

Race and Gender in Counselling

Counselling in Scotland

WINTER/SPRING 2007

RESEARCH DIALOGUE

ON BECOMING A RESEARCHER

WIDENING THE BOUNDARIES

TIPPING THE GENDER SCALES

EVALUATION



COSCA
Counselling & Psychotherapy
in Scotland

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Editorial



John Dodds

I am delighted to have been given the chance to take over the editorial reins of *Counselling in Scotland*, but also feel a bit daunted about maintaining the high standards set by my predecessor, Lorna.

Lorna made a substantial impact on the COSCA journal during her short period of editorship. She brought her highly developed skills as a professional journalist and her interest in counselling to her editing role. Lorna's interview with Professor David Mearns about his retirement from the University of Strathclyde, and the illuminating way she presented it in the journal, was an outstanding personal achievement for her and one that set a new direction for the journal. I wish her every success for the future.

My background is journalism and public relations. I've worked in local newspapers, the voluntary sector, the arts and the civil service. And in addition to my day job I work as a volunteer counsellor at a community health organisation, Health All Round in Edinburgh, while at the time of writing entering the last few months of my Counselling Diploma course. And in my spare (!) time, I write fiction.

The scope and range of articles this time is as broad and interesting as ever, but in the future we may focus on a single theme or topic, while also maintaining the trend of anthologies on wide-ranging subjects.

One hot topic we will definitely cover will be the forthcoming regulation of counselling services.

We'd like to know your thoughts about this, and would certainly welcome articles on the subject. Drop me a line if you have something to say.

Counselling organisations will find something of interest in the article on evaluation, and the issues of race and gender in counselling should give plenty of food for thought and debate. We also have some fascinating articles about research in counselling, following COSCA's very successful Research Dialogue event. You will see that there are links between Jo Hilton's article and Miller Mair's keynote address.

I am always looking for articles for the journal, and for ideas. I want to run pieces by professionals, and by trainee counsellors, and from people working in other sectors such as health, social enterprises, even the legal profession. I'd welcome your thoughts on this.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

John Dodds

Research dialogue



Mary MacCallum Sullivan

The counsellor's and the client's emotional journey in therapy: mapping the intersubjective experience.

COSCA Research Dialogue

Stirling, Thursday 9 November, 2006

Introduction

The COSCA Research Dialogue aimed to focus on the view that clients' problems are not necessarily only their own as individuals, but that these problems are experienced in a much wider context: social, economic, religious, spiritual and cultural. It sought to underline the need for counsellors to understand these contexts and the role of research in informing others about counselling and possible learning from it.

Rationale for the research

There is a need, I suggest, for qualitative research that privileges and articulates individuals' subjective perceptions of their positive and negative experiences as Scots and how this influences questions of self-identification, wellbeing and self-confidence in a relational context. If some common elements of such experience can be found, this information may help to shape public policy that seeks to address Scots' under-achievement and indicators of poor population health and well-being. Quantitative research simply cannot illuminate the more complex and nuanced subjective experience that may contribute to individuals' low self-esteem, low educational and professional expectations, and general lack of personal achievement.

The workshop represents the first stage in an ongoing exploration of the particularities of the subjective experience of being Scottish in a relational psychotherapeutic perspective. My overarching research focus is on the impact in relationships of the asymmetry of power and in the

restorative and transformational function of relational 'truthfulness'. As a returning Scot, I am interested in whether aspects of a putative Scottish national 'personality' could be 'healed' through the transformative power of a process described by McIntosh¹ as 'cultural psychotherapy':

In personal psychotherapy, an individual is helped to recover their repressed history, so that they understand how their being has been constructed, and perhaps distorted and stunted. A similar process maybe needs to happen with the soul of nations. We need to recover those parts of our shared national histories that have been kept off the curriculum, and see how they have shaped us as peoples (McIntosh, 2005).

Such a process — exploring our individual and collective repressed histories — may allow us to acknowledge the intergenerational trauma that constrain our individual and collective expectations so that we become able to embrace an enhanced sense of possibility. 'It is this experience of "being more than" or of "being as possibility" that is the essential power of psychotherapy' (Todres 2003:202).

I was particularly interested in this workshop in learning about how practitioners in counselling/psychotherapy perceive their experience and their identity as Scots, and how this may or may not influence their practice as counsellors from a relational perspective. The workshop sought to interactively explore participants' individual and personal life experience and considered how this may influence their professional stance within the therapeutic relationship.

Aims of the workshop

- To explore with practitioner co-researchers the emotional and relational experience that has

¹ 'a movement towards healing wounds of the broken... disempowered communities'. McIntosh attributes this phrase to Kathy Galloway of the Iona Community.

shaped them and their self-identification as Scots.

- To explore 'positive' personal resources that practitioners identify as deriving from a Scottish frame of reference that foster and affirm 'being as possibility'.
- To seek to map this experience on to the intersubjective aspects of their practice.

Questioning assumptions about self-identification

I do not expect to find a singular experience of self-identification as Scottish. I trust we can think beyond historical and existing narratives of subjectivities. New identities are being forged out of the retrieval of repressed history: '[a] world of multiple identities and partial ways of belonging quite unlike anything we have [yet] seen' (McCrone, 2005). And Homi Bhabha points out that 'the very concepts of homogenous national cultures, the consensual or contiguous transmission of historical traditions, or "organic" ethnic communities are in a profound process of redefinition' (Bhabha 1994:5).

Hannah Arendt defined the nation as 'that curiously hybrid realm where private interests assume public significance'. What counsellors and their clients think of as our individual identity, our own unique problematic personal history and how we view it, contributes to, constitutes a collective sense of who we are as Scots, and therefore what we want Scotland to be in the world.

This question of identity is the hidden discourse of counselling; emerging from 'the between', in the to-ing and fro-ing of the dialogue, the inter-action of the One in relation to the Other, we (both counsellor and client) work at and through our sense of who we are in the world, how we should act in the world, how we desire to be with another and others.

The big picture

The Research Dialogue took place in the cradle of Scottish history (Stirling). Close by is the Wallace Monument, which celebrates (if that's the right word) the oppression of Scots by England, resistance to English domination, heroism in the face of certain defeat, defence of the early concept of 'freedom' as set forth in the declaration of Arbroath in 1340.

So we sit in a context or perspective of Scotland's history as a subject, 'adjunct' or 'subaltern' nation, where the experience of Scots has been of England as the more powerful partner – the 'elite' (Bhabha 1994). This is by no means the whole truth, given that the government of the United Kingdom, is controlled largely by Scots and that Scots are influential in many aspects of British cultural life – the public sphere. Some might argue that Scots were fundamental to the success of the British Empire and have always invaded England very successfully as individuals. With the advent of devolution, or perhaps a future form of independence, Scotland has entered into a post-colonial relationship with England. Such a relationship remains to be developed.

As in history, so in counselling. Particularly in a dyadic relationship like counselling, it is difficult to escape from the One vs Other power dynamic: there is one member of the dyad with more power than the other in some way at some point – more often than not it will be the counsellor to whom power accrues, particularly in respect of being the one to whom the client has come for help. Where the balance of power lies is the 'elite', the client remaining as subordinate, 'subaltern'. I suggest that profound restorative 'healing' in psychotherapy may take place when that balance of power is held in mind and addressed, whether implicitly or explicitly. I'm interested in the restorative possibility that may lie in the open acknowledgement of the realities of the power

² 'Old Scots, 'new' Scots, returning Scots, exiled Scots...

relation, especially where and how it impacts on the client, the 'subaltern'. Where 'difference' between counsellor and client is obvious, it may be easy to discern, acknowledge, and address/work with; where there is considerable experience in common between counsellor and client – common culture, common background, common intergenerational trauma – the asymmetry of power may be less obvious.

Diagnosing the 'problem'

I want to understand how this history may have shaped and influenced me. How does this sense of belonging to, identifying myself as a member of a 'subaltern' people, limit my ambitions, constrain my choices? Some speak of 'the Scottish Cringe' (Craig, 2003; MacLeod, 2005 et al); 'St Andrew's Fault' (Ascherson, 2002), others diagnose a dysfunctional, distinctively Scottish cultural frame of reference, 'a conceptual tool-bag which serves us ill in the modern world' (McCrone 2005:5, 6); for Ian Macwhirter, Scotland's suicide record demonstrates 'a society that has lost the will to live' (Macwhirter, 2005). Phil Hanlon, with others, has investigated 'the Scottish Effect' – Scotland's excess mortality (Hanlon et al 2001).

Do these so-called 'national traits' posited above resonate with the subjective experience of individuals – individually or collectively? Can an experience of restorative justice within counselling or psychotherapy change the way individuals think of themselves – from 'loser' to 'winner'? Could such an individual experience somehow influence the collective 'personality'?

The counsellor's emotional journey

I believe it necessary to explore the counsellor's emotional journey first, before looking at whether and how this may influence the process of the interaction with clients. I am wondering whether, if

I, as a counsellor, can determine where I stand, emotionally, in relation to my sense of myself as a Scot working with clients in Scotland, then I may be better able to discern traumatic experiences and influences held in common with my client, and those that I can clearly identify as different.

Questions asked

- What are the emotional and relational experiences that have shaped you?
- What influence has your experience of relational power or powerlessness to do with your emotional journey, or its starting-point at least?
- Are you aware of any patterns that repeat themselves, from the experience of your parents' generation, down through to your own, or your children's experience?

I proposed that some historical examples of relational trauma for some Scots (as for others elsewhere) are: dis-location, loss of sense of place/belonging; loss/deprivation, poverty, low educational expectations, poor nutrition; emotional neglect. I asked workshop participants to reflect together on their experience of loss, dislocation, fear, powerlessness, and/or trauma, and how these, in some way, might have contributed to them becoming counsellors.

Participants reflected together on their own life experience, and discussed how this experience may have contributed to their self-identification, to their choice of career, to the particular client group with whom they have found themselves working, to the specialist focus of their clinical work, or, indeed, to their personal ambitions in relation to 'giving back' something, achieving change in relation to some disliked aspect of 'society'. There was also a lively discussion about the question of relational power in

the counselling interaction: contrasting views highlighted both the interpersonal power and responsibility of the counsellor and respect for the individual autonomy of the client.

Further steps

This is a tentative starting-point for further research. Much more will be needed in the way of systematic enquiry before anything can be considered as learned or understood about the questions posed thus far.

The following activities suggest themselves at this juncture:

- Compile a list of possible 'relational traumas' that may act as 'key events' in an individual's emotional journey, e.g. bereavement in early life, other significant loss, dis-location, bullying or other forms of abuse, oppression or neglect.
- Explore this list in relation to my own emotional journey to test the possible links with repeating patterns of experience or behaviour.
- Test the model with other participants.
- Search data of clients' narrated experience as brought to counselling to identify any matching, overlapping, or significantly differing experience of such events/patterns.

Beyond this, the work will be to determine what aspects of counselling and psychotherapeutic intervention may help to bring about individual 'seismic' personality change. Such change would have to be mapped in some fashion to facilitate the extrapolation of a proposed methodology for an effective, collective, 'cultural psychotherapy'. If such an effective approach could be developed, its findings might help to inform public policy which

seeks to address Scots' under-achievement and indicators of poor population health and wellbeing.

I would welcome any responses to the questions I have raised.

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Mary MacCallum Sullivan

On becoming a researcher



Jo Hilton

Letting go of certainty in research

One of the themes of this year's COSCA Research Conference was the way in which research can challenge our strongly held convictions. It struck me as fitting very closely with what I was doing at the time. I was researching counselling theory as part of a master's dissertation. I found that the experience challenged me, my ideas and the ideas of others that I had taken in over the course of my counselling training. I would argue that a key role of research is to challenge our ideas and theories, yet it was at the level of personal challenge that I found the greatest struggle.

The research that I was undertaking as a person-centred counsellor engaged in dialogue with psychodynamic counselling, examined my work with a client who had suffered symptoms of depression over a long period. In an attempt to explore the counselling relationship reflexively I found myself questioning many of my basic assumptions about life, meaning and how we know who we are. I became aware that in choosing to spend nearly a year immersed in this client's story and our work together, at times it became difficult to know where the client ended and I started.

I found Gendlin's (1962, 1997) term *experiencing* to be helpful in describing a way of exploring the embodied felt-sense of what was happening. The cloudy lens through which the client saw his life seemed to have connections to the increasingly cloudy lens through which I saw the research process. I found it difficult *emotional work* (Hochschild 2003) and, like many other part time students, it was hard to integrate it with the other emotional work in my life such as caring, managing and planning and continuing client work.

As time went on, I noticed the processes that were taking place and the way in which they mirrored my

experiences of counselling training and becoming a counsellor. As a counselling trainee I needed a counselling theory, tuition and supervision to build my sense of security and, making a link into attachment theory, a *secure base* (Holmes 2001) from which to explore and be creative. As a novice researcher, I needed a theory of knowledge that supported my exploration, tuition in research methodologies and supervision to build a sense of security as a researcher. At times I felt lost.

Eventually a circular process emerged. In the same way that I had learned about counselling, I began to learn about research by doing it. Increasingly I believe that there are many similarities, both are grounded in context. Bondi (with Fewell, J. 2003) describes counselling as a situated practice. I can only learn about this client by working with this client, I can only learn about this research by working on this research. There are parallels and overlaps (Bondi 2004, 2006) between the practice of counselling and the domain of research. Both *sets of learning* are built up in the same way, experientially. Looking into the elements of that experiencing, I would argue that this *emotional learning* is learnt *emotionally*.

Ways of capturing experiencing

During my counselling training, I was asked to keep a journal. I used it to write down feelings and ideas and to capture images that seemed important. Over time, I found that I hardly ever re-read the journal but that I could get a good sense of how I was feeling at the time of writing, depending not only on *what* I wrote but *how* I wrote. At first I discovered that I recorded difficult experiences by referring to song lyrics. Later something else was emerging, I'd begun to write poetry, work that was just for me. I noticed that sometimes the poetry flowed more easily than at others.

During the research process, I decided to write a journal, and here I describe some of the phases that I saw emerging in the process. I was able to identify times when I was thinking and writing in my 'counsellor' *mode of being* (Cooper 1999) and at other times my 'researcher' mode of being. Etherington (2000, 2001, 2004), working with narrative, uses the metaphor of 'voice' to describe these different parts of the self.

So what I'm going to describe here is that process, looked at over three stages of my work. This is offered as a subjective account of my personal experience, I make no grand claims of scientific objectivity, in fact I believe that we need to claim and prize our subjective contribution to learning.

Early days

Having spent some time thinking about the ethics of my case study and the need to take care of the identity of my client as well as look after myself, I was ready to launch into RESEARCH. I've used capital letters for RESEARCH as it felt like something IMPORTANT.

My researcher-self sprang into action ready to interrogate my counsellor-self.

'Did this counselling work? What were you doing here and why? What was the most helpful and the least helpful thing that you did?'

My counsellor-self tried to reply
'Well you know, it's kind of counselling, a sort of listening, I'm not sure if anything I did actually 'worked' but it seemed at the time as if it helped.'

I remembered how my counsellor-self had embraced 'not knowing' through Bion's (1970) articulation of Keat's 'negative capability'. It was important for me to work *without memory or desire*. How would this

translate into research as I was clearly back to square one? Already there were the signs that my researcher-self was in search of the certainty that my counsellor-self had let go of with such a struggle. Anything I said in my counsellor voice sounded a little 'woolly' and flat and seemed to put my researcher-self on the offensive as the questioning became more pointed. There was an impasse.

Over time, as my supervisor helped me to acknowledge the pain, frustration and seeming hopelessness of my research journey without offering the quick fixes that I wanted ... yet realised that I would never, myself, offer a counselling client, I acquired a more soothing part of me that could begin to tolerate my research anxieties. In the same way that Casement (2002) offers the idea of an internal supervisor, I believe that I was acquiring an internal research-supervisor. I think that the main role of this internal supervisor was to step in between my warring counsellor-self and researcher-self to request a more thoughtful, less persecutory engagement. Thinking about this in terms of Rogers' (1957) core conditions, the difficulty of applying them to ourselves is perhaps one of our hardest challenges, the coming together of the core conditions in the external dialogue between counsellor and client, counsellor and supervisor, playing a crucial role in creating the environment for an internal dialogue to take place.

In the past I had been involved with training work and had talked about *transferable skills* and how often skills learned in one area of life or *mode of being* didn't transfer. What seemed to be happening here was a *mediated transfer of emotional learning* from one mode to another.

Reflecting on past training work, I realise that the term *transferable skill* is used quite glibly. I'd been aware that some of my counselling skills would be

required in my research but I hadn't thought about the sometimes painful, sometimes exciting learning process that enabled that transfer to become embodied, rather than held as an external and sometimes unfathomable set of rules. It seemed important to turn round my initial thinking and move from learning what I could find out about counselling by researching it, to what I could find out about how to approach research by applying the hard won developmental gains made by my counsellor-self.

Moving on

Eventually I allowed myself let go of the need to know anything. This time the bald questions were out and the dialogue was quieter. I found myself in a feeling journey through the engagement with the client work, aware that at the time there was a reason that I wanted to return to this piece of work. There was something that had jarred and that seemed a good point to start. Exploring my feelings of discomfort in a difficult moment of client work, allowed me to access how I had felt then and the clues that I had left behind for myself to re-discover. This time, I *'just listened.'*

I'd been interested in the idea that some of the things we say in counselling just 'pop up'. Rogers (1980) had talked about presence, Mearns and Cooper (2005) about relational depth and Stern (2004) about *now moments and moments of meeting.*

It was interesting that in my early exploration, very little had 'popped up'. Now the background noise was turned down, I could hear the inner dialogue as my researcher-self had begun to make use of the listening ability that had become so important to my counsellor-self. Now the relationship was a little warmer and the need to resort to flight was less marked. I'd disengaged the cold scorn that my researcher-self had poured on half-thought, half-

dreamed words. I was writing poetry again.

My researcher-self needed persuading that this had some value as research. Yet, if research is enquiry, poetry has, throughout the ages, enabled us to *enquire within.* Holmes (2001:90) describes how poetic expression can help us discover emotion.

'The prosaic structure of narrative contains, reassures and soothes but may also constrain, control and distort. Lyric poetry can be a liberation from story, enabling us to see the world with fresh eyes, but its capacity to fragment takes us dangerously close to the limits of understanding.'

I think that his 'fresh eyes' were helpful. I saw the value of this quieter, more counselling-compatible engagement with myself and could, as if for the first time, attune to the small movements that indicated new feeling and thinking without the pressure to squeeze this in narrative form.

Bion (1970) offers us the concept of containment and here, I felt at my most *uncontained* emotionally, reaching for a theory and the support of my supervisor. Her support in taking seriously my attempts was helpful, calming and enabled my further exploration when I felt most insecure of almost every aspect of the research. The immediacy of poetry helped me to write from a position of deep insecurity. I was not *able* to write in the smoother narrative form that might begin to emerge as I felt more at ease. It seemed to be a process worth trusting.

Towards reflexivity

As the end of the project drew near, I had reached a point that felt less uncomfortable. I accepted that I could not feel the same sense of security about research as I did about my counselling work.

Fonagy (2001) describes this sense of security as a condition for the development of reflexivity. From an attachment theory point of view, reflexivity - the ability to engage with and explore our emotional selves in a thoughtful way is a marker for secure attachment. I would argue that we can apply attachment thinking not only to early primary care giver – child interactions but whenever there is the potential for personal growth and learning.

I came to appreciate the way in which I had become aware of my needs as a researcher and how my supervision had responded to those in a way that mirrored my approach to counselling. I had needed to lean on the security of my tutors and supervisors to allow me to explore whatever I needed to explore, to let go of the beliefs that held my counselling work together with the hope of emerging with some new level of security.

At times it seemed like my research supervisor was shining a torch on my feet, not helping me see where I was going but staying with me where I was. On each return we worked together to find my feet and what lay underneath. At times it felt like a very small platform with a very large drop but over time the platform felt larger and the potential risk more manageable. In counselling work we are always aware of creating a safe environment for the client, it seemed as important to work with the rather less tangible safe environment that I needed from which to conduct research. As it became clear that my research was challenging the theories and beliefs about the process that support us in counselling, it felt as if I was challenging the ground on which I stood.

It seemed to me that in difficult times, we value a research approach and supervision which can work with, rather than against our hard won counselling way of being. We need to be able to rely on that important support as we challenge our beliefs,

whatever they are, especially where they are not only firmly held but when we realise that they *were* holding us up.

Jo Hilton

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Volunteer Members of COSCA's Counsellor Accreditation Standing Policy Group

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) is seeking to appoint additional Volunteer Members to its Counsellor Accreditation Standing Policy Group.

The remit of this Standing Policy Group is to:

- review COSCA's Counsellor Accreditation system on an on-going basis
- ensure that COSCA's Counsellor Accreditation system takes account of changes in the field of counselling and psychotherapy
- consult with COSCA's Counsellor Accreditation Panel, COSCA's staff and other stakeholders on the implementation of the Counsellor Accreditation system
- submit its policy decisions on changes to the Counsellor Accreditation system to COSCA's Policy Board for approval.

The new Volunteer Members of this Standing Policy Group are required to:

- be Accredited Counsellor Members of COSCA
- have an interest in counsellor accreditation
- attend quarterly meetings of the Standing Policy Group in Stirling.

Travel and other out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed. Volunteer Members of this Group will be directly responsible to the Chief Executive of COSCA.

For an informal discussion and/or for more information, please contact:

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No closing date has been arranged.



Miller Mair

Widening the boundaries

Widening the boundaries of our awareness— developing a different culture of inquiry

The topic for the third Annual Research Dialogue organised by COSCA – Speaking outside the counselling room: exploring the spirit of counselling in research – is specially close to my heart.

I will say a little about three interrelated topics:

- counselling, research and inquiry;
- the need to honour and champion the ‘genius’ or ‘spirit’ of counselling through psychological inquiry; and
- the need to develop a different culture of inquiry if we are to engage more fully with the ‘spirit’ of counselling in the context of inquiry.

Counselling, research and inquiry

I will start with a little story.

I have a colleague I sometimes visit who is a very successful businessman, a Margaret Thatcher enthusiast, a forceful personality who is knowledgeable and very experienced in managing high level affairs in business, university life and politics.

He spends a lot of our time together telling me about all the important things he is doing, how much money is involved, how many important people and significant issues he has been engaged with since we last met.

Sometimes he remembers – eventually – to ask me what I’ve been up to, and I find it hard to think of anything which matches his extremely large and confident claims. Even when he asks me the odd question about my work, he does so in a way which

makes it difficult for me to answer since his questions are couched in the context of an implied how important, how large scale, how well they contribute to his vision of society, how solid and marketable they are.

When I leave after a few hours, it takes me most of the next week to recover my own identity. The shaping power of his capitalist, market-oriented, product-producing vision of life has all but obliterated my more fluid, qualitative, liberal, softer, more propositional way of being and thinking.

I am concerned that the powerful, culturally-backed engagement between ‘research’ and ‘counselling’ may become like this too. Most of the influence is likely to be in one direction as counsellors are ‘forced’ to take on the values, procedures and concerns of evaluative research, of the ‘this approach is better than that approach’ variety.

Very good work has been done in bringing counselling and evaluative research into relation with each other, and I’m sure that will continue. But I would urge you to remember the experience of clinical psychology, a discipline founded on and forever stressing ‘research’, but with only a tiny percentage of its practitioners actually doing research, even after more than fifty years.

I’m specially impressed by many developments in qualitative research and their implications for counselling. But evaluative research is the dominant force (as exemplified in the Government’s support for NICE, the National Institute for Clinical Excellence), and it has simple-minded views on how people function and often simplistic, quantifying methods.

In contrast, counselling is more loosely organised but has more sensitive, nuanced, responsive, imaginative ways of trying to understand what people are up to

and what powers and possibilities they bring to bear on their circumstances.

The worlds of counselling and research are very different and have to be brought together with great care. Evaluative research is controlling, impersonal, standardised and measuring. Counselling is personal, variable, intuitive and uniquely related to those involved.

If the 'baby' of counselling imagination is not to be dissolved in the 'acid bath' of measurement and standardisation, much care is needed.

In my view, we need to develop a wider perspective on the kinds of psychological inquiry involved in, and relevant to, counselling. We need to recognise more clearly how many modes of searching for understanding are needed, as well as re-searching for publicly justified claims.

The spirit of counselling in relation to inquiry

What I want to do here is to identify a few aspects of the counselling situation which seem significant to me, and which call out for a different understanding of inquiry from the standard, evaluative model.

What I have been seeking, for many years now, is some better understanding of the kinds of inquiry which are inherently involved in counselling and psychotherapy and which need an elaborated language to enable us to speak more readily of what we are involved with.

Without a language suitable to the issues involved we cannot hope to understand, defend or undertake the kinds of inquiries which hold and nourish the spirit of counselling engagements.

I will again start with a story to give us some common ground on which to consider what follows.

I was staying overnight in an hotel, far from home, before going to be one of the interviewers for a new post. There were three applicants on the shortlist for a senior post in a Psychological Therapies Department. Each applicant had marked strengths and certain limitations and the choice was going to have profound implications for the atmosphere, direction and development of the place. One of the candidates had a distinguished background in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, another was a cognitive behaviour therapist and the third was more eclectic and wide ranging in his psychotherapeutic background.

The whisper was that the psychoanalytic applicant was the favourite and this contributed to my unease. I certainly didn't want to be unfair to her, but I have a history of disquiet about the way in which some who are deeply rooted in the psychoanalytic tradition can be arrogant and narrowly rigid in their understanding of, and openness to, other approaches.

As I sat in the hotel foyer after breakfast, waiting for the taxi to take me to the interviews, I was aware of feeling tense, uneasy, confused, unsettled. As I often do, I took out a note book to reflect a little on who was going to the interviews as me.

First of all, I identified the main 'selves' who seemed to be alive and active in me as my awareness was shaped by the uncertainties of the moment. I gave simple names to each, to catch their most obvious characteristics.

Almost immediately I was aware of the one who was most in evidence, having been left to cope as best he could. I called him 'Anxious'. Then there was another, right in my face, 'The Rebel Teenager'. After them came 'The Reformer' and 'Mr Fair Minded'.

I paused with each of them to get some sense of what each cared about, valued and was concerned about in the present situation.

Anxious was insecure, uneasy, nervous. He was feeling inadequate to the task that was facing us, even a bit overawed by the situation and the distinguished interviewees (and the political implications and pressures which he felt surrounded their claims). He was tight and closed.

The Rebel Teenager was immediately there to be heard, loud and clear. He wanted to bash the establishment bastard. 'Make her squirm or let her feel she is being successful and then dump her!' was his vigorous advice.

The Reformer was concerned with wider and longer term issues. He wanted to help towards enabling fairer and more open ways to live in and develop psychotherapy. He wanted to chart a different and more wide angled approach than any of the 'schools' seemed to offer. He recognised that if he was to put his concern into action he would, in a quiet and gentle way, be taking on the 'establishment'. His words of advice were 'Be faithful to your values'.

Mr Fair Minded wanted to see and value the strengths of each candidate and wanted to make the interviews a good and constructive experience for all those taking part. But he also wanted to attend to the needs of the world and of the discipline of psychotherapy in a broader way than was often done.

Using the Community of Selves idea in this way was familiar to me, having been practicing it, in many different ways, for over thirty years by that particular morning.

And how did it feel? Did it feel useful?

Quite certainly it did.

I was shocked by the forceful presence, the outspoken honesty, of The Rebel Teenager. He was certainly expressing a strong thread that I had not fully recognised in my earlier confusion. I couldn't help but laugh at his 'no nonsense' approach.

I was grateful to Mr Fair Minded, for the balance which he brought and the sense of being so trustworthy.

In that situation where I was shrinking under the imagined pressures of expectation in the outside world, The Reformer reminded me, in this public and politically charged situation, of the importance of being true to your values and aspirations if you possibly can.

Anxious had so obviously been present feeling that he was being left with the whole responsibility in his lap, as the others initially remained in the shadows, mostly out of reach.

I got a strong sense of the powerful energy of The Rebel Teenager, the quiet passion of The Reformer, the safe pair of hands of Mr Fair Minded.

All these energies seemed useful and had their relevance.

I immediately asked Mr Fair Minded to be the Chairperson of my 'team' for this occasion. I asked him to draw on the vigorous anger of The Teenage Rebel, if that was needed, and on the vision of The Reformer too.

Anxious, by now much relieved, was also a valuable member of the team since he is always so sensitively open to the undercurrents and hidden threats in situations like this. He could also be helpful to Mr Fair Minded.

As the taxi came, I felt stronger, more confident, with more understanding of who we were as a 'team' going to this interview situation. We had identified each other. Each had had his say and been listened to. The strengths of each were to be included and deployed. There was no longer a tugging in this direction and that, but a sense of common purpose.

The interviews went well. The candidates presented themselves clearly and strongly and in the end the decision was on a knife edge between two of the candidates. The chairman of the panel summed up, recognising the balance of strengths and limitations of each contender. He brought us all towards a point of decision, indicating that we were tipping towards one over the other, tipping towards 'the bookie's favourite'.

And then I was especially grateful to have spoken with my 'team' beforehand because I could see so clearly that a logical decision, a decision of the head only, could just favour this candidate, but if head and heart were combined, listening to the implicit hopes of each of them, I could see that an argument was needed for the other. Within moments, the values and hopes of others on the interview panel had been awoken and a unanimous decision was made in favour of the other.

Now for a few points concerning counselling in relation to inquiry:

We may better be thought of as multiple rather than unitary beings

Who and how we are is important in relation to what we do, certainly in counselling. The importance of the qualities of the counsellor is recognised when you undergo counselling yourself before you qualify for practice, and when you undertake regular supervision to help in facing the

problems arising in the context of client work.

My little story is one way of showing how we may usefully be seen to be multiple rather than unitary, something well recognised in many counselling and psychotherapy traditions, but almost completely ignored in the simplistic image of the person which informs most evaluative research.

We know in counselling how the qualities, textures and energies we bring to our work are important, just as was the case for me as I prepared to go to the interviews. In my case, all had relevance and could have led to precipitate and damaging outcomes had they not been recognised and engaged with in a constructive way.

Might this not be so also in many research contexts where there is an implicit assumption at present that all participants or subjects are interchangeable and all researchers or experimenters too?

Relationships in focus

It is a commonplace of counselling that much of what is valuable is to do with the relationship between counsellor and clients. Yet, in most evaluative research in relation to counselling, there is little attention paid, theoretically or practically, to engaging with relationship rather than entities, with others seen as objects, out there in the world.

In my example, the 'selves' produced were not separate entities, complete in themselves, but intimately interrelated aspects of my sensed relationship within the context of the anticipated meeting. As soon as these relational selves were named and addressed their natures and relationships with each other and the world began to change.

In so much evaluative research we are dealing with objectified 'others', not with 'the between and

among'. We are dealing with conventionally visible and tangible 'things', leaving out most of the powers and presences that are invisible and intangible between and among us.

Language, conversation and understanding

Language and conversation are central to counselling (with language meaning more than 'words' and including all our ways of making sense of each other and our worlds). Through language and conversation we come to understand in new ways.

One of the older meanings of 'understanding' is 'to stand under', and this opens up a mode of psychological inquiry which is quite crucial in counselling (and largely missing from evaluative research).

This is shown in my example. I didn't just name the different 'selves' that appeared. I went to the place of each and 'stood under' the forms and qualities of being that were 'held' by the words used to give each a name. In doing this I made myself available to the experience of what it was like to be each one, to feel and see the world from each place, not just to get some ideas from afar.

This mode of inquiry is experiential, dangerous, life changing (to a greater or lesser degree). The outcomes are primarily to do with being changed and becoming someone with a wider range of qualities of awareness. You are not primarily collecting facts or information. You are widening the range of your awareness, becoming more and other than you were before, allowing and bearing different qualities of experiencing and action to become part of who and how you are in the world.

As I experienced each 'self', a changing relationship developed between them and different possibilities emerged in relation to the situation I was facing.

While all this is familiar to counsellors, the mode of inquiry here, of standing under and becoming intimately and personally involved, has not been made explicit or articulated clearly. This mode of inquiry is a powerful complement to the evaluative research mode of inquiry which involves 'standing over' and engaging in an impersonal manner and from a distance so that others, and not oneself as inquirer, are affected.

Both of these modes of inquiry are valuable and necessary in their different ways.

Steps towards a different culture of inquiry

I am not advocating an either/or approach to inquiry but a both/and perspective which encourages a range of modes of inquiry, including evaluative research, qualitative studies and what I am calling conversational inquiry – and others too. I believe that disciplines like counselling and psychotherapy have important things to teach us about human experience and functioning. If they are to bring more of these things into the arena of public policy we need to engage in many different kinds and modes of inquiry, especially giving attention to developing those that most fully express and explore the 'genius' or 'spirit' of the counselling engagement.

If we are to have much chance of doing this – and avoid being narrowed and silenced by the politics which give the current evaluative research model its social power – I believe we need to develop a new culture of inquiry which supports, encourages, questions, allows and develops the kinds of insights which arise from counselling practice.

I believe we have to make a wider understanding of inquiry central, so that counselling, psychotherapy, facilitation, coaching, supervision and other such disciplines can come to place relevant inquiry at the

heart of what they undertake. At present, I have the sense that questions, questioning and personal quests for greater understanding are often dormant, or even lacking, for many practitioners.

A passion for inquiry is needed, which will involve a profound valuing of personal concerns in the context of work and life. We will have to give attention to articulating more of our experience in counselling and other such contexts.

To leave trails and to enable further developments of personal inquiry, we may need to develop places of meeting, support, reflection, questioning and inquiry which enable us to be part of a social and cultural movement of relevance to what we seek.

At Kinharvie Institute, we have been, for a couple of years now, edging towards enabling and encouraging more imaginative writing, seeking to make it more possible for all in the team to speak their own truth and to try to body forth the central aspects of their work with individuals and organisations. We are trying to reach a fuller understanding of what could be involved in developing among ourselves as professionals, and in our work with individual and organisational clients, various forms of communities of conversational inquiry.

One model for developing a new culture, or community, of conversational inquiry, could be to use the model of counselling as a 'template', focussing our intentions on inquiry rather than 'healing' or 'treatment'.

One of the consequences of engaging in communities of conversational inquiry may be the widening of the participants' awareness of themselves, others and of the issues under scrutiny. Such contexts would value listening, looking, speaking, questioning and personal quests for greater understanding.

Communities of conversational inquiry may, in time, become worthy partners for other approaches to both research and inquiry, hopefully enriching the field in ways which are sensitive to the spirit of our counselling and a widening of the boundaries of our awareness of what inquiry can usefully mean in the context of counselling and psychotherapy.

Dr Miller Mair

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Keynote Address delivered at the 3rd COSCA Research Dialogue, Stirling, on 9 November, 2006

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Tipping the gender scales



Michael McDowell / Eilidh Macluskey / Pat Miller-Randell

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This article is based on a presentation given by counselling trainees Michael McDowell, Eilidh Macluskey and Pat Miller-Randell at a seminar at Moray College, Elgin on 9 November 2006.

Tipping the Gender Scales

The topic for our presentation was gender in relation to power and oppression in the counselling relationship. We weren't necessarily in agreement about which approach to take to the subject, however, Seamus Prior's recent article in *Counselling in Scotland* suggested a possible way forward. In his article, he said that the counselling profession needs to look at ways of adapting training to suit men rather than expecting men to adapt to women-dominated training (Prior 2006:7). This seemed pretty provocative and Prior didn't give any ideas as to how training could be changed, just that men and women have different ways of being in society and that some aspects of training like speaking openly about feelings, admitting vulnerability, and expressing doubts about competence or performance are 'antithetical to masculine culture'. Also, in looking at our topic, we noted that it was interesting and rather paradoxical that a lot of counselling literature is written by men (even the issue of *Counselling in Scotland* in which Prior's article appears consists of six articles written by four men and two women) and that many positions of influence in the counselling profession are held by men.

So what, then, might be the effect on the client-counsellor relationship of adapting the training of counsellors to suit men in a seemingly 'woman-dominated' profession?

Let's go back a bit in time to get some idea of how we've got to the point where we're being asked to consider adapting counselling training to men, as this seems such a contrast to the situation at the

beginning of the last century when therapists, or rather analysts, were predominantly male. It would appear that the power balance seems to have shifted to some extent as far as gender of the therapist is concerned.

But first of all – what is gender? And how does it relate to power and oppression? On a basic level, gender could be seen as to do with things being either male or female. But what does being male or female actually mean? Okay, we have bodies with the physical attributes of either sex, which might mean that we might behave in a certain way just because we're one or the other sex, but is it as simple as that? We recognised that we can look beyond physical gender in a way, to see that the qualities an individual might have could be described as either male or female and can be embodied by one sex or the other to a greater or lesser extent. Separating the masculine and feminine completely doesn't seem to be a very good idea. In fact, Peggy Natiello mentions Daniel Levinson's concept of 'gender splitting' in which there is a rigid division between the masculine and feminine that has been pervasive throughout the history of humankind, and that creates "antithetical divisions between women and men, between social worlds, between the masculine and feminine within the self [and which] also creates inequalities that limit adult development of women as well as men." (Levinson 1996:38, in Natiello 1999:166).

Perhaps the way gender splitting affects relationships between men and women is reflected in the way Alan Wolfe has observed that: 'of all the ways that one group has systematically mistreated another, none is more deeply rooted than the way men have subordinated women. All other discriminations pale by contrast' (Wolfe 1994). It would seem that there is potential for abuse of power and therefore oppression of one sex by another, simply because

one sex is trained to be competitive, aggressive and to sideline deeper emotions. But there's more to it than that. For centuries, many people have actually considered women to be inferior to men. For example, Lesley Rose, a woman who is also a Jew, describes how the Jewish response to women is to see them firstly, as having secondary status to men, and secondly as temptress, seducer and siren (Rose 1999).

According to MacLeod, many women therapists have, over time, come to the conclusion that 'a careful reading of Freud's writings reveals that he thoroughly rejected women as full human beings' (MacLeod 2003:211). Was there a possibility then that because Freud was a Jewish male analyst working in a 'male-dominated' profession during the early part of the last century in a 'male dominated' society, that he could have abused his female clients? And what has been the legacy of this?

Has anything changed? At the beginning of the last century in the UK, women didn't have the vote, were generally not in positions of power (for example, in the church, government and business), and were still probably considered to be the 'possessions' of men basically (husbands owned all their wives' possessions up till 1870). So it would seem that the relationship between the sexes at that time was wide open to abuse and oppression. However, since then, and only on the surface perhaps, the gap in the balance of power appears to have been closing slowly. Is this reflected in the counselling/therapeutic profession? In relation to counselling, MacLeod writes that:

'Many writers in recent years have drawn attention to the ways in which power can be abused in the counselling relationship: for example, through sexual exploitation of clients ... The fact that so many of the examples of abuse relate to situations of men abusing women invites comparison with the more general social phenomenon of male violence

against women, expressed through physical violence, rape and pornography.' (McLeod 2003:35).

Perhaps women's power in the counselling relationship lies in the idea that women are naturally drawn to the emphasis on mutuality and equality of the counselling relationship because of their way of relating to others. By 'counselling', we really mean the person-centred approach, as it is in this approach that we find the emphasis on mutuality and equality in relationship. Rather simply put, psychoanalytical/psychodynamic therapy is historically diagnostic and directive in approach with the client and therapist seen as separate bodies; whereas Rogers developed the idea of the relationship between the client and therapist as the therapeutic vehicle and saw this relationship as a fundamentally equal and mutual one. Carol Wolter-Gustafson has also said that: 'The person-centred approach is in a unique and ideal position to illuminate the study of women and men and the creation of a knowing self. [Rogers] sets the development of self in relation in such a way that the nature of empathic understanding is given paramount importance' (Wolter-Gustafson 1999:211).

According to Maguire, for male therapists, the power/oppression issue is in 'guarding against the dangers of seducing their female patients' whereas female therapists have 'anxieties about containing the aggressive or abusive aspects of their male patients' sexual transferences' (Maguire 2004:132). Although the potential for abuse of power appears to be much reduced in the person-centred approach, for some people it still exists simply because Carl Rogers was male. MacLeod wrote: '... male-dominated therapy theory has tended to emphasise the goal of developing "ego strength", defined in terms of strong boundaries between self and other. By contrast, the feminist notion of the relational self implies much more of a sense of interconnectedness between persons' (McLeod

2003:215). This is brought about through both parties being able to respond empathically to each other. We're not saying that Rogers did fall into the 'male-dominated therapy theory model' but the fact that he was male has been significant for many and he acknowledged this himself.

The Stone Center at Wellesley College in the USA has done a lot of research on feminist approaches to counselling. According to MacLeod, the Center has placed 'a psychodynamic theory of development alongside a person-centred understanding of the therapeutic relationship. But it has reinterpreted both sets of ideas from a feminist perspective that looks at therapy as part of a social world characterised by male domination' (MacLeod 2003:216). They have been re-examining elements of the counselling process such as empathy, mutuality, dependency and caring, in light of the 'relational' nature of women's development. An example of this 'relational' nature is the way women assess moral dilemmas according to a sense of responsibility in relationships, in contrast to men who make moral judgments based on criteria of fairness and rights.

It would seem then that the person-centred approach is a very acceptable form of counselling as far as feminists are concerned. However, MacLeod also points out that 'in the classical Rogerian 'core conditions' model, empathy is regarded as a counsellor-supplied condition that can facilitate understanding and self-acceptance on the part of the client [whereas] in the Stone Center theory, empathy is viewed as a fundamental characteristic of women's ways of knowing and relating' (MacLeod 2003:215).

Does this mean that women then don't need to learn how to use empathy and that men do? If women already have empathy, why are they having to learn about it on counselling courses? Could it be

because it was something that was not considered important by the male dominated profession many years ago when detachment was considered a necessary aspect of therapy (and which might have reflected the accepted and respected form of relating to others in society)? Perhaps, as time has gone by and the 'feminine qualities' of humanity have come more to the fore, the significance of empathy has been recognised as important in the counselling relationship (particularly by Rogers) and it has therefore been given more prominence in counselling training.

And so we come back to our question – do we need to adapt training to men? Bearing in mind that the waters seem to have been somewhat muddied by the idea that we need to get away from the polarisation of male and female and to acknowledge that both masculine and feminine qualities exist in both men and women, another question comes up – does it actually matter whether the counsellor is a man or a woman?

We wondered if looking at the ratio of male to female clients in our own limited experience of counselling so far might help to answer this question. Pat looked at her list of clients at a GP practice, and out of 20 referrals so far, only three had been men – 85 per cent were women and 15 per cent men. This, curiously, corresponded with figures we were given by the Counselling Training Initiative representative who visited the college recently and who told us that in counselling training, 85 per cent of trainees are women and 15 per cent men (and that this had actually shifted from 95 per cent women and 5 per cent men!). However, this is very much in contrast to Eilidh's experience with Alcohol Focus Scotland where people are referred from different sources. She established that 128 women and 216 men had been referred, (roughly 37 per cent women and 63 per cent men). So what's going on here? It would seem that perhaps

the nature of the referral (in this case, to do with addiction) has some bearing on why men come forward for counselling to some extent perhaps? It's also interesting to note that 36 men were referred by the criminal justice system and prison and the question here might be: how engaged are these men likely to be with the process if it's something they've basically been 'sentenced' to do? And back to our question – would it actually make any difference what gender the counsellor is?

Does the way the gender balance in counselling training appears to be starting to swing back the other way towards men to some extent (even if it is just 10 per cent) reflect a move towards the integration of masculine and feminine qualities in both sexes that is already happening in the general population? Men appear to be increasingly entering traditionally female-dominated occupations, such as in the nurturing and caring professions, and women are entering male-dominated ones, such as mechanics and engineering. Could the fact that this is happening also reflect the trend toward the 'supraconscious' person talked about in *A Way of Being* (Rogers 1980) – the person who is able to recognise and use their own inner energy in such a way that transcends the perceived restrictions and boundaries associated with physical existence, in this case, the male or female body?

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Evaluation

matters to counselling organisations



Steven Marwick

Why should evaluation matter to counselling organisations?

Evaluation matters to counselling organisations because evaluation is about working out what difference we make to people's lives. It's about celebrating success and making improvements. It's about helping to deliver a better counselling service. So evaluation is important and worth doing well.

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Funders are definitely putting more emphasis on evaluation and you can't offer accessible, reliable and quality counselling services without funds.

On 5 December 2006 the Scotland Funders Forum launched *The Evaluation Declaration*. This document reflects the ways many funders think about evaluation and the evaluation agenda they share with the organisations they fund.

The declaration states that evaluation should be:

- **Valuable** – it adds to our knowledge about what we do, helps us understand the difference we are making and is an opportunity to learn and develop.
- **Relevant** – it should be used, shared and acted on. This means less focus on detailed reporting of activities and more focus on the outcomes: the difference or change that happened.
- **Proportionate** – it should be right for the size and complexity of the project.
- **Supported** – funders and funded organisations have to take responsibility for supporting evaluation, investing in self-evaluation and promoting a culture of learning.

- **Looking from inside and outside** – there is a place for self-evaluation and external evaluation. Not everyone needs both but external evaluation should be used to add value to – not replace - an organisation's own self-evaluation and learning.

While not all funders are 'walking the talk' yet on all of these statements, there is a clear consensus that this is the direction they are headed.

You can get a copy of *The Evaluation Declaration* from the Big Lottery Fund **0141 242 1400** or **Dharmendra.kanani@biglotteryfund.org.uk**

Here are some questions for counselling organisations to consider:

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Steven Marwick

Director, Evaluation Support Scotland

Letters

to the editors

Dear Editors,

We read with interest Seamus Prior's reflection on core competencies of counselling students ("Social Inclusion in Counselling Training") and reasonable adjustments that could make counselling training more socially inclusive. Seamus refers to trainees who communicate non-verbally; deaf sign language users are included in this group. Twenty-two sign language users have completed or are still studying for the COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills through a course run jointly by the Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) and the University of Strathclyde. We hope that some of these students will continue on to diploma courses and recognise that they may not find it easy to obtain student placement opportunities.

Seamus considers it to be unethical to admit students who may be unable to obtain a placement (if placement agencies consider verbal communication to be a core requirement of counsellors). However, current legislation makes it illegal for a training organisation or counselling agency to discriminate against students on the basis of their disability. It would also be unethical to suggest that while it is satisfactory for a deaf client to be counselled by a hearing counsellor with an interpreter, it is not acceptable for a hearing client to be counselled by a deaf counsellor with an interpreter.

For the last three years, SCoD has been working with counselling training and voluntary organisations to make them [xx space] more accessible to people who are deaf sign language users, deafened, deafblind or hard of hearing. Currently there are only two deaf counsellors in Scotland and a further two hearing counsellors who can counsel in British Sign Language (BSL). With approximately 6,000 people in Scotland using BSL as their first language, and with 40-50 per cent of

BSL Users experiencing mental health problems (compared with 25 per cent of the hearing population), there is a real need for more deaf counsellors. SCoD hopes to continue this work by offering placement support to deaf students on diploma courses.

We would be very interested in being contacted by training and voluntary organisations that are in a position to be proactive in this work.

Yours sincerely,

Lilian Lawson OBE, Director, Scottish Council on Deafness

Teresa Brasier, Counsellor and SCoD Project Coordinator

Trudi Collier, Counsellor and SCoD Project Coordinator

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Skills for Health Consultation

This is your opportunity to influence national occupational standards development for counsellors and psychotherapists

Skills for Health have recently carried out a scoping exercise to examine the functions carried out by psychotherapists and counsellors across the UK.

The attached Skills for Health consultation document contains information about the scoping phase along with several questions for counsellors and psychotherapists. The consultation process will last from 1st December 2006 until the end of February 2007.

The results of this work will be used to inform the development of National Occupational Standards for the area of psychological therapies, due to begin in early 2007. These standards can be used for a variety of purposes, one of which may be to inform later discussion about the threshold standards that could be used for the regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists. However, any such moves towards regulation will be the subject of further, separate consultation by the Health Departments in each of the four countries in the UK.

COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) needs to have your views on the contents of this document, so that we can make a full response to the consultation. You need not limit your comments to answer the formal consultation questions in the documents, but please let us know what you think about any aspect of the consultation paper.

To be considered for inclusion in COSCA's response, your comments need to be submitted to Brian Magee, Chief Executive, COSCA by the 7th February 2007. We will publish our response to Skills for Health by the end of February.

You can also submit your own response directly to Skills for Health by email to consultation@skillsforhealth.org.uk or by mail to FAO Musrat Amin, Skills for Health, 2 Brewery Wharf, Kendell St., Leeds LS10 1JR.

Skills for Health will publish the report of the consultation in early March 2007, and detailed development work informed by this consultation is then scheduled for April 2007.

The email address for your comments to COSCA is brian@cosca.org.uk or write to Brian Magee, Chief Executive, COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland), 18 Viewfield Street, Stirling FK8 1UA.

To see the Skills for Health consultation document click [here](#): Skills for Health and under "Title" on the page which opens up, click on *Consultation Document*.

COSCA's 4th Counselling Research Dialogue and COSCA's National Counselling Conference 2007



in

DUNBLANE HYDRO HOTEL

**26 NOVEMBER and
27 NOVEMBER 2007**

18 Viewfield Street, Stirling FK8 1UA
Tel: 01786 475 140 Fax: 01786 446 207
Email: info@cosca.org.uk Website: www.cosca.org.uk

ADVANCE NOTICE

**COSCA (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland) will be holding
2 major events in November 2007 in the Dunblane Hydro Hotel:**

- **COSCA's 4th Counselling Research Dialogue
on Monday 26 November 2007**
- **COSCA's National Counselling Conference
on Tuesday 27 November 2007**

The COSCA National Counselling Conference will be held the day after the Counselling Research Dialogue, giving delegates the opportunity to attend a 2 day event.

The Dunblane Hydro Hotel is holding a limited number of rooms for delegates who wish to stay overnight on Monday 26 November 2007, and these can be booked now – by contacting the Dunblane Hydro Hotel on 01786 825 800, quoting the COSCA Conference for the special overnight rate.

A call for papers for the Counselling Research Dialogue will be made in early 2007 and the programme, themes and booking forms for both events will be available in due course.

In the meantime, if you would like to attend on either or both days, please make a note of these events in your 2007 diary.

Gazette

Details of all events are on the COSCA website: www.cosca.org.uk
Please contact Marilyn Cunningham, COSCA Administrator, for further details on any of the events below:
marilyn@cosca.org.uk
Telephone: 01786 475 140.

2007

15 January
COSCA Recognition Scheme Workshop:
Stirling
Preparing for Assessment

20 January
COSCA Accreditation Workshops:
Glasgow

31 January
Skills for Health Consultation Document:
Final day for responses from COSCA members on this document

15 March
COSCA Course Validation Panel Meeting
All papers require to be with COSCA two weeks prior to this date

19 March
COSCA Recognition Scheme Workshop:
Glasgow
An Introduction to the Recognition Scheme

21 March
COSCA Recognition Scheme Workshop:
Edinburgh
An Introduction to the Recognition Scheme

27 March
COSCA Recognition Scheme Workshop:
Perth
An Introduction to the Recognition Scheme

31 March
Deadline for receipt of COSCA Accreditation applications

17 May
COSCA Course Validation Panel Meeting
All papers require to be with COSCA two weeks prior to this date

28 June
COSCA Annual Trainers Event:
Stirling

June
COSCA Accreditation Workshops

6 September
COSCA Course Validation Panel Meeting
All papers require to be with COSCA two weeks prior to this date

September
COSCA Recognition Scheme:
Training Day

30 September
Deadline for receipt of COSCA Accreditation applications

3 October
COSCA AGM 2007: Stirling

26/27 November
COSCA Research Dialogue/COSCA National Counselling Conference 2007
Dunblane Hydro, Perthshire

6 December
COSCA Course Validation Panel Meeting
All papers require to be with COSCA two weeks prior to this date

Vision and Purpose

As the professional body for counselling and psychotherapy in Scotland, COSCA seeks to advance all forms of counselling and psychotherapy and use of counselling skills by promoting best practice and through the delivery of a range of sustainable services.

Contact us

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