

Lesson 1: Basic Human Nature

Summary

In this and the next few lessons, you will be working with the basic theory of Re-evaluation Counseling, as well as learning the most important things to do (and, more so, not to do) as a Co-Counselor.

Prerequisites and Preparation

Reading Materials - Before meeting with your partner for your session, read the articles for Lesson 1.

Readings

Primary Articles

- [The Human Side Of Human Beings, from start through Chapter 12: The "Snowballing" of Distress](#)
- The RC Community Guidelines: [A.3. The One Point Program](#), [M.1. Relationships](#), [C.3. Structure of RC Classes](#)
- [An Introductory Lecture](#) by Tim Jackins

Presentation

Listening is the basic practice of RC. As a listener, one needs to communicate caring and interest and keep attention on the client rather than on one's own concerns.

This listening includes an understanding that we humans are completely good and intelligent, inherently cooperative and caring and that we get a kick out of life. However, we are vulnerable to being hurt especially early in our lives, which without emotional healing (**discharge**—see below) these inherent human characteristics are distorted into rigid and unintelligent thoughts (**distress recordings**) and behaviors

(distress patterns). There is a difference between the person and the effects of these early hurts which we call **distress patterns**.

A hurt is stored as a **distress recording** until we are able to sufficiently **discharge** (release emotions through crying, laughing, sweating, trembling, raging/tantrumming, yawning) about the hurtful experience. Discharge frees our minds from the effects of the hurt and lets us think freshly where feelings and upset once confused our thoughts. As we free our minds our basic nature of goodness, intelligence, cooperation, caring, and an enjoyment of life become apparent in our everyday interactions.

Guidelines for the first (and every) session (put this somewhere you can look at before each session)

- Client starts with news and goods (what has gone well recently)
- Counselor gives warm, interested attention
- Counselor keeps relaxed eye contact
- Client decides what he/she is going to work on (start with life story if nothing else is pressing, and repeat life story from beginning if there is time)
- If client discharges (laughing, crying, sweating, shaking, yawning, non-repetitive active talking), counselor can direct them back to the topic that led to the discharge
- Don't give advice or interrupt discharge
- Divide the time equally even if it feels like one person needs more time than the other
- Remember to keep confidential what the client says in session
- Counselor can end the session by bringing the client's attention back to present time with an engaging question (eg: what are you looking forward to)
- No socializing; don't come early or stay late for a meal or other activity
- Appreciate each other and each other's counseling
- Congratulations! Well done!

QUOTE: THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH ANY HUMAN BEING EXCEPT THE RESULTS OF MISTREATMENT. Harvey Jackins, Scroll

Discussion

With your Co-Counseling partner, please discuss the reading materials in detail before you start the first session. If you have any questions about the ideas presented, make sure that you write them down at this point.

What is the difference between human intelligence and patterned behavior?

What is human intelligence? What is love? What is real human power?

How does human intelligence work?

What are the inherent characteristics of human beings or the basic nature of human beings?

What are the key things that you should do in your co-counseling sessions?

Session

Your session (the practice part of your meeting) should eventually be 1 hour long for each of you. It is recommended that you start with perhaps 30 minutes each and increase 10 minutes in follow-up sessions till the 1 hour time is reached. This is good amount of time for you to make good progress in this class. If you can, find a spot with good privacy, where you can sit close together and having some physical contact (holding hands, arm around shoulder, etc). Even that small amount of physical contact will make a big difference. Of course in this period of the pandemic you most likely will be doing this by zoom (unless you and your partner are in a shared loop).

It is recommended that you spend your first few Co-Counseling sessions telling and re-telling the story of your life from the time you were born (or even earlier), up to present time. Do not worry if you say the same things twice (the goal of the session is not to entertain your partner, but to get used to being listened to with delight). When you run out of things to say, just start over and go into more detail, if you like.

After some time, you will find yourself spending more and more time on particular events. It is useful to note these events in your mind for later (or write them down).

When it is your turn to listen, make sure that you follow the recommendations in the reading material. You can start by asking your partner to briefly talk about some recent pleasant happening (we call that a "New and Good"). Also, when the timer signals the end of the session, you can ask the partner about something he/she is looking forward to. This puts the attention of your partner back to present and future events, where it is needed.

Except for these questions, you should not say anything at all. This may feel a little uncomfortable at first, but you will soon realize the benefits of this simple idea. If your partner runs out of things to talk about, you can encourage her/him to start over from the earliest memories, or to go into more detail in areas where you may have noticed some emotion. Otherwise, please be sure to keep as quiet as possible while listening with all the attention you can muster. The goal of these sessions is to get used to paying loving and delighted attention to your partner without interrupting her or him.

Feedback

Keep notes on any questions or concerns you have from the readings and your session(s) especially from the RC Guidelines -- The no-socializing policy (*The RC Community Guidelines* M. Relationships) and the addictions policy (*The RC Community Guidelines* C.3). You can present these to your teacher when you start your full fundamentals class.

Keep in mind that just plain paying attention without interrupting is the most important thing you can do at this point as a counselor, and that will continue to constitute more than 90% of what you do in that role. If you managed to do that in your session, you were successful. If not, don't worry. The next time you meet, you'll get another chance!

Lesson 2 - Distress Recordings

Summary

This lesson is probably the most important in the Fundamentals Class, because we introduce the concept of a distress recording and distress patterns, which is the core concept of Re-evaluation Counseling. While the concept of distress recordings/patterns is very simple and easy to understand, it is extremely powerful in its ability to explain all observed irrational human behavior, something humans have struggled with for millennia.

Prerequisites and Preparation:

At this point you should have a grasp of how the human intelligence works. You should also have gained some experience paying attention to your client without engaging in conversation. As a client you should feel comfortable having your counselor pay attention to you without expecting them to interrupt you or engage in conversation. You have by now told your life story in some detail once or twice. In doing so, you may have noticed that there are certain events in your life which have more 'charge' than others. It is good at this point to flag those events, so that we can return to them later with better tools at hand.

Before meeting with your partner for your sessions, read the articles for Lesson 2.

Readings:

- ["Humans acquire distress patterns from being hurt"](#) by Harvey Jackins
- [The Human Side Of Human Beings](#), from Chapter 13 "The Early Beginnings of Damage" to end

Secondary Articles

- ["Goals of the counselor"](#) by Harvey Jackins
The Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual p. 30
- ["Fundamentals of Co-Counseling"](#) by Harvey Jackins
(Report to the World Conference, July 19, 1979)
Present Time No. 39, pp 3-10
The Benign Reality, pp. 57-75
- ["Approaching a major turning point"](#) by Harvey Jackins
Present Time No. 53, pp. 3-5
The Rest of Our Lives, pp. 131-136

Presentation:

Intelligence is the ability to respond freshly and successfully to each new situation.

Hurtful experiences interfere with the functioning of our intelligence. During a hurtful experience, the information coming in is not properly sorted and stored in our minds; instead, the information mis-stores and the result is a recording of the hurtful experience, a "distress recording." Distress recordings interfere with intelligent thought and leave us acting in rigid, repetitive (patterned) ways (**distress patterns**).

There are three sources of **distress patterns**: accident, contagion (from the distress patterns of the people around us), and oppression.

The effects of undischarged distress include the following:

- We become vulnerable to *restimulation** (see below)
- We are unable to use the information from the distressing event
- Our thought processes are impaired in the areas in which we were hurt
- We become vulnerable to manipulation
- Our functioning is reduced overall
- We often feel bad
- Our picture of reality becomes inaccurate, and
- We separate from others.

When confronted with a new experience that is similar enough to an old hurt, we are pulled to act as though the original distressing experience were happening now. This tendency is called ***restimulation**.

With discharge, it becomes easier to decide not to let past hurts dictate our current behavior.

A **distress recording** is rigid, inflexible, and repetitive, in contrast with rational thought, which is flexible, fresh, and appropriate for the present situation. A **distress pattern** results from these distress recordings which makes our behaviors rigid, inflexible, and repetitive rather than flexible, creative, and fitting to the present situation.

Intermittent patterns show themselves in particular situations—fear of thunder is one example. A **chronic pattern** is one that is always operating in our minds. We feel like it is “the way things are” or “just the way we are” or “our personality.” For example, we feel that we are stupid or shy or unattractive.

In counseling we always strive to distinguish between the person and the pattern. The human beneath the pattern is whole and excellent. The pattern was installed on the person by a distress experience. The pattern is completely separate from the person and can be completely discharged.

QUOTE: WE DRAW A CLEAR DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE *PERSON*, GOOD AND WHOLESOME IN EVERY RESPECT, AND THE *DISTRESS PATTERN*, WHICH APPEARS TO REPRESENT THE PERSON BUT WHICH IS ACTUALLY A FOREIGN ELEMENT, PARASITIC UPON THE PERSON. Harvey Jackins, “The Distinctive Characteristics of RC,” *The Human Situation*, Revised (2010) page 13 and Original page 14.

Discussion

With your Co-Counseling partner, please discuss the reading materials in detail before you start the first session. If you have any questions about the ideas presented, make sure that you write them down at this point.

- What is the mechanism of the distress recording?

- Talk about the sources of distress
- What is restimulation of a distress recording?
- What is the difference between intermittent and chronic patterns?
- What is the difference between the person and the pattern?
- What are some examples of intermittent and chronic patterns that you've observed in yourself, in others?
- What are examples of patterns that you've seen on a large number of people (eg isolation)?

Session

Your session (the practice part of your meeting) should be getting close to 1 hour each (at least 40 minutes each way).

It is recommended that you continue to spend your Co-Counseling sessions telling and re-telling the story of your life from the time you were born (or even earlier), up to present time, while your counselor pays attention to you without interruption. This is good practice to get each of you familiar with the process. Later, we will start being more active as counselors and more focused as clients.

Feedback

After your session, please write down any questions, comments and/or concerns you may have about the session or about the reading materials. You can raise these with your online teacher once you are in a class.

Notice any discharge (crying, laughter, shaking, excited talking, yawning) when you were the counselor. Think about what you did to encourage the client to continue discharging.

Lesson 3: Discharge

Summary

This lesson is a continuation of Lesson 2 (Distress Recordings and Distress Patterns). We will study in detail how distress recordings are discharged. We also take a look at the different types of discharge corresponding to the different types of emotions present at the time the distress recording is made.

Prerequisites and Preparation

At this point you should be familiar with the notion of a distress recording and how they result in rigid patterns of behavior. You may have noticed that with your listening without interruption your client (and you) may have engaged in emotional discharge (crying, laughter, shaking, animated talking, yawning). Perhaps you've made some note of this either in your mind or in notes. Continue to notice this and where your client does discharge.

Readings

Primary Articles

- ["The recovery process"](#) by Harvey Jackins
The Human Side of Human Beings pp. 75-95
- ["Inherent healing processes"](#) by Harvey Jackins
The Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual pp. 1-7
- ["The Postulates of RC,"](#) Harvey Jackins, *The Human Situation*
- **Secondary Articles**
- ["Counseling directly on a new physical injury"](#) by Lyndon Piddington
Present Time, No. 107, p. 26
- ["Thinking through a physical injury thoroughly"](#) by Jenny Sazama
Present Time, No. 91, pp. 14-19
- ["Discharge, don't respect, embarrassment"](#) by Tim Jackins
Present Time, No. 58, pp. 3-5

- ["The successful contradiction and discharge of heavy fear"](#) by Harvey Jackins
Present Time, No. 68, pp. 31-32

Presentation

Discharge is a **natural process** and occurs freely until interfered with. Discharge frees our minds from the effects of distressing experiences.

There are several forms of discharge. They tend to occur in a basic order from crying and sobbing (with tears), to trembling, shaking, and cold perspiration, to laughter, to animated talking, yawning, and stretching. (see chart on page 7 of the *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual*.)

Young people **spontaneously** discharge when hurt and fight hard to keep the discharge process intact.

However, our society **interferes with** and **inhibits discharge**. This is done by direct suppression ("don't cry"), cultural patterns ("our group is strong and doesn't show feelings"), pressures to conform ("look and act like everyone else"), violence or threat of violence ("I'll give you something to cry about"), and the threat of the "mental health" system ("you will be locked up if you keep doing that"). Discharge has been suppressed for thousands of years, and we all have patterns of suppressing it.

To **recover the discharge process**, a client can discharge directly on patterns that inhibit discharge. You and your partner can do what we call a mini session (less than 1 hour each) about what you were told about crying or expressing fears. It's useful to have people talk about their **previous experiences** with each form of discharge, when they were stopped from discharging, how other people reacted when they themselves discharged, their beliefs about discharge and where they learned them, and so on. A large focus of this fundamentals class is about assisting you and your partner to recover the ability to discharge.

Making loud or angry noises, pounding pillows, and complaining bitterly are not discharge, but can sometimes lead to discharge.

Re-evaluation occurs spontaneously with sufficient discharge. Previously mis-stored information becomes usable information. An example of a re-evaluation is when a client understands something quite different about themselves or society as a result of sufficient discharge over time, eg: women are not weak, all children deserve to be respected, working class people are smart, etc.

QUOTE: "ANY DISTRESS CAN BE DISCHARGED IF CONTRADICTED SUFFICIENTLY, SKILLFULLY, AND PERSISTENTLY ENOUGH." Harvey Jackins, *The List* 4.004

Discussion questions

With your Co-Counseling partner, please discuss the reading materials in detail before you start each session. If you have any questions about the ideas presented, make sure that you write them down at this point.

- How does discharge removes a distress recording?
- How the different types of discharge are outward indications of one and the same process, but reflecting different recorded emotions
- Your experiences with discharge outside of RC (how you have seen people treated when they discharge).
- Your most recent memories of you discharging (for each type). Your early memories of discharging and how you were treated. Did you see people treated differently (eg little boys vs little girls)
- The myths about each form of discharge (that someone who cries is hurting, that someone who shakes is cold or sick, that someone who yawns is bored, etc.)

Session

Continue to tell life stories unless specific incidents in your life need attention - but do continue telling your life story in these first few sessions. Important insights and places to counsel on in later sessions will emerge. Your session should be at least 50 minutes each way. Your next session should be the 1 hour length. This is good amount of time for you to make good progress in this class.

As a counselor, if you notice your client on the verge of discharge, make sure that you let him/her know that you noticed, and encourage him/her to follow through with the discharge. Do not interrupt or distract your client from the discharge. You may feel uncomfortable. This is a good place to make a note to yourself and counsel on in a later session. We all got so interfered with when we tried to discharge and much of our discomfort with discharge is from that. Counseling in your sessions on your early experiences with emotional discharge will make a difference (and you will also become more comfortable with discharge as you co-counsel more).

Discharge happens naturally, and it is not useful to 'go through the motions' just to please your counselor. If there is no discharge happening, don't worry about it. Just being listened to is very valuable, and there is no need to 'perform.' This is particularly important to keep in mind when the client is a man. Appreciating your client for whatever they can do in session will make a big difference.

After your session, notice the kinds of discharge that happened in the session and write down what you did to encourage it, and whether or not that helped your client.

Feedback

After your session(s), notice the kinds of discharge that happened in the session and write down what you did to encourage it, and whether or not that helped your client.

Lesson 4: The Role of the Counselor and Client

Summary

This lesson presents the basic responsibilities of the counselor and client and the ways in which these responsibilities can be carried out. Some preliminary skills and techniques beyond listening (the

fundamental skill) are also presented here. There will be more techniques in later classes.

Prerequisites and Preparation

Before proceeding with this lesson you should make sure that you understand the mechanism and effects of the distress recordings. As a client you should now be comfortable having the attention of your counselor, and as a counselor you should be comfortable with listening to your client.

From the previous sessions you should by now have identified certain events of your life that carry a lot of emotional charge. The counselor can go back to some of these with your client and use the ideas in this lesson to make your listening even more effective. The client can also think about what events they want to go back to and set some goals for their session.

Before meeting with your partner for your sessions, read the articles for Lesson 4.

Readings

Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual, pages 8-12; *How to Begin Re-evaluation Counseling*;

["The Counselor as Bagpiper."](#) Harvey Jackins, *The Reclaiming of Power*, pages 31-32

["Keeping the Counselor and Client in Communication with Each Other,"](#) Harvey Jackins, *Start Over Every Morning*, pages 153-154;

["On Being the Counselor."](#) Tim Jackins, *Present Time* No. 123, pages 7-9

Presentation

Listening is the main thing we do in Co-Counseling—listening well and with interest. (Review what to do and not to do in a co-counseling session).

The counselor always needs to show the client approval, delight, respect, confidence, high expectations, commitment, and caring.

As noted above and below, most of what the counselor does is listen well and pay warm, caring attention to the client. When it is necessary to be more active, the following steps are useful: 1. remember and reflect the reality of how good the client is; 2. pay enough attention to the client to identify the distress; 3. think of how to contradict* the distress; and, 4. contradict the distress sufficiently to encourage discharge. Effectiveness as client and counselor increases with time and as they get to know each other.

*A **contradiction** to a distress recording is anything that allows the client to see the distress as separate from reality—for example, turning the client's attention to the counselor, asking the client to recall some simple facts or pleasant memories, and so on. A contradiction to helplessness could be "maybe I can do something". A contradiction to isolation is noticing that you (the counselor) are with them. Or a contradiction to feeling bad about yourself could be "you're not the worst person in the world". Again it is anything that shows the client that the distress is not based in reality.

Help the client **sustain discharge**. Keep directing the client back to where they were discharging and remind them that discharge is the healing of the hurt.

The **counselor's role** is to fight alongside the client against the distress. Counselors can't do the clients' work for them but also cannot leave them alone to struggle against the distress.

It generally works best if a **client can come to a session** having thought about what they want to work on and how to make the session

go well. They can attempt to openly share thoughts and feelings, try the counselor's suggestions, work for connection with the counselor, and avoid inhibiting discharge. An approach that is often useful is to **decide** on a course of action, **act**, and then **discharge**, in that order.

The **counselor comes to the session** with the intention of showing approval, delight, respect, confidence, high expectations, commitment, and caring; and has thought about the client and possible contradictions to the client's distress. The counselor needs to set aside anything that would interfere with effective counseling, keeps their attention on the client, and listens to and counsels the client as explained above. The counselor is necessarily only partially re-emerged from distress, is intelligent but only partially informed, and is likely still influenced by distress patterns. The client needs to remember this reality and not have unrealistic expectations of the counselor.

QUOTE: "NINETY PERCENT OF GOOD COUNSELING IS SIMPLY PAYING ATTENTION TO THE CLIENT." Harvey Jackins, *Present Time* No. 15, page 38

Discussion

For your meetings during this lesson, please have your session first, and notice the role of the counselor and client. You could try out the suggestions in the reading material. After the sessions you can then discuss how sessions worked and what it brought up for you as a client. Again, if you have any questions about the ideas and suggestions in the reading material and presentation, make sure that you write them down for later discussion in your class with your online teacher.

Session

Your sessions should now be an hour for each client (this will not be repeated in later lessons). You should have told your life story several

times and found that some incidents had more emotional charge to them than others. You, the client, can select one of these incidents and talk about it in more detail with the intention of looking for and going after the places where discharge occurs. The counselor can also suggest to the client that they might want to look at this incident or event again (it is always the client's choice.) Try using some of the suggestions in the readings and the presentation, (eg contradictions, an attitude of approval and relaxed high expectations, directing the client back to where they were discharging, etc.)

Feedback

After your session(s) write down what you noticed about what you did as counselor that assisted your client to feel safe, keep sharing, and discharge. You could also write down what you noticed your counselor did to promote these when you were client.

Write down any questions or concerns you have about your role as counselor and client or of some of the suggestions and concepts in this class to communicate to your online teacher when you get into your teacher led online class.

Lesson 5: Fundamental Counseling Skills

Summary

This lesson is devoted to a number of simple techniques that you will find useful as a counselor. We will also discuss in more detail how to structure the session from the client's point of view.

Prerequisites and Preparation

Before proceeding with this lesson remind yourself of the importance of listening well to your client. Listening is the basic contradiction in a session (can you imagine what your life would be like now if you had someone listen well to you as a young one?). Listening well will also enable you to notice where the client struggles and what might enable them to see the difference between their distress and who they really are. Seeing this is what brings discharge. Choosing other techniques will rely on this basic skill of listening.

Before meeting with your partner for your sessions, read the articles for Lesson 5.

Readings

Primary Articles

["Spectrum of techniques"](#) by Harvey Jackins, The Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual pp. 15-22.

["What to do in a session"](#) by Harvey Jackins

Secondary Articles

- [Cleaning Up Some Concepts](#) by Harvey Jackins, Present Time, No. 63, p. 33
- The Longer View, pp. 45-48
- ["It's all my fault"](#) by Harvey Jackins, Present Time, No. 55, p. 19

Presentation

It is customary to begin each session with an expression of “**news and goods,**” during which the client states a recent pleasant memory to pull attention to what’s good in the present. News and goods remind us that any upsets from earlier in our day are not happening now and that any resulting negative feelings are not about this new situation.

The counselor can help the client notice the counselor's presence and attention, and discharge embarrassment or other feelings that make it difficult to fully use the counselor's attention.

The counselor always needs to keep in mind that the client is inherently a person of great intelligence, value, decisiveness, and power, as well as needing assistance to emerge from distress. The counselor should also notice and remember where this particular client is capable, treasurable, and already functioning, or close to functioning, elegantly and well. The counselor should keep in mind that everyone has **always done their best** at every moment of the past. Shame, blame, criticism, and punishment have never made sense, arise from distress, and create additional distress recordings. They do not assist people to behave more cooperatively or humanly.

The counselor can invite the client to show what they are struggling with. The counselor can ask **questions** and offer phrases that contradict the client's distress and guide the client toward discharge.

“Balance of attention”—If too much of the client's attention is on the distress, the client will have difficulty discharging. There are many ways to achieve a “balance” of attention, and most of these involve the counselor directing the client's attention away from the distress and toward reality. If the client is discharging, it follows that they already have a good balance of attention and the counselor can encourage them to stay with whatever thought or action is bringing discharge.

The **“Spectrum of Techniques”** is a framework that requires progressively more of the client's attention (See *Fundamentals of Co-Counseling Manual*, pages 15-22). This “spectrum” assists students in moving to a lighter technique if they become bogged down in distress and are not discharging.

If and when you feel inadequate as a counselor remind yourself that caring and listening, paying attention, and sometimes actively contradicting the client's distress, is much of what is needed for a successful session.

(The following paragraph refers to when we get back into physical contact with each other.)

Aware physical contact (such as thoughtful and aware hand- holding and hugging) can contradict common distresses of feeling uncared about and alone. None of us got enough aware and safe physical touching while growing up, and many, many people have experienced physical and sexual abuse. Cultures vary in what is considered acceptable physical contact, especially between men and women. Try **holding hands** during sessions. Hugging can be part of greeting and saying good-bye to one another. You and your client can choose to do this when you feel safe enough to have physical contact. The counselor can offer to hold hands, sit close, put an arm around the client, and so on, but it is **always the client's choice**. Over time, as safety increases, you can encourage each other to discharge about physical touching, so that counselors can thoughtfully use aware physical contact to increase safety and **contradict distress**.

It is useful at the end of a session to get the client's attention out. Asking what are you looking forward to or paying attention to their environment (what do you notice is purple in this room?) are two examples of this. You are free to come up with others.

QUOTE: EVERY SINGLE HUMAN BEING, AT EVERY MOMENT OF THE PAST, IF THE ENTIRE SITUATION IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, HAS ALWAYS DONE THE VERY BEST THAT HE OR SHE COULD DO, AND SO DESERVES NEITHER BLAME NOR REPROACH FROM ANYONE, INCLUDING SELF. THIS, IN PARTICULAR, IS TRUE OF YOU. Harvey Jackins, Scroll

Discussion

For your meetings during this lesson, please have your session first, and try out the suggestions in the reading material. After the sessions, or after trying out each technique, you can then discuss how it worked and what it brought up for you as a client. Again, if you have any questions

about the techniques, make sure that you write them down and send them to the on-line teacher.

Session

In your sessions, please try out the following techniques:

- News and goods (remembering pleasant things) (2 minutes at start of session)
(PS: You should use this technique in every session you have from now on, as it is a good reminder that life is indeed good)
- Remembering little upsets (2-5 minutes at start of session)
(PS: It is also good to do this in every session you have from now on, as it frees up your attention for the remainder of the session.)
- Moving quickly to different kinds of memories
- Rapid review or scanning
- Repeating a phrase (if it seems to have emotional content)
- Attention out
(PS: You should also do this in every session you have from now on.)

Feedback

Think about or take notes on how things went when you tried out each of the techniques of this lesson. If you have any questions about these techniques, write them down and discuss with your teacher led class.