

Co-Counselling International (UK)

**Suggestions  
for  
Exercises**

**for Fundamentals training and Other  
Co-counselling Workshops**

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1978, revised edition 1998

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# Suggestions for Exercises

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The best activities are those you devise on the spot to meet the emergent needs of the situation. The following list is just to stimulate the teacher's imagination. See also my:

- [Co-Counselling Manual](#)
  - [Co-Counselling Teachers' Manual](#)
  - [Co-Counselling Teacher Trainers' Manual](#)
  - [Intensive Counselling](#)
  - [Suggestions for Exercises](#)
  - [Catharsis in Human Development](#)
1. Co-counsel with your assistant teacher before the class and split the class time between the teacher and the assistant teacher allocating different functions to each. Co-counsel after each class.
  2. When the teacher is restimulated get a class member to counsel the teacher.
  3. Discharge in class on "Being a good teacher". Generally it helps greatly when the teacher discharges in class.
  4. Keep Fundamentals Classes moving: lots of circles, mini-sessions, moving about. Have light, humorous, cheerful sessions.
  5. Having a few experienced co-counsellors in a Fundamentals Class, helps beginners move along faster
  6. The way co-teachers relate to each other has an important impact as a model in a Fundamentals Class.
  7. Write up what happened in the class, how the design developed, after the class, plus ideas for next week.
  8. Each one reach one: when a class member brings a beginner, get the member to introduce the beginner (name, where do you live, what is your occupation, how did you hear of co-counselling, what are your expectations for the class, what do you like about yourself, what good things have happened to you recently, etc); then get members to say in turn what co-counselling means to them, the gains and benefits they have derived from it - theory will come tumbling out. Have a mini-session of validation of each other.
  9. As a form of the good and new opening circle, have each member bring into class an artifact of their own making and display before the group.
  10. Ask "How is your co-counselling going?" in Fundamentals Classes always. Probe for snags, difficulties, problems, doubts about theory and technique. Counsel with class members on these. Ask also for gains and benefits from regular co-counselling. Enquire about new, sensitive areas that have been opened up, directions that have been offered or discovered and found helpful.

11. For embarrassment: have a mini-session in which members take turns to whisper "dark secrets" about themselves to each other.
12. Rational action project: get each member of the class to set himself a realistic practical goal for himself for the coming week. Have a mini-session on the material blocking the realisation of that project. Disclose to the whole group the direction that emerges from the mini-session. At next week's class review what happened to the project.
13. Triad: one counsellor supports the client, another counsellor menaces the client and the client discharges.
14. Triad: each takes 10 minutes as client with one counsellor and one observer. Then a 5 minute feedback discussion by client, counsellor and observer. Each takes each role, so 45 minutes for the whole exercise.
15. Mini-session on self-validation: the counsellor reports back to the group what seems special about the client from the latter's self-validation.
16. Use random selection sometimes for co-counselling pairs in a Fundamentals Class.
17. Concentrate a lot on validation in the beginning of a Fundamentals Class series. Have four embraces for each person from other class members at the start of each class. Love your students to facilitate their learning.
18. Have class members discharge on their reluctance to ring up people for extra between-class co-counselling sessions. Exercise: go round the group "dialing up" members who reply either "yes or "no" and the client discharges accordingly.
19. Mini-session on the topic "Where, oh where has my free attention gone"?
20. If you as teacher are shut down, teach the class light techniques and have them use them on you.
21. Mini-session: have client and counsellor alternate a direction back and forth between each other, to elicit mutual restimulation material. For example such a direction as "I can trust you".
22. The teacher demonstrates with a client before the class how not to co-counsel.
23. Project: teach class members light techniques, then ask them to go out into the world and use the light techniques on someone. Report back the following week on what happened.
24. For counselling the client on experiences of surgery: get emotional discharge off first; have client repeatedly recount everything before and after operation, gradually closing in on the occluded period; then have client recount a fantasy however bizarre about the occluded material, and go over and over the fantasy until the yawns come off.
25. For counselling the client reluctant to discharge fear: let the fear come off after laughter; have the client say in a foolish baby voice "Dooh I'm scared" with a shiver (show him how); have client say over and over again "I'm frightened" until boredom drives him to face discharge.
26. Be aware of the distinction between real anger - which comes off as quick, energetic righteous indignation - and pseudo-anger which is a fear-based rehearsal of violence episodes (loud and raucous banging about, playing the other end of the recording, i.e. the aggressor's explicit or tacit behaviour). Anger is not easy to get

- at; covered by real fear and real grief; a lot of laughter, shaking, tears have to come off first.
27. For counselling the client on false guilt: have the client say proudly "I'm responsible for causing distress to those I love" then into discharge. False guilt is holding oneself responsible for blame imposed by others. It comes away in laughter, trembling, tears, etc.
  28. Simulated tickling: leads to discharge. But only approach the client as if to tickle; don't impose a further intrusion. A lot of tickling of the child is intrusive.
  29. Light level work: is important to get attention out for the heavily distressed. But you've got to be flip to hit the light techniques well. (The heavily chronically distressed person needs a 24 hour programme as well as counselling; he needs to be kept occupied between sessions).
  30. Coming off tranquillisers: the client may need a week of continuous counselling while the fear comes off.
  31. Think and Listen: in groups of four or five, each person takes turns (from 5 minutes to 30 minutes each) to think out loud on frontier issues in his own reflections on any topic under the sun. The others make no comment or intervention but give complete thoughtful attention. The client has a chance to push the frontiers of his usual thinking forward.
  32. Contradict overt patterns such as postural patterns, smoking, etc. A simple thing for class members do to.
  33. Creativity night: have members play guitar, read poetry, bring and share some form of self-expression.
  34. Approval stool: have client stand on a stool to be validated by all the other class members.
  35. For aches and pains: massage in dyads or from whole group, take pressure up to the threshold of pain and encourage client to let discharge come through.
  36. If you see one person getting away from you, getting shut down, try to reach him with a change of technique, activity or strategy.
  37. Daily goal setting: what is it I want to accomplish today?
  38. Name games: sing your name; sing your nickname from childhood; cheer your nickname "ra ra ra Tiddlum".
  39. Say "Whoopie" at each other in the middle of a sentence.
  40. Keep news and goods going round opening circle until everyone has arrived.
  41. Contradict your pattern in movement and gesture in front of the group.
  42. Play the counterpartal pattern, the other end of the record, in front of the group: e.g. authority figure and timid person are in counterpartal pattern.
  43. Mini-session: each says to the other "I see it's been a great day" three times.
  44. Say "Zest" three times loudly with arms outstretched.
  45. Two objects: teacher has two objects, starts them off simultaneously, one going round circle to right, one going round circle to left.
    - Teacher hands object to next person A.

- Teacher: "This is a pain".
  - A: "A what?" Teacher: "A pain".
  - A: "Oh".
  - A then takes the object and offers it to the next person using the same dialogue.
  - Teacher starts object in other direction immediately saying "This is a hurt", etc.
  - High discharge when objects cross over at opposite side of circle.
  - Each object goes round the whole circle and back to the teacher.
46. Demonstration then mini-session: contradict physical controls (e.g. open mouth wide, slurp and blubber, take shirt off, dance the jitters).
  47. Mini-session: to break up nodding controls, nod opposite ways at each other, i.e. one up and down, the other sideways.
  48. Validating circle: non verbal communication of affection by touching and looking at the client in the middle in a validating way. Use circles of 5 or 6 with each member in middle for about 4 minutes.
  49. Threefold milling: have everyone in the class simultaneously singing, moving and hugging, with each person continuously varying each each of these activities.
  50. Mini-session on toilet training: client squats on floor as if on potty. Counsellor uses phrases like "What have you made for mummy?", "Clever little boy".
  51. Mini-session on pram life: client lies on back on floor as if in pram. Counsellor looks into pram using phrases like "Cooee".
  52. Client stands before the group and sings the old song:
    - 52.1. Oh my papa, to me he was so wonderful  
Oh my papa, to me he was so good  
Gone are the days when he would take me on his knee  
And with a smile he'd change my tears to laughter  
Oh my papa, to me he was so wonderful  
Oh my papa, to me he was so good.
  53. To overcome speech as a control: where client is stuck on the recording and can't get at the underlying feeling, say to him "Don't say it, just make a noise that expresses what is really there."
  54. Male sandwich triad: two men holding a third man, all hold on to each other and talk about "big boy" material. Female sandwich triads on "nice girl" material.
  55. Quasi-validations: in a circle where an apparent validation is given (which in fact is invalidating). Get other members to imitate the quasi-validation so that the speaker can see it for what it is. Get speaker to practise an authentic validation.
  56. Mini-session: on the complete validation of other people in one's life.
  57. Mini-session on choosing: prior to choosing co-counselling partners for out-of-class co-counselling, or if choosing within class gets heavy. Talk over material about choosing and being chosen.
  58. Validation cards: each person writes a validation card for another person who takes it home and sticks it on to a mirror which is used daily.

59. Lift and rock: to validate someone who needs it badly.
60. Mini-session on embarrassment: whisper to your counsellor those things about yourself which if he knew about he would terminate the relationship. Start with the lighter horrors ("I drool in my sleep") and move on to heavier material. End up with secrets that are really hard to tell.
61. Mini-session on alternating direction: "I'm in charge" back and forth between partners. Or "I'm in charge. No you're in charge" back and forth.
62. Spilling out before the group: review the past week or the past six months without editing, in front of the whole class. Very rapid and spontaneous outpouring, stream of consciousness verbalisation. Let it all spill out without hesitation.
63. Heads on stomachs: form a pattern on the floor, everyone lying down at right angles to someone else, with head on the other's stomach.
64. Whisper appreciations of and to the next person, who then says it about himself aloud to the group.
65. Validation of a distressed or shut down person by everyone.
66. Choosing co-counsellors: raise the issue on the second week of an on-going class. Mini-session as above on choosing and being chosen. Some teachers assign co-counselling pairs. Others get class members to choose their own partners. Change counsellors around regularly; encourage people to change weekly; have some changing and some steady partners.
67. Discharge circles: of 4, 5 or 6 persons, each member takes it in turn to spend some minutes in the middle of the circle, the others linking arms. The one in the middle turns to each of the circle and uses the same direction to each. The following directions can be used: "You really love me", "It's only fear that separates us", "Sex", "Together, you and I", "I like your body", "Hold me, I need your love", etc.
68. Members demonstrate to each other in pairs how they like to be hugged and how they don't like to be hugged.
69. Get people to say how much they like their co-counselling partners.
70. Boast before the group about behaviours of which you are ashamed.
71. Remember and/or imagine the way that someone who loves you talks about you, and role play them saying it all in front of the group.
72. Write down a goal or secret, mix up cards and share them out among group members (no one gets their own card). In front of group read out the card and say how you think the author would reach the goal or feel about holding in that secret.
73. Each pins on a card saying how he would like to be validated. Members validate each other in these ways.
74. Regression session: plan class round childhood experiences. Use nicknames, play games, use child-like speech and thought; create a group nursery.
75. Validation circle: think of a validation you would most like to hear, first choose someone you would like to have say it to you, then have whole group say it at once.
76. Say "I'm the greatest ever" with knees bent slightly before group and find where you are holding tension; have the group tell you where they see tension in your body.
77. Crisis exercise in small groups: you've just been told you have received a crucial telephone call. What could it be about? What should you do about it?

78. Funeral exercise in small group: you are at your own funeral, so give the speech you would like to hear about yourself.
79. Do the new and good opening circle in baby talk.
80. Walking validation: let members take it in turns to walk around the room before the group in a totally proud and self-appreciative way.
81. Polar milling: have members mill around overtly avoiding and recoiling from each other. Then switch to making real contact with each other.
82. Mini-session on many positions: client holds a direction sitting, standing, lying, upside down, in a corner, etc.
83. Back-lift dyads: interlock elbows, lifter bends knees, liftee places behind in small of lifter's back. Liftee is raised and lies relaxed and spreadeagled on horizontal back of lifter. Liftee shouts out "Me!" several times and discharges.
84. Knee-support dyads: client lies on his back over horizontal thigh of partner who has other knee on the floor. Client shouts out "Me!" several times and discharges.
85. Become one of your best friends appreciating you in front of the class.
86. St Peter's Gate mini-session: recount all your successes and positive achievements throughout your life.
87. Mini-session on your conception: describe in detail your parents making love when they conceived you. Be realistic and sincere but as validating of them as possible.
88. Mirror validation: validate yourself in front of a full length mirror before the class.
89. Mini-session on childhood glossolalia: the client spends some minutes in pre-linguistic "speech" - the sounds a child makes who is on the verge of forming real sentences. "Ecstatic" nonsense. Imagine yourself having a pre-literate view of the world and expressing your wonderment in sounds.
90. Write on a card a negative thing you feel about yourself. Mix all the cards and have each person give a positive direction for the card he receives.
91. Write a letter to your father or mother and then read it aloud in the class.
92. Relate happy experiences in childhood in a childlike voice and in child's language.
93. Melting-in dyads: counsellor says "Welcome home", holding client in warm close embrace. Client relaxes, sighs, luxuriates in the human warmth.
94. Mini-session on interface directions: directions on the interface between the personal and the transpersonal. Such as: "I am", "I am that I am", "I and thou", "Our reality is in our relating", "I am human", "My potential is unbounded", "Forever", "You and I in present time", "Now", and so on.
95. Loosening up: jump and shout; gyrate the hips in full circle; shake a violent dog off one leg with loud noises, then shake it off the other leg; tremble and shake all over, flicking and shaking the hands rapidly; take big gasping breaths and shout "Oh!" on each out-breath; stamp the floor violently, shake both fists and shout "No!" And so on.
96. Name calling in a circle: each person says his name three times, first time in normal voice, second time louder, third time as loud as possible combined with a floor stamping tantrum.



97. Laughing dyads: client takes a few minutes starting with very hearty artificial laugh, goes into real laugh, when this dries up straight back into hearty artificial laugh and so on. Counsellor laughs freely.
98. Acting into fear: have everyone stand free in the room with eyes closed, and act into fear discharge, trembling hands, arms, shoulders, side to side tremble of head, lips, chattering of jaws, light quaking tremble of knees, increase breathing rate and make sounds on out-breath. Repeat this cycle about five times with pauses in between. Watch for those who slip into real discharge of tears, trembling, etc.
99. Mini-session on chronological scanning: review a portion of one of the following: sexual experiences, physical violence (as victim and as aggressor), food experiences, "God" material, times I was rejected, times I rejected, times I was befriended, times I helped others, guilt experiences, shame experiences, separation/loss experiences, being mocked experiences, illnesses and accidents, intensely loving experiences, frustration experiences, my successes, and so on and so on. Positive experiences are of course lighter than negative experiences.
100. Mini-session on bodily self-validation: the client validates the various parts, organs and processes of his physical body, e.g. "I have fine white bones", "I have rich warm blood", "My heart is strong and vigorous", etc.
101. Direction-holding: the basic tool against patterns. Counter-pattern direction is like a tangent to a curve, it counters rigidity at one point; it loses its effectiveness after some long time. Then move on to another point with another direction. Some directions are curves in themselves, tangents at every point, e.g. "All is well", "I will live from this point on as if I were completely rational". The best direction is outside both ends of the pattern; use the other end of the pattern only when that is as far as the client can go.
102. Contradiction: complete self-appreciation contradicts negative material in what is said, tone of voice, facial expression, gesture and posture. Contradiction can be used in all kinds of subtle in-between and partial ways to elicit discharge, if the client is too shut-down to take on complete self-appreciation. Such partial contradictions may be effective in getting discharge off.
  - The client grossly exaggerates the negativity of the recording in all four ways.
  - The client keeps to the negative content of what is said but says it happily, gaily, boastfully, with a "Whoopee" etc.
  - The client uses a positive verbal direction but says it with an exaggerated negative tone of voice, facial expression, gesture and posture.
  - Full self-appreciation.
103. Mini-session on thumb: client sucks thumb as if about two years old; counsellor uses phrases that express invalidating concern e.g. "I wonder if he really is going to learn to talk properly?", "Do you think his legs will straighten out?", "You're too big to do babyish things like that", etc.
104. Celebrate: appreciate your basic human capacities for loving and being loved, for understanding and being understood, for being self-determining and for co-operating with others - not for discharge, but for confident, joyful affirmation.
105. To recover power, work on powerlessness. Deal with a "powerless" incident by:

- Describing it and discharging on it.
  - Telling it as though you had power to handle it successfully.
  - Imagining you are a hero(ine) and telling what you would have done in the situation.
  - Telling it as though there were helpful figures present, whom you trust, supporting you.
106. To recover power, work on powerlessness. Deal with the total childhood situation that has given rise to present feelings of powerlessness and inadequacies: by describing what your childhood would have been like if you had been a happy, confident, distress-free child supported by mature, wise, loving parents; or by describing how as a strong, confident child you would have made your parents behave (your counsellor can act the parent whom you are thus taking charge of).
107. Relationship counselling. A counsellor works with two people who are in mutual restimulation. The counsellor works with each in turn using these kinds of intervention:
- "What do you really like about him?"
  - "What is it here and now about him that restimulates you?" ...
  - "What does that remind you of?"
  - "How would you like him to be different?" ....
  - "What would you like him to say or do?"
  - "What does that remind you of?" ....
  - "What's the thought?" Counsellor works with any hidden projections that surface ....
  - "Can you describe to me now the real him, what he distinctively and truly is?"
108. To work with confrontation and conflict. Use one or more of the following:
- Identification check and/or relationship counselling.
  - Discharge on positive directions about each other in each other's presence.
  - Ritualise the conflict in symbolic aggression such as Yes-No shouting, back to back pushing with Yes-No shouting, each knifing a box shouting "I want to kill you", etc.
  - Role reversal.
  - Sharing and swapping what I think you think of me.
  - Rogerian synergy - repeat what the other says to the other's satisfaction before replying.
  - Build rational contracts and confront those who later unawarely break them.
  - Raise consciousness about the widespread phenomena of unaware dumping of distress.
109. Work on cultural distress-scripts, on restrictions and oppression writ large throughout our society. Identify and discharge on pervasive negative scripts about children, old people, women, men, racial minorities, the handicapped, socio-economic classes, the third world, other nations and cultures, religious groups, the

transpersonal. Set goals and action-plan to interrupt these scripts in your own behaviour and in the social world at large,

110. Regression by reverie: See Co-Counselling Teachers' Manual: Explanation of basic working techniques: [Regression by reverie](#)
  111. Birth work: See Co-Counselling Teachers' Manual: Group Work: [Birth work](#).
  112. Body work: See Co-Counselling Teachers' Manual: Group Work: [Body work](#) also [Active Body Work](#) and [Passive Body Work](#).
  113. Transpersonal co-counselling: See Co-Counselling Manual: [Transpersonal Expression](#)
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