Counselling in Scotland

SPRING 2017

Funding Challenges

To all the professionals…

Healing Our Inner Being

On Becoming More, in the Therapeutic Relationship

The Scots as Persons in Transition

Perspectives

Transgender Couples Counselling

From Boy to Man

COSCA

Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland

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Editorial

John Dodds

E.M. FOSTER'S phrase from "Howard's End," "only connect," perfectly summarises a theme that informs two of the articles in this issue. In one of them, Colin Kirkwood's "Persons in Transition" looks at, among other things, connection (or lack thereof) in a political and cultural context, while Mike Moss "On becoming more in the therapeutic relationship" looks at the potential for a deeper connection with clients in the therapeutic relationship.

Although Colin's article was written before the Scottish Referendum and the subsequent Brexit vote, the points he makes are still perfectly valid today. Interestingly enough, just as we reached the proof-reading stage of the journal first Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, was seeking permission for a second referendum on Scottish independence between the autumn of 2018 and spring the following year (which would coincide with the expected conclusion to the UK's Brexit negotiations). Colin does not argue for separateness from the UK in the sense of a disconnection, but rather for what I would call an independent connectedness, recognising our common humanity and connection as human beings, while he also discusses the benefits of cultural and political diversity, among other things.

Someone I met recently, Ian Ross, is an autogenic therapist, and I felt an article by him about this approach would be of interest to our readers. The autogenic approach recognises that when we are distressed both mind and body are affected. He says in his introduction, "Whatever therapeutic approaches are used, it is unlikely that lasting well-being will result unless our bodies also become settled and in harmony." The result is a fascinating piece called "Healing our Inner Being: non-cognitive approaches to well-being."

Last issue we had an article about counselling in relation to sex. A wide field, of course, and sometimes brings us to areas that we perhaps need to understand more about if it is not within our experience. Dr. Alistair McBeath makes this very point in his discourse on transgender couples counselling. There has been a marked increase of referral in recent years of people struggling to live with the gender that they were assigned at birth. In approaching transgender couple counselling for the first time, Dr. McBeath, says, "I sensed an immediate inner conflict between wanting to increase my knowledge about what the word transgender might mean without losing my sensitivity to basic human difference and individual diversity."

As regular readers may know some of our contributors are poets as well as counsellors, so this issue again features poetry, as well as a review of a collection of poems called "From Boy to Man" by Colin Kirkwood, who also wrote the "Persons in Transition." Our own Benet Haughton, who is extremely well-versed (pun intended) in poetry, highly praises Colin's work in his insightful review.

Still on the subject of poetry, COSCA was one of the nominated charities in the Year of Listening (YOL) 2016, which included a writing competition. We are very pleased to publish in this issue of the COSCA Journal the "commended" poem on listening by Susan Robinson.

Launching this issue of the journal is an important piece about funding challenges for counselling organisations by COSCA's Recognition Scheme Development Officer, Jenny McLintock. In her introductory statements, she says, "I am becoming increasingly concerned by the feedback received from organisations regarding their difficulties experienced in acquiring and maintaining funding, placing the development and sustainment and the very existence of counselling organisations at risk." First discussing the challenges, Jenny goes on to suggest ways that organisations can support their efforts to acquire and maintain funding while retaining their ethics, value and ethos.

John Dodds, Editor

Funding Challenges

for Counselling Organisations

Jenny McLintock
COSCA Recognition Scheme Development Officer

The COSCA Recognition Scheme is a quality assurance scheme for counselling, psychotherapy and counselling skills organisations which has at its heart a commitment to the development and sustainment of high quality services, continuous organisational improvement and the use of sound ethical practice.

The scheme endeavours to value diversity within counselling, psychotherapy and counselling skills organisations and to promote the benefits of the use of the counselling approach in Scotland as a whole. We are fortunate to presently have 26 recognition scheme organisations of varying size (including national organisations), client focus (from generic to specific issues), geographic location and organisational structure (including both voluntary sector organisations and limited companies).

With the duties of overseeing and supporting the Scheme in mind I am becoming increasingly concerned by the feedback received from organisations regarding their difficulties experienced in acquiring and maintaining funding, placing the development and sustainment and the very existence of counselling organisations at risk. Two recognition scheme organisations this year alone, and one organisation working towards recognition, have lost core funding, while other COSCA member organisations have reported experiencing difficulties with meeting the demands of funders.

With regards to the expectations of those funding counselling, psychotherapy and counselling skills organisations, the recent COSCA Recognition Scheme Standards event, held in Stirling, offered considerable insight. The event sought to explore the ways in which organisations can identify and express the positive outcomes of counselling to further their clients' needs and organisational development.

Feedback from organisations attending the event highlighted the rigours involved in evidencing outcomes as requested by funders, concerns regarding the efficacy of these outcomes in capturing client progress and a difficulty regarding balancing the need for ethical practise with funders' expectations.

The apparent drop in support for funding of counselling services sits squarely at odds with the knowledge that 83.33 % of our 25 recognised organisations have reported an increase in the demand for their services with no organisations reporting a decrease in demand for their services. In our 2014-2015 survey increases in demands for services were reported from between 10 and 50%.

So what is going on?

What challenges do organisations face in acquiring and maintaining funding while retaining their ethics, values and ethos?

The pursuit of funding is an occupation in itself but many organisations simply do not have the resources to employ dedicated fundraisers, so for many service managers it becomes an additional, albeit critical, task for organisational survival. A cursory glance at voluntary sector training available regarding funding will reveal multiple options, many focused on the evidencing of an organisation's 'impact' or 'outcomes' to secure or retain funding. So, this leads one to question of whether those already stretched regarding time, resources and funding are at a disadvantage when seeking funding.

There is an array of funding sources available such as (by no means a comprehensive list): The Big Lottery Fund, Arts Councils, charitable funds, independent trusts/foundations, NHS Board, local authorities and the Scottish Government. The types of funding available

include project funding, core funding, non-renewable grants and others.

The acquirement, sustainment and functions of said funding are variable and often unpredictable awards could be one-off, multiyear support, time limited, or restricted to a set number of time periods or to certain uses. Different funders prioritise different needs and may award accordingly. For instance, the Big Lottery *Awards for all Fund Scotland* application lists present priorities as services which engage people from areas of high deprivation, address rural isolation and encourage activity in rural areas, engage care leavers, engage older people in care home and carers, remove financial barriers to access creative activities and support integration of refugees and asylum seekers.

So who does get funded? Time would not allow for a sufficient examination of the various funds available and which (if any) counselling, psychotherapy and counselling skills services were funded by them in recent years. Moreover, a recent (2015) freedom of information enquiry to the Big Lottery Fund reveals the vast majority of successful applications for counselling services in Scotland are multi-layered organisations who offer additional support services rather than solely existing as a counselling service.

Throughout the funding process organisations will be required to evidence the need for their service, how this need was identified and will be met and the impact that their service will make (establishing a duty to record service 'outcomes'). There is a focus among funders to ensure that the service they fund benefits as vast a group of individuals as possible.

With this expectation in mind we might reasonably query as to whether those organisations placing counselling solely as the main function of the service may be at a disadvantage to those offering counselling as a supplementary element (e.g. to those whose services include advocacy, group work, advice and information) or against those offering a type of service which could be considered 'new and innovative'. Matthew Haggis, Counsellor and board member at PF Counselling Service, a generic service offering counselling and psychotherapy in Edinburgh, argues to this end that "it's hard for counselling and psychotherapy–it's not an exciting cause in fundraising terms."

Liz Bondi et al (2003) argue that organisations are subject to the "shifting priorities of awarding bodies and donors" (p 30). Lorraine MacKenzie, Counselling Service Manager at VOCAL Carers Counselling Service (open to unpaid carers requiring emotional support in Edinburgh and Midlothian) notes that it "can be difficult to ascertain what type of projects some trust funds are interested in funding."

With a wider remit it may be easier to evidence that multiple categories of people will benefit from the service, or innovative ideas may hold more weight with funders. This carries challenges of its own however and the danger is the ethics, values and ethos of services which traditionally offer counselling services. Indeed, their very identity could be stretched beyond recognition.

SCVO'S Third Force News (2015) blog, "How to Grab a Grant" states that one key mistake made by organisations is to try too hard to fit the needs of a funder, stating that organisations may end up doing something that doesn't fit their community or their organisation in the long run (Smith, 2015). This makes one query whether organisations feel under pressure to be innovative as opposed to sticking to their tried and tested formula?

Should they expand into other service areas to bid for funding outwith their historical counselling focus? Peter Drucker an organisational theorist who has been described as the father of modern management proposed that organisations tend to expand into economic areas they should avoid. Conversely however Drucker (1974) also argued against the dangers of organisations clinging to "yesterday's successes," favouring instead the process of "planned abandonment" - in other words, withdrawing from old business areas to focus on the new and hopeful (p 84-85).

'Evidencing Impact'

Once an organisation has acquired funding the next challenge is to attempt to sustain that funding, which involves meeting the needs and expectations of the funders.

Funders will vary in what types of data or outcomes they request from organisations, this variation often being in relation to the types of funding offered (for example, one off project or

core funding) or the type of funder (for example, versus statutory). Funders may request regular reports, outcomes, qualitative or quantitative data or updates; others may have service level agreements which are expected to be met to retain funding.

Liz Bondi (2006) discusses the settings in which counselling services are offered and how this influences the kind of outcomes or effects considered relevant.

"For example, where counselling is available within the National Health Service it tends to be thought of as a form of (non-medical) health care and its outcomes are likely to be evaluated in relation to mental health symptoms" (p 3).

So how does the evidencing of 'outcomes' impact on services?

It can be a burden for staff to collate, measure and analyse data to produce 'outcomes' in terms of both time and resources.

Lorraine MacKenzie notes: "We are lucky at VOCAL that we have got lots of evidence so this has not been challenging but I can see how that could be difficult for services who haven't been going for as long as us or who didn't gather this information at an early stage."

Meeting funders' requirements also involves building relationships and maintaining relationships with said funders which again involves time, resources and commitment.

Matthew Haggis, PF Counselling, asserts: "We have a good relationship with the NHS. Alison Hampton, our Director, has worked for many years at maintaining that relationship. We provide a lot of counselling to the community, which is significantly above and beyond what is funded by the NHS. We feel they trust us."

Capturing outcomes, if done ethically, also needs to be part of the contract with clients regarding confidentiality and record keeping.

How meaningful are the 'outcomes' being captured?

There are some concerns as to whether the outcomes requested by funders truly capture the value of the work being done by counselling organisations, which was highlighted in discussion by attendees at the recent COSCA Standards Event.

There were suggestions that there are limitations to the data being captured, for instance whether gains or decreases in key measurement indicators (such as CORE scores) were due to the counselling process or to factors external to this. There was further concern that the types of outcomes requested by funders did not capture the intricacies of the counselling process and therefore the true value of the work being undertaken.

Liz Bondi et al (2006) argues that, "The idea that counselling leads to issues being reframed suggests that changes are holistic and cannot easily be broken down into a series of measurable components'' (p5).

Matthew Haggis asserts that, "There are factors for counselling services specifically which work against them with many funders. Counselling has a particular problem with providing long term outcomes through follow-up and evidencing service user involvement with clients. There are ethical issues for us in engaging clients in work that may include their counsellor, and in interrupting ex-clients' lives with further contact after counselling has ended."

So what can organisations do to support their efforts to acquire and maintain funding while retaining their ethics, value and ethos?

Be well informed and know your potential resource
Gather as much knowledge as necessary regarding funders, the funding process and support this process by attending free training events, researching online and by whatever means relevant.

Foster good relationships with funders
Lorraine MacKenzie states that: "Face to Face meetings help. Most recently our trust fund funders (i.e. not lottery and council) have had a personal interest in either counselling or our client group i.e. carers."

Know your organisational focus and strengths
Know your strengths - be cautious against expanding into business areas which do not fit your ethos and values, while being flexible enough to adapt with the changing times and abandon ideas that don't work for your organisation.

Gather evidence for the need and impact of your service using appropriate outcome measures
The measurement and communication of your outcomes and impact as an organisation is also clearly vital.

Utilise measurement tools which best display the value of your work with the demographic you support for instance, for the counselling of children and young people using the YP CORE measure.

Get involved in research to evidence the outcomes of your organisations work, consider joining the COSCA Research Network www.cosca.org.uk under the headings Research/Network.

Retain your ethics throughout the funding process
Lorraine from VOCAL advises organisations to "Be clear about the need for confidentiality. Also you need to have a robust and secure administrative system in order to gather statistics for the end of year reports and so forth."

Communicate your outcomes
Communicate your positive outcomes and achievements by whatever means is ethically possible and to appropriate parties; such as circulating your annual report, or publicising your positive outcomes in the local media or on your website; transparency can help to breed trust amongst funders and raise awareness of your impact at the same time.

In a similar vein apply to join the COSCA Recognition Scheme; a recognised kitemark of professionalism and quality standard providing credibility and assurance of accountability to your funders. The scheme offers a dedicated section for funders on the COSCA Website detailing the criteria met by your organisation to achieve recognition.

Be less reliant on funders
Can organisations be less reliant on funders and raise funds by alternative means?

Matthew Haggis PF Counselling Service reflects to this end: "Over the last ten years we have tried to develop a different, sustainable funding model that is not dependent on external funders, either statutory or voluntary. By seeking donations which clients readily agree are affordable and appropriate, we have made significant progress in this direction.

"Most of our funding comes from client donations not from funders. Only about 15% comes regularly from NHS Lothian and we receive £138,000 a year in client donations (including Gift Aid on those donations. Clients make a weekly donation which is agreed with them as affordable and sustainable. We support a real mix of people, some of whom have dire financial circumstances, 34% of our clients are not in employment, whereas some are able to donate £20-30. The 'average' donation is £12.

We actively involve ourselves in community fundraising, with counsellors and clients doing sponsored runs etc. We don't have a dedicated fundraiser for this.

Value your workers
Another factor you may want to consider is the attention ensuring that your workforce feels valued which can result in higher levels of staff retention and funds saved. Filling a vacancy can be costly and according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management over three quarters of organisations had difficulties with recruitment, with smaller organisations of less than 50 feeling the most difficulties (*Talk Magazine*, Gilhuus-Moe, p 7).

Organisational behaviour theory outlines *The Psychological Contract* (Rousseau, 1989) which is said to play a key role in an employee's performance and loyalty to an organisation. The theory argues that the perception of what an employee or volunteer believes is owed to them, over and above the terms detailed in their contract, arguably can indicate how well an employee is likely to perform or to stay with an organisation.

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Biography

Jenny McLintock is the COSCA Recognition Scheme Development Officer. She also works as an Alcohol Counsellor with the Glasgow Council on Alcohol.

To all the professionals out there...

Help me to
open up by asking questiOns and
working With me

Don'T
patrOnise me

Don't Leave me sitting
In endless, awful
Silence.
ThaT doesn't work.
I'll just becomE more disassociated and
distaNt

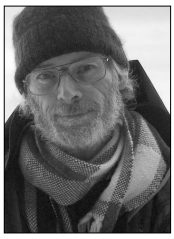
sTuck in my own head
drOwning in thoughts

I'M unable to articulate
What I need is for you to actively Engage with me as an equal

Susan Robinson

Healing our Inner Being

non-cognitive approaches to well-being



Ian Ross
Autogenic Therapist

1. Preamble

When we are distressed, it is not just our minds that are distressed. Our bodies are also out of harmony. Whatever therapeutic approaches are used, it is unlikely that lasting well-being will result unless our bodies also become settled and in harmony.

Research during the last few decades suggests that one of the crucial elements in counselling/ psychotherapy is the relationship between the therapist and client [e.g. Wampold 2011; Wampold et al 2002]. The actual theoretical orientation of the therapist is of much less importance. This indicates that transformation in the therapeutic situation comes about not so much by a change in our thinking/ cognition/ analytical thinking, but more through changed dynamics within us brought about by the therapeutic relationship. In this article, we will be looking at some of the underlying neuro-physiological underpinnings of such changed dynamics in terms of three models I have found particularly helpful: our Primary Process Emotions [Panksepp 1998[1]], the Polyvagal theory [Porges 2011], and Autonomic Afferents [Craig 2015]. We will then go on to look at some approaches that can specifically facilitate settling the body – and so the mind.

Implicit in the above is that human distress arises as a result of disturbed body states, and not just mind states. Our mind states are intimately related to our body states, and vice versa.

2. Affect regulation in children

If a small child becomes upset or distressed in any way, there is a problem because their pre-frontal cortex (PFC) is not sufficiently developed to deal with the affect disturbance [Sunderland 2007]. However, the "good enough parent" [Winnicott 1960 pp 140-152] will gently pick up their distressed child and this nurturing and cuddling will normally settle the disturbed child [Sunderland 2007]. The child's distress may have been associated with, for example, anxiety, anger, or separation distress. Such distresses are associated with activation of the flight/fight Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)– and this will, for example, lead to a speeding up of the heart due to adrenaline and the activation of the SNS nerves to the heart. What is less well known is that the SNS afferents (SNS nerves conducting messages from the body to the brain) will also have been activated, and these keep the distress (and negative affect) going [Craig 2015].

The parent's ability to nurture and comfort their child depends a great deal on the wholesome operation of their (the parent's) CARE circuits, which are associated with the release of oxytocin and increased activity of the Para-Sympathetic Nervous System [PSNS]; this in turn is associated with increased social engagement dynamics [Porges 2011].

As the child's distress settles, this will not only be associated with a reduction in SNS afferent activity, but with an increase in PSNS afferent activity. Research in recent decades indicates that the afferent Autonomic Nervous System is lateralised in humans as follows:

- SNS afferents terminate in the Right Anterior Insular Cortex (whichever side of the body they start from). This is associated with negative/distressing affect [Craig 2015].
- PSNS afferents terminate in the Left Anterior Insular Cortex (whichever side of the body they start from). This is associated with increased positive affect [Craig 2015].

1 Panksepp describes seven discreet Emotional Operating Neuros Circuits that we share with mammal: FEAR; RAGE; CARE; Separation Distress manifesting as PANIC/GRIEF [Panksepp & Biven 2012]; PLAY; LUST (sexual circuits) and SEEKING (e.g. food, water, shelter, companionship, and in humans, the potential of seeking meaning). In this paper, we will follow Panksepp's notation regarding these discreet Emotional Operating Neuro Circuits: e.g. CARE, not care.

The implications of this are that out bodily state determines our mental state (and vice versa). This in turn means that for enduring well-being, bodily harmony is crucial.

3a. Procedural earned tendencies and hyper-vigilant states

In childhood, as a result of inappropriate stressors (e.g. frequent parental arguments), we may develop (unconsciously) learned behaviour patterns which at the time may be adaptive. However, if these are continued into adult life they may become dysfunctional. For example, a small girl who has an abusive father who happens to be tall may grow up and meet a tall man she fancies; should they start to become intimate, her FEAR circuits may be activated. Such behaviour patterns have been called Procedural Learned Tendencies [Ogden 2003]. These may be associated with hyper-vigilant states, anxiety, and/or medically unexplained symptoms [Dobbin & S. Ross 2012]. Hypervigilant states may best be treated with approaches that change our underlying neuro-physiology towards increased PSNS afferent activity.

3b. Recurrent Depression and negative ruminations

In recent years, new therapeutic approaches have been developed for recurrent depression that focus on experiential approaches rather than cognitive (in the analytical thinking sense) [Segal et al 2013; Dobbin & S. Ross 2012].

One of the tendencies of our human brains, especially if we are feeling low or stressed, is to negatively ruminate about matters. Such negative ruminations have, in Buddhist psychology, been termed the "second arrow." The first arrow is the actual event/memory, the second arrow is the negative elaborations of the event (i.e. unhelpful ruminations) [Teasdale & Chaskalson 2011]. In this sense, much human distress is of our own making; while this per se in not our fault, once we recognise this as being the case, we can decide to learn skilful means to reduce or stop the second arrow (the negative ruminations).

Experiential approaches to recurrent depression have, in recent years, been shown to be efficacious [Segal et al 2013; Dobbin et al 2009]. The experimental modalities in such therapies appears to re-set our neuro-physiology. Such experiential approaches, by shifting our mental modus operandi towards more positive affect and emotions, may also increase our resilience, and thus increase our ability to cope with the ups and downs of life [Tugade & Fredrickson 2004].

4. Therapeutic relationship as potentially mirroring aspects of a wholesome mother-child dyad

The counselling therapeutic relationship can be seen in many ways to re-enact the mother-child dyad. If the original was dysfunctional, there is the possibility in the therapeutic relationship that a wholesome relationship can be developed, that will begin to activate the client's own nurturing and self-nurturing circuits.

The implication of this is that as humans we each have potentially within us a self-healing system which can be activated by skilful means. For example, as the therapeutic relationship develops, as the client we may begin to feel, amongst other things:

- heard;
- nurtured;
- accepted;
- safe.

This in turn will have bodily consequences, such as:

i. A reduction in SNS afferent activity, with resultant reduction in negative affects (including those associated with FEAR, RAGE and Separation Distress circuits [Panksepp 1998];

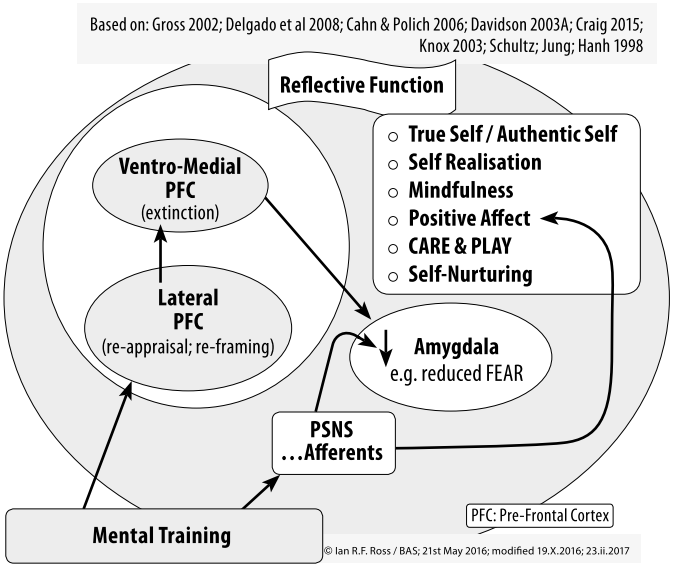
ii. Increased PSNS afferent activity, with the associated increase in positive affect [Craig 2005; 2015].

iii. As a result of ii., our positive social engagement circuits [Porges 2011] will be activated (e.g. nurturing); and this in turn will be associated with

iv. Activation of CARE and PLAY[2]

Naturally, the above processes very much re-echo what is going on in childhood in "good enough" parent-child dynamics; and indeed in "good-enough" and playful sibling interactions. The Figure below illustrates some of the neuro-physiological dynamics discussed.

2 PLAY is associated with a bio-dance between SNS and PSNS activity. However, for us to be in a positive playful mood, we have to already be in a bodily state of increased PSNS afferent activity so that we can socially engage with our "play-mates."



Schematic representation of some neuro-physiological dynamics involved in Mental Training, Play therapy, and Nurturing Psychotherapy

Comments on Figure

i. Mental Training, including some forms of counselling/psychotherapy, change our neuro-physiology, as shown.

ii. Changed dynamics in our lateral PFC facilitate re-appraisal/re-framing [Gross 2002;].

iii. Pathways from ii. lead to the ventro-medial PFC, which is associated with reductions of (traumatic) memories (sometimes called extinction) [Delgado 2008].

iv. These dynamics in turn are associated with our Reflective Function [Knox 2003], and concepts such as establishing our True Self and Mindfulness.

v. Separately, Mental Training increases PSNS afferent pathways, and these in turn:

- reduce amygdala activities associated with anxiety/FEAR and anger [RAGE]
- Increase Positive Affect [Craig 2015]
- Facilitate CARE circuits [Panksepp 1998] and Mindfulness.

5. Ancient approaches to human distress

Can we learn anything from ancient wisdoms of the human situation? Jung once said he felt Buddhist psychology was one of the profoundest psychologies ever developed by humans. How could this be?

A fundamental aspect of such ancient approaches is to start by calming the body – by focusing on the breath in certain forms of meditation. As the breathing settles, there is an increase in heart rate variability (HRV), an indirect measure of increased PSNS activity [Berntson et al 1993]. This implies that disturbed affect can be changed by skilful means in which we change the dynamics of the autonomic nervous system.

Much human suffering is caused as a result of childhood traumas that we have not processed adequately. This means that we have a hurt inner child within us, whom we tend to ignore. Well-being and transformation is unlikely to develop in us while our inner child is hurting. Mindful breathing and Walking meditation can allow us to become more in touch with our bodies, and so with our hurt inner child; and this can then begin a transformative process in which we begin to take care of our distressed child within, just as nurturing parent would take good care of her/his distressed child [Hanh 2010A].

As is becoming increasingly appreciated, this implies that psycho-therapies can become more efficacious if the teaching of certain body-calming skills are routinely incorporated into the therapy. Johannes H. Schultz was a psychiatrist and (Freudian) psycho-analyst, and he was bothered that therapies could lead to the patient becoming dependent upon the therapist. As a result, he developed the concept that effective therapies would result in: a) the client learning a set of skills to cope with the ups and downs of life (that then become of life-long relevance); and b) ensure that the patient becomes independent of the therapist within a relatively short period of time [Schultz 1932]. Schultz's research lead him on to develop autogenic training – which if we were to give it a thumbnail sketch could be regarded as a western structured form of meditation. It is an experiential type of therapy, in which we tune in to what is going on in the body in the present moment – as in certain forms of meditation.

Lasting change can only come about through regular daily practice. In the west, we are used to the concept that if we are to become physically healthy, we need to take regular physical exercise. There is less awareness that if we are going to become mentally healthy, we need to take regular mental exercise – i.e. some form of mental training (e.g. positive mental training; mindfulness meditation; autogenic training). This

is of course not a new realisation; Plato went further to suggest that a healthy body needs a healthy mind, and a healthy mind needs a healthy body.

6. The concept of a healthy mind and a healthy body

As just indicated, the concept that a healthy body requires a healthy mind – and a healthy mind a healthy body [Biddle et al 2000] – is not new. Plato, in discussing the importance of a balance and harmony between mind and body, warned about the dangers of developing one at the exclusion of the other: and went on to say:

There is one safeguard against both dangers, which is to avoid exercising either body or mind without the other, and thus preserve an equal and healthy balance between them. So anyone engaged on mathematics or any other strenuous intellectual pursuit should also exercise his body and take part in physical training…

Plato. c. 357 BPE/1965; p 119

We can summarise this by saying:

- a healthy (physically fit) body helps to keep the mind healthy;
- a healthy mind helps to keep our body physically healthy.

In the context of Buddhist psychology, a healthy mind is not simply to do with keeping the mind active in a thinking, cognitive, and doing sense. Rather, it is to allow ourselves time for the mind to settle through specific mental training disciplines, so that the mind can embrace the being mode – rather than the doing mode. Analysing a rainbow in scientific terms is an example of the mental doing mode; on the other hand, being in the very moment of a rainbow's existence, with a sense of awe, is an example of the being mental mode.

7. Mental training and psychotherapy as part of our approach to well-being

As human beings, it is inevitable that we will suffer setbacks, loss, and distressing feelings. Many of us seek counselling/therapy as a way to develop further and to grow in an emotional and well-being sense. Formal diagnoses are not always helpful. Half way through medical school I was not sure if I wanted to continue my medical studies. My director of studies referred me to a psychiatrist, who asked me many questions. In my naïve way at the time, I wondered why, and asked him. He said: "Well, just as in physical medicine we need to make a diagnosis before we treat, in mental diagnosis we need to make a diagnosis before we treat." I was aghast and said, "But why does not being sure I want to study medicine make me into a psychiatric diagnostic category?"

Mental distress is exacerbated by a disturbed body. If the surface of a highland loch is disturbed, the reflected images of mountains, trees and clouds are disturbed. From this perspective, settling the mind on a regular basis – through appropriate mental training – can be a good start to helping us all with the ups and downs of life. Below are some examples of some of these approaches:

- Mindfulness based cognitive therapy for depression
- Mindfulness courses [e.g. Kabat-Zinn 1990/2004]
- Positive mental training
- Autogenic training

To which we can naturally add:

- Nurturing psychotherapy and play therapy [e.g. Axline 1964 (Dibs)]

Biography

Ian Ross, is an Autogenic Therapist, Member of UKCP

Further information regarding some of the themes discussed in this paper can be found at:

www.atdynamics.co.uk

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3 No relation to Ian Ross

On Becoming More, in the Therapeutic Relationship:

an exploration of directional presence

Mike Moss

In my work as a therapist I have begun to discover something more in the presence of being in the therapeutic encounter which if attended to, even in the smallest of ways, movement towards healing can be experienced. It is as if there is some kind of guidance towards the direction for potential growth which can be experienced as a presence of there being something more. I may be called a counsellor and the other person a client, yet I believe that ultimately, in this relationship, we are not separate in our fullest universal expression of being, and there is what I have called a "directional presence" towards us both functioning more fully in each moment of encounter. And it is by receiving this directional presence, that there can be a deeper therapeutic contact between helper and receiver of help, which joins us momentarily in the mystery of life.

I have been trained in person centred counselling and have a great admiration for Carl Rogers work. Recently I have been drawn to his writing about the concepts of the "fully functioning person" in *On becoming a person* (1961), and his later writing, where I believe he revisited the fully functioning person in his essay on *The Foundations of The Person Centred Approach* "A Way of Being" (1980). By reflecting on both these ideas together, I have discovered there appears to be some new meaning for me, which holds some potential for growth in therapy and counselling, and which directly correlates with my own experience as a counsellor today.

My understanding is that Rogers believed that when the core conditions of congruence, empathy and unconditional positive regard are experienced in the therapeutic encounter, the client is then able to be free to move in any direction, towards becoming their own highest potential, and that the direction they take will be determined from more informed choice, towards growth, and latterly he talked about a direction towards healing. This is what Rogers considered the "actualising tendency" which he said exists in every individual, which can sometimes be buried under layers of psychological defences, but which "...awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed" (1961).

Rogers then appears to go even further in his discovery, and some years later states that in his experience as a therapist, the human organism's potential for change may be connected to what he now terms as an evolving force, or "evolutionary flow" which he also recognises as "part of a formative tendency in our universe." (1980)

It seems here as if Rogers had come to realise something remarkable from his work with clients and groups. Something that was beyond the realisation of the personal, towards a more universal flow that may be being connected to in some way, and that there may be an energetic current of potential in the universe, flowing towards growth, that is somehow able to be accessed within the self.

To help consider this further, I want to go back and look at what Rogers originally put forward regarding the notion of the "a good life" (1961) where I believe he was trying to find a description of what every human inherently aspires to, and why. He described the "good life" as a process towards the most satisfying behaviour, where a person has an increasing openness to their experience, an increase in their existential living, and where they become more able to fully trust in their organismic experience of being human. In my view, he also wanted to formulate in some way, the evidence for the "a good life," which he had witnessed in the growth and change he experienced from his clients, where people were able to achieve a much more satisfying life through becoming more self-aware in engaging with therapy.

He states that "The good life, from the point of view of my experience, is the process of movement in a direction which the human organism selects when it is inwardly free to move in any direction and the general qualities of this selected direction appear to have a certain universality...The process of the good life is not, I am convinced, a life for the faint-hearted. It involves the stretching and growing of becoming more and more of one's potentialities. It involves the courage to be. It means launching oneself fully into the stream of life." *On becoming a Person* (1961)

I think Rogers originally draws his thoughts together, describing the process of the "a good life," in terms of the client, but is there also something more? My view is that he was also interested to know if these conditions were somehow tuning into a more universal process of actualisation, which was being connected to in some way in therapy and that both client and therapist could experience this energy or synergy?

I am also interested here in his statements about the stream of life and also the universality and the releasing of more and more potentialities. I wonder if this is what Rogers touched on again when he describes his experience, reflecting on something more "spiritual" (1980) in his work where he seemed to have discovered something more, in the therapeutic encounter which he could not fully explain. He also hypothesised on there being a transcendent awareness, in therapy, where he had at times felt in harmony and in unity with the whole universe.

In Rogers essay on *The Foundations of the Person Centred Approach,* "A Way of Being" (1980) he talks quite openly about what he had discovered when he felt that he was at his best, as a group facilitator or a therapist. He offers a description of something that I have experienced in my own work at times and also in my supervision, where I can connect to something more. A way of being that appears much more clear and meaningful, connected to both a depth inside and vastness outside of myself, where I experience a greater part of myself in the service of the other. Also where I can share this with the other, where we both become in that moment closer to who we are, both separate and connected.

Rogers describes this much better than I can, so I will let you read him in his own words, and I would also invite you to ask yourself if you can recognise any part of your own experience as a counsellor here?

"I discover another characteristic. I find that when I am closest to my inner, intuitive self when I am somehow in touch with the unknown in me...then whatever I do seems to be full of healing. Then simply my presence is releasing and helpful. There is nothing I can do to force this experience, but when I can relax and be close to the transcendental core of me...At those moments it seems that my inner spirit has reached out and touched the inner spirit of the other. Our relationship transcends itself and becomes a part of something larger. Profound growth and healing and energy are present."

I find Rogers reflections here, inspiring. And I would like to ask you to consider that this experience of connection may indeed be open to all of us, who are at a deeper level engaged in offering therapy or counselling. Even if we can only imagine for one moment that we may connect this way to another human being at this level. And remember this experience may also be in connection to something larger than us, so we are not necessarily on our own here, and can ask for help. And even just by imagining the great potential of another human being that we are working with, or even by imagining our own potential, we may be tuning into something that will offer the possibility of healing in every moment.

I want to share a little story about a boy I worked with many years ago when I was a youth worker in a school. This boy was probably the smallest boy in first year. He had been referred to me due to concerns about his behaviour, and it was hoped that I may have been able to help him. Teachers believed he was not fulfilling his "potential." After introducing myself I went over his referral notes with him and wondered if he knew what the word "potential" meant. I was surprised by his answer, really surprised.

In fact, his answer changed my life. I learned something that day that I have never forgotten. This boy has become a wise teacher, a sage in my story. He told me that he knew what "potential" meant. "It is stored up energy, Mike," he said, having learned in his science class, that potential energy is stored up energy.

Having our potential stored up inside us, struck me as so clearly the best definition I could find to

describe what had previously been indescribable, but so familiar to me. It made me think that having our potential already stored up, was a way of describing the energy towards self-actualisation. And perhaps this could mean that every potential of who we are, and who we are in the process of becoming, may already be there inside us, just waiting to be released?

I have carried this knowledge with me within my own life, and work, holding awareness that there has always been energy, and a directional presence of potential in us all and in the universe, which can be felt in our desire to help, and facilitate another person's growth and healing as well as our own. And that this awareness and experience has been slowly forming even more clearly in my work. As I have found that the more I can know that there is a potential for growth and change in me and a potential for growth and change in the other, then I am more awakened to a directional presence that our best is yet to come. And that this process may indeed be towards what Rogers experienced and what he termed "The good life."

A knowing that has been born in me, as a flow of believing and being, that sometimes feels not quite there, or just out of reach, like an apple on a tree, to then discover the deliciousness of tasting the apple, to then discover there are even more apples on the tree, full of seeds as well, to make more trees, and even more delicious apples, to make more seeds to make more apples, to make more trees. To then discover that I am the apple and that I am the tree.

Biography

Mike Moss is employed as a counsellor/ psychotherapist by West Lothian Council, working with young people up to 25 years old. He also has a small private practice offering supervision to counsellors in Edinburgh.

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The Scots as Persons in Transition:

there is another way

Colin Kirkwood

Let me start by asking the question: who are the Scots? I recently read a fascinating book by historian Daphne Brooke, called *Wild Men and Holy Places*. It's about the early history of Galloway. It helped me get my head clearer about the basic plurality of the Scots from the earliest times.

There are Picts, up there in the Mearns and adjacent areas. There are Ancient Britons, with their stronghold at Dumbarton, or Dun Briton. There are probably a few Romans, skulking in the mist, intermarrying with Picts and Britons. Then in come trailer-loads of Angles, via the kingdom of Northumbria, which stretched as far north as Edinburgh, as far west as Galloway, and as far north-west as Ayrshire. With a name like Kirkwood – first recorded in Ayr around 1000 AD – I can't be anything else but an Angle.

Then in come waves of Celts, or Scots, or Irish, whatever you call them. And in come boatloads of Vikings, all round: north, south, east, west. And later still you've got the Normans, who first of all came across from France and defeated the Anglo-Saxons at the Battle of Hastings.

These Normans, or North-men, are really Vikings of a more sophisticated type. I think of them as early imperialists, from this corner of the globe, who later on got as far south as Sicily with their conquering ways.

It is, for some, an inconvenient truth, but a vital one, that the Normans did not stop at Berwick-on-Tweed. It was a Scottish king, David 1st, who invited about 60 or 70 of them to come up north and help him "manage" the unruly proto-Scots into some sort of unity. He parceled Scotland out in large chunks to these Normans, and they got on with the job of pacifying our ancestors in all their diversity. They "drove change" as Tony Blair would have put it. Their strategy included feudalism, and their tactics included gouging out of eyes and cutting out of tongues. As Daphne Brooke insists, this was quite normal at the time. Fergus of Galloway was the last native lord to hold out against the unifying and centralising trend, before he too succumbed to eye-and tongue-related interventions.

In case you get too dewy-eyed about independence, you need to bear in mind that one of these Norman knights, or barons, or whatever you choose to call them, was called Robert de Brus, later anglified to Robert the Bruce. He defeated another Scotified Norman knight to seize the Scottish throne, and went on to defeat Edward Langshanks, another Norman knight, normally domiciled south of the Border, who happened to be the King of England.

Incidentally, the Border should not really be called "the Border." It should be, and once was, called the debatable lands: a territory rather than a line.

So there we are. Immigration. Conquest. Warring tribes. Land grabs. Raiders. Intermarriage. Imperialism. The usual mix. The novelist Willie MacIlvanney got it right when he called us a mongrel race.

We could continue the list right up till today. French. Jews. Huguenots. Dutch. Catholic Irish. Protestant Irish. The odd black slave. The odd shipwrecked Spaniard. And more recent arrivals from England, Italy, India, Pakistan, Germany, China, the Caribbean, Poland, Lithuania, Greece, Iraq and so on. And on.

The Scots are not a pure-bred race. They are inherently and increasingly diverse. They are whoever happens to come here, live here, work here, fight here, breed here. I hope I have got that key point across.

So the question at issue is not racial, since we are a multi-racial people. We would be getting closer to what the issue is – or rather, what the issues are - if we were to ask a series of questions. Is it about hatred? Is it about resentment? Is it about domination? Is it about feelings of inferiority? Is it about class? Is it about caste? Is it about social justice? Is it about land ownership? Is it about political power? Political differences? Is it about democracy? Is it about community? Is it about religion? Is it about capitalism? Socialism? Communism? Is it about enterprise? Wealth? Is it about languages? Is it about sex and gender relationships? Is it about ecology? Geography? Sport? Philosophy? Culture in the broadest sense?

My answer is: all of the above.

And here is another – not entirely tangential - question: does some of this stuff show up also in counselling, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis? After all, Scotland has made a noble contribution to a distinctive trend in psychotherapy, a tradition rejoicing in pluralism, even eclecticism, welcoming Freud, Jung, Adler, Ferenczi, Klein, Suttie, Fairbairn, Winnicott, Gestalt, Person-centred, Transactional Analysis, Buddhist Psychotherapy, Psychosynthesis, Cognitive Behaviourism, the Heimler Method of Human Social Functioning, Mindfulness and so on.

But I am not here to praise Scottish psychotherapy, rather to address what some Trotskyists used to call the conjuncture. And what a conjuncture! We have a chance to contribute to determining the future of our nation. And for me, it is even broader than that: we have an opportunity, as the novelist Alasdair Gray once put it, *to gather all the rays of culture into one*.

I am not here to summarise a wide range of views. I have my own "take" on our situation, and intend to present it briefly.

I am a personalist. I hold that every human being is a person, who is inherently valuable, who can know and act on the world, who is to be treated as a subject, not an object, and whose personhood is constituted at least partly by their relationships with other persons. Persons need and seek friends and fellowship. Persons need and seek roles, relationships and community.

Britain, and Scotland as a part of Britain, prides itself on a long historical process of transition, from autocratic monarchy to representative democracy, with a gradually expanding franchise. Now, while that process has undoubtedly occurred, and has been hard won, to overglamourise it puts us in danger of missing other trends that have been happening since the second world war. During this period, there have been significant shifts away from democracy and mutuality, in the direction of the centralization of power, the growth of individualism, and the hegemony of self-interest.

The post-war picture has been muddied because these latter trends have been presented in the context of talk about devolution. The late John P Mackintosh's influential book, published in 1968, *The Devolution of Power*, illustrates the muddying process to perfection. While floating the idea of the possibility of devolution to Scotland and Wales, Mackintosh is actually primarily concerned to do away with small-scale local democracy in towns, counties, and urban and rural districts, and replace it with government through much larger regional structures. Mackintosh in an aside in *The Devolution of Power* actually comments that "democracy is now in decline," as if that is obvious and need not be debated.

I contend that his preoccupation in that book, and the real direction of British national policy in the last fifty years, has been to move away from locating democracy close to where human beings live and work, away from local democracy, towards large-scale structures which are seen as rational, efficient and functional. In short, democracy is being replaced by technocracy. British society is being reconfigured as a rational machine. The search is on for powerful experts. For tsars, commissioners, and chief executive officers. For large-scale directive management in every area of life. Change is to be driven, whether we like it or not.

It is in this context that we should see recent developments in Scotland: two rounds of local government reform, which in most areas abolished any meaningful local government, followed by devolution of certain powers to a Scottish Parliament, with the retention of real financial and political power in London. Power devolved, as Enoch Powell acutely observed, is power retained.

The real problem for the Scots, as for the English and Welsh, is the continuation of British centralism, British paternalism and British patriarchy. We in Scotland do not have a problem

with our continuing attachment to the people of the North-east, the North-west, Yorkshire, Lancashire, the Midlands, the South-east and the South-west of England, or to the people of Wales. We are stuck, we are lumbered, in common with our English and Welsh neighbours, with an outdated concentration of political and financial power in Westminster and the City of London. We in Scotland do not want or need to separate ourselves from our neighbours. On the contrary, we all need to resume the struggle for fundamental democratization and decentralization throughout the UK. We need personal and communal empowerment. We need community democracy.

The difference between the Scots and the English at the present time is simply this: the Scots are sharply aware of the yawning democratic deficit, and the geographical imbalance, and want to empower themselves as a people, while the English are still thirled to British centralism, paternalism and financial sharp practice. They think: that's how it's always been, and that's how it will always be. I argue that it doesn't need to be like that. It won't always be like that.

I am making this point strongly, because there are a few people in Scotland who do want complete independence, who do want complete separation from England. They are in a minority, but they are very good at pressing powerful emotional buttons in the Scottish psyche.

What I am arguing for is self-government. I want all the levers of political and financial power affecting Scotland to be pulled in Scotland, by people living, working and committed to Scotland. But I also want us to continue to play a reforming part in Britain, with the Scots acting as a (non-prescriptive) working model, a demonstration to the English people of how we can dismantle the Westminster and City of London systems of centralized power. So: not the break-up of Britain, but the break-up of the London-centred system. Our friends in England need a radical decentralization of power and resources just as much as we do. It calls for fundamental restructuring, and re-orientation, not for a few token gestures.

If we don't make this kind of argument, and go for this kind of solution, we will be in danger of ending up with our own miniature version of the Westminster Punch and Judy show, with all political and financial power centralized in Edinburgh.

So when we cast our votes in September, we need to think outside the British centralist box. And there is an awful lot of thinking to do. (*Editor's note: this was written prior to the Scottish referendum, and Brexit has happened subsequently also, but as we know we potentially have another Referendum, so the arguments in this article are still current*).

I ground myself not in individualism, but in the idea of persons in relation. I hold that ordinary people – non-celebrities – can know, think, dialogue, find common ground, take initiatives and manage themselves. We can be self-governing, in a whole variety of communities and at every level of scale.

For me, the core of democracy is direct democracy, direct engagement as both a right and a responsibility. Of course, there is also the need for good leadership, and good representation. There is a need for expertise, and for courageous, prophetic voices. But so long as we define democracy merely as representative democracy, we exclude persons and communities from the direct exercise of power and responsibility. In fact we treat people not as persons but as disempowered objects. Our cities, towns, housing schemes, and rural areas, are full of people who have been treated in this way: systematically and intentionally excluded from the direct exercise of power. We have our attachment to the central elites, the British party system, and the arcane British financial and land-ownership systems, to thank for that.

How appalling it is that these paternalistic mindsets and entrenched privileges still dominate our lives! And don't kid yourself on: I am not referring here only to the Conservative Party, but also to Labour and the Liberal Democrats. In Scotland, the SNP demonstrates some worrying signs of centralist thinking. We need to find the nerve to break with that kind of thinking and empower ourselves as persons, citizens, localities and communities.

But to emphasise the concepts of persons in relation, community empowerment and self-management is not enough. We need to revalorize other strands of the Scottish tradition and weave them into the new society to which we aspire. Here I name some of these strands and summarise their key themes.

It was Scottish thinkers Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith who articulated the idea of sympathy: that people sense directly what other people are thinking and feeling, and that we actually feel with them. That, according to Hutcheson and Smith, is the basis of our moral sense. We need to rehabilitate that idea and weave it into a whole social ethic.

It was Adam Smith, also, who led the way in understanding how economies thrive. We need to integrate Smith's understanding of the prosperity of nations with his understanding of human sympathy and moral sentiment, in an ethic which can replace the impersonal model of free market economics which has become dominant again in the last thirty five years. We need to replace it with a model hinted at in the titles of two great books: Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered*, and Nyerere's *The Purpose is Man*. This latter point can perhaps better be captured by arguing that the purpose of society is the flourishing, as best they can, of every man, woman and child, in every community, and the wise use of the resources of the world. It should, for example, be a basic assumption that the good society has a responsibility to design useful work and other worthwhile activities that every person can do.

The Scots, like our cousins the English, have always been drawn towards religious, humanist and ecological perspectives. The Scots tend to emphasise principles, and the English tend to emphasise pragmatics. Both are important. It would be a great mistake to downgrade religious, humanist and ecological perspectives. They are foundational, and they need to go on developing. I am very much opposed to attempts to privatize or individualise these concerns. They are core elements in defining our sense of community, of where we have come from and where we are going to, our sense of right and wrong and our efforts to live good lives personally and socially.

At the same time, I argue that we have to challenge fundamentalism and literalism wherever it occurs. The literal belief in the actual existence of a God transcending all time and space is unconvincing and counter-productive. It is a misconception which has distorted religion throughout human history, pointing backwards towards a murderous and fanatical authoritarianism. On the other hand, the idea of God as symbol, as illuminating metaphor, as powerful imaginative story, as a source of support, is very valuable indeed.

In the same way, our religious and political tribalism, our belief in the exclusive rightness of our own holy texts, our exclusive versions of what is right and wrong, cry out to be addressed, because they are so obstinately (and oppositionally) rooted. Religious, humanist and ecological practices affirm the value of life and values for living, a reverence for the whole of nature, both animate and inanimate. They are too important to leave to sectarians and fanatics. We need to learn to dialogue, and value other perspectives.

In this connection the recent spread of humanist celebrations of birth, marriage and death seems very valuable from what I would regard as a religious perspective.

The United States of America claims to have developed much of its underlying thinking from Scottish sources, and while there is some truth in that, it is also true that the USA has distorted many of its Scottish models, for example the model of democracy, by individualizing it. There is a strong Scottish accent on fellowship and community, which we need to reaffirm.

Some of the most disturbing yet creative struggles of the last fifty or sixty years have been around human sexuality and gender, the relations between the sexes and the generations. In my childhood, Scottish society was patriarchal, male-dominated and misogynist, full of hatred and fear of women. You often heard of, and occasionally literally *heard*, men battering women, and women and children screaming. These cultural norms have been courageously challenged by the feminist movement, and yet there are times when it can seem as if the resolution of the tensions between men and women is as far away as ever.

At the same time, sixty years ago, homosexuality and lesbianism were the loves that dared not speak their names. And underlying all of this was Christian hatred and disparagement of sexuality, the association of the body with original sin, the idea that we were born in sin. This devaluation of human sexuality is still with us, as is the other side of the coin, the sexual exploitation of women, children and men. We need to find the courage to continue our efforts to rehabilitate, understand and respect human sexuality as a core aspect of personal being and relating. We need to give equal regard, equal resourcing, to reproduction alongside production; and to the contributions of all generations, including

parents, grandparents and childless adults, in the love, upbringing and education of children, who belong to us all.

If I were to pick out one real advance in our Scottish society in the last sixty years, it would be the atmosphere that now characterises many nursery and primary schools and their playgrounds. Mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends, teachers, learning assistants, janitors, administrative staff all mix with children on much more equal terms. How far we have come from the grim days of belting, when parents were kept out of the school and out of the playground.

Scotland has maintained a great split between organized labour on the one hand, and management, ownership, enterprise and finance on the other. We must take decisive steps to overcome this destructive division. It is counter-productive. We must sustain our awareness of the injustices of class, inequality and poverty and our determination to right these wrongs, but face up to the fact that we have substituted public rituals and political rhetoric about social justice, ending poverty and reducing unemployment for taking effective action to achieve those objectives.

I am therefore in favour of ending class-based divisions in politics and enterprise, and instituting in their place all-inclusive, community-based politics and production. It will need to be all-inclusive. It will have to be based on really drastic reductions in income differentials. It will have to incorporate further development of Gordon Brown's great innovation: tax credits, which should be renamed social credits. It will have to be grounded on genuinely full employment, which should be a basic assumption, implemented and sustained without question.

Without such steps, Scotland will continue to be a hypocritical and complacent society, admiring in the mirror of the media its social democracy, liberal individualism and bureaucratic corporatism, features which at present benefit mainly our greedy middle classes.

There is in Scotland a deep and justified resentment of feudalism, yet we retain the bizarre situation of our noble families, our *nouveaux riches*, our private equity funds and our biggest companies owning vast tracts of land and property. I am in favour of a Scottish law to replace private property with community property, not on the basis of eviction, but on the basis that all resources are to be held and used in trust for, and with the direct involvement of, wider communities; with strong rights of intervention when this objective is resisted or evaded.

We need to move towards a system in which everyone, no matter their class, status or inherited wealth at birth, is expected to take an active, contributory part in the life of communities at every level of scale, to ensure that the resources of every member of the community are applied to support the flourishing of all.

For this purpose, we need to transform our taxation system into a resource-sharing system. Tax systems are resented, evaded, and when they are effective, mainly feed central bureaucracies and middle and upper class interests. Instead, we need a comprehensive register of all resources to be compiled locally, nationally, and internationally. Such a register will be the basis on which we resource, create and convert existing interests into a range of social enterprise communities.

I go out of my way to praise again the contributions of counselling, psychotherapy and psychoanalysis for the significant changes they have brought to our culture in Scotland over the last sixty years. They have enriched society in two ways. First they have helped people to tackle problems of personal distress and personal relationships, which were previously largely ignored. And second, they have irrigated the barren landscape of utilitarianism, positivist science, large-scale economics, and paternalistic policy-making. This barren discourse has been enriched with new words and stories, dialogues and metaphors about experiences, feelings, memories, thoughts, relationships, persons and places. If we have grown in self-confidence and the sense of self-efficacy; if we are ready for self-government and direct as well as representative democracy, if we can tackle the transitions involved, it will be at least partly because of that contribution.

Now, a final word from a Scottish person-in-transition. I have decided to vote YES in the referendum next month. Not because I support separation-independence. Independence can only be meaningfully considered in the context

of acknowledging continuing dependence and interdependence. Interdependence does not stop at Berwick-on-Tweed, nor at the English channel. I refuse to acquiesce in turning the word independence into either a shibboleth or an anathema.

I will vote YES because I believe in the growing confidence and maturity of the Scottish, English and Welsh people. I believe in our capacity for self-government. I hope to see self-government in every part of Britain. We can reinvent Scotland, and the rest of Britain, on a decentralized basis. Then we will be *both* self-governing *and* better together.

Colin Kirkwood
Edinburgh, 25 August, 2014.
colinkirkwood@blueyonder.co.uk

Colin Kirkwood is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, adult educator and community activist. His most recent book is *The Persons in Relation Perspective / in Counselling, Psychotherapy and Community Adult Learning* (Sense, 2012). He is also author of *Vulgar Eloquence: Essays in Education, Community and Politics* (Polygon, 1990) and (with Gerri Kirkwood) *Living Adult Education: Freire in Scotland* (2nd edition)(Sense, 2011).

Postscript
Colin Kirkwood's collection of his poetry, *From Boy to Man*, was published by Word Power Books in December 2015.

This paper was first published online by Bella Caledonia.

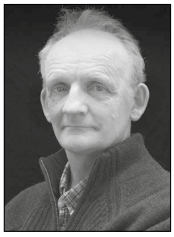
Perspective

Hello!
But to whom am I speaking?
You used to be Joe
And now you are Joan
Who are you?
How do I know who you are?
There's the same smile
Not quite the same face
And Joe never dressed that way.

You do seem so much happier
There is a peace about Joan
That Joe didn't have.
The long journey to find yourself
Has finally ended
And you are now content
At your arrival.

Why can't I be content?
I think I need to work at this,
Realise that the history of where Joe went
What he did, all his stories,
They are still there
Albeit with another face.
But wait
This is not about me.
A private prophecy, to be yourself
Has come true.
Let's celebrate, let's welcome
Your place in the world.

Morag Chisholm
2016



Transgender Couples Counselling:

an issue-focused approach

Dr Alistair McBeath

Introduction

Within the therapy and counselling world the word transgender is one that has now assumed a prominent position in referencing a constellation of varied issues, both physical and psychological, that are clearly moving into the mainstream focus of our profession. The rates of referral for those struggling to live with the gender that they were assigned at birth, a condition now referred to as *gender dysphoria*, have increased dramatically in recent years[1].

A sign of how the pace of change around transgender issues has quickened came when I was recently contacted by one of the UK's biggest healthcare insurers who asked if I would be willing to offer relationship counselling to a "transgender couple." For the organisation in question this was new ground; they had never previously funded counselling support for couples where transgender issues were prominent.

This short paper seeks to share my experience and learning from accepting this challenge with the hope that it can enhance practitioners' understanding of how support may be offered to a minority but emerging and highly important client group.

Terms and definitions

The term *transgender* has become an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression or behaviour does not conform to that typically associated with the gender they were assigned at birth. Some individuals have a strong desire to "transition" from the gender they were assigned at birth (i.e. their natal sex) to their felt or assumed gender identity; those who medically transition from their birth sex to the other sex are commonly referred to as *transsexuals*.

This process of transition through lifestyle change and medical intervention is often referred to as sex or gender reassignment. An individual assigned a male gender identity at birth but who embarks on a transition to a female gender identity is commonly known as a *trans-woman (MtF)*. Likewise, individuals who transition from a female assigned gender identity to a felt male gender identity are referred to as *trans-males (FtM)*. The process of transitioning is initially facilitated through attendance at a Gender Identity Clinic (GIC); there are four adult GICs in Scotland.

It is important to recognise that gender identity is not always an either-or choice. The term *gender-queer* is associated with those who cannot relate to a binary choice between a male or female gender identity; indeed, they may feel themselves to be on a gender continuum between male and female. Another related term is *gender-fluid* that emphasises a non-fixedness around gender identity.

The commonly used shorthand phrase *trans-people* will be used in this paper. The use of appropriate pronouns with trans-people is very important as it serves to respect and affirm their identity. One convention is to use the pronoun associated with the new, assumed identity. So, as in this paper, the pronoun associated with a person transitioning to a female identity (a trans-woman) would be "she."

A final important point: sexuality and gender are different. Thus, a trans-person may have any form of sexual orientation or none.

First Steps

When I knew that I was going to be offering counselling support to what I was told was a "transgendered couple" I sensed an immediate inner conflict between wanting to increase my knowledge about what the word transgender might mean without losing my sensitivity to basic human difference and individual diversity. In

1 Gender identity clinic services under strain as referral rates soar - Guardian (online) July 2016 – available at www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jul/10

short, I didn't want the label to dominate or limit my thinking.

Now that I can reflect upon my experience of working with a couple where transgender issues were prominent I found that it was very important to have a sound knowledge base around transgender issues. Apart from the fact that the area is quite complex there is good evidence that therapeutic success with trans-clients is positively influenced by the perceived gender-expertise of their counsellors (Hunt, 2014).

Acquiring knowledge around transgender issues covers several important domains. For example, from a legal perspective it's important to be aware of the rights (and pressures) that are associated with a trans-person seeking to legally change their gender identify under the Gender Recognition Act (2004); this Act allows a trans-person to obtain a Gender Recognition Certificate which enables them to secure a new birth certificate that confirms their new and assumed gender identity; this can have implications for a subsequent legal partnership.

From a psychological perspective there is little doubt that trans-people can have significant mental health issues with a particular heightened incidence of depression, suicidal ideation and self-harm being reported. They also regularly suffer discrimination, verbal and physical abuse (Trans Mental Health Study, 2012)[2]. Legally, trans-people have been recognised and acknowledged but in many ways they suffer from a society that, in the main, is far from acceptant and, according to the latest Home Office crime figures, is becoming increasingly transphobic.

Linda and Mary

I will refer to the couple that I worked with as Linda and Mary[3]; these are not their real names. Just a brief description of their circumstances should indicate the complexity and pressures that fill their lives. Mary is a divorced woman in her 30s with three children. Linda is a transitioning trans-woman in her 40s who has embarked on a full process of transition that will involve significant surgical interventions. Linda has two teenage children from her previous marriage. Linda and Mary lost a naturally conceived child around a year ago. Linda has dressed as a woman with make-up and female features for quite some time. Mary and Linda live together.

Sitting opposite Linda and Mary for the first time was challenging; I could feel a strange sense of unease in relation to Linda but not Mary. On reflection I was struggling with how to attune to Linda and I'm sure this was because, initially, I had adopted a neutral stance towards her. Richards (2014) has noted that this disposition is liable to actually disrupt rapport with a trans-person or even cause offence. What is required is not neutrality around gender but affirmation of gender.

During the first session with Mary and Linda it quickly became apparent that they did indeed have significant relationship issues. The most pressing issue was reflected in what Mary called her "fury" that Linda had apparently reneged on a promise not to embark on a process of gender transition from male to female (MtF). She said more than once, "I totally did not sign up for this." The fact that they were due to be married in two months time added considerable additional pressures.

Mary described Linda's decision and progress towards transitioning as having had "catastrophic consequences" across all facets of her life. She said she'd had to put her life on hold; she'd lost friends, experienced difficulties with family members, she felt conspicuous when walking in public with Linda and had now become very socially withdrawn. She captured something about her social isolation in saying; "we can't even nip out to the supermarket to get a bottle of milk any more."

In contrast Linda seemed to somewhat relish her appearance in public. As Mary expressed more and more anger around Linda's transitioning I challenged her as to why she was still with her. Her reply was short but significant: "I'm in too deep."

Sitting opposite Linda and Mary I couldn't help but think that as Linda was experiencing a release from the pressures and confines of her gender dysphoria, Mary was becoming trapped in an ever narrowing and increasingly unhappy life. When I shared this thought Mary became very upset but readily identified with my thoughts and, was again, visibly, very angry. Linda said little except that she was "sorry."

As this first session was drawing to a close I realised that I had largely forgotten about gender as a primary issue and, indeed, this felt wholly

2 Trans Mental Health Study (2012) – available at www.gires.org.uk (Genetic Identity Research and Education Society)

3 Linda and Mary gave approval for some of their dialogue to be included in this paper.

appropriate. Linda and Mary were talking about relationship discord, anger, lack of trust and, for Mary, a sense of increasing unhappiness and despair. They were not talking about gender or gender issues as such. It is important to resist the temptation of being drawn to a focus on gender when, in fact, it's not the primary issue.

Clearly there's a fine balance to be achieved between affirming gender without overly focusing on it as the key issue. Recent research has shown that transgender people's experiences of counselling tends to be positive when their counsellor can affirm the importance of gender issues but without always assuming these issues to be the main focus of support and dialogue (Hunt, 2014).

In working with Linda and Mary I tried to keep in mind an inner question: *am I treating Linda and Mary differently from how I might be with a heterosexual couple?*

In our third session Mary's anger had increased markedly and she talked for the first time about the possibility of leaving the relationship. In the dialogue that followed it became clear that Linda's attitude to her gender transition was the overwhelming central issue for Mary and that it threatened to make their transgender couple relationship untenable.

Mary had reached a tipping point and accused Linda of being selfish and of not being fully committed to her transitioning process; she specifically mentioned Linda's lack of awareness of her facial hair being visible and that she had not followed through on some voice coaching that she had received. And again, there was more anger at Linda for having apparently decided to have breast surgery without really consulting her.

In this session Mary directly questioned Linda's sincerity and commitment to transitioning; she suggested that Linda was just "playing at dressing up and being girlie." This doubt in Mary's mind seemed to impact on Linda with real force; the very basis of their shared life as a trans-couple was now being questioned.

So, what had happened? It became very clear that Linda's gender transition was all consuming; Mary said that it dominated every minute of their lives. A key event was a recent social gathering where Mary described herself as feeling "sick and humiliated" by Linda's appearance and demeanour. There was a stark contrast between Linda and Mary. Linda experienced her commitment to transitioning as positive and enriching whereas Mary had grown to hate it.

But was gender the real issue? It seems reasonable to suggest that the real issue was actually not to do with gender as such; it was to do with Linda and Mary's inability to find a shared and workable way of living with the process of gender transition. In other words it was ultimately a relationship problem that was exposed by the severe challenges of trying to live with gender transition.

Concluding thoughts

Hopefully, the material presented has raised awareness of the importance of being knowledgeable and clinically responsive to issues around transgender and some of the relational difficulties that practitioners might encounter. In the couples setting presented the emphasis was ultimately on respect and empathy without following an exclusive gender focused path. It is important to strike an appropriate balance between being sensitive to gender and leading on gender.

The need for counsellors to raise their awareness of gender issues and acquire more knowledge in this area is clear. Recent research indicates that our profession has some real catching up to do around both affirming gender and being knowledgeable around gender (Hunt, 2014). It seems inevitable that the numbers of trans-people seeking support through counselling will rise. As practitioners we must ensure that we do not indirectly discriminate against this client group by being insufficiently prepared to offer appropriate support and expertise.

Biography

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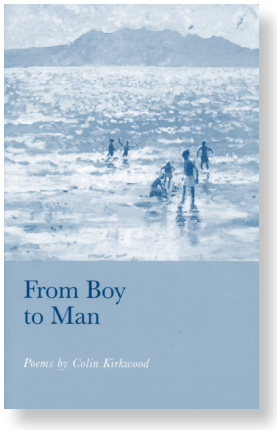

From Boy to Man

Biography
Benet Haughton works as a psychotherapist both privately and for a charity called Arkordia. He combines this with painting and has occasional exhibitions and equally occasionally writes small pieces of poetry and articles on psychotherapy.

Book Review by Benet Haughton
Counsellor

By **Colin Kirkwood**.
78pages Published by Word Power Books 2015
www.word-power.co.uk Price: **£8.99**

"For the poet there is precisely no magic. There is only life in all its unpredictability and all its freedom" -
Thomas Merton

Raids on the Unspeakable

When Brian Magee asked me if I would review this collection of poems by Colin Kirkwood the first thing that struck me was that, besides being a poet, he is also a psychotherapist. This is important as it offers a way into what may feel for some, obscure and even quite difficult poems. This is a small collection only 78 pages and when I reached the last page I wished there were many more. He cites many literary influences in his introduction from Gerard Manley Hopkins and DH Lawrence to Edwin Morgan and Ezra Pound whom he studied at university in Glasgow but the main thing I notice is the pleasure and wit he takes in making play with words and ideas. And often his poems *are* witty, not simply clever. What quickly followed was a realisation that his works are also sometimes disrespectful and rebellious, or at least of those with poetic sensibilities honed say in the study of Wordsworth or Yeats might find them so.

Mr Kirkwood is no romantic, preferring the sound of words and what they say as concrete elements in perception and experience rather than echoing any lost arcadia. Ever since the Holocaust and Orwell's *1984*, any self respecting artist struggles, as do therapists, with despairing patients, to breathe words into meaning and thus wring from them some solace in understanding the world we now live in. The faith Mr Kirkwood retains in language relies on the is-ness of experience itself, his own experience and where his poems work best (and most of them do) his experience joins ours in touching, moving, humorous and thought provoking ways.

Roadsong is an example for us to join the apt description a 'wry singing' of a road:

up a long
rising road
saying you're
lost saying
this road is
a vague con
tinuity
a line you
go up a
sense of it
a long wry singing

Another called *Down inside* asks for similar empathic identification of self as observing/ subject/participant. I detect a bit of Gerard Manley Hopkins here if I am not mistaken.

firtree leaning
loning one side
vertical grey
way up out to
blue sky high barred
by bars stand hard
straight trunks push bush
blue high from you

One of his most powerful and moving for me is simply descriptions of 14th century paintings by Paolo da Venezia. It is hard to make religious poems nowadays as they ask us to use language that in our age is not easy. Storie di Cristo tells in open verse, events from Christ's life from the perspective of a viewer in the 20th or is it now 21st century. The simple, stark, witty but unembellished observations have the power to revivify old acquaintance.

One small caveat in what otherwise was a delight to read and reread; there was no chronology. *From Boy to Man* might have been better served if I had known when he was a boy and when he was a man and the intermediate stages in between of course. But this is a small question beside the pleasure of the work themselves.

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Some information is currently available on the COSCA website and this will be further updated when final details are known.

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1 JUNE
COSCA 19th Annual Trainers Event
'Key Skills for Confident and Successful Trainers'
STIRLING

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STIRLING

20 SEPTEMBER
COSCA Annual General Meeting
Guest Speaker: Dr Susan Simpson, Advanced Schema Therapy Trainer, Schema Therapy Scotland: 'Schema Therapy: An Introduction'.
STIRLING

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