

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES DECEMBER 1996

WEST YORKSHIRE CO-COUNSELLING (WYCC)

A questionnaire and sae were sent to all addresses where there is a subscriber to the WYCC Newsletter. The intention had been to send one to every subscriber ("on the list"). In households where there are more than one Co-coer some may not have received a copy as only one copy may have been sent. 34 returned completed questionnaires. The total responses to some questions may be more than 33/34 because more than one response was possible. Some people did not answer every question.

1. *In what year did you complete your Fundamentals?*

1996: 4; 1995:11; 1994:2; 1993:4; 1992:3; 1991:3; 1990:3; earlier: 3; not answered: 1

2. *Do you still practise Co-counselling?*

21 do. 13 don't; of these 2 completed Fundamentals in 1996, 5 in 1995, 3 in 1993, 1 in 1992 and 2 in 1991.

The 1995 dropout rate might seem high, but it is a smaller proportion of the whole for that year than 1993. See also responses to Question 12.

3. *What is your current reason for being active or inactive?*

ACTIVE

- It helps/it works (2)
- useful
- useful in my personal journey
- lots of stuff to work on
- still growing (2)
- personal development
- keeping in touch with my feelings
- another crisis in life
- find out what I want thus becoming more assertive
- excellent holidays
- develop new ideas
- sense of well-being/ being centred
- nurturing
- fun
- life's hard!
- The culture
- freeing
- support
- friendship
- keep in touch
- self-acceptance
- awareness of who I am
- learn about 'self'

INACTIVE

- distance
- no local group
- have moved out of area
- Co-coers have moved
- Co-coers known have become friends/ their stuff
- inertia (2)
- motivation lacking
- pressing needs met by Fundamentals
- lack of competence in keeping to the rules
- holidays interfered; didn't start again
- ill-health
- demands of another course (2)
- not worth outcome
- no need/time/inclination at the moment

4. Co-counselling sessions: regular and irregular

Co-coers having sessions irregularly:

11 respondents used to have sessions with the same partner

3 have them now

4 would like such sessions

6 used to have sessions with more than one partner

1 does so now

4 would like such sessions

2 respondents used to have sessions at day, w/e , week-long workshops

4 have these now

8 would like to have them

7 used to be in a peer group

3 are now

11 would like to be

4 respondents used to have sessions when necessary

5 have them on this basis now

5 would like such sessions

Cocoers having sessions regularly:

14 used to co-co with the same person

4 co-co with the same person now

8 would like to do so

10 used to co-co with more than one person

3 do so now

7 would like to do so (There were additional comments here like "but one main person")

5 used to co-co regularly on a weekly basis

3 do so now

3 would like to do so

5 used to co-co regularly on a bi-weekly basis

1 does so now

2 would like to do so

6 used to co-co regularly on a monthly basis

4 do so now

4 would like to do so

Comment

This seems to suggest that some of us are not getting as much co-coing as we would like. There seems to be enough interest for at least one peer group to be running. The figures for past, present and 'would like' seem to suggest that people would like to be doing more. Maybe the responses to the next question suggests why: those people haven't been asked.

5. Average number per annum of Co-coers who've contacted me for a session

15 people on average were contacted	by no cocoers in a year
9 people on average were contacted	by 1 cocoeer per year
7 people on average were contacted	by 2 cocoers per year
1 person on average were contacted	by 3 cocoers per year

Comment

These figures seem to show that about half the respondents haven't ever been contacted and the other half have been contacted by between 1 and 3 cocoers per year.

6. Average number per annum of Co-coers who I have contacted for a session

8 cocoes on average have not	contacted any other cocoeer in a year
11 cocoes on average have	contacted 1 other cocoeer per year
9 cocoes on average contacted 2	other cocoes per year

Comment

Twice as many people seem to have attempted to contact other cocoes (albeit only 1 or 2 per year) than not make any contact at all.

7. Is the contacts list useful?

28 yes; 4 no

Comment

The very high positive response to the list being useful is of interest when compared to the actual low usage of it in terms of how often respondents have either been contacted for a session or contacted others for a session. The comments below possibly help explain.

8. Comments on the list

All active Co-coers considered the list useful; even some of the non-active did. There seems to be little initial contact via the list; most contact is with people from the same Fundamentals, with some hesitancy about whether it's OK to call someone on spec. "It's there if I need it", "security", or words to that effect was a common theme. Another theme was the feeling of belonging, or of keeping in touch: not purely for Co-counselling. Some people find it useful for contacting Co-counsellors who they have met at functions, and for checking who is available locally.

9. What do you see as the advantages of Co-counselling?

it works/effective techniques X 3
acceptance
flexible/choice of partner
non-herarchical
helps healing of myself
safe
helps me to be grounded/know what I want /assertive
regular opportunity to work on my stuff
peer group

being clear/ in touch/at ease with own feelings
a chance to think through situations aloud
most powerful way to reach inner feelings esp with right partner
access causal factors of feelings and blocks as they arise
freedom of expression
the total approach
people are inspiring
the ethos/sense of community
helps to keep me sane
sounding off
support in times of distress
can be myself with no need to act
unpretentious direct help
maintain gains from fundamentals
sound board
contact
continued practice
talk over situation with disinterested partner
talk through problem with no one giving advice, opinion or judgement
confidential

10. What do you see as the disadvantages of Co-counselling?

the rules
when rules get broken it can go wrong (always works if rules followed)
would prefer more feedback than the rules permit
some co-coers give advice
there's only one point of view on a subject
relationships which develop outside of sessions can interfere
unexpected conflict
finding partners
feel OK only with certain people
don't like using different partners
instability of the relationship
initial contact can be difficult
personally not good attacking the initiative.....the need for this
difficulty in maintaining community when not doing group work esp if numbers locally are low
the close community
bullying
making the effort
never there when I need it
people seem to work with those they have trained with and are a known quantity

11. Do you feel that Co-counselling is enabling you to develop your potential in your personal life? How?

25 stated that it is. 7 stated that it is not; these tend to be those not currently practising (i.e. except one)

Answers to the question 'How?'

- enabled work on causes and patterns of distress
- supportive community

- allows me to disolve situation before they explode
- used approaches in my job
- co-co group enables me to deal with what's on top
- finding positive things to celebrate and encourages me to enjoy those
- enables me to spot destructive patterns so they can be changed even into things to celebrate
- feel more in touch with my body, emotions
- by using 'I can, I choose' etc ; say I don't know and then I do ; more control of feelings
- forum for personal growth, validation, nurturing, fun
- chance to talk and explore feelings
- reminds me of personal power, skills and talents
- more open
- accept discharge as OK
- more confident
- chance to get involved in workshops etc
- focal point for current issues / reflection on past issues
- making me self-examine feelings and reactions
- brilliant tool for life/crisis; ongoing support
- I listen and empathise better
- I am better at talking about things that matter
- grounding/ knowing myself/ assertiveness/seeing others' experiences
- helps me look at /remove limitations

Comment

Almost all those who said they were active cocoers said that coco was enabling them to develop potential in their personal life. Those who said the converse were those who stated that they were inactive.

12. Having completed your Fundamentals course, how satisfied were you with it?

7 rated it 10; 1 rated it 9; 2 rated it 8; 3 rated it 7; 1 rated it 6; 3 rated it 5; 1 rated it 3.

Comment

Almost everyone rated their course as satisfying them (i.e. rated it over 5). Just under half of respondents rated their course highly.

N.B. For questions 12, 14 and 15, the score 5 = OK; and the score 10 = very .

13. How could your course be improved on?

further courses leading on from fundamentals
 follow-up days or system and feedback on difficulties afterwards
 feedback exercise at end of first weekend
 more talking games and fewer moving games
 better visuals without spelling errors
 being residential
 conflict between Uni dept and co-co aims
 more chance to meet as a group
 more consistency from main facilitator and more flexibility
 respect from tutors
underline: do not give advice or evaluate the client's session
 remind people about the rules (eg confidentiality in the newsletter) and conflict resolution

less group; more one to one
more group; ie 1 -2 counsellors
tutors to participate in all sessions to increase the safety of the vulnerable
more variety (cultural etc) in the group
better venue
fewer helpers taking time in the group
2 comments that it could not be improved upon

14. How competent did you feel after your fundamentals course to use the skills you learned as a Co-counsellor?

15 rated themselves as 5 or more ; 5 rated themselves as below 5.

Comment

More respondents seemed to have felt competent after their course to use their skills.

15. How competent do you feel now with your skills ?

13 rated themselves as 5 or more; 6 rated themselves as below 5.
15 rated their current competence as being higher (and 13 rated as lower) than when they had completed their Fundamentals. 5 respondents gave the same score for questions 14 and 15.

Comment

The responses in questions 14 and 15 naturally indicate that respondents do vary in their feelings of competence both after a course and now. Almost half of replies were saying they are now more competent than after completing their course, whilst the other half's scores suggest they feel less competent than they did after their course. Some of the latter responses were from those people who stated that they were no longer active in Co-Counselling. It would have been interesting to have asked why people felt their competence had increased or lowered. In addition it may be possible to find out a connection between someone's rating and their level or frequency of Co-Counselling activity.

16. Tick any Themes/Topics for Workshops, Gatherings and Peer Groups you would be interested in coming to.

Workshops

10-14 people requested workshops on: anger; life changes; fun & games; inner child; body image; bereavement & loss; anxiety; depression; sexuality.

6-9 people requested workshops on: celebration; sadness; work; money; elder/ageing; parenting; couples; addiction; food.

Gatherings

6-9 people requested gatherings on: fun and games; food

Peer Groups

6-9 people requested peer groups on: fun and games; anxiety.

Comment

All topics received requests for peer groups and gatherings. ???All other than the above had fewer than 5 requests???. This question had space to add suggestions. Topics mentioned were:sexuality and celibacy; fear of emotional intimacy; loneliness; panic attacks; politics and social action; post-natal depression; no theme.

17. Tick any of the following skills workshops you would be interested in.

Further Co-co skills	18 responses
Bodywork	14
Massage	12
Voice/music	11
Gestalt	11
TA	11
Intensive contract	10
Creative arts	10
Psychodrama	9
Trans-personal	9
Regression	7
Breathing	5
Encounter; touch; focusing; Alexander; Tai Chi; Co-co brush-up	I each.

Comment

It is surprising that not more ideas for skills or themes for workshops or gatherings weren't suggested because on reflection skills such as assertiveness or NLP was missed off on the original list which probably would have interested cocoers unless, of course, everyone is satisfied with their sense of assertiveness! There may have been some unclarity for some on questions 16 and 17 as to what some of the themes or skills actually meant and given more information people may have ticked more.

It's important to note that the list of workshop themes and skills are by no means prescriptive. Anyone could put anything on as long as it complements and is able to be utilised in Co-Counselling

**18. If you were to attend a workshop or gathering, which days/times would you prefer?
(Asterisk most preferred)**

One whole Sat or Sun	25 (including 7 asterisked)
Sat pm	12
Sun am	11
Sun pm	10
Sat am	10
Sat - Sun non-residential	9
Fri-Sun residential	8
Tues evg	8
Mon evg	7
Thurs evg	7
Fri evg	7
Sun evg	5
One night residential	4

Comment

One whole Sat or Sun was clearly the most popular time to hold a Gathering or Workshop. in fact weekends in general were preferred including (as expected) residentials and non-residentials.

Despite low numbers, weekday evenings would be quite feasible for Workshops or gatherings especially as people's availability changes and even if 7 turn up, this is a good enough size for a group.

19. Tick the amounts you might be willing to pay for a workshop of differing lengths.

One Day

Price (£s)	Number ticked
0-10	10
11-20	13
21-30	3
31-40	1
41-50	1

Two Day Res

21-30	6
31-40	4
41-50	4
51+	7

There was an error in this section ; the column headed *For two days residential* should have read *Two days non-residential*. We have ignored the responses for that column.

Comment

It may be impractical to run residential for the kind of maximum amounts that people seem prepared to pay (from £21). Compare prices for advertised events from other areas and national/international events (typically over £50 min for a weekend). West Yorkshire's annual residential at Barmoor is an exception because of the very low cost of the venue (£35).

One day workshops and Gatherings could also very feasibly be run with the amounts respondents were prepared to pay. A typical venue's fee could be covered by fees with even a smallish group of between 5 and 10 people turning up.

20. What gender/sexuality focus (if any) would you prefer?

Mixed-gender workshops	26
Mixed-gender peer-groups	18
Women-only workshops	9
Women-only peer-groups	7
Men-only workshops	6
Men-only peer-groups	5
Other responses minimal: (gay/lesbian/bi)	

Comment

About 75% of respondents preferred mixed gender/sexuality focus for workshops. 50% of people preferred peer groups to be mixed gender. Approximately 25% of coocers preferred either women or men only workshops and peer groups. Responses for gay/lesbian/bi workshops and peer groups were minimal. Despite the lower numbers for single sex workshops and peer groups if those coocers came together there would be enough to form a group.

21. How would you prefer a workshop or a gathering to be run?

20 people each???prefer the option for an event to be part-facilitated and part peer-led.

9 prefer peer-led.

Comment

Most people seemed to want an event to be part facilitated and part peer-led. A pity this question was not split between workshops and gatherings. Maybe more might feel OK about peer-led gatherings, but the question does not allow the

difference to show. The lower response for peer-led workshops/gatherings may be because of the lacking in experience of this way of working even though it fits with the fundamental principle that in Co-Counselling we have the resources to resolve our own issues and make our own choices and not only be led by others and have choices made for us.

22. Would you be interested in coming together with other Co-coers for social events?

23 said yes and 8 said no.

Comment

Just under 75% of replies were interested in coming together with other co-coers for social events.

23 Suggestions for social events and comments or why not interested

Suggestions: walking (5); games (4); bring and share meals (2); demonstrate cooking favourite meal then eating and talking; pub or movie evening; treats; celebrations; surreal evening; massage; music(2); drums; picnics; quizzes; story-telling; cycling; camping; just socialising.

Reasons why not: other commitments; time (3); may shift focus away from Co-co; was taught that Co-coers must not socialise with each other; would exclude non-Co-coing partner; need to trust people a lot more before feeling comfortable in social gatherings (my stuff); missed an event cos not local.

24. What would you like covered in the WYCC Newsletter?

Most responses indicate that it is doing more or less what people want and are happy with 3 issues a year, including, overall, the amount of humour and poems. There was a reluctance to pay more. Respondents would like:

significantly more descriptions of workshops, items on Co-co skills and ideas, and theory
more reviews of workshops
a little more about personal Co-co experiences.

Respondents would prefer to have:

fewer adverts

Comment:

less of nothing? The newsletter hasn't had them. The responses in this section were extremely varied, with no clear patterns emerging especially not enough to lead to any major changes. The only significant request is more on descriptions of workshops as they are advertised and more on reviews of them.

The request from respondents for more of the above may be at conflict with how much people are prepared to pay for the newsletter, since putting more in and not taking very much out will probably mean more pages and therefore a slightly increased sub.

25. If you were interested in a 1-day or evening workshop, gathering or peer-group, where would you be willing to travel to?

There was a balance between Bradford and Leeds for both attending a day or evening event. One or two mentioned their interest or willingness to travel to other parts of West Yorkshire.

26. If the theme/skill, fee and location suited you, how often would you be willing to come to workshops, gatherings and peer-groups?

Respondents overwhelmingly stated that they would attend these. The average stated frequency for workshops and gatherings was 4 per year and 6 for peer-groups.

Comment

Was the question unclear here? It invited frequency as a number per year, and yet for a peer-group once every two months doesn't seem very often at all. Peer-groups that have operated in the past (and maybe now) have tended to have weekly or bi-weekly meetings where Co-coers meet for Co-counselling. Maybe there was a lack of understanding of what a peer-group is.)

Although the average frequency of attending workshops and gatherings was 4 per year, this doesn't necessarily mean that this is how many there should be in a year. More could be put on since people might choose to attend 4 in a year but not the same 4 as everyone else! Remember also that there are many more who did not return their questionnaire and who would add therefore to the numbers attending any event.

27. If you answered no to any of question 26, please say why.

Living out of the area/finances; only if very local (2); not able currently to participate in Co-co events; depends on the nature of the group.

Offers of help

13 people completed the form to say they could help in some way. Out of that 13:

3 offered to *sole facilitate* a workshop or gathering.

10 offered to *co-facilitate* a workshop or gathering.

8 offered to *help* with a workshop or gathering.

9 offered their house for a workshop, gathering or peer group for approx. 5-10 people. One of these was able to offer his house for 11-15 people.

8 could help with the newsletter (suggesting typing, compiling and paste up, stuffing, provide cartoons/poems, distribution or anything).

All 13 stated they would like to be informed about workshops, gatherings or social events.

Comment

An appreciation of thanks needs to be noted and given to all the 13 people who completed the form and said they could help in some way. there were between 8 and 10 people who offered to co-facilitate, help with or offered their house for a workshop, gathering, newsletter or (in the case of the house) a peer group. It's interesting that only a small proportion (3 people) offered to sole facilitate something

Dennis Green and Keith Lander, May 1997