluate options.

Hypervigilant: You try too hard. You become so anxious and aroused by the conflict and stress triggered by the decision that your decision-making efficiency decreases. You may become indecisive and fail to see the wood for the trees.

Avoidant: You cope with decisions by refusing to confront them, hoping they will go away and procrastinating over them.

Conformist: You conform to what others expect of you. You allow your decisions to be heavily influenced, if not made, by others.

Rebellious: You rebel against what other expect of you. Your decisions are dependent on what others’ [sic] think, though in an oppositional way.

Ethical : The framework for your choice is a code of ethics: be it religious or secular(Nelson-Jones 1992, pp. 300–301).

The decision-making process that we describe later in this chapter effectively embodies Arroba's 'rational', 'feeling-based' and 'ethical' styles.

Nelson-Jones (1992) describes two stages for helping clients develop 'rational' decision-making skills. They are: (1) confronting and making the decision; and (2) implementing and evaluating the decision. There are four skill-steps in the first stage: (1) *confront the decision*—to acknowledge its need, and declare what it is; (2) *generate options and gather information about them*—to expand options and gather relevant information; (3) *assess the predicted consequences of options*—to evaluate the consequences of each; and (4) *commit yourself to a decision*—the precursor to implementation. The three skill-steps in stage two relate to the **implementation** of the decision—not the making of it. They are (5) *plan how to implement the decision*; (6) *implement the decision*; and (7) *assess the actual consequences of implementation*.

Whilst there is a logical flow to this process, step 2 gives no indication of the nature of the information to be gathered; nor does step 3 suggest a process to assess the consequences of the options. Without specifying the required information, and quantifiable means of assessing it, we believe that the appropriateness of the decision could be in doubt. This possibility is checked by step 7—after the decision has been implemented. Nelson-Jones reports that, following this step, 'clients may stick with the original decisions or modify or discard them' (Nelson-Jones 1992, p. 302). In our experience, such modifications rarely, if ever, occur because the process we use requires that the chosen option meets a predetermined level of viability before action planning begins. If viability is not established, no action plan is drafted. We see no point in pursuing a goal whose attainment will not satisfy the person making the decision. When the chosen option is viable, plans are drafted, implemented, and assessed, but the assessment relates to how well the predetermined goal standards were met—not whether earlier decisions need to be modified, and plans rewritten.

In discussing 'making a choice' between options, Geldard and Geldard seem to favour Arroba's 'feeling-based' style. They suggest that clients 'explore what it would feel like' to choose each option, and 'what the consequences of this choice would be' (2001, pp. 194). They claim that such exploration makes it possible to establish a clear comparison between options—and presumably a choice. They rightly point out that some loss or cost is involved in making a choice, but do not provide a means to quantify the degree of such costs. They discuss the 'effect of polarities'—the parts of self that are attracted to different options concurrently—but do not show how to incorporate the impact of such differences into the decision-making process. They comment on the 'myth of the "right" choice', but do not show how to recognise the 'best' choice by quantifying the level of viability of options.

Egan makes reference to a 'natural decision-making process that helping processes can assist, modify and accelerate but not replace' (Egan 1998, p. 23). His application of this process to helping has seven elements: (1) *Initial awareness*—to appreciate the scope of issues; (2) *Urgency*—a sense that develops as a function of annoyance or pain; (3) *Initial search for remedies*—where remedial options are considered; (4) *Estimation of costs*—a recognition that solutions have inherent costs or pain; (5) *Deliberation*—where a 'serious weighing of choices occurs'; (6) *Rational decision*—where an intellectual decision is made; and (7) *Rational-emotional decision*—where values and emotion give impetus to the decision.

Egan outlines ‘steps’ to augment the natural process, but they are not sequenced ‘in a mechanistic “now do this” sense. Rather they are activities that help clients develop answers to questions’ (Egan 1998, p. 27). The first question relates to a ‘preferred scenario’, and asks, ‘What would life look like if it were more tolerable or, even better, more fulfilling?’. The next questions builds on the first to ask, ‘What do I need and want?’. There are three prongs to this question. They relate to (1) generating possibilities for a better future; (2) developing a realistic change agenda; and (3) finding incentives that will help clients to commit to change. We can appreciate the merits of ‘expanding’ information as part of the ‘deliberation’ but, again, we are concerned at the absence of the operational steps that ‘narrow’ information in ways that decide which is the preferred, most viable option of the range that has been generated.

George and Cristiani list the decision-making steps devised by Stewart, Winborn, Johnson, Burks and Engelkes (cited in George & Cristiani 1990, pp. 166). In brief, they are: (1) *Identify the problem*—to name it and any blocks to solving it; (2) *Identification of values and goals*—so that solutions will be consistent with client’s values and long-term goals; (3) *Identify alternatives*; (4) *Examine alternatives*—to evaluate advantages and disadvantages of options based on factual data; (5) *Make a tentative decision*; (6) *Take action on the decision*—to test the fidelity of the decision and generate information to modify the decision; and (7) *Evaluate outcomes*. The inclusion of ‘values’ adds to the merit of this approach but, yet again, the steps lack a process to translate conceptual notions into operational tasks. Again, we consider that it is neither necessary, nor efficient, to initiate action to test the appropriateness of the decision.

As an aside; we reviewed ten of the 79,500 references that ‘Google’ threw up on the internet in relation to ‘decision-making’. Most related to the business world. None were as detailed as the process we are about to describe. Some were apparently modelled on Carkhuff’s earlier work, but lacked its specificity. They seemed to have nothing to add.

In his current publications on helping skills, Carkhuff (2000, 2000a, 2000b) provides skill steps that address ‘problems’, ‘goals’, ‘values’, ‘courses of action’, and ‘choices’. These steps have been simplified to help focus on the elements of decision making, but in our view, the complexities that arise in counselling situations warrant mastery of his more detailed work, ‘*Productive Problem Solving*’ (Carkhuff 1985). In the remainder of this chapter, we work through the decision-making steps that are heavily based on Carkhuff’s earlier work. The process will show: (1) how alternatives are generated; (2) how values and related factors are listed, defined, and ‘weighted’ so that relativities between them can be compared; (3) how the impact of each value on each option can be measured; (4) how the weighting of each factor and the measure of its impact combine to influence the overall decision; (5) how numerical differences can make the preferred option obvious; and (6) how the preferred option can be tested for viability against a predetermined level of acceptable risk.

Reviewing current competence

Imagine that you need to replace your motor vehicle. You can afford up to \$35,000 for a cash purchase, so you attend the Motor Show to see the latest on offer. You are very tall and find that there are only five makes that give you ample leg and head room for comfortable driving. All have appeal for different reasons. You have listened to the sales pitch, read all the brochures, and even spoken to the Technical Division of the Royal Automobile Association, only to be reminded that the final decision must be yours.

Reflect on the process that you use in making such a decision, and record the details to establish your learning baseline.

The skills of decision making

To demonstrate the skills involved in the decision-making process we will work through the decision that Derek needed to make in order to resolve an ambiguity that arose while defining his personalised goal in operational terms.

Background

Derek was the 58 year old medical practitioner, the subject of the case study outlined in Exercise 19 on page 323, for whom you were invited to write a personalised goal.

You may recall from page 489 that Derek's personalised goal (from exercise 19) was:

'...you really need to find a way to abandon the values that have been imposed on you as a child in favour of values that are more personally fulfilling; balance contribution, recreation and family responsibilities; and still offer an economically viable future, so that you can live with vitality.'

After discussing the matter further with Vicky, Derek defined his goal in operational terms as far as he could—but he was unable to decide between a number of possible strategies that he could use to tackle his goal. Note the bold print in the first draft of his operational goal (rated at 4.25):

*'I want my wife, Mary, and myself to have a fulfilling and economically viable future that balances contribution, recreation and family responsibilities. I can make this decision at home and ratify it at work. This must be done before 5.00 pm 25th Oct. (the deadline for acceptance of an 'offer' of a 'retirement package' from my employer). My reason for doing this is to renew a spirit of self-worth through purposeful contribution. **I can't really decide on a broad strategy to achieve this goal** but I can say that it will be well and truly achieved if, by the 31st of (month nominated), I wake up each weekday with a sense of optimism, Mary and I both feel that we can maintain our current financial commitments from guaranteed income sources—any dividends from investments will be a bonus for indulgences—and I have sufficient energy to plan and execute joint ventures with Mary—instead of leaving it all to her.'*

Derek's goal will not be complete until a decision has been made to identify a preferred, viable strategy, so that an action plan can then be developed to achieve the goal. The decision-making process now begins.

The skill steps of decision making

Each step will be considered sequentially, and the results recorded in the appropriate box on the Decision Making Worksheet. The completed sheet is shown on page 371. Relevant parts of that sheet will be shown as the process progresses. In the counselling room, the process is best scribed on a whiteboard so that edited refinements can be easily made. If an electronic whiteboard is not available to copy the results, the layout should match the worksheet so that the client can take a written copy.

Skill step 1 lists the reason for engaging in the decision-making process. The question to be answered is: *'Why do you need to make a decision—what is it about?'*

Derek's declared need was to decide on what specific strategy to use to achieve his goal:

'I need to identify the preferred strategy that I need to take to ensure that Mary and I will have a fulfilling and economically viable future that balances contribution, recreation, and family responsibilities.'

This need is recorded in the space at the top left of the sheet, as shown in Figure 29.

Skill step 2 identifies and lists all feasible options that are acceptable to the client. The question to be answered is: *'What possible alternatives need to be taken into account?'*

This step calls for an ability to recognise alternative possibilities that are currently available to clients, and are acceptable to them. This includes any creative option that can be 'dreamed up' as a possibility. In the first instance, the counsellor lists the options that have already occurred to the client. In many cases, the counsellor can see additional options. These should be discussed, and listed if they have appeal to the client.

<p><i>Quest</i> DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET</p> <p><i>I need to identify the preferred strategy that I need to take to ensure that Mary and I will have a fulfilling and economically viable future that balances contribution, recreation, and family responsibilities.</i></p>		<p><i>Keep working to 65, sweat it out and get 'full' super</i></p>	<p><i>Take package and 'reduced' super, do voluntary work</i></p>	<p><i>Take package and 'reduced' super, set up consultancy</i></p>	<p><i>Work part time at lower status job, maintain existing super contribution, set up consultancy</i></p>
Factors	weight (1 – 10)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4

Figure 29. Showing where the 'need' and 'options' are listed on the Decision Making Worksheet.

In Derek's case, the indecision between options related to uncertainty about economic viability. At 58, he had dried up professionally, but still received a salary of \$90,000. He could 'escape' to a lower status job that paid less, but was more satisfying; and still maintain or adjust his current superannuation contributions. Alternatively, he could take a retirement 'package' of \$200,000 and also receive reduced, indexed superannuation worth \$25,000 per annum for a retiree his age. His wife, Mary, was dependent on his income, and Derek had made a commitment to his widowed daughter to pay school fees for two grandchildren. He was tempted to take the 'package', but could not make up his mind between staying at work, or undertaking one of several other options that all appealed to him for different reasons, but none of which stood out as 'the way to go'. Discussion around these topics distilled four distinct alternatives. They are listed on the 'options' column in Figure 29. They are:

- Keep working to 65, sweat it out, and get 'full' super;
- Take package and 'reduced' super, do voluntary work;
- Take package and 'reduced' super, set up consultancy.
- Work part time at lower status job, maintain existing super contribution, set up consultancy.

Skill step 3 identifies and lists all relevant factors that impinge on the decision. The question to be answered is: *‘What factors and personal values will influence the making of your decision, and subsequently be effected by it?’*.

This step requires the skill of recognising the discrete factors that have relevance for the client in relation to the particular decision. Many of the factors will have been mentioned during the earlier exploratory phase. These can be recalled by the counsellor, confirmed by the client, and listed in the ‘Factors’ column on the whiteboard or worksheet. The list is extended by asking the client to identify other relevant factors, and by the counsellor suggesting any others that seem possible, so that the client can decide whether or not to list them.

In Derek’s case, the factors that emerged were, ‘Annual income’, ‘Refreshment’, ‘Contribution’, ‘Mary’s view’, ‘Financial security’, ‘Challenge’ ‘Children’s views’ and ‘Image’. These are listed in Figure 30 on page 362.

Skill step 4 defines each listed factor. The question to be answered, of each factor, is: *‘What do you mean actually mean by this factor?’*.

This step requires the skill of ensuring that the client declares a clear, unambiguous meaning for each of the factors listed. It is tempting to assume that the listing of the factor makes the meaning obvious—but this is not necessarily so. Consider the potential confusion if a particular decision involved the factor ‘cost’. The counsellor’s insistence on defining each factor could push the need to list four separate factors: (1) cost—capital price; (2) cost—maintenance; or in some cases (3) cost—ongoing interest payments; (4) cost—emotional.

In Derek’s case, these definitions, listed in Figure 30, were:

- Annual income—\$’s per annum from guaranteed source;
- Refreshment—renewal of spirit;
- Contribution—using skills to benefit others;
- Mary’s view—Mary’s opinion;
- Financial security—feelings about different income levels;
- Challenge—excitement in, creativity required for, work;
- Children’s views—what my kids think;
- Image—what current colleagues think of me.

Skill step 5 assigns a ‘weight’ to all factors, on a 1–10 scale, to express the relative importance of each factor. The question to be answered, of each factor, is: *‘What rating, between one and ten, best signifies the importance of this factor for you?’*.

This step recognises that not all factors impinge on a decision equally. The skill steps to identify the weightings that reflect these differences are sequenced in the following way:

1. Review the weights, and check that the relativities ‘sit well’ subjectively. identify the most important factor first, and weight it as 10.
2. Identify the least important factor, and weight it as, say, 1, 2, or 3.
3. Identify a factor whose relative importance is ‘in the middle’, between the ‘top’ and ‘bottom’ weight—a ‘mid’ point that may be rated at, say, 5, 6, or 7.
4. Identify the factor whose relative importance is midway between the top and mid weight, and rate it accordingly.

5. Identify the factor whose relative importance is midway between the mid and bottom weights, and rate it accordingly.
6. Continue to ‘split the difference’ between weightings in this way until all factors are weighted; a strategy technically referred to as ‘partitioning the variance’.
7. Weight factors of equal importance with the same number—remember you are **rating** the factors—not **ranking** them.

review the weights, and check that the relativities ‘sit well’ subjectively.

In Derek’s case, the factors were weighted 6, 9, 10, 8, 4, 9, 2 and 2 respectively. They are shown in column 2 of Figure 30 and subsequent figures.

DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET		Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Factors	weight (1 – 10)				
<i>I need to identify the preferred strategy I need to take to ensure that Mary and I will have a fulfilling and economically viable future that balances contribution, recreation, and family responsibilities.</i>		<i>Keep working to 65, sweat it out and get 'full' super</i>	<i>Take package and 'reduced' super, do voluntary work</i>	<i>Take package and 'reduced' super, set up consultancy</i>	<i>Work part time at lower status job maintain existing super contribution, set up consultancy</i>
Annual income (\$'s per annum from guaranteed source)	6				
Refreshment (renewal of spirit)	9				
Contribution (using skills to benefit others)	10				
Mary’s view (Mary’s opinion)	8				
Financial security (feelings about different income levels)	4				
Challenge (excitement in, creativity required for, work)	9				
Children’s views (what my kids think)	2				
‘Image’ (what current colleagues think of me)	2				

Figure 30. Showing where the factors, their definitions, and their weights are listed on the Decision Making Worksheet.

It is important in this step that the counsellor confronts any apparent inconsistencies that the client may list during discussion. For example, Vicky challenged Derek’s weightings by saying:

‘Your weightings say that your level of income (weighted 6) is less important to you than Mary’s view of what you should do (weighted 8). Do you really mean that having a low income would suit you if it Mary was happy about it?’

Derek was taken aback by the confrontation, and then confirmed that, above a ‘viable’ level of income, he would want Mary’s opinion to outweigh his historical preoccupation

with wealth. In this way, the weightings were confirmed for ‘fit’, and no alterations were necessary.

To this point, we have done no more than generate the entities that relate to decision making: the options available; related factors, and their relative importance. However, these entities have been arranged to form a grid whereby all options intersect with all factors. This makes it possible to break down the complex final decision into a series of simple ‘mini-decisions’ The number of mini-decisions equals the number of options multiplied by the number of factors. In Derek’s case, this was 4 (options) X 8 (factors) equals 32 mini-decisions. From this point on, new information will be introduced, cell by cell and row by row, that will ultimately contribute to the final decision.

Skill step 6 specifies how favourably each option meets the requirements of each factor. The question to be answered of every cell in the matrix is, *‘How favourably does this option express this factor (or meet its requirements)?’*

The answer to the ‘favourability’ question will be expressed in terms of a ‘favourability scale’ that rates different degrees of favourability on the five point scale below.

- very favourably 5
- favourably 4
- minimally favourably 3
- unfavourably 2
- very unfavourably 1

For many decisions, it is sufficient for clients to assess the degree of favourability intuitively, but in some instances it is desirable to quantify the levels of favourability numerically, or define them with clear descriptors. For example, in Derek’s case, the following favourability scale was developed in relation to the ‘Annual income’ factor:

- very favourably: rating 5 > \$50,000
- favourably rating 4 \$40,000 – \$50,000
- minimally favourably rating 3 \$35,000 – \$40,000
- unfavourably rating 2 \$30,000 – \$35,000
- very unfavourably rating 1 < \$30,000

Derek did not feel the need to define a scale using descriptors for other factors, but the following example shows how this could have been done to operationalise a reasonably abstract factor, such as ‘contribution’, if that had seemed to be useful.

- very favourably rating 5 80% of my skills used, 80% of available time to benefit people whose influence substantially benefits others
- favourably rating 4 60% of my skills used for 60% of available time, to benefit teams of people in organisational settings
- minimally favourably rating 3 50% of my skills used 50% of available time, to bring clear benefit to individuals
- unfavourably rating 2 <50% of my skills required for <50% of the time for appreciative but ‘non-needy’ target group
- very unfavourably rating 1 less than 5% of my skills used for the sake of those outside my family

In asking the ‘step 6’ question for the first time, the counsellor points to the matrix cell that relates the first option to the first factor (shaded in Figure 31). In Derek’s case,

Vicky asked: ‘How favourably does sweating it out to get the full pension meet your annual income requirement?’. Derek noted that this option would guarantee an income of > \$50,000, and so, in line with his predetermined favourability scale, it was rated at ‘5’. Vicky recorded the result in the left hand portion of the option 1 column of Figure 31.

DECISION-MAKING WORKSHEET			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Factors	weight (1 – 10)					
<i>I need to identify the preferred strategy I need to take to ensure that Mary and I will have a fulfilling and economically viable future that balances contribution, recreation and family responsibilities.</i>			<i>Keep working to 65 sweat it out and get 'full' super</i>	<i>Take package and 'reduced' super do voluntary work</i>	<i>Take package and 'reduced' super, set up consultancy</i>	<i>Work part time at lower status job maintain existing super contribution set up consultancy</i>
Annual income (\$'s per annum from guaranteed source)	6		5	3	4	3
Refreshment (renewal of spirit)	9		1	5	3	3
Contribution (using skills to benefit others)	10		2	3	5	4
Mary's view (Mary's opinion)	8		1	5	3	4
Financial security (feelings about different income levels)	4		5	3	3	4
Challenge (excitement in, creativity required for, work)	9		1	3	5	5
Children's views (what my kids think)	2		5	1	2	3
'Image' (what current colleagues think of me)	2		5	3	4	2
Ideal score:	actual viability	TOTALS ➔				
Desired viability:	%					

Figure 31. Showing the placement of the favourability ratings for each option in relation to each factor.

This process is repeated for each option, **against the same factor**, until the row is completed. It is important to complete each row—rather than work down the columns—so that the relativities between options are addressed in sequence. Rows are then processed in turn. In Derek's case, step 6 was repeated 32 times, and the ratings were similarly recorded in the left side of each column. Figure 31 lists the favourability rating of each decision.

Skill step 7 calculates the impact that the ‘mini-decision’ made in each cell has on the overall decision. The question to be answered, in relation to each cell, is ‘What is the product of the weight multiplied by the favourability rating?’.

Consider how this works in the first cell processed in Derek’s case (shown shaded in Figure 32). His ‘Annual income’, factor, weighted ‘6’, is multiplied by the favourability rating ‘5’ to give a result of ‘30’. This product is recorded in the right hand side of the first cell as shown in Figure 32. All cells in the **same row** are similarly processed—each option against the first factor. Figure 32 shows the computations for all options in the first row: option 2 is $6 \times 3 = 18$; option 3 is $6 \times 4 = 24$; and option 4 is $6 \times 3 = 18$. Step 7 is repeated, row by row, until all cells have been similarly processed, as shown.

Factors			weight (1–10)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Annual income (\$’s per annum from guaranteed source)			6	5 30	3 18	4 24	3 18
Refreshment (renewal of spirit)			9	1 9	5 45	3 27	3 27
Contribution (using skills to benefit others)			10	2 20	3 30	5 50	4 40
Mary’s view (Mary’s opinion)			8	1 8	5 40	3 24	4 32
Financial security (feelings about different income levels)			4	5 20	3 12	3 12	4 16
Challenge (excitement in, creativity required for, work)			9	1 9	3 27	5 45	5 45
Children’s views (what my kids think)			2	5 10	1 2	2 4	3 6
‘Image’ (what current colleagues think of me)			2	5 10	3 6	4 8	2 4
Ideal score:	actual viability	TOTALS ➔		116	180	194	188
Desired viability:	%						

Figure 32. Showing the computations of weighted factors multiplied by favourability ratings for each option, and the overall option tallies

Skill step 8 computes how the combined mini-decisions determine the merit of each option. The question to be answered is: ‘What is the sum of all computations in the column relating to this option?’.

This step adds up the numbers in the right side of the option columns. In Derek’s case, the tallies of the four options were 116, 180, 194 and 188, respectively, as shown in Figure 32.

Skill step 9 determines which is the preferred option. The question to be answered is: ‘Which option has scored the most points?’.

This step is easily achieved by noting the highest tally across all option columns. In Derek’s case, option 3 was preferred with its top score of 194, but further steps were required from Vicky’s perspective, but as far as Derek was concerned it was ‘all over’.

An aside on the process in this case

Options 2, 3 and 4 were all very close. It was no wonder that Derek had trouble deciding between them! By this stage, Derek had already decided to run with option 3—

that of taking the ‘package’ and a lower superannuation rate, and setting up a consultancy. He expressed great relief that processing in this way brought conclusion to a matter that he had ‘dithered over’ for several weeks. He said that even though options 2 and 4 were numerically close, the process of considering each element, a piece at a time, made the boundaries between options quite discernible. In our view Derek’s discernment was unusual. Vicky encouraged Derek to complete the process. He agreed.

The process continues

Skill step 10 is an optional step that especially applies when the scores for different options are similar, as they were in this case. It analyses the data to see whether or not the preferred option can be further enhanced. The question to be answered is: *‘Is it possible, and advantageous, to incorporate highly favoured aspects from less preferred options into the preferred option?’*.

In considering this question, Vicky noted that in the ‘Refreshment’ factor, the preferred option 3 (package plus consultancy) only scored 27 points, where as the less preferred option 2 (package plus voluntary work) scored 45 points, as shown in Figure 33.

Annual income (\$’s per annum from guaranteed source)	6	5	30	3	18	4	24	3	18
Refreshment (renewal of spirit)	9	1	9	5	45	3	27	3	27
Contribution (using skills to benefit others)	10	2	20	3	30	5	50	4	40
Mary’s view (Mary’s opinion)	8	1	8	5	40	3	24	4	32
Financial security (feelings about different income levels)	4	5	20	3	12	3	12	4	16
Challenge (excitement in, creativity required for, work)	9	1	9	3	27	5	45	5	45

Figure 33. Showing an example of where an aspect of a less preferred option could possibly enhance the preferred option.

Vicky put it Derek that these figures suggested that by doing some voluntary work, as well as setting up a consultancy, could possibly increase his experience of refreshment, and also please Mary, who viewed the voluntary option more favourably (40) than the consultancy (24). Derek considered the matter, and decided not to incorporate the idea because it would diminish his sense of contribution (down from 50) and challenge (down from 45). Nevertheless, at this point in the discussion Derek decided to take a holiday break with Mary before planning the development of his consultancy, not only renew his spirit but to celebrate a new ability to share with Mary whilst reviving a sense of contribution to the community.

Skill step 11 Checks the viability of the preferred option. This check requires three sub-steps. The overall question to be answered is: *‘Is the preferred option viable?’*.

Before considering the process for testing viability, its purpose should be clearly understood. The point to be made is that the preferred option **might simply be ‘the best of a bad lot’, but not necessarily viable**. For example, we have used this process to help organisations to select staff. There have been occasions where a ‘preferred’ applicant might have been appointed if a viability check had not been taken to show

that the applicant was ‘not up to scratch’ against the organisation’s expressed requirements!

Simply put, viability means how well an option shapes against the ‘ideal’ option. The ideal option is one that meets 100% of the requirements. The level of viability can thus be measured as the percentage to which a given option approximates the ‘ideal score’. Imagine that an additional option column was labelled ‘ideal’. It follows that each time the favourability question was asked of this option, the rating would always be ‘5’. In practice, there is no need to draft such a column as the skill sub-steps will show.

Skill step 11.1 calculates the score of the ideal option. The question to be answered is: ‘*What is five times the sum of the weights of all factors?*’.

This step is achieved by simply adding up the numbers in the weights column, and multiplying that number by 5. In Derek’s case, the sum of the weights came to 50, and the ideal score came to 50 x 5 =250. These are recorded at the bottom of the sheet, as shown in Figure 34.

‘Image’ (what current colleagues think of me)		2	5	10	3	6	4	8	2	4
Ideal score: 250	actual viability	TOTALS →	50	116	180	194 ✓	180			
Desired viability: 70%	77.6%									

Figure 34. Showing where the information relating to viability is recorded on the Decision Making Worksheet.

Skill step 11.2 lists the level of viability required by the client. The question to be answered is: *What degree of certainty do you require of the preferred option before accepting it as a ‘goer’.*

This determination takes into account the importance and/or the amount of acceptable risk involved in the decision. Clients differ in their willingness to take risks. The nature of the decision may also influence the level of acceptable risk. For example, one may take greater risks in selecting a meal from a menu than in deciding whether or not to dissolve a marriage. Carkhuff’s early work suggested that an option was viable if it met 70% or more of the ideal requirements. For many decisions, this figure generally seen as a workable benchmark. In Derek’s case, 70% viability was quite acceptable. This figure was recorded in the bottom left cell as shown in Figure 34.

Skill step 11.3 calculates the actual viability of the preferred option. The question to be answered is: ‘*When expressed as a percentage, to what degree does the option fulfil the ideal requirements of the combined factors?*’

This skill simply multiplies the tally of the particular option by 100, and divides that product by the ideal score.

In Derek’s case, the calculation was $(194 \times 100)/250 = 77.6\%$. This result is shown in the ‘actual viability’ box at the bottom of Figure 34.

Since the viability of any option can be calculated in the same way, Derek decided to compute the viability of his first option—continuing in his current job until he was 65, ‘just for fun’. Some quick arithmetic showed a viability of 46.4%,

whereupon Derek turned to Vicky and said. *‘Good God—no wonder I feel professionally spent—that’s worse than ‘even money!’*. They both laughed.

Skill step 12 seeks to enhance the viability of the preferred option on those occasions when it falls short of the desired viability. The question to be answered is: *‘What creative steps can be taken to enhance the favourability of the option by: (1) creatively upgrading the favourability factors; (2) modifying the definitions of detracting factors;(3) increasing the precision of ‘mini-decisions’ by defining favourability scales operationally;(4) adding new factors that may have originally been seen as non-applicable; or (5) broadening perspectives by consulting more widely.*

This step is similar to, but more rigorous than skill step 10. It becomes necessary, because if viability is not achieved, it is unlikely that the decision-maker will find satisfaction by proceeding.

Skill step 12 was not necessary in Derek’s case, but some hypothetical examples of how the five elements of the ‘step 12’ question may help to clarify its function. Recall that Mary favoured the ‘voluntary work’ option. To upgrade the ‘Mary’s opinion’ factor in the ‘consultancy’ option, Derek could be challenged to find a way to provide pro bono services, from his consultancy, to a voluntary agency who desperately needed his skills.

The possibility of modifying the definition of the ‘Children’s views’ factor could be discussed. It is possible that Derek could decide that he had no real obligation to indulge his children financially any more, so long as he honoured his promise to his daughter about his grandchildren’s education. He could decide that withdrawing financial support from his two sons would create some tensions, but would be in his long term best interest, and consistent with his goal of ‘balancing family interests’. Accordingly, he could not only redefine ‘Children’s views’—he could erase the factor.

By operationalising the favourability of additional factors (other than ‘Annual income’) Derek could think through the significance of each with greater precision. An example of operationalising an ‘abstract’ factor (contribution) was shown on page 363.

It is always possible that some factors are dismissed as being ‘non-related’ when processing a decision. For example, Derek could have initially included a factor that related to ‘hobbies time’. Reflection on this factor could bring realisation that by having ‘taken a package’ there would be opportunity to make more time available for making jam, reading and playing bridge. This could increase viability.

It is possible that by consulting with a financial advisor, he could find better ways to manage his financial assets in order to receive some social security benefits.

Closure

The ‘how’ step was now clear, and Derek updated his operational goal. It now read:

*‘I want my wife, Mary, and myself to have a fulfilling and economically viable future that balances contribution, recreation and family responsibilities. I can make this decision at home and ratify it at work. This must be done before 5.00 pm 25th Oct. (the deadline for acceptance of an ‘offer’ of a ‘retirement package’ from my employer). My reason for doing this is to renew a spirit of self-worth through purposeful contribution. **I will do this by accepting a ‘package’ and a reduction in superannuation payments so that I am free to develop a consulting business.** My goal will be well and truly achieved if by the 31st of (month nominated) I wake up each weekday with a sense of optimism, Mary and I both feel that we can maintain our current financial commitments from guaranteed income sources (any dividends from investments will be a bonus for*

indulgences), and I have sufficient energy to plan and execute joint ventures with Mary (instead of leaving it all to her).'

Derek's operational goal was now specific and unambiguous (at level 4.5). He was now ready to proceed with action planning—the topic of the next chapter. His full Decision Making Worksheet appears as Figure 35 on page 371. Recall that all worksheets and exercises can be copied from the authors website for personal use (see title page).

Decision making in groups

The process described above can be readily applied to group decisions. As an example, we will discuss the application already mentioned—selecting staff for organisations so that 'non-viable' appointments are not made. Such appointments usually have serious, expensive organisational consequences .

When selecting staff for relatively senior positions, it is usual to form a selection panel of people who will have a future working relationship of one kind or another with the successful applicant. To use this process, each panellist must be familiar with the method of using the worksheet.

Before interviewing begins, panellists collaborate to create a list of factors that 'profile' the organisation's requirements for the vacant position. Different people will contribute from the perspective of the position that they hold in the organisation. Discussion is invariably required to eventually agree on the weighting of the factors. Prior to interviewing, the names of candidates are written in the options column in the order in which they will be interviewed.

As each applicant is interviewed, each panel member considers how favourably the candidate meets the requirement of each organisational factor. At the end of the day, panellists meet to compare notes. There are almost always some differences in the way panellist rate candidates. These differences are discussed, and panellists will modify their ratings in light of evidence shared. This gives everyone a chance to reconsider any points that they may have missed during the interviews. Any subsequent differences are resolved by adding the panellists' ratings of each cell, and then calculating the average score to determine the group rating for that cell. Each cell is considered in turn.

The tallies and viability decisions are then made in the ways already described. If the preferred applicant fails to meet the viability requirements, we strongly recommend that the position be readvertised. We have known cases where 'non-viable' applicants have been appointed, and we have subsequently been told of pervasive dissatisfaction with the appointee.

The process may sound rather complex, but the interaction ensures that all perspectives are heard, all evidence is considered, and a more informed choice is made. In any group, the process ensures that the 'heavies' do not intimidate others, and that 'timid folk' have equitable influence in making a decision.

Practicing decision making

In our regular training programs, decision making is generally practiced in dyads immediately after the process has been presented, and as required, thereafter, during sessions dedicated to working through the counselling process from initial engagement through to developing an action plan.

Exercise 24: Decision-making activity

This exercise provides an opportunity to make a personal decision using the Decision-making sheet. (download copies from the authors' website, see title page). Readers familiar with the construction of spreadsheets may want to create a document that will electronically deal with the computations.

The task

Consider any area where you need to make a decision, and work through the steps outlined in this chapter. Alternatively, pick up on the goal that every counsellor should periodically address in real life—balance in life.

'I want to maximise the use of my next block of free time (more than 3 days) so that I regenerate emotionally, physically and spiritually'.

Either decide on **'how'** to make this happen, or **'where'** to go if you prefer to take a holiday rather than considering other home-based alternatives.

You might choose to work with a partner or friend but, for the sake of practice:

- generate at least five options to achieve the goal;
- identify at least 10 factors that will influence the decision;
- define each factor so that there is no ambiguity as to what the factor means;
- weight each factor to accurately reflect the relative importance of the factors;
- determine the favourability of all options against each factor;
- compute the mini-decisions (weight x favourability) in each cell at the intersect of each option with each factor;
- add up the computations recorded in the column of each option;
- identify the preferred option;
- test whether or not the preferred option is at least 70% viable.

Once your decision has been made, write out the completed operationalised goal in the space provided below. This goal could become the target for your action planning practice, in Exercise 25, at the end of the next chapter.

No answers are supplied for personal work undertaken in Exercise 24.

My refined operationalised goal

Summary

What decision making is

Decision-making is determining which of a number of options is preferred, and whether or not that option is viable.

What decision making does

Operationally, effective decision making:

- breaks down the complexity of the decision making process into manageable pieces;
- considers all the feasible alternative options;
- identifies all the factors which are involved in a decision;
- compares the relative importance of those factors to the person concerned;
- provides a means of considering the degree of favourability which each option offers in relation to each factor;
- provides a means of determining which option is preferred;
- provides a means of testing how viable the preferred option is in relation to an ideal option.

Functionally, effective decision making:

- leads to the best possible decisions;
- facilitates thorough examination of all critical aspects;
- makes constructive negotiation easier and fairer for group decision making.

Why decision making is important

If one breaks down a complex decision into its constituent elements, then one can focus more easily on each element, and so consider the matter more thoroughly, thereby making the most informed decision.

When decision making is used

Decision making is used whenever there is a decision to be made between options that involve uncertainty or complexity. The process makes decision making manageable. Counsellors can empower clients by teaching the process as well as using it.

How to make decisions

The following steps are used to make a decision on a Decision Making Worksheet;

- specify the nature of the required decision;
- list all acceptable, feasible options;
- list all factors related to the decision;
- define each factor;
- weight all factors on a 1–10 scale to specify their relative importance;
- specify how favourably each option expresses each factor;

- in each cell, multiply the favourability rating by the associated factor weight to calculate the impact that this cell will have on the overall decision;
- add up the computed figures in each option column;
- identify the preferred option—the one with the highest numerical tally;
- analyse the information to consider ways of enhancing the preferred option;
- test the viability of the preferred option by:
 - calculating the ideal score (sum of the weights, multiplied by 5);
 - declare the ‘desired’ viability, (as a percentage of the ideal). This is the level of risk that is deemed to be viable;
 - calculate the viability of the preferred option, (divide the preferred option by the ideal score, and multiply the result by 100), and check against the desired viability.
- if the preferred option is not viable, seek to enhance it by creatively considering any or all of the following:
 - creatively upgrading the favourability factors;
 - reviewing and modifying the definitions of detracting factors if necessary;
 - increasing the precision of ‘mini-decisions’ by defining favourability scales operationally;
 - adding new factors that may have originally been seen as non-applicable;
 - broadening perspectives by consulting more widely.

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My learning about decision making

Write in your own words

What decision making is:

What decision making does:

Why decision making is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own decision-making skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my decision making:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

Action planning skills

Preamble

The skills described in the previous chapters all work together to culminate in constructive action. Clients have been attended to with love; listened to, and observed with acuity; responded to with empathy; possibly confronted, and through the personalising process, have reached an understanding of what they need and want to do to resolve an issue constructively. They have then been questioned, considered suggestions, and perhaps been helped to decide between unclear options, in order to spell out a feasible way of achieving what they want in operational terms.

There are two options for what happens next. The operationalised goal will have specified a broad action strategy that will be implemented by the client, either on their own, or with help from another person, agency, or commercial enterprise. Examples of the latter could be: a therapeutic strategy by an expert, enrolment in a weight loss program, extensive home renovations by a builder, or innumerable other initiatives. If the client intends to implement the action strategy themselves, the counsellor should offer to collaborate in drafting an action plan, **with** the client, to spell out the series of concrete things that need to be done, in what sequence, and over what time span.

Not all counsellors share the perspective outlined above. Some counsellors believe that plans should be made **for** clients—if at all. Some others seem to have a ‘hit-and-miss’ approach. Non-directive therapies trust clients to take their own initiatives.

Nelson Jones notes that, ‘Some helpers do not develop systematic plans because they are unwilling to spend out of session time doing this task’ (Nelson-Jones 1992, p. 234). Nelson-Jones does the planning himself, but has some prior discussion, with his clients, about working goals in order to offer ‘some protection against making unacceptable plans’—although he concedes that, ‘Sometimes you may consider it helpful to involve clients early in the planning process’. The same author gives an example of a plan that he drafted to ‘assist Jim Blake develop getting-another-job skills’. It involved seven counselling sessions over four weeks. We do not know Jim, but nevertheless express surprise to read that as late as session 5, two of the five ‘working goals’ listed were ‘Be more in touch with wants and wishes’ and ‘Managing time when unemployed’ (Nelson-Jones 1992, pp.237–239). We would expect that if Jim had been helped to the point of having an operationalised goal designed to help him get another job, an action plan could be drafted, collaboratively, in one session!

George and Cristiani (1990) do not mention the option of the counsellor assisting clients to draft a plan for action that they, the client, can implement. They suggest ‘that many clients are able to act on insights and new understandings they gain through the therapeutic climate and through advanced skills employed by the counsellor’. On the other extreme, they suggest that counsellors ‘must facilitate the behaviour change process by implementing specific action strategies or programs’ (1990, p. 165). They suggest ‘established’ programs that use: (1) behavioural techniques such as ‘systematic desensitisation’, ‘behaviour contracts’, ‘social modelling’, and ‘assertion training’; (2) ‘Decision-making methodologies’; and (3) Problem-solving strategies’. It seems to us that this approach has a central gap through which some clients must fall.

Geldard and Geldard (2001) appear to us to have a ‘hit-and-miss’ approach to action planning. They advocate the Gestalt approach which focuses on raising client’s awareness of emotional blocks to action as they occur. They warn against counsellors pushing for action, but gently work to get clients to decide to act. Apparently the nature of the action appears to be less important than the fact of acting. For example, they list ten steps in their action plan, all of which relate to the first step only. Step 8 is to, ‘Carry out the first step’. Their discussion on this step begins, ‘Whether or not the client carries out the first step is unimportant. If they do, then they can feel good about that, and if they don’t then there will be some learning from the process’ (Geldard & Geldard (2001, p. 205). The final step 10 is to reassess the overall goal. The discussion on this step reads: ‘Often when the client has gone some way in one direction, they will realise that the goal originally targeted is one which is no longer desired. That is clearly OK, but the client will consequently need to reassess their overall goal’ (Geldard & Geldard (2001, p. 206). In our view such activity is much closer to exploration than to purposeful action towards attaining a well thought through operationalised goal.

Egan’s overall approach is a little more collaborative than that of Nelson-Jones. He suggests offering a sketched plan outline to clients, and then helping the client ‘fill out the sketch and adapt it to his or her needs and style’ (Egan 1998, p. 309). Egan describes the basics of action planning, and provides a series of case studies to illustrate the use of sequencing steps and sub-steps within a given time-frame, but fails to mention other refinements to enhance the probability of successful implementation. His presentation will have appeal to readers who prefer a narrative style to our approach of detailing skill steps that, to some, seem ‘too mechanistic’. Egan properly points out that the degree of specificity of activities, and the rigidity of time frames must make sense to the client, but then says that ‘there are no formulas’ (Egan 1998, p. 308). We will later describe a series of skill steps that virtually guarantee the most efficient level of specificity for a given client (neither over-planned nor under-planned); and ensure achievable, but pressure free, timelines.

We are intrigued to note that Egan writes a plan as if it were already implemented—as statements of accomplishment. He specifies using the ‘the past-participle approach’, but does not explain why (Egan 1998, p. 303). To get technical, we prefer to use the present tense transitive verb that specifies what will need to be done during implementation. To see the difference, compare Egan’s sub-step to Wanda (whose goal was to get a job) with the way we will suggest it be written.

Résumé written (Egan 1998, p. 303) or Write (or update) résumé.

There is merit in reflecting on the benefits of action planning that Egan has listed:

1. Plans help clients develop needed discipline.

2. Plans keep clients from being overwhelmed.
3. Formulating plans helps clients search for more useful ways of accomplishing goals—that is, even better strategies.
4. Plans provide an opportunity to evaluate the realism and adequacy of goals.
5. Plans make clients aware of the resources they will need to implement their strategies.
6. Formulating plans helps clients uncover unanticipated obstacles to the accomplishment of goals.
7. Planning can help clients manage post decisional depression (Egan 1998, pp. 301-302).

Carkhuff (2000, 2000a, 2000b) provides the most comprehensive and systematic way of developing action plans that we are aware of. His broad steps are to: (1) define goals; (2) develop programs; (3) design a schedule of reinforcements; (4) prepare to implement steps; and (5) plan check steps. His current publications breaks these broad steps into do-able skill steps that make the whole process very manageable. In the remainder of this chapter, we will draw on Carkhuff's method to describe the skill steps used in developing an action plan.

Reviewing current competence

Planning to do the things we want and need to do is an everyday occurrence. Some of us create list in our heads. Others recognise the first step, head off towards their goal, and await the first 'contingency' before giving further thought to the next step. Some seem to intuitively know what to do to achieve quite complex tasks. The real question is, 'what do you consciously do in developing a plan?'. If you have trouble thinking of an immediate example, imagine that you need to shift house. Make up an operationalised 5W2H goal to install you in the house of your dreams, and then write an action plan that will take to ensure an effective installation. Your approach to planning becomes your learning baseline.

The skills of action planning

To demonstrate the skills involved in the action planning process, David will work through the very first action plan that he drafted in 1976 as part of his skills training in the United States. The program is simple, but was life-changing for him, and led to the introduction of skills training for Social Workers, and Counsellors in South Australia.

Background

The 1970's were a 'boom time' for social work in South Australia. At that time I had overall responsibility for training and development programs for a staff of about 1300 people in the, then, Department for Community Welfare (DCW). One significant program offered a 12 month practical social work training course to place 'Community Welfare Workers' in the field to augment the output from tertiary institutions. In my view, neither the universities, nor my experienced staff, nor indeed myself, had much to offer course participants in the way of skills training, so, after searching what was available, worldwide, The South Australian Government made it possible for me to

undertake extensive training in what was then called 'Human Resource Development' (HRD) skills training at the Long Beach campus of the California State University. The basic program was led by Dr. Robert Cash, and an advanced program was led by Dr. Bernard Berenson, colleague and co-developer of HRD with Dr. Robert Carkhuff. The description of my plan in this text differs slightly from the original version because our Action Planning Worksheet is a modified version of the original worksheet. The plan flowed from the following operational goal:

I want myself, David Kranz, to conduct the first HRD training program for selected key staff in the SA Dept. for Community Welfare, at Staff Development Branch. I will begin implementation tomorrow, 1/7/76, and conclude the program on 1/12/76. If I do this, then I will establish a team of effective co-trainers who can train others in the Dept, universities etc.(to create a multiplier effect). I have no other strategy but to replicate this program. I will have achieved my goal if it concludes on Dec 17; and at least 7 of the nine participants can produce 10 consecutive responses at a mean score of 2.5 or better; and their evaluations average better than 4 on a range of 5 point scales.

The skill steps of action planning

Action plans are developed on an Action Planning Worksheet. My completed worksheet appears as Figure 42 on page 388. As we work through the steps that led to the development of my plan, miniature segments will be provided to give an overview of 'what bits go where'. It is not important to read the detail until later in the chapter.

In the counselling room, the process is best drafted on a whiteboard so that edited refinements can be easily made. The client can have a copy of the final result. There should be no need to remind readers, that in the counselling setting (and indeed in most others) action plans should not be drafted unless a period of exploration has been undertaken; and a personalised goal has been identified, and subsequently defined in operational terms.

Skill step 1 affirms that preparation has been thorough, and lists the elements of the operationalised goal onto the Action Planning Worksheet. The question to be answered is: 'Can I access my overall intentions, at a glance, as I develop my plan?'.

Figure 36 (page 380) shows the location of the goal elements of my plan on page 388.

1. **Who:** The person(s) who develop the plan list their names in the 'Prepared by' box. In my example my name is shown. If I helped Bill prepare a plan he would list 'Bill and David'.
2. **Who:** The person(s) who will implement the plan list their names in the 'For implementation by' box. In my example my name is shown. If Bill wanted his wife Josie to share the implementation of his plan he would list 'Bill and Josie'.
3. **What:** This element of the operational goal is the desired outcome of the action plan. It is transcribed into the final 'Step 5' box. The words in the plan differ from the words in the operational goal. This is not an issue, the transcript is more specific, and the meaning is unchanged. My Step 5 reads, 'Conduct pilot South Australian HRD program for 9 selected DCW staff'.
4. **Where:** Full details of the proposed venue are listed in the 'Location' box. This is a useful discipline for program authors because copies of plans might easily be given to interested parties who might appreciate such detail, especially a contact number.

5. **When:** The intended ‘start’ date and time refer to the first step. It is always useful to double check the details of the operational goal at the time of drafting the program to ensure that nothing was missed when the goal was defined. The start time must be thought through—practically—so that what is planned is achievable. For example, my start time of 8.00 am on 1/7/76 was organised so that I had 15 minutes uninterrupted access to a trainer whose information I needed before I could proceed with other requirements without undue pressure. She would not have been available if I had taken ‘pot luck’ on catching her at, say, twenty minutes before the 8.45 session began.
6. **When:** It seems wise to simply ‘pencil in’ the intended ‘finish’ time at this stage. This is because a feasibility time line—that allows for ‘contingencies’—is best calculated once the action steps have been determined. In my case, I set the finish time for my program at 4.00 on December 17th—the Friday before Christmas Eve. This would be a very suitable time for participants, but I needed to burn plenty of ‘midnight oil’ to be prepared myself. I had yet to appreciate the importance of ‘contingency time’—a notion to be discussed under skill step 5.2 on page 386.
7. **Why:** The anticipated benefits are transcribed in the box bearing that label. In my case this read, ‘If I train an effective team of trainers, then we can train others and create a multiplier effect that will enhance counselling skills across the state’.
8. **How:** The act of drafting an action plan details the broad intended ‘how’ strategy that was outlined in the operational goal statement. Only the ‘success’ standards are transcribed onto the action plan. Such measures should quantify how much, how many, how often, or how well the outcomes will be measured. In my plan the standards summarise my operational goal to read, ‘at least 7 participants scored 2.5+ on post-test; evaluations average greater than 4.0 (on a range of 5 point scales).

Prepared by: 1	Implemented by: 2	ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET		Anticipated benefits: 7
Location: 4				
Start date: Start time: Reinforcer: PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Step 5: 3			Checkpoint: 8 Finish date: Finish time: 6
Start date: Start time: Reinforcer: PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Step 4:			Checkpoint: Finish date: Finish time:
Start date: Start time: Reinforcer: PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Step 3:			Checkpoint: Finish date: Finish time:
Start date: Start time: Reinforcer: PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Step 2:			Checkpoint: Finish date: Finish time:
Start date: Start time: 5 Reinforcer: PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Step 1:			Checkpoint: Finish date: Finish time:

Figure 36. Showing where the elements of an operationalised goal are located when transcribed onto an action plan.

Skill step 2 develops the broad ‘primary’ steps of an action plan. The question to be answered is: ‘*What broad steps does the implementer need as a ‘scaffold’ from which to build a successful plan?*’.

Primary steps can be developed in different ways. One common way is to start where you are and ask the question, ‘What do I need to do next?’, repeatedly, until a series of steps is developed. Another common strategy is to envisage the final product and ask the question, ‘What must have been achieved to get here?’, repeatedly, until a series of steps brings you back to your starting point. We advocate a third strategy that is analogous to crossing a stream.

Imagine the following scenario. A very tall father, a short mother and a smaller child are out hiking, and find themselves on bank A of ‘Planner’s Creek’ (depicted in Figure 37). They need to cross. The lanky father can easily get from bank A to bank B in one broad jump. The mother is less certain, so stepping stone 1 is placed mid way between banks A and B. She is now able to cross safely. The child is reluctant to leave bank A because stone 1 seems too far, and too hard to get to safely. The parents alleviate the child’s apprehension by putting stepping stones 2 and 3 midway between stone 1 and banks A and B respectively. The child is now able to cross confidently and safely.

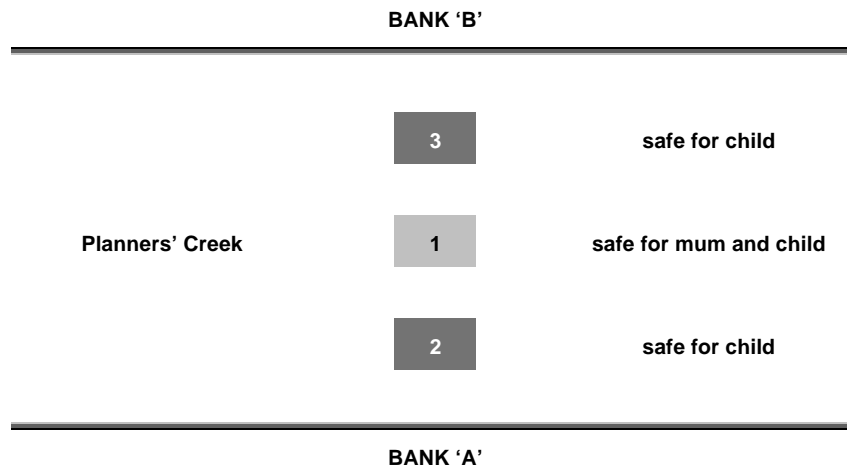


Figure 37. Showing how stepping stones in a creek are analogous to intermediate primary steps in an action plan.

In the planning application the stepping stones are known as ‘intermediate steps’. They are used in developing a scaffold for an action plan when the complexity of the plan requires them, or when the implementer of the plan lacks confidence, or competence. The process of ‘splitting the difference’ to insert intermediate steps may also be called ‘partitioning the variance’. If used, the intermediate steps are also primary steps. They are the pillars on which a ‘bridge’ can be built across Planner’s Creek’. They are the scaffold on which a detailed plan can be constructed. With this in mind, we will consider how sub-steps of skill step 2 were applied in our example. Note that in all cases, the step begins with an active verb. This principle applies throughout the planning process. Figure 38 on page 382, shows where the primary steps are listed on an action plan and the order in which they are developed.

Skill step 2.1 simply affirms that the words listed in Step 5 accurately reflect the ‘what’ of the operationalised goal. In my plan this was to:

Conduct pilot South Australian HRD program for 9 selected DCW staff.

Skill step 2.2 identifies the first primary step—Step 1 of the action plan. The question to be answered is: ‘What is the first thing that needs to happen when implementing the plan?’.

In answer to this question, Step 1 of my plan was to:

Acquire necessary training materials and ship home.

Clearly, without such resources nothing significant could happen. I also knew that other ‘sub-steps’ would be necessary to achieve this step. For example, as visitor I had no idea where the Post Office was, let alone how to get there. However, as a scaffold step, I could conceive its significance with sufficient clarity to move on.

Skill step 2.3 identifies the first intermediate step—Step 3 of the action plan. The question to be answered is: ‘What major step must I undertake midway between my first step and my goal?’.

In answer to this question, Step 3 of my plan (the middle stepping stone) became:

Present program outline to the Standing Training Committee for formal approval.

This was a significant mid-point. I knew that there would be no hitches. I was Executive Officer of that committee, and was expected to produce ‘something’ on my return home. This was it. Formalising my proposed program would clear budgets, and ensure that staff were released, and be given due recognition for attending training.

This is a pivotal step in planning. It might be sufficient, in some circumstances, for some clients to start building on a three step scaffold, but not for others. However, in all cases, we suggest that the questions relating to skill steps 2.4 and 2.5 (below) be posed. Remember the different capacities of the mother and child.

Prepared by:	Implemented by:	ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET		Anticipated benefits:
Location				
Start date:	Step 5	2.1	<i>Conduct pilot South Australian FRO program for 9 selected DCW staff.</i>	Checkpoint:
Start time:				
Reinforce:				Finish date:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Finish time:
Start date:	Step 4	2.5	<i>Finalise arrangements: with admin and resource staff and personal preparation</i>	Checkpoint:
Start time:				
Reinforce:				Finish date:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Finish time:
Start date:	Step 3	2.3	<i>Present program to the Standing Training Committee (STC) for formal approval</i>	Checkpoint:
Start time:				
Reinforce:				Finish date:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Finish time:
Start date:	Step 2	2.4	<i>Prepare preliminaries — confirm dates, book venue, draft training materials</i>	Checkpoint:
Start time:				
Reinforce:				Finish date:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Finish time:
Start date:	Step 1	2.2	<i>Acquire necessary training materials and ship home</i>	Checkpoint:
Start time:				
Reinforce:				Finish date:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>				Finish time:

Figure 38. Showing the positioning and sequencing of the primary steps that form the scaffold of an action plan.

Skill step 2.4 identifies the next intermediate step—Step 2 of the action plan. The question to be answered is: ‘*What major step must I undertake midway between the first and third steps of my plan?*’.

In answer to this question, Step 2 of my plan was:

Prepare preliminaries—confirm dates; book venue; draft training materials.

Whilst I had long since developed the policy and procedures for setting up training programs, this was not a step that I was prepared to take for granted. It provided opportunity to subsequently reflect on preliminary details that can easily be overlooked. For example, I have seen others prepare great events, and then panic because the venue they had in mind was not available on the day planned. ‘Book the venue first—and then plan the event’, is not a bad policy.

Skill step 2.5 identifies the final intermediate step—Step 4 of the action plan. The question to be answered is: ‘*What major step must I undertake midway between my third step and my goal?*’.

In answer to this question, Step 4 of my plan was:

Finalise arrangements: with admin and resource staff; and personal preparation.

This step was included so that I could ensure that ‘all was prepared’ well in advance of the delivery date. Such a step virtually guarantees a hassle free start to a program, where the trainer’s attention can focus on greeting participants, and offering them hospitality as they arrive, rather than setting up video equipment, for example, that can often takes longer than expected!

Skill step 3 develops the sub-steps that are necessary to fulfil the requirements of each of the primary steps. They are listed under the appropriate primary step, as shown for primary Step 1, in Figure 39 on page 384. These sub-steps may be one of two kinds, both of which will be discussed in turn. They are:

The sub-steps may reflect a **series of tasks** that needs to be undertaken in sequence.

In this case, the steps can be developed in the same way as the primary steps—by asking the questions to establish the simple first step, the middle step, and intermediate steps, in that order. Alternatively, with familiar tasks, the sequence may be obvious, in which case there is no need to develop intermediate steps in the way previously described. The strategy of partitioning the variance is best applied when planning unfamiliar tasks.

The sub-steps may simply be a **list of tasks** that can be undertaken in random order—without the need for sequencing.

The sub-steps for my primary Step 1 were developed as a series of tasks. I think that I could have simply listed the tasks, but at the time I wanted to practice the process of partitioning the steps. They went like this.

Skill step 3.1 addresses the task of the primary step: *Acquire necessary training materials and ship home.*

Skill step 3.2 identifies the first sub-step required to achieve primary step 1. The question I needed to ask was: ‘*What is the first thing I need to do to acquire the all the appropriate materials?*’.

The answer was:

1. Check all requirements with Dorothy Mitchell (Master-trainer) and list them.

This sub-step would provide me with a list of all the materials that Dorothy used to set up, deliver, and evaluate the program that I was attending. She could also advise where I could acquire them.

I clearly needed an intermediate step to get from ‘having a list’ to ‘shipping stuff home’.

Skill step 3.3 identifies the first intermediate sub-step (sub-step 3) The question I asked was, ‘*What will I need do midway between getting Dorothy’s list and shipping materials home?*’.

In my case, Dr Cash had already offered his support in helping me to establish ‘down under’, so in answer to the question, my intermediate sub-step became:

3. Formalise approval from Dr Cash for duplication of copyright materials.

This sub-step would help me determine which of his materials he was happy for me to photo-copy, and use with acknowledgement; and which of his materials were appropriate to purchase.

The next planning step seemed unnecessary, but I followed it, ‘just for practice’.

Skill step 3.4 identifies the next intermediate sub-step (sub-step 2) The question I asked was, ‘*What will I need do between getting Dorothy’s list, and formalising copyright issues?*’.

It seemed easy enough, at first, to get Dorothy’s list, then sort out the copyright, then get what I needed. But not so! Somehow, as I pondered the need of this skill step, I recalled that the video tapes that Dorothy had used were not compatible with the PAL system used in Australia, and realised that I needed to find a way around this if possible. This generated my second sub-step:

2. Check with Dorothy if videos can be converted to PAL format or 16 mm film.

I realised that I could **implement** sub-steps 1 and 2 concurrently with Dorothy.

Skill step 3.5 identifies the final intermediate sub-step (sub-step 4) The question I asked was, ‘*What do I need to do between having materials approved and shipping them home?*’.

In answer to this question for my sub-step 4 obvious:

4. Purchase 1 copy of all texts from bookstall, and order up to 30 from HRD Press.

This step would provide resources for individual copies for training staff, for up to twenty-four participants in future programs, and add references for our Library.

PTO—Relapse Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Start date: Start time: Reintense: PTO—Relapse Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Step 1: <i>Acquire necessary materials and ship home</i> 1. Check all requirements with Dorothy and list them. 2. Check with Dorothy if videos can be converted to PAL format or 16 mm film. 3. Formalise approval from Dr Cash for duplication of copyright materials. 4. Purchase 1 copy of all texts from bookstall and order up to 30 from HRD Press. 5. Take up Donna’s offer to acquire packaging, and provide transport to post.	Finish time: Checkpoint: Finish date: Finish time:
--	--	---

Figure 39. Showing that the sub-steps are listed immediately under the primary step to which they relate.

As an overseas student, I needed help to acquire packaging and get to the Post Office, Hence my additional intermediate sub-step 5:

5. Take up Donna’s offer to acquire packaging and provide transport to post.

‘The sub-steps for the remaining primary steps are processed in a similar way. They are all listed on the completed worksheet, Figure 42 on page 388. The content will be familiar to readers involved in training activities, and perhaps of little interest to others.

An aside

Trainers who have read my finished plan may appreciate further clarity on two sub-steps in particular. The first, Step 4 sub-step 1, relates to morning tea on day 1, ‘a la Long Beach’. This refers to the sumptuous ‘morning tea’ provided, by the American training team, on day one. They provided a range of fruits, cookies and a variety of drinks. They said that the provision was to model the value of ‘symbolic nurturing’—an empathic gesture to meet the preferences of participants. It foretold the ‘care’ that permeated the remainder of the program. We have taken up this notion in all of our programs, and, in some settings, incurred the wrath of cost clerks who insisted that tea and coffee—with plain biscuits (as a grudging compromise) were all that would be provided. Not everyone sees the point until it has been experienced.

The second aside relates to Step 5, sub-step 3—the use of ‘daily logs’. At the end of each day of the American program, participants took time to write their reflections of the day. On occasions, emotions were deeply stirred, sometimes up, sometimes down. Overnight, the trainers would respond empathically in writing. The log became a valued document that gave the experience of being fully understood by very skilled ‘strangers’. Logs are a particularly valuable training tool for intense programs that are conducted on consecutive days over long periods.

Back to action planning

Earlier reference was made to the fact that sub-steps could be a simple list. Consider, for my plight, for example, if I had not had assistance to pack and post the training materials. I would have needed to get boxes, paper, string, and label; find a pay-phone, and ring a taxi; maybe go to a supermarket; then find the Post Office, check custom requirements—and the rest. These things might easily be held in mind, but just as easily, and perhaps more effectively, listed as sub-steps.

Occasionally, implementers may need to have additional smaller steps still, in order to feel confident in achieving a sub-step. In these cases, a second worksheet can be used to avoid cramming on the first worksheet. On sheet two, the sub-steps can be written in the spaces provided for the primary steps, and ‘sub-sub-steps’ can be developed in the space immediately below. This sounds far more complicated than it really is.

In drafting action plans, it is important to ensure that the implementer(s) will be able to carry out the task with confidence, but without the irritation of irrelevant detail. This balance is achieved by partitioning the variance when developing steps throughout the plan. In our regular programs, we have come to call the need for this balance, the ‘DCAP principle’. The term originated in fun. We had noticed that, generally speaking, some people became quite annoyed if given too many, or too few, instructions when asked to undertake a task. If given too many instructions they could ‘do their block’ and say something like, ‘Do you think I’m stupid, or somethin?’? If given too few instructions they could say something like, ‘Do you think I’m Mandrake, or somethin?’ (a comic strip magician of yester-year). It was a quick quip to see ‘doing your block’ as a kind of ‘decapitation’. Out of the blue came the oblique and flippant comment that, to avoid this unnecessary annoyance, we needed a DeCAP principle, which, to ‘sound fancy’, was cobbled to stand for the ‘Differential Coefficient of Action Planning’. The dubious acronym has remained as a useful mnemonic to remind planners to ‘split the difference’ between program steps to ensure that there are sufficient steps for each implementer to achieve their goal with confidence—without having to contend with superfluous instructions that the implementer is already competent to undertake.

Skill step 4 provides a ‘checkpoint’ that specifies the standard to be met before moving from one primary step the next The question to be answered is: *‘How will I know that I have successfully completed this primary step?’*.

These checkpoints are written in the past tense. They specify the standards that have been met to ‘sign off’ on the current step, and give the ‘nod’ for the next step.

In my case, I recognised that Step 1 would be completed when:

Goods acquired and posted, orders made, receipts filed.

Figure 40 shows this information listed in the ‘Checkpoint’ box to the right of Step 1.

PPO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/> Start date: Start time: Reinforce: PPO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>	Step 1: <i>Acquire necessary materials and ship home</i> <i>Check all requirements with Dorothy and list them.</i> <i>Check with Dorothy if videos can be converted to PAL format or 16 mm film.</i> <i>Formalise approval from Dr Cash for duplication of copyright materials.</i> <i>Purchase 1 copy of all texts from bookstall and order up to 30 from WED Press.</i> <i>Take up Donna's offer to acquire packaging materials, and provide transport to post.</i>	Finish time: Checkpoint: <i>Goods acquired and posted, orders made, receipts filed</i> Finish date: Finish time:
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Figure 40. Showing the location of a Checkpoint in an action plan.

The checkpoints relating to other primary steps are listed in similar boxes to the right of each primary step. My checks can be seen on the completed sheet in Figure 42 on page 388. Note that the checks that are listed in Step 5 are the standards set in the operationalised goal.

Skill step 5 establishes the time constraints applied to each primary step. The question to be answered is: *‘How much time should I reasonably allocate to complete this step?’*.

Determining what is ‘reasonable’ is not as easy as it seems. Several small sub-steps are involved in this determination.

Skill step 5.1 estimates the actual time required to complete the overall primary step. The question to be answered is: *‘What is the sum of the times required to perform each associated sub-step?’*.

This is a relatively easy task if one is familiar with the procedure of each task, but if not, it is useful to consult someone who is aware of what is involved. It is a simple matter to add up the estimated times of all sub-steps.

Skill step 5.2 extends the estimated time to allow for ‘contingencies’. The question to be answered is, *‘From past experience, what percentage of extra time needs to be allowed to compensate for time lost due to unforeseen contingencies?’*.

This varies from person to person as a function of vocational role, lifestyle, and diversity of interests. We have found that for busy people an additional 40% of the estimated time is a good approximation to allow for contingencies. Such contingencies might be related to ‘mishaps’ during the implementing the plan, but are mostly related to unforeseen tasks, requests from others, or fortuitous opportunities that are likely to occur. This means that we would deem a ten hour task to take fourteen hours. That is: $10 + (10 \times 40/100) = 10 + 4 = 14$.

Skill step 5.3 allocates the period of time during which the task will be done. The question to be answered is: *‘How do I fit this task with others in my diary, and with those of others who might be involved?’*.

This step assumes that the implementer maintains a diary. It may also require consulting others upon whom successful implementation depends. This, and the previous sub-steps, virtually ensure that deadlines will be met without pressure.

My plan was a mixed bag when it comes to exemplifying effective timelines. My Step 1 put unnecessary pressure on Donna and myself because I did not consider the preparation time she needed to prepare for the Bicentennial celebrations of American Independence on July 4th 1976. After some inconvenience, my stuff was posted on Saturday July 3rd at about 11.00 am—not 5.00 pm on the Friday as planned. Lack of consultation, and failure to allow for contingencies when planning is a recipe for pressure and frustration when implementing.

My primary Step 3 is a better example of timeline planning. It involved getting formal approval to conduct my first HRD Training program. I was familiar with the standard program proposal format referred to in sub-step 1, and judged that it would take about five hours to draft. With contingency time this would take about seven hours. However, as I was planning offshore, I was unable to establish the likely work load of either my office manager, Pauline, or printer, Sandra. To accommodate these factors I decided to start my draft at 10 am on Monday 27/9/76—immediately after dealing with the morning post. This would allow two days for copies to be typed, proof-read, printed and couriered to Committee members, who would have opportunity to peruse them during the week before the meeting on 6/10/76.

Sub-step 2 was easily dealt with. As the committee’s Executive Officer, I included my proposal early on the agenda which meant that formal approval would be given early in the meeting on 6/10/76. Accordingly, the ‘start’ date and time details are listed in the grey cells to the left of Step 3, and the ‘finish’ details to the right, as shown in Figure 41.

The detail in the above two paragraphs is likely to be boring for most readers, but it is included to highlight the need, when planning, to take into account other people’s needs, especially when constrained by dates that are not easily negotiable.



Figure 41. Showing the location of the ‘start’ and ‘finish’ details of each primary step of an action plan

The ‘time’ details are shown for all steps on the completed plan, Figure 42. It should be noted that the aggregate time set for all the steps should match the limits set in the operational goal. If not, the final finishing time can either be amended, or, if it is a ‘must’, other activities may need to be re-prioritised to accommodate the prescribed deadline. The unhealthy option is to make a constant habit of ‘overloading’. Such apparent commitment eventually takes its toll on work performance, family life, and personal health. Effective planning maintains balance, and gets things done on time.

Skill step 6 identifies a suitable gift or activity that will reward the successful completion of each primary step (or encourage persistence for struggling implementers). The question to be answered is: ‘*What would I, as the implementer, really like to have, or do, to celebrate the successful completion of this primary step (or to provide incentive for me to keep going if I should flag in my efforts)?*’

In my action plan, the reinforcer that I selected for Step 1 was to:

Take Donna and her children to Disneyland.

The reinforcer is listed to the left of the related primary step, as shown in Figure 41.

Prepared by:	For implementation by:	Anticipated benefits:
David Kravz	David Kravz	If I train an effective team of trainers, then we can train others and create a multiplier effect that will enhance counseling skills across the state.
ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET		
Location: DCW Staff Development Branch, 5 Holmes Avenue, Magill (532 1000)		
Step 5:	Conduct pilot South Australian ARD program for 9 selected DCW staff	
Start date: Mon 6/12/76		
Start time: 8.30 for 9.00 am		
Reinforcer: Write to Dorothy, report and have a bag	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Replicate format taught by Bob Cash, delivered by Dorothy, and tutored by Sharon—acknowledge source. 2. Incorporate information gleaned from readings that were not covered in basic course. 3. Stay responsive in daily logs. 4. Seek more feedback than sought in standard evaluation forms. 	
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Checkpoint: At least 7 participants scored 2.5+ on post-test; evaluations average >4.0		
Finish date: Fri 17/12/76		
Finish time: 4.00 pm.		
Step 4:	Finalise arrangements: with admin and resource staff; and personal preparation	
Start date: Wed 11/12/76		
Start time: 10.00 am		
Reinforcer: Have 2 dill cucumbers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrange special morning tea for 6/12 with Pauline, a la Long Beach. 2. Check equipment requirements with Christine—video equipment working; spare OAP globe in situ 3. Pick up printed materials from Sandra and sequence. 4. Rehearse presentations (in head) and ensure overhead transparencies are sequenced correctly 	
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Checkpoint: All equipment OK; printing finished and checked. morning tea confirmed		
Finish date: Wed 11/12/76		
Finish time: 11.15 am		
Step 3:	Present program outline to the Standing Training Committee (STC) for formal approval	
Start date: Mon 27/9/76		
Start time: 10.00 am		
Reinforcer: Have a beer with Jay Noble	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare submission for STC in the standard program proposal format. 2. Include early in meeting agenda to allow adequate discussion. 	
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Checkpoint: Program approved at October meeting		
Finish date: Wed 6/10/76		
Finish time: 3.30 pm		
Step 2:	Prepare preliminaries—confirm dates; book venue; draft training materials.	
Start date: Mon 23/8/76		
Start time: 8.45 am		
Reinforcer: Eat out with Laine	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Report verbally to Deputy Director General, and get approval in principle to my overall operational goal. 2. Outline proposal to my training team; confirm dates with them (6–17 Dec); decide what 3 'outside' staff to invite to make up to 9 participants. 3. Book blue plenary room and associate syndicate rooms from 3–17 Dec. 4. Revise manual; read all Carbhuff texts, start drafting OAP's and handouts for each session—model on Cash as approved. 	
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Checkpoint: Had word from DDG on 25/8 participants confirmed; venue booked by 27/8/76		
Finish date: preparation ongoing		
Finish time: up to step 4		
Step 1:	Acquire necessary training materials and ship home	
Start date: Thurs 1/7/76		
Start time: 8.00 am.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Check all requirements with Dorothy Mitchell and list them. 2. Check with Dorothy if videos can be converted to PAL format or 16 mm film. 3. Formalise approval from Dr Cash for duplication of copyright materials. 4. Purchase 1 copy of all texts from bookstall and order up to 50 from ARD Press. 5. Take up Donna's offer to acquire packaging, and provide transport to post. 	
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>		
Checkpoint: Goods acquired and posted, orders made, receipts filed		
Finish date: Fri 2/7/76		
Finish time: 5.00 pm.		

Figure 42. showing the completed action plan developed in this chapter.

Other reinforcers were all attractive to me, and seemed appropriate to the occasions. They are listed in the completed plan on page 388. Having set dates, and booked the venue (Step 2), I celebrated with my wife, Laine, by wining and dining at our favourite Chinese restaurant. After the program was formally approved (Step 3), I celebrated by having a beer with a colleague, Joy, who was a member of the Standing Training Committee. After finalising arrangements, (Step 4), I celebrated by eating two naturally fermented, dill cucumbers—a lifetime favourite since my first mouthful of such Barossa Valley fare. On completion of the program (Step 5), I wrote to thank Dorothy Mitchell for her contribution to my personal development—and had a gentle brag at my success.

Skill step 7 generates a series of checklists that detail requirements for the effective implementation of the plan, and its subsequent evaluation. The question to be answered is: *‘What resources, monitoring standards, relapse strategies, and evaluation criteria do I need to generate for this particular plan?’*.

The nature and complexity of the check lists will be determined by the nature and complexity of the plan. The following skill steps indicate the purpose and general structure of each checklist.

Skill step 7.1 lists the resources that will be required to implement the plan. The question to be answered is, *‘What resource categories and items do I need; where can I get them, and for what price?’*.

For some plans, it is useful to list requirements in categories so that it is easy to see what to get from, say, the hardware, the soft furnishings, and carpet stores if the plan relates to redecorating. A tailored version of Figure 43, below, can easily be drawn up to suit varying needs.

Examples of categories can include, people, services, software, hired equipment, test-gear, foodstuffs, and many more. In some instances, there may be delays in supply. These need to be noted, and, if they extend beyond the allowed contingency time, timelines will need to be adjusted accordingly.

Category	Item	Quantity	Price	From

Figure 43. Showing a suggested pro-forma for developing a resources checklist.

In my case, I used three simple categories: ‘stuff to carry’, ‘stuff to ship’, and ‘books to order’. Under the first, I listed items that I could work on while travelling, or were essential to use on my return home. Under the second, I listed items that were available on campus, and would not matter if delayed by surface mail. Under the third, I listed the copies of texts to be ordered from HRD Press.

Skill step 7.2 develops monitoring standards for tools, equipment, aids or procedures used in the implementation of a plan. The question to be answered is: *‘What routine inspections, maintenance, adjustments, calibrations or procedures do I need to make, or undertake, to ensure the effectiveness of my program?’*.

This step ensures that all gear operates at optimum working levels and that legal requirements, such as Occupational Health and Safety regulations, are adhered to.

Monitoring standards should not be confused with either the requirements of the checkpoints that legitimise moving to the next primary step, or with the overall standard defined in the operational goal for attaining the goal. This ‘standards checklist’ will not be required in many programs. Examples could include: regular maintenance of machinery, calibration of scales, synchronising of timing devices, regular sharpening of cutting tools, and the like.

The nearest that my example got to monitoring standards was my noting a need, under primary Step 4, to ensure that a spare globe had been taped to the overhead projector that I would use on my program. This simple standard was set to avoid hassles, and loss of time, if the projector globe should fail during a presentation.

Skill step 7.3 defines the nature and frequency of support provided to the implementer, and details the strategy to be deployed in the event of a ‘lapse’ during implementation. The question to be answered is: *‘What assistance may one require for periodic reviews, or in the event of unforeseen contingencies during the implementation phase of one’s plan?’*.

This step is particularly useful for plans that are collaboratively developed by a client and a counsellor. In some cases, there may be mutual agreement that progress is discussed after each primary step has been achieved. In some cases reviews may be scheduled on a regular fortnightly or monthly basis.

In some plans relating to personal development, or detoxification programs, the possibility of ‘lapse’ will be discussed in advance, and strategies agreed upon to deal with the matter and so avoid a more serious ‘re-lapse’. These and other strategies are discussed in more detail in Chapter 19, from page 409. For now it is sufficient to note that the plan provides a ‘yes’ (Y) or ‘no’ (N) tick box, at the bottom of each ‘reinforcer’ space, to indicate whether or not a relapse strategy has been detailed on the reverse side of the action plan.

Skill step 7.4 generates an evaluation checklist of the effectiveness of the plan, in terms of both the process and the outcome. The question to be answered is: *‘In what areas can one increase one’s efficiency and effectiveness as a planner?’*.

This step evaluates the program, **after the goal has been attained**, to consider what has been learned that can enhance future planning for plans of a similar kind. Information can come from three sources: the planner, the implementer, and those impacted by the program.

In my case, I was both planner and implementer. I did not formally develop a checklist for myself, but learned that the plan was fluent, adequate in terms of the DCAP principle, and that I needed to be more astute and consultative when developing timelines. In relation to outcomes, I used copies of the American ‘Evaluation Sheet’ for program participants, and although feedback from local participants met the broad requirements, I identified gaps that needed to be covered before a second program was organised and conducted.

Skill step 8 reviews the completed plan before implementation begins. The broad question to be answered is, *‘Does the implementer see the plan as feasible?’*.

This review should apply whether or not the planner becomes the implementer, but it is especially important for a counsellor to check plans for clarity and feasibility with the client. This is done by considering a series of simple questions together:

1. Are the steps clear, unambiguous, and logically sequenced; does the plan ‘flow’?

2. Are there the right amount of steps to ensure success without clutter; has the DCAP principle been satisfied?
3. Is the timeline realistic—in relation to other known commitments and the likelihood of unforeseen contingencies?
4. Are the checkpoints clear and adequate—do they provide a solid base on which to build with confidence?
5. Do the reinforcers ‘fit’—will they help celebrate progressive achievements—will they re-motivate clients if they get weary or discouraged?
6. Are the planned review sessions and the support being offered are adequate to ensure progressive, successful implementation?
7. Has the relapse strategy identified the areas where things could lapse, and do the relapse strategies seem adequate?
8. Should joint planners and implementer both sign and date the plan?

This final point, 8, is more ‘ritualistic’ than ‘contractual’, although in some instances we have noted that the fact of having signed their plan has helped wavering clients recall their commitment, and served as an added incentive to work on.

Skill step 9 implements the plan. From this point on there are no questions to answer—just things to do. There are a number of sub-steps that are useful to enhance the implementation phase of the action plan.

Skill step 9.1 rehearses unfamiliar steps.

Once a plan has been drafted, some people succumb to an internal pressures to ‘get on with the job’—only to find that an unfamiliar task is often harder than anticipated. It is wise to rehearse such tasks in some appropriate way.

Had I not been taught this step during my training, I would not have included a sub-step to ‘rehearse my presentations’ in Step 4 of my plan. Even now, I still need to remind myself to try out a new power tool on scrap material before tackling the task on materials that I purchased to become the final product. Practise might not always make perfect—but it certainly helps!

Skill step 9.2 reviews progress during implementation.

This step is what Carkhuff calls the ‘during’ check step. This step monitors progress as the action occurs, by answering the question, ‘Am I performing this [particular] step correctly?’ (Carkhuff 2000, p. 209).¹²

The skill in this step is being able to hold a non-intrusive preoccupation that asks, ‘How am I doing, right now?’. Such monitoring must not over-ride, or even detract from the performance of the task. Rehearsal of a step should continue until one can answer—with supportive evidence, ‘I am doing well!’. In public presentations, for example, it is important to observe one’s audience to read where they are along the continuum: ‘bored to death < ——— > in the palm of my hand’.

¹² Carkhuff’s ‘during’ check step is sandwiched between the ‘before’ and ‘after’ check steps. The ‘before’ step asks ‘What physical, emotional and intellectual resources will I need to perform this step correctly?’. This step is covered by our skill step 7. The ‘after’ check step asks, ‘Did I achieve the physical, emotional and intellectual results and benefits that I wanted?’. This step is also covered by our skill-step 9.

If the answer to any of the self-monitoring check step questions produce evidence of difficulties, or a potential lapse, we can take remedial action quickly—change tack; take a break; consult others; develop smaller sub-sub-steps, or whatever is appropriate to get back on track without serious repercussions.

Skill step 9.3 makes desirable revisions to the program.

It may be desirable to modify an action plan during its implementation for a number of reasons beyond those thrown up by the review question discussed above. These could include: the introduction of new technology; a contextual contingency; a ‘better idea’ from any source; or the upgrading of a relapse strategy. A plan is generally not ‘set in concrete’. Unless a plan is bound by, say, approval from local government, the implementer is free to modify it in any way that they see fit.

Skill step 9.4 repeats an activity if required.

There may be occasions when an implementer is tempted to answer the review question: ‘How am I doing?’ with, ‘not exactly by best effort—but it’ll do’. This is a danger moment when the implementer needs to reconsider their self-imposed standards. We are not suggesting that perfection is required—but we are advocating the need for functionality, viability, and ultimate self-satisfaction. It is often prudent to redo a step at the time—rather than later wishing that you had.

This step can also apply to the repetition of steps in programs which are ‘developmental’, such as personal fitness, or learning to play a musical instrument.

Skill step 9.5 reinforces effort and rewards success—along the way.

We have been surprised over the years at the number of people who argue against ‘external’ rewards, and say things such as, ‘having done it is its own reward!’. The evidence is that appropriate reinforcers will increase the probability of more effective outcomes—so why shun them? Be reminded—there is joy to be had in celebrating the passing of each new milestone—and the world is not yet burdened with a surfeit of joy!

Skill step 10 consummates the action.

Consummation brings things to completion. It might not be the perfect way to complete an action, but we have found satisfaction with our ‘6/8 way’ of consummating a program. The ‘6/8’ refers to six ‘ate’ words: ‘evaluate’, ‘congratulate’, ‘celebrate’, ‘deliberate’, ‘integrate’, and ‘incorporate’. The following sub-steps will clarify the significance of each.

Skill step 10.1 evaluates the results of the concluded program.

This evaluation is made against the standards defined by the operational goal, and any other instrument or means that may have been developed under skill step 7.4. In our view, it not necessary, at this stage to reflect on these evaluations beyond acknowledging the program’s general success. We save any detailed deliberation until after the celebration.

Skill step 10.2 congratulates everybody who has been involved.

The more specific you make your remarks, the more others will feel appreciated, and the more their self-image will be enhanced. I shall never forget the inner glow I felt at the end of the advanced training with Dr Berenson. At the closure, he shook my hand, looked me in the eye warmly and said, ‘Thank you David’. His

attentiveness lingered, and he added, with strength and warmth, ‘You are a builder!’. I recalled the potency of that recognition on several subsequent occasions when the weight of certain political pressures tempted me to ‘throw in the towel’. There is lingering nourishment in words that are an authentic gift from a respected source who takes time to acknowledge the arrival at a yearned-for milestone.

Skill step 10.3 celebrates the success of the implementation.

The celebration should occur in a way that is appropriate to the people involved, and to the nature and importance of the program. Celebration can be more than just food, drink, speeches, and a chat, although they are important elements. Celebrations are enhanced by creative rituals that highlight the joys and struggles that led to the conclusion of a particular program. In celebrating the conclusion of many of our skills training programs, a friend, co-trainer, and author on the subject of rituals, Margie Abbott (2001), created stunning ceremonies that involved colour, movement, fragrance, light, and symbols that captured the essence of the program, and warmed the hearts and lifted the spirits of all present.

Skill step 10.4 deliberates on the evaluative assessment of the implementation.

This step considers all evaluative comments in detail; notes the plaudits; and deliberates on any difficulties experienced, traps encountered, misgivings held, contingencies highlighted, or ideas suggested. What is learned from these deliberations should be logged in some way.

Skill step 10.5 integrates new learning.

This step brings forward the ‘new learnings’ so that they can be consciously blended with current learning to expand the skills repertoires of planners and implementers.

Skill step 10.6 incorporates new learnings into future ‘re-runs’.

This step ensures that repetitions of similar activities are updated to incorporate new learning. This step leads to personal growth. Latent potential is actualised when it translates into substantive skill.

Practicing action planning

In our regular training programs, action planning is generally practiced in dyads immediately after the process has been presented. In the first instance, we recommend that participants who have practiced together in the decision-making exercise, continue to work together to plan the subsequent action.

Exercise 25: Action planning activity

This exercise provides the opportunity to write an action plan for the goal that you developed in Exercise 24 on decision making. However, you may choose to write an action plan to achieve any other goal that has current personal relevance. Blank worksheets can be downloaded from the authors’ website (see title page). You may find it convenient to refer to the summary steps shown in Figure 44 on page 397, as a handy guide for this exercise.

No answers are supplied for personal work undertaken in Exercise 25.

Prepared by:		For implementation by:		Anticipated benefits:		
Location:		ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET				
Step 5:						Checkpoint:
Start date:						
Start time:						
Reinforcer:						Finish date: Finish time:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>						
Step 4:						Checkpoint:
Start date:						
Start time:						
Reinforcer:						Finish date: Finish time:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>						
Step 3:						Checkpoint:
Start date:						
Start time:						
Reinforcer:						Finish date: Finish time:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>						
Step 2:						Checkpoint:
Start date:						
Start time:						
Reinforcer:						Finish date: Finish time:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>						
Step 1:						Checkpoint:
Start date:						
Start time:						
Reinforcer:						Finish date: Finish time:
PTO—Relapse: Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>						

Summary

What action planning is

Action planning is the skill of mapping out the best way to achieve goals.

What action planning does

Effective action planning:

- identifies the necessary steps to achieve a specific goal;
- sequences the steps;
- avoids risky short-cuts, foreseeable snags, and irrelevant diversions by partitioning the variance between steps as the plan develops;
- allocates the time needed to execute each step;
- incorporates contingency buffers;
- sets criteria to show when steps have been accomplished;
- identifies appropriate reinforcers to reward progress, or encourage persistence;
- develops a checklist of resources needed for implementation;
- develops a checklist of critical aspects to monitor during implementation;
- develops a checklist of standards to evaluate the result;
- utilises existing know-how;
- ensures that information is generated and recorded to help upgrade re-runs.

Why action planning is important

If action plans are developed to achieve goals then those who implement them will:

- know what is to be achieved;
- have clear instructions to follow;
- be aware of whether their efforts are satisfactory or not;
- know where to turn for help;
- be rewarded for success or have incentives to continue;
- meet deadlines without undue pressure;
- achieve what is required.

The benefits of implementing skilfully planned activities include:

- the effective achievement of relevant goals;
- constructive gains for the beneficiaries;
- the efficient utilisation of resources, time and effort;
- a sense of achievement for the planners and implementers;
- recognition for the planners and implementers;
- new learning.

When action planning is used

Action planning is applied when it is desirable to achieve anything with a minimum of fuss, and a high probability of success.

An action plan should not be started until:

- unresolved issues have been clarified in a responsive climate (exploring);
- a clear, relevant goal has emerged (personalising);
- an unambiguous, viable approach has been identified (decision making);
- requirements have been defined in operational terms (5W2H).

How to develop an action plan

An action plan is developed on an 'Action Planning Worksheet', as shown on page 394. Wise planners consult whenever they encounter 'tricky areas' so that they utilise the best of existing know how. The skill steps of action planning are summarised in Figure 44 on page 397.

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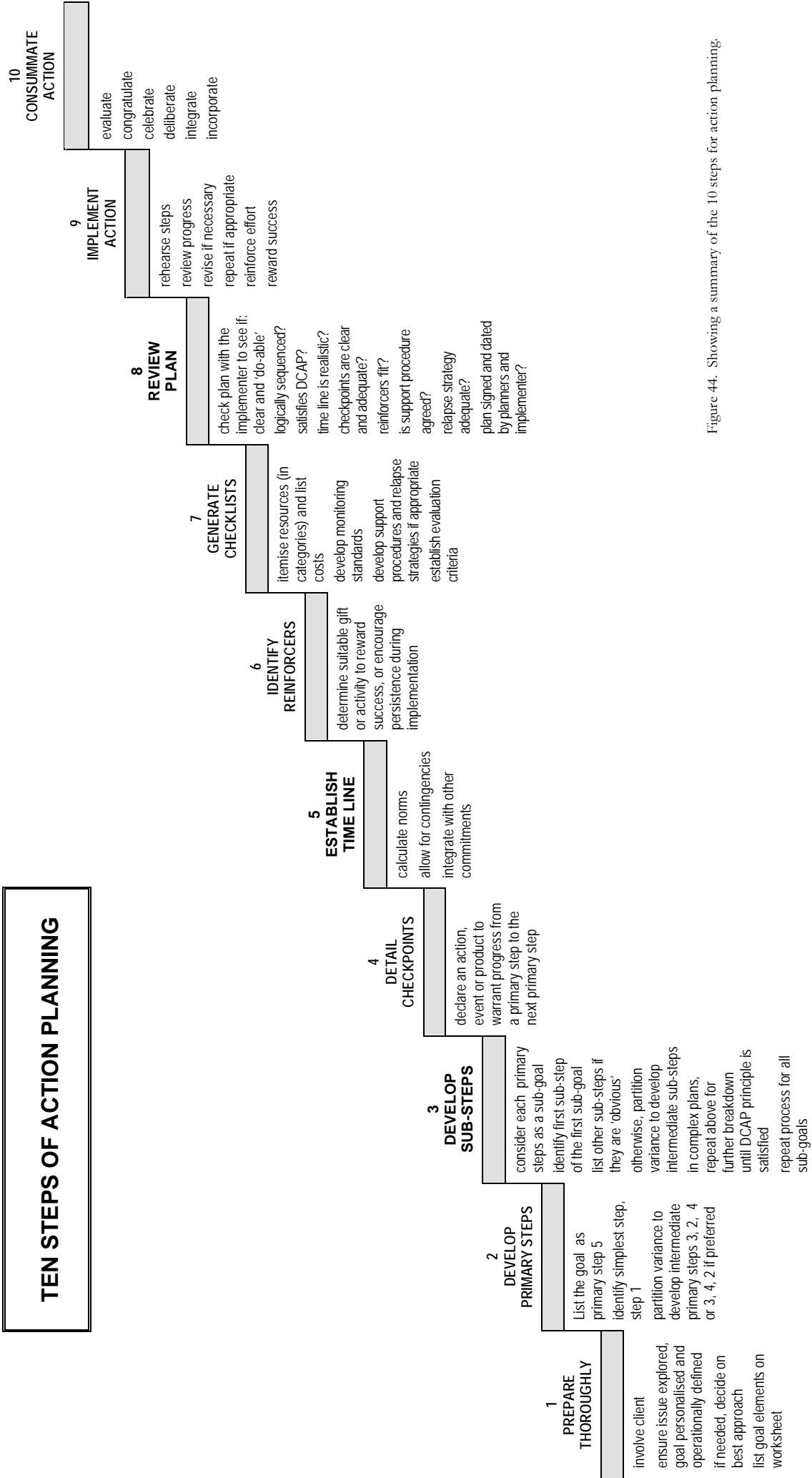


Figure 44. Showing a summary of the 10 steps for action planning.

My learning about action planning

Write in your own words

What action planning is:

What action planning does:

Why action planning is important to me at work and elsewhere:

What I have learned about my own action planning skills:

Steps I want to take to improve my action planning:

At home:

At work:

In the community:

The chapter on Action Planning concludes the discussion on the skills that cumulatively make up the helping process. However, the current section (Part Two) will continue, and consider issues that relate to the broad topic of 'Mastering micro-skills'.

Here is what follows.

On the following page, we offer Exercise 26 which gives you a chance to check your recollection of the terms used throughout the counselling process, and the sequence in which they occur. As you review the process, make sure that you can describe what each counsellor skill does, and the significance of each aspect of the client's experience. If you have achieved a degree of mastery of the skills to this point, the process 'blueprint' should be almost 'second nature'.

The next chapter, Chapter 18, argues for a practical solution to resolve the ongoing 'boundary' debate between counselling and psychotherapy. The broad proposal is that psychotherapists need to learn counselling skills, and counsellors need to learn therapeutic strategies, and both should know when each role applies.

Chapter 19 introduces several therapeutic strategies that we have found to be useful as counsellors. There are others. Many require additional training.

Chapter 20 summarises the counselling skills in a 'nutshell'. We hope that readers find them useful for reviewing the processes discussed.

Chapter 21 provides practical notes for those who may be interested in developing training programs for clients or community groups.

Exercise 26: Review the counselling process

The task is to insert each word, listed below the table, into its appropriate space in the table to overwrite the existing question marks (?).

THE COUNSELLING PROCESS

PRECONDITION	TASK 1	TASK 2	TASK 3	TASK 4
	PROVIDE ? climate	? relevant and ? discussion	? explored information	USE ? knowledge to meet specific need
COUNSELLOR assesses appropriateness has a ? with client	PREPARE clear ? commit time, energy, ? offer focused ?	? to client perceptions thoughts, feelings, ? incongruities, distortions and gaps	PERSONALISE ? what exploration means ? what skill deficiency there is respond to probable client ? '?' deficit into a relevant goal	INITIATE define goal in ? terms decide which option is ? develop a ? plan of 'attack' encourage, reinforce and support plan ?
CLIENT needs to ? a worrying issue	↓ GET? in interaction	↓ EXPLORE to ? and ? unclear issue	↓ ? new direction with ? and ?	↓ ? with enthusiasm confidence and success
LEARNING OUTCOME	know I am not ?	know where I ? (A)	know where I want or ? to 'be (B)	know how to get from A to B

facilitative	generate	clarify	involved	preoccupations	respect	clarity	commitment	diagnose
act	stand	synthesise	operational	preferred	respond	manageable	order	flip
confront	alone	analyse	attentiveness	self-criticism	resolve	selective	understand	contract
	honest							

Answers to Exercise 26 can be found in Figure 11 on page 95.

The counselling sandwich

Preamble

The term ‘counselling’ means different things to different people. The word is fast becoming about as definitive as ‘thing’. To the Australian Cricket Board, counselling is what is ‘recommended’ to a player who utters an ‘ethnic remark’ on the field. It is what Human Resource Managers do to staff members who manifest aberrant behaviour. It is what is offered to people who have experienced a traumatic event. It is what happens to students when teachers find them hard to manage. It becomes a necessity for job-seekers who have given up seeking a job. Others offer counselling for persons not coping with stress, or concerned with drug and other abuse. The list continues to expand. Some counsellors call what they do ‘psychotherapy’. Some psycho-therapists call what they do ‘counselling’. There are umpteen definitions of counselling to sort, ratify or amend. It is time for the emerging counselling ‘profession’ (at least, in Australia) to declare what it has to offer that is different from other related professions—so that employers who advertise for a ‘counsellor’ no longer feel the need to call for a qualified Social Worker or Psychologist, neither of whom is given adequate training in counselling in this country at present.

In this chapter we look at the ongoing debate about what counselling is, and where it fits. We offer the ‘counselling sandwich’ as a functional perspective on how counselling ‘fits’ between a pre-counselling event (crisis, trauma or unresolved issue), and a post-counselling initiative (one that requires dependence on expert help). For the purposes of this discussion, initiatives that clients can implement themselves are deemed to be part of the ‘filling’ of the counselling sandwich. We will clarify these dimensions as the chapter unfolds. Figure 45, below, shows the simple, ‘bread and butter’ version.

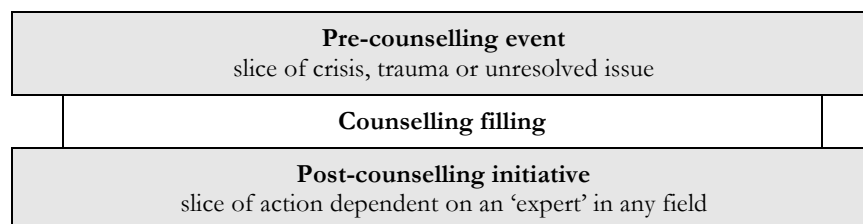


Figure 45. Showing a simple representation of the counselling function sandwiched between a precipitating event and any initiative that requires dependence on ‘expert’ help.

We hope that, as the profession ‘chews on it’, pragmatists will be nourished, and that any who have a tinge of indigestion will regurgitate with added clarity to the debate. The first step towards making the sandwich palatable is to briefly review some of the core perspectives presented in the debate between ‘counselling’ and ‘psychotherapy’

Counselling and Therapy—synonyms or what?

The diversity of unresolved views

The debate about what counselling is, and how it may differ from psychotherapy, has been simmering on the backburner for over fifty years. In 1953 Hahn made the observation that *‘the most complete agreements are that counseling and psychotherapy cannot be clearly distinguished’* (in George & Cristiani 1990, p. 3). This is not a lot of help when needing to draw comparisons, but one must start somewhere!

In 1966, Blocher makes a tangible distinction relating to intent:

...the goals of counseling are ordinarily developmental-educative-preventative, and the goals of psychotherapy are generally remediative-adjustive-therapeutic (Blocher cited in George & Cristiani 1990, p. 3).

In essence, Blocher is saying that counselling grows people, and psychotherapy fixes their pathology. In spite of such differences, he sees considerable overlap between counselling and psychotherapy, and offers a list of five basic assumptions about clients and counsellors. The list follows:

1. Counseling clients are not considered to be ‘mentally ill’, but are viewed as being capable of assuming responsibility for their own behavior and future development.
2. Counseling is focused on the present and the future.
3. The client is a client, not a patient. The counselor is not an authority figure but is essentially a teacher and partner of the client as they move toward mutually defined goals.
4. The counselor is not morally neutral or amoral but has values, feelings, and standards of his/her own. Although the counselor does not necessarily impose these on clients, he or she does not attempt to hide them.
5. The counselor focuses on changing behavior, not just creating insights (Blocher cited in George & Cristiani 1990, p. 3).

Blocher’s failure to supply a comparative list about patients and psychotherapists leaves readers to draw inferences about how counselling differs from psychotherapy. Because we know that psychotherapists traditionally use the term ‘patient’ and counsellors use the word ‘client’, we could conclude, from point 3, that it is legitimate to infer that opposites apply. That seems to give an inappropriate degree of latitude for interpretation. At worst, a ‘flip’ of these tenets could lead to the unlikely conclusion that psychotherapists are amoral autocrats who probe the pasts of sick, irresponsible patients—without intention of helping them change! At best, we could conclude that psychotherapists are neutral experts whose historical analyses produce insights for

patients with classified illnesses. Blocher's profile of 'counsellors and clients' does not cover all the functions that 'helpers' and 'clients' engage in during Carkhuff's helping process, and it only hints at what may happen between 'therapists and patients'. Differences or similarities are not clear. Other evidence needs to be considered.

The British Association for Counselling sees psycho-therapy (or at least aspects of it) as synonymous with counselling:

The term 'counselling' includes work with individuals and with relationships which may be developmental, crisis support, psycho-therapeutic, guiding or problem solving. The task of counselling is to give the 'client' an opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more satisfyingly and resourcefully (McLeod 2003, p. 7).

Having considered the various arguments, Dryden and Feltham concluded that counselling and psychotherapy are interchangeable terms.

We follow the view that there is no essential distinction between counselling and psychotherapy. Both activities can alleviate human suffering, solve problems and help people live more satisfying lives. We disagree with commentators who define counselling as a superficial, brief, symptom-removing activity which compares unfavourably with the 'real work' of (long term and in-depth) psychotherapy....Research indications suggest that the reality is that most counselling and therapy is in fact brief—that clients wish it to be brief; and that its brevity does not detract from its effectiveness (Dryden & Feltham, 1993 pp. 2, 3 and 5).

The debate, however, still seems unresolved. It simmers on. The differences surround issues of 'difficulty', 'setting', 'status', 'qualifications', 'target group' and 'treatment time' (McLeod, 2003). These aspects warrant further comment.

The 'difficulty' argument deems counselling to be 'simpler' and psychotherapy to be more 'complex', 'deeper', and 'harder'. This argument seems 'thin' to us in the light of landmark research of Pierce & Drasgow (1969, pp. 295–298). They showed that teaching 'simple' counselling skills to the 'worst' psychiatric inpatients was more time efficient and beneficial than other forms of complex psychiatric treatment. It should be noted that each member of the experimental group had been excluded from either individual or group therapy because it was considered that they 'could not meaningfully participate in, or benefit from such programs'. Results were compared with four control groups who were receiving various drugs, individual therapy or group therapy. The benefits were shown in measures of 'facilitative interpersonal functioning'.

What is 'difficult' is as much to do with the perception and skills of the practitioner as it is to do with the task. For example, we have observed that some Masters students find it much easier to manage difficult theoretical concepts than to become proficient in the use of counselling skills. The skill of responding empathically to others calls for an ability to suspend one's personal judgement. We have frequently noted that medically and psychologically trained students have found it harder to suspend their judgements than those with other undergraduate qualifications.

The 'setting' argument suggests that the setting determines the 'title'. For example, two practitioners can perform similar tasks, and use similar approaches in different agencies.

The one working in an educational setting is likely to be called a counsellor, whereas the other, working in a medical setting, is more likely to be called a psychotherapist.

The 'status' argument closely aligns with the 'qualifications' argument. McLeod uses language from the business world to exemplify the nature of these debates:

Counseling is provided under a variety of different labels...The up-market version of the product is sold as 'psychotherapy' which is provided by practitioners who are usually very highly trained specialist professionals, often with a background in medicine (McLeod 2003, p. 8).

At another level this debate draws a distinction that acknowledges that counselling can be offered by non-professional volunteer workers, whilst insisting that 'psychotherapy is an exclusively professional occupation' (McLeod 2003, p. 8). An anecdotal comment may help erode the basis for such distinction—if outcomes matter!. During the period of the Whitlam Government (1972–75), hundreds of volunteers were enlisted to assist in helping a wide range of clients from welfare agencies across Australia. As the person with overall responsibility for the training of such volunteers in South Australia, David had considerable feedback from clients who felt more understood and helped by the volunteers than by their designated professionals. It is fair to say that a number of professional noses were put right out of joint during that period.

The 'target group' argument says that the nature of the clientele should be reflected in the practitioner's title. So we have 'School Counsellors', 'Personal Counsellors', 'Relationship Counsellors', 'Marriage and Family Counsellors', 'Grief Counsellors', 'Christian Counsellors', 'Rehabilitation Counsellors' (post trauma or drug) and so on. There seems to be some logic in identifying counsellors in this way since it will reflect other specialist knowledge, or signify access to specific resources associated with a given agency. The debate raises its head again, however, in considering differences between say 'Family Counsellors' and 'Family therapists'.

A functional view of difference and complementarity

As teachers and practitioners we hold the simple view that the single issue of '**who holds the power**' is the key to discriminating a clear, functional relationship between counselling and therapy. The rationale and conclusions concerning these distinctions follow below. Recall that the helping process describes a **collaborative partnership** where counsellors suspend their personal values in order to be: (1) fully attentive to their clients; (2) respond empathically so that clients feel free to tell their story their way; (3) personalise so that clients will assume responsibility for the goals that need to be achieved; and (4) initiate so that clients can develop plans to achieve their goals.

We have accepted, both intellectually and experientially, that Carkhuff's Human Achievement Skills are fundamental to all effective helping in all areas of human endeavour—regardless of what the process is called—simply because they provide the perspective and the means to:

1. Recognise where one is—the only place to start anything.
2. Know where one wants or needs to be— to make any endeavour purposeful.
3. Act successfully—by having the means to move from where one 'is' and arrive at where one 'wants to be'.

These Human Achievement Skills were distilled at a time when ‘counselling’ and ‘psychotherapy’ were used synonymously, but we argue, below, that a practical distinction can be made that depends on the nature of the ‘action’ referred to in point 3 above.

The application of these helping skills is a **collaborative** process where the ‘power’ lies with the client. The client is the ‘expert’ in terms of ‘controlling’ what content is discussed (phase 1); what goal is personally relevant (phase 2); and what action will be undertaken (phase 3). The skills of counsellors facilitate the process. Our proposition is that **the distinction between ‘counselling’ and ‘therapy’ depends upon the nature of the personalised goal that emerges in phase 2—for implementation in phase 3.**

If the goal is such that collaboration continues in Phase 3, then we consider that counselling has occurred across all three phases. In these instances, clients remain in control of their decision making, action planning, and the implementation of their plan—with collaborative input and support from the counsellor.

If the goal set in Phase 2 points to the need for the application of some therapeutic technique, then the client ‘concedes power’ to the expertise of the person who administers that technique. If competent, the counsellor may ‘switch roles’ from counsellor to ‘therapist’ and proceed to explain the technique to the client, and discuss their willingness to participate in the ‘therapy’. If the counsellor is not competent to administer a particular therapeutic technique, then an appropriate referral should be made elsewhere. In this case ‘counselling’ occurs in Phases 1 and 2 with a switch to ‘therapy’ in Phase 3—when the power transfers from client to practitioner. The following examples will help to clarify the distinction.

Scenario 1—the client stays in control in phase 3

Remember Vicky’s client, Derek, who discussed a redundancy package from work in phase 1, and, following a collaborative analysis of that discussion in phase 2, set a goal to determine which potential future option would optimise a sense of fulfilment, economic security, and provide more recreational time for both his wife and himself. In phase 3, Derek continued to control the collaborative decision-making process to determine which option was preferred and whether it was sufficiently viable to sit comfortably with his (and his wife’s) values. He remained in control during the collaborative development of his action plan to achieve the preferred option of taking a redundancy package, and reduced superannuation, so that he could set up his own consultancy. Derek implemented the plan to establish his consultancy. This scenario is represented graphically in Figure 46 below.

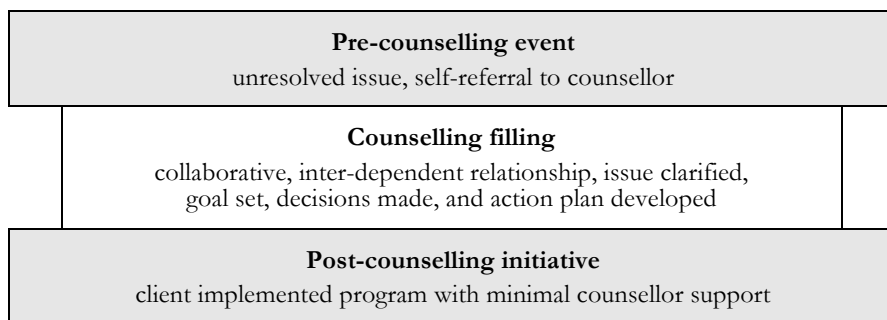


Figure 46. Showing the ‘pre’, ‘actual’ and ‘post’ elements of the ‘counselling sandwich’ where the client remains in control through all three phases of the helping process.

Scenario 2—the client concedes control in phase 3

A female client, who had recently attempted suicide, is referred to a counsellor to discuss her lack of meaning in life, periodic depression, and frequent stress. During phase 1, she came to make links between her current state and early childhood abuse. Following a collaborative analysis of that discussion in phase 2, the client set a goal to find a way to reduce the influence of the internalised, abusive parental voices so that she could live with more hope and authenticity, and less restriction. It was clear to both client and counsellor that the means to achieve this goal were beyond the immediate competence of the client. The counsellor was familiar with, and competent to use, some ‘anchoring’ strategies from the Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) approach to extinguish historical pain. The process was explained, and the client agreed to participate in the ‘treatment’. The agreement constituted a concession of power to a trusted practitioner who now moved from the role of collaborating counsellor to that of expert therapist. The scenario is reflected graphically in Figure 47 below.

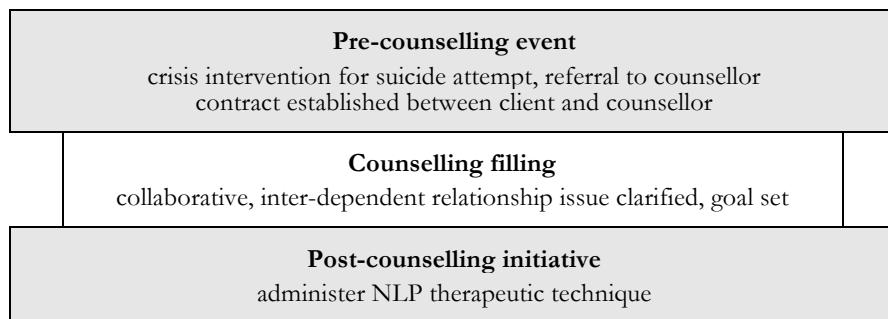


Figure 47. Showing the ‘pre’, ‘actual’ and ‘post’ elements of the ‘counselling sandwich’ where the client concedes control in phase 3 of the helping process and has ‘therapy’.

‘Add-on’ roles for counsellors

Attention should be drawn to the fact that the role of ‘therapist’ is only one of a range of initiatives that can follow counselling. The counsellor can assume any of the following roles when appropriate:

- **advocate:** to act for clients;
- **broker:** to link clients with community resources;
- **educator:** to expand clients’ knowledge or skills;
- **mediator:** to facilitate constructive dialogue between antagonists;
- **negotiator:** to optimise benefits to all parties in a joint venture;
- **supporter:** to fill needy gaps until existing client network expands;
- **therapist:** to apply appropriate therapeutic techniques.

Our observation is that, whilst many counsellors employ these roles from time to time, some specialists from these listed fields fail to employ the counselling process sufficiently well to know where their clients really ‘are’, or where they really ‘want to be’. Such practitioners stay in their ‘expert’ role, and do it ‘their way’. Some really believe that they know what is best for their clients—and act accordingly—and take fees from dissatisfied clients.

In the light of Corey's plea (see page 25), for psychotherapists to not 'jump in' and treat the (superficial) presenting problem, we see a need for therapists to master the skills detailed in this text so that their expertise can be applied to what Corey calls 'their [the client's] deeper message' (Corey 1991, p. 315).

Two clear notions emerge.

1. The effectiveness of counsellors will expand if, having identified a clear, specific, personalised goal, they are able to apply a range of therapeutic strategies, or other helpful roles (where applicable) in the initiative phase of helping.
2. The effectiveness of psychotherapists will expand if they use counselling skills to collaboratively assist clients to identify a clear, specific, personalised goal before therapeutic treatment initiatives are agreed and applied.

The 'switch' from counselling to therapy (or any other initiative) is mutually identified by the counsellor and client when considering the 'how' step of an operationalised goal. If the broad strategy for goal achievement can be undertaken collaboratively, then 'counselling' proceeds. If the broad strategy requires a therapeutic technique, then a switch to 'therapy' is called for—either by the person who acted as counsellor to that point, or by referral elsewhere. If the broad strategy requires one of the 'add on' initiatives, 'counselling' will give way to that function.

Our personal experience is that the role of 'teacher' is by far the most frequent 'add-on' role that counsellors undertake. So often, the personalised deficits of dysfunctional people, or unhappy couples, relate to lack of attentiveness, poor listening, hurtful communication, inability to make 'good' decisions, or ineffective organisation. For such clients, resolution and liberation comes from learning the skills they need. To this end, we have frequently taught the very skills that we ourselves used in the counselling process—the skills described in this book. To teach skills to others is to liberate them. We have taken to heart the observation that 'we in the helping professions wait downstream to fish the bodies out' (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, p. 2). The preferred task is to teach them to swim, upstream! Indeed, we have embraced the notion, and confirmed it experientially, that 'Teaching [is] the preferred mode of treatment' (Carkhuff & Berenson 1976, preface p. i).

We hope that these reflections will have relevance, at least, to pragmatic practitioners, and give added clarity to the roles that each may be called on to use in their day-to-day function of helping others. We are less sure that theorists will accept that the debate has been resolved in any satisfactory way. To each—a point of view! We see no 'poor cousin/rich cousin' relationship between counselling and psychotherapy. We see different, but complementary functions. Roadworthy vehicles have water in the radiator and petrol in the fuel tank—not both liquids in the same container!

Summary

This chapter reviews various perspectives on the unresolved debate about the relationship between 'counselling' and 'therapy'. It argues that, from a pragmatic perspective, a clear distinction can be made between 'counselling' and 'therapy'. When the client 'controls' the process, it is 'counselling'—when the client needs to 'concede' control to an expert, in order to benefit from a therapeutic initiative, then the activity is 'therapy'. It argues that it is equally true that counsellors cease 'counselling' (functionally

speaking) if the initiative they undertake is advocacy, brokerage, educative, mediation, negotiation, support or therapy.

Attention is drawn to the fact that the authors see 'teaching' as an important 'add-on' role for counsellors. Clients are empowered to live more effectively as they gain competence in learning the Human Achievement, and other skills.

The debate ought not be 'either/or' but one of appropriateness. It is clear that each 'side' has something to learn, and that both have something to teach. We hope that our reflections will stimulate new learning, so that the counselling function, and therapeutic procedures enjoy a heightened sense of partnership in providing more effective services to an increasingly needy world.

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Therapeutic strategies

Preamble

This chapter provides an overview of selected therapeutic strategies that may be appropriate when a client's personalised goal requires a program for personal change that is beyond the client's capacity to either develop or implement. The strategies selected are some that we have found useful. There are many more that we have not had the opportunity to either learn or use. Readers are referred to the references at the end of this chapter for more detail about a wide range of therapeutic approaches and strategies. Such approaches can be classified in different ways.

Corey (2004) describes the various strategies as part of the particular theoretical approach that underpins them. For instance, he describes the technique of 'paradoxical intention' (in which the client is instructed to deliberately exaggerate a debilitating behaviour like procrastination in order to experience its futility) as a strategy whose theoretical approach was developed by Alfred Adler.

Eisner (2000) also classifies therapeutic strategies based on theoretical approaches. His classifications are: (1) 'Psychoanalytic'—which emphasises the importance of the unconscious forces; (2) 'Cathartic'—which focuses on expressing emotions; (3) 'Humanistic'—which focuses on the individual and their capacity for personal development' (4) 'Behavioural'—which focuses on learning and unlearning behaviours; (5) 'Systemic'—which underlines the importance of the family and the societal context; and (6) 'Spiritual'—which emphasises humans' innate spiritual capacity. However, Eisner is extremely sceptical of the effectiveness of most therapies, and concludes:

As a method of helping people who have mental or emotional problems, psychotherapy functions much like religious healing. Furthermore, the so-called active modes of psychotherapy do not appear to be any more effective than a placebo...Few psychotherapy modalities will likely survive more than a decade or two (Eisner 2000, p 205).

Whilst we share some of Eisner's concerns about the lack of rigorous research to assess the effectiveness of various approaches, we have experienced that many of our clients have found some of the simple techniques that we describe in this chapter to be extremely helpful to achieve their personalised goals.

Feiss (1979), classifies the therapies in terms of their ‘targets’, and lists them under the broad headings of those pertaining to the ‘**body**’ (or somatic), and those pertaining to the ‘**mind**’, or to ‘**mind/body**’ combinations.

For ease of general description, we have extended Feiss’s approach to conceptualising therapeutic strategies into three categories. They are those broadly designed to focus on: (1) the ‘**mind**’—behavioural; cognitive-behavioural; and other cognitive strategies; (2) the ‘**body**’—somatic/body centred; and (3) the ‘**spirit**’—emotional/spiritual. Not everyone will agree with this classification, nor will everyone agree with our ‘placing’ of the various strategies within the various classifications. We encourage readers to expand their own knowledge base, and form their own classification system.

In this chapter, we choose to focus more on the behavioural approaches, and strategies to help modify cognition, because clients are more able to exercise conscious control with these strategies than with some others. However, we also briefly overview other powerful therapeutic approaches and strategies where clients rely more heavily on the expertise of counsellors, or others, who have undertaken extensive specialist training.

We have collated information from organisations, and other professionals to overview specialist areas where we have limited experience. This chapter also offers exercises that may help readers to integrate some basic concepts.

Ultimately, as a counsellor you have to make decisions about which change approach to recommend to individual clients. However, whichever approach you recommend, we suggest that you:

- ensure that the client has a clear personalised goal;
- explain any recommended techniques clearly to the client, and obtain their consent to either use the strategy, or refer to an appropriate specialist;
- only use particular techniques if you are competent to apply them and feel confident in doing so.

Mind centred therapies

Behavioural approaches

Behavioural strategies for change emerged during the 1950’s and 1960’s, mainly in the United States of America. These approaches are characterised by the application of systematic, rigorous, scientific principles that measure and reinforce behavioural change.

Behavioural approaches to change have been particularly successful in treating problems with anxiety, depression, panic attacks, phobias, and addictions, and in the development of social skills. The following essential concepts are central to behavioural approaches:

- problems can be defined as a task/skills mismatch;
- humans have problems as a result of conditioning and continued reinforcement;
- ‘maladaptation’—or lack of harmony between the parts of self, or between the self and its environment—is a result of a person/situation interaction. It is **not** a result of lack of willpower, personality traits, or inner disorders;
- changing behaviour is difficult, and therefore needs to be rigorously planned;
- behavioural strategies use learning techniques.

The criticisms of behavioural approaches have been that such techniques:

- may change behaviour, but not feelings;
- ignore the important therapeutic relationship with the counsellor;
- do not provide insights for the client;
- unwisely ignore client history;
- involve over-control by the therapist.

In our view, such criticisms may be relevant, except in those instances where therapists have worked collaboratively with their client to identify a personalised goal that will be best attained by a behavioural technique, and where the client has had the approach explained, and has agreed to participate.

Behavioural conditioning

‘Conditioning’ is one of the ways that learning occurs. There are three major ways in which conditioning may happen—‘classical conditioning’, ‘operant conditioning’ and ‘cognitive conditioning’. Each approach is summarised below.

Classical conditioning

Ivan Pavlov was the ‘father’ of classical conditioning. Rimm and Masters say that Pavlov’s work was ‘vastly...influential’ and one of the ‘major antecedents’ of behaviour therapy (Rimm & Masters 1974, p. 3). Simply put, in his now famous experiment, Pavlov sounded a bell in the presence of a dog, and immediately afterwards presented food to the dog, and the dog salivated. In other words he ‘paired’ two unrelated stimuli—the bell and food. He repeated this process, and he found that the dog had ‘learned’ to salivate with just the stimulus of the bell. Pavlov also found that, when he presented the bell without the food for a number of trials, the salivation diminished progressively. He called this process ‘extinction’. After a rest period, however, Pavlov found that the dog still salivated on presentation of the bell—but to a lesser extent. He called this ‘spontaneous recovery’ (Morgan 1961, pp. 194–199).

So, in overall terms, learning occurs when a stimulus is repeated a sufficient number of times to create a ‘conditioned response’—even when one stimulus is linked to a normally unrelated stimulus. It is important to note that ‘deconditioning’ a learned behaviour requires a program that progressively eliminates the behaviour over a sufficient period of time so that no ‘spontaneous recovery’ occurs. In the counselling context, the behaviour to be deconditioned is usually an undesirable behaviour.

Operant conditioning

Skinner was a leader in the study of operant conditioning. Morgan (1961, pp. 200–201) reports that Skinner’s research was mostly conducted with rats in an elaborate ‘cage’ that came to be known as a ‘Skinner box’. Simply put, Skinner showed how a rat can learn to ‘do something’ to its environment to either achieve something it wanted (food pellets) or remove something it did not want (electric shocks). In the first instance, the rat pushed a small ‘bar’ (lever) by chance, but it progressively ‘learned’ to do so when that particular behaviour was rewarded with a pellet (‘reinforcement’). The mechanism that delivered the food could be scheduled in different ways: (1) fixed interval reinforcement—equal time between pellet delivery; (2) variable interval reinforcement—different times between delivery of pellets; (3) fixed ratio reinforcement—pellets delivered after the same number of bar presses; and (4) variable ratio reinforcement—

pellets delivered after a random number of bar presses. Skinner found that a variable ratio schedule created more enduring learning that was harder to extinguish.

Skinner called the delivery of a reward, ‘positive reinforcement’. There seems to be current confusion in relation to the term ‘negative reinforcement’. This is perhaps because at one time, the term was synonymous with ‘punishment or reproof, especially in relation to learning’ (Munn 1961, p. 720), but it is now usually seen to assist learning by removing an unpleasant state of being—the rat learns to press the bar to switch off the electric grid in the floor of the Skinner box. Watson and Tharp define negative reinforcement as ‘a consequence that strengthens behavior by being subtracted from the situation’ (Watson & Tharp 1997, p.119).

So, in overall terms, learning occurs when a behaviour is either positively or negatively reinforced. Skilful use of reinforcers can, therefore, be applied to modify undesirable behaviour, and/or to shape new ‘desired’ behaviour. The extinction of an undesirable behaviour is most likely to occur when there is no chance that a ‘lapse’ will provide intermittent reinforcement for the behaviour—especially because randomly applied reinforcement produces the most enduring behaviour.

Cognitive conditioning

Cognitive conditioning relates to the influence of ‘mediational concepts’, such as the thinking processes, attitudes, and values on learning. Beck (in Corey 1991, p. 344) challenged the concept that learning was simply a process of stimulus □ response reinforcement, by highlighting the negative ‘cognitive conditioning’ that can occur due to historically developed thoughts, perceptions and attitudes.

So, in overall terms, learning also occurs when thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes create, and reinforce, a behavioural response. It follows that ‘unlearning’ or ‘behaviour change’ also requires, the modification of these cognitive influences.

Applying behavioural principles

The broad processes for behavioural change are to:

- select, refine and gain commitment to a goal;
- define the goal as a behaviour to be changed;
- make observations about the behaviour to be changed;
- make the goal operational;
- select an appropriate strategy for change;
- work out a structured plan to change, maintain progress, and prevent relapse.

The skills of responding, personalising, operationalising goals, decision making and action planning, already covered in this text, are the core skills to implement these principles. In addition, it is sometimes useful to refine the operational goal by generating data associated with the behaviour before developing the action steps that are planned to change the behaviour. Such data is systematically gathered by careful observation and recording—rather than trusting a recall of events. Before discussing different methods of data collection, we should note that they all serve the same broad function to:

- assist in analysing possible ‘relapse’ risks;
- give information with which to develop an action plan;
- provide a baseline from which to measure success.

Data gathering skills

Some basic principles for data gathering are that:

- observations are recorded as soon as practicable after they occur;
- records are accurate;
- records are written;
- records are simple so that recording fits easily into the person’s lifestyle.

Data can be recorded in a ‘structured diary’, or in ‘frequency’, ‘duration’, or ‘intensity’ tables.

Structured diaries

Watson and Tharp (1997, p. 11) suggest the use of a structured diary to record information about the behaviour ‘targeted’ for change, and its context. The record lists the **antecedents** ‘A’— things that were present immediately before the target **behaviour** ‘B’ occurred, together with the **consequences** ‘C’—things that followed the performance of the target behaviour. These are commonly referred to as ‘the ABC’s’. The following questions help to identify the ABC’s:

‘A’—antecedent questions include:

- when did ‘it’ occur?
- where did ‘it’ occur?
- with whom?
- what happened?
- what prior thoughts were occurring?
- what prior feelings were occurring?

‘B’—behaviour questions include:

- what thoughts or feelings were associated with the target behaviour?
- what else, including other associated behaviours, was happening at the time?

‘C’—consequence questions include:

- what happened as a result?
- was the result pleasant or unpleasant?
- did the consequences affect the behaviour in any way?

Figure 48 shows an example of recorded ABC’s in a structured diary. A smoker’s goal is to become a non-smoker. Smoking patterns are being ‘self-observed’ by the smoker.

Antecedents	Behaviour	Consequences
<i>8am Breakfast, alone, at home. Felt depressed at the thought of today’s jobs</i>	<i>Had cigarette, read paper, enjoyable and relaxing</i>	<i>Felt guilty</i>
<i>10 am Working hard on project. Felt like a break. Thought I deserved one!</i>	<i>Had a coffee and a cigarette by myself. Enjoyable and relaxing</i>	<i>Felt rewarded but stupid</i>
<i>12.30 After difficult team meeting. Everyone wanting to complain to me afterwards. Felt crowded (etc)</i>	<i>Went outside to get some space. Had a cigarette (etc)</i>	<i>Felt relieved but embarrassed. Colleagues mock me for my habit. I put on a brave face. (etc)</i>
<i>7pm Got home after work. Had a drink. Sat down, watched the news. Thought ‘Thank God, today is over.’</i>	<i>Had a cigarette with a wine. Breathed deeply, relaxed.</i>	<i>Felt at peace. No pressure. No criticism from anyone.</i>

Figure 48. Showing an example of how data can be recorded in a structured diary.

Frequency or duration tables

Watson and Tharp (1997, pp. 77-89) also suggest other recording methods. Noting the frequency and duration of events is the easiest form of recording because it is simply a matter of counting either the number of times that an event occurred, or how long an event lasted. This can provide baseline data against which to measure progress. What gets measured can be simple behaviours (such as the number of cigarettes smoked), successes or failures (such as the number of times one ‘arrived on time’). An example of a ‘duration’ table might be a record of how many minutes one walked each day.

Figure 49 shows an example of a frequency recording for the smoker’s goal, above. The number of cigarettes smoked in a day is recorded to determine both the degree of the ‘addiction’, and the smoking patterns. A duration table could list ‘days’ against ‘time’.

Week 1 Oct 3-9																							
Mon			Tues			Wed			Thurs			Fri			Sat			Sun					
am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev			

Figure 49. Showing the frequency and patterns of smoking for a given individual.

Intensity tables

Sometimes it is useful to get some idea of the intensity of an emotion or reaction. To record this information we need to develop a scale that ‘fits’ the emotion or reaction. For example, someone having problems managing their anger may want to develop a five point scale of anger where 1 equals ‘calm’, and 5 equals ‘rage’. The example in Figure 50, below, combines intensity recording with frequency recording that link to a goal that says, ‘I want to find a way to manage my anger in an adult way’. The purpose is to assess the degree of anger that currently occurs, and identify any patterns relating to that anger that could assist in developing an appropriate action plan.

Day: <i>Monday 3/10/2005</i>	intensity				
Event	calm	cross	anger	fury	rage
<i>Working alone on project.</i>	✓✓				
<i>Colleague criticised my work</i>				✓✓	
<i>Shop assistant ignored me in queue</i>				✓	
<i>Motorist slow at traffic lights</i>			✓✓		
<i>Son swore at me</i>			✓		
<i>Reading before meal</i>	✓				

Figure 50. Showing the nature and frequency of events that trigger different intensities of anger for a given individual.

Making changes

In broad terms, behavioural strategies focus on learning new, effective behaviours or extinguishing old, dysfunctional behaviours. Humans can learn new behaviours from a ‘wise’ source, or from an alternative ‘model’—providing the learning conditions are appropriate. People can also unlearn behaviours if the ‘deconditioning’ experience is beneficial. The way the learning or unlearning occurs is critical. As the original behaviourist experiments taught us, learning and unlearning must be ‘scientific’ in its approach, disciplined in the steps taken, and appropriately reinforced.

Several broad approaches assist behavioural change. Consider the following approaches as they relate to the goal of giving up smoking:

- **changing, or creating new, antecedents** (those attitudes, behaviours, or contexts that usually apply before the behaviour to be modified occurs)—for example, using matches instead of the usual lighter to light one’s cigarette;
- **changing consequences** (events that usually occur after the behaviour to be modified happens)—for example, emptying the used ashtray into a glass jar containing all previous ash and ‘butts’ after smoking a cigarette;
- **changing the type, or scheduling, of reinforcements** for the behaviours to be either learned or modified—for example, ask a friend to give positive feedback when told that the person has smoked less than 5 cigarettes that day;
- **learning new behaviours**—for example, enrol at a gym or start a fitness program.

Common strategies that support behavioural changes are; ‘rehearsal’ (completing an action step in rehearsal mode); ‘modelling’ (using a model of the desired behaviour as an example to follow); and ‘shaping’ (attempting small changes before larger ones). Other strategies include, adding an ‘incompatible behaviour’ to the behaviour which is being modified—such as smoking with the non-preferred hand; and building ‘pauses’ into a usual chain of events—such as having a cup of coffee **before** having a cigarette, **not** smoking **with** it, or waiting five minutes after the first desire to smoke.

It is also very important to identify any unhelpful thought patterns, and find ways to modify them—such as changing a ‘hot’ (unhelpful) thought. For example, ‘I need that cigarette as a reward’, can become a ‘cool’ (helpful) thought by telling oneself to ‘visualise the glass jar with all the ‘butts’ in it’.

Any change program also needs to consider, and plan for, potential ‘lapses’ (small deviations to the plan) and ‘relapses’ (major fall-back to the original behaviour). It is important to keep working towards the goal by modifying the action plan if necessary. Watson and Tharp (1997, p. 48) say: *‘Big shots are only little shots who keep on shooting’*.

Relapse

Changing behaviours is difficult. Old habits are strong, and familiar stimuli can trigger these old habits. It is useful to identify possible risk areas, and develop strategies to manage possible lapses—and so avoid a relapse. It is often useful to ‘fantasise’ about possible relapse to identify factors likely to sabotage the plan. The major reasons for failure are that the problem was initially incorrectly identified or committed to, or reinforcement was insufficient. By ‘identified or committed to’ we mean that an apparent goal was randomly decided on—rather than personalised. Relapse may be due, in part, to that fact that the ‘risk factor’ was initially underestimated.

Diagnosing risk factors

Diagnosing possible risk factors requires some reflection about the ‘forces’ that could sabotage a plan. One way this can be done is to use a version of the ‘force field analysis’ developed by Kurt Lewin (1936). The analysis considers the forces that either ‘drive’ or ‘restrain’ change. This process is still frequently used in organisational consultancy. Figure 51 shows a simplified example that lists the ‘restraining forces’ and ‘facilitating forces’. These can then be weighted as an aid to planning management strategies. The content relates to the same goal of giving up smoking.

FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

brainstorm restraining forces	brainstorm facilitating forces
<i>Other smoking friends</i> <i>Inner yearnings</i> <i>Need to be polite when offered in company</i> <i>Insufficient satisfying alternatives</i> <i>Potential weight gain</i>	<i>Clear sinuses</i> <i>'Applause' from significant others</i> <i>Increased energy</i> <i>No embarrassment in public places</i> <i>More available money</i>
List restraining forces in order of strength	List facilitating forces in order of strength
1. <i>Inner yearnings</i> ▶ 2. <i>Lack of satisfying alternatives</i> ▶ 3. <i>Other smoking friends</i> ▶ 4. <i>Need to be polite</i> ▶ 5. <i>Potential weight gain</i> ▶	◀ <i>No embarrassment in public places</i> 1. ◀ <i>More available money</i> 2. ◀ <i>Clear sinuses</i> 3. ◀ <i>Applause from others</i> 4. ◀ <i>Increased energy</i> 5.

Figure 51. Showing an example of how to record information in a force field analysis.

Managing risk factors

Once some risk factors have been identified, it is useful to develop some ways of dealing with them (in advance) such as: (1) self-generated statements to support progress; (2) change sabotaging (‘hot’) thoughts to supportive (‘cool’) thoughts; or (3) calling on supportive people to encourage commitment. These can become elements of the ‘relapse strategy’ detailed on the back of an action plan when appropriate.

Exercise 27: Data gathering

The following exercise is offered at this point for readers who may wish to practise the skills of data collection. Alternatively, it can be undertaken at any convenient time.

Listed below are five operationalised goals that emerged from real clients. Some details have been changed in the interests of confidentiality. For each operationalised goal, suggest some research that could be done to either refine the goal, or provide some baseline data against which to measure success.

Choose data collection methods that could assist in: (1) refining the operational goal; (2) identifying which of a number of alternative therapeutic strategies is preferred; and (3) detailing elements of the subsequent action plan. Set out your data on a separate sheet of paper.

Client 1

'I want to find a way to decondition the critical parent voices that I have internalised so that I can maintain my confidence when stating my position to people in authority. I need to start working on this immediately (1/8/year) so that I can be ready for a difficult negotiation with my boss on 22/11/year. I need to do this so that I can fully present the capacities that I know I have, and achieve recognition for my efforts. I'll know that I have achieved my goal if I can state my position with energy, conviction, and without mumbling, and if I can maintain eye contact for at least 80 % of the time.'

Client 2

'I want to find a way to decondition my self from my habit of constantly nibbling junk food and lollies. I need to find a way that minimises any sense of deprivation. I would like to do this as soon as possible, but certainly to have this behaviour well in check before 10/4/(year) so that I move into my 40th year feeling 'grown up' at last. I'll know that I have achieved this goal if, by 10/4/(year) I eat only three set meals per day for 70% of the time.'

Client 3

'I want to find a way to express the anger about my abusive childhood (that I have suppressed for years) that makes me cold, critical, and snappy in intimate relationships. The way I choose must not be damaging to my loved ones, nor render me incapable of working effectively. I need to start this immediately (5/8/year) so that I can feel cleared before I get married on 23/11/year. I'll know I have achieved my goal if I wake in the morning (at least 5 days in 7) happy to get out of bed without the pervasive depression that I feel now.'

Client 4

'I want to find a way to discover, and legitimise, who I really am so that I can discard the 'pseudo-self' that is so interwoven with my authentic self that I cannot discriminate the 'authentic' from the 'chameleon'. I need to start doing this now (7/9/year) and never finish. I will review progress on my 40th birthday (3/11/year). I'll know I've achieved my goal if I can name at least 10 personal qualities that get internal corroboration from a 'tingle down my spine.'

Client 5

'I want to establish, and maintain, an effective organisational system at home and at work, so that I can maximise productivity, and minimise crises. I need to start now (11/9/year), and I would like to complete by 23/12/year so that I can start the new year with enthusiasm—rather than my usual sense of overwhelmed panic. I'll know I've achieved my goal if by 1 March (year) I can find what I need, at least 90% of the time, at work and at home, within 5 minutes.'

Examples of how these data can be gathered for Exercise 27 are on page 491.

Cognitive strategies

The principle that underpins all cognitive strategies is that our emotional reactions, and lifestyle, are related to our basic beliefs, and are therefore cognitively created. It follows that if we change the 'cognition'—our thoughts—we change the emotion. In practice it is often difficult to isolate a purely cognitive problem. The boundary between 'cognitive', 'behavioural', 'mind/body', and 'mind/emotional/spiritual' problems is

often very blurred. However, cognitive therapy is based on the assumption that cognitions are the major determinants of how we feel and act. As Beck, the developer of ‘cognitive therapy’, puts it, ‘Cognitive therapy consists of all the approaches that alleviate psychological distress through the medium of correcting faulty conceptions and self signals’ (Beck, 1976, p. 214).

The kinds of thinking errors and distortions that Beck suggests can occur are:

- **Unfounded inference**—reaching conclusions without sufficient evidence, including ‘catastrophising’. ‘She was cross with me’, is inferred to mean that ‘I can do nothing right’.
- **Selective thinking**—forming conclusions based on isolated detail, not overall context. If one negative criticism of my work is made in a series of generally positive evaluations, the conclusion is that, ‘I’m a failure’.
- **Overgeneralisation**—holding an extreme belief based on a single incident. If I have difficulty with a disabled person, it means that, ‘I can **never** relate to disabled people’.
- **Magnification of error**—overestimating the significance of a negative event. ‘I made a mistake’, is interpreted to mean that, ‘The boss will sack me’.
- **Making things personal**—believing an external event is my fault, even if there is no evidence for this. The shopkeeper notes that: ‘They didn’t come back to my shop’, and concludes: ‘I did something wrong the first time that they came to my shop’.
- **Black and white thinking**—thinking and interpreting in an ‘all or nothing’ way. ‘If I am not perfect, I am a total failure’.
- **Absolutist thinking**—thinking that is heavily based on ‘shoulds’ and ‘musts’. ‘Everyone must approve of me’—‘I must be kind to everyone’— ‘I should go to see my parents every week’.

In using cognitive therapy techniques, the counsellor assumes the teacher/educator role to assist clients to modify their thinking. Other behavioural principles, described previously, are also employed to add to the success of the technique. Cognitive therapies are not exempt from the general criticisms of behavioural approaches. However, we have found that when clients have personalised their goal, and understand the proposed strategy, such approaches seem extremely useful.

Selected cognitive strategies

This section gives an overview of a selection from the many techniques that flow from cognitive approaches. References to other approaches are listed at the end of this chapter.

Affirmations

Louise Hay says that: ‘Life is really very simple. What we give out, we get back’ .

‘What we think about ourselves becomes the truth for us...Every thought we think is creating our future...We create the situations and then we give our power away by blaming the other...No person, no place and no thing has any power over us, for we are the only thinkers in it’ (Hay, 1999, p. 13).

Hay (1999) suggests that:

- we need to release our negative beliefs, and make positive affirmations to create a different ‘truth’;
- we need to release the past and forgive.

Hay uses specific ‘affirmations’ for different problematic thinking. Her book encompasses many self-help techniques to overcome negative and self-sabotaging thoughts. Hay’s book should be read by those interested in using this technique.

In general terms, the technique of ‘affirming’ requires that one ‘dwells’, or ‘puts one’s attention’ on positive states of being, or doing, rather than negative ones. We identify the words that we currently say repeatedly to ourselves, and change them to a more positive statement, for example, change ‘I am useless’ to ‘I approve of myself’. Note the use of the present tense.

We have learned to recognise an affirmation as meaningful when it is experienced as a statement that seems impossible for the client to say! We then find it useful to listen to the client’s objection: ‘*I couldn’t say that because...*’, and redraft the affirmation to ‘deal with’ that objection until, after a series of refining redrafts, the affirmation fits uniquely and ideally for the person concerned. The mind is then ‘retrained’ by writing or saying the statement many times a day. In fact, Hay (1999, p. 100) suggests making the affirmations ‘three to four hundred times a day at least’.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming

‘Neuro-Linguistic Programming’ (NLP) was developed by Bandler, a mathematician and Gestalt therapist, and Grinder, a linguistics professor. They developed a system for describing how a person takes in sensory impressions, mentally organises them in cognitive processes, and then translates them into a behavioural or verbal response. The NLP training sensitises people to the four major ‘representational systems’ through which humans take in and process sensory information. The systems are: ‘auditory’ (hearing), ‘visual’ (seeing), ‘kinaesthetic’ (doing, feeling) and ‘gustatory/olfactory’ (smelling, tasting). Some particular strategies (editing and anchoring) that flow from their work suggest that the ‘unconscious’ can be taught new ways to organise experiences (Bandler & Grinder, 1975). Their work has been criticised as lacking academic rigour, but it does seem to work for many people. For example, by ‘reorganising’ the unconscious, a range of phobias can be ‘cured’ in ten minutes!

Editing

When we have a memory that ‘haunts’ us, or an anticipated event that ‘paralyses’ us, it is recommended that we mobilise all our representational systems (visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, gustatory/olfactory) to ‘edit the movie’ that we are playing, and thus minimise its impact—and our debilitating behavioural response to it. There are many ways to ‘edit’. These include changing whole scenes, writing new scripts, changing speed, changing colours, or any other selected aspect. Once a preferred ‘movie’ is obtained we instruct ourselves to remember the movie in that way.

Anchoring

Consider the situation where a normally competent person is so debilitated by ‘nerves’ that they decline speaking engagements that would be beneficial to both others and themselves. The ‘sufferer’ could create an imaginary experience (in comfort at home) that ‘sees’ a relaxed, confident approach to the rostrum, and a fluent, well received speech that concludes with a standing ovation. In their imagination, they will ‘hear’ their

own relaxed breathing, the warm reception from an expectant audience, the resonance of their voice, the buzz of excitement as points are taken up, and the final energy in the ovation. They will ‘feel’ their self-confidence and their potency—all this ‘dreamed up’ in the privacy of their home. In the fullness of that experience, the ‘sufferer’ can ‘anchor’ its positiveness to some simple physical stimulus, say, the placing of the thumb on the fingernail of the ring finger—or any other such act that is not likely to occur in one’s normal routine. By activating the stimulus prior to an engagement, the positive response can be replicated.

We have successfully used a powerful therapeutic application of the anchoring technique to eliminate phobias. This requires that, firstly, the client fully experiences the ‘phobic response’ to be changed through all major representational systems—they must ‘see’ the visual images, ‘hear’ the associated sounds, and ‘feel’ the negative emotions. This usually requires that the person closes their eyes and stays quietly reflective. When the counsellor observes that the client is ‘there’, s/he ‘anchors’ the experience to a pre-determined physical stimulus. We simply touch the client’s right knee. The counsellor then says something so that client can ‘clear’ the phobic images. The client is then asked to recall a strong, positive (‘competent’) experience (not associated with the phobic area). Again, this is a visual, auditory and kinaesthetic experience, which is then anchored the opposite (left) knee, and cleared soon after the client affirms having ‘been there’. The phobia is ‘treated’ when both physical stimuli (both knees) are touched simultaneously. At this time there appears to be an unconscious (almost mystical) reorganisation of cognitive data that takes place, as if the positive experience ‘washes out’ the phobia. The person is asked to just ‘sit with whatever is happening until it feels like it is not happening anymore’. We have found that anchoring the ‘positive’ experience to the person’s dominant side seems to work best (generally the right side for right handed people, and vice versa). We have experienced an interesting phenomena whilst undertaking this strategy. We have also noticed a kind of random ‘throbbing’ in the client’s knees whilst the ‘reorganisation’ is taking place, that becomes regular when the reorganisation has occurred. This point seems to coincide with the person reporting that any turbulence seems to have ceased. We do not understand why this occurs. In cases of deep-seated phobic responses, the anchors can be ‘stacked’ through repetitions of the process.

Working with the inner child

The notion of the ‘inner child’, that lives on in adults, emerged from the work of Carl Jung, who wrote about *the ‘wonder child’—our innate potential for exploration, awe and creative being* (Bradshaw, 1992, p. xii) Another author, Berne used the terms the ‘natural’ and ‘adapted’ child (in Bradshaw, 1992, p. xii). The ‘natural child’ is the one that is creative and spontaneous, and the ‘adapted child’ is that part of humans that has learned to conform to external pressure to survive childhood. Bradshaw calls this part ‘the wounded child’. Piaget, describes children as ‘cognitive aliens’, in that their thinking is distorted. Childlike, distorted thinking can manifest in behavioural disorders such as co-dependence, offender behaviour, and intimacy dysfunction (Bradshaw 1992, p. 22).

Several authors have focussed on working with the ‘inner child’ as a means to health. John Bradshaw (1992) has popularised these ideas both in books and on television. He describes how one’s inner child can get wounded, and then get left with a feeling of ‘toxic shame’. He also details a structure for ‘reclaiming’ and ‘championing’ one’s ‘inner child’. The structure involves going back through one’s developmental stages and finishing ‘unfinished business’.

One 'heals the pain' by:

- reconnecting with childhood, say, by using photos or other memorabilia;
- feeling the child's feelings, say, by 'telling one's story' to a non-judgemental person, or by a guided meditation in which one 'walks back in time';
- dialoguing with the inner child from a position of adult competence, often by communicating, in writing, using the non-dominant hand to allow the inner child to 'speak' without censure, and the dominant hand to express adult wisdom and care;
- using affirmations to support and nurture the inner child.

One eventually 'champions' the 'healed' inner child by using behavioural principles and techniques for change such as planning for, rehearsal of, and reinforcement for, new behaviours.

This technique can be very powerful. It is important to ensure that the context in which these steps occur is quiet, non-judgemental, and safe. Sufficient time must be given to re-entry into the 'normal' world.

Reframing

Reframing is the skill of viewing and describing a situation from at least two different perspectives. Clients often have a very negative view of their world, which can also be viewed from an alternative, maybe more positive, perspective. Geldard and Geldard suggest that:

'Sometimes a skilful counsellor can change the way a client perceives events or situations by 'reframing' the picture the client has described. The counsellor, metaphorically speaking, puts a new frame around the picture so that the picture looks different. The idea behind reframing is not to deny the way the client sees the world, but to present the client with an expanded view of the world. Thus, if the client wishes, they may choose to see things in a new way' (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 142).

Geldard and Geldard (2001, p. 143) give the example of a mother describing how she is unable to relax, because as soon as she turns her back her young son misbehaves, and she has to chase after him and punish him. After reflecting back her feelings, the counsellor offers the client the following reframe.

'I get the impression that you are really important to your son and that he wants lots of attention from you'.

The authors suggest that the mother may then 'see his behaviour not as designed to annoy her, but as designed to attract her attention so that he can get more of her time' (Geldard & Geldard 2001, p. 144). Reframing, in an empathic climate, gives the client the opportunity to view their world differently and so experience internal 'movement' if stuck.

Body centred therapies

This section outlines four of the many 'body-centred' therapeutic approaches. We are familiar with all four, but have not undertaken specialist training in any of them. Accordingly, it is prudent, and we hope helpful, to collate information from the current

websites of relevant professional people and organisations to ‘whet the appetite’ for new learning that will be beneficial in working with clients. We recommend that interested readers check the websites detailed in the reference list at the end of this chapter, or seek out additional reading and/or training.

Radix

Like other body-oriented, somatic psychotherapy practices such as Bioenergetics, Hakomi, Core Energetics, Alexander technique, Bodydynamics, Focusing, and Hellerwork, RADIX neo-Reichian therapy is founded upon the holistic principle of mind/body unity. RADIX therapy is a personal psychological growth practice that is founded upon the principle that each individual is a whole person consisting of a mind, feelings, and a body...By itself, the intellectual understanding offered by traditional verbal/cognitive therapy cannot penetrate to and transform the deeper levels of consciousness...Instead, each kind of blockage must be dealt with on its own level. RADIX therefore uses a diversity of mind (verbal), feelings (affective), and body (somatic) counseling techniques to bring lasting change to each level of the whole person.

RADIX is based upon the humanistic psychology model that views individuals as being on a spectrum of personal growth...RADIX education is rooted in the work of Wilhelm Reich, M.D. whose pioneering research on the relations of body, mind, and feelings has served to source so many of today’s Western mind/body therapeutic practices...Reich’s work on the relationship between emotional stagnation and degenerative disease was ahead of its time. At the root of emotional stagnation is what Reich called muscular armor. Muscular armor is chronic muscular tension that blocks the natural flow of life force through the body that is experienced as emotions. The restriction of the life force can result not only in emotional stagnation, but also in physical disease.

Reich developed techniques to loosen muscular armor thereby helping the client to allow and experience blocked emotions and the freeing of the body’s natural emotional expressiveness. Long-held feelings then could flow through the body and be transformed, leaving the client to feel more alive and better able to establish contact [with] self and others.

Nagel, 2005

Kinesiology

Kinesiology is defined primarily as the use of muscle testing to identify imbalances in the body’s structural, chemical, emotional or other energy, to establish the body’s priority healing needs, and to evaluate energy changes brought about by a broad spectrum of both manual and non-manual therapeutic procedures.

Kinesiology, therefore, may be understood as a system of natural health care which combines muscle monitoring with the principles of Chinese medicine to assess energy and body function, applying a range of gentle yet powerful healing techniques to improve health, wellbeing and vitality. A fundamental premise of Kinesiology is that the body has innate healing energy and is at all times doing its best to care for itself, but that sometimes it needs to be helped into a better position to achieve this care. Kinesiology also recognises that there are flows of energy within the body that relate not only to the muscles but to every tissue and organ that go to make the body a living, feeling being...These energy flows can be evaluated by testing the function of the muscles,

which in turn reflect the body's overall state of structural chemical, or emotional balance. In this way, Kinesiology taps into energies that the more conventional modalities overlook...Kinesiology is not limited to dealing with ailments. Energy balancing brings a person closer to achieving any goal of their choice ~ in sport, relationships, learning or coping with life in general...

Precision muscle monitoring techniques are applied to identify & correct energy blockages within the body. Always the answer is somewhere inside you. Muscle monitoring is a natural feedback system using an indicator muscle, which supplies information via nerve pathways and the meridian system of the Brain and Body. Kinesiology bypasses conscious thinking processes to isolate causal factors in the subconscious, body and etheric levels. Honouring this system enables the body to clear itself at its own enhanced rate and priority.

Kinesiology Connection, 2005

Yoga

The word yoga is derived from the Sanscrit root 'yug', meaning to bind or yoke. The definition of yoga is the yoking of all the powers of the body, mind and soul to God.

Hatha is the form of yoga that is presently so popular in the West. Although primarily thought of as a series of physical exercises (which it is), the real emphasis of hatha yoga lies not in the area of physical fitness, but rather in the development of the subtle body energies...The idea of hatha yoga is to withdraw the life force (prana) from the right and left energy channels and take it into the central channel...of the subtle body....

This can be accomplished through the practice of asanas (different physical postures) and breathing exercises...As the energy rises it opens the chakras or subtle body energy centers along the way. The opening of the chakras releases the tension and energy that has been bottled up at these centers. ...

There are many different schools of yoga (i.e. Integral, Iyengar, Ananda Marga, Kundalini Yoga, Okido Yoga, etc.)...Each one stresses its own philosophy or attitude towards yoga as well as a certain technique of yoga practice.

Feiss 1979, pp. 100—101

Dance therapy

Dance Therapy offers expressive movement experiences which engage body, mind and emotion. Drawing on the therapeutic elements inherent in dance, therapists aim at restoring balance and integration in the areas of physical function, sensory development, emotional expression and mental functioning.

Dance therapy emerged as a profession in the 1960's in USA, and gradually became internationally established, beginning in Australia in the 1970s. It is an allied health profession that combines the creative process and the study of human movement into a holistic approach that draws upon the elements inherent in dance. Programs are designed to meet specific goals and bring about therapeutic change.

Australia's practitioners come from backgrounds in dance or the health sciences which include, for example, teaching, physiotherapy or psychology. They are required to undergo extensive dance therapy training together with supervised clinical practice.

They may be employed solely as dance therapists, or integrate dance therapy within the broader context of their work.

The work of Dance Therapists is applicable to children and adults in diverse settings and can be adapted to the needs of clients with a wide range of specific and non-specific disorders and disabilities...Dance therapists use observation and movement analysis to determine a dance-movement program to address client needs...Dance therapists in Australia use dance and movement for therapeutic goals in institutions, hospitals, community settings, special education and in private practice.

International Dance Therapy Institute of Australia Inc, 2005

Emotional/spiritual-centred strategies

This section outlines four of the many ‘emotional/spiritual-centred’ therapeutic approaches. Again, we are familiar with all four, but have not undertaken specialist training in any of them, and again will quote from the current websites of relevant professional people and organisation, as before.

Psychodrama

Psychodrama is the form of psychotherapy that employs acting to help the patient solve her problems. Under the guidance of a director (therapist) the client acts out situations and relationships that are disturbing to her. Other members of the group are often used to play the roles of the different people involved in the client’s particular problem (mother, father, husband)...Psychodrama is a very dramatic form of group psychotherapy. The action of acting out one’s problems in a group setting enables a person to not only gain greater insight into her problems, but also provides a supportive atmosphere for an individual to experience a “catharsis,” or deep release of tension.

Feiss 1979, pp. 24-25

...Psychodramatists work with a wide range of individuals and groups... Clinical psychodramatists do this work in many settings. They assist individuals, families or groups in private psychotherapy practices and in organisations which specialise in family therapy, family life education, relationship counselling, life transition, education, sexual functioning, sexual assault, post-traumatic stress in individuals and groups, alcohol and drug addiction, mental health including depression, community programmes, spirituality, pastoral work or in correctional services.

...The psychodrama method [pioneered by J. L. Moreno] entails exploring people's functioning and every aspect of a situation and arriving at a clear clinical assessment. The process and outcomes include an expanded vision, resolution of conflict, assessment of relationships, integration of fragmented aspects of the personality, and well-organised planning for the future. Verbal interaction, dramatic enactment, and reflection are all designed to enable individuals to see themselves from a fresh point of view and generate and integrate new behaviours. This comes about when a person sees themselves through the eyes of the people who are significant to them as they take on their roles, through experimentation and through observation of accurate portrayals of their functioning in a non-judgemental atmosphere.

Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia, 2005

Psychosynthesis

Psychosynthesis is an approach to human development fostered by Roberto Assagioli ...beginning around 1910 and continuing to the present day. It is both a theory and practice where the focus is to achieve a synthesis, a coming together, of the various parts of an individual's personality into a more cohesive self. That person can then function in a way that is more life-affirming and authentic. Another major aspect of Psychosynthesis is its affirmation of the spiritual dimension of the person, i.e. the "higher" or "transpersonal" self. The higher self is seen as a source of wisdom, inspiration, unconditional love, and the will to meaning in our lives.

Psychosynthesis is founded on the basic premise that we participate in an orderly universe structured to facilitate the evolution of consciousness. A corollary is that each person's life has purpose and meaning within this broader context and that it is possible for the individual to discover this.

Psychosynthesis has had a profound impact on the human potential movement. For example, the use of guided imagery and the concept of subpersonalities originate with Psychosynthesis.

...In its most basic sense, Psychosynthesis is simply a name for the process of growth—the integration of previously separate elements into a more comprehensive unification or synthesis. It believes each of us has an innate drive toward the unfolding of ourselves, and that we can choose to consciously support that process. While it is generally known that we have a responsibility to this end, we have not always known how to go about it. To address this, Psychosynthesis provides both theory and practice. It offers a framework that enables a more complete understanding of ourselves, our capacities, and our relationships, as well as skills and techniques, to help us deal with these effectively and safely.

...One of the strengths of Psychosynthesis is that it provides practical methods to recognize and access the "higher" or "deeper" part of ourselves, so that the process of growth happens according to an "inner wisdom." What this also means, is that in accessing this truly empowering part of ourselves, the person's own inner self is not violated or imposed upon. It is allowed to unfold at its own speed, and according to its own pattern. It honours all parts of our being, enabling the working through of blocks that hinder growth, without creating further blocks in the process....Some of the methods more commonly used include guided imagery, body awareness and movement, symbolic art work, journal-keeping, training of the will, goal-setting, dreamwork, development of the imagination and intuition, gestalt, ideal models, and meditation.

Kelder, 1994

Art Therapy

Art Therapy is an interdisciplinary form of psychotherapy. Generally based on psychoanalytic or psychodynamic principles, art therapists are able to utilise varied theoretical frameworks in which they feel comfortable to work. Other modes of working include Jungian, humanistic, behavioural, systemic, and integrative approaches.

...The practice of art therapy works across health and medical fields and may incorporate clients' use of various visual art forms such as drawing, painting, sculpture and collage. Some art therapists also offer phototherapy, play and sand-tray work. Art therapy is a therapeutic and diagnostic tool where therapist and client/s [sic] develop a

dynamic interpersonal relationship, with clear boundaries and goals. It differs from traditional art in that the emphasis is on the process of creating rather than on the end product.

Art therapy is a creative process, suitable for all ages, and particularly for those who may be experiencing life changes, trauma, illness or disabilities causing distress for the individual and for their family.

Art therapy works by contributing to changes in the client's inner world, and towards the development of a client's more integrated sense of self, with increased self awareness and acceptance.

...The advantage of art therapy is that even though children and adults are not always able to verbalise what is happening for them or how they feel, interaction in art therapy may be totally non-verbal until there is confidence to communicate verbally. The art helps hold that quiet space. Alternatively there are those who may over-verbalise, blocking feelings and thoughts which need expression; here interaction may be totally verbal until there is courage to mark a blank piece of paper, work with clay [to] make a mask, or create an art work. In other words, art contributes to a fine balance within the therapeutic relationship attending to more aspects of a personality than would otherwise be accessible.

...Art therapists currently work in public and private agencies with other allied health professionals and in multi-disciplinary teams.

Australian National Art Therapy Association, 2005

Music Therapy

Music therapy is an allied health profession practised throughout Australia and in more than 40 countries around the world. It is the planned and creative use of music to attain and maintain health and well-being, and may address physical, psychological, emotional, cognitive and social needs of individuals within a therapeutic relationship.

Music therapy focuses on meeting therapeutic aims, which distinguishes it from musical entertainment or music education. People of any age or ability may benefit from a music therapy program, regardless of musical skill or background.

... RMTs [Registered Music Therapists] work in a diverse range of settings. Traditionally they have worked in special schools, nursing homes and long-term care facilities for rehabilitation or psychiatry. As health and education change, music therapy services are changing too. Aged Care continues to be a large area of work and as Australia's population of aged people increases there will be more work for music therapists. Other prominent areas are palliative care, working with people who are dying; acute health, working with adults and children in hospital; early intervention, working with families which include pre-school children with additional needs. Music therapists also work in mental health with adolescents and adults; rehabilitation, with people who have been in motor vehicle accidents. New areas of work include working with immigrants and refugees.

Australian Music Therapy Association, 2005

This chapter has touched on a number of helpful strategies that can be implemented in the initiative phase of the overall skills process described in earlier chapters. The following exercise gives you an opportunity to 'put it together'— working with clients.

Exercise 28: Working with clients

This exercise should not be started until Exercise 27 has been completed. The purpose of this exercise is to approximate an experience of working with a client over a period of time to help them take appropriate action to achieve a personally relevant goal.

Work with a fellow student—or willing friend—over a period of several weeks. Ask the ‘client’ to choose to work on a personal situation that they have explored in depth already, and where they have developed a goal that they have not yet acted upon. The counselling tasks to be achieved in the sessions are detailed below.

Counselling Tasks

As a counsellor, your task is to assist your client to refine a previously explored goal; help them make a decision about a preferred strategy to achieve the goal, and help them develop an action plan to achieve the goal. This work will use Decision Making Worksheets (page 372) and an Action Planning Worksheet (page 394). You will:

- meet, greet, set a contract for your work (when, where, what, and so on);
- listen to your client’s summarised story and why they have chosen their particular goal to work on;
- ensure (responsively) that you have a grasp of significant factors, and assess whether the goal is truly personalised, (or help them to get that point);
- ensure that all elements (other than the ‘how’) of your client’s operationalised goal are unambiguous—by using a Decision Making Worksheet if necessary;
- decide whether or not it is desirable to collect additional information to:
 - help determine a preferred therapeutic ‘how’ strategy;
 - detail evaluative and other refinements of a subsequent action plan;
- use the appropriate method to collect data if required;
- analyse the data, and discuss its significance with client to determine the preferred strategy (this may emerge as a consequence of the counsellor’s experience and client’s perspectives—if not, a further decision may need to be made by using a second Decision Making Worksheet to identify a clear ‘how’);
- incorporate the therapeutic ‘how’ element into the operationalised goal;
- discuss the ‘pros and cons’ of referring the client elsewhere or having the counsellor apply the preferred strategy—a decision to refer will require a modification of the ‘who’ element in the operational goal;
- complete an action planning worksheet (page 394) with the client to spell out steps, time constraints, performance criteria, and appropriate reinforcements to achieve the client’s goal to either attend elsewhere, or proceed in the current setting;
- if continuing, work out support and relapse plans with the client so that progress is maintained until successful implementation;
- celebrate achievements before terminating your work with the client.

No answers are supplied for the work undertaken in Exercise 28.

Summary

In this chapter we have overviewed some of the therapeutic strategies that we have found useful in working with clients to facilitate behavioural or attitudinal change. We have mainly focussed on behavioural and other cognitive strategies because these allow conscious control to remain with the client. We have also used the descriptions provided by specialist therapists to overview other strategies that focus on body, emotion, or spirit. All of these latter approaches can be very powerful, and require considerable specialist training. When using any therapeutic strategy you should:

- ensure that the client has a clear personalised goal;
- explain any recommended techniques clearly to the client, and obtain their consent to either use the strategy or refer to an appropriate specialist
- if consent is given for you to help the client, ensure that you are competent and confident in using the selected technique.

Exercise 27 provides an opportunity to practice data gathering, and the final exercise, Exercise 28, relates to working with clients whose goal requires the application of a therapeutic strategy. The steps that may need to be taken to develop a final action plan are listed.

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My summary of therapeutic strategies

Write in your own words:

Some therapeutic strategies that appeal to me are:

Essential concepts about these therapeutic strategies:

Why these therapeutic strategies are important in terms of benefits to clients:

Typical situations where these therapeutic strategies would be usefully applied—and where they would not be appropriate:

How these therapeutic strategies are applied—the skills, knowledge, and steps that are significant to me:

References courses where I can read more about these (or other) therapeutic strategies.

Counselling in a nutshell

A review

This chapter summarises the process that has been detailed in this text. It will serve as a reminder of the key elements for those whose primary tasks are other than full-time counselling, but who need to help others resolve issues from time to time. We have found it useful as an ‘overview’ for participants on short courses that we have conducted for Scout Leaders, and other community groups, who get an appreciation of the skills, but very limited opportunity for coached practice.

What counselling is

Counselling is the skill of assisting others to deal with personal (or group) issues in ways that lead to constructive action.

What counselling does

Effective counselling selectively draws on the knowledge, skills and experience which individual resourceful people use to manage their own lives, and on other theoretical concepts, so that helpes (or ‘clients’) can:

- become actively **involved** in addressing some issue which they cannot deal with, have given up on, or are actively avoiding;
- feel free to **explore** all aspects of the issue which have personal relevance to them so that they can get a clear picture of where they stand, emotionally and intellectually, in relation to the issue (and to any others linked to it);
- **understand** the personal implications of their exploration, especially:
 - how their own behaviour and perspective helps to create the issue;
 - how their lack of a particular skill or knowledge perpetuates the issue;
 - how they feel about themselves when they realise these ‘shortcomings’;
 - that they need to acquire the missing skill or knowledge in order to resolve the issue;
- systematically **act** to acquire the needed skill or knowledge, and apply it to resolve the current issue;
- **learn** the counselling process so that they can use it, for themselves and others, to deal with future issues more effectively.

Effective counselling requires resourceful, helpful people to:

- believe that human potential finds its fullest expression in an empathic, caring, supportive, stimulating, non-judgemental climate;
- care for, value, develop, and seek appropriate help for themselves in ways that maintain their resourcefulness;
- clarify a ‘contract’ with clients;
- respect the individual worth of those being counselled;
- be fully attentive to the person, and to all that is said and done;
- test the accuracy of their understanding of the issues as they unfold, so that the person concerned knows that the helper is ‘with them’;
- ensure that the information flow is under the client’s control until all of the significant aspects of the issue have been addressed;
- suspend their own preconceptions, judgments, initiatives, and personal agenda during the ‘exploratory’ phase, and use them **selectively** during the ‘action’ phase;
- draw attention to inconsistencies, distortions and gaps in the client’s information;
- summarise the ‘overall picture’ in a way that enables the client to understand what specific action needs to be taken to deal with their issue constructively, and to assume responsibility to see that this happens;
- help the client to spell out the ‘operational’ detail necessary to ensure that the goal is achievable, and how success will be measured;
- help the client to work out which is the preferred option when there are alternative ‘operational possibilities’, and to measure its viability;
- help to develop an action-plan to achieve what needs to happen;
- provide support during the implementation of the plan if necessary;
- evaluate the outcome, and highlight the learning for future application;
- teach the strategies used in the process.

Why counselling is important

If effective counselling skills are employed, then those being counselled will learn more effective ways of dealing with unresolved issues, so that they can become more self-sufficient, and also potentially more contributive to others.

When counselling is used

Counselling skills are used when a person, or group, in need of resolution of an issue, either asks for help, or accepts an offer of help from a person who:

- feels a professional or personal responsibility to assist;
- is knowledgeable and skilful in processing information in ways that explore issues collaboratively, and deal with them effectively;
- has the decency, and caring, to want a beneficial outcome for the other(s); and has the time, energy, commitment, and skills to work for it.

How to counsel effectively

There is a vast body of knowledge, which systematically details the steps required to learn and apply the necessary skills to counsel effectively. This knowledge is being expanded and refined continually. What follows is a very brief summary of the main steps of the counselling process, and an outline of how to do them.

Being prepared

Effective counsellors are effective people who are committed to their own spiritual, physical, emotional, intellectual, and social wellbeing and development. Ideally, they are caring, healthy, well organised, energetic, and respectful people who understand the critical ingredients of, and means for, actualising human potential. They strive to actualise their own potential, and to help others do the same.

Clarifying a 'contract'

A counselling 'session' can be initiated by either party. A person can approach another person for help, or the resourceful person can offer it. Either way there should be some clear, mutually accepted limits to the arrangement in relation to:

- the broad approach that will be adopted;
- areas that can and cannot be dealt with (in terms of organisational or personal constraints);
- which other people, if any, should be present and why;
- the starting day, date, time, and duration of the dialogue;
- where the session will be held;
- the anticipated benefits;
- some criterion to indicate that it is time to wind up, or refer on.

A request

Requests for help may be direct and specific, or tentative and vague. Before agreeing to act as counsellor the resource person should:

- feel a sense of personal or professional responsibility to be involved;
- have reasonable confidence that they have the knowledge and skill to assist in this instance;
- have the caring, time, energy and commitment to proceed.

In deciding these matters it is useful to:

- listen to the subject matter (and potentially related matters);
- observe the non-verbal information in order to assess the degree, and nature, of the 'disarray' experienced by the person in need.

The degree of disarray gives an indication of the level of skill, and how much time might be required for the particular request; or whether deferral, or referral elsewhere, might be more appropriate.

An offer

An offer of counselling can be made to a person who is sufficiently well known for the resource person to recognise some significant differences between the person's current behaviour, or demeanour, and that which is known to be normal. An offer could sound a bit like this:

'Bill, can I share an observation with you? I generally see you as pretty energetic and 'with it', but you seem to have been struggling with routine things lately, and things seem to be getting at you in some way. It's as if you're preoccupied with something that is taking the joy out of it all. I want to offer an ear if I'm near the mark, and if you'd like to talk it through.'

The critical points to note are:

- the offer is tentative not 'mandatory';
- the evidence of the observations are made overt;
- an attempt is made to identify the other person's experience, and what is causing it.

If the offer is taken up, the 'contract' should be clarified. If it is not, the resource person should signal their future availability—including details of where, when, and why.

Facilitating involvement

'Clients' will feel freer to talk about 'tricky' situations when they feel valued. Counsellors can facilitate such involvement by showing respect, and being fully attentive.

Showing respect

Respect for others is communicated by behaviour as well as with words. Ways of showing respect are embodied in codes of social convention. Remember that different ethnic groups may have different cultural conventions and that, in a multi-cultural society, the same behaviour could signify respect to one person and disrespect to another. The key is to express the behaviour that will be experienced as respectful by the other. Where there is uncertainty, one should do what seems to be appropriate, and watch closely for any verbal or non-verbal evidence of any inappropriateness. If such evidence is present then one should check out its significance. This will signal a quality of respect that shows both concern for, and a willingness to learn from, the other.

Being fully attentive

The prime task of counselling is to clarify that which is unclear so that appropriate action can follow. In order to help sort things out, the counsellor must be fully attentive to the client and to all that is said and done.

There are three aspects to the skills of attending. Collectively they lead to involvement, and set the scene for productive work which is not interrupted by distractions from without (for both), nor by pre-occupations from within (for the counsellor). The three aspects are technically known as **contextual**, **behavioural** and **psychological** attending.

Contextual attending

Contextual attending relates to the **setting** where the counselling occurs.

The counsellor must ensure that the location is:

- accessible to the client;
- appropriate—don't suggest an office at the abattoirs to a vegetarian;
- easily recognised—a house number visible from a car in the dark;
- welcoming—the front light on, and the dog well-fed and tied up;
- inhabited—be there first and have the kettle on.

The counsellor must ensure that the setting is:

- comfortable—carpets, firm (not lounge) chairs, well lit, but not glary ;
- temperate—suitable heating or cooling;
- appropriate—suitable décor—take down favourite posters that say stuff like, ‘don't tell me your troubles—I've got enough of my own’;
- private—no interruptions or distractions— from other people, noises, smells, or telephones.

Behavioural attending

Behavioural attending relates to the counsellor's body **posture**. The way the counsellor sits communicates interest in, respect for, and availability to, the client. Such attending also positions the counsellor's eyes and ears so that they can observe and listen to the client more effectively. The skill steps are:

- square off—sit opposite the client;
- maintain eye contact—scan the face caringly; don't stare, leer or ogle;
- lean in—sit with an open stance, legs apart, straight back between 30 and 45 degrees forwards of vertical, with elbows on knees;
- adjust distance—between 2 and 4 feet (60–120 cm) between eye-balls. This can be ‘adjusted’ by finding the distance where joint energy peaks;
- avoid distracting behaviour—fiddling, snuffling, smoking, etc..

Skilled behavioural attending creates the sense of comfortable involvement which is observable to others as ‘congruent expression’ (an ‘in-tune-ness’).

Psychological attending

Psychological attending relates to the **inner clarity** which the counsellor experiences. The skill steps are:

- attend contextually and behaviourally;
- suspend own values and preconceived ideas;
- ‘still’ any inner distractions;
- actively focus attention with a caring mind and heart.

Facilitating exploration

What really accelerates the client's freedom to talk honestly about a confusing issue is the counsellor's ability to communicate an accurate, intimate understanding of each aspect as it is presented. This ability was called empathy when it was first identified. Nowadays, the skill that expresses empathy that is often called **responding**. The degree of empathy can now be measured, and used to predict the quality of the counsellor's skill, and extent of client's exploration. Clearly, before counsellors can respond accurately (show complete empathy) they must themselves understand what the client is describing as the ‘story’ unfolds. The information used to develop this understanding flows from the continuous, skilful **observation** of and **listening** to the client.

The **confrontation** of inconsistencies, distortions and gaps in the client's information is another skill that, in association with responding, will facilitate exploration.

Observing non-verbal information

The skilled counsellor observes non-verbal information in order to draw accurate inferences about the client. In counselling, such inferences relate more often to the way

the client is feeling than to other aspects—such as their motives. Each inference is shared, responsively, with the client so that its accuracy can be checked. The effect of this will be discussed, later, under ‘Responding’. The skills steps of observing are:

- attend;
- observe the **context**:
 - physical;
 - geographical;
 - psychological;
 - cultural;
 - social (including role);
 - environmental factors.
- observe the **appearance**:
 - body build;
 - clothing;
 - grooming;
 - muscle tone;
 - skin texture;
 - eye clarity;
 - hands etc..
- observe **voluntary behaviour**:
 - use of space;
 - posture;
 - gesture;
 - movement;
 - nature, frequency and duration of eye contact;
 - frequency and triggers for smoking.
- observe **involuntary behaviour**:
 - rate, regularity, and depth of breathing;
 - blushing;
 - facial tics;
 - tears;
 - eye movement to identify way information is accessed.
- utilise the information observed from the context, the client’s appearance, and their behaviour (and the congruity between all observed information) to draw inferences of what is indicated in terms of the client’s feelings, what it means, and what the implications might be for the client.

Listening to verbal information

The skilled counsellor listens in order to **hear** the verbal content, and the way in which things were said, in order to draw accurate inferences about what clients **mean** by what they are saying (or not saying), and to corroborate or modify the ‘feeling’ inference drawn from their observations. Each inference is shared, responsively, with the client so that the accuracy of understanding can be checked. The effect of this is also discussed under ‘Responding’, below.

The skills steps of listening are:

- attend;
- observe;
- suspend own judgements, values and preconceived ideas;
- resist distractions (internal and external);
- focus on the client's words;
- focus on the non-verbal information (called para-linguistics)—such as rate, fluency, volume, intonation, accent, inflection, etc.;
- reflect on the content to identify:
 - **who** is being discussed;
 - **what** specifically is being discussed;
 - **where** the people/items/events are located;
 - **when** the events occurred;
 - **why** the content is important to the speaker;
 - **how** things are being tackled;
 - **what** the implications are;
- ensure that information is consistent with previous data;
- augment observed data with paralinguistic information to check one's accuracy of the client's feeling state.

Responding to client information

When the counsellor has attended, observed and listened to the client, and used the verbal and non-verbal information to draw their 'best inference' about the client's feeling and meaning, it is time to test the accuracy of that understanding with the client. This is done in the form of a simple, concise verbal response. When the client hears the response, they will judge whether or not it is accurate and will say so either in words, a nod, grimace, or other non-verbal signal. In this way the counsellor knows how accurate their inference has been (or in other words how good their skills are). At the same time, the client knows whether they have been really understood (or in other words how good the counsellor's skills are). This is critical information for both. The realities are that clients tend to 'give up' on counsellors who are consistently inaccurate, and learn to trust and respect those who are consistently accurate.

A powerful consequence of all this is that, whilst the counsellor is busy focusing on the client's world, there is no opportunity for personal criticism, judgment, premature advice or even 'bright ideas'— all of which would work against a constructive outcome.

Ongoing, quality responding facilitates quality exploration which expands, and orders, the earlier confusion; so that, when this phase is concluded, the client has a clear picture of where they stand in relation to the issues discussed. This provides a substantial base for the next phases of the process—understanding, and action.

Counsellors can respond to client information in three ways:

- intellectually to the **meaning**;
- emotionally to the **feeling**;
- totally, to both **feeling** and **meaning**.

Responding to meaning

Responding to meaning aims to communicate the ‘essence’ of what has been said or asked. The skill steps are:

- attend, observe and listen;
- reflect on content;
- identify the key topic;
- ‘qualify’ the topic—work out what it does, means or implies;
- clarify your understanding in your head;
- share your understanding in a brief response of approximately 10–15 words by using the format:

‘You’re saying that...’.

Responding to feeling

Responding to feeling aims to communicate an accurate understanding of the emotion associated with what has been said, or has been experienced during a period of silence. The skill steps are:

- attend, observe and listen;
- reflect on content—verbal and non-verbal;
- identify the overall demeanour—+ (‘up’), 0 (neutral), or – (‘down’);
- categorise the demeanour (say ‘up’) into a more specific mood, e.g. ‘happy’;
- refine the mood category (using information about energy level) to capture the right intensity of the ‘mood’, eg, ‘jubilant’ (high energy happy);
- mentally check your inference against what has been observed and heard;
- share your understanding in the format:

‘You feel...’

Responding to feeling and meaning

Responding to both feeling and meaning aims to communicate an understanding of the current feeling and, from what has been said, what caused it. The skill steps are:

- attend, observe and listen;
- reflect on the client’s content—verbal and non-verbal;
- identify the feeling (as above);
- specify the ‘reason for the feeling’—this can be simple and ‘conversational’, or ‘advanced’ and intimate;
- a conversational response identifies the feeling and says what caused it. It uses the format:

‘You feel...(current feeling)...because...(reason for feeling)’.

- an example of a conversational response is:
‘You feel pleased because these notes are relatively short’.
- an advanced response;
 - identifies the feeling;
 - identifies what ‘triggered’ (caused) the feeling;
 - works out how it triggered it (finds the verb to say what the trigger did);

- specifies the personal implication (consequences) for the client
- An advanced response uses the format:
 '*You feel...because...(external trigger)...(dynamic verb)...(impact on client).*'
- an example of an advanced response is:
 '*You feel grateful because the brevity of these notes (trigger) enables (dynamic verb) you to revise key points without wading through unnecessary detail*' (personal implication).

Note the causal link between emotion and intellect facilitated by the word 'because'.

Facilitating understanding

When the exploration is complete, the client has an understanding of where they stand' in relation to the issue. They now have to somehow work out what they want or need to do about it. They cannot do too much about the imperfect circumstances in which they may find themselves; but they can (and need to) assume personal responsibility to **change** their own behaviour in relation to it, **adapt** to it, or **quit** with good reason and dignity. The skills used to assume such responsibility for such action are called the **personalising** skills. There are four progressive steps, which process and synthesise the exploratory data. They are called personalising the 'meaning', the 'problem', the 'new feeling' and the 'goal'. They are complex steps and are described below in outline only.

Personalising skills

Personalising the meaning

This step **describes** what the person **does** in their circumstances (**especially what they continue to do to maintain a problem**)—that we call the 'do-do'—and captures the overall pervasive (usually negative) feeling which is associated with the description. The following format helps to formulate a personalised meaning:

You...(verb...perceptions of related history).
You...(verb...relevant qualities/attributes).
You...(verb...things experienced).
You...(verb...expectations).
You...(verb...things done—especially the 'do-do').
You...(verb...things not done).
You...(verb...things avoided).
You...(verb...consequent effect).
You...(verb...future implications),
and all that makes you feel...(overall, pervasive feeling)'.

The meaning statement should include the 'do-do'—the client's 'bad habit' that perpetuates the problem. For example

'You constantly complain about your kids, but you let them get away with murder'.

Personalising the problem

When the client has acknowledged the accuracy and adequacy of the description, the process moves to the next step—personalising the problem. Its function is to **diagnose** what skill the client **lacks** to account for the ongoing negative feeling in this area of his/her life. The test for the accuracy of this diagnosis is to recognise that the **presence**

of the same skill (if acquired) would fix the problem, and change the negative feeling into an ongoing positive feeling.

The diagnosis must **pinpoint** the skill so that it is ‘**news**’ to the client—it is less helpful to describe a skill deficit that they already know about. The skill is to keep asking: ‘*So what skill do they need to have to be able to do the skill that they know they can’t yet do*’.

The format is:

*‘You feel...(same pervasive feeling)...because you **cannot**...(skill deficit).’*

Personalising the new feeling

When the relevant skill deficit has been pinpointed, not only will the ‘penny drop’ for the client, but they will ‘give themselves a hard time’. They have negative feelings about themselves; they wonder why they hadn’t thought of that pinpointed skill before, or worked it out for themselves, or similar. This self-criticism needs to be responded to, so that it is ‘dealt with’, and they can move on towards constructive action. The response is in the form:

*You feel...(new feeling) at
with yourself because...(restate the deficit).’
deep inside*

Personalising the goal

When the new, inner-directed feeling has been acknowledged, there is a refocusing of energy which intuitively wants to develop the missing skill, and create a more positive meaning to life. This step formalises that desire. It ‘flips’ the deficit into an asset and expresses it in the form of a goal. The format is:

*You feel...(new feeling) at yourself because...(deficit) and you
with want...(flipped deficit) so that...
deep inside (anticipated benefit).’*

Personalising ‘assets’

The process described for dealing with issues that have negative connotations applies equally well in communicating an understanding of positive experiences. For example, a personalised meaning statement could describe an instances where the pervasive feeling is joyful in some way or another. This means that in step 2, there is no ‘problem’ and no skill deficit to identify. Here it is possible to affirm the achievements of others by identifying their ‘assets’—the skills that they have utilised—the things they can do. In such cases the format changes to:

*‘You feel...(pervasive feeling)...because you **can/have done**...(skill asset).’*

It follows that the ‘new feeling’ will also be positive—like, ‘*tickled pink with yourself*’. The goal statement will also have a positive ring that talks about building on the current assets, and reaping further benefits.

Used in this way, counsellors, teachers, and parents can affirm and encourage those whom they have the privilege of nurturing.

Facilitating action

When the personalised goal has emerged, in the last step, a clear ‘**what**’ has emerged. Before setting off to achieve the goal, it pays to sort out the other relevant factors which will increase the probability of successful achievement, that is, to make the goal **operational**. If there are some difficulties in this step, such as unresolved debate about

the best way to approach a task, then additional data might need to be considered, and a decision-making strategy employed before the plans are made and implemented.

Defining goals in operational terms

This step asks practical ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘where’, ‘when’, ‘why’, and ‘how’ (5W2H) questions to make sure that the goal will have the best chance of succeeding. These questions make it possible to:

- list all who are (or will be) involved;
- specify what is to happen;
- set a realistic target dates and times to start, finish, and review;
- state the venue or location of the activity or action;
- state how it will be tackled;
- express why it is being done (a rationale and anticipated benefits);
- state how success will be verified (in quantifiable terms);
- link these elements in a connected way to become the ‘operational goal’.

Deciding on the best approach

Sometimes defining a goal in ‘do-able’ (operational) terms can be confusing because a number of alternatives could apply to a particular aspect. For example, if the ‘what’ is to have a holiday, the ‘where’ could be unclear because Perth, Sydney, or Darwin may all be equally attractive, but for different reasons. A decision-making process is needed to work out the best option. This process will consider all feasible alternatives, and consider all the factors, including personal values, that relate to the decision. Furthermore, each factor will be ‘weighted’ to indicate its relative importance to the client. The decision-making process makes a series of ‘mini-decisions’ as to how favourably each option expresses each factor. The results of all the mini-decisions for each option add up to show which is the preferred option to take for the overall decision. The viability of the preferred option can be calculated.

Action planning

When the operational goal is clear, in all elements—including the preferred holiday resort—a systematic plan can be developed to achieve the goal. The rudiments involve the development and sequencing of manageable steps, with appropriate checkpoints to assess and reward progress, within a predetermined time line. It will incorporate comprehensive resource lists and standards for evaluation.

Implementation

When a suitable plan has been developed, the action can begin. Some clients may need support during the implementation. On occasions, some planned steps may need to be modified if unforeseen contingencies occur. Success should be rewarded and celebrated. New learnings should be noted for future use. This is how we learn and grow.

Notes for trainers

Preamble

Apart from the administrative and organisational aspects of delivering training programs, there are three broad educational aspects that must be addressed. The first ensures that a broad content is outlined to reflect the nature of the particular program. The second aspect requires that a plan is developed so that the content can be systematically covered at a level of sophistication that is appropriate for particular learners, in the allocated time for the conducting of a program. The third aspect involves the ‘delivery’ of the sequenced sessions in ways that meet individual learning needs as the learners progress towards achieving predetermined standards.

This chapter will comment briefly on the resources that we have found helpful with our efforts at content development and session planning for our training programs. The chapter will also consider some administrative aspects in preparing for delivery of a program, an outline of presentation strategies, and a discussion on the individualising of learning for each participant. The latter section will include some practical tips that we have found to be particularly useful.

Developing course content

It seems ideal to be able to schematise a course content (in any area) on one page so that its comprehensiveness can be assessed, at a glance, by any interested party, and used as a basic reference document to ensure that all aspects are covered when planning sessional details. In developing our first course content, we followed the strategy suggested by Berenson, Berenson and Carkhuff (1978) and Carkhuff and Berenson (1981).

Simply put, this strategy (known by the acronym CUTTS), names the **C**ourse, specifies the broad **U**nits to be undertaken, lists the **T**opics to be covered in each unit, identifies the **T**asks to be undertaken in each topic, and spells out the **S**kills required for each task. Figure 52, on the following page, shows how these elements can be charted for any course in an area that culminates in skills.

The content is developed by working from left to right. The sessions are subsequently planned and delivered by starting with a broad overview of the course, and then try considering each task (and associated skills) ‘down the page’, so to speak.

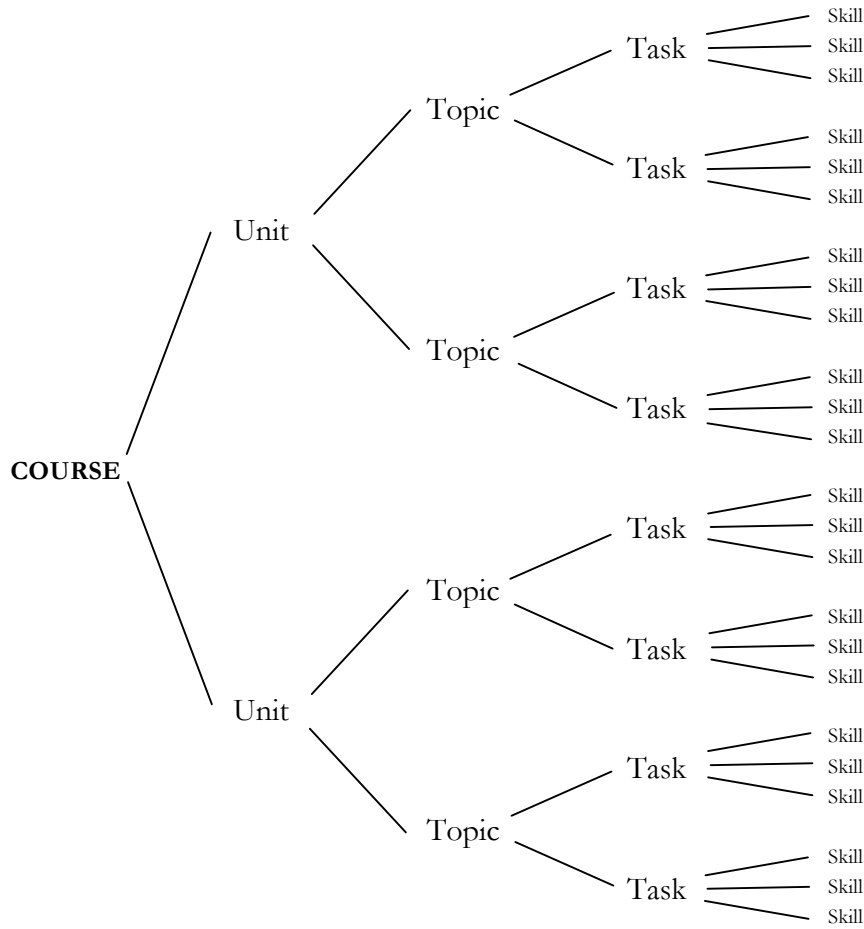


Figure 52. Showing the CUTTS method of developing a course content, slightly modified from Berenson, Berenson and Carkhuff (1978, p. 49).

Our past courses were charted on an A3 page, so we simply detail, in Figure 52, a breakdown the ‘Pre-helping’ unit, the ‘Vigilance’ topic, and associated tasks and skills.

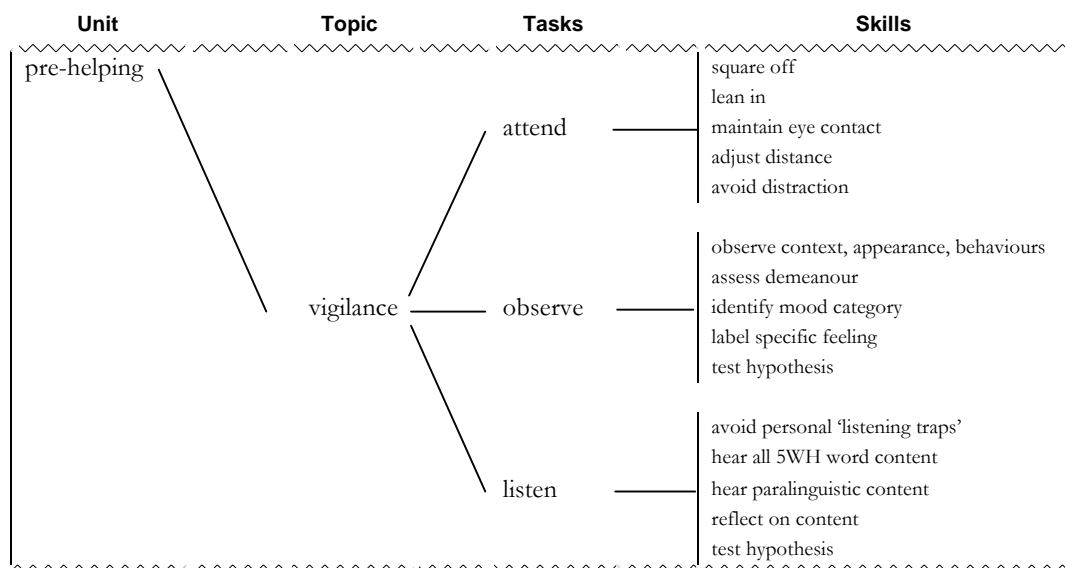


Figure 53. Showing the tasks and skills related to the vigilance topic in the pre-helping unit of a helping skills course.

Planning individual sessions

Once the broad content has been developed for the course, decisions are made about how it can be organised into digestible, bite-sized sessions for presentation to learners. The first session will overview the broad course content to give students an appreciation of how the units, topics, tasks and skills interrelate. Subsequent sessions will focus on each task and associated skills in turn—from top to bottom of the CUTTS chart.

In developing lesson plans, we have drawn on the strategies provided by Berenson, Berenson and Carkhuff (1978a) and Carkhuff and Berenson (1981). They describe a framework known by the acronym, **ROPES**. The tasks to be undertaken in ROPES are:

- R Review** to develop an activity to **review** learners' current knowledge and competence related to the given content;
- O Overview** to provide an **overview** of the content that will expand learners' pictures, and motivate them to learn more;
- P Present** to **present** details of the skill steps of the content to so that learners can see how to move from where they are (the reviewed picture) to where they want to be (the overviewed picture);
- E Exercise** to structure an **exercise(s)** that will give learners ways to practice skills and integrate underpinning knowledge;
- S Summary** to allocate time for learners to discuss the learning experience and **summarise** their 'new' picture, and experience, of the content.

Each component warrants further comment.

The 'review' component

Reviewing current competence in relation to a specific content area, needs to be more than just asking students to list 'what they currently do' when using a related skill (as we have mostly done in this text for readers who are not involved in a regular program). The review step should be both active and fun. For example, one way of reviewing the attending skills, is to pair off students as 'partner 1' and 'partner 2'. Then ask students to scatter themselves around the room so that partners are distant from each other. Instruct partners 1 to 'stay put', and invite partners 2 to do whatever they need to do to be fully attentive to their partner. Instruct students to consciously note what they do, and to not talk during the exercise.

All active partners will usually move closer to their partner, some will stand alongside, some will stand opposite, others will stand at various angles. Many will make at least intermittent eye contact, Some will get chairs and sit near, opposite, or angled to, their partners. Some of those seated may slouch back, with legs crossed and arms folded. Other will have more open postures. A few will lean in towards their partners. Almost all will have forgotten the request to attend silently.

Within a minute or two, the presenting trainer asks the students to 'freeze', and note the different 'poses' around the room. Members of the training team will focus on the postures of the students in their small group in order to 'diagnose' each student's current skill level. The diagnosis continues as students discuss what they consciously

knew, or did not know, about the five elements of attending. The elements will be listed on the whiteboard as they are discussed. Both trainers and trainees will now be aware of where learners ‘are’ in relation to attending skills. This is the level at which the trainer and learner ‘meet’. The diagnosis helps the trainer to pitch future comments at a level that matches the needs of the learners. As Carkhuff and Berenson point out: ‘The review is particularly critical if we implement the fundamental principle of learning: *all learning begins with the learner’s frame of reference*’ (1981, pp. 67–68).

The ‘overview’ component

The overview flows on from the review segment. Here the presenting trainer shares his or her picture of the content with words, demonstrations, and/or activities that link with the students’ picture. As the overview proceeds, learners experience the gap between where they are, and where the trainer is, and thus learning goals can emerge, and be made overt. Students want more than just knowing about the topic—they want to learn the skills that perform the tasks related to given topics—a need that is met in the remaining components of ROPES that follow the overview.

In our continuing example, the trainer will build on students’ picture of attending. This involves filling any ‘blanks’ in the students understanding of the ‘facts’ (what attending is); the ‘concepts’ (what attending does) the ‘principles’ (why attending is important, and what benefits it brings) and its ‘applications’ (where and when attending is applied).¹³ The overview should be an interactive learning experience—not just a ‘lecture’. As a simple example, when discussing how attending leads to involvement, the presenter could stand ‘side on’ to students, and peer out the window for a short period, and then invite feedback on the impact of the withdrawal.

The ‘present’ component

The presentation flows from the overview. It is the ‘how to do it’ element of ROPES. The presentation firstly describes what the skill steps are, and how they are sequenced. The skill steps must be sufficiently detailed to seem absurdly obvious to some, but absolutely necessary for the tentative novice. The skills will then be demonstrated in some way to show how the steps perform the required task. Students will then be given the opportunity to perform the steps themselves. At this point, larger groups will break into smaller practice groups.

The ‘exercise’ component

The exercise component provides opportunity for students to practice the skills and receive individual coaching. The formats of the practice sessions have already been described in the chapter that is relevant to each skill. It is useful for students to consider application of the skills beyond the counselling session. Strategies to individualise coaching will be discussed later under ‘teaching delivery’.

The ‘summary’ component

The purpose of the summary component is for both trainers and trainees to check out what has been learned, both in terms of knowledge and skill mastery. In a sense, it is an

¹³ The summaries of Chapters 6–17 have been structured to briefly describe each topic in terms of related facts, concepts, principles, objectives and skills. These are the core elements covered by the overview and presentation elements of ROPES.

‘update’ of the review. The discussion can affirm new learning, identify areas that need further practice, and provide a sense of preparedness to move on to the next skill. At the conclusion of each related chapter of this book, we have provided a summary sheet for readers to summarise what they have learned, and what applications they can see at home, at work, and in the community.

Teaching delivery

In overall terms, a trainer’s task is to establish and nurture a climate where there is the desire and freedom to learn. This means that the training team must be well organised, knowledgeable, skilled, authentic, caring, and fun-loving. It means maintaining a balance between empathic understanding and assertive initiatives; modelling the principle of concession, and expecting it to apply generally (recall page 44). In more specific terms, to deliver an effective program, trainers need to prepare well, present well, and individualise learning for each participant. Each aspect will be discussed in broad terms.

Prepare well

Apart from the preparation of course content, there are a number of organisational matters that help to individualise the training experience for participants. Programs can be conducted at different levels of complexity, and may, or may not, be offered as a nationally accredited program in Australia. In a nationally accredited program, trainers must either be a Registered Training Provider, or be in a contractual partnership with a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) that handles broad administrative matters. The following summary will exclude RTO functions, and list points that have relevance for trainers in enhancing the training experience for individuals.

Before participants enrol

- ensure that advertisements are simply worded, and invite further enquiry;
- ensure that all enquiries are dealt with courteously and comprehensively:
 - invite enquirers to attend one of several predetermined ‘information sessions’ to meet trainers and discuss a detailed ‘information pack’—a suitably printed set of information that covers all (5WH) aspects of the program, and includes an application form (which seeks details of preferred refreshments);
 - post an information pack to enquirers who show real interest, but who have difficulty in attending an information session;
 - record personal and contact details of those who agree to attend the information session, or who have been posted information—record ‘preferred’ name as well as formal details;
- arrange the correct number of chairs for information session in horseshoe formation where practicable, not rows; place information packs on chairs before guests arrive;
- greet guests appropriately; provide name tag with their preferred name in bold type that can be read from across the room; offer, and personally serve, suitable refreshments—alcohol is less preferred for a work meeting;

In courses that offer professional training (2 or 3 year accredited courses), we also include a pro-forma that invites enquirers to provide evidence of their activities in

selected areas that typify effective counsellors.¹⁴ We only seek this information from people who decide to lodge a firm application. All applicants are later interviewed, and these profiles are discussed. This helps applicants decide whether counselling is ‘for them’ or not. We do not seek this information for shorter ‘personal development’ programs.

After participants apply to register

- arrange an interview to discuss questions arising from information pack, the ‘profile’ information supplied by client, their motivation, practicalities, whether part or full time etc.;
- assess each applicant against predetermined criteria; ours criteria match the areas listed in footnote 14 (we have developed 5 level scales to operationalise each element of the profile);
- comply with current national training requirements, and remain ‘transparent’ in all that is said and done during interview;
- advise ‘offer’ and ‘acceptance’ procedures for registration;
- at the conclusion of the interview, and before applicants depart, they may be requested to complete a ‘Communication and Discrimination Index’, and a comprehension test to assess their ability to abstract and summarise data;
- establish comprehensive records required by the RTO;
- use selection assessment information to decide on student groupings:
 - for practice work groups:
 - limit groups size to nine (this allows for splitting into three triads);
 - ensure gender balance across groups;
 - ensure ‘energy’ distribution within and across groups;
 - ensure ‘age’ distribution within and across groups;
 - avoid including those with ‘known agendas’—domestic partners, friends;
 - for ‘buddies’:
 - list pairs of participants, who live in the same area, who can ‘cover’ for each other, in different ways, if one should be absent for any reason;
 - buddies self-select after a semester break when they know each other.
- prepare name tags with enlarged, preferred names; prepare training materials, and label a copy for each participant using their preferred name.

Preparing the team

The task is to ensure that ‘all hands’ are familiar with program details so that the delivery is smooth, consistent, and effective.

- in the week before the program commences, meet with the training team to:
 - establish, or recommit to, ‘operating norms’;
 - review the practice group listings and relevant participant information;

¹⁴ The profile that we have used is our own synthesis of skills discussed by McLeod (2003, pp. 478- 493), and the personal qualities that PACFA describes as characteristic of effective counsellors. Our list includes: literacy skills, responsibility for own learning, self-awareness, cooperative and contributive spirit, flexibility, capacity for abstract thought, and basic study skills.

- review the overall program outline;
- allocate management and training tasks;
- celebrate the ‘togetherness’ of the training team.

Preparing the venue

The task is to set up the training venue early, so that training staff are totally free to meet, greet, and host participants in ways that model effective contextual attending.

- book the venue for the afternoon before the start of early morning programs;
- arrange furnishings in the plenary and all syndicate (practice) rooms;
- check all training aids—video, overhead projector, amplification etc.; ensure that spare globes, whiteboard markers and dusters are in place;
- check that lighting and temperature controls are functional;
- prepare ‘common room’; fill urns, check supplies of beverages and biscuits—the range should cover all items listed as preferred on application forms;
- prepare adequate ‘welcome’ signs—to greet at gate and direct to venue;
- set out name tags and training manuals at the reception area;
- talk to cleaning staff to ensure that setting up arrangements are workable, or leave a clear written request of requirements, and make a follow up check.

Preparing yourself

The task is to ensure that there will be no ‘contingencies’ when the program gets under way on the morrow.

- it is taken as read that the program is well prepared, but make time for a last minute check to ensure that all that you need for the first day is in order;

Day 1—setting the scene

The task is to ensure an effective, happy start. If the setting up was thorough, the training team will be free to act as hosts to arriving participants who will be treated as guests. The leader will:

- arrive early enough to see that the urn is boiling half an hour before start time; all rooms are unlocked; and the ‘setup’ is unchanged (it can happen); and that heating or cooling is switched on if needed;
- have some team members greet participants outside and ‘bring’ them to the reception area, when possible, (this gets tricky once the ‘rush’ starts);
- encourage trainers to personally serve hospitality (recall the notion of ‘symbolic nurturing’ on page 385), and mingle and socialise generally;
- start program on time for the formal welcome and introductions.

Present well

The presentation of each new skill uses the ROPES strategy that has been previously described. Inherent in that process is the ‘tell’, ‘show’, ‘do’ method.

The ‘tell’ step

The ‘tell’ step presents the skills in ways that link the student review with the trainers overview picture. It spells out the skill steps in detail. The tell step essentially uses words that can be spoken or written. The telling is enhanced when learners can both hear and

see the words. If amplification is needed, it is wise to avoid hand-held or ‘fixed’ microphones. Lapel or headset microphones offer greater flexibility.

There are many aids for communicating key words in writing. The most frequently used are: whiteboard, overhead projector, computerised slide show such as ‘PowerPoint’, flipcharts, posters, and handout materials.

The telling should minimise the ‘lecture’ method, and be as interactive as possible.

The ‘show’ step

The tell step describes the skill steps. The ‘show’ step demonstrates them. There is merit in the presenter, or one of the training team, actually modelling the skill, but other options such as film, video, or DVD can also be used effectively. We happily use role-plays to ‘mock-up’ demonstrations about good and bad greeting skills, but avoid their use in demonstrating responding and higher order skills. In these areas we require that what is being modelled relates to real material, so that the feedback given is authentic, not hypothetical.

The ‘do’ step

In each presentation there is opportunity for students to ‘do’ the step. This adds the kinaesthetic dimension to the auditory and visual inputs of the presentation. This step can involve individual or small, informal group exercises or activities related to the skill. It may simply be a first attempt at performing the skill that will be practised in the formal practice group that follows the presentation.

Individualise learning

Learning to acquire a skill requires individual coaching. Each learner joins a program with different levels of ‘residual’ skills. These are identified by establishing individual baselines. Each participant learns at their own rate, and each negotiates new hurdles with different levels of confidence and aptitude. This means that trainers (and eventually participants) must be skilled, as coaches, to ‘tailor’ appropriate tasks with a complexity that challenge learners without discouraging them.

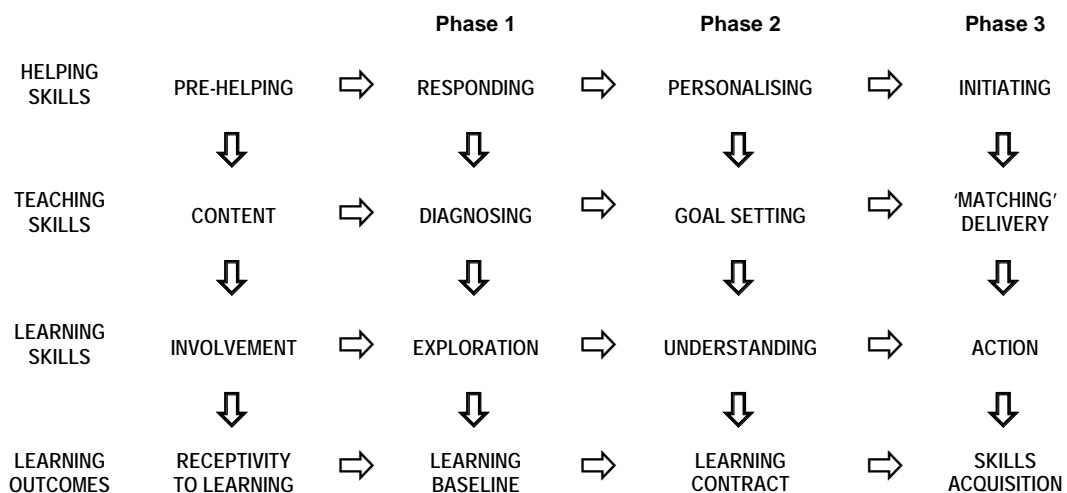


Figure 54. Showing the interrelationship between the blended helping/teaching skills and the learning skills and outcomes.

Figure 54 shows how, in the educational setting, the ‘helping skills’ are applied as ‘teaching skills’ whereby teachers ‘diagnose’, ‘set goals’, and offer a ‘matching delivery’. Trainers diagnose where learning groups and individual learners ‘are’ by being responsive to the group review, and to individual performance during practice sessions. Having ‘met’ learners where they are, trainers then set group learning goals through discussion during the ‘overview’, and individual learning goals by negotiation during practice. Trainers are then able to ‘pitch’ the group presentation in ways that match the broad needs of learners, and tailor the coaching initiatives to match the specific needs of individual learners. The schematic representation is a modified version of the process described by Carkhuff and Berenson (1976, p. 75).

It is not appropriate to try to cover all the skills required for the coaching function. It is assumed that anyone wanting to train in this area will have undertaken professional training themselves. The modelling of their trainers, the references supplied, and the content of this book should help new trainers to get started. We wish you well. Your richest learning will come from your learners.

Summary

This chapter offered a simple introduction to some of the principles involved in developing the content for a skills training program, and for planning the individual sessions needed to deliver that content. The discussion on teaching delivery was limited to descriptions of steps to highlight some of the key points in preparing for a program, presenting information to students, and individualising their learning. The point was made that anyone wanting to undertake a training role should learn from three sources: the modelling of the trainers in their own professional training, the references supplied (and any text on teaching), and finally—and most importantly—from their learners.

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PART THREE

APPENDICES: REVIEW TOOLS

Appendix I

Personal skills questionnaire

This exercise aims to stimulate your awareness of your level of personal resourcefulness. What you already know will be affirmed, and gaps in either your awareness or your actual resourcefulness will become clearer. The exercise may simply help you to focus more as you read Chapter 3, from page 48, or you may wish to summarise your reflections in the space provided at the end of the exercise, so that you can write action plans for self-development in the areas that seem desirable for you. You may wish to get feedback from others about your perceptions, or seek objective data where possible.

If you are undertaking a regular program, you may wish to simply browse the questionnaire, complete it at your leisure, or when recommended by your trainer.

Health management

	YES	NO
1. Do you know what constitutes a balanced, healthy diet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you eat balanced meals regularly (as opposed to skipping meals or eating 'junk' food)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are you sensitive to your own body's needs (as opposed to only being aware of a malfunction when you experience pain)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are you aware of exactly what things you can do to contribute to your own health?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you assume responsibility for your own health (as opposed to 'leaving all that to the doctor')?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are you aware of the short and long term effects of chemical usage on your body (including pharmaceuticals, tobacco, alcohol, food additives)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Do you attempt to monitor and limit your usage of potentially harmful chemicals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Do you have (at least) annual health, hearing, eye and dental checks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Do you always wear protective gear when operating equipment which is potentially injurious to health (e.g. ear protection when using power tools)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Are you aware of the sources, effects and potential remedies of environmental pollutants?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Do you consistently try to avoid or minimise the effects of environmental pollutants (e.g. traffic fumes, your garbage)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Do you attempt in any way to help maintain the world's ecological balance (e.g. by tree planting, avoiding excessive use of paper products)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Can you consciously relax sufficiently to lower your heart rate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Have you ever tested and evaluated, for yourself, any complementary health therapies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Do you expand your verbal, visual and auditory capacity (e.g. by doing crosswords, eye exercises, spatial imagery tests, exercises in listening to sounds, pitch etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Do you stimulate your logical and lateral thinking ability (e.g. by doing 'brain teasers')?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Self discipline

Rest, recreation and balance	YES	NO
1. Do you know what amount and quality of sleep you personally need and ensure that you get it?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you have 'fun' in your life (as opposed to all duty and responsibility)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Have you got at least one recreational interest which you pursue on a regular basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you take brief 'time out' periods during your working day to refresh and 're-charge'?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Do you make opportunities to savour your meals regularly with loved ones (as opposed to usually rushing through them)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Do you feel you have a satisfying balance between work, family, recreational, and individual commitments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Self discipline: rest, recreation and balance – continued

YES NO

- 7. Do you regularly review your time priorities?
- 8. Can you say ‘no’ decently to demands made upon you to which you feel some obligation but feel uncommitted?
- 9. Do you ensure you have regular contact with at least two people whose opinion you value and who affirm and expand your perspectives?
- 10. Do you maintain a social network with which you identify and which supports you?

Self-discipline: organisation

- 1. Do you have appropriate, designated places for things you use at home and work (as opposed to not having any system)?
- 2. Do you consistently put things away in their ‘designated places’ after using them (as opposed to ‘just leaving them there for now’)?
- 3. Do you consciously try to learn the names of things, equipment, people (as opposed to calling them ‘thingumabobs’)?
- 4. Do you have (and refine) collective ‘labels’ (classification systems) for people, things and events as a way of streamlining your personal organisation; (e.g. are all relevant social events, work appointments, public holidays and birthdays listed in your diary)?
- 5. Do you make conscious efforts to remember things you may need to recall; (e.g. location of public telephones, post offices, petrol stations etc.)?
- 6. Do you have ‘routines’ for regular, necessary tasks in your life; (e.g. checking car oil, tyres and water) to minimise crises?
- 7. Do you consciously acquire information outside your ‘specialty’ area; (e.g. current affairs, scientific advances) so that you have general knowledge on which to draw?
- 8. Do you have broad philosophical perspectives about life and work which allow you to ‘classify’ and ‘file’ the information with which we which we are bombarded daily?

Physical fitness

YES NO

- 1. Do you know what the various areas of fitness are?
- 2. Do you know, in objective terms, what your fitness level is?
- 3. Do you undertake any form of physical activity on a regular basis?
- 4. Do you know what **kinds** of exercise improve **which** area of fitness?
- 5. Do you stand, walk and climb stairs when you can (as opposed to sitting, driving or taking elevators most of the time)?
- 6. Do you use physical activity as a means of regenerating your emotional and intellectual reserves (as opposed to ‘flopping in front of the TV’ after a draining day at work)?

Decency

Greeting and farewelling

YES NO

- 1. Do you greet family, friends and colleagues warmly with eye contact?
- 2. Do you use people’s names when you talk to them?

- Decency: greeting and farewelling – continued** **YES** **NO**
3. Do you generally make some comment, on greeting people, which shows that you are interested in them personally (e.g. asking how they went with a project)?
 4. Do you generally try to ensure that you wind up conversations with a positive summary of what has been achieved or shared?
 5. Would you say that you leave most interactions in a way you would not regret if you never saw that person again?
 6. Do you ever smile and say hello to people in lifts or shops?

Appropriate courtesies

1. Do you modify your approach to people according to their age, race or culture (or do you use some stereotyped greeting such as hugging or slapping people on the back)?
2. Do you know anything about what is considered appropriate behaviour with people who come from different age groups, social or cultural backgrounds from your own?
3. Do you try to dress appropriately for the occasion (work or social) or do you insist that others ‘take you as you are’?

Considerate, kind behaviour

1. Do you frequently offer to meet someone else’s obvious, but not necessarily expressed, need (e.g. make a cup of coffee)?
2. Do you say thank you for jobs done for you—even if you consider it to be that person’s responsibility to do the job?
3. Do you ever notice if anyone needs a little assistance, and give it, (e.g. opening the door for someone with their arms full)?
4. Do you ever do something nice for anyone else just for the joy of giving a gift which says to them, ‘I care about you’?
5. Do you usually check other people’s state of mind or availability before you rush in with your idea, your need or your plan?

Vigilance

- Attentiveness** **YES** **NO**
1. Do you maintain a state of open alertness to daily occurrences, people, signs, etc. for 70% of the time or more (as opposed to being preoccupied with your own thoughts)?
 2. Do you successfully attempt to focus on people, things and events outside yourself (as opposed to being self-conscious or assuming that the way other people behave or react is caused by you)?
 3. Do you consciously ‘still’ inner distractions; (e.g. criticisms or ‘personal tangents’) when listening to others?
 4. Do you have eye contact with the person, thing or event with which you are involved; (e.g. speaker or visual aids at a lecture)?
 5. Do you consciously position your body in a way which enables you to maximise getting accurate information (and minimise eye-strain)?
 6. Does positioning your body include facing the person (or ‘thing’ such as TV or book) squarely, with your eyes as near as possible to the same height as the other (e.g. sit if they are sitting so as not to ‘tower’ over them)?
 7. Does positioning your body include adjusting the distance between the person/thing and yourself so that you are neither intrusive nor ‘distant’?

Vigilance: attentiveness – continued **YES** **NO**

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8. Does positioning your body include leaning forward to communicate interest in others or adjusting the angle of your book so that you view it at right angles? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Do you deliberately minimise external distractions to your attentiveness when necessary; (e.g. mobile phone, noise, interruptions or barriers)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Vigilance: observation

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do you have a system for classifying what you see in order to give your observations meaning; (e.g. know what various aspects of non-verbal behaviour mean)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Can you honestly say that you rarely make judgments about people based on limited first impressions; (i.e. stereotyping)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. When you observe other people are you usually accurate in the inferences that you make about them? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do you fully utilise information obtained through your peripheral vision to predict what could happen and foresee potential hazards; (e.g. conclude that a parked car with fumes coming from the exhaust may suddenly pull away from the kerb)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Could you describe what three colleagues or members of your family wore yesterday? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Can you detail at least ten different factors about any office (other than yours) in which you have recently been; (e.g. type and arrangement of furniture, colours, wall hangings, orderliness etc.)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Can you usually assess people’s ages to within 3-5 years from appearance alone? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Can you say with certainty whether someone you met for the first time in the last 3 months wears glasses? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Can you say with certainty whether someone you met for the first time in the last 3 months bites their nails or not? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Can you say with certainty whether someone you met for the first time in the last 3 months has any signs of ill health or not (e.g. stiff movements, cloudy eyes, varicose veins etc.)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Do you consciously note any discrepancies, changes in people’s behaviour or dress, or any inconsistencies in their appearance (e.g. smart suit with dirty shoes)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Are you sensitive to the facial expressions which indicate surprise, unease, puzzlement, resistance, confusion, pain (physical or emotional), annoyance, emotional control etc.? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Vigilance: listening

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Do you usually obtain accurate information when listening to others (as opposed to saying later ‘but I thought you said...’)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Do you usually get dates, times and places of appointments right? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Do you have a way of ‘filing’ verbal information in your head so that you can recall the salient points quickly and easily? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Do you actively listen, for 70% of the time or more, when others are talking, (as opposed to developing ‘ counter arguments ’ in your head)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Do you actively listen, for 70% of the time or more, when others are talking, (as opposed to working out what you would like to say about yourself)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Do you actively listen, for 70% of the time or more, when others are talking without cutting in or ‘ talking over them ’ etc.? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Are you aware of what subjects or situations limit your capacity to hear ‘straight’? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Vigilance: listening – continued**YES NO**

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8. Can you generally ‘sum up’ what others have said? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Can you consistently ‘précis’ what has been said in ten to fifteen words or less? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Do you listen for, and can you succinctly summarise, the real meaning behind another’s words? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Can you work out the implications of what has been said? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. Do you consistently verbalise your summary, précis or understanding of what others are saying— accurately ? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Reflection on my current ‘personal skills’—areas to work on:

Appendix II

Personal performance review

This review focuses on elements of the personal values, skills, and strategies covered in this text and is included for three reasons:

1. to enable you to assess how effectively you express your personal values; know, care for and manage yourself; and interact with others.
2. to familiarise counselling students with a range of cameos that characterise different levels of effectiveness for each factor, to provide windows through which client performance can be viewed—as a useful starting point when identifying a skills deficit in the personalising process;
3. to provide an example of how knowledge of these elements can be applied in an organisational setting—as described below.

This questionnaire was developed to identify specific learning needs for an Australasian group of consultants of a large international organisation. It was distributed (with some minor rephrasing) to the consultants themselves, their supervisors, peers, subordinates, and clients who were asked to rate the consultants as they saw them at the time, and how they should perform, ideally, to optimise their effectiveness. The results were correlated, and the gaps between the ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ indicated the nature and extent of training that was required.

How to complete the review

To begin, read all five descriptions of ways that the first factor, love, can be expressed.

If a particular statement describes your **usual** or **most frequent** behaviour, note its number and write it in the ‘Real’ rating box adjacent to the factor. If your behaviour lies somewhere **between** two descriptions then work out the relative position and record your rating in the ‘real’ box; e.g. 2.5 is midway between 2 and 3; 3.8 indicates more than 3 but not quite 4, and so on.

Process all other factors, in the ‘Personal values’, ‘Personal Management’ and ‘Interaction with Others’ areas, in a similar way.

The ‘Ideal’ box was created for the purpose described above. The level of the ideal will be determined by the role being considered. Using the ‘Ideal’ box is optional, but some counselling students have found it useful to specify a personal ideal to highlight areas for subsequent personal development.

A blank table is provided on page 468 for readers wishing to plot their results graphically.

PERSONAL VALUES

Factors that underpin the way we behave personally and professionally.

Love

The way we express our respect and care for others, acknowledge their personal worth and show that we want good outcomes for them.

Real	Ideal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Selfish: I am self-centred and/or manipulative. I tend to use others for self-interest only.
2. Pragmatic: I keep a 'tally' of favours and remember 'who owes who what'. I tend to avoid, ignore or gloss over difficulties in relationships.
3. Aspiring: I am warm and caring and will take risks both for myself and others in order to improve relationships.
4. Constant: I am warm and caring and will weather difficulties in relationships and continue to befriend others.
5. Selfless: I go the 'second mile' in caring for others and will sacrifice self-interest for others.

Truth

The way we deal with facts, reality and honesty.

Real	Ideal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Distortion: I tend to exaggerate, minimise or 'block out' truth.
2. Situational: I say and do those things that others want to hear—or I avoid those things which 'rock the boat'.
3. Empirical: I seek supporting evidence to test reality. I check facts and my own understanding. I do not 'back off' from unpalatable truth, but tend to require a 'watertight case' before acting.
4. Wisdom: I establish facts and evidence, but also act intuitively on trends that seem useful to refine or expand truth.
5. Integrity: I pursue truth rigorously. I check facts; generate evidence, and act on useful trends. I have the strength and humility to live in accordance with what I discover—despite any apparent cost.

Cosmology

The way we deal with the relationship and interrelationship of humans, animals, plants and all other natural phenomena.

Real	Ideal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Dissonance: I deliberately or unwittingly act in ways which are in conflict with life and nature, e.g. use of chemicals, pollutants, etc.
2. Cosmosis: I behave intuitively and randomly in ways that are in harmony with life and nature.
3. Consciousness: I make conscious attempts to act in ways that are in harmony with life and nature.
4. Harmony: Most of the time, I consciously act in ways that are in harmony with life and nature.
5. Resonance: My actions are so in harmony with life and nature that an 'unusual', constructive relationship develops with other life forms and the environment—like St. Francis of Assisi with animals and birds, or Harry Butler with outback flora and fauna.

Creativity (paradox)

The way we formulate new and original concepts by integrating new information—whether or not it conflicts with pre-conceived ideas. The ultimate creativity is to see complementarity between apparently contradictory phenomena—and act constructively to reconcile the two.

Real	Ideal

1. Dissonance: I am blinkered and tend to reject new ideas and prefer to dismiss their relevance.
2. Avoidance: I am conservative. I am aware of new ideas and incorporate them (when obvious) but tend to avoid ideas that challenge current views.
3. Rationalisation: I am open to new information. I see links that build on and refine current knowledge.
4. Concession: I am experimental—open to new information and not only see links that build on and refine current knowledge but I am also able to think laterally to link apparently unrelated notions.
5. Synthesis: I am inventive—open to new information. I not only see links that build on and refine current knowledge, but I also think laterally to link apparently unrelated notions—creating conclusions which may fly in the face of conventional wisdom—and which may occur by a ‘quantum leap’.

Perfection

The degree to which effort is made to achieve high quality results

Real	Ideal

1. Detractor: I either denigrate my own (or others’) efforts—or am paralysed by a need for perfection.
2. Laissez-faire: I am sloppy or inconsistent in effort.
3. Endeavour: I work hard and carefully to achieve a good product.
4. Excellence: I work hard and constantly review my results to ensure high quality product.
5. Vision: I outwork others for a standard beyond contemporary excellence. I do not get bogged down by unwarranted perfectionism.

Am-ness

The degree of freedom which we experience to be who we really are, moment by moment—because history has been dealt with adequately without ‘hangovers’, and aspirations are planned for.

Real	Ideal

1. Useta/gunna: I am constantly reminiscing about how much better things were in the past—or imagining how ideal things will be in the future (when I win Cross-lotto, etc).
2. Constraint: I am limited in the present by current roles, historical events, or fears of what might happen (or not happen) in the future.
3. Equilibrium: I live in a way that adequately balances past, present and future. I probably make some compromises in relation to past events or for future possibilities, but I still manage to live satisfactorily in the present.
4. Spontaneity: I live authentically, moment by moment, and experience great freedom to be real—whatever the circumstances.
5. Time focussed: I live with the kind of authenticity which, in an almost mystical way, takes into account all that has been, and all that might be, e.g. Mahatma Ghandi.

Ambit

The extent of our perspective of, interest in, and commitment to, the social context in which we live—regardless of the actual context or opportunities.

Real	Ideal

1. Self: For most of the time my world revolves around me.
2. Family and interest groups: My main concerns and interests revolve around my family and the groups that we engage in.
3. National: I consider my family and friends and I want the best for my country. I believe that we should only buy Australian made products and only accept migrants who contribute to our wealth and do not take our jobs.
4. International: I am mindful of the wellbeing of others regardless of their race, culture or creed.
5. Cosmological: My perspectives embrace all universal factors—all natural and spiritual phenomena and creatures, and I am mindful of the interconnections and ultimate interdependence between them.

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT

The ways that we manage ourselves and our lives.

Fitness/health management

The outcomes we achieve from our approach to health care.

Real	Ideal

1. Sickness: I am often sick, and health care is remedial only—I take pills and potions to ‘fix me up’.
2. Survival: I have no severe sickness symptoms—but limited energy and wellbeing. I am aware of health factors, but have only token commitment to taking care of myself.
3. Adaptability: I have energy to manage requirements of daily life, and make conscious efforts regarding health care—diet, exercise, avoiding drug use, etc.
4. Intensity: I have a clear commitment to myself in relation to preventative health care. I have a program to monitor, evaluate and maintain my fitness and wellbeing. I assess the personal relevance of health information and advice (both traditional and alternative). I have energy to manage daily requirements, and also have surplus energy to invest in additional activities.
5. Stamina: I operate in both personal and professional life with the kind of stamina and athleticism which others find (almost) unbelievable. I am extremely fit, energetic and glowing with health.

Motivation

The ‘bottom line’ reason for our actions.

Real	Ideal

1. Avoidance: I only do things to avoid negative actions—or negative reactions from others.
2. Incentive: My ‘bottom line’ for doing things is for recognition, reward, favours, status, kudos or approval.
3. Achievement: I do things mainly to achieve a sense of personal satisfaction in ‘a job well done’ even though the task may have been set by someone else.
4. Self-fulfilment: I do things mainly to expand my own potential in areas of personal competence. I am a ‘self-starter’. I appreciate recognition of my efforts but it not necessary for me to stay with tasks.

- Mission: My 'passion' and perspectives determine the nature of my personal and/or professional contribution. Recognition is largely irrelevant. I often sacrifice conventional rewards to pursue goals.

Self-discipline

Real	Ideal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The capacity to be 'tough in the moment' with oneself or others in order to achieve one's own long-term goals. This is usually exhibited by orderliness, time management, saying 'no' appropriately to personal desires, demands and expectations from self and others, and by being able to 'turn off' from work when it is over.

- Scatty: I am often in crisis and frequently create crises for others because of self-indulgence, under-organization, over-organization, or procrastination. I am either reluctant to do anything which costs time or effort unless the personal benefits are immediate or, conversely, I habitually overload myself with tasks or inappropriate responsibilities.
- Dabbler: I recognise the need to be organised and balanced in life, but I bow to pressure from others and don't act to take control. I manage limited routines satisfactorily but am 'thrown' by contingencies.
- Coper: I work at taking control of all aspects of life—but experience periodic lapses that put stress on personal and professional life.
- Manager: I manage a full, smoothly flowing, well-organized life that achieves both personal and professional goals.
- Organiser: I manage a full, smoothly flowing and well-organized life that achieves both personal and professional goals in a way that leaves free time for new challenges or indulgences.

Self-decency

Real	Ideal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The caring behaviour for self which indicates a belief in own worth and a desire for constructive outcomes for self.

- Distorting: I express an exaggerated view of myself—either positively or negatively. I am either self-pitying or self-indulgent, and either self-deprecating or inaccurately boastful in both words and behaviours.
- Vacillating: My sense of self-worth is variable and 'shaky'. I feels positive about myself some of the time, but highly vulnerable to approval, criticism or negativity from others. I care for self when 'up', but when 'down' I behave in ways that sabotage self-interest.
- Accepting: I accept my own reality—positive and negative. I regularly give to myself (either in material terms or in time) those things that are needed or desired.
- Strong: I have a solid self-concept which can rarely be sabotaged by others. I give myself the things I need, or desire, and am prepared to ask others for things which would be additive.
- Autonomous: I have a strong sense of my own self-worth and consistently take steps to meet my own needs. I ask for whatever would be additive, and rarely settle for 'second best' for myself.

Awareness

Real	Ideal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The capacity to be alert to a range of events outside of self and be open to information beyond limited interest areas.

- Blinkered: I am preoccupied with myself, and unaware of people and events outside of my own thoughts. I tend to have limited general knowledge, and/or experience crises which could have been easily predicted with increased alertness.

2. Limited: I take an active interest in things outside myself or in special interest areas, but I am often troubled or confused by the amount of information collected.
3. Selective: I maintain an open alertness to events, people and situations outside of myself, but tend to focus my awareness on the things that have particular relevance for me.
4. Alert: I maintain an open alertness to events, people and situations outside of self, and focus my awareness on things that have particular relevance to me. However, I regularly review whether my general awareness is sufficiently wide and pinpoint areas for expanded attention.
5. Vigilant: I maintain openness to events, people and situations outside of myself. I not only focus on things that have particular relevance to me, but regularly review whether my general awareness is sufficiently wide. I identify areas for expansion and act to expand my knowledge when appropriate.

Self-monitoring

The opportunities we make for personal reflection and the capacity we have to note our own reactions to people, events and/or situations.

Real	Ideal

1. Foggy: I am always so busy with others, and situations outside of myself, that I never create opportunities for internal peace and solitude. I tend to be unaware of even my most obvious personal reactions.
2. Misty: From time to time I pause to reflect on where I ‘am’, but I get easily distracted or uncomfortable about personal reflection.
3. Cloudy: Occasionally I make time for reflection. I note personal reactions, and I am willing to reflect on my state of personal being.
4. Clear: I often make time for personal reflection, and regularly monitor my personal reactions.
5. Transparent: I have regular times during which personal reflection is possible. I ‘still’ inner distractions in order to ‘listen’ to where I ‘am’. I habitually monitor my personal reactions.

Self-awareness

The capacity to listen to and ‘hear’ oneself and put into words what is felt and why, in order to know oneself fully and honestly—so that one can deal with the implications of that knowledge.

Real	Ideal

1. Disdain: I deny responsibility for, avoid, or denigrate my own thoughts or feelings. My usual stance is either passive or aggressive to a wide range of people and events.
2. Scant: I think about myself in relation to situations, but tend to do so at either an intellectual or an emotional level. I either rationalise a lot—or my feelings dominate me.
3. Acquainted: I am honest with myself about what I feel and why. I explore my thoughts and feelings in relation to situations, but sometimes go around in circles.
4. Familiar: I honestly explore what I think and feel and, with further reflection, I am able to work out the personal implications for me. I assume responsibility for my contribution to various situations (positive, negative or passive) and work out what needs to be done either to change, adapt to, or leave situations that create problems.
5. Intimate: I know myself well. I am consistently honest with myself about what I feel and why I feel that way. I am consistently able to work out what needs to happen to resolve issues or expand learning. I act constructively to achieve what needs to happen rather than react or stay passive.

Learning

The way we act to obtain knowledge and/or skill by study, experience, observation and instruction.

Real	Ideal

1. Non-attentive: I avoid new learning where I can—or only attempt it when under duress. I tend to be defensive or critical in relation to learning. I am unlikely to seek feedback about myself, and react to, or ignore, unsolicited feedback.
2. Attentive: I enjoy learning and find it interesting, but I operate passively in a learning environment, and sometimes feel overwhelmed with the amount of information given.
3. Respond: I am open to new learning and try to relate and integrate it with what I already know and don't know. I sometimes have problems utilising or applying learning to either myself or relevant situations.
4. Personalise: I seek opportunities for, and seek to integrate, new learning. I can see how and where new learning can be applied and utilised and the benefits that can flow from it. I can work out what is necessary to expand or maintain what has been learned.
5. Initiate: I am consistently active in learning. I apply what is learned, and seek and utilise feedback to identify learning gaps for myself. I develop creative strategies to meet unique learning goals.

Knowledge bases

The capacity we have in relation to our subject speciality (ies)—personally and professionally.

Real	Ideal

1. Facts: I have only limited knowledge at a basic level about a subject area. I know what things are.
2. Concepts: I am knowledgeable about the subject area at a conceptual level—in that I know what things do—but I have difficulty relating my knowledge to practical situations.
3. Principles: I am knowledgeable about a particular subject, and have a good grasp of underlying the principles involved, and so I can consistently relate my knowledge to practical situations. I can see what benefits could flow from applying my knowledge.
4. Operationalise: I 'know my stuff' and can utilise that knowledge. I fully understand the concepts and principles behind what I know, and can determine how, when, and under what circumstances any given knowledge can be applied.
5. Technologist: I have credibility as an expert in a particular subject because I consistently utilise and appropriately apply sound theoretical knowledge, and because I make a personal effort to develop my field of expertise, I often work in a pioneering way.

INTERACTION WITH OTHERS

The skills and processes that we use to interact with others.

Decency to others

The way we express courteous, appropriate behaviour to others.

Real	Ideal

1. Rude: I am often unapproachable, abrupt or rude (verbally or behaviourally)—or embarrassingly overfriendly.

2. Volitional: I can be courteous when it ‘suits’, but I’m sometimes moody.
3. Polite: I am appropriately and predictably courteous in observing normal social conventions.
4. Courteous: I am consistently courteous in observing familiar social conventions and sensitive to the courtesies required with different cultures, races, age groups etc.
5. Gracious: I can move with grace and ease in all social and professional situations.

Attentiveness to others

Real Ideal

The way we focus our awareness of, and interest in, others and show a willingness to be involved with them.

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1. Fickle: I am totally self-preoccupied, and seldom aware of what is going on for others unless someone (or something) else forces it to my attention—or I am overly and inappropriately attentive to others to a point that they find intrusive.
2. Remote: I am aware of what is happening for others, but tend not to get involved. I ‘sit on the fence’ as an observer. My body positioning often indicates a desire for distance between myself and others by a lack of eye contact, folded arms, moving away and the like.
3. Attentive: I see what is happening for others and I am prepared to get involved when the need is indicated. I utilise eye contact, adjust the distance between myself and others appropriately, and show them of my interest by leaning forward, and the like.
4. Vigilant: I utilise eye contact and body position to be constantly aware of others, and focus my attention (when appropriate) by minimising distances, leaning forward, and eliminating distractions both within myself and in the immediate environment.
5. Involving: I utilise eye contact, body position, etc. to remain constantly aware of others and, when appropriate, I focus attention so effectively that an atmosphere of total involvement is created between myself and the other.

Observation/listening/sensing

Real Ideal

Picking up what others feel from either visual ‘clues’, the way things are said or from sensing emotions.

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1. Blank/swamped: I am either unaware of what others feel—or I am swamped by what I pick up about them.
2. Biased: I am aware of obvious things about others, but I tend either to focus on things of personal interest or on things to criticise.
3. Restricted: I am frequently able to pick up many things about others, but, more than occasionally, I am not able to give words to what I pick up, or work out what things mean.
4. Astute: I actively and appropriately look for indicators of what others are feeling, and can make reasonably accurate inferences about their state of being.
5. Empathic: I am consistently able to make accurate inferences about another's state of being, and can produce detailed evidence to support my hypotheses—such as subtle changes in breathing patterns.

Responding to others

Real Ideal

The capacity to suspend one’s preconceived ideas/preoccupations; to understand what others feel and why; to communicate that understanding; and synthesise the information obtained.

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1. Reactive: I usually tend to see things from my own point of view and tend to criticise, judge, lecture, avoid, or defend my personal position.

2. Supportive: I acknowledge others' points of view, but usually at either an intellectual or emotional level only. I tend to ignore or avoid what they feel (if I intellectualise) or think (if I view things emotionally).
3. Interchangeable: I can suspend my own point of view and take risks to communicate my understanding of both what others think and how they feel about it—often with greater clarity than they are able to express for themselves. I am also able to highlight discrepancies in others' information in ways that benefit them.
4. Contributive: When appropriate, I can consistently sustain a long interaction that requires suspension of my personal views, and pull together other's information in a way that pinpoints issues for them, and highlights the most constructive directions they need to take to deal with the issues.
5. Empowering: When appropriate, I can consistently suspend my personal views, defensiveness or criticism, so that I am fully there to help others explore personal issues, get to the core of them, and selectively use my knowledge and experience, to help them clarify goals, create options and plan and execute appropriate action.

Assertiveness

The capacity to state, declare or maintain one's own position to another, whether asked for the information or not – either for one's own sake or for the other's.

Real	Ideal

1. Passive/aggressive: I usually act passively or aggressively about expressing personal views. Either I avoid declaring my position and fail to ask necessary questions—or force my views upon others.
2. Bungler: I tend to declare my personal position inappropriately without sensitivity or apologetically.
3. Assertive: I can declare my personal position clearly in appropriate circumstances, but unless there is a pressing need I tend to 'back off'.
4. Assertive collaborator: I can declare my thoughts and feelings easily and comfortably in ways that 'describe'—rather than blame or judge. I have a desire for cooperative problem solving, and I take risks to ask for feedback, and I am prepared to give necessary feedback to others.
5. Assertive negotiator: I can declare my personal position with clarity, strength, cooperativeness and ease. I am clear about what should happen for myself, or what could be indicated for others, and can suggest ways of achieving it. My negotiating position is clear in any discussion.

Teaching/Developing others

The capacity to impart knowledge and skill to assist others develop their potential

Real	Ideal

1. Unable/unwilling: I mostly lack the knowledge needed to teach others, and I am unwilling to take the necessary time or effort required to pass on the things I do know.
2. Willing/inept: I am reasonably knowledgeable, but I share it in ways that others often find irrelevant, out of date, overwhelming or 'pushy'.
3. Responsive teacher: I have knowledge and skills to impart—and a commitment to do so. I monitor how others relate to my teaching in order to proceed, change tack, or pause to clarify issues.
4. Motivating teacher: I have knowledge and skills to impart—and a commitment to do so. I discover what others already know and help them pinpoint gaps in their knowledge and skills in a way that generates commitment to further learning.
5. Mentor: I have knowledge and skill to impart—and a commitment to do so. I start with what others know, focus gaps for the other, and selectively use my perspectives, knowledge and experience to develop individualised learning programs with and for others.

Networking

Real **Ideal**

The groups within which we operate and from which we obtain support.

--	--

1. Exploit/random: I tend to be a 'loner' with random or transient contacts that I tend to 'dump' when I've got what I want from them—or I have a role in, and get support from, a destructive subculture.
2. Net take/shrinking: I have a role within my family and interest groups, but get limited support from them. I tend to 'take' more than I contribute to my network. I am often overlooked or 'left out' by them—and sometimes rejected.
3. Interactive/static: I have a wide family and/or interest group network with which to interact. I get a lot of support from them, and I give a lot of support in return.
4. Net give/expanding: I get personal support from family and interest groups, but I also contribute to community groups at a level that exceeds any personal support I might receive from such groups (both in degree and intimacy). Nevertheless, I enjoy making such contribution.
5. Lead/selected: I have leadership and influence within wide family, interest group and community networks, where I either offer or am asked to contribute. I obtain satisfying support from within the network

My performance profile as at:

Level	Personal values										Personal management										Interaction with others					
	Love	Truth	Cosmology	Creativity/Paradox	Perfection	Am-ness	Ambit	Fitness/health	Motivation	Self-discipline	Self-decency	Awareness	Self-monitoring	Self awareness	Learning	Knowledge bases	Decency to others	Attentiveness	Observe/listen/sense	Responding to others	Assertiveness	Teaching	Networking			
5.0																										
4.5																										
4.0																										
3.5																										
3.0																										
2.5																										
2.0																										
1.5																										
1.0																										

Appendix III

COMMUNICATION INDEX

How to use this index

Read the next page and note the three separate situations involving a neighbour, a woman, and a manager respectively.

Imagine that the statements attributed to these people are directed to you.

Consider your most constructive initial response to each of these three people and write them in the space provided. Write as you would speak.

When you have written these responses move on to the discrimination exercise on the following page. Ignore the repeated exercise on the following three pages at this stage. You will be reminded, at the end of Chapter 9, to revisit this Appendix and re-do the 'post test' in the communication and discrimination exercises. You will learn how to score your efforts in Chapter 9.

1. A neighbour talks to a friend:

'Life these days seems like rush, rush, rush! I feel like I hardly ever see my kids—and my partner feels so unsupported that our relationship is dying. But work is so demanding. We need my income, and I need to work fifty to sixty hours a week to keep up with my work. I just don't know which way to turn.'

My most constructive response:**2. A woman talks to a relative:**

'I'm really worried. I went with a friend to the pokies the other week, and now I find myself calling in several times a day. I can't afford to spend the amounts I'm spending, and soon I think my family will start wondering where all our money is going! They don't know as yet but I'm too ashamed to tell them.'

My most constructive response:**3. A manager talks to a colleague:**

'I don't know how you find the boss, but he's always sticking his nose in and trying to tell me how to run my section. I've come up through the ranks, as you know, and I could teach him a thing or two. Then you ask him to fund a project and you get a sermon—and no resources! In my opinion, he's next to useless.'

My most constructive response:

1. A neighbour talks to a friend:

'Life these days seems like rush, rush, rush! I feel like I hardly ever see my kids—and my partner feels so unsupported that our relationship is dying. But work is so demanding. We need my income, and I need to work fifty to sixty hours a week to keep up with my work. I just don't know which way to turn'.

Alternative responses

Rating

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Why don't you explain to your partner that you are working long hours for the family's sake—not your own—and ask for a bit more understanding and support? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. You sound really despairing. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I know! I'm the same. Only the other day I had a big row with my partner about the same thing. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. You sound like you feel pretty hopeless because the need to work such long hours is actually eroding all that you are working for. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. They're ridiculously long hours! Remind me what you actually do, again, will you? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. A woman talks to a relative:

'I'm really worried. I went with a friend to the pokies the other week, and now I find myself calling in several times a day. I can't afford to spend the amounts I'm spending, and soon I think my family will start wondering where all our money is going! They don't know as yet but I'm too ashamed to tell them.'

Alternative responses

Rating

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Don't worry! Most people like a bit of a flutter these days. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. You should seek some professional advice about this before it really gets out of hand. Gambling can become a real problem—financially and domestically. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. So you had a bit of a 'try' on the pokies, and now you're hooked. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. It seems like you feel a bit out of control. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. You seem to feel trapped because its hard to talk to the family about the fun and the fear that go along with your gambling. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. A manager talks to a colleague:

'I don't know how you find the boss, but he's always sticking his nose in and trying to tell me how to run my section. I've come up through the ranks, as you know, and I could teach him a thing or two. Then you ask him to fund a project and you get a sermon—and no resources! In my opinion, he's next to useless.'

Alternative responses

Rating

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. I've had similar experiences to yours—but perhaps not to the same extent. Perhaps we ought to go and sort him out! | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. You sound really cheesed-off because the boss's performance is counter-productive on all fronts. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Well I've always found him fairly supportive—perhaps it's you! | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. So, your point is that he interferes in section matters, and doesn't deliver on the management side. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Well I think your best option is to let him know how you feel, and where you stand—and put your job on the line if you have to—he knows how important you are in this show. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

This completes the 'pre test'

Complete the next three pages only when ready to 'post-test' after learning the skills taught in Chapter 9.

Communication Index—Trial 2

1. A neighbour talks to a friend:

'Life these days seems like rush, rush, rush! I feel like I hardly ever see my kids—and my partner feels so unsupported that our relationship is dying. But work is so demanding. We need my income, and I need to work fifty to sixty hours a week to keep up with my work. I just don't know which way to turn.'

My most constructive response:**2. A woman talks to a relative:**

'I'm really worried. I went with a friend to the pokies the other week, and now I find myself calling in several times a day. I can't afford to spend the amounts I'm spending, and soon I think my family will start wondering where all our money is going! They don't know as yet but I'm too ashamed to tell them.'

My most constructive response:**3. A manager talks to a colleague:**

'I don't know how you find the boss, but he's always sticking his nose in and trying to tell me how to run my section. I've come up through the ranks, as you know, and I could teach him a thing or two. Then you ask him to fund a project and you get a sermon—and no resources! In my opinion, he's next to useless.'

My most constructive response:

1. A neighbour talks to a friend:

'Life these days seems like rush, rush, rush! I feel like I hardly ever see my kids—and my partner feels so unsupported that our relationship is dying. But work is so demanding. We need my income, and I need to work fifty to sixty hours a week to keep up with my work. I just don't know which way to turn.'

Alternative responses

Rating

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Why don't you explain to your partner that you are working long hours for the family's sake—not your own—and ask for a bit more understanding and support? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. You sound really despairing. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. I know! I'm the same. Only the other day I had a big row with my partner about the same thing. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. You sound like you feel pretty hopeless because the need to work such long hours is actually eroding all that you are working for. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. They're ridiculously long hours. Remind me what you actually do, again, will you? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2. A woman talks to a relative:

'I'm really worried. I went with a friend to the pokies the other week, and now I find myself calling in several times a day. I can't afford to spend the amounts I'm spending, and soon I think my family will start wondering where all our money is going! They don't know as yet but I'm too ashamed to tell them.'

Alternative responses

Rating

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. Don't worry! Most people like a bit of a flutter these days. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. You should seek some professional advice about this before it really gets out of hand. Gambling can become a real problem—financially and domestically. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. So you had a bit of a 'try' on the pokies and now you're hooked. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. It seems like you feel a bit out of control. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. You seem to feel trapped because its hard to talk to the family about the fun or the fear that go along with your gambling. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. A manager talks to a colleague:

‘I don’t know how you find the boss, but he’s always sticking his nose in and trying to tell me how to run my section. I’ve come up through the ranks, as you know, and I could teach him a thing or two. Then you ask him to fund a project and you get a sermon—and no resources! In my opinion, he’s next to useless.’

Alternative responses

Rating

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. I’ve had similar experiences to yours—but perhaps not to the same extent. Perhaps we ought to go and sort him out! | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. You sound really cheesed-off because the boss’s performance is counterproductive on all fronts. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Well I’ve always found him fairly supportive—perhaps it’s you! | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. So, your point is that he interferes in section matters, and doesn’t deliver on the management side. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Well I think your best option is to let him know how you feel and where you stand—and put your job on the line if you have to—he knows how important you are in this show. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Now that you have completed the pre and post communication and discrimination exercises, rate them according to the scale learned (on page 190 in Chapter 9). Record your scores from both attempts in the table below to indicate how much you have learned between your baseline ‘pre-test’ and your ‘post-test’.

The table for converting raw discrimination scores to levels is on page 194.

Function	Date	Communication	Discrimination	
			Score	Level
Pre-test				
Post-test				
Learning gains				

Results for communication and discrimination exercises

Figures 55 and 56, below show the ‘pre’ and ‘post’ test results for 380 educators within the Central Northern Region of the South Australian Education Department during the early 1980’s. The gains in communication skills led to greater teacher effectiveness and fulfilment, fewer discipline problems, and more caring school climates.

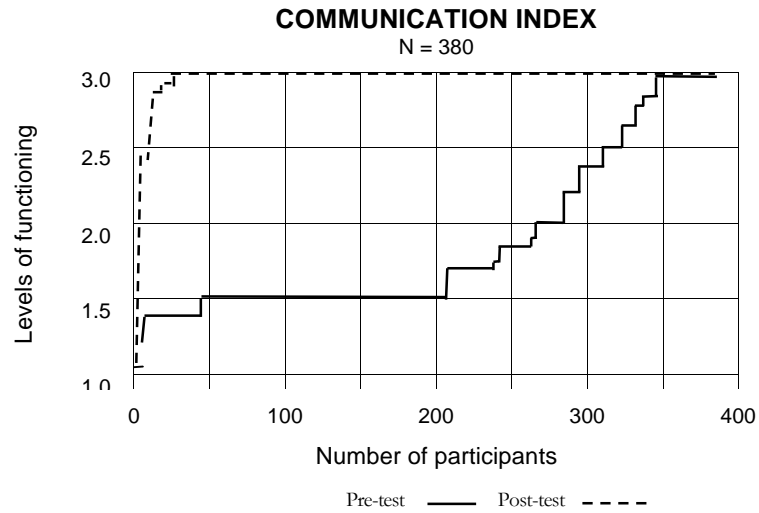


Figure 55. Communication scores of 380 educators before and after 100 hours of training.

The gains in discrimination skills gave teachers confidence and competence in reading ‘what goes on’ in human interactions, and know-how of ‘what tool to use for what job’.

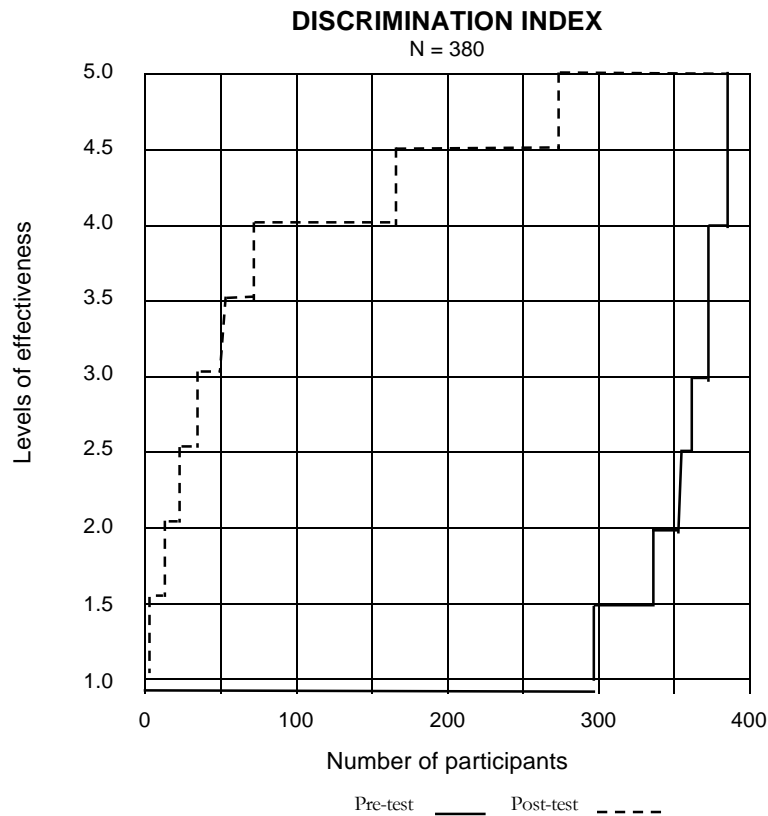


Figure 56. Discrimination scores of 380 educators before and after 100 hours of training.

Appendix IV

Listening test

Instructions for reader

Make sure that the person you are testing can see and hear you without distraction. They should have a pencil and paper handy to write down a the statement that you will read.

Read the following brief for them to understand what to expect.

‘You should attend, observe and listen to me. I am about to read a short statement that you are asked to listen to carefully. When I have finished reading, take your own time to write down the statement verbatim. By that I mean write it word for word—exactly as I read it. Do not write until after I have finished reading.

Here is the statement: (read slowly and clearly)

There is a Union meeting on February the 13th at 10.30 am in the Town Hall, Adelaide. (or modify for where you meet)

It’s really important for us all to attend—strike action is contemplated!

Oh...we need to go in by the southern entrance.’ (or your alternative ‘non-main’ entrance)

When the person has finished writing, the brief continues as follows:

‘I will now read the statement again slowly. You are to note any differences, however small, between what you have written and what I read.’

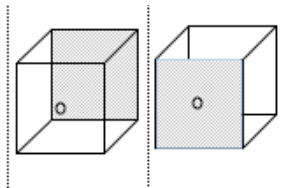
If there are differences, these will normally be discussed in a regular training program, or the listener should be referred back to the text on page 169 to see what the significance of those differences might mean to them, personally. If there were no differences, they will be able to read what errors others have collectively made, and their significance.

PART FOUR

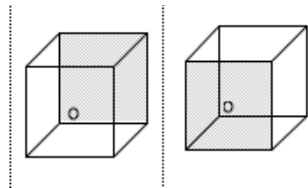
QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Answers to exercises

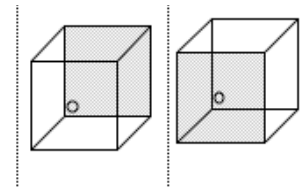
Hypotheses from the Necker cube from page 129



Necker cube viewed from front
(imagine box on table)
circle appears at the lower left of the
back and at the centre of the front



Necker cube viewed from above
(imagine box on floor)
circle appears at the lower left of the
top and at the centre of the bottom



Necker cube viewed from below
(imagine box on wall near ceiling)
circle appears at lower left at the front
and at the centre of the back

Exercise 1: Reviewing personal resourcefulness—from page 59.

The Personal Skills are:	The Skill Dimensions are
PREDISPOSITION	FIRST CAUSE ASTROLOGICAL GENETIC ENVIRONMENTAL
SPIRITUAL	LOVE TRUTH COSMOLOGY PARADOX PERFECTION AM_NESS AMBIT
HEALTH MANAGEMENT	METABOLIC SENSORY/PERCEPTUAL SYMBOLS & LANGUAGE
SELF-DISCIPLINE	REST & BALANCE NEATNESS DEFINITION
PHYSICAL FITNESS	CARDIO-RESPIRATORY FLEXIBILITY DYNAMIC STRENGTH
DECENCY	GREETING/FAREWELLING APPROPRIATE COURTESY KINDNESS
VIGILANCE	ATTENDING OBSERVING LISTENING

Exercise 2: Review of the vigilance skills—from page 184

The skill	The focus	The Skill Steps
ATTENDING	CONTEXTUAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 engage purposefully 2 furnish functionally 3 prepare personally 4 welcome effectively 5 contract clearly
	POSTURAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 square off 2 maintain eye contact 3 lean forwards 30 to 45 degrees 4 adjust distance 60 to 120 cm. 5 avoid distractions
	PSYCHOLOGICAL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 attend contextually 2 attend posturally 3 suspend personal values 4 still inner distractions 5 project caring availability
OBSERVING	CONTEXT APPEARANCE VOLUNTARY BEHAVIOUR INVOLUNTARY BEHAVIOUR ENERGY LEVEL	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 observe systematically 2 identify general demeanour 3 identify mood category 4 identify feeling 5 do language check
LISTENING	AVOIDING DISTRACTIONS WORD CONTENT FEELING CONTENT MEANING THEMES and what NOT SAID	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 know own listening foibles 2 hear 5WH elements of words 3 hear paralinguistic cues 4 focus on content 5 reflect on content

Exercise 3: Rating responses to level 3.0 —from page 195

#1 = 1.0; #2 = 2.5; #3 = 1.0; #4 = 1.5; #5 = 2.0; #6 = 1.0; #7 = 3.0; #8 = 1.5; #9 = 1.5; #10 = 3.0.

Exercise 4: Responding to meaning—from page 203

1. So, you're saying that, with limited information from the doctor, it's easy to imagine the worst.
2. So, from your point of view, specifically targeted interest groups would be infinitely more effective than the current, dysfunctional staff meetings.
3. You seem to think that politicians are so unethical that political activism is both naïve and pointless.
4. So, you are asking me to specify the skills I want you to practice, and suggest a manageable time-table that will help you stay on track.
5. So, you are saying that your wife's insecurity is not only restricting your desire to set up your own business, but it's also stifling any dialogue about it.

Exercise 5: Responding to feelings—from page 209.

1. You seem to feel **quite angry** at the moment.
2. I can see that you feel at **screaming point**.
3. You must feel totally **trapped**.
4. You feel really demeaned.
5. So, you feel kind of totally browbeaten.

Exercise 6: Responding to feeling and meaning—from page 218.

1. You seem to feel quite angry because, as you see it, I get my kicks from perverting on people's private lives.
2. You feel at screaming point because your mother is both unrealistic and selfish.
3. You feel totally trapped because Jim keeps all the power in your relationship by threatening you, and charming others.
4. You feel really demeaned because your parents are unreasonably protective.
5. You feel kind of brow-beaten because your mother has totally taken over arrangements for your very special day.
6. You feel outraged because the school is claiming that Michael is difficult to manage, and is a bully.
7. You feel totally shell-shocked because your wife's declaration of her sexuality came right out of the blue—like you don't really know her.
8. You feel desperate because your marriage to John is so unfulfilling, and so different from the hopes and dreams that he once seemed to share with you.
9. You feel panicky because your wife's return to work has created both domestic chaos, and a climate where it is impossible to really assess the cost/benefits of her return.
10. You feel in conflict because the surgery that could keep your husband attracted to you could also be painful and invasive.

Exercise 7: An advanced response to Arthur—from page 243.

Skill step	Evidence	Reflection	Decision
Step 1: current feeling	He feels 'terrible', 'alone,' is tense, with mood swings.	Of the words Arthur used, 'alone' is the deepest and most persistent. The aloneness seems to be a consequence of his mates scoffing at him—maybe for 'getting religion' or for trying to kick the habit—either way they seem to have written him off. Josie's progressive withdrawal seems to hit hardest. It's like he is being actively abandoned by his friends—and that's rejection. At a deeper level such rejection could lead to feeling dejected.	the feeling is: 'dejected'
Step 2: specific trigger	Friends laugh and mock him. Josie sees him less and less.	<i>So, who or what causes this feeling of dejection?</i> *It's pretty clear that he blames his friends (especially Josie).	the specific trigger is: 'your friends'
Step 3: qualified trigger	'Josie sees me less and less'—he thought she was dependable. 'I don't know why everyone's letting me down'.	<i>So, what is it about the friends that causes this feeling of dejection?</i> *My reflections in step 1 included the notions of rejection and abandonment. Abandonment fits.	the qualified trigger is: 'your friends' abandonment'
Step 4: intimate trigger	'you feel so awful, so alone, and you have these rotten mood-swings and cravings on and off.' 'I don't know why everyone's letting me down—it's as if they'd prefer me to die rather than get healthy'.	<i>So, how does Arthur 'see' this abandonment?</i> There is a lot of pain in the abandonment—he suffers the mood swings and cravings alone—that's cruel. Nothing could be more painful than to feel as if your friends prefer you dead rather than help you to live. If I say 'cruel and hurtful' I get the perceived motive and its consequence.	the intimate trigger is: 'your friends' cruel and hurtful abandonment'
Step 5: what the trigger does	'I'm really trying to kick the drug habit, but it's not easy.' 'I don't think it's worth trying anymore.'	<i>So, what does this abandonment do to Arthur (or to a specific part of him)?</i> There is both resolve to kick the habit and growing doubt that it's all worth it—especially if Josie dumps him as he suspects.	The verb is: 'seriously threatens' the specific target is 'your resolve'

Step 6: to the specific target		There is no evidence of premeditated withdrawal so it's not as strong as sabotage, but while the doubt remains there is serious threat to the resolve to kick the habit.	
Step 7: qualified target	Same evidence	*I have already integrated this step with the last. I answered: <i>What is the nature of the resolve?</i> without having to ask it. I can see how the steps can merge as I reflect on the target.	The qualified target is: 'your resolve to kick the habit' (summary listed below)
<i>'Arthur, you feel dejected because your friends' cruel and hurtful abandonment seriously threatens your resolve to kick the habit.'</i>			
Step 8: the intimate target	No evidence, but reflection based on life experience	<i>So, what consequences relate to the resolve to quit?</i> Ultimately, most drug taking severely limits health. I think Christians believe that the body is the 'temple for the spirit'. I want to cover the consequences for both body and spirit.	The intimate target is: 'your resolve to kick a habit that could ultimately destroy your body and wither your spirit' (see new summary below)
<i>'Arthur, you feel dejected because your friends' cruel and hurtful abandonment seriously threatens your resolve to kick a habit that could ultimately destroy your body and wither your spirit.'</i>			
Step 9: check and rehearsal		The response seems a bit long, but I think each word counts. He's in a bad way, but is intelligent and uses words well. I think I will edit. I think a qualified trigger would do rather than an intimate trigger.	Decide on your final response. I'll knock out 'cruel and hurtful'.
<i>'Arthur, you feel dejected because your friends' abandonment seriously threatens your resolve to kick a habit that could ultimately destroy your body and wither your spirit.'</i>			
*Notice that steps can be easily and intuitively merged—the range of skill steps are tools to use only as required.			

Exercise 8: Advanced responding to feeling and meaning—from page 247

1. You seem to feel quite angry because my apparent scrutiny seems to hook a part of you that is rejecting of people who want to help.
2. You are at screaming point because your mother's poor health, unrealistic attitude, and unreasonable demands perpetuate an internal battle between surrendering to her needs or fighting to meet yours.
3. You feel totally trapped because Jim's needling threats about custody issues with the kids locks you into an abusive relationship.
4. You feel really demeaned because your parents' unreasonable protectiveness stifles your growth towards adulthood and denies your right to make up your own mind.
5. You feel kind of brow-beaten because your mother's self-righteous bossiness throws cold water on what almost seems like your birthright—to fulfil your wedding plans your way.
6. You feel outraged because the school's allegation denies your experience as a mother.
7. You feel totally shell-shocked because your wife's unbelievable declaration of her preferred sexuality shatters all your trust in a relationship that now seems to have been veneered with pretence.
8. You feel desperate because John's complacency is inhibiting your fulfilment to the extent that you are at a personal crossroads without signposts. (short pause) Your 'but' followed by silence—suggests that one unspeakable path requires travelling alone?

9. You feel panicky because your wife’s emotional outbursts stifle your capacity to discuss ways of sharing perspectives with a view to dealing with the chaos, and assessing the cost/benefits to the family.
10. You feel in conflict because fear of losing your husband’s interest drives you to contemplate risking painful plastic surgery to dolly up the old model.

Exercise 9: discriminating revised response ratings—from page 255.

Response 2 uses prepositional link and is very non-specific. As a coach, I may see a need to go back to simple basics—an ‘A—B’ response that included a specific trigger and a specific target and build progressively from there.	2.6 G
Response 3 has an intimate (segmental) trigger, dynamic verb and intimate (segmental) zone 2 target. As a coach, I would discuss the pros and cons of making the response more comprehensive by including Josie’s withdrawal and an overall consequence (compare with response 9).	3.0 S
Response 4 is not an intimate response. It provides a specific, succinct, external reason for the feeling. It is comprehensive because it includes behaviours of both ‘friends’ and ‘Josie’. As a coach, I would comment on the creative format (feeling last), and ask the trainee to identify how the behaviours impact Arthur (apart from feeling hurt). It may be useful to remind the trainee that it’s the impact on Arthur that determines the feeling—not the behaviour of the external triggers—even though that’s how it may be seen.	2.85 C
Response 5 looks a bit like a 2.95 S with a qualified trigger, dynamic verb and qualified zone 2 target. However the link, ‘when’ is conditional, and not necessarily current. As a coach, I would invite discussion on the causal link ‘when’ (see page 211).	2.0
Response 6 has a qualified trigger, dynamic verb and two targets (one qualified zone 2 and one not). Covering ‘resolve’ and ‘support’ makes it comprehensive. As a coach, I would encourage refinement of the target before working on the trigger. This is because the intimacy of the target seems more effective in facilitating exploration than an intimate trigger with a qualified target.	2.95 C
Response 7 has two specific triggers, dynamic verb and specific zone 2 target. It hardly warrants the ‘C’, but by including friends and Josie makes it just one notch better than ‘segmental’ on the segmental—comprehensive continuum. As a coach, I would encourage an upgrade to a qualified target, then a qualified trigger, and then an intimate target.	2.9 C
Response 8 has a qualified trigger, dynamic verb and a specific zone 2 target. As a coach, I would encourage the counsellor to qualify the target and maybe discuss possible consequences to the client to remind them of the ‘intimate’ think step.	< 2.95 but > 2.9
Response 9 has an intimate trigger, dynamic verb and intimate zone 2 target. The inclusion of two consequences suggests that it is comprehensive. As a coach, I would praise the effort of the counsellor. I would internally note that ‘cruel and hurtful’ sounds a bit cumbersome and may not really add much to the effectiveness of the response. I would only raise this reflection with a counsellor whose perfectionism always insisted on being ‘technically complete’ at the expense of conversational fluency. Then, I would share my reflection and remind them that it is sometimes more perfect to be less perfect.	3.0 C
Response 10 has two specific triggers (and therefore moves towards being comprehensive). The copulative verb merely describes something about the triggers. As a coach, I would draw attention to the copulative verb, review the purpose and format of advanced responses, then work to identify the trigger, dynamic verb and specific target.	2.8 C

Response 11 has a specific trigger, dynamic verb (with a ‘progressive aspect’ auxiliary verb ‘be’ + present participle—to get unnecessarily grammatical, and a specific target (zone 3). As a coach, I would encourage the trainee to qualify the trigger and qualify a target in zone 2. This is an example where specific A–specific B leads to a non-specific response!	2.9 S
Response 12 uses the link ‘when’ which infers that the feeling is not current. As a coach, I would encourage the use of a causal link that removed the possibility of presenting a conditional response—even though the client may well accept its current application. I would do this for the sake of professional rigour.	2.0
Response 13 is non-specific and internalised. As a coach, I would encourage specificity and externalising and then suggest an attempt at a manageable Mark II response.	2.7
Response 14 has a qualified trigger, dynamic verb, and an intimate zone 2 target. As a coach, I would discuss the benefit or otherwise of upgrading the trigger to ‘intimate’. It could be concluded that the response might become a bit cumbersome without discernible benefit. (compare with response 9)	> 2.95 but < 3.0
Response 15 qualifies the feeling with a prepositional phrase. As a coach, I would discuss how such phrases usually point to the trigger(s). I would encourage building a response that incorporated the trigger of Josie’s waning interest.	2.6 Q
Response 16 has a specific trigger, a dynamic verb, and a qualified zone 2 target. As a coach, I would encourage qualifying the trigger and/or making the target intimate. It may or not be appropriate to move beyond the segmental—as always it depends on each learner’s capacity.	> 2.9 but < 2.95
Response 17 has a qualified trigger, dynamic verb, but the external target in zone 4. As a coach, I would invite the counsellor to ask the question: ‘What does Josie’s behaviour do to Arthur?’.	2.85 S
Response 18 uses the preposition ‘of’ to show how Josie’s actions relate to the feeling. As a coach, I would suggest that this formulation contains the ingredients of a qualified trigger, and I would encourage building a Mark II response from there.	2.6 S
Response 19 uses the copulative verb ‘to be’ to describe the nature of Josie’s loss of interest. As a coach, I would encourage the counsellor to find a dynamic verb by asking: ‘What does Josie’s lack of interest actually do to Arthur?’.	2.8 S
Response 20 has a qualified trigger, dynamic verb and qualified zone 2 target. As a coach, I would encourage making the target more intimate by getting the counsellor to spell out the consequence of Arthur failing to kick the habit (or the benefits of succeeding in kicking it).	2.95 S

Exercise 10: Rating levels of exploration—from page 271.

1: Low: Client only talks about perceived problem of colleague. No expression of own thoughts or feelings. Talks as an observer of the situation.

2: High: Client declares very intimate thoughts and feelings, and has insights about her way of doing things.

3: Low: There are no expressions of client’s thoughts or feelings about the external event(s) other than as an observer of the situation.

4: Medium: The client talks about self, thoughts and feelings, but they are mainly historical—‘I felt...’, ‘It was like...’

5: Low: The client expresses something of what they think, but mainly talks about external factors. They even resist internal reflection to ask opinion of the counsellor.

6: Medium: The client talks about self, but their thoughts and feelings are mainly historical—'I've *always*...' 'I *found*...'

7: High: The client has new insights about self and the way they behave.

8: Medium: The client talks about own thoughts and feelings. The insights referred to sound like they were achieved earlier in the session, and this is a summary—not new ground being covered.

9: Low: The client is not expressing thoughts about their own situation, but expresses opinions about external things.

10: High: The client declares personal thoughts and feelings, and has insight about what they do.

Exercise 11: Discriminating types of confrontation—from page 286.

1: Didactic. An inaccurate belief is challenged with substantive facts.

2: Experiential confrontation of discrepancies between words and words.

3: Experiential confrontation of incongruity between expressed values and actions.

4: Experiential confrontation of incongruity between words and body language.

Exercise 12: Assessing the merits of confrontations—from 288.

1: This is a didactic confrontation that highlights a difference between the person's belief and a substantive reality based on evidence provided. However it is a bit wordy.

2: This sounds like it is intended to be a didactic confrontation, but the response offers no alternative evidence, and it is expressed in an offensive and dogmatic manner.

3: This sounds like it is intended to be an experiential confrontation of a discrepancy between words and behaviours, but it tenders no evidence for an alternative opinion, nor does it include any words that suggest the confronter is trying to merely clarify confusion.

4: This is an experiential confrontation of a discrepancy between values and actions. It is concise, sufficiently detailed to supply evidence of the discrepancy observed, and includes words that suggest a tentative (not dogmatic) hypothesis.

5: This seems intended to be an experiential confrontation of a discrepancy between values and actions. It does offer evidence for the challenge, however it is wordy and a bit dogmatic.

Exercise 13: Writing confrontations—from page 289.

1: Didactic. Beliefs and reality need to be challenged.

'I want to check something with you, Jane. You seem to believe that your wit and humour help in team relationships, but the reality is that 85% of the evaluation comments about you at the last team review indicate that others find your remarks sarcastic and hurtful. Those two things don't seem to fit.'

2: Experiential. Words/values and words discrepancy need to be challenged.

'I'm a bit confused, Jennifer. You say you want to earn more money and be free of the dole, but you also say you don't want to do the training that has been suggested. Those two things don't fit.'

3: Experiential. Words/values and words discrepancy need to be challenged.

‘Tom, sort me out here. You say you love your kids, but I reckon you have just spent about half of our conversation criticising them, and those two things don’t fit.’

4: Didactic. Beliefs and reality need to be challenged.

‘Mary, I see you revising for your Maths exam which you reckon is on tomorrow, but look at the timetable. It says that Maths is next Wednesday’.

Exercise 14: Rating responses to level 4.0—from page 316

1 = 3.0; # 2 = 4.0; # 3 = 3.25; # 4 = 3.25; # 5 = 4.0; # 6 = 1.5; # 7 = 4.0; # 8 = 2.0; # 9 = 1.0; # 10 = 3.25; # 11 = 3.0 (internalised); # 12 = 2.5; # 13 = 3.0 (if current) or 2.0 (if historical); # 14 = 2.0; # 15 = 2.0 (looks like 4.0 but there is no feeling—a bit sneaky?) # 16 = 2.0; # 17 = 4.0 (asset) # 18 = 2.5; # 19 = 1.0; # 20 = 3.25.

Exercise 15: Recognising ‘signs of readiness’—from page 318.

1: Externalise. Person blames another for their feelings.

2: Personalise. Person owns the issue. They see their role in the problem and express a desire to act differently.

3: Personalise. Person owns the issue. They see their role in the problem and express a desire to act differently.

4: Externalise. Person blames another for their feelings and thoughts.

5: Externalise. Person blames others. The person makes no attempt to examine their own thoughts or feelings.

Exercise 16: Personalising the meaning—from page 319.

1: ‘You feel constantly frustrated because you fritter time away instead of organising yourself efficiently’.

2: ‘You feel guilty a fair bit of the time because you inflame the situation with your kids by reacting angrily to them out of your tiredness rather than your love’.

3: ‘You feel perpetually terrified because you may have jeopardised any chance of vibrancy in your life by constantly ‘playing it safe’ in your work choices.’

4: ‘You feel continually stupid because you create bad working relationships by reacting defensively, like an automaton, to anyone who reminds you of your dad’.

5: ‘You feel controlled overall because you choose to risk death, rather than embrace life authentically, by using smoking as an emotional crutch.’

Exercise 17: Personalising the problem—from page 320.

1: ‘You feel perpetually chicken because you can’t yet find a way to assert your own needs and wants—even though you know what you want.’

2: ‘You feel perpetually discouraged because you can’t yet find a way to maintain your initial enthusiasm about a fitness program long enough to ensure it has an impact on your health.’

3: 'You feel stressed most of the time because you can't yet find a way to 'market' your own needs to yourself in a way that gives them at least equal importance to other people's needs.'

4: 'You feel frightened because you can't yet find a way to manage differences of opinion with others without resorting to aggression.'

5: 'You feel imprisoned because you can't yet find a safe way to progressively move from keeping all your feelings to yourself to gradually sharing them with others.'

Exercise 18: Sequencing personalised responses—from page 321.

3.0: 'You feel angry because the way your boss steals your ideas denies you the credit for your creativity.'

3.25: 'You feel constantly frustrated because you let your need for approval make you an easy target for abusers.'

3.5: 'You feel constantly frustrated because you cannot yet find a way to believe in yourself enough to confront those who abuse your goodwill.'

3.75: 'You feel angry with yourself because you cannot yet find a way to believe in yourself enough to confront those who abuse your goodwill.'

4.0 'So to sum up, you feel angry with yourself because you cannot yet find a way to believe in yourself enough to confront those who abuse your goodwill, and you really need to find a way to do that—to believe in yourself enough to be able to confront those who abuse your goodwill—so that ultimately, you get the credit that you deserve.'

Exercise 19: Personalising from a case study—from page 323.

Personalised Meaning: 3.25

You learned to value wealth, austerity and 'toughness' as a child.

You 'toed the family line' to get approval, and used those values to live and work by.

You even extended yourself beyond your capacities to try to increase your material success.

You struggled to hide your 'softer' more creative side.

You displaced that 'softer side' onto your kids by indulging them.

You created their financial dependence on yourself as a result.

You ultimately failed to achieve either wealth or job success.

You also believe you have failed your family.

You fear the future if you continue to be trapped by your work and family failures.

You yearn to be free and personally satisfied.

But you continue to live by the family 'script', and resort to depression to avoid trying to make the changes that would enable you to live with vitality.

And all this all makes you feel useless.

Personalised skills deficit: 3.5

You feel useless because you can't yet find a way to abandon the values that have been imposed on you as a child in favour of values that are more personally fulfilling; balance contribution, recreation and family responsibilities; and still ensure an economically viable future.

Personalised new feeling: 3.75

You feel disappointed with yourself because you can't yet find a way to abandon the values that have been imposed on you as a child in favour of values that are more personally fulfilling; balance contribution, recreation and family responsibilities; and still ensure an economically viable future.

Personalised goal: 4.0

As a training exercise you would repeat the 3.75 but, if you are fully aware of the function of the steps, you will decide when repetition is reinforcing and when it is redundant, in which case you could say:

So given that disappointment with yourself, you really need to find a way to abandon the values that have been imposed on you as a child in favour of values that are more personally fulfilling; balance contribution, recreation and family responsibilities; and still ensure an economically viable future, so that you can live with vitality.

Exercise 20: Personalising my own goal—from page 325.

No answers are supplied for personal work undertaken in Exercise 20.

Exercise 21: Operationalising goals—from page 337.

Task 1:

- (1) My colleague has personalised their own goal (apart from listing the benefits).
- (2) The next step is to define the goal in operational terms.
- (3) The questions to be asked are:
 1. Where do you access the journals, and where do you usually find it best to read them—at home, work, library?
 2. What journals exactly do you need to read to stay on top of your job? How many are there that you need to read?
 3. Who: Do you need to involve anyone else to get the journals, or is there anyone who needs to be advised of your unavailability whilst studying the journals?
 4. When: How much time do you need per day, per week, or per month to keep abreast of the reading you need to do? When could you start such a routine? Do you have any pressure to complete any reading by a specific date?
 5. How: What would encourage you to start and keep a routine of reading?
 6. How measured: What amount or type of reading would seem satisfying to you in terms of staying abreast of professional issues?
 7. Why: What are the personal and professional benefits for doing this reading?

Task 2

Possible questions are:

1. What exactly do you mean by a better atmosphere?
2. Who do you need to consult with about, or who needs to be involved in, the reception area improvement?
3. Where are the boundaries of the reception area? Are they just the reception area, or are you thinking of outside of the building as being part of reception too?

4. When would you like to start the improvements and when would you like to see a 'new improved area' by?
5. What benefits can you see to having an improved area (why)?
6. How 1: Have you thought of broadly **how** you might go about achieving the improvement? Like, bringing in consultants, doing it as a team exercise, coming in one weekend, and doing it yourself?
7. How 2: Is your picture of what the reception area would be like when it is revitalised? What would be different? How would you know it was improved?

Exercise 22: Preparing a series of assertions—from page 350.

Jean's ownership is **initiating**—aware of the who, what, when, why, where, of goal.

The target is audience C—a formal acquaintance with whom Jean wants to relate decently but not intimately.

Jean's assertion could be:

'The potatoes you delivered this morning are going green. I am rather disappointed because I need top quality potatoes for a dinner that I am giving tomorrow. I would, therefore, like you to deliver five kilos of replacement potatoes to my home by 10 am tomorrow. I'm sure you will make this happen so that we can continue the good business relationship we have had in the past.'

Scenario 2

Mark's ownership is **understanding**—has ownership of explored goal.

The target is Audience C—a 'powerful' person with whom Mark has a long term, formal relationship, who could be either sympathetic or reactive, and with whom he wants to relate constructively.

Mark's assertion could be:

'I would like to find a suitable time in your diary for me to come to your office to review my work situation. I believe I have given good service to the company, and you did say at my appointment that we could renegotiate the terms of my work after a period of satisfactory work. In fact, I'm a bit embarrassed that I didn't press for a review date at the time of my appointment, but I believe four years is more than a reasonable period on which you can make an assessment. I need to flag that I am looking for security of tenure in order to continue to work happily and productively here.'

Scenario 3

Rose's degree of ownership is **unexplored**—is reactive.

The target is Audience A—a known and trusted friend who will not 'write her off' even if the assertion hurts them.

Rose's assertion could be:

'Where have you been? I've been worried to death—and getting rather cranky because we have now wasted so much of my precious day off.'

If an apology was offered Rose could say:

'OK, but please use your mobile in future if you are going to be late.'

If an explanation was given, Rose would listen, respond empathically and if the explanation signalled a need for understanding and compassion. In either case, Rose

would finish with some summary of where the friendship was ‘at’ and add something like:

‘Well, we’ve cleared the air now—so let’s enjoy the rest of the day’.

Exercise 23: Developing my own assertion— from page 352.

No answers are supplied for personal work undertaken in Exercise 23.

Exercise 24: Decision-making activity— from page 370.

No answers are supplied for personal work undertaken in Exercise 24.

Exercise 25: Action planning activity—from page 393.

No ‘answers’ are supplied for personal work undertaken in Exercise 25

Exercise 26: Review the counselling process— from page 400.

Answers to Exercise 26 can be found in Figure 11 on page 95.

Exercise 27: Data gathering—from page 416.

The following are only examples of data collection possibilities. Other methods may also be useful depending on the client’s capacities, the context, and the severity of the issue.

Client 1

An ‘ABC’ chart would give information about the context in which ‘critical voices’ occur and what behaviours ‘they’ produce.

Antecedents	Behaviour	Consequences
My child’s teacher left a phone message asking to see me.	Immediately thought she must have a complaint.	I put off ringing her for several days, and when I finally did she was rather terse and said she had wanted to ask me if I wanted Sam(child) to go to school outing next day—but now too late. I felt stupid and bumbled apologies.

An ‘intensity’ chart could offer information about the degree of limitation when ‘critical voices’ happen. The intensity should also be given operationalised definitions by the client

Day: <i>Monday 3/10/year</i>	intensity				
Event	confident	weak	apologetic	tearful	paralysed
Working alone on project, Colleague looked cross Partner gave a ‘heavy sigh’ when I spoke	✓		✓	✓	

Client 2

It seems important that this client records the frequency and timing of eating snacks.

Week 1 Oct 3-9 Measuring frequency of consumption of lollies or other snacks																							
Mon			Tues			Wed			Thurs			Fri			Sat			Sun					
am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev			

Client 3

In this example the first chart examines the frequency of ‘cold, critical behaviour’ exhibited by the client, and the second charts the client’s daily moods. ABC’s could also have been useful.

Week 1 August 5 - 12 Measuring frequency of ‘cold, critical behaviour’																							
Mon			Tues			Wed			Thurs			Fri			Sat			Sun					
am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev	am	pm	ev			

Week 1 August 5 - 12		Intensity of depression				
Day		Serene	Sad	Heavy	Depressed	Immobilised
Monday					✓	
Tuesday				✓		
Wednesday				✓	✓	
Thursday			✓			
Friday					✓	
Saturday			✓			
Sunday		✓				

Client 4

This client needs to differentiate between their ‘authentic self’ and their ‘pseudo-self’ so an ABC chart generating data to log when these two experiences occur could be useful.

Antecedents	Behaviour	Consequences
Listening to Jazz on the radio, by myself in the house. At a party, knew only 10% of people there.	Found myself moving with energy to the music. Pseudo smiling, chatting, socialising, drinking too much.	Felt happy and energised and like making loud sound! Felt exhausted and couldn’t wait to get away. Got feedback later that everyone thought I was terrific and got 2 more invitations for this weekend.
Went for a walk in the park with Meg. We talked about matters of local politics.	I was very talkative and animated. Interested in Meg’s views and experiences.	Meg invited me to a local council meeting later that week. I felt burdened, but I went.

Client 5

It might be useful for this client to have a clear picture of the current state of disorganisation in their life so that the enormity of the task is ascertained. So an ‘intensity’ chart of the various areas of the person’s life would be useful.

It would be very important with this client to have some operational definition of the scale used.

1. Major. Total chaos. Can seldom find anything—sometimes until months later.
2. Severe. Can rarely find things without big drama.
3. Needs attention. Can find a few things sometimes without major upheaval.
4. Minor modification. Can find most things with a bit of a search.
5. OK. Can find most things, most of the time.

Intensity of chaos/disorganisation					
Area	5 OK	4 Minor	3 Attention	2 Severe	1 Major
Work filing cabinets			✓		
Bedroom drawers				✓	
Wardrobe		✓			
Kitchen cupboards				✓	
Filing Cabinet at home					✓
Shed					✓

Exercise 28: Working with clients—from page 426.

No answers are supplied for the work undertaken in Exercise 28.

Glossary of terms

This glossary is mainly for readers who may be unfamiliar with colloquial Australian terms, and for those for whom English is a second language. The key words relating to the skills described in the text are **not** included in the glossary. They are defined in the text and can be accessed via the index. The glossary also includes words that are in the text, but may not be generally used in day to day conversation. Some words have more than one meaning, but the glossary usually only describes the meaning used in this text.

abattoirs: Building where animals are slaughtered for meat.

aberrant: Abnormal, unusual.

abridged: Shortened.

abstract: Non-material, vague; a 'pulling out' of key points into a summary statement.

acronym: A word formed from the first letters of other words, such as 'WHO' for World Health Organisation.

actualisation: The ongoing process of becoming the fullest expression of what one was born to be, a bit like a seed becoming a tree.

ad infinitum: (Latin) For ever.

adjunct: Something added on to something else.

affirmation: A declaration that something is true. As used by Hay, a statement of what the clients wants to be true.

advocate: Someone who pleads on behalf of another.

affect: Feeling.

aforesaid: The thing said before.

agoraphobic: Being afraid of open spaces.

aggregate: The total, the full amount.

alien: Stranger, foreigner.

all hands: *Colloq.* All staff, everyone concerned.

allusive: Not fully expressed; hinted at, inferred.

ambiguity: Doubt about meaning; can be taken two ways.

amenable: Agreeable, open to.

analogy: Words that compare one thing with another to help understanding, e.g. the analogy between the heart and a pump.

anapaestic rhythm: Two short beats followed by one long beat.

anomaly: Something different to the common rule.

antidote: A remedy, solution, answer.

antithesis: The direct opposite.

arbiter: The decider, the deciding factor.

archetypes: The first model after which something is made. Often referring to basic personality types in human psychology.

aromatherapy: A form of therapy that uses various perfumed oils to soothe and heal.

arrhythmia: Disturbance, irregularity of heartbeat.

articulate: To say something clearly.

astute: Shrewd, clever.

attribute: A quality.

auditory: Related to hearing.

augment: To add to.

authentic: Real, genuine.

autocratic: Oppressive, bossy.

autonomous: Independent, self-sufficient.

autonomic nervous system: The nervous system that regulates the internal functions of the body including involuntary adjustments to 'emergencies'.

aversive: Unpleasant, something that is disliked.

axiom: A self-evident truth, does not require proof.

axiomatic: Obvious, self-evident.

on the backburner: *Colloq.* To set aside for a while in order to do something else—even though it will need to be attended to at a later time.

backfires: *Colloq.* When something you do or say does not get the intended result. Literally, an accident

- when a cartridge explodes in the breech (back end) of a gun, and 'blows up' in your face.
- backs off:** Withdraws from a commitment.
- bedfellows:** *Colloq.* Things that 'live' intimately with a person, thing or attribute.
- behaviourism:** The study of human or animal responses to various stimuli.
- behave:** A sense of obligation that an action is the right and proper thing to do, and should be done.
- belly (in one's):** Deep feeling experienced in the abdomen (gut).
- bellies churn:** *Colloq.* Tension, stress, distress experiences in the abdomen (gut).
- below par:** Below normal standard.
- benchmark:** A point from which we judge the quality of anything.
- berserk:** Crazy, out of control, violent.
- big deal:** Something that 'matters a lot', is very important.
- bingo:** *Colloq.* Adapted from the game 'Bingo'. It means a successful, quick finish.
- bitching:** Complaining in a disagreeable way.
- bland:** Weak, mild.
- blind spot:** A matter about which one cannot see, especially their own inconsistencies.
- blinker:** *Colloq.* Seeing things in a limited way, being unable to see things clearly—or choosing not to.
- bloke:** *Colloq.* Man, guy, fellow.
- blossom:** To flourish, develop. Grow and bloom, as a bud unfolds to become a flower.
- blotch:** A large, irregular stain or mark.
- blow one's stack:** *Colloq.* To lose one's temper, get very angry.
- blow:** (money): *Colloq.* Spend it all recklessly.
- blow hot and cold:** *Colloq.* To switch between a behaviour and its opposite without good reason.
- blow up:** *Colloq.* Lose one's temper, get very angry, explode.
- bludge:** *Colloq.* To avoid responsibilities, impose on others, or be lazy.
- bludger:** *Colloq.* A person who bludges (above).
- blueprint:** A detailed plan, map.
- body language:** The non-verbal 'language' of gesture, behaviour, facial expression, breathing, etc.
- boils down to:** *Colloq.* A summary, the 'bottom line' the bare facts.
- bore the pants off:** *Colloq.* Delivering a long, dreary, uninteresting speech or commentary.
- bossy:** Controlling, domineering.
- bottle up:** To hold in, suppress, especially feelings.
- bottom line:** The basis of something, a position from which one will not shift or negotiate further.
- brace:** Make strong.
- brainstorming:** A quick way of generating ideas in a fast, random, non-critical way, usually in groups.
- break the ice:** *Colloq.* To get started in ways that help people to relax formality or overcome shyness.
- brevity:** Shortness.
- browbeaten:** Intimidated, scared, bullied.
- bucks:** *Colloq.* Dollars.
- buddies:** *Colloq.* Friends, comrades, mates.
- budding:** In the early stages of, a beginner or novice.
- bulimic:** In constant hunger leading to gross over-eating, often following by self-induced vomiting.
- bulldozer approach:** *Colloq.* Over forceful manner.
- bumbled:** Spoke awkwardly and clumsily.
- burnout:** *Colloq.* In relation to work: emotionally, physically and professionally, 'drying up' to the point of exhaustion.
- butts:** The ends of cigarettes that have been smoked.
- buy time:** Use a delaying tactic to avoid doing something.
- calibrate:** Set or adjust a measuring instrument (scale).
- cameo:** Small 'picture' of something that represents the essence of the whole.
- candour:** Outspokenness, frankness.
- cap it off:** *Colloq.* Add a final touch.
- cardio-respiratory:** Relating to the heart and lung.
- catch on:** *Colloq.* To grasp mentally, understand.
- catch out:** Expose, find out.
- causal:** Denoting or implying a cause.
- centring:** Focussing one's attention to produce an internal state of calm energy.
- CFC:** Carbon fluorocarbon, a chemical compound found in many domestic and industrial products that damages the atmosphere.
- chakras:** Energy centres in the body.
- chameleon:** An animal that changes colour to blend with its surroundings.
- champion:** To defend, protect, fight for.
- cheesed off:** *Colloq.* Fed up with.
- chequered flag:** *Colloq.* An event that signifies the end of something.
- chew on:** *Colloq.* Think about, reflect on something.
- chicken:** *Colloq.* Being scared, cowardly.
- chin up:** Advice to brighten one's mood when tense or stressed.
- chronologically:** Ordered according to date or time.
- churned up:** *Colloq.* Agitated, internally turbulent.
- clam up:** *Colloq.* Remain silent, refuse to talk.
- clamp down:** *Colloq.* Become more strict with rules.
- clobbered:** *Colloq.* Attacked, or otherwise hurt.
- cloistered:** Secret and protected, as in a religious order.
- cobble together:** *Colloq.* Combine roughly.
- cogitation:** Meditation, thought, reflection.
- cognitive:** Thinking, thought process.
- collaborate:** To work harmoniously with another.

- colourful language:** Language that is not edited to be 'proper' nor, necessarily, suitable for public hearing. Also picturesque.
- come hither look:** *Colloq.* A flirtatious look.
- come on heavy:** *Colloq.* Become punitive and critical.
- coming from:** *Colloq.* Arising from a person's view or position on a matter.
- complacent:** Self-satisfied, smug.
- comprehension:** Understanding.
- comprehensive:** Complete, covering everything.
- compromise:** Settle differences with others by mutual concession, giving way to find a middle position.
- concede:** Admit as true, just, or proper; give in, allow.
- conceptual:** Made up of ideas about something.
- congruence:** The condition of being in agreement or harmony.
- connotation:** Secondary or implied meaning.
- contention:** Debate, argument, controversy.
- contingency:** Unforeseen event.
- continuum:** A series.
- convergent:** Narrowing towards a single point.
- cool lingo:** *Colloq.* Fashionable language.
- copped:** *Colloq.* Received something not wanted.
- cops the backwash:** *Colloq.* Bears the negative results of an event.
- cops the flack:** *Colloq.* Bears the negative results of an event.
- core:** At the centre, central.
- corks in one's ears:** *Colloq.* Unable to listen and hear.
- corollary:** Recognisable natural consequence or result.
- cosmology:** A branch of philosophy studying the origin and structure of the universe.
- couched:** Contained, embedded, sitting on.
- counter argument:** Opposing point of view.
- crossroads:** A decision point.
- crux:** A vital basic or decisive point.
- cryptogram:** A coded message (popular as puzzles).
- culminate:** Reach the high spot, conclude.
- cumbersome:** Awkward, burdensome, clumsy.
- daggy:** *Colloq.* Dirty, slovenly, unpleasant.
- dash hope:** Remove all reason for hope.
- decode:** Translate, interpret the intended meaning.
- decondition:** Extinguish a conditioned response.
- deficit:** That which is lacking.
- degenerate:** Deteriorate, get worse.
- dehumanise:** Deprive of human character, quality.
- demean:** Put down, disgrace, lower in dignity.
- demeanour:** A person's overall conduct or bearing.
- dementia:** Impairment or loss of mental powers.
- demystify:** Make plain by removing any mystery.
- denigrate:** To defame, blacken, make dirty.
- deprecate:** Lessen the values of, belittle, 'put down'.
- detox:** Abbreviation for detoxification, getting rid of drugs and/or alcohol in the body.
- deviation:** Variation from intended path or standard.
- dialogue:** Conversation between two or more people.
- didactic:** Intended to teach or instruct.
- dillydally:** Waste time, especially by indecision.
- dimensionalising:** Describes ways information can be represented, such as a two-dimensional chart.
- disarray:** Disorder, confusion.
- discerning:** Recognising differences between things.
- discrepancy:** Difference, inconsistency.
- discriminate:** Make distinctions, note difference between things.
- disequilibrium:** Imbalance, instability.
- disparity:** Lack of similarity, difference, inconsistency.
- dispassionate:** Unbiased, impartial, devoid of feeling.
- dissociative identity disorder:** Clinical term for a disorder where the person unconsciously 'leaves' their real identity and takes up another identity from time to time—initially done to survive prolonged stress/abuse.
- dissonance:** Discordance, lack of harmony.
- distil:** Purify to essential elements. A term borrowed from the whisky/brandy making industry.
- dither:** *Colloq.* Hovering excitement, unable to make up one's mind.
- divergent:** Moving in different directions, expanding.
- dogmatic:** Rigid, fixed, inflexible view.
- dogsbody** *Colloq.* A person who is imposed upon to do work, especially work others want to avoid.
- dole:** Payments made by government to unemployed people.
- dolly up:** *Colloq.* To make smarter, more fashionable.
- do-flickies:** *Colloq.* A word used when one cannot remember the real name of something.
- domino effect:** *Colloq.* One thing leading to another.
- done their homework:** *Colloq.* Worked to prepare for events of various kinds.
- dormant:** Sleeping, or in a state of rest or inactivity.
- down-and-out:** *Colloq.* Poor and of low status, often beggars or tramps, without friends or prospects.
- down-under:** *Colloq.* Northern hemisphere name for Australia, New Zealand, adjacent Pacific islands.
- dreamed up:** *Colloq.* Thought up creatively.
- dries up:** *Colloq.* Stops (talking) (cash flow) etcetera.
- drives a wedge:** Forces distance between (people).
- dudes dig:** *Colloq.* People (especially up to date people) like or admire the thing in question.
- dumped on:** *Colloq.* Inappropriately expressed personal feelings to another.
- dyad:** A group of two people.
- dyed-in-the-wool:** Through and through, rigid.
- dynamic:** Forceful.
- dysfunctional:** Not working.

- eclectic:** In counselling, made up from a selection of theories.
- elasticity:** Flexibility.
- eloquent:** Speaks well, clearly and expressively.
- elusive:** Hard to express or define, hiding.
- empathy:** The capacity to express an understanding of another's experience.
- emasculate:** Weaken, deprive of strength, vigour.
- embellish:** Add an improvement, enhance, adorn.
- embodied:** Incorporated, the essence included.
- empiricism:** Facts derived from research methods, used to support or influence experience.
- end of tether:** *Colloq.* Feeling stretched or very tense, can go no further—like a goat on a rope.
- energy flags:** Energy diminishes, tapers off with time.
- energy resonance:** An awareness of a person's energy field that is 'sensed' internally, almost mystically, by the counsellor when fully attentive.
- enigma:** Something puzzling or hard to explain.
- enough on your plate:** *Colloq.* The person has a lot to do and cannot take on any more work.
- ephemeris:** Tables showing position of heavenly bodies on a number of dates, in orderly sequence.
- equilibrium:** Balance, stability.
- erodes:** Eats away, destroys slowly.
- espoused:** Adopted or embraced as one's own.
- ethnic:** Those speaking same language, racial groups.
- euphonious:** Agreeable to the ear, well-sounding.
- euphoria:** Unusually high sense of well being, unnatural state of elation.
- excursion:** A short trip.
- exhort:** To earnestly urge, advise or caution.
- existential:** A group of doctrines specifying the freedom and responsibility of human existence.
- experiential:** Derived from experience.
- facilitative:** Helpful, enabling, makes easier.
- fag:** *Colloq.* A cigarette.
- fantasise:** Imagine, indulge in an elaborate daydream.
- far fetched:** *Colloq.* Exaggerated.
- fast-tracked:** *Colloq.* Rapidly promoted.
- feasible:** Achievable, workable, realistic, possible.
- fine-tune:** Make small, but important, adjustments or changes to improve performance.
- firing on all cylinders:** *Colloq.* Energetic, performing well, like a car in good working order.
- flagging:** Getting tired, weakening.
- flashing eyes:** Eyes are very alert, lively and 'lit up'—often in anger.
- flopping:** Sitting down heavily in a tired manner.
- fluent:** Articulate, flowing.
- flutter:** *Colloq.* To gamble in small amounts.
- fly by the seat of pants:** *Colloq.* To operate without fore-thought.
- foggy:** *Colloq.* Not having a clear idea about a topic.
- footy:** An affectionate term for football.
- foreshadow:** To indicate beforehand.
- fragmented:** In pieces, disorganised, broken down.
- frame of reference:** Point of view, perspective.
- fraternise:** Be friendly towards others, including enemies.
- fritter:** Squander or waste, little by little, gradually.
- fronts up:** *Colloq.* Makes an appearance.
- frolicking:** Playfully, merrily, having fun, energetically dancing about.
- fuddy duddy:** *Colloq.* A person who is old-fashioned and out of date, inclined to be fussy.
- fume:** To show irritation or anger.
- functional:** Capable, useful, practical.
- futile:** Useless, ineffective, unworkable.
- galah:** Literally, a common small Australian cockatoo. *Colloq.* A fool or simpleton.
- galling:** Irritating (usually in relation to oneself).
- gamut:** Range, extent.
- garbage:** Literally, rubbish, often applied to anything to mean that the thing, or comment, has no worth.
- gelling:** *Colloq.* Setting, becoming established, ideas start to make sense.
- generic:** In counselling, applies to all general needs presented in counselling.
- genetic:** Inherited feature or trait.
- genuine:** Real, authentic.
- Gestalt:** An organised pattern, and the therapeutic approach that uses that concept as its base.
- get one's act together:** *Colloq.* Become organised.
- get agro:** *Colloq.* Become angry.
- get a handle on:** *Colloq.* Begin to understand or be able to manage.
- get a lift:** *Colloq.* Make mood brighter
- get away with murder:** *Colloq.* Avoid consequences of an action, or avoid well-deserved punishment.
- get kicks:** *Colloq.* Gain pleasure from, enjoy.
- get off your butt:** *Colloq.* Get moving, become active.
- getting hooked:** *Colloq.* Being 'caught' by something or someone against one's better judgement.
- glean:** Gather, collect, pick up.
- glib:** Quick and fluent, often thoughtless or insincere.
- glitch:** *Colloq.* A snag, hitch, or malfunction.
- gloss over:** To explain away something superficially, to minimise the importance of something.
- goad:** To push, prod, stimulate, drive.
- goer:** *Colloq.* A viable option, likely to be successful.
- go nuts:** *Colloq.* To feel almost crazy.
- going through the motions:** *Colloq.* Doing something without commitment.
- goose flesh/goose bumps:** Involuntary response to cold or fear, when body hair 'stands on end', often at the back of the neck.

- got in your face:** *Colloq.* A person annoyed you, affronted you.
- going overboard:** *Colloq.* Exaggerating, overdoing something.
- grandstanding:** Showing off, boasting, wanting to impress.
- grounded:** Sensible, level-headed, firmly established.
- gruesome:** That which makes one shudder, or experience horror.
- gunna:** Australian slang for 'going to'.
- gutter language:** *Colloq.* Using swear words.
- hallucinogens:** Chemicals capable of producing hallucinations or 'unreal reality'.
- hands on:** *Colloq.* Practical experience.
- hang in:** *Colloq.* Persevere, stay involved.
- hangover:** *Colloq.* Something left over from an earlier experience, especially after excessive drinking.
- happy as Larry:** *Colloq.* Very happy, on top of things.
- happy medium:** *Colloq.* Comfortable middle position.
- Harry Butler:** A famous Australian naturalist.
- hassle:** A quarrel, struggle or period of unease.
- have one's act together:** *Colloq.* To be competent and confident.
- heavies:** *Colloq.* Those holding power.
- hitch:** An unexpected block or problem, obstruction.
- hit-and-miss:** Haphazard, random approach.
- hit the bullseye:** *Colloq.* To be extremely accurate, literally 'hitting the centre of a target'.
- hogs the show:** *Colloq.* Talking so much that nobody else can say anything.
- holding the floor:** *Colloq.* Talking so much that nobody else can say anything.
- homogeneous:** Of a similar kind or nature.
- honing:** Making sharper.
- hooked interest:** *Colloq.* Attracted, or caught, interest.
- hopping mad:** *Colloq.* Very angry.
- horseshoe formation:** Seating arrangement that is shaped in a half-circle, like a horseshoe.
- hovering attentiveness:** Attention that stays loosely but perpetually aware.
- Human Achievement Skills:** Carkhuff's words for the basic skills of living life effectively.
- humanism:** A philosophy, and therapeutic approach, where human interests predominate.
- Human Resource Development:** Carkhuff's words for his picture of effective humans, living in effective societies or working in effective organisations, using effective programs.
- Human Technology:** Carkhuff's words for the skills of living, learning and working effectively.
- hypothesis:** Best guess, untested theory.
- idiom:** A way of saying something differently from its literal meaning, as in a dialect.
- idiomatic:** Relating to a particular language or idiom.
- impacts:** Contacts with force.
- impasse:** A block to progress, with no way out.
- Impediment:** A block, barrier or restriction, things that get in the way.
- incongruent:** Things that are dissimilar, the condition of being out of agreement or harmony.
- inconsistent:** Self-contradictory, lack of agreement between parts.
- incremental:** Something added to piece by piece.
- incubate:** Literally, sit on eggs so that they hatch.
Colloq. To think about an idea in the back of the mind until it 'hatches'.
- incumbent:** Obligatory, necessary.
- inebriated:** Affected by alcohol, drunk.
- inept:** Incapable, out of place, unsuitable.
- inference:** Conclusion, supposition, guess, based on the evidence.
- innate:** Inborn, inherent in the character of something.
- innervate:** Stimulate through the nerves.
- integrate:** Bring together into a whole.
- interchangeable:** Any term that can be changed with another term without losing meaning.
- inter-dependent:** Each person/fact/event relying on others.
- intermediate:** In the middle.
- inter-personal:** Between people.
- interrogate:** Question.
- in a rut:** *Colloq.* Stuck in a boring situation.
- in the wake:** *Colloq.* After the event, (from the 'trail' behind a moving ship).
- intra-personal:** With, or within, oneself.
- intrinsic:** Belongs to something by its very nature.
- introjection:** Inserting one's own information (or viewpoint) when not intended.
- introspection:** Looking inwards, self-reflection.
- intrusion:** Unwelcome entry, without permission.
- intuition:** Instinct, inner knowing.
- involuntary:** Without conscious control.
- jumbled:** Mixed up, muddled, confused, without order.
- jump in:** *Colloq.* To begin something without sufficient forethought or preparation.
- Jungian:** A therapeutic approach based on the work of Carl Jung.
- key:** Essential, important, significant.
- kick the habit:** *Colloq.* To overcome an addictive habit, such as smoking.
- kill a cat:** *Colloq.* Take action, do something.
- kinaesthetic:** Related to movement—action or emotion.
- kinesiology:** A therapeutic approach to helping people by focussing on the body.
- knock:** *Colloq.* To criticise, find fault with.
- knock off:** *Colloq.* To stop an activity, especially work.
- knocked over:** *Colloq.* Really impressed, impacted.
- kudos:** Glory, renown, status, reputation.

- lackey:** Servile follower, servant.
- laissez-faire:** (French) *Colloq.* Sloppy.
- lapse:** Slight error, sinking to a lower grade, falling into disuse, a slip or negligence.
- latent:** Hidden, present but not visible, dormant.
- lateral:** Sideways.
- learning base line:** A person's current level of skill and/or knowledge, their personal benchmark.
- Leonardo da Vinci:** A famous 16th Century Italian artist.
- let off steam:** To express one's anger or frustration, often by indirect or harmless means.
- lethargy:** Being sluggish, drowsy, apathetic, low energy.
- lick into shape:** Bring to perfection, make efficient.
- lick one's wounds** To retire and recover after defeat, to comfort oneself.
- logo:** A trademark.
- lollies:** Sweets, confectionery, chocolates.
- loner:** One who dislikes the company of others.
- long winded:** Tediously wordy speech or writing.
- loo:** *Colloq.* Toilet, water closet, bathroom, rest room.
- lucid:** Clear, easily understood.
- luminescence:** The giving out of light.
- macabre:** Horrible, gruesome, grim.
- malfunction:** Something goes wrong.
- mammogram:** An X-ray of the breast.
- mandatory:** Ordered, required, often by law.
- manipulation:** Moving some thing, person, or process around to suit one's purpose.
- marathon:** A very long race or event where endurance is the important factor.
- mechanistic:** Mechanical, rigid, without emotion.
- mediocre:** Ordinary, of moderate quality only.
- metabolic function:** The way the body processes food, eliminates waste and generates energy.
- metaphor:** A term applied to something that it does not mean literally, but resembles, such as: *He is a tower of strength.*
- metaphysical:** Concerned with abstract ideas about the nature of being, time, the universe etc.
- micro-skills:** The individual skill steps, that can be taught separately, but which together make up the overall effective skill.
- milestone:** A significant event that implies progress in one's life such as a birthday or promotion.
- mind-set:** The perspective from which things are viewed.
- mixed bag:** An assortment of people and objects of different kinds and varying quality; variety.
- mnemonics:** A way of using letters or words as an aid to memory.
- mobilise:** To get going, put into motion, muster.
- mockery:** Ridicule, scorn, derision.
- mock-up:** Not the real thing, a model.
- mooch:** To slouch or saunter along, to walk about without much purpose.
- mores:** Customs, accepted conventions that express the fundamental moral views of a group.
- mothballed:** *Colloq.* Put aside, completely segregated.
- multi-dimensional:** Having many dimensions.
- multiple personality disorder:** A clinical term for a disorder where the person unconsciously 'leaves' their real identity and takes up several other identities from time to time—initially done to survive prolonged stress/abuse.
- muse:** A goddess thought to inspire poetry.
- mumbling:** Not speaking clearly.
- naïve:** Innocent, inexperienced, possibly foolish.
- Napoleon:** A famous (dead) French soldier and ruler.
- near the mark:** *Colloq.* Sufficiently accurate to satisfy.
- needle:** *Colloq.* To irritate, annoy, slowly and regularly.
- negate:** Deny, say 'no' to.
- negotiate:** Discuss with a view to make a 'deal'.
- nesting:** Carkhuff's word for one smaller thing being part of a larger thing.
- neurosis:** Emotional disorder.
- Neuro-Linguistic programming (NLP):** A system developed by Bandler and Grinder (1975) for describing how a person takes in, and organises information, and then translates them into a behavioural or verbal response.
- niggle:** Grumble or complain constantly.
- Noah's ark:** The floating vessel that, in a Bible story, saved Noah, his family and two of each breed of animal at a time when the world was flooded.
- nonchalant:** Unconcerned, casual, indifferent.
- norms:** Ways in which individuals or groups currently operate, or ways that groups agree to conduct their meetings or business.
- nosedive:** *Colloq.* A rapid fall in quality, or drop off in standards.
- nose out of joint:** Offended, thwarted or upset.
- notch:** *Colloq.* A step, or a small amount.
- nullify:** Make ineffective, of no consequence or use.
- nuts about you:** *Colloq.* Person loves you very much.
- nutshell:** In a very brief form, a tidy package.
- OAM:** Medal of the Order of Australia. An official award made to citizens of Australia for meritorious service in a given vocational, community, artistic or sporting field.
- oblique:** Slanted, angled, not straight or direct.
- occultism:** Study of things secret, mysterious or magic.
- ogle:** To look at someone with flirtatious intent.
- OHP:** Overhead projector.
- operationalise:** Make 'do-able' by detailing what is to happen, how, when, where, why, by whom and to what standard.
- optimise:** Make the best of something.
- Orient:** The countries of Asia, generally, in this case especially China.

- orient:** Adjust to surroundings.
- orientate:** Adjust to surroundings.
- orientation:** Leaning towards a particular intellectual or philosophical position.
- oscillation:** To swing or move to and fro, between.
- ouch:** A cry of pain.
- ovation:** Prolonged applause.
- package:** *Colloq.* A financial settlement offered if employment terminated.
- palatable:** Literally, edible. In this text, acceptable.
- palliative:** Soothing, often related to caring for those who are dying.
- paradox:** A statement that seems self-contradictory, yet expresses a truth. An apparent contradiction.
- paralinguistics:** The way words are said, accent, tone, volume etc. The non-verbals of the verbal.
- paraphrase:** To restate something in words that are clear without losing the original sense or meaning.
- parrot:** Literally a hook-billed bird. Also, one who unintelligently repeats the words (or imitates the actions) of another.
- passive:** Inactive, inert, submitting without resistance.
- pathology:** Abnormal condition.
- paver:** Flat stone block which, when laid with other pavers, makes a path or road.
- pecuniary:** Relating to money.
- pedantically:** Slavishly following rules.
- pedantry:** Undue attention to learning and rules.
- peek:** A little look, to peep at, or peer.
- peep:** In this text, 'not a peep', making no reply.
- peevied:** Being cross, discontented, fretful.
- penny drops:** A remark or explanation is understood.
- perpetuate:** Keep something going, or an issue alive.
- pertinent:** Relating to the matter in hand.
- pervasive:** Extending throughout, all the time, spread through, persistent.
- perving:** *Colloq.* Getting onlooker satisfaction, often sexual.
- PhD:** Doctor of Philosophy, a higher education qualification.
- phenomenon:** An observable fact or occurrence, (plural phenomena).
- philanthropist:** One who loves humankind and acts generously towards others.
- phobic:** Response to a phobia—excess fear, dread.
- physiology:** Related to the way the body works.
- pigs:** An exclamation of comment, or derision that forcefully says, 'Rubbish! that is totally wrong!'
- pinpoint:** To identify precisely.
- pitch:** (of sound) Relates to frequency—'high' or 'low.' In this text, pitching a 'presentation' at a level that matches learners' needs.
- pivot point:** A turning point.
- platitude:** Common and glib expression, trite.
- plaudit:** Approval, applause for achievement.
- playing games:** Behaving in ways that block open and honest communication.
- play down:** Minimising the importance of.
- pokies:** Poker machines.
- polarity:** Division, especially of opposites, as in positive and negative 'poles' on a battery.
- pompous:** Self-important, snobbish, arrogant.
- pot luck:** A random or haphazard choice.
Colloq. Taking a chance with whatever happens.
- potent:** Powerful, strong.
- pragmatism:** Emphasising the practical and factual.
- precedes:** Goes before.
- précis:** A short summary or abstract.
- precocious:** Usually of a child. Developmentally ahead, especially mentally.
- precondition:** That which must happen before something else happens.
- precursor:** Forerunner, that which goes before to indicate the approach of something else.
- predetermined:** Pre-arranged, fixed.
- pre disposition:** Having a previous inclination or susceptibility towards something.
- predominant:** Most important, major.
- premeditated:** Planned in advance, thought through beforehand.
- preposition:** A word that comes before a noun (naming word) to indicate its relation to other words. For example, by, in, from, against.
- prerequisite:** That which is required beforehand. 'Fluency in English is a prerequisite for the job.'
- prickly:** Sensitive, easily upset.
- primers:** Basic textbooks.
- procrastinate:** Put something off until another time.
- proficient:** Capable, skilful.
- pro-forma:** Form relating to an established procedure.
- proposition:** A proposal, an idea put forward.
- protocol:** Custom or rules of group or culture, especially relating to procedures and ceremonies.
- protrusion:** Something 'sticking out'.
- proxemics:** Hall's term (1963) for the art and 'science' of reading how humans use distance as a way of obtaining either space or intimacy.
- proximity:** Closeness in place, time, or relation.
- pseudo:** False, not what it is supposed to be.
- psyche:** The human soul, spirit, mind.
- psychoanalytic:** Concerning the relationship of conscious and unconscious psychological forces.
- psychotherapy:** The science/art of helping people with problems—historically seen as more specialised and more remedial than counselling.
- purport:** Conveying to the mind what is meant or intended, what a thing is supposed to be.
- putting on a front:** *Colloq.* Behaving in a way that is false, different from the person's actual feeling.

- put on a good show:** *Colloq.* Successfully pretend to be or do something.
- put in the bin:** *Colloq.* Discard as if of no future value, let go of, stop doing something.
- Pythagoras' theorem:** A geometrical theory relating to right-angled triangles.
- qualify:** A grammatical term meaning to modify by adding a descriptor—the *black dog*.
- qualitative:** Relating to the nature and attributes of something.
- quantum leap:** Huge or radical shift in ideas.
- quantum physicist:** A scientist involved in the advanced study of atomic systems.
- quit:** Stop, cease, or discontinue, relinquish, let go.
- ranking:** Putting a series of things in order of importance.
- rating:** A score, giving a scaled score to something.
- rationale:** Statement of reasons or principles.
- recalcitrant:** Obstinate, unmanageable, not obedient or compliant.
- redundant:** Being in excess to requirements.
- reframe:** Perceive and describe things from a different point of view.
- regenerate:** Revive, refresh, restore.
- regular course:** A term used in this book to mean training programs of 144 hours duration, that follow the outline of courses developed by the authors.
- rehash:** Work up (old material) in a new form.
- reigning ideologies:** The ideas of those in power.
- reiterate:** Say again, repeat.
- rejoinder:** An answer to a reply.
- relapse:** Have setback, fall back to a former state.
- remedial:** Curative, tending to apply a remedy.
- repertoire:** Range of things within a person's accomplishments, more usually musical, theatrical.
- replica:** A copy of an original.
- resonance:** To be in direct harmony with. Vibrate at the same frequency, such as a bowed string and the body of a violin.
- resuscitate:** Revive, especially from apparent death.
- retarding:** Holding back, delaying progress, hindering.
- retina:** A coating at the back of the eye that receives light messages/images that the brain translates into what we see.
- ride it out:** To sustain or endure successfully, patiently doing something not desired—ride out a storm at sea.
- rigour:** Strictness, precision.
- roadworthy:** Fit for use, reliable, trustworthy, such as a car on the road.
- robust:** Strong, healthy, hardy, vigorous.
- rock bottom:** Lowest possible position. It cannot get any worse.
- rock the boat:** *Colloq.* Create a disturbance, make trouble.
- rostrum:** Platform or stage for public speaking.
- round in circles:** *Colloq.* Continuing to repeat the same thinking or speaking and going nowhere.
- round robin:** *Colloq.* A way of practising skills where students sit in a semi-circle and take turns in interacting with a person seated in the centre.
- Royal Automobile Association:** A South Australian motoring organisation that provides various services for motorists who are members.
- rudiments:** Basics, elements or first principles of a subject.
- sabotage:** Underhand interference with a process or property that minimises its effectiveness, attacks with ill will.
- salient:** Prominent, conspicuous, important.
- Sanskrit:** An ancient Indian language.
- scaffold:** A temporary structure to support men and material in construction of buildings, *Colloq.*, a structure or outline when producing other things.
- scenario:** The outline of a particular situation, a plan to be followed.
- scepticism:** A position of critical questioning.
- scoff:** To ridicule, make fun of.
- schematically:** Represented by a drawing or diagram.
- schizophrenia:** A mental illness where reality is often distorted.
- screaming point:** *Colloq.* Desperate, seems as if things cannot get any worse.
- screw up:** *Colloq.* To make major mistake.
- scrutinised:** Examined critically.
- scuttle:** Literally, to wilfully sink a ship. *Colloq.* Ruin one's own best interest, or 'sink' another person.
- second nature:** Instinctive, a well practiced habit that is part of one's nature or character.
- segmental:** Divided into parts that naturally or logically divide.
- self-deprecating:** Criticise oneself harshly.
- set in concrete:** *Colloq.* Fixed, cannot be changed.
- set the stage:** Prepare for success in what follows.
- shell shocked:** Literally a nervous disorder brought on by the strain of modern warfare. *Colloq.* Really shocked by heavy criticism or personal attack.
- shook up:** *Colloq.* Shocked, shaken emotionally.
- shoot yourself in the foot:** *Colloq.* Behave in ways that damage your own chance of succeeding.
- shortcomings:** Limitations.
- simmer down:** *Colloq.* Calm down emotionally.
- simultaneous:** At the same time, concurrently.
- sizing up:** *Colloq.* Assessing, considering the merits of.
- sloppy:** Careless, untidy, slovenly, not precise.
- smirk:** Grin.
- smoke coming from ears:** *Colloq.* Very angry indeed.
- smorgasbord:** Swedish word meaning a buffet meal of a wide variety of dishes.
- snappy:** Quick, sharp speech, often critical.

- soft touch:** *Colloq.* Easy to manipulate.
- soldier on:** *Colloq.* To manage bravely, despite difficulties.
- sonic:** Referring to sound.
- sop:** Something given to pacify, quieten, or soothe.
- spawned:** To produce, give rise to, to give birth to.
- Speaker of the House of Representatives:** The title of the person who oversees the proceedings of the lower house of the Australian Federal Parliament.
- spiteful:** Wanting to humiliate, venomous ill-will.
- spot-on:** *Colloq.* Absolutely right or accurate. Excellent!
- springboard:** *Colloq.* Provide a stimulus for action.
- St Francis of Assisi:** A Catholic saint who seemed able to have a remarkable relationship with the animal kingdom.
- stack:** To place one thing on top of another.
- stakeholder:** One who has an active and personal interest (or stake) in an outcome.
- stay abreast:** To keep one's information up to date.
- steamed up:** *Colloq.* Very angry.
- stereotype:** To label without consideration of individual differences.
- stew:** *Colloq.* To fret worry, or fuss.
- stick their nose in:** *Colloq.* To pry, interfere.
- strife:** Conflict, discord. *Colloq.* In trouble.
- subordinate:** A person of lesser rank, or thing of lower order.
- substantiate:** Establish by proof, give evidence of.
- sub-personality:** A term used in the Psychosynthesis therapeutic approach that means a part of oneself.
- sub-vocal:** Words formed in one's mind, not spoken.
- succinct:** Short, concise, in few words.
- sumptuous:** Lavish, splendid, superb.
- suss out:** *Colloq.* Try to assess the possibilities of a situation before proceeding.
- swagger:** To walk with a body movement that indicates superiority, defiance.
- sweat it out:** *Colloq.* Carry on despite difficulties.
- switch off:** *Colloq.* Lose interest in, stop listening.
- synonym:** A word that has the same (or nearly the same) meaning as another, in the same language.
- synonymous:** Having the same meaning.
- synthesise:** Combining elements into a new, more complex, whole.
- systematic:** Having a method or plan.
- systematic desensitisation:** A therapeutic technique where an unwanted behaviour is extinguished by approaching feared situations gradually.
- tackle:** *Colloq.* To take on a challenge.
- tailor:** To make something fit for those involved.
- take in:** Absorb, comprehend, understand.
- take stock:** Assess the current state of things.
- tally:** The sum total of.
- tangent:** Digression, departure from something being discussed, or under consideration.
- tangible:** Touchable, real, definite.
- tai chi:** A system of exercises and spiritual practices.
- Tao:** (Chinese) Path or way which, in Taoist belief, is the course of life and its foundation in relation to eternal truth.
- teaching grandma to suck eggs:** *Colloq.* Stating the obvious to those who are already aware of it.
- template:** Pattern, mould for future similar activities.
- ten green bottles:** An old song where gradually all bottles are broken until none remain.
- tentative:** Hesitant, cautious.
- tenure:** Permanent holding or possession of a position or property.
- tetchy:** Irritable.
- therapeutic:** Remedial or curative, health-promoting.
- thingummybobs:** *Colloq.* A word used when one cannot remember the real name of something.
- thongs:** Flat sandals, loosely held on the foot by a strip of material between the first and second toes.
- throw in the towel:** *Colloq.* To give in, accept defeat.
- thrown:** *Colloq.* Caught unawares, baffled by, put off.
- throws cold water on:** *Colloq.* Restricts any joy or enthusiasm by criticising.
- tickled pink:** Greatly pleased or amused.
- tics:** Painless, purposeless contractions of muscles in the face or extremities.
- tiff:** A petty quarrel.
- titbit:** A pleasing bit of anything.
- toe the line:** *Colloq.* Behave according to rules.
- two hoots (to matter):** *Colloq.* It doesn't matter at all.
- top dog:** The person in the most important position.
- torso:** The body other than the head and limbs.
- transcend:** Rise above, surpass, excel.
- transcribe:** To make a copy of in writing, write out.
- transparent:** Open, can be seen through.
- transpose:** To change the relative position of.
- trauma:** A startling experience that has lasting emotional effects, a shock.
- triads:** A group of three people. A useful training structure where the people rotate in three different counselling roles during practice sessions.
- tricky:** Deceptive, uncertain or ticklish (difficult) to deal with.
- trigger:** To start or precipitate something, stimulate.
- triune being:** A being with three parts.
- trudge:** Walk wearily, laboriously.
- truism:** That which is obviously true.
- turbulent:** Disturbed, agitated, troubled.
- tyrant:** Oppressor, unjust ruler.
- umbrage:** Offence, resentful displeasure, indignation.
- umpteen:** An indefinite, but large number.
- unambiguous:** *Colloq.* Unmistakable, clear cut.

- unsalvageable:** Not able to be redeemed, saved.
- unsolicited:** Not asked for.
- utility:** Usefulness.
- validated:** Confirmed, substantiated, corroborated.
- validity:** Has validity when the test applied measures what it is supposed to measure.
- vantage point:** The best position from which to get the clearest view of anything.
- vener:** Thin covering, often to enhance appearance.
- verbatim:** Word for word, in exactly the same words.
- verity:** Truth, in accordance with reality.
- vernacular:** Language derived from the 'literal' language, but modified to take a meaning of a particular sub-group. A bit like slang or dialect.
- VET (Vocational Education and Training):** The name of an Australian national government scheme that accredits, and oversees all non-university certified training leading to vocational outcomes.
- viable:** Workable, practical, do-able.
- vigilant:** Keenly attentive, awake, alert, watchful.
- visual:** Related to sight and seeing.
- voluble:** Uses lots of words, glibly fluent.
- voluntary:** A choice made by one's own free will.
- wading through:** Laboriously working through.
- walk in another's shoes:** A metaphorical way of describing empathy—understanding the situation from another's point of view.
- waning:** (of the moon) Gradual decline of extent, strength, quantity, intensity or power.
- waver:** Sway to and fro, fluctuate, become shaky, show doubt or indecision.
- waxing:** (of the moon) Gradual increase in extent, quantity, strength, intensity or power.
- wet blanket:** A person or thing that dampens ardour or enthusiasm, or has a discouraging effect.
- whatsits:** *Colloq.* A word used when one cannot remember the real name of something.
- what-d'ye-call-its:** *Colloq.* A word used when one cannot remember the real name of something.
- whet the appetite:** To make keen or eager.
- whip in:** *Colloq.* Pay a quick visit.
- whiteboard:** In this text, this can mean any visual medium that client and counsellor can see as they work something out collaboratively, amend in process and later either copy or print from.
- whiz out:** *Colloq.* To exit speedily.
- winding down:** Drawing to a close, relax after a period of tension or activity.
- with it:** In touch with what is happening. Up to date, clear, energetic, in control, fashionable.
- wolf down:** *Colloq.* To eat speedily, greedily.
- woolly:** Unclear in thought, expression, or depiction.
- write off:** (debt) Debt no longer payable. *Colloq.* Dismiss, overlook, an incompetent person.
- Yoga:** A system of exercises and spiritual practices.
- yoke:** To bind or join together.

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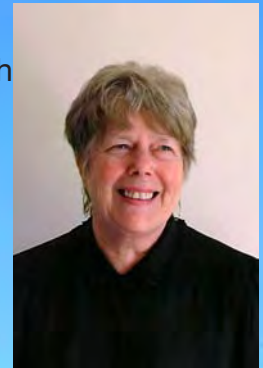


DAVID KRANZ

David switched careers from telecommunications to social work in his early thirties. Following basic social work training he chose to learn selectively and informally to develop the skills he needed for pioneering projects throughout his innovative career. He established the Elizabeth District Office and Staff Development Branch in the state Department for Community Welfare. He convened major national and international training programs for social welfare administrators. He introduced skills training into human service areas in welfare and educational institutions, including universities, in South Australia.

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Vicky worked as a Social Worker with a wide range of client groups including: homeless families, disabled persons, those with mental health problems and the elderly in the United Kingdom, and with indigenous Australians at Amata, Port Augusta and Adelaide. She managed regional welfare services in the United Kingdom and was a Foster Care Consultant and Staff Development Officer in Australia. She was the foundation President of the Counselling Association of South Australia and its delegate at the formation of the national Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia



For almost twenty-five years, the authors co-partnered a human resource consultancy, Quest Associates, and successfully applied the skills detailed in this text to meet the diverse needs of individuals, organizations and commercial enterprises. They developed, managed and taught in a suite of accredited counselling courses, from Certificate IV to Degree level that has earned a reputation for producing quality counsellors in the field. They have taught in the Masters in Counselling for the University of South Australia on a contractual basis for many years both in Adelaide and Hong Kong. They sold their business in 2004 in order to retire. 'Roadworthy skills' is the authors' ongoing contribution to counsellors and other helpful people.

