



COSCA

Counselling & Psychotherapy
in Scotland

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**COSCA's 3RD ANNUAL COUNSELLING
RESEARCH DIALOGUE 2006**

*"Speaking Outside the Counselling Room:
Expressing the Spirit of Counselling through Research"*

*Thursday 9 November 2006
9.30 am to 4.00 pm
Scottish Further Education Unit, Stirling FK9 4TY*

PORTFOLIO OF ABSTRACTS

Jane Balmforth

Professional Role: MSc in Counselling student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde

ABSTRACT: Paper

Clients' experiences of how perceived differences in social class between counsellor and client affect the therapeutic relationship

Background:

There is already a body of research on how differences between counsellor and client such as race, gender, sexual orientation affect the counselling relationship; how the client experiences a difference of social class is a dynamic in the counselling relationship that has received less attention. I am a middle class person-centred counsellor, aware of my mixed middle/working class background and how this affects my work with clients.

Aims:

This is a qualitative, phenomenological research project aiming to explore how clients felt a perceived difference in social background had affected their relationship with a counsellor, and how the difference impacted on their experience of therapy. This was carried out through interviewing clients and identifying themes.

Results:

Six participants identified as working class and perceived their counselling to be middle/upper class. One participant identified as middle class and perceived her counsellor to be working class.

The working class clients felt disempowered and unaccepted. They withheld parts of themselves in the counselling relationship because of feeling ashamed or judged; they felt an expectation to enter an idle class world and take on the values espoused by the therapist. The middle class client felt powerful enough to accept the working class therapist's limited knowledge as part of the relationship, although this dynamic was unvoiced.

Conclusions:

In these clients' experiences counselling is not a politically "neutral" activity; the perceived difference in social background had a powerful effect on the counselling relationship. There were unresolved and unspoken issues of power and a lack of awareness from the middle class therapists of a working class frame of reference that prevented the clients from feeling accepted and able to develop in counselling. There may be wider aspects of how counsellors explore their own class and how class is dealt with in therapy for counsellors to consider.

Alison Barr

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde

ABSTRACT: Paper

An investigation into the extent to which psychological wounds inspire counsellors and psychotherapists to become wounded healers, the significance of these wounds on their career choice, the causes of these wounds and the overall significance of demographic factors

Background:

It is a common opinion that psychological wounds lead many people to enter a career as a counsellor or psychotherapist.

Aims:

This study investigated the extent to which psychological wounds inspire counsellors and psychotherapists to become wounded healers, the significance of these wounds on career choice, the causes of these wounds and the overall significance of demographic factors.

Method:

An on-line questionnaire was used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data (253 respondents). A pilot study and a verification study were conducted. A positivist epistemology and a pluralistic methodology were used. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative data was analysed using thematic analysis, with a grounded theory approach.

Results:

73.9% of counsellors and psychotherapists have experienced psychological wounding events leading to career choice and 26.1% have not. There is a significant difference within designation, gender, grouping gender and ethnicity and grouping gender and age. There is a slight majority of the respondent 'probably' or 'possibly' choosing their career regardless of the wounding experience. The majority of the wounds were caused by events experienced directly by the respondents (65%) as opposed to indirectly or both. The exact causes of the wounds vary enormously. The main categories are abuse, family life as a child, mental ill-health (own), social, family life as an adult, bereavement, mental ill-health (others), life threatening, physical ill-health (others), physical ill-health (own) and other.

Conclusions / Implications:

As the existence of psychological wounding leading to career choice is evident it is recommended that counselling and psychotherapy courses devote time specifically to address this issue, to exploring these wounds and to assist with the healing process. This is particularly true in relation to counselling courses and where the individuals are white females, especially those aged 51-60, and white males over 60.

Professor Liz Bondi

Professional Role: Co-director of Counselling Studies and
Professor of Social Geography
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: The University of Edinburgh

ABSTRACT: Paper

**Is counselling a preventative service?
A case study of a youth counselling service**

The aims of counselling vary according to the specific remits of services and the specific needs of clients. However, among these aims the idea that counselling may be able to play a preventative role in relation to health and social care is often important. Indeed this possibility is suggested by recent policy developments that advocate the provision of counselling in community settings in order to support people's mental health and well-being at a community or primary care level. In this context, this paper offers qualitative evidence of the preventative impacts of a newly established youth counselling service, drawing on feedback provided by stakeholders in the course of an independent evaluation. The service provides counselling within a secondary school and in a local community centre. It is charged with working in partnership with a wide range of statutory and voluntary sector services for young people in the area. The evaluation of the service generated evidence of two main preventative impacts. First, in-depth interviews with service-users provide powerful evidence of how the counselling service helps young people presenting with problems similar to those that lead to referrals to statutory services. Within these accounts there is strong support for the claim that counselling prevents the further escalation of problems and recourse to other services. Such interpretations are endorsed by some of those who had referred young people to counselling. Secondly, guidance teachers at the school in which the service was based, describe how, as well as providing a much-valued additional service, the counsellor enhances their own capacity to work effectively with young people. This generates further preventative impacts beyond direct counselling work with individual clients.

Teresa Brasier

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde

ABSTRACT: Poster

Hearing the Client: towards evaluation of Employee Assistance Programme telephone counselling based on client experience

This study explores how clients evaluate telephone counselling. The researcher was employed as a telephone counsellor in a company providing Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs). There is little published research on the effectiveness of telephone counselling and none where clients have been interviewed in depth. A qualitative approach was used to capture the depth and breadth of counsellor and client experience.

Two surveys were used; the first survey being three focus groups with counsellors to determine what evaluation they engaged in, both self-reflectively and with clients, and to discuss protocol and ethical issues. The second survey followed: a pilot interview was conducted with one client and then ten client research interviews using a semi-structured questionnaire.

Focus groups and interviews were recorded and transcribed. Template analysis was used as the researcher had a good working knowledge of both counselling and evaluation and was able to draw up *a priori* themes and an initial template.

The research found that clients evaluate telephone counselling by measuring change(s) they have made in feelings, thoughts and behaviours and by measuring the quality of their relationship with the counsellor. Clients found the delivery of counselling by telephone to be a positive therapeutic intervention; associating not being seen with not being judged by the counsellor. The outcome of the research offers suggestions for future evaluation of telephone counselling: a Theory of Change approach could be usefully used if counsellors and clients clearly articulated their use of a therapeutic contract and documented the process of change.

MICK COOPER

Professional Role: Professor of Counselling
Institution: University of Strathclyde

ABSTRACT: PAPER

Evaluation of the Glasgow Counselling in Schools Project Phase II: Key Findings

This is the first presentation of major new research findings from the nationally-recognised evaluation of the second phase of the Glasgow Counselling in Schools Project. The Project, which now delivers person-centred counselling to young people in 12 of Glasgow's secondary schools, was evaluated using a pluralistic, multi-method design. This included pre- and post-counselling measures of mental health and wellbeing (YP-CORE); post-counselling questionnaires; pastoral care staff questionnaires; and interviews with clients, pastoral care staff and multi-agency professionals.

The paper will briefly outline the aims and methods of the study, and present a summary of key findings. These include:

1. Counselling was associated with significant improvements in mental health
2. Clients and pastoral care teachers were highly satisfied with the counselling service
3. Principle areas for improving the service were identified as:
 - a. extending the service
 - b. establishing clearer protocols regarding communication from counsellors
4. Counselling had a positive impact on many pupils' capacities to study and learn
5. The counselling service was seen by pastoral care staff and multi-agency professionals as a valuable addition to the schools' pastoral care provisions

These results will be discussed in relation to findings from related evaluation studies.

Jane Edwards

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde; Simpson House
Counselling Service

ABSTRACT: Poster

How postmodern ideas can change person-centred counsellor's beliefs about their role and counselling theory

Presentation Format

- Background
- Aims
- Research sample
- Participant's understanding of postmodernism
- How participant's thinking about counselling theory was influenced by postmodern ideas
- How participant's counselling practice was influenced by postmodern ideas
- Conclusions

Background:

The work of philosophers who are associated with postmodernism has been influential in the social sciences in recent years and in some schools of psychotherapy. This study explored how postmodern ideas had impacted on a sample of counsellors thinking about counselling theory and their counselling practice. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with seven counsellors, training to at least Diploma level in the person-centred approach, then underwent a process of immersion, categorisation and thematic analysis.

Aims:

The central aim was to explore through a qualitative study how being influenced by postmodern ideas affected counsellors thinking on counselling theory and counselling practice.

Results:

Participants described looking beyond a particular counselling theory to explain how they work and what they believe counselling to be. Particular aspects of theory such as the concept of a real self and the actualising tendency were not seen as credible. Features of counselling practice included the significance of narrative, identity as socially constructed, and the counsellor as co-creator with the client. The limitations of the study include focusing on counsellors training in one counselling approach, and different understandings of postmodernism.

Conclusions/Implications:

Participants suggested that postmodern ideas lead them to see theory as a tool rather than a truth. The study provides counsellors with ways in which they could use postmodern ideas in their practice. Possible areas for further research include focusing on the influence of postmodernism on counsellors who were trained in other schools of psychotherapy.

Robert Elliot

Professional Role: Professor of Counselling
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde

ABSTRACT: Paper

Integrating research and practice: old problem, new possibilities

Background:

Practice and research have been viewed as a dichotomy throughout most of the modern era of medicine and psychotherapy.

Aims:

In this presentation, I begin by reviewing the various existing models of the relationship between research and practice. I will then describe emerging possibilities for a more effective integration between research and practice through practice-based research. I will review several recent developments for facilitating this integration, including an organizing conceptual framework; easy-to-use quantitative instruments and related statistical tools; systematic qualitative research methods; systematic single case studies; and practitioner research networks.

Conclusions:

By becoming more involved with relevant, practice-based research, practitioners can improve the quality of care they provide their clients, can contribute to the development of the scientific basis of their profession, and can position themselves to be more effective in continuing political struggles for professional recognition.

David Fryer

**Professional Role: Teacher/Researcher in Critical Community
Psychology**

**Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: Stirling University; member and Vice-Chairperson
of Reachout with Arts in Mind, Alloa.**

ABSTRACT: Paper

**Reaching Out: speaking outside the counselling room as a tool to contest
oppression**

This dialogue will focus on the view that client's problems are not necessarily their own as individuals but are experienced in a much wider context: social, economic, religious, spiritual and cultural

In this paper I will describe and facilitate discussion of the work of a group of "survivors of the psy-complex" who use a combination mutual aid, expressive arts, popular education and community activism to challenge stereotype, stigma and oppressive practices in relation to "mental ill health". I will briefly sketch the origins and history of the group, describe and illustrate its diverse activities and explicate its ethos before focusing in, in more detail, on its engagement with poetry as an example "speaking outside the consulting room" as primary prevention and social action to challenge oppression. I will close by explaining how and why this is a model of critical psychological work.

Marie Gavin Wolters

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde

ABSTRACT: Paper

Therapists' perceptions/experiences of counselling clients who have experienced abuse in institutional settings as compared with clients who have experienced abuse in non-institutional settings: An exploratory study

A significant gap exists in counselling research in relation to working with adults who have experienced childhood abuse in institutional settings, the effectiveness of therapy and clients and therapists perception of this. This study therefore sets out to begin to make a contribution to exploring this gap. The study explores therapists' perceptions and experiences of counselling clients who have experienced childhood abuse in institutional settings as compared with clients who have experienced childhood abuse in non-institutional settings. The primary aim was to give a descriptive account of therapists' experiences.

Participants were primarily experienced Humanistic therapists, six of who were female and four of who were male. Data was gathered through the use of qualitative, semi-structured interviews within the broader framework of a person-centred and phenomenological methodology.

Findings indicated that participants experienced working with both groups as similar and yet different. The way therapists related and worked with both groups was similar in attending to each client as an "individual". There were certain factors more prominent, profound and sustained for therapist in their experience of counselling clients who were in institutional care as children. Such as trying to convey trust, dealing with hearing the client's stories, seeing the damage now caused from having been in institutions and working with the client's sense of hopelessness.

In addition to this they identified the challenge in forming the therapeutic relationship as greater and described the therapeutic process as slower. The results also suggested that participants experience a range of effects when working with survivors of childhood institutional abuse, including physical, emotional, and changes in their perception. They identified ways to deal with the effects leading to healthy ways of sustaining themselves in their practice. The implications for further research and practice are discussed.

Jo Hilton

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: The University of Edinburgh

ABSTRACT: Paper

The experience of doing research that leads the researcher to question theory and previously strongly held convictions.

The presentation will look at the dilemma of the counsellor in engaging with reflexive, subjective, qualitative research that seeks to challenge current thinking. The task facing the counsellor-researcher is to take another perspective on the counselling process. This builds on the experience of counselling training, where, it could be argued, the counselling dyad is viewed from the position of supervision as a way of not only gaining a *third position* in relation to client work but also a *secure base* from which to practice. Yet these hard won, developmental gains remain within a counselling framework. Moving as a counsellor-researcher into the epistemologies operating in the domains of academic research can mean reviewing and re-asking questions that problematise the very foundations on which counselling locates itself. This presents an opportunity for the counsellor to review their understanding and face the challenge of re-situating their practice. Arguably, the role of research supervision, in steadying the counsellor-researcher to stay with the personal challenges faced in this reflexive *emotional work* in the quest for a *secure base for the researcher-self* mirrors the process already undertaken in establishing a *secure base for the counsellor-self*.

Ewan Innes

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde; YMCA Glasgow

ABSTRACT: Paper

An investigation into the perceptions of counselling from a homeless person's perspective

Background:

Today homeless units can be "Petri dishes" for addictiveness, emotional and psychological issues. To date, there have been very few studies on homeless people in relation to counselling and therapy. The homeless view and legislations have changed drastically with the emphasis more on suiting the client and to offer higher levels of support.

Aims:

This research was undertaken in an attempt to capture some of the homeless people's perceptions towards counsellors and counselling therapy to improve the provision of service to this particular group in view of their possible emotional requirements caused by their homeless status and their resulting emotional turbulence.

Results:

Many perceptions emerged as a result of the interviews, most prominent being that the homeless individuals had felt that counsellors and the counselling system were "helpful", however most used other social options as a means of talking through their emotional issues. It was not obvious to the interviewees, how the process of counselling was accomplished; however, what was known was that there was a spoken dialogue between two parties.

It was clear that their perceptions of counselling were heavily influenced by the referring agents who were not counsellors. They had been perceived as authoritarian and as a result a view was formed that counselling might possibly have a power imbalance when dealing with the homeless.

Conclusions/Implications:

It is hoped that this research will contribute to the growing evidence of how we, the counsellors, are perceived throughout a broad cross section of society. The data suggests that counselling is not yet user-friendly in respect of this group due to their varied and tentative perceptions of counselling.

This research study has highlighted many implications for the modern therapeutic world and for the provision of service to this and other distinct groups.

Mary MacCallum Sullivan

Professional Role: Independent Practice in Glasgow
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: Formerly Head of Quality Assurance at the School of Psychotherapy and Counselling at Regent's College in London; Honorary Secretary of UKCP

ABSTRACT: Workshop

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

Presentation Format: Interactive workshop

- Initial presentation
- Small group work
- Plenary

Background:

The workshop represents the first stage in an on-going exploration of the particularities of the subjective experience of being Scottish in a relational psychotherapeutic perspective

Aims:

- To explore with practitioner co-researchers the emotional and relational experience that has shaped them;
- 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.

Results:

I would hope to gain some initial pointers towards common experiences of being Scottish in a relational psychotherapeutic perspective

Conclusions/Implications:

Common experiences of being Scottish in a relational psychotherapeutic perspective will have implications for an understanding and conduct of the therapeutic relationship. The workshop will interactively explore participants' individual and personal life experience and will consider how this influences their professional stance within the therapeutic relationship. My research focuses on the impact in relationships of the asymmetry of power and in the restorative and transformational function of relational 'truthfulness'. I am particularly interested in how practitioners in counselling/psychotherapy perceive their identity as Scots, and how this may or may not influence their practice as counsellors from a relational perspective. I will seek to show that a willingness to explore our individual and collective repressed histories may allow us to embrace an enhanced sense of possibility, both individually and collectively.

Jacqueline McDowell

Professional Role: Manager
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: Evaluation Support Scotland

ABSTRACT: Workshop

Focusing on outcomes to tell the story of your organisations success

What are the outcomes in counselling organisations? How do counselling organisations collect evidence of their outcomes? How can they improve the way they demonstrate the difference their organisation makes?

This participative workshop will give delegates the opportunity to consider these questions with their peers.

By the end of the workshop participants will have:

- Reflected on what outcomes are
- Considered ways to improve how they collect information on outcomes

15 minutes: Powerpoint presentation

What are outcomes and why are they so important

25 minutes: Case study examples or work from group experience

Small group discussion on What are the outcomes in counselling organisations? How can counselling organisations collect evidence of these outcomes?

45 minutes: Potential input on methods – Powerpoint
Facilitated group discussion

5 minutes: Action planning sheet/Evaluation sheet
Personal reflection and action planning
Evaluation

Seamus Prior

Professional Role: Co-Director of Counselling Studies
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: The University of Edinburgh

ABSTRACT: Paper

What young people tell us about the counselling relationship and process

This paper explores what young people using a counselling service tell us about the counselling relationship and process. These accounts have been generated through a series of individual interviews with young people using a youth counselling service, the interviews being undertaken as part of a larger evaluation project.

Using young people's own words, I draw out themes relating to trust, confidentiality and control, to internal and interpersonal change processes and to the value of counselling. These findings are placed in the context of the growing interest in client accounts of therapeutic experience and process, and are related to the core theoretical ideas which underpin practice as conceived by counselling practitioners.

Kaye Richards

Professional Role: Research Facilitator
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy

ABSTRACT: Paper

The need for evidence in a regulated profession

Research into counselling and psychotherapy needs to consider a range of social and political agendas as it looks ahead to its future developments and aspirations. As the regulation of the profession evolves the ways in which the counselling and psychotherapy profession responds to this challenge inevitably places research in a changing political arena. Furthermore, the question of how we bridge the gap between research and practice becomes a political agenda that can not be ignored. This paper will consider some of the research implications that a regulated profession will entail. For example, what are the criteria for accreditation of new professions (and thus the accreditation of counselling and psychotherapy) and what role does research have in this process? What are the ramifications of regulation on evidence based practice and how will this impact on future directions in counselling and psychotherapy research and practice? The second part of this paper will illustrate some of the ways in which BACP is responding to this ever changing landscape of regulation and research. For example, the development of a core curriculum in counselling and psychotherapy training – which will include a national standard for the teaching of research methods. Activities such as this raise a central question of why we need to work towards equipping counselling and psychotherapy practitioners to become critical consumers of research in the first place? This question will be considered in the context of the values of a regulated profession. In conclusion, this paper will consider the strategic imperatives for research at BACP, highlighting how these complement its organisational goals, along with the research priorities of the counselling and psychotherapy community in a time of ongoing professional change – a time of change that will have a long standing impact on the future of the profession and the role of research.

Brian Rodgers and Professor John McLeod

Professional Role: (Brian Rodgers) Doctoral Student (John McLeod)
Professor

Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: Tayside Institute for Health Studies

ABSTRACT: Paper

Bringing counselling skills to the community: does it work?

Background:

The Pilton Community Health Project uses a community development approach to develop local resources and services within the Pilton area. As part of this initiative, funding was obtained to run the first module of the four module COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills course for people within the local community. Participants received a total of 36 hours training consisting of 3 hour sessions spread over 12 consecutive weeks. In total, 48 people registered for four separate courses, with 34 people successfully obtaining their certificate.

Aims:

The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of the training for participants to determine if the course met people's needs, and to collect information in order to improve future training.

Results:

Results were obtained for 31 participants comparing their skills from before till after training. Analysis indicates that the majority of participants gained substantially from the training with 77.5% (24) rating themselves higher in most or all skills at the end of the course. Further, the majority of participants demonstrated an improvement in their skills response to case vignettes when rated by an independent rater. Participants also identified a number of additional benefits of the training which they valued both within work settings and their personal lives.

Conclusions:

Though the study is limited in scale and method, the results do indicate that just a single module of the COSCA Certificate in Counselling course is effective at introducing the basic competencies of counselling skills. Further, it would appear that people gained significant personal benefits from attending the course, and 'opened their eyes' to a different way of relating to people. More research is required, both in different settings, and across the different modules of the certificate. Additional followup research would be useful to find out how people integrate what they have learned from the course

Alison Shoemark, Professor Mick Cooper, Professor John McLeod

Professional Role: Trainer
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: (Alison Shoemark) School of Education,
University of Aberdeen

ABSTRACT: Workshop

Developing a comprehensive understanding of what clients gain from counselling: methods and early returns form the Tayside Centre for Counselling collaborative study

The Tayside Centre for Counselling (TCC) is a research clinic based in Dundee, operated by staff and students from universities across Scotland. The first research study being carried out at the clinic is an in-depth investigation of client's experiences of the outcomes of counselling. An important theme in the study is a focus on the role of social and cultural resources in relation to counselling. In the research, clients are interviewed before they receive counselling, and again at the end of counselling and follow-up, and complete questionnaires of a weekly basis. The results of the study will be analysed in terms of different types of user-constructed outcomes. Another aspect of the study will be to compare the results produced by qualitative and quantitative methods.

At the time of the conference, data collection will only just have commenced. The aim of this workshop is to allow participants to gain first-hand experience of the interview schedules and questionnaires used in the study, and the kinds of information that they generate. The workshop will begin with a brief introduction to the research, and the research tools that are being used. Following this, participants will be invited to decide between a range of different topic discussion groups, each of which will be facilitated by a member of the clinic staff team.

Maureen Sharkey

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde

ABSTRACT: Poster

Women's Perception of Counselling following Miscarriage

Background:

Even though one in four pregnancies end in miscarriage Regan (2001), there were no studies found which examined the client's perception of counselling with this specific group, and few studies which examined the clients' perception of counselling even in general terms. Miscarriage represents thousands of women in the UK each and every year. In Scotland, in 2004 there were 5,887 miscarriages, according to an ISD Scotland National Statistics release (2004). 25% of women who become pregnant experience at least one miscarriage.

Aims:

This study was undertaken to help develop an understanding of what was useful to women who have suffered miscarriage in their experience of counselling, and how counselling was perceived. The study was expected to give insight into what women perceive as useful in counselling following loss. The study used a qualitative approach allowing the participant independence to respond to the question on their own terms.

Results:

Miscarriage participants preferred counsellors to have knowledge of miscarriage which was more than just a basic or surface knowledge. The counselling process helped impart that confidence to the client as the relational depth in the counsellor-client relationship was developed. The counsellor having had a miscarriage experience themselves enabled the participants to form an emotional bond with the counsellor over a shared experience, and as a result of this, there was an early development of the therapeutic relationship.

Conclusions:

This study has found participants' overall perceptions of counselling to be a helpful and safe place to mark their experience of loss. Furthermore, perceptions of counselling revealed that counselling offered women an opportunity to grieve and to explore the reasons for their loss. In some cases counselling was perceived as a lifesaving experience.

The research findings of this study support and reinforce the significance for specialised miscarriage counselling in order to meet the individual's diverse needs.

Christopher Vlasto

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Strathclyde

ABSTRACT: Poster

A comparison between groupwork and one to one counselling as agents of change in the bereavement process – therapists’ views”

Whilst it is agreed that bereavement is a major health risk, a lack of evidence base has led to questioning of the value of therapy. Despite this bereavement services offer a wide range of therapeutic approaches, provided by social workers, volunteers or professional counsellors, however there is no consensus about what is most effective.

This research paper, undertaken for the Msc in Counselling at Strathclyde University, arose out of the researcher’s interest as Palliative Care Counsellor for Fife Primary Care Trust. Conducting both groupwork and one to one counselling with bereaved clients, he observed that both seemed to work in different but powerful ways to facilitate clients’ grieving. The current study emerged from a desire to understand the value of each for clients.

A qualitative approach was taken in order to encourage a greater depth and variety of response through semi-structured interviews with therapists specialising in bereavement. The interview questions were designed to explore and clarify the perceived differences between the two interventions. To date five therapists and one client have been interviewed. It is planned to interview a further five therapists to give a broader range of views for comparison.

Preliminary findings indicate a consensus that each intervention is useful but in different ways: one to one as a repository for embarrassing or shameful material and as preparation for group; whilst the group may “speed up the process” by “challenging” clients’ perceptions and encouraging and facilitating an engagement with others.

Margaret Wadsley

Professional Role: B.Ed M Phil
(MA in Integrative Psychotherapy – award pending)
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: Private Practice

ABSTRACT: Poster

Speaking from a place without words

Dialogue to engage with profession and wider community about:

- Therapeutic intervention with young children – characteristics of effective practice, its challenges, and ethical issues
- Common features of practice across approaches, multi-sensory links, linguistic development as a key factor

Background:

31 years in education specialising in teaching children with a range of complex additional learning needs, university lecturing, training and consultancy.

Therapeutic practice with children, university students, parents and asylum seekers/refugees.

Aims of Presentation:

To illustrate how therapeutic intervention with children under eleven using client-created metaphors, enables them to work non-verbally in expressing their inner world to an empathically attuned other.

Research outline poster is based on:

The qualitative study this presentation will be based on examined the research question: *“How do practitioners, working therapeutically with children under 11, respond to and work with client-created metaphor?”* Metaphor in therapy was investigated alongside developmental theory learning theory and neuroscience against an Integrative Psychotherapy framework.

Phenomenological inquiry was applied and included nine research participants’ lived experiences of client-created metaphor in therapeutic practice with children under eleven. Ethical endeavour was addressed as essential throughout. A poem was written to capture the essence of the participants’ experiences.

Findings:

The findings of this investigation suggested interconnections between client-created metaphor and therapeutic intervention for children that facilitated a safe “channel of communication” for emotional distress. The evidence indicated that children of that age group investigated still depend on “playing” as a nature process to speak from a place of pain through metaphoric imagery. The Scottish Executive Framework: “Children and Young People’s Mental Health”, points to the essential need for coherent and appropriate therapeutic support for children and young people experiencing emotional health issues.

Conclusion:

Overall the investigation derived points for future research and information of value to the education, social work and medical professions and most importantly counsellors and psychotherapists, in their vital work with young children. When the practitioners interviewed used therapeutic integration to respond to and work with client-created metaphor, clients moved into contact with their own inner-awareness safely and a new sense of coherence of their inner-selves resulted.

Dot Weaks

Professional Role: Student
Institution/Affiliation/Workplace: University of Abertay Dundee

ABSTRACT: Paper

Dealing with the Aftermath

The role of counselling as a means of enhancing the process of coming to terms with a diagnosis of early dementia

Background and aims:

This paper examines the evaluation of what it was like for 5 people with a diagnosis of early dementia and their families to take part in a research study. What will be reported here is part of a wider PhD study which aimed to develop a better understanding of how people experiencing early dementia co-construct the meaning of how a diagnosis of early dementia impacts on different aspects of their lives. It also considered the potential role of counselling as a means of enhancing the process of coming to terms with a diagnosis of early dementia.

Results:

Three main themes emerging from the data of the evaluation interviews were: **accepting the unknown; motivating factors; and personal process.**

These three themes will be elaborated with a more detailed report focussing on the **personal process.**

This personal process was akin to that of a counselling process.

Conclusions and Implications:

The conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that the spirit of counselling is indeed expressed through the research process in a very real and effective way for the participants. The benefits from the encounter of the research process and relationships are evident.

The implications from this are the possibilities for the development of counselling interventions that arise from listening to the voices of the people within the study. A set of nine key therapeutic tasks were identified following this process and these will be reported on in this paper.