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Introduction: The Incidence and Impact of Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse, the act of a significantly older person forcing or coercing a child to engage in sexual behaviour, is more publically recognized than ever before. Evidence of the effects of sexual abuse on children is mounting (Browne and Finkelhor, 1986; Fischer, 1983) and, as a result, sexual abuse counselling is an emerging specialty.

Clinical observations and empirical research (Courtois, 1979; Gil, 1988; Sgroi, 1982) indicate that the lasting effects of sexual abuse can result in (1) negative emotional effects (Anderson, Back and Griffith, 1981; DeFrancis, 1969; Friedrich, Urquiza, and Beilke, 1986; Tufts, 1984), (2) physical consequences and somatic complaints (DeFrancis, 1969; Meiselman, 1978), (3) sexual problems (Tufts, 1984), (4) negative self perceptions (Bagley and Ramsay, 1985; Briere, 1984; Harrison, Lumry, and Claypatch, 1984; Fischer, 1983; Herman, 1981; Sedney and Brooks, 1984), and (5) difficulties in relating interpersonally later in life (DeYoung, 1982; Fromouth, 1983; Goodwin, McCarthy and Divasto, 1981; Meiselman, 1978).

While research on the effects of sexual abuse in native communities is sparse, the community pain and trauma attributed to the effects of child sexual abuse are increasingly apparent to community members and professionals who work in native communities. A survey of a native population demonstrates that the sexual abuse effects are similar to non-native populations: difficulty in developing trusting relationships with peers and adults, inability to express anger effectively, and stress related to withholding feelings generated by victimisation (Ashby, Gilchrist, and Miramontez, 1987). These authors stress that these issues are compounded by being native in a non-native world. With regards to being native in a non-native world, Jilik (1982) and Johnson (1988) have pointed out that natives experience cultural confusion and relative deprivation which results in existential frustration, discouragement, defeat, lowered self-esteem and sometimes moral disorientation.

Few trained native counsellors exist and non-native counsellors are often reluctant to jump into the fray to do what they can in native communities. As noted by Van Dyke (1984), small communities differ from urban centres in critical ways; many programs (including sexual abuse programs) have been shaped by needs of larger and urban communities, and having been trained in urban centre universities counsellors are ill equipped to function in small native communities. This leaves northern native communities with a major manpower shortage: a shortage of adequately trained native counsellors, and in particular, counsellors who can deal with sexual abuse.

There are two critical concerns which challenge and make the immediate provision of trained native counsellors difficult. The first is that many natives who seek counsellor training programs require training *and* healing. Many natives who are attracted to social services, or who are viewed by local communities as natural helpers, have been victims and require healing (Ashby, Gilchrist, and Miramontez, 1987).

Table 1. Survey of Social Work Students at Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (N = 23, representing 12 bands in British Columbia)

	Yes	No	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>No Response</i>
Have you been sexually abused?	23	3	—	—
Has anyone in your family been sexually abused?	19	2	2	—
Do you know anyone in your community who has been sexually abused?	22	—	—	1

While the incidence of sexual abuse varies depending on the sample and definition of sexual abuse, identified groups of victims as opposed to general survey victims have usually been younger, experienced more serious forms of abuse, and are abused more often by family members (Haugaard and Repucci, 1988). This conclusion has been substantiated by native social workers in training at Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in British Columbia. Twenty of the 23 trainees reported being sexually abused as children (see Table 1).

When the group responded to whether they thought many, some, or few, people had been sexually abused as children in their native communities, 20 said many and 3 said some. In response to the same question regarding non-native communities 18 said many and 5 said some. While the data does not necessarily confirm the actual incidence of sexual abuse in the general native population, it does provide evidence that child sexual abuse is an issue for many natives who are attracted to social services, and certainly they view sexual abuse as an issue in both native and non-native communities.

This need for training *and* healing requires a different perspective on counsellor training than that held by the non-native community. The non-native perspectives on counsellor training is that first one must deal with healing issues, *then* be trained to be a counsellor. While it can be argued that both native and non-native communities cannot wait for healing followed by training, there is an immediate need for, and lack of, trained counsellors in the native communities. The need is for counsellors who can understand the cultural and personality differences inherent in particular community cultures and sexual abuse.

A second concern in training native sexual abuse counsellors is the nature of the problem itself. Child sexual abuse is conceptualized in this article as less a problem of human sexuality and more a problem of power and control (Gil, 1988; Sgori, 1982). In the non-native community there has been reluctance on the part of professionals to develop intervention skills to address power and control. As a result, counsellors have been notoriously ill equipped to deal with clients who misuse/abuse power and control. Such persons are often hostile, threatening, menacing and difficult to reposition from their aggressive position since maintaining that position has meant survival, perceived success, and achievement in overcoming others.

In the native community the power differential issue can be complicated further in that small communities (of any culture) tend to subordinate in power relationships (Van Dyke, 1984). Because many native communities are small communities, historically they have subordinated to influences coming in from the outside as is evidenced by cultural genocide e.g. loss of language, art forms, economic independence and so on. To add more fuel to this fire, many native counsellors are women, compounding the power issue yet again. While many native women may not be in subordinate positions within their own communities, and actually assert their power in governing the reserve and influencing family and community matters, there is little doubt that native women, as well as non-

native women, capitulate to outside influences in deciding what to do. Therefore, a major challenge in training native sexual abuse counsellors is one of taking the subordinate (women who are native from small communities) and empowering them to tackle power issues! No small task.

This paper argues that traditional counsellor training is inadequate for meeting the needs of native communities and that a different educational process is required in the training of native sexual abuse counsellors. The proposed Empowerment Training Model has been conceptualized from clinical and educational work in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and a successful sexual abuse training program developed by the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology in British Columbia and assumes some of the principles of empowerment articulated by Rappaport (1981). The model recognizes that because many native counsellors come with a background of subordinate power relationships, they require training which empowers them to deal with power issues in their own as well as others' lives. Such training allows for trainees to gain control over their own lives and assumes the following conditions which differentiate it from more traditional "fix it" models:

1. native counsellors in training come with unique competencies and have the capacity to develop other competencies;
2. local training programs must be designed to assist trainees in developing local solutions to local problems; and
3. different training formats must be developed to ensure local control as well as ensure programs which address the rights and needs of natives in particular.

Before presenting the model and discussing implications for training native sexual abuse counsellors when such a program is used, it must be stressed that the proposed training model is designed to ensure a different educational process which fosters self control or control over one's life. Unlike training models which emphasize knowing "certain things" or doing something a "certain way", this model encourages the development of a training program designed to address individual and cultural needs of the trainee to exercise control, specifically control of the self.

While it can be argued that any counsellor training (native or non-native with sexual abuse or other issues as the focus of counselling) may well benefit from a different educational process, native sexual abuse counsellor training demands it for the following reasons:

1. child sexual abuse is a condition of not having and/or not being able to exercise control;
2. the fears of the abused are terrifying and result in forgetting what happened or remembering with acute emotional pain reminiscent of the abuse experience; and
3. child sexual abuse victims are not differentiated (unclear about who they are) which contributes to their being unsure about who is responsible for what happened and the effects of what happened.

Counselling the sexually abused requires understanding that victims are not just working on one aspect of their lives, or one area which needs work, but rather are working on a pervasive condition of not being in control of the self and lack of an understanding of the self that goes with being in control. To belabour the point as to the nature of self and what is required, consider the following questions:

1. If you were victimized by a parent, friend, or relative, whom would you tell?
2. If your child informed you of sexual activity between him/herself and your spouse, what would you do?
3. If you found yourself sexually involved with your children or their playmates, whom would you tell and where would you go for help?
4. If you were a professional and were informed by an entire family of their conspiracy in incest, would you report it to the authorities or work with them in therapy as they requested?

To answer these questions clearly, without hedging and with comfort, one must be pretty clear about who one is and be able to articulate what is personally true and important. In other words, one has the capability to define the self, one's position, or one's point of view on these issues. Whether you addressed the questions or not, the exercise gives you some idea of what is missing in abused children and adult survivors. They did not and are not able to address such issues with clarity about themselves.

In order to address aspects of self as a counsellor (for oneself and for others), counsellor training, and the counselling required within training, requires a special kind of learning and therefore a special kind of training. This training model is based on the premise that trainers need to ensure more than the learning of knowledge and the development of certain counselling skills. Trainers need to integrate four learning principles which provide a different educational process and create a different learning context.

Learning Principles

The four learning principles include: (1) experiential learning, (2) integrative learning, (3) personalised learning, and (4) transformational learning. While these learning principles are not original they contribute uniquely to the problem of counsellor training in native communities. The integration of the four learning principles operates in such a way as to allow more effective learning. It operates as follows: more effective learning comes out of one's experience, is integrated with what is already known, filters through who the person is, and transforms the person. This kind of holistic learning is empowering in that it influences thoughts *and* behaviours, and the learning empowers the learner to think *and* act in a new way. Following is a discussion on the nature of and the implementation of these principles when training native sexual abuse counsellors.

Experiential learning allows the learner to extrapolate or to draw conclusions from their own experience as opposed to traditional learning which typically occurs from listening and reading. Experiential learning lends itself to inexperienced or low classroom performers in the traditional sense. Such learners are intelligent and have the capability to glean principles, conclusions, and tenets from the structured learning situation or assignment. For example, when teaching how to problem solve, small groups would first be given a problem to solve (car tire blow out, burned dinner, lost child, etc.). They would then be asked to solve the problem. Finally, they would be instructed to identify the steps they went through to solve the problem. In this example of experiential learning, the third step provides the opportunity for the learner to evaluate what is to be known by engaging in a process of inquiry and discovery out of the structured learning experience.

Integrative learning occurs when the learner puts together information to allow broader understanding of the phenomenon. For example, learning case management and how to plan change would be integrated with the previous learning of problem solving. Case management would then be linked to change theory or behaviour change theory allowing for more complete assessments or more complete planning and problem solving. Another example, would be teaching about child sexual abuse (symptoms, predispositions, family dynamics, treatment objectives, treatment strategies, etc.) by linking sexual abuse to other forms of abuse (wife battering, physical abuse, neglect, sexual harassment, discrimination, etc.) and how all abuse relates to power, power theory, and misuse of power. The two

major aspects of integrative learning are (1) knowing what you need to know and (2) combining that with other information in order to create a more complete understanding of what needs to be known.

Personalised learning comes out of knowing the self and understanding that everything learned filters through who you are. In personalised learning there is recognition that what is known, what is developed, what is used/not used or what is learned, is inextricably tied to who you are and knowing who you are. This is a demanding experience in that it requires the learner to pay attention to the information or the acquisition of information in terms of the self; it involves a deliberate choosing of what to take in, an integration of what is taken in with other information, and a personalising of it in terms of who one is.

From a classroom or therapy perspective, personalised learning clearly underscores that while information is absolute, the understanding of that information is relative. Personalised learning is very empowering because it recognizes idiosyncratic differences throughout the process and outcome of learning. For the teacher each person represents the classroom and each project is successful when the person has understood and can articulate a personal perspective on what has been learned.

This kind of teaching can be therapeutic in that it is likely that the learner will change. For example, when teaching sexual abuse the learner could be asked to define sexual abuse and give examples from their own lives. Once the learner has defined sexual abuse, the learner is pressed to wrestle with questions of whether sexual abuse is about human sexuality or about power, or both? Once the student is clear about their current thinking, some instruction, some demonstration, and examples of power can be given. Structured experiences of power differential in the classroom follow, allowing students to experience the effects of power abuse in the moment. Following the instruction and experiences of power differential, students would be asked once again to define and describe sexual abuse and to notice any changes in their thinking about sexual abuse. Asking how this difference in thinking is apt to affect their practice or working with sexual abuse victims takes the learning even further.

Transformational learning intentionally creates a shift in the learner; it affects thinking, feeling and doing, or transforms the learner to be different. It actually changes how the learner operates in the community. While personalised learning *may be* therapeutic, transformational learning is definitely therapeutic. Change will occur and it will be for the better.

Generally speaking, change is needed for any problem that gets in the way of counsellor trainees being appropriately dependent, independent, and interdependent without being co-dependent or victims/bullies themselves. Typical problems in a classroom of counsellor trainees might include: victim stances, manipulative behaviour such as whining, late assignments, or coming late, not knowing how to genuinely care for others and their issues, fostering dependence rather than independence, making others wrong, and so on. In order to change, trainees must be able to recognise victim/bully behaviour, understand how victim/bully behaviours serve a purpose, notice how they may have positioned themselves to maintain the victim/bully positions, and that the self image they have created is one that warrants victimisation. Ultimately trainees must recognise that victimisation and intimidation are counter therapeutic; that one untransformed victim in the room, the client, will be enough!

To address this kind of issue in the classroom requires the instructor to allow the whole person to relate in class, not just the academic person. Genuine caring for the trainees and their change demands the instructor create an educational/therapeutic relationship with the learners. Special exercises which demonstrate bully behaviour are useful in assisting the trainees to understand their emotional reaction to the situation as well as the part they play in the victim circumstance. Other exercises can be used for trainees to practice new ways of being in situations which typically resulted in their victimisation. These kinds of exercises can precipitate extreme emotions in the learner and the instructor must be able to provide a safe environment for this kind of personal learning.

The integration of these four principles provides an educational process which creates a unique learning context which empowers the trainee to focus on learning about self, developing life skills, and understanding information needed to work with sexual abuse victims. The integration of these four principles demands that the trainer understand and take into account the needs of the student and prepares the student for the employment situation that the person will be in after training. The actual content of the training sessions must be developed in consideration of the needs of the learner group.

Empowerment Training Model

Figure 1 represents three components of empowerment training: aspects of self, life skills, and understanding. The key to understanding the program model is realising that it defines components of

training rather than prescribes exact content that must be learned. Further, the model requires the trainer to take into account the needs of the learner and the potential employer. This allows for particular program development which builds on what is already known by the group and allows for emphasizing those components that require attention to attend to local needs. Describing and defining these components highlights their relative importance.

Aspects of Self

Counselling occurs out of an interaction between the counsellor and client. What the counsellor does, thinks, and feels, comes out of who the counsellor is at any point in time. What the client does, how the client feels, and what the client thinks is related to the counsellor's perception of the client at that point in time, even when the counsellor's perception is inaccurate. Knowing about aspects of self is important because what is true for the counsellor *and* for the client is filtered through the counsellor's experiences (Skylare and Cunningham, 1983).

In sexual abuse counselling, counsellors must assist others with complicated power issues, and must, therefore, be aware of their own power issues. To have this awareness increases the counsellor's understanding of the issues, mitigates against the counsellor projecting their unresolved power and control issues onto the client, and provides counsellors with assurance that such issues can be resolved. Therefore, counsellors in training must first resolve their own issues of power and grieve the loss of what they missed while overpowered. Only then can they begin to engage in a healing process.

Engaging in a healing process is beneficial for a number of reasons:

1. One must be healed enough to be available to others.
2. One can learn about the process of healing by experiencing the healing process.
3. One can be empowered by the healing process; it sanctions healing.

Because sexual abuse victims often take responsibility for what happened and turn that onto themselves, they often consider themselves bad, not good enough, sluts, and in the extreme, evil. Victims are usually unaware of positive aspects of self. As a result they define themselves negatively; they require the opportunity and support to look inward to discover qualities and interests in order to change their definition of self and subsequently change their self-image.

Further, because they have been abused in primary relationships, subsequent relationships or affiliations with others are untrustworthy. Sometimes, when the relationship is trustworthy it is because victims have distorted what is trustworthy. For example, a woman sexually abused as a child, marries a man who is not abusive. Any sexual advance on his part is perceived as rape and abuse which is basically a function of her not knowing what is normal and what to trust versus what not to trust. Such a lack of trust, or distortion of what is trustworthy, must be resolved. Counselling requires a trusting therapeutic relationship in order to develop clarity about what is really happening in this and other relationships.

The sexual abuse counsellor requires a sense of empowerment. This empowerment must be sanctioned by the self or integrated by the self. Therefore understanding the aspects of self component of the model is integral for teaching self empowerment. It is imperative that native counsellors engage in a healing process of power and control issues in order to have and maintain a positive sense of self and to be empowered in their affiliations and relationships with others. Topics relevant in this component might include: trauma resolution, grieving, self-awareness, affiliation/relationships with others and so on.

Life Skills

A second component of the model is life skills. Life skills are communication and interpersonal skills that allow a person to function effectively and appropriately. In some native communities the social isolation, abuse, neglect, poverty, lack of or substandard education, traditional non-native values (not to be confused with native cultural and spiritual values), homogenous lifestyle, slow pace and so on, creates a reality which requires different and less verbal communication and interpersonal technology. Subsequently, trainees who come out of such communities are often aware that their communication and interpersonal skills are deficit or lacking. The life skill component is intentionally not labelled "counselling skills" because in many instances basic life skills are missing or deficit in the native counsellor trainees. Relatively speaking, trainees often consider counselling skills to be advanced and outside of their capabilities.

Native counsellors coming from these communities into training programs find that they are expected to speak with awareness, to relate interpersonally, and to be reflective and discerning in judgement beyond their capabilities. Basic skills such as value clarification,

divergent thinking, summarising, and listening, can be missing. Because all of these skills are essential for counselling, it would be empowering for native counsellors to be able to use these skills with competency *before* moving to more advanced skills.

This model proposes that training for sexual abuse counselling in native communities begins by appreciating native trainee differences; they come with different skills and skill level. Therefore, training programs must also take into account that counsellors come with and need different skill levels; native counsellor trainees must first be trained to a level of being effective communicators, capable of self-awareness, interpersonally competent, and discerning in judgement. The premise is that counsellor trainees must establish basic skills before attempting more advanced counselling skills and that basic skills have been known to be adequate for counselling (Car-khuff, 1969).

Understanding

The third component of the model is understanding. This refers to what sexual abuse counsellors need to know and understand *theoretically* about power, abuse, self-awareness and skills. To work with sexual abuse clients requires a way of thinking about issues, a way of conceptualising the issues, and a way or ways of resolving these issues. Without a framework and model for thinking and doing, there is a risk of counsellors relying on "tricks" they know rather than knowing why, when or where to employ certain methods or strategies. Again, basic information rather than sophisticated information is needed.

Understanding is about having knowledge and the ability to apply judgement in using that knowledge. Understanding is empowering because it allows counsellors to know and to apply what they know through judgement. In the area of sexual abuse counselling it is imperative that native counsellors know models, frameworks, and existing research on power (control), abuse, self-awareness, life skills, normal development and planned change. Having this knowledge permits ways of thinking about abuse, what it is, how to avoid it, and to how to resolve past abuse; ways of thinking about relationships, how they work, and how to recreate relationships; ways of thinking about life skills, how to develop them, how to teach them, how to use them; ways to think about judgements and decision making, how to generate more alternatives when making decisions, and how to select the best alternative; ways to think about change,

what fosters change, and so on. Understanding provides direction to action; without understanding there can be no informed action.

Educational Process

There are three program objectives for the Empowerment Training Model for native Counsellors:

1. Counsellor trainees will redress their own power and control issues.
2. Counsellor trainees will learn to develop therapeutic relationships with clients who have power and control issues.
3. Counsellor trainees will be able to assist others in a therapeutic relationship with their power and control issues.

Uniquely connected to these objectives is the assumption that basic skill level rather than advanced skill level be taught/learned. Even though it is known that native counsellors will encounter complex counselling situations involving sexual abuse, this model posits that if native sexual abuse counsellors are trained to function at a basic skill level they will be more solidly empowered to assist individuals and communities with power abuse issues.

Another unique aspect of the model is the explicit permission and expectation that counsellor trainees engage in a healing process of their own power and control issues, and that this healing process be viewed as education, not therapy. In non native programs, when trainees have unresolved personal issues they are encouraged to go away and return when they have resolved them. Then training can occur. The belief is that the students cannot learn at an optimal level if they are closed down, in crisis, or dysfunctional.

This model reminds us of what Carl Rogers (1951, 1961, 1969) posited, which is that therapy is educational, that therapy is unlearning and relearning, and that therapy is about understanding. Further, by providing training which allows therapeutic resolution of issues, skill development, and understanding, the model is accountable to the realities of native communities. Even though many natives have been sexually abused, or at the very least, in some other subordinate power position, and even though sexual abuse training takes time, native communities can get on with counsellor training and benefit by having their own counsellors sooner rather than later.

How the model works when applied is clearer by example.

George is a 26 year old native trainee. He has been sexually abused as a child by foster parents who repeatedly abused his twin sister. He has

survivor's guilt for having overcome his own alcoholism and suicidal thoughts, and for being responsible by upgrading his education and being employed. He now enjoys a marriage and family situation and is committed to resolving issues and providing a healthy family environment for his three children.

When George was attending class, George's twin sister called him. She was drunk, upset, and unavailable. In class George was preoccupied with this immediate problem in his life which reminded him of his own history and past issues.

It was possible to use this situation as a teaching moment. Since the class was working on assessments, George was encouraged to use the assessment framework being taught to think through the issues for his sister and for himself. George had no difficulty gathering information, and was able to provide a good deal of the information himself. He sifted and sorted the assessment information, and formulated the problem as: he and his sister needed to (1) acknowledge their past history and accept that there was nothing they could do at the time, (2) express their sadness, disappointment, and anger at their lost opportunity for being children together, (3) define the kind of relationship they want to have as adults, and (4) negotiate their new relationship with their respective partners and include the partners in therapy.

The implementation of the assessment in class, and through other class assignments, brought up emotions that George had put aside and decided not to use for 11 years. He cried for the first time in 11 years and allowed others in class to know how he felt. This was difficult for George and provided a teaching opportunity for him and others.

In class George was working on an aspect of *Understanding*, e.g. assessments and how to conduct them. *Aspects of Self* surfaced, e.g. grieving (lost child), self image (men don't cry), and relationships (being a real twin, one you can count on). This required developing *Life Skills* which he needed in order to (a) understand what he felt, (b) express how he felt, (c) decide what was going on, and (d) decide what to do (see Figure 1). By example the instructor demonstrated how to handle and be with clients while conducting assessments and negotiating goals with clients.

All aspects of the model can be and were addressed in class with George. There was a combination of using the assessment framework, teaching the skills in order to use the assessment framework, and teaching the skills needed in order to understand and respond to aspects of self. This example captures the kind of situation that constantly reoccurs in native sexual abuse counsellor training. It is simply not possible to teach sexual abuse counsellor training in native communities and not have these issues surface. The model allows that this teaching situation offers a rich opportunity for training *and* for healing.

EMPOWERMENT TRAINING

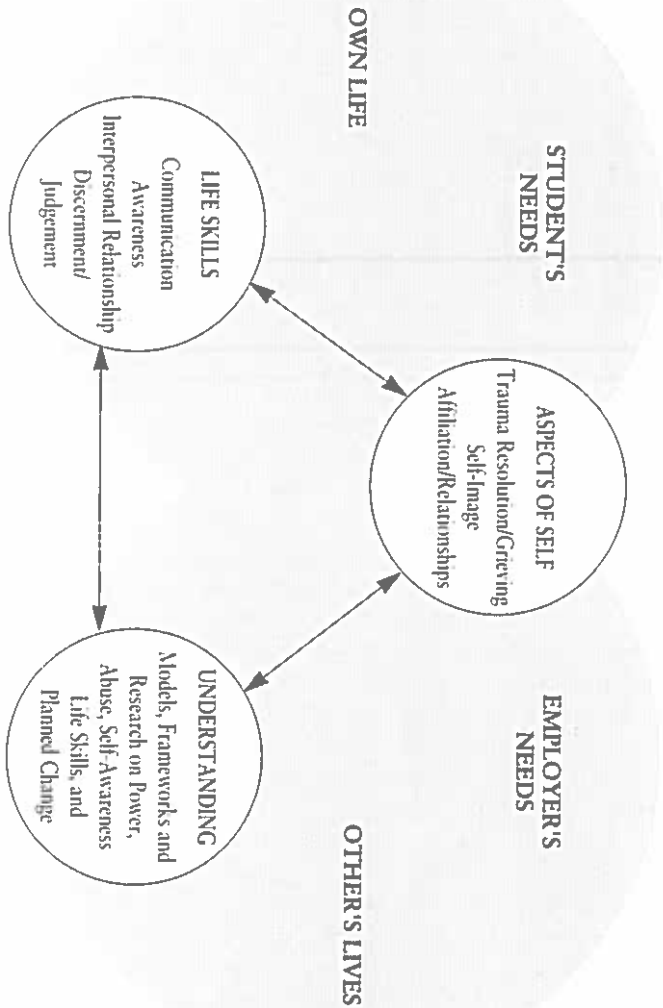


Fig. 1: Model for Empowerment Training

Structure

It is recommended when implementing this model that there be distinct settings, or structure, for different aspects of the program. Different settings clearly lend themselves to more effective implementation of learning strategies which represent the learning principles. For example, the standard classroom setting can be used for the understanding of models, frameworks, research and other didactic material. Structured learning experiences or experiential exercises can be used in the classroom to demonstrate the concepts, ideas or skills and allow for experimentation and limited application of skills. The classroom is the optimal setting for experiential learning, integrative learning and some personalised learning.

An on-going therapy group and/or individual therapy, concurrent with the classroom experience, can be used for the resolution of personal issues. It also becomes a laboratory setting which demonstrates what is taught in the classroom e.g. how to develop a therapeutic relationship, planned change, the relationship between strategies and techniques to treatment goals and so on. While therapeutic learning experiences draw on the classroom learning, the therapy group learning focuses on personalised and transformational learning. The objective is to personally change in order to be capable of effective counselling.

The third setting is a practicum setting where the student has the opportunity to experiment with the concepts learned in class, experiment with the appropriate use of self which is being realized from class, and group or individual therapy, and where the student receives direct feedback on their application of concepts, ideas and skills in real world conditions. This supervised learning clearly draws on the four principles: the learner experiences real world conditions, integrates theory with practice, learns through self, and if the experience is positive, will be transformed!

Negative practicum experiences are deadly and are known to be very disempowering. Usually these practicum settings are familiar community settings. In native communities the relationships in these settings can be familial and may require an outside supervisor to assist the learner in sorting out what is happening objectively. Such supervisors are best affiliated with the teaching centre rather than with the community centre.

While much discussion could follow on the wisdom of using the same instructors or different instructors across the three settings (there are costs and benefits to both), it seems more important to

understand that the model demands top quality instructors who are student-centred, who value personal change, and who encourage self-inquiry and discovery rather than encouraging right thinking and being right.

Summary

Native communities require native sexual abuse counsellors who understand that the prevalence of sexual abuse is an artifact of power differential/power abuse which is culturally embedded in the larger community. Counsellor trainees must learn to resolve their own sexual abuse issues as well as be able to assist others and communities with sexual abuse issues. The Empowerment Model of training suggests that by focusing on basic knowledge and understanding, emphasising the development of basic skills, and allowing trainees to realise their own power through a therapeutic learning experience, a native sexual abuse counsellor can be trained more realistically and efficiently.

The model is inherently practical; it acknowledges the basic training needs of native trainees as well as the immediacy of the need for native counsellors in native communities. The model recommends a highly interactive and personal learning experience which emphasizes four learning principles: experiential learning, integrated learning, personalised learning and transformational learning. Such learning enhances the resolution of personal issues and allows the trainee to learn how to be a capable counsellor. Furthermore, the healing of sexual abuse issues during training is viewed as educational and more efficient than the non-native model of heal first, train second.

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Commentary on CHAPTER 7

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There is great accuracy in this article's premise that the need for trained Native counsellors is immediate and often precludes Native counsellors from dealing with their own healing issues prior to counsellor training. I have seen first hand the difficulties experienced by Native counsellors who receive no self-healing and it is imperative that this is available concurrent to training to the point that counselling should not be permitted to be practised until this criterion is met.

Without concurrent healing, the additional stress of dealing with others' sexual abuse trauma and the pain it raises for the counsellor exacerbates their own unresolved emotional issues. In many instances this can and does contribute to their further low feelings of self-worth in that their ability to perform their counselling tasks is seriously impaired. Often this added stress is enough to cause cessation of employment or the necessity to resort to negative emotional supports that are counter productive to both personal and professional performance and growth.

In my opinion problems experienced by Native sexual abuse counsellors have some similarities. The difference, however, is the paucity of helping/healing resources and the necessity to "soldier on" without dealing with this serious and emotionally immobilizing issue. Further, the inability to effect any change to personal power imbalance is transmitted to the client. This contributes to the continuation of the cycle of power imbalance as clients can not be helped to look clearly and honestly at their painful issues when the counsellor's own perception is coloured solely by non-resolved negative experiences.

In this paper the issue of empowerment is accorded the prominence it deserves. An added point for Native communities and counsellors is the existing network of power relationships. Consanguineous relationships and economic dependency issues highlight the power imbalance. This can be seen in females vs. males, youths vs. elders, prominent families vs. less prominent families and the influence of the perceived strong over the weak. This point should not be underemphasized, as this writer initially was tempted to do, as the problems and difficulties of fulfilling counselling and legal mandates in the face of such power imbalances are demonstrable and real.

While directly applicable to counsellor training in Native communities the example of empowerment training is one that could be employed more often in "conventional" counsellor training. Original thinking, holistic learning that influences thoughts and behaviours, and teaching students to think and act in new ways are not always the end result of theoretical learning. To enhance the effectiveness of all people entering the human service field there needs to be greater attention to training methodology as is proposed in Dr. Ricks' article.

One final point to be made is the uniqueness of the Empowerment Training Model. It provides a basic structure that can be utilized by Native counsellors with varying skill levels. It emphasizes the understanding of the application in counselling rather than merely offering techniques that are rigidly applied. It is an application of a process that has been worked through and "felt" by Native counsellors. They have achieved success in the resolution of their own self healing, confidence in the ability to empower themselves, and recognition of their own abilities.

Based on my experience the efficacy of this type of learning method is readily apparent and measurable. Students not only tell you about their successes; it is demonstrated in both their personal and professional functioning. Counselling in the area of child sexual abuse is an emotionally draining experience that requires counsellors to deal with many feelings, issues and experiences that impact on them personally. Dealing in this area without the proper training and self-healing is destructive, unproductive and irresponsible. Thus it is exciting to contemplate the opportunity to provide Native counsellors with a training program that can provide theoretical learning, empowerment and counselling skills.