

HUMAN INTELLIGENCE, EMOTIONAL HEALING, AND BEGINNING HOLISTIC CO-COUNSELING

Adapted from Amara Karuna's Manual for Holistic Peer Counseling, used with permission.

This is a summary of the basic ideas from Re-evaluation Counseling, (RC). RC is based on observation of what really works in practice, not on theories of what ought to work.

It evolved from the experiences of thousands of people. It is a grassroots, people's movement, aimed at teaching lay people how to be effective in helping themselves and others with emotional issues, and in regaining our innate goodness and intelligence.

You can use the ideas presented here on different levels- use it occasionally just to blow off steam in stressful times, or as a deep long-term therapy, systematically changing yourself for the better, and removing the blocks that keep you from realizing your dreams.

Take what you want of these ideas, just the ones that make sense for you, and leave the rest. You are encouraged to think for yourself about everything in these handouts and classes.

BASIC THEORY OF HUMAN NATURE

What are human beings really like?

Underneath all the programs, conditioning, expectations and hurts that we get, what is our true basic nature? Think about: What would you be like if you were really free to be your true self?

What are young children like before they are socialized?

In Holistic Co-Counseling we choose to believe:

- Human beings are inherently intelligent, zestful, loving, communicative and cooperative.
- Every person is whole and complete, unique, and with limitless potential.
- Nothing can permanently damage our inherent nature, but many things can cover it up.

NORMAL THINKING PROCESS

Intelligence can be defined as the ability to respond to new situations in a fresh, appropriate way. When

thinking well, we look at a present situation, and our minds compare it to many past experiences, and then create a new, precisely tailored, successful response. We are naturally vastly intelligent. Animals with less capacity for intelligence rely on instinct, which gives them general responses for situations that happen frequently, such as what to do when an enemy is nearby. But these instinctual responses are not flexible, and so don't always work well in every situation. Example: an opossum on the road will freeze when startled, which may or may not be the right (survival oriented) thing to do at that moment!

When our thinking process is working well, when we are relaxed and feeling normal, information from our environment (sounds sights, smells) comes in, (as it always does) mostly on subconscious level. It gets evaluated, processed and sorted, and then filed in our memory in separate isolated bits, which can be recalled at will later.

HURTS

Why don't people always act according to our true Inner nature?

We get hurt. Physically, mentally and emotionally, on all levels, and frequently. When we are being hurt, our thinking process shuts down, or seems to work very differently. People do not usually think well while hurting. Ever try to think with a headache or while very upset? The input of information from the environment is still pouring in, but it's not getting processed or evaluated as usual, and a kind of mis-storage occurs. All the sights, sounds, smells, etc., emotions, as well as the experience of being unable to think clearly get stuck together in one big recording/memory. This recording is like a videotape of the incident, which is stored for later processing, perhaps at a safer time.

In an ideal situation, as soon as the hurtful event is over, the person would be able to release the hurt and heal. Hurts always naturally seek release. However the safe space, time, and attention from a caring person which encourage the healing is not usually available to

most of us, so the emotions and information tends to stay stuck. They can stay stuck an entire lifetime unless they are processed. Example: People afraid of dogs because once they were bitten.

Negative effects of STORED HURTS

A stored hurt creates a rigid, inflexible spot in our mind, a recording of the whole event. The recording seems to take up space, to use up some of our capacity for intelligence. All the information seems to be stored in one big lump- separate bits can't be remembered separately as they can when it is stored normally. It becomes a place where we can't think well, that when alone we avoid remembering.

Why? What happens right now when you think about something that was really a hurtful event? You re-experience the hurt. It's all still right there, and so we try to avoid remembering it.- But it's also booby-trapped: a later event which is similar enough to the first recorded hurtful event will "set off" a re-playing of the old recording. The new situation may not even be a hurtful event- it can just be similar in any way. We call this being "Re-stimulated" or "Triggered." (it's commonly called getting buttons pushed, or overreacting.) When the old recording starts to play, it feels like a replaying of the old incident- you feel the same feelings, sometimes find yourself saying the same words.

A person in the grip of an old distress recording will: Say things that are not pertinent; do things that don't work; fail to cope effectively and gracefully with the present situation; and endure terrible feelings which may have nothing to do with the present situation. You can tell you've come across residue in someone: they're acting frozen, nonsensical, rigid. They become irrational and "not themselves". They may get memory flashes of the old situation. Can you think of times when you have acted like that? Snowballing of distress-Because the person has failed to cope effectively with the new situation, it also becomes a hurt experience, and gets recorded with all its new feelings, sensations and thoughts. Thus new situations are added on top of the old ones- and the distress recording gets bigger, adding more layers:

This means: The booby trap has more triggers. It takes up more of our free thinking space, and there are less areas available which are not upsetting to us. The person becomes more disposed

to be upset by more situations, and more deeply upset, and for longer times. It has been estimated that a very successful adult in our culture is probably using only approximately 10% of the original capacity of the flexible mind we were born with.

We get hurt early and often- By accident, when we are babies: we get bumps, or get cold, hungry, frustrated or scared. This is a normal part of life, and could get taken care of by our inherent healing process, if it were allowed to happen. But by far, the greatest cause of our hurts are from contagion from distressed adults. When the adults around us get re-stimulated and act irrational, this is a very distressing experience for a young person. For example, a child runs outside naked, and the parent (having been punished by their own parents for exactly the same thing) gets upset and yells at the child, telling them how bad and embarrassing they have been acting. Then the child carries guilt, shame and fear about their body as a recorded distress. Other Examples?

PATTERNS

When there has been enough re-stimulation, and when the same hurts happen over and over, they form patterns which become incorporated into our personalities and even reflected in our body structure.-Most patterns are latent, when you do not feel the distress all the time, but it lies inside waiting to be pulled out by a similar event. We see these as our "problems"- like "Oh, I always get mad when someone is late for anything."

Chronic patterns: happen when we are hurt so frequently over a long time, that un-released emotional energy from past feelings becomes pervasive, and we think "that's just the way I am". These are seen as idiosyncrasies of personality, or as your viewpoint on reality. Chronic patterns are constantly re-stimulated; they play all the time. They are like colored glasses through which we see the world. They can be identified in a person's posture, speech, emotional attitudes (like pessimism), and ritual rigid behaviors (addictions). Q- What kinds of patterns have you seen in yourself and others?

THE INHERENT HEALING PROCESS

The process of storing hurts can be reversed. Our abilities to think clearly can be recovered and repaired.

A natural healing process is built in, we are all born with it. If it could operate, it would allow stored distress to be removed immediately. This emotional release process can be called "discharge" in the sense of discharging or draining a battery. It can also be referred to as catharsis.

Emotional release is a natural, inherent process- every child does it spontaneously.

Emotional energy becomes integrated and is healed in the following ways:

- **GRIEF:** The experience of grief is resolved through tears and sobbing, crying and releasing lymph
- **FEAR:** The experience of fear is resolved through cold sweat, trembling and shaking
- **ANGER:** The experience of anger is released through loud sounds and large physical movements, hot sweat
- **PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT:** The experience of physical discomfort is released through yawning and stretching
- **SHAME:** The experience of shame and embarrassment is released through laughter
- Light release of all these feeling states can be achieved through animated, non-repetitive talking.

If the natural healing process is allowed to complete itself in the presence of a neutral witness, the stuck information is released, evaluated and stored correctly. The area of our thinking is restored to flexible awareness. This is called "Re-evaluation," and is an automatic response after emotion has been discharged. It is the "Aha" feeling of resolution (understanding). The purpose of counseling is to encourage the discharge process so that we can reclaim all the areas of our flexible thinking that have been blocked.

BLOCKS TO THE HEALING PROCESS

What keeps the natural healing process from happening? Mainly the lack of an attentive, loving person to give us neutral witnessing attention. There

is a vast shortage of people who know how to truly pay attention to someone else. We grow up with a chronic feeling of never having enough personal attention. This is due to similar hurts instilled in the adults we depended on, and also to the isolating structure of our society, which makes it very hard for parents to get the help they need.

Do you feel like you got enough attention while growing up?

Our culture also confuses the healing process with the hurt. We think, if someone is crying, that if we can get the person to stop crying, then they will be all better. We do not realize that the crying itself was what would make the hurt dissolve. Inhibiting mechanisms are learned early in our development. We are told "don't cry", and get lots of patting, rocking, threats, or humiliation: "Big boys don't cry". Soon the inhibitions become internalized, and we stop ourselves without having to be told.

No form of emotional release is more important than the others. If they are encouraged and persisted with, the stuck hurt will be released in just the right way for the client. Often you will have many different feelings about one hurtful event.

Everyone keeps trying to get attention, although unawarely. We talk out our problems, or cry on a shoulder with friends. But it is hard to be thorough and deep with this unaware "clienting," because our conditioning not to have feelings takes over whenever the discharge gets deep. Friends are often unskilled at listening and will often offer advice, give criticism, or just take the attention back to themselves by interrupting and talking about their own feelings. If you listen, much of everyday conversation is people trying to client about their problems. In co-counseling we structure our time together so that we create a safe time for us each to have a turn being listened to, when the listener has been trained to listen well. In this way deep and true healing can take place.

If the discharge process is allowed to operate, people can return to natural state of freedom and zestful living. Each gain in recovering our capacity for intelligence is worthwhile, however small. Total re-evaluation is called "re-emergence."