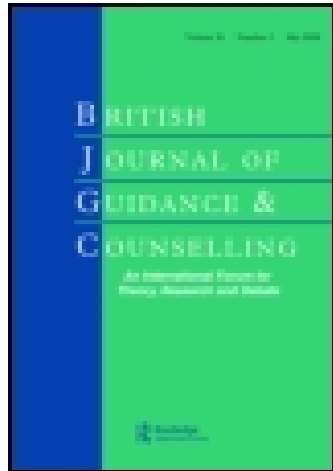


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On: 25 November 2014, At: 01:58

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



British Journal of Guidance & Counselling

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cbjg20>

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Published online: 16 Oct 2007.

To cite this article: Ian R. Owen (1991) Using the sixth sense: The place and relevance of language in counselling, *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 19:3, 307-319, DOI: [10.1080/03069889108260394](https://doi.org/10.1080/03069889108260394)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03069889108260394>

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Using the Sixth Sense: the Place and Relevance of Language in Counselling

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Counsellors' primary skills, apart from listening to clients' words, lie in responding with well-chosen words. Ideal counsellors say just the right thing, at just the right time, in just the right way. It is suggested that emphasising how words relate to cognitive, emotional and relationship events can take counselling on to new ground. In addition to felt experience being in sight, sound, feeling, smell and taste, language itself is posited as a 'sense' through which we perceive, and are joined to, our environment. From the starting point that counsellors use words to heal, attention is paid to how wrong words injure clients, how words are a major component in making relationships, and how they create and define felt experiences. 'Metaphorical schemas' are posited as bases for shaping felt experience. These schemas are a theory of subjectively felt emotion and cognitive understanding.

Words create relationships

This paper addresses the issue of language in counselling and psychotherapy. The spoken word is shown to play a major role in creating, maintaining or destroying relationships. Evidence is also given as to how words mediate reality and felt experience. Words have the power to hurt as well as to heal. Not only can an unkind look or a wounding gesture hurt a client, but a misplaced word or misplaced silence can be equally destructive. The counsellor's task is described here as being one of using words to heal and not wound. This paper attempts to help readers think about their current counselling practice in new ways. It hopes to promote readers to self-critique, new insights and new awareness of the difficulties of high-quality counselling.

The first few sections of this paper lay out the general principles on the relation of words to experience in counselling and psychotherapy. It is hypothesised that interpersonal events in therapy (how both people perceive each other's words and silences) cause intrapsychic effects for client and counsellor; or, putting it more simply, that thinking and emotional states are caused by external and internal stimuli which connect client and counsellor. Furthermore, it is hypothesised that a lesser amount of interpersonal activity creates conditions for more intrapsychic or psychodynamic effects to take place.

When a client is referred or self-refers to a counsellor, the relationship has begun. What happens when the two people meet can be well described by

knowing what each said to the other during the session. In a sense, words create relationships. To a large degree the counselling relationship is made by words, where whatever the counsellor says is given an extra emotional charge, because it always involves the intimate life of the client. The counsellor's words must be good enough to help the two people fit together. The after-effects of the session will live on for the client. The counsellor's words may help the client make sense of his or her life, decisions or experiences, in a new way. The counsellor's words define the explicit ground rules of therapy, the roles which both parties take, and the boundary conditions within which the counselling interaction occurs.

This paper is a first step in unravelling any links of cause and effect in counselling. Whatever the counsellor says has consequences for the client in his or her thoughts, emotions and relationships with others. In all jobs and vocations, there are practitioners who are good, mediocre or consistently bad. When counselling is effective for clients, they can be set free, matured or enabled to heal themselves. When counselling is ineffective, clients can be made to act as children, deluded, spied on, insulted, controlled, seduced, accused, contradicted or damaged, and have their personal development set back years. These effects can happen in any therapy or style of counselling.

Research shows that differences in individual speaking styles can affect rapport and empathy. Tannen (1987), an associate professor of linguistics, gives an explicit description of how empathy can be made or broken when two people's conversational styles are different. She describes styles of direct and indirect communication and the different ways in which people speak and expect to be heard. What can go wrong in the counselling relationship in terms of lack of empathy, warmth or congruence can be like this: 'There are uncomfortable silences. You fish for topics. You bump into each other as you both start at once and then both stop. You start to say something interesting but he cuts you off. He starts saying something and never seems to finish ... Whatever you do to make things better makes them worse' (p.3).

Counsellors need skill and sensitivity to enable clients to speak. In response to clients, counsellors need to listen and speak well. This paper points to a number of writers relevant to counsellors and psychotherapists who are faced with people in suffering and confusion.

Speaking skills are required in counselling for both parties. An example is the client who is inarticulate in being able to describe how they feel and is not used to talking about their feelings or relationships. Such a person will find counselling difficult. If all reluctant or uncertain clients can say is that they feel bad, and if they are unable to spell out to the articulate counsellor precisely what they feel, then therapy may be terminated by the client at an early stage.

Words create experience

Philosophers of language debate how words mediate reality and felt experience. Each one of us has an idiosyncratic usage of the English language. A language chops up or patterns a person's experience into a certain shape. Once this shape has been made, it is difficult to change. The Whorf-Sapir hypothesis (Sapir, 1949; Worf, 1956; Kay and Kempton, 1984) proposes 'that the world and its elements are not only encoded by our language, but that the structure of our language forms our world view' (Shapiro, 1979, p.51). A language helps define cognition, experience, emotions, and relationships by connecting an individual to others in predetermined ways. A person's words mediate his or her reality. The role that language fulfils is very similar to that of the five senses in which we live. This leads me to believe that language is a sixth sense through which we perceive the world and know meanings.

Language is a path to understanding, rather than understanding itself. A word such as 'depression' can be misleading. It is the nature of abstract nouns to reify processes or ongoing events. What was an on-going process of being depressed becomes through the English language 'depression', a thing-like illness which afflicts the sufferer.

Language can be described as the use of symbols to represent life experiences. Words which describe emotions are not the emotions themselves. The ease of using words is greater than the ease with which emotions can change. Words are malleable approximations or labels which are put on to real experience. For example, Lacan's term 'aphanisis' (Lacan, 1986 ed., pp. 216–229) is what he uses to describe the disappearance of meaning in the usage of words. As people speak, so their meaning shifts and changes.

Language is a way of using symbols to convey meaning, among other things. A specific language contains sets of categories which are predetermined for its speakers. A language is used unconsciously: we do not know how we use it. Many entities and distinctions only exist in the symbolic system of a language. For instance, ideas of good and bad do not exist in reality, but in fact are defined by people's use of language. Some ways of describing the world are very different from our own. A New Guinea language, Dani, has only two words for colour: '*mili* (dark-cool, including black, green and blue) and *mola* (light-warm, including white, red, yellow)' (Lakoff, 1987, p.40). Some languages may have no adjectives at all: Igbo has eight, Hausa 12 (*ibid*, p. 290).

The conclusion I come to in trying to draw together these opinions on the nature of a language's words, and their users' experiences, is that words are *a representation of experience and a part of experience* in a human context. Words and experience are part of each other. The words of a language act like a sixth sense. They enable us to categorise, develop meaning and know experiences.

Metaphors and experience

Lakoff, a professor of linguistics, and Johnson, a professor of philosophy, argue the central place of metaphors in understanding both language and human experience. Their writings point out how clients present their suffering in metaphorical terms, describing concepts and experience by transferring the sense of one word to another. A metaphor is a container which transfers the sense of one experience to another.

Lakoff and Johnson's hypothesis is that metaphors are better approximations of experience than ordinary logical descriptions. Client's descriptions are 'a knot in the stomach', 'I've gone blank', 'a sudden lump in my throat', 'a terrible heaviness in my chest', 'butterflies in my tummy' and 'a tight grasping headache'. The words in these expressions have a great physical quality because they are born of felt experience, rather than just being rationalisations about felt experiences. Dissociation, bodily and cognitive symptoms are described in an alive vibrant language which could be drawn. Clients tell you of 'broken hearts', 'clouds hanging' over them, being 'stabbed in the back', 'thoughts that go round and round', 'vicious circles', 'floating ... looking down' on themselves, and all manner of other colourful expressions.

Johnson (1987) developed the hypothesis that experience is described in, and has, underlying metaphorical structures. Lakoff (1987) comments that one of 'Johnson's basic insights is that experience is structured in a significant way prior to, and independent of, any concepts. Existing concepts may impose further structuring on what we experience, but basic experiential structures are present regardless of any such imposition of concepts ... Take, for example, a container schema – a schema consisting of a *boundary* distinguishing an *interior* from an *exterior*. The container schema defines the most basic distinction between in and out. We understand our own bodies as containers - perhaps the most basic things we do are ingest and excrete, take air into our lungs and breathe it out' (p.271).

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) metaphorical schemas are posited as the underlying structures for human experience, existing at an unconscious level. When person A speaks to person B, person B's physiological and cognitive reactions are structured along predetermined lines. When person B speaks back to A, then the reply is in the idioms of the English language. The reply is *about* their experience. It is no accident that their words will be about one of a set number of experiential reactions which are events in the metaphorical schemas. Lakoff and Johnson present a 'psycho-logic': a logical analysis of how thought and emotion occur and make sense. Examples of the container metaphorical schema coming through are clients' experiences of being 'too thin-skinned, I can't keep out his criticisms', 'I have to cry, but my tears won't come out', or 'I'm fed up, I can't take any more'.

Lakoff (1987) describes himself as a cognitive linguist, 'mainly interested in that aspect of cognition that is unconscious, automatic, and apparently effort-free and independent of skill' (p.446). He adds: 'One of the most important things that cognitive linguistics has to offer to other branches of cognitive science is a methodology for studying linguistic and conceptual structure in very great detail – a level of detail much finer and richer than can be approached at present by other techniques' (p.379). He explains more of his ideas about how we create our experience and perceive the world: 'Schemas that structure our bodily experience *pre-conceptually* have a basic logic. *Pre-conceptual* structural correlations in experience motivate metaphors that map that logic on to abstract domains' (p.278). He calls his approach 'experiential realism': '... there is no unbridgeable gulf between language and thought on one hand and the world on the other. Language and thought are meaningful because they are motivated by our functioning as part of reality ... it is because *the body is in the mind*, as Johnson puts it, that our basic-level and image-schematic concepts are meaningful' (p.292).

Thus, for example, if clients say that they have a 'terrible anger' and that this is why they are in therapy, then the single word 'anger' draws in meanings and experiences of many different shades. A client's 'anger' may in fact be related to many previous experiences and usages of the word. The anger could be like the time the client fought a school friend when he was seven. Or it could be like his father's anger when his father was drunk. The use of the word 'anger' therefore spans several areas of experience in the client's life. When this particular man says 'anger', his word comes from his life experience of being angry and seeing others angry. His individual experience of anger could be a sudden hot feeling of pressure which moves up inside his chest and into his head. The metaphor for this experience could be a 'burst of anger' or 'burning with anger'. Many clients describe their areas of difficulty as an 'it' or a 'that' which repeatedly happens to them.

Lakoff (1987) gives a case-study on anger which illustrates the underlying physiology and personal versions of the experience. He identifies the underlying principles in the cognitive linguistic analysis as: 'The physiological effects of an emotion stand for the emotion' (p.382); and 'The body is a container for emotions' (p.383). Various experiences expressed in words stand for anger: for instance, body heat, internal pressure, redness in the face and neck area, agitation, and an interference with accurate perception. 'The *anger is heat* metaphor, when applied to fluids, combines with the metaphor *the body is a container for the emotions* to yield the central metaphor of the system' (p.383). 'Anger is the heat of a fluid in a container', as in 'You make my *blood boil*', '*Simmer* down!', 'I had reached the *boiling point*' and 'Let him *stew*'. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue strongly that conceptual systems are largely metaphorical. They go further to conclude: 'In actuality we feel that no metaphor can ever be comprehended or even adequately represented independently of its experiential basis' (p.19).

Johnson (1987) explains how cognition and language are based on bodily metaphors of in/out, up/down, balance and containment. He argues that metaphorical constructions are what lie underneath language, emotion and experience: 'I will not be using "metaphor" in the traditional sense as merely a figure of speech; rather, I shall identify it as a pervasive indispensable structure of human understanding by means of which we figuratively comprehend our world. And I shall argue that "imagination" is a basic image-schematic capacity for ordering our experience; it is not merely a wild, non-rule-governed faculty for fantasy and creativity' (p.xx). He continues: 'My central purpose is to develop a constructive theory of imagination and understanding that emphasizes our embodiment as the key to dealing adequately with meaning and reason' (p.xxi). Basically, embodiment is the fact that our lived experience takes place in our bodies. Counselling and psychotherapy need a theoretical basis which acknowledges our humanity. The place of language and felt experience are central to therapies of all kinds.

Devisch *et al.* (1988) have researched sexually abused clients and found supportive results for this mode of understanding by using other techniques. Huyghe (1984) researched anorexics and has also come to similar conclusions as the ones presented here on metaphor.

Words create counselling

There are various tensions within counselling. In teaching and practising it, counsellors are torn between the experience of trying to make counselling occur with clients, versus how theory, ethics, research and the counselling literature says it could occur. The creation of consistent high quality counselling for clients involves individual practitioners taking in all the contradictory forces and operationalising the concepts to make effective counselling relationships. These are relationships in which the client is more likely to obtain positive intrapsychic and interpersonal changes: where the client finds emotional, cognitive and relationship improvements.

The creation of effective counselling could involve three stages. The first is helping a client to find an effective vocabulary to express his or her distress. In the second, the counsellor takes full responsibility for all he or she says and does, being aware that a wrong word or action can deeply wound a client, and using some of the client's vocabulary. Finally, the client indicates that genuine change has been made by reporting this back to the counsellor.

The counsellor's media for creating these effects are the spoken word and silence. Speech is the logical content of what is communicated plus the tone and speed in which it is said. The choice of words, speed of speaking, tone and pitch of voice all add shading to a counsellor's intervention. When a counsellor chooses to be silent in a particular part of a session, this may be interpreted by the client in different ways. Silence from the counsellor could

be felt as being disapproving or approving, agreeing or threatening, or have other meanings.

Many counselling theories share the rationale developed by Shapiro (1979), who presents a complete overview of language from a psychoanalytical viewpoint. He surveys various theories of linguistic understanding and puts forward the link between language and counselling or psychotherapy: 'Encouraging a patient to say in words that which he thought could not be put into words is the aim of talking therapies. It is only with this activity that potentials for insight and cure are possible... It is the therapists's job, in turn, to tolerate the broadest variety of expressions and ultimately use the vehicle of words in sentences as the most parsimonious means available for rendering feelings and ideas into a communicated something. If the ultimate aim of the therapy is to build a coherent story for a patient so that he may move in his life with greater freedom and flexibility, then he has to have his actions, thoughts, and feelings condensed and clearly designated' (p. 161).

I claim that clients' perspectives on psychological change and healing are the realisation that symptoms, which were once thought of as, for example, hated pieces of self-sabotage, can change through the passage of time according to some new pattern. An experience which was once thought to be repeating and immutable is suddenly realised to have diminished or to have become understandable in a new wider context, in which clients see themselves and their lives. This is the process of the client's insight, an insight which is gained retrospectively. Such insight is made through comparisons drawn by clients, perhaps between how they are after therapy, and how they were at the time of the worst occurrences of their symptoms or indecision.

When clients speak of their reasons and experiences for coming to therapy, each word they use for describing their experiences is like a code word which has a series of associations, meanings, memories and other experiences attached to it. Clients try to explain their suffering as best they can. Counsellors might ask questions in such a way as to try and capture the client's meanings intact. Or clients themselves may make statements which tell the counsellor precisely and succinctly how they feel.

Szasz (1978, p.208) says that the counsellor or psychotherapist's art is one of healing by using words. He uses the Greek phrase *iatroi logoi* (healing words) to describe the special rhetoric that a therapist can use to reach inside clients' bodies and heal the pain and suffering which they feel there. As suffering is a felt experience, then to be healed is to feel better in your body, by the counsellor's use of words.

The French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1986 ed.) was particularly interested in the role of language in psychoanalytic therapy (see Lemaire, 1977, pp. 12–21). Amongst other things, according to Wodak (1986), Lacan maintained that symptoms are language, not just making themselves known in language. He believed that language cannot be taken away from a person and that fundamentally people are, in a sense, language. So states of

suffering are when clients are prisoners of their own language, their own fixed ideas, or fixed connotations, and repeating miserable experiences. As the use of language conjures up experience (and *vice-versa*), the use of healing language in therapy frees clients to experience new parts of themselves and act differently with the people around them. A possible definition of healing in therapy is for the client to become able to gain independence from their language's meanings, assumptions, restrictions, rules and categories of coding their experience. This is because what presently seems bad, awful and disastrous will be spoken about in some new light.

Lacan's own writings are too dense to be accessible without prior knowledge of his system. However, Benvenuto and Kennedy (1986) provide a simple introduction to the breadth of his thought, Lemaire (1977) provides a more in-depth explanation of his basic concepts, and Wilden (1972) also gives sound insights into Lacan's work.

Interventions as effective choices of words

My definition of an ideal counselling intervention is saying something which makes just the right difference in just the right way at just the right time. The counsellor's intervention when spoken is both effective and ethical in helping clients heal themselves. The items which are being healed include the ability to have self-knowledge and understanding, to make decisions and to release the connection of negative emotion to memories. In general, these things mean that clients gain a sense of their self which is uncontaminated by repetitious frightening thoughts, is free of the anxiety of how future events might be, or is released from anguishing over how things were in the past. Once freed of this personal burden, they can take up a place with others which is more agreeable to them.

People have a relation to their words as well as their actions. For instance, a person can lie, use sarcasm or irony, unknowingly deceive themselves, or confabulate a memory. A person can attribute meanings to another's words, emotions and actions. A person can consider another's relationship to his or her words and actions, and act accordingly on the overt and covert messages. The words a person uses is then a path across a field, one of a possible number of ways of going in a direction towards some end; rather than the speaking of a precise timeless truth that is unchangeable.

My hypothesis is this: that relationships between people can be characterised on a continuum, between two poles – one intrapsychic and the other interpersonal. In counselling and psychotherapy, this distinction is particularly noticeable. When there is a great deal of activity between people, then the intrapsychic effects are lessened. And *vice-versa*, when the interpersonal contribution is lessened, then the possibility of intrapsychic effects are much increased. The interpersonal end of the scale is increased in 'busy' therapy where great emphasis is placed on being with each other, relating and using social skills. In more inward-looking therapies, greater intra-

psychic and psychodynamic effects can occur when the conditions are right for the client to free-associate, speak of their intimate experiences, take part in experiential awareness exercises, and find out about hidden thoughts and emotions. Of course, these intrapsychic effects happen in the session with the counsellor, so they are to a degree interpersonal. The effects of therapeutic change for the client are also present in the client's relationships outside the session.

People relate through words: towards the interpersonal end of the spectrum of counselling relationships, the client looks to the counsellor to read or interpret his or her actions, to decide what to say and not say. The client is given approval, encouraged and rewarded when he or she says certain things. Also, the client may read the counsellor so that certain topics or actions are prohibited or disliked by the counsellor. Such activities work both ways. As it takes two willing parties to make a relationship happen, the events in a session are partly due to the interpersonal field in which each person reads the other. Counsellors cannot take total responsibility for their effects on clients: instead, for counsellor and client, causes and effects are intermingled in a systemic way, layer upon layer, and loop within loop. Like a game of table tennis, a ball (cause and effect) bounces back and forth: from the client's utterance (cause) to the counsellor response (effect) and choice of intervention (cause) which creates a new client response (effect). In this interplay of action and reaction, as each tunes into the other, the words used are hearable evidence of how the relationship is being built. How each person perceives the interpersonal and intrapsychic field creates certain phenomena, and bars other phenomena from happening.

Each counsellor and client combination makes a unique series of meetings where the counsellor can try and keep to the discipline he or she has been taught, and make non-counselling interventions as he or she feels is appropriate. In trying to operationalise theory, counsellors adhere to ideal practice to greater and lesser degrees. In the creation of a disciplined use of language in counselling, a knowledge or prediction of the effect of interventions is needed before one of them is voiced to the client. The discipline I wish to create is one informed by the need to heal instead of hurt. This discipline is in the service of the client and tries to keep away from the *empty* good intentions of the counsellor. I have no answer for readers in providing a researched, reliable set of interventions for counsellors. My aim is provoking thoughtfulness and self-questioning. As Socrates put it: 'I am not teaching anything ... all I do is question' (Plato, 1980 ed., p.14).

Finding clients' metaphors

The last section of this paper outlines a form of therapy that has been demonstrated to 20,000 therapists worldwide since 1985. The aim of this therapy is to change negative body and cognitive experiences by using the client's own words and subjective experiences. The seminars are approved

by the National Board of Counselors, USA, and the American Psychological Association.

If a client can accept and feel safe with experiential awareness exercises and can accept a therapeutic modality that is based on question asking, then the work of David Grove provides a deep insight into the workings of a client's psychodynamics. Grove's therapy is based on finding a person's metaphors of suffering and helping a person transform the metaphors and so produce change (Grove and Panzer, 1989; Owen, 1989). The *Personal Journeys* audio-tape package is recommended for counsellors' personal benefit and to help clients access and understand their own material (Grove, 1990). Grove's theoretical basis is taken from Lacan and from Lakoff and Johnson. His breakthrough is in applying these ideas to make a therapy and a way of exploring the unconscious. Further development of these new techniques is required.

First of all, Grove maintains that the therapist can best facilitate change by asking questions that direct the clients' attention internally to their experience of suffering. This process is called 'triangulation' and the way of achieving it is by using his second concept 'clean language' (Grove, 1987a). Clean language is a way for the therapist to speak such that 'The therapist only asks the questions the client can answer... Clean language invites clients to discover for themselves their internal processes. The therapist gathers information to make this possible. The therapist does not ask questions that will help the therapist to understand the client. This shift in emphasis induces a state of self-absorption with the client that is different from the descriptive process of ordinary language.'

The reasoning behind Grove's invention of clean language is that people's experience comes in mixtures of the five senses plus cognition in words – what I refer to as the sixth sense. A person's memory of past experience, current experiencing, and experiences of thinking about a possible future, exist as mixtures of sound, sight, feeling, taste and smell. The experiences which clients suffer with are memories. Visual memories are seen again like a photograph, or sometimes moving like glimpses of a film. Kinesthetic memories are the unresolved after-effects of a previous feeling. Similarly, the memory of thoughts or speech are heard as the words plus the tone of voice.

Current experiences of the client in the counsellor's office are aspects of these experiences which return in the current moment of the session or happen during the client's week. The client's physical state in a session is related to their past and to the current situation with the counsellor. Shrugs, tears, gestures, changes in perception and feeling occur for clients when they speak of deep personal issues. Clean language helps the client explore her own issues and experiences by eliciting new information, in the form in which the client lives it.

For instance, if a male client has a strong 'frozen' feeling of anger and a one-second moving visual memory of being hit by his father when he was three, then to say either 'tell me what happened' or 'what is going through your mind?' disrupts the client's experience, because he has to answer along the lines in the counsellor's directive 'tell me', or about things which go 'through the mind' and *not* feelings in his body. If this client is focused on the look on his father's face as he was being hit and the counsellor says 'what do you think about that now?', then the possibility for mismatching is greatly increased. Clean language is the use of bland questions which have a great possibility of fitting in well with client's experience. If a client is asked 'is there anything else about that?' and the answer is that he wants to 'get rid of the knots in his stomach', then that is the client's own aim for his therapy. If he had been asked 'can you tell me more?', this invokes a totally different answer to be addressed to the counsellor.

Clean language is 'devoid of the therapist's presuppositions and attributions of how the therapist thinks the world is ... devoid of the therapist's assumptions about the client's reality and more importantly, the therapist's orientation'. It 'stays within the client's language framework and uses the client's words in delivering therapeutic information' (Grove, 1987b, p.2). Clean language has many advantages in creating ways of making a truly client-centred healing experience for the client.

In the case of Grove's approach, empathy exists between client and counsellor during a clean-language interview, but it is of a different order from other therapeutic relationships. To be in rapport is to accept each word the client says and to try and speak with some of the client's words in a non-condescending way that is meaningful for the client. When Grove's clean questions are employed, rapport is created by the counsellor honouring the relationships that clients have with their own experiences which are encoded in their own idiosyncratic language. Such a rapport exists at a much deeper level than in other more socially oriented relationships. Grove's method is phenomenological as it explores subjective experience and excludes preconceptions.

Grove's clean-language method is a substantial body of inter-related ideas derived from his work with clients. There is not sufficient space here to do these ideas justice. His approach is an extra or alternative way of working with clients. Clean-language questions find how clients construe their experience. Some examples of clean-language questions in relation to ordinary counselling questions are:

Clean

What would be helpful?
 What do you want?
 And what is happening?
 Is there anything you are thinking?

Ordinary

How can I help?
 What seems to be the matter?
 How do you feel?
 What is on your mind?

And anything else about that?	Tell me more?
And when that happened, how did you feel?	How did you feel about that?
And when that happens, how does that affect you?	How do you feel when that happens?
And when that happened...?	Tell me what happened?
And what is the feeling like?	Are you angry?
And when you have that feeling, where do you feel it?	Can you get in touch with that?
And what happens next?	I want you to...

When the clean questions are spoken slowly and gently, they allow the client to answer in such a way that brings forth their idiosyncratic phrasing, metaphors and ways of understanding. The clean questions listed above are ways of opening a door to a person's world; the process of triangulation can be initiated by them. During triangulation the therapist will hear the relationship of the client to his or her emotional and cognitive processes. The triangle is between the therapist, the client and the client's experience.

Conclusion

Because of the difference between counselling as it is practised, and counselling as it is preached, it is useful to bear in mind the semanticist Alfred Korzybski's (1958) maxim 'don't mistake the map for the territory': '... important characteristics of maps should be noted. A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory which accounts for its usefulness ...' (p.58). As applied to counselling, this maxim points out the difference between a counsellor's theory of counselling and what actually happens in his or her sessions. A counselling map is useful only in so much that it helps clients get changes and choices in their lives. A counselling map can predict where phenomena are and how counsellors can get from one to another. Counselling researchers and theorists can make good-quality maps for us. But the map is not the territory when the counsellor is in mid-session and feels anxious, or finds that the client gets very angry at him or her, or bursts into tears right at the end of the session. Counselling theories need to be turned into effective counselling relations. Research indicates what is and is not effective practice, and this can guide the map-making process.

I posit the hypothesis that in all communication, and especially in therapy, there exists a continuum, between interpersonal activity and intrapsychic activity. Both of these activities occur simultaneously. The conditions in the interpersonal field in therapy create certain effects intrapsychically for both client and counsellor. But the degree in which they both occur varies. Intrapsychic effects are heightened in more introspective, uncovering, exploratory therapies where clients' awareness is turned inwards on to their

own experiences. In opposition to this, the more interpersonal therapies such as group-work, social skills training and assertiveness training keep the client focused outwards on to other people in the interpersonal field around them.

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Received 22 September 1989; final revisions received 3 December 1990.

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